HABASH: LIBERATION NOT NEGOTIATION

The following interview was granted by comrade George Habash Secretary General of the PFLP, to the Italian newspaper Il Manifesto, whereupon it was published on January 26-30/1974. This segment is the first of a series.

Q.1. The P.F.L.P. was the organization which openly opposed participation in the Peace Conference, can you explain the political reasons behind your refusal?

A.1. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, as a revolutionary organization struggles for the interest of the oppressed Palestinian masses, for liberation, repatriation and self-determination. Given that we are part of the Arab liberation movement and the world revolution, the P.F.L.P. cannot adopt a position except through the recognition of the basic interests of these revolutionary forces.

In refusing participation in the so-called "Peace Conference" in Geneva, it does not base its refusal on either emotive or chauvinistic reasons, rather it derives its position from clear recognition of what this conference actually represents at this point and time.

The Geneva Conference is in basic conflict with the interests of the Palestinian and Arab masses and its national progressive and revolutionary forces. In addition, it is an attempt to curb the necessary conditions for the development of their struggle. The "Peace Conference" relies on two factors: The legal factor and the political factor.

A) The legal factor: The Geneva Conference convenes based on the U.N. Security Council resolution 338 which in turn is based on resolution 242 plus the negotiations with Israel. Both of these resolutions provide for the withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories, and at best from all the occupied territories hence. In return they implicitly impose the recognition of Israel and a guarantee of its presence and its borders.

Such a recognition, which the convening of the Geneva Conference will concretize as the basis to solve the Middle East crisis, provides a clear recognition of the legitimacy of the Zionist colonization on the greater portion of the Palestinian homeland. Simply put, the recognition of the Israeli, Zionist aggression till June 4, 1967. This clearly represents a major setback as regards the rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and their right to self-determination.

By the simple fact of any participation in the part of any representative of the Palestinian people would mean the acceptance of the Security Council's two resolutions, hence recognition of the setbacks they contain, regardless of the geographic boundaries of the Zionist entity.

Concerning this same people are claiming the possibility of dividing the Palestinian rights into temporary versus historic rights, in other words we are capable of acquiring part of the Palestinian land now as a step on the road of struggle to fully acquire it.

To these people we would like to clarify the major difference between partial liberation throughout struggle and the establishment of a revolutionary authority on it, and the acquiring of that part without struggle but by giving the other part of the land.

Partial liberation represents a great leap forward in the process of struggle and creates more favorable conditions for the whole Palestinian and Arab revolutionary process including the Jewish one. In addition it increases its revolutionary alliances on the world level. Whereas the second represents an abortion of the local revolutionary process and the first step in resolving the revolutionary alliance of the Palestinian resistance internationally. If it goes beyond what it required as "temporary rights". What would we then tell the world after we bowed out of the agreement we had accepted.

B) As for the political factor: The Geneva Conference meets under very important and dangerous political conditions. It represents an attempt to convert a clear uprising of the Arab masses so as to crystallize the Imperialist-Zionist and the reactionary interests threatened by the uprising.

The Geneva Conference meets in the aftermath of the October war which produced two categories of results: Basic results which form objective conditions for a progressive Arab uprising; and results that would permit for the advancement of the Imperialist-Zionist-Reactionary attack.

The first category is summarized in the following:

A) Destruction of the myth regarding the enemy's supremacy. As a result the Palestinian and Arab masses regained their confidence in their abilities and ultimately in the inevitability of victory. At the same time it shook the Zionist forces' confidence, both in and out of Israel, in addition to all of the Imperialist and reactionary forces that stand behind it, in the inability of the Zionist entity to expand and to play both the colonialist and imperialist roles it is entrusted with.

B) The October war took place in a period where Arab political divisions were quite strong, but the escalation of the contradictions with the Zionist enemy caused the renewal of unity among the Arab masses to a degree not even expected by the closest observers. While the talks for settlement-- e.g. the Geneva Conference-- represents the shortest road to circumscribe this unity.

(The unity among the Arab masses is not a metaphysical
or chauvinistic matter, but it is a material objective power that proves its ability when confronting imperialism and its weakness. It's nature is progressive, revolutionary and liberating. This nature is more deeply rooted to the extent that the revolutionary progressive forces are capable of leading the struggle.

C) The October war proved more to the world than any other time, what the Israeli leaders have been trying to hide, that the entity is not dependent on a site but a presence that is organically linked to and protected by U.S. Imperialism.

The PFLP's contention that U.S. Imperialism is our main enemy was confirmed, whereas the Zionist entity and the reactionary Arab forces are nothing more than appendages to U.S. Imperialism.

The danger of the Geneva Conference regarding this point is that it weakens the Arab peoples' animosity towards U.S. Imperialism and depicts the latter as a neutral arbitrator as opposed to the main enemy, a fact recognized by our people during the last war.

Hence the struggle of the Palestinian and Arab masses would be transformed from an anti-imperialist national liberation movement, into a limited nationalistic fight for the regaining of some of the lost lands.

The October war proved very clearly the importance of the relations between the Arab national liberation movement with the socialist countries. In addition the war proved the Arab masses' willingness to fight and the Socialist countries continued material support. In fact, the Arab masses' desire to fight is the real basis upon which our struggle is founded and that provides the material grounds for the support we receive from the Socialist countries. - In spite of the opportunistic and dangerous political trends adopted by certain Arab regimes prior to the war, regarding the sacrificing and curtailing of intimate relations with the Soviet Union, in favor of a change of direction leading to a pro-U.S. position; the dependence of the reactionary all kingdoms who have a very frank and blunt hatred for, anything pertaining to communism, the Socialist countries and the Soviet Union (The massacre against the Sudanese Communist party, and the pushing out of Soviet military advisors from Egypt). In spite of all these antagonistic developments, the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries presented all sorts of material-economic aid.

This close inter-relationship between the Arab national liberation movement and the Socialist countries is actually based on a common struggle against imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. Such intimate relations provide the liberation forces with essential weapon by which to wage their struggle.

The last war in a practical and definite way also proved the importance of relations between the Arab national liberation movement and the Socialist countries. A relationship which is an essential source of strength for the Arab liberation struggle.

The second category can be illustrated through the following:

A) Exposing the conflict between the interests of the present Arab regimes in achieving victory over Israel and their interests in preventing the provisions that can secure victory. Generally speaking the Arab nationalist regimes are opposed to Israel and Imperialism, but that is fundamentally different for i.e., people's war, and the giving in to U.S. Imperialism by relying on Arab reaction.

Under the present circumstances of anti-progressive, anti-neutral policies, any "Palestinian entity" that is proposed in Geneva must be rejected because not only would it be a partial Palestinian entity, i.e. 22.2% of all Palestinian land, but in addition it is organically linked to the anti-progressive principles, and in fact would be established to serve and further the interests of this anti-progressive and anti-national policy.

Hence we do not only reject the attendance of representatives of the Palestinian people, but we reject as well the political concepts implicit in the direction that the Arab regimes have taken.

GENEVA + PALESTINIAN STATE = SURRENDER

above all an expression as to their opposition to the people's struggle and the giving in to U.S. Imperialism by relying on Arab reaction.

To be continued
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In the last issue of the Bulletin (9) we published the first part of this interview which was originally granted by Dr. George Habash, Secretary-General of the P.F.L.P., to the Italian "Il Manifesto." The original was published on January 29-30/74. In this issue we publish the remainder of the interview since the issues discussed then if anything are as relevant now as the time of their discussion.

Q. 2. How does the PFLP evaluate the Syrian and Iraqi positions?

A. 1. The PFLP's evaluation of the present Arab controversies is entirely based on the conflict between two lines that crystallized since the October war. This evaluation is not in disagreement with the PFLP's struggle look before the war, but stems from it and emphasizes its basic features.

1. The line that holds to the positive achievements of the October war and aims to overcome its negative results. In other words, the line that holds more in the ability of the Palestinian and Arab masses in their abilities and the invincibility of victory through releasing its capabilities for the culmination of the struggle.

2. The line that is more convinced about the October war that it cannot achieve victory over the enemy without sacrificing its own basic interests which issues the victory. This line depends more on its political direction toward a settlement on the basis of safeguarding its personal interests to that of the battle and the struggle.

The Arab political division between these two lines is not dogmatic as it appears for the first instance. That is to say that Iraq is in the first line, and Egypt in the second. For in Egypt itself there is a very wide mass force that struggles in the direction of the first line. There is an internal battle between these two lines in all of the Arab regimes including the Palestinian one as well, although the majority of this line or that appears to be different in this region or that. While we say that the Iraqi forces that fought heroically in the October war refuses the proposed Kinger settlement, and we see that the Egyptian regime puts forward all the conditions in order to make successful the settlement, the Syrian regime tries to approved the Security Council resolution 215 with a special understanding that views it self withdrawal from all occupied territories in 267 as a precondition in addition to the respect of the lawful rights of the Palestinian people.

Our position concerning these various Arab states is crystal clear. We are a revolutionary Arab force as much as we saw a Palestinian revolutionary force. Such the battle between these two lines that are mentioned above spreads all over the Arab region and is also our battle. Without reservations we are with the political and social forces of the first line in every Arab state from Mauritania to Bahrein and against the forces of non-military attitude. The second is to face the usage of oil in the battle of liberation that is necessary and that the usage of oil in the battle is not by any means a substitute to the necessity of the usage of oil in the battle. We cannot deny that the usage of oil weapons to protect and expand its approach was consuming Arab oil. They would not maintain our stance.

The popular demands were summarized as follows:

1. Creation of the oil flow to all countries that support the enemy especially the U.S.A.

2. Nationalization of these countries' shares in the oil companies and the minimization of their interests in the countries.

With the increase of the intensity of the Arab masses on these demands, the Arab governing reactionary regimes in most of the oil countries were not capable of keeping the oil weapon normal in the battle. We cannot deny that the usage of the weapons received a welcome from the masses.

Primarily we support all measures that liberate the Arab oil and strikes the enemy operations that it is exposed to, and principally we are for the use of oil in the battle.

But we are the first to object to the methods used by the reactionary Arab regimes. We took the initiative of writing a long statement concerning this matter in our central organ - Al Mahd. The main points can be summarized as follows:

1. The cessation of the oil to the U.S.A., and diminishing the amount exported to other countries is by no way a substitute to the necessity of continuing U.S. interests. This nationalization we consider the basis for the vastness of our oil in the battle.

2. The method that was used by Arab

reaction in this field leads to an unusual harm between the U.S. Europe and Japan. This brings to the U.S. three profits then is looses by the cessation of Arab oil to it.

3. The increase of oil prices by the Arab oil companies is by no way a substitute to the necessity of continuing the supply of oil and a demand to be imposed upon. But this without the nationalization of the oil companies brings the majority of the profits to the accounts of the oil monopolies of which the U.S. share is 50%.

Nationalization alone is capable of correcting this contact harm that the U.S. benefits from. The policy of diminishing oil production without distinguished among friends and enemies and minors does not serve the Arab interests. This means that the U.S. and the bourgeoisie machinery to create a wave of animosity towards the Arabs. It might make the U.S. use its influence and propaganda to support the policy through claiming that they were most generous country of Arab oil simply to get the success of its policy which aims at the control of the whole area.

Events have proven our course. According to the Far East Economic Review by exploiting the present oil crisis, the western oil industry has increased its profits 35% as compared to the same period last year. During the whole period of the previous year, profits increased 40%. "Gulf's" increased 51%; "Mob's" 64%; "Sun Oil's" 37%.; "Chevron's" 57%.

The New York Times wrote the following: "What concerns the international oil companies, the sudden increase in the price of international oil, was accompanied by a great increase in their profits." This is one example of the brutal and more appropriately non-existent impact of the oil weapon in the absence of the nationalization of imperialist oil interests.

Imperialism is rearming the indigenous nations with the help of the leadership of Fatah and Saudi. What are the tasks of the Resistance Movement, militarily, politically and socially at the present stage?

A. 1. Pin pointing the revolutionary task in any stage tasks in addition to the understanding of the nature of that stage, the specification of the central poles of that stage, the specification of the central points or point that governs the movement and expressions in that stage.

Regarding the Palestinian Resistance Movement and the Arab national liberation movement there are two major issues that we must face at this stage. The first is the continuation of armed struggle and the because of that struggle through involving more powers of the Palestinian and Arab masses in all the military and non-military battles. The second is to face the dangers resulting from the existence of Palestinian Resistance, which main-
four themselves in the attempt to liqui-
date it or liquidate its cause. This is con-
trolled now in the Geneva Conference
which is known as the Peace Conference,
and the politics that it contains as we
pointed out previously. Resisting the dan-
gers cannot be done except by the fol-
lowing:

1. Preservation of the unity of the
Resistance Movement, and strengthen-
ing of this unity by mobilizing the
widest mass base and its forces,
by rejecting the liquidation
operation prepared at this time.
Such an emphasis on national
unity and its structure as well as its
revolutionary political line are the
conditions capable of silencing those
elements who are desiring from the
line, without causing a split in the
resistance.

2. To work to the utmost possible
to avoid all the political dangers in the
Arab homeland. Depending on the
positive results of the October
war so as to curtail the setbacks of
the regimes and what this represents
in the political dangers on the Palestin-
ian level, the Resistance and the
Arab Front provides the external
confrontation against the legitimacy. But in our
opinion as a revolutionary organization
with a proletarian international scope,
this legitimacy should be guided with a
safe look at the interests of the Palestinian,
Arab and international
movements.

Concerning every operation that we
are responsible for we are required to evaluate
the costs and the benefits that are achiev-
ed by the revolutionary movement on all
levels, Palestinian, Arab and international.

But at the same time we do not repre-
sent all the uprooted and dispersed Pales-
tinian people, and we do not plan all the
foreign operations. Hence we can not
in any case guarantee the wisdom and the correctness
of all operations that take place outside,
neither the outcome to the interest of the

P.L.O. to form an investigative committee
to probe into the background of the ope-
ration and to determine who is behind
it. Upon the termination of the investi-
gation, the facts will be publicly released.

Q. 7. After the October war, it be-
came clear that there is a right
and a left trend in Israel; in your opin-
ion what is the role played by
the U.S. to influence this trend?
What is the situation of the Red
Front inside Israel?

A. 7. Throughout the first days of the
war, the PFLP studied the various pos-
sible contingencies likely to result from the
war specially as regards the internal im-
 pact of the war on Israel. We reached the
conclusion that the Israeli material and
political losses that the Israeli entity would suffer would differ in their political
characteristics and their consequences:
We specified it as follows:

1. A defeat to the ruling circles
of Zionism.

2. The growth of two lines: One on
the right of the present leadership.
The second on the «left» of that leadership,
we called it the Nazim Goldman line.

3. We also noticed the growth of the
radical line which is represented
through the following parties and
organizations: Rakah, Matmup, Siah,
Black Panthers and the anti-
war elements among the students,
youth and intellectuals.

We expected that the balance of power of
tech changes will be determined (size and
percentage) by the length of the war
and its military, economic and
political results.

We believe that the shortcomings of
the October war which the Arab political
leadership bears responsibility for, is what
made capable the rise of the right wing
in Israel. Depending on the results of the
war, the right wing justified Israeli losses to
only military and political maintains that
the leadership had committed and accord-
ingly this wing claimed that it could have
avoided it, it presents as proof the partial
victories that Israeli army is capable of
achieving towards the end.

This is regarding the internal effects of
strengthening the extreme right wing inside
Israel. As for the external effects we
notice that the U.S propaganda machin-
ery has contributed greatly in making
this prominent. Although the U.S. depends
on the ruling wing in Israel, it sees that
the presence of the extreme right wing
allows it to employ it as means to pres-
ture the Arab regimes for more conces-
sions.

This is regarding the extreme right. Re-
garding the Red Front, the subject is so
extreme that it enters into the issue of the secur-
uty of the revolution. The PFLP
looks at the Red Front as a historical
symptom which forms a very important
dimension of the struggle in the future.
In the view of the PFLP it is inevitable
that many Jews will rebel against the

Zionist ideology and liberate themselves
from its ranks and limits. Their look that
their interest is common with the revo-

lutionary Arab forces to build a democ-

ratic socialistic society which presents the
just and peaceful solution to all national,
religions and racial problems.

Q. 8. Does the PFLP believe that
there is a possibility of the Re-
sistance Movement being attach-
ed militarily during the Peace
Conference or after it?

A. 8. Those who are part of the Peace
Conference believe that the Arab
regimes have a dual look at the Palestin-
ian Resistance Movement. They need the
Palestinian side to participate in the settle-
ment which they were not capable of
acquiring from outside the ranks of the
Resistance Movement. On the other side
they considered the Resistance with its revolutionary struggle that:

side or the contrary are that might present
the main obstacle in the way of reaching
a settlement. Also to transfer the
Resistance to an entity without a more
revolutionary content which will make it
an easy prey for occupation. This policy
would very closely the political battle
taking place now within the Resistance
and tries to be on its results. It might find it
necessary in a certain time that the re-
sult of the battle in its favor might come
through a certain military attack on the
presence of the Resistance here or there.
We suspect that Israel is the first possible
agent that will carry out such an attack
or the Lebanese regime which falls second
in line.

The first possibility is the most probable,
and might manifest itself through an Is-
raeli attack on southern Lebanon, which
will provide the chance to bring the Le-
banese water resources in the Geneva
Conference. Or it might manifest itself in
special Israeli operations that will enable
the Arab regimes and their propaganda
machinery to compare between their vic-
tories during the October war and the
inability of the resistance even in de-
defending itself.

In considering all of the above, we re-
sist that the essential position by the U.S.
is to attempt to line the Resistance Move-
ment into participating in the exploitation
plan. The most dangerous is the pres-
ure that the reactionary Arab regimes are
applying so as to insure Washington’s goal of bringing the Resistance to Geneva.
In addition the already anticipated attacks
from both Israel, Jordan and Lebanon
seem to liquidate the resistance will act as another agent that would push the Resistance
participating in this capitulation opera-
in