



People of the southern suburbs - living under Phalangist threat, Dec. 1983

fend Lebanon as an independent Arab state in the face of Israel and its imperialist backers, or there will be no army in Lebanon. Without this task for the army, there is no need to have an army; the internal security forces are better than the army in preserving internal security. We want an army that agrees with Syria and the Palestinian revolution on confronting the Israeli occupation and the danger of US aggression, not an army that fights Syria and the Palestinian revolution with US and Israeli support.

There is also the economic crisis. An added reason for this crisis is that billions of dollars are paid in cash to the US and France. The state pays 30% more than market price in order to have immediate delivery. The state also pays the price of shells shot by the US fleets against our people and the Lebanese treasury. All this is accompanied by deals and brokerage within the government. The economic situation is a total disaster. It threatens the working masses with unemployment, the agricultural workers with losing their bread; also small producers are threatened, as is the national industry and agriculture and a major part of services.

The destructive social consequences of the economic crisis portend the emergence of crises of a new type. The bread revolt, as happened in Tunisia and Morocco, is possible in Lebanon, but here it will be among an armed people, an armed working class, armed revolutionary forces. We shall not fail to use any method in our struggle to keep the working class and other working people from paying the price of the crisis. How can the working class go hungry while possessing arms and when there is food in stock, and money accumulating in the monopolies' treasuries? We propose a socio-economic reform in the country, even more strongly than in the previous period, because the crisis is more violent and destructive than previously.

Where, then, is it possible to make compromises? Why compromise with the state? Our principled position specifies a set of factors: (1) the balance of forces, (2) the position of our allies, in as much as we may propose an advanced task, (3) our permanent distinction between the central link in the struggle and other links, (4) our view that if the major link is broken, this opens opportunities for developing the struggle in other areas. The battle is going to be difficult and long. Our major task is to build an internal balance of forces that demonstrates the internal character of the battle. This will lessen external influence without cancelling it. This would also have the Arab position become a supportive one and not an alternative that runs against the Lebanese progressive and nationalist forces. We will work to have complete coordina-

tion with Syria and the Palestinian revolution, and we will rely on international support to our national cause.

On the perspectives for the Lebanese National Resistance Front if the Israelis were to withdraw from the South...

If Israeli withdrawal takes place, it means that we have made a great historical accomplishment, not only in our struggle in Lebanon, but this would have repercussions on the Arab national liberation movement in general and the Palestinian revolution in particular. In this case, we face a major question: What can a liberated Lebanon offer the Palestinian revolution in support of the Palestinian people's cause? It is inevitable to play a very important role, not less than the role played by Lebanon previously; the practice will be the same, but in different forms. It is not in the interest of the Palestinian revolution, the Lebanese progressive forces, Lebanon, or the Palestinian cause, to return to the same anarchy and old practices. This did not push the Palestinian revolution to practice its vanguard role in a better way. Lebanon will not go back to the same exposed form of conflict, as a place for public Palestinian revolution presence, exhibitionism and intermittent infighting. Lebanon, with its nationalist ties, belongs to the Lebanese nationalist forces, and to the Palestinian revolution as well. We must know how to use this arena better for the Palestinian revolution, while at the same time not damaging the Lebanese nationalist forces. We must use it as a means to mobilize potentials in order to continue the struggle in all forms, inside and outside the occupied territories, for liberating Palestine and achieving the legitimate national tasks of our people. We are not ready to return to an approach that bypasses the Lebanese national factor and then drags the Palestinian revolution into problems that detract from its tasks of liberation, as happened before. The Palestinian revolution will not find it easy to establish a kingdom on others' territory, instead of struggling based on the facilities available in this land for the political, military and popular work in the occupied territories. This requires a radical change in the size and quality of Palestinian armed presence and the form of practice. In this perspective, the PLO no longer needs the thousands of fighters, but it needs quality fighters.

On the Palestinian role in the Lebanese National Resistance Front...

It is our duty to say that Palestinian revolutionary forces, among them PFLP and DFLP, participate in an important part of the Lebanese National Resistance. However, Palestinian participation is not limited to the South. Palestinians are present in other areas - the mountains, the southern suburbs of Beirut, etc. More than others, they are exposed to terror, harassment and maltreatment by the puppets of Israel, the fascist forces and the authority. Self-defense is a basic right. On one hand, they participate according to their conviction in their self-defense. On the other, they participate with the Lebanese National Resistance Front, their allies in the struggle.

On the future...

A realistic analysis of the conflict today, on different levels, makes us optimistic. Our victory in Lebanon, if totally achieved, will not only automatically reflect on the overall situation of the Arab national liberation movement. In addition, the dilemma for US imperialism and Israel in Lebanon will develop into a big dilemma for Arab reaction... We have confidence in the abilities of our people, in the support of our allies and friends, and in the ability of our own party as well.