

Momentary Memorials:  
Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War and Hezbollah

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## Abstract

The Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) is a product of its diverse participating factions. With more than a dozen political, religious, and social parties, the streets of Lebanon became flooded with contradicting political imageries, influencing public perception of the 'other' and inciting military action. Their unique role in Lebanon's political atmosphere allows such graphics to transcend mere propaganda to become physical sites of memorialization, despite their ephemerality. Posters exhibiting martyrs, political icons, and spiritual references control viewers' field of vision and prompt their physical accumulation around the images, much like one would see at a funeral or sculptural memorial. These images give cause for public commemoration. Though several militias are disbanded at the end of the civil war, Hezbollah gains notoriety for its rapid advancement, made possible, in part, by the party's media strategies. Once dominated by images of martyrs, Hezbollah posters begin to memorialize moments in time – their subject matter as ephemeral as their medium. This thesis is an examination of political poster aesthetics and how such is situated within the larger discourses of art history and graphic design, ultimately arguing for Lebanon's prominent role as an artistic hub in the Middle East.

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## Introduction

### A Brief History of Modern Lebanon and Political Graphics

*The most ethereal caress / A dawn, was given / While  
sleepy West nuzzled to senseless East. / One city just then /  
One battered, paranoid, schizophrenic city.*<sup>1</sup>

Two unidentified men stand next to one another. The man on the left carries a shovel while his neighbor carries a rifle; both are clad in long trousers and boots. Above them reads, “Together we liberate.” Below reads, “Together we build” (Fig. 1). The two men share an identical stance, both driving the tools into the rubble. The man yielding a shovel stands as a symbol for Lebanon’s post-civil war reconstruction; his ‘weapon’ digs violently into a pile of bricks. Similarly, the right-hand figure holds his weapon in a downward position, digging into a desolated Star of David. In the lower left-hand corner, one sees the unmistakable mark of Hezbollah. The slogan, then, has two partially juxtaposing meanings. While the poster’s designer asks his viewers to unite in Lebanon’s rebuilding efforts, he also emits a war cry. Conflict is not over; rather, Lebanon’s true test of peace, victory, and armistice comes with attentive patience. Now comes the time where reconstruction is equally important to maintaining stability, through violence if necessary. However, above all else, one must note that the image of the gun, typically portrayed in an upright, anticipatory manner, is facing downward. Has it been tamed? Has the artist domesticated the weapon? Or is he predicting a future where, despite current renovation, conflict is inevitable and the weapon will be of necessity? Southern Lebanon was still in need of liberation, a substantial struggle still looming over Muslims

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<sup>1</sup> Mishka Mojabber Mourani and Aida Yacoub Haddad. “New Year, 1979” from *Alone Together*, (Karachi: Kutub, 2012), 49.

in the late twentieth century. Such ambiguity comes into play when examining the majority of visual culture, particularly in an analysis of political posters in the Middle East.

This particular imagery was created alongside the 1992 Lebanese elections, a time where after nearly fifteen years of civil strife, the late Prime Minister Rafic Hariri heralded a massive post-war reform, and therefore propaganda campaign. The term ‘propaganda’ will be redefined in depth in the next chapter of this study, but it is essential to recognize, as Jonathan Crary states in his book *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*:

[Humans are] swamped with images and information about the past and recent catastrophes – but there is also a growing incapacity to engage these traces in ways that could move beyond them, in the interest of a common future... images [in the broad sense of the term] have become one of the many depleted and disposable elements that, in their intrinsic achievability, end up never being discarded, contributing to an ever more congealed futureless present.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, humans have become so accustomed to their surrounding visual culture that the line between genuine memory and retroactive thought has been blurred, a statement that is incredibly relevant to the production, aesthetic development, and public consumption of political posters throughout the Lebanese civil war, *al-Harb al-Lubnaniya*.<sup>3</sup> This thesis will explore Lebanon’s political posters as they affect political atmospheres, which is inevitably tied to the construction of memory, commemoration, celebration, societal reconstruction, and controlled amnesia.

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<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Crary, *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, (New York: Verso, 2013), 34.

<sup>3</sup> Fawwaz Traboulsi, introduction to *Off the Wall: Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War*, by Zeina Maasri, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), xvii.

One conclusion can be made immediately: humans have always and will always consume (in the literal and optical sense) what is in front of them. The concept is particularly prevalent to the creation, utilization, and disposal of political imagery, which Fawwaz Traboulsi suggests can be implemented as “weapon[ry],”<sup>4</sup> especially in the throws of war. One must ask; however, what is worth displaying and, therefore, remembering? How much of this remembrance is within our control? How much of this remembrance is fabricated by outside bias or supplementation? The aforementioned poster begins to ask these questions, as do many of the images this study will provide. Middle Eastern artistic content is as varied in usage, content, aesthetic themes, production, and audience, as there are differences in political and religious ideologies. As with any design or art historical study, each of these factors plays a significant role in understanding a particular culture or time period. Such a diverse subject typically becomes far more manageable when one dissects the posters of individual factions; the same, however, cannot be said for Lebanon, particularly in the face of civil war (1975-90) and the rapid development of Hezbollah thereafter.

According to Zeina Maasri, a leading scholar on political posters and their emergence in Lebanon in the twentieth century, one of the greatest struggles in deciphering the progression of this region’s visual culture is developing a clear definition of propaganda and activist art,<sup>5</sup> if differences between the two actually exist. In most scholarly analyses, propaganda is defined as an educational system where individuals “have to be deeply indoctrinated in the values and interests of private power and the state-corporate nexus that represents it... more intelligent members of the community...

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<sup>4</sup> Traboulsi, introduction, xviii.

<sup>5</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 4.

[are] able to drive a reluctant population into war by terrifying them and eliciting jingoist fanaticism... The essential function [of propaganda] is to set up and maintain a system of doctrines and beliefs which will undermine independent thought and prevent a proper understanding and analysis of national and global institutions, issues, and policies.”<sup>6</sup>

Here, the term ‘propaganda’ is used derogatorily. This popular definition may suffice for describing the political posters of, for example, World War I and II, Cuban, Chinese, and Soviet Union strategies, Red Scare tactics, and the Cold War<sup>7</sup> -- the majority of which are developed by a singular organization (the government or elite, educated class) and intended for a singular, usually unified (less educated), public. This is what I will refer to as the ‘traditional model’ throughout this study. Propagandistic media generally revolves around a singular aesthetic; however, the concept that one powerful entity manipulates the masses toward one action or line of thought does not describe the multitude of opinions forming the fifteen years of war in Lebanon during the later half of the 1900s. Here, the traditional propaganda model cannot be utilized; rather, I argue that Lebanese government leaders, militias, religious groups, community voices, and even young generations on social media have developed an original ‘propaganda’ tactic taking the form of graphic activism. In her book *Graphic Agitation: Social and Political Graphics Since the Sixties*, Liz McQuiston states that propaganda is “part of the official voice that aims to win votes and set policies; but it is also part of the unofficial voice that protests against the established order or encourages dissent.”<sup>8</sup> The emphasis on ‘encouraged

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<sup>6</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*, (New York: Seven Stories, 2002), 12, 39.

<sup>7</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 35.

<sup>8</sup> Liz McQuiston, *Graphic Agitation: Social and Political Graphics Since the Sixties*, (London: Phaidon, 1993), 28.

dissent' is key. Rather than an authoritative figure enlisting positive support with graphic aid, several of Lebanon's political posters revolve around the negativity toward 'the other' and historic martyr commemoration. The primary focus of propaganda has, thus, been shifted. Oftentimes, a poster's content refers not to a group's power or strength, but rather to the remembrance of a particular figure or to an era of prior dominance. These concepts will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The phrase 'political graphics' makes one think of an image's historical significance – its ability to excite, to scare, and to mourn. In order to grasp an understanding of modern Lebanon and the media being produced means to have a subsequent understanding of the country's history within a contemporary Middle Eastern context. The development of visual culture in the country depends heavily on its development as an autonomous state in a region characterized by perpetual conflict. For the purposes of this thesis, the story begins with the League of Nations and General Henri Gouraud who, after granting a mandate for Lebanon and Syria into the hands of the French, established the State of Greater Lebanon (Map 1) in September of 1920.<sup>9</sup> After being nominally ruled by the Ottoman Empire from 1516 to the end of the First World War in 1918<sup>10</sup>, which infamously established Martyr's Square in Beirut, Lebanon's first glimpse of its newfound semiautonomy was appealing. The unified Lebanese Republic was later established by French command in 1926; however, many of its Muslim citizens objected provisions of the mandate and opted, instead, for an independent Arab state and

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<sup>9</sup> The region that was once Syria was divided into four states per the League of Nations: Greater Lebanon, Aleppo, Damascus, and the Alawi state. The 1920 establishment of Greater Lebanon included the provinces of Mount Lebanon, north Lebanon, south Lebanon, and the Bekaa Valley. Traboulsi, *Modern Lebanon*, 75-80.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

the annexation of Syria.<sup>11</sup> Thus, violent anti-French disputes erupted along its coasts. It has been said that, “while Christian opponents of the mandate invoked the rights of nations to self-determination, Muslim annexationists expressed their opposition to the mandate and the partition of Syria as a necessarily unjust economic, political, fiscal and administrative system.”<sup>12</sup> This is not to say that only Muslims actively fought against their French commanders; a substantial number of non-Maronite Christians (mainly Greek and Orthodox Catholics) voiced similar desires. It should come as no surprise, then, that the majority of non-Maronites voted in favor of Syria’s annexation.<sup>13</sup>

A consequence of these differences in political and religious ideologies was a lack of hegemonic authority after France moved the Lebanon-Syrian border eastward, nearly doubling Beirut’s territorial control. Civil unrest became so great that Lebanon required legislative balance amongst their own population, thus parliamentary seats were appointed according to the country’s 1932 census.<sup>14</sup> These guidelines, which became a permanent part of modern Lebanon’s constitution, made it such that the President was to be a Christian (based on a 54% population majority), the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim, and the Speaker of the Parliament a Shi’i Muslim, effectively establishing a six-to-five ratio of Christians to Muslims in parliamentary seats.<sup>15</sup> Since gaining full independence from Western authority in 1943, Lebanon’s political atmosphere has been based on its 1932 ideals.

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<sup>11</sup> Traboulsi, *Modern Lebanon*, 75-80.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 81.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Independence only emphasized the country's reliance on regional and sectarian traditions. Though the post-civil-war Taif Agreement – which will be discussed at greater length in the following chapters – created an equal governmental appointment system, achieving political authority was, and still is, nearly impossible without support of one's familial or religious sect. In her book, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon*, Lucia Volk posits:

To speak of Lebanon and shared national sentiments in one breath will raise eyebrows in certain corners. Many argue that Lebanon's most pronounced characteristic is its sectarianism: age-old primordial hatreds between religious groups that erupt into armed conflict with regularity... [eventually,] 'Lebanonization' made it into the English dictionary after the last protracted and costly Lebanese Civil War (1975-1991). It similarly denotes the dissolution of the national fabric in light of religiously based factions, prepared to defend their own against everybody else.<sup>16</sup>

Sectarianism, however, goes beyond political appointment and rears its head in nearly every aspect of modern Lebanon's public life: schooling, professional careers, literature, visual arts, et cetera. Because of this, studying the media being produced by designers of differing religious, regional, and political sects is anything but simple, particularly with visual culture from the later half of the twentieth century.

Despite instances of traditionally propagandistic content, political graphics throughout the Lebanese civil war take on new significance through their unique means of production and references to modern painting, film, book illustration, and other artistic practices in the Arab world. Though aesthetic genres and stylistic traits of past wartime

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<sup>16</sup> In her book, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon*, Lucia Volk explains why several Arab states have failed to establish "strong" nations. She argues that many Arabs have remained too attached to their families or "clans," which many refer to as tribal or "sectarian." The author posits that such dedication to one's family gets in the way of one's utmost dedication to their country and sense of national pride. Lucia Volk, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon*, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2010), 2.

prints are present, this thesis explores the concept of the Lebanese – and inevitably Palestinian, Israeli, Iranian, and Syrian – political poster as an innovative realm of artistic design relevant to the development of visual culture in the Middle East. Later chapters of this study reveal how the role of the Lebanese political poster, particularly in the case of Hezbollah posters, has transformed a mass-produced image or slogan into a contemporary war memorial. In particular, my study will ponder what a member of a Western audience expects these posters to look like and what qualifies them as political art worthy of an international audience. Further to this, it is my goal to explore the ways in which political graphics have become supplemented by peripheral influences in order to manipulate individuals. Chapter One will address the Lebanese civil war poster aesthetics and stylistic influences/continuations from previous wartime posters. This section will also include an analysis of Lebanon's deviation from said influences in order to establish original styles and means of production, manifestly initiating an argument for propaganda's transformation to graphic activism, later for a global audience. Chapter Two will explore Hezbollah's formative years and the organizations graphic experimentation. This section will include an analysis of post-war reconstruction posters with an emphasis on the juxtaposing "Together we liberate, together we build" framework. Chapter Three will illustrate Hezbollah's political and military dominance after the civil war and leading into its 34-Day War against Israel. This chapter will further examine Hezbollah's Divine Victory Campaign; I argue, here, that political posters further depart from traditional propagandistic methods toward becoming individual sites of resistance.



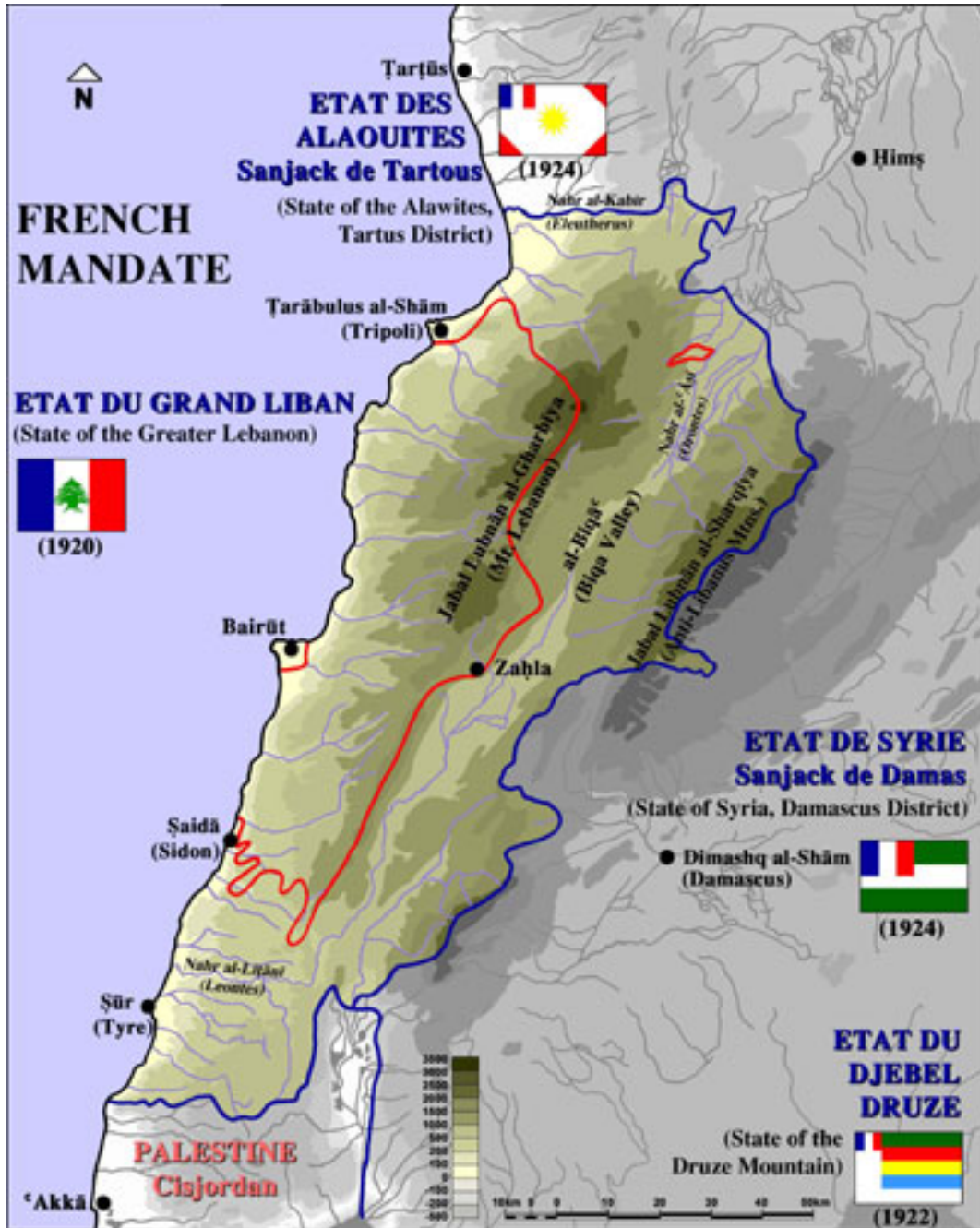
With the availability of the American University of Beirut and Zeina Maasri's "Signs of Conflict" online archive of civil war and Hezbollah posters, I will be able to reconstruct Lebanon's just-lived past from an art historical perspective – a topic that is significantly under researched. I find it most interesting that the contemporary art realm focuses its study on Lebanese artists such as Walid Raad, Akram Zaatari, and Lamia Joreiga, each examples of individuals that attempt to recall the Lebanese civil war through fictional or fabricated elements. Raad's Atlas Group archive project is the topic of extensive art historical scrutiny, but its content is based solely on fictional imageries. At a time when Lebanon was characterized by citizen amnesia, such works like Raad's do not attempt to reconstruct an accurate timeline. Joreige and Zaatari, too, struggle to unravel a mysterious past through the fanciful conglomeration of images, video footage, and text. In an attempt to question the construction of history, I have decided to work with Lebanese political posters as a means of better understanding Lebanon's place within art and design history in the Middle East. Consequently, this thesis is an attempt to decipher a cohesive record of events through the examination of the country's *utilized* political graphics, made possible by the extensive online archive published by the American University of Beirut and Maasri. My study will aim to highlight the transformative quality of Lebanon's political posters, their only unifying quality being to memorialize, despite differences in subject matter. The Lebanese civil war has been subject to much scholarship, but seldom has this research been conducted in the field of art history. It is my hopes that this thesis has provided a basis for further research on Lebanese political posters and their existence as ephemeral memorials. Further, the

following pages provide a platform for readers to appreciate political poster imagery and its inscription within a modern Lebanese social context and revolutionary discourse.

Figure 1, *Together we liberate, together we build*, poster for the 1992 Parliamentary Elections. Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication 5: 2012, 172.



Map 1, French Mandated State of Greater Lebanon with French administrative units in Blue, 1924, Stanford Journal of Archaeology,  
<http://web.stanford.edu/dept/archaeology/journal/newdraft/garnand/figurepage.html>.  
 Accessed 30 May, 2014.



## Chapter One

## Posters of the Lebanese Civil War, An Overview (1975-1990)

To Beirut ...  
 From the Soul of her people she makes wine,  
 From their sweat, she makes bread and jasmine.  
 So how did it come to taste of smoke and fire?

The Lebanese Songwriter, Fayrouz<sup>17</sup>

One can argue that there are as many definitions of propaganda as there are opinions in the world. The most poignant question is whether political posters produced during the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) adhere to any of these definitions, considering the term often comes with pejorative undertones. If so, which definitions are worthy? If not, what distinguishes Lebanese posters from other warring images? One conclusion can be made immediately: the fifteen-year-long war was far from two-sided; more than a dozen active fronts and political parties were involved in Lebanon's media outburst during the civil war, each with their own religious, administrative, and sectarian influences. Such is not the case in an examination of propaganda outside of Lebanon. Situated in the heart of the Middle East, Lebanon exists to the north of Israel where its borders, particularly its southern, were continually challenged and redrawn (Map 2). With more than a decade of civil strife, the country's geographical, political, and cultural attitudes were prone to dramatic transformation. This reality left the war-stricken Lebanon privy to a multitude of political poster aesthetics, contrary to conventional propaganda.

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<sup>17</sup> Fayrouz in *Pity the Nation: The Abduction of Lebanon*, by Robert Fisk, (New York: Antheneum, 1990), 92.

When one authoritative group is delivering a message to a broad public, such propagandistic content has connotations of deceit. The figure that holds power has the task of manipulating people according to his own political stance. Here, the key term is ‘manipulation.’ In order to penetrate an entire society, methods of deception can, and often do occur, leading to a “perpetual emotional subjection”<sup>18</sup> to the leader’s decisions. Here, one recalls the Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels’ nineteen Principles of Propaganda, all of which aim to dictate, control, and deceive people. Principle One and Seven state that “propaganda must be planned and executed by only one authority” and that such authority must have “credibility [that] alone determine[s] whether propaganda output should be true or false.”<sup>19</sup> To paraphrase, the background, intelligence, authority of the singular propaganda executor determines whether the public is in need of factual or devious imagery. Such definitions deem propaganda a transformative device where the authority and prestige of one individual or predetermined sanction transforms that which the public thinks and respects.

Consider, for example, the September 8, 1961 Time Magazine cover illustrating Nikita Khrushchev (fig. 2). The stern-faced politician graced every American newsstand, standing amid a flaming, desecrated landscape, perhaps suggesting the country’s eminent doom under communist rule. Feeling it was their duty to take all necessary measures against the Soviet Union, the United States government commissioned the magazine cover, striking fear into the American public. Rather than displaying an image condoning the strength of the U.S. armed forces or public unity, the Kennedy administration

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<sup>18</sup> Zahera Harb, *Channels of Resistance in Lebanon: Liberation Propaganda, Hezbollah and the Media*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 8.

<sup>19</sup> Leonard W. Doob, *Goebbels’ Principles of Propaganda*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1950), 422-428.

communicated a fabled and exaggerated potential for destruction. Similarly, a prolific poster titled, *Is This Tomorrow* (fig. 3), from the Catechetical Guild Educational Society of St. Paul, Minnesota exhibits the violent struggle against communism in America. With a burning flag and violent, perhaps even grotesque, figures struggling against communist soldiers, the poster embodies Red Scare tactics and the conventional propaganda model: that which is provided by an authoritative voice as viable, even if slightly deceitful, educational material.<sup>20</sup> Both of these particular images, thus, derive their significance from the manipulation of character and emotion, in this case, within an international arena. Political posters such as these provide viewers with an understanding of a singular authority and one's place within a generalized public, particularly one branded by fear.

Such is most certainly not the case when examining political posters in the Middle East, particularly in Lebanon during the throes of civil war. Instead of a definitive ideology being forced upon individuals – I say forced to emphasize the political image's ceaseless presence in the daily lives of citizens – Lebanon exhibits more than a dozen differing factions and their desires to promote a unique cause to a distinct group. As such, the population lacked any unified ideology. In this case, propaganda does more than disseminate biased ideas according to a singular voice. Lebanese posters must be examined as constructs of communication, redefining propaganda as a deliberate attempt to shape public perceptions and manipulate understanding. These posters are unique in that they exhibit this manipulation, but in a boundless exchange of differing ideas – a concept seldom acknowledged in the scholarship of political posters elsewhere. What

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<sup>20</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 7.

follows is an examination of the civil war's opposing parties. Here, I argue that Lebanese political posters (throughout and directly following the civil war) transcend the aforementioned definitions of propaganda and must be valued as graphic activist works and ephemeral memorials. The issue of contextualization is apparent when studying this region; not only does each party actively announce their political positions, but each does so through the unique activist design, thus showing viewers how different cultural contexts effect the implementation of information and generation of opinions, though based in the same timeframe. Political poster production in Lebanon does not adhere to that of the rest of the world, specifically to that of the West. This will be made apparent through an art historical examination of the civil war poster production and Lebanon's active warring fronts.

In April of 1975, Phalangist gunmen ambushed a bus in the Ayn-al-Rummanah district of Beirut, killing as many as twenty-seven of its Palestinian passengers.<sup>21</sup> The Palangists, however, claimed that this action was no more than a rebuttal to a guerrilla attack on a church in the same district; such were the somewhat ambiguous clashes that prompted the civil war. Soon thereafter, Syrian troops made their way into Lebanon, ultimately with the intent to restore peace and "curb the Palestinians."<sup>22</sup> Not much later, in reprisal for a Palestinian attack, Israel launched their invasion of southern Lebanon, taking full swing in June of 1982. It is not until September that U.S., French, and Italian troops arrive in Beirut, further adding to the diverse population residing in Lebanon during the mid to late twentieth century. City streets were rapidly engulfed in opposing

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<sup>21</sup> Fisk, *Pity the Nation*, 170.

<sup>22</sup> "Lebanon Profile," BBC News, 4 Apr. 2014, Accessed 17 July 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14649284>



imagery, telling the world that the country did not quite fit within the confines of traditional propagandistic methods; Lebanon's visual culture was (and still is) influenced by authoritative voices, wealthy individuals, prospering artists, and young, computer-savvy individuals alike. Over and above this, each poster's supporting faction was able to clearly define an aesthetic according to their intended viewership – a concept to be valued by a global audience. Divided according to their relative political and religious affiliations, these parties are as follows:

**Lebanese Front (1976), Lebanese Kataeb Party or Phalange (1936), National Liberal Party (1958), Tanzim (1969), Guardians of the Cedars (1975), Marada (1967), and Lebanese Forces (1976)**

The Lebanese Front is recognized as a coalition of mainly Christian groups, including leaders of the dominant Christian Maronite and left-wing Lebanese nationalist parties and corresponding military organizations. This included the primary figures Camil Chamoun (Christian president of Lebanon from 1952-58), Pierre Gemayel (prominent leader in opposition to the French mandate and father of Bachir and Amine Gemayel, both of which obtained a presidency in the 1980s), Suleiman Frangieh (president of Lebanon from 1970-76), and other prominent intellectual figures. In short, the Lebanese Front favored a “neutral position”<sup>23</sup> with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Consequently, the front maintained a strong opposition to the Palestinian forces residing in Lebanon, believing each was a threat to the country's wellbeing and sovereignty. With the help of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and South Lebanon Army, the Kataeb Party, National Liberal Party, Marada Movement, Guardians of the Cedars, and Al-Tanzim

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<sup>23</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 25.

formed a joint military command that would rapidly gain notoriety during the formative years of civil war.

As such, the Lebanese Front was influenced by the 1936 establishment of the Lebanese Kataeb Party (LKP or Phalange), led by Pierre Gemayel until his death in 1984, thus playing a significant role during the first half of the civil war. Formed as a right-wing Lebanese nationalist party, the Phalange faction was modeled after the Spanish Phalange and Italian Fascist parties<sup>24</sup> and consisted of young Maronite individuals. Since its formation, the group had strongly opposed the infiltration of any foreigner into Lebanon and continually advocated for Lebanese independence at any cost. The Lebanese Kataeb Party and, consequently, the Lebanese Front and other subsequent parties, revolved around a uniformly anti-communist, anti-Palestinian ideology and actively objected that which was associated with pan-Arab principles. The coalition acknowledged Lebanon as a Maronite country in association with the social, political, and economic ideals of Western Christianity. In order to guarantee their followers basic human rights and freedoms, the Kataeb Party and Lebanese Front strived for the decentralization of religion – a goal which inevitably developed a distinct propaganda aesthetic, enormous public following, and subsequent military factions.

Founded in 1958 by president Camil Chamoun, the National Liberal Party (NLP) operated under similar philosophies. With pro-Western political views and a predominantly Christian membership, Chamoun's son formed the NLP's first military wing, the *Numur* (Tigers), which experienced violent conflict, ultimately leading to its termination in 1980. Thus, many of its prominent figures were absorbed into the

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<sup>24</sup> Fisk, *Pity the Nation*, 52.

Lebanese Forces. Similarly, the small organization, Tanzim, formed in 1969 by former members of the Lebanese Kataeb Party, actively resisted the dispersal of Palestinian forces within Lebanon. In 1977, however, Tanzim split in two, prompting many of its soldiers to join the Lebanese Forces.

Two years prior to Tanzim's dissolution, the Guardians of the Cedars was established in alliance with the Lebanese Front and Lebanese Forces on the eve of civil war. This group is considered to be "right-wing and ultra-Lebanese-nationalist"<sup>25</sup> to the point of violent hostility to Arabism, ultimately calling for the expulsion of Palestinian forces and refugees. Also associated with the Lebanese Forces under the command of Bashir Gemayel, and in collaboration with the leaders of their associated factions, was the Marada organization, consisting of Maronite partisans in northern Lebanon. This alliance was; however, obliterated after the death of their leader's son at the hands of Kataeb extremists in 1978.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, the Lebanese Forces, in collaboration with the aforementioned supporting militias, rapidly gained support throughout the formative years of civil strife, particularly from Israeli soldiers on the southern border with Lebanon.<sup>27</sup>

Such an enormous and influential right-wing faction inevitably sought a unique poster aesthetic to promote their accomplishments and warn others of their strength. The rise in civil conflict prompted such groups to form their political identities through the public dispersal of posters, further emphasizing the lack of stylistic unity intrinsic to Lebanon. For example, an early poster of the Lebanese Kataeb Party illustrates eight

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<sup>25</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 25.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>27</sup> Volk, *Memorials*, 207.

cedar trees. As the national symbol of Lebanon, the cedar graces the country's flag and coat of arms, and was inevitably adopted by such parties who viewed themselves as the groups advocating most for Lebanese independence and regional, Anti-Arab dominance. In Arabic, the poster reads, "They died for Lebanon to live" (fig. 4), referencing to the deforestation and exploitation of the cedar's wood by outside forces. As such, the poster refers to the exploitation of land and resources by unwelcome Palestinians. Further to this, the number eight refers to rebirth and resurrection in a biblical sense; Christians believe that the 8<sup>th</sup> day provided a new beginning after the creation week. Members of the Lebanese Front, Lebanese Forces, Kataeb Party, and other subsequent factions adopted this number to refer to Lebanon's regeneration after the expulsion of Palestinians. Each tree also exhibits a different set of numbers inscribed in their trunks referencing the names and dates of deceased Maronite leaders. Below the cedar trees reads, "the martyrs of Kataeb," where Kataeb is used as both a noun (in terms of the party as a whole) and adjective (that which describes the type of soldier); it must also be noted; however, that there is no word in the English language for the position of the Lebanese soldier, as the word stems from the Arabic verb "to kill."

Another prominent Kataeb poster titled, *44 Years in the Service of Lebanon* (fig. 5), exhibits a portrait of Pierre Gemayel, the subject only revealed due to the poster's publication on the front page of the 'Amal' newspaper in 1980. The artist, Pierre Sadek, illustrates Gemayel as a somewhat indistinct silhouette, his profile covered by two versions of the Lebanese flag: one with splashes of blood and a pointed, geometric cedar tree, and the other a more customary rendition, emphasizing the dualistic symbolism of Lebanese tradition and the implementation brute force when the nation's sovereignty is

threatened. This not only highlights the habitual use of cedar tree imagery in anti-Arab, posters, but also accentuates the prominence of portraiture throughout the civil war – a subject that is also stressed in Lebanese book illustration and news sources.

Here, one must reference a series of posters exhibiting Bashir Gemayel as president and sheikh. In one Kataeb poster simply titled, *The President Bashir Gemayel* (fig. 6), the Maronite leader stands before the Lebanese flag; those viewing such posters are aware of his power and loyalty to Lebanon. Another similar poster titled, *14 September* (fig. 7), depicts Gemayel's portrait as a holy vessel, surrounded by the sanctified glow of what would be Christ above. As he sheds a protective, perhaps omnipotent, glow over the silhouette of Lebanon below him, viewers understand Gemayel's position as not only president, but inevitably sheikh and religious administrator as well. He is infallible. The designer, simply known as Raidy, illustrates Gemayel as having transcended the human realm in order to cast his grace or supremacy upon the Christian citizens below; this romanticized refinement is a necessary response to the grotesque events unfolding beneath him. The date, 14 September, commemorates the assassination of this primary figure and, consequently, his ascension into heaven.

In an examination of the stylistic innovations of each right-wing poster, it is necessary to mention graphic continuations from previous, particularly Western, political posters. One image immediately comes to mind, that titled, *Our Lebanon needs you, YOU* (fig. 8) also created by Pierre Sadek in 1983. While the traditional cedar tree has made yet another appearance, Bashir Gemayel is now exhibited in the likeness of J.M. Flag's 1917 Uncle Sam poster (fig. 9), or that of the British Lord Kitchener (fig. 10) made three years prior, both adhering to traditional propaganda models in order to recruit

soldiers for World War One. In each of these renditions, the viewer is confronted with the merciless expression of a prominent leader; similarly, each figure aggressively extends a finger toward the public, emphasizing the importance of the individual and his allegiance to other recruited men. The word ‘you’ is stressed in each of these posters to convince individual citizens of their potential for political or military contributions. – a topic later nullified, as will be discussed in the following chapter. Created for the Lebanese Forces, the Gemayel rendition appropriates this Western poster genre, but transforms it within the civil war context; however, instead of stating that the government or military specifically need recruits, the poster’s text affirms that, *Our Lebanon* – the people’s Lebanon – is in need of nationalistic support. This is where Lebanese political posters deviate from any traditional definition of propaganda. Though incorporating before seen imagery, such right-wing posters emphasize the way propaganda has been transformed by “the complex forms in which power is articulated and perceived and the way political discourses are constructed, whether through hegemonic or counter-hegemonic means.”<sup>28</sup> In this case, the recurrence of the cedar tree and adoption of Western poster aesthetics makes right wing posters fall within a hegemonic discourse. The aforementioned American and British posters contain a unilateral message intended for their entire countries, respectively. Such unilateral content is, however, missing from posters in Lebanon; though the posters actively promote loyalty to one’s political or religious leader, they do so only for a singular, fragmented audience. In the broad sense of the term, activist art refers to works that are inherently aligned with social movements. Political posters, then, must be thought of as physical manifestations of “currents of

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<sup>28</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 16.

thought.”<sup>29</sup> Additionally, these images denote only the beginning of portraiture and activist content in Lebanese civil war media, which further deviates from the traditional propagandistic model as exhibited in leftist and radical organization posters.

**Lebanese National Movement (1969), Lebanese National Resistance Front (1982), Palestinian Liberation Organization (1964), Progressive Socialist Party (1949), Lebanese Communist Party (1924), Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon (1970), Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (1932)**

The Lebanese National Movement (LNM) is one of the more heterogeneous parties grouping both leftist and nationalist parties under the direction of Kamal Jumblatt in 1969. While challenging Maronite dominance, the LNM favored Lebanon’s active role within the Arab-Israeli conflict and supported Palestinian resistance in its liberation struggle, shown through the parties active operation with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and subsequent evacuation of the PLO from southern Lebanon and Beirut, however, led to the LNM’s dissolution. Nonetheless, the party is said to have been incredibly active during the formative years of the civil war (1975-82), consisting of and supported by such organizations at the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon (OCA), Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) and the Arab Socialist Baath Party, all of which embodied a pan-Arab nationalist outlook<sup>30</sup> and exhibited an original poster aesthetic. Such leftist positions strove for the revival of a unified social and geographical entity within the Arab world while opposing those who challenged their liberation and resistance struggles. As such, the aforementioned socialist parties gained both military

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<sup>29</sup> Charles A. Beard and Alfred Vagts, “Currents of Thought in Historiography,” *The American Historical Review*, (1937): 460.

<sup>30</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 26-29.

and financial support of the more radical leftist movements, many of which adopted communist ideologies. Not only did these groups actively contest against Maronite dominance, but each also supported the Palestinian resistance in its liberation struggle – even if that meant leading military operations against Israel in southern Lebanon or violently contesting Syria’s 1976 intervention in Beirut.<sup>31</sup> Such parties include the Organization of Communist Action in Lebanon (OCA) founded in 1970, the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF) founded in 1982 after the Israeli invasion, and the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) founded in 1924 and initially linked to the Syrian Communist Party. Though internal conflict led to many of these factions’ dissolution, each contributed to the poster wars taking place in Lebanon’s once cosmopolitan streets.

The establishment of more radical, left wing factions and militias led to greater experimentation in poster genres and stylistic traits. While it can be argued that no active organization in the civil war adhered to a particular or predetermined aesthetic of production, leftist designers sought artistic individuality and did not attempt a unified genre; it must also be noted that the production of such posters was, most typically, voluntary on this side of the spectrum. Oftentimes, many of the country’s more renowned artists, Rafic Charaf, Omran Al-Kaysi, Nabil Kdouh, Paul Guiragossian, and the aforementioned Pierre Sadek, work for a given faction on their own prerogative. Zeina Maasri points out that, although their contributions were sporadic and appeared typically in periods of heightened conflict when their canvases were not selling as rapidly, Lebanon’s trained artists made up the majority of poster stylization due to the

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<sup>31</sup> Traboulsi, *Modern Lebanon*, 194-198.



“absence of academic training in graphic design,”<sup>32</sup> a reality synonymous with the “movement of political activism among Arab artists in the late 1960s.”<sup>33</sup> Over and above this, one recognizes that such posters held no cohesive genre due to the variety in established artists’ contributions, each with their own recognized style. Maasri states that,

Quite typically, a painting or drawing would be made by the artist before it was adapted into a poster, whereby the text would be sidelined to the designer’s artwork. Essentially, the artists in the most part did not really dwell on the design process of a poster but rather offered their artwork to be published in a poster format. Artists developed posters based on their own artistic preoccupations, which in many cases incorporated their political concerns, not only in the subject matter but also at the level of the visual form. These artist explorations were contemporaneous with a general undercurrent of modern art in the Arab world in search for a relation with its locality and history.<sup>34</sup>

The search for identity through visual media is inextricably linked to the regional political and cultural factors that each artist experiences. With the decline of French colonial power over the region, inhabitants sought imagery that embodied nationalism and steered the Arab people toward a more unified future. This initiated somewhat of a visual awakening in a region experiencing several decades of cultural and stylistic homogeneity, during which “Western tradition, rather than experimentation, was the guiding principle.”<sup>35</sup> Such explorations are, thus, particularly pronounced in the posters that illustrate the Palestinian struggle and politico-religious unanimity in the region. In a PSP poster titled, *The Mountain’s Victory* (fig. 11), Omran Al-Kaysi combines traditional calligraphy, collage, and oil painting in poster format to commemorate the martyrdom of

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<sup>32</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 40.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Wijdan Ali, “Modern Arab Art: An Overview,” *Forces of Change: Artists of the Arab World*, (1994): 73.

founder Kamal Jumblatt. In the foreground, one sees a machine gun inscribed with symbolic references to Jumblatt's leadership and service; behind the weapon is an abstract expressionist-like wall, alluding to one of Al-Kaysi's paintings under the same name. However, the English translation of the title is insufficient. The text above the mountainous scene describes not victory as a noun, but that which is used as an Arabic verb; the title, thus, is not necessarily possessive, but emphasizes the *action* of being victorious. Subsequently, the text below the machine gun references a poetic verse about the pride and honor bestowed upon the mountainous region. The mountain is given anthropomorphic connotations; it is referred to as a man and a prideful one at that. The verse is repeated calligraphically within the machine gun alluding to both Jumblatt's authority and quite literally, the act of "holding honor in the neck of the gun." Over and above this, it becomes apparent that artistic ingenuity has made its way into the political poster realm for the first time, fusing traditional Islamic calligraphy, poetry, painting, and collage.

Paul Guiragossian's poster series for the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) is likewise worthy of exploration. Another highly acclaimed artist, Guiragossian had already been creating posters for several years prior to the onset of the civil war. In conjunction with the Assembly of Cultural Media and Committees in Support of Liberating the South, the artist strongly opposed Israeli occupation and produced posters to voice this concern, several of which look eerily similar to drawings in a sketchbook. With red wash paint and ink, Guiragossian illustrates the ambiguous heroes of war – the dynamic workers laboring for a common cause. In such works as *Let Us Unite Our Efforts in the Liberation Struggle* (fig. 12) or *Two Years of National Resistance* (fig. 13),

the posters “hold more aesthetic qualities of a painting than those of a poster.”<sup>36</sup> Unlike a traditionally propagandistic or promotional poster, Guiragossian’s designs unfold an intimate bond to a political cause, producing artwork that eclipses the mere functional requirements of a political poster. It is evident that the artist’s primary occupation is with illustrating a personal perspective through an unconventional medium; the mass production and widespread viewership is simply a bonus. Further, one must note that these particular pieces do not exhibit specific political figures, but portray the artist’s *impression* of his leaders’ likeness. This can be compared to the aforementioned mystical representation of Bashir Gemayel. In the case of leftist posters, artists such as Guiragossian were not concerned with portraiture that is spiritual or romantic; they were, instead, interested in a more “sophisticated aesthetic representation”<sup>37</sup> that is purposefully vague. Perhaps such artists would argue that the identity of a left wing hero is irrelevant as long as the leftist public is united. Individualism did not matter as long as the public resisted unwelcome occupation. This message is achieved through Guiragossian’s implementation of sweeping brushstrokes and ambiguous subject matter – adhering to the artist’s exclusive style. This, however, is not the only leftist designer who appropriates his own previous work in poster format.

It is evident that artists, illustrators, designers, and calligraphers alike were aware of other cultures’ historical poster development and adopted various aesthetics within a twentieth century Lebanese context. While Al-Kaysi experimented with elements of Abstract Expressionism, artists such as Rafic Charaf designed several posters after encountering posters made by the Cuban-based Organization of Solidarity of the People

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<sup>36</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 42.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (OSPAAAL). Comparable to Pop Art aesthetics forming throughout the 1960s, the OSPAAAL artists designed posters in support of liberation struggles all over the world and grew a keen interest in that of the Palestinians.<sup>38</sup> With this newfound interest, the organization sided with more of the left wing movements throughout the civil war, spreading their brightly colored, Warhol-like prints throughout the region and consequently influencing the work of local artists. One LCP poster titled, *Against Imperialism and Zionism* (fig. 14) illustrates Kamal Jumblatt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Lumumba, Che Guevara, Ho Shi Mihn, and Tanios Chahine in colorful, animated rows. Each leader has been placed on an equally significant plane, showing its Lebanese viewers that Jumblatt, like the other prominent figures, reins supreme over his people; such posters maintain a straightforward message and composition while being visually intriguing. In her writing, Zeina Maasri states that this eccentric Pop aesthetic “held connotations of leftist politics of that era. In Lebanon, it meant not only Marxist politics but signified other forms of anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist struggles, which articulated revolutionary liberation struggles with Arab unionist quests.”<sup>39</sup> Other left wing parties, thus, adopted this graphic rhetoric not for propagandistic purposes, but to highlight and glorify the lives of Kamal Jumblatt, leader of the SSNP Antun Saadeh, Mussa al-Sadr, and others.

Equally effective to the OSPAAAL-inspired LCP posters is a work titled, *The Assault of Saida is an Assault on the National Resistance* (fig. 15), by Omran Kaysi. Exhibiting the subject matter and calligraphic content of one of his paintings, the artist

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<sup>38</sup> Lincoln Cushing, *Revolucion!: Cuban Poster Art*, (San Francisco: Chronicle, 2003), 10.

<sup>39</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 45.

intertwined Qur'anic symbolism and his own artistic flair in a poster opposing Israeli occupation in the mid-1980s. Perhaps referencing Mohammad's horseback journey across the heavens, Kaysi paints a neon pink horse floating across the print. Above the creature is a masked, winged figure carrying a calligraphic textile marked with discombobulated fragments of the Star of David. Here, it becomes possible that the suspended figure is not the Prophet, but is instead a grotesque representation of an unwelcome Israeli citizen. Arabesque graphics adapted from the canvas provide a degree of uncertainty in the poster format, especially when traditional poetic calligraphy and folk tales are produced in the political realm. This provides an example of a political poster that experimented with graphic abstraction. Such ambiguity is prominent in many Lebanese civil war posters, particularly those associated with Arab nationalism and the resistance to Israeli occupation – a concept that also branches out into the posters for the Amal Movement and Nasserist Parties.

### **Nasserist Movements (Independent Nasserist Movement and Socialist Arab Union) and the Amal Movement**

The third and final section of this chapter discusses the civil war appearances made by two front running Nasserist movements and the formation of the Amal Movement thereafter. Founded in 1958 by Ibrahim Kolehlat, the Independent Nasserist Movement (INM), also referred to by the name of its military wing, Murbitun, similarly embraced a pan-Arab nationalist outlook alongside the aforementioned leftist factions.<sup>40</sup> Also in support of the socialist projects of Egyptian president Gamal Abd el-Nasser, the INM fought beside the LNM with a majority Sunni membership. Many of the

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<sup>40</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 28.

organization's posters implemented portraiture, but, again, not in the same mystical, transcendental fashion as the right-wing, Bashir Gemayel imagery. In a Murabitun poster titled, *Shallom* (fig. 16), the third Egyptian president, Anwar al-Sadat, is depicted in a black and white photograph. Along with his pipe, al-Sadat wears a black eye patch in the style of Israeli military leader Moshe Dayan (a figure infamous for this enigmatic trend). Additionally, the poster exhibits the Egyptian president in a tall top hat á la Uncle Sam. The juxtaposition of the Israeli eye patch and American flag denotes the designer's knowledge of Western postmodern art and the comical method of defacing a traditional photograph or romantic canvas with external references. The movement's leftist position and opposition to Israeli occupation meant that mocking Israeli leadership, and subsequent American support, was a common motif in their graphic language until the party's dissolution in 1985 at the hands of the PSP and Amal Movement.

The other prominent Nasserist Movement, the Socialist Arab Union, established its own unique poster aesthetic – a recurring subject throughout the Lebanese civil war. While operating in Syria during the 1970s, the organization held a close relationship to the Socialist Arab Union in Egypt and adopted similar leftist prospects, including its wartime support of other pan-Arabic factions.<sup>41</sup> One poster titled, *A Green Memory in Days of Drought* (fig. 17) exhibits lush, animated trees in commemoration of Gamal Abd-el-Nasser's birthday. The 'bubbled' calligraphy pays tribute to Nasser's passing while denoting him as one of the many celebrity martyrs during the 70s; while still upholding references to Pop aesthetics, this poster stands as another early precursor to the martyr memorialization soon to bathe the streets of Lebanon. Thus, the examination of

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<sup>41</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 28.

the poster, *The Martyrs of Struggle Against the Zionist Enemy* (fig. 18) is necessary. Still referencing floral symbols of growth and renewal, this poster illustrates what historian Dana Bartelt refers to as, “photographic images employ[ing] layers of complex symbolism and yet, at first glance, appear[ing] simple and straightforward.”<sup>42</sup> Similarly, graphic designer Yarom Vardimom writes that the sociopolitical undertakings in graphic design, while being “generally critical... [they] naturally deal with new and local symbols and their relationship to the culture’s previous symbols. Symbols of Middle Eastern society’s distress are pictures of bereavement, violence, and religious ritual.”<sup>43</sup> With an emphasis on the term ‘ritual,’ it must be argued that such political posters stand as sites of memorialization, despite their ephemeral context. The action associated with societal ‘ritual’ is ever present in the process of reminiscence.

This poster ideology is extended to that of the Amal Movement, its name coming from the phrase *Afwah al-Muqawama al-Lubaniya* (AFWAJ), literally meaning ‘hope’ in terms of Lebanese “resistance detachments.”<sup>44</sup> Established in 1975 by Shi’i cleric Imam Mousa al-Sadr (from the military wing, Movement of the Disinherited), the Amal Movement embodied this detached resistance by calling for social equality, with the majority of its focus on Lebanon’s conflicted south. With a predominantly Shi’i membership and in close conjunction with the aforementioned Nasserist Movements, Amal endorsed Syria’s 1976 intervention and officially supported the Palestinian, despite

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<sup>42</sup> Bartelt, Dana. *Both Sides of Peace: Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art*, (Raleigh, NC: Contemporary Art Museum, in Association with U of Washington, 1997), 13.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Fisk, *Pity the Nation*, 238.

later clashes with the PLO and Murabitun.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, the movement took part in the resistance against Israel's presence in Lebanon, an operation that allowed the group to form very brief alliances with other leftist parties, particularly with the PSP and Hezbollah. These alliances, however, came to an abrupt halt upon al-Sadr's 1978 disappearance.<sup>46</sup> Political posters, thus, portrayed a left wing resistance while furthering the design of war hero memorials after their leader's mysterious departure. In his book, *Pity the Nation*, Robert Fisk reiterates, "murdered [he] may have been, but who could deny [his] potency now?"<sup>47</sup> His face was not to be forgotten.

As an interesting allusion to previously mentioned rightist prints, posters such as, *It is the Lebanese Movement Towards the Better* (fig. 19), adhere to some of the qualities of right wing portraiture, though, much less enchanting or outlandish in nature. Illustrating the faces of al-Sadr and Lebanese Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri, this poster is one of the first examples seen of realist portraiture infused with traditional calligraphy and graphic symbolism. The calligraphic title refers to an excerpt from *Mithaq Harakat al Mahroumin* (the charter of the Movement of the Disinherited) as written by al-Sadr four years before his presumed death. A bird in flight, perhaps referencing the flight of the deceased's soul and/or the Prophet Mohammad's ascension, supplements the image. Birds, particularly doves, have been linked to the notion of martyrdom, especially within more radical leftist organizations.

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<sup>45</sup> Fisk, *Pity the Nation*, 86.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Sadr was an Iranian Shi'i cleric with familial ties in Lebanon. He moved there in 1959 when he was appointed a leading cleric position in southern Lebanon. He then disappeared in 1978 while visiting Libya, the topic of which continues to be a mystery.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.



Another Amal poster titled, *Be Prepared For Them With All Your Force* (fig. 20), exhibits artist Rafic Charaf's familiarity with Pop art characteristics, traditional calligraphy, and religious symbolism, all of which are intertwined in the poster format. The red horse pictured near the bottom of the print alludes to its significance in Qur'anic passages. His ability to carry the Prophet Mohammad across the heavens refers to the Amal Movement's ceaseless strength; at all costs, they strive to be ruthless and stringent against their enemies. The title, it is known, comes from a Qur'anic verse, showing that the Lebanese artist was first and foremost concerned with the presence of religious remarks in his individual aesthetic. The political affiliation is subpar. Here, one sees how such proud, vivid imagery took to the streets with an intensity previously unbeknownst to the political poster arena.

This chapter has so far provided a brief discussion about both right and left wing poster aesthetics, offering a starting point for the remainder of this thesis's examination of post-war graphics, principally those of Hezbollah, following its formation in 1982. It is my hopes that this chapter has delivered a broad overview of Lebanon's graphic language during the formative years of war, of which several concepts will bleed into Hezbollah media and post-war 'reconstruction' imagery. In the following chapter, I do not provide examples of differing factions, rather, I attempt to unravel the significance of individual parties' civil war poster series as contemporary martyr memorial in a time and region characterized by perpetual unrest. Artists in need of a creative outlet assumed the role of political activist by transforming the traditional view of poster as propaganda to that of individual sites of remembrance and resistance. The idea that Lebanese civil war media falls under the realm of a unilateral aesthetic is a delusion; instead of an

authoritative figure preaching his stance to a greater, typically unified public, Lebanese posters and their stylistic genres are as diverse as their designers, thus, creating a critical distance from traditional modes of propaganda. Despite instances of propagandistic content (i.e. the Lebanese flag and quotes from political speeches), political posters created throughout the civil war are more aligned with artistic individualism than with graphic autonomy – a case prominent in political posters in the Western world. This chapter stands as an argument for Lebanon's implementation of activist media, providing a platform for which fleeting memorials are recognized. Sectarian ties prompt dozens of individuals, already with their predetermined political and religious affiliations, to create works for a specified audience. As such, activist graphics on the streets of Lebanon adopt the part of modern memorial, lacking a unified aesthetic of Lebanese patriotism; it is a divided nation for a reason. In this multi-headed war, political graphics, though ephemeral, stand as locations of individual strife, remembrance, and commemoration.

Map 2, Philippe Rekacewicz, Map of Lebanon with changes in Israeli occupation denoted in stripes, Published Feb. 2000, Accessed on 30 October, 2014, <<http://mondediplo.com/maps/golansouthlebanon200002>>.



Figure 2, Nikita Khrushchev TIME Magazine Cover, 8 Sep. 1961.



Figure 3, *Is This Tomorrow*, Catechetical Guild Educational Society of St. Paul, Minnesota, 1947

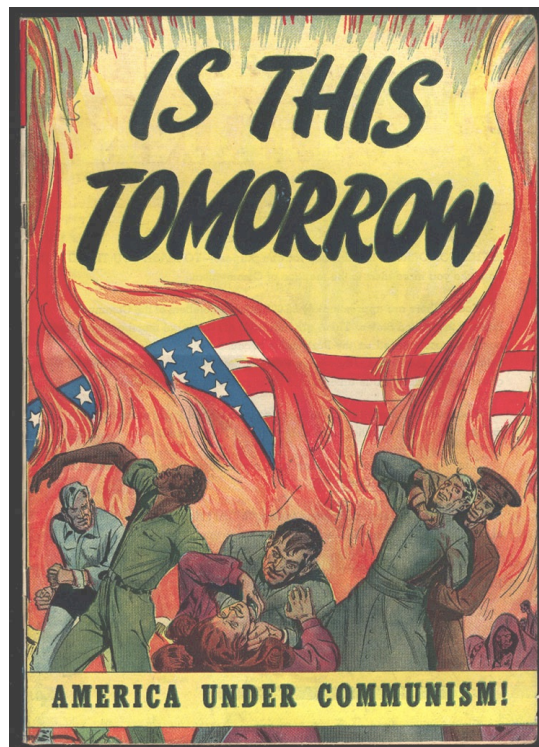


Figure 4, Kourkin, *They Died for Lebanon to Live*, Lebanese Kataeb Party, Wassim Jabre Collection, 1976

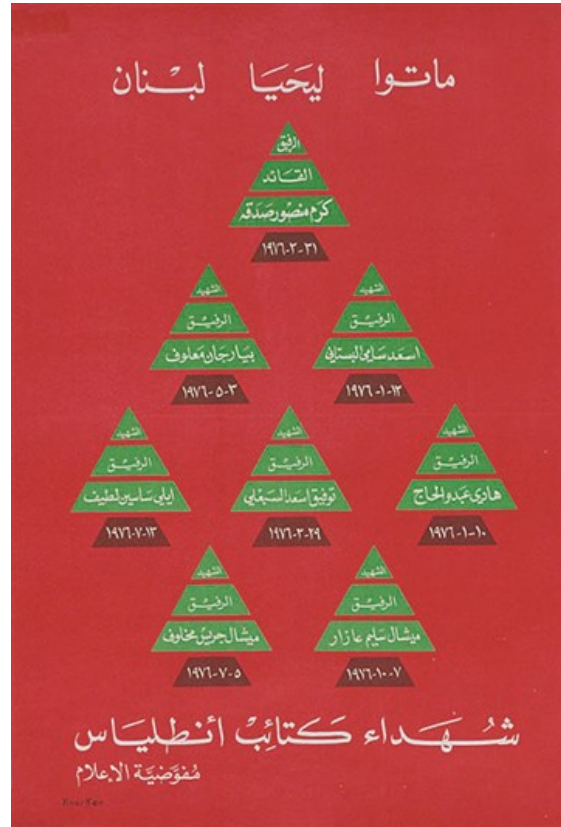


Figure 5, Pierre Sadek for the Atelier d'Art, *44 Years in the Service of Lebanon*, Lebanese Kataeb Party, Karl Bassil Collection, 1980





Figure 6, Artist unknown, *The President Bashir Gemayel*, Lebanese Kataeb Party, Zeina Maasri Collection, c. 1980



Figure 7, Raidy, *14 September*, Lebanese Kataeb Party, Zeina Maasri Collection, c. 1982.



Figure 8, Pierre Sadek, *Our Lebanon Needs You, YOU!*, Lebanese Forces, Zeina Maasri Collection, c. 1980



Figure 9, James Montgomery Flagg, *I Want You for the U.S. Army*, Library of Congress Lithograph Collection, 1917



Figure 10, Alfred Leete, *Join Your Country's Army*, London Opinion Magazine, 1914





Figure 11, Omran al-Kaysi, *The Mountain's Victory*, Progressive Socialist Party, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1984

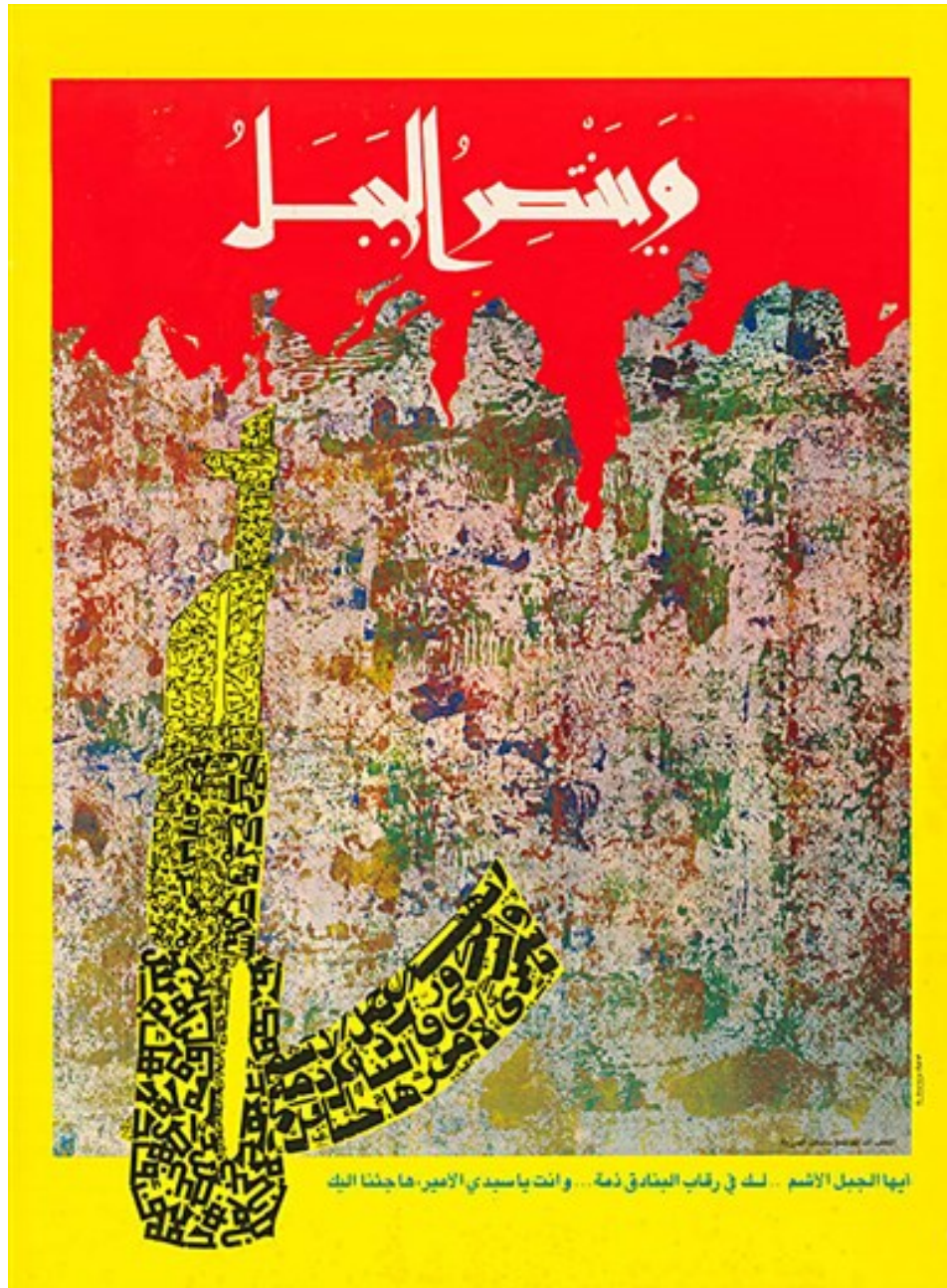


Figure 12, Paul Guiragossian, *Let Us Unite Our Efforts in the Liberation Struggle*, Lebanese Communist Party, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1982



Figure 13, Paul Guiragossian, *Two Years of the Lebanese National Resistance*, Cultural Council of South Lebanon, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1984



Figure 14, Artist unknown, *Against Imperialism and Zionism*, Lebanese National Movement, Progressive Socialist Party Poster Archives, 1977



Figure 15, Omran Kaysi, *The Assault on Saida is an Assault on the National Resistance*, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1985.

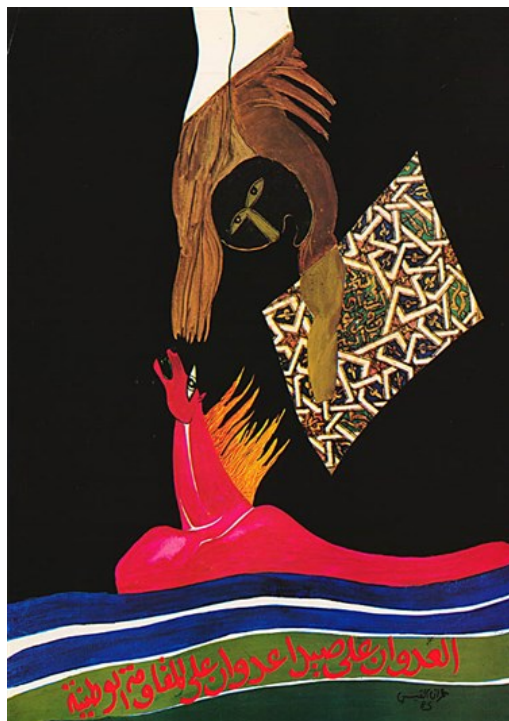




Figure 16, Artist unknown, *Shallom*, Independent Nasserite Movement (Murabitun), Zeina Maasri Collection, 1979



Figure 17, Artist unknown, *A Green Memory in Days of Drought (Commemoration of Gamal Abd-el-Nasser's Birthday)*, Arab Socialist Union, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1979



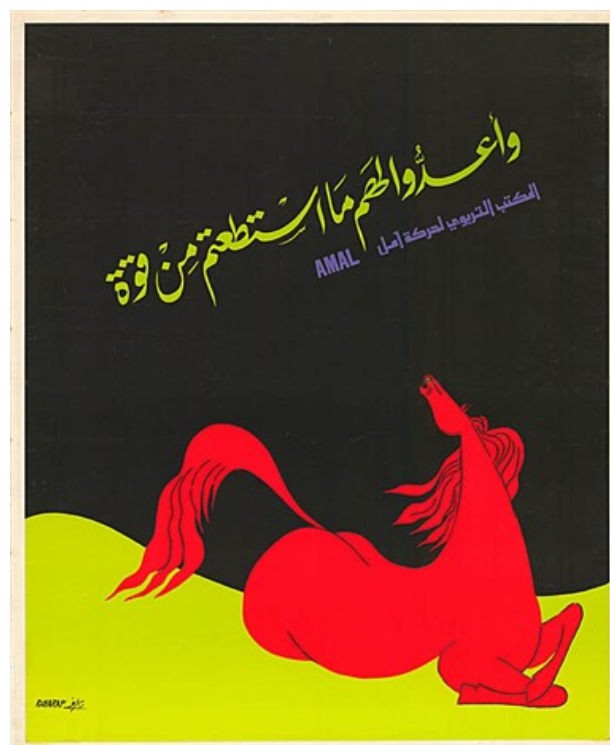
Figure 18, Artist unknown, *The Martyrs of Struggle Against the Zionist Enemy*, Arab Socialist Union, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1980



Figure 19, Nabil Kdouh, *It is the Lebanese Movement Towards the Better*, Amal Movement, Hezbollah Media Office Archive, 1980



Figure 20, Rafic Charaf, *Be Prepared For Them With All Your Force* (Qur'anic Verse), Amal Movement, Zeina Maasri Collection, c. 1985



## Chapter Two

### Martyrs Among Us: Hezbollah's Realization in Poster Format

And say not of those who are slain in God's cause, "they are dead": nay, they are alive, but you perceive it not.

Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:154<sup>48</sup>

In the midst of the Lebanese civil war, political posters dominated the public sphere. While buying groceries, families were confronted with a least a dozen differing messages and slogans; when walking to school, children were bombarded with ambiguous, symbolic, and oftentimes violent imagery. This became the norm in Beirut, the Beqaa Valley, and particularly, in southern Lebanon where tensions between bordering Israel and flourishing radical militias were most noticeable. Such conflicting media characterized the 1980s and 1990s; Lebanon's citizens inevitably grew accustomed to this eclectic urban aesthetic as their country held no prospects for a unilateral objective in the near future. The development of various left and right wing organizations, as mentioned in Chapter One, introduced the region to a heterogeneous way of seeing. While political imageries have flooded city streets throughout the majority of historical wars, the Lebanese civil war was first to establish poster genres that transcend propaganda. Such posters, though significantly under researched, have gained notoriety for their individualism. Concepts of graphic activism and martyr memorialization become widely utilized themes, specifically with regard to the more radical leftist groups active during the later years of the civil war – a topic that will be further analyzed in this chapter.

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<sup>48</sup> "Al-Baqarah (The Cow)," Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement, University of Southern California, Accessed Sept. 21, 2014. < <http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/002-qmt.php>>.

## Hezbollah's Formative Years

The Arab world witnessed an immense uprising of Shi'i politics throughout the twentieth century, particularly in the 1970s and immediately following the Iranian Revolution of 1979. In his book, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, Augustus Richard Norton suggests that young Shi'i men, at the time, felt "alienated from old-style politics and were attracted by new political forces. The promise of radical change could only have been irresistible to a community whose ethos emphasized its exploitation and dispossession by the ruling elites."<sup>49</sup> This prompted younger Shi'i generations to flock to the civil war's more radical "secular opposition parties,"<sup>50</sup> specifically the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP), the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP), the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party, and the Organization for Communist Action in Lebanon. It must be noted; however, that the leadership of these parties was predominantly Christian, inciting a need for a political movement characterized by Islamic sectarian ties. Thus, Hezbollah, literally meaning 'Party of God,' was born. Norton states,

Of the three distinctive trends preceding the emergence of Hezbollah in 1982, several secular parties, as well as the reformist Amal movement, retain a significant following. As the armed Palestinian presence grew stronger [in Lebanon], many young Shi'a found their place in one or another of the guerrilla fighter organizations... Hussein Nasrallah, a brother of Hasan Nasrallah, a founding member of Hezbollah and its famous secretary-general, is a life member of Amal. When the two groups were at each other's throats in the late 1980s, Hussein was on the front lines confronting his brother... In Lebanon political support is conditional and political loyalty sometimes has a short shelf life... Even if Israel had not launched its invasion of southern Lebanon, the young would-be

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<sup>49</sup> Norton, Augustus R. *Hezbollah: A Short History*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007), 15.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.



revolutionaries among the Shi'a would have pursued their path of emulating Iran's Islamic revolution.<sup>51</sup>

Undoubtedly, the Israeli invasion only furthered their direction, providing a context for Hezbollah to flourish. Thousands of young men were selected for religious education with a curriculum designed according to the al-Najaf and Karbala seminaries in Iraq. It was in a Baalbak splinter seminary where the adolescent Hasan Nasrallah learned of the expelled Ayatollah Khomeini. Here, the future Hezbollah secretary-general adopted a revolutionary outlook that prompted an "antipathy toward Israel,"<sup>52</sup> an undying loyalty to Iran and Khomeini, and a steadfast commitment to make changes in his home country. An immediate goal was to infiltrate the Amal movement in hopes of reforming it from within. With no success, young Shi'i rebels negated "Amal's de facto secularism"<sup>53</sup> in order to establish themselves according to an Islamic system of law and to do so quickly during heightened years of civil conflict. To these budding revolutionaries, the only solution was to fight under the banner of Islam: "we have seen that aggression can be repelled only with the sacrifice of blood, and that freedom is not given but regained with sacrifice of both heart and soul."<sup>54</sup> Hezbollah's notorious emphasis on martyrdom, and inevitably, memorialization is what followed.

For the purposes of this thesis, my examination of Hezbollah's martyr posters revolves around the idea that there are not only several different kinds of martyrs, but also that each is remembered differently in the poster format. The party's political posters are informed by martyrdom that is not fixed, but is instead responsive to larger political and

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<sup>51</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah*, 16-17.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

historical narratives. As Lucia Volk defines in her book, *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon*, “the word martyr comes from the Greek *martis* (from the verb “to remember”) from which early Christian leaders derived the term *martirium* to describe the deaths of persecuted members of their faith.”<sup>55</sup> Initially coming from a verb, the word stresses action; the process of remembering is far from removed or static. It become apparent that memorializing one martyr is entirely different from the same process of another, again deviating from any traditional propagandistic custom. Rather than uniting a population with pride, Hezbollah’s followers are driven together by posters that take the form of ephemeral memorial; political posters being produced in Lebanon at the time became individual sites of remembrance and ‘holy’ commemoration. Much like cemeteries and sculptural war memorials, Hezbollah’s political posters transformed the two-dimensional picture plane into a physical space provoking strong emotional responses, all while teaching the viewer about radical Shi’i discipline and sacrifice. While adopting many of the aesthetic characteristics of Iranian Revolution posters, Hezbollah’s media offices created a community of the deceased, which became a “template, or cognitive map,”<sup>56</sup> for the community of the living.

In a poster titled, *Jerusalem... We Shall Come* (fig. 21), one sees the lavish and vibrant Dome of the Rock, basking in the heaven’s glow. Though its splendor is visible, it is still slightly out of reach; one is forced to view the Dome from a distance and through a circular window or screen. The divine building, and the gratification that comes with obtaining it, is shrouded in the banner of Islam and stands as Hezbollah’s prize upon the defeat of the Israelis. After the 1982 invasion, the party needed a unifying

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<sup>55</sup> Volk, *Memorials*, 30.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

political goal; defeating Israel and collecting their sought-after winnings (land, architecture, politico-religious followers, etc.) was of the utmost importance. Images of the Dome of the Rock, designed in vivid color, told both its fellow Shi'i citizens and their opponents that it was only a matter of moments before Jerusalem and its most prized cultural landmark was captured by Hezbollah extremists.<sup>57</sup> Thus, Hezbollah's media office established itself as a dauntless force not to be reckoned with. Even before publishing their first graphic martyr memorial, the organization and its military wing, the Islamic Resistance, had made its mark on the streets of Lebanon; the group already had a determined goal and enough loyal sectarian followers to support their formative years and rapid advancement as a military and, later administrative, superpower. The very initial focus was not on remembrance but about promises and progression.

This phenomenon, however, was short-lived. Hezbollah's media campaigns were the subject of "surprise and amazement in terms of [their] technical execution and diffusion, for [their] mastering of the aesthetic expertise and professional know-how of a modern advertisement industry."<sup>58</sup> Over and above this, the organization collected large endorsements from the Iranian government, their funding opportunities allowing for Hezbollah's media offices to contract independent artists and commissioned young up-and-coming designers. In less than five years, the party was able to brand itself with the design of its own coherent logo, based on that of the guards of the Iranian Revolution (Pasderan). Again, the party's Iranian influences are ever present. The logo exhibits a

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<sup>57</sup> Jerusalem is considered to be the third holy city for Muslim practitioners after Mecca and Medina. The Dome of the Rock is a historical pilgrimage destination. In fact, Jerusalem is considered to be the first *qibla* before Mecca adopted this purpose.

<sup>58</sup> Maasri, Zeina. "The Aesthetics of Belonging," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 5.2 (2012), 154.

raised fist and rifle<sup>59</sup>. Even non-native viewers were aware of Hezbollah's coordination and preemptive prestige. In addition to this emblem, the Party of God discovered the importance of *unique* militia marketing; varied political posters were already characteristic of the civil war, but Hezbollah took the symbolic poster to new levels. No longer were political prints only meant to discredit the 'others'; Hezbollah imagery was mass-produced to provide physical places of worship, memorialization, grief, and education for any and all eyes. The group "has been active in building and consolidating an Islamic milieu among its Shi'i constituency, in which the politics of culture, religion, and resistance collide into an inseparable, meaningful whole."<sup>60</sup> In such posters as, *In the Sea of Martyrdom Until We Arrive at the Shore of Victory* (fig. 22), the Islamic Resistance is deemed as spiritually-driven, perhaps even graceful, acceptors of a martyr's fate; the pictured figures knew what was coming, accepted it as necessary, and are forever memorialized by their portrait publication. Dozens of Shi'i Muslims in Lebanon would flock to such posters to show their gratitude and pray for the figures' safe ascension into Allah's realm. Further to this, those viewing the poster were aware of the figures' names and methods of sacrifice, but more important than this, the public was aware of their heightened status as a religious martyr in connection with Hezbollah. Thus, the five stoic faces transcend into their afterlife, ethereal selves, each adorned with an identifying headband similar to the aforementioned poster's portrayal of the Islamic

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<sup>59</sup> Typically found in yellow, red, or green – colors commonly found in the Lebanese flag and Coat of Arms – Hezbollah's logo is a stylized representation of an assault rifle. The weapon is subsequently paired with several other objects including a globe, sword, book, tree branch, and the organization's name (Party of God) in Kufic script. Further, the logo reads, "They shall be triumphant," alluding to the organization's self-supposed victory against Israel in southern Lebanon. Ibid., 169.

<sup>60</sup> Maasri, "Belonging," 155.

banner. Their individual identities are no longer as important as their new lives amongst the clouds. Though subject to vandalism, disposal, and simply being blown away, these ephemeral images were intended as nomadic memorials, as physical locations where Hezbollah's cause was contemplated.

In a similar poster titled, *Martyrs of Badr al-Kubra Operation* (fig. 23), artist Adel Selman exhibits the photographic portraits of seven martyrs floating above three gravestones marked with the Star of David. Out of the upper right-hand corner stems a shining weapon, perpetually aimed at the graves. Here, the message is clear; even in death, Hezbollah would sustain a watchful eye over the Israelis; even after death, Israeli soldiers were the enemy. Lucia Volk notes that a cemetery's design is characterized by "repetitious epitaphs and repeated gravestones, which highlights the communal aspect of the dead."<sup>61</sup> In this case, the gravestones are cracking and disheveled. Furthermore, while the Star of David was once viewed as mere religious symbol, the image later connoted the Israeli army – a force that has since been demolished in Hezbollah's eyes. In similar imageries, Israel only exists within quotation marks, the Party of God refused to acknowledge its existence. In the design of this particular poster, Hezbollah successfully destroyed any sense of Israeli pride and assumed the posture of victor, a trend that will continue in political posters even after the 1990 ceasefire.

### **Iranian Influences**

As mentioned in Chapter One, Lebanese political posters both appropriate and deviate from external historical references. This is also the case with Hezbollah posters,

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<sup>61</sup> Volk, *Memorials*, 25.

though any graphic continuations typically stem from their close encounters with Iranian posters during the 1970s. Imageries of Khomeini, bustling city streets, and the Islamic banner are prominent and left lasting impressions on radical Shi'i designers. In a poster titled, *The Shah's Exile and Khomeini's Return* (fig. 24), artist Hasan Isma'ilzadah imitates the traditional Iranian coffeehouse paintings to portray the end of the Revolution and the importance of narrative storytelling. In the upper right-hand corner, the Ayatollah hovers over his people, Qur'an in hand, as a reminder of his former exile and triumphant return home. Below him are crowds of demonstrators, executioners, and mourners, showing the beginnings of graphic massacre – a poster genre that Hezbollah enthusiastically adopts. Immediately prior, during, and after the Revolution, Iranian posters provided a visual documentary of the historical events as they unfolded; images were inherently current and constructed a national narrative about contemporary circumstances. Though ephemeral, Iranian graphics jumpstarted the Shi'i aspects of the Revolution “above all others in order to forward the newly formed government's claims to religious authority and political legitimacy.”<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, such imageries reference historical figures in order to justify current, often violent events – a topic ever present in Hezbollah's martyr memorial posters.

An Iranian poster called, *Blindfolded Soldier Shot at Gunpoint* (fig. 25), a blindfolded Iranian soldier stands with a gun pointed at his chest; behind him stands Imam Hussein, waiting to escort the sacrificial combatant to a heavenly paradise. To the left of the Imam stands three unidentifiable figures. Without heads, the viewer

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<sup>62</sup> Various authors. “The Graphics of Revolution and War: Iranian Poster Arts.” U of Chicago Special Collections Library, n.d., accessed Sept. 30, 2014. <<https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/webexhibits/iranianposters/newkarbala.html>>.

understands that they, too, are martyrs that gave their lives along with Hussein at the Battle of Karbala circa 680 CE. Also known as the Grand Sacrifice, this historical event provokes annual commemoration and the continued tradition of martyr sacrifice and its artistic documentation.<sup>63</sup> As in the aforementioned Guiragossian posters, the individual identities are less important than honoring Shi'a bravery and loyalty as a whole. "The enemy abstracted into a faceless aggressor devoid of any human traits, a death machine, is a recurrent portrayal of the Israeli army by the local factions in resisting [them]."<sup>64</sup> The vivid red and green colors in this particular poster become symbolic of the martyrs' spilled blood and the promise of acceptance and renewal once in their transcendental kingdom, respectively. Furthermore, this poster foreshadows the horror and bodily mutilation that appeared in Hezbollah posters during the later years of the Lebanese civil war, primarily in late 1982 when Israel pushed past their southern occupation to infiltrate West Beirut. Now characterized by hundreds of suicide bombings and far too many casualties to accurately count, Lebanon's Shi'i citizens required physical places to mourn and to educate younger soon-to-be revolutionaries. The civil war was left greatly undocumented, the events of which not taught in schools. Thus, posters became educational tools for young generations. One sees that Hezbollah's posters become increasingly brutal while still referencing strong spiritual ties; the images were at once memorials and schools of thought.

### Hezbollah's Graphic Experimentation

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<sup>63</sup> Caroline Rooney and Rita Sakr, *The Ethics of Representation in Literature, Art, and Journalism: Transnational Responses to the Siege of Beirut*, (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 123.

<sup>64</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 106.

In a poster titled, *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Commemoration of the First Martyrdom Operation in Jabal'Amel* (fig. 26), an anonymous designer depicts the young martyr Ahmad Kassir proudly floating over the rubble and disfigured bodies that once inhabited Beirut. Here, the architectural ruins, shrapnel, and bodily remains are indiscernible from one another, showing its viewers the utter destruction of war, specifically when Hezbollah claims its victory over Israel. Below the demolished structure reads, "The first in the reign of heroism, the pioneer of martyrdom operations, the happy martyr Ahmad Kassir 'Haydar'; the destroyer of the headquarters of the Israeli military governor in Sour."<sup>65</sup> Not only is the young man "happy" with his sacrifice, but the poster's text also anchors its theme and subject matter into Hezbollah's aesthetic discourse; the man is young, successful, politically and religiously righteous according to his sectarian leaders, and emblematic of extreme leftist objectives. Posters such as this situate Hezbollah amongst Lebanon's other forerunning factions while simultaneously providing individuals with a site for communal mourning. In her article, "Violence, Trauma, and Subjectivity: Compromise Formations of Survival in the Novels of Rawi Hage and Mischa Hiller," Julia Borossa states,

Psychoanalytic theories of trauma are closely linked to mourning and owe much to Freud's and his colleagues... They maintain that the effects of loss, whether worked through, repeated, or foreclosed, remain as a scar on the psyche. However, this scarring, in all the particularity of its detail and texture, is also what, under certain ethical conditions, may broaden an understanding of the universal.<sup>66</sup>

Put more simply, there is an enormous range in aesthetics and subjectivities depicted in Hezbollah posters that not only allow the public to cope, but also provide viewers with

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<sup>65</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 50.

<sup>66</sup> Rooney and Sakr, *Ethics of Representation*, 122.



the capacity to situate said graphics into a broad understanding of their religious, political, and social identities.

Hezbollah's vast pictorial vocabulary provides a platform for further aesthetic experimentation, despite its undoubtable Iranian influences. One must note that Hezbollah visuals are not solely based on external stimuli, but are unique in their radically violent portrayals of success. Rather than portraying a majestic spiritual leader watching over his followers, as mentioned in reference to the late Bashir Gemayel in Chapter One, Hezbollah posters further deviate from traditional propaganda by assuming the role of victor at any and all costs; the presence of mutilated masses in such a poster only highlights the party's dominance and collective following. Historian Olfa Lamloum states that,

Hezbollah's distinctive dramatization of politics is no accident. The reasons behind it are firstly historical... resistance to the Israeli occupation became central to the organization's discourse and political activity and it grew convinced of the strategic importance of images as visual proof of its military exploits... The comparative freedom of the press enjoyed in Lebanon during the civil war, as well as the prevalent custom of using iconography to mark political territory, encouraged all political forces [Hezbollah most of all] to employ these forces.<sup>67</sup>

Hezbollah's media offices supersede the expected Islamist poster rhetoric and propaganda by being aesthetically comparable to public memorials and activist art, in other words, by being both accessible and portable. By "freedom of the press," Lamloum refers to the vast array of poster authors, including amateur designers; many posters may have been defaced or immediately torn down, but individual designers expressed their political interests just as easily. Lebanon's streets were canvases for everyone. As

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<sup>67</sup> O. Lamloum, "Hezbollah's Media: Political History in Outline," *Global Media and Communications* 5.3, (2010), 354.

activist works, these posters transform the urban landscape into an arena for socio-political change. Viewers generally expect Hezbollah's campaigns to align with the rest of "Lebanon's prolific political mediascape,"<sup>68</sup> but instead, they assume the position of an authoritative 'we' that are victorious over a autonomous 'they.' Here, Hezbollah dehumanizes the enemy in political posters thereby concretizing "hostile traits"<sup>69</sup> as being intrinsic to Israel/the 'other.' This concept will persist as Hezbollah posters become that much more graphic as Israel withdraws from Beirut and South Lebanon near the end of the civil war.

In a poster dating from 1985, five martyrs are displayed over gallons of blood dripping from the Dome of the Rock. Below their portraits is a pair of hands holding an AK-47 rifle. The commemoration of Jerusalem Day "not only shows solidarity with the dispossessed Palestinian people, but above all, summons viewers to the struggle of a Muslim *umma* deprived of its holy site."<sup>70</sup> Titled, *A Constellation of Martyrs of the Islamic Resistance, in the Western Bekaa* (fig. 27), the poster claims Jerusalem as the *Qibla* (direction of prayer) of the mujahideen (guerilla fighters traditionally against non-Muslim forces), its emancipation being Hezbollah's ultimate jihad. It must be noted; however, that the term *jihad* does not simply refer a religious battle, but instead stems from the verb 'to strive' or 'to exert.' To these radically leftist Shi'i Muslims, the visual representation of martyrdom and overwhelming political authority stems from this term and the concept of orthopraxy. As Zeina Maasri states, "blood is an overwhelming protagonist in the narrative of martyrdom, referring to self-sacrifice. It is portrayed in a

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<sup>68</sup> Maasri, "Belonging," 155.

<sup>69</sup> Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 101.

<sup>70</sup> Maasri, "Belonging," 163.

grotesque exuberance, a literal visual expression of a bloodbath.” There is an undeniable focus on the violent *action* required in achieving its religious and geographical victory; these horrifying representations are a necessary precursor to Hezbollah’s post-war election and reconstruction posters which eventually move past the depictions of headstrong, unrestrained death toward the illustration of Hezbollah as divinely undefeated and responsible for Lebanon’s restoration. The goal is to, once again, present Lebanon, specifically Beirut, as the “Paris of the Middle East,”<sup>71</sup> deeply engrained in the concept of cosmopolitanism and “chic”<sup>72</sup> poster aesthetics.

### **Taif Agreement and Post-Civil War Aesthetics**

After nearly fourteen years of civil strife, Lebanon’s parliamentary leaders, still assigned according to the original 1932 census, met in Taif, Saudi Arabia to endorse a Charter of National Reconciliation<sup>73</sup> – ultimately transferring much of the president’s authority to the Lebanese cabinet and giving its Muslim representatives a greater voice. The agreement reiterated much of the 1926 Constitution and the 1943 National Pact, yet agreed that parliamentary seats were to be equally distributed amongst Muslim and Christian representatives; accordingly, the Document of National Accord prompted a discussion of armistice, formally ending the civil war in October of 1990 and the dissolution of all militias, with the exception of Hezbollah.<sup>74</sup> With the post-war elections on the horizon, the radical Shi’i group refused to disband in hopes of reforming the

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<sup>71</sup> Maasri, “Belonging,” 185.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Regula Kaufmann, Antoine Laham, Jonas Loetscher, and Arnold Luethold, “National Reconciliation,” (DCAF, 2009), 6.

<sup>74</sup> Traboulsi, *Modern Lebanon*, 224.

Lebanese government from its interior. Hezbollah, though without their military wing on the accord of the Taif Agreement, was successful in this endeavor, winning twelve out of the 128 parliamentary seats in the 1992 elections. As such, Hezbollah gained even more notoriety on a global scale as being an authoritative and influential governmental entity – a topic ever present in its graphic portfolio. After so many years of civil war, Hezbollah leaders were to formulate a new set of goals to enhance their political, rather than military, prowess.<sup>75</sup> The organization's posters were, thus, in need of transformation.

In the aftermath of civil war, Lebanese citizens are said to have been suffering “a pervasive mood of lethargy, indifference, and weariness”<sup>76</sup> or “collective amnesia.”<sup>77</sup> Scholars have also noted; however, that there were still groups involved in widespread production and “circulation of war memories, as private citizens and civic institutions produced art, films, novels, and academic symposiums to discuss the reasons and outcomes”<sup>78</sup> of the war and ways to better Lebanon's future. A poster titled, *In Confrontation with the Israeli Occupation: March 1978-1994* (fig. 28), depicts the Lebanese silhouette in white, though no longer connected with Israel, which has been expunged. While southern Lebanon and the washed-out Israel are still depicted behind barbed wire, the northern half of the country bursts forth from its confines; from the top stems three green leaves. Though Israel's silhouette is still beneath the wire, therefore

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<sup>75</sup> Zeina Maasri notes that Hezbollah “did not abandon the ideal of an Islamic state; it nevertheless acknowledged that it is not to be achieved by force but rather through a democratic process if a majority of the Lebanese are in favor of the Islamic state model. This has been repeatedly voiced by Hezbollah leaders.” Hezbollah has not pushed for an Islamic state since its inception into Lebanon's political system; the focus was, instead, on elections and “legislative role in the Lebanese parliament.” Maasri, “Belonging,” 174.

<sup>76</sup> Volk, *Memorials*, 107.

<sup>77</sup> Sune Haugbølle, *War and Memory in Lebanon*, (New York: Cambridge, UP, 2010), 101.

<sup>78</sup> Volk, *Memorials*, 107.

rendering it incapable of progression or reconstruction, one understands that Lebanon's streets are surged with prospects of renewal.<sup>79</sup> This particular poster was designed by Imad Issa, a prominent designer associated with the Cultural Council of South Lebanon who's poster aesthetics greatly influenced Hezbollah's post-war graphics. As such, concepts of reconstruction and the potential for renewal under new leadership are fundamental.

An untitled Hezbollah poster dating from the early 1990s portrays Ayatollah Khomeini looking down upon his Lebanese Shi'i followers (fig. 29). The pictured Hezbollah soldiers walk away from the viewer toward a setting sun, their path being uncovered by the deceased's angelic wings. Though one figure still carries his weapon, his comrades have abandoned their rifles on their trek into the horizon. White flowers also fall from the sky, symbolic of Lebanon's newfound, notably momentary, peace and rebirth. Here, concepts of romantic painting and traditional Islamic calligraphy reappear; Hezbollah emphasizes a return to the splendor of pre-civil war Lebanon. This poster served as a physical site for memorialization (albeit a memorial for a past time), further deviating from propaganda as it reconstructs historical splendor to achieve the same in the future. The term *activist* does not refer to violent artistic campaigning, but, instead, to a vigorous demonstration of social change and nation-wide renovation. This aesthetic trend continues in Hezbollah posters throughout the rest of the twentieth century, after which the party rapidly progresses to the declared terrorist organization it is today.

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<sup>79</sup> Many Shi'i individuals, particularly those associated with Hezbollah, refer to "Israel" as existing only within quotation marks. This is to say the country lacks validity after Hezbollah's supposed victories over the Israeli people in the mid-2000s. It is necessary to note the significance of these marks and the common Shi'i Muslim's belief in Israel's nonexistence as a legitimate state.

Before gaining such a title, though, the group was again confronted by Israeli troops in July of 2006.<sup>80</sup>

As discussed, the post-war era observed the consolidation of Hezbollah's domination over resistance activities in Lebanon – a concept that translates into the party's media production. I argue that these images transform in both public perception and artistic design according to Lebanon's competing political discourses and national imaginaries. While its posters initially aimed to establish the group as a feared military assembly, they developed into a series of ephemeral memorials. As physical sites of remembrance and commemoration, Hezbollah posters during the mid-1980s gained recognition as meeting places for radically left-wing Shi'i communities, and inevitably as sites of revolutionary education and resistance. Thus, Hezbollah posters diverge from traditional definitions of propaganda, further than the preceding civil war factions examined in Chapter One. From this poster genre stemmed Hezbollah's post-war reconstruction efforts, while still maintaining a degree of public fear; though the war was formally over, Hezbollah still needed to uphold its reputation as being inherently aggressive. Maasri states, such posters "are determinedly counter-hegemonic from the purview of a transnational political context dominated by US and Israeli political, military and discursive power."<sup>81</sup> Put more simply, the organization has constructed a visual identity within the Lebanese context in efforts to affirm not only political, but also cultural belonging to its environment. This outline is key to understanding the products

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<sup>80</sup> Amos Harel and Avi Isacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 29.

<sup>81</sup> Maasri, "Belonging," 178.

of Hezbollah's media offices during and directly after the 2006 war against Israel – the topic of discussion in the following section of this study.

Figure 21, Artist unknown, *Jerusalem... We Shall Come*, Hezbollah/Islamic Resistance, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1984.



Figure 22, Artist unknown, *In the Sea of Martyrdom Until We Arrive at the Shore of Victory*, Hezbollah/Islamic Resistance, Hezbollah Media Office Collection, c. 1985.





Figure 23, Adel Selman, *Martyrs of Badr Al-Kubra Operation*, Hezbollah/Islamic Resistance, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1987.



Figure 24, Hasan Isma'ilzadah, *The Shah's Exile and Khomeini's Return*, Iranian, University of Chicago Library Special Collections Research Center, 1979.

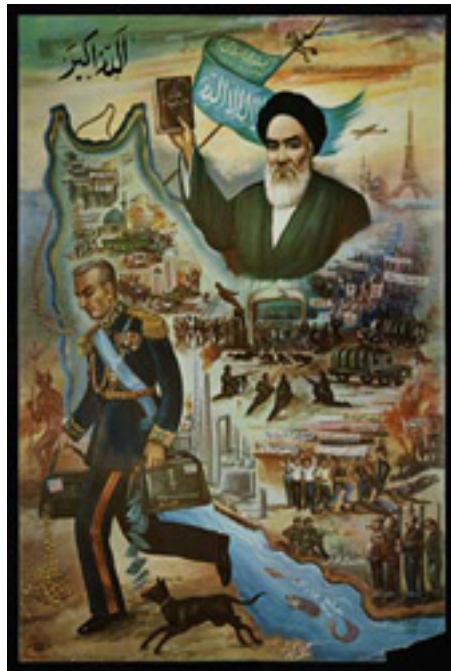


Figure 25, Artist unknown, *Blindfolded Soldier Shot at Gunpoint*, Iranian, University of Chicago Library Special Collections Research Center, 1981.



Figure 26, Artist unknown, *The 2<sup>nd</sup> Commemoration of the First Martyrdom Operation in Jabal'Amel*, Hezbollah/Islamic Resistance, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1984.



Figure 27, Artist unknown, *A Constellation of Martyrs of the Islamic Resistance, in the Western Bekaa*, Hezbollah/Islamic Resistance, Hezbollah Media Office Collection, 1985.

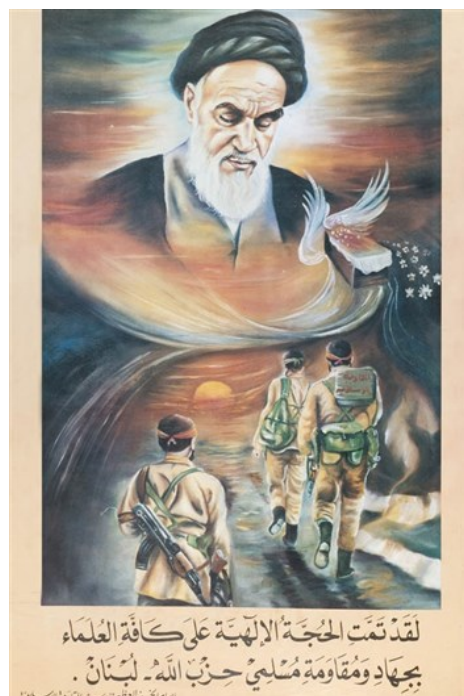




Figure 28, Imad Issa, *In Confrontation with the Israeli Occupation: March 1978-1994*, Cultural Council of South Lebanon, Zeina Maasri Collection, 1994.



Figure 29, Adel Selman, Untitled, Hezbollah/Islamic Resistance, Hezbollah Media Office Collection, 1989.



## Chapter Three

### A New Middle East: The 34-Day War and Divine Victory Campaign

If you want to judge if a party is Lebanese enough, let me say we take up arms and fight against the occupation of our land, is that Lebanese enough? ...Its destiny is manifested in our motto: 'Death to Israel.'<sup>82</sup>

Hasan Nasrallah, Hezbollah Secretary General

With its guns temporarily put aside, Hezbollah's struggle for political prestige was of immediate concern. After winning several parliamentary seats, the organization was able to establish itself as a political superpower with an even more menacing military wing lurking in the background. Israel's 1985 partial withdrawal from Lebanon left Amal content with suspending most of its resistance activities, leaving Hezbollah the only, and therefore most progressive, party to gain further prestige "at the expense of the other organizations, especially on the Left."<sup>83</sup> This reality left Israel shaken, but alert.

### Preliminary Attacks

In April of 1996, the Israelis bombed Hezbollah bases in Southern Lebanon, Beirut, and the Bekaa Valley, striking a UN base in their conquests. This event and Hezbollah's retaliation are known as Operation Grapes of Wrath.<sup>84</sup> Israel's intent was to undermine popular support among the Lebanese Shi'i Muslims, as well as to "prompt

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<sup>82</sup> Hasan Nasrallah, Nicholas Noe, and Nicholas Blanford, *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayed Hasan Nasrallah*, (London: Verso, 2007), 221.

<sup>83</sup> Traboulsi, *Modern Lebanon*, 230.

<sup>84</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah*, 84.

Syria to reign in the organi[z]ation.”<sup>85</sup> Hezbollah’s rapid advancement after the civil war was nowhere near close to its end, its vast political presence provoking Israel’s complete withdraw from Lebanon in May of 2000, six weeks before their Hezbollah-prescribed deadline.

### **Hezbollah and Hariri**

Despite nearly five years of ceasefire after Israel extracted its troops, the early months of 2005 were riddled with chaos. Lebanese Prime Minister, Rafic Hariri, was assassinated by a car bomb in Beirut; his death to be understood in “the context of his status as the focus of Lebanese opposition to Syrian authority,”<sup>86</sup> thus sparking anti-Syrian rallies throughout Beirut. Consequently, the Anti-Syrian alliance led by Saad Hariri won control of parliament in Lebanon’s 2005 elections; not much later four pro-Syrian generals were charged with the murder of Rafic Hariri earlier the same year. This prompted the beginning of Hezbollah’s presence in the Hariri case and fortified the organization’s distrust of Israel, saying that the former Prime Minister’s tribunal “[was] in league” with the country to the south. Those accused of taking Hariri’s life are members of Hezbollah, urging other Shi’i revolutionaries to kidnap two Israeli soldiers as a way of mocking their military. As an older brother teases his younger, Hezbollah kept Israel in a headlock, causing the latter to grow furious; in July of, Israel decided to invade Lebanon once again, initiating the 34-Day War. To Secretary General Nasrallah, the

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<sup>85</sup> These attempts were; however, unsuccessful as a result of the horrible slaughter of more than 100 displaced civilians in Qana; Israel only managed to further stir Hezbollah’s hatred. Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Norton, *Hezbollah*, 127.

killing in Qana was a godsend. As Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff state in their book, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon*,

Once again the Arab public, large sections of the Lebanese citizenry, and, to a certain degree, even the international community lent their support to Hezbollah. The American networks provided wide coverage of the killing – as they had not done for years with event connected with Israel. Israel had been missing from American TV screens since the United States went to war in Iraq. Now, because of Qana, Israel returned to prime time.<sup>87</sup>

This phenomenon was possible, in part, because of Hezbollah's massive poster and billboard campaigns. Images of the party's violent behavior overwhelmed the streets of Lebanon once again, showing that Lebanese poster production, specifically in regard to Hezbollah, exists on a cyclical timeline; the party's initial posters exhibited the party's formation, later being subsumed by its violence. Then, Hezbollah posters revolved around the "together we build, together we liberate" slogan after the civil war. Consequently, posters during Hezbollah's reconstruction period portrayed the cosmopolitan grandeur that was to be Lebanon's future under Hezbollah's political, military, and culturally dominating reign. Not much later, however, the country, and its political posters, experienced a relapse in violent, wartime imagery.

### **A Divine Victory: Memorializing Hezbollah's Grandeur**

The 34-Day War against Israel took place at a moment of heightened internal conflict when the focus was not only on preventing Israel from occupying Lebanese territory, but their foreseen "success in the battlefield was also framed as deterring further US hegemony in the region with the latter's alleged project for a 'new Middle East,'"88

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<sup>87</sup> Harel and Isacharoff, *34 Days*, 167.

<sup>88</sup> Maasri, "Belonging," 154.

involving the abolition of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Thus, Hezbollah's political posters adopted a multilingual purpose. Now published in Arabic, French, and English, many of the party's graphics were accessible by a global audience; its newfound viewership gave the organization all the more motivation to assume the role of victor, spurring Hezbollah's *Divine Victory* poster campaign and subsequent artistic enthusiasm. It is important to note that the designer of this poster campaign did not define himself as a member of the organization, rather a mere individual in support of its conquests. Hezbollah's creative director, Mohammad Kawtharani had never met Nasrallah, but produced posters based upon a few customary guidelines provided by the secretary general himself.

In a poster series titled, *Our Air. Our Earth. Our Water. With Fire is Defended.* (fig. 30-33), Hezbollah uses Arabic and English to announce their triumph in the 34-Day War against Israel. The widespread announcement of this event meant that the posters were able to reach a public "beyond the confines of H[e]zb[o]llah's assumed Shi'i constituency."<sup>89</sup> Their graphic language was capable of hailing the Lebanese population as a whole, assuming a *national* victory, situating Lebanon within a global landscape. An article in *Newsweek International* referred to Hezbollah's poster aesthetic after the civil war as being "straight to the point."<sup>90</sup> While Islamist posters were once known for their "densely impenetrable Arabic, peppered with quotes from the Qur'an,"<sup>91</sup> Hezbollah posters produced for the Divine Victory Campaign emit a clear and singular message; the

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<sup>89</sup> Maasri, "Belonging," 150.

<sup>90</sup> Peraino, Kevin. "Winning Hearts and Minds; the New War in Lebanon is a Propaganda Battle – And Hezbollah is Coming Out on Top. Some Tips From a Master." *Newsweek International*. 2 Oct. 2006. Accessed 27 August 2014, <<http://www.newsweek.com/winning-hearts-and-minds-111623>>.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.



party is akin to public knowledge and demands. In this particular poster series, one sees a simplified slogan pasted onto an even more simplified image; whether it be tanks on the ground, UH-60 helicopter attacks in the air, war ship bombings over water, or missile launches exploding with fire, Hezbollah showed that it was the dominant party over all elements. These 34 days may have been characterized by chaos, but it was a chaos that existed on Hezbollah's accord. As Lara Deeb writes in her article, "Exhibiting the 'Just-Lived Past': Hizbullah's Nationalist Narratives in Transnational Political Context," such posters simultaneously "dr[a]w people into 'the Resistance community,' delineated that community's boundaries, and articulated a particular narrative of Lebanese nationalism and the position of Lebanon in the Middle East vis-à-vis Israel."<sup>92</sup> The process of creating a political narrative in the poster format is of a "dual nature."<sup>93</sup> On one hand, such posters were meant to appeal to an internal Lebanese public; the goal was to gain solidarity with Hezbollah's political and military mobilization. On the other, Hezbollah posters produced during the 34-Day War were successful in reaching an "external, transnational audience,"<sup>94</sup> earning the group and its visual culture notoriety on a global scale. One of the most striking aspects of this campaign is its being crafted explicitly for a broad public, particularly a foreign one. While Hezbollah strives to reach the Lebanese masses, it too attempted to employ text and imagery that was readable by Western populations, specifically the United States, as it is often held responsible for Israel's attacks in Lebanon. Thus, Hezbollah posters deviated from the intention of

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<sup>92</sup> Lara Deeb, "Exhibiting the 'Just-Lived Past': Hizbullah's Nationalist Narratives in Transnational Political Context." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 50.02, (2008), 370.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 374.

political graphics produced by the various factions throughout the civil war, and even further from Western definitions of propaganda. Instead of poster imagery being meant to reach a smaller, distinct crowd, as discussed in Chapter One, Hezbollah posters thrived on their global display. Over and above this, posters designed in conjunction with the Divine Victory Campaign of 2006 were not necessarily focused on inciting national pride, but were instead concerned with declaring absolute victory. Manifestly, Hezbollah posters were still physical sites of memorialization, but no longer for martyrs. In order to move forward with their political and military domination, the party had to memorialize successful conquests under Hezbollah's reign. There was no need to commemorate martyrs when Lebanon as a whole was worthy of memorialization in company with Hezbollah's grandeur. The aforementioned poster series memorializes particular moments of armed accomplishment.

As such, a poster titled, *You Are Our Crowning Glory, You Are God's Men, With Who We Can Accomplish Victory... And We Have Been Victorious* (fig. 34), represents remembrance as a means of moving forward valiantly. Two soldiers, clad in camouflage, stand with their machine guns pointed toward the horizon. Upon further examination, it becomes apparent that the men were guarding Lebanon's southern border with Israel; their weapons are positioned to kill the oncoming enemy. The poster speaks of national protection as well as the necessity in being vigilant. Israel's 2006 attack did not come as a surprise; this poster told its viewers that Lebanese citizens, thus, should not be surprised by future confrontations; with Hezbollah's watchful eye, there was no need for Lebanese citizens to fear their southern border. Despite the figures' guns being raised, the Arabic slogan beneath the image alludes to Hezbollah's already achieved victory; Hezbollah

soldiers are the last standing. These are “God’s Men” with who Hezbollah, and the Lebanese Shi’i population as a whole, can and have achieved victory. One must also note that, unlike the previous political posters studied in this thesis, the heroes face away from the viewer. Again, their individual identities do not matter; their allegiance to Hezbollah’s cause makes them worthy of memorialization. This poster stood as a site for the national commemoration of Hezbollah’s presumed victory in the 34-Day War. “The photograph in which [the soldiers] appear carefully stages them as disciplined, courageous men belonging to a military institution that has taken upon itself the duty of safeguarding the nation.”<sup>95</sup> Hezbollah’s culture of resistance was continued, warranting public mobilization and reestablishing the ideal of the *ummah* (Islamic community) in the twenty-first century, especially among other Shi’i revolutionaries.

In her research, Zeina Maasri argues that political posters produced during the civil war provided sites of symbolic struggle; I would further this argument by stating that Lebanese, particularly Hezbollah, posters were always, to some degree, ephemeral memorials. In the case of the aforementioned print, Hezbollah alluded to their previous martyr posters, but transformed the topic to adhere to the 34-Day War and self-declared *Divine Victory*. By doing so, Hezbollah’s political posters of 2006 blurred the line between historical/commemorative narratives and the construction of the future; the latter cannot exist without the memorialization of the former. In her book *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon*, Lucia Volk states,

Political elites in Lebanon build memorials after war and tragedy to exercise their power of world making. In particular, memorials have played an important part in creating shared values and meanings in a society marked by cultural and political divisions. In creating

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<sup>95</sup> Maasri, “Belonging,” 150.

commemorative narratives, political elites have sought to transcend competing narratives of division and hatred... some political elites chose to remember [history] as a means to validate national identities.<sup>96</sup>

The public played an important role in bringing these sites to life through image memorialization, despite their transitory existence. Such posters offered Lebanese viewers a physical space to learn, commemorate, and construct their futures as a unified community – options that were made possible, if not enforced, by Hezbollah. The images provided somewhat of a pilgrimage destination to those willing to follow the party's Islamic path of resistance. Much like a communal gathering at a mosque or funeral, these posters generated public observance and commemorative action, making each a momentary monument. As Deeb reiterates, “contemporary warfare includes battles over the representations and meanings of ‘current events’ and the just-lived past, over the images of parties to the conflict on a transnational stage, and over broader spheres of cultural production and meaning making.”<sup>97</sup> It is within this framework that one understands the impact of political posters on redefining sites of history and memory, as well as propaganda, within a Lebanese context.

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<sup>96</sup> Volk, *Memorials*, 37-38.

<sup>97</sup> Deeb, *Exhibiting*, 396.

Figures 30-33, Artist unknown, *Our Air. Our Earth. Our Water. With Fire is Defended.* Series of four posters from the *Divine Victory* campaign, Hezbollah Media Office, 2006

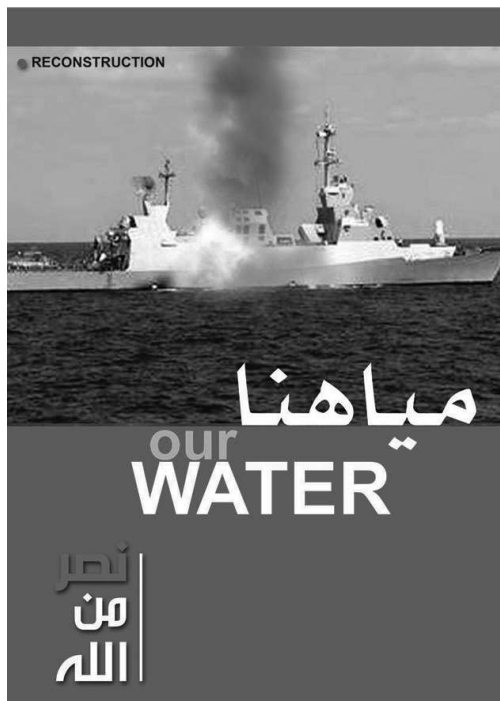
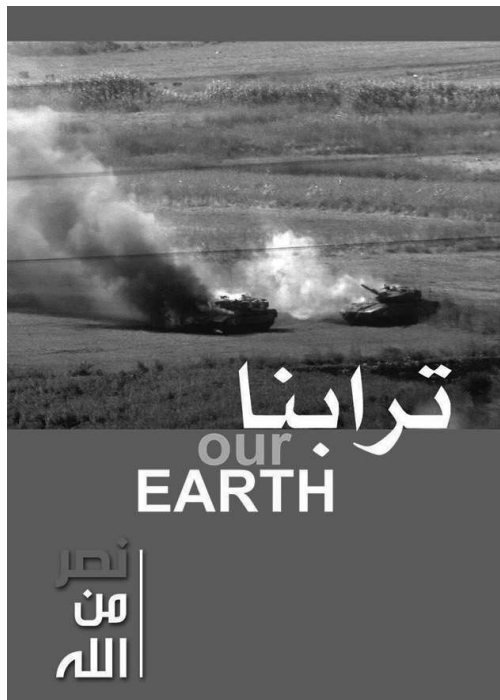
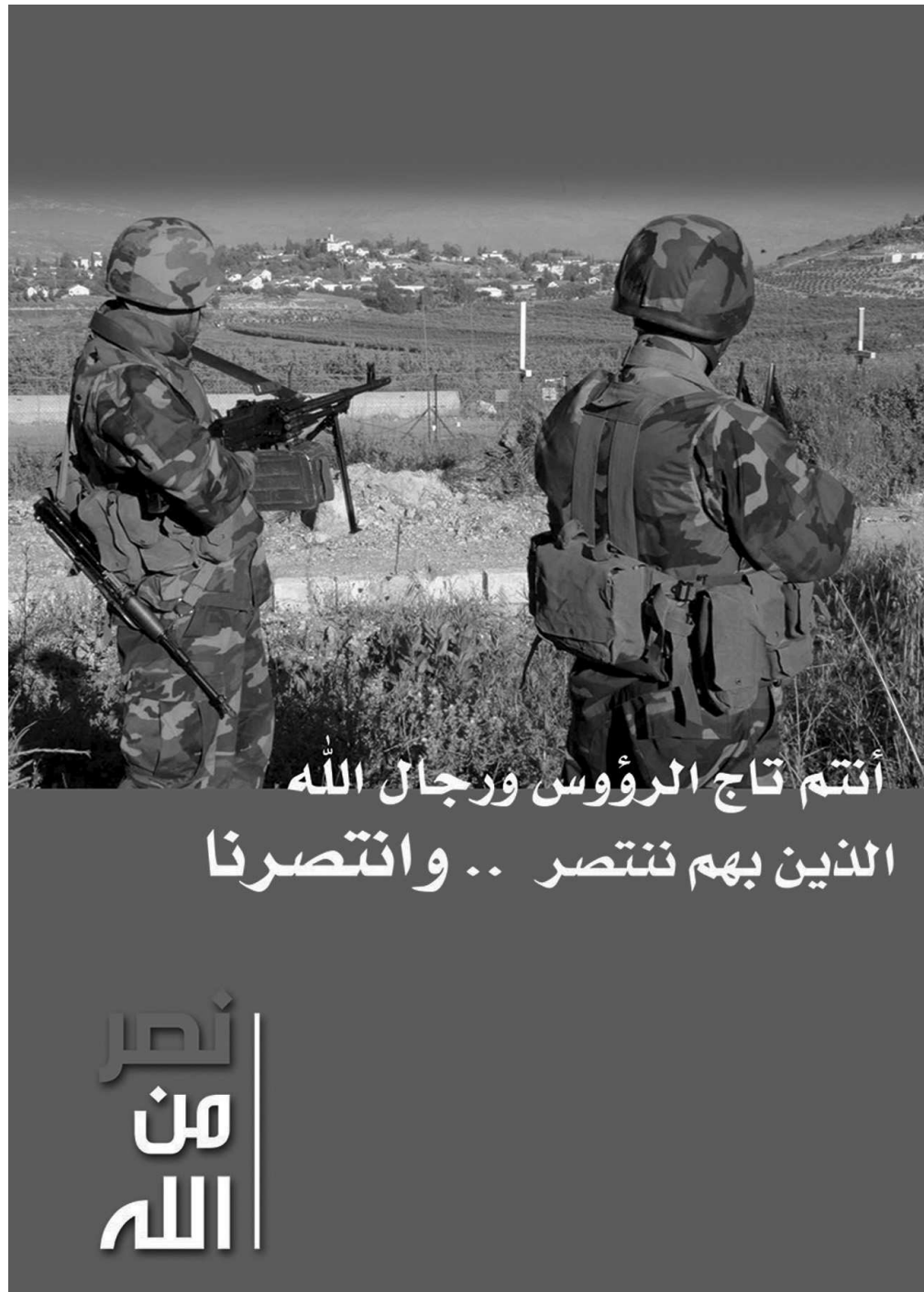


Figure 34, Artist unknown, *You Are Our Crowning Glory, You Are God's Men, With Who We Can Accomplish Victory... And We Have Been Victorious*, Divine Victory campaign, Hezbollah Media Office, 2006



## Conclusion

Though aesthetic genres and stylistic traits of past wartime prints are present, this thesis has explored the concept of the Lebanese civil war political poster, stemming into that of Hezbollah, as an innovative realm of artistic design relevant to the development of visual culture in the Middle East. I have attempted to approach this subject as a neutral party that seeks to analyze the posters' aesthetic genres and significance within a greater art historical and design discourse. As such, this thesis has argued that Lebanese political posters, particularly those produced by the Party of God, established physical sites of memorialization – a topic that transformed alongside the viewer's political, military, and social experiences. Despite their fleeting existence, Lebanese political posters sought to establish a community of commemoration, often inciting public action, resistance, remembrance, and education. These images provided the foundation for Lebanon's historical reconstruction and future nation building. Such images brought to the fore memories of violent clashes between Christian, Druze, Sunnis, and Shi'i Muslims alike, the reasons for such clashes only now being remembered with visual aides. The online poster archive at the American University of Beirut and the recently rediscovered Hezbollah Media Office archive have allowed me to regenerate a period of Lebanese history characterized by lacking documentation and public amnesia. Hezbollah was one of the few Lebanese political parties that maintained an archive of all of their printed posters, which the party kept in large archival albums. This thesis has been an attempt to shed light on the development of these posters during and directly following the Lebanese civil war and how such a collection is situated within the discourse of historical

and political design – a topic significantly under researched from an art historical perspective.

I have selected certain posters for this study to highlight the diversity in civil war ideologies and the corresponding designers that have established Lebanon, once again, as a country with rich artistic/design history. Over and above this, this thesis aimed to critically redefine political propaganda as that which revolves around *action* and *practice*, the two primary notions of Islam. As such, I have argued that the political posters being produced during and directly following the civil war deviated from traditional propaganda in that they were not created by a consolidated elite for a unilateral population, thus challenging the way such posters were perceived by American and European spectators. The posters designed by more than a dozen active political and religious factions in the civil war were immediately telling of Lebanon's divergence from traditional propaganda definitions, that which has been established by figures such as Noam Chomsky for a Western audience. Because Hezbollah strived to attain a transnational viewership, one notices that the party deviated further from traditional propagandistic methods, which sought to undermine independent thought and prevent an understanding of global issues. It is misleading to think that such posters were not supplemented by external influences and aesthetics, but they were undeniably linked to specific rising conflicts and the construction of visual identities intrinsic to Lebanon.

Hezbollah visuals have become infamous for their ability to prompt public commemoration of martyrs and Lebanon's grandeur under the organization's reign. I have argued that such posters transcend their two-dimensional boundaries to become physical sites of education and memorialization. Citizens gained a sense of community



from crowding around these urban images and taking part in collective remembrance. I have examined Lebanese political posters as artistic artifacts that are incredibly telling of the country's diverse population and lacking political (and religious) cohesion. In this analysis, it is ever clear that political graphics produced throughout the last few decades should be studied and appreciated for their individual contributions to Lebanon's image wars. Manifestly, the posters displayed by the Lebanese civil war and Hezbollah created an alternative culture of propaganda and memorialization. To reiterate Jonathan Crary,

[Humans are] swamped with images and information about the past and recent catastrophes – but there is also a growing incapacity to engage these traces in ways that could move beyond them, in the interest of a common future... images [in the broad sense of the term] have become one of the many depleted and disposable elements that, in their intrinsic achievability, end up never being discarded.<sup>98</sup>

The posters' presence on the streets of Lebanon means they were inevitably seen; it is their content that provoked communal gathering and physical commemoration.

The first chapter of this study aimed to provide a broad overview of the participating fronts in the Lebanese civil war and the poster genres of each. In this examination I have argued that such images are proof of the country's lacking unified aesthetic. Instead, each party and organization produced political graphics that aligned with their specific goals, histories, and intended audiences, allowing readers to understand Lebanon's dismissal of Western propaganda techniques. Here, the emphasis was often placed on the memorialization of political figures and historical martyrs.

The second chapter illustrated the formation of Hezbollah and the civil war's concluding events. With Hezbollah's establishment there appeared a poster genre revolving around post-war reconstruction efforts and the party's rapid advancement as

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<sup>98</sup> Crary, 24/7, 34.

both a military and political superpower. In his chapter, I stated that artists and graphic designers momentarily set aside violent imagery to focus on Lebanon's prosperous future. This phenomenon was; however, short-lived.

The Israeli invasion of 2006, the topic of discussion in Chapter Three, incited the return of aggressive resistance graphics. I have argued that this period of time was characterized by Hezbollah's dominance, particularly within Lebanon's visual culture. The *Divine Victory* campaign published images in both the poster and billboard formats to promote its Shi'i customs, denounce Israel's legitimacy, educate young revolutionaries, and to memorialize specific moments of the organization's splendor.

As such, this study has aimed to highlight the transformative quality of Lebanon's political posters, their only unifying quality being to memorialize, despite differences in subject matter. The Lebanese civil war has been subject to much scholarship, but seldom has this research been conducted in the field of art history. It is my hopes that this thesis has provided a basis for further research on Lebanese political posters and their existence as momentary memorials.

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