

ty. It does, however, raise certain problems for the occupying force itself. Despite the financial contribution of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, which was established under the Riyadh Agreements at 65 per cent of the costs of the Arab Deterrent Force for the first six months of occupation, Syrian expenditures resulting from the occupation amount to more than \$1 million a day. Politically speaking, Syria's freedom of action with regard to Lebanon is strictly limited by the jealous watch kept as much by the other Arab countries as by Israel and the United States. Tel Aviv's veto on the stationing of Arab Deterrent Force troops in Southern Lebanon represents both a warning to and a serious restriction on Syrian authority in Lebanon. American assent to the Syrian occupation, obtained over Israeli objections, only covers the peacekeeping role of the Syrians. Finally, from an inter-Arab and domestic Syrian point of view, the ambiguity of the Syrian policy during the civil war leaves Syria very vulnerable to attacks from left-wing Arab regimes and even from groups within Syria itself. In fact, as was the case during the final months of the civil war, those who are hoping for an abrupt change in Lebanon set their best hopes on an overthrow of the Assad regime.

Thus the Syrian tutelage in Lebanon, far from being a historical opportunity for realizing the age-old ambition of a "Greater Syria", represents a heavy burden for the Syrian republic, if not a threat to its own stability. While addressing a Lebanese delegation in August, President Assad declared that Lebanon and Syria made up a single nation, a single country, but two states. He did not mention a plan for annexation, but the statement was both bitter and ironic.

#### **De facto partition**

The occupation and the influence exerted by Syria on the domestic policy of the country are obvious, and the *de facto* partitioning of Lebanon, while not quite as evident, is nevertheless very real. The "green line" that separated the Christian and Moslem areas during the civil war has remained engraved both on the way of thinking of the Lebanese and on their daily lives. There are very few Moslems or other sympathizers of the "Moslem progressive" camp who would even think of going to live "on the other side", and although, in spite of the exodus of numerous foreign residents, a district in the Moslem western area of the capital such as Ras Beyrouth continues to display a fine denominational heterogeneity, it represents an isolated exception. Financial and commercial establishments are making arrangements in recognition of this tacit division,

and it is common practice for a bank, or even a hairdressing salon, to divide its operations according to sector in order to avoid difficulties for its employees or customers and — who knows? — even to provide against a possible renewal of hostilities.

This segregation, which is still incomplete because of communication needs within the capital, is more noticeable when one ventures outside Beirut. It is very evident when one travels from Beirut to the small village of Jounieh, the modern political and economic centre of the Christians, with its new commercial and port facilities, or to Mount Lebanon, the unconditionally Maronite fiefdom. The following incident reflects the present atmosphere. It is said that the key figure in the abortive *coup* of March 11, 1976, the Moslem General Ahdab, having reached the summer resort of Broumana in the Lebanese mountains, was abused, slapped and turned away by youths from the village, one of whom was the son of a prominent Christian deputy. The deputy apologized to General Ahdab and celebrated with him several days later at Broumana, but few incidents of this sort end on such a happy note.

It seems that the first consequence of the Lebanese civil war was to stir up sectarianism and weaken the state. Indeed, there are obvious rifts in the unity of each camp that reveal the social basis of Lebanese sectarianism — the left-wing Christians, through a "patriotic grouping", agitate against the dominant ideology of their fellow Christians, while the sympathy of the Sunnite Moslem middle class with the aims of the Christian Falangist Party is barely concealed. These aims are to ensure order and to remove the Palestinian troublemakers from Lebanon. It is with scepticism, however, that the Lebanese view the few loudly-trumpeted attempts at national reconciliation. Despite the fact that the powerful Christian leader, Camille Chamoun, offered an *iftar*, the traditional banquet of the month of Ramadan, for the former Prime Minister, Takiedinne Solh, and that the supreme head of the Falangists, Pierre Gemayel, anxious to keep up with his allies on the road to reconciliation, followed Chamoun's lead by organizing an *iftar* for Saeb Salam, the strong man of Moslem Beirut, the two camps are no closer to reconciliation. In fact, these initiatives have led to accusations of opportunism from both sides.

The weakening of an already weak state is the first obstacle on the road to any real reconciliation. Since it achieved independence in 1943, Lebanon has been based on the shaky compromise of the "National Pact", which divided the elected positions

*Segregation more noticeable outside Beirut*

*Attempts at national reconciliation viewed with scepticism*