

anon

Camps Still Besieged



Breaking the camps' resistance is a prelude to disarming the Palestinian people, depriving them not only of their right to join in the war against the Zionist enemy, but of their very right to existence. Thus, it is an illusion to believe that Amal intends to take comprehensive measures to lift the inhuman siege.

SHATILA IS STARVING

The camps of West Beirut paint a particularly bleak picture. Almost 85% of Shatila has been completely destroyed. The camp's population, about 3,000 Palestinians, is locked into an area of 100 meters by 150 meters, taking shelter in the remains of demolished structures which have lost the status of houses. The wounded have to be guarded from stray cats which find their way through the missile-riddled walls to lick the blood off a wound. Food has dwindled to the last bits, and meagre rations of gruel are now being allotted to children under 12 years of age. The rest have declared a period of self-imposed fasting, so as to save food for the children, old people and pregnant women. Of the many appeals for help made to regional and international organizations, the most recent call sent out by the inhabitants of Shatila is an indication of how desperate their situation is:

«We are starving to death. If we die, human conscience will die with us. The history of mankind has taught us that man can destroy and kill with bullets and missiles, but till now history has no record of a people being starved to death. Has mankind now decided to destroy us by starvation? We refuse to eat the flesh of our dead children, women and men. We will die of starvation first, and let human conscience die with us... Shatila... will be the first to testify to the degradation of human values and civilization, and the morals of mankind.»

Shatila is still heaving under Amal's merciless siege. From February 19th to mid-March, 24 women were wounded and two martyred in attempts to leave the camp to secure food supplies. Scores of others have been killed or wounded by indiscriminate shelling. At night, hand grenades are thrown regularly at the camp's entrance, to prevent people from attempting to buy supplies under the cover of darkness.

TERRORIZING WOMEN

Burj Al Barajneh is another dismal example of daily suffering at the hands

of the Amal gangs and their backers. Amal has formally agreed to allow women to leave and reenter the camp within a designated time period to buy food (9 a.m. to 12 noon). However, this time has turned into one harbouring terror and harassment for women. Incidents of women being wounded or killed by Amal militiamen at the camp's entrance, especially between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, have become daily fare. Between February 19th and 27th, a total of 31 Palestinian women were intentionally shot at by the Amal forces. Four of them died immediately while several of the wounded see no hope of survival because of lack of treatment. Those who fall close to the camp's premises are dragged to shelter; others are sometimes left unaided because sporadic outbursts of fire keep people away.

On February 28th, a comrade was shot dead in his tracks while trying to organize the women's exit from the camp to get food. Two women were also shot and left wounded in the chaos of fear and bullets. One of them later died of her wounds. The next day, after a number of women had - strangely enough - been allowed out, Amal and the Lebanese Army's 6th Brigade suddenly began heavy shelling of the camp at 9:12 a.m. An average of six missiles per minute bombarded Burj Al Barajneh. Women who had considered themselves lucky to get out of the camp were now trapped outside. They had to risk their lives dodging bullets while attempting to sneak back to their

Camp residents without food or security

