THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON: THE POLICIES OF THE LEBANESE STATE AND THE ROLE OF THE UNRWA

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON:
THE POLICIES OF THE LEBANESE STATE
AND
THE ROLE OF THE UNRWA

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This thesis analyzes the activities and conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon within the framework of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the political developments in Lebanon. Their relations with the Lebanese state and public and their role in the domestic and regional political developments are discussed along with the roles of the outside actors such as Israel and Syria. In addition, the role of the UNRWA in Lebanon is analyzed from a historical perspective as an attempt to give a complete picture of the context surrounding the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

The study shows that the Lebanese state totally rules out the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees because of sectarian and economic reasons and implements

restrictive policies to prevent their resettlement. The legacy of the Civil War and the post-War problems in Lebanon are additional factors for the rejectionist policies of the Lebanese state.

In the regional context, Syria has been the most important actor in Lebanon. It is found that Syria has total control of the Lebanese politics and Palestinian politics in Lebanon.

Regarding the UNRWA, it is concluded that the Agency has operated as a quasi-state organ for refugees but the financial difficulties and its mandate prevents it to improve the conditions of refugees. The Agency has been very crucial for the refugees in Lebanon because the refugee community in this country is totally dependent on the Agency service.

Keywords: Palestinian (Palestine) refugees, Lebanon, the UNRWA, Arab-Israeli conflict.

ÖZ

LÜBNAN'DAKİ FİLİSTİNLİ MÜLTECİLER:

LÜBNAN DEVLETİ'NİN POLİTİKALARI VE UNRWA'NIN ROLÜ

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Bu tez, Arap-İsrail çatışması ve Lübnan'daki siyasi gelişmeler çerçevesinde Lübnan'daki Filistinli mültecilerin faaliyetlerini ve durumlarını incelemektedir. Suriye ve İsrail gibi dış aktörlerin rollerinin yanısıra Filistinli mültecilerin Lübnan Devleti ve halkı ile ilişkileri ve yerel ve bölgesel siyasi gelişmelerdeki rolü tartışılmaktadır. Ayrıca, Lübnan'daki Filistinli mültecilerin içinde yer aldığı bağlamın tam bir görüntüsünü vermek amacıyla UNRWA'nın Lübnan'daki rolü tarihsel bir perspektiften incelenmektedir.

Çalışma, Lübnan Devleti'nin mezhepsel ve ekonomik nedenlerden ötürü Filistinli mültecilerin Lübnan'a yerleştirilmesini kesinlikle düşünmediğini ve bunu engellemek için kısıtlayıcı politikalar uyguladığını göstermektedir. İç Savaş ve savaş sonrası sorunlar da Lübnan Devleti'nin retçi politikalarını doğuran diğer etkenlerdir.

Bölgesel bağlamda Suriye, Lübnan'daki en önemli aktör olmuştur. Suriye'nin Lübnan'ın politikalarını ve Lübnan'daki Filistinliler'in politikaları tamamen kontrol ettiği tespit edilmiştir.

UNRWA ile ilgili olarak da Örgüt'ün mülteciler için bir yarı-devlet gibi işlediği ancak mali zorlukların ve yetkisinin mültecilerin koşullarını iyileştirmesini engellediği sonucuna varılmıştır. Örgüt, Lübnan'daki mülteciler için çok önemlidir çünkü bu ülkedeki mülteci topluluğu tamamiyle Örgüt'ün verdiği hizmetlere bağımlıdır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Filistinli mülteciler (Filistin mültecileri), Lübnan, UNRWA, Arap-İsrail çatışması.

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CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION

One of the important issues that international conflicts left unresolved in the 20th century is the presence of millions of refugees. These people lack the appropriate protection from their states and their futures are uncertain, especially if the conflict persists years or even decades, as it has been the case in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Besides lack of state protection, refugees face additional problems in host states and when the relevant measures for their survival and protection in exile are non-existent, they become more vulnerable to the factors surrounding them. This was the case for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

THE PROBLEM

The Significance and the Justification of the Thesis Subject

The Palestinian refugee problem in Lebanon is an issue which is directly and strongly linked with three areas: The Arab-Israeli conflict, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and internal politics and balances of Lebanon. Hence, this subject incorporates three areas of research in one topic. The reason to focus specifically in Lebanon is due to the exceptional status and experiences of the Palestinian refugee community in that country, whose presence and activities also have had very significant repercussions in the history of Lebanon. Even if the Arab-Israeli conflict is resettled, the refugee issue in Lebanon will have long term consequences for the Lebanese domestic politics and for the Palestinian refugees. Such a context

deserves a deeper perspective and understanding of the Palestinian refugee question in Lebanon.

Definition of the Problem

One of the long term consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict has been the existence of millions of Palestinian refugees in diaspora. Lebanon is one of the countries which experienced this problem in an extraordinary way characterized by schism between the sects, the Lebanese Civil War, frequent political and military interventions of regional actors in Lebanon and a post-Civil War order. In this picture, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as a political actor on one side and as a humanitarian issue on the other side poses complexities for the understanding of the effects of their presence and activities in Lebanon. Questions arise such as: What were the attitudes of the Lebanese state and the public towards the refugees in the initial years of their arrival and what changes occurred in this attitude in later decades?, What kind of policy did the Lebanese state implement towards the Palestinian refugees and what were the reasons of this policy?, How did the Palestinian refugees and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) affect the internal politics of Lebanon?, What were the effects of the Palestinian existence in the involvement of external actors in Lebanon?, How did the Arab-Israeli peace process affect the refugees in Lebanon?, How did humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian refugees evolve over time?, What were the elements of this humanitarian assistance?, How did the UNRWA respond to special situations in Lebanon?, What are the limitations on the UNRWA which influenced its performance in Lebanon?...

This study will try to find answers to these questions and similar ones by describing and discussing the issue from all aspects with the aim of presenting a comprehensive and clear picture of the issue of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the role of the UNRWA.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Palestinian refugee issue in Lebanon has various facets. It is not only a political issue, but also a humanitarian one. It is also not only a problem that has to be resolved by the Lebanese government but also by the regional countries and the international community within the framework of the Arab-Israeli peace process. Finally, the issue can not be fully grasped without paying attention to the interaction between the Lebanese domestic politics, the regional politics and the international context.

Internal Context: Lebanon

The most important characteristics of Lebanon for the subject in question is its sectarian and highly traditional political system. The Lebanese society has been made up of various sects, the most important four of which are the Maronites, the Sunnis, the Shi'ites and the Druzes. There has always been a rivalry for political hegemony between these sects since the establishment of the independent Lebanese state in 1943. The Maronites, a generally wealthy and a Western-oriented Christian sect, had the upper hand in the state institutions followed by the Sunni Muslims. The Shi'ites, an overwhelmingly rural society and the third largest sect in the early years of the independent Lebanese state, remained relatively marginalized in the making of the Lebanese state. However, challenges to the status quo were set in motion beginning from the late 1950s and intensified in mid-1960s. One of the challenges was pan-Arabism, which will be discussed separately under regional context. But suffice it here to say that the increasing power of Arab nationalism in the region was articulated with the Lebanese actors to alter the delicate political balance of the country. A second challenge came from the Shi'ites, especially beginning from the late-1960s, with their demands for a reform in the existing system in which the Shi'ites would have more political power. A third force was the growth of the secular leftist Lebanese National Movement (LNM) in the 1960s, which mainly comprised of Muslims, under the leadership of the Druze leader Kamal Jumblat and in alliance with the PLO. These forces were combined with

other regional and international political factors and left their marks in the history of Lebanon with two civil wars, the first one in 1958 and the second between 1975 and 1991.

The second internal variable is the economy of Lebanon. Lebanon is a very small country with very limited resources. The underdeveloped industry has concentrated in and around Beirut and the country's economy has mainly rested on the service sector, more specifically, the finance sector. In the Bekaa and in Southern Lebanon, the main economic activity has been agriculture. This economic structure provided very limited opportunities for development and employment and little space to accommodate population increases.

Regional Context: The Middle East

The regional powers and politics had very important repercussions for Lebanon and for the Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon. In turn, the political circumstances and balances within Lebanon resulted in different reactions of the regional countries.

Without doubt, the most important regional event, which not only affected Lebanon but the Middle East as a whole, has been the eruption of the Arab-Israeli conflict right after the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948. This is the most important event regarding the thesis subject, firstly because the Palestinian refugee problem in Lebanon was the outcome of this very event and secondly because the regional policies of the countries in the Middle East has been considerably shaped by this event in the last half century.

The second important event was the emergence of pan-Arabism in mid-1950s. This ideology gained momentum after the Suez Crisis in 1956, when the Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser fought against French, British and Israeli invasion. As a result, Nasser emerged as a hero struggling against imperialism and Israel. The first implication of pan-Arabism and Nasserism for Lebanon was that "a pro-Western or pro-Arab Lebanon?" dilemma for the Lebanese political elite came to the light. Actually, this disagreement between the Western-oriented Christian Maronites and pro-Arab Muslims was present since the establishment of the

independent Lebanese state. However, it manifested itself more openly after 1956 and turned into a very short civil war in Lebanon in 1958, with the intervention of the United States (US) in the middle of the conflict to preserve the Western leanings of the country. This civil war was overcome by the implementation of a slightly more pro-Nasserite foreign policy and without any change in the political system. Secondly, the rise of Nasserism and pan-Arabism also mobilized the Lebanese anti-status quo masses and the Palestinians in Lebanon under secular leftist movements such as the LNM. These movements became a strong opposition to the sectarian political system of Lebanon in late 1960s, which eventually turned into a major factor causing the eruption of the civil war in 1975.

Thirdly, and more recently, the Arab-Israeli peace process which was initiated in October 1991, had important reflections in Lebanon. The most important topic for Lebanon in the peace process was the existence and future of the Palestinian refugees. Hence, the peace process started a political debate on the future of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Apart from regional events and currents, the regional powers were also influential in the Lebanese domestic politics and in the evolution of the Palestinian refugee problem in Lebanon. Among the regional countries, perhaps the most important has been Syria. Syria's direct or indirect involvement in the Lebanese domestic scene occurred after 1971, when Hafiz al-Asad assumed the presidency in Syria. Syria's ambitions on Lebanon were twofold: The first was the very existence of the Lebanese state itself. Since the 1920s, Syria has resented to the existence of a separate Lebanon, a country which was seen as part of the Greater Syria. When Hafiz al-Asad came to power in 1971, Syria began its attempts, politically or militarily, to change the course of events in Lebanon in its favor. Secondly, Syria tried to control the Palestinians and the PLO in Lebanon with the aim of maintaining an influence on the Arab-Israeli conflict, especially after 1978, when Syria remained the sole military power against Israel after the signing of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Thirdly, as an extension of Syria's concerns towards Israel, Lebanon became an important country to be utilized as a buffer between Syria and Israel. Syria's influence in domestic politics of Lebanon has

been continuing in the post-Civil War period and its ambitions are still evident in Lebanese political decision-making.

Another major regional power, and a party to the Arab-Israeli conflict, was Israel. Israel's involvement in Lebanon occurred mainly through its military actions as a response to the Palestinian cross-border guerrilla operations from the Lebanese territory into northern Israel beginning form the late 1960s. By time, the guerrilla operations and the subsequent Israeli retaliations polarized the Lebanese politicians and the masses. After the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978, these military operations were combined with political and military cooperations with some Lebanese groups (such as the South Lebanese Army (SLA), the Maronites and their armed element, the Lebanese Forces (LF)), and as a result, Israel became a party to the conflict in Lebanon. Israel also acted as a unifying factor for the Lebanese shortly after its second invasion of Lebanon in June 1982.

Apart from these major regional factors, there were other regional factors which affected the course of the events in Lebanon. One of these factors was the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The first result of this event was that the politicization of the Shi'ite community in Lebanon accelerated. Secondly, the fundamentalist government in Iran began to supply money and arms to the Shi'ite militias, especially to Hizbullah.

Other Arab states such as Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Egypt, were also active in the Lebanese scene. These states, along with other Arab states, supplied to or supported the Palestinian guerrilla organizations which had close relations with the states concerned. The most evident example of this relationship was between Arab Liberation Front (ALF) and Iraq. Another role of these states, which indirectly affected Lebanon, was that they supported the Palestinian cause in every occasion and acknowledged in the Arab League meetings the right of the Palestinians to carry out guerrilla operations.

The Iran-Iraq War between 1980-1988 was another input for Lebanon in the 1980s. This war was extended to the Lebanese soil through the proxies of these two countries, such as the clashes that occurred between Amal, a Shi'ite militia group, and the ALF in 1981.

Finally, the Gulf War between Iraq and the US in 1991 influenced the Palestinians in the Middle East and in Lebanon negatively. The fundamental reason for the deterioration in the political and economic situation of the refugees was the PLO's support to Iraq during the war. When the war was over, the PLO had lost confidence of the Arab states. The Palestinian refugees paid the price of this decision when the Gulf states began to expel the Palestinian workers.

International Context

The roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the establishment of an Israeli state were closely linked with the post-Second World War order, in which the US emerged as the new hegemon and the Great Britain was a fading but still influential colonial power. The post-World War order also divided the world into two camps between the Soviet-led Eastern bloc and the US-led Western bloc.

The idea to find a homeland to the Jews was the project of the Zionist movement and supported by the British, who, through the Balfour Declaration in 1917, committed to support the establishment of "a national homeland" for Jews in Palestine. This idea was implemented in the wake of the Second World War, during which the Jews subjected to genocide in Europe. The most important two actors in the realization of the idea of a Jewish state were the US and the Great Britain. Furthermore, the earlier efforts to find a settlement to the conflict were all joint US-British initiatives. Despite the Arab states' rejection of the resettlement of the refugees in states other than Palestine and the existence of a Jewish state at the heart of the Middle East, the US-British initiatives were attempts to find a settlement on the basis of the recognition of the State of Israel and the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees in the host states. The UNRWA, which was established in 1950 with the aim of assisting to the Palestinian refugees, was also a design of the US-British mentality with the final goal of resettling the Palestinian refugees in the host states.

Although the Great Britain's colonial power faded in later decades after its disengagement from its colonies and the independence movements of the colonies in 1950s and 1960s, the US emerged as the major extra-regional power which

supported, financially or politically, Israeli existence. The US also involved in the conflict as a mediator in every occasion, as it did in the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt in 1978, the Israeli-Lebanese Peace Treaty in May 1983 and the Arab-Israeli peace process initiated in October 1991.

On the other hand, the Soviet bloc never involved in the conflict directly but it established close relations with some Arab states, such as Egypt, Syria and Iraq. It also provided arms to some of the groups within the PLO. Thus, it will be fair to say that the Arab-Israeli conflict mainly remained under US control in terms of superpower involvement.

The UNRWA

The UNRWA has been operating in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Occupied Territories –the West Bank and the Gaza Strip- (OT) since 1950. Since its inception, the Agency's history has been shaped by financial distress, wars, emergency situations and politics. The elements of the framework in which the Agency has been operating may be summarized as follows:

- Status and mandate: The UNRWA is a United Nations (UN) Agency, liable to the UN General Assembly. As a UN organ, the Agency and its staff have diplomatic status. As opposed to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), the Agency does not have the mandate to protect Palestinian refugees, that is, the mandate to assure civil and social rights to the Palestinian refugees in the host countries and to control and administer the refugee camps. Hence, the jurisdiction within the camps lies within the host governments.
- Mission: The Agency's mission was defined by the UN General Assembly Resolution 302 as follows:

> (a) To carry out in collaboration with local governments the direct relief and works programmes as recommended by the Economic Survey Mission, (b) To consult with the interested Near Eastern Governments concerning measures to be

> taken by them preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available.[1]

Hence, the Agency's mission is a humanitarian one and no political mission nor mandate was granted to the Agency. This excludes the Agency to pursue any political goals in realizing its operations for the Palestinian refugees. This means that the Agency can only have a role in its areas of operation.

- Host states and the Politics of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Agency's performance has also been closely connected with the attitudes of the host states towards the Agency and the governments' flexibility to allow Agency's specific plans and programmes in their territories, where almost all the population is Arab. Added to this factor is the political context. The Arab governments and the Arab public has always been resentful to the establishment of the State of Israel and has always opposed to the resettlement of refugees in territories other than the territories of the former British mandate of Palestine. As a result, the existence of refugees has always been a political matter for the Arab states.
- The Influence of the Superpowers: Although the Agency was established by the UN, the US and the Great Britain were the major powers which supported the existence of an organization with the initial aim of resettling the refugees in the long term as a permanent solution to the Palestinian refugee problem. Therefore, the Agency has always been seen as an instrument of Western powers in the eyes of the Palestinian refugees and of the host states.
- Funding: The Agency's budget has never been part of the UN budget and almost 100% of the Agency's budget has been funded through voluntary contributions. Therefore, the Agency has always experienced a financial distress and a chronic deficit in its regular budget. The financial problem became more and more acute by time because of the natural increase in refugee population and because of emergency situations.

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[1] UNGA Resolution 302 (IV), December 8, 1949.

- The Staff: The Agency currently employs 23.500 staff working in its Headquarters and in its fields of operation.[2] What is exceptional about the staff of the Agency is that 99% of the staff is Palestinian and it is the only UN agency employing such an overwhelming majority of one ethnic group. This composition sometimes has led to controversies within the Agency between its mission as a humanitarian organization and the political aspirations of its Palestinian staff. This staff composition at times has attracted criticisms from Israel and from the financial contributors of the Agency.

ARGUMENTS

In the light of the contextual framework explained above, the following arguments were discussed throughout the study:

The Lebanese State's Policy towards the Palestinian Refugees

The Lebanese state implements two policies towards the Palestinian refugees: The first is the rejection of resettlement of the refugees in Lebanon. The second policy, which is an outcome of the first policy, is restrictions on the refugees to prevent their integration into the Lebanese economic and political system. These policies can be understood by looking at the internal dynamics of Lebanon. The first element to be considered is the sectarian political structure of Lebanon. The Palestinian refugees are overwhelmingly Muslim and the Palestinian refugee population almost equals to the one tenth of the Lebanese population. If incorporated, the Palestinian refugees would tilt the sectarian balance in favor of the Muslims. Such an outcome concerns especially the Maronites in Lebanon. The second element is the economy of Lebanon. Lebanon was unable to accommodate such a large number of foreigners given the limited absorptive capacity of the Lebanese economy.

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[2] United Nations Information System on Palestine (UNISPAL), "Report of The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in The Near East, 2002-2003" (UNRWA Report hereafter), http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on June 30, 2004.

At the end of the Civil War and just after the initiation of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations in 1991, the Lebanese state began to implement two additional policies towards the Palestinian refugees. These were the reestablishment of control over refugees and negligence of the refugee issue. The policy of reestablishing control was an extension of the Lebanese state's effort to reestablish its authority allover the country after a sixteen-year long civil war. The policy of negligence of the issue means "do nothing about the Palestinian refugees and wait and see". This policy, if it is a policy, had four reasons. The first is related with the internal situation of post-War Lebanon. The state ignores the refugee issue because its own citizens naturally come first in the state's efforts to reconstruct the social and economic life of the country. Furthermore, any attempt by the government in favor of the Palestinian refugees could be perceived by the Lebanese public as the preparation of the grounds for the eventual resettlement of the refugees. In post-Taif Lebanon, no government is willing to negotiate on the status and conditions of the refugees since the Lebanese public opinion is totally against resettlement and feeling dislike against the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon because of their role in the Civil War. The third reason for negligence was the Arab-Israeli peace talks up until 2000. The Lebanese state did not want to negotiate with PLO representatives on the future of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon because it was waiting for the outcome of the peace negotiations. A fourth reason is the Syrian dominance in internal politics of Lebanon.

Syria and the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

Syria has been a very important actor in the last three decades of Lebanese political life. Syria's ambitions on Lebanon were discussed in the framework section. In this study, it is argued that Syria wanted to dominate the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon because of two reasons: the first reason is Syria's long-lasting goal to subordinate Lebanon to Syrian interests. Damascus wants to control the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as a means to control Lebanon. Secondly, Syria wants to strengthen her hand against Israel and the control of refugee politics will serve as an instrument for this goal. A second argument regarding Syria is that after 1991,

Syria gained total control of the refugee issue in Lebanon and whatever decision or action is taken by the Lebanese state regarding the Palestinian refugees, it is actually a Syrian decision to a great extent. However, it should be made clear that Syria does not dictate all the decisions or actions, but in every issue regarding the refugees in Lebanon, the Lebanese state at least needs the acquiescence or consent of Damascus.

The UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

The research on the UNRWA forms the humanitarian side of the Palestinian refugee problem in Lebanon. The UNRWA has been a very important actor which has been in direct contact with the Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. On the issue of the UNRWA's role in the Lebanon field, it is argued that the Agency has been an institution acting as a quasi-state in the absence of a Palestinian state, providing the stateless refugees with basic services (i.e. education, health, employment -within the Agency- and to some extent, social assistance) which would have otherwise been provided by a state. A second argument is that the financial situation and the mandate of the Agency have seriously prevented the Agency to rehabilitate the conditions of the Palestinian refugees. Finally, regarding the current situation, it is argued that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon remain almost totally dependant on the UNRWA services because of the absence of the PLO institutions in Lebanon since 1982 and because of the still-continuing economic and social effects of the Civil War.

This study is mainly based on annual reports of the UNRWA and secondary sources on the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In the course of the research, I also visited Lebanon between 24 July and 5 August 2004. During my visit, I carried out interviews with Prof. Farid al-Khazen on the post-War political situation in Lebanon, the Arab-Israeli peace process and Palestinian refugees; with Prof. Judith Harik on Hizbullah and Palestinian refugees; with UNRWA Public Information Officer of the Lebanon Field, Ms. Hoda Samra, on the Agency services in Lebanon; and with Assistant Prof. Diana Allen on the situation of Palestinian refugees and Palestinian political organizations in Lebanon and their responses to

the Arab-Israeli peace process. I also visited Shatela refugee camp to see conditions and daily lives of refugees.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The study is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 provides a detailed historical background of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon until early 1990s. Their exodus, their initial situation in Lebanon, their relations with the Lebanese state and with the Lebanese public and the evolution of these relations within the context of political circumstances in the country and in the region are mentioned in this chapter. In addition, the chapter also analyzes the involvement of the external actors and their roles in the Palestinian refugee issue, in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in Lebanon.

Chapter 2 begins with the immediate post-War period and the start of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. This chapter attempts to explain and discuss the conditions of the refugees in Lebanon within the context of the peace process and post-War Lebanon. In doing so, their changing relations with the Lebanese public and state are examined while at the same time taking into account the inputs that emerged as a result of the peace negotiations.

In chapter 3, the role of the UNRWA is analyzed with special reference to Lebanon. Its establishment and evolution are described as a historical account while focusing on the emergency situations that took place in Lebanon in 1970s and 1980s. For the period beginning from early 1990s, the role and initiatives of the Agency in Lebanon and in the Arab-Israeli peace process are examined. Throughout the chapter, political circumstances and problems of the Agency are discussed in order to provide the reader with a comprehensive framework within which the Agency has been operating.

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: 1948-1991

THE EXODUS AND THE FIRST YEARS IN LEBANON: 1948-1950

The Palestinian refugee problem emerged right after the United Nations (UN) Partition Plan Resolution on November 29, 1947, which divided the territories of the British mandate of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. The refugees migrated in several stages stretching over a year, reaching its climax after the establishment of the Israeli state on May 15, 1948 and the subsequent eruption of the war between the joint Arab forces and Israel.[1] The refugee destinations were West Bank, Gaza Strip, Egypt, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon. The refugees who fled to Lebanon were mainly from the Galilee region (north of Israel) and from the cities of Jaffa, Acre and Haifa.

There was conflicting figures regarding the number of refugees who arrived in Lebanon. The figures were based on estimates of various authorities and experts: The highest figure was as high as 140.000 (given by Brand and Gilmour), whereas there were estimates as low as 84.000 (given by Adelman based on UN estimates),

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[1] Benny Morris gives a detailed account of the stages and causes of Palestinian exodus from Palestine, based on the Israeli Defence Forces Intelligence Service Report prepared in June 1948. Benny Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1990), Chapter 3.

with other figures ranging in between (90.000-120.000 given by Morris and 110.000 by Sayigh).[2]

The refugees entered into Lebanon from its southern border with Israel. An overwhelming majority of the refugees thought that their displacement was temporary and that they would soon be repatriated.[3] Hence, most of the refugees, who were almost totally peasants, were concentrated along the Israeli border in the first months of their exodus. The government began to distribute the refugees to the camps in the other parts of the country only after 1950.[4] Initially, there were 17 camps in Lebanon established mainly in the rural south around Tyre and Sidon, in the north around Tripoli and around Beirut. The camp locations were determined based on economic and political concerns. The camps in the rural areas were established so that the landlords could employ cheap labor in agriculture. The camps near city limits were designed to provide cheap labor for the construction sector. Majority of the camps were located close to Muslim-populated zones.[5]

If the mid-range figures were taken, the number of refugees in Lebanon equaled about one tenth of the Lebanese population in late 1940s,[6] however, no population census has been conducted in Lebanon since 1932 and this ratio was just an estimate.

Lebanon's political system was established on a compromise between the Maronites and the Sunnis in 1946, which was named as the National Pact. According to this compromise, the representation in and the administration of the state would be based on the sectarian balance in the country. With the influx of refugees equaling about one-tenth of the population, an overwhelming majority of

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[2] Laurie A. Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1988), p. 233, David Gilmour, *Lebanon: The Fractured Country* (Sphere Books: London, 1987), p. 86, Howard Adelman, "Palestinian Refugees and the Peace Process" in Paul Marantz and Janice Gross Stein (eds.), *Peace-Making in the Middle East: Problems and Prospects* (Croom Helm:London, 1985), p. 108, Morris, Ibid., p. 68, Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies* (Zed Books: London and New Jersey, 1994), p. 17.

[3] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 36.

[4] John C. Cooley, "The Palestinians" in P.E. Haley and L.W. Snider (eds.), *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues* (Syracuse University Press: New York, 1979), p. 25.

[5] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 24 and Samih K. Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians* (Westview Press: Boulder, 1997), p. 142.

[6] David McDowall, *The Palestinians: The Road to Nationhood* (Minority Rights Publications: London, 1994), p. 63.

whom were Sunnis, particularly the Maronites (the dominant Christian community) felt threatened due to the potential effects of the influx on the sectarian balance of Lebanon.[7] Moreover, Lebanon was an underdeveloped country with poor natural resources and an already high unemployment rate. As hopes for repatriation faded by the early 1950s, the Maronites began to oppose the resettlement of the refugees in Lebanon.[8]

The initial situation of the refugees in Lebanon differed according to class. The urban middle- and upper-class Palestinians and the Christian Palestinians were economically better off and they could easily integrate into the new circumstances and could find jobs. Most of the Christian Palestinians obtained Lebanese citizenship easily.[9] On the contrary, a great majority of the refugees, who were peasants or poor, were in a desperate condition with little or no belonging with them. It was this group who were accommodated in the camps.[10] Hence, the initial difference between the refugees was urban versus rural,[11] which was transformed into camp-residents versus non-camp residents in Lebanon.

Initially, camp dwellers were living in very harsh conditions. All the basic facilities were inadequate and the basic needs were hardly met. The first relief efforts were organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies and the American Friends Service Committee. United Nations Relief for Palestinian Refugees (UNRPR) was the first UN organ to deal with the relief efforts. It was established on November 19, 1948. On December 8, 1949, UNRPR was replaced by the UNRWA. The first facilities in the camps were provided by the UNRWA. The accommodation in tents gave way to huts in the first years. In Shatela camp, located in the southern suburbs of Beirut, clinic, school and public latrines were installed quickly, although they were not sufficient in meeting the demand. However, using cement was forbidden in all the camps. In

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[7] McDowall, Ibid., p. 63-4.
[8] Morris, *1948 and After*, p. 251.
[9] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 23.
[10] Morris, *1948 and After*, p. 79 and McDowall, *The Road to Nationhood*, p. 65.
[11] Rosemary Sayigh, "The Palestinian Identity Among Camp Residents", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 6-3 (Spring 1977), p.6.

the early years of Shatela, there was no running water in the camp. The water was brought in by the lorries of the UNRWA.[12] Apart from facilities, UNRWA also provided the basic needs of the refugees through rationing, which was an important support for the economic survival of the refugees.

THE YEARS OF ADAPTATION: 1950-1958

In this period, as hopes for a quick repatriation and a settlement in the Arab-Israeli conflict began to fade among the refugees and Arab states, the Palestinian refugees began to establish a new life in Lebanon. Consequently, the Lebanese state began its attempts to regulate and control the Palestinian presence.

The Measures of the Lebanese State and the Political Situation

A few years after the Palestinians' arrival in Lebanon, it was understood by the Lebanese authorities that a quick repatriation scheme and a peace was out of sight. Reluctant to accommodate and to resettle a community equaling 10% of its national population, the Lebanese state began to put restrictions on the Palestinian refugees. The first restriction attempt came in 1951, aiming at illegalizing the employment of the Palestinians.[13] Other restrictions followed soon: Palestinians were prohibited to work in many professional jobs, travel and work permits required, their enrollment in the public schools were very limited. They were defined as non-nationals (neither national nor foreigner).[14]

On the contrary, Syria and Jordan (Transjordan by then), extended extensive rights to the refugees in their respective territories. Syria granted equal rights to the refugees without giving them citizenship, whereas Jordan granted citizenship to all the Palestinians and their descendants in 1954. As a result, Lebanon has remained the most restrictive host country.

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[12] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 39-40.
[13] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 23.
[14] Gilmour, *The Fractured Country*, p. 88 and McDowall, *Road to Nationhood*, p. 66.

In the first decade of the refugees in Lebanon, the Lebanese state's instruments of political control over refugees were the general security agents and the personal influence of the former Mufti of Jerusalem (and the influence of his political body, Arab Higher Committee).[15] Another instrument of the Lebanese state to control the refugees was the restrictions on employment. The work permits for permanent employment were very hard to get and the procedure was time-consuming. As a result, the extension of permits was used as a pressure and the refugees had to seek personal connections or use bribery to obtain one.[16] Moreover, the permits were limited to a small number of works, mainly for unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. Combined with the difficulty of getting a permit, many Palestinians had to work without a permit for a lower wage and with no social security.[17]

Politically, the Palestinian refugees were passive until the mid-1950s. This was due to the absence of a leadership to mobilize the masses. The prevailing identity for the refugees during this decade was Arabism. With the emergence of Egyptian president Nasser after the Suez Crisis in 1956, the Palestinians began to involve in the Arab politics under pan-Arabism.[18] Nasser was admired because of his anti-imperialist rhetoric and his support for the Palestinian cause. This eroded Mufti's authority. However, their mobilization was not welcomed by the Lebanese state and the state began to use more strict measures and mechanisms to control the Palestinians,[19] particularly after the election of Fuad Chehab as the new president in 1958.

The Socio-Economic Conditions of the Palestinian Refugees

After the recovery from the initial wave of shock and despair, the Palestinian refugees began to establish a new life in Lebanon. The deprivation of the peasants

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[15] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 26.
[16] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 25.
[17] Rosemary Sayigh, "The Struggle for Survival: The Economic Conditions of Palestinian Camp Residents in Lebanon", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 7-2 (Winter 1978), p. 115.
[18] Farid al-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon: 1967-1976* (IB Tauris: London and New York, 2000), p. 133.
[19] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 52.

and the poor living in the camps forced them to find work. The camp-dwellers living in the rural camps sought daily paid agricultural work. When the UNRWA services began to expand beginning from mid-1950, a small number of the refugees were employed within the UNRWA works programmes scheme, such as road construction and afforestation projects. Apart from these workers, there was also a small number of male Palestinians who emigrated to the Gulf countries for work. Those living in the camps around big cities could find unskilled work, especially in the construction sector. According to Sayigh's account, there were plenty of blue-collar works available in Shatela in the 1950s, however, the wage was low.[20]

In the 50s, Lebanese economy began to expand and job opportunities increased, particularly in Beirut. There was a significant need for labor especially in the construction sector. This resulted in an immigration to Beirut, although it was slow in the first decade. Located in Beirut, the UNRWA was also a very large employer for Palestinian labor and it attracted many Palestinian refugees from the rural areas. In Beirut, there were not only more opportunities for employment, but also for health and education services. Hence, by the mid-1950s, the population of the Beirut camps began to increase. Apart from the Palestinians, there were small communities of poor Syrian and Lebanese moving in the camps. However, the Lebanese state tried to make sure that there was no expansion in camp zones and no new housing beyond the camp limits, to prevent any possibility for settlement.[21]

Despite immigration and economic expansion, the camp society remained isolated from the Lebanese both because they were living in the camps in the suburbs of Beirut and because the camp-dwellers were economically marginal and deprived.[22] The refugees in camps were grouped according to their origin. This grouping according to locality served to reproduce their pre-1948 social customs and traditions. All the traditional forms of social life were preserved and even

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[20] Sayigh, Ibid., pp. 44-5.
[21] Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (Harvard Unişversity Press: Cambridge and Massachusettes, 1994), p. 203.
[22] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 62.

reinforced.[23] This isolation from the environment and reconstruction of pre-1948 traditional life-style served to form an identity disconnected with mid- and upper-class Palestinians living outside the camps.

With the increasing job opportunities because of the economic expansion, the Palestinian refugees in camps began to differentiate and even specialize. This development introduced a new upper-class among the camp community, although the pre-1948 traditional life-style and leadership prevailed.[24]

During the 1950s, the main agency to meet the refugees' basic needs were the UNRWA. Basic health, education and social facilities were provided by the UNRWA. The Agency schools and medical services were free for the refugees, but they were not sufficient to meet the demand. Until mid-1950s, there were still many refugee children who reached the school age but unable to enroll in the Agency schools because of lack of space. UNRWA education system covered elementary, preparatory and secondary schooling[25] whereas the universities were private.

THE STATE REPRESSION AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION: 1958-1969

After a decade-long adaptation and passivity of the refugees in Lebanon, this period was characterized by the mobilization of the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese masses under secular-leftist movements as a challenge to the status quo in Lebanon. This period also experienced the rise of a Palestinian movement independent from the Arab states. As a result, the years between 1958 and 1969 became very critical for the future of Lebanon and the Palestinians in Lebanon.

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[23] Sirhan, "Palestinian Refugee Camp Life in Lebanon", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 4-2 (Winter 1975), pp. 101-3.
[24] Kimmerling and Migdal, *The Making of a People*, p. 204. However, Sayigh argues that the socio-economic differentiation occurred in 1960s, which will be mentioned in the next part. Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 79.
[25] The UNRWA secondary education was halted in 1963 in all the fields as a measure to decrease costs.

Political Developments of the Period

This period began with two important political events, one internal and the other external. The external event was the rise of Nasserism, a pan-Arab and socialist ideology led by the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. His nationalization of the Anglo-French owned Suez Canal and his success in resisting the French-English-Israeli troops in1956 appealed the Arab masses. Like majority of the Arabs, the Palestinian refugees became supporters of Nasser (and the Mufti lost his influence in late-50s).

The internal event was the demands for reform in the conservative, Maronite-dominated, pro-Western political system. The political groups and parties opposing the static nature of the National Pact and the Maronite domination were challenging the political system for social and economic reforms and for the implementation of various ideologies such as pan-Arabism and communism. With the rise of Nasserism in the second half of the 50s, these parties began to voice their demands more openly, yet, they were still marginal in the Lebanese political system resting on the traditional forms of politics and leadership.[26] The Palestinian refugees, particularly the young generation, were also recruited to these opposition parties and groups. The Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) led by George Habash was particularly popular among the Palestinians due to its pro-Nasserite leanings and for the same reason, it was under close scrutiny by the military intelligence.[27]

When Fuad Chehab took over the presidency from Camille Chamoun in 1958 after a six-month long Civil War fought between the supporters and the opponents of Chamoun, Chehab adopted a moderate pro-Nasserite foreign policy in order to win the support of the Muslim masses for the Maronite-dominated state. He undertook reforms in the political system of Lebanon in order to end the privileged positions of traditional and religious community leaders in the politics. In reforming the system and the state apparatus, he tried to bypass the traditional political system and to suppress any opposition, which could attempt to erode his

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[26] Itamar Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon: 1970-1985* (Cornell University Press: London, 1985), pp. 26-7.
[27] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 68.

authority, by expanding the bureaucracy and by effectively utilizing the Deuxième Bureau (the military intelligence).[28]

According to the interviews by Sayigh with the residents in Shatela camp, the Bureau opened an office in the camp and it recruited collaborators within the camp population. Some of these collaborators were openly associated with the Bureau. There were some other collaborators who were just informers. Not only the political party members but the whole camp population were surveilled by the Bureau agents or by the collaborators. The oppression of the refugees were in the form of prohibitions and permits, which represented the bureaucratic control of the Chehabist period. To overcome these difficulties, bribery became very common in the camps during this period. Arrests and interrogations became frequent events and many of those who were arrested were mistreated. A second measure to be implemented during the period was the police patrols in the camps. The aim was to enforce all regulations on refugees, such as the restriction on housing and the prevention of any potential expansion of the camp boundaries.[29]

This period also witnessed the emergence of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations against Israel, generally known as the Palestinian Resistance Movement (PRM). They were recruiting guerrillas, establishing training bases and undertaking armed actions. Due to the strict control over the refugee camps in Lebanon, there were no training bases nor any branch of the resistance organizations within or around the camps in the early 1960s. However, the camps became secret stations for the passage and transmission of arms in 1962.[30]

In the Arab summit which convened in Egypt in January 1964, the PLO and its military wing, the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) was formed. It was led by traditional Arab notables, with the support of the Arab countries. It had no intention for guerrilla activity and the struggle would be under the direction of Arab armies.[31] However, Lebanon wanted to stay outside this struggle and the Arab

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[28] Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon*, pp. 29-30.
[29] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, pp. 68-71.
[30] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 75.
[31] McDowall, *The Road to Nationhood*, p.69.

states accepted this request in the same summit, deciding that Lebanon would not be included in PLO activities.[32]

Nevertheless, Palestinian guerrillas were infiltrating into Lebanon from Syria and Jordan and they began to carry out their first raids in 1964. The subsequent Israeli retaliations also began in 1964, however, the initial retaliations were small in scale. At the same time, the Lebanese Army tried to prevent these PRM attacks. The first years were not troublesome for the army and for the Lebanese living in the south because the attacks and retaliations were limited. Moreover, there was a broad support to the Palestinians from the urban lower and middle-classes, from intellectuals and students until late 60s. The strongest support was from the Sunnis, but also from the Shi'ites and the Greek Orthodox, who were identifying themselves as Arabs.[33] The strongest opposition came from the Maronites and conservatives because of their concerns about the sectarian balance. Another reason for their opposition to the PLO activities was because of the PLO's non-sectarian and progressive ideology, which was a threat to the status quo in Lebanon.[34] This sympathy from pan-Arab masses was combined with a dislike against Israel, because of the trouble it caused in the Middle East in general and in Lebanon in particular.[35] This broad support continued up until the late 1970s, when the Palestinian commando activities against Israel and Israel's effective and destructive retaliations in response intensified.

Despite strict measures to prevent political activity and training in the camps, Fatah began to form secret cells in the camps in 1965 and it established training bases in some camps in 1967.[36] Fatah was a prominent guerrilla organization led by Yaser Arafat, with Palestinian nationalism as its ideology and the liberation of Palestine as its primary cause.[37]

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[32] Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, translated from German by John Richardson (IB Tauris: London, 1993), p. 162.
[33] Michael C. Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor in the Lebanese Civil War", *Middle East Journal*, 32-3 (Summer 1978), p. 264.
[34] Rex Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon* (Westview Press: Boulder and San Francisco 1990), p. 162.
[35] Hanf, *Coexistence*, p. 162.
[36] Al-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State*, p. 136.
[37] Al-Khazen, Ibid., p. 134.

In 1967, when Arab armies were defeated in the Six-day war, the appeal of pan-Arabism decreased and Nasserism came to an end. That same year, following a commando raid into Israel, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) followed the commandos in Jordan Valley and armed clashes occurred between the Israeli forces on the one side and the Jordanian Army and the PRM guerrillas on the other. The Israeli Forces suffered heavy losses during the fighting, which was known as the Battle of Karameh. For the Arab masses and the Palestinians, this fighting demonstrated that the Israeli forces were not invincible. This small success increased the confidence in the guerrilla movement. After this event, the guerrilla organizations took over the leadership of the PLO. From then on, the PLO became an umbrella organization under which the Palestinian politico-military organizations from various ideologies operated. The dominant organization in the PLO was Fatah. The other important groups were pro-Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) headed by George Habash, who transformed his former organization ANM, the Iraqi-sponsored Arab Liberation Front (ALF), Syrian-sponsored Saeqa and Marxist organizations such as Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC). From 1967 onwards, the guerrilla-led PLO gradually became the dominant actor in the struggle against Israel. This unleashed Palestinian activism in the host countries, including Lebanon. All the activities which were handled secretly were now being carried out publicly, such as recruitment to the PLO, transmission and storage of arms and establishment of training bases, because of the increasing support to the PLO.[38]

After 1968, the guerrilla activities from Lebanon intensified, following harsher Israeli retaliations. The Lebanese Army tried to control the guerrilla activities in the south, but in vain. There were two basic reasons for the Army's inability to prevent attacks: First, the Lebanese Army was small and non-political, in order to maintain the sectarian balance. There was no conscription in the army and the low ranks were filled by the Shi'ites. The Shi'ites preferred recruitment in

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[38] Al-Khazen, Ibid., p. 136.

the army because the majority of the Shi'ites were peasants and they were the poorest community in Lebanon. The remaining posts were filled by the Sunnis and the Maronites to maintain the sectarian balance.[39] However, the Army's middle and lower ranks remained overwhelmingly Muslim. Second, as discussed above, there was a broad support from the Lebanese Muslims for the Palestinian cause. When the army was ordered to take action against the PRM, the supporters of the PLO perceived the army as a tool of the Maronite hegemony.[40] Until 1969, there were many mass demonstrations to protest army actions against the PRM guerrillas in the south. The Lebanese opposition parties were also participating in these demonstrations. The criticism grew so much that finally in April 1969, following a demonstration against the army, the refugees and PRM guerrillas mobilized to end the Deuxième Bureau authority in the camps. The popularity of the PLO, the effective guerrilla activities, the army's inability to prevent these actions and protests against the army from the Palestinians and from their Lebanese allies led to the signing of the Cairo Agreement between the PLO and the Lebanese Army on November 3, 1969. The Cairo Agreement marked the beginning of a new period for the Palestinians and the PLO in Lebanon, giving them an unprecedented autonomy in Lebanon until 1982.

The Socio-Economic Conditions of the Palestinian Refugees

The socio-economic situation of the Palestinians were slightly different from the previous period. The effects of the economic expansion in Lebanon and the UNRWA education system were felt better during this period. Many Palestinians acquired new skills and these educated generation could find work more easily, particularly in the Gulf.[41] But the majority, who were uneducated and unskilled, remained dependent on the seasonal, agricultural and unskilled jobs with low wages. The economic conditions for this group was still difficult because the income earned by one or two members working in a daily paid work was

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[39] Hanf, *Coexistence*, p. 161-2.
[40] Gilmour, *The Fractured Country*, p. 94-5.
[41] Sayigh, "The Struggle for Survival", p . 112.

inadequate for a crowded family.[42] According to a survey conducted in 1971, only 7% of the camp-dwellers were employed permanently whereas 58% of the workers were employed on a daily basis, with one-fifth of the respondents employed in the agricultural sector.[43] Another consequence of this economic hardship was the contribution to income by family members other than the adult male. The same survey revealed that 11 % of males and 2 % of females between the ages 10-14 were employed.[44] There was an income gap between the daily paid labor and salaried employment, which led to a socio-economic differentiation among the camp dwellers.[45] As a result, the peasant Palestinians of Palestine began to transform into an urbanized sub-proleteriat in exile.[46] However, Sayigh argues that the Palestinian workers did not develop a proleteriat consciousness immediately because of the domination of the traditional social norms and relations and the dispersal of these workers in small enterprises.[47]

Contrary to the economic situation of camp-dweller Palestinians, the non-camp-dweller Palestinians, who were from the middle or upper economic strata or who were Christians, became entrepreneurs in Lebanon and many of them succeeded to prosper.[48] This bourgoisie became political activists in the 1960s and they also financed the PRM/PLO activities.[49]

During the period, the Palestinian refugees living in the camps preserved and even reinforced their distinct identities as camp-dwellers. The primary cause for this distinct identity was their sub-standard conditions in the refugee camps combined with their inferior socio-economic situations *vis-à-vis* the Lebanese and the non-camp resident Palestinians.[50] Moreover, their situation as refugees with experiences of shock and disappointment, their residence in camps, which served

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[42] Sirhan, "Camp Life in Lebanon", pp. 99-100.
[43] Sirhan, Ibid., p.101.
[44] Sirhan, Ibid., p.101
[45] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, pp. 79-80.
[46] Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, p. 140.
[47] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p.45
[48] Gilmour, *The Fractured Country*, p. 90.
[49] Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, p.151.
[50] Robert Bowker, *Palestinian Refugees: Mythology, Identity and the Search for Peace* (Lynne Rienner: Boulder and London, 2003), pp. 68-9.

as a factor isolating them spatially, and their sectarian difference from a part of the Lebanese society were effective in the formation of this identity.[51] Their difficulty in accessing to the Lebanese educational institutions and the existence of the UNRWA as an approval of their inferior and exceptional status also strengthened the identities of the camp Palestinians.[52] According to Farsoun, the host societies also perceived them as different because of their social conditions and legal status.[53] Despite the formation of this distinct identity and the isolation of camp refugees, the political support given to the Palestinian movement led to a rapprochement between the Lebanese and the Palestinians in this decade.

The level of education among the Palestinian refugees living in camps remained low during this period. This was because the UNRWA education covered only elementary and preparatory classes and the Lebanese state continued to limit public schools for the Palestinian refugees, which was a unique case among the host countries. However, there was a positive development in literacy rates in this period. The reason was that a young generation began to complete UNRWA education. For instance, for the year 1971 the literacy rate for the males in the age group 10-24 was 91.5 % whereas the rate was 41.2 % for the males above the age 35.[54] Nevertheless, overwhelming majority of the camp dwellers could not receive university education due to the limited number of scholarships provided by the UNRWA. Another problem was related to female Palestinian refugees, whose illiteracy rate was far higher than that of males because of the domination of the traditional social life-style.[55]

With a rise in the educational level and with the PLO's role in the struggle for the Palestinian cause, an increase in the political consciousness and activism of the Palestinian refugees occurred.[56] As a result, the politics became a very sensitive issue and it occupied the most important place among the camp dwellers. Sayigh

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[51] Sayigh, "The Palestinian Identity", p. 7.
[52] Kimmerling and Migdal, *The Making of a People*, pp. 193 and 204.
[53] Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, p.154.
[54] Sirhan, "Camp Life in Lebanon", p. 97.
[55] Sirhan, Ibid., pp. 95-6.
[56] Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, p. 148.

states that despite the importance of politics, the majority stayed aloof from political activities and they remained loyal to the traditional leadership.[57] On the contrary, Gilmour argues that with the coming of the Resistance in the camps in the beginning of the 1960s, the traditional leadership was subordinated to the new leadership.[58] Sirhan maintains the same argument with Gilmour arguing that although the traditional leadership still preserved its influence to some extent, the Resistance Movement had the upper hand in political leadership in camps.[59]

PALESTINIAN AUTONOMY AND THE CIVIL WAR: 1969-1982

This period began with the signing of the Cairo Agreement which assured important rights for Palestinian political and military activity in Lebanon. In addition to this, the turmoil in the country turned into a civil war in 1975. The period also witnessed the direct involvement of the regional actors in Lebanon.

Palestinian Autonomy, Syrian Involvement and Deepening Turmoil

The Cairo Agreement, signed between the Lebanese Army Commander General Emile al-Bustani and the Chairman of the PLO Yaser Arafat on November 3, 1969, gave the Palestinians and the PLO a great autonomy.[60] With this agreement, the security within the camps came under the control of Palestinian Armed Struggle Command (PASC) in cooperation with the Lebanese authorities. This force would be responsible for the determination and regulation of the armed presence within the camps. Popular Committees were formed to carry out the municipal and other day-to-day affairs within the camps in cooperation with the Lebanese authorities. The Lebanese state also recognized the Palestinians' right to participate in the armed struggle for the Palestinian cause. To this end, the Lebanese Army pledged

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[57] Sayigh, "Palestinian Identity", p. 10.
[58] Gilmour, *The Fractured Country*, p. 90.
[59] Unlike Sayigh and Gilmour, Sirhan cites four leadership styles, two traditional and two modern: *wujaha* (local notables, who also act as connections for favor), *mukhtars* (village heads and also heads of big families), new leaders (political activists, educated people or UNRWA officials) and fighters (of the Resistance). Sirhan, "Camp Life in Lebanon", pp. 106-7.
[60] The full text of the Cairo Accords can be found in Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival*, pp. 199-200.

to facilitate the operation of commando activities in Lebanon, such as the facilitation of border-crossing from the specified points and of evacuation and supply operations of the commandos. In turn, the PLO agreed to undertake to control the conduct of its members, assured its respect for the sovereignty of Lebanon and pledged not to interfere in the Lebanese affairs.

However, there was a growing concern from the Christian side, particularly from the Phalangists (the Kataeb Party) led by Pierre Gemayel. The Christian parties and groups began to organize their own militias, realizing that the Lebanese Army was unable to prevent Palestinian armed presence and to protect the Lebanese from the Israeli retaliations.[61] The first skirmishes between the Palestinians and the Christian militias occurred in March 1970. This growing concern led the Lebanese government to amend some of the articles of the Cairo Agreement in May 1970. These amendments included some restrictions such as the prohibition of firing rockets, carrying arms in settlement areas and laying mines along the Israeli border zone. Fatah and Saeqa (a Syrian-sponsored and moderate Palestinian organization) agreed to comply with these amendments, however, radical groups such as the PFLP rejected.[62]

At the very beginning of this period, another major development occurred which affected the course of the Palestinian struggle. After the Battle of Karameh in Jordan, the Resistance organizations which were now controlling the PLO, began to threaten the regime in Jordan, where the Palestinian population ratio was high. This growing power of the Resistance in Jordan led the Jordanian Army to take effective actions against the guerrilla presence in Jordan. In September 1970, after bloody clashes between the Resistance and the Jordanian Army, the Palestinian armed presence were expelled from Jordan. Up until then, the headquarters of the Resistance Movement was in Jordan. With their expulsion from Jordan, all the Resistance and the PLO activities were transferred to Lebanon beginning from the late-1970. However, Sayigh argues that the PLO should be considered as an internal factor, although informally, in Lebanon before its

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[61] Hanf, *Coexistence*, p. 167.
[62] Cooley, "The Palestinians", p. 31.

expulsion from Jordan because of the existence of its cultural and social institutions well before 1970 and also because of the close links with the Lebanese intelligentsia and opposition. This explains why the relocation of the PLO in Lebanon was opposed by a very small faction of the Lebanese.[63] Following the clashes in Jordan, tens of thousands of refugees in the Jordan field also fled to Lebanon and the refugee population in Lebanon increased. Hanf gives an estimate between 200.000 and 500.000 and Gilmour puts the figure as 350.000 for the year 1971.[64]

As soon as the PLO relocated in Lebanon, it began to establish financial and military alliances or strengthened the already-existing ones with the Lebanese leftist and progressive parties for popular support, a lesson learned from its experience in Jordan. This cooperation also decreased the isolation of the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon to some extent.[65] Nevertheless, this alliance was not an overall support. There was a resentment against the Palestinian armed presence, particularly from the Christians, because of the Israeli retaliations in the south.

At the same time, the Lebanese Army was still trying to prevent Palestinian guerrilla activities in Southern Lebanon. In early-1973 the army arrested some Palestinian guerrillas, however, they were released soon after the Syrian intervention. The tension between the PLO and the army was resolved with the signing of the Melkart Protocol in May 1973 under the mediation of Syria. The Protocol reaffirmed the terms of the Cairo Agreement.[66] This Syrian mediation was the beginning of Syria's involvement in the Lebanese politics. From then on, Syria would take a more active role in Lebanon, which would turn into direct intervention right at the beginning of the Civil War. There were many reasons for Syria's interventionist policies in Lebanon: First, Syria reached a stable regime when Hafiz al-Assad came to power in 1971. With this change in government, Syria began to assume a greater role in Arab politics and in the Arab-Israeli

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[63] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 30.
[64] Hanf, *Coexistence*, p.168 and Gilmour, *The Fractured Country*, p. 86.
[65] Hanf, Ibid., p. 169.
[66] Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor", p. 171.

conflict. Second, from a historical point of view, Syria has always resented the establishment of Lebanon, which it thought was an integral part of the Greater Syria, both economically and politically. Third, Lebanon was the most liberal country in the Middle East. There were many political organizations from various ideologies, a free press and many political asylums, who fled from the pressures of their relatively oppressive governments. This liberal system was a threat to the existing regime in Syria, because there were many opponents of the regime who sought refuge in Lebanon.[67] A fourth reason was Syria's isolation in the Arab-Israeli conflict when Egypt began separate peace talks with Israel after the October War in 1973. The Egypt's role in Arab politics was already in decline with the death of Nasser in 1970, however, the separate peace talks totally ruled out Egypt, leaving Syria as the only major Arab power confronting Israel. Lebanon was now a strategically important country for the defense of the southern flank of Syria in a possible war with Israel.[68] Finally, Syria wanted to control the Palestinians and Lebanon in order to indicate to the US and Israel that a peace without Syria's consent was not possible.[69]

Syria's mediation in 1973 also reveals the dual policies of the Arab states regarding the PLO and the Palestinian cause. The Arab states were supporting the Palestinian cause verbally and some of them (Libya, Saudi Arabia and Iraq) were also supplying money and arms to their respective guerrilla groups. However, none of these countries allowed the Resistance to carry out guerrilla operations from their territories while at the same time they put pressure on the Lebanese state to allow Palestinian guerrilla activities on the basis that the Palestinians had the right to undertake armed struggle against Israel.[70] The reason for the reluctance of the host states to allow guerrilla activities were twofold: First, they feared Israeli retaliations and second, they perceived the existence of commandos as a potential challenge to the regime.[71]

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[67] Hudson, Ibid., p. 176.
[68] Rabinovich, *The War for Lebanon*, p. 36.
[69] Hanf, *Coexistence*, p. 184.
[70] Gilmour, *The Fractured Country*, p. 95.
[71] Farsoun, *Palestine and the Palestinians*, p. 156.

The Civil War and Increasing Israeli Involvement

The political turmoil in Lebanon eventually led to the eruption of the Civil War in 1975. The date on which the Civil War began was generally assumed as the April 13, 1975, when the Christian militias opened fire to a bus carrying Palestinian commandos in a Christian quarter in Beirut. In the first months of the Civil War, the clashes were between the Christian militias and Palestinian guerrillas. Fatah declared that it would respect the sovereignty of Lebanon, as it promised in Cairo Agreement, and did not involve in the first months of the fighting. The warring Palestinian groups the radical factions within the PLO.[72] However, when the Lebanese Forces (LF)[73] attacked on the Dbayeh refugee camp and imposed blockade on some Palestinian camps in Beirut (Tal al-Zataar and Jisr al-Basha) in January 1976, Fatah took side in the Civil War. At this time, Syria intervened in the conflict and presented a package of solution. However, the package did not please any party and after a short cease-fire, the clashes erupted again in February. Syria tried to prevent any consequence against its interests by deploying troops in April 1976. In the Riyadh Summit of the Arab League held in October 1976, the Arab states agreed to send a peace force to Lebanon, in which the Syrian troops were by far the largest contingent.[74] In late-1976, Syria involved in the conflict directly with the aim of maintaining a balance between the leftists and rightists in order to prevent any victory against its interests.[75]

Meanwhile, an important development occurred in late-1970s in Israel which would change the fate of the Palestinians in Lebanon. In June 1977, the rightist Likud party under the leadership of Begin replaced the Labor party in the government. This change of government in Israel was the beginning of a more interventionist policy towards Lebanese politics and the Palestinians in Lebanon. The Likud government established close relations with LF and provided them

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[72] These groups were PFLP, DFLP, ALF and PFLP-GC.

[73] LF was composed of rightist Christian militias such as the armed wing of the Kataeb Party (the Phalangists), Camille Chamoun's Tigers militia, the Guardians of the Cedars and president Franjiyyeh's Marada.

[74] Of the 30.000 troops, 25.000 were Syrian. Hanf, *Coexistence*, p. 225.

[75] Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge University Press: Newcastle, 1984), p. 77.

military supplies.[76] There were already Israeli retaliations, most of them in the form of air strikes, as a counter-measure to Palestinian guerrilla operations. In the second half of the 70s, these reprisals became increasingly destructive, causing many civilians to emigrate from the south, but these operations never took the form of an invasion until 1978. Following a Fatah operation into Israel on March 11, 1978, Israel initiated its first large-scale invasion of Lebanon on March 15. This invasion caused an estimated 200.000 Lebanese, overwhelmingly Shi'ites, to flee northwards and the civilian Palestinians evacuated the camps in the south, to be defended by the guerrillas.[77] This invasion lasted short and the Israeli Army began its withdrawal in June 1978. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was deployed to the evacuated zones, while Israel left a ten kilometer-wide border strip to the Major Haddad's Southern Lebanon Army (SLA)[78] as a surrogate force, a *fait accompli* which was protested by the UN.

Despite the existence of the UNIFIL and the SLA in the south, the Palestinian commando raids were still continuing. The Likud government was planning to end these raids by expelling all the Palestinian armed existence and the PLO units in Lebanon. The Israeli forces began to invade Lebanon on June 6, 1982, this time being broader and longer. According to Brynen, the main reason for the invasion was not to end the Palestinian cross-border operations but something more comprehensive. He argues that Lebanon was a base not only for military activity, but also for diplomatic and independent action. Hence, the primary reason for the invasion was not to stop the commando raids but to destroy autonomous Palestinian infrastructure so that Israel would feel less international pressure for peace negotiations and less threatened from Palestinian political activity.[79]

In the first few days, the Syrian forces were easily ruled out by the IDF. West Beirut was besieged with heavy artillery and blockade. In June 1982, the PLO

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[76] Ghada Hashem Talhami, *Syria and the Palestinians: The Clash of Nationalisms* (University Press of Florida: Gainesville, 2001), p. 119.
[77] Cooley, "The Palestinians", p. 52.
[78] The SLA was an all-Christian remnant of the Lebanese Army after the army's disintegration in January 1976.
[79] Byrnen, *Sanctuary and Survival*, pp. 168-9.

agreed to evacuate Lebanon to be relocated to Tunisia under the guarantee of the US to protect the civilians left behind. A multinational force was deployed in Beirut to prevent any skirmish during the evacuation. By early September, the PLO had left Lebanon.

In this period, the existence of the Palestinian refugees, the autonomy of the PLO, its institutionalization in Lebanon and its alliance with the Lebanese leftist groups made the PLO an internal actor to the conflict. Beginning from the mid-1970s and especially after the PLO's involvement in the Civil War, the wide popular support to the PLO began to decrease and it turned to hostility after 1982. Brynen provides a two-dimensional explanation for the decrease in the popular support to the PLO. The first dimension constitutes the reasons beyond the PLO's control. These were the death of LNM leader Kamal Jumblatt in 1977, sectarianization of the Lebanese community, Arab interference both to the PLO and to the conflict in Lebanon and the Israeli retaliations. The second dimension forms the reasons created by the PLO. These were the continuation of the cross-border operations, PLO's intervention in the internal affairs of Lebanon and finally the misbehavior of the PLO commandos.[80]

Socio-Economic Conditions of the Palestinian Refugees

This period of autonomy for the Palestinians also led to many socio-political and cultural developments within the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The immediate effect of the Cairo Agreement was the replacement of the Lebanese security by the PLO forces. Organizations opened new offices in camps and they recruited many members. Popular committees were formed to manage and improve the camp services. These committees were designed to accommodate representatives from the Resistance organizations and therefore, it soon became an arena for the inter-group clashes.[81] Sayigh argues that these committees were ineffective because it depended on the PRM politically and financially and participation of the

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[80] Brynen, Ibid., p. 164.
[81] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 95.

camp-dwellers was limited.[82] Another indication of autonomy was the establishment of courts independent from the Lebanese courts to examine intra-Palestinian cases.[83] The limitations on housing gave way to free housing within camp limits and concrete houses were built.

The UNRWA education system suffered from overcrowding in this period because of the natural increase in population and the new arrivals from Jordan. In 1971, there were 42 pupils per class.[84] As a result, UNRWA had to adopt double-shift schooling in late 1960s. However, the PLO institutions complemented the UNRWA system by providing vocational training, granting scholarships and establishing cultural institutions.

The employment opportunities in the Lebanese economy decreased during this period because of the end of the economic expansion and later because of the Civil War, which displaced many people and brought insecurity outside the camp borders.[85] On the other hand, the PLO institutions provided many employment opportunities by recruiting the refugees into their branches and by establishing clothing, embroidery and metalwork workshops. Sayigh observes some trends in the economic structure of the camp-dweller Palestinians. These were the move into service sector, increase in industrial workers and decrease in agricultural workers, increasing migration to the Gulf and admiration of intellectual professions (such as journalism, teaching).[86] However, the poverty and sub-standard conditions of camp residents continued in this period because of their status as non-nationals and their inaccess to higher educational institutions.[87] The PLO institutions tried to overcome the Palestinian poverty and war damages by providing free medical services, pensions and compensations. In this period, the PLO services complemented the UNRWA services and eased the burden of the Agency.

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[82] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 96.
[83] Cited in Sayigh, Ibid., p. 94.
[84] Sirhan, "Camp Life in Lebanon", p. 98.
[85] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 109.
[86] Sayigh, "The Struggle for Survival", pp. 118-19.
[87] Sayigh, Ibid., p.117.

Even though their economic situation remained unchanged, social changes began to take place within the camp-dwellers in late 1960s with the emergence of the Resistance and increase in political activism. These developments led to the emergence of a modern and revolutionary leadership, an increase in national consciousness and solidarity.[88] Sayigh argues that Palestinians living in the camps developed an identity different from other Arabs because of their different economic, historical and political experiences in exile.[89]

The 1970s witnessed the emergence of the PLO as a quasi-state, the political autonomy of the Palestinians and a civil war hitting not only the Palestinians but the whole Lebanese population. Although the civil war continued until 1991, the Israeli invasion of 1982 and the evacuation of PLO ended this Palestinian autonomy abruptly.

HOSTILITY AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS: 1982-1991

In this period, the damaging effects of the Civil War and the Israeli invasion were felt on a massive scale both by the Palestinian community in Lebanon and by the Lebanese citizens. The hostility against the Palestinian dramatically increased, the Lebanese allies of the PLO began to distance themselves from Palestinians and anti-Palestinian Shi'ite militancy intensified. Lebanon as a military and political base began to lose its importance and the attention was shifted to the OT beginning from the Palestinian uprising in those territories in 1988.

Post-Invasion Situation

After the completion of the PLO's evacuation, the multinational force in Beirut was redeployed. On September 15, 1982, Israeli army units began to march into West Beirut, in contravention to the agreement with the US special envoy to Lebanon, Philip Habib, on the pretext to expel the remaining armed Palestinian units in the

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[88] Sirhan, "Camp Life in Lebanon", p.107.
[89] Sayigh, "Identity Among Camp Residents", p. 21.

camps. The operation was carried out by the Lebanese Forces, which were in close contact with the Likud government. On September 17, LF moved into Sabra and Shatela and massacred hundreds of Palestinians in two days as the IDF stood by. This action was criticized heavily both by the international community and by the Israeli parliament. Following the massacres, the US troops were once again deployed in Lebanon. This attack against the Palestinians was the first but not last. Beginning from September 1982, the Lebanese Army, the Deuxième Bureau and the LF undertook many aggressive actions against the Palestinian refugees. In many occasions, the army and LF even cooperated for disarmament of the Palestinians and the control of West Beirut.[90] Harassments became daily events. The Palestinians were forcefully evicted from apartments, attacked, arrested and mistreated. The state did not provide any protection, in violation of the agreement reached with the US. The situation in the south was not different. The IDF carried out mass arrests, detentions and committed mistreatments against the Palestinian refugees.[91]

The Lebanese-Israeli peace talks started in December 1982 with the US initiative and was concluded in May 1983. But the peace treaty was strongly opposed by the majority of the Lebanese discontent with the concessions on the sovereignty of the Lebanese state in the south..[92] An opposition was formed by the former-president Franjiyyeh (1970-1976), former-premier Rashid Karameh and the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt with Syrian backing.[93] Moreover, the Israeli withdrawal was conditioned on the simultaneous withdrawal of the Syrian troops, which gave Syria an advantage. However, Syria refused to withdraw and the treaty was born dead. On the other hand, IDF suffered so heavy casualties both in West Beirut and in the south by the attacks of various anti-Israeli groups (such as Amal, the Palestinians and some groups within the LNM) that it withdrew from Lebanon in August 1983, leaving a security zone in the south.

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[90] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 134.
[91] Sayigh, Ibid., pp. 201-4.
[92] Hanf, *Coexistence*, p. 273.
[93] Talhami, *Syria and the Palestinians*, p. 129.

Following the withdrawal, the US decided to redeploy its troops for the same reason in February 1984. The US's direct involvement as a "neutral actor" lasted only one and a half years, however, it was the target of many groups, which perceived the US as an ally of Israel.

Palestinian Factional Fighting in the North

At the same time with these developments in mid-1983, there were clashes among Palestinian organizations in Tripoli. The conflict was between the supporters and opponents of Arafat. Actually, this split emerged after the Palestinian National Council (PNC) meeting in 1974, when the PNC changed its strategy from the liberation of all Palestine to a two-state solution in any portion of Palestine. At the same time, the Arab League Summit in 1974 recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate authority for the Palestinian struggle. Following this decision, the PLO was also given the observer status in the UN General Assembly. Brynen argues that this change in strategy and the other two diplomatic developments had important implications for the PLO activities. First, the importance of diplomacy increased and the significance of guerrilla operations decreased. The guerrilla operations became costly for the PLO because of the increasingly destructive Israeli retaliations and resulting damage, which caused a decrease in the reputation of the PLO. Second, the shift to diplomacy did not bring a halt to the guerrilla operations. These operations continued to be carried out by the radical factions within the PLO because they were rejecting the two-state solution as the final goal and diplomacy as a means to this end. As a result, a split emerged between the supporters of diplomacy, headed by Arafat, and those who denounced diplomacy for the Palestinian struggle.[94]

Despite the existence of different views and ideologies between the PLO factions, the attacks on the Palestinians by the rightist militias during the Civil War unified them for the defense of the refugee camps and for their existence in Lebanon. After the evacuation of the PLO from Lebanon, Arafat returned back, but

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[94] Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival*, pp. 168-70.

this time he was settled in Tripoli. The anti-Arafat groups backed by Syria attacked Arafat loyalists in May 1983. After heavy fightings, Arafat loyalists were defeated and Arafat had to leave Lebanon. After this event, the Palestinians in Lebanon came under the control of Syria.[95]

There are different views on the new alignments within the PLO during and after the Palestinian factional fighting in 1983. Sayigh argues that the split occurred within Fatah and this split later led to the establishment of the Palestine National Salvation Front (PNSF) stationed in Damascus, which challenged Arafat's leadership of the PLO.[96] According to Talhami, the anti-Arafat group was not demanding Arafat's resignation but a more democratic debate within the PLO decision-making bodies at the initial phase of the split. In 1983, there were defections within the PLO, but only small pro-Syrian groups together with al-Saeqa joined the rebellion in the North. The "independent opposition" led by the PFLP and DFLP remained outside.[97] Brynen asserts that the PLO groups split into three after this rebellion. The first group was the National Alliance, comprising of al-Saeqa, PFLP-GC and Fatah rebels, which demanded the Arafat's removal. The second group was the remaining Fatah members, the ALF and many Arab states, who continued to support Arafat. The third group was formed of PFLP, DFLP and Palestine Communist Party. This group was still critical to the political stand and organizational structure of the PLO, however, they remained loyal to Arafat and they were committed to the independence of the PLO framework.[98]

The Palestinian-Shi'ite Relations and the War of the Camps

On May 1985, the Amal militiamen imposed blockade on two camps in Beirut and attacked the camps on the pretext to prevent the alleged return of the Palestinian militias to the refugee camps. The return of the Palestinian guerrillas was just the immediate reason for Amal attacks, but there were other reasons related both with

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[95] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 141 and Hanf, *Coexistence*, p. 294-5.
[96] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 141.
[97] Talhami, *Syria and the Palestinians*, 127-9.
[98] Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival*, pp. 186-7.

Amal's ambitions and with the deteriorating Palestinian-Shi'ite relations since the second half of the 1970s. Hence, it will be useful to mention the rise of the Shi'ite political and militant activity and the Palestinian-Shi'ite relations briefly.

Unlike the Sunnis and the Maronites, who were the largest sects at the time of the foundation of the Lebanese state, the Shi'ites were not a primary community in the politics of Lebanon because the National Pact was a compromise between the two former communities although the Shi'ites were the third largest sect in Lebanon by then. In addition to their political marginality as a result of the National Pact, they also remained economically and socially marginal because the Lebanese state failed to pay attention to rural development until the reformist president Chehab.[99] Although he undertook some investments to develop the countryside, his six-year term did not suffice for a social and economic transformation. Moreover, the Shi'ites were the only community who were unable to develop their sectarian and social institutions in Lebanon.[100] The majority of the Shi'ites were agricultural workers living in the Beqaa and in the South , who were working for low wages. In the 1950s, they began to migrate to the cities, mainly to Beirut, in order to benefit from the economic expansion. They could find employment in manual works, in construction and industrial sector. Like Palestinians, they were now becoming a sub-proleteriat in the southern and northern suburbs of Beirut. In addition, the damage caused by the Israeli retaliations also increased their deprivation in the second half of the 60s, which caused a mass exodus from the rural areas. By the late 1960s, the Shi'ites were a large and marginal sect in the Lebanese economic and political life. Their marginality began to turn into mobilization in the 60s and the Shi'ites began to be members of the opposition parties. Concurrently, the sectarian demands of the Shi'ites began to be voiced by a cleric, Imam Musa Sadr. His propoganda for social, economic and political justice, his accusation of the Lebanese state of failing to defend the South from Israeli aggression and his use of some religious messages

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[99] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 163.
[100] Al-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State*, p. 42.

in expressing these demands made him popular among the Shi'ites.[101] The Sadr's difference from the LNM and from the other radical political groups regarding the political system was that Sadr was a reformist. His fundamental demand was an adjustment in the confessional system whereas the leftist movements were revolutionary.[102]

Due to these political and economic reasons, the Shi'ites began to develop solidarity with the Palestinians, who were as deprived and as radical as the Shi'ites.[103] The Shi'ites also supported the Palestinian cause because of religious and ethnic ties. Many Shi'ites also involved in the opposition movements and the Palestinian resistance, where they had first acquainted with the Palestinians.[104]

However, contrary to the Kata'eb Party and the LNM, the Shi'ite mobilization and Imam Sadr's movement, "the Movement of the Deprived", did not develop an armed wing until mid-1970s. Shortly before the start of the Civil War, Imam Sadr decided to establish a Shi'ite militia group, Amal, for defense in the South against the Israeli aggression and as a response to the militarization of other sectarian and political groups in the early-1970s. The Amal militiamen were trained in a PLO base in the Beqaa Valley.[105]

In the first phase of the Civil War, the Amal and Sadr were affiliated with the PLO and LNM, however, the Amal remained outside the fighting. Nevertheless, the Shi'ites and the Palestinians fought together against the rightist militias when the rightist militias attacked Tal al-Zatar refugee camp and its neighboring Shi'ite quarter, Naba, in East Beirut in August 1976. The first tension between Amal and PLO/LNM alliance occurred during this fighting. the Shi'ite militia in Naba could not resist long to the attacks. This facilitated the fall of the refugee camp, which resulted in the Palestinian accusations of the Shi'ites.[106] In

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[101] Helena Cobban, "The Growth of Shi'i Power in Lebanon and Its Implications for the Future" in Juan R.I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie (eds.), *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1986), p. 143.
[102] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 169.
[103] Al-Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State*, p. 44.
[104] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 165.
[105] Augustus Richard Norton, "The Origins and Resurgence of Amal" in Martin Kramer (ed.), *Shi'ism, Resistance and Revolution* (Westview Press: Boulder and London, 1987), p. 206.
[106] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 172.

April 1976, when Syria intervened in Lebanon to prevent an early victory of the PLO-LNM alliance, Imam Sadr supported the intervention of Syria whereas the LNM and the PLO opposed the intervention. The main reason of Sadr's support of this Syrian action was that he was a reformist whereas the LNM was struggling for a total change in the political system.[107] This became the second event for the first signs of a break-up between Amal and the PLO/LNM.

However, the main turning point in the Palestinian-Shi'ite relations occurred in 1978. The first event in 1978 was the first large scale Israeli invasion into Lebanon in March and the second event was the disappearance of Imam Sadr in his visit to Libya in August. Although the reason for the disappearance is still unknown, this event caused the revitalization of the Shi'ite mobilization and a change in the Amal leadership and strategy. From this year on, the Palestinian-Shi'ite relations deteriorated sharply.

There were many reasons for the deterioration of the relations. First, the scale of the invasion and the damage it caused were far bigger than the previous retaliations of Israel. This invasion reminded the Shi'ites in the South that Israeli attacks would not cease as long as there were PLO activities there.[108] Second, the agents recruited by Israel after the invasion were carrying out anti-Palestinian propoganda. Third, there was the misbehavior of the ill-disciplined Palestinian commandos in the South. Brynen argues that during the Civil War, the mistreatment to counterparts and local populations were committed by all the militias, however, those committed by the Palestinians were resented more both because of their high numbers and because they were not the habitants of Lebanon.[109] There are two different explanations as to why these misbehaviors could not be prevented by the PLO top ranks. According to Sayigh, the PLO leadership was indifferent to the relations with the Shi'ites and hence, it did not pay

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[107] Norton, "Resurgence of Amal", pp. 207-8.
[108] Norton, Ibid., p. 209.
[109] Brynen lists theft, corruption, extortion and assault as kinds of misbehavior. Rex Brynen, "Palestinian-Lebanese Relations: A Political Analysis" in Deirdre Collings (ed.), *Peace for Lebanon?: From War to Reconstruction* (Lynne Rienner: Boulder and London, 1994), p. 85.

attention to the problem.[110] Brynen argues that PLO was unable to solve the problem, firstly because it was occupied with the struggle against Israel in late-1970s and in early-1980s, secondly because any measure taken might be perceived as an action against the sovereignty of the Lebanese state and thirdly, because of the organizational weaknesses stemming from different views and ideologies of the PLO organizations.[111] The fourth reason for the deterioration in the relations was the existence of various Palestinian guerrilla groups with different ideologies, such as al-Saeqa, ALF and PFLP, which resulted in disorder and disunity in the Palestinian activities in the South.[112] Fifth, there was the pressure of the SLA to prevent support to the Palestinians.[113] Finally, following the disappearance of Sadr, the change in Amal leadership and strategy caused the clash of interests between the PLO and Amal. In the post-Sadr Amal, the movement became a secular organization and the defense of the South became essential. In addition, unlike Sadr's connections with Iran, new Amal was Lebanist, trying to preserve the existence and sovereignty of the Lebanese state whereas the PLO was using Lebanon as a surrogate battlefield.[114] Along with these changes in Amal, these developments also resulted in Amal's adoption of an anti-Palestinian policy in the aftermath of 1978.

Although some of these reasons stated above were already present before 1978, such as the activities of the SLA, the operations and misbehavior of the PLO groups, the Israeli invasion became the final factor which set the stage for the intensification of anti-Palestinian feelings among the Shi'ites.

From this time on, Amal became the most popular organization among the Shi'ites and its power increased gradually in the following years, both because of the security needs of the Shi'ites in the South and because of its anti-Palestinianism.

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[110] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 180.
[111] Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival*, p. 173.
[112] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 179.
[113] Cobban, "The Growth of Shi'i Power", p. 145.
[114] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 181.

This anti-Palestinian attitude within Amal caused the eruption of the first clashes with the PLO in 1980 and 1981. However, Amal and the PLO freezed their conflict upon the Israeli invasion in1982 and they fought together against the Israeli forces and the Christian militias in West Beirut.

In the South, the Israeli invasion was initially welcomed by the Shi'ite population, however, this positive attitude turned into anger shortly after the invasion. The reasons for this hostility against the presence of Israel were the perception that the invasion would last long, the economic hardships as a result of the invasion and the attempts of Israel to recruit agents.[115] As a result, the Shi'ites began to resist against the invasion and Amal became the primary organization for resistance in the South.

Beginning from the late 1982 until the withdrawal of Israel in mid-1983, a broad Israeli resistance emerged within the Lebanese community. The LNM and Amal became the main organizations challenging Israeli presence in Lebanon. The PLO also participated in this armed struggle and it even supplied arms to Amal.[116]

This cooperation lasted until the Israeli withdrawal from Beirut and the tension between Amal and the PLO reemerged. After the Israeli withdrawal from West Beirut, Amal became the greatest power in West Beirut. This presented an opportunity for Amal to impose its hegemony in West Beirut and to realize its demands in favor of the Shi'ite community. Hence, Amal wanted to curb the Palestinian presence in Beirut to prevent any challenge to its hegemony in West Beirut.[117] To justify the planned attack on the Palestinian camps in West Beirut, Amal asserted that the Palestinian guerrillas were returning to the camps. However, Sayigh argues that this claim was not true because of the following reasons: First, there was no evidence for the existence of such a huge number of pro-Arafat guerrillas in Beirut after the PLO's evacuation. Second, there were some guerrillas who returned, but they were little in number and they were pro-Syrian. Third, this claim was not realistic because the wide popular support enjoyed by the PLO in the

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[115] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 146-7.
[116] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 182.
[117] Cobban, "The Growth of Shi'i Power", p. 152.

pre-1982 period was lacking and even the LNM support of the PLO was non-existent. As a result, she argues that that this pretext was presented by Amal only to increase public support for the attacks.[118] Similarly, Brynen argues that there was re-armament within the Palestinian refugee camps, but this time the main reason was self-defense and the reestablishment of the PLO played only little part. Furthermore, those who returned were the local Palestinians, whose families were in Lebanon.[119]

Amal attacked the two Palestinian camps in Beirut, Shatela and Bourj al-Barajnah, and imposed blockade in May 1985. Syria was also against the presence of an independent Palestinian presence in Lebanon and therefore it supported Amal's attack politically and logistically.[120] The "War of the Camps" continued with interruptions until January 1988, shortly after the beginning of the Palestinian uprising in the OT.

According to Brynen, Amal was weakened after these clashes because the verbal support given to Amal by the other Lebanese militias (LF, Sunni militias, Hizbullah and LNM) changed in the later stages of the fighting because of these groups' concern for Amal's rising military and political power. These groups even helped the Palestinians to repulse Amal attacks.[121]

During the War of the Camps, another blow to the Palestinian presence came in May 1987, when the parliament abrogated the Cairo Agreement.

After the War of the Camps, the camps saw another conflict in May 1988, this time among the Palestinian factions. After clashes, the pro-Syrian groups gained the control of Beirut camps as pro-Arafat groups remaining dominant only in the south.

The Civil War ended in 1991, with the implementation of the Taif Accords which was concluded in October 1989 but could not be enforced because of the continuing clashes. These clashes were between Amal and Hizbullah for the

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[118] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 189-90.
[119] Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival*, p. 188.
[120] Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, p. 187.
[121] Brynen, *Sanctuary and Survival*, p. 190.

dominance of the Shi'ite community, and later on between Palestinians and Amal-Hizbullah combined to wipe out the remaining Palestinian existence in the South; between Arafat loyalists and anti-Arafat groups in Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp; between the anti-Syrian President Michel Aoun and the LF and later on between Aoun and Syrian forces and finally between the LA and the Palestinian guerrillas.

Socio-Economic Conditions of the Palestinian Refugees

After the Israeli invasion in 1982, the social and economic situation of the Palestinians deteriorated sharply. The fundamental reason for the deterioration was the destruction and displacement caused during and after the invasion. The UNRWA tried to overcome the crisis by increasing the emergency aid, however, the absence of the PLO, hostility of the Lebanese, attacks and harassments from the LF, the army, IDF and Amal made life insecure and destitute for the Palestinians.

The employment opportunities for the Palestinians in this decade shrank remarkably. There were many reasons for this shrinkage: First, the Israeli invasion caused a destruction and a recession in the Lebanese economy, which inversely affected not only the refugees but the whole Lebanese population as well. Second, the end of oil boom and the successive recession in the Gulf countries caused a decrease in remittances and employment opportunities in the Gulf.[122] Third, absence of the PLO as an employer and service-provider decreased the Palestinians' income. Finally, their insecurity barred them to work outside the camp borders. As a result of these negative developments, Palestinians once more became heavily dependent on the UNRWA rations and assistance.

Even though the UNRWA gave assistance and tried to provide funds for the reconstruction of destroyed shelters, the funds were insufficient and the government prohibited the reconstruction of the shelters outside camp limits.

The education system also suffered beginning from 1975 because of the war but especially after 1982 because of the Israeli invasion, the withdrawal of the PLO

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[122] Pamela Ann Smith, "Palestinian Diaspora, 1948-1985", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 15-3 (Spring 1986), p. 105.

and the War of the Camps. The war caused damages, psychological trauma and displacement, which decreased the standards and the enrollment rates.[123]

The Israeli invasion also caused a change in the Palestinian-Lebanese relations. The strong support to the PLO and the Palestinians by the Lebanese before the invasion gave way to a consensus opposing the return to pre-1982 situation.[124] The Palestinians even acted as unifiers of the Lebanese society because everybody put the blame of the war when the war was over.[125] However, it would be misleading to put the blame fully on the Palestinians, as it would equally be misleading to ignore their existence as a factor that erupted the civil war. Khalidi argues that Lebanon's problems originated from its own social and political structures and there would eventually be a conflict even if there had been no PLO in Lebanon. He further argues that the PLO interfered in the internal affairs of Lebanon because of lack of discipline and cohesion within the organization.[126] Hudson emphasizes the lack of authority to control the Palestinians and other militias as a factor leading to the war. In the prolongation of the conflict, he argues that external intervention was influential. For Hudson, the Palestinians were pulled into the conflict because of the disagreement among the Lebanese regarding the Arab face of the country.[127]

The end of the Civil War in mid-1991 and the beginning of the Arab-Israeli peace process in October 1991 marked the beginning of a new period for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

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[123] Sayigh, "Uncertain Future", p. 104-5.
[124] Brynen, "Palestinian-Lebanese Relations", p. 84.
[125] Brynen, Ibid., p. 93. The attitudes of the Lebanese towards the Palestinians will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.
[126] Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians and Lebanon" in H. Barakat (ed.), *Toward a Viable Lebanon* (Croom Helm: Washington D.C., 1988), p. 141-2.
[127] Hudson, "The Palestinian Factor", p. 266-7.

CHAPTER 2

THE POST-WAR LEBANON

AND

THE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

This period is characterized by changes in the Palestinian refugee issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and changes in the relation between the Palestinians and the Lebanese state in particular. The factors of this change are threefold: First, there has been an ongoing change in relations between the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the Lebanese state since the Israeli invasion of 1982. The Palestinians were no more an autonomous community in Lebanon and the support given to the PLO dramatically diminished after the invasion. In early 1990s, this factor has combined with two other factors, the end of the civil war in Lebanon and the beginning of the peace process, together with other regional developments.

The Taif Agreement and The Syrian-Lebanese Treaty

The Taif Agreement became the agreement on which the new Lebanese state and post-War order in Lebanon depended. The Agreement was ratified by the Lebanese parliament on November 4, 1989. However, the clashes continued up until mid-1991.

The Taif Agreement and the new constitution set forth the new nature of the Lebanese state.[1] The power and the authority of the Sunni prime minister was enhanced at the expense of Maronite president and the seats in the parliament were divided equally between the Muslims and the Christians. According to the agreement, all militias would be disbanded and their weapons and other possessions would be handed to the Lebanese state. The state authority would be reestablished in all parts of the country, including the south, which was still under Israeli occupation. The agreement also pledged to find a solution for the Lebanese displaced during the war. The Accord reassured the Syria's role in Lebanon by stating that "[i]t maintains preferred relations with Syria based on the roots of close affinity, history and common interests".

The first implication of the Agreement on the Palestinians in Lebanon was that the disbanding of the Palestinian guerrillas was also included in the agenda for the reestablishment of the state authority. A second implication was the issue of displaced persons. Although the Lebanese state pledged to find a solution for its displaced citizens, there was no reference in the Agreement concerning a solution for the displaced Palestinians.

The subsequent Syrian-Lebanese Treaty[2] stipulated high level of cooperation in all fields, which would "enable the two countries to use their political, economic and security resources to provide prosperity and stability and to ensure their pan-Arab and national security". For this purpose, the treaty stipulated the establishment of committees for economic, social, security and political cooperation along with a general secretariat, which would follow up the implementation of the provisions of the treaty. The redeployment of the Syrian troops would be carried out upon the decisions of a joint Lebanese-Syrian military committee.

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[1] An excerpt of the Taif Accord is available on www.mideastweb.org/taif.htm (accessed on June 16, 1004).
[2] An excerpt of the Treaty can be found on www.mideastweb.org/syrialeb1.htm (accessed on June 16, 2004).

The implication of this Treaty for Lebanon was that the Syrian involvement and interference in Lebanese politics were legalized.

The Arab-Israeli Peace Process

At the same time with the internal peace efforts in Lebanon, Arab-Israeli peace process commenced with the Madrid Conference on October 30, 1991. The peace initiative was based on a two-track system: The bilateral and the multilateral tracks. The bilateral negotiations would be carried out between Israel and the Arab parties to the conflict, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The multilateral track consisted of the countries in the region and other countries such as Canada, the US and Japan. The multilateral negotiations was set up to address the issues which were common to the region. In January 1992, five multilateral working groups were formed in Moscow, which would address the following issues: Refugees, water, regional and economic development, environment and arms control and regional security. However, Syria and Lebanon boycotted the multilateral tracks, on the pretext that the multilateral tracks would lead to the improvement of contact between Arabs and Israel, which contravened with the Syrian policy of regaining the Golan Heights[3] before any rapprochement.[4]

The most important development in the peace process occurred when the Palestinian delegation and Israel signed the Declaration of Principles (DOP) on September 13, 1993 in Oslo.[5] The DOP laid the basis for the establishment of a temporary Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza for a period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement of the conflict. The parties also agreed in the DOP that the status of Jerusalem, refugees, Jewish settlements, borders and security arrangements would be handled in the final status negotiations, which would commence in three years. The declaration also stipulated the establishment of a Quadripartite Committee, consisting of Jordan, Egypt, Israel

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[3] Golan Heights, which had belonged to Syria, were annexed by Israel in the war of 1967.
[4] Rex Brynen, "Much Ado About Nothing? The Refugee Working Group and The Perils of Multilateral Quasi-negotiation", *International Negotiations*, 2 (1997), p. 281.
[5] The text of the DOP is available in John King, *Handshake in Washington: The Beginning of The Middle East* Peace (Ithaca Press: Reading, 1994).

and Palestinian representatives, to address the return of the persons displaced in the 1967 War.[6]

The most conflictual issue, and the most relevant for the scope of this thesis, regarding the settlement of the refugee question has been the right of return. There is a consensus among the scholars on the impossibility of the return of all the Palestinian diaspora in general and the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in particular to Israel and/or to the PA land if a permanent settlement is achieved. In the first meeting of the Refugee Working Group (RWG), Israel made clear that the refugee issue be resolved through resettlement.[7] Israel rejected to recognize the right of return on the basis that recognition would imply its acknowledgement of the responsibility for the creation of the refugee problem.[8] A more important reason for rejection was put forward by Shimon Peres, the former foreign and prime minister of Israel: "if [right of return is] accepted, it would wipe out the national character of the State of Israel, making the Jewish majority into a minority".[9] Israel only agreed to negotiate the return of the persons displaced in the War of 1967, which was written down in the DOP. As a result, any schemes for return would imply a return to the PA land, namely the West Bank and Gaza. In case of a return to the PA land, Salam argues that the priority would be given first to the refugees in West Bank and Gaza and then to the displaced persons. Hence, any return of refugees outside the West Bank and Gaza would be symbolic, given the limited economic and spatial absorptive capacity of these territories.[10] He further argues that the international community, particularly the US and Britain, has also been in favor of resettlement in host countries since 1948, which was demonstrated by the development of plans and commission reports, especially in the first decade of the

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[6] There is a distinction between those displaced in 1948 and those in 1967 War. In international legal texts and in academic literature, the Palestinians displaced in 1948 are referred as "refugees" whereas those displaced in 1967 are referred as "displaced persons".
[7] Brynen, "Much Ado About Nothing", p. 284.
[8] Cited in Rex Brynen, "Imagining a Solution: Final Status Arrangements and Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 26-2 (Winter 1997), p. 45.
[9] Quoted in Brynen, Ibid., p. 45.
[10] Nawaf A. Salam, "Between Repatriation and Resettlement: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 24-1 (Autumn 1994), p. 22.

problem.[11] On the other side, the prospect for the establishment of a Palestinian Authority was the primary issue for the Palestinian leaders, and hence, the refugee issue was subordinated. The Palestinian leadership focused its efforts on the establishment of "an economically and politically viable state".[12] Sayigh argues that the DOP implicitly exchanged a Palestinian state for the refugees' right of return in the eyes of the PLO negotiators.[13] Therefore, any chance of return for the Palestinians in Lebanon seems not possible both because of the aforementioned reasons and because the Palestinians in Lebanon were overwhelmingly from Galilee region in Northern Israel.[14]

During the peace negotiations, Lebanon followed the Syrian line by not attending to the multilateral working groups. Given the Syrian dominance in Lebanese politics, any progress on the Lebanese-Israeli track remained tied to the Syrian-Israeli track. The main issue for Lebanon has been the future of the Palestinian refugees. Refugees' right of return has been the precondition of Lebanon for peace with Israel, along with Israel's withdrawal from Golan Heights and from Southern Lebanon.[15] But Israel's refusal of granting the right of return to the refugees aggravated the refugee problem in Lebanon. On the other hand, Israel was concerned about the existence and anti-Israeli operations of Hizbullah in Southern Lebanon, which was under Israeli occupation since 1982. For Syria, refugee issue was only a card against Israel to regain the Golan Heights. For Palestinian delegation, it was a card for the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.[16] Hence, the refugee issue was a priority only for Lebanon.

However, the rightist Likud's coming to power in Israel in May 1996 hindered any progress on the negotiations. The new prime minister Netanyahu

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[11] Salam, Ibid., p. 23.
[12] Brynen, "Much Ado About Nothing", p. 284.
[13] Rosemary Sayigh, "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: Implantation, Transfer or Return?", *Middle East Policy*, 8-1 (March 2001), pp. 96-7.
[14] In 1992, 71% of the Palestinians refugees in Lebanon were from Galilee, whereas less than 1% were from WB and Gaza combined. Brynen, "Imagining a Solution", p. 47.
[15] Simon Haddad, "Sectarian Attitudes as a Function of Palestinian Presence in Lebanon", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 22-3 (Summer 2000), p. 85.
[16] Rosemary Sayigh, "Greater Insecurity for Refugees in Lebanon", *Middle East Report Online*, March 1, 2000.

rejected the establishment of "a Palestinian state or any foreign sovereignty west of the Jordan river".[17] When Netanyahu launched a plan to establish new Jewish settlements in early 1997, Arab League decided to boycott the multilaterals as a protest and final status negotiations were postponed several times. After Labor Party headed by Ehud Barak came to power in 1999, the final status negotiations recommenced for the third time.[18] In July 2000, the leaders met at Camp David with the US President Clinton acting as a mediator. This time, Arafat demanded the full implementation of the right of return for the refugees. However, the negotiations ended in stalemate. The commencement of al-Aqsa *Intifada* in the OT in September 2000 and the election of Likud Party headed by Ariel Sharon in January 2001 put an end to the Arab-Israeli peace efforts.

The Post-War Situation in Lebanon

With the end of the Civil War, the Lebanese state tried to reconstitute its authority over whole Lebanon except the South, which was still under Israeli occupation. The disbanding of all the militias was a means to this end. However, the Palestinian guerrillas in the South resisted to hand over their weapons, which caused the eruption of clashes between the LA and the Palestinian guerrillas. In June 1991, the Palestinian guerrillas handed over their heavy weapons to the army and withdrew into the camps. Their positions were taken over by the LA.

An official dialogue started between the Lebanese government and the PLO in May 1991. The issues were social and civil rights of the Palestinian refugees, Palestinian armed presence and the security in the camps.[19] The talks did not last long, partially because the Lebanese authorities decided to wait for the outcome of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations initiated in October 1991. The other reasons to

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[17] Quoted in Brynen, "Imagining a Solution", p. 46.
[18] The first two negotiations with Israeli prime ministers Shimon Peres and Benyamin Netanyahu were fruitless.
[19] Jaber Suleiman, "The Current Political, Organizational and Security Situation in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 29-1 (Autumn 1999), p. 69.

end the talks were the already-established army control and the Syria's policy towards Palestinians, which would be shaped according to the peace talks.[20]

During the first years of the 1990s, the Lebanese state and public were trying to recover the social and economic damages of the civil war years. The most pressing problem for the Lebanese government in early 1990s was the displaced Lebanese. In 1991, there were nearly 450.000 internally displaced Lebanese.[21] Other problems were devastation of the economic, political and social life in the country and the reorganization of state services and institutions.

When the prime minister Rafik al-Hariri took the office from Salim al-Hoss in 1992, he launched a ten-year reconstruction plan, named "Horizon 2000". Al-Hariri was a billionare businessman, who did not belong to any traditional or influential family in Lebanon but he had good relationships with the business circles, especially in the Gulf countries.

However, there was no attempt to improve or even deal with the refugee issue although the refugees were equally devastated by the war. According to the UNRWA figures, there were 7000 displaced refugee families (35.000 refugees) in the wake of the Civil War, along with an undetermined number of non-registered Palestinians.[22]

The reasons for the ignorance of the issue by the Lebanese state are various. The first reason was that the Lebanese state was waiting for the outcome of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations. Second, the government do not and can not attempt to deal with the refugees when its own people are suffering.[23] The Lebanese government naturally prioritizes its own citizens in the post-War period. A third reason is the Syrian influence. Syria has total control of the Lebanese politics and the refugee issue in Lebanon. Finally, despite the Civil War ended, a

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[20] Rosemary Sayigh, "Palestinians in Lebanon: Uncertain Future", in Deirdre Collings (ed.), *Peace for Lebanon?: From War to Reconstruction* (Lynne Rienner: Boulder and London, 1994), p. 98.
[21] Steve Edminster, *Trapped on All Sides: The Marginalization of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* (U.S. Committee for Refugees, Washington D.C., 1999), p. 10.
[22] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1990-1991", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, October, 17, 2004.
[23] Personal interview with Prof. Judith Harik, Department of Political Science, Metn University, Beirut. July 26, 2004.

national reconciliation in Lebanon has not been achieved.[24] The problem of inter-sectarian power-sharing remains unresolved in post-War Lebanon.

The sensitivity of the sectarian politics in Lebanon was demonstrated by the naturalization code enacted in 1994. As a result of this code, hundreds of thousands of foreigners were naturalized, among them were Palestinian refugees. There were different figures as to the composition of the persons naturalized. Malik and Harris estimates the number of the naturalized population as 300.000, 60.000 of whom were Palestinians.[25] However, Haddad gives the number of Palestinian naturalizations as more than 25.000 among 400.000 naturalizations in total.[26] According to al-Khazen's estimates, the number of naturalized were 300.000. 80% of them were Muslims and half of the naturalized had Syrian citizenship. There were 20.000-25.000 Palestinian refugees who were naturalized, on the basis that these refugees belonged to the seven villages located in the Israeli-Lebanese border and which were claimed to be Lebanese territory before 1928.[27] The Christians opposed to this naturalizations because this action increased the Muslim population in the country. After these criticisms, the remaining Palestinian Christians were naturalized as well.[28] The problem with the naturalizations was that there was no thorough investigation. The case is still pending before the court.

There were also other debates on the sectarian politics in Lebanon. According to al-Khazen, the Christian population was concerned with the anti-Christian policies of the government in the post-Taif order, such as the naturalization code, the electoral laws of 1992 and 1996, which were claimed to undermine the Christian representation, and the weak representation of the Christians in government and in Parliament.[29]

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[24] Farid al-Khazen, "Permanent Settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon: A Recipe for Conflict", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 10-3 (1997), p. 281.
[25] Habib C. Malik, "Is There Still a Lebanon?" (March 1998), www.ciaonet.org/olj/meria.html (accessed on June 30, 2004) and William W. Harris, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars and Global Extensions* (Marcus Wiener Publishers: Princeton, 1997) p. 310.
[26] Haddad, "Sectarian Attitudes...", p. 84.
[27] Personal interview with Prof. Farid al-Khazen, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, American University of Beirut, Beirut. July 28, 2004.
[28] Simon Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon: The Politics of Refugee Integration* (Sussex Academic Press: Brighton and Portland, 2003), p. 41.
[29] Al-Khazen, "A Recipe for Conflict", p. 288.

In early 2000, the prevailing hostility against the Palestinians gained a momentum when the Lebanese politicians and media attacks intensified as a result of a Palestinian criminal's hide-out in Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp. A media campaign started, depicting the camps as "islands of security", places where the Lebanese security forces could not enter the camps and impose their authority. With this campaign, Lebanon may have tried to remind the international community that Palestinians have been threatening the internal security of Lebanon, justifying its rejection of resettlement.[30] Actually, the Palestinian armed presence in the camps continued after the Taif Agreement and there is still no Lebanese security forces within the camps. Shafiq al-Hout, the unofficial PA representative to Lebanon, opposed the media claims by stating that "everyone knows that all heavy arms were removed from the camps after Taif and that if southern camps have arms, it is because the Syrian and Lebanese governments want them to".[31] Sayigh argues that the security forces can and do enter the camps to make arrests and searches.[32] Suleiman counterargues the Lebanese state's claim as well and he adds that the army has informers within the camps, but patrolling inside the camps is carried out by Palestinian factions.[33] The Lebanese state's inability to exert full authority over the camps is because of the Syrian aim to maintain armed presence in the camps, just enough to strengthen her hand in her talks with Israel.[34]

Another issue on the agenda in post-War Lebanon was the Israeli occupation in the South and the anti-Israeli military resistance carried out by Hizbullah (Party of The God). Hizbullah was a Shi'ite organization with a radical religious discourse established in the early 1980s with the primary goal of founding an Islamic state like Iran and with an ideological affinity towards Khomeini's Iran. In turn Iran, with the aim of expanding its ideological influence in the Middle East,

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[30] Sayigh, "Implantation, Transfer or Return", pp. 94-5.
[31] Quoted in Sayigh, "Implantation, Transfer or Return?", p. 95.
[32] Sayigh, Ibid., p. 102.
[33] Suleiman, "The Current Political, Organizational...", p. 72.
[34] Rosemary Sayigh, "No Work, No Space, No Future: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon", *Middle East International*, August 10, 2001.

supplied arms and money to Hizbullah.[35] According to Harik, there was also some Palestinian involvement in the party: After the PLO's evacuation from Lebanon, the religiously-oriented Palestinian guerrillas were left without a structure and they found Hizbullah as an alternative. These people even provided training to Hizbullah guerrillas.[36] The main operations of Hizbullah in 1980s was its resistance against Israel, which was also carried into the 1990s. Other than that, the party competed with the Amal movement for the hegemony over the Shi'ite community and this rivalry turned into armed clashes in 1989.

However, Hizbullah was not just a para-military organization. It has become a complex set of institutions providing welfare and employment to mainly the Shi'ites in the fields of health, education and business.[37] In the 1990s, it began to operate a TV channel, al-Manar, a radio and a newspaper.

In the post-War period, Hizbullah adapted to the political circumstances by leaving aside its radical discourse of founding an Islamic state and replacing it with pragmatism by integrating into the Lebanese politics.[38] It involved in the post-war political life of Lebanon by participating in the parliamentary and municipal elections. However, it did not cease its operations against Israel. When the state began its attempts to disarm all the militias, Hizbullah remained as the sole armed militia, through Syria's political support and provision of space in the South and through funding from Iran.[39] The anti-Israeli operations of the organization attracted support from the majority of the Lebanese as well as Palestinians.[40]

When Labor Party came to power in Israel in 1999, it declared its intention to withdraw from Lebanon. The withdrawal took place in May 2000, while the Israeli Forces maintained a very small security zone, known as the Shebaa Farms. The withdrawal of Israel was seen by the masses as a success of Hizbullah

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[35] Farid al-Khazen, "Political Parties in Postwar Lebanon: Parties in Search for Partisans", *Middle East Journal*, 57-4 (Autumn 2003), p. 611.
[36] Interview with Prof. Judith Harik.
[37] Adham Saouli, "Lebanon's Hizbullah", *World Affairs*, 166-2 (Fall2003), p. 74.
[38] Saouli, Ibid.,pp. 73-4.
[39] Interview with Prof. Judith Harik.
[40] Danish Immigration Service, *Report on Fact-Finding Mission to Lebanon* (Copenhagen, 1998), p. 9.

resistance with the idea that there was one Arab force which was able to force Israel to give up land and this event became a very big surprise for the coming Palestinian uprising in the OT.[41] Despite Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, Hizbullah continued to carry out guerrilla operations with Syrian patronage against Israel, as a reminder of the Golan Heights issue.[42] In addition, it began to support the *intifada* and champion the Palestinian cause by adopting the aim of liberating Jerusalem and Palestine and forcing the Jews to leave Palestine. The connection with the Palestinian cause was also expressed by the leader of the party immediately after the Israeli withdrawal: "This triumph we present to our deprived people in occupied Palestine. Your destiny is in your hands. ... Resistance and the Intifada are the road to freedom...".[43] Despite the party's support to the Palestinians, Hizbullah also safeguarded the Israeli border against Palestinian infiltrations because Syria wanted to keep the scale of the conflict limited so that Israel would not have any justification to hit back on a much greater scale.[44]

An important event for the refugees after the Israeli withdrawal was the eruption of the al-Aqsa *intifada* in the OT in September 2001. The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon supported the *intifada* by organizing demonstrations. There was also support from the Muslim Lebanese as well. Nevertheless, these demonstrations did not have any political consequences in Lebanon and it just boosted the morale of Palestinian refugees for some while.

A recent development, however, was more shocking than any other development for the Palestinians in Lebanon and in the Middle East. It was the death of the heroic leader of the Palestinians, Yaser Arafat, in November 2004. Besides the wave of shock and mourning among the refugees, his death necessitated election of the new president of the PA. However, the Palestinians in the diaspora were not permitted to vote by the Israeli authorities. Mahmud Abbas, a close friend of Arafat and the new chairman of the PLO, was elected the president

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[41] Interview with Prof. Judith Harik.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Quoted in Saouli, "Lebanon's Hizbullah", pp. 75.
[44] Interview with Prof. Judith Harik.

with the majority of the votes. Despite the difficulty to predict the general attitude of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon towards the new president, a recent opinion poll carried out in the refugee camps might give an idea. The survey found out that 87% of some 560 respondents believed that Abbas would not be able to forge a national unity.[45] This indicated that the refugees in Lebanon are still preserving their hopelessness.

The Post-War Political Situation within The Camps

Apart from the Palestinian-Lebanese political relations, a second political context exists within the camps. Before 1982, the camps were autonomous zones for the Palestinian political and armed activities. However, this situation changed with the expulsion of PLO in 1982 and more recently, with the end of the civil war and the initiation of the peace process.

The Factions:

The political and organizational climate in the camps are different from one another, based on the Syrian presence and enduring PLO alliances.[46] The camps of south includes all the factions, but Beirut camps and camps in the north are controlled by pro-Syrian groups (such as al-Saeqa, PFLP, Fatah al-Intifada, DFLP, PFLP-GC). The report of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) states that the pro-Syrian leanings of these organizations are not because of their support for the Syria's leadership but because of their financial dependency on Syria and because of Syria's political domination in Lebanon.[47]

The Palestinian factions responded differently to the peace process. The majority of the factions opposed the peace process because Arafat did not consult any organization in the negotiations.[48] These factions formed an opposition group called "the group of ten". These groups were DFLP, PFLP, PFLP-GC, Fatah

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[45] The Daily Star, "Denied The Vote, Refugees Fear The Worst", January 6, 2005. www.dailystar.com.lb, accessed on January 11, 2005.
[46] Suleiman, "The Current Political, Organizational...", p. 66.
[47] Danish Immigration Service, *Fact-Finding Mission to Lebanon*, p. 15.
[48] Danish Immigration Service, Ibid., p. 14.

al-Intifada, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, al-Saeqa, Palestinian Popular Struggle Front (PPSF), Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) and Palestinian Communist Party (PCP). However, these groups only agree in rejecting the peace process. Other than that, they have different ideologies such as secularism, Marxism and fundamentalism. Furthermore, PPSF, PLF and PCP also split into two- one supporting the peace process and the other opposing.[49] Some radical factions totally rejects the existence of a Jewish state in the Middle East (such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad).[50]

The split between and within the Palestinian factions is reflected in the popular committees, which were founded after the Cairo Agreement to run day-to-day affairs of the camps, including water distribution, setting up electricity and phone lines. The committee's work is hindered by political splits and services and resources are duplicated in some camps due to the existence of several committees under the influence of different factions.[51]

According to the DIS Report, the Palestinian organizations have no more significant military power in the camps after the Taif Agreement and their roles are confined to political and social activities.[52] However, the security is still controlled by the armed Palestinians within the camps and the LA has no permanent existence within the camps. This situation led to the allegations by the Lebanese media that the camps were "security islands" where there was no Lebanese authority. However, Suleiman argues that this perception is not true because the Lebanese security forces can enter the camps and make arrests, but they do not patrol within the camps.[53] Al-Khazen argues that Syria protects this situation and the inability of Lebanese security forces to extend their authority within the camps is also a Syrian decision.[54]

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[49] Danish Immigration Service, Ibid., p. 14-5.
[50] Scott Peterson, For Palestinians in Lebanon, No Place Like Home", *Christian Science Monitor*, May 6, 1998, p.8.
[51] Suleiman, "The Current Political, Organizational...", p. 76.
[52] Danish Immigration Service, *Fact-Finding Mission to Lebanon*, p. 17.
[53] Suleiman, "The Current Political, Organizational...", p. 72.
[54] Interview with Prof. Farid al-Khazen.

The Refugees:

The majority of the refugees also oppose the peace process because they believe that the DOP subordinated the refugee issue to the Palestinian state. According to Allan, who carried out interviews with the refugees in Shatela, the refugees were feeling despair because they believed that the negotiations were "empty talk" and they were indifferent to the political events.[55] An UNRWA official in the Lebanon field stated the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon felt even worse as a result of the peace process because they were losing their hopes.[56]

Haddad argues that support to Arafat decreased considerably in the last years because of Fatah's inability to access refugee camps other than those in the South, because Fatah focused its efforts to the PA and because Arafat was unable to secure a satisfactory outcome for the refugees in the negotiations.[57] On the contrary, Islamic groups such as Islamic Jihad and Hamas were on the rise because of their role in the al-Aqsa *Intifada* and because of their social services such as kindergardens, women classes and food and financial aid.[58]

Regarding the political leanings, there is almost consensus among the scholars on the indifference of the refugees to the politics and political alignments. Suleiman argues that refugees are distant from political realignments.[59] Othman argues that the factions cannot offer solutions to the social, political and economic problems of the refugees and therefore they are not trusted.[60] Al-Khazen also argues that the refugees are held hostage by the various groups for their own sake while the refugees are suffering.[61] Haddad's study also reveals the gap between the refugees and the organizations. In the survey, 51% of the respondents stated that

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[55] Personal interview with Assistant Professor Diana Allan, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusettes, US. August 3, 2004.
[56] Interview with Ms. Hoda Samra, Public Information Officer of UNRWA Lebanon Field Office, Beirut. July 27, 2004.
[57] Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, pp. 129-30.
[58] Interview with Assistant Prof. Diana Allan.
[59] Suleiman, "The Current Political, Organizational...", p. 73.
[60] Ahmad Ali Othman, "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: Political and Social Effects of the Oslo Accords", www.badil.org/Art74/1998/26h.htm, accessed on March 3, 2000.
[61] Interview with Prof. Farid al-Khazen.

they had no allegiance to any particular group and the highest support was to the Islamic groups with 21%, far less than the former group.[62]

The gap between the organizations and the refugees and the political rivalry between these organizations caused a lack of leadership and prevented the existence of a legitimate authority to represent the refugees in Lebanon.[63] The former representative of the PLO in Lebanon, Shafiq al-Hout, also mentioned this problem:

> No single political representative exists. The ten organizations as well as some independent and historical figures are in contact with the Lebanese. Also , we shouldnot ignore the rise of Hamas and al-Jihad who can play important political roles.[64]

Palestinian and Lebanese Views on Resettlement in Lebanon

When the Arab-Israeli peace process started and a breakthrough achieved in 1993, a serious debate took place in the Lebanese politics as well as within the public on the issue of the future of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The focal point of the debates was the issue of resettlement because the DOP did not mention the repatriation of the Palestinian refugees and Israel only accepted the return of the Palestinian displaced in the 1967 War.

It can be said that the overwhelming majority of the Lebanese, along with the government, totally reject the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees. There are four basic reasons for the rejection of resettlement. The most important reason is the sectarian balance in Lebanon. The number of UNRWA-registered refugees were 302.049 in 1990.[65] The overwhelming majority of the refugees were Sunnis. Hence, their resettlement would tilt the sectarian balance in favor of the Muslims, more specifically in favor of the Sunnis, which has been outspokenly rejected by the Maronites. Second reason is related with the economy. Given Lebanon's small territory, limited resources, crawling economy and the existence of hundreds of

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[62] Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, pp. 129.
[63] Suleiman, "The Current Political, Organizational...", p. 72.
[64] Quoted in Ziad Majed, "The Palestinians in Lebanon", *The Lebanon Report*, 6-6 (June 1995), p. 8.
[65] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1995-1996", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on November 3, 2003.

thousands of other foreign workers, most of them Syrians, totally rule out the absorption of refugees. Third, the new constitution, which was prepared in the wake of the Taif Accord, totally rejected resettlement. And fourth, the PLO activities after 1969 caused a resentment within the Lebanese society after 1982. The majority of the Lebanese society thinks that they have already paid a heavy price for the Arab-Israeli conflict.

For the Palestinian part, they are also against resettlement because it will simply mean giving up the cause.

The Official View:

The official view on the resettlement issue is quite clear: Total rejection of the idea of resettlement because of the above-mentioned reasons. The Lebanese government makes clear to the international community and to Israel that this is an issue on which it cannot make any compromise. According to al-Khazen, there is consensus among the politicians, and the Lebanese society, on the issue of rejection of resettlement but there is also consensus that the Palestinians should return to Palestine, which is also a way to solve the problem.[66] This support for return and rejection of resettlement were evidenced by the statement of the current President Emile Lahoud: "We cannot accept a settlement without... the sacred right of return of Palestinian refugees to their land."[67] The former prime minister Rafik al-Hariri similarly opposed resettlement and supported the right of return by stating that "this is a crucial issue for the Lebanese and they are in full agreement on it".[68]

The Lebanese Public Opinion:

The rejection of the resettlement is also voiced by the majority of the Lebanese. A study conducted by Hilal Khashan in late 1992 revealed that 75% of the Lebanese would reject resettlement. 87% of the Maronites, 78% of the Shi'ites, 71% of the

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[66] Interview with Prof. Farid al-Khazen.
[67] Quoted in Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, p. 45.
[68] *The Daily Star*, "Palestinian Right of Return Tops Agenda in Paris", April 19, 2004. www.dailystar.com.lb, accessed on January 11, 2005.

Druze and 63% of the Sunnis rejected resettlement in Lebanon.[69] A similar survey carried out by Haddad in January 2000 also found similar results. According to the survey, 88% of the Maronites, 62% of the Shi'ites and 54% of the Druze demanded the deportation of the Palestinian refugees.[70] However, only 47% of the Sunnis demanded their deportation,[71] which can be explained by the fact that the resettlement of the Palestinians will increase the political of influence of the Sunnis. Although all the sectarian communities in Lebanon reject resettlement, the Maronites and the Shi'ites are particularly concerned about the realization of such a plan. The concerns of Maronites stem from their potential loss of political influence with the increase in Muslim population. The general concern of the Maronites is also voiced by the Maronite Patriarch Cardinal Nasrallah Sfeir: ".... If the resettlement of Palestinians in vast under-populated Arab countries is not acceptable then the effects on a small highly over-populated country like Lebanon would be even more dire."[72] On the other hand, the Shi'ites are against resettlement firstly because they believe they have suffered the most from the Palestinian guerrilla activities in the 1970s and secondly, they do not want the sectarian balance to change in favor of the Sunnis.[73] The Shi'ites' rejection of resettlement was also expressed by the Hizbullah secretary-general Hasan Nasrallah: ".... we are with the rest of the Lebanese and with the rest of the Palestinians in rejecting the resettlement plans, although the Palestinians are our dear brothers. The natural thing is for the Palestinians to return to their land in Palestine."[74]

Haddad's study also justifies the resentment of the Lebanese towards the Palestinians because of their involvement in the war. According to the results, 86% of the Maronites, 51% of the Sunnis and 59% of the Shi'ites blamed the war fully or significantly on Palestinians. Bowker characterizes this negative attitude as a "mutual distrust" between Palestinians and the Lebanese because of Palestinians'

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[69] Hilal Khashan, *Palestinian Resettlement in Lebanon: Behind the Debate*, Montréal Studies on the Contemporary Arab World (Interuniversity Consortium for Arab Studies, 1994), pp. 9-10.
[70] Haddad, "Sectarian Attitudes...", p. 99.
[71] Haddad, Ibid., p. 99.
[72] Haddad, Ibid., p. 85.
[73] Al-Khazen, "A Recipe for Conflict", p. 287.
[74] Quoted in Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, p. 45.

abuses of their privileges granted by the Cairo Agreement in 1969 and their exploitation of internal conflicts for their own benefits.[75]

Despite the majority's rejection for resettlement and resentment to the Palestinian involvement in the war, Sayigh divides the public opinion into three groups and argues that the majority of the Lebanese are indifferent to the Palestinian issue. The other two groups are the two extremes of the scale, which are minorities, one extreme totally rejecting the Palestinian existence and demands their expulsion as soon as possible and the other extreme demanding rights for Palestinians.[76]

The Palestinian View:

The overwhelming majority of the Palestinians also rejects any resettlement. The basic reason for their rejection is their demand for right of return.

Regarding the Palestinian factions in Lebanon, the majority of them rejects the Oslo peace process because Arafat did not consult the other factions in concluding the DOP. The main posture of these organizations are the rejection of the peace process and total repatriation of all refugees.[77]

Regarding the refugees, they are also against the peace process and they also reject resettlement in Lebanon. A study undertaken by Haddad in 2002 found that 57% of the refugees rejected Lebanese citizenship and 79% rejected permanent settlement in Lebanon as a solution.[78] The refugees' demand for the right of return within the framework of a peace settlement is also evident. The survey found that 75%of the refugees would not support a Palestinian state if return was not guaranteed.[79] Haddad argues that their rejection of resettlement and their demand for right of return are because of their radicalism and commitment to the struggle.[80] The PA's senior representative in Lebanon, Sultan Abu al-Aynain, confirmed the

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[75] Bowker, *Mythology, Identity...*, p. 76.
[76] Sayigh, "Implantation, Transfer or Return?", p. 102-3.
[77] Interview with Prof. Farid al-Khazen.
[78] Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, p. 137.
[79] Haddad, Ibid., p. 131.
[80] Haddad, Ibid., p. 139.

commitment of the Palestinians: "I haven't fought 30 years of my life to stay here... Although I love Lebanon, why should I take up Lebanese nationality? If 100.000 Palestinians... are made to stay here, I cannot guarantee they won't fight their own way out."[81]

Socio-Economic Conditions of the Palestinian Refugees

There are currently 391.679 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon according to the UNRWA records.[82] However, this number is problematic because no census has been carried out since the refugee's arrival in Lebanon. In addition, some refugees were naturalized, some emigrated to other countries and the refugees who arrived after the guerrillas' clashes with the Jordanian army in 1970 were not accounted for because they were not registered in Lebanon. Hence, Sayigh argues that to put the number around 200.000 would be more realistic.[83] On the other hand, Arzt argues that the decline in population was somewhere between 50.000 and 60.000.[84] Lebanon remains as the only country where the percentage of camp dwellers is higher than the non-camp refugees (56.7% lived in camps) and it is the country which has the highest percentage of special hardship cases (11.2%) among UNRWA's area of operation.[85] This is because the Palestinians in Lebanon are the most marginalized and the most deprived community among the Palestinian diaspora.

Employment:

The employment opportunities for the refugees in post-War Lebanon decreased sharply. There are four reasons for this shrinkage. First, there has been a continuing effect of the absence of PLO institutions after the PLO's expulsion in 1982. Second, the legal restrictions on the employment decrease the work alternatives of

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[81] Quoted in Frederic C. Hof, "Beyond the Boundary: Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinians", *Middle East Insight* (March-April 2000), p. 37.
[82] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 2002-2003".
[83] Sayigh, "Implantation, Transfer or Return", p. 101.
[84] Donna E. Arzt, *Refugees into Citizens: Palestinians and the End of Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Council on Foreign Relations Press: New York, 1997) p. 46.
[85] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 2002-2003".

the refugees. Palestinian refugees cannot work in almost all professional jobs outside the camp borders and they need work permits, which should be renewed annually, for other semi-skilled and manual jobs. Hence, most of the refugees works illegally. In addition to this restriction, the existence of 400.000 Syrian workers[86] in Lebanon poses a great challenge for the Palestinians. Third, the Gulf War, which took place after the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait had negative effects for employment of the Palestinian refugees. The PLO's support to Iraq in the Gulf War in 1990 antagonized the Gulf countries against the PLO and the Palestinian workers and these countries decreased or stopped financing the PLO. In addition, many Gulf countries expelled the Palestinian workers, including those who emigrated from Lebanon. Fourth, the restrictions on the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) prevent the employment of the refugees to some extent. The reason is that the Lebanese state requires the all NGOs to be registered as a Lebanese organization and stipulates that the majority of the employees should be Lebanese citizens. Due to these restrictions, most of the refugees employed works mainly in constructions, in agriculture or they run small shops within the camps. The only alternatives for professional employment available to the refugees are the UNRWA or the PRCS.

As a result, the majority of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon remains dependant on international aid and UNRWA services.

Education:

The education opportunities for the refugees in Lebanon are very limited. They can not benefit from the Lebanese public schools extensively. The refugee children are admitted to public schools only if there is enough space after the registration of the Lebanese children. In addition, private schools are very costly for the refugees. Consequently, UNRWA schools are the only option for the poor refugee families in Lebanon. Due to this restriction, Lebanon is the only country where the UNRWA still runs secondary schools.

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[86] Haddad, *Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, p. 13.

However, the financial crisis of UNRWA prevents the Agency to improve its educational programme to a satisfactory level, both in quality and in quantity. The basic physical problem is the existence of unsatisfactory premises, which leads to overcrowding. 62% of the agency's school in Lebanon are still running double-shift system,[87] which was introduced in 1974 as a solution to the overcrowding problem.

However, the qualitative problems are more pressing for the Agency and for the refugees. The first problem is related with the staff. The financial situation of the Agency prevents it to employ sufficient number of teachers. There is also the psychological impact of the Civil War. The young refugee generation in Lebanon experienced the trauma of the civil war years. Hence, the UNRWA launched special programs in education, including self-learning materials, additional class periods, extra supervision and special classes for slow-learners, to offset the disruption caused by the war.[88] The high drop-out rates is another problem for the UNRWA education. The major causes of high drop-out rates are listed by Sirhan as economic problems, which lead the families to force their children work, high repetition rates, familial problems such as death and divorce, disinterest of families to education, because they think that it will not yield any result due to the lack of employment opportunities and finally, physical handicap.[89]

Health:

The Palestinians' inaccess to Lebanese health institutions make them dependent on UNRWA hospitals and clinics. However, the Agency had to take measures in the health services because of the financial distress. Hence, it introduced co-payment system in which the patients cover some part of the hospital expenses. However, the refugees in the Lebanon field were exempted from these co-payments, except

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[87] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 2002-2003".
[88] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1995-1996", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on November 12, 2003.
[89] Bassem Sirhan, "Education and the Palestinians in Lebanon", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 10-3 (1997), p. 391.

specialized life-saving treatments, due to their exceptional conditions.[90] But specialized life-saving treatments are very costly for the refugees and most of the patients are unable to pay the bill. Although the Agency do not cover the costs of specialized life-saving treatments, it assists to the most needy patients. According to the agency's statistics in 1996, two-thirds of all the refugees assisted by the UNRWA to cover the costs of specialized life-saving treatment were refugees in Lebanon.[91]

The PRCS is the second largest provider of health services to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Its services are identical with the UNRWA, which were out- and in-patient services, specialist medical care, medical clinics, laboratories, pharmacies and dental clinics. The UNRWA also cooperates with the PRCS by concluding agreements with the PRCS hospitals for specialized life-saving treatment with a reasonable cost. However, PRCS also began to face financial problems after 1993, when the PLO decided to cease funding to the organization.

The NGOs are also assisting the refugees especially in basic and preventive health care and they also secure funds for the specialized life-saving treatments.[92] However, Hassan argues that these organizations are lacking in quality and quantity and they do not have the capacity to respond to the requirements of the refugees.[93]

Housing and Infrastructure:

The Palestinian refugees living in the camps face continuous limitations on construction. The most basic prohibition is the restriction to build outside the camp borders. This restriction has been continuing since the establishment of the first camps in Lebanon. However, the number of official camps decreased from fifteen to twelve because three camps were destroyed during the Civil War. Some of the displaced refugees moved to other camps. Secondly, Palestinian refugee population

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[90] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1995-1996".
[91] UNISPAL, Ibid.
[92] Edminster, *Trapped on All Sides*, p. 20.
[93] Ali Hassan, "Health Amongst The Palestinians in Lebanon", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 10-3 (1997), p. 393.

has been increasing. These two reasons, along with the governments rejection to expand camp zones, lead to overcrowding in the refugee camps. For instance, the Shatela refugee camp in the southern suburbs of Beirut has an area of nearly one square kilometer with 12.200 registered refugees.[94] There are also poor Lebanese and foreign workers in the camp. As a result, the habitants of Shatela camp constructed haphazardous vertical buildings.

In addition, there are refugee gatherings, which are known as unofficial camps, mainly constructed near the official camps to facilitate access to the UNRWA services or near areas where refugees could find employment. The number of Palestinians living in these unofficial camps are estimated to be 15.000.[95] Many of the refugees rented the dwellings in these areas or they were allotted some part of the land by landowners in whose fields they worked.[96] The rest are squatters in privately-owned land and hence, they face the fear of eviction by the owners. However, as they are not recognized by the UNRWA, these camps are under strict control of the Lebanese state.[97]

A more recent restriction was on building and reparation within the camps. This restriction was imposed in the post-Taif period in an effort to impose state authority over camps. UNRWA needs special permission to bring building materials into the camps near Tyre and this causes delays in the agency's reparation projects. Of the 578 shelters on the priority list for reparation in Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp, only 50 were rehabilitated during the 2002-2003 reporting period.[98] In Rashidieh camp located near Tyre in the south, the agency identified 5000 displaced persons and 600 destroyed shelters. However, rehabilitation projects can not be carried out due to the ban to bring in building materials.[99] Therefore,

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[94] UNRWA, www.unrwa.org/unrwa/refugess/lebanon, accessed on June 30, 2004.
[95] The Daily Star, "Palestinians Forced to Live in State of Disrepair", April 26, 2004. www.dailystar.com.lb, accessed on January 11, 2005.
[96] Mahmoud Abbas, "The Housing Situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 10-3 (1997), p. 380.
[97] The Daily Star, "Palestinians Forced to Live in State of Disrepair".
[98] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 2002-2003".
[99] UNRWA, www.unrwa.org/unrwa/refugees/lebanon.

thousands of shelters, which were damaged during the war are still unrepaired. This policy also preventes the expansion of the existing shelters.

The recent law on the property ownership enacted in April 2001 was another restriction for the Palestinians. This law prohibites the Palestinians from owning and inheriting property. Natour argues that this law was enacted as a pre-measure so that the resettled Palestinians would not want to remain if a resettlement scheme was imposed on Lebanon as part of a peace plan.[100]

The overcrowded population within the camps and the destruction caused by the war also cause grave problems in the infrastructure. Many camps have poor sewage and water supply systems. In 1996, the UNRWA raised $7 million additional fund to improve sewerage, drainage and water supplies in 8 camps.[101] Even though 97% of the shelters in camps had access to safe water by 2003, only 60% of the shelters were connected to the sewerage system, which was the lowest ratio among the agency's area of operation.[102] In Shatela refugee camp located in the suburbs of Beirut, the residents drink unsafe water and the environmental conditions are very bad with overcrowded shelters and open drains. The situation was similar in Rashidieh camp in which there was no sewerage network and the sewage was flewing into open ditches along roads.[103]

Apart from these continuing problems in housing, the early 1990s were very difficult years for the displaced Palestinian refugees. There were 7.000 refugee families (35.000 refugees) in 1991 and these people were mainly squatting the abandonned or damaged buildings. However, as the reconstruction efforts were initiated, the state began to evict the squatter Palestinians forcefully. Although an agreement was reached between the state and the UNRWA in 1995, in which the Lebanese state admitted to pay USD 5.000 for each family evicted,[104] the amount was insufficient and the space was limited within the camps to build a shelter.

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[100] Souheil al-Natour, "The Palestinians in Lebanon: New Restrictions on Property Ownership", *Holy Land Studies*, 2-1 (2003), p. 58.
[101] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1995-1996".
[102] UNISPAL, Ibid.
[103] UNRWA, www.unrwa.org/unrwa/refugees/lebanon.
[104] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1993-1994", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 17, 2004.

International Aid:

The most basic and the primary server to the Palestinian refugees is the UNRWA. However, the Agency has been experiencing financial difficulties since its inception in 1950. In the 1990s, this situation became worse as emergency aids were launched in 1980s and as total refugee population increased while the donor countries was unable to keep pace with the Agency's increasing financial demands. As a result, the UNRWA had to implement austerity measures to reduce costs. This reduced the Agency's ability to provide sufficient services, especially in health and education when the Lebanon field is concerned. This factor was combined with the Arab-Israeli peace process and the conclusion of the DOP, after when the attention and aids of the international community and the PLO were skewed to the OT. [105] The refugees in Lebanon also asserted that UNRWA also began to pay more attention and diverted funds to the OT, but the Agency denied this allegation. The Agency official in Lebanon stated that the Agency's activities in the OT after the Oslo Accords did not take away from the fields.[106]

To overcome the financial problems in the provision of services and to alleviate the miserable conditions of the refugees in Lebanon, UNRWA launched a special emergency program in July 1997 in the amount of $11 million.[107] Nevertheless, this fund was a one-time contribution by the donors and it was far from meeting the demand.

Due to these restrictions and their post-War situation, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon face the most difficult situation among the Palestinian refugees. Their deprivation came to such an unbearable point that the refugees' priority became one of survival and they are far less interested with the politics of the conflict. The economic hardship and life as refugee put pressure on the

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[105] Arzt, *Refugees into Citizens*, p. 46 and Joe Marie Fecci, "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and Syria Face Different, Uncertan Futures", *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, 19-9 (December 2000), p. 26.
[106] Interview with Ms. Hoda Samra.
[107] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 2002-2003".

refugees, particularly the young generation, to emigrate to a Western country legally or illegally.[108]

Because of their marginalization and uneasy living conditions, the Palestinians in the camps still preserve a distinct identity.[109] Bowker points out two prevailing characteristics for the refugees living in camps: First, their identity as an imagined community (displayed by strong family ties, preservation of the traditional living style and distinction between refugee-non-refugee) shaped by

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[108] Fecci, "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon and Syria...", p. 26.

[109] The basic difference among the Palestinians is between the refugees and non-refugees. However, the socio-economic conditions and political attitudes of Palestinians also differ according to host country. This difference has formed over decades as a result of the policies of the host states. Therefore, it will be misleading to see the Palestinians as a unique instrument. For instance Jordan, where the population ratio of Palestinians is estimated to range between 40-65% of the total population, granted citizenship to the Palestinians and their descendants in 1954. It also annexed the West Bank after the 1948 War and maintained its sovereignty until its disengagement decision in 1988. Moreover, the Hashemite Dynasty tried to forge a national unity in Jordan. To this end, the Palestinians obtained equal employment opportunities with the Jordanians in the state institutions and many Palestinians succeeded to prosper in Jordan. On the other hand, some Palestinians, especially refugees and those living in the East Bank, has remained loyal to their Palestinian identity. This Palestinianism sometimes led to confrontations with the Jordanian government, such as the Black September in 1970 and demands for an independent Palestinian state especially after the 1988 *Intifada*.

In Syria, government granted Palestinians all the rights enjoyed by the Syrian citizens except citizenship. The Palestinians in Syria enjoyed full access to government services and labor market. On the other hand, the Syrian government has closely monitored the activities of the Palestinians, a policy implemented not only to Palestinians but to the whole Syrian population as well.

In the West Bank and Gaza, the situation is more different than Syria and Jordan. The West Bank had been administered by Jordan until 1988. After the DOP, it became a territory of the PA. After the eruption of the *Intifada*, Palestinian political activism shifted to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, the *intifada* led to harsh Israeli military operations in these territories. To assure security, Israel frequently carried out punitive operations and sealed off the borders. These measures led to deterioration in economic activities in the West Bank.

The Gaza Strip was administered by Egypt, but never annexed. In 1967, it was occupied by Israel. Due to its small size and large number of indigenous and refugee Palestinians, it is the most densely-populated field. In addition, the Gaza habitants has had to live with continuous Israeli military operations after the *intifada*. Its dense population and Israeli operations cause serious setbacks in the economic activity.

Apart from these host country-specific distinctions, another distinction was created by the UNRWA education system, more specifically, the implementation of the host country curriculum in the UNRWA schools. This has created different educational backgrounds between the Palestinians who attended or has been attending to the Agency schools.

For more information on the Palestinians in the other host countries, see Don Peretz, *Palestinians, Refugees and The Middle East Peace Process* (US Institute of Peace: Washington D.C., 1993), Abbas Shiblak, "In Search of a Durable Solution: Residency Status and Civil Rights of Palestinians in Host Arab States" in Spiegel S.L. and Pervin D.J. (eds.), *Practical Peace Making in The Middle East* (Garland Publishing: New York and London, 1995), Arzt, *Refugees into Citizens* and Bowker, *Mythology, Identity...*.

their common historical and social experiences and second, their preparedness for mobilization, particularly for their right of return.[110] Sayigh argues that their identity was a mixed form of refugeedom, class and nationalism and their status reproduced this identity as refugees.[111]

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[110] Bowker, Ibid., p. 79.
[111] Rosemary Sayigh, "Dis/solving the 'Refugee Problem' ", *Middle East Report* (Summer 1998), p. 22.

CHAPTER 3

THE UNRWA AND ITS ROLE IN LEBANON[1]

FIRST RELIEF EFFORTS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNRWA

Immediately after the Arab-Israeli War in May 1948, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled their homes. They had little or no belongings with them and majority of them were peasants. First relief efforts came from international organizations, namely International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies and the American Friends Service Committee. These organizations mainly provided food and tents to the destitute refugees. However, their assistance was far from meeting the actual need. The host governments were unable to rehabilitate their situation either. Therefore, the Arab League appealed to the UN to deal with the situation. The UN Secretary-General referred the issue to the International Refugee Organization (IRO), which was established immediately after the Second World War to deal with the refugee issue in Europe. However, IRO declined the demand on the pretext that it had insufficient resources to handle the issue.[2] Therefore, the UN established the United Nations Disaster Relief Project

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[1] Throughout the chapter, the annual reports of the UNRWA from 1951 to 2004 will be used for reference to the Agency's operations and activities. The majority of the Agency reports are available on http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, last accessed on October 17, 2004.

[2] Dennis C. Howley, *The United Nations and the Palestinians* (Exposition Press: New York, 1975), p. 11.

on September 11, 1948. The mission of the organization was to coordinate the relief efforts of the already-existing charity organizations and the distribution of the donations by the host governments.[3]

However, the Disaster Relief Project was short-lived. Three months after the establishment of the project, it was replaced by the United Nations Relief for Palestinian Refugees (UNRPR), which was established on December 1, 1948. The aim of the new organization was again to coordinate the relief efforts of those organizations mentioned above but this time, UNRPR delegated authority to those charity organizations by concluding agreements for field operations and for the distribution of rations.[4] The fields were shared among these charity organizations: The League of the Red Cross would handle the operations in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan (Transjordan by then); International Committee of the Red Cross would deal with the refugees in Israel and the West Bank and the American Friends of the Society Committee would operate in the Gaza Strip.

In addition to these organizations, the UNRPR cooperated with other UN organs for the handling of the relief efforts by using their assistance and expertise. For this purpose, UNICEF would provide food and blanket; the World Health Organization (WHO) would provide assistance in health; UNESCO would assist in education and the IRO would assist in logistics. This cooperation formed the backbone of future relief efforts and has continued since then. Nevertheless, the refugees were scattered in towns, villages and even in orchards. As a result, these relief efforts were not exhaustive in the sense that the refugees distant from cities and relief centers were still dependant on host government assistance.[5]

At the same time, there were efforts to find a settlement to the conflict. Immediately after the establishment of the UNRPR, the UN General Assembly passed the Resolution 194 on December 11, 1948, which stated that

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[3] Benjamin N. Schiff, *Refugees Unto The Third Generation: UN Aid to Palestinians* (Syracuse University Press: New York, 1995), p. 14.
[4] Lex Takkenberg, *The Status of Palestinian Refugees in International Law* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1998), p. 24.
[5] Howley, *The United Nations and the Palestinians*, p.14.

> ...the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and the compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property... should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.[6]

This paragraph of the resolution became the main document on which the Arab states justified their demands on the right of return of refugees. Besides, the resolution also called for the establishment of the Conciliation Commission for Palestine (CCP), with members from the US, Great Britain and Turkey. In August 1949, the CCP established the Economic Survey Mission (ESM) with the goal of studying economic measures for resettlement, repatriation and rehabilitation of the refugees in the host countries. That same year, the mission estimated that there were 97.000 refugees in Lebanon,[7] but by September 1949, there were 127.800 ration recipients in the Lebanon field.[8]

The general opinion of both the international community and the refugees was that the refugee issue was a temporary problem and it would be settled soon. However, the US mediation efforts and the negotiations between the Arabs and the Israelis proved fruitless. Furthermore, the ESM recommended the inauguration of works programme to render the refugees self-supporting along with the continuation of the relief provision. To this end, the mission recommended the establishment of an agency to initiate works programme, to handle the relief operations and to negotiate with the host governments. Recognizing that a more comprehensive assistance effort was necessary to deal with the refugee issue, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 302, which established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on December 8, 1949. On May 1, 1950, UNRPR was liquidated and its responsibility was transferred to UNRWA.

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[6] UNGA Resolution 194 (III), December 11, 1948.
[7] Cited in Howley, *The United Nations and the Palestinians*, p.20.
[8] Cited in Howley, Ibid., p.15.

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE UNRWA: WORKS AND LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS

When UNRWA inaugurated its programmes and operations, the Agency did not have to start from zero. The education, health and relief provisions were already running in all fields, though in small scales. The cooperation with the charity organizations and with other UN organs were not abandoned.

The Main Services of the Agency

In the field of education, the main Agency services has been the administration of elementary, preparatory and secondary schools in all the fields. Other than this, the Agency also established vocational training centers to make the refugees gain marketable skills to enhance their employment opportunities. The Agency has also provided scholarships for university education, though on a limited scale due to financial concerns. Finally, the Agency has implemented pre-service and in-service teacher training and certification programme for those employed in Agency schools.

In health services, the Agency has provided all the basic health services for the refugees. These were primary health care (such as health clinics, dental clinics, family planning, laboratories, special care for diabetes, hypertension, cardiology) and secondary health care (hospitalization), mother and child health care, immunization campaigns and environmental health care.

In relief, the Agency provided basic rations (until late 1970s), has assisted special hardship cases and initiated emergency relief during times of crisis. The Agency also has implemented social development and self-support projects (beginning from mid-1980s).

The Initial Attitudes of The Host States

In his first report, the director of the Agency[9] stated that the establishment of the Agency was positively received by the host states but there was a concern about the motives of the UNRWA.[10] The positive reception was due to the establishment of an organization to handle the relief operations in all fields on a much wider scale, which implied an alleviation of the burden of the host states. On the other hand, the host states were concerned that the final goal of the Agency was to overcome the refugee issue through resettlement. The refugees were also against a resettlement. These concerns later turned out to be the main criticism to the Agency's operations by the Arab states and the refugees.

Despite their initial reservation, all the host governments concluded agreements with the Agency and they appointed different state organs for negotiation and liaison with the UNRWA. In Lebanon, the ministry of foreign affairs was responsible for the relations with the Agency. From this time on, the Lebanese state closely cooperated with the Agency, except the 1970s when there was a political turmoil in the country and the government authority eroded as a result. The reason for the willingness of the government to cooperate with the Agency was not to control the Agency's decision-making, rather, it was a political motivation to prevent any possibility for the integration of the refugees.[11]

The Problem of Definition

The initial task of the Agency was to put forth a definition of refugee in order to decrease the number of ration rolls. A Palestine refugee was "a needy person, who, as a result of the war in Palestine, has lost his home and his means of livelihood". This first definition was rather flexible to leave room for chief district officers to include "many border-line cases which inevitably arise".[12] Takkenberg argues that

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[9] When the Agency was established, the head of the Agency was titled as "the director". In 1962, this title was replaced by "the Commissioner-General".
[10] *UNRWA Report, 1950-1951* (UN: New York, 1951) p. 3.
[11] Yves Besson, "UNRWA and Its Role in Lebanon", paper presented at the Palestinians in Lebanon Conference organized by the Center for Lebanese Studies and The Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford, 27th-30th September 1996, p. 12.
[12] *UNRWA Report, 1950-1951*, p. 3.

the emphasis both on loss of means of livelihood and accommodation was part of the Agency's attempt to cancel out the rations of the non-eligible refugees.[13] There was also insistence from various Arab countries to include their citizens who were destitute as a result of the war in Palestine. However, the Agency resisted to these suggestions and made clear that its funds were insufficient and reserved only for the "genuine refugees". The only exception to this case was some number of Lebanese among the 128.000 claimants in Lebanon, who were working across the border in the citrus groves or on the farms of Palestine but who came back to Lebanon and claimed status as refugees with the start of the war. However, the Agency was in the process of conducting an exhaustive census to eliminate false registrations.

This definition was refined in mid-1951 by adding the statement "a Palestine refugees is a person *normally resident in Palestine*,... [emphasis added]". This addition was aimed to eliminate those Lebanese defined in the preceding paragraph.[14]

A third definition was made by the Agency as another measure to limit the number of ration recipients. The definition was "a Palestine refugee is a person whose normal residence was Palestine for *a minimum period of two years* preceding the outbreak of the conflict in 1948 and who, as a result of this conflict, has lost both his home and his means of livelihood [emphasis added]".[15] However, the Agency also included the descendants of the refugees without making a change in the definition and this became a general principle of the Agency in the later decades. The definition remained unchanged until 1993. It is important to note here that this definition was devised for operational purposes, that is, to determine the criteria for eligibility to the Agency's assistance[16] and it did not include all persons who became refugees as a result of the Arab-Israeli War in 1948.

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[13] Takkenberg, *The Status of Palestinian Refugees*, p. 71.
[14] Takkenberg, Ibid., p. 71.
[15] Takkenberg, Ibid., p. 72.
[16] Takkenberg, Ibid., p. 83.

Works and Large-Scale Projects

In its first year of operation, the Agency focused on the works programme. The aim was to decrease the relief and the number of the ration recipients by creating employment opportunities for the refugees. The idea behind this attempt was to prepare grounds for the eventual integration and absorption of the refugees into host states.

However, the Agency encountered some problems in the implementation of the programme. The reasons were that the Agency did not get started its operations at the anticipated time, the time taken to interest the refugees and the host states were longer than anticipated, the lack of contributions were lagging the implementation of some programmes behind and there were no opportunities for a programme in the Gaza field and the programme in Lebanon was limited.[17]

The first attempts of the Agency to provide employment were small-scale projects such as road construction and afforestation. In Lebanon, 1100 workers were employed in road construction and afforestation projects by September 1950. Other projects under consideration in Lebanon were excavation, handicrafts and the development of the Litani River.[18]

On the other hand, the Agency and the workers were target of threats and criticisms in August and September 1950. A large section of the Arab Press criticized the Agency and its motives. Due to the threats by unidentified groups, the workers declined to work for a while and a bomb was thrown to a truck carrying workers in Lebanon.[19] Besides, the Agency acknowledged that the refugees were tired of their present conditions and they were told and generally believe that the West and the UN interference in their affairs caused their plight. Due to this antipathy, the refugees and the host states were opposing any attempt for correction in the ration rolls. Hence, the Agency was unable to decrease the number of ration recipients. The lack of contributions were also pressing hard on the Agency's

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[17] *UNRWA Report*, 1950-1951, p. 7.
[18] Ibid., p. 7-8.
[19] Ibid., p. 5.

operations. Although the General Assembly made an appeal of $55.000.000 for the Agency's first year operations, only $39.000.000 were promised by June 1951.[20]

By late 1951, UNRWA developed a three-year development plan. The Agency concluded an agreement with Jordan relating to an irrigation scheme of the Yarmuk-Jordan Valley and with Egypt relating to the irrigation of an area in the Sinai Peninsula. The Agency estimated that these projects would render 150.000-200.000 refugees self-supporting.[21] From this time up until mid-1950s, the Agency focused on the implementation of large-scale projects rather than the small-scale works schemes. Howley argues that the works program was not successful because the employment opportunities created by these projects were lower than the expected and the refugees became more dependant on UNRWA rather than became self-supporting because the Agency became an employer.[22] Forsythe also converges with the view that the works programme was unable to render refugees self-supporting. But contrary to Howley, who based the failure of the programme on the Agency's position as an employer, Forsythe argues that the programme was unsuccessful because refugees returned back to their shelters when the projects finished and no refugees were integrated as a result. Furthermore, he adds that the host governments were also opposing the programme, which was perceived as a plan for resettlement.[23]

Yet, the refugees were also opposing large-scale schemes on the basis that any kind of reintegration plan would mean the liquidation of the cause although the Agency several times reiterated that such large-scale projects would not prejudice to rights of the refugees. These plans also eroded the confidence on the Agency based on the belief that the UNRWA was an instrument of the Western powers. Despite Jordan's and Egypt's initial consent for these projects, they also opposed the large-scale development plans in later years, but the reasons were never made

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[20] Ibid., p. 11.
[21] Ibid., p. 2.
[22] Howley, *The United Nations and the Palestinians*, p.24.
[23] David P. Forsythe, "UNRWA, The Palestine Refugees, and World Politics", *International Organizations*, 25 (Winter 1971), p. 34.

clear by the state authorities and the Agency never raised the issue after the Suez Crisis and the rise of pan-Arabism in mid-1950s.[24]

Another problem faced by the Agency was the inability of the Agency to decrease the number of ration rolls. To do so would mean to implement projects and to render the refugees self-supporting. The Agency estimated that even if these large-scale projects were initiated, six years would be needed to see a substantial decrease in ration rolls. However, the relief fund intended to last three years had already been consumed at the end of the first two years of the Agency. By mid-1950s, large-scale projects were abandoned due to opposition and the Agency focused on rehabilitation of the conditions of the refugees via other means such as education, vocational training, health and infrastructural improvements.

FROM INTEGRATION SCHEMES TO REHABILITATION

With the abandonment of the works and large-scale projects in mid-1950s, the Agency focused on the improvement of the living conditions and rehabilitation of the refugees. The main areas of emphasis were education and infrastructure.

The focus on education was intended to improve the educational backgrounds of the refugees and to supply the Middle East with educated and qualified work force which was severely needed at those years and which would be beneficial for the refugees in the long term to find employment. The Agency again faced difficulties in implementing its educational programme but this time it was not the opposition from refugees. On the contrary, the Agency was lagging behind the demand from refugees to get educated and only in 1956-1957 school year was the Agency able to admit all the children at school age for enrollment in its schools. This gap between Agency supply and refugee demand was stemming from the insufficient resources to build schools and to recruit teachers. A second problem was the difficulty in finding qualified teachers. The lack of qualified workforce was a significant problem in the Middle East in 1950s. So, the problem was not only

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[24] Forsythe, Ibid., p. 35.

finding good teachers but also keeping them. When the Agency teachers gained experience in the Agency schools, they were leaving for other schools particularly in the Gulf countries with better conditions.[25]

Despite the Agency's emphasis on education, lack of funds forced the Agency to close its secondary school education (from ninth to eleventh grades) in 1963. From this year on, the only alternative for the refugees wishing to attend to secondary schools were the government schools, if they were not enough well-off to pay for the private schools. Another implication of this financial problem to the education field was the inability of the Agency to build new schools and classes to meet the demand. So, the Agency had to operate double-shift schools in all the fields beginning from late 1960s. In 1968-1969 school year, 22 of the 58 schools in Lebanon (40% of the schools) operated on double-shift.[26]

With the focus on the education provision, the Agency started to operate vocational training centers to make refugees gain marketable skills. The center in Lebanon, the Siblin Training Center in the South near Sidon, opened in October 1963.

Another aspect of the Agency's education provision, which was a significant problem for the Agency, was the inflexibility of the Agency to prepare its own curriculum for its schools. The Agency adopted the curricula of the host countries to integrate its programme with those of the host countries so that the refugee children could take the graduation exams ("brevet" in Lebanon) of the host country. An implication of this principle for the Lebanon field was the inauguration of French classes for the preparatory school (sixth to tenth grade in Lebanon) in 1964-1965 school year. Despite the inflexibility in the curriculum, the Agency published or selected its own textbooks to be used in the Agency schools. Nevertheless, the textbooks became a controversial issue, especially after the Israeli invasion of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967. After 1967, Israeli officials were able to monitor the education within the Agency schools, including textbooks. The problem was that Israel objected the description of Israel within the UNRWA

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[25] *UNRWA Report*, *1956-1957* (UN: New York, 1957), p. 5.
[26] *UNRWA Report*, *1968-1969* (UN: New York, 1957), p. 30.

textbooks and asserted that they were nurturing anti-Israeli attitudes but there were also complaints from Arab host states as well.[27]

Along with these operations, the Agency continued its efforts to correct the registration rolls. However, the opposition from the host states and the refugees were preventing a comprehensive study. The only exception was the Lebanon field, where the Agency was able to examine all the ration recipients with the cooperation of the government between 1963 and 1967. In 1963, the Agency imposed a ration quota in all fields to limit the number of ration recipients in order to control the costs (in Jordan, this quota was introduced in 1953). The rations were distributed to the refugees over one year of age. Due to this quota, there were always a number of refugee children over one year of age entitled to receive rations but unable to do so. This number grew steadily in all fields over the years because the Agency did not take the population increases into account when fixing the ration ceiling. The only exception was Lebanon, where the Agency was able to eliminate a substantial number of non-needy refugees and all the refugee children over one year of age could get rations in mid-1964. Yet, the refugee children over one year of age entitled to receive rations but unable to do so increased steadily in the following years in Lebanon and in other fields as well. In 1967, the figure for Lebanon was 5.100.[28] Although the Agency and the Lebanese government agreed on the new terms to cancel the rations based on the minimum salary as a reference in 1967, the number of refugee children not receiving rations continued to increase and the figure for Lebanon was 11.000 in 1969.[29]

In 1960s, the Agency complained on the lack of understanding of Agency's status by some departments and officials of the host states. As a result, the Agency put forward many legal claims against some governments and contacted with the authorities concerned in order to settle the disagreements and problems. The claims concerning the Lebanese authorities (together with Syria and Jordan) were the

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[27] Milton Viorst, *Reaching for The Olive Branch: UNRWA and Peace in The Middle East* (The Middle East Institute: Washington D.C., 1989), p. 55.
[28] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1966-1967", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 6, 2004.
[29] *UNRWA Report*, *1968-1969* ((UN: New York, 1969), p. 15.

excess transportation and customs taxes for Agency goods and materials. The duties of these departments or officials were not to deal with the international missions and the origins of the disputes stemmed from this incompetence. Other than that, the Agency several times stated in the reports of its first two decades that there were no problems with the government of Lebanon and the government was quite cooperative.

In June 1967, the second Arab-Israeli War, known as "Six-day War", took place, resulting in, among other consequences, the displacement of 300.000 people in Jordan, Syria and the Gaza fields, 120.000 of whom were refugees.[30] The Agency took immediate measures by issuing rations to and establishing emergency camps for those displaced. However, Lebanon was not involved in the war and there were no migration into Lebanon nor there were any interruptions in the Agency's services in Lebanon, except the closure of Agency schools for a short period. In Lebanon, the first of the major disruptions in education took place in 1969. The first of these school closures was the four-week strike of the Agency teachers in February 1969 to oppose the newly enacted Occupation Classification Manual, which regulated the administration of the schools and put forth new criteria for promotion and benefits of the Agency teachers. The second one took place in April 1969, as part of several political demonstrations of the refugees and the Muslim Lebanese population to protest the Lebanese Army actions against the Palestinian guerrillas and Palestinian political activities.

The strong support to the Palestinians from the Lebanese Muslims, the strengthening of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations and the regional politics led to conclusion of the Cairo Agreement between the PLO and the Lebanese government in November 1969, which started a new era for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and changed the nature of the relations of the UNRWA with the Palestinians and the Lebanese government.

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[30] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1966-1967".

PALESTINIAN AUTONOMY AND THE ADVENT OF THE CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON

The year 1969 was an important turning point both for the Palestinian refugees and the UNRWA in Lebanon. With the signing of the Cairo Agreement between the PLO and the Lebanese government in November, the Palestinians in Lebanon obtained autonomy within the camps. The origins of the PLO's political rise goes back to the Six-Day War, when the Arab armies were defeated by the Israeli Forces and the guerrilla groups emerged as an alternative for the liberation struggle. After the war, the groups began to organize more openly, especially in Lebanon and Jordan. The Cairo Agreement granted these organization the right to represent the refugees, negotiate on behalf of them and the right to control the camps. After 1969, the Palestinian socio-economic and political organizations mushroomed and these groups became an important actor in the following two decades in Lebanon.

The PLO-UNRWA Relations

After the signing of the agreement, the Lebanese security forces withdrew from the camps and they were replaced by the guerrilla groups. One immediate consequence of the lack of government authority and the control of the guerrilla groups for the Agency was the occupation of some Agency buildings within the camps by these groups. The Agency, as being a UN organ and having a diplomatic status, did not negotiate with the Palestinian groups for their evacuation but appealed to the government to settle the problem in December 1969 and March 1970, but the negotiations between the government and the PLO were fruitless. In 1973, some of these occupied Agency buildings were returned to the Agency. A second immediate consequence of the PLO control was the suspension of the ration investigations in October 1969. However, there were no interruptions in the Agency's operations because of these events and the Agency continued to operate its main services both inside and outside the camps. But a more serious event took place in May 1970 when a Palestinian organization occupied the Agency Headquarters and an Agency warehouse in Beirut and threatened the Agency staff.

The Agency again appealed to the government for immediate action and the government made appropriate police dispositions.[31]

Despite the absence of a direct formal contact between the PLO and the Agency, the contact was established through the liaison committees, set up after the Cairo Agreement with members from the Lebanese gendarmerie and the PLO security forces for cooperation and consultation between the government and the PLO.[32] But the PLO-UNRWA relations were more than an informal contact. The relation was characterized by compromises of the Agency on one hand and cooperation between the two organizations on the other. The first compromise of the Agency was that the Agency staff were being accompanied by the PLO forces during visits to the camps, which was in contradiction with the Agency's diplomatic status. Weighill argues that after the PLO's arrival and organization in Lebanon, the Agency practically needed the consent of the relevant militia group to enter the camps.[33] Secondly, the PLO tried to control and influence the Agency by trying to place its preferred candidates.[34] Schiff argues that this attempt of the PLO was sometimes successful because the Agency lost control of personnel decisions due to the security situation and the frequent interruptions of supply routes especially after 1975.[35]

Apart from these problems, the UNRWA-PLO relations were quite cooperative. The PLO assured funds for the Agency for improvement in services, it protected the Agency installations and it complemented the Agency services by creating its own socio-economic organizations.[36] Schiff converges with this view and he argues that the Agency's compromises in Lebanon, especially at times of

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[31] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1970-1971", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 7, 2004.
[32] Marie-Louise Weighill, "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: The Politics of Assistance", paper presented at the Palestinians in Lebanon Conference organized by the Center for Lebanese Studies and The Refugee Studies Programme, University of Oxford, 27th-30th September 1996, p. 31.
[33] Weighill, Ibid., p. 31.
[34] Viorst, *Reaching for The Olive Branch*, p. 68.
[35] Schiff, Refugees unto The Third Generation, p. 104.
[36] Viorst, *Reaching for The Olive Branch*, p. 69.

turmoil, were stemming from the decentralization of the PLO and its indifference to the Agency's complaints.[37]

Regular Operations of the Agency

An important development in 1970 was that for the first in UNRWA's history, the education expenditures passed the relief expenditures in the general budget with a ratio of 45% to 42% and the education provision became the largest activity of the Agency since then.[38] Another development in education was the instruction of Palestinian history in Agency schools beginning from January 1970 after demands from the teachers and the approval of the Lebanese authorities.

In the later years of the period, the education in the Agency schools in Lebanon was interrupted many times due to different reasons. These reasons were the frequent strikes by the teachers of the Agency to protest the new regulations or to support the Palestinian guerrillas in Jordan during and after the clash of the Palestinian guerrillas with the Jordanian Army in September 1970 and the frequent strikes and Israeli air raids as responses to cross border Palestinian guerrilla operations form Lebanon. Due to these disturbances, the Siblin Training Center was shifted to non-residential admission and did not take new students in 1970-1971 school year.

The Israeli reprisals into Southern Lebanon during the period and in the following years also led to the disruption in education. In 1974, an Israeli raid on the Nabatieh refugee camp near Sidon caused the destruction of the camp, including the Agency facilities there. The Agency and some other voluntary agencies immediately launched an emergency assistance for the refugees displaced from the camp in the form of medical and domestic equipment and for those who wanted to stay, reconstruction materials.

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[37] Schiff, Refugees unto The Third Generation, p. 109.
[38] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1969-1970", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 7, 2004.

The Institutionalization of The PLO

A very important characteristic of this period until the Israeli invasion in 1982 was the establishment and the operations of an increasing number of Palestinian voluntary organizations and PLO institutions in every aspect of life. In the education field, these organization acted as complementary to the Agency education system mainly by operating kindergartens and crèches. The health services supported the Agency system by operating clinics and hospitals. Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), which was funded by the PLO, was by far the largest service provider in the health services after the UNRWA. The Society was serving not only the Palestinians but the Lebanese as well. In 1981, one third of the patients served by the PRCS was Lebanese.[39] The PLO also filled the vacuum left by the government by providing infrastructural facilities such as water supply, sanitation networks and electricity within the camps.

The PLO and other Palestinian organization increased the employment opportunities for the refugees in Lebanon. This was achieved in three ways: First, the arrival of and the autonomy granted to the PLO eased the restrictions on the employment of the Palestinian refugees. Second, these organizations employed the refugees within their operations and third, the economic enterprises established by the PLO created new opportunities for the refugees.[40] However, Weighill argues that the services of these organizations were lacking in coordination, replicating each other because of factional competition and expanding without planning.[41] Nevertheless, the services provided by these organizations eased the burden of the Agency significantly in Lebanon, which was also appreciated by the Agency in those years.

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[39] Weighill, "The Politics of Assistance", p. 33.
[40] Weighill, Ibid., p. 34-5.
[41] Weighill, Ibid., p. 29-30.

FROM THE ADVENT OF THE CIVIL WAR TO THE ISRAELI INVASION

In April 1975, fighting between the Lebanese Christian and Palestinian militias broke out in Beirut and spread to the other areas soon, with the involvement of other factions as well. The Agency was able to maintain the basic services with minor interruptions except a three-week state of emergency in April. However, the fighting in Beirut intensified in the following months and the Agency faced serious difficulty in rendering the services. The Agency was unable to distribute the emergency aid in the form of food which began in 1974 after the Israeli air raid into Southern Lebanon. The level of reach for the distribution of the rations at the time of intense fighting was 20% for Beirut and 80% for other areas.[42] The schools close to the fighting areas were closed and the staff were unable to come to work. Only medical services of the Agency continued, though on a limited scale. During the period of intense fighting, the Agency buildings were damaged or looted.

During the period, the Agency had to relocate its headquarters from Beirut several times because of the inability to carry out the services and operations due to the prevailing conditions. The first of these moves took place in January 1976 when the Headquarters was relocated to Vienna.

However, with the deployment of the Arab Deterrent Force in Lebanon in October 1976, the situation improved considerably and the Agency was able to restart its services by year-end. The first phase of the internal fighting left 30.000 Palestinian refugees displaced,[43] majority of whom were the inhabitants of Dikwaneh and Jisr al-Basha camps in Beirut destroyed during the fighting.

The Agency restarted its emergency relief, this time not only in the form of rations but blankets, mattresses, clothing and cooking materials as well. However, the Agency's critical financial situation forced the Agency to reduce the ration content in 1977 second time in the Agency's history in order to decrease the costs.

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[42] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1976-1977", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 7, 2004.
[43] The number of registered Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was 201.000 as in June 1977. UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1976-1977".

In February 1978, a further reduction took place in the flour component by one third and another reduction was made in 1979. But the Agency launched a new kind of assistance for the "special hardship cases" (SHCs), which included widows, orphans, the aged, the physically and mentally handicapped and the chronically sick. Through the programme, these people were provided extra rations, assistance in repair and construction of shelters, cash grants, blankets, clothing and preferential access to vocational and teacher training.[44] The Agency initiated the programme in East Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the summer of 1978. In Lebanon, the programme was started in 1981.

In early 1977, the Agency was planning to carry the Headquarters back to Beirut and by late 1977, the Headquarters was moved back to Beirut from Vienna.

The Agency was able to restart its education services gradually beginning from October 1976. However, the majority of the schools remained closed because of several reasons: The schools operating within the camps close to the fighting were closed because the refugees living in camps had left the camp; some schools were inoperative because displaced refugees squatted the buildings; some schools were damaged or looted during the fighting or damaged because of Israeli military actions and some other schools were closed because of insecurity. The Agency had to make up for the lost education time by extending the school year through early openings, shorter mid-year holidays or late closures in the summer. These measures became the usual Agency practice in Lebanon in the aftermath of the clashes and disruptions in education throughout the period. The only vocational and teacher training center in Lebanon, the Siblin Training Center near Sidon, was also closed for some time. The center, which had been operating non-residentially since 1970 because of the frequent interruptions in the training and because of the security concerns, opened and shifted to residential training again in 1976.

Every time the clashes ceased, the Agency carried out reparations on its installations. The refugees were also provided with construction materials and in

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[44] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1981-1982", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 7, 2004.

some cases with cash assistance to the extent that the Agency's financial situation allowed to enable refugees reconstruct or repair their shelters.

The provision of the health services was also affected by the fighting and the Agency was severely limited in this operation. At times of fighting, the Agency was unable to reach most of the refugees and these refugees were referred to the American University Hospital or PRCS hospitals. The main problem in health services during the Civil War was the shortage of hospital beds to accommodate the refugees needing medical treatment.

The main emergency operations of the Agency between 1975 and 1982 followed the above-mentioned measures and operations during and after internal clashes. However, the Agency had to cope with another emergency situation when the Israeli Defense Forces invaded the Southern Lebanon in March 1978. The main problem during and after the Israeli invasion was the displacement of thousands of refugees from the South and their dispersal to safer areas in the country. Immediately after the invasion, the Agency reported that there were 67.000 displaced refugees, 45.000 of whom received emergency assistance.[45] The assistance was made available by special contributions. The Agency also appealed for two separate contributions, one for the continuation of the emergency relief for six months and another one for the reconstruction of the Agency buildings and refugee shelters in the South.[46] However, the majority of the refugees returned back to their homes in June 1978.

This emergency and the consequent displacement was followed by another one in mid-1978, when the clashes in Beirut forced the refugees living in Dbayeh camp left their homes. In mid-1979, there were 50.000 displaced Palestinian refugees receiving emergency assistance.[47]

In April 1978, the Agency took the decision to permanently relocate the Headquarters out of Lebanon because the prevailing conditions resulted in a

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[45] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1977-1978", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 7, 2004.
[46] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1978-1979", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 7, 2004.
[47] UNISPAL, Ibid.

considerable loss of work time and raised concerns for the security of the staff. The Headquarters was relocated to Vienna in Spring 1978 and some departments were relocated to Amman in Summer 1978.

The Civil War in Lebanon entered into a new course when the Israeli Army started the invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982. The Agency had to face new emergency situations, more severe and comprehensive than the preceding ones.

THE ISRAELI INVASION AND THE UNRWA'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

The Israeli Defense Forces began the invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982. The aim of this military operation was to curb the Palestinian armed existence totally in Lebanon. By the end of the month, the Israeli Forces reached Beirut and imposed a blockade on the Western sector of the city. The PLO agreed to evacuate Lebanon following the invasion and the evacuation began in August and continued until early September.

After the evacuation of the PLO, the notorious Sabra and Shatela massacres took place in mid-September, followed by hostile treatments to Palestinians by the Israeli Forces, the LF and the LA, such as arrests, detentions and mistreatments. Following these events, a multinational force was deployed in Beirut to assure security.

The IDF remained in Beirut until February 1983, when it decided to withdraw to Southern Lebanon because of heavy casualties it suffered by the attacks of hostile militia groups. The withdrawal was complete by August 1983.

The immediate effect of the invasion was the displacement of tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees and Lebanese within and from the South. In the eight camps in Beirut, Sidon and Tyre, the Agency reported that 57% of the shelters were destroyed and 36% were damaged, rendering 74.000 refugees homeless. The Agency estimated that 150.000-200.000 of the 238.000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon would need relief, including those displaced, until the end of the year. Hence, the Commissioner-General decided to extend the emergency relief

to the non-registered Palestinian refugees upon their application. Following this decision, the Commissioner-General made a $52.7 million appeal to the international community for the provision of one-year emergency relief in Lebanon. At the end of the first year of the emergency operations, there were 178.000 Palestinian refugees receiving assistance, 7.200 of whom were non-registered refugees.[48]

In the South, the Agency was able to launch an emergency relief within three weeks after the invasion. The relief assistance composed of ration, household items, clothing, medical care and sanitation. The first distributions of relief in the South were supplied from the West Bank and from Beirut with Israeli permission. In June, the Agency decided to suspend the distribution of relief in Jordan and Syria with the approval of the refugee leaders in those fields in order to secure enough stock for the Lebanon emergency. In Beirut, the Agency was able to restore the educational and health services only after the end of the siege in late September, but some distribution points had already been established by June 1982. The fighting had not penetrated to the Beqaa Valley and to the north of the country, but there was a considerable number of displaced refugees who fled the South. The emergency relief to the South, to Beqaa and to the North was provided through the Agency‘s Damascus and West Bank field offices because the Beirut Field Office was isolated from rest of the country. The Agency also extended its supplementary feeding programme by issuing mid-day meals to the children up to 15 years old, which was already supplied to the children up to 6 years old. These relief efforts were handled in cooperation with the Higher Relief Committee established by the government, the UN Coordination of Relief to Lebanon, International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), UN Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) and some other voluntary organizations.

Apart from emergency relief, the most basic need of the displaced refugees were accommodation. The Agency was aware that the issue needed urgent attention because the autumn rains were about to set in. As for the South, the Agency

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[48] UNISPAL, “UNRWA Report, 1982-1983”, http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October October 7, 2004.

planned to erect tents until a permanent solution was found. However, the Israeli and Lebanese officials gave the permission to erect tents only within the pre-1982 camp borders. This exposed another problem for the Agency and for the refugees because the refugees not living in camps comprised slightly more than half of the registered Palestinian refugees in the Lebanon field. These people squatted the privately-owned buildings after the invasion and sometimes were evacuated by force. The Agency constructed bases and delivered the tents to the South but the refugees were demanding the reconstruction of the shelters and rejected to live in the tents. During the protests, some tents were burned and some bases were wrecked in the Ain al-Hilweh camp located near Sidon. In November 1982, the Agency granted cash to the refugees in the South to cover the costs of the reconstruction of shelters.

In Beirut, the reconstruction was not possible immediately after the siege, but the Lebanese government allowed the Agency to clear the ruins and to erect tents within the camps in October 1982. By December 1982, the clearing was complete. the Agency granted cash and provided building materials to the refugees in Beirut for the reconstruction of their shelters. By February 1983, most of the reconstruction in the Beirut camps was complete. However, the government made clear in March that the Agency could carry out the reconstruction of the shelters provided that the reconstruction was only possible within the camp borders in the pre-1982 period. Following this official policy, the Lebanese gendarmerie entered into the camps and hampered the construction of the remaining shelters.

In the North, the majority of the displaced refugees found accommodation in the shelters of their relatives or friends. In the Beqaa Valley, the displaced refugees concentrated in the Wavell camp. Apart from the camp inhabitants, there were many other displaced Palestinians.

Many of the Agency buildings including schools, clinics and warehouses were also damaged or destroyed during the invasion. In 1983, the Agency presented a $4.6 million claim to the Israeli government for compensation.[49]

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[49] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1983-1984", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 7, 2004.

The health and education services were totally disrupted in the areas of fighting. Some schools were opened in October and the majority of the schools were operating by December 1982. The health services in the South were immediately restored on a very limited scale. However, the Agency had to wait until late September for the re-organization of the services in Beirut. For the displaced refugees coming form the South, the Agency established a mobile health team in Beirut. In the North and Beqaa, the Agency provided these services in the places where displaced refugees concentrated. One of the setbacks the Agency faced after the invasion was the destruction and elimination of the PRCS services throughout Lebanon. The absence of PRCS put a heavy burden on the Agency regarding the provision of the health service. The shortage of hospital beds persisted during the emergency and the Agency had to recruit additional staff and had to conclude agreements for additional beds with private hospitals where the displaced refugees concentrated, particularly in the South.

In the first weeks of the invasion, there was an urgent need for potable water, medical supplies and sanitation. Despite the shortages in sanitation, no epidemics were reported during the invasion and the Agency was able to provide water by tankers and other short-term environmental measures (the removal of garbage, partial reparations of the water system and the control against rodents and flies) by August 1982.

In 1982, following the Israeli claims that the Siblin Training Center was being used for military activities, the Agency embarked a careful investigation. At the end of the investigation, it was revealed that during the two years prior to the invasion and unknown to the senior officials, the center was used for military training by the Palestinian military officials. Israeli units also declared that they had found military equipment in the center. The Agency took disciplinary action for those responsible. This event was a blow to the Agency's reputation. Except the senior officials, the overwhelming majority of the Agency's officials were Palestinians, comprising the 99% of the Agency staff. This Palestinian domination led to the controversy in the Agency operations in the sense that the Palestinian staff were a party to the conflict, but the Agency was a UN body acting as a

humanitarian organization without any political goal and mandate. In 1982, the Agency decided to strengthen its international staff in each field office in order to assure "international surveillance", by expressing that:

> The locally-recruited Palestinian staff are the backbone of the organization in "normal situations"..... But they are themselves members of the community which is at once embroiled in and victimized by the tensions and conflicts of the Near East.[50]

However, the Agency did not make clear whether the revealing of the Siblin Training Center case led the Agency to take a decision as such.

After the invasion, the personal security of both the Palestinian refugees and the Agency staff were under serious threat, especially in the South and in Beirut. Although the security situation improved in Beirut after the deployment of the multinational force, the situation was still alarming in the South. During and after the invasion, the Israeli units and the Lebanese government arrested thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians, including the Agency staff. The number of arrested people were 9.000 in 1982 and 5.000 in 1983, 75% of whom were Palestinians, including 200 Agency staff.[51] Other than arrests, there were many kidnappings, detentions, deaths and disappearances.

In addition to the emergency situation in Lebanon, the Agency also had to confront with its financial difficulties in its operations throughout its fields of operation. In 1982, the Agency was planning to liquidate its education programme to reduce the costs because the educational services were the largest Agency operation since 1969-1970 reporting period. At the end of 1982, the expenditures on the education operations were comprising 60.4% of all Agency expenditures.[52] This plan for liquidation raised concerns among the Palestinian refugee population, the host governments and the Agency teachers, all of whom were Palestinian refugees as well and the resignation rate increased considerably.

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[50] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1982-1983".
[51] UNISPAL, Ibid.
[52] UNISPAL, Ibid.

INTRA-PALESTINIAN FIGHTING AND THE WAR OF THE CAMPS

This period was not short of fighting and emergency. A couple of weeks after the withdrawal of the Israeli Forces from Sidon to the South in February 1983, clashes erupted in the areas where there were no Israeli military presence. The Mieh Mieh and Ain al-Hilweh camps near Sidon were shelled by the surrounding militias and 40.000 refugees were rendered homeless.[53] In Beirut and in Beqaa, pro- and anti-Arafat Palestinian factions started clashes. In the Chouf area to the south of Beirut, the coastal road became inaccessible due to the start of the fighting between the LF and the Popular Socialist Party (PSP) in July 1983. As a result, the Beirut-Sidon road became inaccessible and the Agency had to turn to the offices in Jerusalem and the West Bank for supply of assistance to the South. During the fighting between the LF and the PSP, the PSP militia occupied the Siblin Training Center, which was situated on top of a hill, looking the Beirut-Sidon road and remained there for almost a year. Therefore, the Agency shifted its training courses to other buildings in Sidon, Tyre and Damascus. In late 1983, the intra-Palestinian fighting shifted to the city of Tripoli in Northern Lebanon and the Agency initiated an emergency assistance for 36.000 refugees in the North, but the assistance was possible only in places where access to refugees was possible.[54] Due to the re-commencement of hostilities, the Agency had to postpone its reconstruction programme for the refugee shelters and for its installations.

In December 1983, the UN General Assembly called for the continuation of the ration distributions in all fields. However, the Agency was unable to implement this decision due to financial constraints. Furthermore, the Agency ceased the distribution of emergency assistance in Lebanon in March 1983, but the assistance to the 24.000 special hardship cases, comprising 9.3% of the registered refugees in Lebanon and the supplementary feeding programme continued. There were 159.000 refugees receiving emergency assistance when the assistance was ceased.[55]

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[53] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1984-1985", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 12, 2004.
[54] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1983-1984".
[55] UNISPAL, Ibid.

The refugees still receiving rations protested the discontinuation decision by refusing to get rations for some months in Sidon, Beqaa and Tyre.

Due to the war-torn economy and the departure of the PLO from Lebanon, the employment opportunities dramatically decreased for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Hence, the Agency started to implement self-support and income generation projects for the refugees in 1983.

Following the invasion, the Agency described the emergency situation in Lebanon as the most difficult emergency in the Agency's history because of its political and military complexities and because of its duration.[56]

A second major strike came to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon with the start of the War of the Camps in May 1985 when the Amal militias attacked Shatela and Bourj al-Barajnah camps in Beirut. During the clashes, Amal intermittently besieged the camps, preventing the access of the Agency into the camps. During times of tranquility, the refugees fled from the camps and at the end of the first year of the War of the Camps, only 25.000 of the 43.000 refugees were still living in the camps.[57] The siege around the two Beirut camps were lifted in June 1986. But this time, Rashidieh camp near Tyre was besieged in September 1986. There were also sieges around Bourj al-Shemali and al-Buss camps in the South, however, these sieges lasted shorter. When the siege in Rashidieh was continuing, the two Beirut camps were besieged again in November. The War of the Camps ended in January 1988, when another emergency case erupted in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank with the start of the Palestinian uprising (*intifada*) in December 1987. After the War of the Camps, clashes between the Palestinian factions erupted Shatela and Bourj al-Barajnah camps in May 1988. At the end of the War of the Camps and intra-Palestinian fighting, only twenty of the 1.500 families were still living in the Shatela camp.[58]

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[56] UNISPAL, Ibid.
[57] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1985-1986", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 12, 2004.
[58] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1988-1989", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 12, 2004.

During the sieges, the militias surrounding the camps were not allowing the Agency to enter the camps. Hence, the distribution of relief and other Agency services were frequently disrupted. The militias were demanding assistance for the Lebanese living in the vicinity of the camps and who were badly affected by the fighting. They stated that unless an assistance was not provided for those Lebanese, they would not allow the relief to be distributed in the camps.[59] However, the UNRWA did not have the mandate to assist to people other than the registered Palestinian refugees. Hence, the Commissioner-General appealed to the UN Secretary-General for emergency relief for the Lebanese affected by the conflict. As a result, the relief was distributed to the Lebanese with the contributions of the World Food Programme and of the UNICEF in February 1987. The Agency was also allowed to enter the camps and distribute rations within the besieged camps.

When the sieges in the Beirut camps ended, the Agency ceased its relief operations there, but by Summer 1986 there were still 48.000 displaced refugees receiving assistance in other areas of the country.[60] However, when the sieges in the two Beirut camps started once again in late 1986, the Agency decided to expand the relief programme to the whole Palestinian community for the second time. The Commissioner-General made a special appeal for the Lebanese emergency and a special fund was established in early 1987. First general ration distribution took place in February 1987, when 245.000 Palestinians received assistance. In the same year, the Agency made four general distributions to the Palestinians in Lebanon.[61]

With the end of the War of the Camps, the number of the displaced refugees began to decrease gradually. There were 47.000 displaced refugees in May 1987, whereas the figure decreased to 32.000 some months after the sieges had ended.[62]

The personal security of the refugees and the Agency staff continued to be a problem during the mid-1980s and the Agency had to take some measures to assure

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[59] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1986-1987", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 12, 2004.
[60] UNISPAL, Ibid.
[61] UNISPAL, Ibid.
[62] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1984-1985".

the security of its staff and the relief convoys. Therefore, the Agency assigned two international staff to deal with the security arrangements. During deliveries of relief, the staff began to travel in groups with the accompany of the militia in control of that area. In some cases, the UNIFIL also provided helicopter to the Agency staff. Another measure was the opening of a sub-office in Larnaka-Cyprus because of frequent interruptions of the operations and work in the field office. The staff were rotated between the field office and the sub-office.

In 1989, the clashes in Beirut intensified again, but this time the parties were the LF, under the command of Samir Jaja and the Lebanese Army under the command of Michel Aoun. These clashes rendered 23.000 refugees homeless and caused heavy damage in the Dbayeh camp located in the northern part of Beirut.[63] Due to these clashes, the Agency had to relocate the field office to the Siblin Training Center and then to Mar Elias in Beqaa until August 1990. The LA-LF fighting continued in 1990, but by Summer 1990, there was no fighting in Beirut. Clashes continued in South Lebanon, where the Palestinian groups clashed with Amal and Hizbullah and then among each other in mid-1990, displacing 10.000 Palestinians in the south.[64] In the following year, Palestinian militias resisted the Lebanese Army in the South. By Summer 1991, the government authority was restored allover Lebanon except the South, where the Israeli Forces maintained their presence until 2000.

During the last two years of the Civil War, the Agency continued to distribute rations to the non-registered refugees and to the Lebanese, with contributions from other international agencies. However, with the diminution of the magnitude of violence in 1990, the donor contributions decreased although the Agency still needed $12 million to continue the emergency relief until the end of 1990.[65]

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[63] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1989-1990", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 12, 2004.
[64] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1990-1991", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 12, 2004.
[65] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1989-1990".

When the fighting in Beirut ceased, the reconstruction efforts restarted, but the Agency had difficulty in finding contractors to build the damaged/destroyed schools quickly and satisfactorily. There was still much to be done in the post-War Lebanon.

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN THE POST-WAR LEBANON AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE PROCESS

The Problems of Palestinian Refugees in the Post-War Lebanon

When the Civil War was over, both the Palestinians and the Lebanese were suffering from destruction, displacement and the collapse of the economy. There was a need to undertake a reconstruction and reorganization effort in every aspect of life.

The most pressing problem for the Agency immediately after the War was the existence of 7.000 displaced refugee families (35.000 refugees), who were living in the damaged or abandoned buildings with extremely unsatisfactory conditions.[66] The Lebanese government was in the process of sending eviction notes to the refugees living in the squatted buildings and the Agency negotiated with the government the find a solution to the problem. Finally, the government accepted in 1994 to pay $5.000 for each refugee family evicted by government notes.[67] However, the accommodation of refugees in Lebanon continues to be a problem because of overcrowding in the camps, limited funds for shelter rehabilitation and lack of space.

Another problem that was of great concern to the Agency was the economic conditions of the refugees. Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the PLO evacuated Lebanon and employment opportunities decreased sharply for the Palestinian refugees. Added to this were the stagnation caused by the Civil War and the Gulf War in Winter 1990, which decreased the remittances sent by the

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[66] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1990-1991".
[67] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1993-1994", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on 17, 2004.

working family members of the refugees in Lebanon. The Agency developed revolving loan funds, micro-enterprise projects and poverty alleviation programmes to render refugees self-supporting and established medium-scale enterprises such as cooperatives. In 1995, the Agency extended the poverty alleviation programme to include the poor in the line of extreme hardship but not included in the SHC programme.

A third issue to be immediately addressed was the health services to the Palestinian refugees. After the PLO's departure from Lebanon and the continuation of the War, the PRCS services as well as other voluntary health services were curtailed, increasing the Agency's burden. In the 1980s, the Agency had concluded agreements with private hospitals for hospitalization of refugees, but this options was becoming increasingly costly for the Agency because of the high inflation rate in the post-War Lebanon and the decreasing financial capabilities of the Agency. The Agency was in urgent need of funds to improve its health services in Lebanon. Some of the funds were provided through the Peace Implementation Programme and through Lebanon appeal (which were mentioned in more detail in the coming paragraphs). To decrease the costs in health services, the Agency decided to cover the 75% of hospitalization costs and the rest would be paid by the refugees, except in cases which the Agency covered the total cost of the treatment of a refugee who was under extreme hardship.[68] This measure was put into effect in all fields in September 1995. But the co-payments made by the refugees in Lebanon were higher than elsewhere because of the high cost of treatment in Lebanon. As a result, two thirds of the refugees assisted under this service in 1996 were the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.[69] the Agency also exempted the refugees in Lebanon from co-payment in secondary health care, which was implemented in other fields because of the financial difficulties of the Agency. In mid-1990s, the PLO restarted to fund PRCS hospitals in Lebanon, which were serving at a cheaper rate and as a result, the Agency agreed with the PRCS for reservation of hospital beds and

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[68] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1994-1995", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 17, 2004.
[69] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1996-1997", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 17, 2004.

treatment. Despite the measures taken by the Agency, there was still need for extrabudgetary resources for health services in Lebanon. Therefore, the Agency agreed with the governments of Italy, Switzerland and with the EU in 2000 for additional funds to be channeled to the health services in Lebanon. However, it became evident to the Agency that the health services in Lebanon could not be maintained with the special contributions. Therefore, the Agency decided to include full hospitalization costs with the Agency's regular budget beginning from 2002.[70]

In the field of education, the services and facilities of the Agency had been severely hampered due to the War. There were many damaged or destroyed Agency schools, the displacement resulted in lower attendance rates and the refugee children were experiencing the trauma of the War. The Agency undertook reconstruction efforts immediately after the War through special contributions, but the Lebanese government did not allow the operation of Agency-built schools outside the camp borders. Therefore, the Agency had to rent buildings outside the camps. Due to this restriction, most of the rented Agency schools were physically unsatisfactory. Regarding the pupils, the low success rate in the early 1990s was a concern for the Agency. Although the success rate increased gradually in the following years, the rate remained lower than the government and private school rates and therefore, the Agency developed special teaching and learning methods to improve the success rates in Lebanon. A major consequence of the War and the dire economic conditions of the refugees was that the refugee parents began to transfer their children from private schools to the Agency schools, which increased the burden of the Agency. There was limited space in the government schools for the refugee children and the refugees especially in central Lebanon had no option but the Agency schools. Hence, the Agency decided to restart its secondary

[70] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 2001-2002", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 17, 2004.

education cycle in Lebanon again in 1993, which was ceased in all fields in 1963. By 2003, there were five secondary schools throughout Lebanon.[71]

At the same time with the reconstruction efforts in Lebanon, the Agency also continued its emergency relief attempts even after the Civil War. To this end, the Agency combined the special emergency funds for Lebanon and the OT under the name of Emergency Measures for Lebanon and the Occupied Territories (EMLOT) in 1990. This fund aimed to alleviate the problems of the refugees in these fields. In Lebanon, the Agency distributed emergency rations, monthly food parcels, cash assistance to the refugees directly affected by the conditions and funded the reconstruction and rehabilitation of shelters through this fund. But the fund was not enough to cover all the projected measures and the Agency had to allocate some amount to the EMLOT from the general budget. The Agency curtailed the activities under the fund in 1994 because of financial difficulties and the decreasing need for this fund as a result of improvements in the political and security situation. Finally at the end of 1997, the fund was liquidated.

Finally, the environmental conditions and the sanitation of the camps were very poor because of the heavy damage to the camp infrastructures during the War. Immediately after the War, the Agency began its efforts to raise a special fund in the amount of $12 million to improve the camp infrastructures but donations were not forthcoming. By June 1996, the Agency was able to assure only $7 million for infrastructure projects and had to reprogramme the funds for construction of sanitation networks of the camps. The Agency also cooperated with the Beirut municipality for connection of sanitation networks of camps to the city network.

The UNRWA and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process

At the same time, there was a new development in the regional politics with the initiation of the Arab-Israeli peace process in 1991 in Madrid. Following a series of negotiations, the PLO and Israel signed the DOP in September 1993, which envisaged the establishment of a Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and the

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[71] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 2002-2003", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 17, 2004.

Gaza Strip, the withdrawal of the Israeli Forces from the OT and the eventual solution of the other issues such as the borders, the status of Jerusalem, the Jewish settlements and refugees. This rapprochement gave hope to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon as well as to the refugees in other fields for it meant the end of refugeedom. The Agency assumed a technical role in the peace process and it did not involve in the political negotiations.

As a response to the peace initiatives, the Agency began to emphasize community development programmes, which focused on women and rehabilitation, income generation and beneficiary participation projects and loans and funds for the development of refugee economies in all the fields. After the DOP, the Agency also cooperated with the PA for the harmonization of the Agency services in the OT and for the handover of the Agency's records and databases for the eventual transition of authority to the PA. Another initiative by the Agency was the announcement of the Peace Implementation Programme (PIP) in October 1993 with the aim of improving the social and physical conditions of the Palestinians and creating employment opportunities in the OT and in other fields.[72] The projects undertaken under this programme were funded by special contributions of the donors for each field separately. However, the contributions for the programme concentrated on the OT, where a Palestinian state was likely to be established, and the contributions to the PIP projects in Lebanon, where the refugees lacked access to labor market and heavily depended on the UNRWA for social services, lagged behind. For instance, at the end of the third year of the PIP, total contributions were $192.6 million, of which $160 million were earmarked for the projects in the OT and the rest was earmarked for the projects in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.[73]

Besides Agency initiatives, the Agency participated in the multilateral tracks by regularly attending the Refugee Working Group (RWG) meetings and the technical committee sessions of the RWG on family reunification, public health and databases and inventory of assistance to Palestine refugees. During the RWG

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[72] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1993-1994".
[73] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1995-1996", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 17, 2004.

meetings, the Agency emphasized the need to include the refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan in regional developments. Operationally, the Agency achieved this attention through the PIP.[74]

Another response of the Agency to the peace process was the decision to relocate the Agency Headquarters from Vienna to Gaza, which was carried out between mid-1994 and mid-1996, in order to facilitate the contact with the PA.

The Agency also changed its definition of "a Palestine refugee" in 1993. In this new definition, the criteria of the loss of means of livelihood and home were taken out. This definition was important because it would be used as a starting point for the determination of those persons eligible for compensation or repatriation if a permanent settlement was achieved.[75] Schiff argues that the distinction between the refugees and non-refugees had already eroded before the definition change, which happened through assistance to non-registered refugees during emergency crisis (such as in Lebanon) and the deterioration of the economic situation after the Gulf War in 1991.[76]

The Financial Difficulties of The Agency and Its Effects in The Lebanon Field

The 1990s were not just years of optimism, but also continuation of the financial distress for the Agency's and the lose of hope and feelings of abandonment for the Palestinian refugees. The Agency financial situation has never been good and the Agency had to cut services or postpone some of the expenditures several times in the past. The situation did not change in the 1990s and the Agency had to take austerity measures in the amount of tens of millions of dollars. These measures comprised of the freezing of salary increases, new constructions, new recruitment and the introduction of co-payments from refugees for specialized life-saving treatments and for secondary health care. As a result, expenditure per refugee decreased 29% between 1994 and 1997.[77] These reductions were most severely felt in the Lebanon field because the refugees in Lebanon were totally dependent on the

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[74] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1993-1994".
[75] Takkenberg, *The Status of Palestinian Refugees*, p. 77.
[76] Schiff, *Refugees unto The Third Generation*, p. 7.
[77] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1996-1997".

UNRWA services. In addition, the PIP contributions for the fields other than the OT were not enough to improve the services rendered to the refugees in Lebanon. Therefore, the Agency appealed to the international community for an amount of $11 million in July 1997 under the name of "Lebanon appeal" in order to improve the services provided in the Lebanon field. Priority was given to the health services and more than half of the funds pledged were spent on health. The other projects funded were improvement in secondary education, vocational training and shelter rehabilitation.[78]

For the refugees, the deadlock in the peace process in the second half of the 1990s already had the effect of hopelessness. The cutback in UNRWA services due to financial difficulty was perceived by the refugees as the liquidation of the Agency before any final settlement was reached. This caused protests and demonstrations by the refugees in Lebanon against the Agency. However, the director of the Agency in Lebanon, Robert Cook, stated in March 2003 that the funding had been on the increase since 1996 and he defined the problem as the inability of the funding to keep pace with the population increase. He added that the Agency had no plans for reduction in services.[79]

In the last few years, some restrictions were imposed on UNRWA, along with the refugees, in Lebanon. The government does not allow new construction inside the camps in the Tyre area and there are army check points at the entrance of the camps to prevent the refugees from bringing in any materials inside the camps. The Agency needs special permissions from the government to undertake any rehabilitation or construction within the camps.

Geneva Conference

In early June 2005, a two-day conference was organized with the Agency's initiative in Geneva, Switzerland. The conference aimed to improve the relations between the host states, the donor states and the Agency and to increase awareness

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[78] UNISPAL, "UNRWA Report, 1997-1998", http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf, accessed on October 17, 2004.
[79] The Daily Star, "New UNRWA Director: No Plans for Reduced Services", March 13, 2003. www.dailystar.com.lb, accessed on January 11, 2005.

and support of the international community to the needs of Palestinian refugees. The organization hosted the donor countries of the Agency, the host states and NGOs.

During the conference, four sessions were held to address the following issues: The well-being of the Palestinian refugee children, housing and environmental conditions within the refugee camps, the socio-economic development of the refugees and mobilization of resources on behalf of refugees. At the end of the conference, some recommendations were made and priorities were set, such as the assurance of better respect for international humanitarian law, improvements to assure safe and full access of refugees to the Agency's services, need for protection, need to improve the environmental, educational and health standards of the refugees and measures to improve the management of the Agency resources.[80] The most important implication of the conference was that the Agency incorporated these suggestions and priorities into its five-year medium term plan covering the period 2005-2009.

THE UNRWA AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

To draw more logical and comprehensive conclusions of the Agency's *raison d'être* and its operations, some complementary additions and discussions must be made regarding the Agency's environment, which were not extensively mentioned in the preceding titles.

The Host States

The Agency's closest environment was the host states in which the Agency operated. The host states' stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict and on the future of the Palestine refugees affected their relations with the Agency. The host states preserved a dual attitude towards the Agency. First was tolerance, because the UNRWA has been the main organ to assist the refugees, which eased the burden of

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[80] UNRWA, www.unrwa.org, accessed on January 27, 2005.

the host states. The second was suspicion, because the Agency was established with the eventual aim of resettling the refugees in the host states through its works and large-scale programmes in the initial years. This led to the perception that the Agency was a Western tool to liquidate the Palestinian cause. This suspicion was reinforced in the later decades by the shrinkage in services because of financial difficulties, which was perceived by the host states as a preparation for the liquidation of the Agency. Despite the financial difficulties of the Agency, the host states refrained from contributing to the funding of the Agency, firstly because they believed that they were the victims of the conflict and secondly because they feared that their contribution would lead to the transfer of responsibility from the Western powers on their shoulders.[81]

Besides these attitudes, another element which shaped the relations between the Agency and the host states was the mandate of the Agency. The Agency did not have jurisdiction over camps and security and administration of refugee camps were carried out by the host states. The implication of this factor was that the Agency needed the consent of the host states for its activities. This situation has led to the limitation of the Agency's operations, such as the abandonment of the economic projects in the first half of the 1950s. Schiff argues that the host states subordinated the humanitarian concerns and their commitment to the Agency's status to their own economic and social problems.[82]

The Donor Countries and The Western Powers

The Agency was a product of Western view of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The eventual aim underlying the establishment of the UNRWA was to settle the refugee problem through resettlement in the host countries. As the establishment of the Agency was a Western idea and as there was reluctance from the host states to contribute to the Agency's funding, the US, the Great Britain and some European countries remained as the main donors of the Agency. There was no contribution

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[81] Viorst, *Reaching for The Olive Branch*, p. 58.
[82] Schiff, *Refugees unto The Third Generation*, p. 8.

from the Soviet Bloc because, like Arab states, it saw the Agency as an imperialist tool.[83]

The Western countries and Israel were also critical of the Agency. They criticized the Agency of being too pro-Palestinian, based on the belief that the Agency contributed to the nationalist sentiments and radicalization of the refugees by maintaining the refugee camps, providing education and assisting them.[84]

Schiff argues that, as there are critics both from the Arab states and from the Western countries, there was no neutral ground to judge the Agency's success in achieving an uncertain political objective.[85]

The Palestinian Refugees

The majority of the refugees perceived the Agency like the host states, that is, the Agency was an imperialist tool designed to integrate them into the host society. This concern was made evident by the refugees in the early years of the Agency through protests of the Agency's economic transformation plans. There was also resentment in late 1970s and early 1980s to the decisions to reduce and terminate the distribution of rations. All these attempts led to the suspicion by the refugees and they were never sure if their circumstance had the priority.[86] On the other hand, there was also a positive attitude towards the Agency. First, the UNRWA identity cards became a political symbol for the registered refugees, a justification for their right of return and a link with Palestine.[87] Secondly, the existence of the Agency was the international recognition of and support for their cause.[88] Hence, when the Agency was cutting off its services during times of financial difficulty, the refugee protests was not only because of their fear of loss of a service provider for the alleviation of their situation, but also it was because of a feeling of abandonment by the international community.

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[83] Viorst, *Reaching for The Olive Branch*, p. 59.
[84] Cited in Schiff, *Refugees unto The Third Generation*, p. 10-1.
[85] Schiff,Ibid., p. 5.
[86] Schiff, Ibid., p. 274.
[87] Jalal al-Husseini, "UNRWA and The Palestinian Nation-Building Process", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 29-2 (Winter 2000), 52.
[88] Bowker, *Mythology, Identity...*, p. 142.

For the refugees in Lebanon, a two-dimensional perception of the Agency can be mentioned. The first dimension is the same with the perception of the whole refugee community. However, second dimension is specific to the refugees in Lebanon. This diverging view stems from the exceptional conditions of the refugee community in this country. The Agency is more than a political symbol for the refugees in Lebanon, for it is the only institution which they can rely on in the absence of a friendly host government and civil rights.

The Staff

The Agency currently employs 23.500 staff, of which only 135 are international and the rest are Palestinian. The existence of this huge number of Palestinian staff, from time to time, have been problematic for the Agency because the Palestinian staff have been the actors, and victims, of the conflict especially beginning from the late 1960s, when the Palestinian political activity gained an independent character. This created a dilemma between the Agency's status and the aspirations of its staff. A very good example of this dilemma was demonstrated by the Agency teachers. The teachers' political aspirations and nationalist sentiments made the Agency schools a ground for political mobilization and a means for the transmission of Palestinian nationalism.[89]

A second case was the existence of Palestinian staff who, at the same time, were also participating (or attempting to participate) in the political activities of the resistance groups. The Agency tried to prevent these cases by implementing some rules and regulations. One of the measures taken by the Agency following the PLO invitation to Palestinian Agency staff to attend to the Palestinian National Congress in 1964 was as follows:

> Staff members who apply for a leave during the period of the Congress may in principle be granted such leave, but on the clear understanding that should they attend or participate in the Congress, they would do so entirely on their own responsibility and without any prior authorization or approval by the Agency, and

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[89] Bowker, Ibid., p. 137 and al-Husseini, "UNRWA and The Palestinian Nation-Building Process", p. 54.

> will remain subject to their obligations as staff members for so long as they continue in Agency's service.[90]

Another problem was related with the employment of and assistance to members of the Resistance. When the Palestinian resistance organizations began to recruit guerrillas and activists, the Agency tried to make sure that members of such organizations were not employed or assisted.[91]

Ashkenasi argues that existence of such a large number of Palestinian staff decreased the Agency's effectiveness and integrity.[92] On the other hand, an UNRWA official, herself a Palestinian, stated that advantages of the existence of huge number of Palestinian staff are more than disadvantages and the rules and regulations of the Agency prevent politicization and personalization of the procedures and resources.[93]

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[90] Quoted in Schiff, *Refugees unto The Third Generation*, p. 102.
[91] Schiff, Ibid., p. 103.
[92] Abrahan Ashkenasi, "The International Institutionalization of a Refugees Problem: The Palestinians and the UNRWA", *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, 12-1 (1990), pp.65-6.
[93] Interview with Ms. Hoda Samra.

CONCLUSION

It has been more than half a century since the Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As the conflict remained unsolved, the refugees became a reality in the Lebanese social and political life. There were various factors which affected the Palestinian presence and their activities in Lebanon because it was a domestic and international political issue, along with its humanitarian aspect.

For the Lebanese state, the Palestinian presence was a destabilizing factor beginning from their arrival because of two main reasons. The first was the sectarian structure of the country. The Lebanese society composed of many Muslim and Christian sects, Maronites, Shi'ites, Druze, Sunnis, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics to name just a few. In addition, the organization of the state was based on the sectarian dominance, which was called "confessionalism". This system allocated the sects predetermined posts in state organs, mainly according to the population ratio of each sect. The possibility of resettling the refugees, who were overwhelmingly Sunnis and equaled one-tenth of the Lebanese population, was a serious problem for the Muslim-Christian and Sunni-Shi'ite power-sharing within the country. The second reason was the economy of the country. Lebanon was a very small mountainous country, with poor natural resources. The industry was not developed and the economy depended on the construction, agriculture and service sectors. Hence, there was no economic space for the Palestinian refugees in the country. As a result of these two reasons, the basic policies of the Lebanese state towards the refugees were rejection of resettlement and imposition of restrictions in every aspect of life so that they would not demand resettlement.

However, the anti-status quo masses such as pan-Arabs, socialists, communists and secularists in Lebanon began to emerge as an actor in domestic politics, especially beginning from the 1960s. This mobilization was a response to the developments in the regional level such as pan-Arabism and Nasserism and a response to the highly traditional, sectarian, Maronite-dominated nature of the government. These movements were fostered by the mobilization of the Palestinians when they began to emerge as an actor independent from the Arab states in mid-1960s. Their guerrilla struggle to regain their homeland and their secularist, progressive ideologies found support from the Lebanese Muslims and the Lebanese left and this initiated the polarization of the country in late 1960s. On the other hand, the Maronites and traditional élites were discontent with these movements along with the rise of political and military activities of the Palestinian Resistance in Lebanon. This polarization intensified following the conclusion of the Cairo Agreement between the Lebanese state and the PLO in 1969. These developments led to the emergence of sectarian and ideological militia groups, which turned into a Civil War in 1975. The country was devastated by the Civil War for fifteen years. Each party to the conflict, be it the sectarian communities or political groups, sought hegemony over the others, which accelerated the sectarianization and antagonization of the groups in Lebanon.

The chaotic situation and power struggle within Lebanon intensified with the involvement of the external actors, mainly Israel and Syria. Both countries had different reasons to intervene in the conflict. For Syria, Lebanon has always been a part of their "Greater Syria" ideal. Secondly, Lebanon was an important territory for defense of Syria's border against potential Israeli threat. Thirdly, the liberal nature of Lebanon, where political asylums of authoritarian Middle Eastern regimes sought refuge, was seen as a threat to the regime in Syria. When Hafiz al-Asad came to power in Syria in 1971, he wanted to build an Arab country which would have domination in Arab politics and in the Arab-Israeli conflict and hence, Syrian government began its attempts to realize these ambitions. Throughout the war, Syria supported different parties (the Maronites, the LNM/PLO alliance, Amal, Hizbullah) so that none of the groups were powerful enough to overrule the

others. These pragmatic alliances provided Syria the upper hand to end the conflict in its favor. As a result, Syria continued to control Lebanese decision-making in foreign and domestic politics in the post-War period. Other than its ambitions over Lebanon, Syria also wanted to control the Palestinian politics as well. There were two reasons for this attempt. First, Syria wanted to control the PLO as part of its aim to control Lebanese politics. Second, its domination of the PLO was an attempt to strengthen her hand against Israel within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. As far as the Palestinians in Lebanon were concerned, Syria attained this aim in 1980s and continued its domination of Palestinians in Lebanon in the post-War period.

Israel had different motives for intervention in Lebanon. The main reason was the Palestinian political and military activities. The Palestinian guerrillas were carrying out operations through infiltrations into Israel beginning from mid-1960s. These operations were causing damages and casualties in Israel. Beginning from 1969, these military operations were combined with Palestinian autonomous political activities, which gave the PLO an international recognition. The Israeli response to the guerrilla infiltrations was retaliation with an increasing scale and destruction over years, which were causing destruction and casualties in southern Lebanon and displacement of the population. In 1982 with the goal of ending Palestinian existence in Lebanon completely, Israel invaded the country. As a result, the Palestinian political and military activities were seriously curtailed in Lebanon. Another implication of the invasion for the PLO and the Palestinians was the change in the attitudes of the Lebanese society towards Palestinians. The wide support enjoyed by the PLO before 1982 was non-existent and even the PLO allies defected from the ranks.

When the Civil War ended in 1991, Lebanon was almost completely devastated by the war. The whole population was suffering from destitution and destruction. The government of Hariri undertook a comprehensive reconstruction effort beginning from 1992. However, the Palestinian refugees had no place in the post-War Lebanon. The government did not extend the reconstruction projects to include the refugees. There were many reasons for the ignorance of the refugee

issue. The first reason was the priority given to the Lebanese population. Given the destitution of the Lebanese citizens and insufficient resources of the state, the Lebanese government naturally diverted its attention to revive the economic and social life of Lebanon. Secondly, any attempt to improve the conditions of the refugees would be perceived by the Lebanese population, who were feeling resentment towards the Palestinians because of their role in the Civil War, as a preparation for the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees. As a result, the Palestinian refugee issue was no more a political matter that would be capitalized by the politicians. A third reason was the Syrian domination in Lebanon. In post-War period, the camps remained unarmed despite the Taif Agreement stipulated otherwise. This was a Syrian choice and everything related with the Palestinian presence in Lebanon depended on the consent of Syria. Fourth reason was the start of the Arab-Israeli peace talks. Neither Syria nor Lebanon wanted to do anything about the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon because they were waiting for the outcome of the negotiations.

The Arab-Israeli peace process began in Madrid in 1991. It was based on a two-track system: Bilateral tracks were the separate negotiations of the Arab parties (Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) with Israel. Multilateral tracks were the negotiations which would deal with the issues common to the region, with the involvement of countries from the region and from the international community. However, Syria did not participate in the multilateral tracks and its negotiations with Israel proved fruitless because Syria conditioned a peace with Israel on the return of the Golan Heights back to Syria. Lebanon did not involve in the multilateral tracks either because it followed the Syrian line.

The peace process started a debate on the refugee issue in Lebanon. The Lebanese society and state was in consensus to oppose the resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon but they were also supportive to the idea of right of return. On the Palestinian side, there was a hope that the negotiations might grant the right of return. However, the course of the talks demonstrated that the PLO was more interested in establishing a Palestinian authority in the OT, which was agreed upon with Israel in the DOP in 1993, and it subordinated the refugee

issue. The result for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was feelings of hopelessness and abandonment because they were living under unbearable conditions in Lebanon and the peace talks did not promise any prospect for their future. The main service and welfare provider to the Palestinian refugees, the UNRWA, was not able to alleviate their plight either.

The UNRWA was the UN organ established to deal with the relief distribution and to devise employment projects for the Palestinian refugees. The Agency maintained its existence since 1950 but it was unable to transform the conditions of the refugees. There were many reasons for the UNRWA's inability to improve the plight of the refugees. First, the UN granted the Agency a technical role. It did not have the mandate to develop political solutions to the refugee issue or to assure rights to them in the host states and the mission of the Agency was to provide relief and services to the refugees until a solution was achieved. Second, the Agency operated within the sovereignty of the host countries, which implied that it needed the consent of the host states to carry out its operations. Third, the Agency budget was almost totally dependent on voluntary contributions of the donor countries, which exposed the Agency to frequent financial difficulties.

The Agency was a product of the Western and Israeli understanding of the refugee issue within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. According to this mentality, the refugee issue could be settled by the resettlement of the refugees in the host countries. The Agency was established to serve this very idea. The relief would be temporary and the Agency would primarily deal with developing projects to create employment opportunities for the refugees, which would render them self-supporting and facilitate resettlement. The Agency tried to implement this strategy in the first half of the 1950s, however, it faced opposition from the Arab countries and from the refugees, who were totally rejecting the idea of resettlement and were demanding repatriation. The main objective of the Agency, which was put forward by the Western powers, had failed and the Agency was left without a clear objective in the late 1950s. As a result, the Agency turned its attention to rehabilitation of the conditions of the refugees by emphasizing its education and

health services and infrastructural projects. This focus of the Agency has continued since then, with some additional projects in the 1990s.

However, the Agency faced greater challenges in the 1970s and 1980s. These challenges began with the eruption of the 1967 War between Israel and Syria, Jordan and Egypt. This event was followed by the Civil War in Lebanon between 1975 and 1990, but especially after 1982, and finally in the OT in 1988. For the scope of this thesis, only the emergency situations in Lebanon were discussed. The emergency in Lebanon was the longest and most damaging for the refugees and the Agency. It rendered thousands of refugees displaced, jobless and psychologically traumatized and serious interruptions occurred in the provision of Agency services. The problem became more acute for the refugees and the Agency as a result of the PLO's evacuation of Lebanon in 1982. As a result of this evacuation, the refugees were left without economic and political structures to protect their interests. For the Agency, it meant the increase of its burden.

In the post-War period, the Agency had to deal with the consequences of the Civil War, which rendered refugees more deprived and marginalized. The most pressing problem for the Agency immediately after the war was the presence of thousands of displaced refugees, but there were also serious problems in education, health and camp infrastructure. However, unlike the 1970s when the Palestinians enjoyed the abundance of the Palestinian institutions which provided them services of every kind along with employment, the only organization available to the refugees in the post-War period was the UNRWA. This made the refugees totally dependent on the Agency at a time when the Agency was facing serious financial difficulties. This pessimistic scene was changed when the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations started in 1991.

The peace talks gave the refugees in Lebanon a hope for return to homeland. It would also mean, if an agreement was achieved, the transfer of the Agency operations to the new Palestinian entity. During the peace talks, the Agency assumed a technical role, especially after the DOP, by cooperating with the PA on the eventual transfer of the Agency operations and by trying to raise funds for the transformation of the economic and social life of the Palestinians in the OT

and for improvement of the conditions of the refugees elsewhere. However, the refugees' hopes faded as the DOP did not mention any solution for the future of the refugees and as the PLO's attention focused on the establishment of the PA. The conditions of the refugees in Lebanon during and after the peace process did not change because the donations for the projects in Lebanon were not forthcoming, the Agency was unable to keep the quality and quantity of its services due to financial constraints and the restrictions on the Palestinian refugees prevented them to improve their conditions.

Since fifty-four years of its existence, the Agency had to react to and operate within the political circumstances in its field of operations. It was caught between the Western and Arab perceptions of its mission. For the Western powers and for Israel, the Agency would achieve the resettlement of the refugees. For Arabs, it would provide relief to the refugees until they were repatriated. As a result, the Agency was seen by the Western powers and Israel as the responsible for the perpetuation of the refugee problem. This belief was strengthened by the extensive employment of the Palestinians in the Agency cadres and by the political radicalization of the refugees. It was seen by the Arabs as a tool of the Western imperialism aimed to liquidate the Palestinian cause. The Arab perception was strengthened by the frequent reduction in Agency services due to financial difficulties.

In fact, both views were partially true. The Palestinian employees of the Agency were also a party to the conflict. This sometimes led to controversial situations between the political aspirations of the Palestinian staff and the status of the Agency. These aspirations sometimes led to the misuse of the Agency's status and resources and they sometimes led to the transmission of the Palestinian nationalism through the Agency schools. But the perpetuation of the refugees issue was not because of the Agency's operations, rather, it was firstly because of the Agency's lack of relevant mandate to assure civil and economic rights for the refugees in the host states and secondly because of the failure of the Arabs, Israelis and the international community to find a viable solution to the conflict.

On the other hand, it was true that the Agency was established to serve the Western perspective of the issue. However, the reduction of the Agency services was not because of the plans to liquidate the Agency, rather, it was because the donations were not keeping pace with the population growth of the refugees.

However, the Agency achieved some successes despite criticisms from both sides. The first success of the Agency has been its ability to serve the stateless Palestinian refugees as a quasi-state organ. Despite serious financial difficulties, the Agency was able to provide an extensive education system, basic health services, employment within its body and social assistance to alleviate their plight. And second, the Agency had a good record in emergency relief. It was able to respond quickly and effectively while implementing necessary measures on a great number of refugees, majority of whom were scattered. In doing this, the Agency succeeded in drawing the international community's attention to the problem and it was able to raise sufficient amount of funds to keep the emergency assistance satisfactory.

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