

Who Attacks the Damascus Agreement and Why?

To refute the Palestinian right-wing's furious attack on the Damascus agreement, PFLP's Deputy General Secretary, Comrade Abu Ali Mustafa, explains the implications of this agreement in relation to the balance of forces and agreements concluded by the PLO in the past.

In accordance with their particular political and class backgrounds, several parties have attacked the Damascus agreement which ended the war on the Palestinian camps in Beirut. The most fervent attackers are the deviating rightists in the PLO leadership, who launched a campaign against the agreement and those who signed it, using two main arguments. The first is that the agreement cancelled the Cairo agreement signed in 1969, between the PLO and the Lebanese government, under the auspices of the Arab League. The second is that the Damascus agreement included a point whereby the Palestine National Salvation Front agreed to disarm our people in the Beirut camps. Some are even saying that the PNSF has agreed to disarm our people in all of Lebanon. We answer these lies based on the following facts:

The Damascus agreement improves the Cairo agreement

First, we stress that the Damascus agreement did not cancel the Cairo agreement, either implicitly or explicitly. From the legal point of view, the parties signing the Damascus agreement are not the same as those who signed the Cairo agreement. The Amal movement does not have the same legal prerogatives as the Lebanese government. There has not been any authorization by all Lebanese parties to make the Damascus agreement.

More important is that the Damascus agreement implements the Cairo agreement in a better way, by stressing the right of the Palestinian people to carry arms in Lebanon, to practice armed struggle from Lebanese territory. The Damascus agreement does not put limits on the number of armed people who have the right to be in the camps. On the contrary, it stresses the right of our people to possess arms. It also stresses the need to take into consideration the political, social and

Bourj al Barajneh after the camp war.



civil rights of the Palestinian people, that they should be treated as in other Arab countries.

Where were the Cairo agreement's «defenders» at the 16th PNC?

The strange thing is that those attacking the Damascus agreement have just now noticed that the Cairo agreement is being called into question. It is as if they had never heard of the Philip Habib agreement which left nothing of the Cairo agreement except its memory. Even stranger is that these people do not try to remember the last legitimate session of the PNC, the 16th, held in Algiers, in February 1983. All Palestinian organizations and national figures were represented there. At the end of the session, the political declaration was read, including the following well-known paragraphs on Lebanon:

1. *Deepening the relations with the Lebanese people and their patriotic forces, and extending full support to these forces in their courageous struggle to resist Zionist occupation and its instruments.*

2. *Chief among the current tasks of the Palestinian revolution is to struggle jointly with the Lebanese masses and their patriotic and democratic forces to terminate the Zionist occupation.*

3. *The PNC calls upon the Executive Committee to conduct talks with the Lebanese government concerning the security and safety of the Palestinian citizens living in Lebanon, and insuring their rights of residence, freedom of movement, work, and of social and political activities.*

4. *Action for ending the arbitrary collective and individual arrests which were carried out on a political basis, and for releasing the Palestinian prisoners detained in the prisons of the Lebanese authorities.*

The Cairo agreement, as a basis for organizing Palestinian-Lebanese relations, was completely omitted. We in the PFLP were not satisfied with this omission. Yet the very people who now shed tears over the Cairo agreement, were at that time fully prepared not to adhere to it. This is proven in the third point, specifying what should be negotiated with the Lebanese authorities: The Cairo agreement is not mentioned. Actually, the PNC resolutions could have referred to the Cairo agreement, especially its first four points which state that it has been agreed to organize Palestinian presence in Lebanon on the basis of:

1. *The right to residence, work and free movement for Palestinians now living in Lebanon.*

2. *Palestinians living in the camps can form local committees to preserve their rights in cooperation with the local authorities, in accordance with the Lebanese law.*

3. *The Palestinian military police shall have stations in the camps, in cooperation with the popular committees, to bring about good relations with the authorities. These stations are ►*