

Editorial

AMAL'S WAR ON THE CAMPS AIMS AT IMPOSING SECTARIAN SOLUTIONS IN ALL LEBANON

Facts are accumulating to indicate the true nature of the sectarian Amal movement and of the schemes it aims to implement in Lebanon. The most prominent indication is Amal's continuing war against the Palestinian people and revolution in Lebanon. Another major indication is the war unleashed by Amal against the Lebanese Communist Party and other patriotic forces in West Beirut. Still another indication is found in the statements of Israeli leaders about their contacts with Amal responsibles in South Lebanon, to encourage Amal to prevent any attacks against 'Israel' from the South. Clinton Bailey, a leading Israeli Arabist and responsible for contacts with Amal, has explained: «There are Shiite leaders in South Lebanon who realize that in the long run, they and we are natural allies to an extent because both of us want peace and stability in South Lebanon» (Newsweek, February 16, 1987).

What Amal has been doing against the Palestinian revolution and civilians in Lebanon can only be explained in one way: Amal wants to prove itself capable of preserving the security of 'Israel' from southern Lebanon. As a result, Amal would be assigned to represent the southerners without being challenged by the South Lebanese Army or any other Israeli proxies. Having achieved this, it would be easier for Amal's leadership to ask for more leading posts in the Lebanese state hierarchy, without any change in this state's sectarian nature. Clearly, fulfilling this aim of Amal would be at the expense of all the struggle and blood shed by Lebanese patriots for the sake of building a new, progressive Lebanon to replace the present unjust, sectarian system.

Amal's leaders, of course, say that they are fighting Yasir Arafat's men in order to prevent him from implementing his capitulationist policies using Lebanon as a base. It is insulting to human intelligence to listen to these claims, because even idiots know that the Palestinian revolution consists of factions other than that led by Arafat. By now, even idiots have become familiar with the fact that Amal's war against the Palestinian camps is directed against every living creature in these camps. For what other reason has Amal deprived the camps of food, water, and medical supplies for almost five consecutive months, while continuing, day and night, to shell and burn these camps?

Who in the world would believe that infants less than one year old are implementing «Arafat's capitulationist policies» and thus deserve to be starved to death by Amal's siege? What mind can understand or imagine the horror created by Amal in Palestinian mothers, which drives them to burn their children and themselves to avoid the slow death imposed by Amal's starvation of the camps?

After more than two months of siege against Rashidiya camp, the Palestinian fighters launched their operation in Maghdousheh, to defend the camps. From that time Amal has

said it will not lift the siege unless the Palestinian forces withdraw from Maghdousheh. When the Palestinians withdrew from Maghdousheh, Amal intensified its shelling of the camps and tightened the siege.

A few days ago, Amal launched a new, dirty war against the Lebanese Communist Party and other patriotic forces in West Beirut. Amal leader Nabih Berri did not hesitate to again use the timeworn pretext of 'Arafat'. Speaking from Damascus, he claimed that the reason for this offensive against the Lebanese communists was that their general secretary, George Hawi, had missed Arafat, and wanted to bring him back to Beirut! Berri's comment is so stupid that it doesn't deserve comment. However, what does require comment is the reason behind Amal's latest war against Lebanese patriots. It is significant that this war broke out immediately after the spread of rumors that a deal is being secretly prepared between the Phalangist President of Lebanon, Amin Gemayel, and the Amal leaders. For the Amal leaders to prove themselves capable partners to the fascists and their imperialist and Zionist masters, their militiamen had to 'clean' West Beirut of all patriotic forces, especially the Lebanese communists.

The specific reasons behind Amal's war on Lebanese patriots and progressives are the following: First, by dominating the western side of the capital, Amal aspires to become the decisive political power there, as the fascists did by spreading their hegemony over East Beirut. Second, Amal is striving to gain credibility in the eyes of the imperialists by fighting the communists and other anti-imperialist forces. This is a parallel to Amal's attempt to gain credibility in the eyes of the Zionists by fighting the Palestinians.

The question is whether Amal's leadership is aware of the lessons of history, most particularly in Lebanon. Are they aware of what the Zionists did when they were invited into Lebanon by the Phalangists? Didn't the Israelis arrange their occupation in Lebanon as they wanted, regardless of the Phalangists' ambitions? Didn't Begin summon Bashir Gemayel and demand that he sign a 'peace' treaty to legalize Israeli hegemony in Lebanon, even though Bashir felt this contradictory to his plans as president of Lebanon?

What will prevent the Zionist leadership from renegeing on their promises to Amal after the latter has done their dirty work for them? What will prevent US imperialism and the fascists in East Beirut from doing the same? Amal risks to be drained in its own dirty wars, and weakened to the point that it cannot impose its ambitions on its supposed partners. Most importantly, did the Amal leadership ask itself whether it is any longer accepted by any sector of the Lebanese patriotic masses? Amal's failure around the camps and in West Beirut generally provides the answer.

The disastrous results of Amal's attempts at hegemony, for Palestinians and Lebanese alike, only prove certain truths that were known in advance by the revolutionary forces. More than ever it is clear that the key to solving the Lebanese crisis, while simultaneously restoring Lebanese-Palestinian relations, is unity in struggle against the plans of imperialism, Zionism and the fascist forces. This requires Palestinian-Lebanese coordination, based on a clear nationalist program, for rebuilding Lebanon on a non-sectarian basis, while furthering the Palestinian struggle for a democratic state in Palestine.