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LEBANON

RESISTANCE FRONT LEADERS DISCUSS ORGANIZATION, OPERATIONS

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[Interview with Abu Tariq, Hazim and Ra'd, leaders of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, by Zakariya Hammud: "AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI Interviews Three Leaders of Lebanese National Resistance Front; Our Objective Is To Turn Ourselves into Popular Army for Full Liberation of Soil"; date and place not specified]

[Text] For the first time ever, three leaders of the national resistance in the south have spoken to the press. Abu Tariq, Hazim and Ra'd from the Lebanese National Resistance Front have revealed to AL-NAHAR AL-'ARABI WA AL-DUWALI the truth of how the front emerged, the front's circumstances and objectives and some aspects of its activity against the Israeli occupation, answering various questions: who are you? Who finances you? Do you believe that you are capable of ousting the Israelis from the south? What is your relationship with the Lebanese parties? How do you explain the demand of some ministers and others that you be adopted and supported? How do you face the plots aimed against you? What kind of relationship do you have with the inhabitants of the south? Can your operations go beyond the framework of the presence of the occupying Israeli forces? They have answered these and other questions that occur to the minds of whoever has followed resistance activity, which first began in al-Sana'i', Beirut, on 21 September 1982, and ended with the blowing up of the military governor's headquarters in Tyre.

Have South Lebanon, Western al-Biqa' and Rashayya become another West Bank because of the Israeli occupation?

While the southerners and the population of Western al-Biqa' and Rashayya are being subjected to acts of containment, normalization, mass murder and humiliation and while the country's riches are being pillaged, its land usurped and its trees uprooted, you find the sectarians fighting each other and trying to split among themselves whatever remains and you find the population of the occupied territories trying to defend these territories with whatever limited resources are at its disposal.

On the evening of Tuesday, 21 September 1982, the first communique in the name of the Lebanese National Resistance was distributed to the information media in Beirut, declaring the resistance's operation carried out on Monday night against the Israeli concentrations in al-Sana'i' area of the Lebanese capital. The communique stressed that the struggle would continue until the occupiers were expelled. At 0730 on the following day, 22 September, an attack was carried out at Ayyub Station near Burj al-Murr, also in Beirut, with hand grenades and automatic weapons.

On the night of 22 September, an attack with (Energa) missiles was launched against the Israeli concentrations in front of the PLO headquarters at Corniche al-Mazra'ah.

On the afternoon of 24 September, a fighter approached an Israeli officer sitting with two of his colleagues at the Wimpy Cafe in al-Hamra' and fired his pistol, killing the officer and wounding his two colleagues, the first in the neck and the second in the chest.

After every operation, the papers emerged with a communique issued by the Lebanese National Resistance Front claiming credit for the operation and declaring the start of the course toward liberating Lebanon from the Israeli occupation.

The Lebanese National Resistance Front has been fighting Israel since that date. There have been hundreds of operations and tens of martyrs among the resistance fighters, there have been hundreds of killed, wounded and disabled among the invading Israelis and there have been thousands of detainees in Ansar Camp.

The war goes on between a regular occupation army and a resistance movement whose position, place, means and methods the enemy has not been able to uncover.

The war between the Israeli forces and the Resistance Front is real, considering that the number of Israelis killed has exceeded the number Israel lost during the 1967 and 1973 wars and even during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Will the resistance continue and will the war in the south go on raging?
Can the resistance oust Israel and has this resistance become a main political and military party in ousting Israel from the occupied territories?

What Is the Lebanese National Resistance Movement?

It is the will of a people to liberate the land and to regain dignity. It embodies true national unity because it includes all factions of the Lebanese people. The front is not a certain party, a certain organization or a certain formation. It is a moment and a place in Lebanon. Rather, it is a movement born of political parties and factions with diverse ideological tendencies and with different views and forms of organization. But they are in agreement on a specific point, namely defending the occupied Lebanese soil, repelling the dangers of occupation and ending this occupation.

The forces forming the Lebanese National Resistance Front are comprised of a number of parties with a nationalist tendency, religious movements and some Marxist parties. This is why we find that three currents dominate the ideological and organizational dimension of the Resistance Front: the religious current which includes organizations with a sectarian character, the pan-Arab [al-qawmi] current which is represented by a number of parties and individuals who adopt pan-Arabist thinking and the Marxist current.

This is in addition to young individuals and groups engaging spontaneously and individually in military operations, without any planning and without any coordination with the said front.

Through its war against Israel, this front has created around it a positive patriotic climate in the south, Western al-Biqa' and Rashayya and has become an all-embracing national phenomenon.

Two major factors move the front: the first is its name and the second is the popular rallying behind and support for the front, without sympathizers and supporters knowing what it is or what political line guides it. Consequently, the front carries out operations against the enemy out of a patriotic motive and in reaction to the acts of oppression and terror to which the inhabitants of the occupied territories are subjected by the Israelis. Subsequently, the operations are declared in the name of the Lebanese National Resistance Front-- a name now reiterated by everybody in Lebanon and the Arab world. Friendly committees provide material support and information for the front have now been formed.

Therefore, numerous questions have been asked regarding the front's reality and operational circumstances. Does it have a command? Who heads it? Where are its positions? Where and how does it move? Where does it get support? Is it supported by some countries? What will its relationship with the State of Lebanon be in the future? Who supports it and who rejects it? All these are questions on the minds of Lebanese, Arabs, Israelis, Europeans and Americans, because this phenomenon has begun to constitute an important turning point in the Lebanese crisis and the Israeli occupation. Consequently, this phenomenon is proceeding in a parallel line with the series of solutions projected for Lebanon generally and for the south in particular. There are those who demand that the state adopt and support this front and those who demand that it be rejected and fought against because it poses a danger to the possibility of establishing negotiations between Lebanon and Israel-- negotiations which they consider the only thing capable of ousting Israel from Lebanon.

But the National Resistance Front declares its existence by continuing to engage in daily operations against the Israelis and inflict further losses on them. In return, Israel retaliates against these operations at times by putting pressure on the inhabitants and by making mass arrests and at other times by engaging in acts of assassination and murder, of burning and destroying crops and of evicting anybody whose presence in the occupied territories is not desired by Israel. These evictions have reached such dimensions that

nearly 70 percent of the southern youth are now outside the south. Meanwhile, those remaining in the south must submit to the laws imposed by the occupation forces or join in underground action.

Abu Tariq Speaks

What about the National Resistance Front, who belongs to it and what does it want? The question has been raised at a local and an international level and the answers to it are not available because one of the most important elements in the success of this front is its secretive activity and careful organization, in addition to its complex organizational structure. But the importance of raising the issue has been a reason for following up on this issue and for reaching some symbols [leaders] in the front, despite their secretiveness, their high level of organization and their determination not to embroil the issue in media problems, requirements and consequences and to keep it in its current form.

There were successive contacts before we could get in touch with Abu Tariq, the political officer of the Lebanese National Resistance Front-Liberation Forces, and conduct the following interview with him:

[Question] How did you reach the name the Lebanese National Resistance Front?

[Abu Tariq] The nature of its beginning, the circumstances engulfing this start, the elements constituting the front and the front's fundamental objectives dictated the name. It is natural for an action directed against the likely enemy to be a resistance action in its nature and to have a national content because it seeks to liberate the land from occupation and to regain national sovereignty. Considering that resistance activity falls within a front's framework, this name is projected so that it may encompass all the resources employed within the context of confronting the occupation. We proceed in this regard on the basis that the multiplicity of parties opposing the Israeli occupation, with their different intellectual tendencies and inclinations, does not abolish the possibility of their common national agreement. We believe that the element of hostility toward the Zionist enemy is enough to constitute a mainstay for the creation of the front's alliance. Therefore, the compounded name of the front--a name compatible with the nature of the action, namely confronting the occupation--sums up in fact the objectives of this national liberationist activity. It has been selected from among several other names and titles and it has been decided to use the name the National Resistance Front-Liberation Forces because it is most compatible with the state of struggle in which the Lebanese masses have become enrolled.

[Question] What is the explanation for this phenomenon and what are the factors that have helped its emergence?

[Abu Tariq] The axiomatic explanation for this phenomenon is that it is a normal reaction to the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and to the enemy's occupation of parts of Lebanese territory. This is an experience waged by all peoples whose lands have been subjected to occupation. We, the Lebanese, cannot be the exception to this rule.

As for the factors that have helped this phenomenon emerge, they are due to a number of reasons:

First, the Israeli occupation of our land which has helped the birth of its antithesis. If there were no occupation, there would be no resistance, of course.

Second, the ability and speed characterizing the movement of the popular masses and of their national political forces in overcoming the shocking resulting from the occupation and in proceeding toward resistance action.

Third, the heritage of struggle amassed by the Lebanese masses generally and by the southern masses in particular and their awareness of the dimensions of the Zionist danger which is based on their awareness of the nature of the national and pan-Arab struggle against the Zionist enemy. This heritage of struggle has been a ready nucleus that has played a fundamental role in developing the popular situation in its entirety.

Fourth, the popular national awareness of what the Zionist danger embodies and the resistance's adoption of this awareness. This has led to bolstering the march of the armed popular struggle against the likely enemy. This is also what has made the resistance a vanguard that has performed the role of a protecting shield confronting the occupation.

Fifth, numerous forces with various intellectual starting points and national and popular figures have joined the confrontation battle. Though differing in their political positions, these forces and figures have met in the battle of avenging the national dignity and feeling. These springs have poured into a single channel, forming a sweeping current.

Sixth, the absence of official pan-Arab and national action capable of confronting the Israeli enemy who has relied on the blitzkrieg to occupy the Arab territories. Thus, the resistance has come to fill a gap in this regrettable Arab reality and to impose on the occupation forces a real war of attrition which they cannot endure for a long time.

[Question] What is the Lebanese National Resistance Front?

[Answer] The Lebanese National Resistance Front is the child of the labor undertaken by the south and the other territories trampled by the occupation and it is the living national expression of the Lebanese people's life in this fateful period Lebanon is going through.

The Lebanese National Resistance Front is the only healthy part of this ailing body that is being consumed by the sectarian borer and by denominational isolationism. Therefore, the front's political line is a line of fusing all the forces opposed to the occupation. These forces' program is founded on two accepted facts: efforts to liberate the land from occupation and a belief that the element of internal popular and political unification is a fundamental element in arousing the will for liberation to its optimum limits. Therefore, the front's political line is a line of liberation and unification

at the same time. In this context, the front is interested in organizing the available efforts and in employing all the resources available at the local and Arab levels to make the battle being waged against the Zionists an equal battle.

Moreover, the resistance's political line, as we understand it, is a fundamental line in its rejection of the occupation. This fundamental line dictates that resistance be decisive in rejecting all forms of settlement with the Zionist enemy. Therefore, the struggle that must be waged is a struggle that deals with all the aspects of life in Lebanon and that must take all the forms necessary.

We say that the resistance's political line is the element guiding all the forms of resistance, including military resistance. If military resistance is the most effective popular expressions, the other forms of resistance are no less important than the military resistance because the resistance with its various elements is nothing but the enactment of a political decision. The means of spurring the masses are one of the forms of resistance, and so is boycotting the enemy and refraining from dealing with him, rejecting normalization and confronting the enemy's agents. All these aspects complement each other. By integrating the elements of these forms of resistance, we will achieve the desired national end and will prevent the enemy from achieving his goals.

Front and State

[Question] How do you explain the demand by some circles in the government and outside it that the state adopt and support the resistance front?

[Abu Tariq] Demanding this of the government should not be confined to some circles because confronting the occupation is the responsibility of all Lebanese of all sects and political affiliations. Therefore, this demand represents faith at its weakest. What is surprising is not the demand that the state adopt the resistance but rather the ongoing argument concerning the resistance's role in liberating the land.

[Question] How do you envision the state's adoption and support?

[Answer] We must ask here the following question: how does the state view the occupation of vast parts of Lebanese territory? If it views this occupation as a violation of sovereignty and an attack against this sovereignty, then the state's national legitimacy is tied to the extent of its ability to lead a national plan to rescue the soil from the occupation's talons and to restore national sovereignty to the occupied territories. But if the state is incapable of leading such a plan, then does it consider an action confronting the occupation a legitimate action?

If it considers it a legitimate action, then it must provide it with the necessary care. But if it considers it illegal, then it will have abandoned the principle of national sovereignty over the land.

It is our view that for the state to possess national qualities, it must consider national resistance action against the occupier as legitimate action. If because of internal complexities the state refrains from adopting a frank and clear position toward adopting the resistance, then this refraining does not at all absolve the state of its responsibility.

It is our opinion that support by the state comes under various provisions which give the resistance a new dimension, making it the cause of all Lebanese, both inside and outside the government. In light of this official position, several consequences must be underlined:

First, liberation of the land is a task that is not assigned to the inhabitants of the occupied territories alone because the occupation is aimed against not just these territories but against the whole nation's future.

Second, the state's recognition of resistance action as legitimate action requires it to mobilize international efforts to support this resistance and to put all the state's institutions and agencies at the service of this objective.

Third, state support and state recognition of resistance action as legitimate action must encourage the state to put up with the consequences of the occupation and with the enemy's reaction to the intensifying resistance. The state responsibility in this regard is a dual responsibility, considering that it is responsible fundamentally for the citizens' security and responsible nationally for liberation of the land. Here, we say that the state has failed not only to make the decision recognizing resistance action as legitimate action. Its failure is also evident in the lack of a serious contribution on its part in tackling the consequences generated by the occupation in the wake of its escalating oppressive measures. Those whose crops are destroyed need immediate assistance and aid, those whose homes have been blown up need to have them rebuilt, those who are martyred need sustenance for their families and those who have been evicted and deported need to have the minimum requirements of life secured for them.

The state must also devote attention to facilitating the official procedures concerning the inhabitants of the occupied territories in the sphere of health and social services. We demand that the state adopt an official political decision recognizing the resistance as legitimate national activity and that the state employ this resistance as one of the elements of strength available to it to impose an unconditional withdrawal on the Israeli enemy.

Protection and Support

[Question] There is no doubt that the National Resistance Front is exposed to internal and external plots. How can the resistance be preserved, protected, assisted and helped to spread?

[Abu Tariq] Preservation of the resistance front comes through securing all the elements for its continuity and for developing its effectiveness so that it may achieve its goals. What is more important in this regard is not to let

the parties to the resistance fall into the snare of factionalism and sectarianism and not to have each party seek to portray itself as the sole party behind the front's activity because such an attempt would be tantamount to a falsification of the truth and a fall into the abyss. On the other hand, preserving and protecting the resistance require comprehensive national adoption of this resistance and pan-Arab support for it at all levels. In this respect, establishing a national fund for support of the resistance and for the steadfastness of our people in the occupied territories and pan-Arab financing for the resistance are among the top pan-Arab duties.

[Question] What about material support? Which are the circles that contribute to the material and moral support of the front?

[Abu Tariq] We would be revealing no secret when we say that material support is still confined to popular initiatives which, by their limited nature, are not enough to meet the essential requirements. As for the circles that give material and moral support to the front, they are the circles connected with the resistance action. Regarding moral support, it is still within the framework of political praise issuing from numerous forces and states that have not offered anything tangible yet.

Military Operations

[Question] Against whom are your operations aimed fundamentally? Can (they) go beyond the framework of the areas where there is an Israeli presence, and how?

[Abu Tariq] The operations are the implementation of a political decision. They are aimed fundamentally against the occupying enemy and those collaborating with him because whoever collaborates with the enemy is a traitor. By virtue of tying his destiny to the enemy's destiny, a collaborator is subjected to the same criteria to which the enemy is subjected. Insofar as we, the Lebanese National Resistance Movement, are concerned, the scope of our operations is confined to the areas occupied by the Zionist enemy. But this does not preclude our giving thought to dealing the enemy blows wherever we can. The future will answer this question.

[Question] What about military operations in the field?

[Abu Tariq] The Liberation Forces are one of the National Resistance Front's platoons which has embarked on military actions against the occupation forces since the occupiers' feet desecrated our soil. Our platoon has dealt its blows to the enemy in all the occupied territories and with all the available military means. We are working to develop these operations qualitatively and quantitatively. We announce these operations within the general information framework to insure the unity of the national effort and to reject factionalism on the one hand and because of security necessities on the other hand. But what we can announce in this regard is that the latest operation carried out by the Liberation Forces' strugglers, namely operation No 214, attacked the motorcade of former enemy minister of defense Sharon while he was passing through Sidon last March. The latest operations also include the explosive charge placed in the Israeli intelligence office in the city of Tyre last July.

[Question] What about the Israeli soldier? Out of your experience in fighting this soldier and in directing military operations against the occupation concentrations, how long can this soldier stay in Lebanon and do you think that these operations will ultimately liberate the south?

[Answer] Our confrontation against the enemy in the occupied Lebanese territories cannot be measured by the conventional military criteria applicable to confrontations between regular armies.

We do not deny that the enemy possesses strong points in its military position, considering the high technology put at the disposal of its forces. On the other hand, we put emphasis on creating psychological unrest among the enemy's ranks, on hampering the enemy's movements and on preventing his forces settling down in their positions, thus causing the enemy to be in a constant state of alert. The operations surprising the enemy's concentrations and the movements of his forces have begun to produce their initial results through the big losses suffered by the enemy forces and through reverberations in the Zionist enemy's internal situation, not to mention the ghost of constant fear pursuing the enemy soldiers wherever they go. We can say that our resistance has dropped the mythical halo with which the enemy surrounds himself. The fear generated by the national resistance's operations against the Israeli enemy has made this enemy view the Lebanese resistance fighter as a new kind of man. This fear has also made the enemy view his military machine as incapable of breaking the back of national and popular steadfastness.

As to how long the enemy can persist with his occupation, everybody knows that the enemy has ambitions on our land and our waters and that, consequently, it will not invade our country in order to withdraw from it voluntarily and that there has to be continuing resistance to make his continued occupation more costly to him than his withdrawal. This is why we say that we are proceeding on the path that ends the occupation of our land. We work on the basis of our convictions, nothing that the current balance of power cannot liberate the south under these circumstances. But the escalating and continuous resistance will keep the issue of the occupation of the south, Western al-Biqa' and Rashayya a live issue and this resistance will be the action on whose basis a more comprehensive national and pan-Arab action will be created. The balance of forces will then assume a new shape and the south, like the rest of the occupied Arab territories, will be liberated. Here, we would like to draw attention to the fact that the Zionist enemy and its agents are spreading rumors to the effect that the military operations striking the enemy forces and agents are tantamount to nothing more than sabotaging the interest of the southerners, that these operations are delaying the withdrawal from the occupied territories and, consequently, that they will not lead to liberating the land. We on our part assert that these rumors are intended to throw dust in our eyes and malicious attempt to influence the convictions of the Lebanese. In our estimate, these rumors will not find fertile soil on which to grow.

Demographic and Geographic Change

[Question] It is said that most of the detainees in Ansar and in other Israeli prisons have been arrested in retaliation for the daring operations directed against the Israeli army and that the Israelis are consequently

engaging in acts of suppression, terrorization and eviction against the inhabitants and the villages with the aim of arousing popular wrath against the national resistance. Has Israel succeeded in this and has the popularity of the resistance front been affected by these measures among the population of the occupied territories?

[Abu Tariq] The statement that Israel has escalated its brutal acts of oppression against our kinsmen in the occupied territories in order to suppress our people's uprising is probably true in part. But the other part is that Israel has a clear scheme against the population and that Israel is working to create a demographic and geographic change. Therefore, under the pretext of retaliation for the resistance operations, Israel is devoting the south of its inhabitants to make it easy for itself to contain and devour it in the future. We will be revealing no secret if we say that the measures to which our kinsmen in the south are subjected, beginning with the economic blockade and ending with the arrests, liquidations and deportations, have a relative impact on our kinsmen's steadfastness. But this steadfastness has not been shaken yet. The proof is that the operations have escalated simultaneously with the occupation forces' escalation of their oppressive measures. For fear that the negative effects of this oppression may escalate, the answer must come through creating in Lebanon the climate necessary to insure the resistance's national action so that the inhabitants of all the occupied territories may feel that they are not alone in the honorable national battle they are waging against a settlement-oriented and expansionist enemy.

[Question] How is coordination established among the parties to the National Resistance Front?

[Abu Tariq] Let us keep this confidential because the single objective is the coordinator among the parties and because the central political line of the forces opposed to the occupation is crystallized in operations whenever the need arises.

Hazim Speaks

From Abu Tariq, we proceeded to Hazim, one of the cadres of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, and had the following interview with him:

[Question] How did you reach the name the Lebanese National Resistance Front?

[Hazim] The idea of forming a front to resist the Zionist occupation dates back to the time of the Beirut blockade, specifically to the end of June 1982. At that time, the Palestinian resistance's departure from Lebanon became certain because Yasir 'Arafat delivered his written letter, dated 3 June 1982, which included the PLO leadership's agreement to leave Lebanon and which noted 'Arafat's talks with al-Wazzan and Philip Habib and their agreement on the issue.

We felt at the time that the departure of the armed Palestinian resistance from Lebanon threw on our shoulders the task of fighting the occupation, relying on all the citizens opposed to the occupation and proceeding on the basis of the sense of national responsibility and of the void resulting

from the departure of the Palestinians fighting the occupation. Negotiations were held among three Lebanese leftist parties throughout the period of the blockade. Those negotiations ended with the Lebanese National Resistance Front formula after two other formulas, namely the Lebanese Liberation Organization and the Lebanese Popular Resistance Front, had been discussed. We found that the nature of the circumstances did not permit us to adopt either of these two formulas because both entailed carrying arms against the Lebanese government as a reactionary and fascist government at a time when our goal was confined to resisting the occupation. This is why we disregarded the two other formulas, because they reduced the size of the resistance against the Israeli occupation--an occupation that arouses the feeling of not only the popular masses and their progressive and national forces but also arouses the national and religious heritage and that affects the interests of the bourgeoisie and of some landowners. Out of their desire to formulate a general policy to fight the Israeli occupation and to mobilize the broadcast forces, the three parties agreed on the Lebanese National Resistance Front rather than the Lebanese Popular Resistance Front or the Lebanese Liberation Organization formulas. The decision made by the front's political and military commands was to announce the front on 22 September 1982 with qualitative operations so that the course of national resistance to the occupation would emerge on the day Bashir al-Jumayyil assumed his duties as president of the republic. But Bashir al-Jumayyil's assassination on the evening of 14 September and Israel's invasion of Beirut on the morning of 15 September motivated the general secretaries of two of the parties founding the front to issue statements in their personal names calling for the creation of the front according to the formula agreed upon. The political bureau of the third party issued a communique supporting their call and asserting its commitment to it. You can check the newspapers of 16 and 17 September 1982 to read the two statements and the communique.

These founding parties started to issue communiqués on the resistance operations against the Zionists under the name of the LNRF [Lebanese National Resistance Front]. Since then, the front's name has become a general tendency under which all the resistance forces opposing the occupation can enroll. (Actual) resistance activity has gone beyond the framework of the three parties founding the front. But the formula has continued to be the general form of the resistance and all the other formulas have failed to surpass or overwhelm this formula.

This is how we reached this name and how we announced this formula, coupled with resistance action as of 15 September 1982. Any other claim regarding the formation of the front is no more than the pursuit of a formula which took 3 months to develop--3 months of discussion, preparation and anti-occupation actions from the beginning of June until the LNRF was declared. Needless to say, the revelation of this historical fact does not undermine the right of the other forces to contribute to fighting the occupation under the same formula.

[Question] What is the explanation to this phenomenon and what are the factors that have helped its emergence?

[Hazim] First, the Israeli occupation of Lebanon; second, the PLO leadership's decision on the departure of the armed Palestinian resistance from Lebanon; third, our national feeling of the duty to defend the sanctity of the homeland and to fight the Zionist occupation desecrating it; fourth, our struggle experience during the civil war and during the 3 months preceding the formation of the front, which convinced us of the need to combine our fighting forces and to mobilize our resources against the occupying invaders; fifth, the masses' decision against the occupiers--a decision free of the distortions caused by the negative actions of some of the Palestinian resistance factions--which encouraged us to include the role of the Palestinian masses and their unity of struggle with the Lebanese masses in our awareness and our calculations regarding the need to unite the forces opposed to the occupation; and, sixth, the legacy of the rich experience of the presence of the Palestinian fighters in Lebanon and the Syrian stance of opposition to Israel and to fascism were, of course, factors contributing to the formation of the front. These are the most important factors helping the emergence of the LNRF and its becoming a general way of fighting the occupation. We were dreaming and our dream has come true in the broadest manner. The soundness of our foresight was confirmed at a time when many of the forces that were considered pro-national forces were vacillating under the weight of the occupation between fighting the occupiers and fleeing the arena. They vacillated in such a way that they lost the ability to think along sound national lines and encouraged some of their cadres to deal with the occupiers! As for the explanation regarding the phenomenon of the Lebanese national resistance which includes all the Lebanese and Palestinian masses and forces, it is evident in the deep love our masses have for their homeland and in their readiness to defend it and to protect its sanctity and independence. It is a natural phenomenon that not only indicates the genuine character of our people but also shows how stupid were those who planned for the fifth war when they thought that they could intimidate our people and subject them to occupation just by deploying their forces. Truly, "you propose and the fates laugh."

[Question] What is the Lebanese National Resistance Front and what does it aspire to? What is its political and military line?

[Hazim] The Lebanese National Resistance Front is the general tendency of the struggle to fight the Zionist occupation of the Lebanese homeland. As for its aspirations, they are confined to liberating the homeland and expelling the Israelis, relying on the people's will. Its name--national resistance--makes evident its political line which makes armed violence an extension of its policy by other means. Its actions--armed struggle--and its methods and means of action make it obvious that its military line is devoted to fighting the Israelis and draining their forces so that they may be forced to flee Lebanese territory, all of Lebanon's territory.

[Question] How do you interpret the demand by some parties inside and outside the government that the state adopt and support the resistance front?

[Hazim] The phenomenon of demanding that the State of Lebanon adopt the Lebanese National Resistance Front is not new. A number of parties and forces proposed this to President Amin al-Jumayyil when they called him Muhammad Amin. But they failed.

The current demand is somewhat different. Some parties from outside the government that propose adoption of the National Resistance Front are motivated by their past dreams to be accepted by the government as partners of the regime, with the hope of gaining firm official recognition as a national side opposed to the reactionary men of the regime and of moving a step closer toward the objective and purpose of being a partner in the riches and spoils enjoyed by the partners in the backward and reactionary regime and a partner in the relations of subservience and civil wars at the expense of the lives and livelihood of the people and at the expense of the dignity of man, who has come to represent in the regime of the omnipotent and of the murders the cheapest commodity in the market of theft, lackeyhood, exploitation and greed. As for some of the government circles demanding adoption of the National Resistance Front, they are dreaming of accomplishing the impossible, that is, if they are serious in their demand. But if their purpose is to justify their participation in the government before the citizens, then their demand will be prolonged and repeated futilely until they return to their popular positions at such a time when obsolescence will have insured that the demand is neglected and buried the way the first demand has been buried.

[Question] How do you envision the state's adoption and support?

[Hazim] It is said that President Hafiz al-Asad rejected a proposal by U.S. Ambassador Rumsfeld calling for the formation of a "national" union government in accordance with the 17 May accord and the multinational forces. Upon Rumsfeld's insistence on the requirement that the Syrian leadership examine his proposal seriously in its capacity as a solver of the crisis gripping everybody's throat, President al-Asad answered that such a government would be futile as long as the 17 May accord continued to be recognized because with the presence of the accord, the government would be split into two factions: one with Israel and the other with Syria.

The accord was abolished and the National Union Party has been formed. Accordingly, the demand to the state is renewed on the grounds that it is a single party now. But the reality of this government says that it is not so. This is why we do not think the State of Lebanon is capable of adopting the National Resistance Front. Regardless of how much the pressures on the State of Lebanon escalate, this state which contains a major faction which has historical relations and relations of interest with Israel cannot adopt the front. The most it can do is to allocate some funds to be spent "here and there" and to engage in a propaganda campaign that offers a false image of the state but offers nothing serious for the south, Western al-Biqa', Rashayya or the national resistance.

The ability of the State of Lebanon does not go beyond that of taking a stance of opposition to the occupation and of asking the international lobbies to exert pressure on Israel to withdraw. But if the state wants to go beyond these limits, then it must first present half of its members to the courts to be convicted of the crime of inviting the occupation and of supporting it with regular forces until this very moment. Isn't Lahd one of the officers who is considered a supporter of this half of the government?

Plots

[Question] There is no doubt that the resistance front is subjected to internal and external plots. How can it be preserved, protected, supported and helped to spread?

[Hazim] Since its creation, the Lebanese National Resistance Front has been exposed to plots. Yet, it has continued to be the only formula imposed on all those opposed to the occupation. We are confident that this formula, within whose framework all the Lebanese and Palestinian fighting forces are now enrolled and to which they are committed, will continue to be stronger than the plots. The secret behind this is made evident by the fact that the front has been and will continue to be impregnable internally. When it is impregnable internally, then all the external plots will hit this wall of impregnability and will be smashed on the rock of the impossibility of plotting from within. If it seems as if we are talking in incomprehensible riddles, then it is in this respect that the front's strength and impregnability lie. For sabotage to be able to defeat the front's actions, it has to succeed first in breaking up the front's structure, in creating divisions within this structure and in disuniting it. Unless plotting can break up those who are united and erase the formula of their unity, it will continue to turn in a vicious circle. This is the case with the plotting against the resistance front. Plotting, regardless of its dimensions, is incapable of succeeding in foiling and undercutting the front.

The secret behind this is simple. The front has no organizational structure through which the plotting may penetrate and bore into its body. Even the two political and military commands formed by the three parties initiating the front formula and mapping out the front's general course and direction are no longer the only two authorities deciding the front's actions. Since the front became a general framework for all those opposed to the occupation a long time ago, this front has not been subject to a particular command. Rather, each side has become an independent and secret political and military command for its own actions. This is why you find that the front has become a formula for numerous and diverse ideological and political affiliations bound by nothing more than the national commitment against the occupation. It is within this general framework that the fighters of this or that side meet to carry out joint actions at the same time when each side is carrying out its own operations. The joint action has its reasons, causes and motives which do not include ideological or political unity but rather the need for explosives or certain types of weapons or elements. Therefore, the joint operations carried out by some of the sides committed to the front formula do not mean a commitment or a restriction against cooperation or joint actions with other sides. This is unlike the case of front's action as defined by an internal program and constitution. For example, we cooperate in some operations with Amal Movement's fighters, with Hizaballah, with the uprising's fighters and a number of other new resistance factions. We also cooperate with our comrades in the basic forces, disregarding the political or ideological differences which we do not permit to influence the fighter's movement and their ability to carry on with their actions. The issue of the national resistance has gone beyond its initial stages, and plotting is no longer capable of undermining it. We had feared for the resistance because of exploitation and opportunism but these elements have failed and any attempt to sabotage

the armed national struggle will fail. We are completely convinced that it is impossible for plotting to succeed. We are not a PLO and we do not have an Abu 'Ammar among us to hold the bottleneck and to plot against the cause. As for Israel and its lackeys, they are incapable of destroying the front for the very important reason that they are incorporated in regular armies whose movement is exposed whereas the front consists of numerous forces whose movement is confidential and unknown. This keeps the initiative and the offensive in our hands at all times. If one side is incapable or tired for any reason, the other sides continue their struggle. This is why Israel and its lackeys will not be able to do more than they have done, and all they have done so far is characterized most obviously but utter failure.

The national resistance is not one party but is rather a formula of action. By the way, this is an unprecedented phenomenon and we can consider it one of the virtues of the special characteristic of the Lebanese arena. Armed struggle requires unity of military command whereas the situation in Lebanon underlines the presence of numerous commands. Therefore, the plotting, should it occur, will be against the resistance's exposed parties that exploit the blood of the martyrs to collect donations. The arm of sabotage is much too short to reach the effective popular sides. As to how to preserve, protect, support and help the resistance spread, this is done with greater and ceaseless armed resistance which is the most beneficial and effective means to persuade our people to support our combat groups and patrols with men and money. A single contribution campaign in any part of Lebanon is capable of perpetuating our actions for many days. As long as our expenses are confined to combat and do not involve offices, aides, cars, guards, trips to Paris and the United States and entertainment evenings that require enormous expenditures and as long as our activity is confidential and free of exploitation and opportunism, the continuation of armed resistance is capable of persuading our people's sons to rally behind us and to help us with personal weapons, explosives, bread and olives. All these expenses can be met with the costs of the travel, trips, entertainment evenings and housing of one of those leaders who know nothing about resistance action other than verbal prattle and press statements.

No Support

[Question] What about material support and about the circles that contribute to the material and moral support of the front?

[Hazim] We are not aware of any front giving us material support. All that can be said in this regard should be addressed to those who exploit the name of the national resistance. We have received support from nobody, except for 1,500 Kuwaiti dinars from the Kuwaiti committee for supporting the national resistance and from our allies and comrades who are the revolutionary forces with whom we participate in the fight on the ground. We know no other supporting circles and we have not received support from anybody, perhaps because we are afraid to fall into the dangers of the policy of "whoever pays directs." We do not want anybody to direct us. The only thing we want to direct us is our faith in the homeland and our conviction in the need to defend it.

[Question] Against whom are your operations fundamentally aimed and can these operations go beyond the limits of the Israeli occupation areas?

[Hazim] Our combat action is aimed fundamentally against the Israeli invaders. We have not given any thought so far to moving it beyond the Israeli occupation areas. The Israelis and their lackeys in these areas are the targets against whom we aim the muzzles of our rifles. We are not sectarian and we fight sectarianism and resist sectarian actions. If we are forced to fight with the "national forces" we will not forget to exert our utmost efforts to deter sectarian actions. We are well known for our revolutionary course and our progressive commitment which is founded on a clear basis that makes a distinction and our progressive commitment which is founded on a clear basis that makes a distinction between the people--regardless of religion, color or race--and their enemies. We are with the people and with the workers, the peasants and all the toilers and against their capitalist enemies, especially the big and greedy merchants and landlords. We support women's liberation and full equality with men and against the persecutors of women and against the shackles that bind women, regardless of whether they are religious or social. We do not punish one man for the sin of another as the sectarians do. Every man is responsible for his acts and has his rights and his duties.

Examples

[Question] Can you tell us about some national resistance operations and about how the resistance has confronted the occupier?

[Hazim] The examples are numerous but we cannot reveal them because we still need the methods followed in implementing the major part of these operations. For example, the method followed in the operation in which the headquarters of the Israeli governor in Tyre were blown up is still not fully known to the Israelis. I think that you noticed their confusion over the issue of the vehicle which crashed into the headquarters even though the headquarters were blown up from within.

Therefore, we will be content with some simple examples that have become primitive insofar as our methods of operation are concerned or with examples which have become a reality which the Israelis are incapable of changing.

First, we have noticed from our practical experience that the Israeli position we attack does not return the fire in most cases but contacts other positions to return the fire. Therefore, we have had enough time to attack the Israeli positions and to change our positions before they could retaliate. As a result of the large number of operations, the Israelis have been hit with such a wave of fear that they have hastened and continue to hasten to take cover, opening fire indiscriminately just because fire is opened at them. This has forced them to strengthen their fortifications. But instead of bringing them security and reassurance, these fortifications have turned into a frightening ghost for all the Israeli soldiers hiding behind them. This fear was created when the national resistance fighters were able to penetrate their barriers and attack them in their very hiding places.

Second, the Israelis have spread the news that they will implement the military security system they have implemented successfully in Gaza. This system is tantamount to Israeli patrols roaming the streets and supplied with electronic equipment capable of detecting weapons. When implemented in South Lebanon, this system created some fear. But the fighters have been able to overcome this problem by placing a damaged rocket launcher near a main street and then proceeding to plough a nearby orchard. When they became certain that the Israeli patrols were unable to detect it, the fighters proceeded to lay an ambush and showered the Israelis with B-7 rockets and medium and light PKS machine gun fire. This perplexed the Israelis who were forced to pull out orchard trees for a distance of 50 meters on both sides of the street. They thus caused grave damage to the owners, who united against the Israelis.

The exaggeration of the Israeli media regarding the efficiency of Israeli security methods created among the Israelis a sense of unrealistic confidence at the outset. The penetration of these means has completely shaken this confidence, causing the Israeli soldier to lose his self-confidence to the degree that he often opens fire at any movement in his direction. So that this knowledge may not seem as if it were the result of our struggle alone, we must admit that we went to the Western Sahara and studied closely there the means and methods with which they [presumably POLISARIO] confront the Moroccan forces and the very sophisticated technology supplied to these forces by the United States and we emerged with a very important lesson to the effect that inasmuch as excessive fortifications give the soldiers hiding behind them a sense of security and reassurance, the penetration of such fortifications creates among the soldiers such a state of frustration and inferiority that they lose their morale and their enemy becomes greatly frightening to them. We must also admit that the quality of the operations carried out by the heroes of the Islamic Jihad Organization has played a major role in helping us create a state of fear and panic among the Israelis.

Third, we used the electricity supplied by the state powerlines extended along the public roads to detonate the explosive charges planted by the fighters until we received modern detonation equipment. We have been using and we continue to use battery cells for the same purpose. Not all our operations have been purely military but have also sought to achieve political objectives by seeking to create tension among the masses and to spur them against the occupiers whenever an arrest campaign or acts of indiscriminate arrests are carried out by the occupiers. We have avoided and continue to avoid dwelling on the pursuit, arrests, torture and oppression to which we are exposed. We rather fuse all these into the popular situation. As for Israel, the more it resorts to its means of oppression, the more determined it makes us. By the way, the Israelis are aware that Lahl's army and its likes cannot stand in our face. You can realize this fact from the statements of the Israelis themselves. We have concluded from the Israelis' recent statements that they are exaggerating and magnifying the strength of their lackeys so that they may justify their escape. Imagine that they are proud and boastful of Lahl's army because it is 2,000 strong! Whether it is 2,000 or 3,000 or 4,000 strong, this army will not be any more fortunate than the Zionist army which, as a result of defeating the Arab armies, was said to be invincible. Why is it running away now if it is truly invincible?

The Israelis have experienced what the Lebanese government's army experienced when it poured its fire on Beirut and the mountain with the purpose of intimidating them. The result was that the people, including women, carried arms in the face of this army.

The main problem or difficulty is that of transporting weapons, especially explosives and missiles, into the occupied territories. I believe that Israel's success in complicating the weapons problem is limited. Most of the time we get the weapons from the Israeli army itself in return for hashish. Moreover, a large number of the weapons discovered or seized by the Israeli soldiers returns to the hands of the national fighters. We face problems but it is possible to surmount them. We have been able to carry out an operation with Grad missiles in a very primitive and simple way against the Metula settlement in occupied Palestine.

[Question] What about the Israeli enemy, judging by your experience in fighting him and aiming operations against his concentrations and patrols? When will it be able to carry on with the confrontation and do you believe that these operations will ultimately oust him from the south?

[Hazim] The basic law governing the popular war is embodied in the fact that it relies on the element of time. This is why it has been described as a long-drawn-out and a long-range war. The passage of time gives the continuation of such a war an element of confusion and attrition and makes it a drain on the enemy. A continued war against the enemy cannot be achieved unless the element of secrecy is present in the main part of this war. Thanks to such secrecy, the initiative remains in the hands of the fighters. With the passage of time, a sense of confidence develops among the fighters by virtue of increased experience and increased knowledge of the dimensions, limits and consequences of the enemy's reactions. With time and with repeated effective operations against the enemy soldiers who are exposed and unable to protect themselves totally and completely, there develops a sense of fear among the enemy and those collaborating with him. If he moves, the enemy is afraid and if he stands at a roadblock or in his position he is afraid because he expects an attack that may end his life. For example, the Israelis comb some forest areas surrounding their positions every evening, and sometimes in the morning and in clear daylight. They set up imaginary ambush positions containing nothing other than searchlights at a certain distance from their positions to mislead the national resistance fighters into believing that they are present.

The repeated operations have generated considerable frustration among the Zionist soldiers and have caused them to act indiscriminately, either in the way they direct their fire or in the way they react. We have become confident that continuation of the resistance operations is capable of forcing them to flee Lebanon. I believe that you notice with us that the Israelis have returned empty-handed from their fifth war, considering that they have lost all the results they achieved in 1982. It has become evident that they accomplished whatever they accomplished, first, through the collusion of 'Arafat's leadership and the Lebanese Front with them and, second, through the intense firepower they employed during the war. It is well known that these two elements

are transient and temporary. The collusion has been largely defeated and the use of intensive firepower has become a negative element acting against the Israelis because the side at which the fire has to be directed is invisible. If the Israelis open fire, they open it against ghosts because the resistance fighters are not regular armies or military barracks on which they can rain their fire.

It thus becomes evident that the element of time is not in their interest. The continued resistance has turned, first, into an element of demoralization among their troops and, second, into a factor in worsening their general crisis and in exposing their inability to deter and to put an end to their attrition, as well as into a factor putting pressure on them to reconsider their calculations. The only logical conclusion reached by their calculations is to flee Lebanon and to cling to means other than occupation.

Where Are Results of Oppression?

[Question] It is said that most of the fighters in the Ansar detention camp and in other Israeli prisons have been arrested in retaliation for the daring operations aimed against them and that, consequently, the Israelis resort to engaging in oppression and terrorization against the population and the resistance forces with the aim of instigating hatred against the national resistance fighters. Has Israel succeeded in this so far and has the popularity of the national resistance in the occupied territories been affected by these measures?

[Hazim] That the Israelis are arresting people in retaliation for these operations is a tangible fact. But this will not at all achieve for them their objective. On the contrary, with this action they instigate hatred against themselves and even further intensify the isolation of their lackeys. They may succeed, and they have actually succeeded, in arousing a feeling, but not a hatred of the feeling of fear. Some cowards have tried to use fear as a means to advise that the resistance against Israel be eased. But what has the result been?

We do not want to reveal more things that may not seem tangible. But we refer you to the qualitative operations carried out by men who believe in their God and their homeland. Martyr Bilal Fahs, martyr Raghieb Harb and others like them are not leftists nor were they motivated by communist ideology. What are the results achieved by Israel's actions and oppression? Can you not see that the Ansar detention camp has turned into such a struggle school that entering this camp has become a medal of bravery and an act of self-confidence and of confidence in the cause.

[Question] How is coordination established between the resistance front's parties?

[Hazim] There is no coordination at the level of the leaderships and all that is said by the spokesmen and the leaders in this regard are allegations unrelated to the reality. Were there real coordination, the south and the other occupied areas would have been turned into a hell burning the Israelis. But at the level of dealing with the Israelis, there is coordination among

the field commands, as we have already noted. We believe that the present national leaderships can achieve no more than propaganda support for the formula. As for coordination, the first to violate it are those leaderships that turn the martyrs' blood into a business. It is worth noting that the relationship of some leaders with the national resistance does not go beyond the limits of words.

Our slogan has constantly been: "And say work and the masses will see your work and history will judge for or against you."

Ra'd Speaks

The other contact was with Ra'd, another official of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, with whom we had the following interview:

[Question] How did you reach the name the Lebanese National Resistance Front?

[Ra'd] The national press deserves the biggest credit in this respect. During the Beirut blockade and the subsequent consequences which threatened to sweep Lebanon in its entirety, a group of youths pained by the previous phase which led to the invasion banded together. That phase had to be followed by a new phase in the wake of the failure of the structure of the military resistance fighting the occupation to stand fast because this resistance had turned into a regular army facing another regular army. It was natural for the stronger to win, and Israel was of course the stronger. The Palestinian resistance and the Joint Forces turned into a regular army with tanks and military equipment that became an obvious target for aircraft and for warships whereas the experiment of guerrilla warfare was weak and limited to the framework of street fighting. A new method had to be used to fight the occupying enemy. This motivated us to coexist and to adapt to and learn the secrets of explosives. A band of youths constituting the first nucleus proceeded to search for elements with adequate experience in this field and elements harboring the national and revolutionary feeling which has motivated us to proceed on this path.

After the political settlements and in the wake of the Sabra and Shatila massacres, we began to form groups and moved to the south. As a start, we carried out a number of organized operations, such as the Wimpay, al-Sana'i' and 'A'ishah al-Bakkar operations and other operations in the suburbs of Beirut, in al-Shuwayfat and in al-Hadath. We then started to meet with other groups which had explosives and which were operating without any partisan or central decision and we launched our operations against the enemy. The press began to make references to the "national resistance" or the "Lebanese resistance." This led to a call for a plenary meeting of the cadres of the active groups. A meeting was held, the broad lines were mapped out and the Lebanese National Resistance Front was born.

At the political level, all the existing theories and structures, beginning with the National Movement and ending with the Joint Forces, were dropped because there had to be a method of action totally different from the formula prevalent until then, especially since the struggle in Lebanon had taken

the form of the mercenary actions for allocations and salaries. We had to re-create the right man. We have considered this phase a phase of national liberation solely, regardless of creed, principle and religious faith, especially since there are in our ranks numerous patriotic Christians who have had a prominent role in our actions.

As for military actions, there has been agreement on form and method. Since the groups were organized with high precision, the form of confidential organization has prevailed among them, meaning that the elements do not know each other. There is only a command that coordinates between these groups and that divides the action among the elements and the individuals.

Regarding the economic aspect, Israel's objective is to subjugate the southerner by inundating him with electrical appliances and luxuries at low prices so as to tempt him to spend all his money and force him to resort to Israel when he needs money to support his family. Thus, we launched an information campaign to alert the people in the south to the Israeli schemes that seek to impoverish the south and to bring it to a state of utter destitution so that it may exploit it for its plans or to evict the southerners from the south in search of a livelihood.

[Question] What is the southerner's relationship with the front?

[Ra'd] No revolution can succeed if it does not rely on firm ground. The firm ground is the people. We would like to mention this example on the occasion. In an operation in Wadi al-Zinah, the Israelis were certain that one of the attacking resistance elements was wounded. But they did not find the man because his comrades were able to get him to Beirut with the support of the area's inhabitants.

Through our experiences with and our study of the enemy, we have followed a new method with him. We have planted ears and eyes from the resistance in the Israeli enemy's formations. This has helped us change our methods constantly so that the enemy may not be able to discover the resistance's method. Here also it is worth noting that one of the resistance elements was martyred while carrying in his pocket a card of membership in the Free Lebanon Army.

National Parties

[Question] What is the relationship of the national parties with the front?

[Ra'd] The national parties are present in the front because most of the elements forming the resistance front belong fundamentally to the group of national parties.

[Question] It is said that after the formation of the National Resistance Front, a code of honor was drawn up by the national parties stipulating that each organization or party carry out its operations in the name of the National Resistance Front and that no organization announce an operation it has not carried out. How true is this?

[Ra'd] We wish a code of honor were drawn up to coordinate the military actions of the groups because such a code is likely to make a military action against the Israeli enemy a highly efficient action. Moreover, such a code will help organize the collection of financial donations.

[Question] How do you interpret the demand by some circles inside and outside the government calling for adoption and support of the front?

[Ra'd] We are for any step that supports this idea. The state can set up a national fund to insure an honorable life for the families of the martyred and of the captured and also to protect the southern economy. For some time now, Israel has resorted to burning vast areas of crops and to uprooting olive and banana trees and many farmers and peasants have been made homeless. Many families have also been made homeless as a result of the destruction inflicted on the villages and small towns. There are also the problems emanating from the closing of roads. The cost of shipping a truckload from the south to Beirut and vice versa has reached nearly 25,000 Lebanese pounds as a result of the hardships and of the nights spent at the crossing points. In the past, the cost did not exceed 500 Lebanese pounds.

Therefore, a national fund whose task is to protect the south's production and to insure the sale of southern goods in the internal markets at cost after the fund itself purchases them and then sells them is tantamount to supporting the southern economy. The state can also secure housing for the evacuees and hospitals and clinics in the south, can show interest in the southern civil servant and can accord him special treatment, not suspend his salary, as it has done with a number of teachers detained in Ansar camp.

First Spark

[Question] There is no doubt that the National Resistance Front is subjected to internal and external plots. How can the front be preserved, protected, supported and helped to spread?

[Ra'd] At the beginning, we considered ourselves a microbe or a contagion whenever we approached a "national" partisan circle. We believed that the conditions were moving toward negotiations and then toward a peace treaty with Israel. When the 17 May accord was concluded and then abolished, we knew that numerous factions would adopt this action. Abolition of the 17 May accord was tantamount to an absolution for this action.

For us, it was important that we not embark on acts of vituperation, regardless of what happens, in order that we may preserve this process and not drop to the level of what happened in the Palestinian resistance when the various organizations rushed to claim credit for operations against the Israeli enemy--a rush which caused a single operation to be claimed by several organizations whenever an "Israeli soldier stumbled."

What is important to us is that the actions in the south continue. The multiplicity of operations against the Israeli enemy is not what is important because our role as a national resistance movement is to touch off the first

spark in awakening the homeland's conscience in order to achieve a popular war and because the ultimate goal is to transform this spark into a popular army whose national decision is a central decision for the full liberation of the soil. This is why we, as a national resistance movement, do not claim that we can destroy the Israeli enemy. We are the resistance spark which must exist or the bridge across which the country must move in the direction of liberation.

[Question] What about material support and what are the circles that contribute to material and moral support of the front?

[Answer] In addition to the national fund to which we have already referred, there are numerous bodies that have begun to collect donations. In this regard, we ourselves are also entitled to do the same. But this collection will be from the Lebanese citizen who has suffered the worst in terms of homelessness, destruction, viction and unemployment. For example, some organizations have collected donations in al-Silm Quarter of the southern suburb on the pretext of support for the national resistance in the south. Whenever the citizen has heard the name of the national resistance, he has donated half of whatever he has without being aware that he is embarking on such an act. This is done spontaneously by the citizens. But the citizen needs these sums of money more than others because he is ultimately the one who needs the support so that he may be the firm base for the National Resistance Front.

We believe that the actions in the south are the national responsibility of every Lebanese as they are the responsibility of every Arab because the conflict with Israel is a cultural conflict and not a conflict over borders and because the south generally is waging a real war against Israel. We are the first line of defense for this area. With the fall of the south, the entire area will fall.

This is why a decision has been made to open a secret bank account. This depends on setting up the national (or pan-Arab) fund or on attaining a code of honor that establishes a unified collection for all the factions. Therefore we are giving out this number which we consider directed at the outside and not for Lebanon and with which every expatriate Lebanese and every Arab aware of his responsibility is concerned. The number is 05-00-317-806, Mabeo Bank, Middle East Banking Company.

[Question] Through your experience in fighting the Israeli enemy and in directing military operations against his concentrations, what about this enemy and how long will he be able to maintain his occupation? Do you think that these operations will ultimately liberate the south?

[Ra'd] We know that the Israeli enemy is waging a war in which it is suffering the worst. For the first time in Israel's history, there are officers and soldiers who refuse to fight in the south as a result of the operations. This is because at the outset the enemy considered this war like any other war waged by Israel against the Arabs. The emergence in Israel of movements that call for peace and withdrawal, such as the Peace Now movement, Israel's

economic situation that is worsening day after day on the one hand and the escalating operations of the National Resistance Front on the other hand are further rallying the people behind this front. We believe that it is Israel's intention to withdraw. But it will experience a political crisis if it withdraws without any political gain. This means that the countdown in the Israeli entity has begun. This is why this entity is desperately trying to make any political gain. The resistance's military operations have come to constitute an important political party in the Lebanese-Israeli crisis because they have become a heavy burden to Israel and an important element in reducing the severity of the Israeli condition concerning withdrawal in return for political gains.

Scorched Earth

[Question] It is said that most of the detainees in Ansar and in other Israeli prisons have been arrested in retaliation for the daring operations carried out against the enemy and that the Israelis are, consequently, engaging in acts of oppression, terrorization and eviction against the inhabitants so as to arouse popular hatred against the national resistance. Has Israel succeeded in this and has the popularity of the resistance front in the occupied territories been affected by these measures?

[Ra'd] The hatred against Israel is intensifying, not vice versa. The resistance fighters do not have the choice of delaying the resistance against Israel because of any other interest. If Israel clings to the southland, then let this land be scorched. On the other hand, if Israel can actually evict the inhabitants of the south before the birth of central national decisionmaking which will put an end to the National Resistance Front then we will be a people unworthy of living. There is no other scientific interpretation for this phenomenon because all the other interpretations of this projection, should it occur and keeping in mind that it is incompatible with the logic of history, mean dropping the theory of the Lebanese resistance which is our fate and not our choice.

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