



INTERVIEW WITH COMRADE HABASH

The following are excerpts of an interview with Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, in *Sabah Al Khair* magazine, Jan. 9, 1982, issued by the Syrian Social Nationalist Party in Lebanon.

The Palestinian Central Council has issued decisions which enforce adherence to the decisions of the PNC and the Covenant of the PLO. Does this constitute a sound basis on which Palestinian national unity can be strengthened — a pressing necessity during this period?

Theoretically what the Palestinian Central Council declared during its last meeting *does* constitute a sound basis on which we can reinforce Palestinian national unity. However, we must always keep our eyes open to the continuous attempts of Arab reaction to split the Palestinian arena. For example, after the last meeting of the Palestinian Central Council, Prince Fahd met with the students at the School of Petroleum Engineering in Saudi Arabia and said that his plan still stands and that many of the regimes still support it — and that leaders of

the PLO support it too! What is the aim of such statements? What does their timing indicate? Saudi Arabia, in the person of Fahd, aims at dealing a blow to Palestinian national unity by launching these political balloons which will be bounced about and constitute a source of differences in the Palestinian revolution. One of the duties of the PLO is to implement what has been decided on during the Palestinian Central Council. This requires, in our opinion, a prompt answer to Fahd's statements, stating that the Covenant of the PLO and its current program do not in any way recognize the Zionist entity. Such a reply would strengthen Palestinian national unity and reaffirm to everyone that we still hold fast to the Covenant of the PLO and to the programs we have all agreed upon.

Two days ago, following the Palestinian Central Council meeting and the issuing of its communique, Saud al Faisal announced that Saudi Arabia and the Arab states are ready to recognize 'Israel'... In such a case, the PLO should make a quick and direct answer, stating that the Arab people, who silenced Sadat and King Abdullah before him, are capable of silencing Faisal and the whole Saudi family. Saudi Arabia tried to retract this statement, but this retraction only confirms it. Saudi reaction believes that this is the suitable time to accomplish the recognition of 'Israel'. It is first and foremost the duty of the PLO, before any other Arab force, to make Arab reaction understand that our Palestinian people are supported by the masses of our Arab nation and all the progressive and socialist forces of the world. In addition, we will continue to fight until this cancerous presence is uprooted from our Palestinian and Arab lands, even if it takes a hundred years. All those who dare mention recognition of 'Israel' will receive their due from the people. Fahd, Faisal and the whole Saudi family should understand that all their wealth cannot buy the Palestinian revolution.

Shamir has announced that there will be no withdrawal in April. The fact that the enemy



Zionist soldiers marching into the Golan Heights to reinforce the occupation after the annexation

government continues to establish settlements can mean only one thing: following the policy of Judaization in order to realize the establishment of 'Greater Israel'. The question is: What is to be done?

The solution is based on three important points: (1) to remain steadfast and not surrender in spite of the difficult situation through which we are passing, (2) to strengthen the position of rejecting the cancerous Zionist entity in the Arab lands, (3) not to limit our response to political activity, no matter how important and valuable this may be, but to concentrate on actively practicing protracted people's war, giving it priority over any other solution, because through this we can mobilize tens of millions of the sons of our Arab nation. In this way we will be able to erode the basis of the Zionist entity and bring about its downfall. In short, the solution is what the LPM and the PLO are doing, on the condition that this becomes the situation from the Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean. In this framework, political activity is of utmost importance.

The people who fought for their freedom and rights have achieved them. The experience of the peoples of Latin America, Africa, Asia and others is sufficient proof of this.

At the beginning of this year, Reagan stated that the annexation of the West Bank would be a big mistake and mean an end to Camp David. Doesn't this mean that Reagan okays Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights and what has already been done to Judaize Jerusalem and the rape of Palestine?

Our Arab nation should be well aware of the true nature of these US-Zionist maneuvers in spite of the attempts of the US and reactionary propaganda to camouflage them. It is the duty of all patriotic and progressive forces to remind their people of

past and present history in order to extract lessons to protect the masses from these delusions.

When the Iraqi nuclear reactor was bombed, the US pretended to be angry and upset. What happened after that? US imperialism signed the strategic cooperation agreement with the Zionist entity. After the annexation of the Golan Heights and the decision of the UN Security Council to ask 'Israel' to rescind its decision to annex the Golan Heights, Begin cancelled the strategic cooperation agreement. What happened next? The US announced that anything is possible "except taking measures against Israel"! Percy then visited the Zionist entity, to be followed by a visit from Haig, while the Reagan Administration kept pouring out statements to the effect that the strategic cooperation agreement with the Zionist entity will remain in effect.

What must be made clear to our masses is the true nature of the Zionist entity — that it is the arm that deals the blows for imperialism in our Arab land and that it is organically linked to the Zionist movement, whose very existence depends on the destruction of our national existence. If our people are made aware of this truth, then imperialist, reactionary and Zionist maneuvers will have no chance of success.

Are there any specific measures being taken to strengthen the steadfastness of the Palestinian-Lebanese-Syrian triangle of confrontation following Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights and its threats to annex South Lebanon? To what extent are these measures, if they exist, linked to the Arab strategy decided on during the Fez Summit with regard to the defense of the South?

If the measures anticipated for the new confrontation strategy are linked to the Fez Summit, God help us! The measures re-

quired to liberate the South and strengthen the steadfastness of its families should have their origin in the LPM, PLO and Syria. The alliance of these three parties should shoulder the responsibility of facing the dangerous possibilities to which the South is exposed and to which this triangle is exposed through the South. The annexation of the Golan Heights should be a new source of challenge and motivation for these three parties, enabling them to chart the correct path for the liberation of the Golan Heights and Palestine. This path has become clear to all, the path of defeating the enemy by protracted people's war which mobilizes the largest sectors of our Arab nation. The path of Fez did not bring the people of Lebanon and Syria anything except booby-trapped cars and explosions. This left scores of innocent victims in an attempt to instill despair in the Arab masses and thus lead them to accept the idea of recognizing the Zionist entity.

Any Arab convergence should aim at awakening the Arab masses in order to concentrate their energies and potentials in protracted people's war.

Last year the theme was aggression and confrontation — aggression by the Camp David partners against the Arab world, and confrontation by the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front and the uprising in the occupied lands. What are your expectations for the coming year?

In short, we expect more aggression and more confrontation. By observing the international situation, especially during this period, and imperialism's aggressive policy and its reflections on the Zionist entity — motivating Zionist aggression and assuring its desired results — it becomes clear that this year will be a hot one. However, we can say that with the weapons which helped us

remain steadfast in face of the imperialist, Zionist, reactionary and isolationist attempts to exterminate us, we will also be able to continue our steadfastness.

Our arms, Palestinian national unity and our alliance with the LPM, Syria and the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front, the support and activity of the Arab masses in the revolution, the weapon of our strategic alliance with the socialist community, especially the Soviet Union — with all this we will be able to remain steadfast. It is the duty of all progressive and patriotic Arab forces to use all these weapons in the liberation battle.

Is there any message you would like to direct to the LPM, especially since the Lebanese arena is expected to experience a lot of pressure due to its being a national arena, and due to the subjects of national accord and the presidential elections?

I agree with the part of the question which notes the importance and the particularity of the Lebanese arena, especially during this period. It is an arena full of confrontation and maneuvers. Presidential elections are to take place this year... This will serve to escalate conflict, since the forthcoming president will be required to be more partial to one of the two programs — either that of the patriotic Lebanese or the isolationist, Zionist, imperialist one. Thus the enemy camp has begun tightening the rope, in the form of the US plan, Habib's visits, Beshir Gemayel's initiative and the disruptions of security in the patriotic area.

The point is that it is not a matter of a message we would like to direct to the LPM. It is a call for hope, because the LPM can guarantee the defense of the Palestinian Revolution on Lebanese soil. It is our hope that next year will provide the opportunity to put into practice all the basic lessons extracted from the experience of the patriotic movement over the past years.

Allow me to mention a few of these lessons. The principle thing that the LPM must face is the fascist, Zionist, isolationist plan, which has established its control over part of the Lebanese land and people. This must be confronted by establishing a patriotic authority which shoulders the responsibility for the real liberation of all of Lebanon, creating a progressive, patriotic united Lebanon. In order for this to take place, it is clear that working for the establishment of a broad national front is necessary. It is also necessary to work seriously towards extending bridges to all the Lebanese people, especially those in the isolationist ghettos, in order to insure the

isolation and overthrow of the fascists' plan, and the establishment of the united progressive Lebanon to which most Lebanese aspire.

How do you evaluate President Assad's new formulation of Arab solidarity in the light of the annexation of the Golan Heights? In your opinion, what is the role of the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front in this period?

Motivated by feelings of brotherliness, concern and a deep sense of responsibility, and in the light of past experience, we think that the aims and purpose of Arab solidarity should be defined beforehand. If the next summit is convened, is it not our right to ask for what purpose it is being convened? Is it not our right to ask what became of former summits and their results? Should the coming summit be similar to the former ones in content and results?

Arab solidarity has always allowed Arab reaction to wear its 'patriotic costume' in an attempt to conceal the reality of its antagonism towards the Arab national movement, and thus to enact the most dangerous of imperialist conspiracies against our national cause. We do not absolutely object to any summit regardless of the topics, agenda and results. However, it is essential that we keep our eyes open to any plans Arab reaction tries to enact during these summits. Do you think it is by chance that just after President Assad left Saudi Arabia, Fahd announced that his plan still stands? Only a fool would believe that. Fahd timed his announcement in order to falsely insinuate that Syria had agreed to the Saudi plan. We know that Syria is anxious to hold an Arab summit with the theme of confrontation. So what does Fahd's announcement really mean? The reactionary regimes always try to use these summits to conceal their attempts to enact their conspiracies, to weaken the patriotic forces and to hold all the reins in their hands.

We cannot object in principle to this step taken by President Assad. However, we say that confronting the annexation requires a new Syrian policy and a new Syrian-Palestinian-patriotic Lebanese policy, as well as a new policy on the part of the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front. After that, if Arab reaction is forced to save face in front of the masses and takes a step towards supporting the confrontation of the Golan annexation, it may be possible to establish Arab solidarity on the basis of a plan of confronting the enemy.

It is our duty to warn that if this summit meeting is convened, there will be those who call for official Arab adoption of the Fahd

plan. Most of the reactionary Arab regimes are anxious for it to be adopted... If the Arab summit is held on the basis of the Saudi initiative, we say that it is a miserable summit with miserable results. In addition, we state that any patriotic force or regime that facilitates such results will be held responsible before the masses.

In Poland, there are two factors contributing to the disruption of security and the economy... KOR and US pressure... What is the real nature of the role played by these two factors? What are their aims in the long run?

The role played by these two factors is clear and substantial as anyone who follows the Polish situation can see. Their long-term aims are aggressive ones and are not limited to Poland... Their purpose is to have a negative influence on all the countries of the socialist community.

A few days ago, I read Brzezinski's statement that he expects Polish events to reflect themselves on the Soviet Union, which represents the first and principle socialist experiment which has lasted for decades. US imperialism tries to remedy its ever escalating crisis by going on the offensive against the socialist and progressive forces in all parts of the world. The latest developments in Poland, the formation of the military council for national salvation and the declaration of an emergency situation are a start to limiting these aggressive plans.

What remains to be mentioned is that the events in Poland are not solely due to these two factors. There is an important basic matter which should constitute an experience and a lesson for all the countries of the socialist community, as well as for any country aiming to apply socialism in the future: What made it possible for these factors to do their job was the many basic mistakes made by the United Polish Labor Party. The party neglected some of the basic laws for building socialism, especially in the field of agriculture and spreading socialist ideology among the masses. For example, in the field of agriculture, private property has not yet been abolished or even limited. It still accounts for 70% of Polish agricultural land.

We hope that the Polish people will overcome this crisis and put a stop to all counter-revolutionary activities, because any success for the counter-revolutionary forces in Poland will affect all other countries of the socialist community; this negative influence will also extend to affect our national cause and our whole Arab region. ●