

PFLP 16th Anniversary — Mass Rally

On December 9th, the PFLP celebrated the 16th anniversary of its founding at a mass rally in Yarmouk camp, near Damascus, Syria. Over 10,000 people attended, most from various parts of Syria; some also came from Lebanon to celebrate the glorious occasion. The rally was held in an atmosphere of revolutionary joy with the masses chanting slogans in support of the Palestinian revolution and saluting the Front's 16 years of struggle. Among the honored guests attending were a broad spectrum of Palestinian leaders, several leaders of the Lebanese nationalist forces, representatives of progressive Arab organizations, and diplomatic representatives of many friendly countries.

Opening the celebration, the PFLP's dance troupe and band, *Al Ard (The Land)*, played music and performed the traditional Palestinian *debka* folkdance. Following the entertainment, there were speeches by three of the honored guests at the rally. The first was delivered by Tawfiq Salha, regional leader of the Arab Socialist Baath Party. The second speaker was Comrade Hadi Ahmad Nasser on behalf of the Yemeni Socialist Party. The third speaker was Comrade George Hawi, General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party. (See following pages for synopses of their speeches.) Then, amidst the cheering of the masses, Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, began the main speech, which follows in excerpt:

Comrade George Habash

We meet today to renew the promise to our Palestinian and Arab masses and our friends around the world, to continue the struggle until Zionism is eradicated from Palestine, and we establish a democratic state in all of Palestine, and a united, socialist, Arab society...

Today, the nature and objectives of the Zionist-imperialist attack in the area are clearer than ever before. I say this based on a set of evidence that shows the nature of the political situation we will be facing in the coming year. All of you heard about the recent visit of Shamir to Washington, about the strategic US-Israeli alliance, and the US and Israeli air raids that followed, against the positions of the Syrian forces, the Lebanese nationalists and the Palestinian revolution — present side-by-side on the confrontation line with the enemy.

This period witnesses a clear, inflexible US policy — intensification of Zionist-imperialist intransigence... What are the objectives of this attack? How can we stop it?

This attack aims to implement Camp David in the whole area. It aims to subjugate Syria, the Lebanese nationalist movement, the Palestinian revolution and every Arab country that stands firmly opposed to the imperialist plans. After imposing Camp David on the northern front (Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian revolution), US imperialism will turn to our comrades in Democratic Yemen in an attempt to destroy this bastion... Moreover, it will turn to Algeria, Libya and the entire Arab arena in

order to make Camp David prevail, whereby imperialism and Zionism will be the masters of the area...

This is the challenge facing us this year and in the coming years. How each nationalist organization and regime combats this challenge will be the scientific measure for evaluating them... It is important to point out that in order to impose their objectives, US imperialism and Zionism need not use all their military might... While preparing for aggression, they are also employing other methods to subjugate the nationalist forces. If these fail, they will direct the painful blows...

The yardstick of nationalism

As nationalist, democratic and revolutionary forces, how can we confront this plan? What is the yardstick for judging the position of every regime, force and party?

First is a decisive political position to confront not only 'Israel', but also US imperialism, which is the primary supporter of 'Israel'. The yardstick of nationalism today is not to be anti-Israeli only, but mainly to be anti-US imperialism. If the Arab nation had been facing 'Israel' only, it would have been able to put a limit to Israeli aggression and defeat it... What makes 'Israel' so powerful is maximum and unconditional US aid — military, economic and political... Whoever wants to confront 'Israel' must combat US imperialism. From now on, we are not ready to describe any regime or party as nationalist on the basis of formal or

verbal opposition to 'Israel'.

Some Arab regimes want to put on the veil of nationalism by having an anti-Israeli position, but the Arab people's long history shows this to be deception. He who is content to talk about combating 'Israel', without knowing that the real battle is with US imperialism, is not a nationalist.

Still some Arab regimes do not dare to deal with these facts. Why? I read the statement of Saudi Arabia on the International Solidarity Day with the Palestinian People. It says that 'Israel' is strong because there is a big power supporting it! Saudi Arabia does not dare to mention the name of this power... Arab reaction professes support to the Palestinian cause; meanwhile, all their money pours into the banks of imperialism, particularly the US. What kind of logic is this?

We do not expect these regimes to have a strategic alliance with the Soviet Union... The Soviet Union supports our cause politically, diplomatically and militarily, yet many Arab states do not have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. What kind of Arabs are these? If these Arabs still think that the US holds "99% of the cards of the solution in the area", as expressed by Sadat, it is about time that the people and nationalist vanguards in these states present the solid facts — The US does not hold 99% of the cards.

In the historical perspective, the US is a declining power. Look at the movement of history... I remember very well during the 1936 revolt in Palestine, Britain was the Great Empire; the sun never set on its territories. Today Britain is a limited power. The same logic applies to the US. In 1945, US industrial