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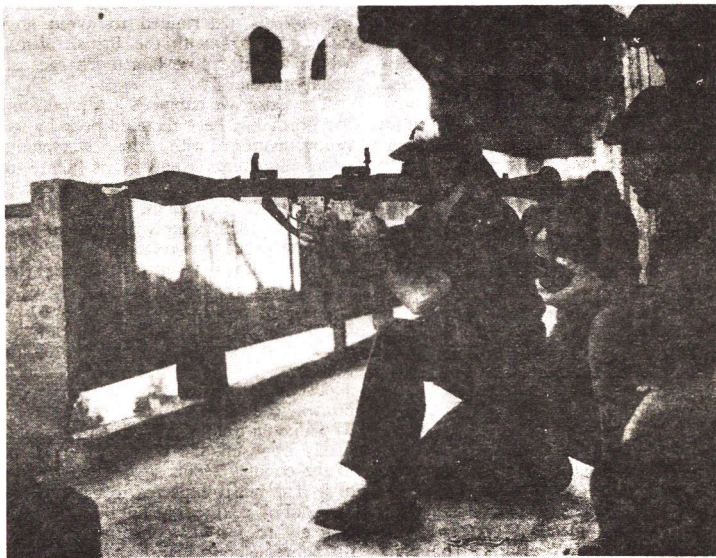
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**Interview with Comrade Nayef Hawatmeh
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Editorial -

THE CRISIS IN LEBANON

After months of intense civil strife between right-wing and left-wing factions and an exceptionally high number of casualties, Lebanon has yet to recover the normal pace of its political and economic life. For the crisis remains an unresolved one, the roots of which go all the way back to 1943 when a so-called National Pact was drawn to define the character of the country's political institutions and its relationship to the rest of the Arab world. And, if anything, the turmoil in Beirut and the other cities of Lebanon has sharpened the deep contradictions inherent in the Lebanese system.

To separate the internal problems of a small country from those of its surrounding region will often lead to a partial if not false image of the situation. In the case of Lebanon, this risk is all the more present in that the country has a peculiar status in inter-Arab politics. And when it comes to the violent events that have shaken it recently, to separate the internal level from the external cannot but distort any attempt at explaining these events.

At the external level, i.e. the regional level of the Arab East as a whole, there is one single development that has had a fundamental importance: the resurgence since the mid-1960's of the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination. Inasmuch as it was an independent struggle, constituting an actual or potential danger to the existing political order, the right-wing Arab regimes first tried to control it or coopt it. Failing to do so, they then tried to localize it and, later, liquidate it when it was increasingly threatening their own security and their attempts at reaching some arrangement with the state of Israel under American auspices. This general development has been punctuated by two major events: the wars of June 1967 and October 1973. The first, triggered in part by Palestinian guerrilla incursions into Israel, by demonstrating the incapacity of the regular Arab enemies against Zionist expansionism, considerably weakened the hold of the Arab governments on their restive populations and allowed for an open and vigorous organization of the emerging Palestinian resistance, particularly in Jordan and Lebanon. The second war, by breaking a six-year stalemate in the fact of Israeli occupation of Arab lands and allowing at least for the first steps toward a peaceful settlement, opened the way for the re-orientation of the new national bourgeoisies, such as in Egypt, which saw their interests better served by alliances with the U.S. and the West than with the Soviet Union. A re-orientation that was considerably helped by the emerging economic power of the oil-producing and conservative countries of the Arabian Peninsula, which gave a strong sanction to the present policy pursued by the Sadat government in trying to achieve an American-sponsored settlement with Israel.

Against this backdrop of discredited first, and later partially enhanced, Arab governments, the Palestinian resistance when through a corresponding course of ups and downs. After the bloody civil war in Jordan in 1970-71, it saw its open bases reduced to those of Lebanon. In alliance with the progressive forces in this country, it

naturally incurred the animosity of the ruling plutocracy and the parties defending the internal status quo. But the forces in presence on the Lebanese arena were not those on the Jordanian arena, and the liquidation of the Palestinian resistance here proved to be a much harder task. After the October War, and the subsequent pro-Western shift of the Sadat government aided by the newly-found power of the oil-producing states, which reduced further the margin of support the Palestinian resistance could count on from the Arab League, the inter-Arab situation seemed to be more favorable for a new round to restrict if not altogether eliminate the resistance in Lebanon. Indeed, while the recent diplomatic maneuverings make it clear that the general tendency of the Arab regimes runs counter to the goals of the Palestinian national movement, the resistance still represents, by the pressures it can apply directly and indirectly, a major obstacle to the eventual success of a Middle Eastern modus vivendi under American auspices.

Internally, Lebanon has been the stage of a fundamental cleavage between increasingly dissatisfied masses and state institutions that are unable to adapt themselves to the needs of the former. The ruling class alliance, based on a contrived equilibrium defined by the National Pact of 1943 (a sort of constitution ascribing posts and responsibilities, in all state institutions and the army, to the different religious communities of the country according to some fixed percentages), has been subjected to strong pressures by the rise of new social forces. While the National Pact reflected the actual balance of power at the end of the French Mandate, between the Christian and Moslem wings of the rich upper class and, to a lesser extent, of the predominantly Christian bourgeoisie, it no longer represents the interests and aspirations of wide social strata.

Among these are the urban masses, including many sections of the petit-bourgeoisie, which have had to suffer from the general deterioration of the economic situation, especially in the last three to four years. The Sunni Moslem faction of the traditional political leadership drawing its support mainly from within these urban groups, the rise of the latter has forced the former to ask, in vain so far, for a larger share of power within the ruling class alliance. Equally important among the dissatisfied sections of the population are the rural masses of Shia Moslem background, especially in the south of Lebanon where they have had to suffer for many years now the hardships of Israeli military incursions and bombardments (3,036 such incursions from 1968 to 1974 according to official figures). This also has led to dissensions within the ruling class alliance, which have been compounded by the fact that the Shia Moslem community, the largest numerically in the country, is blatantly under-represented in the inter-community balance specified by the National Pact of 1943. Since early this year, in particular, social discontent and tension have considerably increased as a result of two separate sequences of events. The first has been the stepped-up Israeli campaign against the south of Lebanon, which included the razing to the ground of Kfar Shouba, a small town of about 5000 inhabitants, last January. The second, started by a march of small fishermen in the port city of Saïda (Sidon) against the monopoly of a new fishing company, led to a general strike and bloody clashes with the army in February. The latter, a small career army of about 15,000 men, had sent one of its brigades to Saïda which was soundly defeated by thousands of townspeople up in arms. It was only a prelude for the events that were to follow two months later.

More significant is the emergence on the Lebanese political scene of an organized and militant Left, which comprises the Lebanese Communist Party, the Organization for Communist Action in Lebanon, the Progressive Socialist Party, along with other smaller groups - all within a broad coalition opposed to the traditional and conservative parties. By transcending the division of the population into religious and ethnic communities and effectively replacing it by an awareness of the opposition between privileged social strata and deprived masses, the Left constitutes a direct threat to the existing political order. Notwithstanding its relatively small number, it has managed to channel the militancy of the discontented urban and rural masses into challenging the legitimacy of the present institutions and the National Pact on which they are defined.

In this complex conflict between progressive and conservative forces, between deprived Moslem masses and traditional politicians (Moslem and Christian alike), and between different factions within the ruling class alliance, the Lebanese Left has found a natural and reliable ally in the Palestinian resistance, which has often provided the former with crucial help in its struggle against the internal status quo. The eventual establishment of a progressive regime in Lebanon, satisfying the needs of its wide laboring masses and respecting the rights of its various religious-ethnic communities, would also serve as a strong guarantee for the preservation of an effective Palestinian national movement.

It is in this whole context that one must look at the recent confrontation in Lebanon. While it was the bloodiest so far, it was not the first. Nor, it seems, will it be the last. In the course of the last six to seven years, since the entry of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon and the subsequent emergence of a strong Lebanese Left, the conservative forces in the country, spearheaded by the armed militia of the right-wing Phalangist Party, have repeatedly attempted to contain the mounting influence of the Left by isolating the militarily and materially stronger Resistance (most notably in April-October 1969, in May 1973, and in April-May-June 1975). Thus these attempts, including the most recent one, have been at first and primarily aimed at restricting if not neutralizing the Resistance in Lebanon. But the strength and organization of the Left had developed sufficiently in the recent confrontations so as to gradually shift it, in the course of its early unfolding, from a series of provocations by the Phalangist militia against the Resistance and the Palestinian camps to an all-out confrontation between dissatisfied urban masses and right-wing militias and parties. Thus, from the first attack on a Palestinian bus by Phalangist militiamen in a Beirut suburb (Ain el-Rumaneh) on April 13, which led to the massacre of 27 Palestinians, it developed to reach the dimensions of a civil war at the end of June. In Beirut, a city of more than one million people, it eventually engulfed every neighborhood and nearly every street corner in the last week of June, during which right-wing militias, helped by the army, used heavy weapons (artillery, mortars, rockets) against the poorest sections of the city and strongholds of the Left.

This foiled attempt at isolating the Palestinian resistance also came, not surprisingly, at a time when the overtures of the Sadat government, with strong backing from Saudi Arabia, toward the U.S. and Israel were made all the more earnestly that the political momentum started by the

October War toward a Middle Eastern settlement seemed to come to a standstill. A standstill that would perpetuate Israeli occupation of Arab lands and once more subject the Arab governments to strong internal pressures for their liberation, leading to a situation not unlike that preceding the October War. Hence, the eagerness of the Sadat government to find ways to pick up the pace of forthcoming settlement, with American blessings, by means of desperate diplomatic moves and hence, also its encouragements, veiled or not-so-veiled, to the forces and parties trying to subdue in Lebanon the Palestinian resistance, a major obstacle toward a Pax Americana in the Middle East.

What has been the outcome of the recent events in Lebanon? In spite of the present cabinet's insistence that it is "a cabinet of national unity," that there should be "no loser or winner," there is no doubt that the right-wing parties have suffered several setbacks. True, they have not been defeated - nor will they be defeated in one stroke - and, what is more ominous, their militias have increased in size and acquired new Jordanian, Israeli, and NATO weapons. But, in balance, it is the movement of the disinherited masses and the Left parties, along with the Palestinian resistance, that have considerably gained from the last confrontation.

1. First and foremost, among the results of the recent crisis, the Resistance has not been neutralized. Quite the contrary, it has come out in a position of greater strength and independence. This is the fact that will have to be reckoned with by all conservative and reactionary forces, both in Lebanon and the Middle East as a whole. Within Lebanon itself, its alliance with the Lebanese Left has strengthened and, together, they have outbalanced the power of the Phalangist and other right-wing parties and militias. And the Left, particularly the Communist Party and the Organization for Communist Action, are now in a position to challenge the traditional Moslem leadership of the exploited urban and rural masses - and, if not, they can at least prevent it from collaborating with the right-wing (predominantly Christian) parties, notably the Phalangists. Indeed, when they called for the exclusion of the latter from the formation of the present cabinet the first such exclusion since 1958, the prime minister-designate, a Sunni Moslem according to the National Pact, was forced to yield to their demand.

2. Worthy of notice are many other political gains, achieved as the crisis was unfolding. For example, the prime minister who resigned on May 15, no longer able to contain the situation, was forced to raise for the first time in a speech in Parliament itself the question of amending the National Pact of 1943. One of the rare cases when a government calls into question the legitimacy of its own constitution! Later, on May 23, the president appointed a military cabinet to cope with the explosive situation. The army's officer corps being generally with the right-wing parties, an open-ended general strike was called by the parties of the Left, supported by many politicians of the Center, which effectively paralyzed much of the country and forced the cabinet to resign two days later. A record in the life-span of military governments!

THE SINAI AGREEMENT

- A blow against Arab liberation and the Palestinian struggle, serving imperialist plans in the area.
- A united front of all Arab progressive and patriotic forces is needed to defeat imperialist, Zionist, and Arab reactionary forces.

The wide popular reaction provoked by the signing of the Sinai Agreement and the attacks made on it by all Arab progressive and patriotic forces has to be explained by what the agreement signifies in terms of the Arab struggle against Zionist occupation, the struggle of the Palestinian people to regain their national rights, and the imperialist penetration of the area.

On the level of the Arab-Israeli struggle, the Egyptian-Israeli agreement and its secret appendices mean the following:

- a) The fragmentation of the Arab cause through adopting a step-by-step policy on one hand and through bilateral agreements on the other. This is an old Israeli tactic used by the Israeli Zionist leadership since the 1948 war (Rhodes Agreement), which serves the Israeli policy of fragmenting and weakening the Arab front by dealing with each front separately and not as a collectivity or unity. By this tactic Israel, aided and encouraged by American imperialism, hopes to extract the utmost concessions from each country by putting it in a militarily and politically weak position.
- b) The Sadat-Rabin agreement is a one-sided concession by the Egyptian leadership renouncing the use of force in the struggle to liberate occupied Arab territories. It is a declaration by Egypt ending the state of war with Israel, while Israel still occupies over 90% of Sinai, the Golan Heights, and the whole of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While the Egyptian leadership renounces the use of force, the agreement and its secret clauses commit American imperialism to arm Israel with highly sophisticated weapons including F-16 fighters (long-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear heads and reaching Arab capitals) worth some 3 billion dollars.
- c) Militarily speaking, the agreement in no way affects Israel's capacity to launch new attacks or reoccupy territory it has withdrawn from. Egyptian oilfields remain within the range of Israeli guns, and so does the Suez Canal. Moreover, the early-warning stations set up in Sinai and manned by Americans provide the U.S. (and thus Israel) with all the information it needs about Egypt's military positions, equipment and movements. In other words, Sadat has accepted an American military base on Egyptian soil. The Sinai surrenderist agreement gives Israel "complete freedom of defensive and offensive action," to use the words of Israeli General Gur. All these military concessions by the right-wing leadership are in addition to economic ones such as the opening of the Suez Canal, and diplomatic ones such as Cairo's cessation of the anti-Zionist propaganda campaign - and these concessions have been given with no tangible concessions from Israel.
- d) The Sinai Agreement clearly negates the decisions of the Rabat Conference, which committed the Arab countries to unity of action, to achieving complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, and to regaining the national rights of the Palestinians and establishing

their independent state on the Palestinian land liberated from Israeli occupation. There is no mention in the Sinai Agreement of Israeli withdrawal from other occupied territories. Instead, the secret documents annexed to the agreement describe it as an agreement "in its own right" - that is, an agreement which does not commit Israel to further withdrawals from Sinai or other Arab territory. Israeli leaders have been insistent since the signing of the Sinai Agreement that no withdrawal from the Golan Heights is contemplated or possible.

As regards the cause of the Palestinian people for self-determination and the establishment of the independent state on liberated Palestinian land, Sadat has completely capitulated. The Sadat-Rabin agreement and the whole step-by-step approach, together with the partial bilateral negotiation policy, serve the American, Zionist, and Arab reactionary plan of ignoring the P.L.O. and the national rights of the Palestinian people, by reactivating the political role of the Hashemite regime in preparing to resume control over any liberated Palestinian territory.

Also, the agreement removes Egypt, with all its political, military and demographic weight, from the arena of the anti-Zionist struggle in the area and thus boosts the Israeli position which had been considerably weakened by the October War. Therefore, it can only strengthen the right-wing forces in other Arab countries. Even within the Palestinian resistance itself, right-wing elements were hesitant in attacking the Sadat Agreement, and when the P.L.O. did attack it, they tried to minimize the attack by statements such as "the difference between the P.L.O. and Sadat over the agreement is a difference in interpretation and not essence!"

The Sinai Agreement has had a clear influence on events in Lebanon, where right-wing isolationist forces have been launching military attacks to weaken the progressive and patriotic Lebanese forces and the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon. These reactionary forces have been publicly and otherwise encouraged by the Egyptian right and by Arab reaction which is allied to imperialism and which sees the resistance and other Arab progressive forces and parties as obstacles to imperialist penetration in the area. The conspiracy in Lebanon against the resistance and the Lebanese progressive forces is part of the Sinai Agreement and what it embodies.

On the level of the anti-imperialist Arab struggle, the Sinai Agreement has been a major blow to the Arab liberation movement. For the policy that has led Sadat to sign the agreement began in 1971 with the ascendancy of the right-wing ruling section of the Egyptian bourgeoisie, characterized by its "liberalization policy" (the demolition of all the progressive gains made by the Egyptian working class and progressive forces during the Nasserite period) and its step-by-step alliance with imperialism, especially American imperialism. This alliance was strengthened after the October War when the Egyptian leadership began to use the positive results of the war not to achieve the demands for complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories and recognition of the P.L.O. and of the national rights of the Palestinian people, but to strengthen American influence in the area. The Egyptian leadership a) adopted internal economic, social and political policies suitable for attracting domestic and foreign private capital, b) attempted to silence all internal opposition to these capitulationist and right-wing policies by increased repression and all external opposition by encouraging and sup-

porting reactionary and right-wing forces in the Arab world, c) whitewashed the face of American imperialism by depicting it as antagonistic to Israel and capable of developing the area through aid and capital investment, and d) launched systematic attacks against the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, hitting at the alliance between the socialist countries and the Arab people, and thus paving the way for increased American penetration and influence.

Despite the grave blow that the Sinai Agreement has dealt the Arab liberation struggle in general and the Palestinian struggle in particular, the widespread popular reaction against it both among the Palestinian people and from all progressive forces in the Arab world shows that the Arab people can foil and defeat the Sadat Agreement and all the conspiracies and aims of Arab reaction, imperialism, and Zionism. What is required now is a wide united Arab progressive front to organize and lead the struggle of the Arab people against the Arab ruling right-wing forces, and simultaneously against imperialist-Zionist plans.

TWO DFLP COMMUNIQUEES

To President Houari Boumediene,
To the Brothers of the Leading Committee of the Revolution,

On the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the beginning of the glorious revolution of liberation of the fraternal Algerian people,

In the name of the Central Committee of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and in the name of all the militants of the Front and all the Palestinian people, we send our warmest greetings.

We follow with great interest the achievements on all levels of the Algerian revolution, and we wish continued prosperity for the fraternal people of Algeria. The Palestinian people are struggling with all national and progressive Arab forces to foil the defeatist and liquidationist imperialist projects confronting the whole Arab liberation movement and its fight for self-determination. The Palestinian people are inspired by the great sacrifices made by the Algerian people in achieving their national independence and economic and social liberation.

Our people, at the same time, support with all their energy the peoples of all those regions which are yet struggling for the right of self-determination and national independence - and at their head, the peoples of Oman, Eritrea, and colonized Sahara.

LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE OF THE ALGERIAN AND PALESTINIAN PEOPLES!

LONG LIVE THE DEMOCRATIC ARAB NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT!

Central Committee of the DFLP
1 November 1975

To the Central Committee of the United Socialist Party of Germany,

Dear Comrades,

The Central Committee of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine sends its warm greetings on the historic anniversary of the creation of the German Democratic Republic which arose out of the defeat of fascism and the struggles of the German working class.

At the same time, we thank your party, the government, and the German people for the firm and constant support they give to the struggle of our people, represented by the P.L.O., against defeatist and liquidationist solutions, and for the triumph of the transitional national program which calls for our people's right to self-determination and national independence.

Revolutionary Greetings!

Central Committee of the DFLP

INTERVIEW WITH COMRADE NAYEF HAWATMEH (From Al-Akhbar)

Q: What do you think of the present situation in Lebanon?

A: There are two important factors which explain the Lebanese situation. First, class and political contradictions in Lebanon are at a point which necessitates a whole series of democratizing changes in both the social and state structures of the country. But the reactionary forces are refusing to allow progress toward solving these contradictions to proceed peacefully by democratic methods. Instead, they are using armed violence to block what is inevitable. The second factor is the large offensive led by Israeli-American imperialism in the Arab world. This offensive encompasses both the Israeli-Arab and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as problems of regional independence and national liberation, especially as regards oil wealth in the Arabian peninsula and strategic channels of communication.

In the Lebanese situation, these two factors meet as follows: Israeli-American imperialism is conducting an offensive making use of local reaction which is aimed at provoking a violent clash of the Lebanese contradictions. Israeli-American imperialism wants local reaction to play a multiple role in the plot against Lebanon. Reactionary forces have always represented the "strategic reserve" of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Israeli-American imperialism uses this local strategic

reserve to impose on Lebanon its own solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. And the interests of the Lebanese reactionary forces subscribe to this imperialist solution in an attempt to solve, by force, the country's contradictions. Any democratic development plan is therefore rejected so that Lebanon will remain in the hands of a bourgeois minority of the most reactionary type where the protagonists of confessionism can be found.

After its success in freezing the Egyptian front and isolating it from a line of direct confrontation, the American solution now aims at freezing the talks concerning Israeli withdrawal from Arab and Palestinian territory. The American offensive is mainly centered on changing the political and social map of the remaining fronts (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan) in order to ensure the future stages of its plan of surrender and liquidation. At this level, Lebanon is one of the best areas for the American offensive. The aim is to inflict human and material losses on the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese national movement. This will complete one stage of the American solution and thereby change the situation in the area in accordance with the Israeli-American imperialist plan.

At the same time, an attempt is being made in Jordan to undermine the Palestinian revolution and the P.L.O. Certain Arab governments are providing the Hashemite regime with economic, political and moral aid, in order to end its political isolation and prepare Jordan for its role in the future of the Palestinian cause. This plan aims to put forward the Jordanian regime as a substitute for the Palestinian revolution and the P.L.O. in any discussion on the future of the Palestinian land, with the end in view of imposing a liquidationist solution on the Palestinian people according to a Jordano-Israeli formula based on the partition of Palestine between the Zionist entity and a future United Kingdom. The results of the 1948 catastrophe would, in this way, be secured by integrating and assimilating the Palestinian people into a United Kingdom and into other Arab countries.

The third step is to isolate Syria by attempting to impose concessions on it as was done in the case of Egypt. Thus, step by step, all obstacles would be removed from the American plan to bring about the surrender of the front-line countries to Israel at the expense of giving up Arab territory and of liquidating the Palestinian homeland and its people. And so, after changing the political, structural and social map of the countries facing Israel, imperialism will resume approaches toward a new withdrawal from occupied territory.

The above analysis gives us a clearer understanding of what is now happening in Lebanon. It also justifies all our military and political efforts to counter the American offensive in its local form, based on a strategic alliance between the Palestinian Revolution and all the national and democratic Lebanese forces. It also explains the struggle of these forces, which are defending the country, to counter the deadly aggression of the Kata'eb and its allies and the opposition of these forces to attempts to suppress the contradictions in the country by armed force. The national and democratic forces act with renewed hope to reach a solution to political and structural class contradictions, by democratic and peaceful means.

Our enemy's plans have failed so far. But the opposing parties do not accept that the Palestinian Revolution has the right to defend itself or that Lebanon is entitled to peaceful democratic development. We hope - although hope alone is not enough - that the forces opposed to progress and development have drawn the necessary lessons from the latest events. Force solves nothing. On the contrary, violence breeds violence. Furthermore, the flood of blood and destruction let loose by the reactionary forces has shown clearly that violence as a solution to the country's contradictions leads inevitably to a dead-end.

In conclusion, we hope that democratic dialogue, with all its potential, will be the only means used to solve Lebanon's internal problems, to overcome the Lebanese phase of the American solution, and to destroy in the coming struggle the deadly reactionary forces which form the "strategic reserve" of imperialism.

Q: However, Comrade Nayef, what you call the "strategic reserve" of imperialism does not act alone and is not supported solely by imperialism. The Egyptian right-wing follows the same direction and the Voice of the Arabs (from Cairo) retransmits the Kata'eb private radio, Voice of Lebanon. What do you think of the Egyptian position and its consequences?

A: Sadat and his bourgeoisie are indeed encouraging the Kata'eb and its allies, at least in voicing for their nationalism and justifying their actions to the disadvantage of the Palestinian Revolution and the whole Lebanese national and democratic movement. This position is in harmony with American enterprises and those of the Egyptian right-wing, especially since the Sinai Agreement. The right-wing has collaborated in creating the necessary conditions to facilitate the successive phases of the American plan. Therefore, it wants neither a Palestinian revolution that is a growing material and political force, nor a national democratic Lebanese movement ready to fight American imperialist plans. The Egyptian right-wing is working assiduously and premeditatedly to reduce the importance of the Palestinian Revolution and to encourage the destruction of the Lebanese national and democratic forces.

Since the Kata'eb aggressors and their allies are carrying out these aims, it is natural for the Egyptian right to support them indirectly by improving their "murderous faces," as Sadat's statements and the whole Egyptian Information Service has tried to do. The ruling right in Egypt understands very well the extent of the contradiction existing between it on the one hand and the Palestinian Revolution and Arab national and democratic forces on the other. The Egyptian right has come to play an integral part in the conflict aiming to reduce the importance of these forces. This is an additional role designed for the Arab reactionary forces in the American plan against all Arab liberation and independence movements.

In these circumstances, what the right-wing Palestinian faction of the P.L.O. claims is absolutely wrong. Indeed, this right-wing still claims that "the difference between the P.L.O. and Sadat over the agreement is a difference in interpretation and not essence." This last announcement was recently made by the Palestine National Council members visiting Federal Germany (24 September 1975).

Q: Why is American imperialism making headway in the Arab countries while it is losing ground elsewhere in the world?

A: The need to solve various contradictions between the bourgeois factions ruling Egypt explains all the concessions made in Egypt's national, Arab and international policy. These contradictions were settled in a manner advantageous to the agricultural bourgeoisie and to the prejudice of the industrial and technocratic bourgeoisie.

Under Abdul Nasser, contradictions were always solved in favor of the most advanced ruling factions of the bourgeoisie by progressively eliminating all restrictions against capitalist development. By the direct and permanent intervention of the state in favor of the construction of state capitalism in particular, the industrial bourgeoisie and technocrats were reinforced. All this necessitated an Arab policy in opposition to imperialism, reaction and Zionism. The advanced role of Egypt in the Arab and African national liberation movement was therefore reinforced. Relations were developed between Egypt and the Arab countries and the Soviet Union.

The right-wing take-over of May 1971 under Sadat pushed the parasitic agricultural and bureaucratic bourgeoisie to political power. The result was a whole series of economic regressions in the historical development of the bourgeois class, under the slogan of "opening-up!" It becomes evident that all this synchronized with the American plan regarding the Middle East in general and the Israeli-Arab conflict in particular. To solve the question of the occupied territories, American conditions were and continue to be altering the political map and redistributing classes in all the Arab countries. This alteration is always to be made to the advantage of private capitalism and to the detriment of state capitalism represented by the public sector and the state-financed production projects. This is what Sadat has done and what Abdul Nasser refused to do. This is why Soviet experts were expelled in 1972 and why events took the course we all know about at present.

It is certain that all these moves will have an opposite effect to the one envisaged by the regime. A national popular democratic movement will emerge in the society and will fight this bourgeoisie which diverts the gains and democratic changes realized by Abdul Nasser. This explains objectively the creation of the Egyptian Communist Party. It constitutes an independent platform for the working class and the masses.

Thus, the most important factor in all the transformations which have taken place in Egypt is that the country is following a policy of political alliance with the United States. Even Heykal, a son of the regime, mentions it in his book The Road to Ramadan. The second factor is the new tactic adopted by American imperialism in the Arab region. During the regime of Abdul Nasser, imperialist American policy was based on one strong axis: Israel, which at the time was the sole reactionary center of imperialism. Imperialism's Arab agents in the area were abandoned. But imperialism's defeat in Vietnam and the loss of its base in Indochina made it feel the need for a substitute. The October War also taught it an important lesson: its policy must be based on several axes in such a way as to secure its interests through many centers in all regions of the world. This new tactic must be developed on all axes equally without provoking conflicts between them. This is why, after the coup of May 1971, American imperialism directed its efforts toward

Israel and at the same time toward local Arab agents of imperialism. It was mainly after 1973 that American imperialism began to direct its policy in a more balanced manner toward the various leaderships. The essential focus of this policy was to change the political and social structure of Egypt so as to enable the U.S. to solve the problem of the occupied territories. This is now proceeding according to a timetable, and the intervention of the U.S. on behalf of minimal Israeli withdrawal from occupied lands is in accordance with these changes.

The new American tactic is being applied not only to the Arab-Israeli conflict but also to the question of oil in the Gulf. In exchange for petroleum securities and assurances that the national role of the oil weapon will not be used, the U.S. has solved some regional problems of the Gulf territories. In other words, it is a policy of a step in exchange for a step - this proves the danger of the current American policy of step-by-step.

Q: How can you confront the American offensive and reconstitute a larger front in which all Arab revolutionary forces will be included? How will this front fight within a common basic program?

A: Since its creation, and in particular since the October War and before the capitulation of the Arab right-wing, the DFLP took the initiative in defining the main enemy bloc as the American plan and its allies, Israel and the Arab reactionary forces. The DFLP called for the mobilization of all national and democratic forces in one broad front to surround and break the American offensive.

Less than one month after the end of the October War, the DFLP participated in drawing up an Arab and Palestinian political program for the current stage. This program recommended the creation of a front which would direct all its efforts toward foiling the imperialist plans; and it defined the strategy for the current phase. That strategy can be summarized in the following three points:

- 1) To struggle for unconditional liberation of all occupied territories - this necessitates a united front of the countries bordering Israel, along with mobilizing the full potential of the rearguard countries to support the frontlines and refusing to treat the problem of the occupied territories piecemeal (a rejection of the step-by-step policy).
- 2) To unify the Palestinian and Arab struggles to obtain Palestinian rights, which in the current phase are defined as: the right to return, the right to self-determination, the right to national independence, and the right to create a national state of Palestine on the territories liberated from Zionist occupation. These are fundamental and sacred rights not only to the Palestinian people but to all the people of the world. Such an acknowledgement would lead to a democratic, balanced and permanent solution and in the long run to the creation of a unified democratic state on all of Palestine.
- 3) To struggle against imperialist plans in all Arab countries so that each country obtains a real national independence with rights to dispose of its national wealth in the way it sees fit.

Only such a program will enable all national and revolutionary forces to be gathered in one broad, strong and unified front which will draw the largest possible sector of the masses to participate and which will direct all its activities against the main enemies: the U.S., Israel,

and Arab reactionary forces.

But until now, such a mobilization front could not be created because of three factors arising from the Arab national and Palestinian liberation movements:

- 1) The illusory belief on behalf of some factions in the movement that there exists a combined Soviet-American solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict which will be the consequence of an international detente. This is why these factions are separated from the movement, even though they represent only a minority, and are fighting mainly against a so-called Soviet-American solution.
- 2) The attempt of some national bourgeoisies to subordinate the eventual united front to their own strategic and tactical positions - an attempt by several states on the front and back lines.
- 3) The policy of the most right-wing Arab regimes, which continually seeks to prevent all serious struggles against Israeli-American imperialism and the enemy's step-by-step policy. At this level, Sadat has played the biggest role, and it is his regime which has stood at the head of the right wing of the Arab national liberation movement.

It is mainly following the Sinai Agreement that the right-wing orientation of the Arab national regimes, and specifically the Sadat regime, toward a policy of surrender has become clear. It is also since this agreement that the demagogy of the small and middle bourgeoisie, which has for a long time hidden behind revolutionary slogans to lead the revolution to a dead-end, has become more evident. This small and middle bourgeoisie practiced a policy of division in order to weaken the front of the forces opposed to the American solution. It also undertook a policy of opening-up toward the neighboring reactionary regimes and the ruling Egyptian right-wing, by not publically denouncing the steps and concessions made by Sadat.

This will necessarily lead to the democratic and revolutionary forces uniting together to fight the American imperialist plans that are directed at the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian conflict and all the problems of liberation and independence. The more the conflict is sharpened, the more the process of revealing the true nature of the Arab bourgeois regimes will be accelerated, since these regimes, because of their economic and political class interests, are coming ever closer to American imperialism and will end in a perfect entente between the two to the detriment of the whole Arab cause. Thus, a broad front of the Arab communist parties and all the Arab democratic forces with all revolutionary and national Palestinian forces must be formed on the basis of democratic practice, away from empty rhetoric and adventurist demagogic slogans. The program to be followed in the present phase constitutes the answer to the program of the enemy bloc, as the only program capable of mobilizing and bringing about the participation of the greatest number of the masses into the struggle against the enemy.

The daily development of events reveals the true nature of the reactionary forces and at the same time helps to mobilize the democratic and national forces in one united front. This leads to a reinforcing of the links of friendship and struggle between the Palestinian and Arab people, and the Soviet and eastern socialist countries, together with the revolutionary and democratic movements of the world. The fighters and the masses discover in the struggle and from their personal experience who their friends are. All the demagogic means used by the ruling Arab bour-

geoisie to mislead them will be useless. Our fighters and masses are aware that the Arab bourgeoisie is acting this way to justify its policy of generalized surrender at every level.

Q: What do you think of the proposal, presented by the Hashemite regime, for a dialogue with the Palestinians?

A: The DFLP has never ceased to struggle within the Palestinian masses and the P.L.O. for reactivating the Jordanian front with our fighters participating effectively in the combat. We cannot forget the disaster of the October War when Hussein prevented any movement on the Eastern front while cannon-fire thundered across the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. The reopening of the Jordanian front for the fighting forces of the revolution means the obligatory application of the Rabat decisions. By acknowledging the P.L.O. as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the Rabat decisions provide for the military, political and organizational presence of the P.L.O. among the Palestinian masses in Jordan. These decisions also recommend the reopening of the Jordanian front for the fedayeen, and affirm the right of the Palestinian and Jordanian people living under the Hashemite regime to participate in the struggle against the Zionism and American imperialist occupation.

But Hussein gave only his verbal agreement to these decisions. We always repeat that before considering any possibility of dialogue with Hussein, he must accept the Rabat decisions in practice. We reject all pressure exerted on the P.L.O. to end its isolation of the Jordanian regime. In fact, we demand of the Arab countries to reinforce this isolation.

INTERVIEW WITH A LEADER OF THE EGYPTIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (From Al-Hourriah)

In an interview given to the magazine Al-Hourriah, a leader of the Egyptian Communist Party analyzes the situation in Egypt and explains the reasons for his party's opposition to the partial agreement in Sinai. The following is the text of the interview.

Q: What is the position of the Egyptian Communist Party toward the agreement?

A: We clearly condemn the agreement and we view it as an abandonment of Egyptian sovereignty and, at the same time, a legitimization of the Israeli occupation in Sinai. The addition of the American occupation further complicates the tasks of the Egyptian people in its determination to continue the struggle for the liberation of its usurped land. We view the agreement as a consolidation of the occupation, not as a partial liberation. It is a defeat surpassing that of 1967. In 1967, all forces, including the government, fought against foreign occupation. At another

equally important level, we consider the agreement to be an effective and objective betrayal of the Arab national liberation movement. It is an abandonment of the Arab lands and people, and it exposes the revolutionary forces to pressures and liquidation through the imperialist-reactionary alliance.

This agreement moves Egypt further away than ever from the revolutionary forces, the socialist camp, and its leader - the Soviet Union. At the same time it allies our country more closely with American imperialism by legitimizing its presence in our area. Sadat's latest declarations confirm his intentions to depend more and more on the U.S.

As far as the Palestinian national question is concerned, the separate Egyptian-Israeli agreement is a stab in the back - as it constitutes a complete negation of the preceding Arab summits at Khartoum (1967), Algiers (1973), and Rabat (1974). The Egyptian government's attitude was revealed at Kampala and at the non-aligned summit at Lima, where our government showed itself to be the foremost defender of the Israeli presence at the United Nations.

Q: How can the Egyptian Communist Party fight this agreement?

A: We have and continue to fight this agreement through various forms of action on the different levels of the economic, political, and social aspects of the agreement. We consider our first task to be that of liberation: not just liberation of Egyptian territory, but also of all Arab territory occupied by Zionist or foreign forces. We make no difference between Port Said, Haifa, Sinai, or the Golan. Along with the Arab national liberation movement of which we are a part, we shall denounce the agreement and fight its dangerous consequences. We shall work for the unity of the Egyptian national forces, and in fact we can now say that there is a front of popular masses in Egypt which has been working for a long time. It has effectively mobilized the masses of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals. These masses have already asked for arms, called for the continuation of the struggle, for a war economy, for freedom of expression to all national forces, and for the purging within all institutions of reactionary elements.

These masses have already struggled for unity on the Arab battlefield, and let us not forget that the Egyptian workers exposed themselves to the fire of the authorities in shouting out slogans of solidarity with the Palestinian people and their fedayeen.

Q: Is the announcement of the reconstitution of your party related to the national dangers which are currently threatening Egypt?

A: The political report of the Egyptian Communist Party, which was published in the press last month, has been taken as the declaration of the party's reconstruction. But this was only a step along the long path of struggle which has lasted for several years. It is no longer a secret to say that we began to reorganize the Egyptian Communist Party shortly after its activities had officially ceased. The decision to dissolve the Egyptian Communist Party has been condemned from the beginning of the first report. The liquidation of the organization of the Egyptian working class has been seen as a crime against that class and against the Egyptian people.

Q: According to you, why has the Egyptian regime signed a partial agreement with Israel?

A: The concluding of this agreement could have been defeated. It is the fruit of an erroneous policy followed mainly by traditional forces in Egypt. These reactionary Arab forces succeeded in attracting certain national forces (influential in the Arab world) to reactionary positions. Before the after the October War, the conviction of the large percent of the masses was that a change in the relationship of forces could only take place through struggle. Under the pressure of reactionary forces, several national forces approved (at least implicitly) of the "bilateral solution" method. They did not take a position openly hostile toward it and were content to publish formal communiques for internal consumption from time to time, which would not result in any real agitation of the masses. The consequence of this was that most of these national forces were involved in secondary discussions on the nature of the partial compromise and not on the principle itself of partial compromise. Some of them justified this reactionary position by distinguishing between a partial agreement which is compatible to and part of an overall compromise, and one which is not.

The Egyptian Communist Party's point of view, along with that of various revolutionary groups, was that any partial compromise would of necessity lead to partial concessions which would later threaten not only the struggle of the Egyptian people, but also the whole Arab liberation movement.

The fundamental divergence here in this question is determined by the different methods of analyzing the class and social nature of the regime, and the hegemonic forces, and where their interests will lead. From a correct and scientific analysis, it was possible to know the result without having to go through the actual experience and without leaving space in which reactionary forces could maneuver with their plots. It was possible to prevent these things.

We could have avoided many losses which we are today facing. For instance, if we look at the problem of the changes occurring, we see that the general trend of Egyptian capitalism is parasitic, not the trend of a productive bourgeoisie. This therefore means that an evaluation of local capitalism cannot be made with the same criterion used in making evaluations before the Second World War and immediately after. It is clear that any possibility of change of our capitalist class is related to changes on the Arab and international world scales.

Thus our point of view seemed somewhat pessimistic to some of the national forces which continue to deal in illusions and have concepts that are outdated. We saw that for some, criticism of Sadat was interpreted as attacks on the Egyptian people!

Most of the revolutionary forces in Egypt lost the initiative. Moreover, their positions being without specific character were therefore confused with the positions of the regime by the popular masses. Hesitant and capitulationist tendencies dominated the leadership of certain national forces. This resulted in a situation of no faith in the masses because "they do not move," and "we are surrounded on all sides."
