

democracy for the masses, being open to form a genuine popular front, and having strategic relations with the socialist community. Under these conditions, certain strata of the petit bourgeoisie can fulfill the tasks of the national democratic revolution in alliance with the working class, the peasants and other oppressed strata.

However, Democratic Yemen is not the main feature; the main feature is what happened in Egypt and Iraq. The crisis of the main branch of the Arab national liberation movement, led by the petit bourgeoisie from 1952 until today, is a structural one; it is rooted in the class nature of the leadership. Though this petit bourgeoisie assumed the position of a bourgeoisie, such a bourgeoisie cannot achieve real liberation or a national democratic revolution. It is not like the bourgeoisie in Europe or Japan. Rather, it is fated to remain as a parasitic bourgeoisie, linked and subordinated to the international imperialist bourgeoisie. Moreover, the ethnic and sectarian conflicts in more than one Arab country show that this class cannot preserve national unity in its own state.

The working class parties

The crisis of the other section of the Arab national liberation movement - the working class and its organizations - is a qualitatively different matter. It is not structural, because the working class and its parties can achieve the aims of the Arab national liberation movement. It is in their class interests to achieve the national democratic revolution headed towards socialism. Moreover, the international situation is conducive to this in view of the growing capacity of the socialist community and the structural crisis of imperialism. This has already occurred in other countries, a prime example being Vietnam, which also suffered partition. The Vietnamese revolution achieved liberation and unity, and began socialist construction.

The crisis of the Arab communist parties, as reflected in their limited growth and achievements, is not structural, but related to certain significant mistakes in their political line. We dealt with this in the Political Report of the PFLP's 4th National Congress. For example, many communist parties regarded this stage as not being theirs. They thought that a national democratic revolution is usually the revolution of the bourgeoisie. They did not take into consideration that things changed radically after the October Revolution. They overlooked Lenin's theory on the link between the national democratic and the socialist revolution, and the importance of the working class's leading role. When certain communist parties have this view, of course it has consequences. They took part in the Arab national liberation movement, but due to their theoretical assumptions, they did not aim to play a leading role. This complicated their situation.

In the fifties, when Nasser's leadership achieved successes, certain communist parties began to speak of the non-capitalist path of development, and the possibility of achieving socialism in this way. This means that the bourgeoisie can achieve socialism, which is a contradiction in itself. This was a very grave theoretical mistake. In Egypt, the Communist Party dissolved itself, because they said that Nasser could achieve socialism.

There were also mistakes concerning the Arab national question, specifically on the questions of Palestine and Arab unity. Despite the clear theoretical position adopted by the international communist movement against Zionism, as a racist, colonial movement tied to imperialism, a change occurred in the Arab communist parties' position on the question of Palestine after 1948. This had negative effects on the national and mass level. Moreover, for a long period, the Arab communist parties failed to recognize the concept of an Arab nation, without taking into consideration the importance of this concept as a weapon in confronting the imperialist, Zionist and reactionary plots.

This should give an idea not only of the roots of the crisis, but also of how we should try to find solutions. Briefly, it is our duty to emphasize that the bourgeois leadership of the Arab national liberation movement is on the way to an end. Accordingly, the working class and its parties must prepare themselves to achieve the tasks that have been put on the agenda, but not achieved, by the feudal, bourgeois and petit bourgeois classes. These tasks can only be achieved by the working class - its party, ideology, strategy and international alliances.

Based on the battle of Beirut, some concluded that allying with the Arabs was useless. Why does the Front reject this narrow, Palestinian-only approach?

It would be a fatal mistake to adopt a narrow Palestinian line; this would mean that Palestine will not be liberated. On the contrary, the experience of Beirut confirms the PFLP's view that the Palestinian revolution is part of the Arab national liberation movement and the Arab revolution.

There are many facts that support our view. The first is the simple fact that the Palestinian people are part of the Arab nation. The Arab liberation movement did not intend to have Syria, Palestine or Lebanon as separate states. It aimed at a united Arab state, for the simple reason that the Arab nation has most, though not all, of the factors that constitute a nation. The division of the Mashraq was the work of the colonial powers, as seen in the Sykes-Picot treaty. Are we to remain victims of what was proposed in this agreement?

Of course, many years have passed since the partition of the area, and this has led some people to think that this idea of the unity of the Arab nation is no longer essential. Let us put this argument aside and concentrate on the practical reasons for the PFLP's rejection of any narrow Palestinian trend:

First: The Zionist colonization and Israeli institutions have developed far beyond what we faced in 1948. In 1948, despite all their efforts, the Zionists were only able to gather 600,000-700,000 settlers in Palestine; this was also despite the evacuation of Jews from Europe due to fascism. Today, Zionism boasts of more than three million settlers in Palestine.

Second: More than half the Palestinian people are living outside of Palestine, mainly in the surrounding Arab countries. In Jordan, there are over one million; in Lebanon, about ½million; in Syria, about 300,000; in Egypt, 50,000-100,000.

In this situation, how must we fight to liberate Palestine? Of course, our people in Palestine fight directly against the Israeli authorities and settlements. Close to two million Palestinians inside confronting the Israeli army can create immense problems for 'Israel'. This says to the world that we exist and have our rights; we will not accept Israeli control, imperialism, etc. However, we are up against the Likud's line, insisting that all of Palestine is 'Israel'. Even the Labor Party concedes only part of Palestine, to be connected with Jordan. We are up against the enormously equipped Israeli army and militarized society. In view of these facts, if we direct our struggle against 'Israel' solely through the Palestinians inside, will we obtain our objectives? No! This explains the fact that in spite of 18 years of struggle, we have not liberated one inch of Palestinian soil.

In order to liberate Palestine, Palestinians in the occupied land must fight, but there must also be a role for the Palestinians outside. Now we get to the essential point. Whenever we, as Palestinians, fight from outside, we have been overwhelmed by the following experience, both in Jordan and in Lebanon: 'Israel' begins to threaten the regimes of these countries, saying, "We don't want the Palestinians operating from your soil. Either you take care of them, or we will do so ourselves, by conquering your land". In Jordan, the result was that the regime made a direct attack to finish off the Palestinian revolution. In Lebanon, the reactionary regime tried many times to finish off the Palestinian revolution prior