

AMAL ADVANCE THWARTED

On Oct. 27th, Amal, with the help of Lebanese Army tanks, made an early morning attempt to advance on Rashidiya from the south, after long hours of shelling. They were heroically confronted by the Palestinians. Amal withdrew, leaving behind tens of dead. One Palestinian was martyred and another injured. Amal barbarically escalated the battle, from night until the morning. Once again, there was a meeting between the same forces, which issued a statement calling for a ceasefire, an end to the war of attrition on Rashidiya, and reaffirming the Palestinian demands for lifting the siege, releasing prisoners, etc. Moreover, the statement said that «all forms of internal fighting between allies should be brought to a halt in order to strengthen confrontation against imperialism, Zionism and reaction.» Amal agreed that all forces withdraw to their former posts, under the supervision of the Popular Liberation Army (of the Popular Nasserite Organization), on the condition that the PLA's task end immediately after the withdrawal process from all positions of tension is completed.

The very next day, right after the agreement was signed by all parties, the camp war continued. Amal shelled Rashidiya for hours. The buffer force was unable to take its positions because of Amal's continuous aggression, this time using Grad rockets. There were heavy casualties on both sides. On October 26 and 27th, Palestinian losses were three martyrs and six injured. On Oct. 28th, Amal advanced with bulldozers to open a passage from the

southeast of the camp. The confrontation caused the Palestinians three casualties. Reports from the camp said that Lebanese Army helicopters transported ammunition from Beirut to Amal in Tyre.

Amal continued its aggression all day on Oct. 29th. At 11 p.m. an urgent meeting was called in Mustafa Sa'ad's house. The meeting was attended by Walid Jumblatt of the Progressive Socialist Party, George Hawi of the Lebanese Communist Party, Asem Kanso of the Arab Socialist Baath Party, the PNSF delegation and Amal. An agreement was reached which did not differ in essence from the many previous ones. Once again Amal promised to abide by the agreement. Yet, the next day, Amal elements kidnapped three civilians at a crossroads outside Rashidiya. On Oct. 30th, Amal unleashed a heavy barrage of shelling on the camp and attempted to advance. Clashes ensued, causing six deaths. The Palestinians sabotaged Amal's bulldozer and forced them to withdraw.

A representative of the PNSF arrived in Tyre to meet with local cadres of Amal to discuss the situation, only to discover that they were greatly agitated; they were demanding: first, the surrender of all weapons from the camp; and second, postponing the arrival of the joint coordination committee to Tyre, as had been agreed in the last meeting, on the pretext that they needed time to bury their dead. It was, however, obvious that they needed more time to prepare for a new battle. Amal then ignited the war in Burj Al Barajneh camp in Beirut to delay the joint committee's arrival in Tyre, to supervise implementation of the last agreement. As expected, shelling broke out in Rashidiyah once again on

November 1st, and went on for several days, causing the Palestinians eight martyrs and six injured.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE WAR

As we go to press, the camp war remains unresolved. Yet whatever the outcome, the reasons for its eruption and continuation are already clear. Amal is determined to improve its share in the Lebanese cake. Due to the ideology and class nature of its leadership, Amal fails to see that the solution for the Shiite masses, historically the poorest of Lebanon's poor, is an end to sectarianism. Instead, Amal seeks to bolster its position within a slightly readjusted sectarian system, by carving out a Shiite canton in South Lebanon. To this end, it is working to eliminate any elements that might disturb the spread of its dominance, whether the Palestinian revolution, the Lebanese nationalist forces or even Hezbollah.

Amal's efforts to disarm the Palestinians coincide with the Israelis' military campaign against all nationalists in the South. Amal's attack on Rashidiyah is indirectly helping the Israelis to achieve their goal of liquidating the Palestinian revolution in Lebanon. Whether consciously or not, Amal is serving as a security force, to protect the Israeli border. For some factions of Amal, this is a deliberate policy aimed at gaining Zionist approval for Amal's dominance in the South.

The camp war in the South has regional implications as well. For its part, the right-wing PLO leadership is attempting to exploit the situation by making a show of military prowess to cover up the setbacks it has suffered in other fields. Ultimately, the quagmire of the camp wars will be used by the right wing to show that armed struggle is no longer viable for the Palestinians. Amal is using the right wing's activities and statements as an excuse for escalating the war, though the real reasons are those we have previously named. Ironically, while claiming to oppose Arafat's line, Amal is actually giving the right-wing excuses for continuing its deviating course. In the end, the PLO's wrong line and Amal attacks on the Palestinian camps, both play into the regional game where imperialism, Zionism and several Arab regimes have already agreed on the elimination of the PLO and the Palestinian role altogether.

However, the camp wars have also shown that the Palestinians are a force to be reckoned with. Far from falling prey to the regional game, Palestinian revolutionaries have closed ranks and heroically defended the camps and their right to bear arms. In the battle with Amal so far, the Palestinians have stayed on the defensive, fending off Amal's attacks. However, no one should expect the Palestinian revolution to remain with arms folded in the face of all these inhuman attacks on our masses and revolution.

Amal roadblock at the entrance to Rashidiya

