



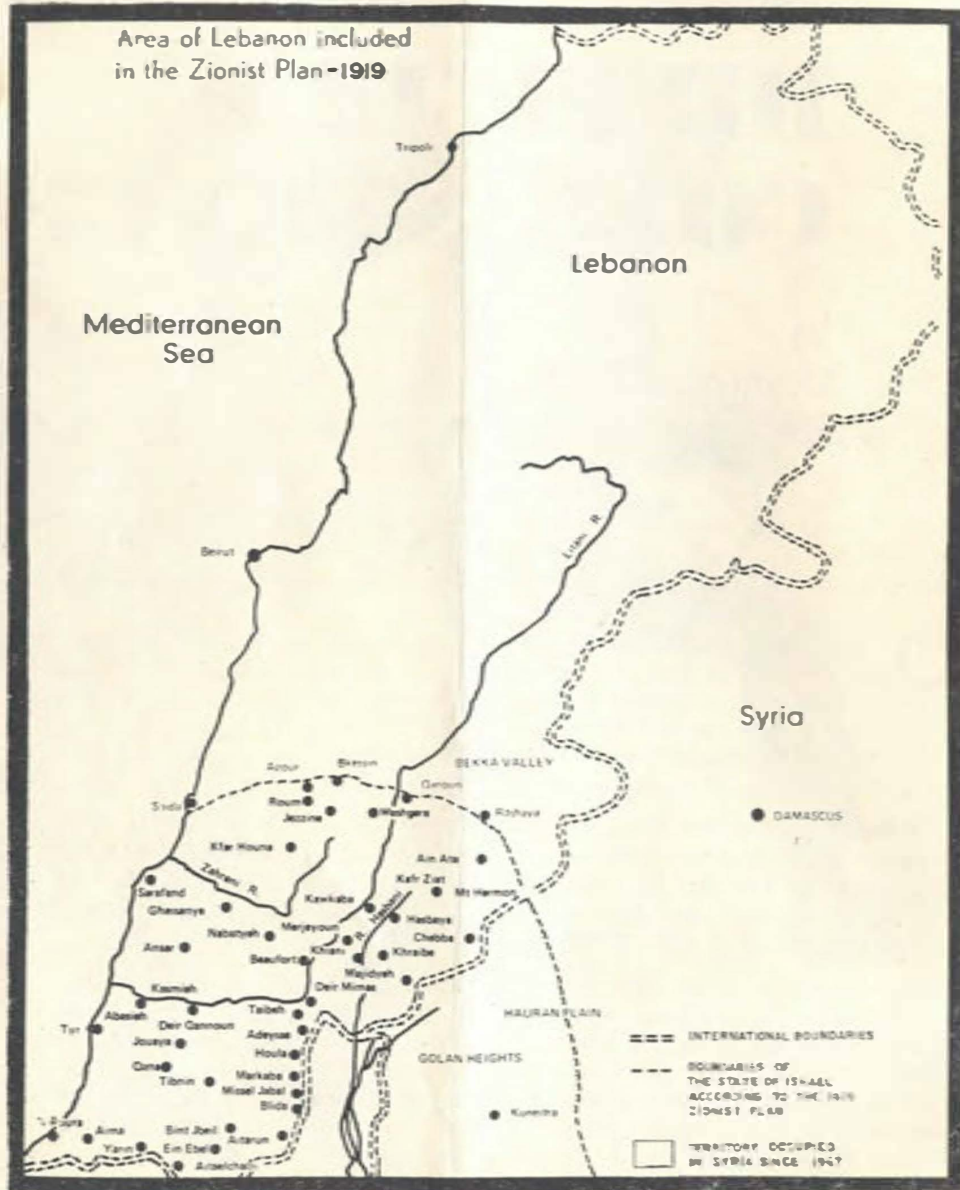
A DIFFICULT COEXISTENCE

by
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ON September 16, Lebanon was once more invaded by Israel. This aggression consisted of bombings on the 8th and 9th which caused 200 victims in Syria among large civilian groups, and on the 16th in Lebanon. It was Israel's first reaction to the kidnapping and death of its 11 sportsmen in an action by the five commandos of Black September, four of whom also died from the bullets fired by West German or Israeli police.

If the invasion of the 16th against the south of Lebanon —less costly in terms of human victims than the bombings against Syria— was given broader publicity, it is due to the fact that both Israel and the United States hope that, either by dialogue or by arms, the same results will be achieved concerning Palestinian activity in Lebanon as with the Black Amman of September 1970.

The unexpected Israeli withdrawal after 36 hours of invasion, occurred without the objectives having been realized — according to Israeli Chief of Staff David Eleazar — namely, occupying the central-south region of the country in order to eliminate from it all Palestinian presence and then advance on El Yanub, catching it in a pincer from the north and the south. Thus the suspicion that a formal promise from the Lebanese government had been negotiated with Tel Aviv, through Washington, to definitively impede the actions of the commandos from the south in the future.



The immediate proclamation of the state of emergency for the entire country, the subsequent tension between Lebanese and Palestinians in the face of the military regime's extension, the notice of clashes between army and fedayeen, discounted by a strict military censorship, made one think that if the situation continued, the Black Amman of September 1970 could be repeated here. In any case that was what Israel and Washington hoped for and what their respective information organs were clearly suggesting.

Although the action of the Lebanese army against the invasion was not as conclusive as was then claimed, and the Lebanese Foreign Affairs Minister Jalil Abujamad himself recognized this, it was meritorious in itself because it was the first time in this repeated history of aggression that the decision to fight was taken. Also the Lebanese army has been consciously disarmed by the political leaders or very selectively armed so that, by its character, it does not incite Israeli reprisals to destroy it. Nevertheless, the Lebanese army, which suffered 18 losses in this invasion, claimed for itself alone the merit of the Israeli withdrawal and despite the fact that there were not a great number of Palestinians in the central-south region invaded, vigorously denied that it knew there were 26 deaths, 50 wounded and 12 captured.



THE anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian tumult in the western world that followed the Munich action served, as on so many other occasions, to hide much more serious events. No one recalled during those days, that only three months earlier, Israeli "terrorists" had entered Lebanese territory and kidnapped five Syrian and five Lebanese officers and killed the four police guards that accompanied them; it was forgotten that in 1972 alone, Lebanon has been the objective of military aggression seven times and invaded four, that it suffered 204 civilian casualties and losses of several hundred million pounds, in an action organized by a State that was destined to "terrorize" the civilian population of Lebanon in a continuous and systematic manner, pit them against the Palestinians and provoke the intervention of the Lebanese army in order to restrict existence in this last refuge of the resistance. With reason it was said in Beirut that in the confidential report made by US Ambassador W. Buffum to his State Department, the loaded remark accompanying it that Palestinian activity in Lebanon would justify in Washington's eyes any Israeli aggression including the permanent occupation of

Memorandum sent by the Lebanese army to the Palestine resistance

To all the security forces:

To the General Leadership of the Internal Security Forces ISF; To the Leadership of General Security and the Superior Palestine committee of Lebanon:

In virtue of Decree No. 3991 of September 16, 1972, and of the disposition of Decreed Law 52 on the proclamation of the state of emergency or of the military zone established August 5, 1967, the Army Command communicates the following:

Division of resistance detachments.

1) It is henceforth prohibited for the resistance forces to be in the following sectors:

Eastern sector of El Yanub.

To the south of the Chabaa-Hasbaya highway and in the interior of villages and along a perimeter of two kilometer radius as a minimum around the localities. Rachaya Wadi region. In the interior of the villages and on a perimeter with a minimum radius of two kilometers.

Central sector. It is prohibited for any new member of the Palestine resistance to penetrate into it. The fedayees who are in it must evacuate the villages and a perimeter of a minimum of two kilometers radius around them. Nabatiye region. The status quo is maintained and members of the resistance may remain in the refugee camps.

Eastern region. The fedayees are prohibited from being outside the refugee camps.

Beqa'a region. The fedayees are prohibited from being outside the refugee camps.

Mt. Lebanon region. The fedayees are prohibited from being outside the refugee camps.

2) Movements of members of the resistance are regulated.

—In the sectors. Only the members of the Palestine Armed Struggle Commando (PASC) can appear armed and in uniform. Their appearance must nevertheless be in coordination with the liaison department of the general staff

in charge of Palestine military affairs.

—Outside the camps. The same as above.

3) Sanctions.

Any person who does not respect these measures will be subjected to military jurisdiction.

4) Entry into force.

The measures contained in the communique will enter into force at 1600 hours local time on Sunday, September 17, 1972.

All the forces of the army, the ISF and general security are charged with applying the regulations of this decree.

a part of Lebanon; and the subsequent opposition vote by the United States representative in the Security Council to a resolution requesting Israel to abstain from reprisals, constituted a green light to Tel Aviv for the aggression that actually followed.

The most important Israeli aggressions against Lebanon were motivated by commando actions that absolutely in no way implicated that country: detour of a Sabena airline plane to Tel Aviv (May 30, 1972), action by the Japanese suicide commando against Lod airport (September 5, 1972), Munich (September 5, 1972). Nevertheless in each case Israel subjected Beirut to the blackmail of demanding that it expel, silence or attack the Palestinians on pain of finding itself

exposed to reprisal. Beirut voluntarily gave in each time. The suspension of all Palestinian activity was demanded, without taking into account the fact that ceding meant entering into a vicious circle that has led Israel to demand the withdrawal of the Palestinians from the south of Lebanon, but has also insisted that there be no talk permitted in Beirut, as occurred as a result of the attack on the Lod airport when the PFLP information offices were closed by order of the Lebanese government. It was forgotten that it is the existence of the Palestinian people reclaiming their land that prevents Israel's consolidation even though it be merely psychological. The Munich action caught the Lebanese government off guard in this indecision concerning the resistance.

Israel's demand was decisive: elimination by the Lebanese themselves of the Palestinian presence in the south, or else permanent military occupation by Israel. The Lebanese were caught between the frying pan and the fire when Washington, considered to be the only one capable of intervening for Lebanon with Israel, took Tel Aviv's side in order to win the US Jewish vote.

When it ordered its army to fight after having declined an offer of military aid from Syria and another from Libya, Lebanon proclaimed:

- that it had enough for its own self-defense; and
- that in the absence of Arab collaboration, it found itself forced to take the measures it deemed necessary (against the Palestinians) in order to safeguard its territory until such time as a common Arab strategy existed.



THE state of emergency decreed on the 16th in Lebanon imposes on the commandos, *manu militari*, the restriction demanded, and modifies, without prior acceptance by the interested parties, the Coiro Agreements which since 1969 have regulated the difficult coexistence between Lebanon and the resistance.

The problem which has really been raised is that of knowing whether the repetition of a Black Amman of September 1970, is possible in Lebanon. President Fouad el-Khouri, Prime Minister Saeb Salam and numerous other political leaders have reiterated in these days that they will not permit an armed confrontation with the Palestinians. Even Pierre Gemayel, the nonconcordatory head of the Falangist Party who during the 1968 crisis saw the paramilitary body of his party confront the commandos in the streets, has now said that if it comes to deciding the alternative between an armed confrontation with the commandos and the consequent threat of civil war, or the occupation of the south of Lebanon by Israel, he would choose the latter as the lesser evil. Although these attitudes effectively reflect the state of mind of a country like Lebanon which lives on the

transit trade with the Arab hinterland and tourism, and since one of these two vital aspects of its existence — trade — must necessarily take place through Syria, it is extraordinarily vulnerable to any restrictive measure on the part of these two countries which have a different attitude in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is obvious that these desires of Lebanese political men are subject to imponderables.

In any case, the evolution of the crisis is conditioned by various limitations: the Lebanese army does not have the power of the Jordanian army, which is considered to be one of the strongest and best equipped in the Arab world; in Lebanon there would not be the same unity around an eventual "final decision" that exists in Jordan around the genocidal project of Hussein on the Bedouin base of his society; and on the other hand, today the Palestine resistance, from the military point of view, finds itself in a situation which does not permit it, without committing suicide, to fight against any army.

Although all dialogue between Lebanese and Palestinians today starts from the compelling situation created by the Lebanese army, Beirut has demonstrated over this period, that it wants to obtain its ends with a more or less forced



"understanding." If the mediation mission of the General Secretary of the Arab League was successful in securing the Palestinian promise to temporarily freeze activities from the south, it is because it was accompanied by the promise to launch a grand scale diplomatic offensive. Because in effect, Munich, despite the anti-Arab clamor that Israel sponsored, served the Palestinians by putting a temporary damper on illusory projects like that of King Hussein, and, above all, again produced the conviction — as French President Georges Pompidou himself said — that without a just solution to the Palestine problem, the world will be witness to more and more Munichs. The presence of Abu Zaim, Commander in Chief of the Palestinian forces in the south of Lebanon and absolutely opposed on previous occasions to any modification in the Cairo Agreements, is perhaps the only guarantee in the discussions that took place between the Lebanese army and the Palestinians, of the continuity of what they both want to agree to.





IN Cisjordan Israel wanted to create its Arab bantustan with Hussein's aid, but whatever the destiny of that project may be, it has been discredited. In Lebanon a certain evolution of the political argument was noted. The leaders of the parties, when they refer to the activity of the Palestine resistance in the south of Lebanon, are beginning to say that it is the fruit of "undisciplined and uncontrolled" elements.

More important than this is the appearance of a curious opinion, that of the Maronite patriarch Paul Meouchi, who declared on September 27 that: "Israel has no intention of occupying the south of Lebanon and its proposal is only to expel the Palestinians. The Israelis do not want to occupy Lebanon and are carrying out their attacks to keep the commandos out of the area and force them to evacuate the south."

The chief of the Falangist Party, Pierre Gemayel, who is also an outstanding Maronite leader, immediately said that he shared "100%" the opinions of the Patriarch. These affirmations contrast greatly with those of Prime Minister Saeb Salam, who said that Israel not only sought to occupy a part of Lebanon, but also that "our very multiconfessional structure is a pernicious example to them" that they wish to destroy because the State of Israel today is based on racial and confessional discrimination.

Despite the importance that still exists in Lebanon of belonging to a specific religious community, the country's political and social evolution today nevertheless responds to the modern problems of class differences and an ideological affiliation—ambivalent in some cases, advanced in others—which transcends the sectarian. The Lebanese know this despite the isolated voices that have arisen; they find themselves in a difficult position, subjected to the permanent menace of Israel which, this time, demands the final liquidation of the resistance; and on the other hand, they confront the resistance, which even though it may accept the compromise of eliminating all activity temporarily, acceding to the desires of Lebanon, must oppose any prejudicial alteration in the Cairo Agreements.