

Rebuilding the Camps

The camp war left the bulk of the Palestinian population in Beirut living in shelters or the public buildings, such as schools, where they had sought shelter. Seventy per cent of the houses in Sabra and Shatila were destroyed, as was the main waterline to these camps and Bourj al Barajneh. It took bulldozers over forty days to remove the debris. 1650 cubic meters of destroyed material was removed from Bourj, and 4300 cubic meters from the area of Sabra's hospital. This massive destruction stands as concrete proof that the aim of this war was to eliminate the camps altogether.

As if to reinforce this, Beirut municipal authorities announced in late July that the city would be beautified by removal of the destruction. According to them, the destroyed houses should not be rebuilt but the space allotted to major roads as part of modernizing Beirut. Concerning the joint committee established to oversee implementation of the Damascus agreement, Beirut Mayor Shafik Sardouk stated that its function was only to remove the destruction, not to rebuild. Both the Palestine National Salvation Front and Syria immediately responded that the Damascus agreement (article 4) insured the return of the camp population to their homes, and rebuilding them. Also, a group of engineers (Syrian, Lebanese and Palestinian, mostly volunteers) assessed the damage in order to make a plan for rebuilding.

There are a series of obstacles to rebuilding the camps. One is continuation of the tense situation surrounding the camps, and instances of the Amal movement harassing the residents. In addition, Amal and the Lebanese Army's 6th Brigade have refused any proposals for building temporary housing to meet the needs of the most urgent cases.

Another obstacle is financial. Rebuilding costs have been estimated at no less than 300 million Lebanese pounds. The joint committee has so far only received \$1 million from Libya and 50,000 tons of cement from Syria. The majority of Arab regimes have yet to contribute despite their wailing over the Palestinian blood shed in the camp war. Also the rightist PLO leadership cried out during this war, but has yet to offer concrete aid, despite its extensive

funds.

The PNSF has assumed basic responsibility for rebuilding. It has outlined an initial plan, starting with the repair of 500 houses in Shatila and 250 in Bourj al Barajneh, to relieve the most urgent cases. By the 1st of August, an on-the-site brick factory had begun production, and reconstruction is now underway. The Salvation Front will make every effort to have this task completed before the winter cold and rain sets in. ●



Destruction in Sabra

All Facts to the Masses Press Release July 24, 1985

A responsible source in the PFLP stated:

Some Arab media published a news item that Dr. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, speaking in Damascus to militants liberated from the Zionist prisons, said that: "Arafat's groups in Beirut are responsible for the recent war of the camps."

PFLP assures that this news is totally baseless. Dr. Habash confirmed in his speech the analysis which the PFLP has given of that war and the aims of the forces that instigated it. The basic aims were removing the Palestinian klashnikov and ending the Palestinian national role in Lebanon.

The PFLP's position which is well known to all our masses and the Arab nation, became an integral part of the incidents of the bloody war, and thus cannot be omitted or distorted by any information source.

The responsible source concluded his statement by saying that PFLP had not wanted to reopen the records of that difficult period, but the publication of this erroneous news in the Arab media forced us to clarify the facts, acting on the slogan to which we have been committed since our foundation: *All facts to the masses.*

Stop All Harassment

In late July, Comrade Abu Tayeb, member of the PFLP's Politbureau, made a statement concerning violations of the letter and spirit of the June 17th accord signed in Damascus. His intent was to find a solution for these problems in order to restore confidence among the signing parties.

1. The situation of siege continues around the camps of Shatila and Bourj al Barajneh, as the Amal forces and 6th Brigade have not withdrawn from their positions around the camps as was stated in the accord.

2. The Amal movement is still arresting young Palestinian men in Beirut and South Lebanon. These Palestinians have yet to be released.

3. In the last few days, Amal forces have resumed their policy of harassing

and humiliating Palestinians collectively, as when they surrounded Al Bas camp near Sour. Amal forces entered the camp in the night, frightening the women and the children, and carrying out collective punishment on the pretext that one of their positions was fired on from an unknown source.

4. Amal is erecting checkpoints to inspect Palestinians on the only two roads which join the Bekaa with North Lebanon.

Comrade Abu Tayeb concluded by warning of the dangers of the political and informational campaign now focusing on the situation in Saida. He pointed out that such a campaign contributes to the atmosphere of hate and fear that makes possible an explosion of the security situation there. ●