



Appendix:

The Middle East Cauldron Explodes: The Civil War in Jordan

October 1970

The bloody civil war in Jordan has left thousands upon thousands of dead and wounded, in the streets of the cities where buildings lie in rubble, and in the miserable refugee camps where the pitiful tents and tin huts—and the refugees within—have been ripped to shreds with mortar fire. Like vultures waiting for the last gasp of life, the big powers—the U.S. most of all, and the little powers—Syria and Iraq as well as Israel, watch, waiting for their chance to carve up Jordan. In their midst stand the guerrillas, united and disunited, Arab "nationalist" and Maoist "internationalist."

Whether the vultures plan to intervene "to save" King Hussein, or to destroy him, their aims are imperialist. As American Revolutionaries, we oppose, most of all, any intervention by the U.S. Its aim is the same as Russia's: world mastery. Whether its interests are "just" oil or whether they are strategic, American imperialism must keep out of the Middle East.

We stood on the brink of World War III, which could mean the end of civilization altogether. It is not enough to stop at making clear what we are **against**, to stand opposed to imperialist war, no matter who is the "aggressor." It is not even enough to hold high the banner of the totally new society, based on human foundations, that we are **for**. It becomes of the essence to separate ourselves from those who also claim to be for a new society, but think that a social revolution can be achieved through terrorism.

TERRORISM IS NOT REVOLUTION

The terrorists who held over 300 men, women and children captive on the Jordanian desert for six days; blew to smithereens \$50 million worth of jet aircraft; and then held in peril of their lives 55 of the hostages—most of them Jews, may think that they have exposed the "impotence" of the most powerful nation on earth against their relatively few guns and grenades. In truth, all that they have exposed is that their hijacking terrorism is as far from being revolutionary as their so-called "Marxist" Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is from being Marxist.

Destruction of the kind the bomb-throwers glorify is the type of destruction that leaves all relationships exactly the same—if not worse—when the dust and smoke have cleared. A few "symbols" of wealth and advanced technology may have been reduced to rubble;

but not a single big power has been seriously affected. The "system" remains untouched. More important, the terrorists have shown such total disregard for human life, that their actions cannot possibly serve as a focal point for a new social order.

Despite all the emphasis on how "well" the comandos treated their captives, the stench of a naked anti-Semitism hung over the hijackings, as foul as it has even been. The concentration camp atmosphere hovered over everyone as guerrillas separated Jews from non-Jews, and searched among the passengers for Jewish-sounding names from any country, not only Israel. One can hardly blame Jews, who still remember Auschwitz, from believing that the Arab threat of extermination, if they are given the chance, is as real as was Hitler's.

In the face of the new outburst of anti-Semitism, the New Left has chosen to either remain silent, or actually associate itself with a so-called "Arab Socialism" that has only its common anti-Semitism to cement itself together. To say, as Eldridge Cleaver has just done, that "Zionism and U.S. imperialism are the main enemies", is to follow the tradition both of Mao (from whom Cleaver had just come) and of Stalin, past-master of dressing anti-Semitism in the garb of "anti-Zionism." Most of all, it is the greatest **diversion** from the Black Revolution.

To blind oneself—as the New Left seems determined to do—to the meaning of this anti-Semitism; to think that the only way to fight American imperialism is to approve of the "Arab cause," even when that cause is the extinction of Israel; to make one of the other state-capitalist powers, Russia or China, the equivalent of the "new society"—is to blind oneself to the true forces for revolution that exist within each country.

THE TWO WORLDS WITHIN ISRAEL

Take Israel itself. By no accident, the Israeli government has played right into the hands of the Arab comandos, who are as determined as Dayan-Meir not to allow peace to come to the Middle East. The Israeli government has not only procrastinated endlessly on its occupation of Arab lands, despite saying that it is willing to "negotiate" to ensure safe borders; it also dragged its feet long after Egypt finally agreed to a cease-fire; and rushed to leave the negotiating table as soon as Egypt's moving up of missiles was revealed. In short,

they have made it clear they don't really want peace, which was already evident in the manner in which they fought the peace movement in their own country.

The peace movement in Israel gained strength rapidly in the past year. Even many young Israeli soldiers joined the peace demonstrations when they were on leave. Though the original nucleus of opposition had come from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where, after the Six-Day War, a group of professors had founded the Movement for Peace and Security, the new voices of dissent came spontaneously from many divergent groups. These voices were not only reflected in almost all the media, but in recent Israeli literature as well. When the cease-fire was finally announced in Israel, there was dancing in the streets.

It is precisely these voices of dissent which the commando attacks are helping to silence, as they help the Israeli government move further and further to the right.

THE DISUNITY OF THE ARAB WORLD

At the same time, the hijacking terrorism thoroughly exposed the disunity in the Arab camp—and nowhere more than among the guerrillas themselves. There are some dozen Palestinian commando groups called, collectively, the "fedayeen." Only the actual outbreak of civil war in Jordan temporarily halted the jockeying between Dr. George Habash, head of the PFLP, which has been specializing in the hijackings, and Yasir Arafat, head of Al Fatah, which specializes in border attacks on Israel—as to who really "represents" the Palestinian refugees.

All that the blind anti-Semitism of Habash—who was willing to unleash World War III to gain the destruction of Israel—achieved, was the unleashing of Hussein's butchery against the Arab commandos themselves.

It becomes more imperative than ever for those who are trying to build a new world to stop trying to anoint the entire Arab world as "revolutionary" and to begin to see the struggle in global terms.

They had better learn that wild, mindless terrorism—whether of an Arab commando or a self-proclaimed "revolutionary" of the American New Left—not only does not wreck "the system." It provides exactly the fuel needed to stoke the fires of repression.

THE SINO-SOVIET CONFLICT VS. SELF-DETERMINATION

They had better understand that Russia's own imperialist goal is to keep the Suez Canal open for both oil and for its struggle with China; Russia wants a shorter route between the Baltic and Black Sea ports and to India and North Vietnam. **Russia is helping Egypt, not because she cares for the Arab states, but because she hopes Egypt can keep the Suez Canal open.**

They had better understand that Mao's interest in the Middle East and his support of Arafat has little to do with considering American imperialism as the main enemy. **It has everything to do with the Sino-Soviet conflict, and the power play between China and Russia.**

They had better learn how to distinguish between their own opposition to American imperialism, and the Russian, Chinese, or Arab positions. And most of all learn how to recognize the real forces of social revolution in each country, including their own.

Genuine revolutions for self-determination and freedom act as a catalyst for proletarian revolution—as the Irish Revolt of Easter 1916 did in inspiring St. Petersburg 1917. A genuine Arab revolution would release the revolutionary forces within Israel, as well. It cannot do so when it wraps its anti-Semitism in "anti-Israel." At stake is a world that wishes to be born anew, but lacks a truly independent banner of Marxist, not "Maoist," internationalism.

Marxist-Humanists work toward the goals of national liberation and social revolution for a totally new society. "A plague on both your houses" is a religious, not a human solution. But a separation from all plague-ridden houses is the only way at this moment to express the truly independent Marxist stand.