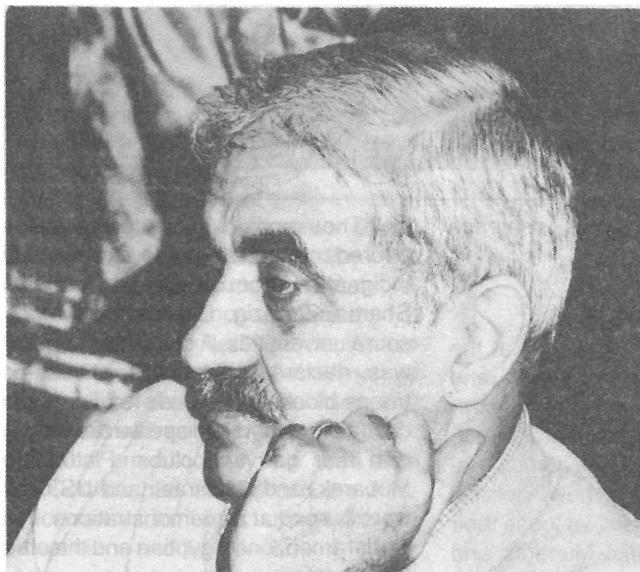


# Comrade Habash and the Yemeni Revolution

*While Comrade George Habash was in Democratic Yemen for the YSP congress in October 1985, he was interviewed by the country's leading newspaper «October 14th» (named for the date of the revolution). Irregardless of the ensuing events in Yemen, we find it important to print this interview for two reasons. One: It is the first interview in which Comrade Habash has spoken about his own life and his entry into the national struggle. Two: It presents the background of the Yemeni revolution's beginning in the context of the Arab National Movement, and thereby for the historical relations between the YSP and PFLP. (The paragraphs in italics are the introduction and conclusion written by the interviewer.)*



*Doctor George Habash is an extraordinary person, not because he is a leader in the Palestinian revolution, or because he is General Secretary of the PFLP, or even because he has been active and steadfast in the Arab and Palestinian national struggle for four decades of his 60 year life. He is extraordinary because of his simple personality and modesty that make you feel he is a close friend you have known for many years. He opens his heart with no hesitation, arrogance or insecurity. Because he is not an ordinary person, he has a big heart with room for everything and a rich mind that is always giving. When he speaks, he uses all his feelings with deep concentration and calm, on even the hottest issue. He gives you confidence to speak with him and search his mind.*

*What do you remember about the beginning of your work in the Arab and Palestinian national field, and the start of your academic life, how you chose to study medicine?*

In fact, I started my work in the Palestinian and Arab national field at the same time - in 1948 - the year of the disaster, the year that part of Palestine was occupied. Before that, I was just an ordinary citizen, experiencing Palestinian and Arab events, reacting like any other Palestinian or Arab citizen. Before 1948, I had not started a continuous, organized struggle, but the loss of Palestine affected me very deeply. It

affected the Arab and Palestinian youth. For me, it was the way my family and I were thrown out of Lydda by force, and the horrible crimes I witnessed being committed by the Zionist occupying forces: the degrading way in which we were kicked out of our home, the enormous difficulties that faced us when we walked to Ramallah, and the indescribable human suffering that I witnessed during this event. All this changed me completely. I didn't find any reason to live or any taste for life, except through struggle against this enemy and the horrible things it stands for.

I remember thinking seriously of leaving school. I was in my second year, studying medicine at the American University of Beirut. I thought of leaving school without knowing what to do. All I wanted was to struggle for regaining my right to live on my land. Only I didn't know how. I didn't want to continue studying in Beirut, because I wanted to stay in Palestine, my homeland, in Ramallah, near Lydda. Only my mother's constant pleading for me to continue my studies made me go back. I consider myself an emotional person; I didn't want to upset my mother. I had to continue my school, and so I went back to Beirut.

There I found what a great influence the disaster had not only on the Palestinians, but on Arab youth in general; those from Syria, Iraq, the Gulf and elsewhere were greatly affected. In 1948, we started a student struggle that expressed our frustration with the Arab leaders of the time. It also expressed our wish to find out what was to be done. As we expressed it then: What is to be done to avenge what has happened? What can we do in struggle to win Palestine back? Since that time, I have been on that path.

*You say you are an emotional person, finishing school due to your mother's pleading, yet the cause of your people and land is what led you to embark on another journey - that of struggle. How were you able to coordinate between becoming a doctor and a militant? How were your mother's feelings? Did she want George the doctor or George the militant?*

In fact, when I went back to school in Beirut, my studying was superficial. It is true that I passed with good grades, but I didn't have in mind getting my degree in medicine in order to practice. I had one thing in mind: working to liberate Palestine. When I finished my study, I felt I had fulfilled my mother's wishes. I could have taken the degree and said: Congratulations mother, your son is now a doctor; so that she would let me