

tionary parties, it is also one of the main directions of the Portuguese people's struggle against the oppressing fascist dictatorship, for their own freedom, for their true national independence.

The peoples in the Portuguese colonies and the people of Portugal have identical enemies. These enemies are those who kill the leaders and fighters of the national-liberation movements, who arrest, torture and throw into prison and kill leaders and fighters of the working class and the democratic forces of Portugal. The struggle of the peoples in Portuguese colonies and the struggle of the Portuguese people are bound by ties of close solidarity.

Active solidarity with the people of Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique is in itself an expression of the fundamental interests of the people of Portugal.

Secretariat, CC PCP

January 21, 1973

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## **FROM THE PARTY PRESS**

### **INTERVIEW OF POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER OF THE LEBANESE COMMUNIST PARTY**

The French weekly *France Nouvelle* of January 15 carried an interview granted to the journal's staff member Michelle Girard by Khalil Debs, member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Lebanese Communist Party.

*Question.* In 1972 Israel repeatedly attacked Lebanon and Syria, thereby encroaching on the sovereignty of these countries. What do you think about the events in your area? What is the role played by progressive Arab forces?

*Answer.* Israel constantly organizes aggressive attacks not only against the Palestinians, but directly against Arab countries, such as Syria and Lebanon. Of course, it is peaceful inhabitants who suffer from the consequences of the attacks, most of the victims being women and children. The bombs thrown on villages and Israeli tanks destroying everything in their way show the monstrousity of these aggressive actions.

To strike a decisive blow at the Arab liberation movement and certain progressive regimes, to liquidate completely, politically and physically, the Palestinian resistance—such is the aim pursued by the Israeli leaders following an expansionist policy.

52 *information bulletin*

Refusing to fulfil the UN resolutions, they persist in their attempts to impose on the Arab countries, with the unreserved support of the U.S., a solution implying the recognition of the accomplished fact and to affirm their right of "the strong" through continued occupation of foreign territories.

Following the massacre of Palestinians in Jordan in 1970, Israel's attempts to impose a similar situation on the Lebanese government have not brought the expected results. The aim of this constant aggression is to strengthen the positions of Arab reaction everywhere, from the USA to Lebanon. Apart from that, the idea is being spread that only the U.S. possesses the key to the settlement of the conflict and efforts are being made to force the Arab countries to change their policy towards the USSR, which, it is claimed, "gave them nothing," and to make concessions to the U.S. All this is unquestionably connected with the strategic and economic conditions in this area.

Taking advantage of the weakness of the Arab liberation movement following the June 1967 defeat, Israel seeks to aggravate this weakness by resorting to force and the U.S.—by means of intrigues and pressure, so as to suppress the progressive and democratic movement.

Today, when there is a turn towards détente, peaceful coexistence and security, the U.S. position of support for the Israeli leaders in the political and military fields glaringly contradicts the "adaptation" to the new conditions of our time, announced by Nixon.

Imposition of a settlement either with the help of concessions or by means of force, contrary to the interests of the peoples of the area, will only aggravate the situation in the area. Only a solution that really meets the interests of these peoples and recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination can lead to the restoration of security in the Middle East. In this respect the unity of the Arab liberation movement and its solidarity may have a positive impact on the advance to such a solution.

Cooperation of the progressive Arab forces can and should be established to give a fitting rebuff to reaction and Zionism. Recently, following several months of preparations, a conference was called in Beirut on the initiative of the National Council of Palestine, which had proposed to hold the conference last spring. (I would like to remind that at our Third Congress 24 Arab Communist and other progressive parties and organizations called for an all-Arab peoples' conference in support of the Palestinian revolution.) The only absentee was Libya which refused to participate in a conference together with Communists. Not a single country or organization supported Libya. Since the social basis and class

positions of the represented parties and movements were different and their ideological and political conceptions often contradictory, the discussions at the conference, naturally, reflected these differences and contradictions. Still, the conference was a success, for it was the first meeting of nationalists and Communists moved by a real desire for unity.

The Conference made it possible to overcome some obstacles and set up the Arab Front of Assistance to the Palestinian revolution. This assistance goes much farther, for the Front's charter notes the role of the Palestinian resistance as an inseparable part of the Arab national-liberation movement and world revolution.

The conference was also successful in that it dealt a heavy blow at anti-communism, for along with representatives of other progressive Arab forces in power Communists were elected to the Secretariat of the Front. Incidentally, this set-back to anti-communism is closely linked with the consolidation of anti-imperialist unity. Lastly this success and solidarity was confirmed by the presence of representatives from socialist countries, the peoples of Europe and Latin America (China did not attend the conference).

After the rather controversial statements of the Right and reactionary wing of the Arab liberation movement, in particular Saudi Arabia (which was denounced by the Conference), this meeting may constitute a step forward in joint action by the progressive Arab forces to mobilize the masses.

*Quest.on.* What are your relations with the Palestinian organizations? How do you combat attempts to counterpose the Lebanese population to the Palestinians in the south of Lebanon?

*Answer.* As for relations between the Lebanese Communist Party and the Palestinian resistance, it should be said that we are engaged in the same struggle, i.e., the struggle of the entire Arab liberation movement. Lebanese Communists fell in battle side by side with Palestinian commandoes.

All this, however, does not rule out the need for a measure of independence for each organization. Even though there are disagreements, one movement cannot impose its strategy on another movement. In this respect our relations have improved, for they are based on complete sincerity and, at the same time, on a common struggle against a common enemy. The guiding principles of our relations are mutual respect and the desire to strengthen cooperation and united action on the basis acceptable to both sides.

This is making the Israeli leaders lose their sleep. Hence the attacks on the Lebanese Communist Party by the newspaper *Haaretz*, which is close to the government. The Communist Party of Israel condemned this slander, calling it a provocation against the Leban-

ese Communist Party. Israel strikes even in Beirut with the help of charged letters and bombs. This is also why the Israeli government continued its aggressive action in southern Lebanon until the Lebanese government, in its turn, decided to strike at the Palestinians. It wants to thwart the 1969 agreements, but problems existing between Lebanon and the Palestinians cannot be settled by force.

The Lebanese Communist Party, together with other progressive parties in Lebanon, came out against all these attempts, making it hard for the Lebanese and Israeli reaction to achieve its aims.

*Quest.on.* At a time when the crisis of state-monopoly capital is being exposed in France, your Third Congress drew attention to the economic, social and political crisis raging in Lebanon. How does this crisis manifest itself in your country, situated in another area?

*Answer.* Though certain economic successes may be noted from the standpoint of the internal political situation, they, regrettably, do not serve the interests of the broad masses. On the contrary, it is the masses who foot the bill, because the taxes are constantly rising and prices go up with no increases in wages. Recently, there were severe clashes in different sectors of the economy. The crisis was confirmed, for instance, by a recent strike at a food factory employing 1,500 workers. This strike, called in support of the demand for a five per cent wage increase (in line with the decision of the government which was compelled to grant it under the pressure of mass trade union and popular actions), forced the factory owner to call out police which opened fire, killing two workers and wounding several more.

These repressions caused a general strike and a big demonstration of 80,000 people which was held under social slogans on the initiative of the Left parties and forces. Solidarity demonstrations and strikes were called in several towns. The movement showed the depth of the crisis and underlined this political aspect: certain forces have not yet "accepted" the democratic gains of our time, including the legal status of the LCP. They tried to probe public opinion through this repression. It should be noted that these events occurred at a time when attempts were being made to push an anti-democratic law through parliament.

The retaliatory actions showed that it will be difficult for reaction to achieve their aims. They corroborated that the struggle for democracy is an inseparable part of the struggle for the people's demands. Even *Le Monde* had to admit that, as proved by the crisis in Lebanon, social struggle and social contradictions are gaining the upper hand over religious differences.

The attempts to involve Lebanon in religious strife have always

been an ideal means of concealing the social struggle, but the reality makes itself felt. For instance, the factory owner who ordered the police to open fire is a Moslem, like the majority of workers. The gulf is becoming deeper and we witness a growth of political consciousness among the workers and the people generally.

The Lebanese Communist Party has always combatted confessionalism. The best way of achieving this goal is to step up the social struggle. We have also noted that the petty and middle bourgeoisie whose interests coincide with those of the working class and run counter to the interests of the Lebanese financial oligarchy linked with foreign monopolies, was quick to respond to the strike call.

The movement is mounting among agricultural workers and small and middle peasants. Several regional conferences and one national conference have already been held to support their demands and rights and to organize the peasants. Preparations are under way for several more conferences.

Note should also be taken of the struggle of college and high school students. For the first time the students who represent the Right parties were forced to support the demands of the Left students.

This social and political struggle, its transition to a new and higher stage, have created new relations between progressive parties and forces. And, conversely, these parties and forces have promoted the growth of this struggle.

The alliance of the LCP with the Progressive Socialist Party (the touchstone of unity), the Baathists and Nasserites is growing stronger in struggle. All these and other forces were represented at our Third Congress.

It is not enough for us Communists to claim the role of vanguard. We must earn it in the fire of struggle. We do not claim a monopoly position for ourselves, but seek to cooperate with all who want to serve the interests of the popular masses.

This unity has already borne fruit. Some workers' demands have already been met. There is the possibility today of preventing the adoption of the anti-democratic law in parliament. But our Third Congress has proved again that the crises affecting the economic, social, cultural and political conditions in the country can be really overcome only through radical transformation of the structures of the present capitalist system. Therefore the Lebanese Communist Party advocates the creation of a national democratic government that would meet the interests of all victims of the policy of the financial oligarchy. This government may become a new stage in our struggle for socialism.