

abandon one piece of our arms. We are carrying arms in the camps, not to fight Amal or the Lebanese people, but to protect ourselves against hostile forces, to prevent another Sabra-Shatila massacre. We will keep on carrying arms even after the Lebanese resolve the Lebanese conflict, though I don't see any solution unless the Palestinian problem is also solved. I don't separate the two issues; the two causes are linked. The talk about a foreseeable agreement between the Lebanese factions and the establishment of a strong central government is just that - talk... As for the contention that the Palestinians want to settle in Lebanon or anywhere besides Palestine, this is not true. If that were true, why do we have hundreds and thousands of martyrs? Why do we teach our children to teach their children to continue carrying arms until Palestine is liberated?... Let everybody know that we don't accept settling in any land other than Palestine.»

Mr. Taysir was very pessimistic about the chances that the PLO leadership's policy will obtain any of the Palestinians' rights. He explained why: «Since the issue of a 'peaceful' settlement was declared, we've gained nothing but misery for our people. When the settlement issue was first raised, the PFLP rejected this, but our people were divided on the subject. When the issue of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza was raised, our masses asked: Then why are we also fighting in the part of Palestine occupied in 1948, where a good number of youth are joining the revolution? They said that if there is going to be this state, why are we killing our youngsters? The settlement which Sadat entered (Camp David) was based on the balance of forces at that time which, though unfavorable to us, was better than it is now. The PLO couldn't get anything then, so how can it get anything now, after the PLO leadership has switched its direction? This is not in favor of the Palestinians or the PLO's program.»

«King Hussein has gained a lot from the Amman accord and is now dividing functions with 'Israel'; PLO was dealt out of the game... As for Mubarak, he said he would not return his ambassador to 'Israel' unless 'Israel' withdraws from South Lebanon and recognizes the PLO. Now we can see that he has sent his ambassador back, before 'Israel' withdrew or recognized the PLO, which it will never do, even if the PLO leadership recognizes resolutions 242 and 338. On the contrary, the PLO leadership hasn't and couldn't get anything. Its policies have affected our people negatively, dividing them and weakening the PLO militarily and politically, on the Arab and international level. If the PLO were stronger and united, we wouldn't have to fight these camp wars, instead of fighting to liberate Palestine.»

Mr. Taysir warned against any

internal fighting in the camps: «Neither 'Israel' nor reactionary or sectarian forces managed to affect our unity. The PNSF must deal with this matter, regardless of what the rightist leadership has done, because Fatah's base in Lebanon, or elsewhere, is patriotic, though misguided...» He concluded with a few words to our readers outside the Arab world: «I thank all those who support our just cause. I thank all the organizations that have supported our clinics or hospitals, or have helped us on the political level. We ask support groups to explain our cause to the largest sector of their people...»

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

Abu Lu'ai is a resident of Bourj Al Barajneh and a teacher in Beirut. He is originally from Kwaikat, a town in the Acca district of Palestine. He spoke of the living conditions in Bourj Al Barajneh now: «In general, the living conditions have changed in so many ways after the camp war of 1985. Before, all the people had something outside the camp. Students attended school outside the camp. Workers had jobs in Beirut and its outskirts. After 1985, everything changed. Students could no longer leave the camp to go to school, and workers could not go to their jobs. There was discrimination between Lebanese and Palestinian workers. Many Palestinians were laid off and replaced by Lebanese. The social and economic conditions were worse than ever. Looking for a source of income became the most urgent task for everybody.»

«Most people took full-time work with the different resistance organizations for two reasons: first, because it is a source of income, and second, to enable the defense of their lives and the camps. However, this in itself also created certain problems. The main problem was that certain organizations recruited indiscriminately. Many people took full-time work in the resistance because of their need for money, not because of their convictions. A lot of the resistance's money is used for economic aid to people. Instead, I believe this money should be utilized to build projects to absorb the unemployed and stop the increasing immigration of our young people.»

«The Palestine National Salvation Front is the representative of our people in the camp. Unfortunately, there are many faults in its work. There are not enough field visits by the responsables. Maybe this is due to the political situation which is changing daily, but I believe that it is necessary to visit the ordinary people of the camp and discuss their living situation in order to solve some of their problems... The most positive role of the resistance was in the period after 1982, prior to 1985. Then there was correct revolutionary work; underground work is the most beneficial...»

«Of course, when there is danger, everyone will carry a gun and turn out to defend the camp, because the danger threatens the whole camp, not only certain houses or certain people. But the point is how to defend the camps? In 1969 (when the Lebanese army attacked the resistance and camps), all the fighters concealed their faces with their kofiyehs, because they knew there were informers among them. But now, fighters show off because everyone who carries a gun is labeled a hero. This is one of the reasons the students and workers are unable to leave the camp. Many of the fighters are politically immature, and there is too much talk about who is a fighter and who is not. This talk gets back to Amal. We have fighters who have not been able to leave the camp since 1985, because Amal detains and kills anyone who has carried a gun... What I mean to say is that recruitment should be done more carefully.»

Abu Lu'ai was adamant about the need for educational facilities. He said, «We have a big problem which is the lack of schools. The students cannot leave the camp to attend school because of Amal. Gradually, education will be eliminated if nothing is done. The youth of the camp have nothing to do when they cannot attend school. This leads many of them to hang around and take drugs or alcohol. In addition, many just stopped going to school and took full-time work with some organization, as a result of the economic situation. The organizations' political education for their members is not enough. They should try to open classes, so the students could resume their education.»

«UNRWA's services have diminished. They provide very few books or school supplies now. The main task of the Salvation Front now, in my opinion, should be following up with UNRWA the issue of reopening Sibleen vocational institute. It has been closed since 1982. Many young people attended this institute after finishing high school, because of the high costs of universities. Now our youth cannot leave the camp to finish their education at all, so it would be very important to reopen this institute. UNRWA does not provide food for the people of the camp on the pretext that they are out of money, but they are paying salaries of over 20,000 Lebanese pounds each to their foreign staff members.»

«At this stage, high school fees are over 7,000 Lebanese pounds per semester. Most families cannot send their children to high school. Therefore, I suggest that the Salvation Front work to open a high school in the camp, so that the 200 students who have finished grammar school can at least finish high school. The Salvation Front has opened a school in Sidon. We heard that it was the greatest service to the people there. Two other schools were opened in Tripoli and Tyre. We need such a project here, or at least