

Xs: Jon, Jafar, (Gérard)

MATERIALS RELATED TO THE REPORT OF THE AD HOC FACT-FINDING COMMISSION  
ON DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS IN THE LEBANESE RCG

- 1) Report on the September 1976 Meeting of the Arab Commission
- 2) Proposal for the Reorganization of the International Arab Commission
- 3) Minutes of the October 9-10, 1976, Meeting of the Arab Commission
- 4) Minutes of the November 6, 1976, Meeting of the Arab Commission
- 5) February 8, 1977, letter to the United Secretariat Bureau from Jon Rothschild

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1. Report on the September 1976 Meeting of the Arab Commission

In accordance with a decision made in July, the International Arab Commission held a meeting in August to discuss the reorganization of its work this autumn. At that meeting, Jon was designated to draft a written proposal on reorganization. This was done, and the September meeting of the commission discussed and voted on that draft, making certain amendments. The text of the proposal accepted by the commission is attached. The vote in favor of the amended proposal was unanimous; except for Comrade Munir, who disagreed with point 4 under tasks, proposing that the journal described in the draft should not be in Arabic. In addition, Comrade Léon proposed that the journal be bilingual in Arabic and French rather than solely in Arabic. The meeting decided that Jon should give a report to the USec Bureau summarizing the views of the commission and presenting the reorganization proposal and would report back to the next meeting on the attitude of the Bureau.

In addition to the reorganization plan, the meeting voted on the following motion:

Considering:

a. That information we have received indicates that the current objective situation in Lebanon makes it extremely difficult to carry out effective political work;

b. That the Arab Commission has elaborated a plan for the reorganization of the Arab work of the International which requires the presence of Comrades Majida and Selim,

the Arab Commission believes that Comrades Majida and Selim can be more effective in building the FI if they remain in Europe during the coming period, so long as considerations a and b continue to hold. The Arab Commission therefore requests that the United Secretariat assign these comrades to remain in Europe to help implement the project of the commission and to communicate this decision to the comrades in Lebanon.

This motion was approved unanimously, with the exception of Comrade Munir. In favor of the motion were Jafar, Jon, Gérard, Léon, and Majida.

## 2. Proposal for the Reorganization of the International Arab Commission

When the Arab Commission of the United Secretariat was first formed in March 1976, it was seen as having two major areas of activity: to coordinate and centralize the efforts to establish revolutionary Marxist nuclei in the Maghreb countries; to serve as a transmission belt between the existing nuclei in the Arab East and the International as a whole, which entailed writing articles for Inprecor, overseeing the activity of the Arab commissions in various sections in Europe and coordinating that activity as far as possible, distributing written material prepared by the groups in the region, etc.

The composition of the commission was determined accordingly: it included two representatives of the French commission, one from the British commission, two members of the United Secretariat, and one comrade from Inprecor, with the understanding that leading members of the groups in the region would attend meetings as often as possible. The general role of the commission was defined as follows: to act for the existing Arab groups in those geographic regions in which the groups themselves were unable to act.

Since the commission was formed, there have been a number of changes in the objective situation:

1. The commission has been unable to carry out the task of centralizing and coordinating work of establishing nuclei in the Maghreb. The basic reason for this has been twofold: lack of clarity on the relationship between the responsibilities of the International commission and those of the French commission; organizational and political differences within the French commission, which have since resulted in the dissolution of that body.

2. The events in Lebanon have qualitatively altered the situation of the revolutionary Marxist nucleus there. As far as International work is concerned, the most obvious sense in which this is true is that contact between the group and the center has been virtually cut off. In addition, whatever the current conditions of the comrades there and whatever the medium-term evolution of the civil war, Lebanon will no longer be able to serve as a center for the organization of our work in the region, at least for a period of time, because of the impossibility of travel back and forth and because of the lack of functioning of communications systems.

3. A number of leading comrades from groups in the region are now in Europe on a more or less extended basis. Consequently, the available resources for conducting Arab work in Europe have expanded.

4. For many months now it has been impossible for the comrades in Lebanon to publish Munadil, which had served as the central political voice of Arab revolutionary Marxists. In fact, one of the tasks of the commission had been precisely to distribute it as widely as possible. It is unlikely that publication and distribution of Munadil will be able to begin again soon. In effect, this means that the Fourth International currently has no regular journal in Arabic.

5. Also as a result of the civil war in Lebanon, the composition of the Arab milieu in Europe has changed. Historically, Arabs recruited politically to the FI in Europe have either remained in Europe permanently or have been unwilling or unable to continue political activity on returning to their countries. Now, however, there are significant numbers of Arabs who have left Lebanon out of necessity and do not intend to remain in Europe permanently or to become assimilated into European life. At the same time, they are seeking both explana-

tions for what has happened and political alternatives. This offers the FI a field of activity that may well prove fruitful.

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The new situation may thus be summarized as follows: Coordination among the various groups in the Arab East no longer exists; the Arabic newspaper of the Fourth International no longer exists; it is impossible for the comrades in Lebanon to direct the work in other Arab countries; some of our leading Arab cadre cannot go back to the Arab world in the immediate future.

In addition, this new objective situation arises as the FI enters a pre-World Congress discussion during which the question of the Arab revolution is on the agenda. Because of the long agenda (there are nine points), the priorities of the International as a whole, and the formal limit on the number of pages in the internal discussion bulletin, it is unlikely that the question of the Arab revolution will be dealt with adequately. This problem is compounded by the fact that no body of political discussion on Arab questions exists, since no unified Arab section exists for the whole region. The Arab revolution is, moreover, the only point on the World Congress agenda for which this is true. For Spain and Portugal there are sections; the points on European perspectives and the balance-sheet on the Indochinese revolution have been discussed (and will be further discussed) by various International bodies, such as the United Secretariat, before a draft resolution is submitted. The theses on women's oppression and the women's liberation movement are being elaborated in the framework of an international commission and reports from the European and North American sections and sympathizing groups. The Arab resolution being presented for the Congress, however, was drafted more than two years ago (before such events as the civil war in Lebanon, the conflict over West Sahara, the second Sinai accord, the defeat of the Kurdish armed struggle, the development of a new political situation in Algeria, not to mention the evolution of the workers movement in countries like Egypt). There has been no organized discussion on an international or even Arab-wide scale of these developments, which have occurred since the text was drafted. We therefore find ourselves in the following contradiction: The experiences of the comrades are qualitatively superior to the pre-Ninth World Congress level, but no vehicle has been established for assimilating and discussing those experiences on a leadership level or for involving the rank and file in such a discussion. There is thus a risk of these experiences being lost as political and theoretical acquisitions for the movement.

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The tasks and composition of the Arab commission should be altered in accordance with this new objective and subjective situation. In general, the commission should take on four areas of work:

1. Coordination and centralization of the fractions now working toward the construction of revolutionary Marxist nuclei in the Maghreb. This means that the commission should receive regular and direct reports from the comrades in the Maghreb countries and from the Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian fractions and should oversee their work politically. The general orientation of the fractions should be discussed in the commission (entrism, relations with other groups, etc.) as should the political attitude of the fractions on more general questions (response to Boumeddiene's institutionalization plan, Sahara, etc.).

2. Coordination of the work of the groups in the Arab East. It is obvious that no political body in Europe can substitute itself for the leaderships of the groups on the scene, nor could it become a genuine political leadership in the sense of guiding the daily or even weekly activity of these groups. But the commission can and should hold regular discussions on the political situation in each country (based on regular reports from the countries themselves), the political line of the groups on the major questions, their activity, and so on. The most elementary considerations of the process of collective discussion dictate that the isolation of the Egyptian and Iraqi comrades from the International be ended. This can only be done if regular discussion and exchanges occur within some International body. In addition, even in the cases of Israel and Lebanon, discussion of the groups' activities and line should be the affair of an International body and not simply the groups themselves.

3. The commission should become the vehicle for International discussion of the general political problems of the Arab revolution. Since, as pointed out above, the International bulletin will devote only a relatively small number of pages to these questions, the commission should initiate a written discussion and should establish technical facilities for mimeographing discussion bulletins, distributing them, and discussing them orally. Concurrently, these bulletins can be circulated to the ranks of the organizations in the Arab world, the Arab commissions in various sections, and individual comrades in cases where commissions do not exist, as well as the USec Bureau. This discussion could deal with such points as: existence or not of an Arab nation; question of an Arab Leninist party; character of Zionism; the national question in Palestine; problems of the Kurdish revolution; history of the Communist parties in the Arab world; development of capitalism and the political structure in the major countries of the Arab world, etc. Part of this discussion may involve differences and be polemical; in many cases, however, it will be rather a question of research, discussion, and education, the production of a body of texts that can help to educate our militants.

4. While the Arab commission cannot replace Munadil, it can attempt to partially fill the vacuum left by the temporary disappearance of Munadil. The aim should be to produce an Arabic journal to appear on a regular basis directed at both the Arab countries themselves (and Israel) and the Arab communities in Europe, taking account of the modification of that milieu as described above. The journal should be a theoretical magazine dealing with the central political and historical questions of the Arab revolution. The commission should designate a subcommittee of several comrades to be in charge of editing the journal and of making a concrete proposal on size, regularity, printing location, etc. The general contents of each issue should be discussed by the commission as a whole; they may include, for example, translations of articles that have appeared in Inprecor or other journals of the FI, adaptations of some of the articles produced under point 3 above, articles solicited from the comrades in the region, articles specially written by members of the commission, etc. The establishment of such an organ would also provide a potential organizational vehicle for contacts with Arab and Kurdish militants.

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This reorganization of the tasks and purposes of the commission would imply an expansion of its composition. The procedure by which this should be implemented is as follows: The commission itself should make a proposal to the Bureau of the United Secretariat, which designated the commission in the first place. That proposal would then be discussed and voted on by the Bureau and by the United Secretariat.

### 3. Minutes of the October 9-10, 1976, Meeting of the Arab Commission

Agenda: Political situation in Lebanon; Organization of work; immigrant work in France; Paris demonstration; Israel; Tunisia; Contact with Lebanese comrades; Algeria; Middle East work.

1. Political situation in Lebanon. A discussion was held on the Syrian offensive and the prospects for the evolution of the situation. The objective situation for the comrades was briefly discussed, with most comrades agreeing that the question of whether they should remain in Beirut or even in the country should be discussed directly with them through the USec Bureau, the general feeling being that they should not stay where they are at present.

#### 2. Organization of work.

a. Report by Jon: A report was given to the USec Bureau outlining the history of the work of the commission, the problems we have faced, and the proposal for reorganization voted on at the September commission meeting. The opinions expressed by the comrades of the Bureau were as follows: They agreed with the general plan of work and particularly with the necessity for producing the Arabic journal and for organizing political discussion (that is, points 3 and 4 of the reorganization plan). In particular, they felt that the commission should try to redraft the document on the Arab revolution, bringing it up to date, as soon as possible. The general feeling was that we had to make the best of a bad objective situation, which meant concentrating on cadre-building work with the perspective of forming cadres that could be sent to intervene in the Arab countries as the objective situation permitted, Egypt above all. On the questions of the status of the Lebanese comrades currently in Europe and the implementation of the reorganization plan, the following was decided: That Comrade Duret of the Bureau should get in touch with the comrades in Beirut as soon as a way of reaching them could be found. He would communicate the opinion of the commission and the Bureau and discuss with them about their own objective situation, the commission's plan of work, and the role of the comrades who are here. Until the Bureau succeeded in getting in contact with the comrades in Beirut, the Commission should proceed with its plan of work, since there was no point in waiting indefinitely. The formal status of the comrades from Lebanon, however, could be definitively determined only in consultation with the comrades of the RCG. The Bureau also agreed that any objections to the general line of the work of the commission should be discussed with the Bureau and the United Secretariat and not within the commission itself.

b. On the composition of the commission: The meeting decided to propose the following comrades as members of the commission: Jafar, Gérard, Jon, Galois, Selim, Majida, Daniel (from the Algerian fraction). In addition, it was decided that there should be a representative of the Moroccan fraction. The meeting proposed that Jon be delegated to explain the reorganization plan and Bureau decisions to Ben, who should then hold a meeting with the Moroccan fraction to choose a representative, provided they were in agreement to implement the plan of work decided on by the commission and approved by the Bureau. It was also decided that the Tunisian fraction was not yet strong enough politically or organizationally to be represented on the Commission. As soon as this situation could be rectified, however, the Tunisian fraction should also select a representative to the commission.

c. There was some discussion on the question of coordination of work in France, specifically the problem of the journal RSA. It was

reported that Brestar had already begun the task of overseeing the production of RSA. It was agreed that he should continue, that the publication of RSA should be the job of the three Maghreb fractions, all of which should participate in it, and that the commission should be responsible for any political problems that may arise. The actual production of the journal, however, is not the responsibility of the commission.

d. On the Arabic journal: It was decided that Jafar, Majida, and Selim should hold a meeting as soon as possible and should present a precise technical proposal to the next meeting of the commission.

e. On the World Congress resolution: It was decided that the existing text should be redrafted entirely, since the probable date of the Congress offers us more time than we had thought. Gérard and Selim were designated to produce a detailed outline for the next meeting. If there were agreement on the outline, we could then proceed to the drafting of a long analytical document, from which a new resolution would be distilled.

3. Immigrant work in France. Léon reported that an immigration secretariat was being formed by the LCR and that there had been a request that he serve on it as a representative of the commission. It was decided that although there was no objection to Léon's serving on this secretariat if he thought it was consistent with his other work, it would be inappropriate for him to do so as a representative of the commission. If the commission began sending "representatives" to various commissions and secretariats of national sections on questions directly or indirectly related to Arab work, the functioning of the commission would be undermined.

4. Paris demonstration. There was discussion on whether or not it was correct to allow the Iraqi Baathists to sign the call in support of the Lebanon solidarity demonstration. Although the discussion was inconclusive, with comrades holding various positions, most agreed that there was no violation of principle involved in "allowing" the Baathists to support the call, provided that the call itself was of a principled character. The more general question of the character of united fronts and solidarity coalitions obviously requires further discussion.

5. Israel. Ben was invited to the meeting to give a report of his trip. (Before the report was given, he was informed of the decisions of reorganization plan as had been decided in point 2b above). Summary of the report by Ben:

A new rise of struggle by Arabs in the pre-1967 borders is now going on, as well as an upturn in Palestinian national consciousness. There are two main consequences of this: First, there is an increased willingness to struggle against the Zionist state; second, there is a desire for organizational independence of the Jewish population, including the Jewish workers. There has been a generalization of independent structures of a front character in the Arab villages. These structures, which have names like Progressive Front, Democratic Front, Sons of this or that village, etc., are politically heterogeneous, containing nationalists, Marxists, and vanguard elements. In general they have extremely localist platforms relating to the problems of the given village and there is little or no coordination from village to village. On the whole, however, they clearly stand to the left of the CP in the sense that they are more willing to struggle against the state. The CP has taken a sectarian attitude toward these structures, seeing them (correctly) as a local alternative to the CP itself. In

addition, there are now Arab student committees in four cities. The CP has lost the leadership of three of them. Our comrades favor the formation of a unified National Union of Arab Students on the basis of these committees, which presently function separately. This objective situation is very favorable to our comrades. The Arab mobilization will surely continue through the next municipal elections (December 1977); after that it is impossible to predict what will happen. This means that the comrades must try as quickly as possible to take advantage of the objective opportunities. The big problem here is that the opportunities vastly exceed the comrades' ability to intervene, since the number of cadre remains very small. It is, however, objectively possible to recruit 50-100 militants within one year. The comrades are intervening in the Arab student committees and the local village structures. They plan on presenting a list of candidates in the Histadrut elections (not all comrades, but in association with our Arab contacts) on a platform of destruction of the Histadrut and creation of a genuine class union. They also have the perspective of presenting a list in the next elections in an effort to crystallize an alternative pole to the CP. A congress will be held soon. One of the problems under discussion (although there will not be a separate congress document on this) is the question of what attitude to take toward the possible formation of an Arab party in Israel, which represents a danger.

Discussion. Most of the discussion centered on the question of an Arab party. Although the formation of such a party would of course entail certain dangers, most comrades felt that in view of the role such a party could play in the self-organization of Arabs, we should certainly not a priori exclude supporting its formation. The general feeling leaned in the direction of our comrades' supporting the formation of such a party as a means of centralizing the various local bodies and fronts, which could easily fall apart if they do not lead to a more permanent structure. Historically, our comrades in Israel have tended to be in favor of such an organization of the Arabs in Israel, since the complete lack of an Arab bourgeoisie and the overwhelming proletarian character of the Arab population in Israel would lend an Arab party a social base different from that of the nationalist parties in the Arab countries. In addition, the very notion of Arab self-organization represents a direct attack on Zionism and is seen as such by the ruling class, witness the repression of the el-Ard attempt. It was agreed that serious tactical difficulties are posed here, and none of the comrades had a hard and fast position on the question, but it was felt that we should try to discuss the point with the comrades in Israel. It was further decided that the congress documents should be translated into English or French as soon as possible to permit discussion of this and other points. There was also some discussion of the potentiality of creating an alternative pole to the CP in the near future (or even in the medium term), with some comrades, in particular Jon, expressing great doubts. The general conclusion was that we should try to establish more regular contact and political discussion with the comrades in Israel, on the basis of receipt of their congress documents.

6. Tunisia. There was a report of a proposal to produce a pamphlet on the national question and the character of the revolution, the main aim being to provide ourselves with an initial instrument with which to intervene in the debate now going on in the Tunisian far left, particularly the Perspectives group. In addition, the comrades are preparing solidarity work around the current trials. There will be further reports on the progress of this work in the future meetings.

7. Lebanon. Ben reported on histelephone conversation with Jaber several days before, the first direct contact we have been able to establish in months. He reported the comrades' analysis of the current situation. It was decided that Duret should try to get in touch with the comrades now that there was a material possibility for this in order to discuss the reorganization plan, the status of the comrades here, and the future work of the group in Lebanon.

8. Algeria. Léon reported on integrating another comrade into the fraction. It was decided that the next meeting should receive a general report of the work of the fraction.

9. Middle East work. It was decided that Majida, Selim, and one other comrade should hold a meeting to discuss how to organize Middle East work in France and that they should make a proposal to the next commission meeting.

10. Next meeting. The next meeting will be held Saturday and Sunday, November 6-7. Proposed agenda: Algeria report; Resolution; Middle East work; Discussion on Arabic journal; Kurdish work. Comrades will be informed of the site of the meeting.

#### 4. Minutes of the November 6, 1976, Meeting of the Arab Commission.

1. Trip by Leah: A report was given on Leah's visit to Europe. The tour in Holland was extremely successful. Several interviews appeared in mass circulation newspapers. Amnesty International paid for a trip to London for her to discuss with them, and there is now a possibility of another tour, of Britain. Also the SWP has raised the possibility of a tour of the United States, which might be coordinated with her British tour.

2. Israel: A report from Mikado dealing with the congress of Matspen-Marxist was read to the meeting. (See attachment for text of report.) It was proposed that we write to the comrades to ask that they try to arrange for translation of the main congress documents into French or English as soon as possible.

3. Tunisia: A report was given based on information from a comradewho has recently returned from the country. Summary of the report:

Revolutionary Marxist work has now begun in the country, but it is proceeding very very slowly. Nevertheless, some gains have already been made. Primarily, the comrades now have a rather intimate knowledge of the political situation and milieu, including the trade unions and the political tendencies that exist. They are therefore able to respond to political developments. The overall situation in the country is characterized by the crisis posed by the succession problem. Bourguiba, who has played a crucial bonapartist role, will not last much longer. The ruling class is thus preoccupied with constructing a regime to take over after his death, and this had led to a number of political polarizations, with some factions recommending a tighter integration of the trade unions into the state apparatus. This is occurring within the context of a rise in combativity of the working class. A strike wave has been going on, but organizational and political confusion reigns among the working class. The largest left oppositional grouping is the Movement of Popular Unity (MUP), a sort of local Union de la Gauche. It is composed of the CP, the remnants of the old Ben Salah tendency, and a part of the far left. It calls for a democratic stage with the establishment of parliamentary



democracy. Its major theme is "national unity" and it seems to be receiving some financial aid from Libya (which is also funding some committees in Europe for a "democratic Tunisia"). U.S. and French investments in Tunisia are on the rise, and it appears that at least a section of the Tunisian ruling class dreams of making Tunisia the Lebanon (pre-civil war, that is) of the Maghreb. This project has little if any chance of success, but the program of the MUP objectively falls within this framework. The erosion of the Destourian party on the political level is reflected in an erosion of the bureaucracy on the trade-union level. An opposition now exists within some unions. Although this opposition is completely unstructured and very confused politically, it is generally centered around opposition to the integration of the unions into the state. Repression remains a real problem, but there have been changes here as well. In the past the repression was centrally directed against the far-left organizations that had arisen from the student movement and had split many times. It was thus relatively easy for the regime to pick off such militants. It is not so easy for the police to deal with a more general rise of workers combativity. One example: on two occasions convictions of worker activists were overturned by higher courts, which indicates that the regime has to take account of the reaction of the workers to attacks on their leaders. Some very elementary forms of self-organization (strike pickets, rudimentary self-defense against police attacks) have developed among the workers. On the situation of the far left: The dominant group, Perspectives Tunisiennes, has undergone a rightward evolution. It has become Stalinist more than Maoist and is now participating in the MUP. The fact that PT has been moving to the right while the workers are moving to the left has created some problems for PT. There have been a number of splits, leading to the formation of groups which generally exist in France as well. One is the Democratic Mass Movement (MDM), a Mao-populist centrist group. It is very small but its militants are courageous and combative. Another is the Revolutionary Party of the Tunisian People (PRPT), which developed out of the MNA. It exists mainly in the South and has some base among the peasants. It is anti-Stalinist, but the political level is very low. There are also a number of very small and sectarian groups in France. In general, Maoism remains dominant ideologically, but the fracturing of Maoism into competitive groups has loosened the situation up. Our comrades are now working on drafting a political platform, which will be published under the signatures of individual revolutionary Marxists with no organizational designation. The attempt here is to begin to intervene in the discussions going on in the far left and the political milieu in general. The stage we are at is one of trying to recruit a few people and train them politically. The comrades must remain clandestine at this point, but we can aid them primarily by publishing various materials.

Discussion: Some of the elements of the MDM broke with Maoism over the Chinese line in Angola. This is significant, because at the beginning the MDM was even more Maoist than the PT. The danger is that in the absence of a revolutionary Marxist pole, some of the critical elements are moving toward the pro-Moscow CPs. There are trends toward a Democratic Front type evolution, with some militants considering going back to the CP. This indicates the urgency of our position beginning to appear as an alternative pole. It was explained that the platform our comrades are working on will be axised around the permanent revolution as opposed to the stages theory, with specific application to Tunisia, since this is the central issue in the left and far left. It will also deal with the maturation of the Tunisian working class in light of the socioeconomic transformations that have occurred in the country, the aim being to demonstrate that the perspec-

tive of the working class leading the revolution is not an abstract one. Two comrades have been designated to assure links between Europe and the comrades in Tunisia.

4. Mauritania: Report by Selim: We have had a discussion with a comrade from Mauritania who reports that a small political group has been formed there in which Trotskyists play a leading role. (The group itself is not all Trotskyists.) It was transformed to some extent by this comrade, who was a member of a Trotskyist organization elsewhere and has since returned to Mauritania. The comrade gave us a brief report on the general situation in the country: Arab national consciousness has been on the rise there since 1967. The regime has since declared the country to be Arab, which raises a problem in terms of the African minority in the south. It is a one-party state and the ruling party has leftist pretensions. The Maoists and nationalists have joined this party and claim to represent a tendency within it. In fact, however, there seem to be no real differences. One of the ministers in the cabinet is a Maoist. The social situation of the country is extraordinarily backward. There is only one secondary school in the country and no university. Because of this, university students generally go to Morocco, which presents the opportunity of establishing links between the comrades of this group and comrades in Morocco. Some of the members of the Mauritanian groups have already gone to Morocco. We asked the comrades to work on a political platform in order to homogenize the group. We have attempted to work out means of communication and will be kept informed of the development of the group and will receive further information about the situation. The most important point here is the possibility of using this development to strengthen our work in Morocco.

5. Morocco: The Moroccan fraction is suffering from two problems: assignment of militants and money. The commission members generally agreed that we should try to integrate the Moroccan and Mauritanian work and that someone from the commission should be assigned to oversee this work. It is also necessary to try to integrate the Moroccan fraction into the commission, which has not occurred at all up to now. There was general agreement that we should try to raise the money to send someone to Morocco and Mauritania during January.

6. Algeria: Report by Léon: The forces of the Algerian fraction are as follows: Besides Léon, there are five Algerian comrades and two French comrades in the Algerian fraction in Paris. In addition, there are 4 close sympathizers (Algerians) and a periphery of about 10 or so, but this is unstructured. In Lyon there is one member and 3 close sympathizers, plus one French comrade who has recently returned from the country. They are organized in an RSA circle and are in the leadership of the CTA in Lyon. There are 2 sympathizers in Rouen, but they are much less integrated than those in the other cities. In Algeria there are 3 Algerian comrades and 1 French comrade in one city plus several sympathizers (not structured). In another city there was a circle of about 10 sympathizers plus 1 member, with 3 of the sympathizers close to being accepted as members. However, this information is old since we have lost contact with this city. In general, the fraction made progress over the past year, but there was a problem with hyperactivism and insufficient political formation. For example, we decided that an organization like the CTA was an objective need of the Algerian workers in France and then plunged into building it, without taking sufficient account of the division of labor of our comrades between activism and political education. In Algeria itself the influence of Trotskyist ideas is rather broad with-

in the left movement and the reputation of Trotskyism is good. (The situation differs from that of Tunisia in this respect.) In fact, this reputation of Trotskyism goes well beyond our ability to capitalize on it. We missed important opportunities during the period of the debate over the national charter, mainly because of the factional situation in the fraction itself. (There will soon be a document on this situation.) We are planning to hold a conference of Algerian comrades in late December. Three documents will be produced for this conference: general political situation in Algeria; Arab revolution; tasks of revolutionary Marxists. These will be drafted within the fraction and will be discussed both there and in the Arab Commission. In terms of orientation, our work among students remains important. We plan to place more emphasis on structuring sympathizer circles and organizing political education.

Discussion: A proposal was made to organize an educational series in consultation with the Arab Commission. This proposal was brought up again under a later point (see below). In addition, there was a report and some discussion on a project for a journal being initiated by centrist forces who have asked us to participate. This point will be discussed in more detail at the next commission meeting.

7. Middle East Work: Reports by Majida and Selim: It is now apparent that we need a Middle East fraction to organize our work both among Lebanese and in relation to the Kurdish movement. There are a number of people in France now who were formerly sympathizers of the group in Lebanon. It is important to work with them, otherwise they may leave political activity. The proposal is to establish a Middle East fraction (initially composed of Majida, Selim, and François) and also two circles, one composed of the comrades who were around the RCG in Beirut, the other for Kurdish work. Organizationally, this would involve the integration of Majida and Selim into the LCR and the gradual integration of the Lebanese sympathizers. In the case of the latter, the main priority is to organize a series of educational classes and to have them start working with the LCR on various projects. Their organizational integration into the LCR should not be hasty. In addition, a comrade who was formerly a member of the Central Committee of the RCG and resigned from the organization shortly before the start of the civil war has recently arrived in Paris. She is interested in working with us. She left the organization over differences in the orientation of work and not basic political differences. It was proposed that the commission get in touch with the comrades in Lebanon to ascertain their attitude toward our working with this comrade. At the same time, the status of Majida and Selim and the views of the comrades in Lebanon on our working with the former sympathizers of the RCG should also be discussed. Subject to discussion of these points with the comrades in Lebanon, the perspective should be to integrate this former CC comrade into the LCR as soon as possible and to initiate work with the sympathizers. At the next meeting of the commission there should be a report on a plan of work for the Middle East fraction, a report of the educational classes (which should be integrated with the project of classes for the Algerian comrades), and a proposal for relations between the fraction and comrades in the French provinces. In addition, the discussion of these points with the comrades in Lebanon on this question should have taken place by the next meeting.

8. Arabic journal: There was a brief discussion based on a proposal received from Jafar. It was agreed that it was pointless to discuss this matter until a meeting of Jafar, Selim, and Majida could be held to make a detailed proposal to the commission on the exact

character of the journal and the technical procedure for producing it. This has been held up by Jafar's documentary problems; but ought to be resolved before the next meeting, at which this discussion should take place.

9. World Congress Resolution: In accordance with the decision of the last meeting, Selim presented a proposed outline for an analytical text from which a resolution would later be distilled. The text of the outline is attached. There was general discussion on it and it was agreed that those comrades in basic agreement with the outline should meet before the next meeting to decide on changes, revisions, additions, etc. and then should arrange a division of labor for writing the various sections. As sections are finished they will be discussed in the commission and each member can propose changes or counterdrafts. Those comrades who are not in overall agreement with the outline can either present counterdrafts on the various points or submit an entirely different document. The next meeting will examine the progress of this procedure.

10. Next meeting: The next meeting will be held either December 11 and 12 (Saturday-Sunday) or December 12-13 (Sunday-Monday). Comrades will be informed of the exact date and location. Agenda items so far: Algeria (discussion of proposal by centrist elements); Middle East work (presentation of proposals listed under point 7 of these minutes); Arabic journal; world congress resolution. Other points will be added as they arise.

(NOTE: THE ATTACHMENTS TO THESE MINUTES ARE NOT REPRODUCED HERE.)

5. February 8, 1977, Letter to the United Secretariat Bureau from  
Jon Rothschild

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8 February 1977

To: Bureau of the United Secretariat  
From: Jon Rothschild  
Subject: Arab Commission

Dear Comrades,

The point of this letter is to draw your attention to a number of organizational and political points in order to avoid misunderstandings in the future.

1. Composition of the commission:

The text on the "Central Arab Commission" tentatively approved by the USec Bureau in early January indicates the composition of the commission as follows: A delegate from "each of the four fractions" in France ("Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Middle East"); a delegate from the British commission; myself, as "responsible for liaison with Inprecor"; "any other comrade designated by the U.S. Bureau." As far as I know, the U.S. Bureau has not designated anybody else up to now. Also as far as I know, the Tunisian fraction exists barely if at all; in November the previous commission had decided that there was no comrade from this fraction who could serve on the commission at the present time. The Middle East fraction also does not exist, to my knowledge; it was to have been organized by two comrades one of whom has been expelled and one of whom has been suspended from the Fourth International. The Moroccan fraction has not been heard from since Comrade Ben's resignation from the previous commission. I have no idea by what modality it would select a representative to the new

commission. Thus, as defined by the text approved by the U.S. Bureau, the commission has three members right now, at least by implication: the comrade named to the previous commission by the Algerian fraction; the comrade named to the previous commission by the British commission; myself, as "liaison with Inprecor."

## 2. Tasks of the commission:

Several of the tasks assigned to this commission in the text approved by the U.S. Bureau cannot be carried out at the present time:

\*Reproduction and distribution of the review el-Munadil, since there is not yet any review el-Munadil.

\*Supervision and coordination of the work of the Arab fractions in Paris, the other Arab commissions in France and in Europe. As indicated above, the Algerian fraction is the only Arab fraction or "other commission" now functioning in France; the IMG is the only other section that has an Arab commission. The notion that the three comrades mentioned can, or even should, centralize and coordinate and supervise the work of the Algerian fraction and the British commission does not appear realistic or useful to me.

\*Direction of the work of constructing Trotskyist nuclei in the countries of the Maghreb. The comrade who was playing a key role in the work directed at Morocco has been expelled from the Fourth International, unjustly in my opinion. But be that as it may, once again it is unrealistic to assume that with the loss of one of the key comrades and with no contact whatsoever with the Moroccan fraction, if it indeed exists, the three comrades named above can "direct" the work of constructing Trotskyist nuclei in the Maghreb countries.

\*Permanent liaison between the Bureau and the groups in the region. There are two groups in the region at present, one in Lebanon and one in Israel. Again, it is difficult to see the utility of the three comrades of the commission trying to serve as "liaison" between these groups and the Bureau, particularly since so far as I know no method of communicating with the comrades in Lebanon has been found.

One further point. When Comrade Jaber was here he expressed the desire that an international campaign be carried out, particularly in Inprecor, in the name of what he described as "five martyrs" of the organization. Up to now I have received no information on these martyrs, which I had been promised, and it is therefore impossible to wage said campaign in Inprecor or anywhere else.

In sum, then, the situation is as follows: The Arab Commission now has three members and no tasks that can realistically be carried out by those three comrades. Further, no one has been designated as being responsible for convening this commission. As far as my own personal assignment is concerned, there is nothing to "liaison" with Inprecor.

In light of this, I would like to inform the Bureau, formally, of the following points:

1. I do not regard myself as in any way responsible for convening the commission as defined in the text approved by the Bureau. If this body is convened, I am willing to serve as the link between it and Inprecor, whatever that may entail.

2. My own opinion is that the work of the previous commission -- or committee, or work group, or whatever it be called -- has been halted by the unjustified, undemocratic, and deleterious expulsion and suspension of two of its key members and by the alteration of its

tasks in such a way that work which needed --- and needs -- to be done can no longer be done properly.

3. It is my understanding that the Arab revolution remains on the agenda of the coming World Congress and that the question of the work of the International in this sphere --- both its balance-sheet and perspectives --- is thus an appropriate subject for discussion in the international discussion bulletin. If this understanding is incorrect, I would appreciate being so informed by the Bureau.

Revolutionary greetings,

s/ Jon Rothschild