



## Middle East crisis and the Arab liberation movement

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I. For more than four years now Israel has been holding on to the Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war. Its adamant refusal to withdraw from them – and in this, too, it relies on U.S. support – has sharply aggravated the Middle East crisis, making it one of the most volatile issues of our time.

The Israeli-U.S. imperialist plan of quick and complete victory through a surprise attack failed. The policy now is to exploit the results of the temporary Arab defeat in 1967 by holding up the threat of fresh aggression, engineering border incidents and systematic incursions into Arab territory.

The time factor is basic to these plans. The Zionists and imperialists are staking on the economic, political and moral exhaustion of the Arab peoples, trying to inculcate a feeling of hopelessness, split the Arab camp and isolate it from the world workers' and liberation movement and from the socialist countries.

The identity of Israeli and U.S. aims is becoming increasingly clear, providing added evidence of Israel's imperialist nature and expansionist proclivities. Imperialism is exploiting that to defend its long-term interests in this area. Developments over the past 20 years are convincing U.S. imperialism that reactionary regimes cannot withstand the hurricane wind of change in the Middle East. It has no choice but to rely on the armed strength of its outpost, Israel.

When, in the early 1900s, the founders of the reactionary Zionist movement set out to build the state of Israel, they conceived it as an instrument for dividing the Arab people and frustrating their advance to unity. And the facts have shown that from its very inception Israel has been the Middle East gendarme, the main imperialist weapon of aggression, territorial aggrandizement and obstruction of the Arab peoples' advance to freedom and progress. Recent events fully confirm that appraisal of Israel's role. It is helping U.S. imperialism in its attempts to recapture positions lost as a result of the Arab national liberation movement; positions, moreover, essential to its strategy of building a ring of aggressive blocs around the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. U.S. imperialism wants to make the Middle East an operational base against the Afro-Asian anti-imperialist movement.

The Arab movement for national liberation is now passing through a crucial period. The four years since the 1967 defeat have markedly changed things. And the imperialists want to make maximum use of this in shaping their Middle East tactics, under U.S. supervision.

The present crisis is due chiefly to the contradictions between the various national-liberation contingents and to the failure of some elements to appreciate the scale and consequences of the 1967 defeat and to draw the necessary conclusions therefrom. Not all the forces, including some Arab governments, have deeply and critically analyzed the causes of the defeat. This is due primarily to their class nature, to the absence of an ideological base from which correctly to assess developments, but also to the general disarray following the 1967 defeat. More, these forces have no program defining the nature of the struggle now being fought on various fronts and are therefore unable clearly to distinguish between friend and foe, both in the Arab East and the larger world.

II. The close interconnection between national form and social content, which is characteristic of the Arab liberation movement, is the result of the far-reaching socio-economic reforms carried out in a number of Arab countries in the early 60s. But the tempo of reform slowed down in the subsequent period, despite the broadening territorial base of the movement after the overthrow of the monarchy in Libya, expulsion of the British colonialists from Southern Yemen and the May 1969 events in the Sudan.

The Second Congress of the Lebanese Communist Party (July 1968, its materials have been published) carefully analyzed the situation in the Arab national liberation movement. It examined the place of the petty bourgeoisie and its revolutionary-democratic elements, their alliance with the working class, their role in the movement's leadership, emphasizing their class nature, the absence of a scientific ideology, and their indecision, which limits the action potential of revolutionary-democratic regimes. The Party sees these petty-bourgeois revolutionary democrats as an anti-imperialist force interested in socio-economic transformations, but believes that the petty bourgeoisie as a class, and the revolutionary democrats, are incapable of carrying the revolution to the triumph of socialism. That can be accomplished only by the working class, the most progressive and revolutionary class of society.

The movement's class and ideological heterogeneity makes for a wide difference of views. This is an objective factor, one that follows from the very nature of the movement, its depth and scope. However, it cannot justify the disunity that reigns in its different contingents. This leads to conflicts that divert them from the effort to resolve the basic contradiction, between imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction, on the one hand, and the Arab national liberation movement, on the other.

Our Party believes that resolving this contradiction is the common strategic aim of the movement's various detachments.

Resolution of other contradictions relating to the class, political and ideological interests of the various contingents should be achieved within the framework of our common task, namely, the fight against the main enemy. This necessitates democratic discussion, recognition of all contingents and definition of their place in the common struggle.

Violation of these principles inevitably leads to a split, and a split undermines the movement's ability to take the offensive. No national contingent has been able to avoid this.

Division manifests itself primarily in the spread of opportunist tendencies and Leftist adventurism. Objectively, Right opportunism merges with imperialism's attempt to rob the movement of its social content. The opportunists call for 'national struggle,' deny that there are any contradictions between the interests of the national liberation movement and Arab reaction. They insist on an end to social transformations and on a return to the old order of things. They want to sever the Arab liberation struggle from the world revolutionary movement.

In line with their class positions, these Rightists seek an excuse for a compromise in Israel's attitude, which is supported by the United States. Such a policy, always dangerous, holds out the threat of fresh conflicts and contradictions within the movement, the threat of its continued weakening. It also serves as justification for Leftist adventurist tendencies.

The Left adventurists, a product of petty-bourgeois anarchism, call for a struggle against the petty bourgeoisie and the progressive regimes it leads, claiming that they are responsible for the defeat of 1967. They make no distinction between Saudi Arabia's feudal regime and the anti-imperialist regime of, say, the United Arab Republic. By setting the movement and its individual contingents unachievable goals they are, objectively, playing into the hands of reaction. For a realistic understanding of the situation and for revolutionary practice they substitute high-sounding pseudo-revolutionary slogans, maintaining that the movement's strategic aims can be achieved quickly and easily, thus prodding it towards adventurism. They encourage illusory hopes among the people, and when these are dispelled by reality there is a feeling of hopelessness and despair.

iii. The split in the Arab national liberation movement has already produced a situation in which solution of the main contradiction, with imperialism, is being replaced by more accent on internal differences, culminating in armed conflicts that further aggravate divisions within the various contingents. Objectively, such conflicts benefit imperialism, Zionism and internal reaction and indeed are deliberately provoked by them.

The imperialists are bending every effort to widen the rift in the movement. Their main concern is to set the national democratic forces and Communist parties at loggerheads by spreading the allegation that the Communists are responsible for all the mistakes

and setbacks, and thus prevent the Communist parties from becoming a major political force in the Middle East. It is in this light that one should regard the anti-Communist campaign started in some Arab countries following the attempted coup in Sudan on July 19 and the mass arrests and murder of consistent and staunch Arab patriots. These lines are being written at a time when prominent democratic and progressive leaders are being executed in the Sudan. Our Party has stated that these actions of the Sudanese authorities are a dangerous provocation directed against the Sudanese and other Arab peoples, against the masses in the Arab countries and throughout the world.

In this context, attention should be drawn to the provocative role of the Leftist adventurist groups. They are joining the reactionary forces in attacks on the Communists and in instigating conflicts between the Communist parties and other national forces. And it has to be said that the Chinese leaders support them in instigating anti-communism and anti-Sovietism in the Arab countries. Objectively, this coincides with U.S. imperialist attempts to isolate the national liberation from the world revolutionary movement, notably from its main force, the Soviet Union, in preparation for the decisive blow against the Arab world.

An apt appraisal of anti-Communist tendencies is given in the official communique of talks in the United Arab Republic this July between delegations of the CPSU and the Arab Socialist Union: 'The two sides expressed their conviction that anti-communism does damage to the freedom aspirations and national interests of the peoples and should not be tolerated. It only serves the interests of the international imperialist and reactionary circles. Attempts to disseminate anti-communism are meant to split the ranks of the Arab revolutionary fighters against imperialism, Zionism and Israeli aggression and for the Arab peoples' right to free, independent development. These attempts are also aimed at hampering solidarity and cooperation between the Arab peoples and their friends.'

The split in the Arab liberation movement is further exacerbated by the actions of the reactionary forces now in power in some Arab countries. They are responsible for the terror campaigns designed to destroy the Palestine resistance movement, which since the June war has grown into a strong military force against imperialism and Israel. There is no denying that the Palestine resistance has committed a number of political and tactical errors and has been embroiled in unnecessary conflicts and clashes. It is equally beyond doubt that some Arab political forces have imposed on it tasks alien to it and beyond its capacity. But for all that, it is a militant movement of an anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist orientation and reflects the national aspirations of the Palestine Arabs. It is a major obstacle to imperialist attempts to wrest concessions from the Arab liberation movement and resolutely rejects a compromise at the expense of the Arab people as suggested by the reactionary forces working in collusion with the imperialists and Israel.

Subversion by the rulers of a number of Arab countries can be

seen also in their interference, in the interests of reaction and imperialism, in the Persian Gulf area, and in their support of the monarchists in Northern Yemen, through whom they influence its policy. There has also been outright provocation and the dispatch of armed gangs into the Yemen People's Democratic Republic. Saudi Arabia too is helping the monarchist regime in Jordan, is trying to influence Lebanese policy on a number of issues through economic pressure. It wants to tie Lebanon to the USA and abolish the hard-won political and democratic freedoms and social gains of our working class and people. The idea is to turn Lebanon into a second Jordan, make it an enemy of the Palestine resistance and pave the way for a new bloc linking Saudi Arabia with the Lebanon and Jordan. In short, another attempt to revive the Baghdad or Islamic Pact.

iv. America's isolation in the Arab world, the result of unconditional military, political and economic support of the Israeli invader, has become more pronounced in recent years. U.S. imperialism is maneuvering in an attempt to convince the world that it wants stability and peace in the Middle East. At the same time it wants to give the Rightist faction in the Arab liberation movement arguments in favor of a dialogue with the United States as the prelude to a Middle-East settlement. The U.S. tactic, obviously, is to divide the Arab countries, prepare them for piecemeal pressure and unilateral concessions, culminating in outright capitulation. And all this is accompanied by promises of economic assistance which, in practice, is an additional means of securing American imperialist economic and political domination.

That was the political background to U.S. Secretary of State Rogers' visit. The men who planned it believed that the situation was ripe for American 'mediation' that would force the Arabs to surrender and give Israel political and territorial advantages in any Middle East settlement. Both the U.S. and Israel relied heavily on the contradictions and difficulties besetting the Arab liberation movement and tried, at the same time, to discredit its friendship with the Soviet Union and other members of the socialist community.

In the Lebanon the American envoy concentrated on inducing the reactionary forces to duplicate the Jordan experiment, abolish the Palestine resistance and ban the Communist Party and other progressive organizations. The Lebanese reactionaries were prepared to do that. The idea was to arrest one of the Communist leaders on a trumped-up charge as the pretext for a campaign against the Party. But the resistance of our people, the unparalleled support our Party enjoys among the masses and the absolute majority of all political groups, foiled these plans. The democratic forces came out of this ordeal stronger than ever.

v. The battle against imperialism and Zionist occupation has now entered a crucial phase, one that demands mobilization of all the

patriotic and progressive forces buttressed by a high degree of organization and consciousness. But though expanding in scope, the popular movement is still in many respects spontaneous, lacking firm organization and a clear political program and strategy.

While noting the movement's weak points, we are confident that it will overcome all its difficulties. But this will require a vigorous Communist effort for unity of the national and progressive forces in our own and all other Arab countries. That can be achieved through united action on a common cooperation platform that takes into account the experience of our joint struggle, and through elaborating a program that would concert the efforts and energy of all elements of the movement.

The working class, the most revolutionary and united class and the one most interested in extending and deepening the liberation movement, must be the center around which all the progressive and patriotic forces are brought together. And objective conditions favor the proletariat playing a much bigger role in the national and social struggle.

The people's road to freedom and progress is difficult, long and tortuous, and this imposes a greater role and responsibility on Communists. That was emphasized at conferences of Arab Communists, including the meeting of representatives of the Communist parties of the Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Jordan. It discussed the central problems now facing the Arab peoples.

It noted the growing influence of socialist ideas, the Communist parties' closer link with the masses, and the growth of anti-imperialist, notably anti-American, sentiments. These processes are evidence of the movement's vast potentialities, now further enhanced by Arab-Soviet friendship, a factor that is changing the balance of forces in the Arab world in favor of progress and socialism.

Our parties have promised the Arab peoples to exert every effort for unity. They are pledged to form closer ties with the masses and work indefatigably to build up a united front against imperialism and neo-colonialism and to raise aloft the banner of socialism and proletarian internationalism in the Arab world. Imperialism, reaction, Israel and the Zionists are doing everything to split the Communist parties, prevent their conversion into the decisive force of the people. But, by virtue of their experience, their scientific world outlook and realistic approach, our parties are in a better position than any other sector of the national liberation movement to bring together the different progressive and patriotic forces and overcome present divisions.

Soberly assessing its capability, the Lebanese Communist Party is following the policy adopted by its Second Congress. Together with fraternal parties of the Arab countries it is on the side of the liberation forces, confident that its activity on a national and all-Arab scale accords with the objective course of historical development and that it is an inseparable part of the Arab movement for national liberation.

We are now preparing for the Third Party Congress. It will enable us to form closer links with the progressive elements in Lebanon and other Arab countries and with world socialism in order to foil imperialist and reactionary attacks on democratic organizations and the Palestine resistance, and prevent isolation of the Lebanese people from the all-Arab national liberation movement.

Our Party is convinced that that movement will successfully cope with its present difficulties and, supported by the forces of freedom, peace and socialism, will achieve its aim and embark on the high road of social progress.