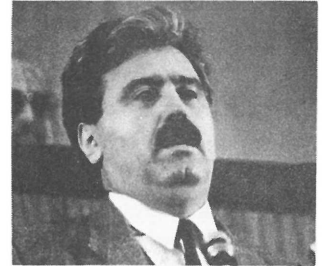


In mid-November we conducted an interview with Comrade George Hawi, General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party.

Communist Party

For a National Democratic Front to Abolish Confessionalism



The Reagan Administration has made no secret of its intention to try and reverse the major advances of the national movement in Lebanon. How does the Communist Party see the upcoming US strategy?

There is no question that the US will begin to act more aggressively, now that the presidential elections are over. While it continues to act to increase tension on a global scale, and to steer away from negotiations with the Soviet Union on limiting the arms race and other peace-related issues, we expect the US administration to concentrate on two main regions: Central America and the Middle East. The US is clearly poised for aggression against Nicaragua and increased intervention in El Salvador. It is threatening Cuba which stands in solidarity with the liberation movements in that region.

In addition we anticipate that Washington will soon turn to the Middle East as the other major target of its aggression, using its two surrogates: Israel on the one hand and Arab reaction on the other. As in the past, Lebanon is likely to be the focal point. By this, we do not simply mean the local Lebanese dimension of the struggle going on, but also the Palestinian movement, Syria's role in Lebanon and, by extension, its status in the region as a whole.

The US will first try to sabotage the achievements of the nationalist forces in order to regain the initiative and eventually realize its previous objectives. The Lebanese regime, which was forced to abrogate the May 17th treaty with Israel, has for the time being opted for the so-called Arab approach, meaning relatively good rapport with Syria. Under strong pressure as a result of the defeat of the so-called Lebanese Forces (the Phalangists) and the sectarian army in the Shouf mountains and subsequently in Beirut, the regime has seemingly opted for national dialogue, first at the Lausanne and Geneva conferences and later in the context of the government of national unity. In effect, it had no choice given the unity of the nationalist and progressive forces, and their solidarity with Syria and with the forces of the Palestinian revolution that chose to participate in the struggle under the banner of the Lebanese National Resistance Front in southern Lebanon, in the Beqaa, in Mount Lebanon and elsewhere.

In reality, however, the regime is dragging its feet and preventing any progress towards genuine national unity in anticipation of new developments that might lead to a change in the situation. It is actively trying to create division among the various components of the anti-fascist camp and at the same time rebuilding its sectarian army as well as the «Lebanese

Forces». On the other hand, it is seeking to defuse Arab support to the Lebanese progressive movement by soliciting Syria's cooperation.

As a result, we expect further deterioration of the situation in Lebanon. We believe the US is intent on causing such deterioration so as to open the way for eventual direct intervention, which may initially take the form of political pressure, while constantly maintaining the option of military action. This, we believe, is what lies behind the current political impasse in Lebanon, and the failure of the Gemayel regime to effectively deal with the three major requisites for a political solution: putting into effect a viable security plan, pursuing the objective of an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon, and agreeing to genuine reforms in Lebanon's political system. Instead, by deceitfully talking of the priority of one task over the others, the regime ends up dealing with none: the liberation of the South must take priority over democratic reforms; the security arrangements preclude efforts to liberate the South, and so on.

The regime seems determined to block any real progress, and this is likely to lead to further confrontation in Lebanon, particularly in the South and the Kharroub district (along the coast and southeast of the capital), and perhaps other areas of the country, paving the way for US involvement in some form.

Such designs for Lebanon will also coincide with increased efforts to liquidate the Palestinian issue. The call for convening the Palestinian National Council in Amman can only be interpreted in this context as a determination by the right-wing of the PLO to accommodate current and anticipated US initiatives. As such, it threatens to split the Palestinian movement and signals a major new development in the emergence of an Arab reactionary pact that will eventually group Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Morocco, as well as the right-wing elements in the PLO. This pact is to serve as a tool for US policies aimed at encircling Syria, the Lebanese progressive movement and the revolutionary forces in the PLO, in preparation for a fresh US initiative based on the Reagan plan.

On a broader scale, the US will use increased pressure on such countries as Democratic Yemen, Libya and Algeria to prevent them from acting in solidarity with those of us that are confronting the imperialist strategy. This strategy will therefore consist first of trying to bring political pressure to bear on Syria in order to force it to agree to US-Israeli terms for resolving the Middle East conflict. Given Syria's commitment to preventing an imperialist settlement, we anticipate that the US will then threaten the use of force, or even actually use force, by prompting an Israeli military action against Syria, as well as against