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SOCIALIST BA'TH PARTY



**The Ba'th facing up to  
the challenge to come**

Michel Aflaq

Unity, Liberty, Socialism

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ARAB AND SOCIALIST BA'TH PARTY

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Unity, Liberty, Socialism



Mr Michel 'Aflaq, founder and Secretary-General of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party broadcast a political speech of the highest importance on the evening of Wednesday, April 6th, 1977, to celebrate the Party's 30th anniversary. We publish the text of his speech in full.

Comrades in arms !

People of our great Arab Nation !

This anniversary comes at a moment as grave as any encountered in the history of the resurgence of the Arab Nation. In the light of the critical situation which we are facing, the history of the last 30 years appears of secondary importance. Only the crucial nature of our present can enable us to approach the past : we can only prove its value and its utility by producing convincing solutions to the questions raised by our present situation.

It was for just such a day as this that revolutionary movements were originally conceived and it is in this that they have their 'raison d'être'.

The Party is an integral part of the Nation and was born out of the Nation's pain and agony, out of its needs and aspirations. It will ever be an integral part of the Nation's history and its destiny.

The Party is the means and the Nation is the end. The Party cannot be separated from the life of the Nation nor from the Arab Revolution, with its successes and failures during the last 30 years. Equally, the Party's past is inseparable from the life of its militant rank and file, from their loyalty, from the sacrifices and hardships they have endured.

This Party's inception was a wager on the originality and the creative genius of the Arab Nation. For the Party, it was neither feasible nor desirable to produce formula for life as it should be lived in an ideal Arab society. It preferred to confine itself to providing guide-lines and basic standards, leaving to rising Arab generations, through their profound and instructive experience, in constant interaction with national and world events, the task of enriching these revolutionary guide-lines.

The Party made no attempt to evolve a universal theory encompassing an interpretation of the whole of human history and the future of humanity. If it had — and if such a thing were possible — it would not have become what it is today, namely the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party — the Party of the contemporary Arab Revolution. It would probably have found itself reduced to a mere study group of abstract, theoretical considerations.

A party which has risen out of the deep-seated needs of the Arab Nation during its present re-birth cannot be the purveyor of ideas remote from, or alien to, the real sufferings of the Nation. During the period surrounding the inception of the Party, the national experiment was still unready for universality and dissemination. Through the Party's experiment — and not without anguish — the Nation revealed these inborn qualities, for instance, by providing its own answers to, and modifications of, world revolutionary theories and movements encountered by the Nation during the period preparatory to revolution.

The ideology of the Ba'th has come to supplement,

not to repudiate socialist ideology. When it faced the problems of the Nation and society, the Ba'th, though still at the beginning of the path of revolutionary experiment, was able to make a genuine contribution to human thought processes; in a deep and, at the same time, disinterested manner, the Party illuminated two basic truths, the nationalist nature of socialism and the humanitarian nature of nationalism. These two truths have had their impact in the revolutions of the Third World, and more recently, in the developed world. Prior to their implementation, an important modification in thinking took place; we must make a start from living reality, in other words, from freedom. The originality and the veracity of the Party's belief was part and parcel of their own spirit of freedom. Each original, creative idea produced by the Party during its long march, and every revolutionary stance that it has assumed throughout its history, was inspired by freedom.

The soundness of this choice was reflected in a decisive, historic moment of the contemporary Arab Revolution. To begin with, the choice was not easy. It was not a simple choice between opposites — between conservatism and revolution, between Left and Right, division and unity, reaction and socialism — but rather a choice to be made between things bearing the same name, but different in essence — one revolution and another, one form of Leftism or another, one aspect of unity or another, one form of socialism or another. The choice was not between the spiritual and matter, but between independant, dominating matter and the material emanating

from, and deeply identified with spirit. For us, spirit is not of an occult, mystical nature and inconsistent with our scientific approach. It is, on the contrary, the incarnation of consciousness, will-power and ethics. It stands for all that impels us towards the good, and towards the beautiful beauty, and towards selflessness and towards heroism. In short, it is the belief in truth, in justice and in freedom.

Confronted by such alternatives, the Party was obliged to take a stand — a stand which sprang from its veracity and from the Nation's experience, and one which converts abstract ideas into a current of life and the making of history.

The policy of the Ba'th was, right from the beginning, based on a revolutionary vision of the national heritage, and patrimony and its close connections with the present stage of national resurgence. This was one of its major options. With this new outlook, as in its wide nationalist concept, and its view of freedom, the Party has outstripped all the movements which have preceded it. The question of the national heritage has never been for our Party one to which recourse was made on special occasions only. It is, in fact, the centre, the focal point of our thinking. This fundamental point has never been given the attention it deserves and remains unknown to many: it is, therefore, imperative, in order that we keep our bearings, that a special reference be made to it now. We shall leave to the rising Ba'athist generations the task of completing the mission. Our attitude to the national heritage, as already stated some 34 years ago, was less an interpretation of the past than a revolutionary attitude to the

present and a humanistic vision of the future. We have constantly endeavoured, while bearing in mind accepted psychological facts, to spare the Arab Revolution, in as far as possible, the ills which have befallen other revolutions, sometimes distorting humanitarian principles, and even bringing them to the verge of collapse.

We derive inspiration from the immortal experiences in the life of the Arab Nation, and this is for us, the same thing as the deriving of inspiration from deep, humanitarian, revolutionary values; this, however, does not confer on the Arab Nation a special privilege, but rather a grave responsibility towards itself, and towards humanity. In these terms, we authenticate the Party's beliefs: we in no way withdraw from our progressive, scientific attitude, nor from its policy concerning its progressive allies within the Nation and outside it.

Peoples of the Arab Nation !  
Vanguards of the Revolution !

Ever since its inception, the Ba'th movement has encountered wide-spread encouragement and deep response from the Arab masses. It has, on the other hand, since its early days, encountered ferocious resistance, and been the victim of slander campaigns by large numbers of influential politicians and their vassals, and by the intelligentsia at large, for whom the idea of converting culture into struggle was unacceptable.

Equally, as soon as the Ba'th movement began to grow in stature and influence, it found a following among the student population. Interaction with

them formed a bridge, connecting the movement with the mass of the people, which responded, from the depths of sound intuition, to the call, and accepted the ideas so bitterly contested by pseudo-intellectuals. At this juncture, imperialism and its collaborators among politicians, together with reactionary elements and all those who use religion as a shield, awakened to the threat of the Ba'th's thinking and set forth on a pitched battle with every weapon at their disposal, without regard for scruple nor even for honour. However, the life force within the movement was stronger than the difficulties and obstacles encountered, and the rocks which caused it to stumble. These latter would, in themselves, have been enough to spell the doom of any less authentic movement. The Ba'th survived because it derived its vitality from the Nation and from the Nation's rebirth.

The Party is endowed with a strong sense of realism, which has been instrumental in transforming it into a militant revolutionary movement based on an idea, and not simply an intellectual school preaching revolution and struggle. It is for this very reason that the movement found difficulty in avoiding some of the ailments which afflicted the society it had undertaken to lead. This explains the serious difficulties which the movement has experienced internally and the reason why threats from the outside appear insignificant. This is the movement's destiny and its unshakeable belief. Our statements would be out of place, did we not believe that the present conjuncture is the harshest and the most cruel that the Arab Nation has been called upon to face. In conse-

quence, we consider the present occasion fitting for a word of counsel, drawn straight from experience, in the hope that it will be heard by those who are open-minded.

The Ba'th experiment has one particular characteristic which, if neglected, could expose the movement — which is a fundamental one in the advance of the Arab Revolution — to grave distortion and deviation. This distinguishing characteristic is a blend of subjective and objective factors which takes the form of an organic unity. The nationalist, socialist, and democratic ideas of the Party are inseparable from the internal psychological processes which go to make up the above-mentioned characteristic. For twenty years at least the ideas of the Party have been shared by the Arab people. None of the leaders of other movements, nor the movements themselves have been able to take the place of the Ba'th. Their ideas were ready-made, not born out of intellectual, psychological and ethical effort like those of the Ba'th. Ideas can be of value and exert an influence, but they are incapable of engendering a vigorous movement, without that inimitable, unmistakable, incommunicable intensity of effort.

The Ba'th movement has been linked to the mass of the working people by a deep many-sided bond of destiny. There is, to begin with, an unshakable, ideological conviction that none of the objectives of the contemporary Arab revolution can be attained without the struggle of the working people as their instrument. Neither liberation from imperialism and Zionism, nor the achievement of Arab unity, nor the

edification of socialism can be realized without the struggle of the workers. The association of the Ba'th movement and the working people provides an impenetrable shield to ward off a host of deadly ills engendered by the cultural, social, economic and political backwardness of our society, which is all the more vulnerable in the case of division. It is the workers alone who, with their patience and endurance, their highly original critical sense and their genius and creativity, are capable of modifying direction, on the one hand, and acting as a buttress for the revolutionary movement on the other.

Comrades in Arms !

People of our great Arab Nation !

Thirty years have elapsed in the life of the Party, in the life of the Nation and in the life of militant fighters. A man can fall prey to arrogance or despair if he only looks inwards. But if he can see himself and his struggle as part of a wider, more permanent whole, he will come closer to objectivity and level-headedness.

Similarly, a party with an introverted attitude, will find itself exposed to the same dangers. If, however, it reflects on the origin of its mission, the motives governing its emergence, and recollects that it is but an off-shoot of the Nation and an attempt to give expression to the Nation's needs and ambitions, it will find itself in a position to maintain its objectivity and balance. With this in mind, we should do well to concentrate on steering clear of two grave afflictions, arrogance and despair. It is, for us, small consolation to see ourselves alone on the true path, while

others tread the road that leads astray. We are distressed by this and only see in it another reason to exact of ourselves increased effort, greater self-sacrifice and greater objectivity and a more open dialogue with other progressive nationalist forces. It will take a long time to persuade these forces to work for co-operation, with a view to repelling the reactionary-imperialist onslaught, which is taking the form of counter-unity: this can only be successfully confronted by an amalgamation of unity-minded forces, bent on showing solidarity in defence as well as offence.

The multiplication and diversity of revolutionary experiments in Arab society appear to us perfectly normal, particularly in the present state of division. We consider them as part of a single-integrated, multi-sided experiment, complementary to our own experiment rather than in rivalry. They should be seen as complementing each other, and interacting one with another, in the consolidation of the struggle for unity and unity in the struggle. It would certainly be anomalous for such experiments to be mutually-exclusive, neither influencing nor being influenced by the other. Even acts of conspiracy, and attempts to isolate and crush us, do not dishearten us.

It was to deal with such moments of stress that the Ba'th Party was founded in the first place. It has been steeled in the furnace of strife and ordeal, and has struck deep and powerful roots into the soil of the Arab home-land. It has linked its destiny with that of the working people throughout the Arab home-land, believing them to be the only force



capable of making history and building the future. Ever since we set out on the road of Ba'th as the road of revolution, we have rigorously cast aside all forms of bigotry, arrogance, superiority and narrowness of mind. We are open to the whole world and to all civilizations, and are fully aware of our need to borrow from others ; but, at the same time, we feel that we have something new and valuable to contribute to the civilization of the world. We have our own distinctive national identity and this is our road to humanity. We have also our own peculiar characteristic — the contribution we are making to the enrichment of the revolutionary and cultural heritage of the world.

We abominate bigotry and fight it with all our might and main. From the very beginning, we collided with bigotry on all sides, from the backward Right and the petrified Left. We found that we had to defend our independent beliefs and wage a bitter struggle against those who claimed the monopoly of truth.

Once we established the right to choose our own path to revolution in perfect freedom, and to delve into our past and understand our patrimony, we found no problem in encountering others whose approach differed from our own, wholly or in part, provided that they respected our choice and the specific nature of the path we tread.

We are not narrow-minded enough to deny recognition and credit to the revolutions which, since the beginning of the century have fought against exploitation, oppression and under-development, which encompass immense territories and vast human populations, and which today occupy posi-

tions of supremacy, both in material and moral terms, wield great power in international politics and stand for freedom and independence of the people. What is important is that we have chosen our course and are confirmed in this by world developments, and their effect on these revolutions in that they have finally recognized the manifold roads which lead to socialism. We do, however, admit that we do not mistake friends for enemies, reactionary for progressive elements, nor real money for counterfeit !

Comrades in arms !

People of our great Arab Nation !

There are many lessons to be drawn from the last 30 years in the life of the Arab Nation. There was, to begin with, the loss of Palestine, which made a violent impact on the Arab Nation and gave rise to many revolutionary attempts. The most important of these was the July Revolution in Egypt. By co-ordinating their efforts with those of the struggling Ba'th Party in different regions of the Middle Eastern Arab countries, Egypt was able to respond to defeat by a series of successes, capped by the union of Egypt and Syria, ten years after the creation of the Zionist entity. The way in which the Arab masses, from the Gulf to the Atlantic, responded to this fledgling bird of unity, revealed that the broad masses were historically aware that unity provided the only effective solution to the conspiracies of imperialism and Zionism.

However, instead of growing and developing, the fledgling bird of unity began to shrink and ail, and this facilitated its undermining by imperialism,

Zionism and the reactionary groups. Here leaders betrayed the backwardness of their approach, imperfections in their systems of government, errors of judgement and, above all, defective culture. In spite of the generosity shown by the broad masses, these leaders showed themselves to be incapable of nurturing the infant unity.

In the light of secession, one would have expected Arab leaders to meet and examine the underlying causes of failure. Instead of this, errors of judgement and tactics, defective vision and shallow culture were perpetuated. Things went from bad to worse, as is only to be expected where the fertile soil of division encourages the growth of affliction and disorder. One of unity's salient aspects is its propensity to raise the level of Arab political leadership and planning on National affairs.

The June War, and subsequent defeat, were the logical outcome of this stage of fragmentation, mutual recrimination and narrowness of vision on the part of Arab rulers. Secession, and its ensuing setbacks, in no way produced a positive result (as might have been expected), concerning reflection on past errors and preparation for a hoped-for move away from secession and back to unity. A move did take place, but from secession to deviation and from national struggle to struggle for power, without even the minimum period for reflection the responsibilities of power in such critical circumstances.

The June defeat did not give rise to the stimulation of self-criticism nor to drastic rectifications; any rectification falling short of unity was doomed to failure on a national level and destined to be short-lived.

Unity alone can stand up to imperialism and Zionism, and wrest from them the full Arab rights with regard to Palestine and elsewhere in the Arab home-land. Without unity, independence would always be in jeopardy, and the situation would remain so highly explosive that at any moment imperialism would be in a position to set a match to it.

As a result of the implantation of the Zionist entity in the very heart of the Arab home-land, the idea of unity could no longer remain a fanciful dream, but became synonymous with "survival". It is now the cardinal nationalist objective and, we may say, the one objective whose fulfilment will ensure the fulfilment of all others. Unity is revolution *per se*. To give unity veracity, revolution is called upon to prove itself in its own revolution against the paganism of regionalism — in other words, in a revolution of liberation. Any discussion of struggle towards liberation without unity is simple idle talk, and can only lead to disaster.

This fact has been thoroughly understood by imperialism and Zionism — better than by many Arabs. As a result, imperialists and Zionists have been combating the concept of revolutionary unity with all the power, all the technology and all the means at their disposal, with a view to maintaining the present state of Arab division.

Former concepts concerning division have been replaced by a new one — "regional nationalism". A new adjective, "Arab", has been added, directly aiming at unity, and we now hear terms such as "Egyptian Arab Nationalism", "Syrian Arab Natio-

nalism", and so forth. This new nationalism, in fact, belongs to factions, dominated by the ruling classes and is divorced from real unity.

Comrades in arms !

People of our great Arab Nation !

Already in 1958, on unity's first application, imperialism and Zionism entered into conspiracy. Taking advantage of the loop-holes and errors which appeared, they were able, in connivance with Arab reaction, to deal a severe blow to unity, which was intended to be fatal. They concentrated their efforts on the smaller of the two countries and the one which offered least resistance — Syria. Syria had abandoned almost all for the sake of unity — its international identity, its progressive people's movement and the strong political role it had hitherto played, without in any way enriching the structure of this new concept of unity. Secession, therefore, did not represent for Syria a return to the days prior to unity, but created a completely new situation in which she found herself too weak to deal with a web of imperialist conspiracies. Imperialism had planted agents in Syria's political and military administrations: secession created a situation inimical to unity and stirred up manifold anti-unity prejudices such as sectarianism and tribalism.

As a result of the glorious triumphs of the February 8th 1963 Revolution, carried out by the Ba'th Party, the secessionist regime in Syria fell without resistance, but the essence of secession survived. Syria found itself caught in a whirlpool, from which

there appeared to be no escape. The Ba'th Party suffered as much as Syria did, from fragmentation and debilitation, as a result of the distorted application of unity in 1958, and it failed to establish control over new and complex conditions — such as the assumption of power under the aegis of military domination. When the Party showed itself to be faithful to its intrinsic ideology and able to withstand distortion and falsification, it was over-thrown by armed force, with tragic consequences to hundreds of Party militants who met with martyrdom or were tortured in the prisons of corrupt regionalists. The Party's principles, however, emerged intact. The identity of the Ba'th, ever turned towards unity, not only survived but triumphed, as vividly illustrated by the Revolution of July 17th-30th in Iraq, where it dissociated itself from those ruling Syria up to the present day, and have arrogated the Party's name. This false party has been revealed in its true colours by plotting against the Ba'th, the Palestine cause and against the Arab Nation, since the counter-revolutionary "coup" of February 23rd, 1963, throughout the June War, until the War in the Lebanon.

On Syrian soil, the Ba'th Party saw the light of day and greatly evolved, both as regards ideology and struggle, in the clear, free Arab atmosphere of this country nourished by its deep-seated nationalist and unity-conscious traditions. Innumerable martyrs offered their lives there and hundreds of unyielding militants are still subjected to torture in the prisons of Damascus.

In spite of this, the Party gives full recognition to all

that it owes to Syria, but it strongly believes that the responsibility for saving Syria does not devolve on the Party alone. This is a Pan-Arab responsibility and that of the broad masses and progressive Arab forces in their entirety. Syria has a fundamental role to play in the Arab destiny, due, on the one hand, to its geographical situation, which brings it face-to-face with the Zionist enemy, and also to its contemporary history as the torch-bearer of Arab unionist nationalism. Our imperialist and Zionist enemies succeeded in isolating Syria, and subjected it to relentless pressure, to the point where Syria's nationalist role has now been reversed. In the past, Syria goaded Egypt on the road to unity; the Syrian regime now beckons to Egypt, to join her in concluding peace-treaties with the enemy. Syria and Egypt used to struggle hand-in-hand against imperialism; they now embrace imperialism, as a prelude to coming to terms with the Zionist entity. Combatants of the Palestine Revolution and the Lebanese Patriotic Movement have recently died in the Lebanon from Syrian bullets.

The Arab people have passed judgement on the Syrian regime, having seen its true face. The fact that it is an instrument in the hands of imperialism can no longer be concealed.

Comrades in Arms!

People of the great Arab Nation!

We believe that the present stage of history is a phase of re-birth and ascendancy for the Arab Nation, and it follows from this that set-backs, reversals, periods of back-sliding and stagnation are simply ephemeral

phenomena on the long road of Arab resurgence. For the most part, they have two causes, defensive reactions on the part of backward elements faced by change, and conspiracies on the part of the declared enemies of the Arab Nation. Imperialists and Zionists have capitalized on the weak points and loop-holes of the Arab revolutionary movements, and on traditionalist groups, where the new principles have not yet put down deep roots. The Arab Revolution is growing and developing dialectically. It fights back against the negative factors it encounters, within the movement and outside it, and accelerates the process of modification, integration and unity.

The recognition of this fact distinguishes revolutionaries from all others. Revolutionaries bring it constantly into play and use it in their everyday struggle.

And so we see signs of growth and progress and at the same time signs of retreat and back-sliding. Our first fruit of revolution after the defeat of June 5th 1967 were the glorious revolution of July 17th 1968 carried out in Iraq by the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party: it was an act avenging Arab defeat and a firm reply to the counter-revolutionary "coup" staged against the Party in Syria in February, 1966.

Revolutionary re-birth has also taken place in the Lebanon. This renewal did not take the form of brutal change, but came rather as a slow, deep process of interaction. Day after day, year after year, the Lebanon has become a safety-valve for pent-up Arab revolutionary feelings and thought. It has also become the scene of popular struggle, committed to

Arabism and orientated towards Palestine.

On the surface, imperialism, Zionism and the reaction may seem to be taking the offensive. A closer look will show that this is not the case. The enemies' moves are only counter-attacks, in the face of the irresistible tide of the Arab Nation — a tide which, if dammed up at one point, will break through at another.

We are in no way intimidated by the gloomy picture painted of the present Arab situation. We are convinced that the Arab Nation is now in a phase of historic re-birth. Signs of decline are only of a fleeting nature and are counter-balanced by indications of progress, which must not be overlooked by our militants.

What has been taking place in the Lebanon is only an indication of progress on the Arab road to revolution: through it, the Arab-Zionist conflict has been crystallized. Recent events there have consolidated the Arabism of the Lebanon and established that our people there are an effective instrument in the hands of the Arab Revolution. Those who have been blindly following the isolationists will discover their mistake when conspiracy is overthrown and the Lebanon recovers its true Arab physiognomy.

The popular uprising which recently swept Egypt is yet another sign of progress on the Arab road to revolution. The Arab population of Egypt have recovered their social, national and unity-conscious role, despite the political, economic and nationalist counter-revolution which took place there. They have become the masters of their own destiny, shed-

ding the tutelage imposed upon them for so long. They have now realized the nature of the bond linking their fate to that of the Arab Nation. It is through suffering, through their sense of national responsibility and through their fidelity to the role to be played by Arab Egypt, that they have come to this.

The Palestine masses continue, as they have for many years, to offer the supreme sacrifice, displaying outstanding heroism in the conflict with our Zionist enemy within occupied territory, and in confrontation with treachery and conspiracies in the Lebanon. The behaviour of the Palestine masses is one of the main, positive factors to encourage optimism and confidence in the future. Such a high degree of revolutionary awareness, courage and endurance offers us a sure guarantee that the Palestinian revolution will continue, and it is, at the same time, a call to the Arab masses to play their part in preventing settlement by capitulation, and in opposing those who support it.

Imperialism and Zionism are concentrating their assault on the Arab home-land for two main reasons. The first concerns the current international situation which is going through a euphoric period of revival and, temporarily, the superiority of the imperialistic capitalist systems led by the United States. This state of affairs is often expressed in terms of technological superiority and the tactics of conspiracy.

The second factor concerns the strategic importance of the Arab home-land, particularly with regard to its abundant oil resources. It also concerns the realization by imperialism and Zionism of the latent

potentialities of the Arab Nation for progress and revolution. Their plan is to prevent the inevitable movement of progress by obstruction and delaying tactics. The latter have been considerably improved by imperialism whilst the Arab Revolution has remained in a state of stagnation and recession.

In these circumstances, imperialism was in a position to dictate the terms of battle and select the area, the timing and the weapons it preferred. We must now reverse the situation, so that terms of battle shall be dictated by the revolution. This pre-supposes two essential factors :

1. Mass struggle on a large scale.
2. Unified Arab struggle throughout the whole, or, at least the major part of the Arab home-land.

These two factors can assure the Arab Revolution's preponderance over its enemies. Individual national struggle can never be a match for the enemy's forces ; neither can unity without struggle modify the balance of power. It is equally obvious that peaceful evolution will neither fend off our enemies nor achieve our defined objectives and one should not be misled by its superficial and short term results.

Revolutionary parties and movements throughout the Arab home-land are now shouldering the task of eliminating signs of deterioration. In the forefront, stands our own Party which, since its inception, has been battling with such situations. It is also the task of progressive Arab regimes, and it is according to their effectiveness in this respect that we can gauge their genuine progressiveness. It is also the task of the Arab masses, the masses who have grown in maturity and have shown their capacity for struggle

in the October War, the war in the Lebanon, in the massive uprising in Egypt, in the resistance offered to the subservient Syrian regime and in the great self-sacrifice they have made for the Palestine Revolution.

In the final analysis, the success of this task depends on the degree of self-awareness already acquired by the Arab Revolution and on the practical results of that awareness, namely the Revolution's ability to exercise control over changing circumstances and to undertake planning for the future in such a way as to foil the enemy's projects. The Revolution must always be on the offensive, it must fully comprehend the future and contribute to its edification. It must be able to assess properly the advantages and impediments of a given future situation and be able to utilize the advantages and surmount the impediments.

The Party has always upheld the idea that unity was synonymous with revolution because, more than any other factor, unity can offer — even before it becomes a reality — a mode of thought and a wealth of possibilities for struggle and for attack.

The enemies of the Arab Revolution — imperialism, Zionism and reaction — will always remain on the defensive, even while sporadically taking the initiative. Apart from the power which the Revolution is capable of mustering today, it is sustained by two ascending forces, both of an astonishing nature. They are the force of Arab history, and the force of human history. We are now in the era when these two forces are converging and harmonising more and more.

Comrades in arms !

People of the great Arab Nation !

One of the outstanding features of the present stage in history — that of the re-birth and resurgence of the Arab Nation — is the emergence of the Palestine Resistance Movement, which came into being 12 years ago as a result of the evasive attitude of the Arab regimes to the battle for the liberation of Palestine and their deviation from the course of unity and liberation. Two elements went into the formation of the Palestine Resistance, one positive and the other negative. The negative element was a parochial, regionalistic attitude which materialized in reaction to the behaviour of certain Arab regimes, whose approach to the Palestinian cause was regionalistic, domineering and veering on exploitation. The Palestine Resistance countered regionalism with regionalism and exploitation by exploitation, seeking to benefit from all and every regime, regardless of its reactionary or progressive tendency. Furthermore, its own target was the acquisition of power i.e. to found a Palestinian state.

The positive factor was the revolutionary element, establishing common ground with the Arab Revolution and its progressive policies. The Palestine Resistance is combating imperialism and Zionism in the main Arab field of battle, occupied Palestine, and is using armed combat and commando operations, which are the most developed form of revolutionary action.

The leaders of the Palestine Resistance have maintained these two elements, often keeping a balance between the two, more often giving preponderance

to the former over the latter. If preponderance is given to the regionalistic element, the revolutionary character of the Resistance movement may suffer, together with its prospects of survival. There has often been confusion between regionalism and the Palestinian identity. The Palestinian identity is legitimate, the epitome of the Arab cause and the window through which the Arab Revolution is viewed by the world in its struggle with imperialism and Zionism. Through it it can win over world support to its cause.

The pro-Zionist western world, however, puts a high price on this support. It is trying to perpetuate Palestinian regionalism and isolationism and separate it from the Arab revolutionary cause.

There is in our mind no doubt that Arab realities and the logic of the Arab Revolution require the Palestine Resistance as a historical necessity. These realities confirm it in its leading revolutionary role, and act as reminders when it founders under the heavy pressure brought to bear on it by regimes favourable to political settlement or when some of its leaders weaken in their revolutionary enthusiasm.

The fact that the Palestinian cause is objectively established as the central issue of the Arab Revolution requires certain duties and responsibilities from the Palestine Resistance and the playing of a leading role in events. Since the Arab Revolution is responsible for the protection of the Resistance Movement, and supports it constantly, the Resistance is obliged to keep the Palestinian issue in its historical perspective — that of the Arab Nation and its current resurgence. This can only be given practical expres-

sion by drawing ever closer to the Arab working people, struggling for the realization of nationalist objectives.

Comrades in Arms !  
People of our great Nation !

The experiment which our Party has been leading in Iraq since the outbreak of the Revolution of July 17th is that of the Arab Ba'th Party in its entirety. It is the experiment of the Ba'th Party of the past, of the present and is a stepping-stone to the future, with all its national hopes and objectives and its moral and human values. One might even say that this experiment is no longer confined to the Ba'th Party alone, but has become that of the national and progressive forces in Iraq and in the rest of the Arab home-land. By virtue of its remarkable achievements and in view of the circumstances prevailing in the Arab home-land, it is a forward leap in the march of the Arab Revolution.

The supreme sacrifice offered by the Party's martyrs and the untold sufferings and hardships borne by Party militants, are more than counterbalanced by one luminous fact, that the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party now stands in this moment of destiny, on the land of a country like Iraq, of considerable stature both from an Arab and from an international point of view, as representative, once more, of the will of the Arab Nation. It stands for the endurance of the Arab Nation: it stands for adherence to the rights and principles of the Nation, and the stability of its future, that the banner of Arab struggle shall continue to fly and the torch of principle burn brightly.

This honour, which is the Ba'th's, is the fruition of our faith in the enriching and ever-young-creative spirit of the people which has never failed to have the last word.

As a result of its close association with the workers, our Party in Iraq has been able to make this unique experiment strike deep roots in the Arab home-land and augur a promising future. During a quarter of a century, the harsh political conditions prevailing in Iraq induced the Party to create a powerful ideological structure. The Party was steeled in the furnace of stress and ordeal before gaining its qualifications for the responsibility of government. Needless to say, the success of the Party's rule depends on the maintenance of the militant virtues which equipped the Party to assume this outstanding nationalist role.

When, therefore, I speak of our Party in this revolutionary country, I am moved by deep emotion and overwhelming pride. The Party's history is a brilliant epic of faith, steadfastness, heroism and selflessness. It is today the focus of the hopes and longings of militant strugglers, and a torch dispelling the enfolding darkness in the region.

The Arab working people throughout the home-land, living under renewed reactionary imperialist rule are now witness to the conditions created by the reactionary-imperialist counter-revolution and the dimensions of the conspiracy woven against Iraq, which is the focus of the hopes of Arab militants and free men of the Third World. In the face of the conspiracies undertaken to stifle the voice of Iraq, which gives expression to their aspirations, the toiling Arab



masses are rallying ever closer in support of Iraq's revolutionary regime.

This country abounds in militant energies, embodied in its workers, its peasants, its women, in its brave Army, its Militia and youth organizations, (these latter have arranged their annual festival to coincide with the Party's anniversary), in the student population, in revolutionary intellectuals and progressive national and nationalist movements. They can all be relied upon to repel conspiracies directed against the Arab home-land and the Revolution of Iraq. In the measure that Arab forces increase their dependence on the broad masses and break away from traditional ways into the wide open spaces of nationalist activity throughout the Arab home-land, so they will assist the Arab Revolution's move from a defensive to an offensive position. No nucleus of defeatism, capitulation or conspiracy will be tolerated throughout the Arab arena. It is precisely such nuclei which constitute the counter-revolutionary forces that try in vain to stem the tide of Arab resurgence.

People of our great Arab Nation !

Comrades in Arms !

Your Party has been given a historic task in bringing about the re-birth of the Nation, in realizing its unity and in liberating its occupied territories.

It is a great honour to hand down this task from one Arab generation to another, in preparation for the day when the flag of the United Arab State will be flown on high, the flag of unity, liberty and socialism.

Our deep faith in the Nation and our unbounded confidence in the energies of the mass of the people give us, on this momentous occasion of the 30th anniversary of our Party, the strength and the determination to stand our ground in the face of our Nation's challenges, and to discharge with honour and vigour the mission with which we have been entrusted.

Homage to the martyrs of our Party and to the martyrs of the Arab Nation everywhere in the Arab home-land.

Homage to all those who have had the honour of contributing to the edification of the Party, to its struggles or to its victories or to its defence in moments of stress.

Homage to our comrades languishing in prison throughout the Arab region, and particularly those in the prisons of the rulers of Damascus.

Homage to our valiant comrades who fought in the Lebanon and offered the supreme sacrifice in defending the honour of Arabism, and who continue to resist the Zionist-reactionary plot against the South of Lebanon.

Homage to the long-suffering masses of our people in the occupied home-land.

Homage to the forces of resistance and revolution throughout the Arab home-land.

Homage to the masses of our people in the Arab home-land and to expatriates abroad.

Homage to allies of the Party among progressive national and nationalist movements, working towards the realization of revolutionary aims.

Homage to progressive movements and liberation movements around the world.

Homage to the rising Arab generations which carry the torch of the Arab future, and to our youth on their festival today.

Homage of love and respect to the masses of our Arab Nation and, with it, a pledge to continue the struggle for the achievement of our nationalist objective.

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