

# SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

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To Bureau members

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**In ENGLISH ONLY**

## REPORT OF THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL FACT-FINDING MISSION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

Introduction by Bruno Kreisky

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Please find attached the report of the Socialist International fact-finding mission to the Middle East, together with an introduction by Bruno Kreisky, and annexes.

The proposal to establish a Socialist International fact-finding body was made at the Party Leaders' Conference held in London on November 11, 1973, in connection with the discussion on the Middle East which then took place.

The Bureau of the Socialist International, at its meeting in London on December 9, 1973, established the Socialist International fact-finding mission to the Middle East.

The mission, which was led by Bruno Kreisky, took place in three stages. For dates, itinerary and membership, please see overleaf.

Fraternally yours,

*Bernt Carlsson*

Bernt Carlsson  
General Secretary.

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SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

STAGE 1

March 9-16, 1974

Itinerary : Egypt, Syria and Israel

Participants : Bruno Kreisky (Austria), Hans Thalberg (Austria), Hans-Eberhard Dingels (Federal Germany), Robert Pontillon (France), Ron Hayward (Great Britain), Pietro Lezzi (Italy, PSI), Eki Sone (Japan, DSP), Relus ter Beek (Netherlands, representing the Benelux countries), Bertil Loefberg (Sweden, representing the Scandinavian countries), Bernt Carlsson (Sweden, representing the Scandinavian countries), and Hans Janitschek (Socialist International).

STAGE 2

February 9-16, 1975

Itinerary : Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya

Participants : Bruno Kreisky, Hans Thalberg, Hans-Eberhard Dingels, Michel Thauvin (France), Anne Vondeling (Netherlands, representing the Benelux countries), Bertil Zachrisson (Sweden, representing the Scandinavian countries), Bernt Carlsson and Hans Janitschek.

STAGE 3

March 15-21, 1976

Itinerary : Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Syria.

Participants : Bruno Kreisky, Hans-Eberhard Dingels, Michel Thauvin, Bernt Carlsson and Hans Janitschek.

## **ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

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**BY BRUNO KREISKY**

### **II. REPORT**

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**OF THE FACT-FINDING MISSION OF THE SOCIALIST  
INTERNATIONAL**

### **III. ANNEXES**

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

by Bruno Kreisky

The proposal to send a fact-finding mission of the International to the Arab countries had found the unanimous agreement at the Party Leaders' Conference held in London on Nov. 11, 1973. Golda Meir, the representative of the Israeli Labour Party, did not raise objections.

The explicit purpose of the fact-finding mission was the attempt to find out to what extent there exist preconditions for a peaceful solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

From the outset there should be no doubt among the Arab participants in these talks that the Socialist International was not only proceeding with the consent of the Israeli Labour Party but in complete loyalty to that party. Developments during these four years were highly unsteady and changing. During the early stages of this mission, immediately after the October War, only President Sadat showed a relative willingness for conciliation, while at the same time being quite explicit about the fact that the ultimate goal,

"peace in our times", would be illusory. The maximum result feasible would be a state of non-belligerency.

Other Arab leaders were more irreconcilable.

During the past four years, there has been a total change. Today most Arab governments support a peaceful solution under certain circumstances. A few, like the governments of Iraq and Libya, still continue to hold to a negative posture. President Boumedienne's position, which could almost be called a doctrine, subscribes to the view that those Arab states which are not immediate neighbors of Israel should not be opposed to a solution which is acceptable to the Arab neighbors of Israel. It may be assumed that this Boumedienne Doctrine, as we would like to call it, will eventually be accepted by all Arab states.

The question arising in this context is therefore the following:

What is the framework within which a peaceful solution can be searched for and, eventually, found? After many long discussions with almost all leading personalities in the Arab world we have come to the conclusion that the following points must be taken into account:

- 1) Peace, in one form or another - and this could also mean some kind of peaceful co-existence -

can only be found if Israel is prepared to return to the border of 1967. This is all the more important since this demand, according to the Arab view and to the original partition plan, implies an essential concession: de facto the Arab states silently accept the revision of the partition plan of 1947.

2) In the Arab view, the establishment of a Palestinian state, in one or another form, is the obvious precondition for any peaceful solution; its territory is understood to include the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. I would like to leave open, for the time being, the question of the feasibility of negotiations on territorial concessions or temporary zones of demilitarization.

3) An agreement about the return of the territories taken from Syria and Egypt, possibly by means of a relevant calendar of operations.

4) In case that there will be Israeli settlements in the areas returned the need arises for an agreement about their status as well as about the areas of Arab settlements in Israel, the content of which would probably have to be more specific than those which were originally de-

veloped in connection with the plan of partition.

5) An agreement about a return of a certain number of Palestinian refugees. In this context I have the feeling that the Arab side knows quite clearly that the number envisaged would be of a more symbolic nature.

It is not the task of this report to present detailed suggestions for a solution; it is only possible to indicate a framework and the general direction where there is the potential for peaceful development. The question is too complex and too much burdened with resentments. It will, therefore, require prolonged and tedious negotiations, beyond the primary framework indicated, which will be similarly complicated as the ones about the Austrian State Treaty.

According to the Arab view, normalization of relations can only be expected after a number of years. First of all, the peace settlement would have to prove and strengthen itself and bring about a gradual change in the state of mind of both sides. The Israeli side occasionally expresses the opinion that normalization has to come first

and that this could then be the precondition for a peaceful solution.

Recent history has presented us with concrete examples for both alternatives. I believe that, if both states do exist side by side, the necessity for a process of normalization with each other will arise very quickly: the lack of natural resources would force Israel and an eventual Palestinian state, probably also Jordan, into it. Given a change of mind, even a very organic cooperation with regard to economic questions could develop very rapidly.

Concerning the question of Jerusalem, I would be the last one who would want to minimize this problem. I am nevertheless of the opinion that, as soon as a solution will have been found for the main problem, it will be possible to find one for Jerusalem too. The case of Rome, which now is the capital of Italy as well as the center of the Roman Catholic Church, could serve as a historic example. In this context, it is worth noting that, as far as I know, the position of the King of Jordan as the Protector of the Holy Places in Jerusalem has been untouched, even by the Rabat Conference.

A question arising in this context is the one concerning the genuine nature of peaceful intentions on the Arab side. I am quite conscious of the fact that, under the existing conditions of prevailing distrust, on both sides, any remark to this point will scarcely meet with approval. On the basis of detailed and very unemotional talks I have reached the conclusion that the reasons put forth by the Arab side to explain their new and changed attitude are quite plausible. According to my informations, which might be incomplete, the Arab states along the front with Israel spend at least ten billion Dollars for purposes of armament. This represents a gigantic amount for relatively small and altogether poor countries which they are not able to raise by themselves but which - and this is generally known - must be financed by the rich Arab states. But these states are also slowly beginning to feel this burden as oppressive. All the more so, since these states themselves need additional funds to finance their own internal and military projects.

Egypt, as the largest Arab state, is a country with so many economic and social problems that their solution can only be approached in a

tangible way, immediately recognizable for large segments of her population, when the resources presently being used for purposes of war are utilized for the accomplishment of peaceful tasks. If this is not the case, Egypt will become a fountainhead for social unrest and, as a consequence, possibly an arena for communist or crypto-communist movements. This fact may be one of the reasons why, above all, progressive democracy-oriented Arab circles, who envision a solution for the social problems of Egypt through reforms, have come to the conclusion that peace is a necessary precondition for such a development. However, if peace cannot be attained, the escalation of nationalist emotions combined with an ever-increasing number of war-like confrontations, will be the unavoidable consequence. War will then become for Egypt, as during Nasser's time, more than a means to fight Israel, it becomes a social safety valve. To brake this vicious circle of poverty, war and hatred is, according to my view, the historical endeavour of Sadat. If it fails, the consequences will be incalculable.

There is enormous wealth amassed in the Arab states. It consists of the revenues from their only raw

material, oil. The rich states, therefore, have a considerable desire for peace and are arriving more and more at a very realistic assessment of the dangers actually confronting these states. The leaders of these countries must therefore logically come to the conclusion that, if the Israelis and the Palestinians are able to find a solution which strongly reduces the risks of war in this region and possibly could even bring about a vision of peace, there are more dangerous enemies than Israel. I therefore do not have any doubt that these countries will supply large amounts of financial assistance to a newly created Palestinian state in order to contribute to its prosperity.

In some instances it was even pointed out to me that, in the long run, a contribution of Israel towards the economic and social development of the region is counted on. To develop this point more deeply at the present time, when our task above all is to reduce mutual distrust, would give this report an aspect of politico-romanticism.

To those who argue that the reasons mentioned by me are not recognized by the Palestinians and their leadership and that it is they who primarily count,

I would like to quote parts of relevant statements of Palestinians put at my disposal:

"The explosive Palestinian parameter with its inherent and automatic built-in capacity to destabilise the situation in the Middle East, will unavoidably trigger another round of military confrontation with untold damage to the protagonists themselves as well as to world interests at large. Based upon this premise, it is clear that the only way to peace and stability in the Middle East is through the recognition and implementation of Palestinian legitimate national rights.

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Very briefly, it can be stated that for the return of the West Bank, Gaza Sector, the Himma and Auja enclaves, a status of non-belligerency can be established between the future sovereign State of Palestine and the State of Israel. But for a full state of peace to take place, other issues will have to be settled the most important of which is the Israeli acceptance and implementation of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their original homes, if they wished to do so or to be compensated if they freely elected not to return." (For the full text see annex I).

"The PNC's resolution called for the establishment of a national Palestinian state and did not refer to a secular democratic State.

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The resolutions spelled out for the first time what we mean by Palestinian national rights, a point of constant criticism by friend and foe alike. Article 11 delineated them as: the right

of return, self-determination and the establishment of a national Palestinian State."

"For those familiar with political forms of expression the Communiqué expresses a clear acceptance of a peaceful evolution.

To differentiate the position of its supporters it should be said that they are again divided in two tendencies.

The first tendency is persistently in favour of the creation of a Palestinian state consisting of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and therewith considers the conflict as ended. This state shall be the homeland of the Palestinians; if not all of them can actually live there, then in a hypothetical way. What Israel represents for the Jews. The future of this state is considered bright by this tendency. Like that of all states in the region. They see the relations with Israel as an evolutionary process which can be found in the course of history. In short, this tendency would acquiesce in the solution attained and will strive to further the development of their state within the framework of the regional conditions.

The second tendency agrees to the peaceful solution out of realistic political considerations.

For they understood that under the local and international conditions prevailing at present no other solution would be possible. They do not perceive this step - creation of their state - at all as a final solution. On the contrary, they see it as a way to attain a calmer situation which would open new possibilities for peaceful confrontation. This tendency watches the evolution

of Israel and her manyfold social and national problems. They proceed further in their internal discussions and analysis and ascertain that without war, the state of Israel will not have a very long life-span for the following reasons:

1. Definitely established, secure frontiers will eliminate an important foundation for the creation of that state: the argument that Israel can be a home for all Jews. For there is not enough space.

2. When the Jews have the possibility to live in their state - Israel - securely and without menace, then the motivation for the World-Jewry to constantly support Israel financially will cease. That will have the effect that the state of Israel and her citizens shape their life in a normal way, like all other states of the region. This means, at the same time, that the messianic character of that state ceases.

3. A peace settlement and the cessation of the messianic character will lead to a resurgence of the national and social problems of that state, for example the discrimination of Oriental Jews in Israel. This situation will then be used by the Arabs to persuade the Oriental Jews with generous financial help to return to their Arab countries of origin. This possibility is already practised. Through intercession of the P.L.O. with some Arab countries it was possible to persuade 500 Israeli families to return to their Arab homelands with appropriate financial help for the start.

4. If this process takes places as described, - so this tendency believes - then the Israelis finally will live as a strong minority in their country. It is furthermore counted upon that the Arab population in Israel will gradually become as large as the Israeli.

Once this situation is reached Israel will finally no more be a obstacle to the Arab striving for unity, neither nationally nor geographically. As stated

initially, the struggle of the Arabs for independence and for the creation of a "United Arab State" was frustrated because of two reasons:

1. the British government did not keep its promises and agreements;
2. a heterogeneous state - Israel - was created which separates the Arab Orient from Arab North Africa.

These two reasons or obstacles will be surmounted - as the second tendency analyses - by neutralizing the state of Israel." (Translation from German)

If a Palestinian state in the envisaged area, West Bank and Gaza Strip, does come into existence, this newly created state will pose overwhelming problems for its government. Such a state will be unable to direct its attention towards anything but internal tasks for a very long time. Even if this state could be armed with the aid of others, it will find itself, in view of the military experience and the military potential of Israel and its army, in a hopeless position and each attempt to look for war-like confrontations with Israel would necessarily lead to a terrible counter-strike which in its effect would go far beyond anything that the Arab side could oppose to it. At any rate, an organized state consisting of the regions presently occupied by Israel would constitute for the whole Arab world a far more vulnerable area with regard to military retaliation measures than is the case with territories occupied by Israel. If such a Palestinian state is created, one of the logical consequences would be the successive dissolution of the refugee camps. They were primarily meant to be a parastate which would enable the Palestinian leadership to fulfil some quasi-governmental functions such

as education of children in Palestinian schools, military recruitment for El Fatah, creation of political institutions, generation of a spirit of resistance and development of their aggressive tendencies. These camps constitute an alien element within the Arab states and, in the case of Lebanon, have proven themselves to be dangerous liabilities for the host country. Their dissolution will be supported by the host countries, in particular, and it is also the declared intention of the PLO to liquidate these camps.

It would be foolish to deny that there still exist radical groups which are not satisfied with a solution along these lines and which would continue their struggle. But we have been plausibly assured that the great majority of the Palestinians would eventually accept a solution found by Arafat and his collaborators, and those not prepared to accept this solution will suffer the fate of all extremist groups.

We also should not neglect the argument based on international law that Israel's existence derives from a resolution of the United Nations from 1947 and that at that time it was the expressed will of the United Nations to create an Israeli and a Palestinian state.

The UN General Assembly's resolution 181 (II) of November 29, 1947, read:

"Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, set forth in part III of this plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces for the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948." (for full text see annex II)

It remains the duty of member states of the United Nations to work for the implementation of this resolution, even if in a modified form.

From my discussions with leading personalities of the Soviet-Union I know that they feel themselves committed to this resolution, in content as well as in principle. The representative of the Soviet-Union at the UN at the time (the present Minister of Foreign Affairs), Mr. Gromyko, presented the position of his country in the 125<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the General Assembly on November 26, 1947, as follows:

"The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as everyone knows, has had no direct material or other interests in Palestine; it is interested in the question of Palestine because it is a Member of the United Nations and because it is a great Power that bears, just as do other great Powers, a special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace. These facts determine the stand taken by the Government of the USSR on the question of Palestine."

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"When the question of the future of Palestine was under discussion at the special session of the General Assembly, the Government of the USSR pointed to the two most acceptable solutions of this question. The first was the creation of a single democratic Arab-Jewish State in which Arabs and Jews would enjoy equal rights. In case that solution were to prove unworkable because of Arab and Jewish insistence that, in view of the deterioration in Arab-Jewish relations, they would be unable to live together, the Government of the USSR through its delegation at the Assembly, pointed to the second solution, which was to partition Palestine into two free, independent and democratic States - an Arab and a Jewish one."

I also gained the impression, that the Soviet government is prepared to accept modifications of the former UN-Resolution if they derive from agreements by the parties concerned, for example through a Geneva Conference.

Finally, I believe that such a solution, which appears to me to be the only one with a chance of success, can be secured politically and militarily so that we may reach a state of affairs which is at least more durable than this precarious state of tension which exists at present.

If we do not succeed in this venture there will be dramatic changes in the Arab states. The enormous resources available to the Arab world will necessarily be used for military purposes and, in the course of the next decades, increasingly better armed armies will threaten Israel. No amount of

counter-force, even if it is militarily extremely successful and devastating, will bring about a definitive change in favour of Israel but will only increase the general danger of war. And the price to be paid in blood by the Israeli people will rise constantly. For the very reason that European Socialists are committed to the state of Israel, they can only, in my view, support a peaceful solution reached through a process of negotiations. Even taking into account the full extent of the feeling of responsibility with regard to Israel, we should not fail to see that the movement of democratic socialism would drift into an intolerable situation if the price would be the antagonizing of the Arab world. It is therefore the task of the Socialist International to do everything in its power to work for a peaceful solution which guarantees the acceptance of the right to live for the Israeli people and the Palestinian people. I am deeply convinced that there will be no insurmountable difficulties that, if Israel, on her part, is prepared to recognize the Palestinian people and its right to live, the Palestinians will withdraw the declaration which calls for the destruction of Israel. Nobody wants to take the first step, but it would not be difficult to find a technical procedure according to which both parties will have to deposit their intentions in a

recognizable way with a third party. The latter assumes to make public these declaration of intent in case of the peace settlement, in which case the public confirmation by both parties will naturally have to be given simultaneously.

In conclusion, with regard to the question whether a new Palestinian state should be part of a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation or should develop outside of it, this appears to be, in our view, not an unsolvable problem if it is made clear in advance that this Palestinian state will be created on the territory of Western Jordan and the Gaza Strip. Under this premise it is entirely feasible, at least it appears to me, that there could be a confederation between Jordan and Palestine before the signing of a peace treaty. Today already, it seems to be clear that such a confederation would be possible after the creation of the state of Palestine and the signing of a peace treaty. This question should not pose unsurmountable difficulties.

I do not deny that I consider the problem of the Middle East as a crucial question for peace in the world in this phase of our history and, if we were

successful in bringing about a peaceful solution, peace would be a historical accomplishment of such magnitude which has been denied to humanity for centuries and I think that, for the first time, the prospects do exist. If rapprochement were possible - the idea of peace would have gained a great, universally visible victory, and the Socialist International would have contributed its share.

At this very moment it seems to me to be of utmost importance that we know our obligation and work in this spirit. No other political movement in democratic Europe can do it.

I therefore propose, as a practical step, that the Socialist International organizes without delay, especially in view of the development in Israel to the Right, a round-table conference with prominent representatives of the Israeli labour movement and of the other member parties. This conference should be considered as the beginning of a series of meetings to be planned over a short period. The objection which will be raised, I can hear it already: such a thing has to be well prepared. My reply, based on practical experience of several decades, is simply this: If a confrontation is prepared at length and takes place only then, one does not really need it any more. At present, however, to meet is more important than a foreseeable result.

R E P O R T

The Palestinians

The disputed question which we can not, and do not want to, answer in our report is the question of the number of Palestinians living in the Arab countries. The Israelis apparently do not focus their attention on this question and they would like to restrict themselves numerically to the Palestinians living in the Israeli sphere of influence. There exists the widely held view - which is, incidentally, shared by large parts of the democratic world - that it is the task of the Arab states to take care, through assimilation, of the Palestinians living outside the state and sphere of influence of Israel, including the occupied territories. This appears to be, in our view, a first serious error of judgment. The fact, for instance, that an Arab of Palestinian extraction holds an important job in the oil industry of Saudi Arabia, or that another one is employd in the Kuwaiti ministry of planning, should not lead to the conclusion that the question of their national identity has now been solved

through assimilation; this to us appears to be an error which leads to serious consequences. This problem is even more relevant with regard to the millions of Palestinian refugees who have found some kind of work. The Palestinians, since they are strangers, have experienced, as they themselves have pointed out, a certain animosity in many of their host countries. The problem is aggravated by the fact that many of them are highly qualified workers, technicians and professionals. In some Arab countries they are mostly working in areas which make them members of the upper classes. In the conservative countries, where they are most urgently needed as part of the work force, they are often considered to be progressive, anti-monarchist, even inclined towards communism.

With regard to their republican sentiments, it seems that the deep hatred of the Palestinians for King Hussein, which derives from the well known events of the past, plays a certain role and is transferred to any monarch who closely cooperates with King Hussein. The position, formerly also often supported by our Israeli comrades, that there is no Palestinian nation appears to us, whatever the historical arguments may be,

to have been superseded by the facts. Recent history teaches us that a spirit of nationalism, once its springs into existence, represents a force which in the long run can not be ignored.

There exists today - and this has been proven by the elections in the occupied territories - a deep Palestinian nationalism in many parts of the Arab world. In any event, there have been hundreds of thousands of Palestinians outside of Israel who years ago have renounced all common bonds with Jordan. In view of these developments we think it is therefore wishful thinking to believe that Jordan and King Hussein can in any way be of assistance in the resolution of this conflict. Incidentally, King Hussein has specifically precluded this possibility in his discussions with us. But it is still feasible that, due to the fact that such a large part of the population of Jordan consists of Palestinians, certain solutions could be found, i. e. the establishment of a confederation between an independent Palestinian state and Jordan. The establishment of such a confederation is presently envisaged for the time after the creation of a Palestinian state.

In this aspect, the Palestinians have clearly succeeded in establishing their political and national views in the entire Pan-Arab world. And it is highly advisable

not to harbor any illusions with regard to these facts. These positions have been expressed with equal determination by the King of Saudi Arabia and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia as well as by the leading personalities in the conservative gulf states. Similar views have been expressed by King Hassan in his discussions with us during the month of March, 1975. It may be true that the unity shown by the Arab world in Rabat was only on the surface, with regard to one question it appears to be very real: today the right of the Palestinians to speak for themselves cannot be denied. No Arab state could speak for them against their will. We deliberately are very cautious in our formulations since we do not want to hurt anyone, since we do not want to deny our respect for the accomplishments which may be observed in Jordan. It seems therefore all the more important and necessary to us to point out that the hope, which is still kept alive in some chancelleries, a final solution can be found with the help of King Hussein, is nothing but an illusion. We consider this observation to be one of the most important results of our fact-finding mission.

The Influence of the Palestinians

Everywhere where nationalist Arab movements execute

governmental functions, Palestinians play a very important role, not only as experts but as politicians as well. In all meetings which we held in these countries, there were Palestinians represented in these groups.

In all Arab states, the Palestinians therefore have at their disposal influential pressure groups which should not be underestimated, especially in the Gulf States. There was a visible expression of relief when our delegation, during the visit to Kuwait, expressed its willingness to also meet with representatives of the PLO. Simply our willingness to do so has lead to a total change of the cool, even hostile climate which had prevailed up to that moment. During the ensuing meeting with representative spokesmen of the Palestinians it was pointed out to us that they had built up Kuwait, a position which we thought to have been a little arrogant.

In many of these states, the Palestinians have their disposal the only existing organization - usually with hundreds of thousands of members. This influence of the Palestinians, on the other hand, is a continous source of their irritation since they cannot estimate what kind of reactions could be caused by the fact of their domi-

nance. A typical example were the events in Jordan and also the present events in Lebanon.

This is one of the reasons why each Palestinian feels the need to bear a passport of his homeland. Even if many of them, above all those who have built up a good career for themselves, do not intend to immediately return to this yet-to-be-established state, all of them, in the final analysis, want their own homeland which they want to create for themselves. This is the explanation why the demand for the creation of a "Little Palestine" has found such a positive resonance also with the Palestinians living outside the areas which are supposed to constitute the new state. We would not exclude the possibility that this is also a source of irritation for the Palestinians who are living in these areas,

#### The P L O

The importance of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians was emphasized in all Arab states. Maybe it was possible to hear in Syria that there exist also other Palestinian organizations, and to be told in Lybia that other Palestinian organizations will take over from the PLO if the PLO "betrays" the interest of the Palestinians. Today there are in fact probably nine Palestinian organizations but there is

no doubt that El Fatah, which was founded as a military movement in 1962, is the most important one. The politically most important organization is the PLO. In the course of a few years it has gained such a degree of recognition with the Palestinians living outside of Israel, a fact which is apparently not known well enough. No matter how one looks at the role of the organization, it is the PLO which has created a Palestinian national consciousness. and it is also the PLO which presents itself as a structured political organization with a high degree of internal democracy. The largest and most influential organization within the PLO ist El Fatah which is organized along military lines. El Fatah in turn is led mainly by the Palestinian intelligentsia which primarily occupies itself with military tasks. This is a somewhat similar process like the one that could be observed in Israel, where people from civilian walks of life temporarily make themselves available for military duties because of the pressing national problems. Within the PLO there is also a financially very strong group of Palestinians who have gained their wealth through their work. mainly in the rich Arab states. This observation appears to us to be of importance since it enables us to draw conclusions about the ideological posture of the PLO. It is not a movement of social revolutionaries, it is

to a not inconsiderable extent nationalist-conservative.

We therefore do not agree with the sometimes expressed apprehension that the PLO is an organization prone to be influenced by communism. The class forces within the PLO, by their very nature, are not communist or anti-economy, although this does not preclude that one is asking for the support of the Soviet Union in the pursuit of national aspirations.

We should also not overlook the fact that, for the last couple of years, El Fatah bears responsibility for the refugee camps and that this, again and again, leads to conflicts with the governments in the countries in which these refugee camps are located. This was one of the factors which caused El Fatah to take a more realistic position. El Fatah knows fully well that it bears responsibility for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who live in the refugee camps, but that it was, as of now, not able to produce one single square foot of Palestinian homeland. This, on the one side, has forced El Fatah to intensify again and again its military efforts with the ultimate goal of creating a well equipped regular army - independent of the interests of other Arab countries -

but also has, on the other hand, given birth to the idea to get a territory on which a Palestinian state may be established. We think that this is one of the reasons why a policy of moderation has begun to develop among the influential circles within El Fatah and that, within the PLO, there are even the beginnings of the idea that the reality of the state of Israel will have to be taken into account. While in 1974, during our talks with Arafat and his colleagues, the differences were clearly visible, and while they were at that time not ready to accept a solution brought about by the creation of a Palestinian state on the territory of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, except possibly as a short-term settlement, Arafat now holds the position, as we can see from his address to the United Nations.

... "Why therefore should I not dream and hope? For is not revolution the making real of dreams and hopes? So let us work together that my dreams may be fulfilled, that I may return with my people out of exile. there in Palestine to live with this Jewish freedomfighter and his partners, with this Arab priest and his brothers, in one democratic State where Christian, Jew and Moslem live in justice, fraternity and progress."

We would also not want to deny ourselves the opportunity

to emphasize that other organizations, for example Es Saika, which is close to the Syrian Baath Party and therefore to the Syrian government, has some influence on the formulation of policy within the PLO. The present crisis in Lebanon points at inner tensions which it is not our present task to discuss and where we do not have any relevant concrete facts at our disposal. In this context it should be mentioned though that one of the organizations, which is considered to be the most radical one, the organization of Dr. Habbash, has publicly recognized the Israelis as a people with its own nationality, which is evident from a document circulated at the Congress of the Palestinians. This organization supports the idea of the coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis instead of one between Moslems, Christians and Jews. In any case, we were informed, by persons who are rather close to us politically, that this organization, because of its "socialist program" has no influence within the PLO, but hopes to gain influence among the Palestinian people. But it is a fact, without any doubt, that the overwhelming majority of all Arab governments supports the PLO.

Presently there are 105 nations who recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in one way or another. We may assume that it is only a question of - very little - time until most

of the industrialized countries will also follow this tendency. We think that it is quite clear from numerous discussions that the PLO, due to the worldwide recognition which it has found during the last months has now irrevocably decided to shed its terrorist image which it had in many countries in Europe and the world. In Arab circles, with the exception of Libya and Iraq, there is recognition of the fact that terrorism has driven the PLO into some kind of political isolation. Because of the reasons mentioned above we have come to the conclusion that a denial of the existence of the PLO by Socialist parties would not only be ineffective but would also create feelings of a new hostility in the Arab world against the social democratic movement.

We know about the great difficulties of our Israeli comrades who take the position that under no circumstances should there be negotiations with the PLO. We think it is not our task to give advice to our Israeli comrades, but we have raised the question again and again with our Arab contacts and have found, at least with regard to one question an important readiness to negotiate. Everywhere where we raised this question, we were told that, for the beginning, the task of presenting the Palestinians could very well

be turned over to Arab military institutions. Apparently it was thought that it might be easier for the Israeli participants to stick to negotiation models which already exist. In this context, the second highest, although fictitious, institution of the Arab world was specifically mentioned, the United Arab High Command. We only mention this example - we have never thought of offering our good services - because it leads us to the conclusion that the Arab side would like to find a quick solution for this question. It is felt that the problem of Palestine is an extremely heavy burden because, as long as it exists, it has to be considered to be the primary problem even though there are quite different problems arising for many Arab states.

#### Some Problems of the Arab World

The discrepancy between the unimaginable wealth of the upper class which controls the oil wells and the great mass - we specifically do not want to say of their own people but of all those working in these countries is striking. These are, in many instances, millions of foreigners, Arabs as well as non-Arabs, ranging from Egyptians to Sudanese, from Pakistanis to Kurds. A new proletariat is growing, and it is an unsolved question how it can be organized along political and trade union lines. This problem will present itself with great urgency if and

when there will be normal conditions in this region.

The process of industrialization, even accumulation of capital is running its course in the rich oil countries without an extreme exploitation of the working people. On the contrary, the new proletariat in these countries belongs to a relatively well-off group of the population. The process of industrialization is mostly conducted by European technicians and supervisors. But this process has its numerous limits, and we may assume that the largest part of the investments generated by the revenues derived from oil will be transferred to the industrial nations of Europe and North America. It is correct that there are gigantic amounts of dollars stacked away in the many funds and banks of the Arab oil countries with the exception of Iraq and Algeria. But they will seek their own opportunities for investment, and even today the recycling of petrodollars does not pose a serious problem. This in turn will lead to a commitment of Arab capital interests in Europe which can be barely envisaged at this time. Considering the situation of the balances of payments of most European nations, we will see the development of a degree of interdependence which would be worthy of special attention. In any event, this problem

indicates a strong desire for stability in the rich Arab states and leads to the distinct hope to terminate the state of war with Israel. But naturally under the condition that a compromise solution between Israel and the Palestinians can be found.

Another problem which preoccupies the attention of the rich states is their security. The desire for security is particularly pronounced in the Gulf States, in Kuwait and in Saudi Arabia. And it should be noted briefly that these states definitely do not consider Israel as the primary threat to their security - if Israel would set the preconditions for the termination of the state of war by retreating from the territories occupied in 1967 -, but by other states and developments. We do not want to be more specific here, which, in view of the well-known geographic situation, is not necessary.

One problem, which apparently preoccupies the moderate Arab statesmen to a very high degree, seems to be the developments in Africa and in this context, above all, the military intervention of Cuba in Angola. It was pointed out to us that such influences may already be observed in South Yemen. All these examples should show us why there is a readiness in the Arab world to come to a solution of the problems of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Our Arab sources in North Africa have told us about their original worry, that Israelis and Palestinians could not live together, was unfounded since it has been shown again and again that especially Palestinian and Israeli intellectuals would be very well suited for just such a development. And finally, our most openminded Arab sources even expressed the view that it would be just this very task which should be given particular attention by the Israelis and Palestinians on the one hand and Israelis and Arabs in general on the other. This surely means that Israel will have to be prepared to relinquish her extremeZionist conceptions but could, in exchange, add a new and mutually beneficial chapter to the history of the centuries-old relationship between Jews and Arabs. In this context there were strong hints with regard to the high level of Israel's technological and scientific development. One of the partners in our discussions, an Arab statesman known all over the world, expressed his opinion that the problem of South Africa could only be finally solved if South Africa will accept the fact that it exists within an African environment and more strongly takes into account developments in Africa, without having to give up South Africa's European characteristics. Similar developments were

predicted for the next decades with regard to Israel - she would have to accept that Israel was created within an Arab area and, although keeping all aspects of her identity, would have to integrate herself into this area, a process greatly facilitated by the fact that the Arab states are becoming more and more European themselves.

Israel would be totally unchallenged in her existence, the sooner she accepts the fact that she has to take into account developments in the Arab world and if she adjusts her future political aspirations to this area. We are fully aware of the fact that, in our report, we present a particular emphasis with regard to the Arab-Israeli question but we feel, that, on the basis of our talks and experiences, we are not only justified in such a posture but that we have a moral obligation to do so.

Return of the Occupied Territories

A phenomenon which in our opinion is particularly worthy of note: In our talks with President Sadat in 1974 he expressed the view that the most which could be accomplished through long negotiations would be

the end of belligerency. To make peace, that would be the task of future generations. This is not the case any more. Most Arab statesmen believe that presently Israel - and we only report on their views - apparently has no interest in making peace. They even believe that the end of belligerency would have come had there been a stronger institutionalization of the negotiations in Geneva, since it is the mandate of the Geneva negotiations to create peace. This changed posture appears to us to be of some consequence, just like the demand for a return to the borders of 1967, which already implies a recognition of the existence of the state of Israel within those borders. But there can be no doubt that no Arab state, even the states not directly involved, can withdraw the demand that all the land conquered in the war of 1967 will have to be returned. In our discussions, there have been no indications whatsoever that there exists a readiness to talk about revisions with regard to territory - although minor ones need not necessarily be totally precluded.

Every Arab statesman will support the position of President Sadat who said, during a press conference in Vienna, that he could not relinquish one inch of soil. But what we feel is feasible would be negotiations about the time-table of such a return of territory

and of the confidence-building measures which would have to be an integral part. We are not enough versed in these questions in order to make concrete proposals but already the agreements which have been signed during the last two years have shown us that several possibilities exist. We have not gained the impression that the Geneva Conference - if it were possible to proceed along these lines - represents the only way for a solution but we believe that, at present, there can not be any other practical peace-supporting measures than a resumption of the Geneva Conference, its institutionalization over a longer period of time, in order to make it possible to return to the conference table again and again, also situations of crisis. There are examples in recent history that permanent conferences of this kind have had no positive effect, but there are also examples which prove that conferences of long duration can bring about results, i.e. the negotiations about the Austrian State Treaty. In all probability, there will be a long series of detailed negotiations preceding any peaceful solution.

Whatever our experiences with negotiations may have been, democratic socialists simply can not deprive themselves of the basic trust in negotiations between states.

We think that especially at the present time, most of Arab statesmen to whom we have talked are our partners in discussion in the truest sense of the word. At any rate, we have not been able to find that absolute, final and even natural deadly enmity between Arabs and Israelis.

In this context it would be tempting to go into an analysis of the question how many "hereditary enmities" there existed between European nations in our older and more recent history.

We feel obliged to point out in our report that Arab self-confidence is not only based on the millions of dollars which derive from oil, as is widely assumed in Europe and America. In fact, there have been the genuine beginnings of a national awakening, which dates back a long time, and which, among other things, has had as its consequence that the oil companies have been taken away from the multinational corporations.

In the Arab world, the national revolution has begun long before the oil crisis. It may be that the control over this gigantic wealth has accelerated this process. The Arabs were, before they were condemned to a state of ahistorical life for many centuries -

centuries of rule by the Turks, a few decades of European colonial rule have brought about this ahistorical state - the generators of a tremendous culture and civilization, and it should be noted that, in particular, members of the Jewish faith, fully allowed to develop their potential, have greatly contributed to this culture. But it is completely natural that the rise of Arab nationalism orients itself to a high degree towards a glorious cultural past. The impressive accomplishments which may be observed in Israel find their counterpart in a newly arising creativity which has been submerged for centuries. This fact, we believe, should make the Arab world a natural partner for cooperation with Europe, and we have left no doubt in our discussions that the establishment of peace in this region and a new relationship between Arabs and Israelis would be a substantial precondition for such a development. Certainly, material incentives will have more effect in this instance - the urgent necessity for a supply of oil and similar developments. In addition, we would like to point out in this context the fact of the strong inclinations of the Arab world toward Black Africa. There is no question that

the great efforts in the field of development assistance do play a quite considerable role. The figures give us a very clear picture.

National Geographic has reported in October 1975:

"Last year, following Kuwait's lead, OPEC nations pledged 17 billion (dollar) to developing countries (the industrial nations committed 11,3 billion)."

We were given another assignment as well: We were asked to look into the question to what extent the Arab states show a desire to cooperate with democratic Europe. On the basis of the discussions which we have held we finally came to the conclusion that the nations of Eastern Europe, inspite of everything, have found a strong foothold in the Arab world. And that, for example, the Soviet Union acts on a perfectly "ideology-free" basis. As an example we would point to the fact that the Soviet Union is one of the largest trade partners of the Moroccan monarchy. On the basis of our discussions we have come to the conclusion that the Arab states will not follow the example of Egypt with regard to relationships with the Soviet Union. In the meantime, even Egypt is trying to work out a modus vivendi with the Soviet Union. Only one thing is certain, that the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries

do not enjoy a dominating ideological influence in the Arab world, at least as long as there is no new war. Only such a war would immediately increase the willingness to visibly intensify military cooperation. In our opinion it is very well feasible that Syria, which presently maintains close political, financial and economic ties with Saudi Arabia and Jordan, will simultaneously maintain a close and intimate relationship with the Soviet Union. With regard to economic cooperation with democratic Europe, we would like to note that it would have to be primarily based on a more enlightened policy by the European Economic Community. In addition, we should work for constructive contacts between the International Energy Agency within OECD on the one hand and OPEC on the other. In this case, economic talks between OECD and Arab organizations along similar lines would be useful. There is certainly the necessary readiness for such contacts on the Arab side.

Chances for cooperation between the Socialist International and the associated parties and political forces in the Arab states

The changed statutes of the Socialist International now permit a much more enlightened posture vis-a-vis

nationalist Arab parties. But we think it would be an even more practical and useful development if we could convince ourselves that social-democratic parties, if and when they establish contacts with other political forces on other continents, need not simultaneously enter into full - fledged fraternity - which, incidentally, has not been demanded by our partners. We think there is also need for a less emotional posture within the Socialist International. What these forces want, and we have seen this quite clearly, is to be liberated from the apparently inescapable alternative of having to make a choice either for "capitalist America" or for "communist Russia". Social Democracy and democratic Socialism really present themselves here as a third force. During the last year, it was not the least due to the fact-finding mission of the Socialist International that leading politicians of the Arab countries have shown a basic change in their attitude toward us. We think that the established procedure of bilateral contacts of the member parties of the Socialist International are useful, but we should not overlook the fact that a rapprochement between Arab parties and the Socialist International could represent a "substantial precondition" for a new situation of dialogue between the Arab parties and the Israeli Labour Party.

In this context we should not overlook a vital fact: The strong affinity which Arab politicians who have lived and studied in Europe feel towards the workers' movement in Europe. We are here faced with a moral aspect which we on our side have not given sufficient attention.

Final Remarks

We do not want to overestimate the importance of the work of this fact-finding mission of the Socialist International. But the fact that it was considered necessary to accord the delegation a large degree of attention with regard to politics, journalism and protocol is proof that its importance was considered to be quite great. That it was possible, in each and everyone of the countries visited, to hold discussions which lasted on the average from 4 to 7 hours, proves the thoroughness with which we dealt with the pressing problems. That we were treated not only with exceptional politeness but with great friendliness - we are even tempted to say, genuine warm friendliness - shows how useful the mission has been, and that, finally, there was acceptance of the fact that the Socialist International and the Socialist parties are determined to give unswerving loyalty to the workers'

movement of Israel but nevertheless want to be informed about developments in the Arab world, which not only gives proof to the realistic perspective of the influential statesmen of the Arab world but also of their desire to establish contacts with us. We therefore believe that the efforts to reach a peaceful solution of the bloody confrontation would today be more sensible than during any other time in the history of this conflict, would have more chances of success than at any time during the proceeding thirty years, but there is need for a considerable measure of courage to support such a program vis-à-vis one's own people.

We reached the conclusion that economic cooperation between Europe and the Arab world, in the interest of both parties concerned, should not only be developed along the traditional forms of commercial relationships but that there is need for a far more systematic attitude of partnership. And we finally are of the opinion that, as volatile the political conditions in this part of the world may be, it is worthwhile to establish contacts with suitable partners because in this way social-democratic, that is to say democratic socialist thought, could find a wider field of application.

All this must justify the interest of the Socialist International in an opening towards the Arab world; this was, after all, the starting point in the decision of London and the mandate for the delegation.

HOTEL IMPERIAL WIEN

Vienna, January 27, 1977.

Dear Chancellor Kreisky

Pursuant to our conversation last night, I would like to submit to Your Excellency a brief review of the current status of the Middle East crisis as well as a resume of the position of the PIO on various parameters of the problem.

There is nowadays a unanimous agreement that the Middle East crisis should be brought to a speedy solution. Unfortunately there has been a great deal of confusion over what constitutes the basic ingredients of a just and lasting solution. So far two formulas have been under consideration, the one assumes that the crux of the problem is a dispute between the confrontation Arab States and the State of Israel while the other insists that the essence of the crisis is the contradictory claims of both Palestinians and Israelis to the same country. The first formula assumes that a settlement is possible between the Arab States and the State of Israel with the Palestinians relegated to a vassal status under Jordan, whereas the other insists that peace can only be achieved when the Palestinians and Israelis reconcile their contradictory claims amicably and satisfactorily through a mutually accepted formula which grants each side the degree of self expression which it seeks and insists upon.

The first formula, which finds favor in some American and Israeli official circles cannot bring about peace or even a temporary state of nonbelligrancy. The explosive Palestinian parametr with its inherent and automatic built in capacity to destabilise the situation in the Middle East, will unavoidably trigger another round of military confrontation with untold damage to the protagonists themselves as well as to World interests at large. Based upon this premise, it is clear that the only way to peace and stability in the Middle East is through the recognition and implementation of Palestinian legitimate national rights.

Within this context, we believe that Western Europe and in particular the 2nd International can play a constructive role. In fact we believe that the major victim of another military confrontation in the Middle East besides the Arabs and Israelis themselves, would be the West European countries whose economies and continued welfare are crucially dependent upon the continued flow of Middle Eastern oil. The 2nd International should therefore seek and insist upon an active role in the search for peace in the Middle East, not only because of the moral imperatives involved or because of the committments of the International to the lofty ideals of peace, justice and universal brotherhood, but also for the urgently pragmatic reasons of West European economic stability and welfare.

Having asserted that peace is impossible without the Palestinians, it is highly reassuring to state that the Palestinians, through an interesting process of political evolution and maturity, are prepared nowadays to contribute to the establishment of Peace in the Middle East.



# HOTEL IMPERIAL WIEN

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I believe that this development represents a historical breakthrough which should be eagerly seized by all interested parties to turn the dream for peace into a living reality. Surprisingly enough, the Palestinian leadership, instead of receiving support for this constructive attitude, was rebuffed by the USA, attacked by the Israeli leadership and harassed by some Arab States. The political shortsightedness manifested in these reactions is dangerous in that it can easily persuade the Palestinian leadership of the futility of moderation and force them to adopt a hardline position which will certainly precipitate another round of military confrontation which now-body can avert.

This is precisely why a West European role is urgently needed. The Palestinian position is still positive and will remain so for the next few months at least. But how long will the Palestinian leadership retain this constructive attitude against American, Israeli and some Arab hostility, is highly unpredictable. My guess is that it won't be for very long. However, a determined West European position could possibly consolidate Palestinian moderation and exert positive pressure on the negative American and Israeli and certain Arab attitudes.

The question naturally arises: How serious is the Palestinians commitment for peace. The answer is that it is very serious, provided that there is reciprocity and a real desire to tackle the problem of peace and discuss all the issues whose solution is absolutely necessary. Very briefly, it can be stated that for the return of the West Bank, Gaza Sector, the Himma and Auja enclaves, a status of non-belligrancy can be established between the future sovereign State of Palestine and the State of Israel. But for a full state of peace to take place, other issues will have to be settled the most important of which is the Israeli acceptance and implementation of the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their original homes, if they wished to do so or to be compensated if they freely elected not to return.

Naturally enough we have not limited our peaceful sentiments to secret and confidential talks with World leaders, but have been sending out a number of public signals which are too well known to enumerate. What is more important, we are planning on passing some very important resolutions of a very constructive nature during the forthcoming Palestinian National Council. All of this should provide convincing and irrefutable proof of the sincerity and seriousness of the Palestinian position.

Very sincerely,

Isam A. Sartawi.

