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Rise and Fall of The South Lebanese Army:
A Political History of South Lebanon from 1969 Till 2003

By

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Rise and Fall of The South Lebanese Army:
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Dedication

I would like to thank all those who have contributed
And encouraged me in the completion of my thesis.

I would also like to dedicate this research
To all those who suffered in any way from the Israeli occupation.

Nathalie Denise Bekai
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Abstract

This research examines the background that triggered the creation of the South Lebanese Army, the events that encouraged it to remain and its dismantle after 22 years of collaborating with Israel. It tackles the major events that Lebanon in general and the South in particular have gone through since the Cairo Agreement in 1969 till the Israeli withdrawal and its impact and outcome on the southern region as well as on the other Middle Eastern countries. The research also discusses thoroughly the South Lebanese Army’s built up, its development through the years and its disintegration. The study is built upon different subjects related to the creation of the South Lebanese Army like the southern Lebanese war, the economy of the southern region, the Israeli policy during its occupation of the South, the Resistance phenomenon and the difficulties faced by the South after Israel’s withdrawal.
Preface

This thesis is the study of the social, economical, political and military aspects of the southern region. The main theme evolves around the creation and development of the Lebanese southern militia. The latter was created in the 70s and led by Major Saad Haddad. After the Israeli invasion of 1982, the SLA became an army helped and supported by the Israelis. In May 2000, when Israel withdrew from South Lebanon, the SLA was dismantled and former SLA members either escaped to Israel or surrendered to the Lebanese authorities. A new page of the Lebanese history started.

We will divide the thesis into three chapters. The first chapter covers the period from the Cairo Agreement in 1969 till the second Israeli invasion in 1982. It deals with the Palestinian armed presence and its attacks on Israel that caused the first Israeli invasion in 1978. It also discusses the beginning of the southern war and the arrival of Major Saad Haddad on the political scene of the region. Moreover, the chapter tells the stories of the first Lebanese-Israeli contacts, which encouraged Israel in implementing the Good Fence policy. The chapter also covers the two Israeli invasions of 1978 and 1982 and the creation of the State of Free Lebanon.

Chapter two begins with the Israeli withdrawal from Beirut and the Mountains and the creation of the Security Zone. The Israeli continued presence in South Lebanon was the trigger behind the birth of the National Lebanese Resistance. Moreover, the chapter discusses the formation of the South Lebanese Army led by Antoine Lahd, its built up, military and men power, activity and relation to Israel. We also tackle the Hezbollah phenomenon and we end the chapter with the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon, its impact on the former SLA members and its effect on the Middle Eastern region.

In the third and last chapter, we analyze the post-withdrawal policies, Hezbollah’s new role in the South, the rulings of the Military Court in Beirut and we end it with an honest opinion of the situation lived by the South today.
CHAPTER ONE

SAAD HADDAD AND THE STATE OF FREE LEBANON

Since the birth of the state of Israel in 1948 and its membership of the United Nations, Lebanon, like any other Arab country, was thrown in the Middle East conflict. This country, which borders Israel to the south and Syria to the east, became for more than two decades, a real war zone where the inhabitants were punished for the misfortune of living in the crossfire between Israeli and Palestinian guns. Situated at the northern Israeli border, the Lebanese villages were a strategic point in the Zionist plans of the Israeli leaders. Long neglected by the government in Beirut, the south, with its almost total absence of legitimate authority, has attracted the regional powers’ intentions on engaging Israel without jeopardizing their own borders. Over the years, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Syria have found the pull of southern Lebanon irresistible. For its part, Israel has used the area to launch military operations and to conduct raids at will to punish and intimidate the Lebanese side.

Moreover, since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli war, Lebanon has been home to large numbers of Palestinian refugees. Approximately 100,000 Palestinian civilians fled their homes in 1948 and 1949 to Lebanon. Some of them were integrated in the Lebanese society, while the others remain living in Palestinian refugee camps situated in Beirut, Saida, Tyre, Baalbak, Anjar, Dbayyeh and Tripoli. After the 1967 war and the defeat of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, the fida’iyyin grabbed the moment and started military training in the camps, which proved to be a fertile recruitment ground. The Cairo Agreement of 1969 gave the Palestinians a legitimate use of military power on Lebanese territory. This
agreement effectively established what was known as a Palestinian state-within-a-state.¹

In this chapter we will first discuss the historical background of the Palestinian presence and its activity in south Lebanon. We will move on to the appearance of Saad Haddad's phenomenon and the first Lebanese - Israeli contacts. We will take a close look at the war in the South and talk about the first Israeli invasion of 1978 and, the declaration of the "State of Free Lebanon". Finally, we will conclude the chapter with the establishment of Saad Haddad's "militia" and the second Israeli invasion in 1982.

**Background of the Palestinian Presence in South Lebanon:**

In February 1969, Yasser Arafat became the chairman of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), while also remaining the leader of Fatah. At that time, both, the PLO and Fatah, were located in Jordan, where their presence had become a major problem to the Hashemite kingdom, as the PLO and other organizations rejected any kind of control over their activities on and from Jordanian territory. The tension between the PLO and the elements loyal to the king finally escalated into the civil war of September 1970 also called "Black September". The Jordanian Army beat Fatah and other PLO organizations, pushing them out of Jordan. Most of them went to Syria, which did not allow any operations from its territory, encouraging these forces to move to Lebanon.

Under pressure from the Left wing groups and other Arab States, the Lebanese government gave the Palestinian guerillas a certain degree of freedom to build their organizations and to execute attacks and military operations across the southern border.² The Palestinian camps were a never-ending recruiting zone, supported by Syria that trained and equipped Palestinian groups with weapons and ammunition and by other Arab countries that financed them. At that time, the Lebanese Army was poorly equipped

and did not have the man-power to either stop the Palestinian excursions in the South, or its operations against Israel from the Lebanese territory.\footnote{Beate Hamizrachi, \textit{The Emergence of The South Lebanon Security Belt: Major Haddad and the Ties with Israel, 1975-1978} (New York, 1988), p. 27.}

The government's reaction to the Palestinian activity in the south and to the Israeli retaliation came in the form of a project of law in 1968 prohibiting any infiltration into Israel from Lebanese territory. Unfortunately, the draft of law remained on paper and was not sent to the Parliament, since the Lebanese Army was incapable of implementing it. The Lebanese government found itself in a dilemma: it did not want to enter the Arab-Israeli conflict forced by the operations originating from its territory, but also it did not want to act against the PLO, which by now enjoyed the support of the Arab world and a number of Lebanese Muslims. One of the major anti-PLO retaliation executed by the Israeli Army took place in December 1968, when Israeli Defense Force (IDF) units under the command of Brigadier General Rafael Eitan dropped with helicopters on Beirut International Airport and blew 13 planes belonging to the Middle East Airlines. There were no casualties, however, the non-intervention of the Lebanese Army led to a government crisis resulting in the resignation of Prime Minister Abdallah Al Yafi. Deputy Rashid Karame succeeded him.\footnote{Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 27.}

The Israeli attack on the airport had finally made the whole country aware of the problem of the Palestinian armed presence in Lebanon. Manifestations for and against freedom of movement and freedom of action, divided the Lebanese society in two: a Muslim majority sided with the Palestinians, while the Christians, especially the Maronites, were against them. The demonstrations were called by left-wing groups in protest against the Government restrictions on the activities of the Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon. The state of emergency was declared as a result of violent clashes between armed demonstrators and the security forces, in which over 15 people were killed and more than
80 were injured. A curfew was also imposed in Beirut and other big cities and press and radio censorship introduced. The state of emergency was ended on the 28th of April, while the curfew was lifted on May 4th 1969.\(^5\) Furthermore, battles between the Lebanese Army and the Palestinians spread all over the country and the army began to make an effort to contain the Palestinian activity in the South. This situation threatened to endanger the very existence of the PLO.\(^6\) Diplomatic efforts, mainly by Egypt and Syria, resulted in the signing of the Cairo Agreement on Monday 3 November 1969 by the Lebanese delegation headed by army Commander General Emile Boustani and a Palestinian Liberation Organization delegation headed by PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat. The meeting was attended for the United Arab Republic by Foreign Minister Mahmud Riyadh and War Minister Mohammed Fawzi. The Agreement was based on the principals of fraternity and common destiny. Relations between Lebanon and the PLO must always be characterized by confidence, frankness and positive cooperation in the interest of both parties within the framework of Lebanon’s sovereignty and safety.\(^7\) Under the stipulation of the nominally secret Cairo Agreement in 1969, the Lebanese government agreed to give the Palestinian guerillas a certain degree of freedom to exercise extra-territorial rights in the 15 refugee camps in the country. They would also be allowed direct access to the Israeli border in the southern Arqub region, which purpose was to execute attacks and military operations across the southern border. From that moment on, the Christians and other communities began to regret the presence of the guerillas and to deplore the loss of production caused by repeated Israeli attacks.\(^8\) Kamal Salibi describes in his book the new situation Lebanon had been put in and had to face:

"The PLO in Lebanon, with all its external connections ... could now behave as a state within the State, as it had acquired, by the terms of the Agreement, what was tantamount to sovereignty not only over the commando bases under its control, but also over the Palestinian refugee camps".\(^9\)

\(^6\) Hamizrachi, op.cit, p. 28.  
\(^7\) Lebanese Israeli Negotiations: chronology, bibliography documents, maps, edited by the Lebanese Center for Documentation and Research, p. 264.  
\(^8\) Kelidar and Burrell, op.cit, p. 6.  
The Lebanese Army, that had proved itself in its war against Fatah, felt humiliated by the agreement, because it gave the PLO unlimited access to the Israeli border. Nonetheless, the Cairo Agreement did not solve the Lebanese situation. It provided a "time out" that was used by the Palestinians to improve their position for the next round. The Palestinian activities in Lebanon had two main objectives: the first was the military aspect, which dealt with the construction of a network of operational bases in the Fatahland region\(^\text{10}\). While the second was political, and dealt with the Palestinian political ideology that gained access in the refugee camps:

"Already in 1969, the UNRWA officials admitted in one of their statements that they had no longer any control over 14 of the 15 camps and that the control had been taken over by the fida'iyyin groups".\(^\text{11}\)

Until 1970, the Lebanese Army had major problems to solve within its commanding units. By that time, Saad Haddad attained the rank of captain, and had already made up his mind about the danger of the PLO activity in Lebanon. Beate Hamizrachi quotes Haddad's opinion about the Palestinian presence and activity in Lebanon: "I warned my soldiers that these terrorists are like a small snake, still without poison. But it will become bigger and strike, and then its poison will kill".\(^\text{12}\) Haddad rejected any kind of compromise with the PLO, which he felt that the very existence of his country was threatened by them and "was a slap in the face of the Lebanese losers". Hamizrachi deduced that as a Christian, Haddad opposed the presence of Palestinians in Lebanon, because that endangered the "status quo". While as a son of the south, he felt better than any, that the activities of the PLO would certainly bring instability and devastation to the area. In Hamizrachi's opinion the future "proved him right".\(^\text{13}\)

\(^\text{10}\) According to Hamizrachi, Fatah, the main branch of the Palestinian organizations, smuggled men and weapons over the Syrian border into the Arkoub region, at the foot of Mount Hebron. This was the launching area of any PLO attacks on Israeli settlements and the starting point of the PLO expansion towards the Hasbani River. The whole region was soon called "Fatahland", due to the predominance of Yasser Arafat's Fatah organization. Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 27.

\(^\text{11}\) The word 'fida'iyyin' originates from Arabic and means 'sacrifice'. It refers to those who sacrifice themselves for land, country, faith, etc, sometimes in suicidal missions.


\(^\text{13}\) Ibid, p. 30.
The Situation of the South Before 1976:

Until this day, people in South Lebanon pride themselves about the kind of security the region lived in before 1976. Most of the families belonged to political parties. The difference in the political ideology between the villages brought disputes, and misunderstandings. Often the political leaders or important heads of families in each village solved these disputes. The use of arms was occasional, depending on the importance of the subject fought for.

However, the situation deteriorated from the beginning of the year 1975, when the lack of trust between the political parties in the region, the arrival of armed militiamen coming from Beirut and the presence of armed Palestinians in the south led to an increase in violence. The Lebanese newspapers stated between the months of April and December of that year, 47 cases of security breaches resulting in gunfire, stealing of goods and damaging properties. Moreover, the attitude of the new militiamen arriving to the region bothered its inhabitants, for they brought chaos to the already established “security pact”. The year 1975 also witnessed a wave of refugees headed to South Lebanon, fleeing the war that started in Beirut. The southerners had to face new social and economic problems: the social ones were brought by the stories told by the newcomers about the atrocities of the war in the capital and its suburbs. These realities were different from the stories told by the local fighters. Economically, the region fell in penury of goods. This brought the local parties, especially the Palestinian organizations to sell them at a higher price.

As for the agriculture, the region is known for its olive and tobacco cultivation. However, the year 1975 brought with it a catastrophe to the farmers of tobacco plantations. For security reasons, the peasants were asked not to collect their crops in the early morning.

hours. As a result they had to waste 20% of their production. Moreover, the Regie\textsuperscript{18} threatened to burn a part of the crops because a number of peasants did not have the permit to plant tobacco.\textsuperscript{19}

The beginning of 1976 witnessed another problem, when the Regie did not accept the tobacco crops produced and refused to pay the farmers their money owed for the year 1975. This meant no income for the southern farmers to begin a new productive year. The solution came from Libya and Iraq that agreed to import a part of the crops. The role of the Lebanese Arab Army (LAA), that replaced the Lebanese Army in its military outposts in the South in March 1976, was to buy the tobacco from the southerners and to deliver it to these two countries. Even though the rescue mission was completed successfully for some farmers, others, mainly Christians, did not sell their share of the produce. They preferred to look to the other side of the border, mainly Israel, to cry for help.\textsuperscript{20}

One of the well-known stories of “the cry for help” in the South is told in the book of Viviane Saliba, the Editor in Chief of Al Massira Magazine. She tells the story of Nicolas Haddad, a Maronite Christian from Rmeich village who decided to end the misery of its people by crossing the border to Israel.

"On March 4, 1986, Nicolas Haddad, the owner of a private school in Rmeich, was sitting at his desk giving a lesson to his students when he stared out of the window at the burnt field of tobacco in front of the school. Looking back in the hungry, cold and worried eyes of his students ... he decided! He was not going to tell anyone except his friend Said and tomorrow he will execute his plan."\textsuperscript{21}

On July 22\textsuperscript{d} 1976, Nicolas Haddad reached his goal when 20 tons of tobacco crossed the Lebanese border to Israel, “while more tons were expected to cross the border in the

\textsuperscript{18} The Regie is a Lebanese institution and holder of a monopoly over tobacco production and trade.
\textsuperscript{19} Jabber, op cit, p.40.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, pp. 41-42.
Unfortunately for the peasants, the production was sold to Israel to a lesser price because of the limited selling price imposed on them. In numbers, the price paid by the Regie was 7.5 Lebanese liras, while Israel paid 1.35-1.5 dollars per kilogram. The militiamen of the villages of Rmeich and Kleiaa backed up the transactions across the border. The new situation encouraged Israel to install the first step of the “Good Fence Policy”. Davar newspaper defined the new Israeli policy as “an important and successful accomplishment”. Israel’s policy of the Fence soon spread to other sectors, like labor, medical assistance, visits and even military supplies. After three months, Israel stopped buying the southern tobacco for financial reasons. Still the southern Lebanese peasant was the only one paying the price for Israel’s decision.

Militarily, till 1968, the security of the area was under the direct supervision of the Lebanese Army. This governmental institution ran the simple lives of the southerners and protected them thoroughly. In 1968, South Lebanon was the base of armed Palestinian organizations that reached and settled in the area to start their military operations and attacks against Israel. After the counter Israeli attacks, which killed 5 Israelis and 11 militiamen, the southerners were forced to take a stand in either joining the battlefield or leaving the area.

Meanwhile, the war that started in Beirut divided and weakened the military institution. In January 1976, the army had to defend its headquarters in Marjayoun against armed militiamen who intended to take control of the entire southern region. The battles lasted till March, when the Lebanese Army lost its headquarter in Marjayoun and found itself besieged by the opposite forces. As a consequence, the institution created roadblocks and demanded permits from people and merchandise crossing the checkpoints. Some of the permits were given after a thorough interrogation.

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22 Al Hamichmar, 25/7/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, index 2, p. 274.
23 Haaretz, 12/10/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 5, p. 375.
25 Jabber, op cit, pp. 48-49.
26 Historically, the Lebanese Army established roadblocks in the southern region in 1955, when a group of Palestinian refugees were moved from the Galilee region, in southern Lebanon, to the Rashidieh camp and
The Disintegration of the Lebanese Army:

At the beginning of 1975, Saad Haddad joined the 1st Battalion in Marjayoun as second-in-command to the battalion commander. After a short time, he was promoted to second-in-command to the sector commander. Haddad had a low opinion of Colonel Kallas, the commander of the 1st Battalion: "he was not interested in his army work. He was only interested in the parties he had at his house 'cause he liked good-looking women". The opinion of some of the southerners about the army was not different, than Haddad's. Southern Muslims and Christians were divided in two opposite opinions: leftist Muslims were against cooperating with any armed force, while Christians saw in the Lebanese Army (LA) an institution that could protect them. These opposite attitudes were all so clear when the government decided to create an institution called "Ansar Al Jaych", ("partisans of the army"). The Christians supported the organization completely; they saw it as their protector. Most of the Shiites and social outcasts enrolled in the new institution, while a minority of the Muslim community in the South did not pay much interest in it.

The southern region lived the first days of the year 1976 in a calm atmosphere. It was the calm before the storm. Soon the unnatural quietness in the south was to end, and the person behind that change was Lieutenant Ahmed El Khatib, commander of the 1st Battalion's tank company, stationed in Hasbaya. "Khatib was always a kind of a rebel. Contrary to army regulations, he would enter the officer's club unwashed and unkempt with his hands in his pockets", Haddad explains.

In the evening of January 23, 1976, general staff Brigadier General Nasrallah called Marjayoun from army HQ in Yarze with the order to withdraw all army forces from Hasbaya. According to intelligence information, the PLO would attack Hasbaya during the night, and the army forces placed there could not defend their position. After the

to the Bekaa region. The government created these security measures for two important reasons: the first was to prevent the group of fida'iyyin, from coming to the southern region. While the second was to secure the Lebanese - Israeli border from any attacks. Ibid, pp. 50-51.

27 Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 51.
28 Jabber, op cit, p. 52.
evacuation order had been received, the HQ in Yarze tried to get in touch with Lieutenant Ahmed El Khatib and other commanding officers in the Hasbaya area, but there was no answer on the wireless. An immediate investigation into the matter revealed that Lieutenant Khatib along with two other Muslim Lieutenants and a number of soldiers had deserted. They had also taken a number of Christian soldiers hostages. Lieutenant Mohamed Abdallah, who was ordered to stop the convoy of deserters, joined them. The convoy reached the Syrian border at Masnaa. The hostages were freed and given money to return home.

The political ideology of the LAA had by now become clear:

"The LAA demands political and economical changes in Lebanon to improve the position of the Muslims. It also proclaims solidarity with the Palestinian guerillas in the country."

The symbol of the new force was a white stallion. Khatib continued to call upon Muslim officers and soldiers to leave the LA and to join him. Many answered his call. His next move was to take over and control the army's vital posts. The first barrack to fall under his control was in Baalbak. Headed towards the south, he conquered Rashaya El Wadi's barrack and proclaimed his forces as the "Lebanese Arab Army" (LAA).

After the Rashaya take over, Khatib headed towards Marjayoun, Kleiaa and Khiyam army posts. Days before the attack of the LAA on this area, some Christian soldiers of the Lebanese Army asked Israel for military help. Others, like Saad Haddad, who did not want to get involved with Israel, decided to leave the region for Beirut. When General Aziz El Ahdab proclaimed an overthrow of the government in Beirut, followed by Colonel Antoine Barakat's seize of the military academy in Fayadieh; Haddad decided to

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33 Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 55.
join the Traboulsi barracks, which was known for its neutrality in the conflict.\textsuperscript{33}

To sum up, Haddad states in his book that Khatib’s mission was offered to other soldiers, who refused because they had sworn to protect Lebanon. He had two good reasons to accept, first because he was already late in his promotion as a soldier and second because, as Haddad says, he thought he would be a nationwide hero. He first contacted Israel, while located in Hasbaya. When Israel let him down, he contacted the Syrians and after both had failed him, he turned to Libya, who paid him big money to \textit{spill out more oil on the fire}. Moreover, Haddad explains that, the Christian hostages, Khatib brought with him to Masnaa, were a security card he had to play because he feared the Syrians might change their minds. Haddad also talks about the reasons behind the Syrian help to dismantle the Lebanese Army: if dismantled, Syria can unite the Lebanese and the Syrian army after invading Lebanon. Therefore both countries become Syria’s long awaited dream: the Greater Syria.\textsuperscript{34}

To the southerners, the dismantling of the Lebanese Army created a vacuum. This vacuum was filled on the Muslim side by the presence of the Lebanese Arab Army. While the Christians stood by the policy of the government in Beirut concerning the Lebanese Army and welcomed their arriving armed soldiers to their villages.\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{The Good Fence Policy and the First Lebanese – Israeli Contact:}

1. \textit{The Good Fence Policy:}

The goal of Israel in establishing the Good Fence policy was to create “a motivation” to develop the relationship it intended to create between the two people. “The motivation” Israel sought was in the southern people’s needs. Israel understood the weakness of the southerners at that time; it grabbed the opportunity and worked on consolidating, at first,

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{34} Haddad, op cit, (no page number).
ethnical relations between the two people. Help came from Maronite to Maronite; from Muslim to Muslim, from Catholic to Catholic. The donations were given to southerners through a Jewish-Arab committee that came from Israel to check the damages of the Lebanese families caused by the war. Some of the donations were in cash, for an account had been opened in the bank of the post office. "The committee asked the people to give donations never minding the religion or the sex of the persons given too". As an example of the publicity made by the media, one of the newspaper articles stated that a truck worth thousands of Israeli Shekels was donated by the military unit in the northern Israeli region, who supervise the Good Fence crossings, to families in South Lebanon. However good the donation was, the article also talked about donation rules, if there was any. Even if no one heard about it, Israel managed to impose some rules on the southerners. The change was in the way people were treated when they were collecting their goods: boxes containing donations had the name of each family on it and members were called upon by the military to collect it. According to the Center of Palestinian Studies, the last article written about the Israeli donation campaign to help the southerners was written in Davar on November 14, 1976, hence four months after the beginning of the Good Fence Policy. Since that date, no Israeli newspaper mentioned any kind of donation. The impact of the first step towards implementing the "Good Fence Policy" had a devastating impact on the southern villages, which fell fast into the South Lebanese war and grew ethnically apart from one another.

What were the major products that Israel "donated" through its Good Fence policy? Israel worked hard, based on the needs or "motivations" of the Christian as well as Muslim

35 Jabber, op cit, p. 55.
36 Yoyl Dar wrote in Davar, 21/7/1976: "some men came from a village in South Lebanon to ask for help to a Arab Israeli village ... at the beginning none of the citizens in the village knew the reason behind that visit. However, the elderly remembered that before the war of independence they fled their village and came to the Lebanese village and asked for help. The villagers said that when you needed help, we rushed to help. Now we are in need for your help and you should help us".
37 The donations were not in reality a very important sum. The committee collected 20 thousand Israeli Shekels from the 60 thousand it had thought. Most of the money went to the Maronite families. The newspaper also states that a wealthy Jew named Abraham Litani donated a large sum of money because he was a student in the American University of Beirut and "have had many Maronite friends". Davar, 19/10/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 2, p. 274.
38 Hatzovia, 14/11/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, no. 20, p. 431.
39 Jabber, op cit, p. 62.
villages, to develop economic relations on both sides of the fence. To some extent, it also managed to attract from both sides, supporters to her good deeds. And because the Good Fence policy was a direct Israeli intervention in the internal affairs of the Lebanese society, the policy also had to cover the social and economical ways of living. Once again Israel managed to use human relations as baits for its political purpose. Here are some of the offerings or, as Israel puts it, donations of the Good Fence:

**Food and fuel:** When the Good Fence policy started, the Israeli newspapers failed to give accurate numbers of the quantity of food supplies donated to the southerners. This is if any numbers were given at all. The newspapers related to general quantity like "trucks of food ..." or "a truck of flour" or "a large quantity of medicine and blankets". After a period of five months, the Al Hamichmar gave, on the 20th of August 1976, in one of its articles a summarized figure of the quantities of donations that were sent to South Lebanon between the 15th of April and the 18th of August 1976, and stated that "Israel donated to the Lebanese villages the following supplies: 10.4 tones of wheat, 11.6 tons of sugar, 6 tones of rice, 14.1 tones of salt, 40 tones of meat and 12820 liters of fuel". Dr. Jabber has two comments. The first relates to the quantity of "donations", which might have been sufficient for a village or a small populated area, but not for the entire region. He adds that most of the aid across the Fence was given to the military and more specifically to the militiamen of the Kleiaa village and other armed groups in the region. The second, is that flour and medicine were absent from the list of offerings. As known in crisis situations, these are the two most important supplies a population would need first. But because of their importance, Israel had put them on the trading lists with the southern farmers:

"This is the main reason behind the arrival of the flour 10 days after the opening of the Good Fence. Another reason behind its late arrival was because Israel was late in establishing a selling price and there was the

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40 Ibid, p. 63.
41 Al Hamichmar, 20/8/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, no. 7-8, pp. 272-274.
the Lebanese farmers to pay it with their tobacco crops".\(^{42}\)

Unfortunately, the same fate was studied by the Israelis to the medicine offers, when the director of the Israeli ministry of agriculture declared in a press conference held in Tel Aviv that: "calls are made to trade and commercialize the southern Lebanese products in exchange for medical supplies. However, no decision was taken till this time".\(^ {43}\) Dr. Jabber concludes by saying that Israel managed once again to attract the southerners to its bait. By trading with the southern farmers the two most wanted items for survival, in the conditions of war, where any man would do anything to save his children from death, Israel managed to force the southerners on trading their tobacco crops with food supplies the Lebanese government failed to provide.\(^ {44}\)

**Trade:** The Fence also provided trading and business dealings between Lebanese peasants, or workers and the Israelis. This new service started in August 1976, after Israel had finished establishing its security defenses along the border. Tobacco was the main product coming from Christian villages.\(^ {45}\) Moreover, to make the process of gain less profitable to the Lebanese villagers, Israel placed trading conditions, such as, obliging the farmers to convert half their income from any trade of tobacco, into Israeli currency. Hence, Israel profited from this process twice: the first time from the purchase of the product, and the second time, from the exchange of Lebanese pounds into Shekels.\(^ {46}\) The Israeli village of Keriat Shmona was the only market opened to the Lebanese businessmen. When the Good Fence was finally established, the Lebanese businessmen could do transactions "anywhere in Israel based on special permits, with one condition

\(^{42}\) Maariv, 19/7/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, pages with no numbers.

\(^{43}\) Ibid, 15/7/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, pages with no numbers.

\(^{44}\) Jabber, op cit, pp. 64-66.

\(^{45}\) Samples of tobacco crops were shown to Israelis at the Fence “to check the quality and to expand the trade". However, no deal was made because of the high tax and price tags on the products. (Haaretz 26/8/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 3, p. 296). The villagers of Kleiaa also asked Israel to help them market 200 tones of tomatoes, by buying 20 to 25 tones per day. The response of the director of the ministry of agriculture came in a statement declaring that: “there is no possibility in this period to contain such quantity, and after the evaluation the experts stated that the products are not suitable healthily". Yadiot Achronot, 18/8/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, pages with no numbers.

\(^{46}\) Jabber, op cit, p. 68.
that of being accompanied by an Israeli during their stay. 47

The one event worth mentioning during that period was the bringing to a standstill of any kind of trading activity between the 14th and the 27th of September 1976, because, as Davar explained, "New trading legislations" were being established. The newspaper states that this resolution came as a result of several complaints from the Lebanese villagers living next to the border that the products bought by the Lebanese businessmen were not arriving to their village. 48

After Israel reopened the Fence, trade became politicized. That meant that the products sold to the Lebanese had to be given from now on to the mayor of the villages and not to the businessmen. It was decided that the mayor of each village would hand the Israelis a list of the number of the population in each village and the quantity of food needed. Moreover, each village will have to name a person responsible for receiving the goods. 49 The first loads were sent to Ain Ibel and Dibble villages on the 30th of September 1976 through the Doviv gate. 50 With this new move, Israel arrived to another political goal that of finding the exact number of the population in the villages of South Lebanon. And after its goal was reached, Israel went back to the old system of giving the Lebanese traders permits to cross the border and buy products.

**Health services:** Starting 1975, South Lebanon entered a period of decline of health services and these worsened with each passing day. For instance, the hospital of Khiyam had a staff composed of 14 doctors working seven days a week and in March 1975, it was robbed and burnt. It closed one week later. The same happened to the Hasbayya hospital, whose services covered the whole central region. The situation became worse when it closed in July 1976 because it lacked medicine and medical supplies. In these circumstances and on January 1st, 1976, Israel supplied the gates of Mtullah, Doviv and

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49 Jabber, op cit, p. 69.
50 *Maariv*, 30/9/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, pages with no numbers.
Hanita with medical hospices. The Israeli media states some numbers of the Lebanese crossing the border seeking medical assistance. However, no one can be certain of these numbers: it stated that until 22 July 1976 there were 1700 outpatient services, after eight days they increased to 2800 outpatient services, including 20 deliveries and 100 hospital admissions. These numbers contradict facts of the reality related too by other Israeli media, which stated in September of the same year the minimum number of people in need of medical attention, to cross the border through the Doviv gate was 100 persons per day. As far as the medical assistance itself, it is worth mentioning that some of the services came after the family and the patient had waited for long hours under the hot, burning sun, at the gates. As for the cost of this assistance, it remained free till the 5th of October 1976, when the Israeli government placed the charge of 100 Shekels on each service. This new fee was the equal of half a month salary of any Lebanese working in Israel.

**Employment services:** Tobacco was the most asked field for labor. It brought the Lebanese workers the highest income. This was a major step in Israel’s policy, which started, since the beginning of 1976, to make an inventory of the population in South Lebanon. The Israeli ministry of labor stated that in the southern Maronite villages there were about 500 unemployed adults, having the skills of a middle Israeli worker. On July 1976, Israel declared that it was studying demands forwarded by jobless Lebanese workers. Hence, on the 29th, Israel accepted 15 workers, who started their employment in

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51 Jabber, op cit, pp. 70-71.
52 Davar, 12/7/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 2, p. 272.
53 Al Hamichmar, 23/8/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, pages with no numbers. Moreover, according to the Haaretz newspaper, there were until the 1st October 1976, 9421 patients among them 5900 Christians, 3512 Muslims and 9 from other ethnics crossed the border for medical assistance. While by the end of the year, the numbered had increased to 9205 Christians, 4797 Muslims and 106 Druses. Haaretz, 1/10/1976, from the report for the Institute of Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 5, p. 372.
54 Al Hamichmar, 9/7/1976, from the report of the Institute of Palestinian Studies, pages with no number.
55 “You want a thousand liras, take two, just don’t let my boy die,” shouted a man in front of Israeli soldiers who were looking down on him. Assafir, 16/9/1976.
56 Jabber, op cit, p. 73.
57 Davar, 2/8/1976.
tobacco factories at the 1st of August. 58 The period of time that followed witnessed an increase in the number of workers crossing the border. These numbers varied according to the economical circumstances the southern villages were facing. For instance, in September the number varied between 300 and 400 workers. While in October 1976, it raised to 400 to 500 workers; to settle in December at 386 workers.59

Lebanese also worked in other fields except construction. Here is an example, given by Yadiot Ahronot, on 300 Lebanese workers crossing the border to Israel: 150 worked in excavating, 85 in carpeting, 10 worked in packing, 24 in the postal service and the rest worked in different fields.60

As for the places of work, it varied between the towns of Safad, Maroon, Mttullah, Houla, Keriat Shmona and Gosh Kalas. On the Lebanese side, workers crossing the Fence came from three main villages: Kleiaa, Rmeich and Alma Al-Shaab. The majority of the workers were men.61

Israel claims that the salaries paid to Lebanese were almost equal to those of Israeli workers.62 However, reality demonstrates otherwise. Wages varied, depending on the field of work, between 20 and 60 Shekels a day. The same work performed in Lebanon would pay the equivalent of 120 shekels; according to the Yadiot Ahronot.63 Furthermore, workers were obliged by law to change 50% of their daily income into Lebanese pounds, which meant losing twice: first at the exchanging office which did not always give good rates. And second, when the worker lost half of his pay for the Israeli

58 Al Hamichmar, 2/8/1976: From the 15 workers crossing the border there were 7 women and 8 men aging between 20 and 25 years old. From the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 3, p. 293.
59 Jabber, op cit, p. 74.
60 Yadiot Ahronot, 20/9/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, pages with no numbers.
61 Jabber, op cit, p. 75.
63 Yadiot Ahronot, 23/8/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 4, p. 295.
national income.\textsuperscript{64}

Three remarks should be made on the way Israel treated workers: First, Lebanese worked in Israel under the impression that this country does not need more labors, therefore their demands cannot be accepted. Second, Lebanese were allowed to work in different fields and then had to leave the Israeli territory immediately after finishing work. They could stay in Israel if they were equipped with a permit and they were always under the direct supervision of the army. Third, Israel used to carefully pick up young men and women for work. This brought disputes and hatred to the Lebanese villages because the newly employed were not ready to give their place to another unemployed villager.\textsuperscript{65}

**Tourism:** On the 23\textsuperscript{rd} of August 1976, Israelis stood at the Doviv gate waiting for the first Lebanese tourists to cross the border. Haaretz mentioned that permits were given to 32 families, or 100 persons. Except for the problems Lebanese faced with their permits, only 41 tourists arrived that day.\textsuperscript{66} However, the “rush” to visit Israel decreased with time and by the end of the year, the border witnessed only 10 tourists crossing daily. If we look closer at the motivations of these Lebanese crossing the border to visit Israel, we observe that:

First, some of the persons who visited Israel during that period were from outside the southern region. Israel had agreed to give them permits after the government of Cyprus had limited their stay in Israel.\textsuperscript{67}

Second, a big part of the Lebanese visiting Israel had relatives who exerted pressure on the Israeli authorities for permits and sponsored the visitors during their stay in Israel.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{64} Al Hamichmar, 26/7/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, pages with no numbers: the Lebanese lira was exchanged in the first week at 250 Israeli pounds, while in the second week it was exchanged at 235 Israeli pounds.

\textsuperscript{65} Jabber, op cit, pp. 76-77.

\textsuperscript{66} Haaretz, 24/8/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 3, p. 297.

\textsuperscript{67} Davar, 4/7/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 2, p. 273. When Beirut International Airport closed during the war, people use to come to Cyprus headed toward Lebanon and arrive to the Lebanese seashore by boats. Another route was through Damascus, but it was often cut because of the fighting in the Bekaa valley.

\textsuperscript{68} Davar, 9/8/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 3, p. 297.
Third, some of the Lebanese made use of their visit to Israel to emigrate from it to other countries in Europe or to the United States, because they did not want to go back to Lebanon.⁶⁹

Fourth, in the number of Lebanese visitors, Israel includes the relatives of the hospitalized or sick persons who sought medical treatment. And the numbers of sick are not few as well as the numbers of their relatives coming to check up on them.⁷⁰

The next step Israel took was to open a permanent travel agency between Haifa and Lebanon in February 1977. It was seen as the first contact made after 29 years. The agency worked on transporting 50 persons once every two weeks.

Other services: The Fence provided the southerners with other services to the benefit of Israel. One of these services was the arrangement of visits to the Israeli factories. After the farmers of tobacco and other agricultures had passed through a very difficult year, and were not able to sell their product anywhere, their neighbor had found a way to encourage them into working with it. Israel opened its factories to the visiting farmers who were impressed to see the progress reached by their neighbor and disappointed with their non-competitiveness. Some of the ‘favors’ Israel did for the peasants was for example to provide them with fertilizers and mechanical parts for their agricultural machinery. Another was to train a woman from the village of Rmeich on the technique of vaccinating the cattle. Furthermore, Israel built water pipes to the border villages.⁷¹ The last services donated by the Fence were the phone lines that were installed in September 1976 in 6 villages; and the postal services, that began also at the beginning of the month of September 1976. The letters were sealed with the phrase: “The Good Fence-Mtullah”.⁷²

⁷⁰ Jabber, op cit, p. 78.
⁷¹ Jabber, op cit, pp. 80-81.
⁷² Haaretz, 29/9/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, pages with no numbers. To these services we can add the gas pipes that were installed in July 1976 and the announcement made by
Evaluation of the services given by the Fence: In an evaluation made by the Al Hamichmar six months after the opening of the Fence, it was stated that the term “South Lebanese villager” was not properly used because there were only four Christian villages that were receiving help from Israel.\(^3\) Hence, Israel was ready to help any other villages regardless of race or religion. However, the Muslim villages, as a whole, did not turn to Israel for any aid. And if there were to be helped, the villages got what they needed from the Christians and in very small quantities. Therefore, the relation remained with the Christians, who were always the core element in the Lebanese-Israeli relations.

Israel was well aware of the pressure it was exercising on the Muslim villages by engaging contact and providing supplies to the Christian villages. Both sects had at one time or another to choose between their civic sense and their physical needs. Obviously, some saw in Israel a savior, while others lingered behind.\(^4\)

Four southern Lebanese villages fell in the Israeli trap, excluding Rmeich that collaborated with their neighbor: Dibble, Ain Ibel, Alma Shaab and Kleiaa. As the Lebanese war moved on, Dibble asked Israel for military arms. Soon the village became a training camp for 120 young soldiers enrolling in the southern war. Ain Ibel followed. It is true that its collaboration came rather late, but the geographical position of the village was a major key player in the strategic game Israel played in the region, in creating a Christian belt to protect itself from Palestinian attacks.\(^5\) Alma Shaab’s collaboration came simultaneously with Ain Ibel’s. In August 1976, the latter villages arrived to a

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5. The villagers of Ain Ibel collaborated with Israel later than expected for several reasons:
   1. In the village lived a small group of military men with high ranks. Therefore, the village did not live the period that faced the other villages where military men asked for their salaries.
   2. The people in the village were in good relation with the political forces in the region, meaning the leftist party and the Kataeb party. The agreement between the two postponed the collaboration of the village with Israel.
   3. Finally, the village was afraid to pay again the price it did in 1920. Unfortunately, these three reasons were not enough to prevent the villagers of Ain Ibel from collaborating with Israel. Ibid, pp. 107-108.
military and security agreement with Rmeich, sponsored by Israel and signed in a tent placed next to the border. An Israeli officer finalized the agreement. The last village to enter into the Israeli equation was Kleiaa. This village was an exception for three reasons: first it was located in the heart of the eastern sector, which meant that it already was in direct contact with Israel. And second because, Kleiaa was the only southern village composed only of Christian Maronites and politically united around the right wing Kataeb party. The third exception was the village’s male composition. There was around 1000-armed militiamen from different ages capable of handling arms. With the fall of Kleiaa in the eastern sector, the South had drawn the lines of its battles.

2. Evaluation of the Christian-Muslim Relations During the Good Fence Policy:

Looking at the Southern Lebanese relations between communities before the beginning of the war and till 1976, we can say that Muslim and Christian villages lived till the first months of 1976 in relatively good relations. People till then still had one of the many characteristics southerners were recognized for, human decency.

However, when the fighting in the capital started, the South had to face hunger, the use of arms and the direct Israeli intervention in the people’s daily lives. The economic situation degenerated fast due to masses of refugees fleeing the war, while the scarce food in the region, made people tense. Moreover, the arrival of armed militiamen from Beirut turned the region into a time bomb ready to explode with any fight between armed or backed up men and for any silly reason. Soon the war caught up with the region. Not taking into account the people living there, whom for the majority did not have anything to do with what was going on. Each party taking part in the fight controlled its geographical zone and was the master of its territory. The Palestinian organizations, on one hand, were always disregarding their commitments to the people of the region. On the other hand, the Christian leaders were enjoying their victory in the capital and its suburbs and taking advantage of the failed cooperation between the PLO and the Syrians. Meanwhile in the

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77 Ibid, p. 110.
shadows, Israel, analyzing the southern situation and founding it appropriate to infiltrate into the Lebanese society, managed to create a link between both Israeli and Lebanese people.

What we would further like to point out, is that the relationship between Christians and Muslims, on both social and political levels, was not the reason behind the bloody hostility fights the two communities faced.

On the social level, small differences were distinguished between the Maronite villages and the Muslim ones. They were seen mainly in the traditions, behavior and the slang. As for the education, there were private schools in Christian villages and public ones in Muslim villages. Here too the education level differed in the learning of new cultures and foreign languages by the students of the private schools. These were tools in acquiring better jobs. The private system also provided new educational systems each year with new books and a new perspective to look at the material presented to the student. This was not the case in the public schools.\textsuperscript{78} Another social differentiation was between the villagers and non-villagers. The first attribute was given to those belonging to the southern village, while the others had limited social and political tasks.\textsuperscript{79} Despite the differences, some social duties were always a must, and brought people together, like weddings, funerals and births and sad ones too like deaths. These moments were the key links in the southern society. Other events helped, like the organization of public markets where people sell all sorts of products.\textsuperscript{80}

On the political level, the southern society was characterized by its political diversity and the subsistence of a very wide variety of political parties living in the area.

The Christian villages dealt with politics according to the equilibrium set between the families in each village, their social standard and the statements and assertions religious

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, p. 89.
men made. One of the reasons behind the political diversity in the region was the existence of the Palestinian organizations. People looked at the Palestinian resistance with two contradictory views: one opened, inclined and comprehensive and another radical and revolted due to what they were causing to the southerners. But, in general, Christian villages were inclined to having limited but good neighborly relations, avoiding any conflict between both sides. From their part, the Palestinian organizations respected this relationship because they knew the critical situation lived by the Christians in South Lebanon.

Parallel to that, the relationship between Muslim villages and the Palestinian organizations was not so friendly when it began in the early 70s because the latter were not allowed to enter or to set up any offices in the Muslim villages. Some of these villages managed to persuade their members not to publicize their political opinion. Hence, they were able to maintain the unity of the village around the elderly, who supported the idea of the non-intrusion of the fida‘iyyin. Other Muslim villages, especially the Shiites, that accepted the Palestinian organizations, dealt with separations between the members of their families and sometimes the disarmament and expulsion of some of these members. This division ended up in the creation of two Shiite wings: one supporting the traditional village leaders and the other sustaining the left wing parties.

Finally, we can safely say that on the Christian as well as on the Muslim side, some sided with the parties fighting in the war, while others stood completely outside and sustained the local leaders of each village. No matter what side a person had in this period of time, the social and political levels of the Lebanese southern society were not the reason behind the continuation of the war in the south. Moreover, if the southern villages were left in peace to decide on the way to settle their internal differences according to their know-how, there is no doubt that they would have been able to avoid the war.

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81 Ibid, p. 92.
82 Ibid, p. 94.
3. The First Lebanese – Israeli Contact:

According to Hamizrachi, the first contacts between Israel and elements of the Lebanese Maronite camp began in 1974, initiated by members of the Tanzim organization. At the beginning, Tanzim members met with Israeli officials in Europe and, in spring 1975, contacts accelerated mainly between Mossad officials and representatives of Camille Chamoun’s Liberals. At a later stage, meetings included the Kataeb of Bachir Gemayel. For the militias, Israel was an important source of arms and ammunition, while for Israel the militias proved to be a steady source of intelligence. Norton adds some figures to explain more about how badly Israel wanted the relationship to work: according to a study made by the American Task Force for Lebanon in June 1991, Israel provided not less than $50 million per year (prior to 1982) to the militias of Bachir Gemayel and Dani Chamoun.

While working on its plan to establish good and solid relations with the Lebanese, Israel had already finished by the end of 1975, arming its northern border and creating a security zone against the Palestinian attacks. By the middle of 1976, it had completed successfully posting 21 army barracks along its security zone. These posts were to become the gates that Lebanese would cross.

On January 26, 1976, Minister of Defense Shimon Peres stated that it was ready to help Christians fleeing the Lebanese war by opening its borders with Lebanon. This call meant to some southerners, who did not see anything bad in asking Israel for help, a warm welcome. The first answer to the Israeli call came at the end of the month of January, when a 16 year-old girl from the village of Kleiaa crossed the border to seek medical help. The second border crossing came from a Druze family who decided to visit some relatives in Israel. As a consequence, and although Israel did not get many answers to its

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83 Ibid, p. 93.
84 The Tanzim organization consisted mainly of extreme right-wing intellectuals who dreamed of Lebanon as a Christian state and operated in a semi-underground fashion. Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 63.
85 Ibid, p. 63.
86 Norton, op cit, p. 64.
87 Jabber, op cit, pp. 56-57.
call from the southerners, it had already laid the first stone of what would be called the "Good Fence Policy".\textsuperscript{88}

As for the first civilian Lebanese – Israeli contact, there is no specific starting date to the beginning of these relations. Christians as Muslims turned to Israel in times of need. However, stories are told about activities along the border during the night. There were rumors of important military relations between some Muslim armed groups living in the villages at the border and Israeli soldiers. Rumors also were told about armed patrols crossing the border at night, smuggling of weapons, training of soldiers and meetings that went down in southern villages between Israeli officers and Lebanese militiamen. These rumors became a fact of the reality in April 1976, when the South witnessed the arrival of militiamen from Beirut across the sea through Israel.\textsuperscript{89}

The Israeli newspaper, Yadiot Ahronot, explains in one of its articles the goal behind the Israeli policy in that period "the main reason behind Israel’s policy of the Good Fence is to create a new situation in the region and at the border".\textsuperscript{90} This new situation went along very well with the newborn strategy of the Minister of Defense Shimon Peres: "the right strategy is not to control the land in the region, but to establish good communication with the people in Lebanon".\textsuperscript{91} Israel had planted its policy casually. And the story begins with the need for medical assistance and food.

It is the story of Nicolas Haddad, from Rmeich, the first Maronite Christian who crossed the border to Israel asking for food and medical help. The slow death turned the life of that region into hell. "We will never surrender," shouted Haddad to the thought of surrendering to Palestinian threats. The only way out of this situation was to resist. But how to resist without water, food, electricity, medicine or doctor? Without guns or ammunition? In the early morning of the month of March 1976, Nicolas Haddad got dressed up to go hunting with his best friend Said. When they were far enough from the

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, p. 56.  
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid, pp. 58-59.  
\textsuperscript{90} Yadiot Ahronot, 5/9/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 4, p. 315.  
\textsuperscript{91} Al Hanichmar, 23/8/1976, from the report of the Institute for Palestinian Studies, year 6, index 4, p. 289.
village, they went to the fence and waited for an Israeli patrol car and stopped it by waving a white handkerchief tied to their guns. After the Israeli soldiers asked them to drop their weapons, Nicolas asked them to meet with the commander in the region, explaining that they came in peace. After an hour or so, a white car driven by two civilian men arrived at the border and took both Nicolas and Said to the center for interrogations:

"At the beginning I felt so guilty ... I am the director of a school and I am a Lebanese who went to Israel and met with the 'enemy', so will they say that I am a traitor?! Then I encouraged myself and said: 'now I am not a teacher, I am a human being. A human being threatened to die of thirst and hunger. I am asking for help to the only neighbor that I have, Israel. I am not asking for military assistance, I just want some food, electricity, water and medicine!' ... Or else I will have to face death".  

After a 20 minute ride, they arrived at an apartment where 13 Israelis, some of them civilians and others military, were waiting for them. So began the four hours of interrogation, through which the Israelis opened a well informed file of Nicolas Haddad, who had to explain the reason behind his visit: "I apologize for being neither your snitch nor your spy or anyone else's spy! This is my story in short terms: I am hungry, thirsty, ill and scared; so can you help me?" At the end of the interrogation, one of the Israelis informed Haddad that they could help him, but he had to meet the commander of the region first. So they set a date to meet with him five days later.

When Haddad arrived to Rmeich, his family and friends greeted him warmly as they thought Palestinians had kidnapped and killed him during his hunting trip. Haddad explained to his family and to the village leaders of Rmeich and other neighboring villages, where he went. As a consequence, the state of emergency was declared because

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92 Saliba, op cit, pp. 130-131.
93 Ibid, pp. 132-133.
95 Ibid, p.135.
villagers feared a Palestinian attack; therefore an Israeli patrol guarded the village that entire night.\footnote{Jabber, op cit, p. 103.}

Three weeks later, Haddad met with Rafael Eitan, the commander of the northern region, who had the approval of both Prime Minister Isaac Rabin and the Minister of Defense Shimon Peres to start helping the villagers of Rmeich. Days later, a medical tent was placed at the border between Israel and Lebanon, where a doctor treated patients around the clock.

In a fourth meeting between Haddad and important Israeli commanders of the northern region, the latter asked Haddad to create a “fire belt”, which would take their cooperation to a higher level, meaning by that the military level. So Haddad met with four officers of the Lebanese Army from the villages of Dibble, Ain Ibel and Rmeich. The officers accepted to work with him for the sake of the country, but did not accept any contact with Israel. All agreed that Nicolas Haddad would bring ammunition from Israel and the officers would use it in Lebanon.

This is how the cooperation between Rmeich and Israel began. Other villages in the area soon followed it and Israel reached her goal in creating its “fire belt”.

Meanwhile, Palestinian roadblocks torn the region apart and left the villagers with no cooperation or communication with each other. As Nicolas Haddad explains, the situation remained that way till the battle of Maroon Al Rass and the first Israeli invasion in 1978.

“In Beirut nobody knew about our relation with Israel ... until we came with Major Saad Haddad and Sami Chidiak as leaders of the military force. When they took over, the Christian villages were torn apart from one another”.\footnote{Saliba, op cit, pp. 136-137.}
In Saad Haddad’s book, Francis Rizk, the spokesman for the “State of Free Lebanon” tells the story of a badly injured soldier in Marjayoun. He was bleeding non-stop, so his family decided to take him to Israel seeking medical assistance. Unfortunately for us, Rizk says, we had no other choice because the region was surrounded by the LAA and the PLO fighters. According to him, Israel was their only hope for survival. He estimated at 110,000 the Lebanese patients who visited Israeli clinics and hospitals in three years. He also estimated the number of Lebanese workers, men and women, who crossed the border to work in Israeli factories, agricultural fields and hotels around 1200 workers daily. Rizk also wondered if the government of Prime Minister Salim El Hoss would have helped the people of the region, like Israel did. He added that the government in Beirut accused them of collaborating with Israel, while the military forces of the PLO and the LAA blocked the roads to their agricultural lands and to the hospitals of Tyr and Saida. The PLO also cut the water and electricity supply to the region.98

The War in South Lebanon:

1- The Arrival of Saad Haddad to the South:

Until the Lebanese civil war began in 1975, Israeli incursions into Lebanon were periodic. When the war started, the Lebanese government lost its ability to maintain control over its territory. Southern Lebanon congregates a “melting pot” of Christian and Muslim ethnics. As the fighting intensified, the southern Christians looked to Israel for support and help against the Left and Palestinian coalition.99 Israel found in the new Christian tutor a long awaited opportunity to create a well-built relationship between the Zionists and the Christians.

Six months had passed since the beginning of the relationship between the Christian villages and Israel, when the war in South Lebanon began in September 1976. The

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98 Haddad, op cit, (no page number).
99 Norton, op cit, p. 62.
relation had also faced important changes. It crossed over the hunger, thirst and sickness, Nicolas Haddad cried for at the Doviv gate that night, to a military partnership. The Israeli newspapers during that time explained how the military training of young soldiers in South Lebanon helped creating a security belt for the southern region's own protection against the Palestinian attacks. This belt created by Israel, released it from the security responsibility it had towards the southern region, by placing a local, trained armed force in each village of the region. From this point onward, the collaboration had improved to reach the military rank. These were the conditions the southern region lived in from 1975 till the beginning of the war.

The key player for Israel's policy in the South was Saad Haddad; a Lebanese Major who was a native from Marjayoun and a Greek Catholic. Norton relates some of the thoughts written by Moshe Sharett in his diaries, reflecting on David Ben Gurion's plans for the establishment of a Christian state in Lebanon in 1954. Sharett writes:

"According to him [Dayan] the only thing that's necessary is to find an officer, even just a Major. We should either win his heart or buy him with money, to make him agree to declare himself the savior of the Maronite population. Then the Israeli army will occupy the necessary territory, and will create a Christian regime, which will ally itself with Israel. The territory from the Litani southward will be totally annexed to Israel and everything will be all right. [...] (16/5/1954).

The chief of staff (i.e., Dayan) supports a plan to hire a Lebanese officer who will agree to serve as a puppet so that the Israeli army may appear as responding to his appeal 'to liberate Lebanon from its Muslim oppressors'.” (28/5/1954).  

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100 Jabber, op cit, pp. 111-112.
101 These diary entries are quoted by Augustus R. Norton from Livia Rokash's book (Rokach Livia, Israel's Sacred Terrorism: a study based on Moshe Sharett's Personal Diary and other documents, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Belmont, Massachusetts, 1980, p. 28-29.) Norton, op cit, p. 63.
Saad Haddad was sent to the South under army orders in 1977 and rose over time to become the leader of the proxy forces aligned to Israel. Haddad was an irritable, blustery man given to frequent emotional outbursts ranging from rage to tears. On one occasion, in the midst of an ongoing military operation, he was so out of control that his Israeli counterpart slapped him in the face to bring him to his senses. His style lent itself to Israel's purposes, since Israeli officials could easily claim that it was not always easy to control their ally. One example can be given to understand more his personality. In March 1981, Haddad's forces brutally shelled a United Nations' position in a southern village because the UN did not take into account Haddad's tax collecting activities. Three UN soldiers died in the shelling.\textsuperscript{102}

Haddad had spent the spring and summer of 1976 in the Traboulsi barracks, in northern Lebanon, along with fellow officers and soldiers, who stepped on the neutral side and in no way interfered in the bloody battles that wrecked the capital. From these barracks, Haddad also followed the full-scale intervention of the Syrian army on June 1, 1976, requested by the Christian leaders. Haddad was excited about the Syrian intervention, hoping like any other Christian that it will "wipe out the PLO and their allies and bring the war to an end".\textsuperscript{103} Many of Haddad's fellow officers had left the army to join this or that camp. His own loyalty to the army, expressed by his presence in the neutral camp of Traboulsi, had so far not led to anything except his being removed from the battle. So he decided to go back to the south, "I asked other officers to come with me but they refused. They did not know what the future would bring and others were afraid of the relationship with Israel". He was called to army headquarters, by General Hannah Said Commander in Chief of the Army and was told that he would have to go to the south by ship via Israel. "I did not mind but I asked for a written order, which I received."\textsuperscript{104}

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, p. 65.  
\textsuperscript{103} Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 67.  
\textsuperscript{104} Hamizrachi states in her book that she asked Haddad several times for the written order, but he never found it and instead he insisted on the fact that it existed. Moreover, the author also witnessed during her presence with Haddad several wireless communications between him and the army HQ in Yarze. Decoding some of the messages sent from the HQ to Haddad, she found that they were dealing with administrative aspects of Haddad's command in the south.
In November 1976, the army paymaster\textsuperscript{105} arrived to the Traboulsi barracks and told Haddad to be at the Aqua Marina in Junieh that evening. After taking his farewell from his family, a small boat took him from Junieh to the open sea where an Israeli patrol boat was waiting. There were about 30 civilians on board all returning to the south. They reached Haifa in the morning where a civilian car was waiting for him. He met with Colonel Benjamin Ben Eliezer, also known as Colonel Fouad, and then took off to Kleiaa.\textsuperscript{106}

Haddad was immediately confronted with the realities of the South. There was no running water or electricity; the LAA and the PLO, who controlled the areas where the electricity plant and the pumping station were situated, had cut both out. Moreover, the phone lines were destroyed by the retrieval of the LAA after the Marjayoun battle. On the first meeting with Eliezer, Haddad asked for Israeli assurances that the salaries of the soldiers would be received on time and that better weapons, including heavy artillery, tanks and ammunition, would be provided. Haddad also discussed the problem of water and electricity. After listening to what Haddad had to say, Eliezer asked him,

\begin{quote}
"What are your assurances that you will be friendly and loyal to Israel?"
\end{quote}

and he answered, \textit{"The best assurance is that I am here, in your office. That is the best assurance I can give."} Eliezer said \textit{"You know that the same chair you are sitting in, also Bachir Gemayel and Dani Chamoun sat."} Haddad answered, \textit{"I am an officer of the Lebanese Army, they are civilians, very popular civilians. If they will be put on trial, their popularity and their power will save them. But if I am put on trial, I will be shot."}

Eliezer was somewhat satisfied with Haddad’s answer and the latter liked his "superior"

\textsuperscript{105} The army paymaster, explains Hamizrachi, visited the south on regular basis via Israel to pay the salaries of the soldiers there. At the beginning of the war, when the south was isolated, the salaries reached Kleiaa in Saiqa jeeps due to an agreement between the army HQ, General Hannah Said and the Saiqa leader Zoher Mohsen. The Israeli explanation was simple, the First Commander of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) in the South Lebanese Command, Colonel Benjamin Ben Eliezer, thought that at that time everybody was trying to draw the South Lebanese soldiers to their side, therefore they were receiving help from the LAA, PLO and IDF.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, p. 73.
and respected him because he felt he understood him.

Haddad looked at the defense strategy of the area he was in command of and found out that most of the soldiers and militiamen were kept close to home. Moreover, there were no fortified positions and no guard duty service around the clock. Haddad had been appointed the officer in charge of the region surrounding Kleiiaa and Marjayoun or the eastern sector; and the region around Rmeich and Alma Shaab or the western sector.\(^\text{107}\)

Hamizrachi explains the feelings Haddad had toward the people of the region and says that no matter what solution he found to the problems on the ground, Haddad felt some rejection from the people of the eastern sector. This situation encouraged him to develop friendly ties with his Israeli neighbors. The more he felt rejection, the more he became attached to his supporters on the Israeli side. Haddad was well known for his many friendly relationships with Israelis and that lasted till the day he died.\(^\text{108}\)

The first show of power against the PLO-Leftist-LAA forces was given to Haddad during the battle of Khiyam. In December 1976, Colonel Fouad delivered heavy artillery to Haddad’s men and gave the order for the first aggressive patrol against the village of Khiyam. However, Haddad refused to fire on the village because there were civilians. His decision gave to some people in the region a reason to trust him. From that moment on and throughout the fighting period, southerners learned to trust Haddad and his militia.\(^\text{109}\)

\textbf{2- The Eastern Sector:}\n
According to Hamizrachi, Haddad was informed in January 1976 from the Lebanese Army HQ that he was appointed “Commander of the Border Zone”.

Militarily, two strategic villages were to be controlled in the eastern sector, Marjayoun and Khiyam. Both fell under the LAA forces, coming from the Bekaa valley, on March

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\(^{107}\) Ibid, pp. 79-80.

\(^{108}\) Ibid, p. 81.
In the battle of Marjayoun two sides were fighting: the militiamen of the right wing, from Kleiaa, who were trying to get their headquarters back, and the LAA who was trying to keep its newly conquered territory. The atmosphere in the country was not stable and the government was weak. Therefore, the parties negotiating in this war had no background to build their negotiations upon. They had only their victories and, if any, their solidarity to fight for. Nonetheless there was a slight difference in the composition of the Kleiaa fighters, which gave them superiority over the LAA: first the number of fighters who joined the militia equaled a quarter of the number of the village’s inhabitants. And second, Kleiaa was the only Christian southern village that was not mixed ethnically or politically. While in the case of the LAA fighters, each one joined the organization for a different reason other than the political ideology. As a consequence, the militiamen lacked hegemony and military training and experience.

On the 22nd of April 1976, the war started in the eastern sector. The Kleiaa fighters, backed up militarily by Israel, victoriously won the battle. From the start, this battle was a winner for several reasons: first and foremost the spread of the rumor of an Israeli attack, encouraging the fighters to leave the village in a hurry. The second reason was the lack of hegemony between the soldiers of the LAA. This made the task of protecting the compound or even fighting for it impossible. Another reason behind the fast fall of the compound was the non-experienced fighters.

On the 20th of October 1976 and after the siege of Marjayoun, Haddad declared the formation of the “Defense Army of South Lebanon”. It was composed of 500 fighters from Kleiaa, 1500 fighters from the Lebanese Forces and 2000 young fighters from the southern region. One of the new assignments given to the new militia was to clear the

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109 Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 83.
110 The forces of the Lebanese Arab Army surrounded Khiyam first and on the next day came the turn of Marjayoun. With both villages under the LAA control, the map was already drawn for the beginning of the war in this sector.
111 Jabber, op cit, pp. 141-142.
112 Ibid, pp. 143-144.
113 Ibid, pp. 146-147.
village of Marjayoun from the “unwelcome inhabitants” who were not politically or religiously adequate to the Lebanese Force’s ideology and plans.\textsuperscript{116}

On the other hand, the presence of the Syrians, who arrived to Nabatiye on January 1977, worried the population of the eastern sector. Haddad was bothered and, in defiance to Israeli orders, fired a number of shells on Nabatiye. Colonel Fouad threatened to reclaim the guns given to Haddad’s soldiers, if the latter would not stop. On the other hand Israel demanded, through a statement made by its Foreign Minister, the withdrawal of the Syrian forces from Nabatiye. Despite Israel’s clear statement some of its officers were convinced that in case the Syrians entered the southern region, they would eliminate the PLO and in the end come to an agreement with Israel.\textsuperscript{117}

The other battle fought in the eastern sector was the battle of Khiyam. Militarily, the village of Khiyam witnessed fights between the LAA and the PLO/Leftists that tore it apart. The ruling feudal family in the village, the Abdallah clan, visited the Good Fence on January 30, 1977, to assure the Israelis that the town was ready to cooperate with them. However, no commitments were made. The morale of the village was down, while Haddad carried out a limited surprise operation to seize the road junction of Nabaa Ibel and another heavy attack to seize Khiyam. The Defense Army of South Lebanon led by Haddad victoriously won the battle and succeeded once again with only a minimum of resistance from the Leftist/LAA fighters.\textsuperscript{118} The force surrounded first the village from all sides. Then the electricity, water and medical assistance were cut off. Unlike Marjayoun, the soldiers of Khiyam, who belonged to the LAA and were poorly equipped, protected it.\textsuperscript{119} As soon as the battle started the fighters fled to the neighboring villages, leaving Khiyam to the civil committee it created. The latter organized the village’s life and declared its neutrality in the war. Khiyam remained under the direct command of Haddad’s militiamen who robbed the village and its inhabitants. That same night, Israeli

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{117} Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 84.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, pp. 88-92.
\textsuperscript{119} Jabber, op cit, p. 157.
officers visited the town to boost the morale of the men guarding Khiyam.120 Many villages of the eastern sector followed Khiyam in declaring their neutrality like Dibbin, Deir Mimes and Kafar Kila.121 However, their fate remained in Israel’s plans and Haddad’s attacks.

Under the blessing and direct command of Colonel Fouad, Haddad started his raid on the villages of Deir Mimes, Tel Lubia,122 Kafar Kila,123 Dibbin,124 and Adeissi.125

3- The Central Sector:

Although Haddad was the commander of three sectors: eastern, central and western, his efforts were directed mostly towards the eastern sector, his home territory.

The central sector stretched along the South Lebanon Highway starting at the village of Ain Ibel 10 km west, continuing in the direction of the village of Kauzah. There were four Maronite villages in the central sector, when the Good Fence policy established the first relations between South Lebanon and Israel. The largest was Rmeich, followed by Ain Ibel, Dibble and Kauzah. There were also a few Shiite villages and mixed Christian-Shiite villages, the most important was the village of Yaroun.126

120 Hamizrachi, op cit, pp. 88-92.
121 Jabber, op cit, p. 162.
122 In Deir Mimes and Tel Lubia, Haddad took over the village by spreading a rumor that he had prepared a force of 3000 fighters for a night attack on the village. The PLO elements fled when they saw the convoy arriving and left the village to Haddad’s forces. Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 84.
123 The fall of the two previous villages put the village of Kafar Kila in a precarious situation. In a meeting with the villagers, Haddad asked them to cooperate with him and his militia. The next morning, all of the inhabitants had left the area. Ibid, p. 86.
124 Haddad refused to take control of the Shiite village of Dibbin, north of Marjayoun because he did not want to send his men to guard it, who at that point refused to serve outside their village. Dibbin also declared its neutrality in the conflict and served as a buffer between Marjayoun and the Shiite village of Blat, which was controlled by the PLO. Ibid, p. 86.
125 In Adeissi, the situation started with the kidnapping of a villager, by the PLO, suspected to have collaborated with Israel. Haddad followed the event of the counter-kidnapping of two inhabitants said to be leftist supporters. The negotiations that followed resulted in the return of all hostages. However, armed leftists invaded Adeissi two days later, and Israel gave Haddad the order to attack. The village fell under the leadership of Haddad’s men after an encounter between PLO fighters and young Druze from Chamoun’s Free Liberal Party. Ibid, p. 86.
In the central sector, the war began as a ‘cold war’. The enclave faced two problems: first the salaries of the soldiers of the area that arrived late. And second the arrival of armed militiamen from Beirut which worsened the situation.

Politically, Ain Ibel was very active because its inhabitants joined the Kataeb party. They saw the contacts with Israel as part of a Christian strategy. On August 16, 1976, a group of militiamen arrived from Beirut to Ain Ibel through Israel. They attacked a group of Palestinian Fatah fighters from the town of Bint Jbeil passing through the village. Seven militiamen were killed, from both sides. As a consequence to this event, the fighting escalated and the villages of Bint Jbeil and Hanine were shelled. Another consequence was the placement of military roadblocks at each end of the villages, where local fighters used to ask for permits or “laissez-passer”. Another important result of the encounter was the visit made by the villagers of Ain Ibel to Israel to ask for military protection. This event and its consequences took the relations between the Lebanese and the Israelis into the political and military dimension once again. Since then, Israel had several military interventions in South Lebanon.\textsuperscript{127} As a consequence to these interventions, Israel stated that it was pleased with the results Haddad’s militia came with, as Haaretz had put it: "\textit{the Christians have proved for the first time that they are able to protect themselves against terrorists.}"\textsuperscript{128}

In spite of the situation, the relationship between the villagers of Ain Ibel and Bint Jbeil remained friendly. A second group of fighters arrived to Ain Ibel on the 30\textsuperscript{th} of August and with them began the war in the central sector.\textsuperscript{129} While both parties armed themselves, Israel intervened and shelled the villages of Hanine, Ain Ibel and Bint Jbeil. The clashes ended in an agreement between the Lebanese Forces of Ain Ibel and the Fatah fighters of Bint Jbeil.\textsuperscript{130}

Finally the remaining villages of Dibble and Kosah saw the relation with Israel as a

\textsuperscript{127} Jabber, op cit, pp. 116-117.
\textsuperscript{128} Haaretz, 1/9/1976.
\textsuperscript{129} Jabber, op cit, p. 119.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid, p. 121.
necessity because they feared their Shiite neighbors.\textsuperscript{131}

The village of Rmeich was the closest to the Israeli border. It saw in the Good Fence policy a temporary solution to its isolation problem related to the selling of its tobacco plantation, which could not be shipped to Beirut because of the political situation the region lived in. When the village leaders met with Israeli officials, their main concern was to sell their products.\textsuperscript{132} General Rafael Eitan recalled the first meeting with representatives of the village:

"Representatives of the Christian village of Rmeich opposite Biranit asked also that we help them. I met them in Naharia. They handed me requests and lists. I could tell them what I could not ask the people of Kleiaa. Kleiaa is isolated without contact with the surrounding villages. [...] I told the dignitaries from Rmeich: develop relations with your neighboring villages, tell their dignitaries that Israel is ready to help if they are as determined as you not to give in to the rule of the terrorists."\textsuperscript{133}

What Eitan meant by developed relations with their neighbors was in Israel’s political plan, the creation of a “Christian fire belt” between the villages of Bint Jbeil, Ain Ibel, Rmeich, Dibble and Hanine to secure the freedom of contact and communication between these villages and Israel. Therefore, the village of Hanine was the next link of the fire belt, but it was still under the control of the PLO. In order to cross the border, the workers, men and women had to pass through Hanine to reach the Doviv gate. For their own security and protection, they were escorted daily by Haddad’s militiamen. The Fatah fighters asked the villagers to attack the convoy, but they refused.\textsuperscript{134}

On Saturday 16, 1976, the Lebanese Forces attacked the village of Hanine at midnight and surrounded it. The attack lasted three consecutive hours and killed seven citizens.

\textsuperscript{131} Hamizrachi, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{134} Jabber, p. 123.
Fatah fighters did not retaliate and withdrew to spare the village more damage and death. But the victory did not spare the village and its inhabitants from theft, destroying of property and migration of its citizens.

The last Shiite village to complete the Israeli fire belt was Bint Jbeil. The Lebanese Forces attacked it on the morning of the 21st of October 1976. The day and hour were picked carefully as it coincided with the town’s market day, when people gather around in the square village. The first bomb was dropped in the village square, killing 14 people and injuring 27. It was another victorious battle for the militia of Saad Haddad and a winning score for Israel, who controlled the central enclave.

The fighting continued till the election of President Elias Sarkis at the head of the Lebanese government, in 1976. When the southerners cried for help to their newly elected President, the government arranged several meetings between both sides: Fatah and Haddad’s militia. Under the direct supervision of the Lebanese government, the negotiating parties arrived at a temporary agreement to stop the fighting. However, caught in the capital’s war, the government of President Sarkis failed to implement the agreement and the South was once again drawn in the war.

4- The Western Sector:

Despite the battles that were taking place in the other enclaves, the western sector remained peaceful through the entire year of 1976 till July 1977, because it was completely isolated and located on the other side of the Israeli border. Alma Shaab was one of the Maronite villages that used the Good Fence to escape from its isolation. Hamizrachi describes the relations between the Christian and the Shiite villages, in the period between 1976 and 1977, as cautious. Both sides were waiting to see who would, in the end, rule the area. The village of Yaroun, for example, refused to join the central

135 Ibid, pp. 128-129.
137 Ibid, p. 135.
138 Ibid, p. 139.
sector and favored its relations with the village of Bint Jbeil, of the eastern enclave, whose residents were in majority Shiite. The defense in the western sector depended mainly on the members of the Kataeb party, who did not have training skills and fighting experience and had had no direct contact with Israel.\textsuperscript{140}

When the signs of a Syrian victory over the Left and the PLO increased, the Kataeb leaders developed a theory encouraging the destruction of as many Shiite villages in the area as possible and their inhabitants expelled, in order to accelerate the creation of a Christian belt similar to that in the Junieh area. In October 1976, the Kataeb activists distributed pamphlets signed by the Lebanese Forces (LF), the top military organization of the Kataeb party, with the slogan: ‘God will never accept a dirty people who befoul its God. Lebanon, the pure, is not the land of the Palestinians and the Syrians.’\textsuperscript{141} Given the situation, Israel found it difficult to control either people and had to maneuver carefully. It was difficult for Israel to develop a local strategic attitude, either militarily or politically.

The war in South Lebanon went on till the first Israeli invasion, or the Litani Operation, in March 1978. However, this time, the circumstances were different from the ones that ruled the southern war till then. The most important consequence was the Israeli interference: Till 1977, Israel interfered indirectly through the Good Fence policy, while from then on; Israel engaged itself in a direct military combat.\textsuperscript{142} Another difference was the relationship between the villages. Despite the major political differences between them, people still communicated and visited each other. However, the situation changed starting 1977, when the political parties directly interfered in the lives of the southern citizens building their relationships on military strength and territorial supremacy. On the other hand, till 1977, the battles of the southern war were limited to important and strategic locations, while after this date; the battles were decided according to the orders given by the military leaders of each fighting camp. Finally, the arrival of the Arab Task

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, p. 171.
\textsuperscript{140} Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{142} Jabber, op cit, p. 173.
Force: The southern region fell into a vacuum the fighting parties took advantage of in the absence of any legal authority. The Palestinians managed to settle an agreement with the Syrians, while the Lebanese Forces and Saad Haddad were military backed by Israel.\textsuperscript{143}

\textbf{Chidiak verses Haddad:}

When Haddad arrived to the South, he made it clear to the leaders of the southern villages that he and nobody else was the commander of the southern enclaves, on behalf of the legal government in Beirut. This caused excitement and shocked Nicolas Haddad, who feared for his position and quickly organized a wave of protests against Haddad and Israel.

However, the surprise was not yet over. On March 14, 1977, Major Sami Chidiak and Lieutenant George Zaatar arrived from Beirut via Israel in order to take over the command of the central and western sectors, respectively. Both officers of the Lebanese Army had been appointed by the Army HQ and carried letters to confirm their assignments. After a meeting with Colonel Fouad and General Eitan, the two officers were introduced to Haddad, who was irritated to share his power with the newly arrived officers.\textsuperscript{144}

Chidiak had an arrogant behavior toward the local leaderships. Moreover, he was considered as a ‘stranger’ by the local population, which worsened the relationship. Chidiak claimed himself as coming from a superior culture, the one of the Lebanese Forces of Beirut. As the opposition to Chidiak intensified, the problems in the south increased. The attempt to unify the eastern and central sectors failed. This encouraged the PLO and the Leftists to strengthen their presence in the area surrounding Bint Jbeil, by trying to conquer it again. When the relations between the PLO and Syria stabilized, the

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, pp. 174-175.\textsuperscript{144} Hamizrachi, p. 105.
PLO and the Left increased their military presence in the area south of the Litany River, while the IDF was concentrating on the eastern and central sectors.\textsuperscript{145}

Chidiak also learned that in his sector, soldiers were used to operate independently and without any military planning. Before his arrival, Haddad gave the approval to some operations by radio. For example, one of the fighters in Yaroun decided, on January 22, 1977, to attack Bint Jbeil because it was a threat to the area and he wanted to express his sorrow for the death of the mother of the Maronite Archbishop Khreish in the village. Hamizrachi states that the Israeli Defense Force counted 129 shells that exploded in the town of Bint Jbeil, while the exchange of fire lasted for several hours. Another example of independent operations took place when one of the officers in Dibble received the news that his father got killed at one of the PLO roadblocks. He and two of his relatives drove a tank to the neighboring Shiite village of Marwahin where they opened fire in all directions killing and wounding villagers and destroying property. Chidiak tried to control the militiamen’s unstable actions in the villages under his command by paralyzing the use of tanks and heavy artillery and denying them ammunition and fuel, which needed his approval for distribution.

Contrary to Haddad, Chidiak did not see any sense in cooperating with the Shiite community in the region. His fixed ideology and the daily instructions from Beirut strengthened his anti-Moslem attitude and he often threatened to expel the Shiites from their villages.\textsuperscript{146} When the French attaché visited the South, in April 1977, he asked Chidiak about a number of explosions he had heard. Chidiak replied: "\textit{We are destroying the village of Yarin and expelling the cannibals from there.}\textsuperscript{147}

Though the Maronites in Chidiak’s area were not very sympathetic to their Shiites neighbors, they rejected the humiliation and harassment of Chidiak’s behavior and

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, p. 107.
\textsuperscript{147} Beate Hamizrachi explains that the Kataeb members in the south to describe Shiites often used the term ‘les cannibales’. One of the reasons behind the downfall of Chidiak was the murder of a number of innocent Shiite villagers after the Litani Operation. Haddad, who was fighting side by side with the Shiites, demanded that Chidiak be punished. Ibid, p. 113.
complained to Haddad and to Israeli officers about it. Suddenly, Chidiak found himself in a kind of house arrest in his village, in Ain Ibel, unable to circulate because of death threats. Under constant pressure, his wife Esther moved to Naharia where she gave birth to their first child. Soon after, Chidiak followed her. He used to cross the Doviv gate every day to spend a few hours in Lebanon and return back to Naharia on the same night. This new behavior increased the hostility toward him.\(^{148}\)

A series of military events happened while Chidiak was still in the South. An armed patrol from the village of Alma Shaab led by George Farah attacked the village of Yarin, where PLO fighters had blocked the south Lebanese highway. A number of PLO fighters were killed and a Sunni teenager was taken prisoner to the Tal Nahhas prison, where Haddad kept all his LAA, PLO and Leftist prisoners. In a second attack on Yarin, Farah was injured in the head and died. For some time, Haddad and Chidiak were accused of not being militarily as courageous as Farah was.\(^ {149}\)

Meanwhile, IDF officers in the eastern sector initiated contacts and negotiations with most of the border Shi'ite villages situated between the eastern and the central sectors on the southern highway. Major Haddad assisted, whenever asked to. The slogan of these meetings was: "keep your village clean", in other words free of the PLO and their allies.\(^ {150}\) All the villages cooperated fearful of the danger of refusing. Their cooperation was rewarded during the Litani Operation, when the villages remained untouched by the invasion. All their young joined Haddad’s militia and were trained and equipped in Israel.\(^ {151}\)

Another aim for these contacts was the creation of a road relating the Israeli border to the

\(^{148}\) A few months after the Litani Operation, Chidiak was expelled from South Lebanon. This Israeli order came as a result of a series of atrocities committed by his men against the Shi'ite. The Chidiak lived in Naharia for a while where they opened a lingerie store for women. According to Kataeb sources, they left Israel to live in France and Canada before returning to Beirut. Ibid, p. 108.

\(^{149}\) Ibid, p. 109.

\(^{150}\) With this new initiative, Israel changed its policy of approach to the southern Lebanese from a secretive, individual, night meetings to a broad daylight meeting at the border, with as many notables as possible. Therefore, no one could be labeled as collaborator.

\(^{151}\) Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 109.
Shiite village of Meis El Jabal. This road would enable Haddad to send patrols from the Good Fence, along the border to Meis El Jabal and from there to the west and north of the southern region.\textsuperscript{152}

One of the last atrocities committed by Chidiak's men took place in the Shiite village of Maroon Al Rass on March 2, 1978, when a force of 40 fighters including SKS men (Section Kataeb Sécurité) occupied the village. A few hours later, a combined PLO-Leftist-Saiqa force counter attacked and took Chidiak’s men by surprise. When Israeli officers refused to involve the IDF in the battle and without any defense system set, Chidiak ordered his men to retreat. Most of the inhabitants had left the village and those who sought Chidiak’s refuge were met with hostility. The SKS men kidnapped a number of Shiite women and stoned them later to death. Other hostages were held in Dibble. Though most of them were released, tow men were later stoned to death.\textsuperscript{153}

These atrocities resulted in the IDF decision to remove the SKS soldiers from the South and send them back to Beirut. They were taken to the Doviv gate, where they were stripped from their weapons, then to Haifa, where they were arrested by the IDF until arrangements for their transfer to Beirut were completed.\textsuperscript{154}

Finally, the Arab public opinion in Israel, Christian as well as Muslim, had a very different perspective about the war in Lebanon. As Davar puts it: "the public opinion did not see the war as fights between Christians and Muslims, but as a leftist camp backed by the Muslims and a right camp backed by Capitalists and Zionists".\textsuperscript{155}

\textbf{Efforts to Influence Haddad:}

Until the Litani Operation, the Lebanese government, the PLO and the Left tried to stay

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid, p. 111.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{155} 	extit{Davar}, 26/7/1976.
in contact and gain the side of both Haddad and Chidiak. Their aim was to reach an agreement between all sides and to bring an end to Israel's influence in the South. The Lebanese government stressed on the officer's duty to obey its Authority and, along with the new commander-in-chief of the Lebanese Army, General Victor Khoury, sent Major Samir El Hage to negotiate with Haddad. Major Hage stated that the president was interested in strengthening the LAA in the south and recommended cooperation between the LAA and Major Haddad's forces. Similar contacts with other officers of the LAA led to the opinion that the LAA was looking for new allies in the south or that they were acting on behalf of the Syrians, who according to rumor, held Lieutenant Khatib under house-arrest in Damascus after taking most of the north, east and central Lebanon under their control.

Other contacts made with Haddad were through southern villagers from Dibbin and Yaroun. Both Haddad and Chidiak cooperated during negotiation attempts, sometimes forgetting to inform the Israeli side, whose informers brought the news.

On May 7, 1977, Haddad met with Arafat's representative from the north of Lebanon. The messenger told him that the PLO's intentions were good and that they had nothing against him or his men. As a good will gesture, the messenger asked Haddad to reopen the road between Marjayoun and the bridge of Khardale.

The next day another messenger came to meet Haddad, but this time on behalf of Major Naim Farhat, who was known for having close to president Sarkis. Farhat repeated the previous request that of reopening the road. He promised Haddad that if the road would reopen and the Good Fence would eventually close, the Lebanese Army Command would send funds and supplies to the region. The negotiations stopped when Haddad cabled the

156 Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 157.
160 Farhat was a pro-Syrian from the "Pioneers of the Lebanese Army", like Hamizrachi calls him, stationed in the Bekaa Valley.
army HQ in Yarze to ask for details and received a vague response.\textsuperscript{161}

At the beginning of June 1977, the negotiations between the PLO, Haddad and Chidiak focused on the daily problems such as the supply of electricity. The lines went across the area controlled by the parties and therefore could be cut by each side at any time. However, the PLO had an advantage having the main transformer station on its side. With the help of the International Red Cross, Haddad had managed to repair the damaged electricity lines. When the latter was cut off suddenly in Haddad’s region this meant that the PLO was doing it on purpose. Usually a few fired shells would restore it back. Hence, because of the need for electricity, Haddad and the PLO had worked out a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’.\textsuperscript{162}

Haddad saw in these contacts an opportunity to play an important role in the negotiations that went on in Beirut between the government and the Lebanese Forces. He contacted Yarze many times, but his negotiating status was not recognized. As a consequence, he accused the army of abandoning its soldiers in the South to their own fate. On June 9, 1977, Haddad was informed that from that moment on him and Chidiak were under the command of Major Johnny Abdo, a Syrian sympathizer, of the Deuxième Bureau. Haddad backed off from his criticism against the army for a while. Abdo never came to the South.\textsuperscript{163}

The PLO and the Left were not the only contacts trying to gain Haddad’s side. The Syrian connection came in June 1977, through a young woman named Fahima from Marjayoun, a relative of Saad Haddad’s.\textsuperscript{164} She brought him a personal message from Syrian Intelligence in Damascus. The message advised Haddad to give up his relations

\textsuperscript{161} Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid, p. 159.
\textsuperscript{164} Fahima was from Kuneitra, on the Syrian Golan Heights. Her brother Sami was killed in the South and her older brother Suleiman, who served with Haddad’s militia, had deserted and left for Syria, in order to join its army. He was arrested on the charge of being an Israeli spy. When Fahima’s family sent her to Syria to find out what had happened to her brother, she was arrested by the Syrian Intelligence and ‘persuaded’ to work with them in order to save her brother. Ibid, p. 160.
with Israel and accept Syria’s help instead.\textsuperscript{165}

Other attempts to influence both Haddad and Chidiak were made by the United States, France and later on, by the former Soviet Union and other Communist countries. The United States sent a messenger, on behalf of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), who met Haddad several times and provided him with a telex number in France and the name of an important member of the American diplomacy in Tel Aviv. When the news arrived to Defense Minister Azar Weizman, he got furious and protested to the Americans and the relation ended.\textsuperscript{166} The French, on the other hand, tried their luck with Chidiak. He was known for his pro-French attitude and liked to declare himself as a “French product”. The final break between Haddad and the Lebanese government came in August 1978, when the UNIFIL lead a Lebanese Army task force from Tibnin to Marjayoun in an attempt to take over the control of the area. Haddad’s forces stopped the advance of the LA units and put an end to all negotiations.\textsuperscript{167}

To sum up, the contacts made by the different parties with Haddad or Chidiak were aimed at establishing or gaining some personal or even common benefits: the Lebanese government hoped that its officers and soldiers in the South would return to their posts under the command of the Army. Syria, who was at that time more powerful than Israel in Lebanon, hoped to gain Haddad and Chidiak to her side. The PLO and the Left thought about a mutual agreement with Haddad and Chidiak to put an end to the war. As for the foreign countries, the French followed their traditional foreign policy in Lebanon in giving support to the Christians and the central government. The United States was interested in solving the South Lebanese problem in a way that would satisfy both the Lebanese government and Syria. However, the reality was disappointing to all the parties because these contacts led nowhere. In fact, “Israel remained Haddad’s main friend and his only source of regular support”.\textsuperscript{168}

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid, p. 181.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid, p. 161.
The Litani Operation (June 1978):

The 1978 “Litani Operation” and 1982 “Operation Peace for Galilee” were Israeli invasions designed to drive the PLO out of southern Lebanon (1978) and destroy it entirely (1982).^{169}

A key event in the construction of the “security zone” was Israel’s 1978 invasion, “Operation Litani”. On the 14th of March 1978, 20,000 Israeli forces invaded and occupied South Lebanon and established what Israel called a ‘security zone’, also known by the media as a buffer zone, following repeated incursions by the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Israel controlled the entire southern area from its border to the Litani River, except the town of Tyr. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 was approved on March 19, under American auspices.^{170} The resolution is based on chapter 6 of the UN charter, which deals with the conclusion of disputes by peaceful means and negotiation.^{171} It called for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon and the establishment of a UN task force called United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). This task force would have three objectives: to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces, to restore international peace and security, and to assist the Lebanese government in reestablishing its effective authority in the area.^{172}

Israel rejected the resolution on the grounds that it was one-sided and unfair. In May 1978, when it had become clear that Israel would not prevent the deployment of UNIFIL, Israeli officers started to work on plans for establishing a security zone. The area would include the three former enclaves and the related Shiite regions along the Israeli border.^{173} Obviously, the IDF needed Haddad and Chidiak’s forces to take over the areas inside as well as outside the former enclaves.^{174} Distrustful of UNIFIL’s commitment and

^{170} Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 166.
^{172} Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 166.
^{173} Ibid, p. 170.
^{174} Ibid, p. 173.
ability to deter Palestinian attacks, Israel withdrew leaving behind a small number of its army’s advisors to assist the local South Lebanese militia led by Saad Haddad and composed of Christians and Shiite Muslims living in the area, who agreed to prevent a PLO counter-attack on Israel. In exchange for their loyalty, Israel supplied the militia with arms, military training and funds.\textsuperscript{175}

Although the Litani Operation increased the notoriety and the territorial control of Haddad, it neither met to his ambitions nor the expectations of the Lebanese Front. Haddad and Chidiak had expected to take over the control of large territories conquered by Israel and hoped the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) will drive the PLO out of the region. Haddad also hoped the IDF would allow him to participate in the fighting. He was disappointed when IDF officers instructed both him and Chidiak to hold their fire and to keep their forces ready. Until the night of the operation in March 14, the two majors had no information concerning the attack, its timing or direction. As for the leaders of the Lebanese Front, they had hoped that Israel’s operation would develop into a thrust-heading north towards Beirut. To their disappointment, Israel saw in such an action a threatening military clash between the IDF and Syrian forces it avoided.\textsuperscript{176}

On the other hand, Israel caused a dilemma in the relations between the two majors and the UNIFIL: on one hand, it encouraged direct contact between the two majors and the task force, while on the other, it refused to recognize Haddad and Chidiak as representatives of the Lebanese Army.\textsuperscript{177}

On June 12, 1978, UNIFIL commander General Erskine and Majors Haddad and Chidiak signed a “Memorandum of Understanding”, where the task force recognizes “the Lebanese Army officers” as “representing the legitimate government of Lebanon”. The memorandum also established the boundaries not to be crossed by the force and declared that:

\textsuperscript{175} Eisenberg, op cit, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{176} Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 167.
"The UNIFIL will not fight, establish roadblocks, disarm legitimate Lebanese forces or put any obstacle before the activities and freedom of movement of forces under the command of Major Haddad and Major Chidiak in areas which are now under their control."

Moreover, in paragraph 13 of the memorandum, the parties agreed that "the good services of the IDF representatives will be used when necessary during the process of developing relations or in times of crisis." While the task force worked closely with the two majors as legal representatives of the Lebanese government, it also established good relations with the PLO and the Left.

Although the task force insisted repeatedly to take full control of the area south of the Litani River, including the enclaves, the two majors and Israel refused.

Following the advice of the Israeli officers, Haddad handed over to UNIFIL the villages of Taibe, Blat, Rashaya al-Fukhar, Ibél El Saki and Kaukaba, as well as the area between Taibe and the Kaakaiya Bridge. On several occasions, UNIFIL officers faced Haddad with written orders from the Lebanese Army HQ in Beirut that ordered him to turn over to the task force the army posts of Marjayoun and Khiyam. After Haddad had ridiculed the army orders and threatened to cut all relations with the task force, the latter abandoned this request.

The nature of the task force's mandate in the South was a non-combatant one, except for self-defense. Even though the international legitimacy was one of its characteristics, UNIFIL had the responsibility to symbolically resist armed action that threatened the accomplishment of its mission. Unfortunately, UNIFIL missteps further complicated things. The force established its headquarters in the old customs station in Naqura, in the

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179 Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 175.
middle of the Israeli controlled border enclave. As a result, UN soldiers were frequently harassed and often subjected to direct threats and even assaults by Haddad’s men. Furthermore, the IDF made it clear that all the requests complaints or proposals should be addressed directly to the majors and not the Israeli officers. With the PLO/Left camp being no longer a danger, Haddad saw in the UNIFIL and its ineffectiveness a new threat to the security belt.

**The State of Free Lebanon:**

On Wednesday 12 April 1979 at 17:25, Saad Haddad declared from Mtullah village the proclamation of the “State of Free Lebanon” and its capital Beirut. He said: “our goal is to free all Lebanon. Until we are in a state of war, we cannot name a president nor have free general elections.” He also asked president Sarkis’s resignation and he assured that South Lebanon would unite again with all Lebanon after the Syrian and Palestinian forces are thrown out.

The reaction of the Beirut government was to charge Saad Haddad with betrayal and to prosecute him in a military court. The penalty was death row. On the international level, none of the foreign Arabic and Western countries supported or even accepted Haddad’s move. The only “support” he got was from the Kataeb party declaration, which came as a response to his newborn state. On the other hand, the Kataeb party placed all the responsibility on the Lebanese government that did nothing to stop Haddad from arriving at this stage.

If we look at the explanation given by the international law in this case, we find that it defines the word “state” as a population living on a limited geographical land. This geographical space has its own laws, rules and traditions. A state lives and exists because of two important factors: first, because the countries of the international community

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182 Ibid, p. 179.
183 Norton, op cit, p. 66.
recognize its existence, while the second is because its population gives its agreement by voting its government. Therefore, this new country is free and through its freedom, it can join international organizations, sign agreements, have diplomatic relations and delegations with other countries, declare the state of war and initiate peace talks.

In his book, Haddad explains how the “State of Free Lebanon” was not independent from the “State of Lebanon”. This new entity, as he puts it, is actually the “State of Lebanon”, with a single major difference, that of freedom. He declared it from the South because, in his opinion, the freedom of Lebanon should start from there and spread into the whole country. He is the leader of that freedom and Beirut is the capital of free Lebanon. As for the borders of his “Free State”, until 1979 Haddad controlled 700 km²: from Kafar Shuba to the Sheikh Mountains on the eastern side, and to Naqura on the Mediterranean Sea, in the west. His estimates of the population living in this region are about 60,000 Muslims and 40,000 Christians. On the security level, in the region Haddad controlled, there was no room for disputes between villages of different religions because in each village there was a military and a civil force that controlled the security of the village and protected it, while the civil force communicated directly with the population and resolved its daily problems.

Haddad also believed that Lebanon is not built on different religious sects. The country’s only sect is the belonging of all its population to the entire Lebanon. Haddad was known for saying this well-known phrase: “Lebanon for the Lebanese and Lebanon above all people.”

Finally, Haddad also explains that his state’s power comes from the strong and true believes of the people who follow him in seeking an independent and free Lebanon.\textsuperscript{185}

\textsuperscript{184} Hamizrachi, op cit, pp. 180-181.
\textsuperscript{185} Haddad, op cit, (no page number).
“Operation Peace for Galilee” (June 1982):

Between 1978 and 1982, the border enclave was consolidated by the Defense Army of the South. Haddad and the Israelis strictly regulated the movement of the UN forces in the region, and often grabbed the opportunity to move the border of the enclave at UNIFIL’s expense.\(^\text{186}\) However, it did not take long before the PLO infiltrated in the UNIFIL area and settled in it as a new base for attacking Israel. Unable to control the PLO movements in its own area, Haddad’s men confronted the UN force on many occasions.\(^\text{187}\) Violent clashes and several extensive shelling on both sides of the border characterized this period. In July 1981, the intense cross-border exchanges between the PLO and Israel led to the negotiation of a cease-fire by U.S. Ambassador Philip Habib. Regardless of the many diplomatic attempts to put an end to the border clashes, to the Israeli officials the time had come to destroy the PLO and to change the balance of power in the region. If the PLO was to be destroyed, Lebanon would easily sign a peace treaty with Israel and this would further isolate the Syrians and weaken their position in the region.\(^\text{188}\)

The second Israeli invasion in 1982, “Operation Peace for Galilee”, was geographically more far-reaching than the first and was undertaken in collaboration with the Maronite Phalange organization. It reached Beirut, the first Arab capital ever to be invaded by Israel.\(^\text{189}\) In his book, Mouin Haddad explains the military strategy undertaken by the Israelis in their second invasion. Their primary goal was to push the Palestinian organizations 40 kilometers up north from the border, securing the northern Israeli settlements from further Palestinian attacks. However, the 40 kilometers north starting from the village of Rmeich, would reach only the Litani River. While the same distance starting from the Golan border would reach the Shouf area. Therefore, in Israel’s military strategy, the invasion should exceed 65 kilometers north, securing the border from all

\(^{186}\) Norton, op cit, p. 67.
\(^{187}\) Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 181.
\(^{188}\) Norton, op cit, p. 67.
\(^{189}\) Eisenberg, op cit, p. 7.
sides and dominating one third of Lebanon’s territory. The hidden goals of the operation were to diminish Syrian influence in Lebanon, facilitate the consolidation of a pro Lebanese-Israeli government under Phalange leader Bachir Gemayel, and last but not least, win Israel its second peace treaty with an Arab state, after Camp David. Israel presumed that the emergent government in Beirut would not only be willing to make peace, but would be capable of doing so. On both counts, Israeli presumptions failed. Even before the victory of Bachir Gemayel to the presidency, which came with a strong Israeli push, it became clear that he did not want to jeopardize his political position by signing a peace treaty with Israel. However, Israel reached the main goal, that of the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon in September 1982. Following the 1985 withdrawals, the South Lebanese militia maintained a strategic position in Jezzin, well north from the “security zone”. Jezzin had a military value, but equally important, Jezzin allowed Israel to access easily the Shouf region as well as the Bekaa valley.

Israel’s interest in South Lebanon and in Haddad was the result of the deteriorating security situation along the border, which had turned the area from a quiet zone into a “wild” north. Israel’s Good Fence agent was Major Saad Haddad, but the decisions were made by Israel through the IDF and its Northern Command.

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191 Eisenberg, op cit, p. 7.
192 Norton, op cit, p. 67.
193 Eisenberg, op cit, p. 7.
194 Norton, op cit, p. 69.
The Period 1982-1985: An Israeli Nightmare:

The PLO Evacuation: After the Israeli army had been besieging West Beirut for almost a month, the Sunni Muslim leaders had finally gathered on July 8, 1982 in the house of former Lebanese Prime Minister Saeb Salam to persuade the PLO to leave Beirut. Arafat and his political adviser Hani Al Hassan were invited to join the group. Arafat agreed to start evacuating from Beirut beginning on August 21, 1982. Before he got on board of the Greek cruiser liner Atlantis to sail to Athens, Arafat told his Lebanese friends, "I am proud because we had the honor of defending this part of Beirut. I am leaving this city, but my heart is here."\(^{196}\)

After the PLO’s withdrawal from Beirut and the Syrian air force badly damaged in its confrontation with Israel, the Lebanese Muslims were more or less disarmed and exposed to the Phalangist militia backed by Israel. The next step in Israel’s plan, according to Friedman, was to “persuade” enough Muslim members of the Parliament to elect Bashir Gemayel as the new President of the republic of Lebanon. Being the only candidate for the presidency, Bashir was elected on August 23, 1982. During the six-year term, Begin and Sharon expected him to consolidate all the military gains of the Israeli army, making it possible for Israel to withdraw from Lebanon while making sure that the country does not go back to its old way. Bashir was supposed to rebuild the Lebanese Army to take the

place of the Israelis, keep the Syrians out of Beirut, prevent the PLO from ever taking root in the Palestinian camps and finally signing a peace treaty with Israel.\footnote{Ibid, pp.156-157.}

**The Death of Bashir Gemayel:** At 4:10 on the afternoon of September 14, 1982, Bashir Gemayel was meeting with a group of Phalangists at the party’s branch in Achrafieh. The purpose of this week’s meeting was to discuss the turn over of power to Bashir’s government and the Lebanese Army that would be under his command. Waiting in the adjacent building was Habib Tanios Shartouni, a member of the pro-Damascus National Syrian Socialist Party, who encouraged the idea of a merger between Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. Moments after the meeting began; Shartouni pressed the button on his remote control setting the bomb off. Friedman sites in his book the research made by Jacques Reinich, a former senior officer of the Israeli Military Intelligence who wrote his doctorate on Bashir Gemayel at the Tel Aviv University, saying that the Syrians decided to eliminate Bashir shortly after his election.

**Sabra and Shatila Massacres:** After Bashir’s death, the Israeli reaction was to invade West Beirut. Two targets interested Sharon’s army. One was the PLO Research Center, where no guns, no ammunition and no fighters were found. The other target was the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps, which according to reports received by Sharon, had sheltered 2000 to 3000 PLO guerilla fighters. According to Friedman, on Thursday, September 16, 1982, two days after Bashir’s death, the Order number 6 was given by the Israeli army general staff to Israeli troops in Beirut. It stated “refugee camps Sabra and Shatila are not to be entered. Searching and mopping up the camp will be done by the Phalangists and the Lebanese army.”\footnote{Ibid, pp. 158-160.} On September 18, the Israelis “discovered” that 1500 Phalangists had been massacring Palestinians in the camp for three days. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimated the death toll between 800 and 1000 men, women and children. Afterward, the Israeli soldiers would claim they did not know what was happening in the camps.\footnote{Ibid, pp.156-157.}
**May 17th Agreement:** After Bashir’s assassination, the Israelis had to find their own way home with no internal Lebanese support. According to Friedman, there were only two ways to create a Lebanese government strong enough and stable enough to stick by Israel. One approach would have been to encourage the Phalangists to accept constitutional reforms that would involve sharing more power with the Muslims, while at the same time encouraging the Muslims to moderate their demands as much as possible. The other approach would have been to install a strongman at the top of the Lebanese pyramid to rely on him to stabilize Lebanon. Since Begin and Sharon did not know how to deal with the Lebanese politics, they opted for the latter approach. Therefore, Amin Gemayel was elected President after Bashir’s death. In Friedman’s opinion, the new President lacked Bashir’s killer instinct and seemed always concerned with his hair style rather than serious affairs of the state. Amin’s policy drove the Druze and the Amal party into the Lebanese civil war and into the arms of the Syrians. By 1983, the Israelis were occupying a house on fire. At that time, Begin was preoccupied with getting a peace treaty from Lebanon to justify the invasion. On May 17, 1983, Amin Gemayel’s government signed the peace treaty with Israel, which included the protection of Israel’s northern border. Not one article of the treaty was ever ratified. The Syrians, through their Lebanese allies, pressured Amin who could not even consider implementing the document. On August 30, 1983, the depressed Israeli Prime Minister asked his Cabinet to meet for the last time. Two weeks later he formally resigned.200

**The Israeli Withdrawal from Beirut and the Mountains:** When it became clear that the 17th May Agreement was not going to be implemented, Israel, in September 1983, began to withdraw unilaterally from Lebanon.201 The process was accompanied by violent attacks from the Lebanese resistance on the IDF troops and reprisal raids by the Israelis on southern villages. These raids frequently led to confrontations between the IDF and units of the UNIFIL in the south. Moreover, as Israel withdrew, it was revealed that they intended to reserve the right of re-entry into the ‘security zone’, which was left

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200 Ibid, pp. 177-178.
201 Ibid, pp. 179-182.
to be patrolled by Israel’s proxy militia, the SLA. The first step was for Israel to pull back from the Shouf Mountains and south to the Awali River. The July 1984 Israeli elections ended in a tie and the Likud and Labor party were forced to join together in a national unity government led by Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir. Most Likud ministers voted against withdrawing from Lebanon, arguing that northern Israel would be exposed to constant rocket attacks. But they were defeated by a narrow majority. In April 1985, the Israeli army completed its unconditional pullout from Lebanon, except for the security belt it retained along the border.

Following the 1985 withdrawal, the SLA maintained a strategic position in Jezzin because the village had both military value and equally important strategic access to the Shouf region, where the Druze predominate, as well as strategic importance for an opening to the Bekaa Valley, where the Syrians had military positions.

In Friedman’s opinion, Israel did not enter Lebanon in 1982 with a real knowledge and understanding of the society and its actors. What the Israeli did not understand about Lebanon as a country was that the real Lebanon was at least “two Lebanons”: the real Lebanon was built on the relations between Maronites, representing the Christian sects and the Sunnis, representing the Muslim sects. It was a merger between equals. The reason most Israelis did not understand this reality was because their impressions of the Lebanese society were formed based on the idea that Lebanon was a Christian society in the same way that theirs would be a Jewish society. Like Israel, Lebanon also had an Arab-Muslim minority, but it was basically a country dominated by Christians who would recognize a Jewish state as soon as another Arab country does first. Had the Israelis taken into account that the real Lebanon was “two Lebanons”, they would have understood that the only way to restore stability and sovereignty was not by supporting the Christians and driving out Arafat and the PLO guerillas, but by balancing the power between Christians and Muslims to have “no vanquisher and no vanquished”, so that

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203 Friedman, op cit, pp. 179-182.
204 Norton, “In Security Zones in South Lebanon”, op cit, p. 70.
neither community feels the need to ask for assistance from abroad.\textsuperscript{205}

**The Lebanese National Resistance:**

In his book called "The Resistance" (Al Moukawama), Karim Mroueh gives a thorough explanation over the reasons behind the creation of the Lebanese National Resistance, the first military operation, the resistance's military skills and the Israeli withdrawal from Beirut and the Mountains.\textsuperscript{206}

The direct reason for the birth of the Moukawama was the Israeli invasion and the siege of Beirut in 1982. This incident created a number of emotions and the feeling of civic duty, which brought together, despite the political differences, a part of the Lebanese citizens to fight along with the Palestinian resistance and the Communist party. The main goal was to create a national resistance, which would include the Lebanese national forces, the Palestinian resistance and other Arab forces that would like to join up. The mission of this new and strong resistance would be to liberate Lebanon from the Israeli invasion, starting with the capital Beirut. The call for the creation of the Lebanese National Resistance came on September 16, 1982. The date was chosen by the Communist party, led by George Hawi and Mohsen Ibrahim

\begin{quote}
"Citizens of the heroic capital Beirut,

Citizens of the great Lebanese regions in the South, the Mountains, the Bekaa and the North,

Great national and brave fighters,

... Join today the Lebanese National Resistance no matter what your religion, political ideology or even social class are, to fight in unity the Israeli invader and to break the chains that the United States and Israel
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid, pp. 134-136.

\textsuperscript{206} Karim Mroueh, The Resistance, Dar Al Farabi, Beirut, Lebanon, 1985, pp. 16-17.
have placed around the necks of our people, so that we can live free again."\(^{207}\)

Beirut, 16 September 1982
George Hawi
Mohsen Ibrahim

In the Middle East, the Arab countries were divided and weak. The first Golf war had started, Egypt had signed the Camp David Agreement with Israel after which the Arab countries had forgiven Egypt and restarted their diplomatic relations. The only resistance Israel faced in the region was from Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. Therefore, the circumstances were right for these three factions to unite themselves in fighting the Israeli enemy. On the international scene, the tension was at its peak between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, this did not stop the Soviet Union from helping and encouraging the Lebanese National Resistance and Syria from continuing with their fight for freedom.\(^{208}\)

The first military operation executed by the resistance in Beirut was on September 9 1982. The target was an Israeli military check point; the mission was completed by two members of the resistance equipped with a hand grenade each and sold out in the killing and wounding of eight Israeli soldiers.\(^{209}\) The military operations that followed were dealt in different military ways according to the situation. The resistance divided its fighters into groups of only seven members that could infiltrate easily into the enemy’s lines. As for the military operations, Mroueh gives six examples: the direct operations when the fighters are face to face with the enemy, the blow up operations in which the fighter detonates the target, the suicidal missions, the village fighting missions in which a whole village, men women and children fight the invader, the operations in series in which several targets are blown up one after the other and the street combats in which the fighter shoots the target, throws a grenade, etc ...\(^{210}\)

\(^{207}\) Ibid, pp. 22-23.
\(^{208}\) Ibid, pp. 62-64.
\(^{209}\) Ibid, pp. 24-25.
\(^{210}\) Ibid, pp. 35-36.
One of the reasons behind the Israeli withdrawal from Beirut and the Mountains was the deadly effect the Lebanese National Resistance had on its soldiers. The IDF lost 650 men since the beginning of the 1982 operation till its withdrawal. The resistance struck hard in Beirut and fought harder in the Mountains. Unfortunately, even though the Moukawam believed it won against the invader, the territory released was left under the control of the Kataeb party. In the Mountains, the resistance fought two wars along side with the Socialist party led by Kamal Jumblatt, the first was against the Israeli invader and the second was against the Kataeb party, which was beaten and returned to the capital.\textsuperscript{211}

Why did Israel withdraw partially from Lebanon? Mroueh argues that first Israel could not have fully withdrawn from Lebanon because it needed to arrive at an understanding or an agreement with the Lebanese government and withdrawing would have ended its involvement in the Lebanese political life. The second reason, given by Mroueh is the Good Fence policy, which started with the beginning of the Lebanese civil war and that Israel did not want to close due to the ongoing relations between the southerners and Israel. The third reason is Israel’s greed in Lebanon's water resources. A fourth reason would be Israel’s plan to change the southern region into a friendly Lebanese-Israeli area. A last reason given by Mroueh is Israel’s goal to turn the southern region into an international area where the forces of the United Nations would be at the mercy of the Israeli forces. For all of the reasons mentioned above and more, the “security zone” became an important region, not because of its length or the number of its inhabitants, but because Israel was occupying it and that raised the region’s importance. Mroueh finally concludes that the Lebanese National Resistance will never rest until all the Lebanese territories are free.\textsuperscript{212}

**Critics of the Israeli Policy Till 1985:**

During the period of its occupation, Israel’s policy in South Lebanon was aimed

\textsuperscript{211} Ibid, pp. 76-79.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid, pp. 85-86.
primarily at securing its northern borders. However, after Israel’s second invasion of Lebanon, in 1982, and its engagement in the Lebanese political life, Israel added a new aim in its policy that of disengaging itself from Lebanon’s internal policy. Therefore, it partially redeployed, in 1985, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) along the international border creating an area 40 km deep, or the equivalent of 10% of the Lebanese territory, where the South Lebanese Army (SLA) would operate under direct supervision and control of the Israeli forces. The region was later known as the “Security Zone”. This new policy was expressed by the National Unity Government on the 14th of January 1985, which stated that “the government will do everything necessary to ensure the peace of the Galilee” and was supported by all the Israeli governments -regardless of their leanings- through the years. Moreover, the policy also helped the Northern Galilee residents to live a more or less normal life away from the attacks of the resistance. However, the policy could not solve the huge problem of human, property and agricultural losses suffered by the southerners. It was well known by the international public opinion, through the several statements made by Israel that the only solution to end this situation would be a peace agreement between the governments of Lebanon, Syria and Israel.213

Critics, of the mishandling of Israel’s policy in Lebanon in the 80s say that Israel missed an important opportunity for salvaging some benefits in the year or two immediately following the 1982 invasion. Unlike the situation in 1978, the PLO was really gone this time, and although the alliance with the Kataeb party had already soured, relations were still good with the Christians and Shiites of South Lebanon. Had Israel withdrawn at that time, and / or actually recognized the sensibilities and needs of the south Lebanese people, it might have earned the trust of a population genuinely interested in seeing the border quiet and secure. In a reflective post-withdrawal interview, Israel’s coordinator for activity in Lebanon, Uri Lubrani, similarly suggested that Israel could and should have redeployed to the international border in 1984. By failing to identify and accommodate the south Lebanese elements who remained after the PLO’s expulsion, Israel helped provoke the creation of the Hezbollah resistance, an enemy equally or more punishing

213 Dr. Erlich, op cit, [Internet site: http://www.ict.org.il]
than the PLO had ever been.\textsuperscript{214}

Other critics, like Laura Eisenberg, introduce the Israeli perspective from another angle, "who is on the other side?" By studying the Israeli perspective, Eisenberg divides the Israeli foreign policy toward Lebanon into two periods: up until the 1970s the Zionist/Israeli embellishment of a friendly Christian community of allies in Lebanon caused minimum damage because Israel did not build its foreign policy on this relationship. However, in the early 1980s, Israel made its most dangerous mistake in evaluating the intentions and relative power of its Lebanese friends and enemies. While the increasingly unrealistic perception of a Maronite ally misguided the Israeli leaders from a more realistic and productive policy in Lebanon, it did not expose Israel to any political or military threat. But once the civil war started in 1975, Israel fell into the trap of relying on religious antagonism, Christian versus Muslim, to pursue its policy in Lebanon accordingly. However, Israel’s interests in Lebanon were not only related to the Christian community, but rather dictated by standard strategic thinking, which made any anti-PLO and later anti-Hezbollah force a potential ally. Certainly, there were differences within the Israeli cabinet about the capability and interest in the Kataeb party. But there was general agreement over the idea of forcing the PLO away from the northern Israeli border and even destroying the organization, if possible.\textsuperscript{215}

From a Lebanese perspective and focusing on the PLO and its Lebanese and Syrian allies, Israel neglected to evaluate properly the Lebanese Shiite community in the early 1970s. This community witnessed the rise of Moussa Sadr and the formation of Shiite organizations such as the Amal movement and the Hezbollah resistance. Although some Shiite supported the Palestinians and the PLO activity in Lebanon, others responded to Israel’s anti-PLO invasion of 1982 with relief and support. However, the settling of Israeli forces in the South, the installation of new road signs in Hebrew and the establishment of military bases and detention camps caused a change in the perception of Israel’s presence in many Shiite’s eyes from liberator to occupier. By 1985, the Amal

\textsuperscript{214} Eisenberg, op cit, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid, p. 7-8.
movement was outgunned by another pan-Islamic movement, Hezbollah. Funded by Iran and encouraged by Syria, Hezbollah sought to drive the Israelis back across the border. Frequent declarations by the leaders’ organization also stated an intention to remove Israel from Palestine and Jerusalem, as well.  

**The Death of Major Saad Haddad:**

On January 14, 1984, Major Saad Haddad died of cancer in his home in Marjayoun. His death was accompanied by a wave of announcements, which came reflecting opposite opinions: Israel’s Defense Minister Moshe Ahrens claimed he was a “great patriot”, while the PLO characterized him as a “traitor” in a communiqué published on the same day. Analyzing his personality through his career as a military leader, we conclude that Haddad was neither a charismatic military leader nor a political figure admired by all the people of Lebanon; he was somewhere in between.  

> “Haddad was never an outstanding military leader whose personal courage was an example to his men. He made many mistakes on the tactical level, and without the help of the Israeli officers, he was unable to organize, motivate, and sometimes even control his men. The strategic planning for the South and resulting decisions were made by Israel, based on her own security needs. Haddad had very little input. Though the IDF never saw in Haddad an outstanding military leader, it helped create the image of him as a tough fighter in the minds of the Israeli people, who developed a special fondness for this man on the other side of the border who talked their political language and fought their battles. The main reason for this phenomenon was the media, whose present and continuous interest in Haddad taught him valuable lessons on his way to becoming a positive media personality. The media lifted him from the role of an obscure, town

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217 Hamizrachi, op cit, p. 183.
square politician to the position of an international (and particularly an Israeli) media celebrity. The IDF, who knew better, still actively supported the development of the image; a weak and obscure Haddad could only have been counterproductive to its interests and efforts.”

It was known that Haddad strongly opposed the Palestinian military presence in Lebanon because it posed a threat to his country’s existence and to the “status quo” that kept it in balance for so long. On the other hand, Haddad’s contact with Israel was accepted by a part of the people of the South, mainly Maronites and some Shiites, who had no other choice but to rely on the Good Fence Policy for economic, medical and physical safety. If the price for the benefits of the open gates was cooperation with Israel, most Lebanese and Israelis in the border region were ready to pay the price.

Although Haddad never showed to Beate Hamizrachi the written order of General Hannah Said, which he claimed had sent him to the South, there is no evidence of its nonexistence. In fact the Lebanese Army accepted Haddad’s presence and activities in the South and stayed in continuous contact with him and paid him and his soldiers’ salaries.

From Haddad to Lahd: The Transition Period:

In an article written by ABC’s correspondent to the region, John Martin recalls his meeting with Major Haddad in 1978, when he visited South Lebanon for the first time. What is interesting in the article is the point of view Begin had of his Lebanese ally. When Saad Haddad died the Israeli cabinet observed a minute of silence in his memory. Menachem Begin, by then a former prime minister, was quoted as saluting Haddad as “a Lebanese patriot loyal to his people with all his heart and soul”. In a radio interview, Begin said: “We want to express the hope that there will be many Lebanese who will

continue to follow in the footsteps of Major Haddad so that all of us will see peace between Lebanon and Israel". The moment of hope expressed by Begin did not last long, for within a few years, the Hezbollah resistance started carrying out ambushes against Israeli and SLA troops. Martin ends his article with the legacy of Saad Haddad fading away: "The moment passed as did the strange saga of Major Saad Haddad."  

In her book "What Did You Do For the South ... What Did You Do To the South", Viviane Saliba writes about the atmosphere lived by the southern Lebanese after Saad Haddad’s death in 1984. Elias Helou, from Jezzin, has a small shop. But these days he is not interested in the market:

"The most important thing that happened is that we were able to stay in our homes and towns and were not compelled to leave. We thank for that the Free Christian Gathering."

Unfortunately there is no work these days. With the blocking of the roads, people that are used to come and spend the weekend in Jezzin, cannot anymore and the town’s life is slow."

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222 The Free Christian Gathering was an organization led by the leader of the southern sector in the Lebanese Forces, Mr. Nizar Najarian. On the 28 of February 1984, the organization held a gathering in the South, under the logo: "The day of Peace with Israel". This organization had seven principles:

1. Work for a sovereign and independent Lebanon, which borders were drawn and implemented by the international community.
2. To live in peace and openness with all of the factions that composes the Lebanese society.
3. To support the South Lebanese Army and to encourage all the Lebanese factions to enroll in its ranks and to support its leader.
4. To guarantee an open relationship between the Christians and Israel and a full cooperation between the Lebanese and the Israeli people in order to achieve peace in the region.
5. To deny all kind of foreign occupation in Lebanon, especially Syria, who wants to steal Lebanon’s independence?
6. The Free Christian Organization is part of the Lebanese – Christian community in Lebanon and around the world. It represents liberty, humanity and honor.
7. To work for the development of the southern Lebanese region, by using all possible means and power.

Saliba, op cit, pp. 104-105.
223 Ibid, p. 106.
Boulos Bechara, another citizen from Jezzin says that eradicating the 17 May Agreement was

"The final strike that knocked us and Lebanon down. And now that we eradicated it, what next? We did to please Syria, but what did Syria give to the Lebanese government instead? Isn’t Syria still shelling Beirut day and night?! The government should have implemented the agreement after its signature. Now that we eradicated it, what changed? Nothing! And Israel will remain in Lebanon for at least 10 more years! Don’t they care at all about the South?! Well, no matter what happens, we are ready to stay here and fight Israel, but they have to find us a shelter in the region of Byblos and Keserwan".224

Boulos Khoury, from the village of Room, does not understand the logic of the government anymore:

"The most important thing for us now is to let our conscience guide us in working for the benefit of our country guide. If the leaders are not happy with way we are protecting our land, let these ‘free the South’ claimers come and free it their way. I think that, from Beirut, they ‘theorized’ enough on how the people in the South should resist and defy".225

Viviane Saliba took a ride in the border strip, where there were neither Israeli roadblocks nor Israeli patrols. The only militia responsible for the security of the region was the South Lebanese Army, under the command of Antoine Lahd. But who is Antoine Lahd?

Antoine Lahd entered the military school in 1942 and graduated with the rank of officer in 1951. He served in the Lebanese Army, all over Lebanon, including the southern region. He is married to Minerva, from Dhour Choueir in Maten. Saliba interviewed

224 Ibid, p. 106.
Antoine Lahd’s family in 1984. Minerva described the South as a quiet region, in contrast with the capital where she was used to living and where all the action is:

"Life in the South is very calm. I think I’m going to like living here. I have started taking Hebrew and English lessons. I like to play the piano and soon I’m going to give private lessons for children in the area. Our only son, Antoine, went to the Lycee school in Beirut. This year, we registered him in the Marjayoun School ... Antoine?! I respect him and his brave civic decision. He collected his money from the Lebanese Army, which by the way was LL 1,175,000, and he then chose to serve his country, especially the South and not to live in Switzerland."\(^{226}\)

When the author asked Lahd’s brother about the reason behind his decision to lead the SLA, the brother answered: “When I asked my brother the same question, he answered that as long as he was able to serve the Christians and his country, he would never hesitate to do so.”

Antoine Lahd is a Christian Maronite from Kafar Katra, in the Chouf region. His goal was to build a strong and defying army capable of protecting the South and securing the northern Israeli region, which will make Israel withdraw from Lebanon. “And the Lebanese government must help me with my task”. When Saliba asked him in what way should the government help, Haddad replied: “The Lebanese Army must pay my soldiers their salaries because they are not in a lesser position than the Shiite who shelled the presidential palace in Yarze and got his salary at the end of the month.” For Lahd, the main goal of the South Lebanese Army and the Free Christian Organization was to secure the southern region. As for the 17 May Agreement, the author says that even though the agreement was not accepted by the Lebanese Parliament, somehow, a part of it was still implemented in the South as it was mentioned in the Agreement.\(^{227}\)

\(^{226}\) Ibid, p. 155.
\(^{227}\) The 17 May Agreement established in one of its sections that the South Lebanese Army would become a southern protection squad led by Antoine Lahd and taking its orders from the Lebanese Army. This squad
Israel's Military Plans for the South and the SLA:

In an interesting article written by Scott MacLeod in 1984, the author explains the Israeli policy toward the SLA and predicts the end of the South Lebanese Army, as "the force Israel intends to leave behind". While visiting the region, the author met with Antoine Lahd and wrote about Israel's major plans and futuristic views for the southern Lebanese region, as well as for its "buffer" force, the SLA. The relationship between the SLA and Israel was obvious, to MacLeod. In short, Lahd's predecessor, Major Haddad, whose Free Lebanon Army acted under direct Israeli orders, had been renamed by the IDF, which established new plans to expand the area of operations controlled by the SLA from the immediate border region to all of southern Lebanon. The IDF also hired Antoine Lahd as leader of the SLA. According to the author, Israel's plans were to organize the SLA along the lines of the IDF in becoming a better military institution and to encourage its officers to attend the military academies in Israel.

In the meantime, the Israeli government had to set a backup plan for its own security and to draw public attention and support for its new policy towards the South. Although the long siege of West Beirut in the summer broke the military back of the PLO in Lebanon, nothing else had been gained from the 29-month old occupation. It was an expensive occupation. Besides costing $1 million a day, it took 40% of the 600 Israeli lives lost in Lebanon. Therefore, the establishment of a strong SLA in the South would be a gain for Israel. Moreover, with such a trusted ally, the Israeli army would increase its strategic and tactical capabilities in comparison with its most hostile enemy, Syria.

The Israeli plans also included contingencies for war. In the event of war, the Israeli Defense Force units could swiftly drive through SLA positions in southern Lebanon, to the Bekaa valley from where the force could easily launch attacks on Syrian forces positioned in central and northern Bekaa and could easily reach Damascus, only 25 miles

would be composed of the soldiers and officers who enrolled in the SLA from the southern villages. Ibid, pp. 156-157.

to the east. In the Israeli logic, the SLA’s tasks should exceed Haddad’s former militia border strip patrols or else the long occupation would have been “a terrible waste of Israeli blood and money”. However, the Israeli plans to geographically extend the SLA’s authority to the Litani River were dangerous because the SLA was not a combat force. It had only two properly trained officers, Lahd and his deputy. The recruits had had minimal platoon and company training and no battalion experience. They tended to be wild-adventure seekers, or young unemployed men who wanted to be paid monthly 1,850 Lebanese lilas. The author concludes that this is the main reason behind the IDF officers’ lack of trust in the SLA’s capabilities to defend its territory and its neighbors well enough.\textsuperscript{230}

The Palestinian Liberation Organization in Damascus produced a report in 1985, in which it collected information from different Jewish and Arab sources, without naming them, about the new leader of the South Lebanese Army, Antoine Lahd and his plans to achieve ethnical equilibrium between Muslims and Christians. The report states that although the Israeli army, to that date, had put a lot of effort and spent money into arming and training the SLA’s soldiers, it could not count on its loyalty because on one hand, the army was not prepared well enough to preserve and defend Israel’s security and on the other hand, the majority of the population living in the region saw the SLA as an occupier and as an extension of the Israeli military power in South Lebanon.\textsuperscript{231}

Referring to an Israeli study, the report stated that the SLA numbered 2069 soldiers, composed of: 1386 Christians, 322 Shiites, 276 Druze, and 65 Sunnite, divided between 4 garrisons. Referring to these numbers, Antoine Lahd declared in 1985 that the SLA, as a military force, was not able to control the territorial enhancement in the South, as did Saad Haddad before him. In his opinion, the door should be opened for new members, but in order to increase the number of soldiers in the army, attention should be drawn to the Shiite majority in the southern region. Lahd estimated that 60% of the SLA soldiers

\textsuperscript{229} Ibid, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{231} The Palestinian Liberation Organization, “Political Reports On: The South Lebanese Army – No. 21”, \textit{Institute of Palestinian Studies}, (20 April 1985), Damascus, Syria, p. 4.
were Christians, while 18% only were Muslims.\textsuperscript{232}

The report also gives the Israeli version on the inequality between the two sects, stating that in the previous years, the army was a militia covering a limited territory of the 'security zone', but now that Israel has enlarged its turf, the Christian majority forming the SLA was not enough anymore for the Israeli expansion goals. What Israel should have done was to either attract the Shiite community with any possible way or to exert pressure on the Muslim citizens in the South and especially the Shiites to join the SLA.

Furthermore, the report mentions that while the Israelis were working on a plan to conquer the sympathy of the Shiite community in the region, a number of Muslim officers in the SLA had forwarded a petition to the Israeli military services asking for the dismissal of Antoine Lahd from his leadership position, which Israel rejected. The Palestinian report explains Israel’s rejection stating that Lahd was appointed to the head of the SLA after several negotiations between Israel and the Chamoun family represented by ex-president Kamil Chamoun and his son Dani.\textsuperscript{233}

Moreover, the report talks about the close relationship between the Kataeb party and the SLA, that was comprised of Kataeb elements between the ages of 18 and 20, who were paid the sum of 1400 L.L. as basic salary and an additional 400 L.L. as pocket money.

In addition to the problems faced by the SLA and Israel in recruiting more Muslim members, the Palestinian report states that, according to the western media, most of the soldiers found in the SLA were former criminals, or outcasts, under aged teenagers, having no idea what they were doing.\textsuperscript{234}

One of the reasons behind the Israeli withdrawal from Beirut, according to the same report, was its need to test the SLA's capabilities in defending itself against the attacks of the resistance and in the absence of an Israeli military backup. As the Israeli Prime

\textsuperscript{232} Ibid, pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{233} Ibid, pp. 5-6.
Minister stated: "... They are shooting at our best soldiers, so do you think that the army will not defend itself? It will." The Israelis were well aware of the capabilities of their allies in the South and that is the main reason behind the continued Israeli demand, at the Nakoura negotiations of 1985, for a role to be given to the SLA. The Israeli fear was expressed in a statement given by the former Israeli Defense Minister, Moshe Arenz:

"... Part of the problem is clear, like the deserters of the South Lebanese Army after the Israeli withdrawal from their natal villages. Henceforth, we can expect in each region we leave behind during our withdrawal deserters to stay behind. They could also be runaways and leave the SLA that happens. [...] therefore, the South Lebanese Army should work on its unity to prevent its permanent disintegration." 236

The Palestinian report concludes with the fact that the Israeli officials were aware of their military situation in South Lebanon concerning the SLA and the hatred of the citizens in the region toward their occupation. Finally, the report states that because of this situation, Israel will rely less on Antoine Lad, as a regional force, and concentrate its efforts more on the force remaining in her power to complete its strategic security. Simultaneously, the Lebanese resistance will carry on with its attacks against the invader. 237

**SLA: Military, Economical Structure and the Problems It Faced:**

Since Antoine Lahd had taken command of the South Lebanese Army in 1985, and since Israel had become the "godfather" of this new southern entity, many names had been given to the SLA, which was labeled by the media as Israel's surrogate army, Israel's proxy militia or Israel's puppet. 238

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234 Ibid, pp. 6-7.
236 Taken from the Israeli radio talk-show "Interpretation of the Situation", which hosted Peres and Eliezer, Assafir, 9/04/1985.
237 The Palestinian Liberation Organization, op cit, p. 9.
238 MacLeod, op cit, p. 13.
Militarily, the SLA was comprised of only 800 soldiers constituting an insufficient number to control the area left behind by Israel after its second invasion and its withdrawal from the mountains. The militia was composed of two brigades: the eastern brigade headed by Nabih Rifai and the western brigade commanded by Fares Kassis, who replaced Aquel Hachem. The latter was composed of three battalions: the 70th, the 80th and the 81st. It included around 700 men distributed in 22 positions and the headquarter. As for the eastern brigade, it was composed also of three battalions: the 90th, the 10th and the 30th. It included about 750 men distributed in 26 positions and four garrisons. In addition to the three battalions, the brigade was composed of a group of 150 men and a reserve force, which had 45 men. Moreover, the militia also included an independent squad battalion, named Squad 20. The official deputy commander of the SLA was Karamallah Said. 239

Lahd faced many problems, one of them being the poorly trained soldiers and officers. None of the soldiers was equipped to handle any military operation of any kind. Despite the Israeli statements on spending large sums of money on military training, Israel had still a lot to be done.

Another problem came from the attitude of the men in the army. The militia that became, suddenly, an army was not well organized, while its soldiers practically never followed orders.

A third problem came from the actual constitution of the army, which was built upon a ‘melting pot’ of ethnics. It was comprised of Muslims, Druze and Christians, and at the beginning of 1984, Israel accepted the participation of the fighters of the Kataeb forces, while it denied it to the Free Lebanon Army. 240 As for the ethnical division of the army it

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240 Many differences appeared between the Lebanese Forces leadership and Haddad in 1983, despite the fighting shoulder to shoulder that went on since 1976. Fadi Fram, the leader of the Lebanese Forces, stated that in his opinion Saad Haddad was a very dangerous phenomenon for the future of the South. (Assafir, 17/2/1983). Haddad replied to the statement by explaining the reason behind the non-involvement of the Lebanese Forces party because it is ‘a Christian party’, while the Army of Free Lebanon is a multi ethical military force. (Al Nahar, 13/8/1983).
was comprised up to 60-65% of Christians.\footnote{According to Jabber, who states the numbers taken from the \textit{Hawadeth} magazine, till the middle of the year 1984: from a total of 2069 soldiers, 1386 were Christians (67%), 322 Shiite (16%), 276 Druze (13%) and 65 Sunni (3%). Jabber, op cit, p. 394.}

However, Lahd had a strong belief in the success of the SLA. This came in a statement made by him and published by Al Nahar newspaper, on the day he declared the creation of the South Lebanese Army: \textit{"Only one military armed force will rule in the South and that is the South Lebanese Army. All other armed forces will be pursued and brought to an end."}\footnote{\textit{Al Nahar}, 4/4/1984.}

Although the obstacles were obvious, Lahd had one single goal in mind and that was to expand the SLA, to be able to outnumber the attacks and to have a more firm grasp on the region both the Israel and SLA were controlling.

However, Lahd faced another problem that of the religious buildup of the southern society. For Lahd it was a must to reach the southern population. Moreover, Lahd saw that the region needed at least 6000 soldiers and that would mean the enrolment of 200 to 300 soldiers per month.\footnote{Jabber, op cit, p. 394.} On the eve of the Israeli withdrawal, the number given by different sources between 1984 and 1985, varied according to the sources. Most of the men forming the SLA were serving from their villages.\footnote{The Hawadeth magazine stated in 1984 that the number of soldiers in the SLA was 2069. (\textit{Hawadeth}, 20/07/1984). The Nahar newspaper counted 2088 soldiers. (\textit{Al Nahar}, 13/9/1984). While in the year 1985, the numbers varied accordingly: in January, the Israeli newspaper Yadiot Achronot stated 2100 soldiers. (\textit{Yadiot Achronot}, 8/3/1985). And Haaretz counted 2400 soldiers in the SLA at the end of the year 1985. (\textit{Haaretz}, 13/11/1985).}

In his book, Jabber discusses the ways Israel used to encourage Christians as well as Muslims to join the SLA:

- When the SLA fell short in the numbers of its fighters, Israel could always count on the Lebanese Forces to fill the vacuum. These Christian fighters came from Beirut to join the SLA through the Haifa port and were sent in the southern battle
field without any knowledge of the grounds they were fighting for. Other Christian fighters came from villages like Jezzine or Roum or even eastern Saida. These and other villages saw in Lahd the defender of the Christian community in the South. However, the situation changed in 1985 when Rabin declared that Israel was out of the Lebanese "religious" war and that, from that moment on, the SLA would defend Israel's interests in South Lebanon and North Israel, instead of the interests of the Lebanese Christians. As a result of the declaration, southerners did not accept to join the SLA anymore and demonstrations where held in front of Lahd's house in Marjayoun. Young men were caught and asked to join the SLA. If they refused, they were put under arrest in the Khiyam prison. The situation escalated a year after the announcement, when parents of SLA soldiers protested in front of Lahd's house against sending their children in the front lines.245

On the Muslim side, the Israeli call to join the SLA was sent in a different way. From the start, Lahd sought to achieve a balanced army between the Christians and the Muslims. Only for this reason, sometimes, Christian enrollers were refused to maintain the equilibrium. When Israel saw that the Muslim community did not cooperate with it, Israel continued the former policy of Saad Haddad, that of creating hatred and fights between villages, neighbors and even family members. Other means was to expel entire families who fled the Israeli invasion and were coming back to their homes and villages. Assafir counted in February 1985, 100 families expelled from the village of Bint Jbeil and other 740 families from different villages in the South.246 Israel continued on banishing families and family members till August of 1985.247 As for the behavior of the SLA, it was encouraged by Israel to search homes, capture prisoners from who were non-cooperative, destroy villages, create roadblocks, humiliate people and steel private property. These encounters led to several Israeli and Lebanese town and village

245 Jabber, op cit, p. 400.
246 The basic reason for such large numbers of expulsions was the non-cooperation of the villagers with the SLA. (Assafir, 26/2/1985). However, Israel did on many occasions banish entire villages, like the Sujud farm in July of 1985, which is located 1030 m above sea level, because it saw in its strategic location an important military outpost. In the Sujud example, the village was completely destroyed. (Al Nahar, 22/7/1985).
meetings. As a result of these meetings, Israel would provide security for the southern villages if its people would provide the SLA with new recruits. The Israeli withdrawal from Beirut and the Mountains was declared on the 14th of January 1985. The time table of the withdrawal started five weeks after its announcement and was divided into three steps. But what is to matter in the withdrawal is the side each fighter took while Israel returned to the pre-established 'security zone'. Some led the way to the South where they were welcomed by Isaac Rabin, while others fled and returned to Beirut.

While Israel withdrew its forces along with the SLA fighters, the resistance stroke 190 operations, according to Assafir newspaper, in the southern region forcing the Israelis to announce their final withdrawal ahead of time, on the 17th of July 1985.

Until the middle of 1987, the thought of dismantling the South Lebanese Army was one of the solutions seen logical by the Israeli military and government. This was caused by two main reasons: first, the increased loss of men in two and half years mounting to 138 killed, 365 wounded, 89 prisoners and 300 deserters. The second reason was the acute gap created between the Christians and the Muslims in the army caused by the high number of deserters, who were mainly Muslims: around 95% of deserters were Shiites, while the Sunnis reached 1% of deserters. This uncontrollable situation increased the ethnical imbalance in the SLA, which was built upon a majority of Christians.

The idea of dismantling the SLA was soon shed from the minds of the Israeli leaders when Colonel David Agmon was assigned as the IDF military commander of the southern region, from July 1986 till the middle of 1988. Agmon originated from Morocco and was known for his support of the idea of the South Lebanese Army in the military.

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247 Jabber, op cit, p. 402.
251 Jabber, op cit, p. 396.
252 Ibid, p. 397.
Israeli circles. He made drastic changes in the way the army was built, the hours of exercise were prolonged from four weeks to twelve and comprised several non-military training fields like medical assistance for the wounded, communication and raze. Moreover, the army trained high rank officers. With Agmon, Israel managed to control the SLA soldiers and activity in the South, while implementing a common military language between a group of Lebanese soldiers with no common ground and the IDF. All of these new changes brought confidence in the army, its soldiers and the Israeli public opinion. It also encouraged the southerners to enroll in it.\footnote{In 1987 the Haaretz newspaper counted the SLA members between 2300 and 2400 members. (\textit{Haaretz}, 30/10/1986). In 1988 their number increased to 2600. (\textit{Haaretz}, 10/6/1988). While in the nineties the numbers varied between 3000 and 3250 soldiers. (\textit{Al Hayat}, 20/1/1994).} Other new elements were seen in the South Lebanese Army i.e. for the first time in the history of the Lebanese War, women were allowed to join the military organization.\footnote{Jabber, op cit, pp. 397-398.}

On the economical level, the region went through a very difficult period between the years of 1984 and 1985, because the Regie was slow in collecting the crops of both years and finished gathering the tobacco plantation at the end of 1986, leaving the framers with a two year loss. Furthermore, the southern farmers, who were paid in Lebanese pounds, had a second loss when the Lebanese Lira started depreciating. Meanwhile, Israel was encouraging young men to enroll in the SLA by paying them in 1985 a minimum of 1500 L.L. for a national guard and 2200 L.L. for a soldier. To increase the chances of gaining more recruits, wages increased with the depreciation of the Lebanese Lira and were paid in American dollars by the end of 1985. For instance, a single soldier was paid 200$ per month, while a married soldier was paid 350$ a month, and a ranked officer received 500$ a month. These numbers were very high and tempting, when one looks at the general atmosphere and decadent economic situation the region lived in. To these wages, Antoine Lahd adjusted, in the nineties, compensations, rewards, special permits to visit Israel and free of charge education and medical assistance, for the families who had members in the South Lebanese Army.\footnote{Jabber, op cit, pp. 397-398.}
control over its soldiers in the SLA, many of whom were collaborating with the resistance of Hezbollah. Starting 1997, a simple beginner soldier was paid 600$, while the Lebanese Army was paying its men around 360$ a month.\textsuperscript{256}

What impact had this situation on the South Lebanese Army? And how did the Christians and Muslims cope with the Israeli threats?

1. Once again, Israel managed to score another point in the southern war. The Shiite community was encouraged by the high salaries of the SLA and a large number of young men were recruited, from the end of the eighties till the middle of the nineties. The Muslims gave Israel a free passage to the villages the SLA had put Christian militants to control and protect.

2. Another important aspect was the change in the population’s perspective towards the South Lebanese Army. People accepted its existence and cooperated with it, in the absence of any other authority in the region.

3. Communication with the SLA and Israel entered a new phase by the end of the eighties. Families of SLA soldiers learned to accept the changes in the repartition of their young soldiers more easily, maybe because they were paid the equivalent of their job. However, the repartition of the SLA soldiers brought, in several occasions, disputes and hatreds between citizens of the same village or even of the same family. This was due to the differentiation caused in the division of work and the ranks of the army. Moreover, villages continued on contributing to Israel’s call for the need of labor and the loss of men, by supplying the first or the second with new and young recruits.

4. Economically, Israel took advantage of the high demand of work in its institutions and related it directly to the SLA. If a Lebanese southern citizen needed or asked to work in Israel, he or she had to be guaranteed first by a South Lebanese Army soldier. Each SLA soldier could guarantee two persons related to him, to his

\textsuperscript{255} Ibid, p. 408.
\textsuperscript{256} Ibid, p. 409.
village or to his close friends.²⁵⁷

Jabber concludes these four important points by stating that even though Israel managed to control, with all means possible, the lives and destinies of the southern population, however it did not manage to gain the approval of the majority of the southern population. The gap that Antoine Lahd created between families, friends and neighbors was more acute than the one created by Saad Haddad.²⁵⁸

**Israel’s Relation and Position Toward the SLA:**

Militarily, the South Lebanese Army was portrayed by many Arab and Israeli analysts as a major Israeli failure. Israel did not only lose capital by investing in its militia, but it also lost men. Between 1984 and 1985, Israel’s losses increased from 200 soldiers up to 1000 soldiers. These numbers varied between Israeli dead and wounded and Lebanese deserters. The years that followed, the loss in men multiplied by three and sometimes by four. When Israel saw the negative results it has encountered, the general opinion of the government and the IDF Generals was that “*the SLA was not the most important means in the South of Lebanon, nor was it the less important. It was just the only weapon Israel had*.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, Israel knew that for the majority of its ally soldiers the only reason they were fighting side by side was the high wages they were receiving. Most of them would have left their position in the front lines of the security zone, if their salaries would lessen or even if Israel would have stopped paying them.²⁶⁰

Politically, Israel used the South Lebanese Army, as well as the southern region it occupied, as a protection against the attacks of the resistance. From the 1990s, the media defined the SLA soldiers as sandbags or a waste tool for the Israeli political and military intervention in the region. On the social level, Israel used the SLA as an important link of

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²⁵⁷ The guarantee made by a soldier of the SLA was not for free. In order to attract a bigger number of workers in its institutions, Israel paid from 50 to 75$ per guarantee.
²⁵⁸ Jabber, op cit, pp. 411-412.
communication between it and the southern population, and between Israel and the international authority in the South representing the United Nations.

On the security level, Israel used the SLA as a center of information to provide it with all the activity that was going in the South and as a center of torture established in Khiyam prison to extort from collaborators with the Lebanese Army and the resistance all kind of information.\textsuperscript{261}

The years 1995 and 1996 witnessed the desertion of hundreds of Muslim and Christian SLA soldiers. However, it did not destabilize the existence of the Israeli ally, but it changed the ethnical balance upon which it was built.\textsuperscript{262}

To sum up, if we looked at the situation of the South Lebanese Army’s position and actions from a general view, we can safely say that it was the single reason behind the rise of the resistance in the 1980s. We can also conclude that the army’s security and military actions in the region did not elevate it to be a more efficient military group, and was not the only reason for its collapse. The South Lebanese Army, as Jabber puts it, was a social, military, political, and ethnical ‘equation’. With time, it evolved from being at first a border ‘equation’, then a Lebanese ‘equation’ and finally a regional ‘equation’.\textsuperscript{265}

**Different Political Views on the South Lebanese Army:**

The Global Security Organization gives an interesting definition and short summary of the South Lebanese Army\textsuperscript{264}:

\textquoteleft\textquoteleft The South Lebanese Army was set up as a Christian militia under the

\textsuperscript{260} Jabber, op cit, pp. 413-414.
\textsuperscript{261} Even though the SLA used all kinds of ways of torture and manipulation of the human pride and love of the family, that its members were trained upon in Israel, some of the high ranked officers could not take it and fled the army because they were treated as employees for the Israelis. Ibid, pp. 415-416.
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid, p. 418.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid, pp. 417 and 420.
command of Major Saad Haddad in 1978, and ever since maintained close ties with Israel. In the early 1980s the SLA fought PLO terror. After the Lebanon war as Israel set up the security zone, it decided to help the SLA maintain its position in South Lebanon. The IDF trained and supported the SLA and the SLA took part in protecting the security zone – mostly by defensive activities such as manning outposts and ongoing security operations. General Antoine Lahd – originally sent by the Lebanese government to the South to fight against terror cells – has commanded the SLA since 1984. As of early 2000, the SLA was comprised of about 50% Shiite Muslims and 50% Christians from the villages in southern Lebanon.”

Originally named the Free Lebanon militia, the Israeli-allied militia was renamed the South Lebanese Army after Saad Haddad’s death in 1985. It originally numbered around 3,000 men, but after 1986, the figure dropped to 1,600 men distributed in 48 positions and five garrisons. The force was led essentially by Lebanese Christians, who recruited Druze and Shiite Muslims from the villages in the occupation zone.

Robert Fisk in 1998 asserts that 24 members of the South Lebanese Army had deserted that year and surrendered to the resistance led by Hezbollah. Meanwhile Israeli troops refused to mount joint patrols with their Lebanese allies. In their turn SLA men refused to leave Israel’s military compounds to go on day or night patrols. Moreover, one SLA officer staged a revolt against the Israelis near the town of Marjayoun a year before. From that moment on, according to Fisk, Israel’s own military professionalism was being called into question.

A year later, an article was written in an Israeli newspaper stating that General Antoine

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264 The report was written by John Pike and modified on July 15, 2002.
265 [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/sla]
Lahd, commander of the South Lebanese Army, restated the fear that SLA soldiers might use their arms against Israel if the Israeli Defense Forces withdraw from Lebanon. The author defines the SLA

"As a mercenary force whose members get their wages from the IDF and supplement their income by exacting protection money from Lebanese workers for their permits. This is a convenient arrangement all around: for the workers, for the SLA and the IDF, which for a cheap rate gets thousands of troops to man outposts and crossing points and generally fill important holes in the South Lebanon fabric. The possibility of a peace treaty between Israel and Syria and Israel and Lebanon is above all a threat to the SLA, which will lose its raison d'etre and its economic resources. Lahd apparently knows what he is talking about when he threatens reprisal attacks by SLA soldiers."\(^{269}\)

Since Israeli troops withdrew from the rest of Lebanon in 1985, the objective of the militia had been to prevent the resistance from infiltrating in the occupation zone, creating a human buffer zone controlled directly by Israel.\(^{270}\) Despite the training and financing given by Israel to the SLA, the latter was never fully trusted by the Israeli army. Moreover, the 2,500 militia force had always been left to the "driest" tasks Israeli soldiers would not do. Most notoriously, they were in direct charge of the Khiyam prison south of Marjayoun, where many hundreds of Lebanese prisoners had been held over the years without trial or charge and under inhuman conditions with routine torture.\(^{271}\) Furthermore, for Israeli safety reasons, the proxy militia patrolled the area targeted by the resistance, while the Israelis controlled the hilltop positions near the international border and other key positions.\(^{272}\) The SLA "sandbag" enabled Israel to occupy and control about 10% of the entire Lebanese territory with only 1,000 troops stationed in the area. However, many of the southern Lebanese joined the SLA only reluctantly, driven by the

\(^{271}\) BBC News, op cit. [Internet site: http://www.bbc.co.uk]
lack of other employment opportunities. The SLA’s actions included the shelling of Lebanese civilian centers and even aggressions against United Nations peacekeepers, who were in Lebanon since 1978 “to oversee Israel’s withdrawal” under the UN resolution of that year.\textsuperscript{273}

At that time, the Israelis were training, equipping and paying the soldiers of the SLA, who numbered more than 2,000 men, according to Israeli reports, or twice the number Haddad had under his command since the first Israeli invasion in 1978. The men wore IDF uniforms, and often did not bother to remove the IDF logo, \textit{Zeva Hagana Le’Israel}, placed above the breast pocket. This explains why the Israeli government insisted, along the years, on a role for the SLA after its withdrawal from Lebanon. The SLA’s arsenal came from the weapons captured by Israel in the wars against the Arabs: T-55 tanks, 130 mm cannons, Kalashnikov assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, for the most part Russian made. The SLA operated in conjunction with IDF units, or even on its own, but always under the direct command and with full synchronization with the Israeli army. In other words, like Mac Leod mentions in his article, the SLA’s job was mainly and foremost to do the “\textit{IDF’s dirty work}”. One of the dirty work done by the SLA was to send some of its units into Muslim villages to search for guerillas and to collect arms. These operations caused frequent hatred between the Shiite community and the SLA, which increased the attacks against the Israeli puppet.\textsuperscript{274}

Socially, the SLA was unrepresentative of the 885,000 people who resided in the South. More than 75\% of the population was and still is Muslim and the majority of them being Shiite. While the SLA, with a Maronite commander, was 66\% Christian. Israel worked through the years to recruit Shiite members to the SLA for two main reasons: first, if the IDF withdrew, at that time, to the 1978 border line, the SLA would be a prime target to the Muslim uprising. And second, there was a fear of new massacres done by the SLA. On at least three occasions, SLA units overwhelmed by enthusiasm and desire for vengeance had opened fire on villagers, killing three people in Jibsheet on March 28,

\textsuperscript{272} \textit{The Daily Star,} 4/3/2000.
\textsuperscript{273} BBC News, op cit. [Internet site: http://www.bbc.co.uk]
thirteen in Sohmor, on September 20 and five in Lubia on October 12, 1984.275

Geographically, the western brigade operated in the area that stretched from the coast to the Israeli border in the central sector. Its headquarters were located in the former Lebanese Army barracks in Bint Jbeil. It controlled the crossing points of Hamra on the coast and Beit Yahoun. The eastern brigade operated north of the Litani River to the village of Aramta and eastward from Kafar Kila to the Shebaa farms. Its headquarters were in Marjayoun. It controlled the crossing points of Kafar Tebnite, Rihan and Zemraya. As for the independent Squad 20, its headquarters were in Hasbaya, this Druze unit was a back up for the main militia.276

The South Lebanese Army occupied since 1985, after Israel’s second withdrawal, a 9 mile deep strip that extended from South Lebanon to western Bekaa valley. As for the number of villages occupied by this army, we can count 125 villages directly occupied by Israel, in addition of 33 more villages that were controlled by “South Lebanese Army” and were under indirect Israeli occupation. The South is divided in 7 districts: district of Tyr (20 villages), Bint Jbeil (20 villages), Marjayoun (31 villages), Hasbaya (23 villages), Nabatiye (4 villages), western Bekaa (4 villages), Jezzin (23 villages), in addition of 33 villages and towns controlled directly by the SLA.277

Hezbollah: Israel's Own Worst Enemy:

The decade of the 80s saw the emergence of two of Israel’s worst enemies, that of the Shiite Lebanese resistance, Hezbollah, the other being Hamas in the occupied territory. Ironically, both groups came into existence in large part because of unintentional

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274 MacLeod, op cit, p. 15
275 Ibid, p. 15.
consequences of Israel’s actions.\textsuperscript{278}

Since its creation as a highly ideological organization, Hezbollah has developed from being a professional guerilla force into a politically international organization and into a successful Lebanese political party. All of these changes have forged the way to Hezbollah’s success against Israel.\textsuperscript{279}

Hezbollah emerged as one of the consequences of Israel’s invasion of 1982. However, it was not formally declared until 1983. At the time Hezbollah came into being, there already was a national Lebanese resistance, the Leftist and the Communist organizations on one hand, and the Amal movement on the other. The latter was created in the early 70s by the Iranian prominent figure Musa Sadr and was led primarily by Nabih Berry. After the Israeli invasion of 1982, the Amal movement was seeking an understanding with Israel and the United States, which failed. The movement’s constituency was made of battered people of South Lebanon, who believed that Israel would expel the PLO and then leave.\textsuperscript{280}

Inspired by the Iranian revolution of 1978-1979, Hezbollah, (the Party of God), was founded with the guidance of Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, Iran’s ambassador to Syria, in 1982. Their name derives from the Koran verse, “those who form the party of God will be the victors.”\textsuperscript{281} The movement began as group of clerics training in Najaf and Karbala in Iraq; in contrast to Amal, whose leaders came from the Shiite bourgeoisie. At the beginning, Hezbollah was not a popular movement. But with Israel having no intention of withdrawing and the government in Beirut who represented only a faction of the Lebanese society, Hezbollah began attracting more followers. By 1984, both Amal and Hezbollah dominated the task to end the occupation. The difference was in the way


\textsuperscript{280} Ibid, pp. 22-35.

\textsuperscript{281} Neff, op cit, pp. 20-21.
Hezbollah searched for members who would believe in martyrdom missions.\textsuperscript{282}

As for the impact of Syria and Iran, there is little doubt that both countries were involved in the creation of Hezbollah. For Iran, the creation of Hezbollah was part of its campaign to spread the message of the 'Islamic Revolution', whereas for Syria, the new movement was an important instrument and key for preserving its interests in Lebanon, at a time when Syria was militarily defeated by Israel. The alliance of Syria and Iran permitted the first to strike at Israel and the United States indirectly, as well as at the Amal movement.

Throughout the 80s, Hezbollah’s actions were strictly radical and had an efficient impact on the Israeli occupation and Iran’s opposition to American policies in Israel and Lebanon. During this period Hezbollah’s military actions were directed to strike western presence or even westerners in Lebanon. These actions comprised abductions, kidnappings, bombings of western locations and suicide bombings.\textsuperscript{283}

When Israel pulled back from the Shouf region and Beirut, to the pre-established ‘security zone’, the resistance turned toward the South, to the area that became a magnet for yet more resistance.\textsuperscript{284}

Much of the operations and attacks produced by Hezbollah were coordinated with Syria and supported by both Syria and Iran, but the resistance held its primary agenda very much on its own: getting rid of the Israeli occupation. Moreover, the success of the movement came also from its local constituency. Its fighters are local men, totally integrated in the Lebanese society. They have families, jobs, homes and very high hopes

\textsuperscript{282} Martyrs are the ones who die in the service of Jihad. However, since the Iranian revolution, the term has acquired a new political meaning and has been transformed from an act of suffering and sacrifice into an inspiring model for revolution and action. Norton, "Hezbollah and The Israeli Withdrawal From South Lebanon", op cit, pp. 22-35.

\textsuperscript{283} Ibid, pp. 22-35.

\textsuperscript{284} During this period, the author mentions in his article an interesting encounter with the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who says: "It was during this period, in December 1984, that Yitzhak Rabin initiated a meeting with me and few other scholars during which he asked what Israel should do. I told him that Israel must leave Lebanon and that to remain would only further radicalize the population. He replied that, as a politician, he could not risk attacks on Israeli towns."
and aspirations for Lebanon.\textsuperscript{285}

The Israeli attacks on the Lebanese infrastructure in 1993, 1996 and 1999 resulted, to Israel's miscalculation, in an increase of support to the resistance. It is in this sense that Hezbollah's officials agreed that the movement was in large measure "created" by Israel. Without the 'raison d'être' of opposing the occupation, Hezbollah would not have been able to build a strong resistance movement. On the other hand, Hezbollah officials observed that if Israel's actions in Lebanon were not resisted, Israel would have never thought of withdrawing its forces.\textsuperscript{286}

During the 1980s, Hezbollah was not interested in the Lebanese political game, particularly running for election and having deputies in the assembly. Moreover, Hezbollah condemned the Lebanese political system as 'rotten to the core'. However, the position of the movement changed by the early 1990s. The period was marked by the end of the Cold War\textsuperscript{287}, the political change in Iran\textsuperscript{288} and the end of the Lebanese civil war. These international changes provided the context for Hezbollah to enter the elections of 1992.\textsuperscript{289} The elections were won and Hezbollah came with eight seats, the largest single bloc from the 128 members of the parliament.\textsuperscript{290}

On the military level, the 1990s set the rules for the war in the South. Before the rules were set, the game was simple, when either side fired at civilians, retaliation followed. If Israel hit civilian targets, Hezbollah hit Israel. However, after operations Accountability and Grapes of Wrath, the rules were drawn with specificity. The rules were much

\textsuperscript{285} Norton, "Hezbollah and The Israeli Withdrawal from South Lebanon", op cit, pp. 22-35.

\textsuperscript{286} The proposition that states that "by ceasing resistance activities Israel would be induced to withdraw" was dismissed as being highly improbable. Ibid, pp. 22-35.

\textsuperscript{287} The end of the Cold War permitted people to talk about the beginning of an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Ibid, pp. 22-35.

\textsuperscript{288} With the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989, Iran began the post revolutionary phase. The new Iranian president Rafsanjani did not hide his impatience with Hezbollah and declared publicly his intention to orient the policy of his country to a direct state-to-state relation with the Lebanese government and the Shiite community as a whole. Ibid, pp. 22-35.

\textsuperscript{289} At that time, the party was divided between a minority led by Sheikh Soubhi Toufaily, who opposed the participation of the movement in the parliamentary elections and the vast majority who thought it was time to enter the Lebanese political life, in order to have a more effective voice in the political system. Ibid, pp. 22-35.
simpler: Israel would not target civilians or civilian targets, and Hezbollah would not target Israel per se. But with its professionalism and motivation, the resistance was more effective in operating within the rules than the IDF or the SLA.\footnote{291}

As a consequence to the motivation of its members, Hezbollah managed not only to gain with time the support of the Lebanese society, by developing itself into a respectable political party, but also to force Israel to withdraw from South Lebanon. As for Israel, we can safely say that Hezbollah was an unintended consequence to the bad political decisions the numerous Israeli governments took.

\textbf{Changes on the International Political Scene Affect Israel’s Policy in the South and the Region:}

1. Starting 1986, a year after the Israeli withdrawal from Beirut, the Israeli political goals changed due to several transformations in the World and the Middle East. This situation automatically affected the Israeli activity in the security zone. In the first six months of 1986, clashes continued between the national resistance on one hand and the SLA and the Israeli Defense Force, on the other. Journalists were excluded from much of the area and several incidents involving mistreatment of civilians, particularly by SLA forces, were reported.\footnote{292}

2. The years 1987-1988 witnessed the rise in influence of the Lebanese Shiite resistance, Hezbollah, in the poorer Shiite areas of the south, eastern Bekaa and the southern suburbs of Beirut. This was achieved at the expense of Amal, which lacked the resources and backup of the Iranian provisions given to Hezbollah. In comparison to the salaries paid by Israel to the SLA, trainee fighters in Hezbollah camps received three times the salary of an SLA soldier. As a consequence to the

\footnote{290 \textit{Ibid}, pp. 22-35.}
\footnote{291 As part of its efforts to minimize its losses, the IDF in the last years of occupation minimized its patrols and even the tour of duty had to be extended to reduce vulnerability. By 1999, only eight of fifty occupation positions were under IDF direct control. The SLA was left to control the remaining forty two. \textit{Ibid}, pp. 22-35.}
\footnote{292 Internet site: http://www.keesings.com]
rise of Hezbollah in major Shiite Lebanese regions, tension grew between Amal and Hezbollah and armed clashes broke out in early September, in Nabatiye.\textsuperscript{293}

3. When the Lebanese civil war had finally finished in 1991, the government decided to redeploy the Lebanese Army in the South, in February of the same year, to the extent of the ‘security zone’. It was part of the government’s attempt to take control over the country. Another step toward this control was the announcement of a plan to dissolve 10 Lebanese militias, which had agreed to give up their arms.\textsuperscript{294} And on March 19, local newspapers reported the first clash between the Lebanese army and the SLA militiamen. The Phalanges Free Lebanon Radio reported that the clashes started when an SLA patrol intercepted a Lebanese army unit removing mines on the periphery of the town of Mlikh.\textsuperscript{295}

4. After 1992 when Hezbollah began to participate in the Lebanese elections, the party had transformed itself from an Islamic international terrorist organization, in Israel’s opinion, into a Lebanese political party, which was committed, according to its own statements, to the political interests of Lebanon.

5. The Lebanese public opinion, changed from being a divided sectarian society to an all-Lebanese and united society gathered around the idea of national peace, the development of Lebanon and the encouragement of the resistance’s activities in the South.

6. On the international scale, Syria had also transformed itself from a state that supports international terrorism, in Israel and the United States’ opinion, into one that sought to be taken off from the American blacklist of terrorist states. This had been a major Syrian political goal since the Gulf war in 1991.

7. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, Syria found itself in a limited

\textsuperscript{293} [Internet site: http://www.keesings.com]
\textsuperscript{294} The plan stated that the militias should dissolve by April 20, 1991. It was later announced by the government that the Defense Ministry would designate locations where all private armies should hand over their weapons. The Lebanese government also announced that it would draft a nationwide security plan with two months of the dissolution.
\textsuperscript{295} [Internet site: http://www.keesings.com]
relationship with the United States.  

In Resef’s opinion, and despite the changes the world faced since the death of Major Saad Haddad in 1984 till 1990, the Israeli policies and activities in South Lebanon did not change, neither strategically or tactically.  

**Operation “Accountability” (July 1993):**

The year 1993 witnessed the first Israeli offensive after the end of the Lebanese war. Here are the events that led to the offensive: On July 5 Hezbollah ambushed an Israeli patrol, injuring one soldier. Israeli forces responded with artillery and helicopter attacks on southern villages, killing two people. Hezbollah retaliated by launching Katyusha rockets on northern Israel, in Kiryat Shmona. The attack caused little damage and no casualties. On the 25th of July 1993, the Rabin government and the IDF decided to launch a retaliatory military operation in the South called “Operation Accountability.” After evaluating that a ground offensive would lead to significant Israeli casualties, artillery and aerial bombardment plan was adopted with the aim of eliminating the Hezbollah resistance bases and decrease military operations on the security zone. Its second goal was to disturb civilian life and force the population to run off north with the intention of turning civilians against Hezbollah, forcing the Lebanese and Syrian governments into taking steps to restrain the resistance’s activities. Israeli air, ground and naval forces bombed Lebanese towns and villages north of the security zone. 147 Lebanese were killed, mostly civilians and more than 350,000 fled to Beirut. Some 75 villages as well as much of the region’s infrastructure were devastated during the Israeli 7-days campaign. The United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher brokered a

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296 Dani Reshef was released from the IDF after serving as an intelligence officer for 10 years, most of which he spent in South Lebanon. Dani Reshef, *Strategic Changes in The World and in The Middle East Since 1985*, [Internet site: http://www.angelfire.com]
297 Ibid, [Internet site: http://www.angelfire.com]
298 [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/lebanon]
300 [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/lebanon]
cease-fire between both parties, which resulted in an oral agreement whereby Israel agreed to refrain from attacking civilian targets in Lebanon, while the Hezbollah pledged to stop firing Katyusha rockets into northern Israel. The agreement only temporarily reduced the intensity of violence. A mutual offensive continued, however, in the succeeding months and years until the IDF launched another major offensive in April 1996.\textsuperscript{302}

For Israel, the operation was hardly an undistorted success. The immediate impact was a flood of negative media coverage. To the Israeli public opinion, the attack had won support for Rabin’s labor coalition government, which was under attack for some time, for being too “soft” on the Arabs and unresponsive to the needs of Israel’s citizens in the border settlements.\textsuperscript{303}

For Lebanon, the Israeli operation pushed back the prospects of the country’s reconstruction. Judging from the Lebanese press, as well as from the comments of the different confessional factions of the Lebanese society, the attack evoked an uncommon unity and sympathy with the victims of the South.\textsuperscript{304}

As for the foreign powers, Syria, Iran and the United States, all played an important role in the region after the attack and in the cease-fire agreement. Damascus effectively restated its intention to stay in Lebanon until Israel withdraws from the security zone. Iran, Hezbollah’s main sponsor, used the events of the summer 1993 to its internal debates to justify continued funding of Hezbollah campaigns in the security zone. As for the United States, the Hezbollah – Israeli exchanges shook the Department of State and offered an opportunity for Secretary of State Warren Christopher to broker a cease-fire. As a conclusion to the operation, the resistance, in general, directed its attacks against the ‘security zone’ and against Israel’s presence in Lebanon rather than northern Israel. This operational code had been reinforced by the terms of the cease-fire.\textsuperscript{305}

\textsuperscript{302} [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/lebanon]
\textsuperscript{303} Norton, “In Security Zones in South Lebanon”, op cit, pp. 71-73.
\textsuperscript{304} Ibid, p. 73.
\textsuperscript{305} Ibid, p. 74.
Operation “Grapes of Wrath” (April 1996):

On April 1996, the IDF launched an intensive 16-day on Lebanon in response to repeated rocket attacks on Israel’s northern region. Like the previous Israeli operation, this one had also consequences.\textsuperscript{306} One of these consequences was the increased support and respect, which it provided for Hezbollah throughout the Arab world. Analysts noted that the Lebanese resistance's new popularity rendered any Syrian move against it highly unlikely. Furthermore, the operation appeared to increase Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres’ winning in the coming elections.\textsuperscript{307} Therefore, the operation was set to achieve different goals: the complete ending of rocket attacks by Hezbollah, an attempt to undermine the popular support of the resistance among the Lebanese and pressure Syria into exercising a more firm control of the Lebanese resistance. Moreover, the operation carried an economic message to the Lebanese government with the bombing of the electricity plants near Beirut, stating that the economic recovery plans and the rebuilding of the country’s infrastructure were at stake if they too did not stop Hezbollah’s activities.\textsuperscript{308} Analysts regarded the policy of Peres from a different angle: they did not doubt Peres’ commitment to the Middle East peace process, but they agreed that the scale of the military operation in Lebanon had changed the context in which peace talks could resume after the Israeli elections.\textsuperscript{309}

During the military operation ‘Grapes of Wrath’, IDF Air Forces attacked Hezbollah training grounds, personnel, headquarters and residences of important leaders as well as large numbers of Katyusha launchers. To avoid Israeli casualties, the IDF did not use ground forces in search and destroy missions. Therefore, not all of the Katyusha rockets were destroyed.\textsuperscript{310} Deputy Defense Minister Or declared on the eve of the first day of the operation that the attack on Beirut was partly a ‘signal’ to the Lebanese government that their capital would not remain unaffected if there continued to be rocket attacks from

\textsuperscript{306} [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/lebanon]
\textsuperscript{307} According to Israeli polls, support for Peres had been badly affected by the suicide bombings by Palestinians in Israel in late February and early March. The Lebanese offensive would, as it did, improve his polls rating and the general public morale. [Internet site: http://www.keesings.com]
\textsuperscript{308} [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/lebanon]
\textsuperscript{309} [Internet site: http://www.keesings.com]
Lebanon on northern Israel.\textsuperscript{311}

During the campaign a tragic incident occurred, when the IDF artillery claimed that in response to Hezbollah’s attack from a close proximity to a UNIFIL camp, where Lebanese civilians had assembled to seek shelter, bombarded the camp killing 4 UNIFIL soldiers and around 100 Lebanese civilians. This incident was condemned internationally and a cease-fire understanding was reached on the 27 of April 1996. The understanding was similar to the one reached in 1993 and stated that Israel would not attack Lebanese villages, while Hezbollah would refrain from launching attacks out of these villages or attack civilian targets. It also set up a Monitoring Committee for the Implementation of the Grapes of Wrath Understandings, comprised of representatives from the United States, France, Syria, Israel and Lebanon, which convened to monitor and discuss infringements of the understandings by the two sides.\textsuperscript{312}

From the beginning of the year 1997, the Israeli policy towards its proxy militia began to change. In April of the same year, the South radio reported that Israel was planning to reinforce the SLA’s armory. According to the report cited by the radio, Israel would provide the SLA with night-vision equipment and wire-guided missiles, like the ones used by the resistance.\textsuperscript{313}

As for the remaining years before the withdrawal, we can say that Israel had changed its policy of occupation to the extent of stating in March 1998 that Israel was prepared to accept the Security Council resolution 425 and pull its forces out of south Lebanon. The statement was made by Prime Minister Netanyahu.\textsuperscript{314} Despite the idea of withdrawing from South Lebanon, activities from both Hezbollah and the SLA/IDF in South Lebanon continued throughout the year 1999, a year before the Israeli withdrawal, but security conditions continued to improve. At that time, the government considered the conflict between armed Lebanese elements and the SLA/IDF to be a national resistance

\textsuperscript{310} [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/lebanon]
\textsuperscript{311} [Internet site: http://www.keesings.com]
\textsuperscript{312} [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/lebanon]
\textsuperscript{313} [Internet site: http://www.keesings.com]
movement against Israeli occupation. Some analysts consider that “the Syrian domination of Lebanon, especially in supporting Hezbollah attacks in the South, and Iranian assistance to the resistance contributed to an environment in which terrorist elements could flourish. The Lebanese government was powerless to change the state of affairs it found himself in”.315 While others believed in the power and the insistence of the resistance, which were the main reason behind the Israeli early withdrawal from South Lebanon.

The SLA Is “No More”:

Nicolas Blanford took in 1999 a small trip to the South. He described his experience in an article he wrote to the Daily Star entitled “Uneasy Ride in the South”.316 Driving through the occupied zone, a part of the country most people never see, “you cannot avoid a slight sense of foreboding when crossing from the comfort of everyday Lebanon into the uncertain dangers of the occupation zone”. The feeling of fear, claustrophobia and isolation is what you feel when crossing the last Lebanese Army checkpoint. Depending on the level of violence in the area, the SLA317 opens its checkpoints at 10am and closes it at 2 pm. The military apparatus strikes the visitor for the first time with its omnipotent machinery and its Hebrew markings. The “Israelis” forbid anyone to drive alone in the occupation zone as a precaution against suicide bombers. The author describes briefly each village he crosses and begins with Naqura, home to UNIFIL’s headquarters since 1978 and ends with Rihan, passing by Blat, Marjayoun and other villages from the three southern enclaves occupied by Israel. He concludes his article with a remark on the sense of isolation and dissociation from the rest of Lebanon the South gives to everyone who visits the zone. While the rest of the country moves on, the zone lags behind, “caught in a trap of outdated fears and mixed loyalties”. The author added to his conclusion a quote

314 [Internet site: http://www.keesings.com]
315 [Internet site: http://www.globalsecurity.org/lebanon]
316 The Daily Star, 9/7/1999.
317 At the end of his article, Blandford explains the term South Lebanese Army as: “an Israeli nomination we absolutely reject for it contradicts with Lebanon’s independence and sovereignty. This army is not but and “Israeli” agent working for realizing “Israel’s” goals in Lebanon”.
by Monsignor Hayek, that "there is no real joy in the area". The people in the area have always been worried and all the speculation of a withdrawal has simply created new worries.\textsuperscript{318}

After a series of imperfections in the weeks leading up to the withdrawal, the Shiite 70\textsuperscript{th} Battalion completely collapsed at the very beginning of the withdrawal leaving behind the remainder of the 2,500 members of the SLA, which melted away, either surrendering to Hezbollah or to the Lebanese units, returning quietly to their homes and villages, or seeking emergency refuge in Israel. Israelis generally sympathized with the SLA families seeking refuge in their country and approved the government’s efforts to admit all SLA members requesting shelter. Accused by SLA of having been sold out by the unannounced pullback, Israel argued that the safety of its own men during the withdrawal necessitated the difficult decision not to warn the SLA. In the preceding months of the withdrawal, some SLA members tried to rehabilitate themselves in the eyes of Hezbollah by passing on information as to Israeli plans, times and routes. But many more fought by Israel’s side for many years till the end of the pull back. While there was no graceful way to terminate the security zone and to put an end to the long built relationship between the Israelis and the SLA, the disintegration of the South Lebanese Army and the flood of migration it caused to families seeking refuge in Israel are not something of which Israelis can be proud of.\textsuperscript{319}

After the withdrawal, Beirut has busied itself with military trials against hundreds of SLA members who surrendered to Hezbollah or were turned over to the government after Israel departed. Accused of collaboration with the enemy, these SLA men, Christians and Muslims, have received sentences ranging from several months to many years, leaving it unclear as to whether the government’s purpose is to punish or assimilate Israel’s former allies. SLA commanders have already been tried in abstention and sentenced to death.\textsuperscript{320}

As for Hezbollah, it is perhaps the most important actor in Lebanon concerning the

\textsuperscript{318} The Daily Star. 9/7/1999.
\textsuperscript{319} Eisenberg, op cit, p. 10.
South’s future. Expectations regarding the resistance’s activity varied between analysts who predicted an immediate clash of violence after the IDF’s withdrawal. This was clearly miscalculated. While other analysts, suspected that the organization will seek to liberate Jerusalem and, backed up by Iran and Syria, will revert to anti-Israeli attacks, this time from the border where they can strike deeper into Israel. This second assumption proved them wrong again. Still many analysts believed that, with the IDF catalyst gone, Hezbollah will turn its energy to the Lebanese society and to the struggle for power between the two Shiite factions, Amal and Hezbollah. One of the analysts, Augustus Richard Norton argued that not only Hezbollah has transformed itself “from revolutionary vanguard to legitimate political party”, but that profound political developments in Tehran have actually led Iran to “actively encourage” the metamorphosis. Regardless of how one characterizes past Hezbollah actions, what is important now is how it behaved since the withdrawal and what will be its plans for the future. There has been no wave of violence, killings, massacres, or sectarian ruptures during and after the withdrawal. If anything, Hezbollah proved to be better prepared for the withdrawal than did the Lebanese government. Since 1992, Hezbollah has been active in the Lebanese politics. It won seven parliament seats in the 1996 elections and won seats in the 2000 elections. In parliament, Hezbollah has been demonstrating a readiness to “check their ideology”. This readiness to seek respectability has increased the organization’s attractiveness to the middle class Shiite, making its activists “Lebanese nationalists par excellence”. Finally, despite its Islamic origins and perceptions, Hezbollah won the respect of most Lebanese for its role as an ultimately successful patriotic resistance force.\(^{321}\)

**Did Israel Betray Its Lebanese Allies?**

“Israel betrayed us. The IDF and the SLA were one ... and we thought it was possible to befriend Israel. We helped them in our land. For twenty-

\(^{320}\) Ibid, p. 10.
five years we were together with it."\[322\]

This is what a former SLA soldiers said in the morning of the Israeli withdrawal and their crossing the border to ask their betraying ally for a new home. The nephew of Aqel Hachem -former commander of the western front, assassinated in early January 2000- himself an SLA soldier, commented on how others like him felt about Israel’s action of withdrawal from South Lebanon:

"We ate with you together, we fought with you together, and we went to funerals with you together. We were your allies."\[323\]

For the SLA to have stayed and fought, they would have needed encouragement and a reliable ally. They had neither, so they decided to run for their lives, to run toward a new life. The highly positioned SLA members had mainly two choices: to surrender to the resistance, or to seek refuge in Israel and face a new and changing chapter in their lives. The ones who sought Israel for shelter knew that the Lebanese government would punish them with at least their freedom, so they chose to live their “freedom” in Israel.

From an Israeli perspective, the withdrawal can be explained as an Israeli plan to “protect its back” against any attack coming from Hezbollah. Therefore, many explanations can be given to the way Israel turned its back on its ally:

- One of the explanations given is that the IDF had to dismantle the SLA if it wanted to comply with the United Nations Resolution 425, which called upon Israel to withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory. To accomplish a safely withdrawal and to be certain that the United Nations would assume responsibility in the “security zone”, Israel had to leave the way it did.

- A second Israeli explanation says that if the SLA would have fought Hezbollah, this would have complicated the IDF’s withdrawal and perhaps even necessitated

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\[322\] Mordechai Nisan, *Did Israel Betray Its Lebanese Allies?* Mordechai Nisan is a teacher at the Rothberg International School of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. [Internet website: http://www.gote.org]
Israel’s return to Lebanon to assist its former ally. Following the IDF’s withdrawal, Israel would no longer direct SLA activities. The war in the South would turn, in time into a civil war.

- Israel also saw the sacrifice of the SLA as necessary to ensure that Hezbollah would not interfere with the withdrawal.
- Another important issue given by the Israelis was the level of their trust in the SLA. Israel thought that the moment it would turn its back on its allies, they would turn against it and fight it.324

A different opinion is possible: that the Barak government did have other ways of treating the SLA, which would have been morally and politically superior to the course undertaken. This point of view states that Israel could have taken one of these steps:

- Strengthening the SLA as an independent force. Israel could have provided the SLA with more modern weapons and could have liberated it to conduct an independent battle against Hezbollah.
- Disarming both the SLA and Hezbollah. Under United Nations auspices and United States support, Israel could have managed an agreement to dismantle both militias.
- Calling upon Syrian forces to withdraw simultaneously with the IDF’s retreat.

To some analysts any of those courses of action would have served Israel’s extensive national and regional security interests and strengthening up its image as a reliable ally.

Appearing before a parliamentary lobby on behalf of the SLA in Israel, Etienne Sakr “Abou Arz” declared that the government of Israel had betrayed its allies. On the other hand, Uri Lubrani, the coordinator of Israeli activities in Lebanon, maintained that Israel had not abandoned the SLA because its members were allowed into Israel. Which side is right?

323 Ibid. [Internet website: http://www.gotc.org]
324 Ibid. [Internet website: http://www.gotc.org]
When Israel opened the gates of its northern border, it proved to have done a humanitarian action for those who sought refuge. However, this alone cannot absolve Israel of its other acts, like the manner of Israel’s departure from South Lebanon. It constituted an act of disloyalty toward its ally.

The decision to abandon SLA personnel to Hezbollah and to the government of Beirut, or impose upon southerners the indignity and turmoil of refugee condition in Israel, was a violation of trust. It also involved deception, as the Israeli authorities concealed their true intentions toward the SLA and the future of South Lebanon. There is no evidence that the Israeli officials ever consulted with their south Lebanese allies, let alone coordinated, what was planned for them. “Expressions of general Israeli concern and responsibility for her allies in the end served as an elusive formulation that culminated in betrayal.”

Sharon’s Policy After the Withdrawal and Israel’s Strategic Considerations:

In an article written by professor Murray Kahl in March 2001, the author explains the policy of Ariel Sharon concerning Lebanon and the SLA after the withdrawal. The author’s basic resources come from Israeli and reliable western sources, however without naming them. The main idea of the article is to prove that no matter what happens Ariel Sharon remains the military man who led the second Israeli invasion of South Lebanon. Even after the Israeli withdrawal, Sharon still had political intentions for Lebanon and Syria, no less dangerous to his Islamic opponents than his plans in the 1980s. The sources emphasize Sharon’s opposition to Ehud Barrak’s decision to withdraw from Lebanon in May 2000, without a peace agreement. They say that Sharon plans to expand the border strip to reach the city of Sidon, while increasing Israel’s alliance with some Christian factions in Lebanon. Israeli military sources argue that the defeat in Lebanon aided the Palestinians in their Al Aqsa intifada. The Lebanese surrender promoted the Hezbollah

325 Ibid, [Internet website: http://www.gotc.org]
concept to the Palestinians, of a radical Islamic group fighting against huge odds.\textsuperscript{326}

On the other hand, Sharon stated that what Israel did to Antoine Lahd and his army was treason and he urged that Israel give safe haven to SLA members and also to recruit them for use in the future to return home and free Lebanon.

Western sources say that Sharon still defends the increase of military pressure on Lebanon in order to prevent Syria from using Lebanon as leverage against Israel. The sources also added that Sharon is convinced that Hezbollah must be removed from the Israeli border, after the withdrawal have proved that it did not bring peace or calm to the border region. In reality, the withdrawal gave Hezbollah an open way to help Palestinians from the Lebanese territory as well as from within Israel.\textsuperscript{327}

Since its withdrawal from Lebanon, the Israeli security and military groups recruited around 1,500 former SLA members into their ranks at twice the salaries they used to receive as members of the South Lebanese Army, in the security zone. Their new salary ranges from $1,000 for regular soldiers to $3,000 for ranking officers. They also benefit from social and health assistance. Moreover, an Israeli army group known as “Department of Special Operations” retrained and reorganized “Unit 504” specialized in espionage inside Lebanon, as well as several commando units made up of former SLA members. They were trained for guerilla warfare, assassinations, infiltrations, and the most modern methods of booby trap vehicles. The Shin Bet, the internal security organ in Israel, also worked in the rehabilitation of Lahd’s army. It recruited a special unit composed of more than 250 former SLA members. These members were chosen from villages in South Lebanon who use an Arabic dialect similar to the Palestinian one. The goal of these new members is to join the undercover units of the Shin Bet, specialized in infiltrating and penetrating Palestinian towns and villages. After the re-burst of the Intifada, Israeli groups conducted field drills on the reorganization of Lahd’s army. Many former SLA members were sent to participate in the protection of settlements and the

\textsuperscript{326} Murray Kahl, “Wake up Beirut, Sharon is Coming”, 6 March 2001. [Internet website: http://www.free-lebanon.com]
installment of roadblocks against Palestinians, especially in Gaza. Recent western and Israeli reports reveal that many former SLA members were seen in Israeli military uniforms operating several barriers in Khan Younes.

Additional intelligence reports gathered by several European capitals add that Sharon is holding meetings with Israeli army leadership to return to the Lebanese front to neutralize Hezbollah and confront the Lebanese and Syrian governments. These reports say that Sharon plans on using Lahd’s army to restore coordination and alliance with some Christian groups who were allies in the past. Nonetheless, the same report differs on the details and on the magnitude of Sharon’s scheme to reenter Lebanon without igniting a regional war.

On the other hand, Arab sources say that it is unlikely that Sharon would revive his old plan to conquer southern Lebanon up to the Awali River or to establish the 40 km wide border strip. However, they do say that these plans still exist in the files of the Israeli Defense Ministry. Any Israeli plan that involves Lebanon includes a multipurpose role for Lahd’s army. In case of war, Lahd’s fighters will be trusted with guarding the borders, confronting the Hezbollah resistance and together with the Israeli army, fight for “liberated zones”. These forces will be called “The Battalions of Return”. Other information reveals that Israel is planning to deploy Lahd fighters equipped with modern weapons at the Chebaa Farms. In case of an attack by the Lebanese resistance, Sharon and the Israeli military command plan to use as justification the United Nations determination that the Farms are Syrian territory and not part of Lebanon. If Syria reacts on the Golan, Sharon will accuse it of violating the Golan cease-fire and transforming it to a war zone. Finally, western security sources say that the return of Lahd’s army in Sharon’s plan will not only be to use them as border guards, but also to infiltrate them through Cyprus in several Lebanese areas.328

327 Ibid, [Internet website: http://www.free-lebanon.com]
328 Ibid, [Internet website: http://www.free-lebanon.com]
Why Did the Israelis Withdraw?

In Mahmoud Soueid’s opinion, the end of thirty years of occupation came due to several factors: some related to the internal Israeli policy, others related to the regional circumstances. The first and foremost important element, according to Soueid, that drew Israel out of Lebanon was the numerous attacks on the Israeli army during the years 1998-1999 and the fruitful collaboration between elements from the SLA and the Lebanese Army. The second reason behind the withdrawal was the defeat of Netanyahu and the success of Barak in the Israeli Prime Minister campaign. Ehoud Barak had promised the Israeli people that in case he would be elected, he would withdraw the Israeli Army from South Lebanon a year after the elections. Barak even had set an evacuation date on 7 July 2000. On the international scene, Barak’s victory came as a surprise and a new hope for the peace process negotiations. His victory was welcomed by the Arab countries, especially Egypt, Syria, Royal Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. The United States and the European Union joined them. A third reason behind the Israeli withdrawal, according to Soueid was the fact that Ehoud Barak was never a supporter for the establishment of the ‘security zone’ in South Lebanon; reason for which the Israeli Army reduced the encounters with the resistance, in the last half of 1999, and limited its patrols as well as its military outposts. A final reason behind the withdrawal would be the implementation of Security Council resolutions 425-426 by Israel in order to separate the Israeli-Syrian negotiations from the Israeli-Lebanese negotiations and isolate Syria in a unilateral agreement.329

To some critics like Laura Eisenberg, Israel’s decision to evacuate the security zone unilaterally was a courageous risk, reflecting a clear and realistic evaluation of the situation along the border, of Israel’s goals with respect to Lebanon and of the relative weaknesses and strengths of forces on the other side. Eisenberg analyses Israel and Lebanon’s political points of view: for Israel, the most important result has been the restoration, “for the first time in 22 years, of a clear-cut border between Israel and

Lebanon, [leaving] Israel with a tighter fist and a more unified public.\textsuperscript{330} As for Lebanon, the most important result of the withdrawal has been the closing of the war chapter, which cost Lebanon heavily through the years, and the end of the military occupation with the termination of the SLA.\textsuperscript{331} Thomas Friedman puts Israel’s win on the border issue in a few words:

\textit{"Whenever Israel has found itself in conflicts without borders - South Lebanon, the Intifada in the West Bank- it has always lost, because it always found it difficult to win support, either at home or abroad, for the force that is required to win a war without borders. Israelis will only sanction this force and sacrifice for a war of clear-cut self-defense over a defined border."}\textsuperscript{332}

Eisenberg ends her article with an interesting idea about the Good Fence:

\textit{"The Good Fence may be locked, but there is a chance that a good fence can make Israel and Lebanon, if not good friends, then at least good neighbors who no longer trespass on one another’s property or harbor the other’s enemies, both with deadly results. Even as good people on both sides strive to break the psychological walls of hostility between Israelis and Lebanese, the material fence separating them must remain, for the indefinite future, high and strong."}\textsuperscript{333}

Augustus Richard Norton concludes with the idea that following the Taef Accord, which facilitated the dismantling of all the militias except the Iranian-backed Hezbollah and the Israeli-backed South Lebanese Army, and during the settling of an effective government in Beirut, the Lebanese government became more assertive in its calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the South and the dismantling of the security zone. The government

\begin{footnotes}
\item[331] Eisenberg, op cit, p. 13.
\item[332] Friedman, op cit, [Internet website: http://www.nytimes.com]
\end{footnotes}
rested its demands on the United Nations resolution 425 of 1978, supported by the United States, which called upon Israel to “withdraw forthwith from all Lebanese territory”.

Israel, on the other hand continues Norton, argued that it had no claims on Lebanon’s territory, but that its interests were confined to security along its borders. Moreover, Israel was not much impressed by any withdrawal arrangement that left Hezbollah intact. Instead, there was a consensus amongst Israeli officials that the security zone was a successful and relatively low-cost venture.\(^{334}\)

As for Syria, the prospect of a unilateral IDF withdrawal presented a considerable inconvenience. Syria had lost the card to play in future negotiations. According to Richard Blanford, Syria believed it was in its interest to promote a new dispute along the Lebanese border to allow Hezbollah to pose a continued threat to Israel. A number of options were available to perpetuate instability along the border, but the most favorable was to demand the return of the Shebaa Farms. Therefore, on May 4, 2000, the Lebanese government encouraged by Syria, told the UN it will consider Resolution 425 unfulfilled and the withdrawal incomplete unless Israel pulled out of Shebaa. Beirut claimed that the farms were originally incorporated into Syria, but the Damascus had given up the territory to Lebanon in the 1950s. In his report, Annan said that Lebanon had no sufficient evidence to prove its claim and concluded that Israel did not have to withdraw from the farms. Annan also decreed that the farms were subject to Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). When drawing the Blue Line, although Annan had placed the farms on the Israeli side, he left open the possibility of future borders changes.\(^{335}\)

Moreover, Norton argues that for Syria the maintenance of an Israeli position in southern Lebanon would serve as a significant justification for the continuing presence of Syrian military forces in Lebanon. When it came to Syria, Israel saw the creation of a security framework in the Golan Heights a much simpler task than the creation of an effective

\(^{333}\) Eisenberg, op cit, p. 14.
\(^{334}\) Norton, “In Security Zones in South Lebanon”, op cit, pp. 75-76-77.
\(^{335}\) Richard Blanford, “Shebaa Farms and Beyond”, *Middle East Insight*, vol. 16, no. 4, September-October 2001, pp. 7-10.
security framework in South Lebanon, where neither the Lebanese Army nor the United Nations’ forces would meet Israel’s demands.\textsuperscript{336}

\textsuperscript{336} Norton, “In Security Zone in South Lebanon”, op cit, pp. 75-77.
CHAPTER THREE

THE SOUTH AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL:
FILLING THE VACUUM

Analysts today divide the periods endured by the southern region, since the Israeli withdrawal, into the pre-withdrawal and the post-withdrawal periods. During the pre-withdrawal period, South Lebanon was the battlefield for the Syrian-Israeli conflict, where the Israeli occupation was one of the causes behind the region’s lack of development. The other cause was, and unfortunately still is, the government’s neglect of the region. Whereas, the post-withdrawal period changed, both the rules of the game played by the two main forces in the region, and the ‘status quo’ lived by the South since 1978. The importance of the withdrawal, to the southern region, came with an economical, political, and security aspect. According to analysts, a new period began for all the parties involved in the southern conflict: the Lebanese government would be challenged with securing the South and giving the region the attention it needs.\textsuperscript{337} To the resistance, the challenge would be to cope with a non-combat situation and to continue the dialogue it started in 1992, with the other political parties. Syria, on the other hand, should now find a new card to play against Israel, like the Sheba farms, to balance its position in the Middle Eastern conflict. Finally, for Israel the region would still remain a security challenge as long as the Hezbollah is posted at its northern border and as long as

\textsuperscript{337}Today, South Lebanon reaches more than 1/5 of the Lebanese territory (or 2090.4 km\textsuperscript{2}). According to statistics, the region embraces 800,000 people, or around a quarter of the Lebanese population, which is evaluated at 3.6 to 4 million people. Unfortunately, the region was long neglected by the Lebanese government because of its instability caused mainly by the Israeli aggressions since 1948. Emigration rate ranged between 40 and 45% in the 1970s. People either left for the capital, or abroad. The situation worsened in the following years and the economy of the region fell apart. By the year 1989 only 3% of the officially registered population lived in South Lebanon. The region is regaining its population little by little, now that Israel has left.
the Lebanese Army does not take full control over the southern Lebanese region.\footnote{Chaouki Achkouti, “What situation after the withdrawal?” *Al Massira*, Issue No. 761, (Monday 5 June 2000), p. 6.}

In my quest to find out what people from different political and non-political circles think about the Israeli withdrawal and the condition of the southern region more than three years after the happy event, I will also incorporate in this chapter interviews with the Editor In Chief of Al Massira Magazine, Viviane Saliba, Mr. Edmond Rizk, a former deputy of parliament and a lawyer from Jezzin, who took several defense cases of former SLA members and Mr. Nawaf El Moussawi, the spokesman of Hezbollah. Moreover, on a field trip I made in the southern region in the summer of 2003, I have met with several former SLA members, who served their time in prison and told their story.

**Analyzing the Post-Withdrawal Policies:**

According to Viviane Saliba, the Editor in Chief of Al Massira Magazine, the Israeli withdrawal was the main reason behind the SLA’s disintegrations. Antoine Lahd’s militia could not have protected the Israeli back while the IDF was withdrawing. Therefore, Saliba explains, the only solution Israel was left with was to withdraw suddenly in order to prevent an attack on its soldiers and in the hope that its withdrawal will provoke a civil war in the South. Saliba also divides the political steps that could be taken by the Lebanese government into four:

1. First and foremost, the Lebanese government should apply the UN resolution 425, which consists of the redeployment of the Lebanese Army at the international borders while taking all the steps needed to further the evacuation of foreign forces, especially Israeli ones, from Lebanese territory. This step should be applied along the lines of the March 1949 Accords.

2. Second, and according to Saliba, the Lebanese authorities should dismantle all Lebanese and foreign militias. No exception should be applied. In case an
exception is made, this would jeopardize the social buildup of the Lebanese society and would place Lebanon once again on the path to war.

3. The two first steps should be succeeded by parliament elections that would bring a new blood to the southern region in the Lebanese political life.

4. Finally, the new government should be built upon the resolutions of the 1949 Agreement and should include a national unity government.\footnote{Viviane Saliba, \textit{Al Massira}, Issue No. 760, (Monday 29 May 2000), pp. 8-9.}

My interview with Mrs. Saliba went unexpectedly well. She and I do not share the same political ideas; therefore I thought that she might not be very straight in answering my questions and I was right. She did not accept to tape the conversation and did not answer many of my questions with a straight answer. Mrs. Saliba went to the southern region in 1984 with the purpose of writing several reports for the magazine. She interviewed Saad Haddad and his family. Her interviews encouraged the Editor In Chief of Al Massira, to put the information she gathered in a book entitled \textit{What did you do to the South ... What did you do for the South?}"

As she remembers him, Saad Haddad is a very ordinary man, who came, at the time to the South, with the idea of helping the region as much as he could. When I asked her what she thought about the Israeli withdrawal, Mrs. Saliba pointed out first a number of articles written in the Magazine about Hezbollah’s victory in the South and then said that “today we assume our responsibilities and mistakes and are aware of the fact that we have lost the Lebanese war as we are aware of the fact that Hezbollah has won it against Israel”.

When I made a comparison with the conclusion she drew in her book of the situation lived by the southern region in 1984 and the region’s current condition, Mrs. Saliba diplomatically told me that she forgot about that part, so I read it to her. Finally, after playing cat and mouse, Mrs. Saliba revealed her opinion and said that the southern region never was the center of attention of the governments. In the end she wished me luck and hoped that I will not write about our interview in my thesis.
But what did the people of the region say and how did they react to this new event?

Najem Hachem, Al Massira’s reporter, interviewed some of the citizens who stayed behind. “All of Lebanon came to us, but our relatives left”. These were the words used by the remaining southern villagers the day of the Israeli withdrawal. To some, the first days after the withdrawal were the hardest, fear was greater than happiness. One question remained unanswered: why did Israel withdraw in that way and faster than expected? Hachem thinks that Tel Aviv withdrew earlier than expected to put the region in a new vacuum, which the resistance would try to fill creating an internal war between the resistance and the former South Lebanese Army, which was presumed by Israel that it would hold up with its remaining weapons and fight.\(^{340}\)

Freedom can be lived in different ways: when arriving to the village of Khiyam, you can count 144 detainees enjoying the feeling of freedom once again, while on the other side of the border, 6500 Lebanese are leaving to another ‘freedom’ that they were searching for in their ‘Security Belt’; Israel. The element of surprise can still sweep you away when you find out that many teenagers leaving the region had no contact with the South Lebanese Army, but visited Israel once or several times. Most of these high school students were forced by the South Lebanese Army to work with Israel or the SLA. Under these circumstances, some of them had no other choice but to leave the region to Beirut or abroad. However, most of the teenagers did not have the means to take this first option, so they enrolled in Lahd’s militia.\(^{341}\)

According to Hachem, the numbers of individuals who left for Israel vary from village to village, for instance:

- In Alma Shaab 600 persons (or 49 families) out of 2500 left. In Kawzah 85 villagers went to Israel.\(^{342}\)
- In Dibble the situation is catastrophic; only 650 elderly villagers remained,

knowing that 4000 persons lived in the village, while the school has only 94 students out of a total of 250. 300 members from the Hanna family left for Israel. The families Saker, Naddaf, Nassif, Younes and Hachem are all gone. It is estimated that around 95% of the village’s people took refuge in Israel.

- In Ain Ibel the situation is not better, 75 families left, which in numbers means 700 out of a total of 1500 persons, while 3 elderly citizens surrendered to the Lebanese authorities.

- Rmeish is the biggest Maronite town in South Lebanon. The number of its citizens is estimated at 12000 Maronites. 1700 persons fled to Israel and 400 houses were closed. Some of its citizens worked with the SLA, while others worked in Israeli hospitals and factories.\(^3\)\(^4\)\(^3\)

- The situation is the same in Kafar Kila, where 150 men surrendered to the Lebanese authorities, while 40 people fled to Israel.\(^3\)\(^4\)\(^4\)

- Aichieh is also known under the name “Aichieh Island” because of its geographical position in the middle of the Rihan, Khiyam and Aramta villages. The village has paid a lot during the war for its strategic position. After the 1982 invasion, out of 3000 villagers, 1000 only came back for the re-building of the village. Today after the Israeli withdrawal, 26 families moved to Israel, in numbers that equals to 112 persons. One month after the withdrawal, the village was still deserted. However, 12 elderly persons, who gave themselves up, came back to the village.\(^3\)\(^4\)\(^5\)

A week after the withdrawal, Chaouki Achkouti, another reporter of Al Massira Magazine, was in the region and drew some interesting conclusions about the future policy of the key players involved in the region, Lebanon, Syria and Israel. To sum it up, for Lebanon it’s an all win situation.\(^3\)\(^4\)\(^6\)

\(^3\)\(^4\) Hachem, op cit. pp. 8-9.
1. Whatever Israel says now or does or even explains to cover her shame from the hasty withdrawal, Lebanon is the winner and Israel is the big looser. For the first time in its history, Israel withdraws from an occupied Arab land with no previous direct settlement or agreement. Moreover, and for the first time, Israel applies an international decision adopted by the United Nations and neglected by it for a long period of time.

2. The Israeli withdrawal was a Lebanese internal success because it was accomplished peacefully and proved to the vanquisher that the Lebanese society was stronger and tighter than expected. Furthermore, the event demonstrated that the resistance was able to administer the region with no clashes and deliver it to the Lebanese authorities. Plus the event had put an end to the last Arab military battlefield against Israel.

3. For Israel, the political aspect of the withdrawal lied on the fact that Syria was out of the Lebanese game and that with the South free Syria will play the Golan card single handedly. The Syrian response to this new Israeli tactic was the same: the Lebanese-Syrian policy and paths will always be together as long as there is no Israeli consensus in the horizon.

4. Looking into the internal political life of Lebanon after the withdrawal, several unanswered questions come up: first, what role would Hezbollah as a resistance and a political party have in the internal political game as well as the external one? Second, which political argument would the Lebanese government if any military attack would occur? Third, what are the Lebanese authority’s economical, security and developmental plans for the southern region?²⁴⁷

To the Israelis the perspective was seen from a different angle. The Israeli authorities tried to explain the next phase of the political relations in the region and came up with

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²⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 7. (Unfortunately, today and after 3 years have passed from the Israeli withdrawal, the southern region still bleeds from its wounds especially the one caused by the Lebanese government which is caught between the multitudes of problems of the every day life and creating new opportunities for regions left behind, like the South. The withdrawal was a success for the Lebanese people and the resistance who never stopped fighting and never gave up on the region. However, after interviewing a number of Lebanese living in the southern region and in Beirut, from different political backgrounds, many considered the success of the 25th May 2000 a failure for the Lebanese government.)
these conclusions:

1. On the Syrian part, the Israeli representatives did not expect a restart of the peace negotiations with Syria, especially in the next period, because Syria was under strong internal pressure, which delayed the peace talks.

2. On the military level, the Israeli leaders expected a short calm period with Syria in Lebanon. Confrontations may occur over the borders; however, the situation is better than before because Hezbollah has no more excuses to fight Israel.

3. As for President Hafez El Assad, the Israeli officials predicted that he would adopt a cautious policy toward Israel.

4. The Israeli officials thought that the Syrians might play a last card on the Lebanese front by encouraging individual harassments against the Israeli army patrolling on the northern Israeli border to keep the Lebanese front open.

5. Israel would surely strike back at Lebanon or Syria if any attack would occur; however, the reinvasion of South Lebanon was and still is out of the question.

6. On the security level, Israel will keep an open eye for any eventual border clashes because it believes that its northern border is still not secure. For this purpose, Israel adopted a new “deterrent” security policy and created a “goal-strike-scale” to be used in case of an Israeli military intervention.

7. Israel expected early internal Lebanese clashes in the southern region, especially after Hezbollah took all the merit for making Israel withdraw like it did and for being demographically superior to the other ethnics, which may bother the minorities of the southern region.\footnote{Ibid, p. 7.}

On the Syrian side the political atmosphere concerning the peace talks with Israel, was divided into two major thoughts:

1. A negative view of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which perceived what, was happening in Lebanon as an opportunity for the Barak government to arrive at a peace agreement with Lebanon only because the Israeli government under its
current constitution could not withdraw to the 4th of June borders, which include the Tabaraya Lake. Moreover, the partisans of this view, "Lebanon first" believed that this new Israeli strategy would have the support and the encouragement of the United States, in order to exercise more pressure over Syria forcing it to make more concessions in the peace talks.

2. A positive view of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which set eyes on a three partite agreement, which would include Lebanon, Syria and Israel, backed by the fruitful diplomacy of the United States. Moreover, the partisans of this view detect an internal Syrian-Baathist change in the handling of its politics, which has been the same for over 15 years.

From all of the scenarios imagined by the parties involved in the outcome of the Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon, only one was adopted:

1. The Lebanese government did not send its army to fully control the region and left it under the control of the local police and the parties of Hezbollah and Amal.
2. Syria and Iran continued in their encouragements of the resistance’s military operations against Israeli military outposts and patrols.
3. The Israeli retaliations were directed for the first time against Syria.
4. The Arab-Israeli peace talks were stopped by a series of military operations conducted by Hezbollah and the Palestinian Jihad.
5. The United Nations remained inactive in the southern region.\textsuperscript{349}

\textbf{Hezbollah: the New Power in the Region:}

After the 2000 elections and Hezbollah winning 12 seats in the parliament, many questions were asked about the future of the resistance and its coming relations with the other Lebanese political parties and the question of demilitarizing the party.

\textsuperscript{349} Ibid, p. 7.
In Musawi’s opinion, the involvement of Lebanon in the regional conflict raises an important question: what role should Lebanon have in this conflict? In Hezbollah’s opinion, as long as there is a strong resistance capable of creating a balance of fear and panic with Israel, Lebanon will be stronger, or else Israel would attack Lebanon daily. Hezbollah is the buffer force for the Lebanese safety. But the resistance has no control over the southern region. It cooperates with the Lebanese authorities there and provides them with backup. Therefore, the South is under the direct control of the Lebanese institutions and is militarily supervised by the Lebanese Army, while Hezbollah works along with the Lebanese authorities in the region.

As for the internal political life, Hezbollah sees that the Lebanese political life is decayed and is practiced by a small group of politicians who hold the reins of the political power and decisions. On the other hand, the Parliament is not exercising normally its duties by forming and supervising the government. Hezbollah as a party forming the government has another battle to win internally in order to achieve a political balance and to fight corruption. On the other hand, the party sees the situation in the South as economically bad because the state has not put into operation the plans for the purpose of the citizens, but for the purpose of some politicians to win votes at the Parliamentary elections.350

In one of his articles written right after the elections, Chaouki Achkouti quoted an Israeli writer from the Washington Post, who seemed impressed by the Hezbollah phenomenon and its victory both in its military campaign against Israel and in its political campaign in the Lebanese elections: “This is the first time Israel looses a psychological war”. The newspaper also explains the winning tactics used by the resistance in its war against Israel: Hezbollah has managed in the end to create fear and panic in the hearts of the Israeli people through a series of successful military operations. One side explains while the other attacks: Israel explains to its people that the purpose of the withdrawal was to put an end to the Israeli suffering and human loss, Hezbollah takes another stand by declaring that Israel had no other choice but to run away from the southern region after it

350 Nawaf Musawi, personal interview, tape 1, side 1.
was defeated in a number of military operations in the last two years of the occupation.\textsuperscript{351}

The resistance was the only reason behind the Israeli failure and takes all the credits because it won a non-equilibrated battle against a worthy opponent much stronger and militarily more equipped than Hezbollah. The tactic was to change the war from a military battlefield into a psychological and moral one. The psychological part of the war was executed by using video cameras to record the military operations against South Lebanese Army men, like Akel Hachem. These videos were then televised on local broadcasting stations and could be seen by Antoine Lahd’s militia as well as by the neighboring Israelis. This caused more panic and trauma to the Israeli society which put a lot of pressure on the Israeli governments along the years. Moreover, the militiamen of the SLA did not feel safe anymore even in their own homes. The results were damaging to the Israeli figure and to the moral of both the Israeli Defense Force and the South Lebanese Army.\textsuperscript{352}

A question must be asked: why did Hezbollah use these tactics? First the geo-strategically grounds on which Hezbollah was operating against Israel helped because the surface of the “security zone” was 10% of the entire Lebanese grounds and narrow, reaching 10 km\textsuperscript{2} from northern Israel to the border strip, enabling the resistance to strike SLA positions in the South or Israel directly. Second, the southern region populated by Christians and Muslims dealing with the Israeli occupation in their every day life was a reliable source for cooperation between the resistance and its southern supporters. Third, part of the people in the region believed in the resistance and helped it. Therefore, the “gangster wars” used by Hezbollah was the most appropriate for this populated region enabling the resistance to strike Israel in an indirect way and avoiding a direct military


\textsuperscript{352} In 1999, the deputies in parliament of Hezbollah suggested to the Lebanese government a law-plan to encourage SLA members to leave their military positions and surrender to the Lebanese authorities. The law stated that the government will not press charges against any SLA member who will surrender to the Lebanese military forces. Unfortunately, the law was never established, but had a deep effect on the South Lebanese Army because a large number of SLA soldiers ran from the South and surrendered to the Lebanese army or to Hezbollah, while others collaborated with the Lebanese secret services. Even though the law was never put in action, it did cause damage to the South Lebanese Army, who since that moment started to fall apart. Hussein Ayoub, \textit{Lahd’s Militia}, (30/09/2003). [Internet site: www.moqawama.org]
war with an enemy much superior, but still inflicting much harm in the IDF and the SLA’s moral.\textsuperscript{353}

On the other hand, Hezbollah managed to run the Israeli withdrawal peacefully and it also managed to control its victory in the South with no violence between parties and with no vengeance.

Mr. Musawi considered what happened in the year 2000 as an unexpected and different event in comparison with the other times Israel withdrew and left behind a battlefield. When the Second World War ended and the French government decided to punish those who collaborated with the Germans, woman were given a forced hair cut as a sign of collaboration while men were sentenced to the death penalty. This violence and vengeance scenes were not seen in the South where collaborators were caught by the party and handed over to the Lebanese authorities. Hezbollah as a resistance acted the way it did because its men were educated to respect every Lebanese, no matter what his political or ethnical background is and considers the invader as its only enemy. This behavior was subjected to many praises from the Lebanese Maronite Cardinal and from the Pope himself.\textsuperscript{354}

What does the political future hold to Hezbollah? The answer comes from its leaders, who explain that the party has been during the 90s in a transition period changing from a military party into a socio-political party. Today Hezbollah still is a military party and will remain so until Israel stops knocking Lebanon’s international borders. As for being a socio-political party, Hezbollah realizes that it represents a vast Shiite majority in the parliament, in the southern region and in Beirut. Therefore, the military dismantle of the party is not an issue today and not even tomorrow, at least until the Shebaa farms are independent and Israel releases all the Lebanese, Palestinian and Arab hostages and detainees. Until all of these issues are not set and completed, the resistance will keep on

\textsuperscript{353} George Masri, “Hezbollah: From the Withdrawal till After Assad’s Death” \textit{Al Raiy Al Aam}, 23 June 2000, from the reports of the Center for Studies & Documentation, no. 402721.

\textsuperscript{354} Nawaf Musawi personal interview, tape 1, side 1.
doing whatever is necessary for the safety and the welfare of Lebanon.\textsuperscript{355}

As for the position of the government, the Prime Minister Salim El Hoss explained in one of the interviews he made after the Israeli withdrawal that the government looks with an “appreciative eye” at the resistance and “respects it very much”. And he added:

“The resistance has a wise, intelligent and responsible leadership therefore; we look forward to more cooperation and binding between the resistance and the government. We were and we still are supporting the actions taken by the resistance and we are making sure that our relations will always be based upon cooperation and understanding”. Finally, he said “the resistance is Hezbollah. And Hezbollah is a political party that has a clear social and political objective, we hope it will keep and move on in the internal democratically Lebanese political life by developing its political agenda”.\textsuperscript{356}

**The Current Situation of the South and the Former SLA Soldiers:**

To Edmond Rizk the situation lived by the South today is the consequence of a history of abandonment by the state. Rizk considers the former SLA members who surrendered to the Lebanese authorities or returned to Lebanon as heroes because they stayed in the region and faced an enemy that had put a lot of pressure on them. These citizens had no other choice but to live with the ‘forced reality’ as he puts it. They were forced to enroll in the South Lebanese Army as well as forced to take up arms. From the year 1990 till the end of the occupation there were several attempts from Rizk, who was a deputy at that time, and other politicians from the southern region to get the Lebanese Army involved in the South, at least in the Jezzin area, to take the SLA’s place. Unfortunately, the plan failed because a political decision was needed. When General Emile Lahoud was at the

\textsuperscript{355} Ibid, pp. 6-7.
head of the Lebanese Army, Rizk again asked the army to take control of Jezzin, but the request was turned down. According to Rizk, in 1996, Antoine Lahd also called the Lebanese government to take control over Jezzin, but the state did not respond because it wanted to leave the region in its status quo and under the Israeli control till the resolution 425 would be applied fully.\footnote{Edmond Rizk, personal interview, tape 2, side 1.}

The southern society is divided between a Shiite majority and a Maronite minority. Three years after the withdrawal, the Christians of the region still feel oppressed, battered and left out by the government. There hopes rose when the President Emile Lahoud came to greet them after the withdrawal. Today, the region still suffers from the lack of development projects that the President promised.

Concerning the Christian fear and worries in the region, Musawi said that there are many reasons behind these feelings. One of these reasons is the lack of Christian representation in the South, which makes the Christians feel left out. The second reason is because the region is still open to the Israeli threats of attack on the Lebanese homes and farms. Moreover, the Middle Eastern region as a whole is not stable. Another reason for this fear is because the people of the region were not brought back to the Lebanese society. These persons lived for 22 years under the Israeli direct control, and they saw in Antoine Lahd their protector. The political parties did not do anything to change their views or to redirect them towards the Lebanese society and asks them today to see Antoine Lahd as a collaborator and a traitor.

Hezbollah and the Muslim parties in the region cannot bring the Christian community back because of the difference in 'political traditions’, therefore the only one capable of gathering the southern Christian community would be the political parties of the same sect. Unfortunately, these Christian political parties did not exist at that time in the region or did not have a supporting base in the southern community or even that the population did not trust enough these political parties. Hezbollah as a resistance did whatever was possible to make the others in the region feel that it has overcome the invasion. However,
it should have been the object of the Christian parties to make their civilians more at ease with the new situation lived by the South.\textsuperscript{358}

Another important reason behind the feeling of fear is the obvious absence of the Lebanese government from the region. Musawi said that there are two ideas in the Lebanese political life: the first asks that the resistance should stop its activity because there is no more need for it in the present. While the second considers that the resistance still has its effect against the Israeli threats. In Musawi’s view, the first opinion, which considers the split of the Lebanese-Syrian relations as an option, is built on a wrong theory if we look at the situation of the region today. Hezbollah thinks that the geopolitical location of Lebanon makes it automatically involved in the region’s conflicts. Therefore, Lebanon cannot be placed outside the Syrian and Palestinian equation.\textsuperscript{359}

To explain more about the situation on the ground, an article was written by Al Massira Magazine, referring to the conditions of the Christian community and its worries in the South. The article states a number of views by some Kleiaa members who were not in the SLA:

\begin{quote}
\textit{The government is accusing us of betrayal, they arrested us, they fired us from our jobs, they marked our judicial records, we are Lebanese, we worked in Israel and not for Israel against our country, Israel was in front of us and the sea was behind us, while the state was missing ... What should we have done? Die from hunger? Throw ourselves in the sea? The government has left us and now we have to pay twice. We live in fear. We want the state to come to us and to protect us, not the state who leaves us and then comes to punish us”}\textsuperscript{360}
\end{quote}

Unfortunately, the economical situation of the region is a catastrophe for all southerners,

\textsuperscript{358} Nawaf Musawi, personal interview, tape 1, side 1.
\textsuperscript{359} Nawaf Musawi, personal interview, tape 1, side 2.
\textsuperscript{360} Nawal Nasser, “Israel has Invaded Them and the State is Punishing Them”, \textit{Al Massira}, Issue No. 935, (Monday 6 October 2003), p 15.
Christians and Muslims. The majority of former SLA soldiers who have served their time in prison and who now are free are unemployed. Moreover, it is very difficult for them to find a job now that their judicial records are marked with their sentence and based upon the decree released by the military tribunal; in case of a conviction a former SLA soldier is released from his duty in the public sector.

Issam Barakat, from Ain Ibel, worked in Israel as a cab driver from 1976 till 1986 and then worked for the Lebanese institution of tobacco from 1987 till the withdrawal. He was sentenced to one year in prison for cooperating with Israel and has lost his job at the institution. He is 55 years old, unemployed and is seeking for work or a visa to any country that would offer him a job.\textsuperscript{361}

The priest from Kleiaa defines the situation of the villagers in the region to the reporter and says:

\textit{"The government came back to Kleiaa ... to collect taxes; however, the economic situation is drastic. There are no job opportunities and the farmers are not selling their crops. We paid the price twice: the first was for 25 years under the Israeli occupation and the second for three years and counting under the government's charges of betrayal".}\textsuperscript{362}

In my field trip to the southern region on the summer of 2003, I have interviewed three former SLA members from the Druze, Maronite and Shiite sects. All three enrolled in the militia under pressure from Lahd's militia and seeking work. They were all under 20 years of age and underwent military training in Israel for several months. Their position in the South Lebanese Army was not very important: one of them was a mechanic and the other two were infantry soldiers. Each had a story to tell and an opinion of the current southern situation. The Druze former member was the only one; however, who said that he would do it again because the economic situation in the South was so hard to take that

\textsuperscript{361} Ibid, p 16.
\textsuperscript{362} Ibid, pp. 14-16.
one would forget who the enemy is. His goal was to enter the SLA for three years, then cash his compensation and go to work in Israel because there the salary was much higher than in the SLA. With the money he made, he married and opened a shop in Hasbaya. He was sentenced to two years in prison, but he was not sorry to have worked for and in Israel because today his financial situation was not better and the region is suffering a lot. He tried to enroll in the Lebanese Army, but he was not accepted because the sectarian balance between Muslims and Christians: considered a minority, he as a Druze had to have two Maronites with him in the army to be accepted.

The Shiite former SLA member had to enroll to stop the pressures of the militia on his father who is a cab driver. He told me that every time his father used to cross the 'security belt' at Jezzin he had to bribe officers or soldiers to let him pass. They are poor so the only solution he had was to drop out of school and enroll in the SLA.

The Maronite former SLA member also dropped out of school because he needed the money to support the rest of his family and later his own. Today all three are unemployed and seek work. They are trying to get a visa in any European or North or South American country where they could find work. Unfortunately for these teenagers, they have already spent maybe half their lives working for the wrong government and then paying the price. They still hope that they will find a better future in some foreign country that will accept them, so I wished them good luck.

As for the problem of the Lebanese seeking refuge in Israel, it did not begin at the end of the year 2002, but with their arrival to the northern Israeli border. On the eve of the withdrawal 6500 Lebanese left for Israel. The convoy of cars was 15 km long. The state of Israel immediately put a budget for the ones considered as loyal and trustworthy subordinates. It tried to assimilate all the new Lebanese in the 'Shicom', which is the Israeli Minister for Social Affairs. The state registered their names, their profession and gave them numbers. Their cars were parked in a large parking area and they were taken by buses (15 buses) to the nearest hotels in the cities of Naharia, Natania, Tabaraya, Kiriat Chmouna and special compounds built specially for them. A family of four
members lived in a single room. Instead of giving the budget acquired to the Lebanese, the government paid with it the hotels and compounds that sheltered them.\footnote{Amal Chehade, “SLA Members Threaten Israel with the Use of Violence”, \textit{Al Hayat - Al Wasat Supplement}, Issue No. 572, (13 January 2003), pp. 4-6. Nawal Nasser, “Israel has Invaded Them and the State is Punishing Them”, \textit{Al Massira}, Issue No. 935, (Monday 6 October 2003), p 14.}

Some Lebanese could not cope with their new situation and decided to come back to Lebanon. For these, being in prison, but in your own country is by far much better than being in Israel. Others found the situation too dangerous for them to go back to Lebanon and did not like their position in Israel either; therefore they decided to leave for another country. From its part, the Israeli government gave each member a social medical card and $200 for basic shopping needs. For some time, the Lebanese refugees, as the Israeli government called them, were paid between $650 and 800 per month, depending on their social status. Taking into account that the minimum salary paid in Israel is $750, the $650 or even the $800 would not be enough to buy food.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 4-6. Ibid, p 14.}

"It was good till it lasted", said one of the former SLA soldiers. Two years after the withdrawal, the Israeli government decided to stop financially supporting the Lebanese, in a step encouraging those who remained and whom Israel did not need, to return back to their country. By that time, the Israeli government had already placed them in houses and given them $5000 for furniture and $75 for child support. Trying to assimilate the new comers into the Israeli society, the government opened new schools to teach the Lebanese children Hebrew along with the Arabic language. Finally, the government started encouraging the Lebanese families to go back to Lebanon, by cutting down their financial support to the quarter of the basic sum given and by paying them $12000 as starters (the number increased with time and was considered a compensation for their years of duty spent in the South Lebanese Army). For the ones whom Israel did not allow to leave, it provided them with every social and economical need they asked for.\footnote{Ibid, pp. 4-6. Ibid, p 14.}

From the 6500 Lebanese seeking refuge in Israel in the year 2000, only 2350 remained in Israel in 2003. However, their economic situation worsened because the Knesset took the
decision to treat the remaining Lebanese as Israeli citizens and stopped supporting them financially by not paying for their shelter. Some of the Lebanese manifested by camping in front of the Israeli government’s headquarters and presented a list of demands. One of these protestors was Marlene, who explained their situation:

"We simply ask for a roof over our heads and a monthly salary, just like the other Lebanese. Israel took from us, along the long years of its invasion, what it wanted and what it needed. Today because Israel does not need us anymore, she throws us in the street. Israel already gave to 200 Lebanese houses, it used the differentiation techniques among us and caused a lot misunderstandings. We understand that the ones who live now in their own home were collaborating with the Israeli secret service, but we also jeopardized our future and the future of our families and Israel should help us too".  

Amal Chehade, Al Hayat reporter in Israel has also interviewed Abdallah, a former officer in the SLA, who was among the protestors and who was, like Marlene, one of the most angry ones because he felt Israel had betrayed him. He said:

"The only choice we have now is to keep on protesting. What we are getting as results today is only a drop from a river and this drop will not prevent us from being thirsty. If we will not get what we need and what we ask for by protesting in front of Sharon’s office, we will surely become outlaws. In the end, I believe that this is what Israel wants, it wants to take us and throw us in prison to get ride of us. Our children will grow and soon they will have their own needs and if we will not be able to give them at least their basic needs, then what kind of parents are we?

The reality is bitter and hard to take, being part of a stealing mob is better

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than dying of hunger. This is what we will be if the Israeli government will not support us.” 367

By the end of the day, the Israeli military forces had beaten some of the Lebanese protestors and imprisoned others.

Reports from Assafir newspaper show that in the past months, the Israeli government has expressed its desire to give 700 Lebanese the Israeli nationality, also mentioning that 30 high ranking officers joined the Israeli Defense Minister as Israeli military personnel. 368 The same report states that during these three years 4000 Lebanese came back to Lebanon, 500 traveled to Africa, Australia and Europe, while some of the ones who remained in Israel would like to come back to Lebanon after cashing in on their compensation. 369

The new decision taken by the Israeli government worried the Lebanese clergy officials, who called the former SLA soldiers in Israel to come back. The Bishop of Tyr, Maroun Sader said that he is against the idea of giving the Lebanese in Israel the Jewish nationality. Moreover, the Mufty of Tyr called upon the Lebanese not to accept the Jewish nationality because it would be considered as a criminal act. The religious officials considered the Israeli act as a very serious and dangerous matter. In case the Lebanese would accept it that would scatter Lebanese citizens around the world and divide them between the ones living abroad, who can come back to their mother country and the ones who can never return. 370

367 Chehade, op cit, pp. 4-6.
368 The Israeli government took the 30 high rank officers under its protection and is currently paying their electricity, phone and water bills, in addition to their rent, while the other Lebanese were assimilated by the ‘Shicom Minister’ and were ranked as unemployed.
369 The same source states that the Israeli government is paying $ 40000 for each Lebanese family who wants to leave and a compensation of three months of the each year of service in the former SLA. The sources from Al Nakoura check point numbered the returnees till August 2003 at 2350 persons, divided as follows: 960 men, 755 women and 1320 children. 800 of these men were trialed and served in prison and are now free.
370 Hussein Saad, The Escapees to Israel Between the Nationality and the Return, (18/08/2003). [Internet site: www.assafir.com]
It is true that Israel is ready to give its nationality to the Lebanese citizens who may never return to Lebanon, but another truth must be told here, the one related to the kind of treatment the Lebanese were dealing with before returning home. The story I chose to tell is about the cook of the Marjayoun military post, who fled when Israel retrieved. He was interviewed by Assafir newspaper, last October when he came back from Israel. In the interview, he explains the treatment Israel still gives to its former Lebanese allies:

“The civilians were very nice to us, they knew that we were from the SLA so they brought blankets and used clothes. However, Israelis have no compassion. Today, most of the Lebanese are more interested with what is happening with the trials in Beirut and how the judicial authorities lessened the sentences. When the opportunity presented itself and the Israeli government increased the compensations to get rid of us, I thought that being sentenced and imprisoned in my own country was better than being free in Israel, so I came back.”\(^{371}\)

The cook enrolled in the former South Lebanese Army in 1988 in order not to be thrown out of the region. He did not have anywhere else to go and could not find a job. He studied hotel management and when he enrolled he was asked to cook at the Marjayoun military post, for the sum of $400 a month:

“I don’t know what was happening in the army; I did not have any military training and did not want to either. [...] When the withdrawal started nobody informed me, the whole situation frightened me and I was afraid from people’s reaction against me for being a member in the SLA. So I went home packed my things, took my wife and child and went to the border. We stood at the border all night till the bus arrived at 7 am and took us to what they called ‘hotels’, but in reality they were compounds,

The cook continued his story by describing the way Israel treated the former SLA high ranked officers with much more respect than the others. "At least they got to sleep in suitable homes", he says. Nobody could protest against the Israeli decisions, even the food was distributed disproportionately. The cook got his family into a Jewish school to learn the Jewish language because "if we didn't then the government would not pay us the sum of 3200 shekels per month". As for visits, the cook described the Israeli social atmosphere as being closer to the European traditions and way of living than to ours: "during the three years and four months I spent in Israel, no neighbor came to knock on my door or even to invite me to a cup of coffee". As for the Lebanese, they were not much more of a friend or help either. Each village had its citizens gathered around each other, like a clan, no one was helping the other, it was as if they were strangers. As for the job offers, the 'big positions' as he puts it, were given to Israel's most loyal and close friends:

"The jobs were offered to the high ranked officers of the former SLA or to the ones who worked with the Israeli secret service. Each one of these men has his own house and car and the Israelis treat him and his family very well. Therefore, it is unlikely that Israel will let them leave. Even if they want to, which they don't, the Israeli government holds their records and their secrets and by letting them come back more secrets can be revealed of the atrocities committed by those who worked for Israel in the 22 years of its occupation of South Lebanon."  

In the end, the Israeli authorities paid the cook a compensation of $ 31000 taking into account the number of years served in the SLA and his rank and gave him $ 2500 for each child. He collected his money and decided to come back to his country.

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The Situation of Former Khiyam Prisoners in Numbers:

Approximately one month after the withdrawal, Assafir newspaper published a very interesting study made by the Ministry of Social Affairs on 5232 former Khiyam prisoners. The study gives a realistic idea of their situation in the prison in comparison with their situation in the society after their release.\(^{375}\)

- From 5232 prisoners, 152 died in prison and 32 were found lost. This number can also be divided by gender, from it 4779 were males and 253 were females. Today, Lebanon still has 16 prisoners in Israel.

- The first Lebanese prisoner taken by Israel was in 1969 followed by a second wave of prisoners in 1975. The year 1982 marks the largest number of captivities: 1394 prisoners (or 26% of the entire total).

- The same report shows a raise in the numbers of prisoners captured between the years of 1982 and 1986 from 1% to 75%. While between the years 1987 and 2000 the numbers decrease drastically in comparison with the first period from 13% in the period between 1987 and 1992 to 10% in the period between 1993 and 2000.

- As for the age of the prisoners at their arrest, it varied accordingly: 8.5% were less than 18 years old, 68.5% were between the ages of 19 and 30, 22% varied between the ages of 31 to 60 and 4% were more than 61 years of age. (See table no. 1).

- The numbers also show that most of the prisoners from both sexes were married: 4276 married men and 135 married women.\(^{376}\)

- Most of the men (1467) fighting with the resistance along the years and imprisoned by Israel were from the southern city of Tyr. The others came from Marjayoun (961), Saida (836) and Nabatieh (684).

- As for the side that conducted the operations of capturing prisoners, 61% of the operations were made by Israel, 24% were done by the South Lebanese Army and

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\(^{374}\) Ibid, p. 8.

\(^{375}\) Abeer Jaber, “Study Made by the Minister of Social Affairs on the Lebanese Detainees”, Assafir, Issue No. 8944, (Saturday 7 July 2003), p. 8.
15% were executed by both in common operations.

- The detention period for the prisoners also varied: 41.1% of the detainees were kept for less than a year, 39.4% were kept for exactly a year, and 10.4% were kept from 2 to 3 years, 99 prisoners stayed in Khiyam for 7 to 10 years and 82 prisoners for 10 to 22 years. While 68.5% of the prisoners in Khiyam were between the ages of 18 and 30 years old, 22% were between the ages of 30 and 60 years. When looking closely at the numbers, we can conclude that more than 500 detainees were already at an elderly age when they were released. (See table no. 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE AND PERIOD OF DETENTION</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.50%</td>
<td>68.50%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less than 18 years old</td>
<td>18-30 years old</td>
<td>30-60 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>above 61 years old</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Detention period            | 41.10%     | less than a year |
| 39.90%                      | one year   |
| 10.40%                      | 2 to 3 years |
| 1.80%                       | 7 to 10 years |
| 1.60%                       | 10 to 22 years |

Table 1

- According to the same study, 50% of the detainees today have an educational level that is less than the brevet, while the other 50% is divided in three: one third of them have only the brevet, 4% technical school and 5% university level. Even though the percentages of educational levels are high, the study gave other percentages for the working and unemployed former detainees: 72.9% of the former detainees are working today, while 10.2% are unemployed and 10.1%

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376 There were 491 single males and 102 females; 43 divorced males and 9 females, finally the widowed were 16 males and 8 females.
work part time jobs.

- Unfortunately, only 26.4% of the detainees were paid their compensations by the government. The other 73.2% did not receive any financial help.\textsuperscript{377} (See table 2 for more information).

To sum up, the study has presented a bitter reality lived by a part of the Lebanese society and an important part it is because these men and women have devoted their lives for this nation in resisting, unlike others that collaborated, an enemy that was far more powerful than they were and they survived for the majority of them. The study also showed the needs of these former detainees on a scale from 1 to 7: medical care, education facilities, psychologist, work, home, loans and finally the basic needs of food, cloths and transportation facilities. Moreover, the study proposes to the government the implementation of a card for each former detainee and his family to be able to collect compensations and other supports from the Minister of Social Affairs. Furthermore, the study encourages the Minister of Social Affairs to create a committee that will discuss and try to solve the former detainees’ problems. This committee should include the membership of representatives of the state, the private sector, international organizations and former detainees. One still hopes that the government will take into consideration this study.\textsuperscript{378}

\textsuperscript{377} Ibid, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid, p. 8.
### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Deceased</th>
<th>SUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>422</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2414</td>
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<td>25-30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>43</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>152</td>
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| Under 18| 4      | 14      | 1        |         | 19       |      |
| 18-24   | 49     | 59      | 3        |         | 111      |      |
| 25-30   | 36     | 19      | 1        | 2       | 58       |      |
| 31-40   | 7      | 27      | 2        |         | 36       |      |
| 41-50   | 6      | 10      | 2        |         | 18       |      |
| 51-60   | 4      | 2       | 3        |         | 9        |      |
| Above 61| 2      | 1       |          |         | 3        |      |
| TOTAL   | 102    | 135     | 9        | 8       | 254      |      |

**Judicial Rulings for the Former South Lebanese Army Prisoners:**

Soon after the Israeli withdrawal, the 1750 former SLA detainees held by the Lebanese Army ended up to be a financial burden on the Lebanese government, especially after the authorities realized that there were not enough prison cells or army compounds to place this number of detainees. For a period of two to three weeks, the detainees were placed in the South and Mount Lebanon, but with no roof over their heads. During the first week of June, the army started building compounds to protect them from the summer heat and the winter rain and cold. According to religious sources, which are in contact with Lebanese in Israel, this number would increase before the end of the year 2000 because around 650
former SLA members, out of 6500, were expected to come back to Lebanon.\footnote{Fares Khachane, “Compounds to Shelter 1750 former SLA Detainees”, \textit{Assafir}, Issue No. 8615, (Saturday 3 June 2000), p. 8.}

Official Lebanese statistics show that on the eve of the withdrawal the South Lebanese Army was comprised of 3943 men distributed between military, army secret service and public administration. According to the same source, this number was divided as follows: 2440 Shiite, 779 Christian, 456 Sunnite and 267 Druze. While the Israeli statistics, published in Haaretz, show that 78\% of the 6500 Lebanese in Israel are Christians, which meant that the majority of the ex-SLA prisoners detained by the Lebanese authorities were Muslims.

The first wave of detainees was interrogated by the army secret services and put on trial by the Military Court according to articles 273 and 278 from the Penal Code that sentenced forced labor from 5 to 15 years. The Court admitted to bail 40 detainees for several non-military and non-security actions related to old age and to civil work like entering Israel.\footnote{An official report divided the 40 released detainees as follows: 8 of them were released for civil reasons because they entered Israel in the purpose of work only. 10 females, aged between 22 and 50 years old, were released for working in the administrative field like secretary or searching the women who entered Israel to work. 18 persons were released for old age, between 63 and 73 years old and finally 8 persons were released because of heart or pulmonary problems. \textit{Ibid}, p. 8.} It is fair to say that the Military Court was more than fair with the persons whose records showed that they had nothing to do with the South Lebanese Army or that the duration mentioned by the law, which is 10 years, had already passed, therefore they were released.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, p. 8.}

Since the beginning of the military trials, more than half of the detainees were judged by the Military Court. I have studied 19 groups comprising several detainees, each one having its own case to study. The period I have chosen to study is between the years 2000 and 2001. From the 122 detainees I have read about their trials and sentences, 38 cases (31.1\% of the detainees) were between the ages of 10 and 18, 62 cases (50.8\% of the detainees) between 19 and 29 years old, 14 cases (11.4\% of the detainees) between 30 and 39 years, 6 cases (4.9\% of the detainees) were between the ages of 40 and 49, and 2
cases (1.6% of the detainees) were above 55 years of age. (See figure no. 1).

As for their residence, most of the detainees were from different southern villages: 10 detainees were from Aita Al Shaab; 9 from Kleia, 8 from each of Aitaroun, Kafar Kila and Khiyam; 7 from Bint Jbeil, 6 from each of Hasbaya, Nakoura, Meis El Jabal and Houla. 4 prisoners were from each of Marjayoun, Kafar Shouba, Yanoun and Deir Mimes. 3 detainees were from each of Kawkaba, Dibbel, Rmeich, Rihan, Ain Jaraf, Ibel El Saki Shwaya and Tyr. 2 from each of Blida, Beit Lif, Shebba, Rachaya, Ramieh and Tair Harfa. Others came from different villages like Kounin, Adeissi, Blat, Kontara, Saida, Kafar Shouba, Ainata and Hibbarieh. Assafir mentioned some of the detainees without giving their ages or places of birth.\textsuperscript{382}

![Age Percentage](image)

**Figure 1. Age Percentage Distribution of former SLA prisoners.**
*(Assafir, Saturday 3 June 2000)*

As for the sentences given by the Lebanese Military Court, they were, and still are, in general fair in comparison to the degree of collaboration with Israel or to the fact that the person visited Israel once or several times. The sentences varied according to the guilt from three weeks in prison to the death penalty.

\textsuperscript{382} The numbers were found in Assafir from several dates ranged between July 2000 and May 2001.
From the 122 sentences given between July 2000 and May 2001, there is one death sentence and two life sentences both in absentia. The maximum prison sentences ranged from 7 to 15 years with forced labor and in some cases the expulsion of the prisoner from the region and/or from his own village for a number of years.\[383\]

The lighter sentences were given mostly for the low rank soldiers in the South Lebanese Army, who were, for the majority, military trained in Israel and given a military post in the front lines of the battlefield. The sentences ranged between one year to 5 years with forced labor and a fine ranging from 400,000 to 1,000,000 Lebanese liras.

The other prison terms for less than a year were given to those who worked in Israel or who visited Israel. These sentences were also fined between 400,000 Lebanese liras and 1,000,000 liras. Women and children coming back to Lebanon through the Nakoura border were immediately released by the Lebanese authorities and were only fined to pay the amount of 400,000 Lebanese liras.\[384\]

On the other hand, some of the sentences were given to release detainees or to cease all judicial pursuits because first the evidence presented was not sufficient and second the penalty duration of 10 years had already passed.\[385\]

To translate these verdicts in numbers and percentages, we will divide the terms given by the military court in periods: the first period goes from three weeks to one year in prison, the second from one year and a half to 6 years with forced labor, the third from 7 to 15 years with forced labor, which is the maximum imprisoned penalty the fourth period will consider life in prison and the death penalty together and finally the rest will be the percentage of the prisoners who were charged by the court then released. From a total of 122 sentences 55 rulings (or 45%) were given three weeks to one year, 28 rulings (or 22.9%) were given a year and a half to 6 years in prison with forced labor, 10 rulings (or 8.1%) were given 7 to 15 years with forced labor, 3 rulings (or 2.4%) were given in

absentia to both life imprisonment and the death penalty, while 26 rulings (or 21.3%) were given for immediate release or to stop legal actions against the prisoners for lack of evidence or because the penalty time mentioned by the law, which is 10 years, had already passed.

![Detention Percentage](image)

**Figure 2.** Military Court rulings percentage of distribution according to prison sentences. (*Assafir*, Saturday 3 June 2000).

Most of the sentences were appealed and the rulings for the majority of cases lessened. Which means that the judicial system applied was fair and which also means that, the majority if not all of the detainees did not commit major crimes like the ones done by those who will never come back to Lebanon to prevent life imprisonment or the death penalty.\(^{386}\) (See figure 2).

Musawi expressed Hezbollah’s opinion on the trials concerning the former SLA members. He said that the party has asked several times not to politicize the decisions taken by the Military Court of Justice. Unfortunately that was not the case with the decisions given to the former SLA members, who were sentenced less than expected and deserved. Hezbollah has kept silent on the sentences because it cares about the unity of

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the Lebanese society, but this does not mean that the sentences were fair to the former SLA members, who should have been put under therapy to make sure that the state has them under control and that in the future they will not collaborate with the enemy again.\textsuperscript{387}

Edmond Rizk, on the other hand, considered that the decisions taken by the Military Court to deprive former SLA members of their civil rights as unfair especially to the southerners who need all the help they can get to keep living in a region left out by the government. Mr. Rizk ended our interview by giving the example of the French men who fought with the German army in the Alsace and Lauraine, in the Second World War. After the war ended De Gaulle decided not to judge those men because they were forced to fight and had no other choice. Finally, under the International Law, Rizk argues, Lebanon should be considered a country under an invasion then an occupation and a ‘forced reality’. Therefore the people to be trialed should have been the leaders of the Arab world, who brought war upon us along with the Lebanese government, who is responsible for the current southern situation.\textsuperscript{388}

Judicial sentences may also be taken by other countries that shelter former SLA members. The Lebanese authorities felt relieved when the debate over the political refugees was opened in Sweden earlier this year. This means that the Swedish authorities will be looking in the cases of the political refugees and might judge them. Some of these political refugees are former SLA high ranking officers, who committed several war crimes and atrocities toward the southern Lebanese. The debate was tackled around two main ideas: the first one was concerned with the reputation of Sweden in accepting to safe haven war criminals; while the second idea debated the possibility of bringing these political refugees to court to judge them or to send them back to their country to be trialed there. A committee was formed headed by Hans Olfrey Bro, who is concerned by the fact that it will be very hard to get evidence against the former SLA soldiers for the simple reason that Israel would not cooperate with the committee or any other

\textsuperscript{387} Nawaf Musawi, personal interview, tape 1, side 2.
\textsuperscript{388} Edmond Rizk, personal interview, tape 2, side 2.
organization seeking justice and punishment for those who worked with Israel and committed crimes for it. According to him there are 150 persons in Sweden from Lebanese origins and former SLA members. Mr. Bro believes that most of these political refugees have committed different crimes ranging from psychological and physical torture to murder and kidnapping. He also added that each case has to fulfill judicial criteria to be able to be sent to court. Unfortunately, most of the 150 cases do not fulfill these criteria, so the only solution would be to deliver them to the authorities of their country, under one condition, which is indicated by the Swedish law of extradition, that they would not be sentenced with the death penalty.\(^{389}\)

Analysts see in the effort made by the Swedish authorities in getting rid of the war criminals an attempt to protect the security of its territory economically and financially from a group of individuals who have used their military techniques and criminal activities in Sweden and other northern European countries to get what they wanted and needed. Much hope is raised by the Lebanese authorities for the extradition of the former SLA war criminals with Sweden.\(^{390}\)

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\(^{390}\) Ibid, p. 20.
Conclusion

Israel's surrogate, Israel's proxy, Israel's puppet. This is how the South Lebanese Army has been labeled, and this explains Israel's continued insistence on a role for the SLA in the years before its withdrawal from Lebanon. The Israeli authorities was responsible for the SLA, derived primarily from their decision to make the organization their own 'creature' and allow it no independence. For many former SLA members, the decision to abandon SLA personnel, or impose upon southerners the indignity of refugee conditions in Israel, was a violation of trust. Expressions of general Israeli concern and responsibility for Israel's allies in the end served as an elusive formulation that culminated in betrayal. Other former SLA members, whom I have met in the South, do not feel the same way. According to them, Israel always managed to get her way in the South and the region. One of them said to me that if he would have had the civic duty in his blood, as members of the resistance have, he would have never accepted to work for Israel. Living with the feeling of guilt is a punishment that one pays when collaborating with the enemy. On the other hand, to live with the memories of imprisonment of the body, torture of the mind and soul, persecution of the beloved ones, emigration, lost of property and fear of bombs, is the circumstances in which former Khiyam detainees and other southern persecuted people have to live with and try to recover from.

A Lebanese campaign to rebuild the South is much needed. The more Lebanese invest in the South, the more people return to rebuild their communities and their lives there. The region needs to be revived and the only one capable of doing so is the Lebanese government in a number of projects that will hopefully encourage foreign investors to place their money in the region. Unfortunately, till now, the government in Beirut has failed to recover the southern region. Moreover, the insignificant rulings given by the Military Court to former SLA members have created a gap in the southern society. Under pressure from religious personalities, the Court balanced its rulings between Christians
and Muslims, without taking into account, the families and former Khiyam detainees who will live and work with the convicts. This unhealthy situation created hatred and the feeling of revenge, which led in several occasions to car explosions or to the beating of the former convict.

As for the former Khiyam detainees, the government paid a good number of them their remuneration; however, it failed again in trying to integrate these men and women, who have spent 10 to 22 years of their lives in the enemy’s prison, in the Lebanese society. For them rehabilitation centers, like the one in Kafa Shuba which opened in 2001, should be built in every town and village and equipped with staff and needs for the former detainees and their families.

To maintain a firm grip on the southern region and to keep the resistance closer to its Israeli target, the Lebanese government has partially implemented the Lebanese Army working hand-in-hand with Hezbollah, a resistance much more equipped and military more fit to counter any Israeli attacks over the region. To some Lebanese factions the presence of the resistance endangers the southern region; Hezbollah thinks that its presence in the South is a must for any Israeli attack.

"We are a nation that adores heroism for God. Heroism is not a goal, but a way to reach the beloved one and to assure devotion and obedience to the all Mighty. This is our ideological belief, which does not negate our civic duties of sacrificing our souls for our country and believes. The party refuses to divulge the number of his members and assures that it has a lot of groups trained and ready to execute suicidal missions in any place and at any time ... The resistance is a Jihad group, which relates its political activities with three dimensional backgrounds: Lebanese, Arab and Muslim."391

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391 Masri, op cit.

Deputy in Chief
Hassan Nasrallah
Since the Military Court has started judging former SLA soldiers, Hezbollah has kept the silence. The goal of the party is not to be implicated in the internal political debates and misunderstandings, which will eventually corrupt the party and wipe out the resistance’s victory along with all the efforts done in the South after the withdrawal. Sheikh Naim Kassem, the deputy of Hezbollah sees that the party is implementing in the southern region a new school of thought. He said in one of his interviews with the press that: “today, in Lebanon, raises a new unified culture, which is the culture of negating any collaboration with Israel.” This new thinking brings the southern Lebanese population closer together in sealing the wounds of the past and in cutting the way of the collaborators with Israel, who are still in the South.\footnote{Chahoud, Hiyam, “Where Does Hezbollah Stand in the Fight for Responsibilities and Liberties?” Al Majalla, 9 September 2001, from the report of the Consultative Center for Studies & Documentation, no.}

Political sources related to the party, as well as Mr. Nawaf Musawi say that Hezbollah has four important points to achieve in its future political plans:

1. The resistance will keep on fighting till the Shebaa farms will be released from the Israeli occupation.

2. The party considers the negotiations on the Lebanese and Palestinian detainees in the Israeli prisons essential and will keep fighting and negotiating for them.

3. By putting Hezbollah on the terrorist list the United States and Israel will encourage the resistance to further move on while keeping in mind the role of the party and of the resistance in the internal political scene.

4. The future of the party should be discussed after the withdrawal of Israel from Shebaa.

On the other hand, the same sources assure that if the resistance is not executing any military operations in the time being, it is not because of secret negotiations with Israel, but for the simple reason that the resistance evaluates the international and regional political situation in conformity with the internal Lebanese situation and the relations of these with the Palestinian activity.
We can sum up Hezbollah’s futuristic plans with what Mr. Nawaf Musawi concluded his interview. On the internal political life of the party, Hezbollah hopes that the new election campaign for the Lebanese Parliament will bring non-corrupted deputies who will hopefully work for bringing welfare to the people of Lebanon. On the international scene, Musawi reassured that the demilitarization of the party is still an early matter to discuss as long as a part of Lebanon, the Shebaa farms, is still under Israeli control. Finally, Hezbollah will also continue its military operations against Israeli targets, as long as Israel keeps invading the Lebanese borders and will continue negotiating for the liberation of all Lebanese and non-Lebanese detainees in the Israeli prisons.  

“"The Good Fence may be locked, but the people on both sides of the fence still live in fear from one another. In the hope that some day the good fence can make from Israel and Lebanon good neighbors, the material fence separating both countries must remain, for the indefinite future, high and strong.""  

464515.
392 Nawaf Musawi, personal interview, tape 1, side 2.
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