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KAMIL AZIMOV, OLGA BIBIKOVA. SHIITES IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL SPACE OF MODERN LEBANON (The first part was published in № 1, 2021) // *Article was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

*Keywords: South Lebanon, Shiites, Maronites, Amal, Hizbullah, Palestinians.*

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*Citation:* Azimov K., Bibikova O. Shiites in the socio-political space of modern Lebanon // *Russia and the Moslem World*, 2021, No. 3 (313), P. 71–92. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2021.03.07

*Abstract. The permanent conflict between Palestinians and Israelis in the southern regions of Lebanon forced local Shiites to create their own organization to protect the interests of the residents of the region. Today, the Shiite organization Hizbullah has become an important factor in the socio-political landscape of Lebanon.*

## **Article № 2**

In 1943, after the end of the French mandate, Lebanon gained independence. Religious communities (there are 18 of them in Lebanon) – Christians (Catholics and Orthodox), Moslems (Sunnis and Shiites), etc. signed the National Pact, according to which a representative of the Maronite community was elected president of the country, a Sunni received the post of prime minister, a Shiite took the chair of the speaker of parliament, etc. This agreement fixed the political priority of the Maronite Christians. The argument in their favor was the alleged numerical superiority of

the Christian population, although the population census was conducted long before the signing of the National Pact – in 1932.<sup>1</sup> At that time, Christians, being the most educated part of the country's population, were extremely active as compared to the Moslem population of the country. Traditionally, on the eve of the elections, Maronite candidates visited countries where a Lebanese diaspora existed (today it numbers from 8 to 14 million people), and there they received votes and financial support from their co-religionists, which allowed the Maronite community to secure victory in the elections.<sup>2</sup> The population census among Moslems was deliberately inaccurate due to the low degree of literacy of this group of the population.<sup>3</sup> The current situation led to a system that put the Moslem community in a deliberately unequal position.

Over time, it became obvious that the demographic situation in Lebanon has changed. In particular, the emigration from Lebanon affected Christians to a greater extent than Moslems. And the birth rate of Christians was noticeably lower than that of Moslems. So, in 2012, according to the Pew Research Center, the number of Moslems in the country was 4,461,910 people (61.3%), while the number of Christians was 2,780,505 people (38.2%).<sup>4</sup>

### **Socio-economic situation of the Shiites of Lebanon (late 20th century)**

The Shiite community in Lebanon has long been the poorest. The areas inhabited by Shiites<sup>5</sup> were striking with their unsanitary conditions. Nevertheless, there were and exist now rich clans among the Shiites (for example, al-Asaad, al-Usairan, al-Khalil), but until recently the majority of Shiites were illiterate. The activities of Musa Sadr, as well as the progressive parties of Lebanon, changed the situation: young Shiites began to receive education (including on the basis of scholarships provided by the USSR). Thus, the increase in the level of education within the community has made Shiites a significant strata of society. Sadr,

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with the support of Iran, created a whole network of humanitarian and charitable organizations, which led to noticeable changes that contributed to the penetration of new ideas and the emergence of new aspirations. Moreover, M. Sadr managed to achieve the creation of a Shiite (separate from Sunnis) representative office<sup>6</sup> in the Lebanese Parliament, which significantly increased the status of Shiites in Lebanese society. Not the least role was played by the activities of progressive Lebanese parties, including the Communist Party of Lebanon, which, needing mass support, involved the Moslems of southern Lebanon, primarily Shiites, in the social movement<sup>7</sup>.

Naturally, over time, the self-consciousness of the Shiite population of Southern Lebanon has significantly strengthened. This was also facilitated by the political situation in the country, which developed against the background of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. By the early 1980s the community, realizing its importance, demanded the right to participate in the management of the state. The Islamic Revolution in Iran (1978–79) played an important role in this evolution. And if Tehran failed to implement the idea of establishing Shiite rule in Lebanon, then its anti-Israeli views of Tehran were supported by the Shiites of Southern Lebanon.

The community has long suffered from the indifference of state structures to its economic situation and socio-political status. Not the least role was played by the neighborhood with Israel, against which the Palestinians who were in the Lebanon territory constantly organized armed attacks. Israel responded to them with bombings and raids, which caused significant damage to the economy of Southern Lebanon.

Musa Sadr had a negative attitude towards the Palestinian presence in Southern Lebanon. Speaking at a rally of thousands in the Bekaa Valley in 1974, Sadr said: "The PLO is a factor of anarchy in the south. Shiites must overcome their inferiority complex in relation to Palestinian organizations. We say: enough is enough!"<sup>8</sup>

The Palestinian detachments were interested in maintaining their presence in Southern Lebanon, and the weak Lebanese army could not protect the border with Israel. When the Government of R. Karami<sup>9</sup> decided to take control of this area in April 1969, the Lebanese army detachments faced Palestinian resistance. Further attempts to solve the problem did not lead to its resolution due to contradictions between the leaders of confessional communities, which concealed deeper differences associated with the traditional confrontation between various political groups.

### **Consequences of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon**

In the autumn of 1970, the number of Palestinians in the country increased dramatically due to the transfer of detachments that were expelled from Jordan (September 1970)<sup>10</sup>. The different attitude towards the Palestinian presence on the part of the heads of confessional communities did not contribute to the development of a unified position on the situation in Southern Lebanon. It should also be noted that at that time, the Arab countries were still dominated by the point of view about the need to destroy Israel. The leaders of Egypt and Syria, who experienced the bitterness of defeat during the war with Israel, as well as the so-called "Arab street" supported the Palestine Liberation Organization morally and financially. Under these conditions, the weak Lebanese Government failed to repel the impending threat of civil war. In the summer of 1975, during the outbreak of the civil war in Lebanon, 30 thousand Moslems were killed. About half of them were Shiites.

Since that time, the training of Shiite armed detachments began in the Bekaa Valley (with the participation of Iranian instructors). Initially, they were formed as an armed wing of the Amal organization. Recall that in translation from Arabic, the word "amal" means "hope". At the same time, it is an

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abbreviation of the full name of the organization “Afwaj al-mukawwama al-lubnaniya” (Lebanese Resistance Battalions)<sup>11</sup>.

Before the disappearance of Musa Sadr, the Amal organization he created, adhering to the principles of tolerance, focusing on charitable activities, sought to defend the interests of the Shiite community inside Lebanon. Now, in the conditions of the aggravated situation, the Shiites were forced to form up self-defense detachments.

On June 6, 1982, Israel launched the operation Shlom a-Galil (Peace to the Galilee). This operation was a response to the terrorist attacks of radical Palestinian organizations that created a training base in southern Lebanon, turning this area into a springboard for periodic provocations against Israel, which made the residents of this area hostages of this situation. The PLO militants terrorized the population of south Lebanese villages for almost 12 years – from 1970 to 1982. A number of researchers note that the arrival of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Southern Lebanon was perceived by residents as a liberation from the terror of the Palestinians.

The Government tried to limit the anti-Israeli actions of Palestinians from the territory of Lebanon. However, unlike Jordan, where King Hussein showed his will and managed to expel the Palestinian militants from the country, the Lebanese government failed to take control of their activities. The current situation stimulated the exodus of some Shiites to the central regions of Lebanon<sup>12</sup>. A number of researchers who have studied the causes of the civil war that began in Lebanon in 1975 consider the Palestinian presence in the country to be the most important prerequisite for a long confrontation between Christians and Moslems, their political organizations and local militias.

It should also be noted that the PLO militants fought not only with Christian formations, but also with Shiite Moslems. At the same time, the Palestinians suffered heavy losses from the Shiite militia, which aligned itself with the units of the Lebanese army.

At the end of September 1982, a multinational force consisting of army units of the United States, France, Italy and Great Britain was introduced into Beirut. Under the pressure from the Western allies, the Government managed to expel a significant part of the Palestinians from the country. However, soon after, the newly elected, but not yet assumed the office, President of Lebanon Bashir Gemayel was assassinated. Israel took advantage of this circumstance by introducing its troops into the territory of West Beirut<sup>13</sup>. Having launched a military operation in 1982, Israel quickly seized a significant part of the country's territory. This was facilitated by the fact that by the autumn the Palestinians had left West Beirut, and the Syrian units that had been in the country since April 1976 also left the capital. Israeli troops entered the capital unhindered. The siege of Beirut lasted from the end of June 1982 until mid-August 1982. Finally, with the mediation of the American diplomat Philip Habib, an agreement was signed (18.08.1982), according to which the PLO forces were to finally leave Lebanon. The main detachments of the Israeli army left the city quarters of Beirut by September 27, 1982. Later, the areas of the international airport and the seaport area were liberated<sup>14</sup>. Taking advantage of the situation, the military wing of the Maronite Kataib party staged a bashing in Sabra and Shatila – two refugee camps<sup>15</sup> where mainly Palestinians lived.

From 1985 to 1988, the Amal Shiite militia units besieged the remaining Palestinian camps several times. It is characteristic that their ally at that time was the President of Syria H. Assad, who actively helped to expel Arafat's detachments from Lebanon. In addition, Amal (together with volunteers from the Communist Party and detachments of the Progressive Socialist Party of Lebanon) managed to defeat the only militia of Lebanese Sunnis, Al-Murabitun, which took part in the civil war on the side of the Palestinians against the Christian right forces.

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## Creation of the Hizbullah Organization

As we have already noted, part of Iran's project to activate the Lebanese Shiites was the creation of the Amal organization, and later the military-political structure of Hizbullah<sup>16</sup>. Assessing the results of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, a number of researchers come to the conclusion that by getting rid of the presence of PLO detachments on the territory of a neighboring state, Israel thus contributed to the strengthening of Shiite organizations that have become a full part of the Lebanese political landscape.

In addition to external factors – the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the civil war and the expulsion of Palestinians from Lebanon – it was the split within Amal that contributed to the birth of the Hizbullah organization. The disagreements that arose were related to different views on the further development of the Shiite movement in the context of the civil war in Lebanon. Lebanese researcher M. Harb believes that after Nabih Berri<sup>17</sup> became one of the members of the organization's leadership, "there emerged a rapprochement between Amal and the Lebanese government<sup>18</sup>." Radical members of the organization, disappointed with the choice of N. Berry began to unite with other Islamist militants and, with the support of Iran, created Hizbullah<sup>19</sup>. In our opinion, the weakening of Amal's authority in the conditions of the civil war that has begun is explained by the fact that the circumstances demanded more effective measures from the Shiite leaders. As you know, Amal was unable to protect the Shiite population of the South either in 1978 or in 1982, when Israel invaded the territory of Lebanon, or from the rampaging PLO detachments.

Funds for the creation of a new organization were provided by Tehran, the second sponsor was Syria. As you know, during the life of M. Sadr, training camps were established in the Bekaa Valley, where young Shiites were trained in military affairs under the guidance of Iranian instructors<sup>20</sup>.

The organizers of the Hizbullah in Lebanon were Abbas al-Moussaoui and Subhi Tufaili from the Islamic Appeal Party, Hassan Nasrallah and Syed Ibrahim Amin al-Syed, Naim Qasim, Imad Mughniyah and Abu Hassan Khudr Salama from the Amal movement, Abdel Hadi Hmade from the Communist Party<sup>21</sup>. In fact, they were carrying out the instructions of Imam Khomeini.

### **The structure of the Hizbullah organization**

The organization is headed by the Majlis al-Shura (advisory council), headed by the Secretary General of the organization. The Council consists of seven members and two advisers (from Iran). The Advisory Council controls several committees responsible for political, military, parliamentary and judicial activities. An important role is played by the Jihad Committee, whose functions include covert operations.

The Al-Arabiya newspaper (UAE) writes that Hizbullah receives \$ 600 million annually from Iran, which is directed to finance the organization's medical, social and military expenses. "This amount helps to cover not only the costs of military activities and payments to employees, but also to provide social assistance to the families of the deceased members of Hizbullah<sup>22</sup>."

Back in 1982, the Al-Qard al-Hasan Association was established, which deals with finance, up to lending to the Shiite population<sup>23</sup>. In recent years, Lebanon has been experiencing an economic crisis, the Lebanese banking system has become an object of monitoring (in order to prevent the financing of terrorism), so money began to flow to Lebanon from Iran in the form of private transfers. Thus, Iran is bypassing the official economy of Lebanon and its banking sector. Al Arabiya also accuses Hizbullah of duty-free transportation of goods to Lebanon through the port of Beirut and (probably due to the weakening of border controls) through illegal smuggling

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checkpoints that appeared in the conditions of the economic crisis and chaos in the country. Hizbullah also carries out projects that bring it profit. These are companies engaged in the production of dairy products, synthetic rubber and car sales, consumer cooperatives, etc. For example, Al-Bunyan Engineering and Contracting Company is engaged in infrastructure projects<sup>24</sup>.

The social and humanitarian network created by Hezbollah is focused on helping the poor and the families of the deceased. In particular, in 1982, on the initiative of Iran, the organization Al-Shaheed (martyr) was created, which provides financial support to the families of the victims. Medical centers (in the southern suburbs of Beirut and Southern Lebanon) and two hospitals were established. Another association, Jihad al-Binah (established in 1985 also on the initiative of Iran), restores houses destroyed during the Israeli bombings, builds schools, is engaged in water supply, construction of power plants. Hizbullah also provides assistance to farmers by distributing seeds, supplying fertilizers and insecticides.

As for the mass media, the Al-Nur radio station has been operating since 1988, in June 1991 Hizbullah created the Al-Manar TV channel, since 1994 the weekly newspaper al-Ahd has been published. Since 2000, educational programs about politics, sports, everyday, family and cultural life have been carried out on the satellite network of the TV channel<sup>25</sup>.

Hizbullah has a military wing, which, according to experts, is comparable to an army. In 2017, the military information provider Jane's 360 estimated that there are more than 25,000 fighters in Hizbullah's detachments, there are also up to 30,000 reservists. It is believed that the operational budget of the military wing is about \$ 1 billion per year. According to the State Department report (2018), Hizbullah annually receives weapons from Iran, as well as from members of the Lebanese (Shiite) diaspora around the world for about \$ 700 million. In 2017, the International Institute for Strategic Studies reported that

Hizbullah's huge military arsenal includes small arms, tanks, unmanned aerial vehicles and various long-range missiles<sup>26</sup>.

A certain role in the development of the Hizbullah organization was played by the authoritative Shiite leader Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah,<sup>27</sup> who founded the Union of Moslem Students (Shiites), whose members were inspired by the ideas of the Iranian revolution. The creation of this union contributed to the fact that the Shiite youth, who had previously expressed their protest in the ranks of the Palestinian Fatah, found a spiritual mentor in the person of Sheikh Fadlallah.

Until recently, the Jihad Committee was headed by Imad Mughniyah,<sup>28</sup> and later Mustafa Badr-ud-din (1961-2016), a relative of Mughniyah (a cousin and at the same time a son-in-law) was appointed to this post. The Jihad Council is accused of many acts of sabotage, including the organization of the explosion of a truck that entered the territory of the headquarters of the American Marines on the territory of the seaport in Beirut (23.10.1983). The truck was loaded with more than 5 tons of TNT explosives. After breaking through the posts, the truck crashed at high speed into a building that collapsed completely. It is characteristic that a few minutes later the headquarters of the French peacekeepers were subjected to a similar attack. As a result of the explosions, 241 Americans and 58 Frenchmen were killed<sup>29</sup>.

Although no reliable evidence was found about the involvement of Shiites in the diversions, political scientists believed that Iran and its brainchild, Hizbullah, were behind them. According to the CIA, in only 5 months of 1983, Hizbullah organized 24 such subversive acts<sup>30</sup>.

A certain Shiite Free Islamic Revolutionary Movement (as it turned out, unknown to anyone) claimed responsibility for the attacks. Later (4.11.1983), another suicide bomber rammed the headquarters of the Israeli counterintelligence in Tyre, as a result, 30 Israelis were killed. In response, French aircraft dropped bombs on a training camp for Shiite militants in the Bekaa Valley. Political scientists believe that it was the Shiite attacks on the

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multinational forces located in the country during this period that caused the governments of the United States, France, Italy and Great Britain to decide (February 1984) to withdraw their troops from Lebanon.

### **The ideology of Hizbullah**

According to the French researcher Bernard Hourcade,<sup>31</sup> "in the confusing context of the Lebanese war, it was in its attitude to Israel and the Palestinian issue that Iran found a pass for passage to the Arab world<sup>32</sup>." The interpretation of this statement suggests that Iran, claiming to participate in solving such an important problem as the Arab-Israeli conflict, which the Arab-Sunni world could not solve, wanted to take the place of a leading power in the Moslem world through this confrontation.

At first, Tehran hoped that the activities of Musa Sadr would contribute to increasing the importance of Tehran's role in Lebanon, but Sadr, after studying local realities, came to the conclusion that the idea of creating a state in Lebanon headed by religious hierarchs (like Iran) has no prospects. The concept of *Wilayat al-Faqih*, i.e. the rule of a Shiite religious leader in the most emancipated and secular state of the Arab world could not be realized. Sadr, seeing how the population of southern Lebanon suffers from the presence of Palestinian militants there, organizing endless attacks against Israel, focused his efforts on making the living conditions of his co-religionists easier.

A French researcher Didier Leroy writes in his book "The Lebanese Hizbullah from the Iranian Revolution to the Syrian War" that the rise of the Shiites and the birth of Hizbullah "should be considered in the context of the marginalization of the Shiites of Lebanon... in areas with high social and political poverty as a result of the confessional distribution of state functions after the national pact of 1943<sup>33</sup>." And further, discussing the formation of Hizbullah's ideology, Leroy writes: "This is, first, a religious ideology based on the Shiite creed, the transformation of the idea

of the imamate and political leadership, and, finally, jihad, the central element of religious doctrine, where the sense of fighting injustice is the driving force<sup>34</sup>."

In its political platform published in 2003, the leadership of the Hizbullah organization emphasized that the organization stands for the establishment of Islamic rule by peaceful democratic means. The movement also supports the slogan of the destruction of the State of Israel. This is evidenced by the organization's program document adopted in 1985: "We appeal to all Arabs and Moslems to tell them that the experience of Moslems in Islamic Iran has proved that people motivated by faith, with bare breasts, can, with the help of Allah, destroy the iron and oppression of tyrannical regimes... Only Islam can lead humanity to rebirth and make progress<sup>35</sup>."

The American researcher R. Norton believes that of the two tasks – the creation of a state like Iran in Lebanon, i.e. the implementation of the idea of *Wilayat al-Faqih*, and the fight against Israel set by the new movement, the first goal gradually faded into the background. Recall that this idea was opposed by Musa Sadr. As for the fight against Israel, this task was not questioned.

Recall that in May 1985, Amal militants defeated the Palestinians in Southern Lebanon. During this period, Amal began to compete with Hizbullah and three years later, most of the Amal fighters joined Hizbullah. Later, Amal focused on humanitarian projects and political work<sup>36</sup>.

In the mid-1980s, Hizbullah managed to mobilize about 7 thousand militants. As the American researcher J.P. Harik notes, membership in this organization for many Shiites meant getting a living, especially since the organization regularly received funding from Iran<sup>37</sup>.

Gradually, the Hizbullah organization became an important not only military, but also political factor within Lebanese society. A number of circumstances contributed to this. In particular, in 1989, after the signing of the agreement in Taif

(Saudi Arabia) The Mufti of Lebanon, Sheikh Hassan Khaled, was killed. According to a number of observers, at this moment the Sunni community, having lost its leader, lost its dominant positions to the Shiites.

In 1991, Abbas al-Mousavi (1952–1992) was elected to the post of General Secretary of Hizbullah instead of Sheikh Subhi al-Tufaili (born in 1948). The removal of al-Tufaili was due to the fact that he believed that Iran was trying to subordinate Hizbullah, to direct its activities exclusively against Israel<sup>38</sup>. There is another opinion: Subhi Tufail was guided by the ideas of Arab unity, which contradicted the requirement of unquestioning submission to the spiritual leader of Iran. Later, Tufaili pointed out the hypocrisy of Tehran, which justified the sending of Iranian volunteers to Syria<sup>39</sup> on the pretext of “protecting Shiite shrines”: “They could not openly say: “We are going to help Assad<sup>40</sup>.”

Al-Mousavi, the new head of the organization, soon allowed himself several harsh statements against Israel, which was met with satisfaction in Tehran. Iran immediately increased its financial support for the Hizbullah organization. In turn, this caused concern in Israel, and already in early 1992, al-Mousavi was killed. After his death, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah (born in 1960)<sup>41</sup> became the new leader of the organization, who focused his efforts on creating a powerful military group that was now operating not only in Southern Lebanon.

### **Activities of the Shiite faction in the Lebanese Parliament**

It should be noted that the population of Lebanon appreciated the efforts of Hizbullah to restore order in the country. As noted by Harik (Harik J.P.) on the eve of the 1992 parliamentary elections, 62% of the Lebanese citizens surveyed said that they would vote for the Hizbullah candidate.<sup>42</sup> This indicates the recognition of the role of the organization in the socio-political life of the country. Success in the parliamentary

elections at the same time meant a change in its character. The organization “clearly signaled that it had changed its radical course and was observing the rules of the pre-election game highlighted by time. Moreover, this game ... increased the legitimacy of the “Party of God” (the literal meaning of the word Hizbullah – auth.) as a mainstream party, which has a resistance wing, since as a result of its election victories, it formed the largest separate bloc in the new parliament – 12 of 128 members. This seems to have dealt a blow to the attempts of Israel and America to accuse the “Party of God” of irresponsible and unprincipled behavior, which in the West is usually associated – with mercenaries<sup>43</sup>. “As Walid Sharara and Frederic Domont note,” while other Arab Islamists have failed to create a solid social base, Hizbullah has established a close alliance with the Lebanese state and important segments of society<sup>44</sup>.”

In 2005, Hizbullah, having participated in the elections in the block with the Amal movement, won a majority in the electoral district No. 2 (South Lebanon), and was able to hold 23 representatives to the parliament (almost a fifth of the deputies out of 128) and was represented in the government, having received the portfolio of the Minister of Energy and Water Resources. It was Muhammad Fneish<sup>45</sup>.

By this time, the Shiite society had changed significantly, the middle class had grown stronger and began to play an important role within its community. Among them there were people who began to reflect on the future of their community and its place in Lebanese society. There was an understanding that, despite the fact that they are related to the Palestinians by their rejection of Israel, the growing number of Palestinians among the country's citizens threatens to disrupt the confessional balance in Lebanon<sup>46</sup>. In 2004, Hizbullah opposed the granting of Lebanese citizenship to Palestinians. This proposal was made by American congressmen who visited Lebanon. It should be noted that in this issue, the interests of the Shiites coincided with the interests of the Maronites and other communities, who feared that the almost half-million

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Palestinian community in Lebanon, most of whom are Sunni Moslems, will become a significant political force that will make decisions to the detriment of the interests of other communities. Thus, the Shiites declared themselves as a community that protects the interests of Lebanon.

### **Activities of the military wing of Hizbullah**

Since the beginning of the ISIL war against Syria (2011), Hizbullah fighters have been actively participating on the side of government forces. The detachments trained by Iranian instructors actively cooperate with the units of the Syrian army. In particular, in May 2013, when ISIL jihadists expelled 30 thousand Christians from the city of al-Qusayr (Homs province, Syria), Hizbullah detachments came to the aid of the Syrian army, which managed to liberate the city as a result of heavy fighting.

Hizbullah detachments provided invaluable assistance in the summer of 2017, when Jabha al-Nusra militants<sup>47</sup> tried to move the theater of military operations to the territory of Lebanon. To do this, they drove a significant number of refugees<sup>48</sup>, mostly Sunnis, from Syria to northern Lebanon. So, in the city of Arsal, where only 30 thousand Lebanese citizens lived at that time, there were already about 100 thousand refugees from Syria, including about 3,000 jihadists and their family members.

The mountainous region of Arsal was considered the most tense place on the Lebanese – Syrian border. The jihadists used this remote area to smuggle weapons and drugs. The situation in northern Lebanon has been threatening for a long time. Lebanese Foreign Minister Gibran Basil, who visited Moscow at the end of 2015, even made a very significant statement: “Lebanon can turn to Russia for military assistance in the fight against terrorism<sup>49</sup>.”

In the summer of 2017, the Syrian government army invited the jihadists to leave the Lebanese territory and gave them the opportunity to safely retreat to Idlib. Having been refused, the Lebanese army, together with Hizbullah’s detachments from the

south, tried to close the passage into the interior of the country. The Syrian government army was attacking the jihadists from the north. The offensive was conducted from two sides, and the first rocket attack on the places of concentration of terrorists was carried out by Hizbullah fighters. A significant number of jihadists were trapped in the town of al-Jibba, arranged by Syrian troops together with Hizbullah fighters. In turn, the Syrian military aviation did not allow the jihadists to continue their penetration into Lebanon. The operation against the jihadists was carried out on July 20, 2017 by all participants simultaneously<sup>50</sup>, thanks to which the Lebanese army, Hizbullah units and the Syrian government troops managed in 6 days to liberate 90 square km of the Arsal district, as well as the neighboring mountainous region of Flita (Syrian territory). It proved also possible to take control of four more areas of the border area with Syria to the south of Arsal. The winners forced the jihadists and their family members (a total of 7.8 thousand people) to leave the area on 170 buses. Lebanese army soldiers entered the liberated areas<sup>51</sup>.

On August 8, 2017, a meeting of the Supreme Defense Council was held under the chairmanship of the President of Lebanon, General M. Aoun, at which it was decided to unite the Lebanese armed forces with the Syrian army and Hizbullah to repel the jihadists. The President stressed that the victory at Arsal was the result of cooperation between Lebanon, Syria and pro-Iranian forces (i.e., Hizbullah – auth.). Later, in an interview with the Egyptian channel SIS (12.12.2017), Lebanese President M. Aoun said: “Hizbullah’s weapons in no way weaken the state. They represent one of the most important pillars of the country's defense strategy. We need resistance while our lands are occupied<sup>52</sup>.”

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Analyzing the activities of the Shiite military-political structure of Hizbullah, originally created for the defense of the Shiite population of Southern Lebanon, it should be noted that this project went beyond its original plan not only due to the comprehensive support of Iran, but also the circumstances that arose at the turn of the XX and XXI centuries, first of all, the Palestinian presence in Lebanon, which stimulated the outbreak of a civil war in this country, and then a more global conflict – the emergence of ISIL, the fight against which became a common task for the citizens of Syria and Lebanon.

Hizbullah, being the “brainchild of Iran”, and, in our opinion, a concrete manifestation of the “export of the Islamic revolution”, was able to become a full-fledged player in the Middle East political field. Naturally, this organization remains an instrument of Iran's influence on Lebanon and Syria, not only through the Shiite community, but also as an ally in the fight against ISIS and its heirs. As the Lebanese researcher Sami Raad<sup>53</sup> notes, analyzing the experience of Hizbullah's activities, “one can note the flexibility that it shows in order to temporarily adapt to a specific goal, waiting for a favorable moment to demand the implementation of its final goal...”<sup>54</sup> Sami Raad believes that Hizbullah “adjusted its strategy of creating an Islamic Republic in Lebanon, accepting Lebanese political life as it is, in accordance with the current constitution and international resolutions, including UN resolution 1701<sup>55</sup>.” And further, Sami Raad himself expresses doubt that Hizbullah remained faithful to the idea of creating an Islamic republic in Lebanon. He writes: “there are no references to such goals in the current speeches. Is this only a strategic absence dictated by the tactical need to adapt one's speech, or a sign of a real political evolution? Today, nothing allows us to assert this<sup>56</sup>.”

Obviously, the answer to this question remains open.

P.S. And yet... French researchers Anne-Lucie Shaen-Oudin, Yara-El-Khoury write in the article "The Lebanese Civil War" that Hizbullah "considers the creation of an Islamic Republic in the hypothetical future, when favorable conditions for its creation will be created."

## References

1. According to the 1932 census, 793,396 people lived in Lebanon, of which 227,800 were Maronites, 178,100 were Sunnis, 155,035 were Shiites, 96,327 were Orthodox (of various churches), etc. Thus, Christians made up the majority of the population - 54%, (of which 29% were Maronites), and Moslems - 22% of the population (of which Sunnis - 22%, Shiites - 20%, the rest-Druze, Ismailis) // Demography of Lebanon. [https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Lebanon#Census\\_of\\_1932](https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Demographics_of_Lebanon#Census_of_1932), (28.01.2020).
2. Many Christians retained dual citizenship, which allowed them to participate in the presidential elections in Lebanon. According to the law of January 1, 1926, there were no restrictions on multiple citizenship in Lebanon. The Law on Lebanese Citizenship // [https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Lebanese\\_nationality\\_law](https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Lebanese_nationality_law); [https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Multiple\\_citizenship](https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Multiple_citizenship) (09.02.2021).
3. It is well known that among the uneducated part of the Moslem population, traditionally only men were recorded in the census.
4. The population of Lebanon. // <https://countrymeters.info/ru/Lebanon> (28.01.2021).
5. Shiites are settled in different regions of Lebanon: in the north in the area of Jbeil and Kisruwan, in the west of the Bekaa Valley, in the south of Lebanon, in Beirut itself and its southern suburbs // Lebanese Shia Moslems. [https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Lebanese\\_Shia\\_Moslems](https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Lebanese_Shia_Moslems) (29.01.2021).
6. In 1969, M. Sadr became its chairman.
7. Lebanon Communist Party, established in 1924, has been active in this region from the very beginning .... In 1969, two more political organizations with a Marxist-Leninist trend were founded: in 1968, the Organization of Lebanese Socialists was founded, which in 1970 merged with the group Socialist Lebanon, forming the Organization of Communist Action headed by Mohsen Ibrahim. // Talal Jaber, "Chiites et pouvoir politique au Liban, 1967-1974 : contribution à une approche socio-religieuse", thèse de doctorat en sociologie, Université Paris-VII, 1980, p. 266.
8. Mackey S. Lebanon. A House divided. N.Y. Norton and Company, 2006. P. 200. (29.01.2021).

9. Rashid Karami – (1921–1987) served as Prime Minister of Lebanon 8 times. His last cabinet was active from 30.04.1984 to 1.06.1987. He played an important role in strengthening the Moslem community of the country.
10. The presence of Palestinians in the country was formalized by the 1969 agreement, which defined the principles of the presence of Palestinian armed groups in Lebanon. The agreement signed with the mediation of Nasser actually removed the Palestinians from the scope of Lebanese law. Thus, the Palestinians were able to carry out armed actions against Israel.
11. Mackey S. Lebanon. *A House divided*. N.Y. Norton and Company, 2006. P.200. (29.01.2021).
12. Mackey S. Lebanon. *A House divided*. N.Y. Norton and Company, 2006. P. 200. The Shiites settled in Nabaa, a northern suburb of Beirut, and in Dahiye, near the airport, in the southern suburbs of Beirut. These two suburbs, together with the Palestinian camps, formed a kind of poverty belt around the capital.
13. Western Beirut – during the outbreak of the civil war, the capital of Lebanon fell under the control of warring forces. Christian formations controlled the eastern part of the city, while Moslems, including Shiite formations, controlled the Western part. The “green line” between them passed in the area of the National Museum.
14. The New York Times. 27.09.1982.
15. The events in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps (September 16–17, 1982) followed on September 14 after the assassination of the President of Lebanon, B. Gemayel, who had not yet taken office, allegedly committed by members of the PLO. The International Red Cross estimated the number of people killed (including Syrians, Iraqis, etc.) at 1,500 people // Alestin F. Palestine is in the loop of Zionism. M., 1988. p. 66.
16. Hizbullah is a Shiite political structure that includes a number of socio-political organizations and a military wing. The name translates as “the party of God”. In Western literature, different spellings are accepted (Hezbollah, Hezbollah), based on dialectal pronunciation. The authors of this article use the spelling adopted in the modern Arabic literary language. The names of the sources cited retain the identical spelling. The phrase “The Party of Allah” is repeatedly mentioned in the Qur’an: Sura 61 (56) and Sura 22 (22) of the Qur’an. Krachkovsky I.Yu. 1956.
17. Nabih Berri – born in 1938, a native of an emigrant family of Lebanese Shiites, graduated from the Sorbonne. Having a law degree, he became a legal adviser to the Amal organization. Then, after the disappearance of M. Sadr, and the two-year rule of Hussein Husseini, he was elected its leader. He contributed to the activation of Amal’s ties with Syria. I have repeatedly met with H. By Assad. In February 1984, Amal fighters under the leadership of N. Berry expelled detachments of Lebanese forces from West Beirut, which increased Berry’s authority. Becoming a leading Shiite leader, he joined the Lebanese government, receiving the portfolio of Minister of Reconstruction of southern Lebanon, later-Minister of Justice, as well as electrical and hydraulic resources. In 1992, Berry became the Chairman of

- the Parliament – the Lebanese National Assembly: This is the highest post that a Shiite Moslem can occupy according to the country's constitution. N. Berry, who has been in the post of speaker since 1992, is known as the most consistent supporter of Syria.
18. Harb M., *Le Hezbollah à Beyrouth (1985-2005). De la banlieue à la ville*, Paris-Beyrouth, 2010 // <https://journals.openedition.org/geocarrefour/8196> (08.02.2021).
  19. Harb M., *Le Hezbollah à Beyrouth (1985-2005), de la banlieue à la ville*, Paris/Beyrouth, 2010 // <https://journals.openedition.org/geocarrefour/8196> (08.02.2021).
  20. Fadhil Abu al-Nasr: *Hezbollah, truth, and perspective*, first edition, al-bulb al - 'alamiyya Lil-Kitab, Beirut, 2003. *لبلل ببح: رصنللا وبأ ليلصف*, 2003، تلورل بباتللل ءلللل علل ءللرلل، لللوالا ءلللل، ءللل ءللل ءللل ءللل
  21. Hezbollah. The birth of the party // [http://www.chaskor.ru/article/hezbollah\\_rozhdenie\\_partii\\_1738](http://www.chaskor.ru/article/hezbollah_rozhdenie_partii_1738) (06.02.2021).
  22. Fakhri J. The shadow economy of Hezbollah: billions at the expense of the state Al Arabiya, UAE. 07.12.2020 // <https://inosmi.ru/politic/20201207/248682617.html> (04.02.2021).
  23. In 2020, the financial system of Lebanon began to experience a deep crisis. Banks have stopped issuing money to their depositors in the amount of more than \$ 100. in a month, and then completely stopped issuing currency and limited one-time payments in Lebanese pounds, But Al-Card al Hasan in some of its branches allowed its customers to withdraw small amounts in dollars from their accounts.
  24. Fakhri J. The shadow economy of Hezbollah: billions at the expense of the state Al Arabiya, UAE. 07.12.2020 // <https://inosmi.ru/politic/20201207/248682617.html> (04.02.2021).
  25. Anne-Lucie Chaigne-Oudin. Hezbollah. 02.03.2018 // <https://www.lescledumoyenorient.com/Hezbollah.html> (16.02.2020).
  26. Hezbollah: histoire, organisation et idéologie. 29.08.2020 // <https://fr.peopleperproject.com/posts/27727-hezbollah-history-organization-and-ideology> (16.02.2020).
  27. Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah (1935-2010), imam, associate of Musa Sadr, has been engaged in charity work in Lebanon since 1952, organizing schools, medical centers, orphanages, schools for the disabled and treatment centers for the blind and deaf. Later, he disagreed with the Iranian leadership and after the assassination attempt on him in 1985, he retired from business in Lebanon. Hussein Fadlallah: another choice. Hizbullah autobiography and modality. Beirut, 1994. (Arabic. Jaz) *لبلل ببح رللل رللل: لبلل لللل نلل*، 1994، تلورل بباتللل ءلللل ءلللل ءلللل ءلللل ءلللل ءلللل ءلللل
  28. Imad Fayeze Mughniyah (nicknamed Hyena; 1962–2008) is a Lebanese, Shiite, a native of Tyre. At the age of 13, he joined the PLO. Since 1983, he has been responsible for a series of terrorist acts, including the capture of 4 Russian hostages in 1985, one of whom was killed. After the Palestinians were ousted from Lebanon, he moved to Hizbullah. He was the first head of the secret service of this organization. He died as a result of a car explosion.

29. Levitt M. Hezbollah: The global footprint of Lebanon's : "Party of God". L., 2013. XVI, P. 23. Cit. on: The Middle East. Oil and politics. ref. Collection of INION. M., 2014, P. 119.
30. Levitt M. Hezbollah: The global footprint of Lebanon's : "Party of God". L., 2013. XVI, P. 23. Cit. on: The Middle East. Oil and politics. ref. Collection of INION. M., 2014, P. 119.
31. Bernard Hourcade (B. Hourcade) – CNRS, Paris, author of "the Geopolitics of Iran," Géopolitique de l'iran, Paris, A. Colin, 2010.
32. Hourcade In, Géopolitique de l'iran, Paris, A. Colin, 2010, p. 224.
33. Leroy D. Le Hezbollah libanais, de la révolution iranienne à la guerre syrienne, L'harmattan. R. // <https://clio-cr.clionautes.org/le-hezbollah-libanais.html> (31.1.2020).
34. Leroy D. Le Hezbollah libanais de la révolution iranienne à la guerre syrienne, L'Harmattan. P. // <https://clio-cr.clionautes.org/le-hezbollah-libanais.html> (31.1.2020).
35. Norton R. Hezbollah, movement of Islamic resistance in Lebanon // Princeton, 2007, P. 46 (29.01.2021).
36. "The two organizations have been competing with each other since the mid-1980s, and in 1988–1989 they fought with each other ... for political control over the southern suburbs of Beirut" // Middle East. Oil and Politics Ref. Collection of INION, M., 2014, P. 89 (31.01.2021).
37. Harik J.P. Hezbollah. The changing face of terrorism // L., N.Y. I.B. Tauris, 2004. – XIV, P. 40 (31.01.2021).
38. Subhi al-Tufaili – [https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Subhi\\_al-Tufayli](https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Subhi_al-Tufayli) (23.01.2021).
39. The bitterness is about the participation of Iranian volunteers in the battles against ISIS.
40. Hezbollah. The birth of the party / / [http://www.chaskor.ru/article/hezbollah\\_rozhdenie\\_partii\\_1738](http://www.chaskor.ru/article/hezbollah_rozhdenie_partii_1738) (07.02.2020). Confusion in the Shiite camp // <https://golosislama.com/news.php?id=29256> (07.02.2021).
41. Hassan Nasrallah (born in 1960) is a native of the Lebanese village of al-Basuria, in which he represented Amal. Today he is called Seyid Hassan, which should mean that he is a descendant of Husayn ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. He studied in an-Najaf (Iraq), where Shiite theologians traditionally study. Then he returned to Lebanon and later became a member of the Politburo of the Amal organization, and then, in 1982, a member of Hizbullah. Becoming the head of Hizbullah H. Nasrallah took care of the creation of the military wing of the organization. Other communities had similar military units in Lebanon. For example, the right-wing Christian Kataib party created its own power structures back in 1936. Iran's financial support allowed the organization to purchase long-range missiles that the Shiites used against Northern Israel. In 2000, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak withdrew Israeli troops from Lebanon. His decision was made after the heavy losses of the Israeli army. Shiites consider the departure of the Israelis to be the result of the policy of H. Nasrallah, after which. Hizbullah immediately took control of areas of southern Lebanon.

42. Harik J.P. Hezbollah. The changing face of terrorism // L., N.Y.: I.B. Tauris, 2004. – XIV, P. 50. Cit by: The Middle East. Oil and Politics Ref. Collection of INION, M., 2014, P. 89–90 (31.01.2021).
43. Harik J.P. Hezbollah. The changing face of terrorism // L., N.Y.: I.B. Tauris, 2004 – XIV, P. 52. Cit. on: The Middle East. Oil and Politics Ref. Collection of INION, M., 2014, P. 89–90 (31.01.2021).
44. Charara W, Domont F. Le Hezbollah, un mouvement islamo-nationaliste, Paris, Fayard, 2004, P. 24.
45. The Wall Street Journal, 31.07.2006.
46. According to the Lebanese Citizenship Law, a foreign spouse cannot obtain Lebanese citizenship through marriage with a Lebanese citizen. When discussing the Law, the deputies of the Parliament came to the conclusion that otherwise it would lead to an increase in the number of Palestinians who would certainly take advantage of this opportunity. The consequences of such a decision could disrupt the demographic situation in the country... In addition, the principle of *jus soli*, i.e. the automatic granting of Lebanese citizenship to those born in this country, does not apply in the country // Lebanese Citizenship Law – [https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Lebanese\\_nationality\\_law#By\\_marriage](https://ru.qaz.wiki/wiki/Lebanese_nationality_law#By_marriage) (05.03.2021).
47. The Jabha al-Nusra group was recognized as a terrorist organization by the decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation (dated 29.12.2014), its activities are prohibited on the territory of Russia.
48. Amarsal is located 12 km from the border with Syria and 134 km from the capital of Lebanon. The government media called Aarsal “the rear base of the gangs”.
49. Ishchenko S. Now Lebanon is in the Russian sights. 09.12.2015 // <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/137808/>
50. La bataille du jurd d'Ersal a commencé. 22.07.2017 // <https://www.voltairenet.org/article197209.html> (20.03.2020).
51. Hizbullah cleared the Lebanese Aarsal district of terrorists // <https://eadaaily.com/ru/news/2017/08/03/hizballa-ochistila-ot-terroristov-livanskiy-rayon-ersal> (17.02.2021).
52. The statement of Lebanese President Aoun completely released Hizbullah from his obligations under UN Security Council resolution 1559 of September 2, 2004, which called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon, as well as the disarmament of all Lebanese.
53. Samih Raad, a Lebanese scholar specializing in theology, professor at the seminary in Metz (France).
54. Samih Raad, «Une expérience politique islamique au Liban», Le Portique // 16.02.2021 // <http://journals.openedition.org/leportique/1408> (17.02.2021).
55. The resolution adopted unanimously by the members of the UN Security Council (11.08.2006) aimed at ending the conflict between Israel and Lebanon in 2006.
56. Samih Raad, “Une expérience politique islamique au Liban”, Le Portique // 16.02.2021 // <http://journals.openedition.org/leportique/1408> (17.02.2021).