HABASH: LIBERATION NOT NEGOTIATION

The following interview was granted by comrade George Habash Secretary General of the PFLP, to the Italian newspaper Il Manifesto, whereupon it was published on January 29-30/1974. This segment is the first of a series.

Q.1. The P.F.L.P. was the organization which openly opposed participation in the Peace Conference, can you explain the political reasons behind your refusal?

A.1. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, as a revolutionary organization struggles for the interest of the oppressed Palestinian masses, for liberation, repatriation and self-determination. Given that we are part of the Arab liberation movement and the world revolution, the P.F.L.P. cannot adopt a position except through the recognition of the basic interests of these revolutionary forces.

In refusing participation in the so called "Peace Conference" in Geneva, it does not base its refusal on either emotive or chauvinistic reasons, rather it derives its position from clear recognition of what the conference actually represents at this point and time.

The Conference is in basic conflict with the interests of the Palestinian and Arab masses and its national progressive and revolutionary forces. In addition, it is an attempt to curtail the necessary conditions for the development of their struggle. The "Peace Conference" relies on two factors: The legal factor and the political factor.

A) The legal factor: The Geneva Conference convenes based on the U.N. Security Council resolution 338 which in turn is based on resolution 242 plus the negotiations with Israel. Both of these resolutions provide for the withdrawal from the 1967 occupied territories, and at best from all the occupied territories hence. In return they implicitly impose the recognition of Israel and a guarantee of its presence and its borders.

Such a recognition, which the convening of the Geneva Conference will concretize as the basis to solve the Middle East crisis, provides a clear recognition of the legitimacy of the Zionist colonization on the greater portion of the Palestinian homeland. Simply put, the recognition of the Israeli, Zionist aggression till June 4, 1967. This clearly represents a major setback as regards the rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and their right to self-determination.

By the simple fact of any participation on the part of any representatives of the Palestinian people would mean the acceptance of the Security Council's two resolutions, hence recognition of the setbacks they contain, regardless of the geographic boundaries of the Zionist entity.

Concerning this some people are claiming the possibility of dividing the Palestinian rights into temporary versus historic rights, in other words we are capable of acquiring part of the Palestinian land now as a step on the road of struggle to fully acquire it.

To these people we would like to clarify the major difference between partial liberation throughout struggle and the establishment of a revolutionary authority on it, and the acquiring of that part without struggle but by giving the other part of the land.

Partial liberation represents a great leap forward in the process of struggle and creates more favorable conditions for the whole Palestinian and Arab revolutionary process including the Jewish one. In addition it increases its revolutionary alliances on the world level. Whereas the second represents an abortion of the local revolutionary process and the first step in resolving the revolutionary alliance of the Palestinian resistance internationally, if it goes beyond what it required as "temporary rights". What would we then tell the world after we bow out of the agreement we had accepted.

B) As for the political factor: The Geneva Conference meets under very important and dangerous political conditions. It represents an attempt to curtail the clear upsurge of the Arab masses so as to crystallize the

Imperialist-Zionist and the reactionary interests threatened by the uprising.

The Geneva Conference meets in the aftermath of the October war which produced two categories of results: Basic results which form objective conditions for a progressive Arab upsurge; and results that would permit for the advancement of the Imperialist-Zionist-Reactionary attack.

The first category is summarized in the following:

A) Destruction of the myth regarding the enemy's supremacy. As a result the Palestinian and Arab masses regained their confidence in their abilities and ultimately in the inevitability of victory. At the same time it shook the Zionist forces' confidence, both in and out of Israel, in addition to all of the Imperialist and reactionary forces that stand behind it, in the ability of the Zionist entity to expand and to play both the colonialist and imperialist roles it is entrusted with.

B) The October war took place in a period where Arab political divisions were quite strong, but the escalation of the contradictions with the Zionist enemy caused the renewal of unity among the Arab masses to a degree not even expected by the closest observers. While the calls for settlement - e.g. the Geneva Conference - represents the shortest road to circumscribe this unity.
or chauvinistic matter, but it is a material objective power that proves its ability when confronting imperialism and its weakness. It's nature is progressive, revolutionary and liberating. This nature is more deeply rooted to the extent that the revolutionary progressive forces are capable of leading the struggle.

C) The October war proved more to the world than anything else, what the Israeli leaders have been trying to hide, that the Arab national entity is not dependent but a presence that is organically linked to and protected by U.S. Imperialism.

The PFLP's contention that U.S. Imperialism is our main enemy was confirmed, whereas the Zionist entity and the reactionary Arab forces are nothing more than appendages to U.S. Imperialism.

The danger of the Geneva Conference regarding this point is that it weakens the Arab peoples' animosity towards U.S. Imperialism and depicts the latter as a neutral arbitrator as opposed to the main enemy, a fact recognized by our people during the last war.

Hence the struggle of the Palestinian and Arab masses would be transformed from an anti-imperialist national liberation movement into a limited nationalistic fight for their regaining of some of the lost lands.

The October war proved very clearly the importance of the relations between the Arab national liberation movement with the socialist countries. In addition the war proved the Arab masses' willingness to fight and the Socialist countries continued material support. In fact, the Arab masses' desire to fight is the real basis upon which our relations between the Arab national liberation movement and the Socialist countries reemerged once again as was the case before the October war.

This close inter-relationship between the Arab national liberation movement and the Socialist countries is actually based on a common struggle against Imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. Such intimate relations provide the liberation forces with essential weapons by which to wage their struggle.

The last war in a practical and definite way also proved the importance of relations between the Arab national liberation movement with the socialist countries. A relationship which is an essential source of strength for the Arab Liberation struggle.

The second category can be illustrated through the following:

A) Exposing the conflict between the interests of the present Arab regimes in achieving victory over Israel and their interests in preventing the provisions that can secure victory. Generally speaking the Arab nationalist regimes are opposed to Israel and Imperialism, but that is fundamentally different from i.e. people's war, and the giving in to U.S. Imperialism by relying on Arab reaction.

Under the present circumstances of anti-progressive, anti-neutral policies, any "Palestinian entity" that is proposed in Geneva must be rejected because not only would it be a partial Palestinian entity, i.e. 22% of all Palestinian land, but in addition it is organically linked to the anti-progressive principles, and in fact would be established to serve and further the interests of this anti-progressive and anti-national policy.

Hence we do not only reject the attendance of representatives of the Palestinian people, but we reject as well the political course implicit in the direction that the Arab regimes have taken.

GENEVA + PALESTINIAN STATE = SURRENDER.
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In the last issue of the Bulletin (9) we published the first part of this interview which was originally granted by Dr. George Habash, Secretary-General of the P.F.L.P. to the Italian Al Manifesto. The original was published on January 29-30/74. In this same issue, we publish the remainder of the interview since the issues discussed then if anything are as relevant now as the time of their discussion.

Q. 1. How does the P.F.L.P evaluate the Syrian and Iraqi positions?

Q. 2. What is the Egyptian political role in the present stage?

Q. 3. What is your evaluation of the Fatah-Saddat axis?

Q. 4. What is Fatah's political evaluation of the present Arab situation?

Q. 5. How does Fatah view the Syrian and Iraqi positions?

Q. 6. What is your evaluation of the present situation?

Q. 7. What is the Arab masses' attitude towards those issues?

Q. 8. What is the difficulty of the present situation?

Q. 9. What is Fatah's policy towards the international oil companies?

Q. 10. What is Fatah's policy towards the American relations?

Q. 11. What is Fatah's policy towards the Israeli settlement policy?

Q. 12. What is Fatah's policy towards the American relations?

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Q. 48. What is Fatah's policy towards the American relations?

Q. 49. What is Fatah's policy towards the Israeli settlement policy?

Q. 50. What is Fatah's policy towards the American relations?
principal position, regarding the external operations of the resistance. In short, the clash on the external front is a confrontation between the Palestinian people who were uprooted from their homeland and dispersed abroad in the presence of the forces and interests that still work and assist in the continuation of the state of dispersion and uprooting.

This existence outside the Palestine, and the Arab Front provides the opportunity for confrontation in its legitimacy. But in our opinion as a revolutionary organization with a proletarian international scope, this legitimacy should be guided with a safe look at the interests of the Palestinian, Arab and international movement.

Concerning every operation that we are responsible for we are required to evaluate the costs and the benefits that are achieved by the revolutionary movement on all levels, Palestinian, Arab and international.

But at the same time we do not represent the uprooted and dispersed Palestinian people, and we do not plan all the foreign operations. Hence we can not guarantee the wisdom and the correctness of all operations that take place outside, neither the outcome to the interest of the

P.L.O. to form an investigative committee to probe into the background of the operation and to determine who is behind it. Upon the termination of the operation, the facts will be publicly released.

Q. 7. After the October war, it became clear that there is a right trend in Israel in your opinion what is the role played by the U.S. to influence this trend? What is the situation of the Red Front inside Israel?

A. 7. Throughout the first days of the war, the PFLP studied the various possible courses of action to result from the war especially as regards the internal impact of the war on Israel. We reached the conclusion that the external leadership, material and political losses that the Israeli entity would suffer would incur important political changes.

We specified it as follows:

1. A defeat to the ruling circles of Zionism.
2. The growth of two lines: One on the right of the present leadership. The second on the left of that leadership, we called it the Nahum Goldman line.
3. We also noticed the growth of the radical line which is represented through the following parties and organizations: Rakah, Matanot, Sheh, Black Panthers and the anti-war elements among the students, youth and intellectuals.

We expected that the balance of power of these changes will be determined (time and percentage) by the length of the war and its military, economic and political results.

We believe that the shortcomings of the October war which the Arab political leadership bears responsibility for, is what made capable the rise of the right wing in Israel. Depending on the result of the war, the right wing justified Israeli losses to only military and political maintains that the leadership had committed and accordingly this wing claimed that it could have avoided it. It presents as proof the partial victories of Israeli army capable of achieving towards the end.

This is regarding the internal efforts of strengthening the extreme right wing inside Israel. As for the external efforts we notice that the U.S propaganda machinery has contributed greatly in making this prominent. Although the U.S. depends on the ruling wing in Israel, it seems that the presence of the extreme right wing allows it to employ as means to pressure the Arab regimes for more concessions.

This is regarding the extreme right. Regarding the Red Front, the subject to a great extent enters the issue of the security of the revolution. The PFLP looks at the Red Front as a historical symptom which forms a very important dimension of the struggle in the future. In the view of the PFLP it is inevitable that many Jews will rebel against the Zionist ideology and liberate themselves from its ranks and limits. Their look that their interest is common with the revolutionary Arab forces to build a democratic socialist society which presents the just and peaceful solution to all national, religious and racial problems.

Q. 8. Does the PFLP believe that there is a possibility of the Resistance Movement being attacked militarily during the Peace Conference or after it?

A. 8. Those who are part of the Peace Conference are considered as enemies of the Palestinian and Arab regimes have a dual look at the Palestinian Resistance Movement. They need the Palestinian side to participate in the settlement which they were not capable of acquiring from outside the ranks of the Resistance Movement. On the other side they considered the Resistance with its revolutionary content and nature that side, or the contrary that might present the main obstacle in the way of reaching a settlement.

On the basis of this dual look which contains the need for the resistance and the need for its participation, the work now is in the direction to squeeze the revolutionary content out of the Resistance and to eliminate its danger for the possible settlement. Also to transform the Resistance into an entity without a revolutionary content which will make it an easy prey for occupation. This policy sounds very closely the political battle taking place now within the Resistance and tries to be on its results. It might find it necessary at a certain time that the result of the battle to its favor might come through a certain military attack on the presence of the Resistance here or there. We suspect that Israel is the first possible agent that will carry out such an attack or the Lebanese regime which falls second in line.

The first possibility is most probable, and might manifest itself through an Israeli attack on southern Lebanon, which will provide the chance to bring the Lebanese water resources in the Genova Conference. Or it might manifest itself in special Israeli operations that will enable the Arab regimes and their propaganda machinery to compare between their victories during the October war and the inability of the resistance even in defending itself.

In considering all of the above, we notice that the essential position by the U.S. is to attempted to line the Resistance Movement into participating in the capitulation plans. The major danger lies in the pressure that the reactionary Arab regimes are applying so as to insure Washington's goal of bringing the Resistance to Geneva. In addition the already anticipated attacks from both Israel, Jordan and Lebanon to liquidate the resistance will act as another agent that would push the Resistance into participating in this capitulation operation.