



Israeli-established border crossing from Lebanon

the Palestinian camp in Beirut, where the fascists enacted a massacre in August 1976, after a prolonged siege.

From 1977, with the advent of the Begin government, the Mossad solidified relations with Bashir Gemayel in particular, bolstering him to impose his command over all the fascist militias grouped in the Lebanese Forces. Militiamen began to travel to 'Israel' for training, and the fascists in the North were encouraged to send troops to fight alongside Saad Haddad when the Israeli army invaded Lebanon up to the Litani River in 1978. When the Israelis finally withdrew, Haddad's fascist forces were installed along the border strip, establishing a statelet that marked the first concrete step towards Lebanon's partition.

In 1978, when battles erupted between the fascist militias and the Syrian troops in Lebanon, Zionist aid to the fascists escalated again, in line with the Camp David plan for establishing imperialist-Zionist hegemony in the whole region. Israeli officers were sent to Lebanon to build up the Lebanese Forces' arsenals and fortifications; hundreds of Lebanese fascists headed to the Zionist state for training. Though the Israelis began to demand payment for their arms supply, \$2 million in weapons were delivered free (Schiff, p. 28).

Having earlier secured an Israeli promise for air support against the Syrian troops if need be, the Phalangists began provocations in East Lebanon (the Bekaa Valley). In April 1981, they began a major conflict, attempting to take over Zahle and forge a link between their areas in and around Beirut and the fascist-held areas in the South. The Israelis participated directly in the battle, shooting down two Syrian helicopters and building up to the missile crisis when the Zionist leadership tried to impose its will as to where the Syrians stationed their Soviet-built missiles not only in Lebanon, but in Syrian territory as well. These events had little to do with the concrete situation in Zahle, but were timed to match US Secretary of State Haig's efforts to forge a «strategic consensus», i.e., anti-Soviet pact in the region, wherein both 'Israel' and the Lebanese fascists wanted to figure prominently.

INVADING LEBANON

His status elevated by Zionist support, Bashir Gemayel announced his presidential candidacy in November 1981, having already been «informed by Sharon that he must quickly prepare for a full-scale war in which Israeli troops would take part» (Schiff, p. 46). Sharon himself led a large entourage of aides on a visit to Beirut in January 1982, to discuss war plans with the Phalangists for an operation that would extend to the southern outskirts of Beirut, i.e., the international airport. Final logistic coordination with the Phalangists was sorted out in Eitan's March visit to Beirut «accompanied this time by the commander of the air force, army specialists, and the commanders of a number of units slated to play key roles in the combat activity centering on the capital» (Schiff, p. 52).

What followed is well-known: the massive, murderous entry of the Israeli army into Lebanon, ushered across the border by Haddad's men, and into East Beirut by the Phalange; the savage bombing and prolonged siege of Beirut; the PLO's withdrawal; the 'election' of Bashir under the shadow of the occupiers' guns, and his assassination, whereafter the Israeli army escorted the Phalangists' elite troops led by their intelligence chief, Elie Hobeika, into Sabra and Shatila camps, to massacre Palestinians and poor Lebanese - women and children and elderly.

With the plan to bring Lebanon into the Camp David alliance having been focused on Bashir's presidency, the Israelis were somewhat at a loss in the aftermath. They distrusted his successor Amin Gemayel's propensity to find a *modus vivendi* with the rightist Moslem bourgeoisie and possibly Syria. In fact, the Israelis had another plan in their pocket, though it was never implemented: «a new presidential election would not be held, in its place would come the constitution of a military government under a prime minister appointed by Sarkis (the outgoing president) and granted emergency powers. Israel's candidate for the job was Johnny Abdo, chief of military intelligence and one of the Americans' most trusted friends in the Lebanese establishment... Over the