

Interview with Comrade Habash

In mid-December 1986, on the occasion of the PFLP's 19th anniversary, Secretary General George Habash gave an exclusive interview to *Al Hadaf* and *Democratic Palestine*.

The failure of the Reykjavik summit was a main international event of 1986. What is your evaluation of the summit? How does the failure reflect itself internationally and in the Middle East?

After the October Revolution was victorious, Lenin outlined the policy of peaceful coexistence. He put forth the clear, correct and comprehensive considerations that determined this policy. Among these considerations were the determination of the Bolsheviks to stabilize the first socialist experience, and their belief that this policy would provide the best conditions for the development of the workers' and revolutionary movement in the capitalist countries. Since then, most events have proved the correctness of this policy.

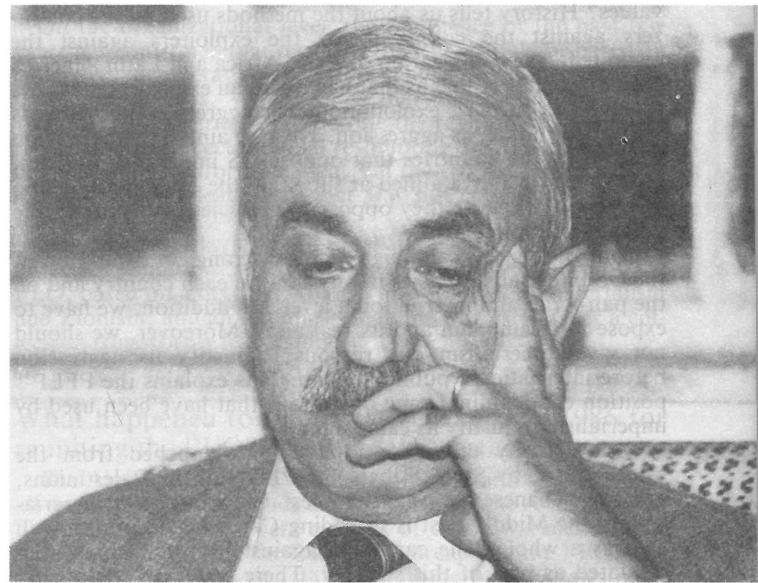
Today, in the nuclear age, there is an additional basic consideration for the coexistence policy, which concerns the fate of all humanity and civilization. The political report of the Soviet Communist Party's 27th congress, and Gorbachev's speech at the congress, confirmed that the fate of all humanity today depends on asserting the policy of international detente... One tactical mistake could lead to a nuclear disaster that could destroy human civilization. This explains the continuous initiatives of Comrade Gorbachev's leadership, from the Warsaw Pact's pledge never to initiate the use of nuclear weapons, to the Soviet Union's own moratorium, and its renewal, stopping nuclear tests until the end of this year.

It is important to confirm that the initiatives of the Soviet Union and the socialist community are serious and genuine. At this historical juncture, the Soviet Union feels a responsibility towards humanity, for protecting the world from the nuclear threat. Some call this policy the peaceful offensive policy; they think it aims at splitting the imperialist camp, provoking the contradictions within it, and gathering forces around the Soviet Union's peaceful policies. During my last visits to a number of the socialist countries, I felt their sincere and responsible position of protecting the world and international peace from a nuclear disaster. I remember certain phrases that made me feel the deep concern of the socialist countries about the nuclear threat, and their genuine willingness to reach agreements that protect the world from nuclear disaster and restore detente in the international arena. This explains the 'surprising' proposals of Comrade Gorbachev in his meeting with Reagan at Reykjavik. These suggestions truly surprised various circles in the West, and were welcomed by international public opinion.

Achieving international detente does not depend only on one side... Two main forces are needed: the Soviet Union and the socialist community on one side and imperialism, especially the USA, on the other. Gorbachev's deep feeling of responsibility must be complemented by Reagan's resolve to give up NATO's strategic military superiority, for this would not be accepted by Gorbachev and the socialist countries, despite their deep sense of the importance of adopting a consistent peaceful policy.

The failure of the Reykjavik summit is due to Reagan and his administration's particularly aggressive policy for reversing history, in order to solve imperialism's crisis. In the seventies, the national liberation movements were able to achieve many victories. The people of Vietnam were victorious, as were the peoples of Laos, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Afghanistan and Iran, where the Shah was toppled. Also in the seventies, the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries were able to achieve defensive strategic parity with NATO. The socialist community continued to achieve a 4% annual growth rate in the economy. Meanwhile, the economic crisis continued in the capitalist camp. In the late seventies, the growth rate in the USA was 5%, and then fell to zero.

This is the essence of the international situation at present, which gives great weight to the peaceful offensive policy of the



Soviet Union. It is true that the Reykjavik summit failed but, at the same time, it was successful in the sense that the results broadened the scope of the forces, countries and international opinion supporting this policy. This was an embarrassment for Reagan's administration and its aggressive policies. The summit also succeeded in creating contradictions within the imperialist camp and the Reagan Administration itself, to the point where the latter had to declare that the Reykjavik summit would not be the last, and that meetings would continue.

The main reason for the failure of the summit was Reagan's insistence on adhering to the SDI program through which he wants to deal a blow to the defensive strategic parity achieved by the Warsaw Pact in the seventies. I don't believe that the failure of the Reykjavik summit will lead the Soviet Union to reconsider the peaceful policy that was adopted at the 27th congress. However, it is expected to lead to the continuation of the US nuclear experiments and aggression on all levels, against the peoples of the world. During Reagan's term, Grenada was occupied, Lebanon was invaded, Libya was bombed; there has been ongoing aggression against Nicaragua, and preparations to launch a major attack.

It is natural that this aggression will be applied specifically in the Middle East, because of its oil wealth and strategic significance. The natural resources in the area are very important for the imperialist forces, although they pretend they could do without them. The aggressive policy will reflect itself on the Arab region specifically, because it represents a special market for US goods. It is also important because the Arab world is located on the southern borders of the Soviet Union.

The talk about dividing the world into spheres of influence is unjustified. When applying the peaceful policy, the Soviet Union is determined that its implementation would not lead to reversing the course of history. Experience has proven that there are principal issues on which the Soviet Union stands firm. It has also proven the falsity of the allegations of the Arab and Palestinian right wing, that peaceful coexistence and international detente are only other terms for dividing spheres of influence.

What are the aims of the US and Britain's international campaign against 'terrorism'? How can this campaign be confronted?