

turned the full force of collective punishment on the southern population. The village of Shaqra, just outside the 'security zone', was a particularly grim example of the methods employed. From the first day of the invasion, this village was besieged. Israeli troops and SLA thugs entered and herded all the men into the schoolyard for questioning. Here they stayed until nightfall, while homes were searched. The invaders destroyed the food supplies which the UNIFIL troops tried to send in to the villagers.

Then, on the fifth day of the invasion, February 21st, Shaqra was again surrounded by two rings of invading troops - Israeli on the outside and SLA inside. All the villagers, including women and down to a day-old baby, were locked in the schoolyard. People were interrogated, in fact tortured, in two classrooms. Many sustained serious injuries and later had to be hospitalized from beatings, having chairs broken on their backs, being stomped on, burned with cigarettes, and jabbed in the ear with nails. One man's penis was burned with a cigarette lighter.

According to a story filed from the area, youth were taken to the nearby pond: «They said they were thrown into it and then, dripping wet and their hands tied behind their backs, were made to lie until dawn on the floor of an unfinished shop» (*Guardian*, Feb. 24). Fifty-five men and six women, one of them pregnant, were taken away by the Zionist troops; three houses were dynamited and many others looted and wrecked; dozens of cars were stolen by the invaders.

Reuters and AFP reported how SLA thugs held a noose on the neck of a Shaqra shopkeeper, tightening it while questioning him, and hitting him when he tried to speak. A woman from Shaqra reported that she and her 18 year old daughter were subjected to electric shock. Another citizen had a metal compass, used for drawing circles on the school blackboard, stabbed into his ear. Mariam Majed, a 40 year old mother of eight, described her experience with the invaders: «They took my eldest son, snatched my gold bracelets and shot at my cows.» Many other southerners reported large-scale looting and the theft of their savings.

Interviewed in a hospital afterwards, the torture victims said that the interrogators had asked few questions about the missing Israeli soldiers, but demanded information on Amal and Hej-

bollah, showing that the main aim was to terrorize the people from supporting the anti-occupation resistance fighters. A 70 year old construction worker added to this thought: «If they cannot defend themselves, why make us suffer? They want us to be their policemen.»

Zionist miscalculations

Major general Ori Orr, Israeli army commander on the northern front, was initially quoted as saying that there were no time or geographical limits on the search operation. Yet the Zionists decided to halt the search without having found the two soldiers. Their claim that this was to avoid friction with the local population was only a face-saving lie. Much more than friction had already been provoked. The comment of an elderly woman in Srifa, a village shelled so heavily that the population and UNIFIL troops fled, indicates the southerners' mood: «I want to kill them. I will choke them with my hands, and I don't need a rifle.»

Meeting a people determined to resist, the Zionists had once more

New Fascist Elite Troops

When Samir Geagea rose to prominence last spring, he felt the need for more highly trained militiamen, and got the idea to establish an elite military school. The school is for university graduates only and is located in an ancient monastery at Ghosta, north of Beirut. Most of the instructors are former Lebanese Army officers. Their chief, Assad Abu Jaoude, says, «We want quality, not quantity. One thousand well-trained men can defeat thousands of disorganized rabble. The Israeli army started as a militia, and now it is one of the strongest in the world. We must do the same.» The school's location on the coast also raises thoughts of its being accessible to Israeli military experts who usually make their contacts to the East Beirut fascists on the northern coast (Junieh).

The school seeks to combine strict discipline with religious motivation: «At every stage we teach the recruits Christian history,» says Abu Jaoude. As usual, the Lebanese fascists are not above distorting the message of Christianity for their own purposes. One trainee's remark hints at how they are being taught this history: «We are suffering a Moslem invasion. So here we are taught that Christ lives within us, that we must fight for him.»

plunged themselves into the Lebanese quagmire of their own making. Actually, the situation that led to the new invasion had been in the making for some time. The turn of the year gave new evidence that the 1982 invasion and 2.5 years of occupation had not even fulfilled the slogan «Peace for the Galilee» which was the very minimum of what the Zionist leadership aspired to in Lebanon. In the week ending January 2nd, there were 14 Katyusha rockets that fell on northern 'Israel'.

In response to what the Israeli government would do about this situation Israeli War Minister Rabin said in a television interview: «I don't intend to repeat the mistake of entering Lebanon. Nor do I intend to return large forces into southern Lebanon.» Yet as he spoke, the Givati brigade (elite paratroopers) had recently ended three months of winter training with full-scale exercises in northern 'Israel'. There was «particular stress on landing from the sea and crossing water obstacles,» according to the commander (*Jerusalem Post*, January 10th), i.e., a rehearsal for invasion.

Another proof of Zionism's expansionist intentions in Lebanon came on February 1st; 35 square kilometers of land in the 'security zone' were annexed, surrounded by barbed wire and equipped with an electric alarm system and new fortifications. The same day, leaflets were dropped over Sidon. Signed by General Ori Orr, the message read: «Any cooperation with subversive Palestinian organizations will wreak destruction on your homes».

The February 1986 invasion will not be the last Zionist aggression against the Lebanese people and land. This aggression is an ongoing fact, especially in the 'security zone'. It does, however, serve to reemphasize that the Zionists cannot so easily resolve their Lebanese dilemma despite superior weaponry and willingness to resort to massive repression. As if to prove the point, the Zionist occupation troops' exit back to the 'security zone' was accompanied by more Katyushas falling in the Galilee. Within a week, another Israeli soldier had been killed in a resistance operation in the South. The Israelis responded with a new mini-invasion, searching villages while helicopter gunships strafed Kafra and Yater. The day before, Israeli army chief of staff Moshe Levy had said in reference to the February 17th invasion: «...We will do it again whenever anything of this sort happens.»

