



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 29-30/1974. 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 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 colonisation 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 on the part of any representatives 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 some people are claiming the possibiliti-

es 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 desolving 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 bow 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 curb 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 ability 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 moves 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 in disengagement. 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 othertime, what the Israeli leaders have been trying to hide, that this entity is not an independant Jewish state 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 is what provides the material grounds for the support we receive from the Socialist countries. - In spite of the opportunistic and dangerous political stands adopted by certain Arab regimes prior to the war, regarding the sacrificing and curtailing of their relationships with the Soviet Union, in favor of a change of direction leading to a pro-U.S. position: The dependence of the reactionary oil 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

that our people possess will set free without limits.

The weakness which the October war uncovered in the Arab regimes provides us with the knock on the door of U.S. Imperialism with all the possible concessions they can offer in hope for a solution that will weaken the level of conflict within the regimes' structures. Simultaneously it lessens the danger of its own crisis, and postpones for as long as possible the development of the masses' revolutionary uprising that threatens their interests.

B) The direction the Arab regimes have taken poses a threat to the positive results of the October war. These regimes are dealing with these positive results in two ways:

1. It holds on to them so as to enable their rationalisation which postulates "peace" i.e. capitulation.

2. In order to rationalise their capitulation stand, these regimes refuse to learn any lessons from the October war, hence forcing an unwanted case of blindness on them. These lessons if they are well taken would clearly show the Arab's ability to score victories. In stead the Egyptian regime proves its dual approach as regards its position vis-a-vis the Israeli troops on the West bank of the Canal. On one hand we are told by top Egyptian military leaders that in no time they can drive off the enemy's forces, while they simultaneously engage in peace talks at the 101 kilometer, and at Geneva, and accomplish certain results at such closed sessions in hopes of driving out the Israeli forces. Claiming their incapability of refusing the proposed settlement the regimes try to rationalize their capitulation.

This trend puts the regimes in a position where they must make further concessions in favor of Israel and U.S. Imperialism and Arab reaction. Contrary to what the positive results of the October war indicated, we notice that a fast process of relations is taking place in the interests of U.S. Imperialism and Arab reaction, where as a new campaign causing doubts regarding the relations with the Socialist countries reemerged once again as was prior to the war. From all that has been preceded it is clear that the Geneva Conference both its legal and political factors represents the elimination of the greatest portion of the Palestinian people's national rights, and an elimination of the positive Arab conditions, the October war, and the embryonic advances of the Arab masses progressive uprising.

The present Arab political direction towards Geneva is

GENEVA + PALESTINIAN STATE = SURRENDER

liberation movement and the Socialist countries is actually based on a common struggle against Imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. Such intimate relations provides the liberation forces an 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 from securing the conditions for victory. The October war uncovered that the main reason for the Arab side's inability to achieve a strategic victory does not lie in the quality of the Arab fighter nor in the quality of the available arms, and neither in the preparedness of the Arab masses to give and sacrifice. Simply put, it lies in the class and political structure of these regimes whose interests are in conflict with what is needed of democratic revolutionary preparedness that guarantees the development of the war into a total national war, through which all the national resources

above all an expression as to their opposition to the people's struggle 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 contents implicit in the direction that the Arab regimes have taken. “



**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 ?

Q. 3. What is the Egyptian political role in the present stage?

What is your evaluation of the Faisal-Sadat axis?

A. 2 & 3 The PFLP's evaluation of the present Arab conditions is centrally based on the conflict between two lines that crystalized since the October war. This evaluation is not in disagreement with the PFLP's strategic 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 to the ability of the Palestinian and Arab masses in their abilities and the inevitability of victory through releasing its capabilities for the continuation of the struggle.

2. The line that is more convinced after the October war that it cannot achieve victory over the enemy without sacrificing its own class interests which insures the victory. This line depends more now in its political direction towards 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 geographical 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 region 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

see that the Iraqi forces who fought heroically in the October war refuse the proposed Kissinger settlement, and we see that the Egyptian regime puts forward all the concessions it can to make successful the settlement, the Syrian regime ties its approval to the Security Council resolution 338 with a special understanding that views Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories in 1967 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 are a Palestinian revolutionary force. As 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 capitulation. And of course we have in every position of this large battle an evaluation of the nature of the fighting forces, the limits and the size of the necessary local alliances for the interest of the whole revolutionary process in the area.

We believe that this explanation of the PFLP's present position answers question number 2 regarding Syria and Iraq and question number 3 regarding the Egyptian role and the Faisal-Sadat axis.

Q. 4. What is the PFLP evaluation of Faisal's oil policy? Does this policy guarantee Faisal's independence from the U.S.? Or is it a U.S. policy to strike European and Japanese interests?

A. 4. The oil in the Arab countries as it is in the other underdeveloped countries is exposed since its discovery to the

ugliest process of thievery and exploitation by the Imperialist monopolist oil companies. And it has presented in this century the most important target that the Arab homeland has faced of Imperialist military and political attacks that reached a barbaric level. It is very natural that one of our basic struggles, and that of the Arab national progressive forces is the enabling the Arab masses to liberate themselves and liberate their sources of which oil is top priority. So it is natural that we support every step that is directed against the thievery operation and we were, as were all of the Arab masses, highly in favor of the Arab steps taken in this field such as the nationalisation of the Iraqi Petroleum Company and its pipelines in Iraq and Syria a year and a half ago, and also support the measures taken in Libya and Algeria.

In addition to this, our principal position that oil is one of the main Arab weapons in the battle of liberation that is waged by the Palestinian and Arab masses. We demanded since the outset of our struggle with the necessity of striking the imperialist interests in the Arab homeland, specially the oil interests. Particularly during the October war this became a demand that the masses insisted upon. It is impossible for the Arab masses to accept the fact that the air bridge which was continuously supplying the enemy with all kinds of weapons to protect and expand its aggression was consuming Arab oil. They would not maintain their silence!

The popular demands were summarized as follows:

1. Cessation 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 nationalization of all their interests in our countries.

With the increase of the insistence 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 neutral in the battle. We cannot deny that the usage of this weapon received a welcome from the masses.

Principally we support all measures that liberate the Arab oil and strikes the thievery operation 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 analysis concerning this matter in our central organ — Al Hadaf. The main points can be summarized as follows:

1. The cessation of oil to the U.S.A., and diminishing the amount exported to other countries is by no way a substitute to the necessity of nationalizing U.S. interests. This nationalization we consider the basis for the usage of oil in the battle.
2. The method that was used by Arab

reaction in this field leads to an unequal harm between the U.S., Europe and Japan. This brings to the U.S. more profit than it loses by the cessation of Arab oil to it.

3. The increase of oil prices by the Arab countries is a legitimate right and a demand to be insisted 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 60%.
4. Nationalization alone is capable of correcting this unequal harm that the U.S. benefits from. The policy of diminishing oil production without distinguishing among friends and enemies and neutrals does not serve the Arab interest. It might enable the U.S. and the hostile propaganda machinery to create a wave of animosity towards the Arabs. It might also enable the U.S. to convince Europe and Japan to support its policy through claiming that they cannot guarantee continuous Arab oil supply except through the success of its policy which aims at the control of the whole area.

Events have proven our comments. According to the Far East Economic Review «By exploiting the present oil crisis the western oil industry have increased its profits 44% as compared to the same period last year. During the third quarter of the present year «Exxon's» profits increased 80%, «Gulf's» increased 91%, «Mobil's» 64%, «Standard Oil of Indiana» 37%, «Getty» 71%».

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 limited and more appropriately non-existent impact of the oil weapon in the absence of the nationalization of Imperialist oil interests.

Q. 5. Imperialism is rearranging the area in a way to stabilize it under the leadership of Faisal and Sadat. What are the tasks of the Resistance Movement, militarily, politically and socially at the present stage?

A. 5. Pin-pointing the revolutionary task in any stage calls in addition to the understanding of the nature of that stage, the specification of the central points 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 central issues that we must face at this stage. The first is the continuation of armed struggle and the increase 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 surrounding the existence of the Palestinian Resistance, which mani-

fest themselves in the attempt to liquidate it or liquidate its cause. This is centralized 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 danger cannot be done except by the following:

1. Preservation of the unity of the Resistance Movement, and strengthening of this unity by mobilizing the widest mass base and its powers, 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 deviating from the line, without causing a split in the resistance.
2. To work to the utmost possible to coordinate and develop the Arab revolutionary effort that is carried out by all the progressive forces in the Arab homeland. Depending on the positive results of the October war so as to curtail the setback of the regimes and what this represents

principal position, regarding the external operations of the resistance. In short, the clash on the external front is a confrontation between the Palestinian people who were uprooted from their homeland and dispersed abroad in the presence of the forces and interests that still work and assist in the continuation of the state of dispersion and uprooting.

This existence outside the Palestinian and the Arab Front provides the external confrontation its legitimacy. But in our opinion as a revolutionary organization with a proletarian internationalist scope, this legitimacy should be guided with a safe look at the interests of the Palestinian, Arab and International movement.

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

But at the same time we do not represent all the uprooted and dispersed Palestinian people, and we do not plan all the foreign operations. Hence we can not guarantee the wisdom and the correctness of all operations that take place outside, neither the outcome to the interest of the



of political dangers on the Palestinian level, the Resistance and the revolutionary Arab national liberation movement.

Q. 6. What is the P.F.L.P.'s position concerning the «Rome Massacre». In addition what do you think of the Imperialist powers who are attempting of placing the blame of the «Rome Massacre» on the Palestinian revolution and in particular the P.F.L.P. ?

A. 6. Before entering the details of the Rome operation we should clarify our

revolutionary movement. It is only natural that the dispersed and uprooted Palestinian people express their national aspirations and justified wrath in ways and means that might be wrong in certain cases. In other words to exercise this legitimate external confrontation which is derived from the nature of the Palestinians presence with the enemy abroad, in ways that are not controllable by any revolutionary political line.

Such characteristics fit the last «Rome Operation» which we had nothing to do with. In addition the PFLP supported the resolution of the Central Council of the

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

Q. 7. After the October war, it became clear that there is a rightist trend in Israel; in your opinion 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 possible contingencies likely to result from the war specially as regards the internal impact of the war on Israel. We reached the conclusion that the human, material and political losses that the Israeli entity would suffer would usher important political changes. We specified it as follows :

1. A defeat to the ruling circle 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 Nahum Goldman line.
3. We also noticed the growth of the radical line which is represented through the following parties and organizations: Rakah, Matzpen, Siah, Black Panthers and the anti-war elements among the students, youth and intellectuals.

We expected that the balance of power of these 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 mistakes that the leadership had committed and accordingly this wing claimed that it could have avoided it. It presents as proof the partial victories that Israeli army was 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 machinery 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 pressure the Arab regimes for more concessions.

This is regarding the extreme right. Regarding the Red Front, the subject to a great extent enters the issue of the security 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 revolutionary Arab forces to build a democratic socialist society which presents the just and peaceful solution to all national, religious and racial problems.

Q. 8. Does the PFLP believe that there is a possibility of the Resistance Movement being attacked militarily during the Peace Conference or after it.

A. 8. Those who are part of the «Peace Conference specially the participating Arab regimes have a dual look at the Palestinian Resistance Movement. They need the Palestinian side to participate in the settlement 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 dimension as not being that side, or the contrary are that might present the main obstacle in the way of reaching a settlement.

On the basis of this dual look which contains the need for the resistance and the need for its participation, the work now is in the direction to squeeze the revolutionary content out of the Resistance, hence to eliminate its danger for the possible settlement. Also to transfer the Resistance to an entity without a mass revolutionary content which will make it an easy prey for cooperation. This policy moulds very closely the political battle taking place now within the Resistance and tries to be on its results. It might find it necessary at a certain time that the result of the battle to 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 most probable, and might manifest itself through an Israeli attack on southern Lebanon, which will provide the chance to bring the Lebanese 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 «victories» during the October war and the «inability» of the resistance even in defending itself.

In considering all of the above, we notice that the essential position by the U.S. is to attempt to line the Resistance Movement into participating in the capitulation plan. The major danger lies in the pressure 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 to liquidate the resistance will act as another agent that would push the Resistance in participating in this capitulationist operation.