Dear Friends:

No description of events in the Middle East can ignore the rapidly changing political and social forces that shape the region. For example, it is not uncommon to hear that the terrorist attacks on American embassies in Beirut and Tunis were caused by the political and social instability in the region. However, it is important to recognize that these attacks are not only a result of political factors, but also of economic factors. In fact, many of the terrorist attacks in the region are directly related to the economic conditions of the countries involved.

For example, in Lebanon, the political unrest has been fueled by the economic disparities between the rich and poor. The wealthy elite have a disproportionate amount of power and influence, while the majority of the population lives in poverty. This has led to a growing sense of discontent among the working class, which is often channelled into violent actions.

Moreover, the economic instability in the region has also contributed to the rise of extremist groups. Many of these groups are able to gain support by exploiting the frustration and anger of the marginalized communities. They promise to bring about change, but their actions only serve to further destabilize the region.

Therefore, it is crucial to address the root causes of these issues, rather than simply responding to the symptoms. This requires a comprehensive approach that includes political, economic, and social reforms. Only by addressing the underlying issues can we hope to achieve lasting peace and stability in the Middle East.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
East "fascism." For the continuity of state-capitalism is not changed by the changes in "tactics." Stalin had long since reduced socialism to "nationalized property," or, more precisely, a mere administrative formula for production for production's sake. This was the ideologically convenient form of Marxism, or world revolution, into the nationalism of Russian Communism.

Where Stalin's "socialism in one country" meant transforming the Communist Parties of the world into mere "bureaucrats" of Moscow and Russia's foreign policies, Kruschev's "detoxification" and recognition of "other paths to socialism" meant opening the doors wide to the "neutral countries"—so long only as they allowed the Russians to bully Western Europe into playing their game. This, which he called "socialist," and "the others," which he called imperialism. Moreover, the very specifics of anti-Semitism were spelled out by him. The anti-Semitism of Russian Communism cannot be seen in the last years of Stalin's life, not alone because of Israel, but, above all, because he had to contend with the true internationalism of Russia's returning soldiers—workers, peasants and intellectuals—whom he had seen as "the West" and now asked what is so different about Russian Communism. Whereupon Stalin discovered that the "new" "enemies," "cosmopolitans," the "cosmopolitans," 7 (Everyone)—from the Jewish doctors whom he was plotting to frame in Russia, to the Communist leader Slanetz in Czechoslovakia—were all accused of being "enemies," "cosmopolitans," or "Zionists," and so they often both.

On this question there was a spontaneous affinity of ideas between Russian Communism and "Arab socialism." As we wrote in 1965:10 (The checkered role of socialism and "issues of revolutionaries" can be seen among the Middle Eastern Socialists. Thus the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party, BATATI came about as a union of two separate factions in 1953. The history of both groups goes back to the early 40's when they were pro-fascist and two of its present leaders—Agram Houriati and Colonel Afif al-Batra—took part in the abortive pro-Italian Rashid Ali revolt in Baghdad in 1941. One of these groups was led by Michael Aflaq, a leading member of the Syrian CP. When the Axis failed they shifted sides. I don't mean to say there is no kind of "should not" in this respect, of course, but to say the working-men's total disillusionment with capitalist politics was so complete that even Fascism called itself national socialism. This bastard socialism is what characterized Italy in Argentina and now characterized the Middle East.

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Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East

III. SHORTCUTS TO REVOLUTION

Whether the maneuvers by the giant global powers in the UN presently are actual preparatory steps to World War III, or merely to "save face," the truth is that Russia did not come to the aid of the Arab countries any more than to the aid of the United States, despite the Eisenhower Doctrine, came to the aid of Israel. Marxist- Humanists cannot allow themselves to be drawn into the criminological maneuvers of either Big Powers or little powers or of "neutral" powers. What does one do in the Middle East, what they all over again revealed about global conflict among the Big Powers, and also what they revealed about the failure of the leaders of the United States and the Middle East, what they all over again revealed about global conflict among the Big Powers, and what they revealed about the failure of the leaders of the United States and the freedom movements themselves.

The anti-Vietnam war movement has suffered enough by sticking so closely to the pragmatic that it gave the impression that it was simply a U.S.-American imperialism struggle was nevertheless "for" Russia and China. The point is now to see that the movement stands for something more than just one thing and one thing only—total liberation of Vietnam, which begins with the self-determination of Vietnam, free from all Big Powers. If we are to avoid divisions within that anti-war struggle on the basis of the Middle East events, what must concern us is that the anti-war movement is not just taking a "progressive cause" and thus fails to reveal the global struggle and both sides' compulsion toward a nuclear Gorterdays'en, Vietnam has brought us close enough to the point where...

The tragedy of the present situation, insofar as those who profess Marxism is concerned, is this: just when the freedom movements should be most concrete, they lapse into "general theory," and just when they must hold firm it is the "progressive nature of the new society on totally new beginnings, they suddenly demand "taking sides" with Communist state-capitalism "because it is against Western imperialism."

We, the freedom fighters should be concerned with how to unite theory and practice—a practice that involves us in freedom movements, be they civil rights, labor, the right of self-determination, and anti-war struggle, to gain the political lead in the anti-imperialist and the "day after" so that we have no more sound revolutions, that is just when they begin to turn away from the concrete that would be the expression of the universal.

Take anti-Semitism, again. We have the fantastic situation that although he supposedly speaks "in a personal capacity" (13) he is a leader proclaiming: "This is not an ordinary conflict between two nations. Therefore it is not enough to call for... [Condemnation of the isolationist rejection of just rights of two peoples.]" Furthermore, reference to Arabs is always to "progressive forces" without a single word of the concrete reality in the feudal monar-
but any that would circumscribe the self-determination of oppressed peoples. It is, however, no accident that Mao’s China came out with precisely the same slogan and did not mean that. The very opposite is the case. Mao meant any military actions that would slows down “American imperialism and Russian revisionism.” Such actions, conducted with “Mao’s Thought” in hand, have included the class-collaborationism which led to the monumental disaster in Indonesia, and the overly hurried nature of forgetting all about Ben Bella in order to convene the conference against Russian revisionism in Algeria the very week of Boumediene’s coup. Presently such actions include conducting politics, in and out of the UN, which would prevent any peace in the Middle East, and stoke up the fires of the delusions of “Arab socialism” for the destruction of Israel—in the further hope that American intervention can finally be provoked and a “second front” be opened against US imperialism bogged down in Vietnam.

Finally, there not only is not a word about the internal situation in the Arab countries among all those who rise to the defense of “Arab socialism”, but there is also not a single word on the question that when the Czech arms deal was first negotiated with Egypt and Syria, it, too, had its “political strings”, as witness their silence on the Hungarian Revolution. If we leave out the affinity of ideas on anti-Semitism, there is the affinity of state-capitalism and the admiration for the Sputnik which most assuredly meant more to the Middle East than did the Humanism of the Hungarian revolutionaries. The point is that the impasse on revolutions in the Middle East, Arab and Jewish alike, can under no circumstances be resolved, except when theory and practice do unite for total freedom, when internationalism does replace nationalism, and when the masses, and not some shortcut like the “vanguard”, do have power in their hands. In other words, the struggle for the minds of men, as the struggle for freedom itself, makes of the question “why philosophy? why now?” not an academic question but one of life and death. It alone will distinguish us both from the ruling classes in each country and the fellow travelers who feel that “taking sides” with the “progressive forces” against Western imperialism must take precedence over unfurling the banner of Marxist-Humanism.

—Raya Dunayevskaya

NOTES

1. Communists, in this case especially the Chinese, try to say that everything in the underdeveloped world began with the Bandung Conference in 1955. There is no doubt that some of Nasser’s views came after his 1952 coup and after his development of a “philosophy” in 1954, but this could as easily be reversed. That is to say, it is easy to show that the nationalist features and the greater opportunism in Communism arose from its encounter with Asian-Middle East nationalism. See The Asian-African Conference: Bandung, Indonesia, April 1955, by George McTurnan Kahin (Cornell Univ. Press, 1956). Also the anthology, The Middle East in Transition, edited by Walter Z. Laqueur (Praeger, 1958).


3. It isn’t only Ba’ath, discussed later in our Letter, that shows its peculiar origin. So does the Communist Party there, which ‘emerged from illegality in 1954, dropped even its agrarian demands so closely did it follow a "national front"-line and so eagerly did it replace the class struggle with mere anti-Westernism, including anti-Semitism. Its leader Khaled Bakdah, declared: “Syria is Arab nationalist, not Communist, and will remain so” and, appealing to, “all four classes” the 1955 Communist Party Manifesto declare its main aim to be simply “to unite all those who oppose the Pact of Baghdad.” (See The Soviet Union and the Middle East by Walter Z. Laqueur (Praeger, 1959). To this day, the closest ties of Russia are with Syria.

4. For background and yet a fairly comprehensive view of the situation, see Nasser’s Egypt by Peter Mansfield (Penguin African Library, 1965). Though a quite sympathetic account of Nasser’s revolution, Mansfield does feel it necessary to conclude thus: “But having set the pace, Egypt has to show that it can arrive...it also has to show that it can emerge from social and economic backwardness to the status of a developed nation. If it does, the Egyptian 1952 revolution will be a seminal event of the 20th century. If it does not, Nasserism will leave as little impression of the world as Italian fascism.”

5. See The Origins of Israel by Sir Israel Berlin (included in Middle East in Transition).


7. The “rootless cosmopolitans” was a reference also to the Varga debate on postwar capitalism’s ability to plan. See the chapter, “Stalin” in Marxism and Freedom. Also State-Capitalism and Marx’s Humanism, a News & Letters publication.


10. Philosophy of Revolution by Gamel Abdul Nasser

11. The Militant, June 5, 1967 has a most confusing statement which is supposed to be an Israeli Socialist Appeal, but in it is delivered by a Belgian to a meeting of Palestinian Muslim Students. There is, of course, a Communist Party in Israel that does have such a position, and the Trotskyists base themselves on a similar position, suited only to the American Trotskyists who go through the paces of at least standing for “self-determination”. See Editorial in The Militant, May 29, 1967.