

Fascists Regroup

«We are now back to the 5th of June, 1982... All the political results of the Israeli operation are now wiped out.» This was the Lebanese Forces' reaction to the abrogation of the treaty with 'Israel', as articulated by their foreign affairs director, Naoum Farah. Fadi Frem, commander-in-chief of the militias condemned the government of his brother-in-law, Amin Gemayel, for «submitting to Syrian demands». There was talk of division in the fascist ranks, with Phalangist Party chief Pierre Gemayel backing his son Amin's tactics, while the Lebanese Forces opposed.

of alliance with 'Israel' and hate of the Arabs, leaving the party free to follow along with Amin Gemayel's maneuvers to retain the presidency. Thus, we witnessed a sudden escalation in political statements by the Lebanese Forces in early March. At the same time, they openly resumed tax collection, and security and administrative functions of the Lebanese Army in East Beirut. Under their auspices, the so-called National Christian Council was formed to resist Syrian influence and work for cantonization, activating the role of extreme-right Maronite monks like Abbot Boulos Naaman. Moreover, the Lebanese Forces opened an office in Jerusalem.

The clearest indication of the new division of labour is the appointment of Karim Pakradouni, Phalangist Party Politbureau member, as political adviser to the Lebanese Forces. He is among the party's most dynamic strategists and has previously been a key figure in its indirect control of the state, as when he served as former President Sarkis' personal councillor from 1976, meanwhile grooming Beshir Gemayel for the presidency. Now his task is to give the Lebanese Forces a political profile which is distinct from, but not contradictory to the Phalangist Party and the President. In line with this, the Lebanese Forces are working on a new political program. In an interview with the Lebanese weekly, *Monday Morning*, Pakradouni outlined the three main

points of this program: «One: The defense of Christian regions by establishing 'red lines' around these areas. These red lines are both military and political; the military lines being mobilization of the Christian population to defend these regions, and the political ones being the contacts which the Lebanese Forces are undertaking at the regional and international levels... Two: Proposing, at the national level, a plan for a federal republic with a view to achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Lebanese problem... the logic of reforms is not enough. We need a complete overhaul of the Lebanese political system... Three: Whereas the 1943 National Pact was based on an agreement between the Maronites and the Sunnites, we are becoming more and more convinced that the New National Pact will have to come about through an agreement between the Maronites and the Shiites, while not excluding the other constituent groups in the nation.»

With such a program the Lebanese Forces can keep their military forces and hard-line base mobilized for the inevitable coming confrontation; this is explicit in the first point. Points two and three present an alternative course for enacting the cantonization proposed by the Lebanese Front at Lausanne, and flatly rejected by all nationalist forces. The Lebanese Forces' approach is dividing the nationalist forces along confessional lines in order to make separate deals.

This was the meaning of Fadi Frem's call to the Moslems to engage in a direct dialogue «above the heads of the fathers» who failed to reach results at Lausanne. The aim is to make cantonization a reality without its being officially adopted. Pakradouni was quite open about this in the above-quoted interview: «In order to fight, the Lebanese Army cannot be mixed... The collapse of the Lebanese Army in Shahar al Gharbi (mountain area near Souq al Gharb) and its refusal to fight in Beirut demonstrate the need for another formula...based on the idea of decentralization...» He went on to advocate a Shiite army in Shiite areas, a Druze army in Druze areas, and the Lebanese Forces in Christian areas. Through their desired alliance with the Shiites, the Lebanese Forces propose enacting cantonization in the South if the Israelis should stage further pull-backs. However, this planned alliance is contradicted by the fascists' practice, especially now in the South.

New proxy for 'Israel'

The Israelis were deeply disturbed by the nationalists' advance, yet it had one bonus: Large numbers of fascist militiamen headed South and soon joined the Free Lebanon Army, which the Israelis had needed to refurnish after the death of Saad Haddad. The first week of March, a delegation from the South went to 'Israel' to map out a strategy for «defending» the South and returning to the Kharroub coastal area north of the Awali line. As a result, the Free Lebanon Army was expanded and dubbed the South Lebanon Army. The Zionists have intensified their arming and training of this force to be the Lebanese party involved in new «security» arrangements, and their proxy in case of future pullbacks. In early April, Former Lebanese Army Major-General Antoine Lahd, a Maronite from the Shouf