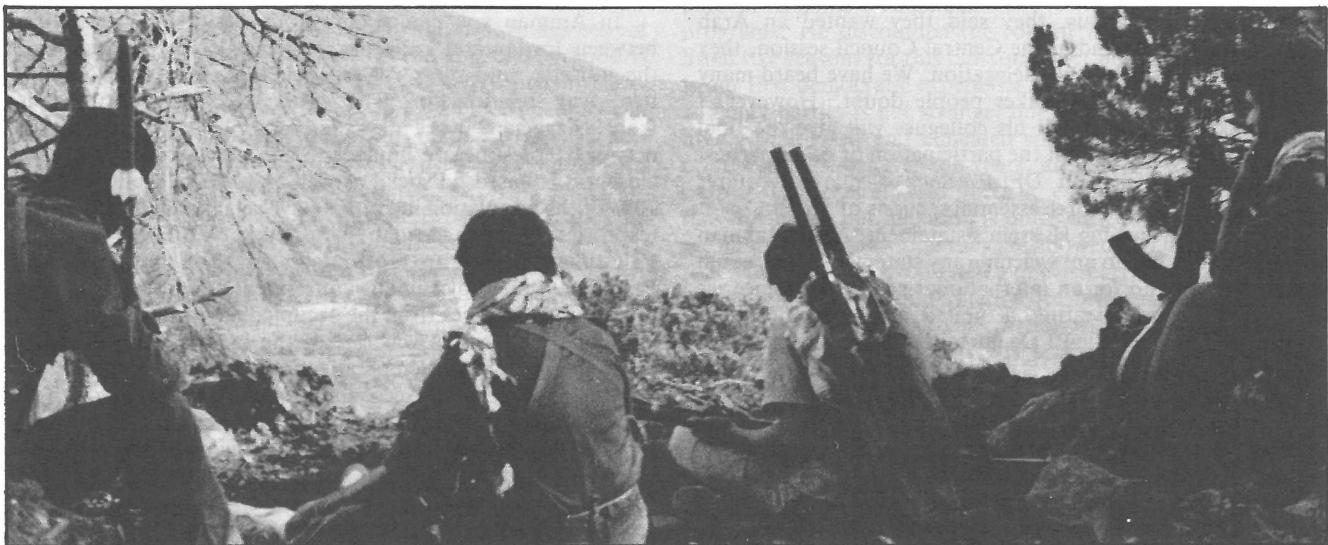


# Palestinian Resistance Jeopardized



On July 1st, the Lebanese Army deployed in Sidon and began its offensive against Palestinian freedom fighters in the area. The Palestinians' position was that they would not impede the deployment; nor would they withdraw or surrender their arms. However, the Palestinian resistance was drawn into a battle it had not wanted. Four days of fighting left about 50 persons dead and 170 injured. The bulk of the casualties were Palestinians; the majority of the dead were freedom fighters, while among the injured, a large number were civilians hit by the Lebanese Army's tank-mounted cannons. Over 300 Palestinians were arrested in the Sidon area and many are still detained.

The fighting was stopped with an agreement whereby Palestinian freedom fighters withdrew into the two camps in the area (Ain Al Hilweh and Mieh Mieh), retaining their light weapons, but relinquishing medium and heavy weapons to be transported out of Lebanon. Meanwhile, the Lebanese government pledged to negotiate the civil and social rights of the Palestinian community in Lebanon.

It is noteworthy that the Palestinian

resistance's positions outside the camps were in the hills east of Sidon – precisely on the frontlines with Israel's proxy, the SLA, in Kfar Falous. All through the eighties, this was a main point of confrontation between the joint Lebanese-Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese fascists. Behind Kfar Falous lies Jezzine, the main SLA-Israeli outpost in South Lebanon, controlling passage between the Bekaa Valley and the Israeli-occupied «security zone».

Soon after the clashes ended in the Sidon area, the Lebanese Army repeated its operation in Tyre, surrounding the three Palestinian refugee camps there (Rashidiyah, Burj Al Shemali and Al Buss). Though heavy and medium weapons have been handed over, the Lebanese Army maintains its siege on these camps. Palestinians are checked and sometimes harassed upon entry and exit, reminding of the sixties, when Palestinians in Lebanon lived under the constant surveillance of the intelligence service, and more recent times when Amal militiamen blockaded the camps in the wake of Israeli withdrawal.

Talks have begun between two

Lebanese ministers and the PLO/Palestinian resistance organizations, but as yet no definite guarantees have been extended to the 500,000 Palestinians in Lebanon, who over the years have been subject to attack not only from Israel, but from the Lebanese right as well. Their civil and social rights have yet to be defined, while any talk of political rights – which encompasses their right to fight to return to their homeland – has been ruled out by Lebanese Defense Minister Murr, who glorified the Lebanese Army's operation in Sidon.

## And now Jezzine?

The Lebanese government presented the army deployment in Sidon and Tyre as the prelude to its march on Jezzine. As the siege began on the camps near Tyre, Lebanese Transport Minister Fakhouri stated: «The army's move into Jezzine is expected to be accomplished within weeks rather than months» (Associated Press, July 9th).

However, as of this writing a month later, the Lebanese Army – which mustered 11,000 troops to confront Palestinian freedom fighters – has not