

Crisis in Lebanon

The Beirut Massacre: The Four Days

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Special to The New York Times

BEIRUT, Lebanon, Sept. 25 — The massacre of more than 300 Palestinian and Lebanese men, women and children at the Shatila refugee camp by Christian militiamen has left many unanswered questions.

The tragedy, which began Wednesday, Sept. 15, and continued until Saturday, Sept. 18, raises questions that focus on the role played by the Israeli Army in what is certain to be regarded as one of the most important events in the modern history of the Middle East.

Much is at stake in the answers to these questions. The relations between the Israeli people and their Government, the relations between world Jewry and Israel, the relations between the United States and Israel and the relations between Israelis and Palestinians will all be affected by the truth of what happened in Shatila.

The Aftermath of the Slayings

The full truth may never be known. Too many people have already fled the scene. Too many people were killed on the spot. Too many people are now under pressure to hide their deeds.

There has been no announcement of any investigation in Lebanon of the militiamen who actually did the killing. In Israel, Prime Minister Menachem Begin rejected the idea of an independent judicial commission of inquiry into the Israeli involvement in the massacre. On Friday, he proposed an investigation of lesser scope, but it was unclear whether the Chief Justice of Israel's Supreme Court would accept the invitation to head it.

What follows is a reconstruction of events as it could be pieced together at this time from interviews with witnesses and statements by participants. It is not the final word. Information is still coming to light. But on the basis of the evidence so far, some conclusions may be drawn.

Role of the Israeli Army

First, the Christian militiamen entered the camp with the full knowledge of the Israeli Army, which provided them with at least some of their arms and provisions and assisted them with flares during nighttime operations.

Second, the Israelis had to have known that there was deep and pervasive fear of the Christian militiamen

among the Palestinian residents of the camps because of past atrocities committed by the Christians and Palestinians against each other during the Lebanese civil war.

Third, the Israeli Army began to learn on the evening of Thursday, Sept. 16, that civilians were being killed in Shatila, since the moment these armed men entered the camps, they began murdering people at random, and those who fled told the Israelis what was happening.

By Friday morning, there was enough evidence of untoward acts by the militiamen to move the senior Israeli commander in Lebanon to order their operations halted, according to the Israeli Government. Yet according to Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, the militiamen doing the killing were told by the Israelis they could stay inside the camps until Saturday morning, and the murders continued until they left.

Fourth, there is every indication that, when the Israeli Army entered

West Beirut earlier in the week, that it encountered no serious resistance from the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. The vast majority of people in the camps appear to have been resigned to the Israelis coming into their area and disarming them.

Evidence of Haddad's Role

Finally, there is still no solid information on the precise makeup and command structure of the Christian militia force, which also apparently included some Shiite Moslems. But there is ample circumstantial evidence that members of the Israeli-armed and trained militia of Maj. Saad Haddad and members of the Christian Phalangist militia — also known as the Lebanese Forces — were in the camps. Whether they were there under orders from Major Haddad or the Phalangist military and political leadership is not clear. The possibility of breakaway elements being involved cannot be ruled out at this point.

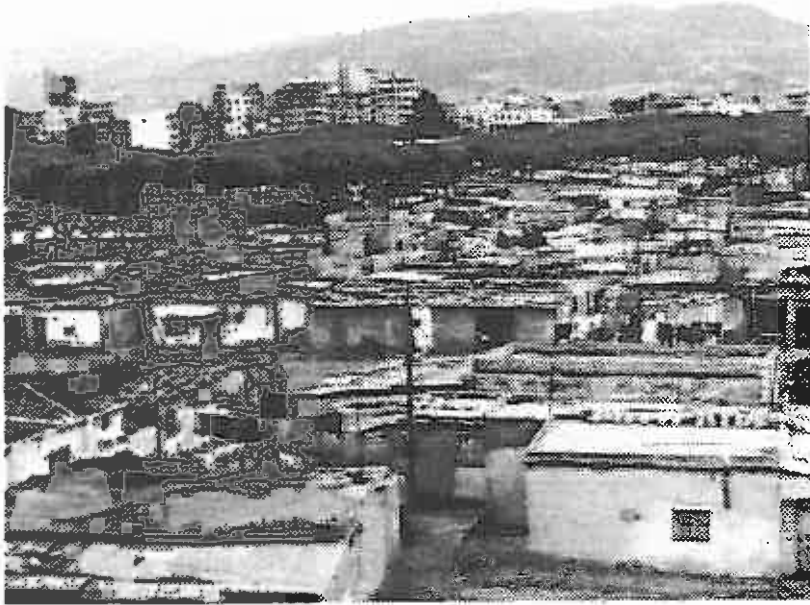


Gamma Liaison / Alain Migon

Palestinians in the wreckage of their refugee camp in Beirut after the massacre of more than 300 people by Lebanese Christian militiamen.

Beirut in Flux

Palestinian Fears Are Voiced



The New York Times / Ingeborg Lippman

Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1978. Half of Lebanon's Palestinian population has lived in such areas.

Once Yasir Arafat, the P.L.O. chairman, decided in early July that he would be leaving Lebanon, his major concern was to make certain that the Lebanese Government and the special United States envoy, Philip C. Habib, provided proper security guarantees for the thousands of Palestinian civilians who would be left behind without P.L.O. protection.

During the talks on ending the Israeli siege of Beirut, P.L.O. officials and the Sunni Moslem leaders of West Beirut — notably Prime Minister Shafik al-Wazzan and former Prime Minister Saeb Salam — repeatedly expressed the view that Israeli tanks could not be permitted to enter West Beirut with Phalangist militiamen in their train. The reason was fear.

This fear, which the negotiators repeatedly expressed in public and which was surely known to the Israelis, was rooted in a series of mass killings and attacks — perpetrated by Lebanese Christian militiamen against Palestinians and Moslems, and by Moslems and Palestinians against Christians — that dated from the Lebanese civil war of 1975-1976.

A Preventative Measure

It was to prevent such bloody incidents, according to Mr. Salam, a key figure in the talks, that the Moslem and Palestinian representatives insisted that United States, Italian and

French troops be deployed in West Beirut until the Lebanese Army was prepared to take over the enforcement of law and order.

Mr. Salam said that this was "precisely why we asked, and received, assurances from the United States that the Israelis would not enter West Beirut."

State Department officials have made clear their support for Mr. Salam's view that these assurances were an integral part of the Habib agreement. American officials believe Israel violated the agreement when it moved into West Beirut on Sept. 15 after the assassination of Lebanon's President-elect, the Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel.

On Sept. 2, with the P.L.O. gone and French, United States and Italian peacekeeping troops in place, the Lebanese Army began to deploy its forces all over West Beirut and in the southern suburbs, where the Palestinian Fakhani district and refugee camps are situated.

For the most part, the Lebanese Army's deployment in West Beirut and the adjacent suburbs went smoothly. Although the army was then in the process of establishing control over West Beirut, the Israeli Army maintained a toehold in the Moslem sector of the capital, near the traffic circle at the Kuwaiti Embassy. Israeli forces also held positions to the south, toward Beirut's international

airport, which they controlled. The airport is very close to the Shatila, Sabra and Burj al Brajneh camps.

There are about 500,000 Palestinians in Lebanon, and many of them have lived in refugee camps such as Shatila since 1948. While the term "camps" may evoke images of tents and other temporary shelters, these settlements actually consisted of more permanent structures: concrete houses, streets and twisting alleyways.

A Brief Period of Calm

On Sept. 11, both the Shatila and Sabra camps were quiet and, according to residents, there was no apprehension over the prospect of the Lebanese Army moving in.

It seemed almost as though life in West Beirut was about to return to what passes for normal here. The Sunni Moslem leaders were making their peace with President-elect Gemayel, and businessmen with reconstruction projects in mind were beginning to survey the devastated city center.

On Tuesday, Sept. 14, the situation began to unravel very quickly.

That morning, Mr. Gemayel convened a meeting in East Beirut of the commanders of the Phalangist militia — whose formal name was the Lebanese Forces. It was the same militia Mr. Gemayel commanded before Lebanon's Parliament elected him to the presidency. Since the civil war, Mr. Gemayel's Phalangist Party has been the dominant element in a coalition of Maronite Christian parties that has controlled East Beirut and a Christian enclave to the north.

In the middle of the meeting called by Mr. Gemayel, a huge bomb, apparently placed on the roof of the building by someone familiar with Mr. Gemayel's schedule, exploded. It brought the entire structure down on the President-elect and his aides. Mr. Gemayel perished.

According to a statement by Ariel Sharon to the Israeli Parliament, moments after the President-elect's death became known, the Israeli Defense Minister contacted Prime Minister Menachem Begin and the two men decided that the Israeli Army should enter West Beirut.

Sharon Sees a Threat

Mr. Sharon argued that the Israeli presence was required, because as long as P.L.O. guerrillas and Lebanese leftist Moslem militiamen remained armed and in the refugee camps, control over West Beirut by the Lebanese Government would be tenuous, and there would be a potential for the P.L.O. to re-establish itself.

Although the Israelis confiscated the arms of all the Moslem groups in West Beirut, they made no attempt to disarm the Christian Phalangist militiamen in East Beirut.

Under the terms of the Habib agreement, those militiamen constituted an illegal force.

The stage had been set for the massacres.

Wednesday

Stage Set for Entry of Militias

At 3:30 A.M. Wednesday, a meeting was held in Beirut between the Israeli Chief of Staff, Lieut. Gen. Rafael Eytan; the commander of Israeli units in the north, Maj. Gen. Amir Drori, and the general staff of the Phalangist militia.

At this meeting, a Phalangist "entry into the camps was mentioned," according to Mr. Sharon's later account to the Israeli Parliament.

Throughout the early hours of Wednesday, Israeli troops poured into West Beirut from Hercules transport planes that were landing at the international airport.

At the same time, tanks and armored personnel carriers were arriving from surrounding areas.

Israelis Seize Intersections

The Israelis began to enter the city proper around 5 A.M., according to Mr. Sharon's subsequent statement to the Israeli Parliament. His troops quickly began seizing key intersections. At some locations, fierce gun battles erupted between Israeli soldiers and Moslem militiamen.

The Israelis skirted the Palestinian refugee camps, making no attempt to enter them.

There appear to have been exchanges of fire between the Israelis and some individuals in the camps, but these were minor. Witnesses say there was no organized resistance from the Sabra or Shatila camps to the Israeli invasion of West Beirut.

'We Were Not Afraid'

"We were not afraid of the Israelis," Zaki F., a 30-year-old Palestinian in the Sabra camp, said in an interview last week. "We know most of them are not bad people. Most of us just locked ourselves in our homes and waited for them to come. We figured we would wait to turn over our arms and that would be it."

And so, camp residents said, they buttoned themselves into their homes on Wednesday and waited for the Israelis to arrive. They did so probably for the same reason that Palestinian guerrillas preferred to flee across the Jordan River into Israel during the Jordanian civil war in 1970 rather than allow themselves to be captured by the Jordanian Army: a basic belief that the Israelis were not "monsters."

However, according to Mr. Sharon's testimony in Parliament, as well as interviews with Israeli soldiers, the Israelis had no intention of going into the camps.

What Mr. Sharon described to Parliament as a process of "checking and clearing out" the refugee camps was, he said, a job that was to be performed by the Phalangists or the Lebanese Army.

By Wednesday afternoon, sniper fire and Israeli shelling had begun around the Sabra and Shatila camps, and it was intensifying.

Dr. Per Maehlumshagen, a Norwegian orthopedic surgeon at Gaza Hospital, not far from the Shatila camp, recalled that "there was a lot of sniping and some shelling" around the hospital.

"Around noon on Wednesday," Dr. Maehlumshagen recalled, "the first wounded started to be brought in. That was the first time we began to hear — I don't remember how — that the Israelis were surrounding the camp and setting up checkpoints."

Zaki F., a Palestinian whose concrete-block home is only a few hundred yards from the hospital, said that by Wednesday afternoon, "no one was moving in or out of the camps."

The Israelis Make a Request

At roughly the same time — the precise hour is uncertain — Mr. Sharon said that the Israeli command in West Beirut contacted the Lebanese Army operations chief for the sector to ask whether the Lebanese were willing to go into the camps on what were termed search-and-destroy missions.

A Lebanese colonel, Michel On, rejected the Israeli proposal. This was corroborated in Mr. Sharon's subsequent statement.

Colonel On explained in an interview that his refusal was based on the fact that the Lebanese Army was just then reconstituting itself as an organization. He said it was also then beginning to win the confidence of the Moslem militiamen, Moslem residents and Palestinians of West Beirut.

According to the colonel, the army wanted to follow its own agenda and its own style in seeking to bring order to the camps.

According to a plan set out by Prime Minister Wazzan, the army had already taken over control of the Burj al Brajneh camp to the south. But on Wednesday, it was not yet ready to move into the Sabra and Shatila camps.

Meanwhile, in the camps themselves, Dr. Eivinu Witsoe, a Norwegian surgeon working at Gaza Hospital, said things were beginning to quiet down. By nightfall, he said, the shooting and shelling had subsided; and about 25 wounded people had been brought into the hospital.

On Wednesday evening, according to Defense Minister Sharon, General Drori met with Colonel On and pressed the Lebanese officer "to persuade the political echelons in the Lebanese Government to approve the entry of the army of Lebanon into the camps."

The colonel consulted Prime Minister Wazzan about the Israeli request. Mr. Wazzan turned it down.

"The Israelis had surrounded the camp," the Prime Minister recalled in an interview. "If the army had agreed to go in and remove arms and Israelis killed Palestinians, everyone would have blamed the Lebanese Army and Government."

The Government and army, he added, did not want to be used "as an instrument of Israeli policy."

Throughout Wednesday night, according to people in both Sabra and Shatila, it was quiet. No one felt any overwhelming sense of fear.

Thursday

Israelis Encircle the Camps

By Thursday morning, the Israeli Army had the entire area around the Sabra and Shatila camps sealed off. No one could move in or out.

A spokesman in East Beirut for the Israeli Army, formally known as the Israel Defense Forces, issued the following statement that day:

"The I.D.F. is in control of all key points in Beirut. Refugee camps harboring terrorist concentrations remain encircled and closed. The I.D.F. calls on citizens to return to normal activity and on all terrorists and other armed persons to lay down their arms."

Around 6 A.M. Thursday, shellfire and gunshots could be heard in the Sabra camp in the vicinity of Gaza Hospital, according to Dr. Witsoe. Although the night had been calm, new groups of wounded people were streaming into the medical center.

Israeli Shelling Reported

The artillery fire, many of these patients later said, appeared to be coming from Israeli positions overlooking the camp to the west. Armed elements inside Sabra may also have been firing at targets outside the camp.

According to Mr. Sharon, after another meeting was held Thursday be-

tween the Phalangist liaison officers and General Drori, "it was concluded that the armed force of Christian militiamen would enter Shatila from the south and west, would look out for and clear out the terrorists."

"And," Mr. Sharon added, "it was stressed that civilians — especially women, children and old people — should not be harmed."

The full story of what happened after the meeting between General Drori and the Phalangist officers is still not known.

Phalangist officials said that by 3 o'clock Thursday afternoon, they had a large force of men at the airport. However, they contend that these men never left the airport area.

Militiamen Begin to Move

Most interviews with survivors of the massacre indicate that at least



Marc Simon/Sipa Press from Black Star

Bodies of Palestinians slain in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps lie beneath a bullet-riddled wall.

some of the 1,500 Phalangists at the airport — but by no means all — moved north toward the Sabra and Shatila camps along a road leading through Ouzai, up past the Henri Chehab army barracks and into the Kuwaiti Embassy traffic circle, just down the main road from the entrance of the Sabra camp.

There the militiamen established makeshift headquarters in a building that housed the Lebanese University's School of Business Administration, on the southwest corner of the traffic circle.

There are a whole series of what appear to be traffic signs pointing the way from the airport to the rotary, which overlooks Shatila and Sabra.

These signs, spray-painted on walls, have a round circle with a triangle inside and the letters "M.P." under them. They are the symbol of the Phalangist military police.

A Question of Identity

But the Phalangists were not the only Christian militiamen moving out of the airport Thursday afternoon.

There is also a sizable body of circumstantial evidence suggesting that members of the militia of Maj. Saad Haddad, armed and trained by Israel, were also at the airport and may also have moved up to the staging area, de-

spite Israeli denials that they were involved in any way in the slayings.

The evidence includes interviews with Lebanese soldiers who were on duty in the traffic circle, and had been on duty there since Sept. 3. They said they saw Haddad militiamen there, dressed in uniforms readily distinguishable from those of the Phalangist militiamen. They also said the Haddad men were noticeable because they lacked the Phalangist insignia on the left breast pocket reading "Lebanese Forces."

Southern Lebanese Accents

Further, scores of survivors from the camps said in interviews that some of the militiamen spoke with southern Lebanese accents and addressed one another by such names as Ali, and Abbas. Both are Shiite Moslem names. Roughly half of Major Haddad's 6,000-member militia members are Shiites from the south.

Finally, Major Haddad said in an interview with The Times of London that some of his men "may have been serving with other forces in Beirut" when the massacre in the camps occurred.

It seems clear that there were militiamen from Major Haddad's group in the strike force that entered the camps on Thursday afternoon.

What is not clear is whether the Haddad militiamen could have reached the camps — far from their normal area of operations in the south along the Israeli border — without the knowledge or active cooperation of the Israelis.

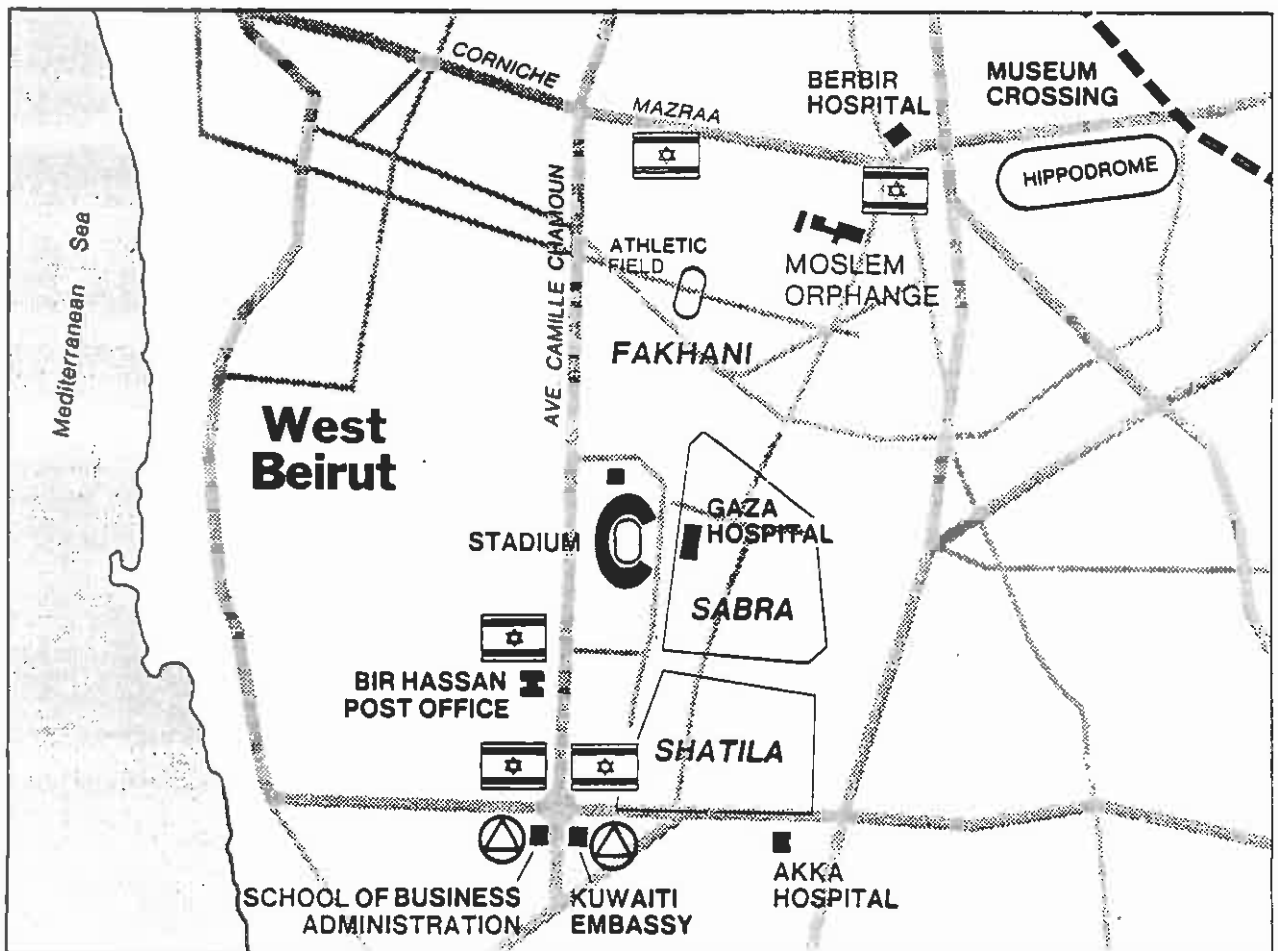
At the least, the circumstantial evidence indicates that some members of the Haddad militia passed through Israeli lines in an apparent effort to join up with the Phalangists going into the Palestinian camps.

According to a Lebanese Army soldier, the militia force going into the camps was composed primarily of Phalangist units consisting of men from Damur, Saadiyat and Nameh. These are three Christian villages that were sacked by Palestinian forces during the Lebanese civil war in retaliation for attacks on Palestinians by Christian militiamen.

The Lebanese soldier said that one Phalangist militiaman told him before going into the camps, "We have been waiting a long time for this day."

A Key Israeli Decision

Sometime around noon Thursday, General Drori, having received another negative response from the Lebanese Army to his request that it move into the camps, met with the



commander of the Phalangists. Judging from all available evidence, it was at this point that the Israelis made a decision to send the militiamen into the camps. Mr. Sharon does not say who the Phalangist commander was, but it is believed to have been the Phalangist chief of staff, Fadi Ephram.

According to Phalangist military sources, an order was then issued for an estimated 1,500 men to assemble on the runways at the airport.

According to residents in Shuweifat, a junction town just south of the airport, there was a steady stream of trucks and armored personnel carriers moving into the airport during the afternoon. All carried Christian militiamen, the residents say. Their accounts were corroborated by Lebanese Army sources.

Another Meeting Is Held

The militiamen, the witnesses said, appeared to be coming from both southern Lebanon — the area of Major Haddad's stronghold — and East Beirut.

According to what Defense Minister Sharon has told the Israeli Parliament, another meeting was held at roughly the same time Thursday afternoon that Phalangist troops were assembling at the airport. The meet-

ing was held between the commander of the Israeli Army division deployed around Beirut, Brig. Amos Yaron, and Phalangist liaison officers. The aim of the meeting, Mr. Sharon said, was to "coordinate the entry of the Phalangists into the Shatila camp."

Sometime around 4 P.M. Thursday, according to residents of the camps, armed men began moving in.

Israelis Had View of Camp

Mr. Sharon says the attack began at night. The Israeli Army had an observation post, equipped with binoculars and a powerful telescope, atop a five-story apartment building in the north-west quadrant of the Kuwaiti Embassy traffic circle. From that position it is possible to see into at least part of the Shatila camp, including those parts where piles of dead bodies were found later.

All available evidence, including testimony by witnesses, suggests that it is probable that Israeli soldiers were manning the post during the time of the massacre. The strongest evidence found by reporters who visited the observation station was in the form of Hebrew-language newspapers found on the floor. They were dated Thursday and Friday.

According to a witness living in a two-story house about half a mile into the Shatila camp from the southern entrance, the sounds of heavy fire and shelling began to be heard around 4 P.M. The din was coming from the southern gate.

A 'Softening-Up' Process

Judging from the way buildings were destroyed at the southern entrance of the camp, Lebanese Army officials say it appears that the militiamen attempted first to "soften up" the area, using heavy-caliber weapons — possibly recoilless rifles.

This appears to have been what the witness, who identified herself as Mrs. Hashem, the wife of Abdul Hadi Ahmed Hashem, was hearing around 4 P.M.

An hour later, Mrs. Hashem recalled, she and her husband grabbed their children and rushed from their house, running northward to escape the gunfire, deeper into the Shatila camp.

At one point, Mrs. Hashem recalled, her husband, Abdul Hadi Ahmed, decided to go back to their home to retrieve some food and milk for the children. He never returned. His bullet-riddled body was later found in the house.

From the moment they entered the camp, witnesses said, the militiamen made no apparent effort to distinguish between Palestinians and Lebanese, let alone between men, women and children.

According to Col. Marcel Prince, the Lebanese Army Surgeon General, as well as medical workers, those people whose bodies were found toward the southern entrance of Shatila were killed at random while others appeared to have been lined up against walls and shot.

In other cases, what appeared to be entire families had been slain as they sat at the dinner table. Others were found dead in their nightclothes, apparently surprised by the militiamen who burst in on them Thursday evening.

Some people were found with their throats slit. Others had been mutilated with some kind of heavy blade, perhaps axes.

But according to Colonel Prince, most people died from gunshot wounds and "the killings were done very quickly."

Some Fled to Adjacent Camp

With people running to get out of the path of the militiamen, it was natural that many would seek refuge in the Sabra refugee camp, farther north, toward the Gaza Hospital. Others fled to the south, to the Akka Hospital, across from the Shatila camp.

Taleb Alouki, a 26-year-old carpenter, and his brother Fawzi, 22, recalled that they were sitting with a group of men drinking tea in their homes in the middle of Shatila around 6 P.M. Thursday when they heard a great deal of noise and shooting coming from the southern end of the camp.

Two men in the group were dispatched to find out what was going on, they recalled later. They returned with a story that Haddad militiamen were killing people in the Shatila camp.

Meanwhile, Zaki F. was in his home near Gaza Hospital on Thursday afternoon when he heard the first reports from people rushing through the neighborhood that members of the Haddad militia were sweeping through Shatila "cutting people with knives."

As Zaki remembers it, sometime around 4 P.M. Thursday he decided to go to the Israeli Army position, just over the hill across from the stadium, and find out what was going on. By now it was well known in the camp that the area was surrounded by Israeli forces.

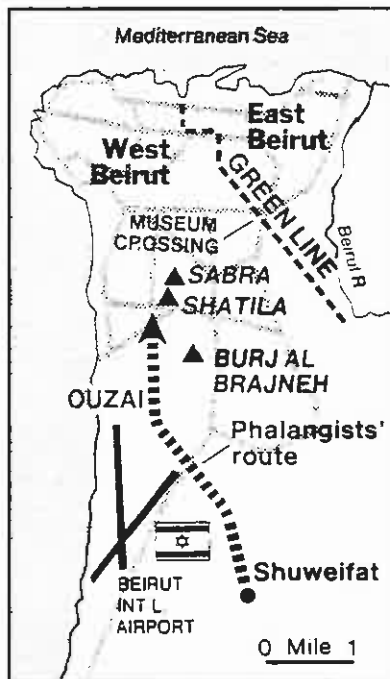
According to Zaki, he spoke to a blond, Arabic-speaking Israeli officer who identified himself only as Rami. They spoke near the Bir Hassan post office, across from the stadium. The Israeli perimeter around the camp ran through this area.

"I told him I saw a woman shot in the hand who said Haddad men were killing people," Zaki recalled. "I admitted we had guns in our homes but we did not want to fight and were prepared to give them to the Israelis."

"He told me to go back to the camp and have everyone from age 13 to 50 to bring his weapons here and that I had until 5 P.M."

Michel Gerti, a reporter for the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, also quoted Israeli soldiers as saying that people were coming out of the camps as early as Thursday evening with tales of a massacre.

Mr. Gerti wrote in Haaretz that at one point he had been approached by



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☐ Israeli positions

⊙ Phalangist positions

On Thursday afternoon about 1,500 Phalangists moved from Shuweifat to the airport. Some then moved north through Ouzai to the traffic circle near the Kuwaiti Embassy.

Israeli soldiers stationed outside Shatila. They told him that on Thursday evening, several Palestinian women ran out of Shatila crying hysterically that their children were being butchered.

At this point, early Thursday night, the story is best picked up by the doctors and nurses inside the Gaza and Akka Hospitals, situated on the north and south ends of the Shatila camp.

An Increase in Casualties

According to Drs. Maehlumshagen and Witsoe, beginning Thursday afternoon, a large number of casualties began flooding into the hospital: mostly men, women and children with gunshot wounds in the head, chest and stomach as well as a variety of shrapnel injuries.

From 8 P.M. Thursday until 5 A.M. Friday, the physicians said, they were busy treating patients.

The doctors said the first indication they had that a massacre might be taking place was when an 11-year-old boy, Milad Farouk, was brought into the hospital with three gunshot wounds. He told the doctors that Christian militiamen had burst into his house in Shatila and shot his mother, father and three siblings, one an infant. Then they shot him.

Hundreds Flee the Scene

At the same time these wounded people were being treated Thursday evening, hundreds of people — the doctors estimate that there were anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000 of them — began flocking to the hospital and the nearby buildings to seek safety.

Pandemonium reigned everywhere. In the operating theater, the physicians said, Palestinian nurses were

breaking down in tears in the middle of surgery out of fear for their lives.

In the streets of Shatila, people were rushing about in terror. The dead and dying were being carried to the hospital by families, as no ambulance drivers would go out.

The scene was made all the more frightening, the doctors said, by the illumination flares that were being fired by Israeli troops over the camps and dropped by Israeli aircraft.

A Sky Aglow With Flares

Mr. Sharon said the 81-millimeter flares were requested by the Phalangists to light their way. Residents in the camp say the sky was aglow most of the night.

"I was here throughout the siege" of Beirut, said Tineke Uluf, a 30-year-old Dutch nurse who was working in the Gaza Hospital, "and I never remember the sky being lit up that brightly over the camps.

"It was like a sports stadium lit up for a football game," she recalled. "It started about 7 P.M. and continued late into the night."

Sometime around 8 P.M. Thursday, men from the Sabra and Shatila camps came to the Gaza Hospital looking for arms to defend themselves.

It is believed from accounts pieced together from various sources among residents in the camp that a last stand of sorts was organized by some of the Shatila men at about this time. It took place about a mile down the main street of the camp, near a building with a blue-green wall, and apparently lasted for most of night.

Buildings in that area are heavily pockmarked from bullets and shellfire, and reporters who visited there

Saturday morning found many piles of M-16 shellcases evidently fired by the militiamen.

On the ground in the area, reporters found boxes that had contained M-16 bullets. The boxes were printed in Hebrew. Elsewhere, there were wrappings from Israeli chocolate wafers on the ground, as well as remnants of United States Army C-rations.

Witnesses say the detritus may be evidence that some of the militiamen had been provided with both food and ammunition by the Israelis.

On the southern end of the Shatila camp, at the Akka Hospital, the scene on Thursday evening was equally grim, according to an Asian doctor who was working in the hospital at the time but declined to be identified.

Bodies All Over the Street

The doctor said he had spoken to a boy who said he had seen bodies lying all over the main street of Shatila.

At one point, the doctor said, about 500 people crowded into the hospital's basement bomb shelter, where they were working themselves up into a frenzy as each one told the other what he or she had seen on the way to the hospital.

Hirsch Goodman, the military correspondent of The Jerusalem Post, reported that he had been shown a cable sent at 11 P.M. Thursday from the head of the Phalangist units in Shatila to the Israeli command in East Beirut.

It said, Mr. Goodman wrote, "To this time we have killed 300 civilians and terrorists."

The cable was immediately distributed in the command and sent to Tel Aviv, he reported.

Friday

Terror Spreads to 2 Hospitals

There is a good deal less information on what happened beginning Friday morning in the camps.

Most people were either in hiding or had fled.

Early Friday, at Akka Hospital, according to the Asian doctor, a young boy came rushing in, saying his mother had been knifed and his sister taken away by militiamen.

At about this time, the people in the hospital shelter were unable to control their fear any longer and almost all of them fled the hospital in a panic, scattering in all directions. What happened to some of them is not known.

The Asian doctor said that in addition to himself, the only medical personnel left behind at Akka Hospital were five Palestinian staff members and six foreign nurses. He said there

were also some patients in their rooms. None of them could walk.

A Hospital Is Invaded

At about 10:20 A.M., witnesses said, militiamen came to the hospital. Speaking Arabic in a southern Lebanese dialect, the witnesses said, they ordered everyone to come out with their hands up.

Three foreign nurses left the hospital under a white flag, according to the Asian doctor. He said they were accompanied by a Palestinian physician who worked at the hospital, Mohammed Ali Osman.

As they were leaving, a shot rang out, and the Palestinian doctor fell to the ground, dead.

At 2 P.M. Friday, a different group of militiamen came, wearing differ-

ent uniforms, according to the Asian doctor. He said they started to molest one of the Lebanese nurses, whose name was Friyal. They stopped after she started screaming.

"Shortly after that we went down to the shelter," the doctor said, "and found that one of the Palestinian nurses down there had been raped repeatedly and then shot." He identified her as Intisar Ismail, 19 years old.

Two Physicians Are Abducted

Around the same time Friday, two Palestinian doctors at the hospital, one named Sami Katib, were abducted by the militiamen who entered the hospital. A Palestinian patient was kidnapped with them.

At approximately 3:45 P.M., witnesses say, yet another group of militiamen arrived at the Akka Hospital.

Their arrival suggested to the Asian doctor that there was very little coordination between these men, especially since they all tended to ask the same question. The militiamen said they wanted to see the nurses. He told



Marc Simon / Sipa Press from Black Star

Israeli soldiers with residents of the Sabra refugee camp last Sunday after the killings there.

the men that the nurses had all fled.

At this point, according to the doctor, the militiamen asked to search the hospital. During the course of their work, they found a photograph of Yasir Arafat in the Asian doctor's room.

"You are a terrorist," one of the militiamen said to him.

At that point, the doctor said, he began to beg for his life. He was told to bring the nurses back to the hospital by 7 P.M., or else, the militiamen said, they would blow his head off.

Fortunately for the physician, by about 5 P.M. Friday, an International Red Cross convoy made it to the hospital and evacuated everyone left there. The doctor said that at about 5:30 P.M., as he was leaving the hospital to seek safety, he saw at the southern end of Shatila what he estimated to be 80 to 90 bodies. They had been mixed together with sand and were being pushed by bulldozers.

This area can be seen very clearly with the naked eye from the Kuwaiti Embassy traffic circle — the site of

the telescope and binocular-equipped Israeli observation post. Whether the Israelis actually looked down and saw what was happening is unknown.

Crisis at Gaza Hospital

At Gaza Hospital, on the other end of the camp, matters were also beginning to unravel Friday morning.

Just after dawn a nurse on the eighth floor was shot and killed by a sniper, according to witnesses.

At about noon, a woman who was director of the hospital called a meeting of the staff in light of the stories being told by the hundreds of people who were gathered around the facility, and by the wounded who had been brought inside.

Her message was simple: If you are a Palestinian, you would be well advised to run for your life, toward Israeli lines and Hamra Street.

About 20 foreign doctors and nurses and two Palestinian male nurses stayed behind to tend to the 37 patients who could not be moved. Everyone else fled.

Among those who ran were Taleb Alouki, the carpenter from Shatila, and his brother Fawzi. Earlier in the day, they managed to get back into the camp, to the shelter where they had left their neighbors the night before. Outside the shelter they found the bodies of 15 men who had been tied together with a rope, shot and scalped.

500 People Flee the Area

The two brothers ran back to the Gaza Hospital, through the maze of buildings and alleyways that make up the refugee camps. When everyone fled at around noon, they recalled, they and about 400 to 500 other people dashed north, toward Corniche Mazraa, the main boulevard separating West Beirut proper from the Palestinian-controlled southern suburbs.

This was also where the northern Israeli perimeter around the camps was situated. They sought refuge in the Warda al-Yazigi School, just south of Corniche Mazraa. It was by now early Friday afternoon.

Sometime, either in the morning or

early afternoon, the precise time cannot be established, a CBS News cameraman was on the perimeter of the Sabra camp, where he filmed a middle-aged Palestinian woman appealing to two Israeli soldiers to stop the killings going on inside the camps.

Some of this information had clearly filtered up to the Israeli command by this time. According to Mr. Sharon's statement before the Israeli Parliament, at about 11 A.M. Friday the Israeli division commander, Amos Yaron, met with General Drori and "raised suspicions concerning the method of operation of the Phalangists."

An Order to Halt Operation

According to Mr. Sharon, General Drori then ordered the Phalangist liaison officer to halt the operation. It is clear from all accounts that by Friday afternoon things did quiet down somewhat in the camps but there were still fires raging and shooting going on, according to people who were on the scene.

What happened next was probably the most controversial decision taken by the Israeli high command, save for sending the Phalangists into the camps in the first place.

At 4:30 P.M. Friday, after General Drori was said by Mr. Sharon to have ordered an end to the operation, Generals Drori and Eytan met again with the Phalangists. At that time, Mr. Sharon said, it was "agreed that all of the Phalangists would leave the refugee camps on Saturday morning."

An Apparent Contradiction

At this point, officials in Lebanon note, there appears to be a serious contradiction in Mr. Sharon's account of what happened. He said the Phalangists were ordered to stop their operations in the camps at 11 A.M. Friday. Yet at 4:30 P.M. they were told that they could stay in the camps until Saturday morning. Repeated efforts to interview General Drori to clarify this point were unsuccessful.

The available evidence suggests that the operation was not halted on Friday, but that it may have been slowed down somewhat.

Israeli officers in East Beirut said that what happened at the 4:30 Friday meeting was that the Phalangists told the Israelis that they needed more time to "clean up" the area.

The Israelis said that instead of moving troops in to stop the militia operation, the Israeli command decided to give those militiamen already in the camp time to finish what they were doing. But at the same time, the Israelis decided to keep additional militiamen from moving into the camp.

Some Phalangists Begin Leaving

Lebanese Army sources confirmed that by Friday afternoon Phalangist units with trucks and halftracks began moving out of the airport back to their home bases, just as Mr. Sharon said.

Inside the camps, the militiamen already on the scene continued with their work.

At some time between 4 and 5 P.M. Friday a Reuters correspondent, Paul Eedle, spoke to an Israeli colonel at the Kuwaiti intersection and asked him about the operations taking place in the camp.

The colonel, who declined to be identified, told Mr. Eedle that his men were working on the basis of two principles: that the Israeli Army should not get involved, but that the area should be "purified."

Sounds of gunfire and explosions could be heard emanating from the northern end of Shatila, witnesses recalled, and they could also be heard by Taleb Alouki and his brother Fawzi. They, along with 400 to 500 other people, had fled from Gaza Hospital in the afternoon when word came that the militiamen were advancing in their direction. They took shelter at the Al-Yazigi school, cowering in courtyards and classrooms.

Some of the Palestinian civilians who tried to flee the camps for the safety of downtown say they were prevented from leaving by the Israelis outside the camps. The following account by the two brothers, was corroborated by the testimony of five other people who were later interviewed separately and independently of each other.

Palestinians Decide to Run

On Friday afternoon, with the sound of gunfire seeming to get closer to the school where they were hiding, the Alouki brothers and the others decided to make a run for Corniche Mazraa and the Israeli lines.

The throng, showing a white flag, moved from the school up Rue Mohammed Ali Beyhum to Corniche Mazraa.

As they approached the Israeli checkpoint on the main boulevard, kitty-corner to the Berbir Hospital, they were stopped by an Israeli soldier. The soldier, by all accounts, was clearly surprised and probably frightened to see all of these people coming at him.

The soldier shouted in Arabic to the crowd to stay back, then went into crouch position at the corner of a building and aimed his gun at the people, who immediately started shrieking and turned around.

Crowd Chooses a Spokesman

The soldier, members of the crowd recalled, then told them to send one

person forward to explain what they wanted. A man was chosen and sent to speak to the Israeli.

According to the people, the spokesman told the soldier that Haddad militiamen were slaughtering civilians in the camps and that they were trying to escape.

The Israeli soldier told the spokesman that there was nothing he could do, and added that if they remained in the area, he would open fire.

People began protesting; women started weeping. The Israeli soldier then reportedly fired two volleys into the air to scatter the crowd. At that point, witnesses say, an Israeli tank rolled from Corniche Mazraa onto Rue Mohammed Ali Beyhum and chased the people a few hundred feet back toward the camps.

Reporters who went to the intersection last Thursday afternoon found a Lebanese man who lived in a first-floor apartment who said he had seen the entire episode from his balcony. He confirmed the refugees' story without any prompting.

If the refugees' account is true, it would appear that by Friday afternoon the Israeli commanders had given no order to allow civilians fleeing the scene to pass through the perimeter set up around the camps by the Israeli Army.

"If we went one way we ran into the Israelis; if we went the other way we ran into the Haddad men," Taleb Alouki said, "so we all just decided to turn around and hide in the school."

Almost a week later, they were still there.

A First Inking of the Horror

It was Friday afternoon that officials at the United States Embassy in Beirut first got an inkling that something was terribly wrong in the Palestinian refugee camps.

A group of American journalists happened to stop by the embassy around 3 P.M. to speak with a member of the staff. In the exchange, one of the journalists mentioned that he had heard rumors that Phalangists had entered the Shatila camp. The chargé d'affaires, Robert Barret, who was in Baabda, was immediately alerted, diplomats say.

The diplomats said that Mr. Barret contacted Amin Gemayel, who had succeeded his slain brother as Phalangist Party leader. They said Mr. Gemayel said he did not know if Phalangist militiamen were in the camps, but that he would check.

This and other evidence suggests that the Phalange Party leadership, including Mr. Geymayel, now Lebanon's President, may not have known what the militiamen were doing.

Saturday

U.S. Confirms the Killings

At 9 A.M. Saturday, a member of the United States Embassy staff entered Shatila, established that a massacre had taken place and informed his superiors.

Sometime between late Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, the militiamen in the camp appear to have made a concerted, but somewhat sloppy, attempt to cover at least some of their tracks.

Many buildings were bulldozed atop the bodies inside them. Some bodies were bulldozed into huge sandpiles, with arms and legs poking out in spots. In some areas the militiamen made neat piles of rubble and corrugated iron sheets to hide the corpses.

It is also possible, judging from the number of buildings that had their facades ripped off, them, or huge bites taken out of them by bulldozers, that the militiamen were seeking to make many buildings uninhabitable so the surviving residents could not return.

Zaki F., the Palestinian living near Gaza Hospital, and a neighbor, Um Fatmi, 40 years old, and her four daughters had locked themselves in their homes in the Sabra camp when, around around 6 A.M. Saturday, men with bullhorns came through. The men identified themselves as Israelis and said that people had to come out. They added that no one had any reason to be fearful.

'Come With Me'

The figures with bullhorns turned out to be militiamen.

"When I came out," Zaki recalled, "I could tell the man was speaking with a Lebanese accent and was not an Israeli at all. He said, 'Come with me or I will shoot.'"

Men, women, girls and young boys were all rounded up by the militiamen. Some 500 to 600 people, possibly even more, were then herded together

and marched at gunpoint down to the main street of Shatila, where they were forced to sit along the road. Beside them were a number of corpses that had already begun to decay.

Zaki recalled that one of the militiamen said to another, "Why are you bringing them all at once? Why not bring them few by few so we can finish them off today?"

"The one he was speaking to answered that the Israelis are going to ask about all the people in Shatila so why not give them to them and say they are from Shatila," Zaki said.

Saleh H., 55 years old, was part of the group. One of the things that he said struck him was how some of the militiamen called each other by Christian names, such as Butros, while others addressed one another as Ali and Abbas, which are Shiite Moslem names and further circumstantial evidence that some of them may have been members of Major Haddad's militia.

Hospital Is Ordered Evacuated

With all of these refugees now collected in Shatila, the final act was about to take place at the Gaza Hospital, where some 20 foreign doctors and nurses and two Palestinian medics were still caring for 37 patients.



United Press International

A Palestinian woman searching for a missing relative among massacre victims in the Sabra refugee camp.

At about 7 A.M., members of the medical staff recalled, six or seven militiamen came to the hospital and ordered everyone out.

"We told them that we could not leave the patients," said Miss Uluf, the Dutch nurse, "so they said two of us could stay behind to look after them.

"They were very well equipped," she recalled. "Some of them had those Israeli kind of helmets with the webbing on them and, in fact, at first we thought they were Israelis.

"They said we had to march with them. As we got closer and closer to Shatila, we saw more and more of these militiamen, some of them in black berets." Some Phalangist militiamen are known to favor black berets.

Hiding with the group of foreign medical workers were the two Palestinian male nurses who were trying to slip through the net of the militiamen.

"They were very frightened," Dr. Maehlumshagen recalled. "When we entered the Shatila camp, we discovered all of these people sitting along the main street. As we marched along, one of the militiamen pulled one of the Palestinian nurses out of the line and asked his identity.

"We asked them what they were going to do with him," the doctor said. "the militiaman said, 'You do your job and I will do mine.'

"They then took the man around a corner and we heard shots. That is all we know."

Along the way, the other Palestinian male nurse was pulled out of line as well, witnesses said. His fate is also unknown.

An Execution in the Street

Several witnesses said that at one point, a man wearing a blue hospital uniform in the group of foreigners from Gaza Hospital was stopped by the militiamen and asked his nationality.

When he replied "Syrian," the militiamen gunned him down in the middle of the street, in front of everyone.

"Somewhere along the way," Miss Uluf said, "we came upon an Israeli officer who asked where we were being taken. The militiaman in charge, wearing a black beret, told the Israeli, 'First they come with me and then they go with you.'"

That is what happened, according to Miss Uluf. The doctors and nurses were taken to the Phalangist outpost at the business school near the traffic circle and were made to sit on the floor.

A Lecture From a Phalangist

A militiaman gave them a lecture, saying, "We are not fascists or racists, but respect the Geneva conventions."

At one point Miss Uluf said, said, while their passports were being checked and they were being berated for working in a "terrorist hospital," an ambulance drove up.

"They took this trembling Palestin-

ian boy out of the ambulance and said to us, 'See how well we treat Palestinians,' " the nurse said.

When each member of the medical team had had his or her identity papers checked by the militiamen, they were allowed to cross the street to the Israeli lines, where they were given fruit, food and water and released.

Two of them were subsequently allowed to return to the hospital to help care for the patients still there.

Meanwhile, back in the Shatila camp, the militiamen were busy separating Lebanese and Palestinians they had taken prisoner, with men forced to sit along one part of the main street; the women along another. It was about 7:30 A.M.

Women Begin Screaming

According to Um Fatmi and her four daughters, a number of men were taken off, their arms behind their heads. Some were taken behind piles of sand. Shots were heard. When the women began screaming, some of the men would be brought back to quiet them down.

According to both Colonel Prince, the Lebanese Army Surgeon General, and a United Nations observer who saw the more than 300 corpses discovered in Shatila so far, it was clear from the relative states of decomposition that some people had been slain as early as Thursday and others as late as Saturday morning.

Some bodies were found bloated and already decaying, the blood that covered them congealed in a dark stain. Others looked as though they had just been shot and had barely decomposed at all, such as a 90-year-old man, Hada Nouri, who was found at the side of the road, his cane at his side.

Diplomat Describes a Scenario

One Western diplomat who viewed the corpses said that what he found especially horrifying was that people had evidently been "marched up to a wall and confronted with the horror of what they were going to look like moments before they themselves were shot."

Around 8 A.M. Saturday, according to Zaki F., the men were ordered to march out of the camp and up the hill. Just outside the gate, he said, was a Land-Rover with Christian militiamen inside. Each man had to pass by the vehicle in single file, apparently for purposes of identification. Some were pulled out of line and forced to sit in a ditch.

According to people in the camps, some of the men who were massed there that morning have not returned.

As the men marched out of the camp they saw about a dozen trucks full of militiamen lining the side of the hill up to the Kuwaiti Embassy traffic circle, apparently preparing to leave the area.

A Difficult Story to Confirm

At some point, according to the testimony of the women who went into

a panic when the men were marched off, two men they thought were Israelis came to the gate of the camp and said the men were being taken to the stadium and that all the women could go home.

Given the semi-hysterical state some of these people were in, this story proved difficult to confirm. One thing is certain: the women and children were all released, and most of the men were marched off to the sports complex.

On the way to the stadium, according to several people in the crowd of men being delivered by the militiamen to the Israelis, an explosion took place, killing a man and his young son and wounding several others. No one seems really sure of what happened.

One story is that a grenade was thrown into the group; another, that someone stepped on an unexploded cluster-bomb shell near the stadium.

A Feeling of Reassurance

All that is certain is that there was an explosion and some of the men were killed and injured.

"When we got near the Kuwaiti Embassy we were very relieved because we saw Israeli soldiers and knew we would not be killed." Zaki F. said.

At some point on the way to the sports stadium, the militiamen moved away and turned the men over to the Israelis. The Israelis asked the men to sit under a stadium tier, tended to the wounded and gave everyone food and water.

In his statement to the Israeli Parliament, Defense Minister Sharon said that on Saturday morning, the Phalangist forces left the areas of the refugee camps, which jibes with the eyewitness accounts.

Then, Mr. Sharon said, information began to arrive about the killings in the Shatila camp. On the basis of this information, he said, General Drori ordered the Israeli Army to take up positions in Fakhani district and later in the Sabra camp in order to protect the population and "put them at ease."

Israelis Say They Were Greeted

Both Mr. Sharon and reporters who watched the Israelis move in said the Israeli Army was greeted warmly by the local Palestinian populace.

Mr. Sharon said General Drori ordered the Israel Defense Forces to stay out of the Shatila camp so that it "would not be linked to the events that occurred there."

According to the men gathered at the stadium, while they were sitting there, awaiting interrogation, an Arabic-speaking Israeli asked them through a bullhorn whether there was anyone there from Shatila. No one answered.

The Israeli soldier then asked whether or not the men understood Arabic and repeated his question. No one answered. The men say that there were some present from the Shatila camp, but that they were afraid to speak up.

Invitations to a Private Chat

Finally the Israeli soldier asked if there was anyone there from around Shatila. Several elderly men raised their hands and were asked to come out for a private chat, with an officer and translator.

According to witnesses, two Israeli soldiers spoke with the men for some time. What they discussed is not known, but they say that the Arabic-speaking Israeli who did the translating threw down his hat in disgust when the interrogation ended, while the Israeli commander slapped his hands together in apparent anger. It is possible that this was the first time these two Israelis learned the full extent of what had happened in the Shatila camp.

Whatever the Israelis knew about the massacre by Saturday morning, and however disturbed they were by the events, some of the Palestinians

say the Israeli soldiers threatened to turn them over to the Phalangists if they did not cooperate.

Saleh H., 55, quotes an Israeli soldier as telling him at the stadium: "You are now under the protection of the Israeli defense forces. Don't worry about anything, just be honest with us. If we find out you are not honest. . ."

He said the soldier added, "the Phalangists are here."

Mr. Saleh said the Israeli soldier then motioned toward the area from where the Phalangists had brought them to the stadium.

Finally Ahmed, 27 years old, a teacher at the school of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Sabra camp, was asked by an Israeli if he knew any guerrillas.

"I told him I knew a lot but they left

when the P.L.O. guerrillas left," he recalled. "I told him I did know some of the Palestinian militiamen still in the camp. I said all this after he promised not to take me to the Phalangists."

On that Saturday morning, a reporter arrived at the sport stadium and observed the men, apparently from Sabra and Shatila sitting under the concrete stadium tier. They all looked very worried but also very quiet.

A few miles away, around 9 A.M., the first outsiders were entering Shatila and discovering the bodies.

The Israeli officer in charge of the stadium interrogations, Col. Naftali Bahiry, was asked if there was any truth to reports that Phalangists were in the area of the camps.

"We asked the Phalangists to leave," said the colonel. "We don't need anyone to do the job for us."

The Israeli Statements on the Events in Lebanon

Thursday, Sept. 16. Israeli Army spokesman: "The I.D.F. is in control of all key points in Beirut. Refugee camps harboring terrorist concentrations remained encircled and closed. The I.D.F. calls on citizens to return to normal activity and on all terrorists and other armed persons to lay down their arms."

Friday, Sept. 17. The Cabinet: "Following the assassination of President-elect Bashir Gemayel, the I.D.F. took positions in

West Beirut in order to prevent the danger of violence, bloodshed and anarchy, while about 2,000 terrorists, equipped with modern and heavy weapons, remained in West Beirut, thus blatantly violating the departure agreement."

Saturday, Sept. 18. Israeli Army spokesman, about noon: "We do not know anything of these alleged massacres. There is no Israeli presence in the camps themselves. We do not know what is happening in the camps, and we are trying to establish the facts."

Foreign Ministry, about 11 P.M.: "Israel condemns the massacre. There was an exchange of fire between Israeli forces and extremist Phalangists, which were engaged in the criminal acts. Only thanks to the intervention of Israeli forces, which were in West Beirut, that the number of casualties was not much higher."

Sunday, Sept. 19. The Chief of Staff, Lieut. Gen. Rafael Eytan: "We don't give the Phalangists orders, and we're not responsible for them. The Phalangists are Lebanese, and Lebanon is theirs, and they act as they see fit. The Phalangists went fighting within this camp here, Shatila, according to their guidelines, if you can call them that, of warfare. We didn't really know what was going on. It was at night. It was assumed it was ordinary fighting. Then in the morning light, when we saw what was happening and what could happen further, we intervened quickly."

Maj. Gen. Amir Drori, northern commander: "Before these events took place, I met with the deputy chief of staff of the Lebanese Army, who



Associated Press

Defense Minister Ariel Sharon: An aide said of the massacre, 'Sharon learned about it Saturday.'

is the personal representative of the Prime Minister, Shafik al-Wazzan. I told him that we are under strict instructions not to go into the camps, and that if we don't go in, and if the Lebanese Army doesn't go in — and he knows the way things are here in Lebanon — then he could well imagine what might happen. I begged him in every language possible to take responsibility for the security situation in the camps."

Monday, Sept. 20. An aide to Defense Minister Ariel Sharon: "Sharon learned about it Saturday."

Army spokesman: "We knew that groups of the Lebanese Forces entered Thursday night with the intention of carrying out a purging process. The atrocious picture began to become clear early Friday morning, but nobody ever could imagine the real circumstances. However, there were suspicions that the reports given by the Lebanese Forces about dead and wounded (not regarding civilians) seemed to be slightly exaggerated. Something seemed to be out of place, and then a senior I.D.F. officer asked the Lebanese forces liaison officer to cease fire and leave the camps. Many hours later the Lebanese Forces left the camps."

Senior Foreign Ministry official: "As far as we were concerned, these were Lebanese units, disciplined units. We never imagined that anything like this would happen. There was a certain fog over what was happening. There were disquieting reports. Gradually it became clear that something was wrong. When it became clear to us that these units were killing civilians, we immediately went into action. We were forced to open fire and sealed off the camps to prevent them from going in and continuing the killing."

Wednesday, Sept. 22. Prime Minister Menachem Begin: "I have a right to express my belief that there is no one guilty in Israel. There is no one guilty in the I.D.F. Just a tragedy."

Defense Minister Ariel Sharon: "The Phalangists entered the refugee camp of Shatila on the night of the 16th of September, 1982, and their activities were halted by the I.D.F. on the 17th in the afternoon, after rumors reached us as to what was occurring in the camp. The area was completely evacuated by Saturday the 18th of September in the hours before noon.

"On the 15th of September, after the murder of Bashir Gemayel, at 3:30 A.M., a meeting was carried out with the Phalangist command in which the Chief of Staff and northern commander participated, and during which we discussed the operations of the Phalangists and the entry of the I.D.F. into the western part of the city. And we spoke in principle of their dealing with the camps.

"On the 16th of September, in the afternoon, a meeting was held between the northern commander and the commander of the

Phalangists with regard to several matters, and on the same day in the afternoon a meeting was held between the division commander in the area and the representative of the Phalangists to coordinate the entry of the Phalangists into the camp of Shatila.

"The agreement was that the Phalangists would enter the camp from the south and the west to search out terrorist nests. In the coordinating meeting, it was stressed that the operation was against terrorists, and that it was forbidden to harm the civilian population, especially women, children and the elderly.

"On the night of the 16th of September, a force of the Phalangists entered Shatila camp.

"On Friday the 17th around noon — actually around 11 A.M. — the division commander met with the northern commander. The division commander raised suspicions concerning the method of operation of the Phalangists. Even



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Prime Minister Menachem Begin: 'I have a right to express my belief that there is no one guilty in Israel.'

then it was not known what was going on in the Shatila camp. The northern commander ordered the immediate halt of the Phalangist activities, by means of the Phalangist liaison officer at the headquarters.

"On Friday the 17th at 4:30 P.M., a meeting was held with the Phalangist staff and the Chief of Staff and the northern commander, in which it was agreed that all the Phalangists would leave the refugee camps on Saturday morning, the 18th of September. It was also agreed that no further forces would enter the camps. At this meeting as well, the events in Shatila camp were still not known.

"On the 18th of September in the morning, the Phalangist forces left the areas of the refugee camps."

Epilogue

U.S. and Israel at Odds

When the Palestine Liberation Organization completed its withdrawal from West Beirut on Sept. 1, most officials agree that it actually pulled out more than 11,000 men.

From that day until Sept. 15, the day the Israeli Army invaded West Beirut, Defense Minister Sharon and other senior Israeli officials repeatedly asserted that the P.L.O. had left 2,000 guerrillas behind. They said that these guerrillas were in plainclothes and were hiding with Lebanese Moslem militiamen in West Beirut.

The Israeli Government complained to the United States about these supposedly hidden guerrillas, and Washington — according to the Israeli radio — replied that while there were P.L.O. personnel left in behind in West Beirut, they were attached to the P.L.O. diplomatic mission there, established in 1964 and fully recognized by the Lebanese Government. Its di-

rector, Shafik al-Hout, had ambassadorial status, Washington reportedly said, and the 100 P.L.O. functionaries working in mission were there with the express permission of Lebanon.

Role of the P.L.O. Personnel

The P.L.O. people, the United States told Israel, were to assist Palestinian families whose breadwinners had been evacuated from the city and to supervise the transfer of P.L.O. arms and ammunition to the Lebanese Army.

In addition to the Palestinians working in the diplomatic mission, there were also Palestinian militiamen. For the most part, they were Palestinian youths born in Lebanon who acted as a civil guard, maintaining order and protecting the camps. As part-time civilian fighters, they were not considered guerrillas under the Habib agreement.

According to the pact, any combatant such as these militiamen who laid down his or her arms and was found acceptable to the Lebanese Government could stay behind in Lebanon. Most of these militiamen met this requirement and did stay behind, since Lebanon was, for all intents and purposes, their home.

Interview With an Israeli Officer

Col. Naftali Bahiry, an Israeli officer in charge of interrogating men who had been rounded up from the camps, confirmed that "far more than half" were simply Palestinian militiamen who he expected would be released.

Colonel Bahiry, interviewed after the massacre, added that only a small percentage were suspected of being P.L.O. guerrillas who had been ordered to stay behind in violation of the Habib agreement.

In summary, the Israelis do not appear to have found, nor do there appear to have been, 2,000 P.L.O. guerrillas who remained behind in West Beirut. Clearly there were some, but the weight of the evidence suggests that the number was in the low hundreds at most.
