SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

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IN ENGLISH ONLY

To Bureau members

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LETTER FROM THE ARAB LEAGUE

Please find attached copy of a letter which I received from Dr Clovis Maksoud, Special Envoy of the Arab League, in connection with the Party Leaders' Conference.

In consultation with the Chairman, this will be put on the provisional agenda of the next Bureau meeting.

Hans Janitschek,
General Secretary.

Dr. Clovis Maksoud
c/o. Arab League Office
1/11 May Hill
London W.1.

26th June, 1974

His Excellency Mr. Hans Janitschek
Socialist International
88A John's Wood High Street
London NW8 75J.

Dear Mr. Janischek,

Your Party Leaders' Conference of the Socialist International is an important occasion and comes at a crucial moment in the history of modern International relations. I would like to wish your deliberations all the success it deserves and am aware that the outcome of your Conference will carry immense weight in shaping the future course of events.

I would like to take this opportunity to submit for your consideration some of our Arab perceptions relating to the problems and issues that your Conference is planning to discuss and hope that they may be of some help in rendering your conclusions and directions for your Parties inclusive of the following assessments:-

I. Concerning the International scene in general.

1) The Arab States irrespective of their ideological commitments have pursued upon their independence the policy of non-alignment. This policy did not at any time mean neutrality in its legalistic form nor an equidistant position between what is right and wrong. Non-alignment to the Arabs meant an alignment with the positive, rational, humanist liberating forces within all blocks. In this endeavour the Arab States have supported without hesitation all anti-colonial movements and all efforts towards achieving co-existence, particularly between the two super powers.

2) Detente between the super powers was to the Arabs not only an ethical imperative in view of the nuclear holocaust that can engulf the world if a detente does not exist, but also an impirical necessity insofaras we belong to the Third World and to the developing nations of the world. We are concious that with growing relaxation of tensions the International climate would be conducive for the developmental tasks that lie ahead for us. True, we are aware that the detente can also be a temptation for the two super powers to arrogate to themselves a measure of decision making that can infringe on one's freedom of mobility and thus mitigate the obvious advantages of the detente.

3) For this reason we deem it of vital importance that the Socialist and Social Democratic movements throughout the world develop a more active presence in the shaping of modern historical currents and articulate the dual needs for the detente and the future democratisation of world politics.

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4) The Arab States, the Arab Socialist Movement in particular, will therefore pursue the dialogue along these lines not only through the United Nations, The Arab League, The Organisation of African Unity and The Non-aligned group and the Islamic Conference, but also will initiate and respond positively to dialogues with Europe and undertake to improve and develop bilateral relations that exist.

II. Concerning the Middle East situation:

1) The Middle East situation undoubtedly as you would appreciate is the focus of our primary concern. On the present Middle East situation I would like to submit for your consideration the following observations and perceptions.

2) The October conflict of 1973 had as its objective and its outcome a creation of a situation that will render Israel develop a readiness to comply with the United Nations Resolutions, particularly the operative parts of the Security Council's Resolutions 338 and 242. This was necessitated by the fact that Israel procrastinated since 1967 in a manner that made all Diplomatic undertakings futile and nearly counter productive.

The October Conflict created a new situation whereby the military defeat the Arabs suffered in 1967 was itself defeated. The International community realised that it can no longer remain indifferent to Israel's procrastination and that the Arabs can no longer tolerate Israel's continued violation of the territorial sovereignty and of the continued denial of Palestinian rights.

3) The United States was as is well known the prinicpal ally and supporter of Israeli objectives. This enabled Israel to pursue its defiance of all United Nations Resolutions and to continue in its delaying tactics concerning the implementations of these Resolutions. The Arab objections to the United States was not so much the American commitment to the "existence of Israel" as the United States government has repeatedly asserted but Arab objections were to the effect that the United States was underwriting Militarily, Diplomatically, Financially and Politically, Israeli conquest and other objectives.

This constituted the form of a green light for Israel to pursue its policies without giving due consideration to the International consensus and depending on the paralysis of the International community to impose its will in the context of United States underwriting Israeli objectives and behaviour pattern.

4) This led the Arab States to impose the Oil Embargo on the United States in order to render American public opinion in general and American policy makers and opinion makers allerted to the legitimate aspirations and claims of the Arab States of the Arab people and more specifically of the Palestinian people. The utilisation of the oil weapon was not intended to bring about undue pressure but a leverage to enable the United States public to be aware that Arab commitment to their legitimate objectives is credible, serious and effective.

The oil embargo acheived its limited political objective inasmuchas the Americans realised that their Middle East policies should no longer be conditioned by the bias which has characterised its policy uptill now.

5) This modification in United States policy due to the October conflict and the ensuing oil embargo put it in a position to utilise "its good offices" to bring about a disengagement of forces on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts.

6) United States during the October War has rushed Arms to Israel that enabled it to pursue its defiance of International legitimacy whilst the Arms the Arabs received from the Soviet Union was to enable the Arabs to retrieve the legitimate rights as defined by the United Nations Resolutions that Israel sought to circumvent and render inoperative.

7) With the United States more disposed to comprehend if not necessarily support Arab rights and positions, the disengagement that has been construed by the Americans and in many sectors of the Western world as a major Diplomatic accomplishment.

It is not our intention nor our purpose to deflate the significance of this American initiative and diplomatic effort. However,, it is important to realise that the disengagement is only a preliminary step in the unfolding process of achieving the substantive issues - namely, total withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and full implementation and respect of the legal, political and national rights of the Palestinian people.

8) Therefore, however, assessment of disengagement that it is a marginal development and is acceptable only insofaras it is related to the steps of withdrawal and a reasonable timetable to implement all the substantive issues of the United Nations Resolutions.

We are underlining this aspect because the euphoria that has been wtinessed in the aftermath of the disengagement agreements in the United States tended to dislocate the optic in many parts of the world of these disengagement agreements. It is time that internal political consideration in the United States might have been a reason in exxagerating the diplomatic pursuits of the United States, but it is essential that we do not elevate the marginal into the level of the substantive lest the substantive issues are reduced into marginal levels and render the area again crisis prone.

9) It must be emphasised here that Israel is misreading dangerously the disengagement agreements and the new diplomatic accomodations with the United Nations that have emerged among the Arab States. The air raids that are killing indiscriminately Lebanese and Palestinian people in Lebanese cities, towns and in refugee camps will if continued put into serious jeapardy the entire structure of the disengagement that has been acheived.

10) Israel's attempt to spell out for Lebanon what it ought to do to the Palestinians is not only an audacious interference but is an invitation for Lebanon to police Israel's obvious and contemptuous violations of the United Nations Resolutions pertaining to the Rights of the Palestinian people of return or compensation the physical presence of the Palestinians in Lebanon and other Arab countries is due to the fact that Israel refused to comply

with the obligations that the United Nations has imposed upon it in return to the birth certificate that the United Nations has given to Israel. That Israel should ask Lebanon to 'discipline' the Palestinians for pursuing their legitimate rights is in fact asking Lebanon to protect Israel's indiscipline concerning its compliance with the political and moral authority of the United Nations.

In fact, and what should concern the Socialist International is that Israel in the pursuit of maintaining an exclusively 'Jewish' State has developed an addiction to violating the Palestinian rights. Otherwise it can be questioned - What Socialist or Democratic or Humanist value can one ascribe to the behaviour pattern of Israel which opens its door selectively to immigration of Jews from all over the world into Israel and bars by all means and with unprecedented vigour and violence the return of the Palestinians whose right to return is inherent in the very resolutions that have partitioned Palestine and which rights have been repeatedly spelled out year after year by all the agencies of the United Nations.

It behoves the Socialist International to address headlong itself to this fundamentally racist notion upon which Israel is predicated otherwise the Socialist movement would be accused of utilising double standards which the ethical imperative that governs Socialist and Socialist Democratic behaviour throughout modern history.

11) The path to peace in the Middle East cannot be based upon any equation that tends to perpetuate injustice for the Palestinian people. The Palestinians constitute the very essence of the whole Middle East crisis and situation. In this respect it becomes evident that the PLO should be regarded as it is regarded by the Arab and the Third World in general as the framework of the Palestinian people and the sole representative of its legal aspirations. Hence, in our submissions, Socialist International must recognise that the prinicple key to peace at this juncture, is that the PLO is the representative for Palestinian aspirations.

When this is recognised then that becomes a disincentive for Israel to keep entertaining as other colonial and racist structures in history have formulas to circumvent or distort Palestinian legitimacy and prempt their rights in National Liberation.

12) For the Socialist International and all democratic forces it is crucial that this Conference at this time does not allow traditional associations among affiliates to deflect the member of the International from addressing themselves of the challenges in the Middle East as they are and not as they are projected by the partisan interpretation of Israel. What is at stake in the Middle East is not only a question of territory although that entails the right of nations to their full sovereignty, nor does it entail only the rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland and in the excercise of their self-determination - important and paramount as that might be - but what should be of mutual concern to all of us is a set of values which must be salvaged and developed and a whole set of questions that cannot remain unanswered.

Can the Socialist and the Socialist Democrat accede to the notion that the answer to anti-Semetism is the building of a ghetto state?

Can the Socialist or Social Democrat escape the inevitable answer that the struggle against discrimination lies in confronting the discriminator and not admitting the inevitability of discussions or even persecution?

Can the Socialist or Socialist Democrat acquiesce to the Israeli notion that there is a permanent polarity between the Jew and Man and hence abdicate his commitment as a Socialist to what is elementary to all Socialist doctrines and principles and that is the secularity of societies and the desirability for multi-racial, multi-regious and multi-ethnic societies?

Can the Socialist or Socialist Democrat be consistent with himself if he allows Israel an exceptional behaviour pattern in disqualifying from belonging to Israel because they are not of the Jewish faith while at the same time and rightly so condemning any society or State which disallows Jews from enjoying full and equal rights in their respective national communities?

Can the Socialist or the Socialist Democrat reconcile his belief in nationalism as a stage in human development with Israel's concept of nationalism as an end in itself or a fulfillment of 'Jewish' manifest destiny?

Can the Socialist and the Socialist Democrat reconcile this moral posture in condemning apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia while condoning Israel's law of return and subsequent discriminatory laws that prevail in the Israeli State?

Can the Socialist or Socialist Democrat reconcile his vigorous sustained condemnation and protestation against United States armed deliveries to obsolete regimes in Vietnam and Cambodia and abstain from protest or even give assent to United States delivery of arms to Israel on long range basis?

Can the Socialist or Socialist Democrat remain oblivious to the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people and accept without question as some and the Western Socialist Democrats have accepted the juggling of words and semantical acrobacy practiced by Israel in terming the mainstream of the Liberation movement as all Liberation movements have been termed by the classical colonialists and racists as terrorists?

These are questions that have to be answered with equivocation and clarity that have not at all times been discernable. We are keen that these questions should be asked and answered. The effort itself in formulating the answers would open new vistas for a dialogue of consequence between the Arab Socialists and the affiliates of the Socialist International. True most of you, especially those excercising power in their respective countries or those who are in the proximity of power might be more eager to deal with the present realities. But which Socialist or Socialist Democrat has ever allowed his mental, political or intellectual process to be arrested by the concern with the immediate?

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Is not the whole crux of Socialism that it injects the vision of tomorrow into the realities of today and helps move mankind towards that tomorrow. to which the Socialists are committed.

We are cognisant that these questions will not be answered during this Conference. We would be however, satisfied if you give a few moments of your precious time to ponder over them and atleast hesitate before you accept any of the Israeli thesis, perception policies and behaviour.

Our submission is that by such pondering you would contribute not only to the deeper understanding of the issues in the Middle East but also and perhaps more importantly to a deeper understanding by the Jew of his destiny in the context of Israel's deliberate attempt at his disfranchisement and alienation from his authentic dynamic and inevitable involvment in mankind.

Let your deliberations not be deflected from the course of perceiving the real and substantive issues in the Middle East. If Israel wants to blur your vision from coming to grips with the future it will blow out of proportion individual incidents of violence inorder to reduce the real proportion of the violence that it has inflicted by its air raids of the refugee camps in Lebanon.

However, away from the charged atmosphere that Israel's addiction to vengenace and all what it entails, we are hopeful that your deliberations will contribute to enhancing the process of rational evolution in the region and not as some of the apologists for Israel in the Socialist and Socialist Democrat movement in Europe have contributed to the growth of irrational attitudes and thus missed an opportunity for healthy contribution to the objectives of peace and justice in the Middle East.

We hope that your deliberation will encourage the people of Israel to develop a sense of belonging to the destiny of the peoples of the area rather than enhance a further Israel's egocentric notion of itself as a counterbalance and a countervailing force to the Arab people's legitimate aspirations in development, unity and peace.

In this endeavour you must realise that this contribution on your part will help bring about the climate we need in order to enable our people to bring our societies into the 20th Century during the 20th Century. Peace with justice in the Middle East can expedite this process and render everybody irrespective of their race, religion or colour the beneficiaries of this transformation. Before you is a challenge that I am sure your Conference will take and respond to. Chancellor Kreisky's visit on behalf of the Socialist International was a beginning. Let us hope that it will serve the ends that we all aspire for and hope to achieve.

Fraternally Yours,

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(Dr. Clovis Maksoud)
Special Envoy of the Arab League
currently visiting London after
completing a Mission to the
United States.