

Overseas Lebanese resistance formed

by Odile Mojon

In Lebanon, in France, and in many other countries, a resistance against the Syrian occupation is becoming organized. Lebanon is currently governed by Syrian puppet President Elias Hrawi, whose regime was secured in power exactly one year ago, when the Syrian Armed Forces conducted a crushing assault against the patriotic forces of Gen. Michel Aoun, Lebanon's rightful President. Aoun was forced to seek asylum in the French embassy in Beirut, where he remained until Aug. 30 of this year, when he left Lebanon for exile in France.

The Syrian intervention was given the green light by the Taif Accords of October 1989, in which the Arab League—backed by the U.S. State Department—met with selected Lebanese politicians in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and got them to agree to neutralize any opposition to Syrian political and military domination.

Odile Mojon, correspondent for the French weekly Nouvelle Solidarité attended a press conference in Paris of the World Front for the Freedom of Lebanon. Her report follows.

The first World Congress for the Freedom of Lebanon was held in Paris Sept. 28-30, bringing together Lebanese from 10 countries. On Oct. 1, Robert Azzam presented the conclusions reached during the three days of debate at a press conference at the Hotel Hilton, which gave birth to the World Front for the Freedom of Lebanon (FMLL), which will be based in Paris, with Mr. Azzam as secretary general.

Beginning by stating the fact that the Lebanese press is presently a muzzled press, Mr. Azzam called on the journalists attending and the French media as a whole to take up the cause of truth. In effect, officially, the case of Lebanon has been pigeon-holed: The Taif Accords have brought peace, and without doubt, soon there will be prosperity in Lebanon! On the ground, and in the hearts of Lebanese (and of those Frenchmen who know how Lebanon was sold out), the reality is quite something else. It is clear that these accords are, in fact, a legitimization of a police state, and the so-called peace bears a strange resemblance to what the Nazi occupation imposed in France during 1942, when, there, too, the theaters reopened their doors, the daily pace of life returned full force—while members of the Resistance were being shot or tortured.

Disappearances, torture

The Syrian-backed regime was installed thanks to its manifold intelligence networks, which allowed it to track, one by one, opponents of the regime. A large number of persons have already disappeared, including children, and it is known that other persons, among them women, have been tortured. But the Syrian regime was imposed also thanks to daily coercion: Anyone who honks his horn to acknowledge General Aoun—and there are many—risks six months in prison.

The Front draws its legitimacy from the massive opposition by the Lebanese population to the Syrian regime, and from the illegitimacy of the present Lebanese government, elected under unacceptable conditions. The Front only recognizes as a legitimate government of Lebanon the government of General Aoun, and is fully aware that one part of the Lebanon drama comes from how an old political and mercenary caste was, and continues to be, abundantly used to impose policies made in a foreign laboratory.

How the Front was formed

The origin of the Front dates back to the increasing awareness by a large part of the Lebanese diaspora four months ago, that internal resistance would be excessively difficult, and to the desire to see created a fighting and active institution. That is how the idea and the necessity to regroup the Lebanese diaspora into an organized movement for the liberation of Lebanon became concretized. Basing itself on the right of peoples to self-determination, the Front demands the immediate withdrawal of the occupation forces as the prerequisite to free elections.

Camille Harb, an attorney from Belgium, has shown how the resolutions of the United Nations demanding the withdrawal of Syrian and Israeli occupation forces from Lebanon were exactly the same as the resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, and how the international community has so well protected itself from doing anything whatever about those having to do with the Lebanese situation.

The Front does not wish to become a political organization, but an organization that fights for fundamental rights, without distinction of religion, and fighting to preserve, whatever the cost, this ecumenical character of Lebanon, which is its true strength. Activity planned bears largely on information, on legal action, and on lobbying international institutions. Two offices were created and will soon begin service: an information and communications office and a human rights office. Representatives of the leading Lebanese communities living in 10 countries were present at the gathering, and in the coming months we expect to see the Lebanese communities in other countries, such as Brazil, Sweden, and Nigeria, joining up with those of France, Belgium, the United States, Venezuela, Australia, Greece, Italy, Canada, Great Britain, and the republics of the former Soviet Union.