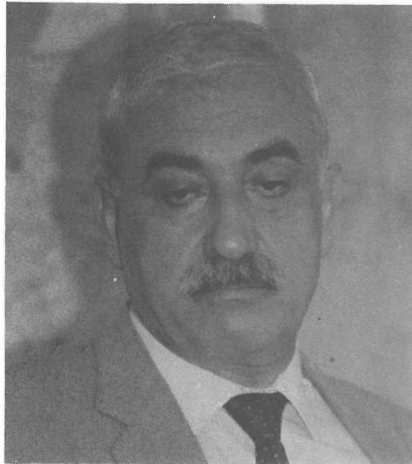


PFLP Press Conference

On June 8th PFLP General Secretary Comrade George Habash held a press conference in Damascus on the occasion of the intifada entering its 19th month. The following are some of the main issues he addressed.

Comrade Habash emphasized in his opening remarks the current Israeli schemes for aborting the uprising. The first scheme being the Shamir plan and the second, the repression and continuous attempts to stop the intifada by all means possible. Comrade Habash reviewed the changes that the intifada has forced upon the Zionist enemy which led to the presentation of the Shamir plan as a political initiative. Nonetheless, Comrade Habash noted that this plan does not mean recognition of the PLO, nor does it mean withdrawal from as much as one inch of the 1967 occupied territories. Clearly the plan has only one goal which is the abortion of the intifada. This plan coincides with the simultaneous escalation of repression on the part of the Israeli army as well as settlers. Comrade Habash said it was unfortunate that the US administration has adopted this same plan in order to achieve the same goal. This was further clarified by the memorandum President Bush sent to King Hassan of Morocco on the occasion of the Arab Summit held in Casablanca wherein he requested from the king to accept the Shamir plan or at least not object to it.

On the other hand, Comrade Habash stressed the necessity of the crystallization of a plan to confront these schemes. In light of this, he noted three tasks which must be done. Firstly, the PLO's total rejection of this plan. Secondly, to call on the Palestinian masses in the 1967 occupied territories to persevere regardless of the escalation of repression and thirdly, the continuation in our plan by organizing all the masses in order to continue and escalate the intifada and galvanize the Palestinian and Arab masses in rallying around the goals of the uprising which are freedom and independence. Comrade Habash quoted a statement made



by Yitzhak Rabin that the struggle is one of will. He accepted that challenge agreeing that at this point in time the struggle is one of will and that the Palestinians will succeed for a very simple reason which is that they have nothing to lose.

PLO-US DIALOGUE

In regards to the beginning of the third round of talks between the PLO and the US, Comrade Habash discussed his view of the expected results stating that the main agenda item will be the acceptance of the Shamir plan. He also stated that threats will be presented to the effect that if the PLO cannot deal with the Shamir plan then the US will be unable to do anything except sever the dialogue between them. Comrade Habash added that the PLO should totally reject this plan since it does not even present the bare minimum of the demands of the Palestinian people. Comrade Habash said that he was confident that just as the US administration was forced to begin these dialogues with the PLO and forced to begin these negotiations with the PLO, they will be forced to continue these negotiations but on a new basis, based on the recognition of the

legitimate, national rights of the Palestinian people. The US administration will be forced to do this due to the escalation and continuation of the intifada and the base of this dialogue will be the international peace conference.

Although the PFLP welcomed the beginning of dialogue between the two, it knew from the beginning however, that the US administration would utilize these dialogues to detour the PLO leadership from its course.

PLO-SYRIAN RELATIONS

During the press conference more than one question pertained to the Palestinian-Syrian relationship. Comrade Habash expressed hope that discussions would begin as soon as possible. He did note however that hope is one thing and reality is another and added that there are some within the PLO and perhaps within Syria who are not very enthusiastic about the convening of these dialogues. Nonetheless, the PFLP sees very clearly that it is in the natural interest of the Palestinians and in the interest of the continuation of the intifada that the PLO and Syria convene talks soon.

ARMED PRESENCE IN LEBANON

Another important question addressed was that it had been said that President Arafat has called for the formation of a Palestinian army and the disbanding of the military forces of the other Palestinian organizations in Lebanon. Comrade Habash stated that this concept has not been presented to the PFLP but in the case that they are faced with it, the decision would be made in light of the Front's understanding of the aim of the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon which is two-fold. Firstly, the continuation of the armed struggle against the Zionist entity who are presently occupying Southern Lebanon, therefore incurring losses in the ranks of the enemy and uplifting the morale of our people in the 1967 occupied territories. The second aim is the protection of the Palestinian masses in the camps in Lebanon, in addition to the historical