

National and Class Struggle

The following is part of an interview with George Hawi, General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party, printed in «Al Nahj», theoretical journal of the Arab communist parties, No.4, May, 1984. He addresses the question of strategic and tactical tasks and alliances at that particular stage of struggle in Lebanon, as well as the relation between national and class struggle. His analysis is an important contribution to evaluating the foregoing period in order to understand the new phase heralded by the Israeli withdrawal. Printing this is part of our tribute to the heroic Lebanese National Resistance which forced this withdrawal.

At present we face two kinds of tasks. Although they are undoubtedly interlinked, each has its own characteristics and distinctions. The first is the continuation of the national liberation of Lebanon, while the second is related to the issue of democratic reform of the political system.

Within this framework, the Communist Party sees the central task to be the mobilization of all energies in order to end the Israeli occupation unconditionally, as implementation of the UN resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 508 and 509, without infringing on the sovereignty of Lebanon and the freedom of its people.

Our party saw *from the beginning* that armed struggle will become the primary among other forms of struggle to liberate the occupied Lebanese territories. This was based on our analysis of the objective reality of Lebanon and the situation under occupation; it was based on the experience of the successive Israeli occupations of other Arab lands since 1947-8, and the failure of all Arab policies to end these; it was also based on our understanding of the nature of the struggle and relations on the international level.

The primacy of armed struggle

The beginning in this respect does not mean June 6th, 1982, the day the massive Israeli invasion of Lebanon began. Rather it goes back to the second national congress of the party in 1968. That congress specified the nature of the struggle being waged in the Lebanese arena in connection with the overall Middle East conflict. It also specified the Israeli plans for Lebanon and called for preparations to carry arms in support of the Palestinian resistance movement in order to contribute to the pan-Arab liberation led by the Palestinian revolution, as well as to confront a possible Israeli invasion; this became more than a mere possibility as Lebanon was becoming an essential arena for the Arab national liberation struggle.

In 1970, after the massacres in Jordan and the death of Abdul Nasser, the Party's Central Committee reaffirmed our view of the overall imperialist-Zionist-reactionary assault on the Arab people's national liberation movement, and our expectations of how this would impact on Lebanon, including the expectation of Israeli attacks that would go beyond skirmishes with limited purposes to become direct occupation. Accordingly, we accelerated execution of the Central Committee's decisions, taken in the light of the second national congress, related to the task of preparing the Party militarily. The formation of the Popular Guard (Al Haras al Shaabi) in the South in 1969 was the result of this long-range vision. Our initiative then, to form the Popular Militias (Quwat al Ansar) in collaboration with our sister communist parties in the countries surrounding Palestine, originated from the same conviction:

that it was becoming increasingly important to practice armed struggle as an essential ingredient in the overall struggle. Our party continued to develop its military preparedness together with the fighters of the Palestinian revolution. Our party learned from their rich experience and distinguished assistance, and attempted to develop this experiment whenever and however it was possible. On the other hand, we paid with them the price of the errors involved in such an experiment, as well as the heavy price extracted with the transformation of Lebanon into the main arena of the pan-Arab national struggle against Israeli aggression and the overall imperialist-Zionist assault in the region.

In the mid-seventies, when the basic contradictions escalated in Lebanon and reactionary violence imposed itself, the Party continued preparations to increase its role in the military field. At the beginning of June 1982, when we were confronted by the open and massive Israeli aggression, the Party threw most of its weight into confronting the US-supported invasion, side by side with the Palestinian revolution and other national and progressive forces in the South. The Party threw most of its weight into the battle which reached its peak in the steadfastness of Beirut. However, in light of the Israelis' quantitative technological and firepower superiority, our long-range Marxist-Leninist vision determined that the Party should not throw all of its weight into an open confrontation that would destroy all the potentials for steadfastness. There were other preparations made earlier by the Party, called the Special Forces; their role was exemplified in the beginning of the anti-occupation military action behind the lines reached by the Israeli army and in areas it had «pacified».

The birth of the LNRF

After the Israeli occupation forces had consolidated their control in Beirut, September 14-16th, 1982, the Party initiated its famous call to start Lebanese national resistance against the occupation, and announced the formation of the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF). A few hours thereafter, the first operations took place in Beirut, to prove to the masses and the national and progressive forces, as well as to the enemy, that the Lebanese people would not accept the occupation, that the fight had not yet been settled in favor of the US and Israel, and that their occupation of Lebanon was not necessarily a point of strength. In fact, Beirut and all Lebanon might become a suitable beginning for the process of Lebanese liberation that is organically linked to the pan-Arab struggle against imperialist and Zionist interests. The LNRF's operations accumulated to become an essential component among the