

Recently the Lebanese Communist Party was joined by all progressive and democratic Lebanese in celebrating its sixteenth anniversary. What are your impressions of the large mass participation in the festivities?

We believe that the festivities on the occasion of the sixteenth anniversary of our party amounted to a broad popular vote of confidence in the program and policies of our party, which in essence are the program and policies of the newly born National Democratic Front. We are proud that these festivities provided for large mass participation as well as the participation of progressive Arab and international parties and organizations. In addition to the Arab Socialist Baath Party, the Algerian National Liberation Front Party, the Yemeni Socialist Party and fellow Arab communist parties, the Palestinian revolution showed its solidarity through the message sent to our central rally in Beirut by Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP; the speech to our rally in Akkar, North Lebanon, delivered by Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa, Deputy General Secretary of the PFLP; and the large participation in our rallies by the Palestinian masses across Lebanon. Scores of solidarity messages were received from fraternal Arab and international parties; the Soviet Communist Party and the Cuban Communist Party were represented at our festivities.

Our major source of pride, however, was the overwhelming participation of our Lebanese people, which exceeded all expectations. We believe that our masses are aware of who is playing a major role in the current struggle against fascism and occupation; the massive turnout indicates their confidence in

our party and its role. We believe that this participation represented a vote of confidence in the role of our party in the context of the Lebanese National Resistance against Israeli occupation, which we had the privilege to launch in cooperation with other nationalist parties and in which we play a major role today. It is a vote of confidence in our party's line of armed confrontation of the US occupation forces prior to their forced exit from Beirut, in our party's leading role in confronting the Phalangists and the sectarian army in the Shouf, the Upper Metn and in Beirut, in alliance with our comrades and brothers in the Progressive Socialist Party and the Amal Movement. It is a vote of confidence in our firm defense of democracy and our struggle against Phalangist dictatorship; in the approach of our party on uniting the struggle of all anti-fascist and anti-occupation forces, an approach that is flexible in form yet firm and principled in substance, and which considers that victory lies in the victory of the slogans that our party puts forward (as opposed to narrow organizational gains).

It was a vote of confidence in the program of those social forces that seek to complete the tasks of liberation and continue with the other tasks of the national democratic revolution in Lebanon, unconstrained by the regressive approach that seeks redistribution of power on a confessional basis instead of doing away with confessionalism altogether.

Furthermore, the large mass participation in our celebration indicated the willingness of our masses to continue to sacrifice for their cause. This determination presents us in the Communist Party with new challenges and responsibilities in the task of providing for the mobilization of the masses towards the realization of their goals. ●

Crowds gathered at the LCP anniversary celebration in Balbeck.

