

## Will there be Security?

In early July the line dividing fascist-controlled East Beirut from nationalist West Beirut was ostensibly erased. The Lebanese government implemented the first phase of its security plan, deploying army units on both sides. This had its positive consequences: The airport reopened, and residents of West Beirut have since been spared the murderous bombardments from the fascist side. There were also drawbacks: West Beirut was once again laid open to the fascists' favorite 'peacetime' device - the car bomb. A serious explosion occurred on August 19th, in a busy street of Basta, a working class neighborhood not far from the former dividing line; three were killed and 25 wounded. Most basically the causes of the conflict and the grievances of the people remained untouched: Political reform is still being delayed; most poignantly thousands of missing persons remain unaccounted for, and their relatives continue to demonstrate for their return.

Efforts to extend the security plan to other areas has further dramatized the problems of national reconciliation with fascist forces. The security plan adopted by the Lebanese cabinet on August 8th, calls for wiping out the confrontation lines that exist in the Shouf mountains where the nationalist forces, here chiefly the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), face the Phalangists and army units. The plan calls for deployment of the Lebanese Army on the Beirut-Damascus highway and on the coastal highway north and southwards from Beirut. Obviously, the Zionist occupiers are also opposed to the new plan. Deploying the Lebanese Army on the coastal road southwards would create a whole new situation. The frequent Israeli incursions over the occupation lines would no longer be ushered in by the fascists.

Even drawing up the security plan proved difficult. The original plan called for army deployment in the Shouf, where the nationalist fighters had displaced the fascist forces in last year's September mountain battle. It left aside the Phalangist-controlled strips of the coastal highway. The two nationalist ministers Berri and Jumblatt objected strenuously, and renewed fighting between the PSP and the Phalangists in the hills south of

Beirut forced revision of the plan. Since August 8th when the cabinet adopted a new version of the security plan for the army to take over the fascist-controlled stretches as well, events have converged to expose the fascists' determination to block the plan's implementation. In mid-August fighting in the hills south of Beirut escalated radically. A top aide of Syrian President Assad then visited Lebanon to confer with Amin Gemayel and Prime Minister Karami on ending this battle in the interests of implementing the overall security plan. At this very time, there 'happened to be' a new outburst of fighting in Tripoli. As heavy battles raged in Tripoli, a helicopter crashed in North Lebanon; all the passengers were killed, including Lebanese Army Chief of Staff, Major General Nadim Hakim. It was first reported that the helicopter crashed into a mountain in the prevailing fog. However, eyewitnesses said that the helicopter had exploded in mid-air before falling into the mountain. This is one of the many indications that the fog did not cause the crash but served as a cover for a special operation mounted by the fascists. Hakim was not among the many pro-fascist army officers. He was a Druze who resigned his post in September 1983 when the army was set against his people in the mountains. He

had reassumed his post in the context of the attempt to rebuild the army under the Karami government and served in the six-man military council designed to end the army commander's monopoly on power. At this time in particular, the Phalangists have obvious motives for such an act: They wish to weaken nationalist controls on the army or to foil the new security plan altogether. Walid Jumblatt was clearly convinced of fascist involvement through official channels, for he refused the presence of Amin Gemayel and his condolence flowers at Hakim's funeral.

The most recent visit of Amin Gemayel to President Assad of Syria aimed at strengthening Syria's role in implementing the security plan especially in the mountain area. Syria stands firm on its support to help Lebanon regain its security and stability. However, the Syrian efforts are obstructed by the fascists, Phalangists and the isolationist Lebanese forces. Obviously these forces will not accept any plan that does not guarantee them full control of Lebanon. Yet, the Phalangists and isolationist forces have not openly rejected the security plan but rather have been selective in their compliance. They have ridiculed the idea of the army deployment on the coastal highway. They refuse to give up their lucrative

*On the second anniversary of Bashir Gemayel's election as Lebanon's President, the Phalangist Party held a ceremony featuring the recruitment of 1000 new members. While we seriously doubt this tremendous swelling of the party, this picture from the ceremony bears witness to the fascists' ongoing aggressive mobilization.*

