

checkpoint at Barbara, 37 km. north of Beirut, where they levy taxes on all lorries entering from the nationalist-controlled North. South from Beirut, they are unwilling to give up their direct link with the Israeli occupation forces. They also refuse to accept the fact that the plan goes hand in hand with the nationalists' demands of political and social reforms.

The Phalangists and Isolationist forces' real position vis a vis the plan is one of maneuvering. They are trying to manipulate it in such a way that can obtain for them the maximum amount of concessions from the nationalists while

they themselves offer none. Also, Amin Gemayel himself is not far from this maneuvering position especially after the death of his father, the head of the Phalangist Party. He certainly hopes to be the replacement of his father some years ahead. This ambition requires him to prove his good intentions and that he pursues the phalange class interests diligently. This means that Amin Gemayel would have to prove that he is not a man of concessions.

The Lebanese nationalist forces are confronting such maneuvers with a firm stand from within the government as

well as outside channels. A series of exclusive ministerial meetings are now in progress. The discussions will be mainly around the nationalists' demands of achieving the political and social reforms along with the implementation of the security plan. A compromise may be reached at these meetings. But it is quite doubtful that a real and lasting solution can be reached at this time. Hence, we do not exclude the possibility of new rounds of fighting which may even be on a large scale.

## ...And the Rivers Don't Run Free

*In a recent interview, «Al Fajr» correspondent asked an Israeli youth working at a kibbutz on the West Bank, where the Arabs were supposed to be. The youth, who claimed not to have anything against the Arabs, pointed to the barren desert outside the kibbutz and said, more bitterly true than probably intended: «Look, there is plenty of room for all of us». The Zionist policy has been to either expel the Arab population to the desert, or by diverting most of the water to their settlements and putting draconian restrictions on Arab use of water, turning Arab land into desert. Access to and control of water has figured as a primary strategic factor from the beginning of the Zionist project, through wars and occupations, to the latest Israeli attempt to divert water from rivers in occupied South Lebanon.*

Recently Minister of State for South Lebanon, Nabih Berri stated that 'Israel' has «carved out» chunks of Lebanese territory near the Israeli border, including parts of the Wazzani river. The Lebanese government has asked the United Nation Forces in South Lebanon to investigate a report stating that 'Israel' has fenced out a Lebanese creek flowing into 'Israel'. Timur Goksel, a spokesman for the UN Forces in South Lebanon, has confirmed that Prime Minister Rashid Karami's government has made this request. Goksel, however, said that UN observers have not yet been able to check the report because 'Israel' has refused to allow them to enter the area in question. On Monday, July 13th, the Beirut newspaper *Al Safir* said the Israelis recently moved their border forward «3 to 5 kilometers» and fenced off parts of the Wazzani creek. The newspaper added that the Israelis had prevented residents of Tal Nahhas village from returning to their homes in the reportedly fenced off area. Already in 1980 UN observers reported that the Israelis erected a fence one kilometer north of the border, an area which included two rivers. That area was near the village of Wazzani which lies on the Lebanese side of the borders facing Syrian Golan Heights. 'Israel' occupied the Golan Heights in 1967 and later annexed it. The small Wazzani creek flows into the Hasbani river which rises in Lebanon and flows south into the Golan and eventually to the Jordan River of which 'Israel' occupied the West Bank also in 1967. The new fence, reported *Al Safir*, would appear to be an extension of the 1980 fence.

Through the last two years Israeli spokesmen have constantly denied that 'Israel' attaches any importance to the water resources in Lebanon, Syria or elsewhere. Comments from 'Israel' and its proxy in South Lebanon, the Lahad army, on the question of the Wazzani river have been contradictory.

According to Reuters an officer in the Lahad army stated that the fence in question had been dismantled at the request of Antoine Lahad who believed it violated Lebanese sovereignty. An Israeli spokesman in Tel Aviv however said that the fence was part of a road repair project. Without explaining whether they were describing this interesting new Israeli method of repairing roads, Reuters explained that a line of holes indicated that the Israelis had intended to extend the fence at least two kilometers further northwards towards another spring that feeds into another river.

It does not seem as if the Israelis have stopped their 'engineering'. On August 14th, the Israeli daily *Haaretz* revealed a plan prepared by the Israeli authorities to pump the Hasbani river waters to Israeli territories. Israeli engineers have worked out a plan to obtain Hasbani river waters from the point where the river passes in occupied Syrian Golan Heights. Hasbani waters, the paper added, will be used to generate electricity as the water of the Lebanese river comes down from the Syrian Golan Heights to Lake Tiberias. On Wednesday, August the 22nd, Secretary General of the Arab League, Al Chadli Qlibi, said that new reports from South Lebanon stress «Israel's» covetousness of South Lebanon's water resources particularly those of the Litani river.

### How the Israelis got «their» water

Even excluding their usurpation of Palestine and its water, the Israelis mainly got «their» water by gunpower, pressure, intimidation, occupation and theft. Already in 1919 they realized that the area around the Mount Hermon, the closeby headwaters of the Jordan river and the Litani were where 'Israel' could and should obtain water. For a long time they studied how to exploit a dam on the Hasbani river and the pos-