

Kishli, Mohammad. "Lebanon's Crisis: Lebanese First and Foremost, Before Becoming a Crisis in Lebanese-Palestinian Relations". *Shu'un Filastiniya* (Beirut), 1975. Translated by *The Palestinian Revolution*, 2016.

That Lebanon was the country to benefit most from the Palestinian Nakba of 1948 is one of history's paradoxes. It adopted the role previously played by Palestine as the link between the Arab East and the wider world, in terms of shipping, commerce, transit, Egyptian trade, the service industry, tourism and so on, and subsequently became the only country in the region to carry out such activities. The economy thrived, with Lebanon taking on the role of intermediary which Palestine had lost with the establishment of Israel and dispersal of Palestinians to countries across the Arab world. Among these countries was Lebanon, in which a huge number of Palestinians had sought refuge – roughly 150,000 to 200,000 people. Here, Palestinians had long-standing social, economic and familial links, thanks to geographical and historical ties between the two peoples.

A quarter century or so later, when Palestine had been revived by its people launching an armed struggle to liberate their land, it began to lay bare the contradictions in the Lebanese position – or rather, the Palestinian issue as a whole began to expose them. Lebanon's contradiction lay in its economic relations with the Arab world versus the nature of its sectarian political system, the latter of which is one based upon isolation and a refusal of any active involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Lebanese isolationism, of which the Kataeb party can be seen as the organisational and ideological embodiment, seeks to benefit from Lebanon's economic relations with the Arab world, while refusing to become a part of it on a political or pan-Arab level. Politically, Lebanon was completely fenced off by this policy of isolationism, and was rendered neutral and distanced from the struggles and related causes in the Arab world.

The above is a short introduction which places the recent bloody attack launched by the Kataeb party against the Palestinian resistance movement squarely in its historical context. Only now can we understand the nature of the current crisis – since before becoming one of Lebanese-Palestinian relations, it was essentially a *Lebanese* crisis. So the existence of the Palestinian resistance movement on Lebanese soil has allowed the aforementioned contradictions to come to the fore; yet they would have been revealed – one way or another – with or without a Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

¹ This work is made available under a Creative Commons 4.0 International Licence, and must be used accordingly. Please see citation guidelines on the About Us page.

Lebanon's contradictions have not been restricted to Lebanese-Arab economic relations and political isolationism; rather, over the past few years – and especially during the last two – the Lebanese government has witnessed key political, economic and social developments born out of internal conflicts 5362 all levels. There are two central contradictions: Lebanon's 'Arab' relations, and internal political and social conflicts. They constitute the authentic backdrop for the artificial conflict set in motion by the Kataeb party against the Palestinian resistance movement last month. We can now expand upon each of the contradictions in turn.

Lebanon's economic relations with the rest of the Arab world:

The post-independence Lebanese economy has, for a long time, taken on the role of 'mediator' between the Arab world (more specifically the Arabian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula – areas of ever-increasing oil wealth) and the West. Over the past ten years, Lebanon has witnessed an increase both in banking activity and in the role of trade, transportation and the service industry, bringing Arab capital and deposits in from the Gulf. There has also been a relative flourishing in Lebanese industry, most of whose produce is exported to Arab markets. Likewise, a large number of Lebanese citizens have gone to work in oil-producing Arab countries, while there has been an influx of cheap Arab labour (that is, Syrian workers) into Lebanon – not to mention Palestinian workers in refugee camps.

A Lebanese economic expert has used statistics, including the following, to substantiate the notion that Lebanon's economy largely relies on the Arab world:

1. Financial transfers from Lebanese citizens – roughly 140,000 people – working and residing in oil-producing Arab countries: they transfer around 500 million Lebanese Lira annually, and it is expected that this figure will increase following the significant upsurge in oil revenue.
2. Financial transfers in the service industry: the value of such transfers from Arab countries has reached 1,000 million Lebanese Lira, covering fees relating to transportation, transit, marketing services, printing and publishing services, medical treatment and services relating to the tourist sector.
3. Financial transfers for investment in Lebanon, and regional deposits in Lebanese banks: the former totals between three and four hundred million dollars a year, while the latter brings in three thousand million

Lebanese Lira a year, 90 per cent of which come from neighbouring Arab countries.

4.

These figures show the extent of Lebanese economic interaction with the rest of the Arab world, indicating that such interaction has been a key determining factor in the level of Lebanon's economic activity. It can be argued – and has in fact been corroborated by our expert – that Arab skills and capital were the principal factors underlying the dynamism witnessed in the construction and banking sectors. Estimates indicate that, if it weren't for the existence of Arab money in Lebanon, the average growth rate in the Lebanese economy – which has reached seven per cent over five years – would have fallen by half.

In face of this near total economic integration in the Arab world, Lebanese isolationism has ruled out any political integration in regional conflicts.

Before the arrival of the Palestinian resistance movement, the sectarian political system was able to safeguard the country's isolation. It could effectively *absorb* external Arab developments, while placing itself firmly outside the framework of fierce conflict witnessed by the region during the rise and spread of the Arab national liberation movement. In spite of the notorious events of 1958 following unification of Egypt and Syria, Lebanon's political system managed to assimilate the crisis and return, unharmed, to its established sectarian balance.

The existing political system was formed on the basis of sectarian compromise between the Christian and Muslim bourgeoisies, as well as the sectarian leaders of political feudalism; such a compromise safeguarded the expansion of burgeoning commercial and economic interests. What was called the 'Arab front' allowed for economic cooperation with the Arab world, while what was known as the 'Lebanese entity' ensured isolation and the protection of domestic affairs from external regional developments.

During the first stage of the crisis, up until 1967, before the arrival of the Palestinian resistance movement in Lebanon, the external Arab 'actor' represented by the Arab Liberation Movement entered the country in the midst of this prevailing sectarian balance. Yet the Lebanese bourgeoisie, and political feudalism, which were at the forefront of the Lebanese National Movement, were able to adapt to this Arab nationalist wave, and the Arab Liberation Movement continued to be an external rather than internal issue. That is to say, this movement was not able to affect the established internal balance within Lebanon, particularly while the Palestinian issue remained

dormant. It wasn't difficult then for the 'nationalist leaders' of the time to slot the Lebanese national movement and its relationship with the Arab liberation movement into the framework of existing, long-standing power balances.

As such, the Lebanese political system was able to assimilate the developments on the 'Arab front' into the heart of its internal balance, and continued to do so up until the arrival of the Palestinian resistance movement on Lebanese soil.

After 1967, and following the inception of the Palestinian resistance movement, the Lebanese crisis began to surface. For this time, the barrier of isolation erected by the state was incapable of preventing the internal, organic interaction between the Palestinian Liberation Movement and the Lebanese National Movement. The nationalist challenge was now being played out within the country, along its frontiers and with the Zionist entity. And so began the fundamental contradiction in Lebanon's affairs: the total, or near total, economic integration in the Arab world, coupled with a political system making every effort to maintain Lebanon's isolation from Arab political developments through its established sectarian balance. The Lebanese government's relationship with the risk of Zionist expansion to Lebanese territory – more specifically, the South – was testament to the fact that this contradiction was now playing out *within* Lebanese affairs.

While economic interests were centred in the country's capital, the South lay neglected and impoverished, with political feudalism having turned it into something of an open prison. In contrast to the militarily powerful and economically developed Israeli colonisers, outlying southern villages were found to be underdeveloped, deserted, unarmed and unfortified.

The Lebanese political system was prospering in the capital and stagnating in the South; democracy reigned in the capital while dictatorship ruled in the South and along the borders. The South, therefore, has been the real witness to Lebanon's contradiction; this is where the political and social crisis really existed, and where the 'deprived'² were really found. The villager, the farmer, the labourer – they were impoverished and disadvantaged, and completely neglected by the state.

Such conditions in the Lebanese South had no need for the ambitions of Zionist expansionism; yet its underdevelopment, its poverty and its fragility

² Refers to Imam Musa al-Sadr's movement to seek justice for the economically disadvantaged ('the deprived') of Lebanon.

were themselves appealing to Israel – now present along Lebanon’s borders – which sought to expand further into Lebanese waters and territory. Israel did not occupy the South for trivial reasons; rather, it held out for the best opportunity to realise its ambitions in the Litani River and the South.

The national and economic crisis of the South preceded the presence of the Palestinian resistance movement. Everything that the South was ‘waiting for’ was for the resistance to arrive, expose the crisis and spur on its political wakefulness, its mobilisation and the growth of the new, live, latent strength within it which, up until that point, had been suppressed, intimidated and restrained.

So Israel’s hostilities on the border and outlying villages began, and the contradiction was exposed. Lebanese isolationism allowed Lebanon to enter neither the national struggle nor the shared Arab struggle against Israel. Lebanon remained continually weak militarily, and strived to remove itself from the arena of conflict during the systematic Arab wars against Israel (in the years 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973). If these wars remained outside Lebanese soil, the war of Palestinian resistance would remain within the country and on the borders. Was Lebanon becoming Arab, that is to say, engaged in the struggle, or was it neutral, fragile, powerless, friendless? This was the challenge which the Palestinian presence unleashed on Lebanese soil. The response of Lebanese isolationism was: ‘Lebanon’s strength lies in its weakness – foreign safeguards, the international police, and so on’.

Of all the isolationist forces, the Kataeb party was the most relentless, the most insistent on isolation, on the rejection of Palestinian presence and on the refusal to give Lebanon any active responsibility in the Israeli-Arab struggle. The Kataeb party, since the inception of the Resistance, had displayed open hostility towards the presence of Palestinians. What most frightened the Lebanese isolationist forces regarding Palestinian resistance was the exposure of this contradiction in Lebanese affairs. Economically, Lebanon was living in the heart of the Arab world; politically, it was refusing to be a part of it.

The ‘Kataeb hatred’ towards Palestinians ignited with a continuous, escalating mobilisation. The Ain al-Rammaneh incident, also known as the Bus Massacre, was not actually the first incident of its kind – a number of clashes had preceded it. But the continuous mobilisation against Palestinian presence reflected the fear of Lebanese isolationist forces that its situation would be exposed and the Lebanese contradiction laid bare. What most frightened them was the inability of the traditional sectarian framework to absorb the ‘Arab actor’ as it had done in the previous period (namely during

the events of 1958). The Arab actor, this time, was the Palestinian cause, which had become an internal issue in Lebanon, and had become a part of its mass make-up itself.

The traditional balance shifted; the crisis was exposed, the contradiction laid bare.

This is what the Kataeb party asserted when it began to place the responsibility for the loss of the previous traditional balance on the Palestinian revolution.

Al-Amal newspaper stated the following:

'Prior to this, Lebanese people, despite their time-honoured differences considered an incontrovertible fact, had managed their affairs together. A bit of leniency on both sides would level out the situation and ensure balance. It would also ensure, for the government, relative popular satisfaction and would mean its rhetoric and decisions could be accepted by the two sides, rather than them being refused by one side and accepted by the other. And this is how it was until the Palestinian revolution began, which adopted Lebanon as its base. Just as Sheikh Pierre Gemayel said: "The whole of Palestine has awoken, both physically and spiritually, in Lebanon". Irrespective of whether the Palestinian presence, as it exists today, is beneficial or harmful, organised or chaotic, it has nonetheless triggered disruption in the life and traditional balance of Lebanon.'

So the reason for the 'Kataeb hatred' towards the Palestinian presence was this disruption of the traditional balance. Yet the party would rather not know that the traditional balance in Lebanon is not an everlasting phenomenon, that Lebanon cannot remain frozen in time. If Palestinian presence helped *expose* the contradiction in the Lebanese situation, this contradiction was not a 'Palestinian' one, and was not created by the Palestinian resistance; rather, it came from the nature of the *Lebanese* presence itself. There is no doubt that it would have been revealed and laid bare with or without Palestinian presence. The Lebanese South – underdeveloped, fragile, impoverished, oppressed and imprisoned – could not remain that way forever, safeguarding the traditional balance; meanwhile Zionism could not look at it from afar without drawing closer and fulfilling its expansionist greed in the South's land and seas. Yet the Kataeb party knows nothing but the Lebanon of the past. It does not realise that Lebanon is like any country in the world, and that the Lebanese government is like any government in the world; it has to be exposed to developments and contradictions, it has to evolve during the struggle between new, popular powers and those of exploitation and underdevelopment. This *Lebanese* struggle is the basis and the origin. The blessing of the Palestinian presence on Lebanese soil was that it exposed, sped up and helped to release this struggle.

In light of this understanding of the Lebanese situation, the backdrop to the recent bloody conflict launched by the Kataeb party against the resistance is made clear. It wanted to return Lebanon to the past, to the time when its traditional balance prevailed, to the suppression of its contradictions, to the control of the powers of feudalism, underdevelopment and exploitation over the country. It is under the delusion that if it were not for the Palestinian presence, Lebanon would be in perfect shape. Therefore, it became even more isolated and isolationist, more zealous and sectarian, and its fear for the Lebanon of the past increased. Meanwhile, the new, popular, progressive and nationalist powers look towards the new Lebanon – Arab, liberal, democratic and nationalist.

The various clashes which have taken place with the Palestinian resistance ever since its inception on Lebanese soil were an attempt by the governing class, on a number of levels, to prevent this new interaction that took place in Lebanon between the 'Arab actor' and the internal Lebanese contradiction.

At the start, the government itself tested out this conflict in the South, when the Lebanese forces surrounded a group of Fedayeen in the village of Majdal Silm. On the back of this, huge national protests broke out in Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli, among other cities and villages, organised by the Lebanese national and progressive movements. During the bloody protest of 23 April 1969, many Lebanese were martyred protecting the freedom of the Palestinian resistance. In the wake of this bloody protest, the government of Rashid Karami – under the presidency of Charles Helou – resigned, and upon his resignation a long political crisis began, continuing for around seven months until an agreement was drawn up about a framework for Lebanese-Palestinian interactions. This agreement was known as the Cairo Agreement, and it laid out in detail the nature of Lebanese-Palestinian relations. The reaching of the Cairo Agreement had been completed on the strength of the Lebanese nationalist and progressive movements and their struggle. That is to say, it was the result of the internal Lebanese actor more than it was the result of a military battle. At that point, the Kataeb party had no choice but to recognise this fact when it said:

'We preferred the evil of Israeli hostilities to the evil of internal fighting, the latter of which is without equal. Lebanon is not destroyed from outside forces, but rather through favouring its national will, and on that day it was at its lowest! As for the Palestinian presence, it did not require an agreement, because it was a reality which also could not be removed except through civil war'.

This realistic recognition at that time by the Kataeb party in 1969, and this comparison between 'the evil of Israeli hostilities' and 'the evil of internal fighting', did not last long, since the Kataeb party began, especially in the recent period, to raise the issue of the Cairo agreement in order to dissolve it, and began to favour 'the evil of internal fighting' over 'the evil of Israeli hostilities'. We will see in the progress of this study, the reasons for this transformation in the Kataeb party's outlook.

The second 'run through' of the conflict took place when Lebanese forces clashed with the Fedayeen in the centre of the city. The bloody events of May 1973 came a few months before the Yom Kippur War. And these events confirmed the impossibility of eliminating the resistance militarily; as for the internal political results of the events, they were the strongest and most effective. Greater interaction between the Lebanese national movement and the Palestinian resistance reached the point of political and military cohesion. In terms of economic outcomes, the country witnessed huge losses, decline, and rigidity in Egyptian trade and the tourism industry. The Lebanese economy is characterised by its strong sensitivity towards any internal agitation, particularly since its Arab relations across the border are the basis of its growth and prosperity. The national measure adopted by Syria during the events of May, namely the locking of the Lebanese-Syrian borders, held great weight in the exposure of the Lebanese contradiction right up till the end. And so the crisis of Lebanon's economic relations had begun in the Arab world; it confirmed, on a practical level, the impossibility of Lebanese isolation, and exposed the contradiction between Lebanese-Arab economic interaction and political isolation. Across the Lebanese-Syrian borders, Lebanon is connected to a network of land transportation with 'the Arab interior' in the Gulf and the Arabian peninsula, and transit operations and goods transportation were carried out across this network, alongside the rising exportation of Lebanese industrial production. Cheap economic labour was also entering the country from Syria (around 120,000 people); if it were not for this labour force – as the Lebanese economist recognised – 'labour expenses would have increased tremendously, and the building and industry sectors would not have been able to grow as quickly as they did.'

It is undeniable that, economically, Lebanon was surviving through its Arab relations, and that it was impossible to become truly politically isolated, and that it was impossible, too, to resist the Palestinian resistance as had happened in Jordan during Black September. Israel would always demand that Lebanon acted like Jordan, and a little while before the recent incidents, Shimon Peres, Israel's Defence Minister, said the following: 'Jordan

understood the message of 1970. It is now up to Lebanon to understand and draw conclusions from it’.

Yet, for a host of reasons, Lebanon is not Jordan. Likewise, the resistance of 1975 is very different from the resistance of 1970.

Perhaps one of the most important reasons why Lebanon is not like Jordan relates to its economic position. For Lebanon could not handle Arab isolation as Jordan could following Black September. In its budget, Jordan relied far more on ‘foreign aid’ than on relations with other Arab countries. Nevertheless, the Hashimite government paid a high political price for Black September. Arab isolation wound up at Rabat’s decision to recognise the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.³ That September, the Hashimite regime won militarily, but it subsequently suffered a political defeat when the PLO was able to realise its Arab and global victory in recognition of it and of the Palestinian people.

After these political victories and the Arab and global recognition of the PLO, opposition to the Palestinian presence in Lebanon became impossible politically, just as it had been impossible economically, just as it had been militarily!

After the Yom Kippur War, this impossibility was made clear to Lebanon’s governing forces, and the Lebanese-Palestinian relations began to settle and take on new, positive shape at a government level. The most prominent expression of this was what was said by the Lebanese president at the UN convention, in the name of all Arabs regarding the Palestinian cause.

Yet this genuine impossibility was not accepted by the Kataeb party. Like any right-wing, fascist party, it is unable to swiftly process historical developments. Rather, it stubbornly resists history, fights its development and works to turn back the hands of time. Since Lebanese-Palestinian relations settled on the level of leadership, along with the Kataeb party power-sharing in government, the issues of Palestinian presence and nullifying the Cairo agreement were raised.

The social crisis and internal struggle

³ It was in the 1974 Arab League summit, convened in Rabat, Morocco, that this resolution was passed.

But what are the true reasons for the 'rogue' Kataeb position? Here the impact of the second and fundamental contradiction in the Lebanese condition is revealed: the social crisis and the internal struggle; for the Kataeb party, by its very nature, is a right-wing, fascist party which found in the development of the social struggle over the last few years, and particularly over the last two, a risk to itself and to its ideas and ideology. The social crisis had begun to generate a new qualitative development in the internal struggle in Lebanon along the following lines:

1. The growth and flourishing of the Lebanese progressive movement and its prominence politically and in terms of leadership of the national movement as a replacement for the traditional leaderships
2. The influence of the rules of the Kataeb party on the social and economic crisis, which forced the party to search for solutions to what it itself called the crisis of the middle class, recognising that Lebanon relies on this class and that the decline and decrease in their standard of living was an intolerable catastrophe threatening Lebanon with fateful consequences. The Kataeb party could not reach any economic or social solution. It saw this decline for itself, which increased its fanaticism, its isolationism and its fascism; and its command began to turn its attention to 'the Palestinian risk' as a compensation for [dealing with] the social and economic crisis.
3. A deep political crisis represented in the shrinking of the role of traditional politicians and their inability to form a complete national government with an economic and social program. Even the Lebanon bourgeoisie started to complain about the ineffectiveness of the authorities and the incapacity of the administration to take in hand the developments of the Arab situation and the flow of Arab oil surpluses. This was in addition to as the exacerbation of the internal struggles between the traditional leaders and their inability to coexistence peacefully with one another.
- 4.

The upshot of all that was a political void which frightened the political right. These qualitative developments in the internal Lebanese situation – which had resulted from the inherently Lebanese contradictions – brought the social and political struggle in Lebanon to a new stage of tension, sharpness and violence. This new stage took on different forms and expressions on a number of social and political levels. Over the last year, Lebanon has witnessed a number of labour and student strikes and violent social disturbances. The wave of price rises added to the exacerbation of the social and economic crisis and encouraged more social forces to get involved in the political and social struggle.

In the face of this new reality, the Kataeb party itself was incapable of seeing the reality of internal developments. It was still stuck in the same framework: fixed on the idea of an isolated Lebanon, on the idea that the Lebanese government was the greatest government, on the prosperity that permeated all Lebanese people, and on the established sectarian balance. When it came to find that all that had started to be damaged and altered, it lost its political sense, and experienced a serious backlash to these developments. (This, incidentally, is what has historically tended to happen with right-wing parties and organisations, so they revert, faced with this social crisis, to a violent fascism which attempts to put a stop to the political and social struggle with force, violence and terrorism.)

Unable to understand these developments, the Kataeb party began to hold the Palestinian presence responsible. If it had not been for the Palestinian presence, Lebanon would be in a better state... If it were not for the Palestinian presence, the global left would not have invaded our country – as the newspaper 'Al-Amal' said. So Lebanon lost its established [sectarian] balance. And it had to return to this balance!

In this way, the Kataeb party found the solution! The Palestinian presence was both the reason and the excuse – the excuse of all excuses. So an ongoing campaign by the party against the Palestinian presence began, just as they began to arm itself intensively and give military training to members of its militia. This mobilisation made it clear that the party was preparing for an orchestrated conflict with Palestinian resistance.

The bloody Ain al-Rammaneh incident against the Palestinians took place. This incident failed militarily and politically, yet the Kataeb party continued, on the strength of its adverse reactions to the qualitative developments in the Lebanese internal struggle, to become more fanatical and isolationist, and to reflect all that against the Palestinian presence, and in its hatred towards the Palestinian people.

This is the 'Kataeb escape' from the Lebanese crisis. It responded to the economic and social crisis by orchestrating armed struggle against the Palestinian resistance.

An economic magazine quotes part of a report which an official within Lebanese administrative apparatus passed to a high-ranking official within the government. The report stated: 'Those who blew up the majority of the economic and commercial institutions do not belong to any Palestinian or Fedayeen organisation. The vast majority of them are Lebanese people who

have Lebanese citizenship and carry ID cards with a sequence number, which prove the plurality of their sectarian affiliations. Few of those who participated in the guerrilla operations are non-Lebanese. All of them are poor with limited means. A significant portion of them belong to Lebanese organisations which believe in revolutionary violence and are attracted by their applied methods in wars of class liberation, and steadfastly believe in the corruption of the economic system which does not provide them with the livelihood they desire and which they see as the root cause of all its ills and the sources of all its complaints.'

The magazine also quoted the belief of some enlightened economists: 'It is their belief that, if there was not a Palestinian problem and a Palestinian presence on Lebanese soil, and the accumulating factors and circumstances since independence had remained the same, the conflict would still have happened. It would not necessarily have been between the Kataeb party and another party, but rather between two other Lebanese parties. The two parties did not need to search for a guise for their struggle. There are a number of guises in Lebanon.'

Despite the method and style of the report, the aforementioned truths – namely that a significant number of participants in the response to the Ain al-Rammaneh incident were Lebanese – confirmed the reality of the heated internal conflict. This conflict was the inevitable result of the Lebanese contradictions on a social and economic level. Palestinian resistance was of course not responsible for these contradiction, nor for their violent exposure; this exposure was related to the intensity of the Lebanese social crisis itself. Yet the Palestinian presence helped to uncover the crisis further. And the Kataeb party, when it searched for a solution outside the Lebanese framework, it found nothing but the Palestinian presence. More precisely, it shifted the battle, and people's attention, from its social framework to a conflict with the Palestinian resistance. Its means, methods and mobilisation in this campaign were distinctly sectarian. In the face of internal developments it could do nothing but fall back on the sectarian balance. It took refuge in sectarian and isolationist fanaticism as a way to protect itself from the effects of the social crisis, and to protect the Lebanese regime from the remnants and result of the internal social struggle. And in this position, the Kataeb party contradicted itself. On the one hand, it kindled sectarian zeal, and on the other it demanded the return of rival sectarian leaders to the centre of leadership, which they had lost by virtue of the developments that had taken place. It effectively gave them back leadership of 'the national street', which they lost influence over, given instead to the 'broken left'. This 'Kataebi logic' is no joke; the Kataeb party saw nothing in Lebanon but this

sectarian edge, and it demanded its continuity in its opposition to the ongoing developments. It also demanded it in its opposition to the emergence of new currents in the Lebanese Christian milieu itself, those which disregarded the social cause and fatefully interacted with the Palestinian one. Sectarianism was the weapon of the Kataeb party in its final clash with the resistance. Yet this weapon – if it doesn't succeed in a temporary and relative way – is unable to continue, and so the qualitative developments themselves which Lebanon is exposed to, would gradually force its permanent end. In its clash with the resistance, the Kataeb party opened the door of the Lebanese crisis to its combatants. It tried to focus the crisis on one issue only, raising the question of the Palestinian issue and looking again to the Cairo agreement. Yet this attempt was destined to fail, since the Lebanese/Palestinian relations was settled decisively with the formula of the Cairo agreement. This stability was protected, on the one hand, by the strength of the Lebanese national movement, and on the other, by the strength of the Palestinian resistance, both politically and militarily.

The only possible solution is in recognising the reality of the crisis and, by extension, the inherently *Lebanese* social crisis.

This recognition gradually increased in supporters and strength, from a number of different intellectual and political streams.

It is on the basis of this that the Lebanese national and progressive movement has put forward its democratic and social program, and fights for its implementation, confirming first and foremost the protection of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon from any plot it is exposed to. It connects its democratic and national fight with the strengthening of Lebanese-Palestinian relations and finally their consolidation. So with that alone, Lebanon can avoid the evil of 'internal fighting' and turn to its internal problems and causes to solve them on a democratic basis.