

The Camp War Continues

On December 27th, as this article was being written, fighting between Amal and the Palestinians in Lebanon was minimal «due to weather conditions,» as one news agency put it. Still, this dirty war did not stop. For over a year and a half, it has continued, halting occasionally as a result of a ceasefire agreement soon to be broken by the Amal gangs. Occasionally also, a thunderstorm temporarily halted the battles. Although this meant a rest period, it was little consolation since the besieged Palestinians in the camps had to suffer from the heavy rain in their devastated houses.

In the previous issue of *Democratic Palestine*, a full report was given of this ongoing dirty war against Palestinian presence, armed or otherwise, in Lebanon. Unfortunately, we find ourselves writing once again about this war of the camps. With the escalation of attack and siege by Amal and the sectarian Lebanese Army, the war moved northwards to Beirut, hitting Shatila and Burj Al Barajneh camps. This is a semi-daily account of the situation facing our people and fighters, projecting the severity of the dirty war.

SHATILA CAMP

Aggression intensified against Shatila after November 26th. It was obvious that Amal, along with the 6th and 1st brigades of the Lebanese Army, was determined to bring down Shatila, no matter the cost. From November 29th, there was heavy fighting around the camp. Amal and the 6th and 1st brigades intensified their attempts to destroy the camp entirely, using all the



Palestinian families taking refuge in Mar Elias camp

weapons in their arsenal: artillery, rockets, mortars, tanks, heavy machine guns, fire bombs, explosives, sniping rifles, etc. The Palestinian defenders fiercely resisted many attempts to storm the camp. Buildings inside and surrounding the camp were systematically targeted for destruction. That day, the attackers lost three tanks, two T-54s and one T-68.

On November 30th, the destructive shelling continued and more troops and tanks were concentrated around the camp. It was reported that 1,500 Lebanese Army soldiers and 400 Amal fighters were concentrated around the camp. This figure shows that the Lebanese Army with its heavy equip-

ment, especially tanks and artillery, is the principal force besieging the camp.

On December 1st, Amal and the Lebanese Army attempted to storm Shatila several times, but in vain. The officers of the two Lebanese Army brigades had to calm their soldiers by claiming that the camp had fallen militarily speaking, and that it would only take three or four days to finish the job. This was necessary because the army's losses were high, and the soldiers' morale low. That day the attackers lost four tanks. Needless to say, destruction in the camp was extensive due to the continuous shelling.

A message sent by the Popular Committee of Shatila described the situation inside the camp as follows: «The destruction of buildings continues; 60% of the camp has been destroyed in one week; 4,000 people inside are facing a housing problem. Most of the food supply is used up. What is available in the stocks of the Popular Committee and the resistance organizations is not enough. Water pipes are broken; there is no electricity except that from a few small generators. We face a problem with medicine which is most needed at this moment, especially with the large number of wounded people. The artillery, rocket and mortar shelling continues, along with heavy machine gun firing, against the camp...»

From December 4th until 9th, artillery and rocket shelling continued, along with heavy and light machine gunning; 70% of the camp is destroyed. Attempts to storm the camp continued, but were fiercely resisted, forcing the

Victims of the Shweifat massacre

