

Initiative to End the Camp Wars

On the 9th anniversary of Imam Musa Sader's disappearance, the Amal movement held a rally in Baalbak, eastern Lebanon, on August 30th. In his speech, Amal's president Nabih Berri introduced a six-point initiative regarding the camp wars. The points of the initiative were:

1. Total withdrawal of all Palestinian forces from East Sidon (3 villages) to their original positions (before the camp war was ignited).

2. The Amal leadership and the Palestinian leadership will make joint visits to all the camps, starting with the Tyre area camps, to listen to complaints and meet demands immediately.

3. Establishing joint, unarmed liaison police units. In the Tyre area camps, these units will be composed of two members of Amal, two from the popular committees and two members of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces. In the Beirut camps, the two members of the Internal Security Forces will be replaced by two Syrian officers. The responsibilities of these units will be implementing the Damascus agreement (signed by the Salvation Front and Amal after the first camp war in 1985) and resolving any problems that may come up.

4. October 1st was set as the date that Palestinian students could go back to school.

5. November 1st was set as the date to begin rebuilding the camps.

6. Forming a higher leadership coordination committee centered in Beirut and composed of two members of Amal and the Front for Unification and Liberation, two members of the Palestinian popular committees and two Syrian officers. This committee will deal with all other issues related to the Palestinian resistance.

PLO RESPONSE

On September 1st, two days after Berri's declaration, the PLO welcomed this initiative as a positive step that would contribute to resolving the tragic conditions prevailing in the Palestinian camps for the past two years. The Palestinian leadership confirmed its readiness to begin a dialogue immediately in order to maintain Palestinian-Lebanese relations. The

PLO spokesman stated that the Palestinian National Work Leadership would take the necessary steps and contact the concerned parties, to reach practical results as soon as possible. (The Palestinian National Work Leadership was recently formed by the PLO to follow up on Palestinian affairs in Lebanon. It is headed by Salah Salah, politbureau member of the PFLP.)

AGREEMENT SIGNED

On September 11th, Musatafa Saad, head of the Popular Nasserite Organization in Sidon, chaired the second meeting between the delegation of the Front for Unification and Liberation and a unified Palestinian delegation. The causes of the destructive camp wars were discussed, as were the steps to be taken to end them, based on Berri's initiative.

The Palestinian delegation included: Isam Salem, the PLO chairman's personal representative in Lebanon; Salah Salah, PFLP politbureau member; Mamdouh Nofal, DFLP politbureau member; Abu Khaled, the Popular Struggle Front's responsible in Lebanon; Abu Imad Al Hassan, Al Saqiya; and Walid, Fatah-Revolutionary Council (Abu Nidal).

The delegation from the Front for Unification and Liberation included representatives from the Progressive Socialist Party, the Lebanese Communist Party, the Arab Democratic Party, the Arab Socialist Baath Party and the Amal movement.

After about four hours of discussion, the two delegations signed the following nine-point agreement:

1. condemning the resort to arms to resolve contradictions; democratic, brotherly dialogue as the only method for resolving differences within the nationalist ranks.
2. The Palestinians are committed to withdraw from all military positions in Ain Al Dulub, Qrayeh and Janasnayeh (East Sidon); they will withdraw to positions assigned by the Front for Unification and Liberation, from which they will confront the Zionist enemy and its agents.
3. ending all measures on both sides in order to enable the residents of the

camps and the surrounding areas to move freely and safely; starting the rebuilding of the camps and the Lebanese areas that were destroyed during the camp war; allowing all expelled Palestinians to return to their homes; and freeing all prisoners held by both sides.

4. Both sides will be committed to Mustafa Saad's statement concerning halting all military actions and propaganda campaigns against each other.

5. The two sides will form a central construction committee with subcommittees in different areas. Both sides appeal to the Arab League and all local, Arab and international humanitarian and social institutions to provide the needed material support for rebuilding the camps, and to establish a fund for this purpose.

6. The two sides will form joint committees in the Beirut and Sidon areas. In the Tyre area, the committee includes Amal and the Palestinian popular committees, with the participation of the Syrians. These committees will supervise ending the present military conditions, insuring freedom of movement for the camp residents, the return of the expelled to their homes and the entry of building materials. These committees will be convened as soon as possible to begin practical implementation of their duties.

7. The third meeting for the two sides will be held on September 18th in Mustafa Saad's home in Sidon.

8. Both sides confirm their intent to put forth the political and organizational basis needed to organize future militant relations between the two peoples, to enable them, along with the Syrians, to achieve their joint national goals in confronting the enemies of the Arab nation.

9. The Front for Unification and Liberation and the organizations of the Palestinian revolution express their appreciation of Syria's great efforts that contributed to reaching the agreement.

This agreement is positive in that it includes the major Palestinian organizations. The Palestinian side is deeply committed to this agreement as a means of ending the vicious cycle of camp wars. However, there have been many agreements before, and practice is the real test. One remains skeptical until all the terms of this agreement are implemented.