

'Non-Existent' Party In Syria Keeps Tab On Arabians' Realm

By WILLIAM L. RYAN
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DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — The head of a political party which is supposed no longer to exist admits that it remains the nerve center of an illegal network throughout the Arab East.

philosopher and general secretary of the Baath-Arab Socialist Resurrection — party, said this in a long, private interview at his home here.

Lebanon Coup Hits 'Buzz Saw'

By TOM MASTERTON
BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — A core of hardbitten, determined politicians confidently triggered a coup d'etat in Lebanon 31 days ago. They ran into a buzz saw.

When Syria buried herself in union with Egypt in the United Arab Republic, all parties in Syria were supposed to have been dissolved. But Baath, while technically dissolved locally, retains a national executive.

Their drive was aimed at overthrowing President Camille Chamoun and his anti-Nasser, anti-Communist, pro-Western government.

The executive is made up of seven members — three Syrians, four from other Arab countries. These men are the high command for a political, violently nationalist underground movement outside this country. Aflaq says it is organized underground in Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, and to some extent in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, mostly among oil workers. It is beginning to take shape also, he said, in the Sudan.

For nearly two years they patiently schemed for an uprising to carry them to power. They seized the coat tails of the most popular ruler in the Middle East — President Gamal Abdel Nasser of the U.A.R. — the United Arab Republic. Nasser, who wanted a Lebanon government friendly to him and his plans for the Arab world, gave them full support.

Damascus remains the headquarters for the movement that passionately espouses the cause of Egyptian leadership of the Arab world. At the same time, the Baathists are under some sort of inspired internal attack in Syria for not having dissolved completely. The Baath party had been the dominant one before union with Egypt.

With weapons smuggled across the border from Syria they armed their followers. They supplied fanatics with the weapons of terrorism — bombs and dynamite sticks.

Aflaq denies the party has a dual role — to be nonexistent in Syria and a force for nationalist propaganda in countries resisting Nasser's influence.

'No Profit in Wars'

The party is nonregional, but all-Arab now, Aflaq said, "so it certainly has a supreme organ, which is the National Executive Committee of the party. This still exists, and it embraces not only Syrians but representatives from all other Arab countries. In this sense the party exists now, but it is not purely Syrian."

In a nation of merchants, and traders who see no profit in home grown revolutions or wars, they looked for little resistance. They were confident that when the smoke cleared after three or four days they would have gotten the power they wanted.

Thus the Baath party's position is something of a mystery. Some of its leaders surely seem slated for the ax as the U.A.R. administration from Egypt cleans house. Yet the Baath network abroad does yeoman work for the cause of Nasserism, and is likely to be a potent force for more violent ferment in areas like the Saudi peninsula and the Jordan-Iraq Federation.

Since the crisis began, his handsome face has hardened noticeably. Otherwise, outwardly at least he shows no sign of the tension he has been during for more than a month.

After the merger into U.A.R., Communist leader Khaled Bekdash fled to Czechoslovakia and eight other Communist leaders have left for exile. Merger certainly was a heavy blow at internal communism.

Western diplomats emerging from meetings with him admit their awe.

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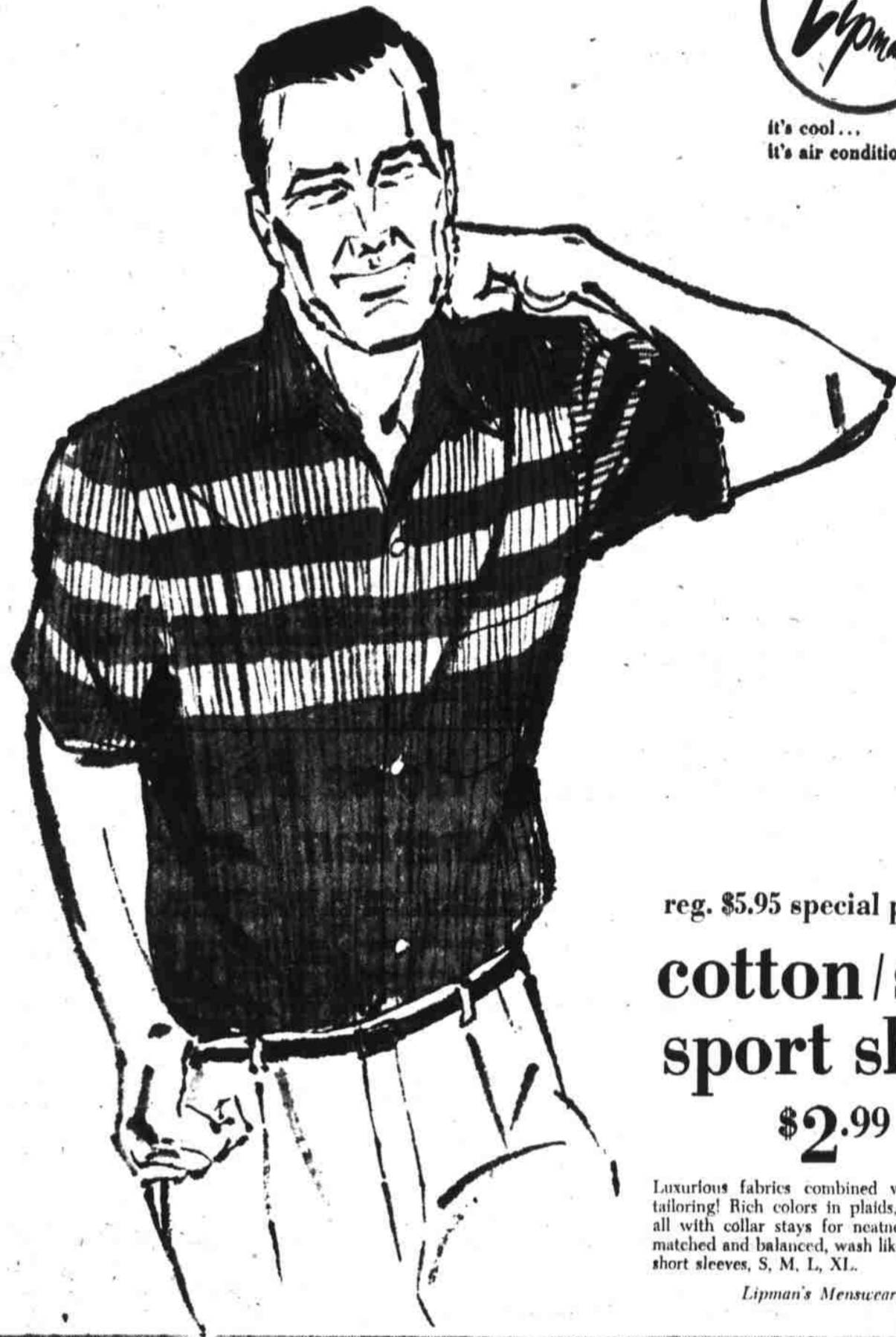
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