

Interview

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Georges

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Ibrahim

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Abdallah

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Cover image: 13th Anniversary of the Palestinian
Revolution, Ahmed Al Nahal, Emile Menhem, 1978,
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with whatever weapons at hand



Editors' Note: This interview with Georges Ibrahim Abdallah was conducted in Lebanon in early January 2026 by the editors of Material. At that time, the country's political situation was still largely shaped by the aftermath of the 2024 Israeli invasion and the fall of Bashar al-Assad in Syria to the north. In March 2026, the resumption of hostilities between the Zionist entity and the Lebanese Resistance following the outbreak of a second Israeli invasion in South Lebanon and the unilateral attack by US-Israeli imperialism against Iran has created a very different reality—that of open armed conflict. Nevertheless, most of the issues raised by Georges Abdallah in this interview remain relevant and important. We therefore hope that despite the significant changes that have occurred, this document will enable our readers to gain a better understanding of the overall historical situation in Lebanon, Palestine, the Arab world, and the anti-imperialist Resistance in the region.

Material: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. We have a series of questions for you, both about your experience as a political prisoner and your views on the situation here in Lebanon as well as Palestine.

As the readership of our journal is mainly English-speaking and has not been very exposed to your case, we would like to ask you to start by briefly introducing yourself.

Georges Ibrahim Abdallah (GLA): I am a Lebanese Arab and Palestinian activist, born out of the Palestinian and Lebanese revolutionary experience. The Lebanese and Palestinian revolutionary movements share a long history. One could say that they began with the advent of the modern Palestinian resistance, which started after the defeat of 1967. In other words, from 1968–1969 to the present day.

So, like any communist activist who has accompanied this journey and is part of it, I have experienced various phases in the dynamic of the struggle, both in the Lebanese Civil War¹ and in two operations (more or less) unrelated to the local national struggle. Mine is a small contribution to the struggle, and prison is part of the dynamic of that struggle.

The category of the “political prisoner” is something that requires clarification because it suggests a certain pretentiousness that is inappropriate. Prison, in general, is a “bump in the road” on the journey of any activist. The real question arises when imprisonment becomes protracted, that is,

when the organizations that are promoting relevant political projects and programs of struggle are incapable of securing the release of their comrade. Nevertheless, throughout the Palestinian revolution, the release of prisoners has always been a moment of great excitement, which has had and continues to have local, regional, and international repercussions.

Material: Obviously not every political prisoner is the same: there are militants who are locked up because they were/are part of an active movement that threatens the state in some way that necessitates their incarceration; there are those that are/were “lone wolf” activists; there are lumpen prisoners who become politicized in prison, etc. Some argue that because of the sheer numbers of “social” prisoners in US prisons, their incarceration is political, and they are in that sense, political prisoners. And then of course in Palestine, everyone in prison can be considered a political prisoner because they have been made so from birth, just by continuing to exist. What you said about the political prisoner being a militant/activist in special circumstances helped us have a better understand that this is perhaps a more critical definition of what a political prisoner is. Can you talk more about your views on this?

GIA: When I refer to prison as a “bump in the road” for any activist, what I mean is that being arrested is part of everyday life for activists. It is not something exceptional. It is normal in

the life of an activist to be arrested and sent to prison, then to spend a week, a month, a year, five years, ten years, there.

The dynamics of the struggle, the balance of power between the forces of the bourgeoisie and the protagonists of the revolutionary struggle, means confrontation. Prison is part of that confrontation. It is part of the arsenal of instruments of repression available to counter-revolutionaries and the bourgeoisie throughout this war.

That being said, prison is not just for people who are classified as “political activists.” The masses in their daily lives face prison; they face the judicial system, the law, judges, and they face the police. Hence, the issue is much broader than simply a question of political or non-political prisoners. When we examine the dimension of “political prisoners,” we identify the most organized fraction of the prison population. This is because the majority of prisons are filled with men and women who reflect society. Most of the time, it is the “dangerous classes” who experience prison; it is the workers, the unemployed, the sons of laborers, all those who are precarious who end up in prison.

Activists are among these masses. But unlike most, activists are organized and therefore better equipped to deal with the prison environment. This applies both to their level of political awareness and to their relationship with the changing reality of society. When we limit the theme of imprisonment to

politically committed prisoners, it restricts us somewhat. But it also leads us to question how we resist in prison.

Do we resist as prisoners or as committed activists? If we resist as prisoners, we are human beings like all human beings. Whether it is you, an activist, who goes to prison, or someone who stole from his grandmother, or another who broke the laws of the bourgeoisie that runs this unjust society: they are all the same. As individuals, at that moment, the labels “political” and “non-political” have no meaning. They only make sense when you treat your position as that of an “activist fighting under particular conditions.” It is at that moment that there are qualitative differences.

It is very important to distinguish between the two. If you talk about repression, prison is in itself a means of repression; it is the place of repression, the pillar of the repressive architecture of the bourgeois state and of the state itself. Where there is exploitation, there is prison, judges and courts, and police. They form the trinity of government and the bourgeois state. Whether you are committed or not, you will have to face it. Those who are on the streets, who steal, who demonstrate, who hold meetings, or who call for perfectly ordinary demands: they will all face this array of violence.

The so-called “political” prisoner is a fellow activist who knows this environment and takes on a very special role, a much more committed role than that of ordinary citizens who are taken into custody. When the activist is in prison, he is treated

differently. This treatment is not necessarily always much worse than that endured by other prisoners, but his role is different at that point—not because he is a prisoner, but because he is an “activist who is in prison.”

Material: In recent interviews, you’ve spoken a little about the particular position of political prisoners within the broader struggle, describing how their role is not simply providing abstract support to struggles taking place outside the prison walls. How does the position of the incarcerated activist allow one to maintain a foothold in the concrete, ongoing struggle while, at the same time, developing creative strategic insights as a result of this partial removal from the day-to-day activism?

GLA: In a way, the issue of the imprisonment of political activists is very straightforward: it concerns an organization whose member is in prison. The question is how [and to what extent] we accept imprisonment for a given period of time. It is up to the organization to decide. If the organization accepts that its comrades will spend years in prison, it will act accordingly. It is the choice of the entire organization, not that of the prisoner. How will it support him? In itself, this is not very important. But once you “accept” imprisonment for your comrades, you have effectively abdicated the overall struggle. Because prison is an institution that destroys individuals.

Quite naturally, like any revolutionary prisoner, I am an abolitionist, which means that I consider prison in itself to be counterproductive for society. Whether it claims to be “progressive” or not, it is an institution that has been put to the test for over a century and has proven to be counterproductive. In other words, it does not produce solutions to “societal offenses.” Whether it is someone who assaulted their neighbor, someone who shoplifted from a store, etc.: locking them up does not reform them. Every time an individual goes to prison, they come out ready to commit new crimes. When it comes to political comrades, that is, men and women who are working to change society, they are supposed to have a position on this institution. Either they consider that this institution should be destroyed and abolished—and the bourgeois police and the courts as well—or they believe that it is legitimate and should continue to exist. This position will be articulated according to the organization, its program, and its class content. If it is a proletarian organization, which stands for personal fulfillment of human beings and the abolition of exploitation and alienation, then we believe that it cannot avoid being abolitionist.

It cannot accept that there are cops who harass the population. It cannot accept that prosecutors decide who lives and who dies among the masses. It has an answer to all these questions. In short, what is important for us today is that if I am an activist and I belong to an organization that fights against all

forms of injustice, and that organization decides that I, who have just been imprisoned, should not spend 30 years in prison, but that in the end, well, I do spend more than 30 years there, the question arises: How can I behave? I behave as an imprisoned revolutionary who will try to participate in the life of his organization inside the prison because I am not completely separated from the organization. Experience shows that comrades who are prisoners and who do not have the support of their organization, who are not in some way or another included in the arena of militant struggles, will suffocate. In order for them to be part of the dynamic and process of actual struggles, their supporters on the outside must also be part of this dynamic. You cannot show solidarity with a prisoner if you do not support that prisoner's struggle. If I am an activist fighting for the liberation of the proletariat, the people who show their solidarity with me are part of the struggle of the real proletariat, not some imaginary one.

In our society, there are men and women who protest and fight, who hold meetings and do all sorts of other things. The solidarity they show me is part of the dynamic of these men and women, which is not the same as if they came to show me love and a little comfort. Whenever there is an opportunity for me to intervene in the dynamic of the struggle, I must intervene. And my comrades must support this intervention. In other words, they must also belong to those who suffer from the actions of the bourgeoisie that put me in prison. Because this

bourgeoisie jailed me specifically for my political activity. This political activity, in principle—if I belong to a proletarian organization—is an activity of proletarian struggle. Every time there is a demonstration, the prisoner must be present in it. Every time there is an occupation of a particular place, the prisoner's supporters must be at the forefront. Ultimately, it is up to the entire organization to engage in this dynamic.

The imprisoned comrade participates both in the prisoners' resistance and in the radicalization or non-radicalization of his organization. In this predicament, solidarity is part of the struggle—not separate from it. From this perspective, we can consider that the liberation of comrades is also part of a power struggle between the mass movement and the political establishment.

As long as the political establishment finds that your detention costs less than your release, you will remain in prison. The judiciary plays a specific role; its role is to defend the established order. And as long as you, the prisoner, do not cost the ruling class much politically, it will continue to indicate a refusal to your request for parole.

But in the presence of a movement in favor of your release, which is part of the dynamics of the real struggle, the bourgeoisie will consider that as a prisoner you become a pretext for continuing to wage this proletarian struggle. The magistrates will then conclude that you cost less outside than

inside prison. And at that point, they will give the order to release you.

That's what happened to me after quite a few years. Those years don't count—not when you're an activist. Because those years are years of struggle for those behind bars as well as for their comrades on the outside. Imagine you've served 30, 40, 50 years—it doesn't matter. Others have died—they're six feet under—and they were part of the same struggle. You don't behave as a “prisoner who struggles”; you behave as an “activist who is in prison”—an activist who “struggles under the particular conditions of imprisonment.” These conditions bring you into contact with the disenfranchised who are in prison. Thus, you end up getting involved in very specific dynamics, and so does your organization. The latter will develop these dynamics concerning imprisonment itself.

Material: Can you give us some concrete examples of how this link is forged between imprisoned activists and the struggle of organizations outside prison, particularly in the French context? For example, we know that you closely followed the Yellow Vests movement.² Likewise, there have been attempts within the prison to politicize inmates and guards.

GLA: The prison population belongs to the popular masses of this country. When there is a social movement, that is, when the relatives and friends of prisoners—people from the same social

stratum—are taking action in society, then this movement is related to the prison. It feeds the prison through repression, of which the bourgeoisie is the main protagonist. Repression drives the masses towards prison, and they come with their demands, their consciousness. Nevertheless, there is a gap between the level of political awareness of the mass movement and that of those who find themselves in prison.

Social movements, in general, are suppressed, and their participants are sent to prison. There is a certain politicization at work here. This spontaneous politicization is tainted by the petty-bourgeois spirit, because when precarious workers seek to act through demands, they look for specific, personal solutions, just as when they may try to do so by robbing a bank. It is by doing these kinds of things that they feed the prison system. Naturally, the bourgeoisie—the guardians of private property—will repress them. You, the political prisoner, are on the side of those who are repressed. And when the social movement demands improvements that belong to the demands of the same social stratum as the other prisoners—when it calls for an improvement in living standards or the abolition of electricity taxes—it is this social stratum, the so-called “dangerous” class, that is affected.

It is affected by repression, which is why it fills prisons with men and women whose leaders are a little more politicized. This is what happens in times of the “euphoria” that comes with social uprisings. But in the overall dynamics of repression,

prison is not the most advanced place in the struggle. It becomes an advanced site when there is an explosive social crisis. The role of comrades is to take advantage of this space to spread political consciousness in line with the mobilization that is taking place outside and by participating in the mobilization that is happening there. The fact remains that repression in itself, in absolute terms, is reprehensible. Whether there is a social movement or not; whether there is a protest movement or not: isolation must be abolished. When repressive measures target the individuality of each person who has stolen, raped, shoplifted, you, the revolutionary activist, will always remain opposed to their destruction as individuals. So you will seek as much as possible to confront the conditions of detention themselves, not just for yourself as a prisoner with a political project, but for the entire prison population.

You will insist that someone who has spent many years in prison be granted leave. You will be the first to demand that there be socio-educational activities. You will encourage any sign of rebellion. Whenever there is a small revolt, you will try to push it to the extreme so that it becomes politicized, because you defend subjects who come from the most impoverished social strata of society. Because who ends up in prison? It's not the children of the bourgeoisie. It's the children of working-class neighborhoods. When these children from working-class neighborhoods end up in prison, it's not because they put up a

political fight. They end up there because they are trying to survive in a class society.

They try to get by, but they go astray by seeking erroneous solutions. They think they can make it by dealing drugs here and there. And their politicization is not that easy; it is very complicated, because we should not forget that the majority of prisoners have not spent their lives working. When you find yourself in a prison with men and women who are 40 years old and have never worked, you find that they don't really understand the concept of exploitation. They have spent their lives stealing, robbing, drug dealing, etc. Their basic notions of class consciousness are spontaneous and are not structured or synthesized. It's up to you to work on this consciousness, but it's not easy.

It's very difficult to politicize someone who has never experienced exploitation directly, who has never attended the "school of the proletariat," namely the unions, who has never been to a protest. This person is 40 or 50 years old and has spent 20 years in and out of prison and then they end up with you. He has never been to a demonstration; he has never made a leaflet; he is struggling to get by; he is trying to make ends meet to support his family, his children.

The concept of "class" only reaches them when there is a mass movement in society. When the Yellow Vests came along, there was such politicization. This prisoner who is here with me in prison, who is 30 or 40 years old, his sister or his wife or his

cousin is in the Yellow Vest protests. At first, she just watched, wondering what all these people were doing, what they were talking about. Then they begin to sympathize with the social movement, for the simple reason that it is a fertile ground for raising awareness.

It is in this sense that the organization of the masses is supposed to take into account all the protagonists who are the targets of repression. This does not mean that everyone can be lumped together. It does not mean that someone who has been involved in drug dealing for twenty years should be treated the same way as a kid who is the son of an unemployed worker and who has robbed the local bank. It's not the same thing. Someone who has spent their life stealing and become the leader of a criminal gang is someone who may be sensitive to demonstrations calling for prisoner freedom. But they cannot be at the forefront of the struggle.

We have to look at what we're talking about. If we're talking about prisoners abstractly, it doesn't make sense. We're talking about specific places of detention: Where are the majority of prisoners in this country? What conditions do they live in? If we take the situation in France, there are about 86,000 prisoners. The majority do not live in decent conditions. There are different categories of prisons: there are jails, there are detention centers, there are central prisons. In central prisons, long sentences are served; everyone lives in their own clean cell, and the destruction of the prisoner is "managed" on a long-term

basis. Humiliations are not everyday occurrences. For example, prisoners eat alone in their cells and are therefore less likely to be raped by their cellmates because they are alone.

Most prisoners are held in jails, where conditions are barely adequate for survival. When there are five people in a cell designed for three, two of them have to sleep on the floor. Two of them become, if not slaves, at least the minions of the most senior prisoner—in other words the least “conscious” prisoner, who is caught up in a cycle of social marginalization.

In this context, the responsibility of those who resist is to consider how we approach prison. There should be specific categories, as well as lawyers who take the “prisoners movement” into account. There are times when the prisoners movement, raising issues from within the prisons, can play a role in raising awareness in society. Look at the jails: we are in the belly of the beast—that is, in one of the so-called most advanced countries—and yet there are cockroaches on the floor. So, as a prisoner, you sleep on the floor with all the filth in the world, and society doesn’t see it. It’s up to our comrades to make this fact known to the outside world. Because jail is where the majority of prisoners are.

Naturally, in these places, there is very strong repression. You can gauge this by the proportion of suicides. The number of suicides in prisons is two or three times higher than outside. People commit suicide because they are in an unbearable situation. The parents of those who commit suicide are poor

people. They don't have the best lawyers, and they themselves don't know how to "speak." They don't know what to do. Of course there are associations. Comrades should support these associations, without having any illusions about them.

Prison is not the factory. It is not where the industrial working class is. In prison, there are marginalized people. Now, marginality is not an insult. We need to understand what the working class is made up of today, and what kind of world it lives in. Internationally, precarious workers make up the majority of the workforce. And it is on this basis that we must understand the issue of prison, while also addressing the concepts of alienation and repression. This is the role of comrades like you and me; comrades here in organizations that claim to be communist organizations, that is, organizations that fight against commodity alienation as a whole.

Material: So far, we have discussed the issue of political prisoners. We would like to ask you some other questions, particularly about the current situation in the Arab world. We were very moved by your arrival in Beirut in July, when one of your first statements was a passionate call to the Arab youth, exhorting them to rise up for Palestine. Why do you think Palestine is the "lever" on which the struggle for the liberation of the Arab people rests?

GLA: It is important to note that the Palestinian revolution plays a historic role in the Arab world. It is a cause that can mobilize the masses from Morocco to the Persian Gulf. Because, generally speaking, Palestine is seen as the open wound of the Arab-Muslim world in its confrontation with the West. An absolute injustice has been committed there, and everyone understands this. Naturally, the Arab bourgeoisie has been unable to heal this wound, and the masses have been unable to play their part for various reasons. But these reasons are not limited to cowardice or anything of that sort. It is the political struggle of Arab organizations that is at issue: the various factions, the various regimes and their repression, etc.

For me, the Palestinian revolution is one of the main levers of the Arab revolution. In other words, I believe that there is an Arab world and an Arab nation made up of several hundred million men and women. The masses of these nations number around 500 million people, whose political system cannot provide for the regeneration of the working class. That is why there are men and women who leave the country and throw themselves into the sea to find a place to survive. In other words, the capitalist system that creates this extremely difficult situation cannot ensure the regeneration of the working or peasant capacity of these countries. The crisis of capital as a whole is having a direct impact on the Arab world.

Palestine is the place where everything comes together. Because what is this entity called Israel? It is not a colony, it is

not a military base for this or that imperial power. Israel is the organic extension of the imperialist West as a whole. This imperialist West was formed in a historical process of genocide, starting in North America and extending to Australia. It was not simply formed through the exploitation of the working class by capitalist forces. No, it was formed through a process of genocide. In North America, in order for it to become the United States and Canada, more than 20 to 25 million Indigenous people had to be killed. In order for Central and South America to become “Latin” America—in other words, for the Latinization of this continent to take place—millions of men and women had to die. For Australia to become Australia as we know it, the Aboriginal population, which was one of the oldest peoples on this planet, had to be eliminated.

Quite naturally, the organic extension, Israel, bears all the scars of this process. Those who are—in terms of social stratum—capable of confronting it are those who are able to confront the capitalist process of genocidal domination as a whole. The genocidal process in Palestine has failed. It began at the end of the 19th century³ and continues to this day. In 1947–1948, when the Nakba⁴ took place, the Palestinian people numbered about 1 million. Today, if the Palestinian people had suffered the fate of the Australian Aboriginals, all that would remain of them would be scattered pockets living in mountain caves. If they had suffered the same fate as the Incas, we would find them mentioned in history books.

Today, the Palestinian people not only continue to exist, but have grown from less than 1 million in 1947 to a population of 14 million and more. In other words, the genocidal process has not succeeded, and this is the basis of the crisis of the Zionist project. This crisis is such that even within the limited space of historic Palestine, the Palestinian people now number about 7,300,000. The population of Israeli settlers is approximately 7,200,000. In other words, the Palestinian population within the Zionist entity, in its historical space, is still in the majority. This population, which was able to resist, did so for various reasons, in conditions that the Aborigines, the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, or even African Americans did not have at their disposal.

The Palestinian people confronted this organic extension of imperialism as representatives of the Arab “Mashriq”⁵ as a whole. As a people, the Palestinians emerged from this struggle, which is why they represent the driving force behind the Arab revolution. They confronted the enemy on behalf of the entire Arab nation, while using this momentum to unite all Arabs. When we recall how the historic revolts of the Palestinian people took place, the revolutions of 1935 and 1939 come to mind. In 1935, it was Izz al-Din al-Qassam who led the movement. Where did he come from? Not from Palestine, but from Syria. It is the entire “Mashriq” surrounding Palestine that forms the Palestinian identity.

Of course, the issue needs to be analyzed in much greater depth. The genocidal Zionist project has failed—which does not mean that the killings have decreased—not at all. But they have reached a point where they cannot go any further. No solutions for Israel can come out of a direct genocidal process. The Palestinian people, despite all the destruction, are still in Palestine. And they are surrounded by a historical social fabric that is the Arab nation—which, it must be said, is currently not rising up to confront colonialism, and is under bourgeois leadership, incapable of confronting the enemy.

Quite naturally, we ask ourselves, “How will the Palestinian revolution develop?” It will develop in the direction of the Arab revolution, that is, through the transformation of those within the social bloc who have an interest in radical change and liberation, such that the bourgeoisie no longer forms the leadership of the movement. Because as long as the bourgeoisie occupies a leading position, the movement cannot confront the organic extension that is the Zionist entity, because the latter is an extension of capital in its purest form.

Unlike all the colonies that have existed throughout history, here, there is no metropolis. The metropolis of colonial Algeria was France; the metropolis of North America was England; the same was true for Australia. Israel has no metropolis. It is international capital that forms its home base. Wherever the headquarters of international capital are located, there lies the home base of this entity. Hence, the social stratum

that will be able to confront the Zionist entity is the one that will be able to confront its metropolis, that is, capitalism as a whole. And this capitalism “as a whole”—which is currently in crisis—has become globalized. Today, there is no “national capitalism” that escapes the rationality of globalization. From this perspective, Palestine is more than a catalyst for the Arab revolution. It is the catalyst for the Arab revolution.

It is in that sense that we can expect the Arab masses, at one point or another, to end up pushing forward the process of liberation. A liberation not only from the Zionist entity, but also from the Arab bourgeoisie. Because today, with the acuity of the contradiction of global capital, the Arab bourgeoisie has been completely transformed. It has alienated itself to the side of Palestine’s enemy.

In the process we are witnessing in Gaza, what is being asked of the Arab bourgeoisie? The Israeli, American, European, German, and other military processes have been unable to disarm the Resistance. Today, the Arab bourgeoisie is called upon to enter into a direct process of disarming the Resistance. Naturally, this will fail because the Arab bourgeoisie is not very strong, and because there are Arab masses who, as part of this process, are called upon to overthrow this ruling class and constitute themselves into a social bloc with a clear awareness of its historical role and of history itself. It is this bloc that is destined to take power. This process is the process of the Arab revolution. It is in this sense that Palestine is the historical

catalyst of the Arab revolution, much more than one of many catalysts.

Material: You have mentioned the Arab bourgeoisie several times, whose vast majority is currently on the side of the enemy. During our first meeting you spoke of the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, who once led the Arab and Palestinian nationalist movement. Since then, certain dynamics have pushed this national and petty bourgeoisie to collaborate with the enemy. Can you tell us a little more about the history of these classes and their situation today?

GLA: Throughout the anti-colonial struggle, the Arab petty bourgeoisie was an upwards-striving class. They led the national liberation struggle, not only in the Arab countries, but throughout the world. The petty bourgeoisie—the one that led the national liberation struggle in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, and Yemen—achieved so much that it was supported by the USSR. It was at the forefront of the petty-bourgeois left internationally. The rising petty bourgeoisie of that era—in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s—reached its peak. Throughout its course, it accumulated resources that it plundered at the very moment it was carrying out its progressive reforms. At a certain point, it transformed itself into a “state bourgeoisie.” The question is not whether it betrayed or not. It changed in nature: from an upwardly mobile petty bourgeoisie in contradiction

with international capital, it transformed itself into a state bourgeoisie seeking to normalize itself within the global capitalist system. This is what happened in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

It is not always easy to “normalize” because, at one point or another, imperialism and the ruthlessness of capital will seek to extort these formerly dissident regimes. Some have failed completely in their normalization. We see this very clearly with Syria and Iraq. And we can say that this global process of the Arab bourgeoisie has reached its peak today, where it is no longer anti-colonial, where it is no longer anti-capitalist, where it no longer carries the peasant aspirations for agrarian reform or the industrialization of their countries. The USSR is no longer, and the entire trajectory of this petty bourgeoisie has tainted the overall liberation process in the region.

But we should not let this history make us forget that this class is only a fraction of the Arab bourgeoisie. The bulk of the Arab bourgeoisie, namely the Gulf bourgeoisie, the Saudi Arabian bourgeoisie, the Moroccan bourgeoisie, and the Tunisian bourgeoisie, are not part of this dynamic. It is a fraction of the petty bourgeoisie that has been anti-colonial—therefore, it was not the “Arab bourgeoisie” as such. At no point were the bourgeoisies of the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, or Morocco anti-colonial. They were born in the cradle of colonialism.

The petty bourgeoisie that led the liberation movement reached its peak and sought to normalize itself. In other words, it wanted to become part of the global capitalist market; some were more or less successful in this endeavor. But today, on the whole, the masses are on one side and these regimes on the other. The fact remains that the masses are disoriented after these experiences. This is because the experience of this petty bourgeoisie destroyed any possibility of organized protest. There were global alliances, notably with the USSR against imperialism, which led to a radicalization of the “reformist” current, to the point where it no longer tolerated any form of organized opposition. The bourgeoisie of the Ba’ath⁶ party in Iraq, the Nasserist⁷ bourgeoisie in Egypt, and even in Syria, did not accept the presence of communist parties that were truly oppositional. All of this was done with the support of the USSR.

The normalization of these reformist parties was endorsed by the USSR. The people paid a very high price for this, and we are still paying a very high price. It is in this sense that today, the petty bourgeoisie that [once] challenged the established order of the reactionary Arab bourgeoisie has now rallied behind the [ruling classes of the] Gulf states. When we talk about the petty bourgeoisie having completely turned to the enemy, it is the bourgeoisie of the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia that has allowed it to “normalize” itself with [global capital].

The state bourgeoisie in Egypt and in its neighboring countries is now completely on the side of the enemy. The ruling classes of the Gulf states have always been reactionary, because they were born in the cradle of colonialism, not in protest against colonialism. However, those who were born in protest against the laws of imperialism have reached a point where they have ceased to be dissidents.

When they finally became state bourgeoisies, with capital stolen from the people during the process of industrialization and agrarian reform—capital that had long been hidden abroad, in Swiss banks, etc.—they sought to turn this capital into profit by exploiting their own countries, becoming part of the overall dynamic of regional and international capital.

It is in this sense that the petty bourgeoisie, which has become the state bourgeoisie, is now “behind” us. This observation should lead us to ask who should then lead the social bloc that is capable of dealing with this situation. It is in this sense that we must understand the crisis of the Arab national project and the crisis of the Palestinian national project. If in the past the petty bourgeoisie was able to lead the anti-colonial struggle, but then reached its peak by becoming a state bourgeoisie, then who will take its place?

The class that should lead the social bloc—since it has an interest in social change and in anti-imperialist confrontation—can only be the proletariat, with its communist

ideology. There is an ideological confrontation within this social bloc, which will last throughout the process of forming of this social bloc. The condition for victory in Palestine and elsewhere lies in the level of awareness this social bloc has of its historical interests. Once aware of those interests, it will be conscious of history itself, because it becomes the historical agent of progress. Only under this condition will there be victory, both over imperialism and over capital, organically represented by the Zionist entity. It is this condition that is not so easy to fulfill, and which will require a long-term struggle.

Quite naturally, the Arab masses will succeed, at one point or another, in forming this social bloc and endowing it with a consciousness of its historical tasks. This is what will enable it to put an end to the entire dynamic of capital in the region. At that point, there will be a global change, not only in the Arab region, but worldwide, because an event of such magnitude changes the balance of power at all levels.

Material: On a different topic, we recently visited to the Bourj el-Barajneh and Shatila⁸ Palestinian refugee camps. There were a few things that really struck us: On the one hand, there was the strong presence of Fatah (as well as other factions) in the Lebanese camps—a party that can be described as that of the bourgeoisie who sided with the enemy through collaboration and who, as you said just, now wants to make its small amount of accumulated capital pay off; on the other hand, there is the

relative absence of opportunities for the masses to organize outside the apparatuses of the well-established parties, which now seem to take very little interest in “mass work”—in the streets and in the small public spaces of the camp.

Who will step in to take over from the established parties? At the same time, what gives rise to a revolutionary subject in such a context, where the camp population has been rendered passive through its dependence on aid provided by NGOs and international agencies such as UNRWA,⁹ against a backdrop of extreme lumpenization of the population.

GLA: The crisis of the Palestinian national project lies in the fact that the forces leading it do not form a state bourgeoisie. The Palestinian bourgeoisie is characterized by its marginalization within the Palestinian national structure—and this has nothing to do with the rising bourgeoisie of the 1950s and 1960s in Syria, Iraq, or Egypt. Here, an entire people has been rendered precarious. It is this existential precariousness that has shaped the Palestinian identity. This Palestinian identity, in its most intimate form as experienced by each Palestinian, is the camp.

When we talk about the camp, we are talking about moments of destruction that are constantly recurring. There is no camp in Palestine or outside Palestine that has not been destroyed at one time or another and subsequently rebuilt. In this dynamic, the role of the social bloc is to represent those who are “existentially precarious.” This is a mass of people who

don't even have a country headed by a bourgeois, colonial, or semi-colonial state. It is a very particular situation. Hence the importance of the Palestinian national liberation movement, with all the complexity of its internal dynamics.

When we talk about Fatah,¹⁰ when we talk about the Palestinian Authority,¹¹ when we talk about the PLO,¹² when we talk about Palestinian organizations, it is not a theoretical and abstract question. We are discussing a movement of precarious masses who find themselves in a specific situation in the Arab world, who have several distinct social strata within their ranks, and who occupy a particular position in the Arab region. Thus, the leadership of the Palestinian national liberation struggle, which was embodied by Fatah—and Fatah, let us not forget, is the mother of the revolution!—is not an organization that can simply be said to have “betrayed” the cause. It is the organization that represents the Palestinian revolution in all its complexity.

Today, this organization that gave us Oslo,¹³ which sacrificed the Palestinian national project and placed a limit on the existence of our people as a people—a “theoretical” limit, of course—is the same organization that is most represented in Zionist prisons, with more than half of the inmates being Fatah members. We must not forget this: this is also Fatah. When it comes to Palestinian prisoners, Fatah members make up more than half of the resistance fighters in Israeli prisons. And it is

still this same Fatah that continues to supply Fedayeen¹⁴—whether in Gaza, the West Bank, or elsewhere.

The leadership at the head of Fatah is pluralistic. It can be said that Palestinian comprador capital has married the bureaucracy of the national liberation movement and given birth to what is known as the Palestinian Authority and all the concessions it has made before our eyes.

Of course, the problem is much more complicated than a simple story of deviations. It is not a matter of mere “deviation”: it is a result of the initial progress of the struggle, which led a fraction of the Palestinian bourgeoisie to seize control of the movement and marry itself to comprador capital, which, unsurprisingly, collaborates with the existing capitalist forces in the region. But its weight of Palestinian capital is extremely marginal in the overall dynamics of the struggle. In other words, Palestinian capital is not the same as that which exists in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, or Lebanon. It is insignificant in relation to the global movement. But it is very important as a fraction of the Palestinian political movement. Its importance lies in the fact that it is part of the movement that can be described as the “lever of the Arab revolution.” Its importance lies in its “Palestinianness” and not in its economic weight or its influence on the region’s capitalist system.

When we talk about the Arab bourgeoisie that has sided with the enemy, we are talking about capital that has real weight in the global economy, within the global dynamics of

inter-imperialist contradictions. Whether it is on the side of China or Russia, whether it is with the Americans or not, it affects the balance of power at the international level. Palestinian capital, on the other hand, is utterly insignificant at this level. Politically, however, it is very important. Politically, the Palestinian movement is at the forefront of the anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist contradiction.

When we describe Israel as an “organic extension of international capital,” we must be able to distinguish between the Arab bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie that is invested in the Palestinian revolution. There is more than just a nuance: there is also a qualitative difference. When we talk about today’s Egyptian “state bourgeoisie,” it is a bourgeoisie, plain and simple. When we talk about the Iraqi bourgeoisie, it is a bourgeoisie, plain and simple. When we talk about the Syrian bourgeoisie, it is a bourgeoisie, plain and simple. On the other hand, the Palestinian bourgeoisie has not succeeded in its conversion at the international level. That is why Palestinian society has collapsed. The same is true of Iraq. This did not happen in Egypt, where there is a bourgeois state in a subjugated, peripheral country, and where order reigns, but from which we expect that at some point the social bloc will get rid of this bourgeoisie.

The Palestinian Authority is more complicated than that, because in the Palestinian situation, there is no single class that manages society. There are martyrs, there are prisoners,

there is the armed struggle movement, there is the dispersion of its people across camps. The camp, in itself, is more than just one “aspect” among others. The Palestinian camp would be doomed to disappear if it were up to the imperialists, because its destruction is the end of the Palestinian cause itself. And in order to put an end to the Palestinian cause, we must put an end to the “Palestinianness” of all Palestinians. However, this “Palestinianness” is embedded in the dynamics of the alleys of these camps.

The camp is “unmanageable”; unmanageable in the sense that it is impossible to manage by and for capitalist interests. It is a place where a group of people who are “existentially precarious” live. When you destroy a camp, what are you doing concretely? Of course, you have destroyed it at its current location. But in reality all you have done is move it somewhere else; it will be rebuilt in another location. Unlike camps built after disasters, which are an economic phenomenon, these are “political” camps from the beginning to the present day. Every time we encounter a camp, we are confronted with Palestinian identity. Palestinian identity has been constructed through the camp, throughout a process that has been going on for more than a century. When we talk about Gaza, what exactly are we talking about? It is a collection of camps: 80% of Gaza’s inhabitants are refugees—not “economic” refugees, but refugees produced in the confrontation between

the anti-colonial movement and colonial aggression. So as a people they embody precariousness on an “existential” level.

Today the camp is located at point A. Tomorrow it is destroyed, and the day after tomorrow it relocates to point B. When it moves from one place to another, what moves is the land, the mothers, the brothers, the sisters. The social functions performed by the various personalities in the camp will also change location and even change in nature. Existential precariousness is the order of the day at that moment. Managing this precariousness is the task of Palestinian revolutionaries. Where are we at on that level? We are still very far away.

In 1968–1969, there was a revolt in the camps that was able to force the withdrawal of bourgeois order. Henceforth, there was no more police, no more judiciary, no more representatives of the order of the “host” country, Lebanon. The status of the camps became that of extraterritoriality. This extraterritoriality benefited the revolutionary movement.

We remember that, historically, the years 1968–1969 were those of a worldwide liberation movement, in which students played an important role. This had an impact on the situation of those who were existentially precarious. If we try to understand the movement that began in 1968 based on the working class in the factories, it is difficult to grasp the Palestinian movement and the armed struggle that gave rise to the Palestinian identity and that of the camp. In 1968–1969, the

Cairo Agreements¹⁵ on the situation of the camps in Lebanon were concluded between the Palestinians and the Lebanese state. These agreements defined not only the extraterritoriality of the camp, but also the Lebanese border with Israel. Thus, a region directly administered by the Fedayeen was established. This administration was the responsibility of the forces of armed struggle, namely a subjective agent acting in the field of class struggle. This was not the result of antagonism between the working class and the bourgeoisie, compounded by the crisis of capital. No. It was the result of a subjective initiative led by the forces of the armed struggle, which became more than just an economic agent.

However, this situation in the camps has atrophied along the way, becoming a kind of stateless state—hence, the failure of the Palestinian left. We were unable to transform the camps with extraterritorial status vis-a-vis the bourgeois order—a status that still exists today. We were unable to transform the camps into “liberated zones,” or at least “semi-liberated zones.” Liberated from what? Liberated from capital and its values. What process did we have instead? A process of deterioration. The camp has become a source of chaos, trafficking, prostitution, and all sorts of other things, to such an extent that the main forces in the camps themselves now say, “We can no longer manage the weapons now in the hands of criminal gangs; we must return them to the state. Let it come and take them away from us!”

This situation fits perfectly into the overall dynamic of “chaos” created by the bourgeoisie in this region. Quite naturally, the Palestinian left—the PFLP, the DFLP, the Palestinian Communist Party¹⁶—is called upon to assume its responsibilities. Will it succeed? Perhaps, we don’t know. In the short term, it will fight, and it is on the basis of this struggle that the forces of the Arab revolution will emerge. The task is not so easy, and the explosiveness of the situation lies in the fact that the camp can never truly be destroyed. To destroy it, the Palestinians must be annihilated, and they cannot be annihilated. Attempts have been made to do so, in particular through measures that draw Palestinians abroad. This is not the same as Egyptians leaving to work in Europe. Here, the goal is political. A country like Canada, for example, tries as much as possible to attract all the managers, all the students, all the intellectuals, all those who have a little knowledge, a little scientific background, among the Palestinians, so that they go work there. They are given every facility possible and imaginable so the camps will empty and cease to exist, so that they are deprived of all their “identity-related capacities.”

Today, international institutions managed by capitalist interests—such as UNRWA, NGOs, and other agencies—impose conditions on the operation and funding of schools, such as, for example, prohibiting girls from wearing headscarves. The other day, a girl wearing a hijab arrived at school and was told that she was no longer welcome, because it was forbidden

to come to school wearing a headscarf. In the same vein, teachers are no longer allowed to teach history, and so on.

Everything is being done to combat Palestinian identity. But identity is embedded in the alleys of the camp. As long as the camp exists, this identity will exist; you cannot separate identity from these alleys. Hence, the desire to destroy the camp. The army is now everywhere, and the camp is surrounded by blockades put up by the Lebanese authorities. But contrary to what one might think, this can only accentuate Palestinian identity.

The bourgeoisie, the capitalists, only ever work in the short term. They cannot operate in the long term because the long term means crisis. And all the solutions proposed for the problems of the bourgeoisie are short-term solutions. So, in reality, it is not really possible for them to extinguish the Palestinian identity movement. It is part of the overall Arab dynamic, so consequently, it will always represent a refuge for precarious Lebanese, Syrians,¹⁷ Iraqis, and others. When you are in the Shatila camp, what is the proportion of Palestinians? Less than 20%.¹⁸ Yet it is still a Palestinian camp. Who lives there? All Arabs who are as precarious as the Palestinians. They feel at home there—at home in the precariousness of the camp.

So, for this driving force of the revolution to play its role, the protagonists of the struggle must be capable of managing these resources. Until they have this capacity, the social bloc will continue to flounder. And this will cause further

damage. However, the revolutionary forces will at some point succeed in forming a social bloc capable of confronting the process of annihilation to which it is being subjected.

The situation in Lebanon today is crucial. Lebanon is much more than the Palestinian struggle. It is a source of concern for the entire Arab bourgeoisie. The Arab bourgeoisie cannot live in harmony with the situation in Lebanon. There is a Resistance, there are people who say “no” and who do not accept normalization with the Zionist entity. Today, this small country, Lebanon—a country that is even too small, with an area of barely 10,000 square kilometers—is being asked to coexist with other Arab regimes.

But in Lebanon there has never been and never will be a dictatorship of one social stratum capable of militarizing social relations. Instead, we have a sectarian system in which the state acts as the guardian of the process of “degeneration,” that is, the process of preventing the formation of a [united] society, ensuring that it remains a collection of communities.¹⁹

The important thing to understand is that this system does not give rise to a direct fascist dictatorship, but to fascist organizations at the grassroots level. For example, there are those who participated in the Shatila massacre, and so on. There are many groups like this. But the state as such will always take the form of the inter-bourgeois agreement that constitutes Lebanon’s particular established order: the agreement between the Sunni bourgeoisie, the Maronite bourgeoisie, etc. It’s the

sectarian characteristics that prevent the emergence of a social bloc with a collective identity capable of putting an end to the bourgeoisie altogether. Quite naturally, the revolutionary process is directed towards the construction of this social bloc. Such a construction cannot take place outside the struggle of the Palestinian people, because the relationship with Palestine is a historical one.

The armed struggle began in 1968–1969 in Palestine and elsewhere, and Lebanon has been part of this theater since those years. It is the main theater of the struggle. Lebanon therefore has an organic relationship with the Palestinian revolution. Naturally, the Arab bourgeoisie, supported by Israel and imperialists of all stripes—American, French, German—will throw its full weight behind breaking this dynamic, to eliminate the representatives of non-normalization with the Zionist entity. They will succeed in achieving certain gains at this level, because non-normalization is now managed by a whole jumble of different organizations. It is not the working class or the communists who are leading it. It is the entire population that is involved, and among them the Shiite bourgeoisie plays an essential role. When our communist comrades will realize the importance of getting directly involved in the Resistance, their mere presence will prevent the Shiite bourgeoisie from coming to terms with the Maronite bourgeoisie. If they do not get fully involved, it will be much less easy, and the bourgeoisie will more likely end up acting as a

bourgeoisie that is without ties. It will then pursue its own interests and break the momentum of the Resistance.

The Resistance has its strengths. It has many martyrs, which means it has a very solid historical foundation. But the leaders of this resistance are now also all martyrs. It is therefore not easy to take their place, as it is still very recent. And the community that is the physical foundation of the Resistance is a Shiite community located on the southern border. Israel cannot accept its presence because it is unable to purge it, that is, to remove the protagonists of the struggle. The contradictions are therefore of an organic nature.

The role of the communists is essential at this level. They need to be much more involved than they are at present. There are martyrs every day. Today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, there will be martyrs falling in Lebanon. But their names sound like that of Hassan Nasrallah²⁰; they are from one particular community. Communists must also fall as martyrs, so that the foundation of national identity is the foundation of collective identity transcending sectarian divisions.

It is within the dynamics of this foundation that the social bloc is built and its class identity constructed. We hope to make it in time before they crush us all. The small country that is Lebanon has too few resources. But its resources are sufficient to ensure that the Resistance remains strong. The hope is that the momentum of this Resistance will lead to the formation of a mass movement—millions of proletarians, sub-proletarians,

and precarious workers who will finally take action, particularly in Egypt and Jordan.

All the hope of the Resistance here in Lebanon lies in ultimately getting back on our feet and looking at the situation with clarity. In short, the role of the Communists is to ensure that we can hold out until a social explosion occurs in Egypt and Jordan.²¹ If it never happens, we will go down in history as those who “jumped to touch the sky.” But we will succeed in the end, because the potential for a mass movement is very strong, and the underlying social structures facilitate its emergence.

Of course, we don’t have a very clear picture of the battlefield. “Here are the good guys, there are the bad guys.” No. We are faced with situations where communities are intertwined. And at the same time, we have the bloc of traitors; people who are connected to imperialism, to Israel, etc. Faced with these imperialists and the Zionist entity, we have people who are willing to blow themselves up. Imperialism is throwing all its weight behind eliminating the leaders of this movement. That’s why we have no choice but to try to navigate against all odds.

Material: To conclude, we would like to ask you how you see the unfolding relationship between the struggles in Lebanon and Palestine on the one hand, and the movements in Europe and North America on the other. How can we concretely and

effectively support the Palestinian revolution from our context in imperialist countries?

GLA: The relationship between the movement here in Lebanon and Palestine and the movement in Europe and elsewhere, that is, between the centers and the peripheries, is built on the dynamics of struggle. Every step forward here is a step forward for you. Every step forward for you is a step forward here. But our reading of the situation will be incomplete if we limit ourselves to this observation.

In fact, what we are facing here is a force that is the organic extension of Western imperialism. It has run out of steam. It is therefore naturally the “fascist” expression of this capital. At the same time, the global dynamics of capital do not produce fascism only in the belly of the beast, in the centers of the system. That is why we see anti-fascist struggles emerging on both sides. These will take on an increasingly broader dimension. It is in this sense that we must understand the intensity of the current movement in Europe for Palestine. It does not express a passionate discovery of love by the Christian man who looks at the wounds of Palestine, the crying children, etc. There are crying children everywhere in the world. That is not what moves people. Today, people in Europe are taking action to say two things: (1) that in Israel there is fascism with Netanyahu; (2) that at home there is fascism with Meloni, with Marine Le Pen, with the AFD, etc. In the intertwined

dynamics of these two forms of anti-fascism, a communist identity is being constructed.

The social bloc, both here and there, is being built in the dynamic of the battle against this ongoing rise of fascism. There is a process of fascism in Europe, it is unmistakable. You only have to look around to see it. It can be observed through the countless discreet laws that are being passed. We see it in prisons, we see it in demonstrations, we see it in the use of violence, we see it in the restrictions that the bourgeoisie is introducing. It's the same here; we see it in the overall dynamics of repression in the Arab world.

There have been intense protests in Europe, as well as small initiatives that have given rise to the story of the flotillas trying to reach Gaza, etc. Here, the impact of these initiatives is enormous. It is enormous in terms of the morale instilled in the protagonists of the struggle. It raises morale and opens up space for communists to better see the dynamics of capitalism.

When we are here in Gaza or there in Europe, and we are on the eve of a potential or probable world war, we are called upon to make small analyses. Their depth at the moment is irrelevant. But these analyses allow us to see more clearly the problems of capitalism. In this context, as protagonists in the revolutionary struggle, we are obliged to talk about certain areas such as the camps—areas that are semi-liberated. How do we manage a semi-liberated area? To understand this, we have to look at how liberated areas were built.

In France and elsewhere, there has been talk of ZADs —“zones à défendre” [“areas to be defended”].²² Without reducing these to mere anecdotes, here we are required to go a little further, or even much further: How can we build a social bloc in the face of the global dynamics of capitalism? How can we build a social bloc whose aspirations are not those of commodification? How can we get rid of commodification altogether? In other words, how can we build a proletarian identity based on the social bloc of those who are existentially precarious?

These are very important tasks, but they require a lot of effort, and of course it is not possible to achieve them all at once. But it is important to keep in mind the significance of maintaining relations with the other side of the Mediterranean. If there is no movement back and forth between here and there—if there is no link—there will be an incompatibility between the proposals to build liberated zones on the one hand and the fact that the bourgeoisie is at the head of the social bloc on the other. In order for us to have the potential for progress, there must be this link—this link that is historical and every day. Whether it is your arrival here or the struggle of the people who are over there in Europe, all of this allows us to forge links of struggle.

For the moment, the struggle takes this form. It is not certain that this is the only form that is proposed and that can be proposed—namely demonstrations of support. Tomorrow, it

may turn out that there are other tasks that our Swiss or other comrades can take on. Yesterday, it took the form of financial support. In the future, it will be something else. It depends on the capacity of the comrades operating in the belly of the beast and the capacity to structure the social bloc here. The fate of the revolution will depend on all of this. The fate of the revolution not only in Europe and the Arab world, but worldwide.

Here, we are not addressing the crisis of capital in terms of low-level propaganda. If we are convinced that we are producing serious analyses, we will see that globalization has ensured that the only way to solve the crisis of overproduction is through intensive global arms production—arms conceived as the driving force of the consumer market economy. It so happens that bombs and missiles cannot be eaten. They are consumed by destroying entire sections of the population. We are on the eve of such events, and the only antidote to this consumption of the “arms-commodity” is revolution in all countries.

Quite naturally, when the revolutionary movement advances in Switzerland or France or elsewhere, the consumption of these goods ceases to be within the reach of capitalism. In other words, the outbreak of war ceases to be the prospect of a world war. When the French proletariat occupies the terrain of daily struggle, the French army cannot go and fight another army in another country. It will have to deal with the French masses until they tip the scales and seize power.

This process is unfolding in parallel with the process here. On our side, it will not always be in the name of the prophet that we will confront the enemy. For the revolutionary process to gain momentum, all categories of heritage must be purged, meaning that some must be denounced and replaced by other perspectives: equality between men and women, the issue of children's rights, the issue of the circulation of goods, etc.

These issues must be addressed by the organizations that manage the current and future semi-liberated zones. We must be able to see what a liberated or semi-liberated zone is and how to manage it. It's not as clearcut as it seems. We have examples before our eyes: the experiences of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie managing these zones, which have led to the situation we see today.

The hope is that the mass movement, with its long history and experience, will succeed in getting us out of this situation. Seeing young people mobilizing in your country gives us hope and the belief that we will be able to confront capitalism and its crisis; that this transition period is the death throes of capitalism. And the transition from agonizing capitalism to socialism is a process that is taking place on both shores of the Mediterranean.

Notes:

1. Often reduced to sectarian strife, the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) was rooted in structural class inequalities, a confessional state serving elite interests (mainly located among the Maronite Christian community), and Lebanon’s position as a semi-colony. Sectarian militias (such as the “Phalangists”) functioned as instruments of Israel and other imperialist interests to fight the local and Palestinian Left.

2. The Yellow Vest movement (beginning in 2018) emerged in response to French state’s neoliberal agenda, regressive taxation, and the steady degradation of working-class living conditions. Despite early attempts by the far right to coopt its anger, and the institutional—and extra-parliamentary—Left’s inability to politically steer it, the movement increasingly articulated demands around redistribution, public services, and popular sovereignty, marking a gradual shift toward a more explicitly left-wing class politics, before it lost momentum in the face of the COVID epidemic in 2020.

3. The first phase of expropriation of the Palestinian people, beginning in the late 19th century with the first Aliyahs—waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine motivated by nationalist, religious, and political aims—reflected the penetration of capitalist interests into Ottoman Palestine. Zionist settlement, supported by European capital, facilitated the commodification of land and the displacement of peasant communities. With the British Mandate over Palestine (1920–1948), these processes were accelerated: imperial administration, legal reforms, and infrastructural projects systematically prioritized settler accumulation over indigenous livelihoods, embedding a structural inequality that framed the subsequent class and national struggle.

4. The Nakba (“catastrophe” in Arabic) refers to the forced displacement of approximately 700,000 Palestinians during the 1948 war, alongside dozens of massacres, widespread village destruction, and land confiscation by Zionist forces.

5. The Mashriq refers to the eastern Arab world, including modern-day Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and parts of the Arabian Peninsula, historically distinguished from the western Arab world, or Maghreb.

6. Ba’athism, developed by Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar in the 1940s, is an Arab nationalist and pan-Arabist ideology combining anti-imperialism, state-led economic development, and social reform. Different branches of the Ba’ath Party came to power in Syria (1963) and Iraq (1968).

7. Nasserism refers to the political ideology associated with Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, combining Arab nationalism, anti-imperialism, and state-led development. While not explicitly socialist, it promoted land reform, industrialization, and mass mobilization.

8. The Bourj el-Barajneh and Shatila camps were established in Lebanon in the aftermath of the 1948 Nakba to house Palestinian refugees. The Shatila Massacre (September 1982) occurred when Lebanese Phalangist militias, allied with the Israeli occupation, massacred hundreds of Palestinian civilians in the Shatila camp.

9. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was created in 1949 to provide aid to Palestinian refugees.

10. Once the leading force of Palestinian resistance under Yasser Arafat, Fatah (abbreviation for “Palestinian National Liberation Movement”) combined nationalist mobilization with armed struggle against Israeli occupation since the mid-1960s. Over the decades,

particularly after the Oslo Agreements, which were negotiated and signed by Yasser Arafat himself, as leader of the PLO at the time, it became increasingly bureaucratic and counter-revolutionary at its top level, prioritizing political survival over genuine resistance.

11. Created in 1994 under the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority functions as a limited administrative body in parts of the occupied West Bank, operating under Israeli military dominance and heavy reliance on foreign aid. Its framework concretely functions to subordinate Palestinian self-determination to imperialist and Zionist interests.

12. The Palestine Liberation Organization was founded in 1964 by the Arab League in Cairo as a national liberation movement representing the Palestinian people. The organization—uniting under its banner a multitude of different political parties and militias—combined armed struggle and diplomacy against Zionism and imperialist powers operating in the region. Over time, especially after the Oslo process, it has been criticized for shifting from a liberation framework toward accommodation and collaboration with Zionism.

13. The Oslo Accords were series of agreements made between Israel and the PLO in 1993 and 1995 that established limited Palestinian self-rule without ending occupation. They resulted in entrenching Israeli control, fragmenting Palestinian territory, and turning the PLO into Israel's watchdog and enforcer.

14. The Palestinian Fedayeen emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as armed groups resisting Israeli occupation and defending refugee communities.

15. The 1969 Cairo Agreements formalized the presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in southern Lebanon, granting armed and administrative autonomy in the refugee camps.

While the treaty represented a real concession to Palestinian self-determination, it also tied the PLO to the Lebanese state and regional power structures.

16. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP, founded in 1967) and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP, founded in 1969) pursued Marxist anti-imperialist struggle and armed resistance but were limited by internal divisions and the dominance of Fatah within the PLO. The Palestinian People's Party (PPP) was established in 1982 as the Palestinian Communist Party before it changed its name in 1991. Although the PPP initially supported the Oslo process, it has since criticized its catastrophic results.

17. Since the collapse of central state authority in Syria after the fall of Bashar al-Assad and the consolidation of power under al-Sharaa (better known as "al-Julani"), Lebanon has experienced an influx of refugees, including Alawites and other Syrian minorities, as well as Syrian Palestinians. Many have taken refuge in existing Palestinian camps, intensifying already precarious conditions.

18. Accounts of the total number vary between 20–40%.

19. Lebanon's sectarian state system, established in 1944, allocated political power among religious communities: Maronite Christians controlled the presidency and a disproportionate share of economic and political institutions, Sunni Muslims held the prime minister position, Shia Muslims the speaker of parliament, and smaller Christian and Druze communities were apportioned seats to maintain a fragile balance. While intended to manage sectarian tensions, it reinforced class dominance held by some communities while marginalizing working-class and peasant populations in others.

20. Hassan Nasrallah, longtime Secretary General of Hezbollah and a central figure in Lebanese resistance politics rooted in Shiite workingclass and antiimperialist currents, was killed in an Israeli airstrike in September 2024. His death was mourned by hundreds of thousands.

21. In previous, more informal discussions with Georges, Egypt was a frequent focus, reflecting on both the strong anti-Zionist sentiment among the population and significant support for the Palestinian cause within parts of the military, as well as the country's demographic weight—nearly 120 million people—making it a central actor in regional politics and anti-imperialist strategy.

22. The French ZAD are contested spaces where activists resist state or corporate projects threatening to destroy the environment, combining direct action, community organizing, and experimental self-governance. Notable examples include the ZAD of Notre-Dame-des-Landes, opposed to a planned airport near Nantes, and the ZAD de Sivens, resisting a dam project.

