

Interview with Comrade Habash

On August 19th, Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, gave an interview to «Al Hadaf», the Front's weekly Arabic magazine. The excerpts we have selected to print below revolve on seven themes: Palestinian armed struggle in Lebanon, the crisis in Palestinian-Syrian-Lebanese nationalist relations due to the camp war, Palestinian national unity, the Palestine National Salvation Front, the danger of the Amman accord, the Casablanca summit and the Damascus agreement to end the war of the camps.

Palestinian armed struggle in Lebanon

«Everyone knows that after the year 1967, the Palestinian revolution has depended on two main bases: the struggle of the Palestinian masses inside occupied Palestine, and the phenomenon of overt armed struggle in the Arab countries surrounding Palestine.

«The war of the camps thrust upon us a reevaluation of the second base and its future, for this war was a serious attempt to put an end to that base; it shook it. Now we are planning to consolidate and protect that base..

«This attempt to put an end to overt armed struggle in Lebanon is the most dangerous of many previous attempts. Why? Because it was carried out by those whom we considered as sons of one and the same nationalist camp... The phenomenon of overt armed struggle carries with it certain burdens. It seems that some nationalist forces are not capable of bearing these burdens.

«Our brothers in the Amal movement launched a hard struggle to liberate the South of Lebanon. However, when they had achieved concrete steps in the process of liberating the South, their silent logic was as follows: 'Now we have liberated the South. As for the liberation of Palestine, it is a historic, tiresome, costly, long process.' The Zionist enemy contributed to this idea by threatening to retaliate, inflicting massive destruction, for any shelling of the Zionist settlements...»

«All phrases of pan-Arab war, or that the liberation of the South should be the door to the liberation of Jerusalem, evaporated. These slogans reached a deadend. Now, the reality speaks for itself: 'We are satisfied with liberating the South. Let the Palestinians concen-

trate their struggle inside Palestine. When all the Arab states have arrived at a unified strategy for liberation, we will not hesitate to fulfill our duty.'

«Now, in the light of the above said words, can we abandon our gun in Lebanon? The answer is very clear, and it should be clear in the minds of all. Our duty remains the heroic defense of the Palestinian gun in Lebanon, no matter

Palestinian revolution in Lebanon must serve the war against 'Israel' and contribute to the war of the Lebanese national movement against the isolationist forces... d) We cannot enforce the Palestinian armed presence on the Lebanese nationalist forces... This presence must be agreed upon through dialogue...»

Crisis in nationalist relations

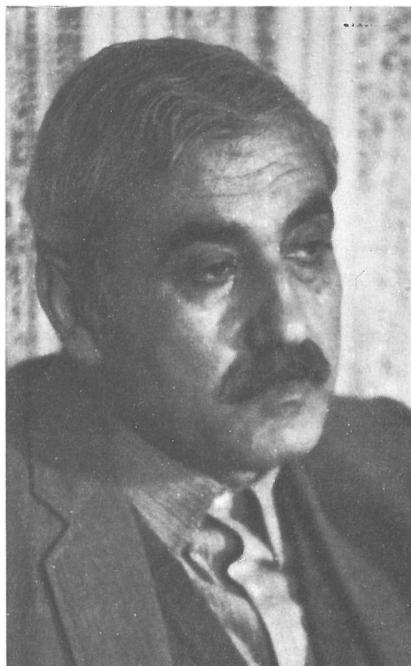
«The war of the camps led to a crisis in the Palestinian-Lebanese nationalist-Syrian relations...»

«I remember very well that after the evacuation of the resistance forces from Beirut in 1982...we in the PFLP said that we are facing a new, complicated situation. We asked ourselves: How can we deal with this new situation? Our answer was that there are two interconnected weapons by which we can overcome the crisis. The first weapon is Palestinian national unity. The second is consolidating our alliances with Syria and the Lebanese national movement.

«After Arafat's visit to Cairo, the convening of the splinter Palestinian National Council in Amman, and the signing of the Amman accord on February 11, 1985, we stressed the importance of the tripartite alliance even more strongly. Yet that does not mean that we have abandoned the slogan of national unity...»

«Our viewpoint was that the formation of the Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF) would be the Palestinian partner capable of consolidating the alliance with Syria and the Lebanese national movement...»

«Then the war of the camps broke out with the aim of ending the role of the Palestinian gun, irrespective of organizational affiliation...At that time we felt that our allies see only a political role for ►



what the cost. How can we protect the Palestinian gun in Lebanon? a) By putting an immediate and decisive end to the previous improper conduct...for which the Palestinian right-wing leadership is responsible... b) By differentiating between the importance of preserving the Palestinian gun in Lebanon on the one hand, and unnecessary, improper military behaviour on the other... c) The overt military presence of the