

War, peace or revolution: Shifting alliances in the Middle East

MARXIST-HUMANIST ANALYSES FROM THE SIX DAY WAR THROUGH THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT TO THE
ANNEXATION OF EAST JERUSALEM

By Raya Dunayevskaya
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Foreword

The articles in this collection were written in the period 1967-1980 -- from the Six Day War through the Camp David Summit to the annexation of East Jerusalem.

Too many people are today eager to forget what the birth of Israel had originally signified, as the birth of a new nation won by fighting British imperialism, and the only place in the Middle East which had neither oil nor any Nazi associations during World War II. The fact that Israel now has the reactionary leadership it does, which is doing its best to reverse the clock and deprive the Palestinians of their right to self-determination, cannot erase the dialectics of liberation then. What is needed is the tracing of the dialectic of each event, as it happened, within the context of the global situation. What is inherent in the Middle East crisis, whether you begin now or in 1949, is the post-World War II struggle of the world powers for global domination, on the one hand, and the struggle for the minds of humanity, on the other.

Collecting these articles in 1980, we begin with the analysis "Religion in General and Jerusalem in Particular in this State-Capitalist Age," an excerpt from Raya Dunayevskaya's Perspectives Thesis presentation to the 1980 News and Letters National Convention. The Thesis, entitled "Today and Tomorrow," is available from News and Letters for \$0.75 plus \$0.50 postage.

We further recommend to readers of this pamphlet The Political-Philosophic Letters of Raya Dunayevskaya, Vol. II (\$1.50 plus \$0.50 postage), which contains Marxist-Humanist analyses of the Iranian Revolution.

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RELIGION IN GENERAL AND JERUSALEM IN PARTICULAR IN THIS STATE-CAPITALIST AGE

by Raya Dunayevskaya

(excerpted from TODAY AND TOMORROW, National Chairwoman's Report to Convention of News and Letters Committees, August 30, 1980.)

Israel has been moving so steadily to the Right that no reactionary action should surprise anyone. Nevertheless, the world -- and this includes Pres. Carter who is still pretending that the so-called Peace Treaty he engineered between Egypt and Israel will bring real peace to the whole of the Middle East -- was shocked by the timing, if nothing else, of the "sudden" fiat from the Knesset that Jerusalem, East and West, that is, Arab as well as Jewish, was "one", was "indivisible," indeed, was the "eternal" capital of Israel, as if really its order extended into the eons of time.

If, however, we take a second, objective look at that phrase, "if nothing else," we will see that it is, precisely, the timing, the provocative timing, which is the logical conclusion to the extremist imperialist moves ever since Begin came to power, and that very week visited and approved a controversial new Jewish settlement in Arab land. It has gone on and expanded ever since. It is necessary, however, to limit ourselves to this year.

In March, 1980 the government of Israel announced it would be taking 1,000 acres of mostly Arab-owned land. It was the first such major expropriation in a decade, and the second largest ever since the victorious 1967 war. Indeed, by the mid-1970s, Israel pried 30 percent of East Jerusalem from Arab ownership. Could anyone doubt when the biggest war hawk of them all, Geula Cohen, was chosen to bring in a draft for the new status of Jerusalem that it would be anything but what it was?

That the neo-fascist religious fanatics called Gush Emunim have no intention whatever of stopping was clear enough from the prevailing terrorism -- not from the PLO this time, but from that reactionary, religious, Zionist group who bombed the cars of two Arab mayors, maiming Mayor Bassan Shaka of Nabulus and Mayor Kerim Khalaf of Ramallah.

Worse still, Menachem Begin is stonewalling the investigation. The correspondent of the Washington Star, David Malevy, asked: how did it happen that the Shin Bet (the Israeli FBI-CIA combined), that has an 85 percent success rate in probing such terrorist acts, did not produce even a suspect? and wasn't it true that the head of that secret police organization resigned because Menachem Begin wasn't giving him a free hand? Whereupon Menachem Begin enters the fray with all the hypocritical hyperboles at his command: "...Never was a calumny so odious as that dispatch." Despite Begin's demagogic rhetoric and the fact that he also got Avraham Achitov, the head of Shin Bet, likewise to say that his resignation was "in no way" connected to soft-pedaling, that that was a "total lie," the general feeling throughout Israel is that both the Shin Bet head and the former terrorist turned Prime Minister doth protest too much.

What is new -- and it is by no means limited to Zionism -- is the new politicized forms of religion. Nor is it a question of whether you listen to the money-wise electronic "evangelists," or you follow the Old or New Testament -- or the Koran, and quote Muhammad, who is supposed to have said: "Whoever goes on a pilgrimage to the Jerusalem sanctuary shall be forgiven all his sins."

The point, rather, is why this rush to power. One need not go abroad to see it is so. All one has to do is look right here at the New Right, the Christian Religious Right. We saw what they did at the Reagan convention. And it is clear

that, though they now are settling for Reagan, they, no more than the KKK and the Nazis, will not stop there, any more than Solzhenitsyn stopped when he got religion and returned to the Greek Orthodox Church.

The biggest bluff of all in modern Russian literature is contained in Solzhenitsyn's voluminous writings, be it in the rewriting of the history of the Russian Revolution, Lenin especially, or the so-called return to the simple life of the Dark Middle Ages which he has not baptized as model, and, lo and behold, they have become the Enlightened Middle Ages. The truth, however, is always concrete, and what is concrete in Solzhenitsyn's life (outside of flirting with the Nazis during World War II) is what happened between 1956, when Khrushchev permitted the publication of One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich when Solzhenitsyn was trying so hard to get out of Russia that he aligned with the Jewish dissidents -- not something the Greek Orthodox Church had been associated with, either in the Middle Ages or the Tsarist Black Hundreds practicing the worst pogroms -- and last week's praise of the new women's liberation movement in Russia by this male chauvinist calling himself women's liberationist. Just as Khomeini knew how to use technology, especially of tapes, and hypocritical embrace of shoras when they fought against the Shah, not against him, so Solzhenitsyn knows how to use the mass media, not to mention the ideology of the military brass about Russia as Satan, Enemy No. 1.

The real point is this: the totality of the crises, especially since 1973-74 -- by no means only on the Arab-Israeli war, but the economic crisis that resulted from the oil embargo -- has shown that the undercurrent of revolt may -- and in some cases, did -- lead to revolution. It is this, especially as it is evolving in the last year, which has led the capitalist rulers to flirt with nazism and occultism all over again.

Occultism has ever been the escape from reality, and since it doesn't have quite as obnoxious/as ^{an odor} nazism, non-taxable dollars are spent on that electronic miracle to bring the message to the public. In any case, the New Religious Right, as in Degin's Israel or in Khomeini's Iran, or the Christian Right here, even when they get masses to follow them, by no means signifies that what the masses want, and what the leaders are striving for -- power -- has the same motivation. Which is why Karl Marx made so sharp a distinction between the religion of the oppressed and that of the oppressor. The whole theory of alienation started there. Follow the majestic historic sweep of Marx's goal, "To unmask human self-alienation in its secular form now that it has been unmasked in its sacred form." Marx goes on:

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their real happiness...

Religion is only the illusory sun about which man revolves so long as he does not revolve about himself...

Man makes religion; religion does not make man. Religion is indeed man's self-consciousness and self-awareness so long as he has not found himself or has lost himself again. But man is not an abstract being, squatting outside the world. Man is the human world, state, society." (Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.)

Nor was it only religion that Marx called "the opium of the people." The same was true of science. 130 years before even the atom was split, and out of which came, not the most constructive new energy force, but the most destructive atomic bomb, Marx wrote: "To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie." We have been living this lie altogether too long. State-capitalism has reincarnated both Religion and Science as moves away from real human needs and new human relations. The turning of the clock backwards must be stopped and will be stopped when we stop separating the philosophy of revolution from social revolution.

Editorial article: *War, peace or revolution*

Shifting alliances in the Middle East

by Raya Dunayevskaya
National Chairwoman, News & Letters Committees

The two months that have elapsed since Sadat's spectacular peace trip to Jerusalem on Nov. 9, saw it all very nearly collapse in Ismailia Dec. 26. There the initiator of a possible new stage for Middle East relations, Sadat, and the guest super-nawk, Israeli Prime Minister Begin, far from coming out with a joint statement of agreement, produced an expression of irreconcilable positions. ¹ couched in diplomatic but unmistakable language. ² Two days later Begin spelled out the euphemisms: "Palestinian administrative autonomy" and "self-rule" in language that brought approval from his Knesset. ³ All others, however, could not but read those 26 points as but one non-euphemistic imperialistic point: continued military occupation both of the West Bank of Jordan (which Begin persisted in calling Judea and Samaria) and the Egyptian Gaza Strip.

We must now modify the expression, "all others" to read all others "except President Carter." He managed to find "self-rule" under Israeli guns "flexible"! Where upon President Sadat must have burned up the private line to the White House. What he publicly declared "made my job more difficult" must have been concretized more precisely on the private line, sufficiently shaking up Carter's scheduled six-nation nine-day whirlwind tour to make room for one unscheduled stop at Aswan. It is this that became the focal point of the whole, not only the Middle East whole, but globally, from India to France.

Just as the question of Palestine was raised at the very start of the trip in Poland, and just as Helmut Schmidt was found hovering in the shadows in Egypt, (as did King Hussein in Iran and elsewhere), so Saudi Arabia held the reins to world oil while Carter ended the trip, beefing up NATO, Jan. 5, 1978—all readying for confrontations world-wide, with very different and unequal weapons, it is true, but the same exploitative class goals. In any case, by the time Carter reached home shores on Jan. 6 he declared Sadat to be "one of the most courageous men in the world," and one definitely in favor of another euphemism — "principles" — under which the irreconcilable positions are allowed to flounder while U.S. imperialism makes the final decision.

Let us forget Sadat's equally hawk-like past, especially the Yom Kippur war he launched in 1973. Sadat made sure that Begin knew he is no different now. Thus on the very day of the Ismailia statement when both leaders still smiled, Mustafa, editor of Akhbar al-Yoni, wrote: "The meetings in Ismailia were not with delegates of the state of Israel, but with Shylock . . . Jewish usurer exacting his pound of flesh."

¹The key paragraph of the Ismailia statement, Dec. 26, reads: "The Egyptian and Israeli delegations here discussed the Palestinian problem. The position of Egypt is that on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip a Palestinian state should be established. The position of Israel is that Palestinian Arabs in Judea, Samaria, the West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip should enjoy self-rule."

²The N.Y. Times, 12/29/77 ran the 26 point Begin Plan on p. A8.

JOINT U.S.-RUSSIAN STATEMENT AND CARTER'S ZIGZAGS

No, it wasn't courage or any other psychological characteristic that brought both hawks together . . . "for peace," any more than it was the characteristic of being hawk and extreme Rightwinger that enabled Nixon to open this decade with his spectacular visit to China. In all cases, it is the concrete, not the "general," which drives to action. In the case of Nixon it was the Vietnam war that the U.S. was losing, not only on the battlefield, but at home. In the case of the Middle East now, it is that those concrete home crises in separate lands reached a sudden concurrence, on the part of the hawks, when confronted with the shock of a Joint Russian-United States Statement on the Mideast. ¹ Unbeknownst to either Egypt or Israel, Russia and the U.S. found common ground on the basis of the "unsafe situation in the Middle East" to declare that "the only right and effective way" to achieve a "solution" is to convene a Geneva Peace Conference "not later than December, 1977."

Israel and Egypt were not the only ones surprised by this October 1 joint statement by the two super-powers. More surprised still, but in this case pleasantly, was the PLO's Arafat. Interpreting the statement's reference to "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians" as an independent Palestinian state, Arafat let it be known that this statement, could indeed serve as a "foundation" for talking.

After all, this had been preceded by more than six months of zigzagging by President Carter. Ever since March he had moved from stressing "defensible borders" for Israel to publicly endorsing the concept of a "Palestinian homeland" in his Mar. 16 Clinton, Mass. speech. By summer he had let it drift down to the PLO that, if UN Resolution 242 were accepted, a "Palestinian entity could indeed be considered."

And, whereas Vice-President Mondale was, on June 18, sent to San Francisco to soften somewhat the new tilting to the Arab side by saying U.S. had "no plan, no timetable, no map" to try to impose settlement, no doubt was left in any one's mind that there was, indeed, a new tilting to the Arab side. The type of tilting, however, that landed U.S. with Russia in a joint statement was enough not only to get Israel and American Zionists to begin pressuring Carter, but sent fear into "moderate Arabs," who are, after all, preferred by Carter to the PLO.

It is at this point that Sadat decided to act on his own. But not so alone that it didn't meet with the concurrence of Begin. Neither Sadat's spectacular trip nor Begin's concurrence was undertaken too far afield from U.S. imperialism's goal. Now that they know that the U.S. will have no part of little powers setting the timetable for any new outbreak of war, even if that means that the U.S. has to unite with its global enemy, Russia, they, in turn, promptly referred to the United States as if it, not Egypt, had taken the initiative for a new stage of Middle East relations.

¹Oct. 1 joint text is printed in N.Y. Times, 10/21/77.

No doubt U.S. imperialism's role will be the decisive factor, whether what has begun that is new finds yet another euphemism—"principles"—to arrive at a collective "solution," or whether all comes to nought once again. But the so-called Left hardly helps matters by automatically siding with the "radical" Arabs, no matter whom that includes. Thereby it falls into the trap of all rulers, as if the 30 years from 1948 to 1978 were one unbroken development. The truth is very different, and truth is always concrete.

Everyone, from the rulers — both Israeli and Arab — to the Left, Trotskyists especially (now that Trotsky has been dead 37 years), likes to pontificate about 30 years of endless Middle East wars, as if every one of these was one and the same, with "Zionist imperialism" on the one side, and "Arab revolutions" on the other.

The truth, however, is that the first Arab war against the state of Israel the minute the UN accepted its independence was anything but revolutionary. It is true that the unifying cement of all feudal Arab states was the anti-Israel feature. It is not true that that made the kings and emirs "revolutionaries." Nasser, for example, approvingly quotes in his *Egypt's Liberation, The Philosophy of Revolution*, Eruhan Cohen's report of what the Egyptian talked about in the armistice talks: "The subject Gamal Abdel Nasser talked about with me was the struggle of Israel against the English, and how we organized the underground resistance movement against them in Palestine . . ."

And so anti-Semitic a state-capitalist ruler as Stalin was the first (even beating the United States to the draw) to recognize the state of Israel. He did so not because of any pro-Israel sentiments. Rather it was because, until then, so narrow was Arab nationalism that it had collaborated with Nazism while the Jews not only fought the Nazis, but brought a dimension other than oil to the Middle East.

Finally, and most important, there were many revolutionary socialists in Palestine who opposed the creation of an all-Jewish state, being and fighting for a bi-national state free of imperialism. These, too, had to face the reality that the Arabs were as opposed to collaboration with them as with Zionists, and the Arab states were all theocratic.

Put differently, just as Trotsky (who was certainly no Zionist but a revolutionary opponent of it) stressed that the rise of Nazism compelled a new look at the "Jewish Question"⁽¹⁾, so Marxist revolutionaries in Palestine in 1948 had to confront the new reality of an independent state, and therefore work for revolutionary goals of uprooting the capitalist state within Israel even as Arab revolutionaries had to work within their homelands for a new classless society. Rather than make anti-Israel the unifying cement, social revolution had to become the driving force.

⁽¹⁾*Egypt's Liberation*, p. 24. The book is very worth rereading now both because, objectively, you can contrast Egypt in the 1950s and now, and because Sadat is a person bereft of philosophy.

⁽²⁾In the last years of his life Trotsky tried facing the reality created by Nazism, on the one hand, and the drive of the Jews to escape its horrors into a homeland. Though, naturally, still opposing the Zionist solution, he did also change his position. Here are some excerpts: "During my youth I rather leaned toward the prognosis that the Jews of different countries would be assimilated and that the Jewish question would thus disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion. This historical development of the last quarter of a century has not confirmed this perspective. Decaying capitalism has everywhere swung over to an exacerbated nationalism, one part of which is anti-Semitism . . . The latest Moscow trial, for example, was staged with the hardly concealed design of

Russia didn't change its mind as to which side it was on until 1955 when Khrushchev concluded his arms deal with Egypt—Nasser's Egypt, that had overthrown King Farouk. Thus came Russia's first breakthrough into the Middle East. Which doesn't mean that Russia was always on the "revolutionary" side. The very next year it put down the revolution in Hungary, trading off its support also of U.S. imperialism for Eisenhower's silence in the UN on Russia's counter-revolutions in East Europe.

In any case, the 1956 war was a very different matter than the 1948 war. Though triggered by Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal and Dulles' arrogant refusal to help build the Aswan Dam, the point is that Eisenhower's imperial USA had to oppose it to put an end to old-style British-French illusions that they were still global powers. It is true that Israel was all too happy to be used by France and Great Britain who dominated that imperialist eruption. Eisenhower was so incensed that Great Britain and France still fancied themselves imperial powers that he stopped that war and made Israel return to its 1948 borders.

Revolutionary Arab nationalisms did emerge in the 1960s. But there were also very contradictory births, as witness Al Fatah and Ba'ath that had their origins in fascism as much as in revolutionary nationalisms. In any case, the unifying cement for Israeli-Arab wars was not revolution, but simply and purely anti-Israel. And, along with the goal of "driving Israel into the sea" came uncritical alliance with Russia. Which, in turn, convinced U.S. imperialism that it had but "one outpost"—Israel — in the Middle East against its global enemy, Russia. That is no longer true. And though the U.S. leaned heavily toward Israel in the 1967 war, that hasn't been so total ever since 1973.

For the Left to act as if the disparate Arab states are all "one Arab nation" and, even when theocratic, are playing a "revolutionary role" while equating Zionism with South African racism, is no less false than President Carter's declaring for "human rights" when in Poland but keeping mum in Iran. It blinds us to the entry of Saudi Arabian "black gold" in the 1973 war, and more crucial, it blinds us to the tragedy of Lebanon and the PLO, 1975-78. It is on these two historic turning points we must now focus to fully comprehend what is the "new" which is just shuffling of the cards in global alignments and realignments, and that which is the kind of "new" which could have meant the eve of social revolutions.

ENTER SAUDI ARABIA'S BLACK GOLD

The first slight U.S. tilting toward the Arab side in the Yom Kippur war in 1973 had little to do with Egypt's surprise attack which caught arrogant Israel off balance, and gained Egypt a sort of victory. Rather it was Saudi Arabia's use of oil as a political weapon which so shook up the whole industrial world—Japan as well as West Europe and the United States—as to cause it also total ideological disarray. That West Europe could so easily cave in both to the boycotting of Israel and the quadrupling of oil prices had U.S. imperialism likewise go helter-skelter trying to hold on to its illusion of the 20th century as "the American century."

presenting internationalists as faithless and lawless Jews who are capable of selling themselves to the German Gestapo." (1/18/37)

"Some would-be 'pundits' have accused me of 'suddenly' raising the 'Jewish question' and of intending to create some kind of ghetto for the Jews. I can only shrug my shoulders . . . The Jewish question has never occupied the center of my attention. But that does not mean that I have the right to be blind to the Jewish problems which exist and demands a solution." The statements have been reprinted in June-July, 1946 issue of *Workers International News*.

Overwhelming the myriad political crises came the global economic crisis, very nearly plunging the world into a full-scale Depression. It is this deep recession that still underlies the current situation when Saudi Arabia, instead of shaking up the industrial capitalistic world, is working hand in hand with U.S. imperialism. Carter's zigzagging was preceded by Henry Kissinger-Nixon's imperial arrogance, first, in threatening the oil kingdoms with invasion, then declaring "the Year of Europe," not to mention raising China to super-power status and thus transforming, by fiat, the bipolar state-capitalist world into a tri-polar one—rather than the "tri-lateral" one Brzezinski was mapping out for Carter, which holds on to the illusion that the United States-West Europe-Japan was the world.

Plans by rulers, in and out of power, have a way, however, of being totally undermined by elemental social revolutions. The mid-1970s, instead of bending under to the nuclear world, saw revolutions erupt from Portugal to Angola, and directly in the Middle East, specifically Lebanon.

THE REVOLUTION IN LEBANON, AND THE OLD IN THE PLO, 1975-6

This is not the place to go into detail on the situation in Lebanon which sparked a mass revolution, a genuine social revolution against its rulers, Christian and Muslim alike.⁽⁴⁾ It is close enough to our times so that we remember that it had been brewing for a long time along class lines, and when it finally erupted, sparked also by the neo-Nazi Christian Right massacre of Palestinians returning from a Rejection Front meeting, the Palestinians worked as one with the Lebanese revolutionaries.

Because of the Palestinian preoccupation with Israel as Enemy No. 1, however, (and the PLO playing political games in the UN to get the Resolution equating Zionism to South African racism passed), the revolution in Lebanon was totally subordinated to anti-Israel.

Soon we were witness to a replay of the 1970-71 slaughter of Palestinians by King Hussein of Jordan on a more gigantic scale, which this time helped also destroy the Lebanese revolution. The extremely contradictory role of the PLO in Lebanon's civil war stretched from being one with the native Lebanese Left against the exploitative capitalistic system to the near-counter-revolutionary role of welcoming Syria's intervention, without in any way revealing the intra-Arab nationalisms between Iraq and Syria. In the jigsaw puzzle of shifting alliances sans class lines and sans any philosophy of liberation, the revolution met defeat.

To have the Left forget all this and once again turn to Israel as the enemy is to doom the new conditions created by Sadat's trip to Jerusalem to a failure that would once again close all doors to new relations in the Middle East.

BEGIN'S NEW UNDERMININGS

Begin has no need of aid from the "Left" to re-create the atmosphere which would make anti-Israel the unifying cement for the whole Arab world, no matter how divided it is at the moment. He has been master of that all his adult life, from his terrorist Irgun days to ideologically not retreating even when Israel became a state. And presently he is doing all in his power to beat a retreat from the one step forward made when he concurred in Sadat's visit. It began with his arrogant behavior in Ismailia. Since his return to Israel not a day has gone by without proof of his retrogressionist nature.

First he spelled out to the Knesset and made public the 26-point so-called peace proposals which must have reminded every school child of Biblical times when Pax Romana ruled Palestine. Then, as if that reaffirmation of continued military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was not militaristic enough, suddenly bulldozers in the Gaza and the Sinai began digging up ground for new occupying settlements. Thirdly, he found his Irgun-type rhetorical thunder to yell threats, that if Israeli military presence were not accepted in the Gaza, he would walk out of further "negotiations."

Whether the United States can find yet another euphemism to rein him in need be no concern of revolutionaries. After all, the liberal-sounding line, "the cold war is over," has been current in the Administration only as a way of declaring that "co-existence" with Russia is no longer to be the overwhelming fact of all global relations. At the same time, there is no reason to think that the other nuclear titan, Russia, will let itself be shunted aside as unceremoniously as Carter did when he easily forgot the joint US-Russian statement in order to embrace Sadat's initiative. Why should any revolutionary be interested in the double crosses and horse-tradings that go on among rulers before they decide to plunge us into yet another war? Even these aspirers for single world power have to hold back since it would be a nuclear war and would put an end to civilization as we have known it. No, what we need to do is go back to Marxist fundamentals: a philosophy of liberation that would give action its direction.

WHERE ARE THE VOICES OF THE MASSES?

First, let us not forget what sent Sadat to Israel. It was not the economic crisis Egypt is in. It was the restlessness of the masses. 1977 has been filled with mass opposition to the exploitative rule, from a general strike, to a veritable mass uprising against the price rises. Sadat had to retreat when not only was the mass anger unmistakable, but it was clear that the Egyptian masses would no longer tolerate, along with their horrible conditions of labor, being saddled with impossible inflation.

In a word, it was fear of social revolution that made him so courageous as to break with the past basis for diversion of the masses from their dissatisfaction with conditions of labor and life to anti-Israel.

Secondly, Begin's concurrence — that single step forward — shows the objective-subjective situation in his land. Ever since he came to power and showed he was as great a reactionary at home as in his imperialist role, there have been strikes, demonstrations, voices of mass opposition to the rightward course. Even the mass outpouring in Israel for Sadat was a great deal more than planned. (See Letter from Israel, p. 10.)

Above all, the Palestinians do wish a homeland, do want, with or without PLO, self-determination. The seeming unity of all the factions in the PLO at Tripoli belies the actual deep division within the PLO. The key to any solution at this moment lies in the hands of the Israeli masses to stop their ruler from closing up the openings that have opened up to them, as to the Arab masses, across all boundary lines, to settle accounts with their masters and begin working out their own destiny. It can begin as early as Jan. 16 when the "Cairo Committee" meets in Jerusalem, and the masses demand that their voices be heard.

Jan. 9, 1978

⁽⁴⁾ Elsewhere I did go into detail. See Political-Philosophic Letter #1, "The UN Resolution on Zionism—and Ideological Obfuscation Also on the Left," and #6 on "Lebanon: The Test Not Only of the PLO, But the Whole Left."

Camp David Summit: Peace in Middle East— or extension of U.S. imperialism?

by Raya Dunayevskaya

They—Sadat and Begin—were summoned. They came. They saw. They did not conquer. He, the summoner—U.S. imperialism in the person of President Carter—did conquer. But even he did not do it till the 13th day at the "Summit" which convened on Sept. 5 and had the 17th as the deadline.

Whether the deadline was orchestrated from the start, or came about "spontaneously," the more important fact is that, on the one hand, the U.S. had promised to build—at a cost of between \$300 million and \$1 billion—two airfields "for Israel," "to replace" those in the Sinai Israel ceded, with conditions, to Egyptian sovereignty. And, on the other hand, Carter, having become the "full partner" Sadat had called for, could also show the U.S.'s full imperial clout to the global enemy, Russia; he will visit Egypt in 1979. It is the U.S.'s presence in the Middle East that the Camp David Summit was designed to achieve.

BEGIN AND SADAT, SEPARATELY AND TOGETHER

Begin may not have buckled under as totally as Sadat. He certainly made this all too obvious, both in the substance of the written "Agreement," and orally, beginning at the very first appearance, in the midst of addressing the American, indeed, a world TV audience, by suddenly switching to Hebrew, acting exactly like the mother lapsing into pig-Latin to make sure the children do not understand adult problems. No doubt that reactionary terrorist of war days has a whole host of other cards up his sleeve to cause the facade of peace to crumble into dust, or, more precisely the sands of Sinai. But Begin, too, had not only to acknowledge Egyptian sovereignty over Sinai, but pay lip service also to the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians." That he has no such intention, having first reduced the right to self-determination to an allegedly "self-governing unity" under Israeli guns "in enclaves," cannot totally undo what he did give, to which we will get later.

Above all, there will be a direct U.S. threat in the Middle East. These two airfields are being built only "for Israel," but can any one doubt the purpose of Defense Secretary Brown's scheduled visit to the Sinai?

"Peace has come to our people and our land" may have sounded as if it were meant for all—the Middle East and the world—but the fact that it was spoken in Hebrew, and it was in Hebrew the day before at Camp David, and that he told the Israeli press that the Agreement "did not block further Israeli West Bank settlements or military deployment," surely was a coded message for his cohorts in the Likud.

For that matter Sadat didn't completely buckle under either, though what he got, and what he demanded publicly—a homeland for the Palestinians—are total opposites. His dramatic trip to Jerusalem, which aroused so much mass support both in Israel and in Egypt for genuine peace, was, in truth, a gesture for a separate peace. And that not only because Egypt is in such deep economic crisis and there is mass discontent, but because as rulers, both he and Begin understood better than did Carter, the globalist, how totally "ominous" was the Oct. 1, 1977 joint statement of the U.S. and Russia for a return to Geneva to "cool down" the Middle East cauldron.

Let us not forget that the PLO was the only one to greet that joint statement, with Arafat saying he "could live with it." And what, above all, we must keep in mind is that that way to peace so scared the Middle East potentates that Sadat's spectacular journey to Israel followed within a month, and within another month a trip by Begin to Ismailia.

That there also unravelled the beginning of the end of the new orientation—Egypt-Israel as unit—is exactly what must be kept in the front of our minds if we are to understand Camp David and its ramifications today. That is to say, at one and the same time, the Egypt-Israel "unit" can blow up and spur on the U.S.-Russia global conflagration.

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1978, for the Middle East, opened with such vilification on the side of both Egypt and Israel, that, by March, Carter had to tell the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the "diplomatic process has come to a halt." Indeed, it was this stalemate that got the U.S. Senate to approve the sale of combat planes to Saudi Arabia and Egypt as well as to Israel. But even this did not prod Egypt and Israel back to "negotiations," as was clear from the collapse of their foreign ministers meeting, this time in the setting of England. And July 18 was followed, on July 24, by Kamel's recall to Egypt and his announcement that no further negotiations would be held.

It was this total impasse which brought about Vance's trip to both Jerusalem and Cairo with but a single "handwritten invitation" to Camp David, which both promptly accepted as they really had nowhere else to go other than war, and Israel was already in one war—in Lebanon! That, technically, its army was out of southern Lebanon, far from closing that chapter, is the open wound that bleeds "heavenward"; surely none on this earth is paying any attention to fragmented Lebanon that keeps being bled, though the civil war has supposedly ended and "peace returned."

When, on Sept. 18, Carter addressed a joint session of Congress, he let it be known that Lebanon, though not included in the Agreement, had caused "heated discussion". As if that is not still another of the

serious problems not "solved" at the "Summit" "on" the Middle East, Carter also let it be known that France may be involved. Having been the first to carve Lebanon out of Syria at the end of the First World War, France no doubt has great "experience," not to aid the Lebanese or Palestinian people, but to steer imperialist rule in that volatile region. For the present moment, it sheds yet another light on why the convening of the Summit conference was delayed one day: to allow Sadat to stop off in France. So much for no secrets at the Summit!

What was put down on paper and grandiosely called "Framework for Peace"—but which all others just call "Framework"—far from being anything "comprehensive," limited itself to one near-accomplishment in returning the Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty, provided that, within two weeks, the Knesset votes to dismantle the Israeli settlements there; and one questionable promise that, after three months of negotiations during which no Israeli settlements would be built there, the Palestinians would supposedly get "self-governing rule," provided (1) they close their eyes to the massive army—and even reduced in half, as promised, the Israeli occupying army numbers 15,000 "in enclaves"—and (2) they can "elect" that governing body, provided they understand that what they are choosing is Israel and Jordan, not any homeland for themselves.

If even we were willing, for the moment, to forget that this can hardly pass for a "comprehensive Middle East framework when even such "moderate" Arabs as King Hussein and King Khalid are not included, how can we forget who at this very moment is meeting in Damascus? Assad is presiding there over a so-called "steadfastness front"—of Syria, Libya, Algeria, South Yemen and, of course, the PLO—this time united solidly against the U.S.-engineered Egypt-Israel accord for a projected bilateral "peace treaty."

The fact that Syria is, at the same time, trying not to close all doors to U.S. imperialism by agreeing to hear Secretary of State Vance's "briefing" on what happened in Camp David is hardly to be taken as a sign of any siding with "the West."

Assad's Syria is not only still occupying Lebanon, and not only is being threatened by Israel, both directly on the occupied Golan Heights, and indirectly via the neo-fascist "Christian" Army who are surrogates for Israel throughout Lebanon; but also is threatened from within the rejection front by the Ba'ath regime of Iraq, while Syria itself is in deep economic-political crisis. It is true Sadat is not using the language of Arafat, who is under the greatest illusion of all that 1978 is 1948 and Israel's very right to exist is questioned. But Sadat's Egypt is a crucial country in the volatile Middle East which abounds in crises, from the civil war in Iran to the two Yemens, one "representing" Saudi Arabia, the other Russia, to . . .

It is impossible to go into all the crises besetting the region, and its strategic as well as oil importance for the industrialized world, as the two nuclear Goliaths—U.S. and Russia—fight for mastery over it. If one can call it "new," the one thing new that has been set off by Camp David is such total fragmentation of the very concept of an "Arab nation," that all one can now see is the heavy tilting toward U.S. capitalist-imperialism until IT sets the timing for global conflagration!

No answer can come from either the imperialistic or narrow nationalistic double-crosses. Only the masses taking destiny into their own hands can possibly put an end to the capitalistic-imperialistic, racist, alienating world headed for the holocaust. One good sign came when 100,000 Israelis marched against Begin, demanding peace. Another sign came from Egypt, where the mass discontent has forced Sadat not to put all the burden of inflation on the backs of the working people.

Each country's rulers must contend with the mass opposition in its land and it is those masses in motion that can nullify Camp David summitry as well as all other contenders who act as "spokesmen" for the Palestinian people, or any other masses struggling for freedom. These masses in motion have not had their last say.

Raya Dunayevskaya
Sept. 20, 1978

THE POLITICAL-PHILOSOPHIC LETTERS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

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Letter #1

January 24, 1976

**THE UN RESOLUTION ON ZIONISM — AND IDEOLOGICAL
OBFUSCATION ALSO ON THE LEFT**

Dear Friends:

Three of the fantastic occurrences in three widely separated parts of the world this month prompt this letter. They exude such abysmal lower depths of ideological obfuscation that they could lay ground only for counter-revolutionary, not for revolutionary, developments. It is imperative, therefore, to look at these events, not merely as passing "immediates", but in a historic-philosophic context.

First, let's look at what followed the passing of that UN Resolution which equated Zionism with racism. At the moment the PLO is trying to carry out what it sees as its implications for the Security Council session, but this cannot be viewed in isolation from two other events: 1) the break-up of the OAU meeting in Ethiopia over the question of recognizing the legitimacy of the MPLA government in Angola; and 2) the war in Lebanon which is calling into question the philosophic underpinnings not only of that UN Resolution, but of that whole "thieves' kitchen." This expression of Lenin's for the League of Nations that followed World War I, just as succinctly characterizes the UN that followed World War II and also called itself a "peace" establishment. It will help us get to the root of the matter since history, far from being limited to the past, helps illuminate on-going history, i.e. what is new in the present.

It may seem foolhardy to try to single out the now in a situation that is so fraught with contradictions which, overnight, transform things into their opposite. It would indeed be an impossible task were it not for the fact that in the Arab Middle East, the unifying force—anti-Israel—cuts across the myriad contradictions. Thus, as

if Lebanon wasn't disintegrating in a fratricidal war between Christian and Moslem, Arafat feels no compunction about shouting, over machine-gun fire, the thousands of dead bodies, and the rubble, that this all is an Israeli "conspiracy", a war initiated by "international Zionism".

By thus blaming Israeli and extending Zionism into an international arena, he has set the line for the PLO representative, Farouk Kaddoumi, at the UN Security Council: Disregard the actual on-going war in Lebanon. Speak not of Moslem in general but of the Palestinian's right for self-determination. And speak of it as if none of that involved the dissolution of any other state.

All this is said with a straight face regarding the Arab Middle East, where all states are theocratic, and where Lebanon, an artificial state which does have Christians and Moslems, can't escape the class divisions, and is at this very moment steeped in civil war. Those Lebanese Moslem Left, who are fighting a genuine revolutionary class struggle against its rulers, Christians mainly but Moslem, too, are being kept in check. The overriding order is never to forget that Israel is the enemy. Lebanon, 1975-76, is in danger of replaying the slaughter in Jordan, 1970-71. Will Syria enter, or the PLA under its control? The PLO allows its adherents anything except a revolutionary class struggle within "the Arab nation". Whether that will be made "law" by the PLO under Arafat's leadership, or by the PLA under Syria's sponsorship, or by the other Palestinian groups in the umbrella organization, PLO, the governing idea will remain twofold: 1) Israel is Enemy No. 1, and 2) no genuine revolutionary force will be allowed to achieve its goal. In any case, insofar as the PLO delegation at the UN is concerned, it had but one aim: disregard what is happening in Lebanon; deny the Israeli translation of the PLO Covenant which defines its goal as the dissolution of Israel and "in its place" the establishment of a "secular state". Farouk Kaddoumi promptly branded the translation "a Zionist falsification".

Rather than concerning ourselves with the UN vote on the Resolution equating Zionism with racism --72 for, 35 against, 32 abstaining--we can get more illumination on whether that Resolution is but the latest form of anti-Semitism or a genuine struggle against racism by turning to the second event that followed the vote--the break-up of the

OAU meeting in Ethiopia, January 8. This will take us far beyond the question of the Middle East and even beyond the concrete question of the legitimacy of the MPLA to govern Angola which was the immediate cause of the break-up, and on to the more fundamental question of a continuing African revolution.

Heretofore, the one thing that always united all independent African nations and those fighting for independence was the total, the unequivocal opposition to apartheid South Africa. No matter how wide the division between the African countries, and no matter how deep the division within any one country, including even the outright civil war in Nigeria, no African entertained the slightest doubt that, as a continent, Africa will never be fully independent so long as racist South Africa exists. Because that was the unifying force, the African nation would not countenance Kenneth Kaunda's attempt at detente with South Africa on the excuse that that could be a step towards freedom for Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). "The racists' regimes in Zimbabwe and South Africa", read the OAU Resolution of August 1, 1975, "have a common imperialist origin, forming a whole, and have the same racist structure and are organically linked in their policy..."

Suddenly, the world was confronted with this spectacle at the OAU meeting in January, 1976. As against its own Resolution of August, 1975, which the Arab-sponsored Resolution of Nov. 15 quoted in its successful attempt to get the African nations to vote with its Resolution defining Zionism as racism (1); as against the very eve of the new January meeting, when even Amin felt an urgency to warn his "African brothers" (referring to Zaire (2)) against having anything to do with racist South Africa, i.e., UNITA and FNLA supported by it; and as against the fact that no less than 20 African nations had already recognized the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola, here is what the world became witness to:

1) The U.S.-Zaire-South African (3)-supported FNLA and UNITA leaders were seated on the platform.

2) Not one word was spoken against the Africans' new rich "friend", Saudi Arabia that was funneling money to these puppets.

3) The 20 African nations who had already recognized the MPLA as the legitimate government of Angola could muster only two others to be with them. With Amin abstaining without explanation, and Ethiopia abstaining on the excuse that hosts shouldn't "take sides", (4) the OAU adjourned with no decision being taken. The tragedy isn't so much whether or not a decision on Angola was arrived at but why the shadow of South Africa hanging over the contending forces didn't act as the unifying force it had always been. Clearly, the global struggle for world domination had entered that cockpit, as it had in Portugal. The counter-revolution intrudes everywhere any revolutionary force emerges to truly shake the existing state powers.

Before the revolution in Portugal, U.S. imperialists showed little interest in its colonies; indeed, so long as the overthrow of the Caetano fascist regime was in the hands of a neo-fascist, it had nothing to say against Portugal's announcement of de-colonization. It was only as the revolution in Portugal was developing along proletarian lines, and Portugal declared it would be no port of call either for NATO or U.S. ships bound for war in the Mideast, that the U.S. began clandestinely to support the "pro-Western" factions, i.e., those supported by apartheid South Africa (feeding also Zaire's ambitions for oil at Cabinda), and discovered that Russia was out to make a "satellite" of Angola. Suddenly, nothing short of detente or no detente depended upon what happened in Angola. In fact, detente or no detente lies elsewhere, as Kissinger's latest trip to Russia on the SALT agreement proves once again.

Which doesn't, however, mean that the U.S.'s imperial hand will not be present in Angola. Or that it has forgotten the Arab Mideast oil, or Israel. In this, the overriding goal of U.S. imperialism, whether it acts "for" Israel and threatens Mideast oil kingdoms with invasion, or the opposite, "capitulates" to them and pressures Israel into concessions, is but one thing. It has no intention whatever of letting the world's main energy source run out of total control of American oil companies.

Once the U.S. and Russia's struggle for single world domina-

tion enters the cockpit, be it the Middle East or Africa, the whip of the counter-revolution takes over. Just as the UN's "peace-keeping mission" in the Congo used everything including individual assassinations, such as Patrice Lumumba's and the stifling of the whole on-going revolution, we are presently confronted with an attempted repetition, not only in South Africa's "peace-making"(!) entry, first into Rhodesia and now into Angola, but also in U.S. imperialism's behind-the-scenes maneuverings. Whether or not U.S. imperialism's more indirect intervention gives South Africa the cover needed for "exit"; whether or not China, likewise, re-enters via aid to Zaire's Mobutu (who is practiced both in work with the CIA and as "Maoist" when it comes to the Sino-Soviet conflict); and whether or not the Middle East succeeds in diverting Third World revolutions to its power ambitions, the point is that the world economic recession and with it, the bi-polar division of this nuclear world—with China playing the same type of state-capitalist politics in place of the "uninterrupted" revolution it is ideologically supposed to favor—lay bare the total disarray in thought as well as in the crisis-ridden economy.

No doubt the Africans were pleased at the Arab nations thumbing their noses at the U.S., but that was hardly the point of dispute on the UN Resolution on "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination", any more than the vote for it by China along with its "Enemy No. 1," Russia, whom China designates as "the new Tsars", was of the same nature as the Africa vote. Nevertheless, the African countries' disregard of, say, the Black intellectuals' fear that the anti-Zionism amendment was diversionary from the original resolution on racism, which the African nations had sponsored and which projected a Decade for the Elimination of Racism, had come home to roost. The break-up of the OAU meeting over the question of Angola brought out the near-fatal divisiveness in a field that is nothing short of the global struggle of the big powers for a re-division of the world.

It is impossible to see what one does not want to see. The oil-rich kingdoms can hardly be considered an integral part of the poor Third World, the world that has suffered most from the quadrupling of

oil prices, which followed the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. If there is any possible affinity of ideas between the oil kingdoms and the independent African nations, that affinity surely lies elsewhere. The ideological disarray is, rather, like the one that's pervading much of the Left who, knowing well the feudal class structure of the Arab theocracies, hungering for a socialist alternative to the capitalistic structure of Israel rather than any relapse to feudalism, much less mistaking Israel and apartheid South Africa as one and the same, nevertheless parrot the UN Resolution on Zionism.

Take, for instance, I.F. Stone. On the one hand, he says that to equate Zionism with racism, when racism in our times means Nazism, "is the overstatement of the century":

"Neither in Israel nor in the occupied territories is the lot of the Arabs under the Star of David the lot of the Jews under the swastika. The Arabs still have more freedom of expression than Ukrainians in the Soviet Union, better treatment than Asians and whites in parts of liberated Africa, and they are not terrorized like the Jews in Iraq or Syria." (5)

One obvious consequence of the UN Resolution that I.F. Stone does recognize is that it was a victory not just for its sponsors, but "also a victory for the Zionist hardliners". What greater boon could right-wing Zionism have wished for than the fact that revulsion against anti-Semitism that independents saw in the UN Resolution led thousands of non-Zionists (and, indeed, many were non-Jews) throughout the world to wear buttons proclaiming "I am a Zionist". What more could they have wished for than that the Israeli opponents of their own rulers—the Israeli Left engaged in class struggles and in fights against their country's foreign policy, especially to Israel's non-recognition of the Palestinians as a national entity entitled to self-determination—should suddenly pause in their struggles, with worry over whether at the other end of the spectrum lurks that perennial manifestation of degeneracy, anti-Semitism?

Despite all this, Stone, using the ground of the UN Resolution for argument, states that 1), since the Palestinians in Israel are treated as second-class citizens, the UN Resolution has "an ele-

ment of truth"; 2) talks of it as if it were no more than an "answer to the Sinai disengagement." He acts as if there were only one way to be for a "viable Arab state," and there were no rich history from Marx through Lenin to Trotsky on the question of self-determination, and as if Marx's humanism wasn't precisely what had been taken out of the "archives" and made into an on-going historic revolutionary movement in our day, precisely in East Europe, fighting for freedom from Russian totalitarianism and racism i.e. anti-Semitism, as witness Czechoslovakia in 1968. (6)

Not that racism is only anti-Semitism, or only against Blacks, be that in South Africa or the USA, or just a Middle East phenomenon. Racism, after all, arose in the heart of West Europe. Because racism is integral to all class exploitative societies and reaches its most vitriolic expression during hard times, it is imperative to look at it comprehensively, focusing on why at any time it takes this or that specific form. Why is it that, where in the turbulent near-revolutions of the 1960's, even so reactionary a Council as the Vatican felt compelled to issue its landmark "Declaration on Jews," proclaiming "a new era of interfaith dialogue" and condemning some root causes of anti-Semitism, whereas, in the 1970's, the "New Left" aligns in a veritable "jihad" against "Zionism".

For whatever reasons the UN's eyes presently are turned only to Israel, racism is in fact reaching a most virulent phase in France where one million French workers and 100,000 immigrant workers have been thrown into the unemployed army. In the case of the immigrant workers, whom the French government had lured there and confined to the dirtiest work at the lowest pay, as well as herding them into the most barbaric living quarters (7), there racism has reared its ugly head as France tries to herd them out of the country, whether they came from the Middle East or Portugal, from Algeria or Black Africa.

Clearly, above everything else hangs the world economic recession at a time when decadent capitalism brings out the worst, be it apartheid South Africa mercenaries fighting in Angola--and bringing disarray into the OAU--or France expelling immigrant labor and bringing racism on the face of it to a very different point and yet connecting with it. When Albert Levy, Secretary of the Movement Against Racism anti-Semitism and For Peace, declared, "France has become the most murderously racist of countries," it did indeed direct attention to the depth of degeneracy of Western "civilization," the type signalled by the outbreak of World War II and the fact of the collapse of France without a fight. The problem cannot be narrowed to what one sees in UN corridors.

It is high time not to take either Arab or Israel's ground for argumentation, or, for that matter, what can best be called "the middle of the road" (which has always been the best place to get run over). It is high time to strike out for totally new ground, the total philosophy of human liberation Marx called "a new Humanism."

It isn't for purposes of so-called "true beginnings", as the crucifixion of Jesus by Roman authorities which had nevertheless been converted into an accusation^{of} deloide against the Jews, not to mention that it took the Vatican nearly 2000 years to "right" that "root of anti-Semitism". Rather, this new ground--the dialectics of liberation in Marx's unearthing a new continent of thought, would not be confined to "the Jewish Question". When Marx broke with bourgeois society and Left Hegelians, who were arguing "On the Jewish Question" in 1843, he commented on the equating of Judaism not only with religion, but with "bargaining", with "money", that money does, indeed, "degrade all the gods of mankind...and converts them into commodities." But if they looked they would, in that case, have to admit that, "Judaism has perpetuated itself in Christian society...achieved perfection in the Christian world", "in the prevailing world", i.e. capitalism. Therefore, what needs uprooting is the commodity structure of society, without which there can be no "universal human emancipation."⁽⁸⁾ Because that principle underlined all Marxist revolutionaries struggling for a class-

less society, without which there can be no "universal human emancipation" the "Jewish Question" was not dealt with as a separate issue.

During Tsarism, however, when the persecution of the Jews reached the pogrom stage, after the assassination of Alexander II by the Populists, and whether in barbaric Russia, or cultured France, where anti-Semitism reared its ugly head in the Dreyfus case, many Jews began to reject "Western civilization". The pogrom on top of the ghettoization, economic, political and social persecution of the Jews, gave rise to Zionism at the end of the 19th century. As a national movement, revolutionary internationalists rejected it. On the whole, Marxists considered the Jewish Question to be a "cultural" one, felt sure that socialism would solve all questions of racial or religious persecution, and therefore urged total assimilation. What changed the attitude on the whole "National Question" was the outbreak of World War I, which revealed how national rebellions can aid the undermining of imperialism. With the Irish Revolution against British imperialism right in the midst of war, when workers were slaughtering each other across national boundaries, the "National Question" assumed an urgency and impetus to proletarian revolution which brought a schism within Bolshevism. Lenin alone made the most profound as well as concrete analysis of the revolutionary aspects of the "National Question"⁽⁹⁾ Moreover, these continued beyond the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia with the accession to power of the Bolsheviks. By the time of the defeat of the 1919 German Revolution, upon which both the extension of the Russian Revolution to a world scale and the very life of the Russian Revolution depended (no one then thought of any such mirage as "socialism in one country"), Lenin raised a totally new aspect to the relationship of the National Question and world revolution: "If not through Berlin, perhaps through Peking".

Whatever changes had in the meantime occurred, in Zionism's projection of a "Jewish homeland"⁽¹⁰⁾ seemed to be of no concern to revolutionary Marxists since they were still confident the world revolution would win.

Everything totally changed with the Great Depression, and the rise of Nazism, accompanied by such manifestation of anti-Semitism also in the "degenerated workers' state" that Trotsky changed his position on the Jewish Question. The density of today's Trotskyists in not grasping either theoretically or practically what happened shows itself clearest in their positions today which have nothing whatever to do with Trotsky's principled statement, be that on the question of permanent revolution or the Jewish question. Not having the slightest conception of what is the dialectical relationship of the objective to the subjective situation--what is the dialectics of liberation when more than one national movement arises, they simply hide both the fact of the change and the why Trotsky, as the great revolutionary he was, changed his position. It is imperative that we study the principal points Trotsky made in the last three years of his life on this question, if we wish to understand the new vantage points necessitated by the rise of Nazism, and that he alone of the leaders of the Russian Revolution lived to confront. Stalin had killed off the "General Staff" of that revolution in the greatest Frame-Up Trials in history, reeking of anti-Semitism as well as of total counter-revolution. Indeed, they were followed by the Hitler-Stalin pact. Here, then are Trotsky's writings on the Jewish Question for the years 1937-1940⁽¹¹⁾:

First, Trotsky contrasts the historical developments of the 1930's with those of his youth when he believed that "the Jewish Question would disappear in a quasi-automatic fashion...decaying capitalism has everywhere swing over to an exacerbated nationalism, one part of which is anti-Semitism".

Secondly, since the Jews have created their own press, have a distinct language, "One must reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch". It isn't that he didn't perceive the conflict between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine, not that he thought that Zionism was any answer. But, this fundamental conflict could not be judged outside the objective context:
1) the reappearance of anti-Semitism in Russia, "the Thermidorian

reaction has stirred up all that is low, dark and backward, and in this agglomeration of 170 million people," 2) At the same time the rise of fascism occurred in the very heart of Western Europe. Therefore, "the next development of world reaction signifies with certainty the physical extermination of the Jews".

This, let us remember, was said before the outbreak of World War II, before the ovens of Auschwitz and Dachau were fully exposed, before the actual extermination of six million Jews.

Trotsky's conclusion was that the "Jewish 'Question' as such is still acute and demands adequate measures from a world federation of workers' states." Naturally, he called upon the Jews to join the Fourth International which had been the first to warn about fascism.

* * * *

World War II had totally changed the objective situation. The creation of the state of Israel changed it still further for the Middle East. Two realities, thereupon, were new: the existence of Israel, and with that success, the creation of another national consciousness--the Palestinian people. Their right to self-determination can no more be decided from above, be it via the many Arab kingdoms and emirates, or the PLO claiming sole spokesmanship, much less through a UN command. Let the Palestinian people speak for themselves. Naturally, Zionism in power, like the ideology of all ruling classes, be they Jewish or Moslem, Christian--or the big powers themselves, West and East, is exploitative. Which is why, precisely why, the main enemy is always in one's own country. The Israeli masses will fight that battle. Far from encouraging such action, the UN Resolution equating Zionism with racism, while the PLO representative shouts: Zionism differs "in no way from apartheid in South Africa"⁽¹²⁾, cannot but remind one of the Big Lie.

Unfortunately, even that is not the worst of it. The worst of it is that it does, indeed, reflect the actual state of the dis-

array of the world, not only in the economy and politics, but also in the void in its thought.

Clearly, the Arab-Israeli question is not just Arab-Israeli; the Middle East is not just the Middle East; Saudi Arabia is not just oil-rich kingdom underwriting PLO actions against Israel, but also South African white mercenaries and its Black puppets in Angola. Nor is it just Africa that is being torn apart; the Portugese revolution is also being put under the whip of counter-revolution. Once again, the global struggle for single world domination, between the U.S. and Russia, with China considering Russia Enemy No. 1 contaminates everything. And through it all, racism and anti-Semitism is at its height also at the heart of "Western civilization"--France. In a word, the ouphemism of "Zionism" for anti-Semitism cannot but recall the degeneracy Western civilization reached in 1940 with the collapse of France without a fight: "Paris is not for burning." For the Left to countenance, nay, to aid in such ideological obfuscation cannot but smooth the way for the counter-revolution. A necessary first step to turn matters around is to clear up our heads so that the history of revolutions, the dialectics of liberation becomes the path for their actualization.

Yours,

Raya

FOOTNOTES:

(1) There was a great deal of opposition to that Resolution outside of the UN halls, by no means limited to Jews. Indeed, one of the most interesting came from Black intellectuals, which stated: "The prospect of a concerted United Nations drive against African apartheid has been effectively thwarted by an amendment which introduces an extraneous issue to a worthy United Nations undertaking". The appeal was signed by 28, including Dr. Charles H. Wesley, author of the first and most original works on Black labor and director of the Afro-American museum in Philadelphia, PA; Dr. Luther Foster, president of Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Ala.; and C. Clyde Ferguson, Jr. of Harvard Law School.

(2) Mobutu of Zaire has been an especially welcome guest in Mao's China, whose Russophobia still has them traffic with the Angolan factions apartheid South Africa supports, though that type of open collaborationism has forced China to announce it would withdraw its support.

- (3) No one need have any illusions about South Africa's "withdrawal" of its mercenaries in Angola. Not only does it operate from its apartheid regime, but it can now hide behind U.S. imperialism since its open support boomeranged.
- (4) Ethiopia has since recognized the MPLA. What it worried about most is what it said least about, and that was Saudi Arabia's intervention since it is Saudi Arabia that is financing a good part of Eritrea's rebels. Where Eritrea's fight for self-determination started as a revolutionary opposition to the Emperor's Ethiopia, the Arab kingdoms choosing Muslim factions to support is corrupting freedom movements.
- (5) I.F. Stone's piece on "Zionism and Peace" was published in The New York Times, 11/23/75
- (6) At the time of Russia's imperialist invasion of Czechoslovakia, August, 1968, the still defiant Czechoslovak radio beamed this broadcast on August 26: "We have learned at long last who is responsible for the non-existent Czechoslovak counterrevolution. "International Zionism" (euphemism for "the Jews"). Apparently our East German friends have been experts on this subject ever since World War II...Allegedly 2 million people are involved...Why cannot these 2 million Zionists be found if the Soviet army command, or perhaps Neues Deutschland wishes to find them? Anyhow, the Germans today are the only real experts able to distinguish with absolute accuracy between Aryans and inferior races." This broadcast is reproduced in Philosophy and Revolution, p.254. See especially, chapter 8, "State-Capitalism and the East European Revolts" where many of the East European revolutionaries speak for themselves.
- (7) The Paris correspondent (Walter Schwartz) of the Manchester Guardian (Dec. 28, 1975) in his article, "France to send home workless immigrants" describes those horrible living quarters, including the illegal but operative "3 x 8 equals 24 principle" (three people using a bed in shifts of eight hours each). The quotations from Albert Levy of the Movement Against Racism, anti-Semitism and for Peace is likewise from that article.
- (8) Marx's "On the Jewish Question" is included in Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society edited by Easton and Guddat.
- (9) Up to March 1917, Lenin's articles on the National Question are included in his Collected Works, Vol.XIX; the 1920 Theses on the National and Colonial Question in Selected Works, Vol. X.
- (10) The question of a bi-national state was not only the aim of the Marxists, but originally was also the concept of Left Zionists. Noam Chomsky (whose Peace in the Middle East? Reflections on Justice and Nationhood should be consulted) quotes a 1907 view of Zionism which held that it was necessary "to avoid a narrow, limited nationalism which would see no further than itself". (Aharon Cohen, Israel and the Arab World).
- (11) These extraordinary Trotsky statements from 1937-40 were reprinted in the Fourth International's Workers International News, June-July 1946, London.
- (12) For gloating over that UN Resolution and its PLO explication, see especially the East German Communist publication, Neues Deutschland, Nov. 13, 1975. We are sure also soon to hear about the developing schism between Assad's PLA and Arafat's PLO.

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Letter #6

August, 1976

LEBANON: THE TEST NOT ONLY OF THE P.L.O. BUT THE WHOLE LEFT

"Cruelty, like every other thing, has its fashion, according to time and place. Caesar, the accomplished scholar, candidly narrated how he ordered many thousands of Gallic warriors to have their right hands cut off. Napoleon would have been ashamed to do this. He preferred dispatching his own French regiments, suspected of republicanism, to Santo Domingo there to die by the hands of blacks, and the plague. The infamous mutilations committed by the Sepoys* remind one of the practices of the Christian Byzantine Empire." --Karl Marx, Sept. 16, 1857

Dear Friends:

No act of barbarism seems to be beyond the degeneracy of our times that have disgorged World War II, The Holocaust, the U.S.'s dropping of the A-bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and today we need add abysmal cynicism to the butchery and savagery of the Lebanese Christian Right. As if the murderous 52-week siege, climaxed also by the cut-off of water, of the Palestinian refugee camp, Tal Zaatar, were not enough, the unsavory son of the infamous fanatical neo-fascist Lebanese Interior Minister Camille Chamoun--Danny--continued to slaughter in cold blood, the Palestinians who were streaming out of the camp with white flags of surrender.

*It isn't that Marx excused the acts of torture committed by the Sepoys even though the 1857 India Mutiny was an anti-imperialist act against Britain. It is that Marx was stressing--and not only in that Sept. 16, 1857 report for The New York Daily Tribune--that appalling acts of cruelty come both from exploitative societies and holy religions: "With Hindus, whom their religion has made virtuosos in the art of self-torturing, these tortures inflicted on the enemies of their race and creed appear quite natural." As against racism, straight or inverted, Marx was deepening his theory of proletarian revolution as the only road to freedom.

Told that the son of the "moderate" Rightist head of the Phalange, Pierre Gemayel, had agreed to let the Red Cross arrange the evacuation, these were the words Danny Chamoun spewed out: "There might have been an agreement between Gemayel and the Palestinians, but how much of the front does the Phalange hold--85 yards?" (1)

It is hard to conceive of anyone to the Right of the Phalange, but in the Christian Right in Lebanon you have both the gunman president Franjei and his son who heads a private army, and Chamoun's "Tigers" who thereupon descended upon the Palestinians like wolves and looters and when the carnage was over, the bulldozers pushed the corpses into mass graves. Back in 1958 it was the wily father who trumped up the bogus ^{issue} of the imminence of the Palestinians "seizing power," whereupon Eisenhower was all too happy to rush in U.S. Marines. In 1976 the gunman son indulges in outright genocide. The grisly end to Palestinian Resistance at Tal Zaatar will not bring to an end the civil war between rulers and ruled, Muslim, Christian and other.

It is true that the civil war that erupted 16 months back, on April 13, 1975, to be exact, was sparked by Palestinians against the Phalange massacre of a busload of Palestinians who were returning from a meeting of the "Rejection Front." (2) And it is true that Muslim reprisals to such massacres are not without their atrocities. It is not true that it is a religious war between Palestinian Muslims and Lebanese Christians. Rather it is a class war between Lebanese masses--Christian as well as Arab and those who profess no religion--and the exploitative, racist, sexist rulers who have been enriching themselves ever since the Egyptian revolution in 1952, climaxed in 1956, that expelled Western imperialism and Lebanon became the finance and mercantile center for Middle East Arab oligarchs as well as Western imperialists.

Not only is it a civil war between masses and rulers, both Lebanese, but the Palestinian Left who have helped have played a most ambivalent role both in a class struggle sense and in a global context. It therefore is necessary to probe the dialectic of develop-

ments these past 16 months from both the obvious phases--Arafat's waffling, Syria's complete turnabout and actual occupation (not unrelated to Israel's, Russia's and U.S.'s seeming bystander roles)--to the not so obvious shrouded acts of the whole Left--from the Nasserists and "Left" Ba'athists--to the Communists, Trotskyists and independents, all under the umbrella of Jublatt's socialism.

I. P.L.O.'s Crucible

The Lebanese masses were so definitely winning the battle with the rulers that the latter "accepted" truces as well as parliamentary compromises that would allegedly cede the people rights, both political and economic. Though none of the contending forces unfolded a banner for total emancipation, no one feared that Arafat would not allow a genuine revolutionary force to come to power. None seemed disturbed by his ambivalence and limiting the Palestinian fighting alongside Moslem Left, depending on his ambitions to get to the Geneva Conference on Palestine as sole representative of the Palestinians fighting for a state of their own. Between the spring and fall, 1975, no one in Lebanon doubted that the issue was Lebanon, and that it would never again be the undisputed stronghold of the Christian Right rulers.

When Syria first marched in to aid the Left, it was under the guise of its own Palestinian Army, Sa'iq, which, moreover, was supposedly under the control of the PLO. That was not only the view of Arafat, but his erstwhile opponent from the Left, Nayef Hawatmeh, head of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) who so assured the Le Monde in a special interview: "I want to make it clear that the PLA is under control of the PLO, and there were no regular army troops under Syrian command, as claimed." (3)

So confident was Arafat both of gaining a whole country as base against Israel, and for a seat at a new Geneva Conference for a Palestinian State, in the winter, 1975, that he was following the events at the UN more than the actual developments in Lebanon. Above the

machine gun fire in Lebanon where the fratricidal war was continuing, he was ordering the PLO representative at the UN regarding the Arab-sponsored Resolution on "Zionism Is Racism" to "analyze" the Lebanese war itself as but a "conspiracy," a war initiated by "international Zionism." (4) Having thus burdened the UN Declaration of a "Decade for the Elimination of Racism" that was to have been fought against South Africa and Rhodesia, with the "Amendment" that "Zionism Is Racism," he had to face the startling reality that not only was Syria out to cut PLO to size, but evidently Syria was aided by some Arab kingdoms, Saudi Arabia especially, and actually collaborating with Christian Right rulers.

Above all, what was gnawing at all the people was: would Syria have made so total a U-turn without at least tacit agreement with the U.S.A.? To call Assad a "traitor" at this late stage will hardly change the course of the war under Arafat's leadership. The point is: where to now that the victories of 1975 are worse than Pyrrhic? now that the counter-revolution has been extended into 1976, and there is no end in sight?

The last tragic denouement was, after all, preceded by sharp alternatives if one were not blinded totally by the narrow single-issue goal of extinction of Israel which is, when all is said and done, the only unifying force of all Arabs. There was still time in the Spring of 1976 to choose between Assad (who had by now openly sent in the regular Syrian Army "to stop the bloodshed," and Kamal Jumblatt, who had resisted Assad's "compromises" as the actual shoring up of Christian Right rulers and thus saving them from the wrath of the masses. In an interview with Eric Rouleau (5) Jumblatt still viewed the future optimistically:

"Lebanon will become a lay state, our Christians will end up by abandoning the Maronite caliphate, the Arab world must be Westernized and rid of an antiquated clericalism which is keeping it chained down." He then spoke of the future as a "Socialist Republic," adding: "Civil war may seem stupid today, but one day people will recognize that it opened the way to the Lebanese people's, even the whole of the Arab world's spiritual renaissance."

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We will return to Jumblatt as the socialist umbrella of some ten Left organizations. Here what is crucial is that Arafat then chose, not Jumblatt, but Assad, after which he waffled long enough to have Assad refuse him entrance to Syria. Arafat did manage to convene an emergency meeting of the Arab League where, for once, he didn't mince words: (6)

"You, the 20 members of the League, are sitting here either in silence, or paying lip-service to the Palestinians' cause while the Palestinians are being slaughtered. Palestinian blood is cheap to you. . . There are 3,850,000 Palestinians living in your countries. You cannot destroy us. I warn you that if you try you will not get away with it."

If the implication was supposed to be that a genuine social revolution would sweep over the feudal kingdoms, Arafat is more obtuse than he has any right to be to think that that wasn't precisely the fear that swept over the rulers, and hence their affinity, not with the Arab masses, but with Christian Right oppressors. The Arab-Israeli confrontation is the "distorting lens" (?) with which to view what is happening in Lebanon, and has rendered meaningless the designations of "Left" and "Right" in all Arab countries. It is time to turn away from all these narrow nationalisms, and see what it is that does recognize, in theory, what are class divisions, and ask that Left why it has done nothing but tailend the PLO?

II. The Strange Antecedents and Very Narrow Nationalism of the New Left

The very narrow nationalism of the New Left cannot be understood, much less fought, outside revolutionary international context, and the totally contradictory types of nationalism that emerged out of World War I and World War II. This is due not alone to different historic periods, but totally different philosophies of revolution. No academic nonsense motivated Lenin's return to Hegelian dialectics at the outbreak of World War II. Rather it was the dialectics of liberation at a time when the betrayal of the Second International urged workers patriotically to slaughter each other across national boundaries. That Lenin called "the bacillus" for proletarian revolution came, instead, from the Irish Easter Rebellion, 1916.

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Because Lenin's revolutionary concepts of internationalism and the philosophy of national self-determination, as inseparable, both preceded and followed the Russian Revolution, there never was a time when national liberation was ever reduced to nationalism, as it was with Stalin once power was won. On the contrary. Lenin's last struggle against Stalin was, precisely, against Great Russian chauvinism he displayed in his native Georgia. As the Georgian Communist, Tsertsvadze put it: "It is true that Marx wanted the union of the proletariat of the whole world, but he never claimed that all Russians ought to unite at Tiflis."

Because the ideology of Stalinism, i.e., national Communism went hand in hand with the first workers' state as it became transformed into its opposite--a state-capitalist society--the replacement of the class struggle by Cold War "anti-Westernism" came "naturally," and though sides had changed during the war, narrow nationalism had not. In any case, by the 1950's, Stalinism found in itself a new affinity with the Arab Middle East.

I do not mean to say that what we see in the Middle East owes its origins to Russia. No, it is indigencous enough. The encounter with Stalinism is no mere matter of "politics making strange bed-fellows." It has had revolutionary elements not only in its anti-Westernism, but positively with the overthrow of Farouk by Nasser in 1952. But it also is a hybrid. The "end of ideology" that came with the defeat of Nazi Germany had a strange new birth. In 1953, in Syria, the Ba'ath (Arab Socialist Renaissance Party) resulted from a merger of two groups, one that so hungered to free itself from Western imperialism that it had participated in the pro-Axis Rashid Ali revolt in Baghdad in 1941, and the other was socialist. Indeed, the first Renaissance grouping was headed by Michel Aflaq, who was in the Syrian Communist Party. (8)

Finally, ⁱⁿ Lebanon, where even now there is a greater variety of political tendencies than anywhere else in Arab lands, the Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon, headed by Khaled Baddash, antedated the time Lebanon gained its independence from France in 1943. From underground existence it made its appearance in the open and kept up

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its Moscow ties when Bakdash appeared at the 19th Russian Communist Party Congress, the last (1952) which Stalin attended. Khaled Bakdash, who is probably under house arrest in Syria, may not have had as much praise for the Syrian nationalists as he had for Stalin, but he made it quite clear that the Syrian Communist Party was not really Communist; he wanted the country to be nationalist, not a Communist Syria. And now when no doubt the Lebanese Communist Party is the largest in any Arab country, its General Secretary, Georges Jaoui, stated this June 27: "We don't force our reforms on the country. We are ready to talk with all our opponents including the Phalangists, for patriotism is not a monopoly of the Left." (9)

And the New Left, born in the 1960s, so disdainful of theory, (which it forever thinks it can pick up "en route"), has a strange attitude toward imperialism. It is as if imperialism were not the natural outgrowth of monopoly capitalism, but was a "conspiracy, organized by a single imaginary center, rather as the Nazis used to refer to the Judoa-Catholic-Masonic Alliance, or Communists under Stalin to the conspiracy of the Trotskyists and Rightists in league with the imperialist secret service."

It is such an attitude to imperialism, along with the theoretic void that has pervaded the Movement since the death of Lenin that has led revolutionaries to collude with narrow nationalism on the ground that it is "anti-imperialist" though purely nationalist. Evidently nationalism of the so-called Third World is of itself revolutionary even when it is under the banner of a king, a shah, or the emirates. Thereby they canonize nationalism though void of working class character, as national liberation:

It isn't that class is the sole characteristic of national liberation movements that revolutionaries can support. It is that the working class nature is its essence and it is that the revolutionary and international impact emerges from masses in motion. (10)

I have no time for the Old Left like present-day Trotskyism (11) that tailends all, including the Arab variety of Stalinism. What is

important to note is the most original derivative of national Communism--with the most "uninterrupted" r-r-r-revolutionary phrasemongering--Maoism. Yet, with its very first separate international development when the Sino-Soviet world was still in orbit rather than in conflict--the 1955 Bandung Conference, ⁽¹²⁾--its pure nationalism but with global reach, likewise plunged into the Arab League lands "sub-imperialist" enfoldment. ⁽¹³⁾

The point is that, in the present circumstances of purely nationalist anti-imperialism with a global reach (not to mention the two actual nuclear global contenders for single world domination--U.S. and Russia--) we cannot bury our heads in the sand. That not only blinds you, but also robs you of revolutionary reason. All it leaves you with is the narrowness of only one enemy--whether that be Israel--, or Israel's oppressive nationalism which attempts denying the very existence of Palestinian national consciousness, not to mention the right to self-determination, or China's obsession with Russia as enemy No. 1. Our nuclear state-capitalist world is far more dangerous than the old imperialism of endless divisions and re-divisions of the world by the Big Powers. Once it is nuclearly armed, the Damocles sword puts into question the very survival of civilization as we have known it.

This does not mean that we give up the struggle for self-determination, Palestinian especially. ⁽¹⁴⁾ It is that we do not narrow our vision of the revolutionary struggle for a totally different world, on truly new Humanist foundations, the first necessity of which is the unity of philosophy and revolution.

Otherwise, long before "the final day," we will not only be confronted with impotent hijacking, to which Dr. Habash's Committee is already reverting, but to such tragic wars as Lebanon, which is more agonizing than a repeat of that bloodbath in Jordan in 1970. It is much later in the day. It includes not only Palestinians, but Lebanese revolutionaries. And, in the civil war no less than ten Left groups are gathered under Jumblatt's banner.

When history and theory get into each other's way, and philosophy and revolution get separated, there is no exit from counter-revolutionary consequences.

Raya Dunayevskaya
Detroit, Michigan

- (1) Newsweek, August 23, 1976.
- (2) In this instance the Rejection Front is not yet the one related to the Sinai Agreement, which was not to take place till September, but to negotiations with Israel, and any idea for a Palestinian State out of the West Bank and Sinai.
- (3) The interview, "At last a real cease-fire," by Frances Cornu was published in the Le Monde section (dated 1/25/76), of The Manchester Guardian, dated 2/1/76.
- (4) See Political-Philosophic Letter No. 1.
- (5) H. Rouleau also holds that "Assad's Calculated Risk"--the invasion of Lebanon;--would not have been undertaken without consultation with the U.S.A. Manchester Guardian, June 4-5/76 in Le Monde section.
- (6) The report of the closed session was evidently made to Henry Tarnier by an Arab source, New York Times, 7/14/76.
- (7) "Lebanon: The Insane War," by James M. Markham, New York Times Magazine, August 15, 1976.
- (8) See both "The Arab Socialist Movement," by Genran Majdalany, a leading theoretician of Da'ath, and "Syria: Nationalism and Communism," by W. Z. Laqueur, as well as a Soviet View, "The Growth of National Consciousness Among Arab Peoples, 1945-1955," in The Middle East in Transition, by Walter A. Laqueur. Though the material is dated, 1958, it contains a substantial variety of views.
- (9) This quote is from a review of Fred Halliday's new work, Arabia without Sultans, in New Left Review, #95, 1-2/76, by Maxime Rodinson. Nearly any work by this great scholar will give the reader the most comprehensive view possible on the Middle East.
- (10) Frantz Fanon was profoundly conscious of the contradictory types of nationalism facing the African revolutions. See especially the chapter, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," in The Wretched of The Earth. Rosa Luxemburg, who hardly had any sympathy for the "National Question," being totally absorbed in internationalism, did, however, profoundly grasp imperialism's oppressive domination of non-

capitalist lands: "Though imperialism is the historic method of prolonging the career of capitalism, it is also a sure means of bringing it to a swift conclusion." (Accumulation of Capital.)

(11) That present-day Trotskyism flies in the face of the Trotsky legacy both historically and theoretically, I have shown in Political-Philosophic Letter No. 1. The latest developments on Lebanon and Israel further expand their opportunism. See especially the interview with a Lebanese Trotskyist in Paris, Intercontinental Press, 7/28/76, as well as the latest issue on Israel. (August , 1976)

(12) An interesting new view is in Israel, the Korean War and China, by Michael Bracher, Jerusalem Academic Press.

(13) The expression regarding Iran, is Fred Halliday's in Arabia without Sultans. See footnote 9.

(14) See Noam Chomsky, in New Politics, Winter, 1976. Also Israel and the Palestinians: A Different Israeli View, and the endless PLO statements. The Left's authentic representative, the head of the Lebanese-Arab army, Ahmen al-Khatib, who has always been Al-Fatah, complained: "It is difficult to make a revolution in Lebanon; there is too much money around." The trouble is that oil money and not only from "left" Iraq and Libya but also from Saudi-Arabia bankrolls the PLO.

June 8, 1967

THE ARAB-ISRAELI COLLISION, THE WORLD POWERS,
AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE MINDS OF MEN

Dear Friends:

No description of events in the Middle East can possibly keep pace with the fantastically rapid changes since the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war just four days ago. This fact, however, does not invalidate the need for an analysis which would place the immediate situation in its proper historic and theoretic context. Quite the contrary; there is no other way comprehensively to view the Arab-Israeli collision. While the June 5th through 7th Israeli blitzkrieg didn't just fall from the skies, neither did Egypt's May 18th request for the removal of the UN Emergency Force from the Sinai, followed on the 22nd by the declaration of a blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping and the threat of "total war", "annihilation" of Israel if it embarked on any "aggression" to change the fait accompli, the new "status quo."

The Arab states called this unholy mess a Jihad (Holy War). Russia and China christened it "a national liberation struggle from Western imperialism." Although the Communist attitude to the Middle East has nothing whatever to do with ideology, and everything to do with oil, strategic outlets to seas and "spheres of influence", these, as well as the actions of the Arab states and Israel, have a history, the history of the 20 years since the creation of the state of Israel. All politics in the Middle East seem to begin with that single historic fact. Let us see whether this is so.

I. Israel: The Reality and the Ideological Struggles

There is no doubt that a new dimension surged up with the creation, in 1943, of the state of Israel in the Middle East, whose politics had heretofore been dominated by Oil. Although the fact is now conveniently forgotten, it was the anti-imperialist struggle of the Palestinian Jews that so overwhelmed the young, then unknown, Colonel Nasser, who had come to sign the pact ending the Arab-Israeli war, that, instead of dwelling on the armisticeterms, he was plying the Jews with questions as to just how the outgunned, outmanned force could have overcome British occupation.

To what extent, if any ¹, the struggle for freedom of the Jewish masses affected the philosophy of revolution that Nasser was to develop for the liberation struggle he was to launch against both Farouk and Western imperialism, is not important. What is important is that in the decade of 1947-56 Nasser gave priority, not to the "destruction" of Israel, or "the liberation of Palestine from Jewish occupation" but "to liberate Egypt" ² and put an end to "the enslavement of the people by the imperialisms and their lackeys, the Egyptian feudal lords and politicians." Even during the Suez War, when he certainly began to give priority to the question of Israel, his views were not as single-minded as those of his "Arab brothers" -- either as expressed by the bastard socialism called Ba'ath³ in Syria, or by the reactionary monarchy in Saudi Arabia.

At first sign, it may have appeared that the achievement of Arab unity in the month of May "proved" the totality of the opposition of the Arab masses to the very

existence of Israel -- as everyone (though for very opposite reasons), from the Arab ruling classes to the Communists, and from bourgeois journalists to the Trotskyists, contends. In actuality, the restlessness of the Arab masses was due to dissatisfaction with their own conditions of life and labor, with the incompletion of their revolutions, begun two decades ago, that still have not made a serious dent in ending their poverty⁴. Originally, Nasser himself was conscious of this. Originally, that is to say, in the early 1960's as against 1967, Nasser attempted limited revolutions in the feudal kingdoms. Because of this he was taunted recently both by radio Amman and Saudi Arabia, thus: "Where was he (Nasser) when the Jews were attacking his Arab brethren? ... Nasser prefers to hide behind the protective screen of the United Nations Emergency Force... Meanwhile he bombs and pours poison gas on the Arabs of Yemen."

I do not mean to say that either Nasser or the Arab masses are full of love for Israel. Quite the contrary. Nor is it only the Arabs whom Israel has expelled and who live in unspeakable misery in their homeless refugee camps who have cause to hate Israel. The class relations in Israel are exactly what they are in any capitalist country -- exploitative. And as in any capitalist country, minorities -- in this case, the Arabs who live in Israel -- are discriminated against both in labor and in politics. But the addition to this situation is by the masses themselves, Jews and Arabs, in class struggle actions, and not through outside attacks by countries ranging from those who experienced some revolutionary change like Egypt to monarchies and shiekhdoms like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Libya. No matter how shrill the voice, or adroit the argument, Communist Russia and China must not be permitted to succeed in their attempts to christen these feudal kingdoms as "freedom-loving, peace-loving nations."

What I do mean to say is that the struggle of Egypt against Israel hadn't been continuous and unvarying for the very good reason that Nasser was involved, more than the rulers of the other Arab countries, in political revolutions, in deepening the one in his own land both through agricultural reform, and some industrialization, building the High Aswan Dam, and in "socialization", i.e. nationalization. It was only when this political revolution didn't solve problems that only a social revolution can overcome; only when he got bogged down in trying to help revolutions get started in other Arab lands; and only because he is not about to complete the revolutions begun (which, in any case, only the masses can do -- against him), that Nasser decided finally to lead the fight for "extinction of Israel."

Israel has as much right to exist as any other country. Its right to existence is the only issue on which Marxist-Humanists express themselves positively. On issues other than that of self-determination, it goes without saying, Marxist-Humanists take no sides in disputes between nations, nor compromise their revolutionary position for a totally new society based on human, not class, foundations.

To try to transform the concrete question of Israel into some "universal" -- whether it be rooted in 2000 years of the irreconcilably different tales of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Qu'oran, or in the 20-year postwar history since the establishment of Israel -- is to fail to see the most obvious facts: neither the biblical tales nor the postwar period tell an unvarying, "universal" story. The Middle East has been the crossroads of many civilizations and the point of origin of at least three religions, none of which drove the others into the sea. The Roman Empire which attempted total annihilation of its opponents, only brought about its own disintegration. The Middle East, in modern times -- specifically in Palestine, specifically in the mid-1940's -- saw at least two occasions in which Jews and Arab collaborated in the drive against British imperialism.

Whatever were or weren't Zionism's achievements since Theodor Herzl in the 19th-century theorized about a "Jewish homeland", the Israel that was created was not established until after the Jewish masses launched into an anti-imperialist struggle on their own, disregarding the promises of British imperialism to Zionist leaders whom they doublecrossed (just as they doublecrossed the Arabs). This was after Nazism's attempted "final solution of the Jewish question" in the ovens of Dachau and Buchenwald and Auschwitz brought masses of non-Zionist Jews to Palestine because no other country, including the United States, would give them refuge. And it was after both the heroic self-activity of the Jewish masses and world opinion forced the UN, including Russia, to recognize reality.

To try to divert from this concrete reality to some "general theory", as some radicals are trying to do when they mix in the brew of "the imperialist nature of Zionism" in any discussion of the "Jewish Question" is, if not a cover-up for anti-Semitism, surely the most opportunistic excuse for not facing reality with all its complications. It is true that some of the German Trotskyists who came to Palestine and tried to work for solidarity between Jews and Arabs, were so disgusted with the actions of the Zionists that they left Palestine in disgust. But it is equally true -- and this fact they do not tell -- that, like Zionism, Islamism too made it impossible to achieve this solidarity. This, precisely, is the tragedy of today's war. It is absolutely criminal to act as if only the Jewish masses need to overthrow their ruling class but the Arab masses are with their ruling classes, who are presently designated as "the progressive forces."⁶

II Peering the Whirlwinds: State Capitalism, the Two Camp Theory and Anti-Semitism

For whatever purposes the original legend was invented that Stalin signed the 1948 UN Resolution recognizing Israel in a "fit of forgetfulness", the truth is that Stalin could then ill afford to show his global ambitions or his thirst for Arab oil and outlets to the Mediterranean, much less his anti-Semitism.

1948 was not, after all, 1939. The decade that separates the two dates saw 20 million Russians die in the war with Nazi Germany which the Hitler-Stalin Pact was supposed to have prevented. Nor could Stalin, in the postwar period, do in the Middle East what he had done in Europe -- undermine every revolutionary situation which might have brought the proletariat to state power independently of the Red Army. He could not stop the self-activity of the Jewish masses that had so caught the imagination of the world. Under the circumstances, the point was how to be able to use that situation for his own needs to fight against the new infusion of capitalistic blood (via the Marshall Plan) into shattered Western Europe. Far from having signed the 1948 UN Resolution recognizing Israel in a "fit of absent-mindedness", Stalin signed with eyes wide open and fully prepared to use this recognition of freedom-fighters in order to help him continue his strangle hold on the Communist Parties in Europe.

Stalin died in 1953 and Russia's "Great Breakthrough" -- via a Czechoslovak arms deal with the Arab states -- came in 1955. Whether named Malenkov, Khrushchev, or Brezhnev-Kosygin, Stalin's heirs followed the same class collaborationist line with their embrace of the Arab world and their shrill voices against "criminal aggression by Israel" as Stalin did when he embraced Israel and spoke, instead, against Middle East "feudalism." For the continuity of state-capitalism is not changed by the changes in "tactics". Stalin had long since reduced socialism to "nationalized property", or, more precisely, a mere administrative formula for production for production's sake,

over as he had perverted the internationalism of Marxism, or world revolution, into the nationalism of Russian Communism.

Where Stalin's "socialism in one country" meant transforming the Communist Parties of the world into mere outposts of Russia's foreign policies, Khrushchev's "deStalinization" and recognition of "other paths to socialism" meant opening the doors wide to the "neutral countries" -- so long only as they aligned themselves with Russia against Western imperialism. In turn, Russian Communism spelled out its anti-Zionism as anti-Israel.

It is Stalin who set the foundations when, in place of the class struggle, he had declared that the whole postwar world was now divided into but two camps: his, which he called "socialist", and "the others", which he called imperialist. Moreover, the very specifics of anti-Semitism were spelled out by him. The anti-Semitism of Russian Communism came to the surface in the last years of Stalin's life not alone because of Israel, but, above all, because he had to contend with the true internationalism of Russia's returning soldiers -- workers, peasants and intellectuals -- who had seen "the West" and now asked what is so different about Russian Communism. Whereupon Stalin discovered that the new "enemy" was "Zionism", the "rootless cosmopolitans". Everyone -- from the Jewish doctors whom he was plotting to frame in Russia, to the Communist leader Slansky in Czechoslovakia -- were all accused of being either "rootless cosmopolitans", or "Zionists", and very often both.

On this question there was a spontaneous affinity of ideas between Russian Communism and "Arab socialism." As we wrote in 1961: "The checkered role of the so-called revolutionaries can be seen among the Middle East socialists. Thus the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party, Ba'ath, came about as a union of two separate factions in 1953. The history of both these groups goes back to the early 1940's; they were pro-fascist. Two of its present leaders -- Aqram Hourani and Colonel Afif el-Bizra -- took part in the abortive pro-Axis Rashid Ali revolt in Baghdad in 1941. One of these groups was originally headed by Michel Aflaz, a leading member of the Syrian Communist Party. When the Axis failed, they shifted sides. One must remember that the working men's total disillusionment with private capitalism was so complete that even Fascism called itself national socialism. This bastard socialism is what characterized Peron's Argentina and now characterized the Middle East."

Needless to say, anti-Semitism was not the only point of affinity. Russian state-capitalism that calls itself Communist has its greatest point of attraction for the Middle East because statification can be done from above whereas revolutions cannot; because industrialization demands a great deal of sweated labor and "socialist" ideology hopes to exact it where private capitalism can no longer do so; and, above all, because it holds out to be the "vanguard" (which was supposed to stand for the proletariat but then got reduced to "the Party" and further degraded to "educated revolutionaries, military and civil") to become the ruling class.

This attitude to the masses, proletarian and peasant -- that their job is to work and work harder -- has led to the disillusionment with political revolutions, whether they occurred in Asia under Communist leadership, or in Africa and the Middle East under nationalist leaders. The warp and woof of Nasser's Philosophy of Revolution, from the start, was indication enough of how the revolution would stop halfway. It could not go beyond the first steps when made from above, but continue on its class collaborationist path with both capitalists and feudal potentates. Here is how Nasser

described the masses on the day of revolution: "The spark had been struck, the vanguard (Army) had taken the fortress by storm; we were waiting only for the hallowed march of the masses ... Crowds without end were flocking around. But how different was the reality from our illusions! The masses were divided and disordered ... We needed unity and discord had arisen in our wake. We needed zeal and ardour, but in these masses we found both and inertia. It is against these things that the Revolution set up its slogan of 'Union, Discipline, and Work.'"¹⁰

Without a comprehension of this warped philosophy of revolution it is impossible to understand the present impasse in the Arab Middle East, the compulsion to go from incomplete revolutions into anti-Semitic adventures and "taking sides" with one or the other of the two nuclear giants out for single world domination. Nor is it possible fully to understand the imperative nature of a theory of liberation as integral to any struggle, without which, in fact, the struggle is bound to be but a halfway house between the old society just overthrown and a totally new society.

Arab socialism may delude itself that, by aligning with Russia and China, it becomes "the vanguard" of the struggle against Western imperialism. But the truth is that it thereby becomes only a pawn in the struggle between United States and Russia for world domination. More specifically, it leans on the collusion of the oil-producing monarchical countries with Western imperialism for private profit and anti-Semitism on the one hand, and on the other hand, with Russian Communism for spheres of influence and, again, anti-Semitism.

III. Short Cuts to Revolution?

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

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

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

Just when freedom fighters should be concerned with how to unite theory and

practice -- a practice that involves us in freedom movements, be they civil rights, labor, the right of self-determination, and anti-war struggles -- in a way that would lead to revolution and "the day after" so that we have no more soured revolutions, that is just when they begin to turn away from the concrete that would be the expression of the universal.

Take anti-Semitism, again. We have the fantastic situation of a Trotskyist (and though he supposedly speaks "in a personal capacity" he is a leader) proclaiming: "This is not an ordinary conflict between two nations. Therefore it is not enough to call for 'Coexistence' based on mutual recognition of just national rights of two peoples." Furthermore, reference to Arabs is always to "progressive forces" without a single word of the concrete reality in the feudal monarchies. When speaking, however, of Israel, it is always of "Western imperialism." Nevertheless, conditions get "evened out" by calling for "an economic and political union of the Middle East, on the basis of socialism":

Then there is a Cuban military expert -- one Captain Jorge Enrique Mendoza -- who assures the Cuban masses that the Arab-Israeli war is "not a race war" but that the lightning military Israeli victory was due to "support by American imperialism" and the Israeli army being "commanded by Nazis". To which China, of course, adds that the Arabs were "betrayed by Russian revisionism."

To get away from the immediate conflict for the moment (because this, too, involves anti-Semitism) I would like to relate one discussion I held in Ghana with a trade union leader, Mr. Magnus-George. I had everywhere spoken against Nasserite anti-Semitism being accepted by the African national revolutionary leaders for obviously opportunistic reasons. There was no anti-Semitism of any sort among the West African masses since the Middle Eastern peoples -- Syrian, Lebanese, etc. -- hold the position in West Africa that the Jew holds elsewhere, as small merchants, the middlemen who add their squeeze on the masses exploited by imperialism. Yet, for some abstract "African unity", one more Afro-Asian solidarity conference had been held and Nkrumah had voted with Nasser on the Resolution about Israel being an "outpost of Western imperialism." Mr. Magnus-George repeated the standard reply that Ghana was not opposed to the Jews or to Israel, but only to "Zionism." To prove his point he showed me a special issue of Ghana Times. I said: Fine, I believe you. Israeli help in agriculture and other projects in Israel and scholarships for Africans is accepted by you precisely because you are not anti-Semitic. But I do not accept the fact that signing Nasser's Resolution doesn't mean what it states. The consequences of a line are the same whether one "means" it or not.

It wasn't Israel the African states were hurting by these Resolutions. They were harming the African Revolutions. Playing big politics only led to constant diversion from the needed deepening of their own revolutions, diversion from being with the African masses in the unfurling in full of the banner of Marxist-Humanism. This is not the place to analyze how such politics aided, not African unity, but Western imperialism and the native military to take over power. But one thing must be asserted unequivocally: the tragedy of both the national revolutions and professed Marxism is this locking for shortcuts to revolution, in theory and militarily, as if guerrilla war is the universal substitute for proletarian revolution.

Thus, Che Guevara recently ended his silence in order to come out with a new slogan about "needing more Vietnams". He may have meant national liberation struggles

against not only American imperialism but any that would circumscribe the self-determination of oppressed peoples. It is, however, no accident that Mao's China came out with precisely the same slogan and did not mean that. The very opposite is the case. Mao meant any military actions that would slow down "American imperialism and Russian revisionism." Such actions, conducted with "Mao's Thought" in hand, have ^{only} included the class-collaborationism which led to the monumental disaster in Indonesia, the overly hurried nature of forgetting all about Ben Bella in order to convene the conference against Russian revisionism in Algeria the very week of Boumediene's coup. Presently such actions include conducting politics, in and out of the UN, which would prevent any peace in the Middle East, and stoke up the fires of the delusions of "Arab socialism" for the destruction of Israel -- in the further hope that American intervention can finally be provoked and a "second front" be opened against US imperialism bogged down in Vietnam.

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

-- RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

Footnotes:

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

2. Gamel Abdul Nasser, Speech, Dec. 31, 1952, quoted in The Ideology of the Egyptian Revolution by Jean Vigncau.

3. It isn't only Ba'ath, discussed later in our Letter, that shows its peculiar origin. So does the Communist Party there, which emerged from illegality in 1954, dropped even its agrarian demands so closely did it follow a "national front" line and so eagerly did it replace the class struggle with mere anti-Westernism, including anti-Semitism. Its leader, Khaled Bakdash, declared: "Syria is Arab nationalist, not Communist, and

will remain so" and, appealing to "all four classes" the 1955 Communist Party Manifesto declared its main aim to be simply "to unite all those who oppose the Pact of Baghdad." (See The Soviet Union and the Middle East by Walter Z. Laqueur (Praeger, 1959) To this day, the closest ties of Russia are with Syria.

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

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

6. The Militant, June 5, 1967

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

8. Weekly Political Letter: "The Syrian Revolt, The Cold War in the Middle East," Oct. 1961.

9. The expression is contained in Resolutions of the Sixth National Conference of the Ba'ath Party, included in Nationalism and Revolution in the Arab World by Hisham B. Sharabi (D. Van Nostrand Co., Princeton, N.J., 1966).

10. Philosophy of Revolution by Gamal Abdul Nasser

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

Anti-Semitism, Anti-Revolution, Anti-Philosophy

U.S. AND RUSSIA ENTER MIDDLE EAST COCKPIT

By Raya Dunayevskaya

The barbaric act of hanging 14 men from their necks in the public square in Baghdad has riveted attention, not so much on the alleged "Israeli spies," as on the degeneracy of the Iraq revolution. A decade ago it seemed to herald a new world. Today it has nothing to hang on to, except enmity to Israel. And even this "unifying force" failed to unify the Arab world.

IRAQ, EGYPT, AND NIXON TOO

The present Iraq government, the newest in a series of military coups and counter-coups, embarked upon the "discovery of Israeli spy rings" soon after it came to power "to clean up corruption." Obviously it was harder to achieve clear government than to unleash propaganda against the remaining 2,500 Jews in the country whom it promptly designated as "Fifth Columnists." Although other Arab countries, especially Egypt and Syria, suspected the virulent anti-Semitism was but a coverup to move against "Arab socialists," they at first could say little against the military junta headed by General Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr because they themselves held most adult Jewish males in prisons, and find anti-Israel propaganda almost the only unifying cement of their crisis-ridden countries.

After two months of "interrogations" and trials, however, one former high official of the Iraq Government, a left Ba'athist, was declared dead "while undergoing interrogation." Others, still held in jail, are feared to be among those marked for future hangings. Even foreign diplomats were not exempt from violent physical attacks. Indeed, on the very day of the hanging of "Israeli spies," a Syrian diplomat was wounded on a street in Baghdad.

The last straw, insofar as Egypt was concerned, was thrown by al-Bakr, a notorious anti-Nasserist, when he demanded that the Arab press laud his actions "for the Arab cause." The main Egyptian daily wrote that the gory spectacle was "not a heart-warming sight nor is it the occasion for organizing a festival and issuing invitations."

Consider, then, the sensitivity of the new Nixon Administration which announced that the President was looking for "new approaches" to the Middle East turmoil "insulated from decisions on the untidy rush of events in Iraq." All this is preparatory to plunging into a "Big Four" conference which will attempt to impose "peace" on the Middle East without either Arab or Israeli having a say in the determination of their own fate. It is not hard to imagine the "objectivity" which will result from his Westernization of the Middle East crisis.

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TWO OF A KIND: RUSSIA AND THE U.S.

Russia stood altogether mute during the savage executions. No doubt, part of the reason is the spontaneous affinity it feels for Iraqi anti-Semitism. But that is only part of the story. A more important reason for the lack of criticism, at a time when Egypt and Syria did attack the hangings, is the orientation of the Iraq military junta's questioning of the granting of concessions by the former administration to France to exploit 10,000 square kilometers of Iraq territory for oil development. Russia's interest in the same project overshadows the inclination to go along with De Gaulle's proposal for "Middle East peace," or to line up with "Arab socialists."

Outweighing both considerations is the possibility of the U.S.-Russia "detente" that is to say, U.S. recognition that Russia is in the Middle East to stay.

This doesn't mean that Nixon is walking into a "trap." On the contrary. Precisely because the U.S. does see further Russian expansion in that strategic area as signifying a shift in the world balance of power, it is anxious to re-establish its own role in the Arab Middle East before a confrontation with Russia. The U.S. sees as one with Russia -- little powers must not be allowed to set the time for the nuclear titans, even if it is the lives of the little ones that are at stake. In a word, the seelikes consider the Middle East an arena for a world power struggle, not for an Arab-Israeli confrontation "ahead of time."

Before the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, when both Russia and the U.S. thought they could control their "spheres of influence," the two super-powers could disregard the French proposal for a "Big Four" conference. They now know differently. Hence the present readiness to accept the junior partnerships of France and Britain and even the "world body, the UN" to dictate "a settlement."

The stage is all set for the deal. The substitute actors are in their respective places. But what about the real actors, the peoples whose lives are at stake? What has happened to that new, third world that it can now be ignored?

THE ARAB REVOLUTIONS

There was a time when getting rid of Western imperialism and internal feudalism in the Arab Middle East took priority over enmity to Israel. It is true that the setting up of the independent state of Israel in what was formerly Palestine brought about the first Arab-Israeli war. But the very success of Palestine's freedom from British imperialism set in motion truly independent Arab national revolutions. A dimension other than oil, a new human dimension -- Freedom -- entered the Middle East.

By 1958, when the Iraq revolution overthrew the Hashemite monarchy, the whole Dulles strategy of anti-national revolutions, for a new type of colonialism, and the creation of UNDO, a euphemism for American imperialism, fell apart. By knocking the kings out from under neo-colonialism in the Middle East, it became possible to start on an independent road.

Iraqi nationalism refused also to follow either Nasserism or the bastard socialism called the Ba'ath Party* in Syria. As against the

tendency to single party rule, Kassim, who headed the first republic of Iraq, allowed the activities of political parties, from moderate to Communist. (Now only in Israel is the Communist Party a legal party.) The unfinished state of the revolution, narrowness of mass base, however, made it impossible to fight the entrenched feudal landlords. The agricultural reforms were not implemented and when the Kurds demanded autonomy, the revolt was bloodily put down. A further political vacuum was created with Kassim outlawing all parties. The isolation from the masses was completed with the increase in unemployment and poverty. By 1963 Kassim rule was bloodily overthrown by a Ba'athist led military coup.

The most recent two-stage coup -- on July 17 and again on July 30-- brought to power a right-wing Ba'athist retired army general. The young colonels who aided the coup were soon scuttled. The new junta moved against the "French faction" but did nothing to get the country out of the deep economic crisis into which it had been plunged by the disastrous Arab-Israeli war in 1967.

The country is in chaos, and yet it is, precisely, the total disarray of the ruling classes and the military, on the one hand, and, on the other hand the dissatisfaction of the great masses, (rural and urban,) with their conditions of life as well as the armed resistance of the Kurds that has, in fact, created a pre-revolutionary situation in the country. It is fear of revolution that has compelled the al-Bakr clique to rely solely on the enmity to Israel and pure anti-Semitism to get it out of the ever-deepening crisis.

It is this which discloses yet another aspect of anti-Semitism -- especially Russian anti-Semitism.

RUSSIAN ANTI-SEMITISM, ANTI-REVOLUTION

Had it not been for the hangings in Iraq and the Russian silence about them in face of the attacks on them by the Arab countries closest to Russia, one may not have felt compelled to take a second look at the existence of anti-Semitism in the Russian orbit, dating back to Stalin's reign. Because, in theory, Communism stands opposed to anti-Semitism, it was so shocking to find it in existence that it was all too easy to attribute it to Stalin's paranoia, rather than to the objective conditions which had produced the transformation of a workers' state into its opposite -- a state-capitalist society. Inside Russia the opposition to Stalin's rule could be seen even as the people defeated Nazism.

For one thing, the heroic Russian masses refused to labor under the same exploitative conditions as they had done during the war. To get a sufficient labor force, all penalties for violations of Stalin's Draconian "labor laws," were cancelled.

Secondly, there were the returning veterans who had seen "the West" and failed to bow to the "superiority" of Russian "socialism." Thirdly, the youth and intellectual opposition grew.

It is because the revolutionary opponents grew, that Stalin unleashed the anti-Semitic campaign that he euphemistically called the struggle against "rootless cosmopolitans." Anti-Semitism had nothing to do with the birth of Israel (which, at first, Stalin voted for, as none but the

Jews had then successfully fought British imperialism). It had everything to do with internal conditions in Russia— the restlessness of the Russian masses with Stalinism.

Anti-semitism had nothing to do with "rootless cosmopolitanism." It had everything to do with stifling the emergence of new revolutionary forces that were struggling to come to power and be independent of Russian domination, be that in Yugoslavia or France. The notorious "Doctor's Plot" was not a struggle against "Zionism" in Israel but against revolutionary opponents in Russia and in the satellites. How quickly old radicals forget, once a new situation arises and a "new" enemy is discovered.

Of course, imperialism, whether Western or Zionist — or, for that matter, Communist of either the Russian or Chinese variety—has to be fought and destroyed. But how does that excuse the Left (from all varieties of Trotskyism to the most "non-ideological" would-be revolutionary) for designating all the Arab countries, including even the feudal monarchies, as "representing the progressive forces"? What accounts for the designation of Israel, from its birth to its most persistently anti-Zionist manifestation, as representing "Western Imperialism"?

Of course, internationalism must replace narrow nationalism, but how does that get to equal "the annihilation of Israel?" Shouldn't self-determination guarantee Israel's right to exist even as it holds for all sovereign nations? Marxist-Humanists refuse not only to "take sides" in Big Power deals but categorically refuse to violate proletarian internationalism and the class struggle within each existing power on the dictates of the Stalinist-Maoist-Castroite "two camp" theory of the world. There has to be an independent way out. There is.

Of course, anti-semitism is but one manifestation of capitalism. But when a "socialist" country like Poland in 1968 carries on so virulent an anti-Semitic campaign against its revolutionary opponents as to ape the Nazis in establishing a special "Jewish Department," it is high time both to recognize the class nature of present-day Communism, which is but a euphemism for state-capitalism, and to recognize that, in this epoch, it signifies anti-revolution as well.

To the extent that Israel is now an occupying force, resistance against it will, and is, emerging. It is this, and not commandos from without that serve as a beacon also for the Jews who are opposing Zionism. It was the threat of genocide that unified the nation. Commandos from without, led by the exhorters of the "annihilation of Israel" cannot, however, be appointed as a "revolutionary force," not even when Mao* adds his blessing to those of the fascist Al-Shukary.

In any case, the new mass dissatisfaction in Arab lands, disclosed in Iraq, is against the ruling classes, not against Israel. It is this the Left is in danger of strangling by tail-ending Communism.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

The danger now is to force a false "Arab unity" against Israel, or "Zionist unity" against Arabs, thereby not only giving the Big Powers an excuse for intervention, but actually stifling the new emergent revolutionary forces throughout the Middle East even as Stalin crushed every revolution in the path of the Red Army as well as every revolutionary movement that dared aspire to power outside of the Red Army orbit.

We have seen the same role reenacted in Paris last Spring. Are we now to have it reappear in the Middle East? That would be the greatest crime any revolutionary could commit. For, note this, the restlessness of the Iraq masses and the demand of the Kurds for autonomy there is directed, not at Israel, but Iraq. The opponents in the jails in Syria oppose Ba'ath rule; the very narrow mass base speaks loudly enough of the Ba'athist leaders' total isolation from the masses. And the student demonstrations in Egypt, as all over the world, are directed, not against a "foreign" enemy, but against the native rulers.

Nationalism is not the beacon it was a decade ago when it seemed to be the way to fight both imperialism and native class exploitation. New forces are emerging who are searching for a more comprehensive theory of liberation that would release these new revolutionary passions and transform the pre-revolutionary situations into social revolutions.

This is no longer a question of pointing to a theoretical void. The practical consequences of the void cry out loud for a philosophy of social revolution. If we only open our eyes, we will see new forces of liberation emerging. Do not stifle them.

February, 1969
Detroit, Mich.

--- RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

* For an analysis of the Ba'ath Party, as well as of Mao's ventures into the Middle East, see "The Arab-Israeli Collision," a Political-Philosophic Letter, June, 1967, News & Letters. Not only has the Sino-Soviet conflict caused a split in the Communist Party of Israel, but it has also produced "Liaist" tendencies within both the Ba'ath and Masserist parties.

NEWS & LETTERS

NOVEMBER, 1973

THE MIDDLE EAST ERUPTS

By Raya Dunayevskaya
National Chairwoman, News and Letters Committees

(Editor's Note: As we go to press, the two super powers have re-entered the Middle East cockpit, allegedly to gain a "cease-fire"—which has not stopped the firing. The latest developments have changed nothing in the fundamental analysis written on October 12 by Raya Dunayevskaya, which we print below.)

* * *

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan on Oct. 8 pronounced the highly charged imperialistic statement: "The same road that leads from Damascus to Tel Aviv also leads from Tel Aviv to Damascus." To try to defend such reactionary militarist statements by pointing to the fact that it was not Israel, but Egypt and Syria who first crossed the 1967 cease-fire boundaries, is to fall into the typical capitalistic-Communist trap about "aggression."

It is never a question of who fired the first shot. Israel had six years during which she had not returned so much as one inch of Arab soil.

Not only that. She had behaved as any imperialist—occupying territory that was not hers; expelling people whose land it was, and proceeding to remake it in her image both as to land and as to settlers. Therefore, to keep harping on the timing of the surprise attack, blasphemous or otherwise, is to talk in a language that is absolutely foreign to the masses who are doing the dying, Israeli as well as Arab.

This is not a matter of "approval" of either Arab or Israeli rulers in this war. Nor can the question possibly be limited to the two sides, in disregard of the super-powers—U.S. and Russia—who have been in the Middle East cockpit ever since the 1967 war.

THE BIG POWERS ARE LINING UP

Take Kissinger's frightening statement: "We shall resist aggressive foreign policy. Detente cannot survive irresponsibility in any area, including the Middle East."

Our double-tongued Secretary of State tried to give the impression that he was threatening Russia. In fact, judging by today's (Oct. 12) press conference, he was also saying the opposite—that Russia is a "responsible" power and as "worried" as the U.S. about the Middle East.

What it all adds up to is that the U.S., like Russia, has no intention of letting either the Israelis or the Arabs enjoy self-determination; that, once the battle lines are "clear," the Big Powers will do the deciding.

So far to the right have the Israeli leaders moved, so imperialistically-minded are they now, that already Premier Meir dares to say that "after victory," Israel will no longer be satisfied with the borders of Oct. 5, 1973! Does that woman really have the gall to see herself driving into

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occupied Cairo? Or Damascus? Or wish to dam up the Suez Canal? Where and when will all this madness stop? Can they not face reality?

Just as the Maginot Line failed to protect France, the Bar Lev Line fell to Egypt. In both cases it was a question of militarists believing in technology rather than in people. Moreover, the Bar Lev Line was not out-flanked; the Egyptians are reoccupying their own land. Ever where Israeli technology helped Israel, it still is not the decisive factor. The Arabs in Israeli-occupied Sinai surely look at the Egyptians as liberators who they wish would come closer. That fact cannot be changed even if Israel mounts a counter-offensive and wins.

As against the 1967 Arab war rhetoric which showed its unmistakable anti-Semitic spirit with its sloganeering of "Driving Israel into the sea," Premier Sadat of Egypt this time is not questioning Israel's right to existence, but its right to occupy Sinai. Whatever be his "gamesmanship," it comes after last year's display of willingness to open the Suez Canal to international traffic, including that of Israel. It was Premier Golda Meir who had hardened her stand and would not budge.

Presently, she is trying to shift the eyes of the Jews (Israeli and Russian) toward hated Russia: "We are fighting against the Egyptian Army and Syrian Army, but the rockets, the tanks, the planes--everything that is in the hands of the Egyptian and Syrian soldier--all this comes to him from the Soviet Union."

It is true that the arms are Russian, even as it is true that Israel's are U.S.-made; exactly what Third World country produces tanks and missiles and planes? It is not true that the Arabs are fighting Russia's war; they are fighting Israel's imperialism. What is true, above all, is that in the entire quarter century of Israel's existence, she has done nothing to solve the question of the Palestinian refugees.

ISRAEL: WHAT IT WAS; WHAT IT IS

What has happened to the humanity, the greatness, the daring of the Jews who escaped Nazism and fought the British imperialists so successfully that they inspired Nasser?

There is no doubt that a new direction surged up with the creation, in 1948, of the state of Israel in the Middle East, whose politics heretofore had been dominated by oil. Although the fact is now conveniently forgotten, it was the anti-imperialist struggle of the Palestinian Jews that so overwhelmed the young, then unknown, Colonel Nasser, who had come to sign the pact ending the Arab-Israeli war, that, instead of dwelling on the armistice terms, he was plying the Jews with questions as to just how the outgunned, outmanned force could have overcome British occupation. And Nasser did, indeed, apply the lessons he learned from the Jews, as he himself tells it in his "Philosophy of Revolution."*

What has happened to the Jewish revolutionaries who were during those World War II years also trying to establish solidarity with the Arab masses who would fight for freedom from imperialism? To point to

*See my Political Letters on the 1967 war and the 1969 Iraqi outburst which personified anti-Semitism, anti-revolution, anti-philosophy. (Available from News and Letters for 35¢.)

the reactionary regimes in the Middle East, their monarchies and shai-kdoms, cannot possibly substitute for Israeli injustices to the Palestinian masses who know no other life than that of refugees.

OIL, AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN

In the Middle East, oil is "the oldest profession." It has always been a corrupting practice which kept feudal monarchies, shai-kdoms and emirs in power, the masses in poverty and illiteracy, the countries underdeveloped. With state capitalism as the dominant feature of world economy, oil has assumed a still newer form: reactionaries as well as "radicals" have learned all about nationalization, price gouging, and using their American counter-parts to put pressure on U.S. imperialism to tilt policy toward the Arab oil monopolists rather than Israel.

This is volatile enough, but what is one to say when this late in the century we are confronted, at one and the same time, with a call from the rightist William F. Buckley, Jr. for re-colonization, and from a former leftist, Walter Laqueur, with a statement that "a Western military presence" is a present need?

Here is what Buckley wrote before the Middle East erupted: "Somewhere along the line, the nations of Western Europe should make a preemptive moral strike against hardening Arab policy. It would have the nature of saying: Mideast oil must be made available." (Published in New York Post, 10/9/73).

The liberals may not have the gall of a Buckley, who christens colonization "a preemptive moral strike." But one and all are busy pointing to the U.S. need for a mailed fist in the Middle East, and espousing the idea that Israel could become that supreme weapon not only against the oil powers but also against the nuclear power, Russia.

Is this where it all is now? Are revolutionaries supposed to "take sides" on such imperialist ground, be it U.S. or Russia, Arab or Israel-- or, for that matter, China, which is playing the wildest game of all, since it has nothing to lose and anything gained is a "victory" against its enemy, Russia.

MAO'S CHINA AND THE THIRD WORLD

Along with the terrorists (and outright fascists like Al-Shukairy whom Mao's China sheltered in the 1967 war), China prides herself on never having recognized Israel's right to existence. Never mind that the People's Republic of China didn't exist in 1947-48. Never mind that even a Stalin (to whom Mao bowed and still does) was the very first to recognize the newborn State of Israel. Never mind that "Marxism-Leninism" that Mao claims to espouse is supposed to stand for social revolution rather than individual terror, much less kingdoms or shai-kdoms. All that we are supposed to see is that Russia is "Enemy Number One," and all else is subordinated to that single overpowering "fact."

On this, Golda Meir and Mao are one. In this, though on opposite sides of the firing line, and though one (Mao) claims to be the spokesman for the Third World, those two are the only rulers who seem not to shy away from any consequences of their politics, even where that might lead to a nuclear holocaust.

The possibility of World War Three is by no means excluded. The jockeying for position is not only among the warring powers but among the nuclear super-powers. The Middle East war is by no means over yet, either as between the countries at war or the super-powers lining up behind closed doors, much less within each country.

WHERE TO NOW ?

Where the 1967 war, with its anti-Semitism and anti-Israel-as-state only served to unite class opponents within Israel, this war can open new ways out if any unfold a new banner of solidarity across national boundaries. This is the only area where revolutionaries outside of Israel can take part.

The "New Left" which thinks being against Israel in toto proves them to be "real" revolutionaries aligning with the Third World, and that the Third World as it now exists means a new world social order, are creating nothing but fatal illusions. No revolutionary regimes exist in Jordan; nor is Mao's China the equivalent of socialism.

Quite the contrary. All that such false identification shows is that its exponents cannot think of liberation without hanging onto existing state powers—rulers who strike out against their own masses.

All one has to do to see that is to look at recent events: King Hussein's massacre of the Palestinian rebels; Mao's turning against his own "ultra left" youth because they followed the Cultural Revolution's slogan, "it is right to rebel."

For that matter, the "Left" in Israel, who thought the way to oppose their rulers was to become spies for Syria, demonstrate that they have no conception of the fact that the struggle for liberation within one's country is not, and cannot be, turned over to an outside state power. Which does not mean that the Israeli Left has no way out and must capitulate to its rulers in the ongoing war.

This war is one too many for both sides in the Middle East conflict. For the situation to have moved off from dead center only to erupt into a full scale war transforms this, for the second time since 1967, into a war of global proportions. That is to say, the two super powers enter to take away the right of self-determination of both the Arab and the Israeli peoples. All the more imperative is it for the Middle East masses to see that the final answer will only come from revolutions within each country, and that includes a revolution in Israel.

In the U.S., the "Year of Europe" has become the year of Watergate has become the year of wildcats has become the year of counter-revolution in Chile has become the year of the Middle East. Sadat calls it "the year of decision." That may well be so, but not in the way Sadat means it. Neither the "limited war" he is espousing for the moment, nor the oil interests pressuring the United States, will have the last say. The Big Powers, nuclearly armed, have no intention of allowing anyone but themselves to do the deciding—not even such middle powers as Western Europe or Japan, who do wish to see a tilting toward the oil monopolists.

The point is that for revolutionaries, there can be no simplistic answers. For they are no substitute for seriously working out a method

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of struggle inseparable from a philosophy of liberation, all integrally related to masses in motion. There simply is no substitute for a social revolution within each country.

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THE U.S., GLOBAL POLITICS AND THE MIDEAST WAR

By Raya Dunayevskaya
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At prime time, on Nov. 25, the President took to the TV and air waves to tell us about the energy crisis. As if reducing house and office temperatures to 68 degrees and auto speed to 50 miles an hour would solve the crisis which caused him to create still one more bureaucracy, the Energy Emergency Action Group, the overconfident but distraught Mr. Nixon unfolded still another fairy tale: by the end of the decade the U.S. would be so totally self-sufficient in energy that we would be independent of any other land, the Middle East--or whatever!

The gilding of the lily for the 1980s hid from us that this Administration is doing nothing whatever "to discipline" the oil monopolies, although it is they who are neither producing enough oil nor in any way "disciplining" the oil kingdoms, sheikdoms and emirates who are so totally dependent on the know-how and technology of "the seven sisters" (BP, Shell, Jersey or Exxon, Stancal or Chevron, Texaco, Gulf and Mobil).

WHAT NIXON DIDN'T TELL US

That was not all that we did not hear about in Nixon's hurried 15-minute address. Not one word was uttered about the Middle East war and the total disarray this has caused among the West European powers plus Japan--all U.S. allies.

The wolf-eat-wolf policy is practiced not because they have much interest in either side of the Arab-Israeli war, but because the question of oil is as potent a weapon and impotent a political principle as ever was Munich.

Most deceptive of all was the silence about the one simple and overriding truth that faces us: a recession, a deep one. No serious economist now denies that unemployment, far from receding, will reach unsatisfactory levels in 1974. The average, by spring, may reach eight percent--and that never fails to mean that for Blacks it is unbearably twice that high.

To get to the depth of the crisis we have to turn away from Nixon's lollipop chat about no lighting for the Christmas trees and turn to the myriad contradictions in U.S. relations with the Mideast, with West Europe, with Japan, with the world, especially Russia.

THE NEW ANTI-RUSSIAN STANCE

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's whirlwind "peace tour" through the Middle East ended in, of all places, Peking, and there on Nov. 14 achieved a totally new set of relations. To the surprise even of Kissinger, he was presented that morning with a change in the paragraph from the joint communique with Nixon in 1972. In place of the 1972 communique making Taiwan the crucial question obstructing "normalization" between China and the U.S., the 1973 paragraph limited itself to affirming "the principle of one China."

Even before the moment, on Nov. 11, when Chou greeted Kissinger as "the Mideast cyclone," it was clear that the Mideast war had brought U.S.-China relations to a sort of joint anti-Russian stage.

For one thing, China had not used its veto power against the U.S.-Russia sponsored cease-fire resolution in the Mideast. Secondly, and crucially, it was not Russia's sponsorship that kept China from using its veto power. Rather, it was China's appreciation of the new U.S. anti-Russian stance.

When Russia threatened to enter the Mideast imbroglio, America called a world alert. As against West Europe that refused to let the U.S. use its ports or air space, China declared that the U.S. had to do so "to forestall the Soviet Union from sending troops unilaterally to the Middle East." As the China News Agency put it, it was only because Russia understood "that the U.S. 'really meant business' that it backed down."

China has but one preoccupation—its own national interests which hold that Russia is "Enemy No. One." Because that is so, it quickly forgot that it was "totally" for the Arab side, up to and including "driving Israel into the sea." No sooner did the Middle East war look as if it might become a Russia-U.S. confrontation than Chou moved for a global position for itself WITH the U.S. This, too, was not the first time China moved for a rapprochement with the U.S. on a great deal more critical issue than trade and "cultural relations."

First, it helped take the U.S. off the hotseat in Indochina. Then during the SALT talks (which it ridiculed), it nevertheless began egging West Europe not to oppose a "U.S. presence." In the Mideast it was even more intensely interested in preferring a "U.S. presence." China all too well understands the titan nuclear power that the U.S. is.

The only one who didn't understand what was involved in the Mideast eruption as it edged toward an "East-West" confrontation—or didn't care to face its global implications—was West Europe. It was neither willing to sacrifice its immediate, national interests as they were bound to Arab oil, nor was it willing, as the West European press put it, to risk "nuclear annihilation without representation." And it was a great deal angrier at the U. S. than at Russia.

"THE YEAR OF EUROPE" THAT WASN'T

Not only did Nixon-Kissinger's "Year of Europe" never come to be. But the intra-imperialist rivalry between West Europe and the U.S. split open at all seams, and not only over the Middle East war which brought it all to a climax. Rather, it began to question also the "philosophic underpinnings" of globalism.

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During the critical two weeks, between the U.S. world alert on Oct. 25 and Nov. 8 (when Kissinger departed for the Mideast tour), the statements from the State and Defense Departments, and the White House itself, were endless. A first, Nixon tried reducing the new tensions to an economic level: "Europe which gets 80 percent of its oil from the Mideast would have frozen to death unless there had been a settlement-- and Japan, too."

Then Kissinger, the "architect" of the "Year of Europe" exploded: "What concerns us is that for two weeks, while the U.S. had to make significant decisions, the Europeans acted as though NATO did not exist. The Europeans seemed more interested in gaining marginal advantages. I don't care what happens to NATO I'm so disgusted."

The Europeans, angered both at Nixon's material vulgarity and the Defense and State Departments' arrogance of nuclear alerting without consultation, let it be known* that European and U.S. interests are not the same in the Middle East: "It's Dullesian hypocrisy on the part of Dr. Kissinger to pretend that they are."

West Europe, at one and the same time, tried narrowing the disagreement to the Mideast which "was never a part of NATO's origin or purpose," and expanding the Mideast stance to an anti-U.S. one, holding that Washington was tottering on the edge of hysteria because of "a Zionist lobby."

NIXON-KISSINGER'S VISION: Pax Americana

But their anti-U.S. unity did not succeed in forging a common stand as to itself. They were united in taking a pro-Arab position but not a pro-Europe stand. They rejected, for example, the Dutch motion that they "share oil within the Common Market community."

Dr. Strangelove Kissinger did expound one "truth!" As against those West European rulers who, since they have no place to go, do not know how to get there, Nixon-Kissinger have a "vision": Pax Americana. Hence, they keep referring to the need, first of all, for a "conceptual basis." More realistically put, Nixon-Kissinger are accusing West Europe of failing to see that "if" the U.S. was "on the edge of hysteria," it was not over Israel or the "Zionist lobby"--surely not when no election is at hand--but over a possible nuclear confrontation with the other nuclear titan, Russia, over who shall rule the world.

Not only is "the Year of Europe" the year that wasn't. But "the new Atlantic charter" that is evolving is the absolute opposite of what Nixon-Kissinger called for.

Even when tempers had cooled considerably, Le Monde declared that "U.S. authorities, brazenly calling their allies to order for their 'lack of cooperation' during the Mideast crisis," were in truth showing that it was not for European defense that "it is absolutely necessary to keep U.S. troops in Europe" but "for America's own security."

In a word, the single Kissinger truth is that, far from the Zionist lobby or Arab oil being the mainspring of the present confrontation, it is "U.S. presence" versus Russian that is pivotal, that overrides all other questions, that has won China, half neutralized the Arab world,

gotten concessions from Israel, and is the question that has put a question mark over the very existence of NATO.

Of course, it isn't only West Europe that "doesn't understand." Neither does Kissinger's own assistant, the specialist on the Mideast in the State Department--Sisco. So happy was he over Kissinger's 48-hour miracle of getting Sadat to sign the six-point "peace plan" that he declared that he was "convinced that Congress, despite the Zionist lobby, is now beginning to see the situation much more clearly. The mood is changing in the U.S. in favor of the Arabs!" The reason? "Oil and our strategic interests." But those two areas of interest are not similar, and Sisco is no "expert" in global strategy as is Kissinger, his boss.

THE NEW ROLE OF SADAT'S EGYPT AND 'THE LEFT'

There is no doubt that there has been a shift on the Middle East. Kissinger is ready enough to force concessions from Israel and therefore can appear to have a more "even-handed" policy. But what is of far greater importance--indeed, is the overriding aim of Nixon-Kissinger--is to keep Russia out of the Middle East.

That was the trump card he used to get the Arabs to be for the "peace plan." With it, he hoped not only to get Sadat's signature but to neutralize Faisal. Though the Saudi Arabian monarch is still using oil as the political weapon both to exact high prices and to separate West Europe from the U.S., he himself fears "radicals" sufficiently to back Egypt to the hilt, including possible "peace" in Geneva.

At the same time, Nixon took steps to appease Europe, to play down any craveness and play up "interests of the alliance as a whole": "if the U.S.S.R. learns that it can exploit the Middle East to separate the U. S. from its European alliance, this could be very disastrous for Europe and the world." That "48 hour miracle"--U.S. as "peacemaker"--is the imperial counterpoint to Europe's "new unity." What hangs in the balance everywhere, however, are the crises at home. And since much of this is related to using oil as political weapon, all eyes are on the new role of Sadat's Egypt.

On the one hand, there were some demonstrations in Europe against their own rulers buckling so easily to the demands of oil for anti-Israeli stance--"Are we going to witness another Munich?" On the other, and more massive hand, however, the Left, in its correct stand against Israel's occupation of all the Arab lands and total disregard of the Palestinian refugees, is acting as if Arab oil equals "revolution."

The truth is that the reason Sadat's Egypt achieved "Arab unity" in the use of oil as political weapon is not due to his being a revolutionary. Quite the contrary. Nasser's Egypt never could get the oil kingdoms to use their resource as a political weapon against "the West" (which suddenly now includes Japan!), because they feared him as a revolutionary nationalist who also stepped outside Egypt's borders. As against that, the oil kingdoms have total confidence in Sadat who will not only do nothing "to interfere in internal affairs" but will also do all in his power to discourage revolutionary movements against any exploitative, reactionary feudal regimes.

MIDDLE EAST AS KEY

What the Left refuses to face in this Egyptian victory is that, far from it being what Western imperialism calls "colonialism in reverse"—the masses in the underdeveloped countries really hitting out against imperialism, the simple truth is that neither "the West" nor the oil kingdoms fear Sadat. What Sadat did achieve, in addition to Arab oil being used as a political weapon, is to let Nixon and Brezhnev know they cannot put the Mideast on the back burner forever.

As against not only Israel but also U.S.-Russia, Sadat's Egypt took the initiative in making secret plans for the attack, in choice of date, Yom Kippur and Ramadan, for that surprise attack. The success of the crossing of Suez into Sinai was in no small part due to the fact that it was a surprise. In any case, politically it was a total success and Brezhnev and Nixon rushed to the alert, not necessarily on the same side even where detente demanded it.

The new, the global new in all this is that, instead of the "Balkanization" which Kissinger, the Euro-centered intellectual, thinks it is, the Middle East showed it can become the key to the world situation, as Germany was in World Wars I and II. So the whole "conceptual basis" of "Atlantic Alliance" better look at itself first, and perhaps for the last time.

The Left must not forget that its "conceptual basis" is the simple truth that the enemy is always at home, with its class rulers. In Israel, too, unfortunately, much of the Left, and not only the moderate doves, is tailending the hawks. It cannot be otherwise so long as its perspectives are not totally revolutionary, not nationalistic, and truly independent of the U.S., Russia, China, or any other state power.

BACK HOME

Where Nixon thought the Middle East War would get him off the Watergate hot seat and show him as the world statesman in full command of the global crisis, the masses are so disgusted with all the lies pouring out of the White House that they even thought the world alert but one more prop of Tricky Dicky.

Whatever the worries—and they are many, beginning with the tightening of their belts that are tight enough already—there is everywhere a new search for something to replace Nixon-Kissinger's "conceptual basis" and "philosophic underpinnings" of Pax Americana. In the ghettos a passion for philosophy is no academic question. Rather, the search for a new relationship of thought to action that underlies the tense quietude is that of the eve of many storms, none of whose direction is known, so that all are preparing for the worst. This does not mean that they will submit to the worst, but that they are working out new forms of opposition.

Le Monde's editor-in-chief, Andre Fontaine, didn't satisfy himself only with calling for the return of all 1967 Arab territories, but also employed the euphemism used by Arabs when they mean it as a time-bomb planted for extermination of Israel: "the legitimate rights of the Palestinians." Andre Fontaine concluded thunderously: "It is unthinkable that Europe say amen to all American initiatives. Europe must forge its own unity if it is to make its weight felt."

A more moderate British publication—the London Sunday Times—likewise rushed to an anti-U.S. stand. "It has never been a term of NATO membership that European governments should support the Zionist imperatives weighing upon American presidents."