

wounded (three youths, one woman and an elderly man) had died due to lack of proper nourishment and medical treatment. Ten children, ranging in age from four months to one and a half years, had died from malnutrition. Forty-five other children were threatened with the same fate. No less a testimony to Amal's fascism was its refusal to let two children out of the camp to be treated for cancer.

It had become common to see people rummaging among heaps of garbage to find something edible that had been discarded by mistake. The approximately 40 wounded in Shatila's underground shelter had lost consciousness for lack of food, loss of blood or inability to withstand pain in the absence of painkillers. Doctors were forced to carry out many amputations without anaesthesia, an especially traumatic situation when a child was concerned. With no blood bags, no soap and no antiseptic stronger than boiled water, doctors were forced to perform surgery by candlelight, because there was no fuel left to run generators. People had begun to burn their furniture, doors and window frames for cooking and warmth. The mountains of garbage, clouds of insects, open sewage and polluted water only added to this impossible situation of death and disease. One Shatila resi-

dent voiced the thoughts of the thousands under siege: «Why can't any power in the world put a stop to this nightmare. We are on the verge of death.» A spokeswoman for the Shatila branch of the General Union of Palestinian Women said, «We die slowly and the whole world looks on.»

In March alone, 46 were wounded and 43 killed in Burj Al Barajneh. In Shatila, 63 were wounded and 25 killed. It is estimated that in Shatila, with a population of 3,000, approximately one-third of whom are under 15 years of age, one in every five persons was killed or wounded since the state of siege began on November 26th. Many have been wounded more than once, and many had to suffer amputations. In Burj Al Barajneh, with a population of 20-30,000, one in every fifteen persons was wounded or killed.

In the face of these atrocities, a broad protest campaign was launched, led by the besieged camp residents themselves. A hail of appeals from Palestinian organizations, the Shatila and Burj popular committees and the GUPW were forwarded to President Hafiz Al Asad, Col. Muammar Qaddafi, President Shadli Bin Jadeed, Democratic Yemen's President Haider Abu Baker Al Attas, the Secretary

General of the Arab League, the United Nations, the national and progressive Lebanese organizations and religious personalities, as well as to international women's organizations, especially the World Federation of Democratic Women.

Demonstrators, led by PNSF members, marched in Nahr Al Bared and Badawi camps in North Lebanon, protesting the siege and calling on the International Red Cross to intervene promptly to alleviate the suffering by evacuating the wounded and letting in supplies.

In Tripoli, Lebanon, popular committees held a sit-in in front of the ICRC headquarter, emphasizing the same demands. In southern Lebanon, representatives of eight Palestinian organizations and of the popular committees of Ain Al Hilweh, Miyeh Miyeh, Sidon, Al Kharoub region, the coastal area, Nabatiyeh and Tyre called a strike on March 31st, denouncing the siege of the camps. On April 1st, a massive demonstration was held in Ain Al Hilweh, organized by the PNSF committee. At the end of the demonstration, speeches were made in a school playground, condemning



Angry Palestinian women and children demonstrators protest siege of refugee camps in Beirut.

