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16 September 2003

SYR41953.E

Syria: Labour Party of Syria
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

An April 2002 *Middle East International* report states that members of a "Revolutionary Labour Party" was seen in 2002 distributing leaflets openly in the streets of Damascus, calling for the release of political prisoners and an end to martial law and arbitrary rulings (19 Apr. 2002, 19).

An August 2001 *Middle East Times* report refers to Syrian writer Hassiba Abdel Rahman who was jailed in 1979, 1986 and 1992 for having belonged to the "Labor Party" and for meeting members of Amnesty International (3 Aug. 2001).

A 2001 Inter Pres Service (IPS) report quotes the head of the Committees for the Defense of Human Rights who said that members of the "Syrian Communist Labor Party" who were arrested between 1987 and 1992 were freed in 2001 following an amnesty "marking the 31st anniversary of late President Hafez al-Assad's rise to power" (20 Nov. 2001).

The original Syrian Communist Party-Faysal (SCP-Faysal) was founded by Yusuf al-Faysal in 1924 (Leftist Parties of the World 23 Aug. 2003). In 2003, the SCP-Faysal had four seats in parliament (ibid.).

In 1973, a faction led by Riyad al-Turk split from the original SCP Faysal to become the Syrian Communist Party-Political Bureau (ibid.). This political party had no seats in parliament in 2003 (ibid.).

In 1986, a faction led by Wisal Farhah Bagdash left the original SCP to become the Syrian Communist Party-Bagdash (SCP-Bagdash). This political organization had four seats in parliament in 2003 (ibid.).

In 2002 the National Committee for the Unity of Syrian Communists was created largely by dissident members of the SCP-Bagdash (ibid.).

No additional information on the Syrian Labour (Labor) Party could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Internet sites, including:

Amnesty International, including its *Annual Report 2003*

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Human Rights Watch (HRW), including its *World Report 2003*

World News Connection (WNC)

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