

War of Attrition on Beirut Camps

The Amal Movement has not let up its attempts to destroy the security situation in the Palestinian camps near Beirut. After instigating a near war in the Burj al Barajneh camp in September, it also sparked clashes in the Sabra and Shatila camps. At exactly 1:30 pm on the 7th of October 1985, Amal killed a Palestinian in Shatila camp which inevitably sparked off serious fighting, the intensity of which spread also to the Sabra camp. The Amal Movement used heavy artillery: B 7 missiles, mortars (60 mm) and heavy machineguns. Although a ceasefire was agreed to at 3 p.m. on the same day, Amal did not abide by it. Efforts to stop the fighting did not cease, however, and 6 hours later another ceasefire was agreed to, after the camps suffered two martyrs and 26 wounded.

The tenseness of the atmosphere was not diminished on the following day. Amal militiamen prohibited anyone from entering or leaving the camps and set up checkpoints in Sabra and the Da'ouk area. Homes of civilians in the Farhat and Hoursh areas were burned.

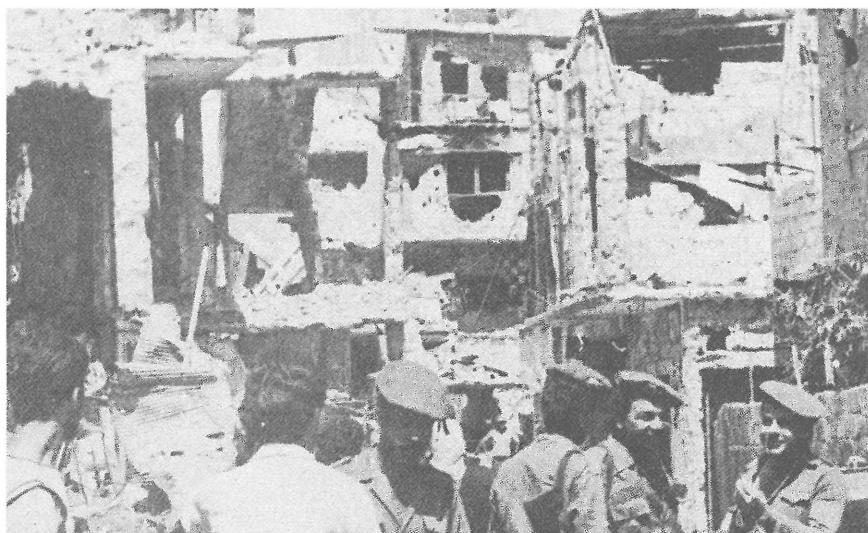
The continuous violations of agreements on the part of Amal plus their constant instigation of clashes only goes to cast doubt on how serious they are about abiding by the Damascus agreement with regard to the camp question. Ever since the signing of the Damascus agreement on June 17th, the Amal Movement has continually tried to hinder rebuilding the camps. Sparking off clashes is one of the ways it reverts to, to discourage rebuilding, hoping that the Palestinians will be demoralized by the hardships and leave the camps. This would facilitate the defeat of the Palestinian camps in a forthcoming attack being prepared for.

In this context, the claims that Amal makes every time it instigates a clash are only a repetition of former ones and an underscoring of its intentions to continue in the same trend. Amal claimed that the massacres of Haret Hreik and clashes in Bourj al Barajneh were isolated incidents. However, it took no step to put an end to these violations. Amal also claimed that the fighting in Shatila and Sabra was caused by internal Palestinian differences despite the fact that its role in the conflict was common knowledge. In addition to this, Amal has

created a ceasefire line around the Palestinian camps from which it continually initiates its attacks on the inhabitants.

All of Amal's violations of the Damascus agreement jeopardize this agreement and threaten to increase Lebanese and Palestinian bloodshed. Moreover, this only goes to intensify the crisis of the Lebanese and Palestinian

liberation movements, wasting potentials which would be better used directed against the Zionist enemy and imperialism and Lebanese fascism as well as the deviationist trend in the Palestinian arena. We are justified, therefore, in doubting the slogans raised by many of the forces who call for the necessity of fighting the Arafat trend, because confrontation of this trend does not come about by striking the Palestinian forces who oppose it. ●



Shatila camp after an Amal attack in early October

Who Will «Clean» West Beirut?

After the fighting ended in Tripoli, North Lebanon, news began to circulate about a forthcoming military campaign in West Beirut, its southern quarters and the adjacent Palestinian refugee camps. According to the right-wing Beirut daily *Al Nahar* on October 19th, the purpose of this campaign is «cleaning West Beirut of the chaos of arms and fighters and establishing the basis for a stable security situation... This task will be carried out by the fighters of the National Unity Front, according to a studied military plan. This is the front which was formed from most of the Lebanese left-wing and nationalist parties and the Amal Movement under the guardianship of Syria.» *Al Nahar* emphasized that according to well-informed political sources, this campaign will certainly include the Palestinian camps and might be carried out by «some Palestinian and Lebanese forces if the situation so requires.» The article goes on to say: «In any case, the plans

for this campaign have already been approved whether they are to be implemented now or in the future.»

On the timing of the «clean-up campaign», the newspaper said: «In addition to the rumors spreading, the information circulating indicates that the coming days will witness the beginning of this campaign.» Another question is raised dealing with the timing of the entry of the Syrian army into the areas which are to be «cleaned»: «Will the Syrian army enter after the campaign has been completed or shortly before?» On the goal and place of entry of the Syrian forces, *Al Nahar* of October 20th, quotes a member of the tripartite meetings between the Lebanese Forces, Amal Movement, and the Progressive Socialist Party as saying, «It is limited to the areas whose complicated security situation requires (such entry)...» The aim of this entry is to gather arms from the Palestinians because «collecting (arms) from