

PAPERS ON LEBANON

14

**THE PUBLIC AND  
SOCIAL SERVICES  
OF THE  
LEBANESE  
MILITIAS**

by

Judith Harik



---

Centre for Lebanese Studies

---

59 Observatory Street, Oxford OX2 6EP. Tel: 0865-58465

**The Public and Social Services of the  
Lebanese Militias**

*by*

**Judith Harik**

**September 1994**



---

**Centre for Lebanese Studies**

---

59 Observatory Street, Oxford OX2 6EP. Tel: 0865-58465

**©Centre for Lebanese Studies**

*Published by the  
Centre for Lebanese Studies  
Oxford*

*The Centre for Lebanese Studies is a privately-funded, independent research institution devoted to the study of Lebanon, its history and the issues presently confronting it.*

*Books in the Centre's series are published in the interest of public information. They represent the free expression of their authors' opinions and do not necessarily indicate the judgement or opinion of the Centre.*

*ISBN: 1 870552 39 3  
ISSN: 0269-8919*

*Designed and Typeset by Bridget Harney  
Printed in Great Britain by  
Oxonian Rewley Press Ltd.*

# *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias*

*Judith Harik\**

## *Introduction*

This study examines the development and political implications of the para-legal public and social services that arose as a result of Lebanon's civil war. With their government helpless to affect the spiralling violence and to perform normal public services, citizens, caught in the crossfire of conflict, turned for assistance to those who controlled their areas—the armed fighters of local parties.<sup>1</sup> What ensued were several experiments in the provision of public services and social assistance which served to further the autonomy of the areas concerned and seemed to portend the state's territorial disintegration. The goal of this study therefore, is to specify the dynamics which encouraged some confessionally-based Lebanese political parties to initiate, expand and diversify their involvement within their constituencies in public assistance programmes over time, and to elucidate any broad trends which may be involved in this process. The players, whose social

---

\* Judith P Harik is Associate Professor of Political Science at the American University of Beirut. Her recent publications include a number of works on Lebanon's Druze community. She is presently researching the socio-economic and political problems involved in the resettlement of Lebanon's displaced.

<sup>1</sup> Randa Antun examines the failure of the Lebanese Government to cope with services in *Al-Harb wal Idara al-Lubnaniyya*. Beirut: Dar Fikr lil Abhath wal Nashr, 1990.

programmes and surrogate administrations are examined are the Maronite Christian Lebanese Forces, the Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), the Shi'i Amal Movement and its competitor the Islamic Movement led by Hizballah.

The factors involved in the parties' adoption of state-related public functions include situational factors such as the geo-strategic location of areas to be administered, size of locale, and the material resources already in place and exploitable; the size and cohesiveness of the included population; and the quality and extent of human resources which could be mobilised to direct and staff surrogate administrative institutions. The extent to which public services develop depends on the interplay of the above factors with purposive variables such as the goals pursued by elites with regard to the reform or transformation of the Lebanese state; and organisational momentum. The latter is the tendency of bureaucrats to expand the activities of their agencies beyond that for which they were originally conceived. This occurs as a response to public demand and as a result of the ideological and strategic needs of the political elites. Taken together, these variables have an important bearing on a party's potential to undertake and sustain, under conditions of social conflict, the broad social services normally carried out by government departments.

The communities and elites examined in this study exhibit characteristics common to many groups in less-developed countries where similar conflicts are entrenched or have arisen recently. Thus, much can be learned from Lebanese experiences and organisational reactions to the civil war. In this respect, the political implications of party-linked social assistance in conflicts fought at least partially over questions of distributive justice are of obvious importance. Furthermore, since the administration of national areas outside the

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

reach of the central state authority plays a large part in sustaining protracted internal conflicts, the subject requires closer attention than it has received to date.

Information on para-legal public services and social assistance in Lebanon during the civil war is incomplete. For example, the question of how autonomous Lebanon's various militia-controlled areas really were, has not as yet been comprehensively addressed in the literature on the civil war. Yet there is a tendency to lump them together uncritically as 'cantons' or 'proto-states'<sup>2</sup> thereby ignoring this question as well as important differences in their genesis, purpose and evolution. Snider's work on the Lebanese Forces offers information on their Popular Committees which carried out social programmes, but does not attempt an explanation of their origin or manner of development.<sup>3</sup> These topics are well addressed in my study of the Druzes' Civil Administration of the Mountain (CAOM),<sup>4</sup> but in treating the subject as an isolated phenomenon, the opportunity to observe trends and draw conclusions from a number of similar cases did not arise.

The numerous brief references in the literature and the media to Hizballah's various social programmes and to Iran's assistance to date, present no clear, overall picture of this vital part of Hizballah's

---

<sup>2</sup> N. Kliot, *The Territorial Disintegration of a State: The Case of Lebanon*, Occasional Papers Series. Durham: Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Lewis W. Snider, 'The Lebanese Forces: Their Origins and Role in Lebanon's Politics', in *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Winter 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Judith P. Harik, 'Change and Continuity in the Lebanese Druze Community: The Civil Administration of the Mountains, 1983-1990', in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3, July 1993, pp. 377-399.

political programme.<sup>5</sup> However, on the surface at least, some of Hizballah's activities share features in common with other party-sponsored administrative efforts. As Hizballah's enclave in Beirut's southern suburbs (Dahiyah) appears to be the most recent example of Lebanese territoriality, and some observers attribute Hizballah's recent legislative victories in part at least to public services,<sup>6</sup> the subject bears investigation within the scope of this study and the limits of available information. Furthermore, the Amal-Hizballah competition for leadership of the Shi'i community, arguably Lebanon's poorest, has broad implications for Lebanon's future, and the extent and scope of social services of the two organisations may provide some evidence about the seriousness of this competition. Lastly, there was considerable speculation as to the durability of the sectarian strongholds as the state began to reassert its authority over national territory in 1991. What remnants remain then in post-war Lebanon and to what political effect?

### ***Geo-Politics and Community Power in Review***

The extent to which sectarian enclaves were compact, defensible and under uniform control, and the availability of human and physical resources, set important limits on what militias could achieve in the realm of public administration and social assistance. A brief review of these geo-political factors is therefore important for the analysis that follows.

---

<sup>5</sup> The best source of information is *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, issues 1983 to 1991. Tel Aviv: Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies.

<sup>6</sup> *L'Orient-Le Jour*, 'Allah et la Politique', Jose Jamhuri, September 11, 1992, p. 2.

*Druze and Maronites in Mount Lebanon*

The settlement pattern whereby distinctive ethnic groups concentrated in various areas to form the territorial basis of a mosaic society encouraged uneven political development. Possessing particular identities, loyalties and with different resources to exploit, each group evolved along its own lines and at its own speed. For example, the Druze, a small, clannish agricultural community who had at first been severely persecuted due to the heterodoxy of their faith<sup>7</sup> developed group consciousness at an early date and were able to establish hegemony over Mount Lebanon from the 15th to the 19th centuries.<sup>8</sup> Their tight social organisation under the leadership of powerful chieftains made the Chouf Mountains something of a Druze fortress.

On the other hand, the Maronite Christians who had become united with Rome as a Uniate church starting in the 12th century began to migrate from northern Lebanon to the area known as Jabal al-Druze after the Ottoman conquest in 1516. Since not much is known about their early political organisation, they were probably not a political community like the Druze of that time. The story of the expansion of Maronite power and the decline of the Druze's political fortunes, as well as the legacy of hostility and fear left by the bloody events of the mid 1800s, is well documented and need not concern us here. The fact is that on the eve of the 1975 civil war, the Maronites superseded the

---

<sup>7</sup> Sami Makarem, *The Druze Faith*. New York: Caravan Books, 1974 and Sami Makarem and Abbas Abu Salih, *Tarikh al-Muwahhidin al-Duruz as-Siyassi*. Beirut: al-Majlis al-Duruzi Lilbuhuth wal-Inma', 1977.

<sup>8</sup> See Kamal S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1963, pp. xvii - xix and pp. 3-79 and Annie and Laurent Chabry, *Politique et Minorité au Proche-Orient, Les Raisons d'une Explosion*. Paris: Editions Maisonneuve and Larose, 1988, pp. 211-212.



Druze in population size<sup>9</sup> and in other resources in their Kesrouan enclave, while in Druze areas most were still subject to Druze domination. The Maronites especially benefitted from the fact that the area of their population concentration included the eastern part of Beirut where development was concentrated. Druze and Shi'i regions on the other hand, were severely deprived.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Maronite assets also included an extensive network of parochial schools and several important universities which taught Maronite views and values and thus reinforced group consciousness.

---

<sup>9</sup> Arnon Soffer, 'Lebanon, Where Demography is the Core of Politics and Life', in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, April 1986, pp.197-205.

<sup>10</sup> Governmental statistics on the location of manufacturing enterprises in the 1960s clearly indicate the extent to which Lebanon's uneven development favoured Kesrouan and the suburbs of East Beirut and all but totally ignored other locales. See Yusuf A. Sayegh, *Entrepreneurs of Lebanon*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 54. According to one IRFED report, Mount Lebanon, excluding the Chouf district, was found to be most advanced in development and Southern Lebanon and the Chouf were considered underdeveloped. (Institut International de Recherches et de Formation en vue de Developpement, *Lubnan Yuwajih Tanmiyatuh*. Beirut: Ma'had al-Tadrib ala al-Inma, 1963, pp. 231-240). The Baalbek region was found to be absolutely backward. Although Druze manufacturing enterprises increased in the 1970s in the Choueifat area, their total number is still far less than those enterprises found in any one of the Maronite manufacturing centres of Makallis, Dikwani or Yayzu al-Malik (see Nasi Rihani, 'The Druze of Mount Lebanon: Class Formation in a Civil War' in *Middle East Report*, January-February 1990, pp. 27-30). The Lebanese Ministry of Health's December 1991 statistics provides further evidence of the advanced development of East Beirut in contrast to other parts of the capital and province. Of 47 private hospitals located in Mount Lebanon, 31 are in East Beirut, and only three are in the southern suburbs of Dahiyah where an estimated half a million Shi'is are living today.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

The Druze were able to share the high level of instruction offered by the Maronite educational system since many Maronites resided in or near Druze villages in rural Mount Lebanon. Furthermore, the proximity of Druze areas to the capital exposed the community to modern ideas and was an additional source of educational and economic advantage.

It is not surprising, therefore, that strongly led, tightly organised political parties representing and deriving support from their communities rather than from the nation as a whole emerged at a relatively early date among the Druze and Maronites. The Maronites' Phalange Party (*al-Kata'ib*), founded in 1936 as a paramilitary organisation with militantly nationalistic goals, believed that Lebanon must not be incorporated into the Arab world as advocated by other confessional groups. Preservation of Maronite identity came first even if that meant severing their stronghold from the rest of the country.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, although Druze leader Kamal Joumblatt's Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) founded in 1949 shared the Kata'ib's attachment to an independent Lebanon, it believed that the nation must have an Arab face.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> John P. Entelis, 'The Politics of Partition: Christian Perspectives on Lebanon's National Identity' in *International Insight*, May-June 1981, p. 41. Also see Tawfik Khalaf, 'The Phalange and the Maronite Community', in R. Owen, ed., *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*. London: Ithaca, 1976, p.45, Karim Pakradouni, *Structure des Kataeb*, Memoire de Diplome d'Etudes Superieures de Sciences Politiques. Beirut: n.p. September 27, 1967, and John P. Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation in Lebanon: al-Kataib 1936-1970*. Leiden: Brill, 1984.

<sup>12</sup> See Faris Ishtai, *al-Hizb at-Taquadumi al-Ishtiraki wa-Dawruhu fi al-Siyassa al-Lubnaniyya 1949-1975*, Vol. 1. Mukhtara: al-Dar al-Taquadumiyya, 1989, pp. 126-156.

The fact that from 1951 onwards, both the Kata'ib and the PSP had several members in every Lebanese parliament indicates their strength and endurance in a country where political factionalism is more the rule than the exception.<sup>13</sup> Of additional interest to this study is the fact that the early organisational charts of both parties show that bureaux concerned with social, educational and health affairs were included in each party's basic structure.<sup>14</sup>

The power-sharing formula that evolved as a result of the 1943 National Pact featured proportional representation according to sect size. This caused great discontent among various religious groups who found themselves disadvantaged and who were resentful of Maronite hegemony – the latter having been given the all powerful presidency of the republic. Since membership in the Druze religion had been closed early in their history to avoid persecution, the small community, which was estimated to comprise about 6.5 per cent of the population, received far less power than they thought was their due. Nonetheless, since the Druze had been given secure and stable political representation within the system, the PSP's programme sought redress by reform rather than radical change.<sup>15</sup> The Shi'is were

---

<sup>13</sup> Michael Sulaiman, *Political Parties in Lebanon*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967, p. 246 and 267. Also see pp. 247 and 269 for organisational charts of the PSP and the Kata'ib.

<sup>14</sup> See Pakradouni, *Les Structures...*, p. 30 and Ishtai, *Al-Hizb at-Takadumi...* p. 393.

<sup>15</sup> See Kamal Joumlatt, *Pour le Liban*. Paris: Stock, 1978; *Al-Dimuqratiyya al-Jadida*. Beirut: Lajnat at-Turath, 1978; and Hasan Rashid, *Al-Hizb at-Taquadumi al-Ishtiraki fi Dau' Mithaqih*. PSP: n.p., n.d., pp. 75-77.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

under-represented and the Sunnis therefore received the lion's share of parliamentary seats reserved for Muslims.<sup>16</sup>

As Maronite leaders saw the situation, the rise of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon's refugee camps after 1967 threatened to tip the sectarian balance in favour of the Muslims.<sup>17</sup> In fact, Kamal Joumblatt strengthened ties with the guerrilla leaders during the prelude to the civil war, partly in order to increase Druze power. Fear of loss of control and identity, led to Maronite militancy which was encouraged and supported by Israel.<sup>18</sup>

The most important of the Maronite militias that arose in the early 1970s was the Lebanese Forces (*al-quwwat al-lubnaniyya*) led by Bashir Gemayel. Bashir and his circle were more radical than the old

---

<sup>16</sup> Mohammad Faour, 'The Demography of Lebanon: A Reappraisal', in *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4, October 1991, p. 636. Faour was able to compile statistics on Muslim and Christian populations in all areas of Lebanon from the Saudi food distribution programme in 1988. From this report, given known areas of Shi'i concentration, it can be inferred that approximately 307,233 Shi'is resided in the Dahiyah, 327,510 in the Bekaa and 354,406 in the South. The Shi'is thus comprise about one third of the population and are the largest sect. See also Augustus R. Norton, 'Shi'ism and Social Protest in Lebanon' in *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, Juan R.I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie, eds., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986, p.158.

<sup>17</sup> In the 1950s, the Christian population was estimated at between 700,000 and 785,000 and Muslims between 572,000 and 624,000. See Faour, *op. cit.* p. 632. The author estimates that the Muslims comprised 65 per cent of the population in 1988, 5 per cent more than Arnon Soffer had indicated in 'Lebanon: Where Demography....', *op. cit.* pp. 197-205, claimed they constituted 60 per cent.

<sup>18</sup> Elaine C. Hagopian, 'Maronite Hegemony to Maronite Militancy: the Creation and Disintegration of Lebanon' in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 4, October 1989, p.106.

guard. They were willing to secure and expand the Maronite sanctuary even if it meant physically eliminating the opposition. Bashir's programme thus first called for the removal of foreigners and opponents from Maronite areas. This occurred when the Lebanese Front (the umbrella organisation which consolidated all the Christian forces) emptied and razed the Palestinian camps in East Beirut and the Bidonville at Karantina. The next step was to be the 'liberation' of West Beirut, and eventually, of all Lebanon.<sup>19</sup> His later attacks on fraternal Maronite militias—Raymond Edde's in Byblos in 1976, and the Tiger militia (*al-numur al-ahrar*) of the National Liberal Party in Safra in 1980—eliminated internal rivalry and permitted the consolidation of his power.

On the Druze side, the Popular Army (*al-jaysh al-sha'abi*) was forming under the banner of the PSP with help from Syria. Jomblatt had no serious internal divisions that could negatively affect his control of the Druze community since his major rivals—the Arslan clan — had never established a party or fielded a militia and had been vilified for their Maronite connections. Jomblatt sought to balance Maronite numbers by heading the National Movement, a loose coalition of leftist and Palestinian organisations opposed to the Maronite-dominated state. Well equipped and well trained, the Lebanese Forces and the Popular Army controlled compact and easily defensible domains from which they fought each other for more than 13 years. The ruinous Mountain War of 1983 was lost by the Lebanese Forces when they attempted to invade the Druze heartland.

---

<sup>19</sup> Marie-Christine Aulas, 'The Socio-Ideological Development of the Maronite Community: The Emergence of the Phalange and the Lebanese Forces' in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 4, Fall 1985, pp. 75-76.

***The Shi'is in the Hinterland***

The large part played by Maronites and Druze in the history of Lebanon dramatically contrasts with that of the Shi'i community which was all but politically invisible until the 1960s.<sup>20</sup> With populations concentrated in the Baalbek-Hirmil District in the Bekaa Valley and in the South, both areas considered remote by Lebanese standards, the majority of the Shi'is were tenant farmers on the large estates of traditional land-owning families, or employees of the state-owned tobacco monopoly. In interviews accorded to the author, Sayyid Mohammed Hussayn Fadlallah, the ranking Shi'i clergyman in Lebanon, blamed the state for Shi'i backwardness since it never adopted an agricultural policy which would allow the Shi'i community to earn a decent living and educate its children.<sup>21</sup> These conditions were mainly responsible for the emigration of many Shi'is to African countries and for their migration to the capital to find work where they congregated in slums.

The clergy had little to do with the formation of Shi'i group consciousness, since they were unable to resist the domination imposed by well established, large land-owning families.<sup>22</sup> Thus the Shi'a tended to join secular opposition parties as a means of voicing

---

<sup>20</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, 'Shi'ism and Social Protest...', *op. cit.* p. 157.

<sup>21</sup> Beirut, August 12 and 19, 1992. According to Joseph Chamie, the Shi'is were the most poorly educated and had the lowest income of the Lebanese communities. 'The Lebanese War: An Investigation into its Causes in *World Affairs*, Vol. 39 Winter 1976-77, pp. 171-188. See also, Ali al-Khalil, 'Junub Lubnan Bayna al 'Dawla waal-Thawra' in *Dirasat 'Arabiyya* 4, Feb. 1975, p. 63.

<sup>22</sup> Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a of Lebanon*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986, p. 101.

their demands. Imam Musa al-Sadr, raised in Iran and educated in religious schools there, changed all that when he returned to Lebanon in 1959. Grasping the political potential of social assistance as a means of outflanking the traditional elites and entering the political arena, al-Sadr underwrote a string of religious and vocational schools and a number of orphanages from funds available to him from his contacts with the religious authorities in Najaf in Iraq and Qom in Iran.<sup>23</sup>

The Imam's role in establishing institutions important to his community's political development is well known. Chief among them was the Movement of the Dispossessed (*harakat al-mahrumin*) founded in 1974, whose military branch (*harakat Amal*) was trained in Baalbek to resist Israeli activities in the South.<sup>24</sup>

At the outset of the civil war Amal was politically immature and lacked institutional coherence. Although more Shi'is probably died in the fighting than did any other group, most of them still fought in the ranks of leftist parties in 1975-76. After the Imam's disappearance while on a trip to Libya in 1977, a power struggle developed over the leadership of the Supreme Islamic Shi'i Council, founded by al-Sadr,<sup>25</sup> and Hussayn Musawi defected to form Islamic Amal, a more radical party.

---

<sup>23</sup> Shimon Shapira, 'The Imam Musa al-Sadr: Father of the Shi'i Resurgence in Lebanon' in *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 44, Fall 1987, p. 124.

<sup>24</sup> See Chris Mowles, 'The Israeli Occupation of South Lebanon' in *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 4, October 1986, pp. 1351-1366. The author claims that the occupation contributed to confessionalism and cantonisation in Lebanon.

<sup>25</sup> Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam...*, *op. cit.* p. 213.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

Thus, in the mid-seventies Amal was in no position to exert unified control over any territory larger than a few blocks, nor to expend effort or resources on any organised public services or social assistance programmes to aid the embattled Shi'is in West Beirut's poorest quarters and in the slums of the southern suburbs.

The implications of the foregoing review can now be summarised. The structure, organisation and preparedness of the Druze and Maronite parties, and their grip on their communities, increased the likelihood that they would make use of these assets to solve social problems associated with the ravages of war.

The Maronites, however, had the clear advantage when it came to the physical resources that could be exploited for purposes of community support and social assistance. Their area was simply better equipped with health facilities, communications and transportation networks. The PSP, lacking these advantages, would have to fall back on Druze initiative and self-reliance and what could be gained from other sources of assistance available in support of their constituency. The Shi'is, on the other hand, had few resources on which they could draw in comparison with the other communities. Amal's leadership was inexperienced, and shared influence over the populous urban quarters with leftist parties. Furthermore, their attention was divided between the civil war in Beirut, and confrontations with Fatah's brigades in the South. It was not until 1984 that Amal burst upon the national scene in any real strength, and by that time Hizballah was on the march as well.

### *Civil War and Public Services*

During the war, property damage and fear of death and injury caused massive population shifts in which more than a third of Lebanon's



three million people were ultimately involved.<sup>26</sup> The effect of these migrations was the formation of homogeneous and exclusive enclaves. These population shifts contributed to the disruption of public services because positions in the Lebanese civil service are distributed on a proportional basis according to sect size. Thus in West Beirut, for example, government jobs which had been held by Maronites who had fled the area, remained vacant since by law they could not be filled. This situation placed pressure on the various factions to deal with public services themselves.

In West Beirut, the armed forces of the many political factions not only manned the front lines against the Lebanese Front but jealously guarded urban strongholds, sometimes no larger than a single block, against incursions by 'fraternal' parties. Lack of central party control and discipline and the havoc of battle led to haphazard use of public utilities and equipment whenever they could be found. Red Cross ambulances were commandeered by fighters and so were doctors. Shoot-outs in the Emergency Room of the American University Hospital in Beirut were common, as rival militiamen struggled to have their wounded treated first. Citizen groups tried to deal with refuse collection and failed.

---

<sup>26</sup> Faour, 'The Demography of Lebanon...', *op. cit.* p. 638, provides statistical evidence of the radical shifts in the religious composition of many areas. See also Salim Nasr, 'La Transition des Chiïtes vers Beyrouth: Mutations Sociales et Mobilisation Communautaire a la Veille de 1975'. CERMOC, *Mouvements Communautaires et Espaces Urbains au Machreq*. Paris: Editions Sinbad, 1985 p. 18. Also see Larry Pintak's *Internal Migrations*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1982, p. 182. Pintak claims that somewhere between half to two-thirds of the Lebanese population had been forced to move at least once since 1975.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

A civil administration to co-ordinate basic services which had been largely abandoned by government employees was attempted in West Beirut in January 1976 under the leadership of a lawyer, Usama Fakhuri, but it could not cope with the chaotic pressures exercised by the many spheres of political influence within the city. The PSP had similar problems when it attempted to form a Popular Administration in the mountain town of 'Aley in March of the same year. Controlling the many armed groups of the National Movement domiciled in the area and effective organisation of logistics and relief for them and for the local citizenry, proved very difficult.<sup>27</sup>

### *The Lebanese Forces' Popular Committees*

In comparison, the eastern sector of the capital was considerably better organised due to the Lebanese Front's tighter command structure and co-ordinated actions. Nonetheless, public services were also disrupted as municipal workers disappeared, and some method was needed to protect public health. The solution was found as a result of an initiative by students in East Beirut's Ashrafiyya quarter in November 1976.<sup>28</sup> The young people first volunteered to clean streets and drive the idle municipal garbage trucks. Then, as similar groups formed in the quarters of Rumayli, Jimayzi and Midawar, means were devised to procure scarce medicines and foodstuffs.

In December 1976, Bashir Gemayel asked a close adviser, George Frayha, professor of microbiology at the Medical School of the

---

<sup>27</sup> Interview with 'Aref al-'Awar. Vice President of the Popular Administration, August 13, 1988.

<sup>28</sup> Interviews with Dr. George Frayha former Co-ordinator of the Popular Committees and Chief of Staff of the Bashir Gemayel Government in 1982. Brummana, September 10 and 11, 1992.

American University of Beirut and in 1978 director of AUB's Off-Campus programme in Ashrafiyya, to set up a public services organisation that would tap the services of volunteers. The notion of a grassroots organisation dedicated to public service corresponded to Bashir's methods, characterised by youthful energy and idealistic notions of government. Furthermore, a network of hardworking volunteers would demonstrate how public services in a modern state ought to be run, while establishing cadres loyal to Bashir throughout Maronite territory. According to Frayha, who became the co-ordinator between the Lebanese Forces and the Popular Committees (*al-hay'aat al-sha'biyya*), the latter were targeted as key components of Bashir's programmed ascent to the presidency and were to form an administrative network which could be extended to all of Lebanon at the appropriate time.

By the end of 1977, with 142 Popular Committees in place, 1,400 new civil servants were aiding a population estimated at about a half million. The Popular Committees' structure generally paralleled that of the state's service agencies, with the Civil Defence Department co-ordinating wartime emergency operations such as repairs to damaged utilities and the shelter of displaced persons, and the environment bureau taking over refuse collection.<sup>29</sup> The Health Committee made sure pharmacies stayed open and distributed free medicine when available, while a Judiciary Committee composed of legal experts tried to mediate problems in the absence of functioning courts. Public security and law enforcement were handled by 30 to 40 militiamen who were placed at the Popular Committees' disposal.

---

<sup>29</sup> Snider, 'The Lebanese Forces: Their Origin...', *op. cit.* p.25.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

In the rural areas of Mount Lebanon in 1975, the emphasis was on local initiative and self-help seconded by the Kata'ib and PSP. For example, men of the Maronite village of Beit Shabab in the Metn formed security teams for night patrols in 1976 and handled village sanitation themselves. The Kata'ib's central health and social bureaux helped out by providing doctors, medication and in times of scarcity, by purchasing and distributing bread.<sup>30</sup> After the villagers decided to accept a Popular Committee the following year, these activities and others came under its authority.

In Druze villages in the Chouf and Metn Districts, a similar pattern prevailed. During the heaviest fighting of 1975 and 1976, activists helped medical personnel to care for the wounded, housing them locally. They established living room dispensaries,<sup>31</sup> took in Druze refugees and cooked communally for the fighters on the front lines. A Druze doctor recalled that the general atmosphere in his village during 1976 was almost festive as people worked shoulder to shoulder.<sup>32</sup>

Because of the Druzes' legendary solidarity and the relatively limited destruction at that time, no institution designed for public services arose after the Syrians closed down the Popular Administration at the end of 1976. Instead, the PSP encouraged self-help operations and local party bureaux maintained contact with the centre, requesting supplies and assistance when needed. The party was capable of managing the worst dislocations, as the Kata'ib might have

---

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Samir Hayik, Head of Beit Shabab branch of the Kata'ib from 1973 to the present. Beit Shabab, August 12, 1992.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Najla Sha'ar, registered nurse. 'Aynab, September 12, 1992.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Dr. Salam al-'Awar. Kirnayyil, el-Metn, July 21, 1989.

been, had Bashir not had other plans for the Popular Committees and for Lebanon.

***The Druze's Civil Administration of the Mountain***

The tremendous destruction of the Mountain War of 1983<sup>33</sup> pushed the PSP to organise its public assistance operations along the same lines as the Popular Committees. After a week of fierce fighting in which many fled the mountains, the Popular Army forced the retreat of the Lebanese Forces which had entered the Chouf under the command of Samir Geagea to 'liberate' Maronite villages there with the help of part of the Lebanese army. In full control of its rural heartland, and aware that the magnitude of the disruption was not amenable to piecemeal or temporary solutions, the PSP swiftly announced the formation of the Civil Administration of the Mountain (CAOM) in the first week of October. Jomblatt used men who held high positions in PSP bureaux of social assistance to head CAOM Committees and also recruited the help of young professionals. Some of the offices which were opened in the compound of the old palace of Beiteddine were staffed by moonlighting government employees. As in the case of the Popular Committees, the administrative departments paralleled those of the state and covered villages in the Chouf, 'Aley, Sahil, Iqlim al-Kharub and Metn Districts.<sup>34</sup>

The immediate crises were quickly dealt with using whatever personnel and equipment were on hand. Yet many grave problems remained such as the housing of displaced persons, the rehabilitation

---

<sup>33</sup> For the background and results of the Mountain War and a chronology of events see *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, Vol. 7. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985, pp. 676-684.

<sup>34</sup> See Harik, 'Continuity and Change....', *op.cit.* p. 11.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

of damaged schools, the search for teachers and school administrators to replace those who had fled, and the restoration of disrupted public services. The magnitude and cost of solving these problems required comprehensive and long-term management by the new bureaucrats.

### *Public Services and Welfare in Amal's South and the Dahiyah*

The presence of large and militant Palestinian camps bordering Israel in southern Lebanon, Amal's traditional fiefdom, led to the area's severe disruption by two Israeli invasions and its subsequent occupation by Israel until 1985. The area was virtually sealed off from the rest of the country several times during that period, with only the narrow and closely controlled Batir road open. The wide scale destruction visited upon the region led to the gradual desertion of the South by its Shi'i population who fled to West Beirut and the southern suburbs. There, the residents already traumatised by the war were further strained by the arrival of thousands of refugees who crowded the densely populated quarters. Adding to the Shi'i tragedy in 1983, the Lebanese army severely shelled the Dahiyah, reducing whole blocks to rubble and creating more homeless and destitute people. The sheer magnitude of the destruction in these two Shi'i domains made anything short of a new Marshall Plan seem incidental.

Amal's militia was estimated at 30,000 in 1982<sup>35</sup> and the party was by that time predominant in the southern suburbs. The vast

---

<sup>35</sup> Henry W. Degenhardt, ed., *International Revolutionary and Dissident Movements: An International Guide*. Burnt Mills, Essex: Longman, 1988, p. 214. See Clinton Bailey, 'Lebanon's Shi'is After the 1982 War' in Martin Kramer, ed., *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1987, pp. 219-236.

majority of the Maronite residents had already fled across the Green Line into the Christian residential quarters of Furn al-Shubak and A'in al-Rumani. Amal's takeover of West Beirut with the PSP in 1984 further indicated the level to which the party's strength had grown.

In 1980 the Council of the South was separated from the Ministry of Social Affairs and given an independent status to handle social welfare and reconstruction in the Southern region in the aftermath of the 1978 Israeli invasion. According to Dr. Hussayn Kana'an, its President from 1980-1984 who had links with Amal, the Council had extraordinary administrative powers and financial independence which allowed quick action to be taken. It was involved in the repair of roads, schools, houses, the construction of hospitals such as the one at Nabatiya, and social assistance for needy families. Medical care for resistance fighters and southern and western Bekaa residents was arranged by a contract with the American University Hospital in Beirut through which the Council guaranteed payment for treatment of patients sent to the capital from the South. The Council was also charged with the replacement of hundreds of Christian teachers who had left the region.

In 1984, after the Battle of Beirut, Amal's influence was acknowledged at the national level by the creation of the Ministry of the South headed by Nabih Berri. According to Kana'an, the Ministry was at first more of a political gesture than a functioning institution. However, after Kana'an was moved to head the Central Bank in 1985, the new ministry soon absorbed the funds and functions of the Council of the South. Dr Adnan Sulayman, the director of the Ministry of the South from 1984 until its closure in 1989, claimed that no formal linkage with Amal existed other than Berri's presidency of both

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

organisations,<sup>36</sup> yet for all intents and purposes, the ministry seems to have officially stamped the South as Amal's fief.

A number of large projects which normally would have come under the aegis of various governmental ministries were handled by the new ministry. They included the extensive repair of Litani River bridges at Kasmiya that had been damaged by an Israeli raid, and other large public works. There is no doubt that the substantial funds available and the resulting public works and assistance programmes were a windfall for Berri's communal and national stature.

In the same year that the Ministry of the South was formed, Nabih Berri's wife, Randa, moved into the health services field with the inauguration of a centre for the physical rehabilitation and training of the handicapped in the Dahiyah. Theoretically independent of Amal, the pilot project grew into the Lebanese Welfare Association for the Handicapped with headquarters in the Barbir quarter of West Beirut.<sup>37</sup> Soon centres were opened in the South and a prosthetics factory opened up in Tyre.

Several facts stand out from the above review. Amal's prestige in the South was heightened in 1980 and 1984 when it was able to influence large scale public projects and social assistance at no direct cost to the party. This was especially important since competition with Hizballah was growing and the latter's service and social assistance activities in the Bekaa, the Dahiyah, and the South were

---

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Dr. Adnan Sulayman, Director of the Ministry of the South, 1984-1989, August 4, 1992.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Taghrid Fayyad, Treasurer, Lebanese Welfare Association of the Handicapped. Beirut, September 29, 1992. The first centre was located in the Dahiyah and closed down when Hizballah took over the area.



under way during this same period. The results of the 1992 parliamentary elections clearly point to the territorial basis of Shi'i political power. Amal candidates replaced 'feudal' Shi'i politicians in the South, and the movement did not contest parliamentary seats in the Baalbek-Hirmil area, thus leaving it to Hizballah. This arrangement was designed to protect the unity of the National Resistance (*al-muqawama al-wataniyya*) in which both parties participate.

The reason why Amal was not deeply involved in public services in the Dahiyah from 1984 to 1990 was that despite it having risen to the status of a major force in a single decade, it nevertheless did not have the administrative structure necessary to provide basic services for the half million residents of the southern suburbs. Furthermore, the government could not be enticed to begin normal services in the Dahiyah or to start reconstruction there which Amal could exploit. In contrast, social assistance in the South was deemed very important to the national resistance since it would help to keep residents on the land in that highly dangerous region. More importantly however, the refugees crowding the southern suburbs are registered voters of the southern and Bekaa villages of their birth, and go back to the heartland to cast their ballots. Given all this, concentration on the South and the western Bekaa through its ministry made more sense and provided more rewards for Amal than did work in the Dahiyah for which there was little governmental support. It was not until the cessation of Shi'i-Maronite hostilities across the Green Line and Amal's loss of the Dahiyah to Hizballah in 1990, that party discipline, tight organisation, and major foreign aid encourage a more programmed approach to social services for the Shi'i community there in the way it had earlier in Baalbek.

***Hizballah's Fiefs***

Hizballah's power domain in Baalbek was formed well after the beginning of the civil war and was never a battle front to the extent that the other territories were. Nonetheless, its very isolation in the Bekaa Valley made it a perfect training ground for clandestine movements. With the arrival of some 5,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards in 1982 to take part in the struggle against Israel and to help with the organisation of revolutionary cadres, the district was sanctified as a bastion of resistance and an outpost on the march to liberate Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup>

The political 'cleansing' of this area began with clashes between the Iranians and the Lebanese Army in Baalbek and a nearby village in November 1982. This was followed by the distribution of leaflets attacking Berri and Sheikh Mohammad Mahdi Shamseddine, Chairman of the SISC, and then a combined Iranian and Lebanese attack on an army barracks near Baalbek in spring 1983.<sup>39</sup> Since war materiel provided by Iran was permitted to cross the Syrian controlled Valley freely on its way to the Baalbek-Hirmil area, within a short time the region became a tightly-controlled, heavily fortified territory whose giant posters of Imam Khomeini indicated that this was Islamic soil.

Much has been written on Hizballah's rise and ideology.<sup>40</sup> The party's emergence is widely perceived as a direct result of Iran's

---

<sup>38</sup> Ali al-Kurani, *Tariqat Hizb Allah fi al-Amal al-Islami*, 1988.

<sup>39</sup> *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, Vol. 7, 1982-1983, *op. cit.* pp. 674-677.

<sup>40</sup> Among the best treatments are Augustus R. Norton's, *Amal and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987 and Shimon Shapira, 'The Origins of Hizballah' in *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 46, Spring 1988.

regional foreign policy needs.<sup>41</sup> A number of radical groups such as *al-tajammu al-ulama al-muslimin fi Lubnan*, established in Lebanon in the pre-civil war period, and whose members fought in 1975 and 1976 and in the Israeli invasion of 1982, were targeted as radical vanguard groups worthy of Iran's assistance.<sup>42</sup> These associations joined or took the name Hizballah when activities began in Beirut, and their educational and philanthropic agencies and programmes were part of a growing network of social assistance.

The demand for social welfare and distributive justice for the oppressed motivated the militant clergy and fused their political and social action. This was seen in the activities of the Association of the Ulama of Jabal Amil which led the first resistance operations against Israeli forces occupying the South. Shi'i clerics running cultural centres, orphanages and welfare organisations in the South joined this struggle and formed the backbone of Hizballah's activities in the region.

The Shi'i clergy adhered to a potent yet simple ideology composed of orthodox Islamic principles and liberation Shi'ism as voiced by Ayatollah Khomeini and Lebanon's well known Shi'i theologian, Mohammad Hussayn Fadlallah.<sup>43</sup> Consistent with the principles of

---

<sup>41</sup> For example see R.K. Ramasani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

<sup>42</sup> Shapira, 'The Origins of Hizballah,' *op. cit.* pp. 122, 126-127.

<sup>43</sup> See Mohammad Hussayn Fadlallah, *Al-Islam wa-Mantiq al-Quwwa*. Beirut: al-Mu'assasat al-jami'iyya lil Dirasat wal-Nashr wal-Tawzi', 1981. For Sayyid Fadlallah's relationship with Hizballah see Chibli Mallat, *Shi'a Thought from the South of Lebanon*. Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1988, pp.28-29 and Mahmud Fakshi, 'The Shi'a Community of Lebanon: A New Assertive Political Force' in *Journal of South Asian and*

Islam, the ideology is deeply concerned with social welfare. Sayyid Fadlallah himself founded a number of charitable institutions, schools, clinics and orphanages in West Beirut. For example, in the Naba'a quarter which was 'liberated' by the Lebanese Front in 1975, he established a welfare association to provide aid, social assistance and education to needy Shi'is arriving in Beirut from the South and the Bekaa.

The substantial salaries and benefits reportedly paid by Hizballah to its fighters<sup>44</sup> encouraged rapid growth of the military wing. Dramatic political acts against Westerners and Western interests which were attributed to Hizballah, its avowed willingness to liberate Jerusalem and its widening public assistance contrasted in almost every way with Amal's orientations and capabilities.<sup>45</sup>

In 1985 the first clashes broke out between the two Shi'i rivals when Berri appeared ready to reach an understanding with the Israelis in the South. In that same year an estimated 5,000 Hizballah partisans marched in Baalbek's Jerusalem Day parade while Hizballah's arsenal

---

*Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 3., Spring 1989, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> *Al-Nahar Arab and International*, No. 645, September 24, 1989, p.16, reported that Hizballah paid its militiamen \$150-200 per month not including food and benefits.

<sup>45</sup> Fakshi, 'The Shi'a Community of Lebanon...', p. 52. For the Shi'i-PLO rift in the South and its effect on the parties, see Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Harvard Centre for International Affairs, 1979, p. 128. See also Marius Deeb, 'Shi'a Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis and Links with Iran and Syria' in *Third World Quarterly*, April 1988, pp. 683-698, and Helena Cobban, 'The Growth of Shi'i Protest in Lebanon' in Nikki R. Keddie and Juan R.I. Cole eds. *Shi'ism and Social Protest*, *op. cit.* pp. 137-155.

was reported to have reached considerable size and sophistication.<sup>46</sup> In 1988 Hizballah challenged Amal both in the South and in West Beirut in a series of clashes to which the Syrian army turned a blind eye. While Amal prevailed in the South, the large-scale fighting of 1990 left Hizballah in full control of the southern suburbs with Amal's presence limited to only one block. The Dahiyah thus suffered the same violent cleansing of external and internal rivals carried out in Maronite areas as a prelude to the Lebanese Forces' territorial hegemony.

Islamic groups had begun social work in Beirut's 'misery belts' well before 1975. However, with the help of Iran, large-scale social organisations arose in the urban centre such as the Imam Khomeini Assistance Committee which opened in Beirut in 1982 with branches in Tyre, Sidon and Baalbek. This organisation has granted 130,000 scholarships, aided 135,000 needy families and has given interest free loans.<sup>47</sup> The Islamic Health Organisation was established in 1984 and Reconstruction Campaign (*jihad al-bina'*), an Islamic engineering and contracting organisation was created in 1988, 'when the Islamic movement was ripe.'<sup>48</sup> This novel institution is worthy of attention as it carries out most of Hizballah's considerable heavy construction projects, and maintains an efficient working relationship with Hizballah quite similar to that established by the other parties with their public works committees.

---

<sup>46</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, *Amal and the Shi'a.....*; *op. cit.* p. 106. By 1990, 10,000 fighters took part in the parade.

<sup>47</sup> *Atlas Mondial de l'Islam Activiste*. Paris: La Table Ronde, 1991, p. 150.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Sultan al-As'ad, Director of Reconstruction Struggle. Beirut, September 15, 1992.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

Reconstruction Campaign (RC) is registered as a Lebanese charitable association inspired by the Iranian organisation of the same name which was established during the Iranian revolution. Besides training and technical advice there is no other connection between the two. With 50 engineers and 150 technicians on hand, its mission is to repair war damage and to address the unattended daily needs of the population in all three areas of Shi'i concentration. For instance, roads, communications, and damaged houses were repaired in the southern villages of Kafra and Yatir after the Israeli withdrawal so that residents could return. In 1992 in the Bekaa Valley, extensive damage due to winter flooding was repaired and in the Dahiyah daily refuse collection began in 1988 for half a million residents. This was necessary within the southern suburbs, since governmental agencies in several municipalities were entirely inactive. Reconstruction Campaign continued this service for over four years until the Lebanese Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and later the Sanitation Department took over.<sup>49</sup> Reconstruction Campaign is still fixing the Dahiyah's drainage and sewage networks to reduce unsanitary conditions caused by flooding and backup.

In 1990, during the Aoun administration, water and electricity service in the Dahiyah was cut due to fighting precipitating a severe emergency similar to that faced by the CAOM in 1983. As the PSP had found, the only answer was the establishment of a large-scale public service programme. Thus, with the Republic of Iran's help,

---

<sup>49</sup> The CDR was created in 1977 to deal with reconstruction and planning. Utilising international aid it managed projects and subcontracted work to local companies for road and electricity repair, school reconstruction, etc. All parties put pressure on the agency for assistance, and most sought credit for work carried out under its auspices.

Reconstruction Campaign built 4,000-litre water reservoirs in each district of the southern suburbs and filled each of them five times a day from five continuously circulating tanker trucks.

In addition, generators mounted on trucks went regularly from building to building to provide electricity to pump water from private cisterns. This service ended as public electricity was partially restored towards the end of 1990, but Reconstruction Campaign is still the major source of drinking water for a half million people.

This reality revealed a great deal about the government's situation and about the impact Hizballah's work had made in the Dahiyah at that time. Through years of neglect and extensive war related damage, an estimated 40 per cent of the water from Ain al-Dilbih, the area's major source, has been lost and its purity gravely compromised. Several wells dug by Unicef in the area reportedly failed. Aggravating the discontent of Dahiyah residents and the large numbers of refugees who remain there is the fact that the new multi-million dollar pipeline which carries water from Damoun, runs directly through the Dahiyah on its way to the Ras Beirut without distributing a drop of water to the southern suburbs. In an interview with the then Minister of Housing Mohammad Baydun, who is an Amal partisan himself, the minister underlined the desperation of the Dahiyah's water situation, but in the light of the government's decisions and capabilities at that time, he expressed his inability to get any action to relieve the parched region.<sup>50</sup>

This and other issues relating both to inadequate public utilities and to damaged or wholly lacking infrastructure drew considerable public

---

<sup>50</sup> Interview with the Minister of Housing, Mohammad Yusuf Baydun, May 7, 1992, UNESCO Headquarters, Beirut.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

attention late in 1991 when Hizballah began openly to exhort the Hrawi Government to take up its social responsibilities in the Dahiyah.<sup>51</sup> Some observers considered this a further sign that Hizballah was moving into mainstream Lebanese politics, a fact which was later confirmed when, early in 1992, Hizballah announced that it would contest the parliamentary elections to be held later that year.

Hizballah has often mobilised Dahiyah residents for strikes and protests of one kind or another, but in December 1991 the party took a new tack by encouraging the formation of residential and professional groups in each quarter of the southern suburbs whose purpose was to press the government for action. On December 30, 1991 former party General Secretary Abbas Musawi called on representatives of these associations and others to form an umbrella organisation, the Dahiyah Activists and Residents Committee, to consider the water problem and other pressing needs of the area. Hizballah's Haj Ibrahim Shammās, Beirut Director of Social Services, and Haj' Abdallah Kasir, Regional Director of Beirut, were part of the group which considered a paper presented by Hizballah's Centre for Developmental Studies. The study, a detailed report on the developmental and financial policy of the state and the extent of general services and condition of infra-structure in the Dahiyah, recommended that the civil planning of the southern suburbs should be done by Muslim engineers since the, 'area is one of Islamic population concentration which has been subjected to sectarian discrimination.' <sup>52</sup> Statistics were presented which compared the water

---

<sup>51</sup> See *al-Hayat*, 'Khitata Hizballah li-Dahiyah al-Janubiyya', February 14, 1991, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> The Centre for Developmental Studies, Hizballah, 'Al-Dahiya al-Janubiyya Ma'sat Tantazir al-Hal', pp. 1-6.



resources of the Dahiyah with those of other urban areas on the basis of population size and offered solutions, including cost estimates. Other inadequate facilities were treated similarly, and this formed the basis of the new association's January 14th press conference where a press communiqué entitled 'The Southern Suburbs: An Area of Misery Awaiting Solution', was released. The names of 27 persons representing development committees<sup>53</sup> and various professional and religious associations located in the Dahiyah, were attached.

Haj Hussayn Shami, Director of Hizballah's social services, explained that mobilising people to demand their rights would continue as a major part of the Islamic Movement's programme since many people were unaccustomed to making their voices heard on social issues, although so far, no response from the government had been forthcoming.<sup>54</sup>

The PSP also sought to pressure the government to take up its responsibilities in Druze areas, but this approach was not used since its constituency was loyal. Instead, references to the CAOM's work and efficiency were used in public addresses by the leadership to exhort the government to follow suit and to take up its duties.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, Druze members of governmental agencies did their part to direct assistance to CAOM areas. The Lebanese Forces, on the other hand, did not adapt such an overtly contentious approach during Bashir's time for obvious reasons, yet they too sought to channel government

---

<sup>53</sup> Ghobayri, Hay Laylaki, Hay al-Sillum, Mrayje, Uzai, Hay al-Abiyad Ruways, Burj al-Barajneh and Hay al-Jamia quarters have development committees.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Haj Hussayn Shami, Director of Hizballah's Social Services. Beirut, September 19, 1992.

<sup>55</sup> This was a ritual of the CAOM yearly anniversary gathering.

funds to their sector for necessary public works. Frayha and a circle of people who were involved in the Popular Committees continued various activities within the realm of consumer advocacy.<sup>56</sup> This suggests that party activities may have resulted in greater public willingness to express grievances by organised action, and in the rise of consumer-oriented groups which were virtually non-existent before the civil war.

### *The Dynamics of Programme Expansion*

Continuing gaps in normal governmental services often seemed to exercise a logic of their own with regard to service institutions. For example, electrical breakdowns often went unattended by government employees and required exasperating private effort and expense to repair. In Druze areas it made more sense for administrators to pay Druze governmental employees (who were at best working part-time) a little extra, buy their tools and materials, and keep a team on call permanently. Eventually their services were placed under the control of the CAOM Public Works Committee.<sup>57</sup> Similar dynamics were involved in the formation of the Maronites' Popular Committees Municipalities Department which regularly borrowed governmental equipment for local service. On the other hand, the experiences of Reconstruction Campaign which witnessed a progression from water

---

<sup>56</sup> For instance, a study submitted to the government in 1991 carefully documented the costs of bread production and found that bakers were making an unfair profit. According to Frayha, if the Popular Committees had still been running, this would never have been allowed. The government gave the report no attention.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Nadim Nammur, Director of The Public Works Committee. Beiteddine, July 26, 1988.

distribution to the building of new classrooms is a good example of how established institutions used staff and equipment to move from tasks emanating from a general problem to new areas of service.

Thus, in 1988 the Iranian Martyr's Foundation, which paid 100 per cent of the medical expenses for Hizballah's injured fighters and 70 per cent of the cost of caring for injured civilians, built al-Rasul al-Aa'zam Hospital in Beirut in order to handle these cases.<sup>58</sup> The Foundation went on to develop other projects to help the families of dead and injured fighters to become self-sufficient. For example, vocational schools for girls were established in Beirut and the Bekaa to train the daughters of fallen Hizballah fighters and subsidised workshops were set up to employ the dependents of these fighters.

The Director of Hizballah's Social Services, Haj Shami, explained to the author that in Hizballah's view an Islamic imperative was involved in the progression from one task to another. He observed that there is almost unlimited work to be done in the former so-called misery belts which, since the war, have become belts of desperation. Since Islam is based on service to mankind, this work must go ahead as a religious duty, 'whether Lebanon is an Islamic state or not.'<sup>59</sup>

The new public administrators sought out further areas of service as the public's wartime needs were further defined. For example, the collapse of state authority in Lebanon made it a prime target for the illegal dumping of expired and contaminated imports from all over the world. Therefore, in late 1977, the Popular Committees opened a Department of Consumer Protection. Soon volunteers began searching

---

<sup>58</sup> *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, Vol. 12, *op. cit.* p. 194.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Haj Hussayn Shami, who cited Imam Khomeini's views on this point as well, *op. cit.*

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

out and destroying outdated drug supplies and foodstuffs and preventing the off-loading of cargoes of putrified meats at the ports. When Popular Committee teams appeared on television wielding modern radiation detection equipment at the ports after the Chernobyl disaster, the public was both amazed by the progressive activism of the Popular Committees and depressed at the government's failure to protect them.

Samir Geagea's takeover of the command of the Lebanese Forces sidelined George Frayha's operation. Instead, the former head of the Popular Committee's Consumer Protection office, Victor Ghurayib, was recruited to carry on some of the functions of the Popular Committee and to construct a similar network of bureaux in Maronite areas under the auspices of the Social Welfare Agency (*mu'assasat al-tadmun al-ishtima'iyya*) which opened in March 1987. This institution and its 35 branch offices matched needy people with generous donors. The result was that 25,000 families became regular recipients of various types and amounts of aid under this agency from 1987 onwards.<sup>60</sup>

In 1985, responding to the almost undisputed pressures of human suffering and need and benefitting from the growing pool of available volunteers, Randa Birri's organisation began secretarial and sewing courses to provide the handicapped with a means of subsistence in various towns in the South and in the Patriarchate area of West Beirut. It was not long before a medical laboratory in Nabatiyya, a dental clinic and a chain of medical dispensaries and pharmacy co-operatives were opened to provide for the needs of war victims. A large and ultra-modern medical centre for the handicapped opened in Sarafand near

---

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Dr. Victor Ghurayib, Director, Lebanese Welfare Agency. Tabarja, August 13, 1992.

Sidon in 1993. It is designed to house 200 in-patients for stays of about six months and offers physical therapy and 25 fields of vocational training. The care of the 500 patients at present being aided is funded from Lebanese expatriate donations and help from NGOs.<sup>61</sup>

Once such public service and social assistance programmes were begun, the momentum for expansion was hard to resist. Pressures from the the needy on one hand, and from volunteers and creative administrators on the other, made new work possible within existing institutional frameworks. Thus, by the mid 1980s social services and welfare foundations were *de rigueur*.<sup>62</sup> Since these institutions added to the stature and legitimacy of new elites in the same way the Islamic Maqasid Foundation had long contributed to the prestige of the West Beirut Sunni Muslim Salam family with whom it was linked,<sup>63</sup> the new leaders found it very productive politically to back enlarged services and related initiatives.

### *Developmental Activities*

There was a widespread tendency for social organisations to take up projects oriented to the future needs of their populations and locales. In addition to the dynamics generated by the public, the new party linked bureaucrats and volunteers, several other factors seem to have had an

---

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Taghrid Fayyad, *op. cit.*

<sup>62</sup> Kamal A. Beyoglou, 'Lebanon's New Leaders: Militias in Politics' in *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 3, Spring 1989, pp. 28-36.

<sup>63</sup> See Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*. London: Ithaca Press, 1986, pp. 45-56 and 67-83 for information on the Salam family and its linkage with the Maqasid Foundation's health, educational and welfare activities. Al-Maqasid was founded in 1878.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

important bearing on this trend. For instance, little planning and development work could be expected from the government, at least in the short term. Equally, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), set up in 1977 with help from international donors, was perennially short of funds and cabinet and parliamentary sessions were difficult to convene even during the most critical moments of the war period. In addition, international organisations were only willing to contribute large amounts of money and technical assistance for projects oriented towards Lebanon's needs after the cessation of hostilities.

Furthermore, as the crisis dragged on, the Lebanese people became increasingly bitter and disillusioned with warlords of all persuasions including their own, for their failure to end the conflict. In many cases, party discipline was hard to achieve and many excesses including corruption and protection rackets were common. In addition to the natural desire to provide for the well being of their constituents, political elites also hoped that fresh and appealing future orientated projects would revitalise the party image. For these reasons social action programmes branched out in new directions.

One such example was the CAOM's survey of village resources in Druze areas. This project which began in 1987 aimed to provide a statistical base on which a comprehensive approach to future development could be based. The Public Works Committee moved easily from work on damaged schools in co-operation with Oger Liban, a construction company owned by Rafiq al-Hariri whose work was underwritten by the European Union,<sup>64</sup> to building schools in towns that lacked educational facilities such as Warhaniyya and

---

<sup>64</sup> Harik, 'Continuity and Change...', *op. cit.* p. 21.

Mukhtara in the Chouf. An experimental farm at Ammik was opened in co-operation with the Italian Government and a project to establish a dairy farm in the Chouf was set up with the American NGO, World Vision.

Another example was the Social Welfare Agency headed by Victor Ghurayib. When its pilot project open Jubayl in 1991, it moved from emergency relief to developmental work. This project includes two model dairy farms in Jurit al-Qatan and al-Khirbi and a dairy processing plant. The Agency turned to the European Union for part of the financing, hoping to raise the rest from individual contributions.

Many of the Popular Committee projects were low budget, high impact efforts which used existing facilities in Kesrouan. They included the cleaning, opening and staffing of a public beach in Byblos which was a novelty for Lebanon, the creation of parking lots in urban centres which employed handicapped persons, and the rehabilitation and operation of part of the coastal railroad line. Like the dairy farms, these were clearly showcase projects.

The generally higher living standards in Mount Lebanon, and the difference in patterns of land ownership there as compared with Shi'i territories, is at least partially responsible for the differences in the type and extent of developmental activities sponsored by the Lebanese Forces and the PSP and those undertaken in the Shi'i domains.

As in many backward regions of the developing world, land tenure and political domination were traditionally closely linked in the South and in the Baalbek region. With this connection broken or extremely frayed, as the parliamentary elections of 1992 showed,<sup>65</sup> large

---

<sup>65</sup> Amal's candidates swept the South, while Hizballah's took the Baalbek-Hirmil area which was not contested by Amal. With a few exceptions, traditional feudal figures were not returned to parliament.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

injections of aid were needed to support the efforts of small, independent farmers if sustained agricultural development and a rising standard of living were to occur.

Led by Hizballah, the Islamic Movement concentrated its strongest efforts on agricultural development in the Bekaa Valley. Helped by a gift of 30 tractors from Iran, a well-planned and accelerated programme has been carried out. Agricultural co-operatives, begun in 1988, have been opened at the rate of one a year.<sup>66</sup> Pamphlets in Arabic on the use of materials and new techniques were being distributed and field demonstrations and consultations have been offered free of charge by qualified engineering staff. Moreover, 11 water wells were dug by Reconstruction Campaign in various locations in the Bekaa and the South. One, for example, brought water to the village of Libbaya which had been dry for 20 years. In May 1990, a veterinary centre was opened in Sahmur, in the western Bekaa; work on a modern agro-technical centre and a school in Hawsh Barada for which land has already been acquired, has already begun; and so has work on a large polyclinic medical centre in Hirmil.

There are also plans for an industrial development using local materials in the Bekaa and the South, as well as construction of low cost public housing which will be available to all but provided free of charge to those whose homes have been destroyed in national resistance areas. This construction will start after repairs on partially damaged homes have been completed. At the time of writing, 1,200 such homes had been reconstructed by Reconstruction Campaign.

---

<sup>66</sup> These centres provide insecticides, fertiliser and tools at cost and are at present operating in Mashgara, 'Ali Nahri, Nabi Uthman and Hermel, along with the centre in Iqlim al-Tuffah in Jiba'a.



While this is impressive, it does not represent all the social activity in Hizballah's Bekaa domain. In 1992 Hizballah instituted a free transportation system between Baalbek and outlying towns and added a restaurant which serves meals for the poor at no cost to its chain of cut-price supermarkets, pharmacies and clinics.<sup>67</sup> At Tayibi, five kilometres from Baalbek, a large complex of resort like bungalows was built in the summer of 1992 to house young people taking part in cultural and recreational activities sponsored by Hizballah.

While the political motivation behind these activities is obvious, the major aim of Amal and Hizballah's developmental activities is to keep the Shi'a on their land and induce those who left to return. This is felt to be especially important in the South where there is fear of Israeli designs on the area's water resources. Thus, under Nabih Birri's presidency of the Ministry of the South several large developmental projects were undertaken, the most important of which was an \$8 million water well project at Jilo, 15 kilometres from Tyre, which piped water to 36 villages. The recently inaugurated Zirariyya Bridge over the Litani River which was built at a cost of \$2,400,000 aimed to open up the region as did roads constructed near Tyre and Zirariyya. The hospital and highway bypass at Nabatiyya and schools in Burj Rahhal, Bisiriyya, and Nabatiyya,<sup>68</sup> as well as the planned centre for the rehabilitation of the handicapped at Sarafand, have diminished the image of the South as an abandoned no-man's land while enhancing Amal's role as a social benefactor.

---

<sup>67</sup> See the party organ *al-Ahad*, August 1, 1989 for a list of dozens of pharmacies, medical dispensaries, and dental clinics associated with Hizballah throughout Lebanon.

<sup>68</sup> Interviews with Muhammad Ubayd, President, and Yussif Hassan, Vice President of Amal's External Affairs Bureau. Beirut, July 20, 1992.

When Amal's projects are added to the activities of the Islamic Movement, it can be seen that considerable attention has been given to the Shi'i regions since the community's awakening. The unresolved struggle for community leadership and the great needs of the Shi'i domains, indicate that in the future social programmes and important developmental activities will be stressed far more in Shi'i locales than in Maronite, Druze or other areas of Lebanon.

### ***Finance as a Factor in the Scope and Types of Assistance Provided***

Public services and projects cannot be provided gratuitously, and thus funding and donor location determine what can be undertaken in the realm of social assistance.

The shape and location of Lebanon's power domains have an important bearing on what funds can be generated internally. For instance, during the war Amal, the Lebanese Forces and the PSP each exploited their coastal strip by opening illegal ports and charging for shipping and receiving cargoes. However, they all denied that party receipts from these sources directly financed their social assistance and public service operations. Moreover, they acknowledged receiving large donations from the parties or party leaders.

Druze and Maronite parties drew additional advantage from the fact that the areas and populations under their control were amenable to taxation. Although some academics have claimed that the Lebanese Forces levied indirect taxes on cinema tickets, restaurant meals and gasoline while also establishing a household tax on a graduated basis,<sup>69</sup> Frayha denied that any of these funds came directly to his

---

<sup>69</sup> Snider, 'The Lebanese Forces: Their Origin...', *op. cit.* p. 23.

organisation. Instead, the Popular Committees relied on careful budgeting, donations from NGO's such as Save the Children, sources available to the Maronite Patriarch, contributions from monastic orders and the expatriate community as well as contributions from the Kata'ib and the Lebanese Forces.

The PSP was less concerned than were the Lebanese Forces about the collection of fees and taxes as a major source of CAOM funding. The few major thoroughfares leading to the mountainous Druze areas were well suited for the establishment of toll booths at military checkpoints and funds collected there represented the lion's share of the CAOM's annual budget.<sup>70</sup> The proceeds of a household tax also went to the local administration. Both Ghurayib's Social Welfare Agency and the CAOM suffered drastic funding cuts when the militias were disarmed and the Lebanese Army extended its authority to Druze and Maronite strongholds during 1990–1991. At that time, the PSP pushed hard but unsuccessfully for the establishment of a Ministry of the Mountain which would receive special funds for reconstruction as had the Council and Ministry of the South.<sup>71</sup>

The full extent of financial contributions from religious groups in Iran and aid from the Iranian government to the Islamic Movement cannot be fully determined. It is reasonable to assume that the importance of the link between social assistance and the radical goals of some orthodox Shi'i groups would account for this reluctance to divulge sources of funding. It is known, however, that the Beirut Office of the Martyrs' Foundation forwards funds to its Tripoli, Beirut, Baalbek, Tyre and Nabatiyya branches to aid the families of martyrs.

---

<sup>70</sup> See Harik. 'Continuity and Change ....., ' *op. cit.* pp. 17-18.

<sup>71</sup> *L'Orient-le Jour*, February 13, 1991, p. 2.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

From all accounts the sums involved for monthly pensions and other benefits are considerable.<sup>72</sup>

According to Reconstruction Campaign's director, Sultan As'ad, efforts are made to supplement external aid by involving locals in project financing. For example, villagers raised \$18,000 of the \$120,000 needed for digging a well and adding a clinic to the *hussayniyya* in Libaya. Villagers also contributed \$6,000 worth of labour. Furthermore, according to Islamic principles, one fifth of religious donations (*Zakat*) may be spent on public projects. Sultan As'ad estimated that *Zakat* from Lebanon and abroad constitute about 20 per cent of the organisation's working funds.

In imposing para-legal systems of taxation and exploiting government facilities for the major portion of their budgets, the social programmes of the PSP and the Lebanese Forces were most vulnerable to the extension of state authority to their areas. But this was not the case in the South; state funding of the Council of the South, in which Amal has a strong interest, continued since it was perceived as being an important part of the national resistance effort.

Iran's contributions have placed Hizballah in the strongest financial position of the four organisations examined in this study. Furthermore, Hizballah can now, through its representatives in parliament, ask to share in decisions pertaining to the allocation of the

---

<sup>72</sup> *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, Vol. 11, 1987, p. 167 reports that in January 1987 the Director General of the Beirut office of the Martyrs' Foundation revealed that LL1.785 billion had been spent in Lebanon from late 1982 until 1986 on monthly pensions alone. Other reports cite large sums transferred from Iran to Hizballah but are impossible to confirm. For example according to *Al-Nahar Arab and International*, *op. cit.* Hizballah's annual allocation from the Iranian national treasury is approximately \$140 million.

Council of the South's funds as well. In addition, with Hizballah's emergence into mainstream politics, it can now approach NGO's for aid.<sup>73</sup>

### ***The Latent Functions of Social Action and Programme Variety***

As already noted, social action programmes were used by elites for more than their manifest humanitarian intentions. For instance, the separation of social institutions from political structures in each case cited in this study permitted service and welfare activities to be touted as apolitical and non-religious in nature and therefore open to anyone residing within their domains. This was heavily emphasised by all administrators and party officials with whom the author spoke and given as an example of their party's high moral ground in contrast with others.<sup>74</sup>

However, armed partisans acting as surrogate police forces in all regions enforced regulations and codes established by the service institutions, and working relations between political and service wings were highly co-ordinated. Thus political mileage was made from most projects and services. For instance, when it was decided to dig wells and install generators in seven public schools that had no water in the

---

<sup>73</sup> An inquiry revealed that on October 7, 1992 Hizballah sought a share of the medicines contributed by the Italian Government as did the other institutions examined in this study.

<sup>74</sup> Haj Shami of Hizballah stressed that Islam made no distinctions between people and served all equally. Zuhayr Obeidi, the Islamic groupings successful Beirut candidate in the parliamentary election of August 30, emphasised Hizballah's openness by the fact that the party interacts with all parts of Lebanese society in the health, social and educational fields. *Al-Safir*, September 2, 1992, p. 2.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

Dahiyah, Hizballah's Student Recruitment Office arranged for volunteer help. In another instance, Hizballah arranged for parental assistance when work on schools was begun by Reconstruction Campaign.<sup>75</sup> Co-ordination between the Martyrs' Foundation, Hizballah and Reconstruction Campaign follows a similar pattern today. Hizballah determines the legitimacy of the families' housing needs, and if necessary, arranges necessary property transactions. Land acquisitions are made with funds from the Martyr's Foundation and Reconstruction Campaign then draws up the plans and builds the desired structure.

Likewise, the close linkage between Frayha and Ghurayib and the Lebanese Forces, between Amal and state institutions serving the South, and between Walid Joumblatt and the PSP with the Civil Administration, was organic, despite the technical 'independence' of the social institutions they headed.

Playing on war related emotions, leaders of these groups represented programmes of social action as evidence of their own know-how and commitment and their communities' strength of purpose. Social activists and administrators in all the parties tended to idealise their roles as standing for high principles and those of their institutions as standing for the best in their societies. Druze administrators, for example, saw their efforts as models of Druze steadfastness in the face of efforts by the 'isolationists' (a common designation for Maronites) to defeat them and drive them out of their territories. On the other hand, people who had worked in the Popular Committees felt that they symbolised new, creative thinking and the end of the old-fashioned

---

<sup>75</sup> See the Director's report, 'Al-Masih al-'Am li Ihtiyajat al-Madaris al-Rasmiyya fi al-Dahiyah al-Janubiyya'. Beirut: February 1992.

Ottoman bureaucratic mentality. From the acquisition of the most modern equipment, to the establishment of environmental protection rules consistent with international practice,<sup>76</sup> Frayha's organisation perpetuated an image of modernity consistent with Maronite feelings of pride in their advancement over other groups. Hizballah executives consistently referred to their efforts as living examples of the concern of Islam for the poor and downtrodden.

Moreover, symbolic references were often used to reinforce group identity. For instance, the title of the Lebanese Forces' radio station—'Radio Free Lebanon' (*Lubnan al-hurr*)—which opened in 1978, clearly expressed the symbolic meaning of the Maronite enclave and linked it to the party's goal to 'liberate' every portion of the 10,452 square kilometres of the state. As Frayha observed, social programmes and popular projects reflected work that would later be accomplished throughout liberated Lebanon. Thus the cleaned and guarded public beach in Byblos symbolised the promise of more free beaches as well as other facilities for lower income groups during Bashir's presidency.

The PSP's radio station 'Voice of the Mountain' (*sawt al-jabal*) proclaimed the PSP as the authentic spokesmen for the mountainous regions of Mount Lebanon. Symbolically, the historic castle of the Shihabi emirs in Beiteddine, formerly the summer residence of Lebanese presidents, was made 'the People's Palace' and the seat of the Druze service organisation. Furthermore, the planting of thousands of cedar seedlings on the slopes of Mount Barouk by the Scouts of the Martyr Kamal Joumblatt, and the cleaning of roads by PSP militiamen using CAOM equipment, underlined the care of the Druze

---

<sup>76</sup> The bans on dynamiting fish and cutting down trees are examples.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

community's physical environment which was idealised as the heart of Lebanon.

Amal made a similar gesture in south Lebanon in 1984 when thousands of nut trees were planted in villages which had recently suffered the ravages of the Israeli invasion. The radio station 'Voice of the Resistance' (*sawt al-muqawama*), begun in 1988 through Birri's Ministry of the South, attributed a noble mission to the area and its sons.

The Islamic Movement's agricultural projects in the Bekaa are heavily overlaid with religious significance and were presented by Reconstruction Campaign's director, Sultan As'ad, as a religious duty which links the renewal of the earth to the needs of Muslim people. The Islamic identity of the locale is emphasised by numerous giant portraits of Ayatollah Khomeini, Ali Khamanei and Hussayn Musawi and a large model of Jerusalem's Al'Aqsa Mosque at the entrance of the city of Baalbek. It is significant that Hizballah's radio 'Voice of the Dispossessed' (*sawt al-mustad'afin*) which was opened in 1986 in the Bekaa, and the 'Voice of Faith' (*sawt al-iman*) begun a year later in Beirut, do not link the Islamic Movement to any one locale as other stations do. As Sayyid Fadlallah emphasised, there are dispossessed in Akkar, the Chouf and Kesrouan as well as in the South and the Bekaa, and Islam is a universal religion that cares for all peoples.

It is clear that such identification with territory was widespread in Lebanon during the war and continues very strongly today in the domains that are involved in the national resistance. Michel Seurat noted a similar tendency to idealise space in his study of a Sunni Muslim popular quarter in Lebanon's northern capital, Tripoli. Over time, Bab Tabanne had become *terra sancta* for the young militiamen who defended the area and resided there. He observed that the locale had



acquired a pure Islamic image as it awaited the wider triumph of Islam in Lebanon.<sup>77</sup>

The institutions originally created to carry out basic public services in times of crisis were also set to work on projects that specifically reinforced primordial communal attachments. For instance, before 1982 there were only three theological schools in Shi'i areas. Since then, Reconstruction Campaign has built seven new institutions where young people are being schooled in the Khomeini tradition of liberation shi'ism. The most recent is Hawza al-Ami in Baalbek where a library, a rarity in Lebanon, has also been opened.

In the past seven years, Amal has also been involved in school construction in the Bekaa, but its concern is with public schools. According to Muhammad Ubayd, President of the party's External Affairs Bureau, 33 public schools have been completed in the region through the efforts of the Ministry of the South. Faced with this activity, the PSP, which had previously opened four schools in the area, decided to cease this work.<sup>78</sup>

Nevertheless in Druze areas, the CAOM is heavily involved in public education. This was because of the severe teacher shortage that followed the Mountain War of 1983. After the situation had been stabilised, in part by bringing the Druze component of the Ministry of Education to work at Beiteddine, the Education Committee sought to redress, through its own publications, what it considered were biased interpretations of Lebanese and Arab history in the textbooks widely

---

<sup>77</sup> Michel Seurat, 'Le Quartier de Bab Tebbane à Tripoli Liban — Etude d'une 'Asabiyya Urbaine', *L'Etat de Barbarie*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1989.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Doreid Yaghi, Vice President of PSP International Affairs. Beirut: July 12, 1992.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

used by the Ministry of Education. A new set of civics textbooks which emphasised socialist ideology, consistent with the PSP's beliefs, followed.<sup>79</sup>

The refurbishing of the Beiteddine historic museum, completed in 1991, and the extensive reconstruction underway on the ancient town centre and historic mosque of the Christian village of Deir el-Qamar in the Chouf, involve both the CAOM Public Works and Cultural Committees. Joumblatt's interest in cultural landmarks is also evidenced in the construction of a museum in Baalbek, begun in 1990. Indeed, it should be noted here that the PSP had an important membership in the Baalbek-Hirmil region prior 1982 and the rise of the Islamic Movement. Thus, opening the city to tourism once again would be one way for the population to regain what once was the major source of livelihood and would make them less dependent on Hizballah aid.

From amongst the parties examined in this study, the construction of religious buildings currently seems to be the province of the Islamic Movement. New mosques and *husayniyyas* such as the one begun in the Nuwayri sector of West Beirut, plus visits to holy shrines and trips to Iran offered to members of Hizballah, are important efforts to revitalise the Muslim faith in Shi'i regions.

In general, the long held and defensive cultural positions of the Maronite community were partially responsible for the early and widespread development of cultural associations of all kinds. As noted earlier, private school systems of high quality and religious

---

<sup>79</sup> For the argument over Lebanon's history see Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Revisited*. London: I.B. Tauris and Company, Ltd., 1988, pp. 200-215, and Harik, 'Community and State....', pp. 23-24.

institutions of all kinds were common in Maronite areas early on. The Popular Committees and other associations developed at the time of Bashir's leadership did not have to concentrate on these aspects of communal life but sought other ways to reawaken the Maronites to their identity and their mission.

Taken as a whole, the wide range of social action promoted by these four organisations emphasise the political meaning of the locales they served. Indeed, depending on the political programme involved, some institutions and activities were made to illustrate deliberate models of the new republic that the planners hoped would arise in the aftermath of the civil war. Those who envisioned the most radical changes—the Lebanese Forces and the Islamic Movement—went the furthest along this road in programme depth, variety and resource expenditure. This was because both were militantly advanced civilising causes: one, the Christian cultural mission, and the other, a revitalised Islam. Both were part of broad, dynamic international movements that had important regional and global implications. In addition, the Maronites feared political marginalisation and even loss of identity if the battle were lost, while islamists were engaged in a long term campaign begun before 1975 to win over the Shi'i community and then the rest of the nation to Islam. The wider causes of both these groups based on religious conviction greatly influenced the vigour with which social action was undertaken, and explains stronger efforts to let services and programmes stand for fundamental goals. Had Bashir Gemayel lived, this would have been more clearly illustrated.

The PSP and Amal, on the other hand, present themselves as secular and did not fight for a fundamentally redesigned state since under Lebanon's confessional system neither stood to lose what political assets they have at present, and both could hope for political

gains in a restructured state. Thus, the PSP's basic goal in establishing the CAOM was to take hold of a desperate emergency that faced the community in 1983. As the crisis ground on, the aim was to keep the Druze on the soil and prevent the small community from scattering through out the world. The attraction of new members and the use of the CAOM as a challenge to the state helped their image as opposition leaders.

For Amal, entering the Lebanese political system and exploiting it as a fully fledged power was a major achievement for the new and sprawling movement. The extent of destruction in its power domains, the ongoing struggle in the South and challenges from Hizballah, in addition to its own internal limitations, made for modest political goals.

### *Conclusions and Implications*

In general, the territorial dimensions of Lebanon's protracted internal conflict created greater appreciation by political elites of the functions of territory that went beyond simple geostrategic reason. For those with authority over large segments of the population, public services and social work are the undisputed result of state collapse and internal migration, and are therefore strategically important to overall campaigns and goals. Their disruption might have serious consequences for internal security.

For the sake of efficiency, and due to the scale and urgency of the tasks that had been forced upon them by the flagging state, some of the parties examined in this study established full-scale local administrations while others, according to conditions in their locales and their means and goals, found other institutional solutions to meet popular demands.

Despite these variations, certain commonalities stand out which permit general conclusions about the development and political impact of public services and social assistance under conditions of governmental collapse and conflict. For instance, centralised, uniform and reliable spatial control was an important precondition for integrated public assistance programmes. Only after the various Lebanese territories had undergone a pattern of purification characterised by the removal of the group that did not belong, followed by the political neutralisation of contending internal factions, was the viability of the entity assured and broadly based social services made possible.

The progression of the conflict and the further debilitation of the state generated continuous public pressure and reliance on party-linked service institutions. This in turn led to the expansion of programmes and their consolidation as established enterprises with budgets, and secured internal and external financing. Funding, whether from foreign or domestic governmental agencies or NGOs, was extremely important and was sought by all organisations due to the level of administrative disruption and human need with which they were forced to cope. Furthermore, party leaders were often able to target the recipients of large contributions and take credit for the projects that were carried out within their domains by other agencies. Indeed, the availability of government and international aid encouraged the formation of some of the social welfare institutions and programmes examined in this study.

With no end of the conflict in sight, elites began to take a long term look at their community's needs, set priorities and move ahead with developmental projects. The efficiency of their operations and the administrative know-how developed over the years permitted fruitful co-operation with the international agencies which participated in

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

projects. In no sense were any of Lebanon's power domains the fully autonomous entities claimed in some quarters. Lebanon's regions were always loosely articulated and were simply more so under conditions of conflict.

Another important factor in the evolution of social action programmes was elite exploitation of complex emotions revolving around fears of marginalisation and banishment. These feelings encouraged a deep consciousness of the link between location and identity, making the Lebanese individual especially susceptible to the symbolic meanings attributed to locales by leaders. In the cases examined in this study, the institutions meant to serve those locales and their residents received similar emotional colouration, and were usually endowed with cherished community attributes. As the war continued there was more emphasis on projects designed to reinforce primordial attachments and thus to revitalise community solidarity.

On the surface, social activities were projected as responses to human need and suffering, religious duty and party obligation. While this presentation was undoubtedly valid, it did not mask the fact that ruthless goals of community and national hegemony were also responsible for the expansion and diversification of social programmes. There is no doubt that the endgames of the various elites were important factors in determining the scope, variety and vigour with which social action was pursued.

Differences in locale, population size, and human and physical developmental levels shaped and set limits to what was possible in terms of social assistance and service programmes. The Shi'i community was less advantaged in all of these attributes than were the Druze and Maronites. This explains the fact that social action in its linkage to Islam was an important agent of political mobilisation as

early as Imam al-Sadr's arrival in Lebanon in 1959 and remains a critical part of the Shi'i awakening still in process.

Administrative leadership had a strong bearing on the types of approaches adopted with respect to social action. Frayha and the CAOM's Nasir al-Din ran highly centralised bureaucracies in line with the characteristics of the sponsoring parties. The PSP's structure basically expanded to include an enlarged public service role, which was given a separate institutional framework. When its major sources of finance contracted, social service activities devolved back to the party bureaux where they had originated, illustrating the elasticity and staying power of the Druze political machine.

In contrast, with Bashir gone, his well-run Popular Committees and programmes for the Maronite community soon disappeared from the public eye because their energetic cadres were not allegiant to Samir Geagea. Indeed, Geagea's social programmes did not approach the scope or appeal of the Popular Committees mainly because he himself had never seized the imagination or captured the loyalty of the Maronite community as had Bashir.

The reasons for Amal's relative weakness in the social services field are apparent when the organisation is compared to the parties that successfully fielded large-scale service operations. A broad, popular movement rather than a structured political party, Amal did not have the administrative wherewithal to raise funds or create institutions to address the enormous problems of its domains. Thus, the Council of the South was of enormous importance to the movement. The dynamism and growth of Hizballah's social activities, their effectiveness as seen in the recent elections, and the Party's targeted expansion into the South, may force Amal to re-evaluate the political role of public services and encourage an administrative overhaul.

## THE LEBANESE MILITIAS

On the other hand, before the civil war began, Islamic groups aided by Iranian interests developed a political programme based on armed resistance, religious revitalisation, and social assistance. The existence of multiple groups with a variety of funding was particularly important between 1982 and 1988 because it was hard to define exactly who or what Hizballah was. Now that Hizballah has publicly emerged, the segmentation and specialisation of social institutions is no less important. With Islamic welfare agencies including the specialised construction company Reconstruction Campaign duly registered as Lebanese charitable associations, it would be particularly difficult for the government to move against them should it desire to undercut a major source of Hizballah's popularity. According to Haj Shami, however, such a move is unlikely considering the amount and vital nature of work Hizballah is doing. Furthermore, it is now possible for Hizballah to press for the elaboration of a coherent agricultural policy and the means to carry it out from within the legislative body.

Evidence of increased social activities by both Amal and Hizballah, and where possible, in each other's domains, leads to the conclusion that success in the Lebanese Shi'i power struggle depends upon which competitor can most widely mobilise the large Shi'i sub-proletariat. The fundamental issue in today's economically depressed Lebanon is—what does each movement have to offer? According to Hizballah officials, a major asset is their steady, patient, reliable work in a country with a government of big talk and little action.<sup>80</sup> To some extent, this was what all of the large-scale social assistance operations

---

<sup>80</sup> Jackson Diehl in 'Moslems Clean up Israeli Arab town'. *The Washington Post*, July 17, 1990, p. 1, quotes a Muslim fundamentalist mayor explaining his party's election victory in almost these exact words.



offered during the war years. The political results seem to have been a considerable expansion of the parties' client networks in days of hardship and uncertainty.

The end of protracted internal conflict is no guarantee that social barriers will quickly fall or that governmental reorganisation will constitute a new beginning. Years of violence, hatred and neglect must be overcome if that is to occur. A start can be made if public confidence in the government can be restored, but this depends not only on new attitudes but on economic revival.

In 1992, for the first time in Lebanon's history, a government was overturned by massive demonstrations over the failing economy. Four years after the theoretical end of the civil war, the Lebanese state has just begun to acquire funds for the reconstruction of Beirut's commercial centre, and for the ravaged telephone, electricity and water infrastructure, and to aid citizens in the reconstruction of homes and properties. However, the current situation all but guarantees continued disregard of the basic needs of most of the country's outlying regions. Given this situation, the parties will remain the predominant political references and sources of social assistance in their territories for some time to come. While the prospects of national integration are not served by such extra-governmental activity, a good case can be made for the fact that in undertaking public services and social programmes, warlords and their bureaucrats have actually held the fragile Lebanese state together for more than 15 years.