**Hasan Nasrallah
and the Issues of National Liberation**

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\*\* Most of the texts in this booklet have already been published in the Lebanese al-Akhbar newspaper (in Arabic) on the dates provided.

**Introductions and Features**

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There is a qualitative difference between resistance movements and national liberation movements. National liberation carries the concept of resistance against occupiers but it goes beyond it to encompass concepts of fighting colonialism, national independence, national state, development, opposing comprador-ism, and realizing social democracy, liberties, human rights, and progressive human disposition, which opposes reactionism, intolerance, and excluding others. Resistance movements do not necessarily include all these concepts, instead they settle for fighting against occupiers. In our countries, there are two recent examples: The first example is the Iraqi resistance that fought the American occupation until it militarily expelled it. However, it did not adopt independence or development and became mired in reactionism and corruption, and was even unable to rebuild the state. Another example is Hamas, which fought the Israeli occupation but lacked the most basic concepts and policies of national liberation.

In Latin America, the cultural environment is similar to the Arab one in terms of the strong popular presence of religion. The Church in the oppressed continent has long been employed against its peoples until striving fathers educed what was known as the "liberation theology". In short, it is a reinterpretation of Christianity through concepts of national-social liberation.

In our countries, such experience has not taken place. On the contrary, Islamist movements have always been reactionary. The Muslim Brotherhood was born in the arms of the British occupation of Egypt and with the blessing of the royal palace. It opposed liberation policies, progressive Nasserist actions, and the peasants’ Baath Revolution in Syria. From the heart of the Muslim Brotherhood emerged the terrorist takfiri thought, at the hands of Sayyid Qutb, the godfather of all subsequent terrorist movements. As is well known, the Muslim Brotherhood played a key role in establishing al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. As such, Arab political Islam has been characterized by three features: first, conformity with the comprador liberal economy that follows global capitalism; second, deep hostility toward nationalism, whether Arab nationalism or that pertaining to Mashreq-i Souraqiya[[1]](#footnote-1); third, enmity toward communism, which rendered political Islam a tool of imperialism throughout the Cold War.

Hezbollah is a unique case in Arab political Islam. The party was born amid a ruthless confrontation with the Israeli occupation, and it is associated with a grand popular national revolution, i.e. the Iranian Revolution as well as the Arab liberation center in Syria.

At first, the party emerged as a resistance movement that had no national liberation dimension. It fought Israel but was hostile toward communism and clashed with the Lebanese Communist Party. Moreover, its outlook on the West was bound by that of the Brotherhood, which views the West as one entity that opposes Islam and has a unified essential nature rather than nations and societies fighting globally. Accordingly, the party stood with the reactionary separatist Bosnian movement that was backed by the U.S. against nationalist Serbia, which opposes the imperialist West and is pro-Arab.

Hezbollah surpassed this primitive stage, especially due to its deepening ties with Damascus in the 1990s. It focused on resistance, but it joined Rafic al-Hariri’s bloc in a marriage with benefits or a co-habitation. In this arrangement, the party settled for resistance and building its social, administrative, and media institutions. Meanwhile, it left Lebanon exposed to comprador, neo-liberal plunder at the hands of the Hariri bloc that was allied with the most corrupt wing in the Syrian regime. Perhaps this co-habitation, which eliminated politics and culture in Lebanon, was justified by the need to focus on liberating the land. Objectively, this stage ended in 2000, when the Israeli enemy was forced to retreat from most of southern Lebanon.

At that point, Hezbollah sought to legitimize its presence and weapons in a positive light by presenting itself as a defense force that preserves Lebanon’s independence and dignity. It succeeded in justifying its new role through its decisive victory over the Israeli aggression on Lebanese soil in 2006. Today we commemorate that victory but with full awareness that its significance, in a strategic sense, has passed as Hezbollah has been recognized as a Lebanese deterrence force, period.

The third leap in Hezbollah’s journey is expressed in its participation in defending the Syrian Arab Republic in facing the imperialist-reactionary, Arab-neo-Ottoman war. For the party, as a resistance and defense force, there was no escape from partaking in this war due to geopolitical, security reasons. Syria’s defeat would have resulted in Hezbollah being hit in the back and the party was not going to wait for terrorists to attack its strongholds. Instead confronting them in Syria itself was wiser.

However, Hezbollah’s involvement in the Syrian war has historically situated it in a new stage. It is fighting terrorist forces that have an Islamist character, and it is defending a nationalist-secular regime. In this war, the party also stands in a multicultural, multi-religious trench starting with Iran to Russia, and to China. While Hezbollah has faced hostility from Islamists for intervening in Syria, it has found genuine allies among progressives, secularists, nationalists, and leftists. Moreover, it has found among Christians, for example, a social base that is no less loyal than its Shiite one.

All this ought to shatter assumptions and put the party on the track of a long-awaited intellectual reassessment. At the same time, ignoring this transformation would affect the party’s future, cohesion, influence, and alliances.

Hezbollah is not expected to give up its religious *marji’iyyah*, but rather to reinterpret and re-conceptualize it in the context of a “liberation jurisprudence” and in line with three courses. The first is adopting the Mashreq-i and Arab nationalist idea. The second is opposing capitalism and adopting a popular national development project and social democracy. The third is espousing a secular civil state project.

The religious heritage of the party has the basis for all that; Ahl al-Bayt are the noblest of Arabs, the Fertile Crescent is the refuge of Shiism, and al-Husayn is first and foremost a martyr for social justice. Moreover, in Imam Ali’s rationale there is a humanitarian, Islamic secularism that is outlined in his saying: “People are of two kinds: they are either your brothers in faith or your equals in humanity.” In the same light, we can add the following: your peers in nationalism, citizenship, and social struggle.

 **(2)**

In the Mashreq, religions and doctrines have always been authoritarianrubrics and *ʿasabiyyahs* imposed on the public who, in the reality of life, only knew one religion, that of the peasants. It is linked to three basic beliefs that do not express so much that which is sacred, but the life of popular peasant groups, their aspirations for peace, security, and harvest. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that their life, with its pains and hopes, in itself became sanctified. The first belief is centered on the individual, heroic, defiant martyr: Adonis, Inanna, Jesus, and al-Husayn. The key idea here, which the saintly hero personifies, is the idea of individual human responsibility to fight injustice even if those suffering from it have given up their cause.

The second belief is the return of the sacred hero once again fueled by the power of history that will end oppression and conflicts and bring aboutthe sought after age of human brotherhood. The third belief, the one I will be addressing today, is the breathing belief of social struggle that is linked to the brave hero, the champion of peasants who is capable of confronting oppressors and providing security to the peasant society against the desert beast. He is Genorgius (the peasant or farmer), also known as Georgios, Mar Gerges, Georges, Grace, and George. This champion of peasants has a title that has always preceded its name: it is “Mar” (Master). In Arabic, he is called **“**Jurja**”**, but his popular name is **“**al-Khidr al-Akhdar**”**, the fearless young man who possesses the invincible sword. He is Imam Ali. "There is no man like Ali. There is no sword like Thulfeqar". To bless their children, Muslim and Christian women in Jordan say "Allah and Ali".

I have studied popular religion in eastern Jordan, and there I found a quintessential setting of the conflict between two types of clans. The first type are semi-Bedouin, semi-peasant clans that settled in mountains and plains. These clans cultivated wheat and grazed sheep and goats, which required them to constantly move within a limited area. The second type are camel Bedouins, i.e. unproductive desert clans that make their living through raids in the “people and the spoil” formula.

I found the religion of the settled clans—before the establishment of the state and modern religious institutions—to be one, despite the presence of a variety of religions and doctrines. It is centered on "al-Khidr al-Akhdar". The name is clearly associated with agriculture[[2]](#footnote-2). Shrines of Al-Khidr have been shared by Muslims and Christians. In fact, they were set up in middle locations between residential areas, as is the case of the shrine of al-Khidr that is situated between Mahis (which is predominantly Muslim) and Fuheis (which is predominantly Christian) in the Jordanian Balqa.

The religion of al-Khidr was not detached from life and its actual struggles. He was embodied in an organized tribal force of tough fighters led by an elite that traced back to Ahl al-Bayt. Accordingly, it fulfilled preconditions of both power and sacredness. The elite itself ran its own agricultural activity and championed peasants against the oppression of camel Bedouins and other authoritarian oppressors. This religious outlook was long embodied in a political relation. For example, the Adwan tribe, whose leadership traced back to Ahl al-Bayt, supported the peasants of FuheisagainsttheGazawiEmirate. In Jordanian social history, during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, there were many incidents in which tribes united under a leadership from Ahl al-Bayt to champion peasants. This pattern was evident in many parts of Bilad al-Sham and Iraq, where it took on various forms that were essentially the same.

The socio-political organization in the Arabian Peninsula was not much different from that model. Most of the ruling-protecting families in the areas of the Peninsula were tribal elites who traced back to Ahl al-Bayt. They organized a fighting force and brought together productive groups of farmers, fishermen, divers, and sailors to face roaming camel Bedouin raiders. During the clash, the “people and the spoil” tribes adopted the Wahhabi religion in order to form a sacred fighting force to defeat the resistance alliance formed among elites who belonged to Ahl al-Bayt, fighters, and producers and to break their ideological bond, which was based on various local forms of popular Shiism.

Claims about the Jewish roots of Mohamad bin Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabism, are not baseless. Regardless of the validity of those claims, the intellectual origins of Wahhabism-and all the schools of Salafism and political Islam that have stemmed from and resembled it–are from Talmudic Judaism. They belong to the traditions of god Yahweh, lord of soldiers, killer, invader, and head of the gang of thieves, who, in the name of the lord, kill those who are different, destruct their land, enslave their women, and burn their crops and cattle (the peasants’ riches). This is what Wahhabism has done ever since its initial raids in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, and Bilad al-Sham. Unabated, it continues to do so fueled by petrodollars and the imperialist support of Zionist and Wahhabi aggressors.

In this time, we claim that the resistance has reestablished the religion of the Mashreq, in strife and in spirit. Al-Khadr al-Akhdar ………… does not die.

**(3)**

I use the term “Islamic fascism” and call for using it in describing takfiris, sectarians, and fundamentalists who follow Wahhabism, the Brotherhood, and their offshoots that are in line with the terrorist course defined by Sayyid Qutb in his book *Milestones Along the Way* and his well-known interpretation *In the Shade of the Quran*. Every terrorist organization that claims to follow Islam is Wahhabi or pertains to the Brotherhood in terms of its origin, approach, or methodology. Even Shiite organizations that practiced terrorism for an extensive time in Iraq followed the Brotherhood’s approach.

The central governing idea in all Islamic movements is that jihad is two types: defensive jihad, which falls under the concept of national resistance, as is the case with Hezbollah and offensive Jihad (Jihad al-Fateh), as is the case with terrorist organizations.

Regarding defensive jihad, resistance is not specifically an Islamic idea but a basic idea of all peoples regardless of religion and race. Yet, Islamic resistance organizations employ religious mobilization as a tool for mobilization, recruitment, and inspiring sacrifice not in orderto give Sharia or religious ideas the upper hand but for the sake of indiscriminately defending the homeland and society. As for offensive jihad, Judaism and the Western Church were familiar with it during Medieval Ages. Yet, it is jurisprudentially linked to Islam and based specifically on an ahistorical interpretation of the Tawbah Chapter of the Quran.

Our aim here is not to get into a discussion on jurisprudence but what ought to be emphasized is that offensive jihad is not the general approach in Islamic thought. Instead, it is a specific approach linked, at the individual level, to sickpsychological inclinations to unleash primitive impulses (murder, pillage, and rape). And at the socio-political level it is linked to Bedouinism, tribal *ʿasabiyyah* and the “people and the spoil” mindset.

Imam Ali laid out a conceptual framework in order to set aside religious texts from political rivalries. In directing Ibn Abbas, who was heading to negotiate with the *Khawarij*, he said the following: “The Quranis amultifaceted carrier**;** you say, and they say. Instead, challenge them with the Sunnah as they will not be able to evade it.” He also set a limit on all religious, cultural, and racial conflicts by stating that “people are of two kinds: they are either your brothers in faith or your equals in humanity”. It is a fundamental human vision that leaves no place for takfir, discrimination, aggression, or overpowering others, etc. In addition to the numerous Islamic schools of thought that follow Ali’s humanitarianism, there are other humanitarian schools of thought: Sufism, rationalism and realism, which brought about what is known as *Shami*[[3]](#footnote-3) Sunni Islam. I do not wish to elaborate on this, I just intended to say that the term “Islamic fascism” does not refer to Islam as if it were fascist in its entirety but refers to a particular approach and methodology that are established on a specific interpretation of Islam. It is an interpretation that invalidates tens of verses, which have definitive meanings and which encourage pluralism, in favor of specific verses linked to historical events from the Tawbah Chapter. The latter verses encourage fighting infidels, polytheists, and *Kitabiyyin*[[4]](#footnote-4). This has also opened the door to accusing Muslims of being infidels by claiming a monopoly on true Islam and considering anyone who does not yield to this claim an infidel or a polytheist, who, therefore, ought to be fought.

Why then, do we not suffice with the term “takfiri currents”? Because it is a term that leads to a religious dispute whereas the phenomenon we face in the Arab world today is a socio-political phenomenon that fits the fascist description.

Here, we will not overlook the problem that has resulted from the fact that neo-conservatives and the right in the West have used the term “Islamic fascism”. They have set out from the clash of religions and civilizations and have characterized a terrorist phenomenon, which they have played the biggest part in creating, as fascism on a “moral” ground. However, that does not discount the term in its scientific sense.

Italian Fascism, German Nazism, Japanese militarism, and other similar movements that Europe witnessed and had a hand in their outbreak, prior to World War II, expresseddifficult times in the crisis of global capitalism in facing the Labour and Socialist expansion. These movements were founded on the basis of racial superiority and the absolute right of superior races to subjugate others through force. Fascism used to stem from the idea of restoring the Roman Empire just as Islamic fascists seek to bring back the caliphate. The West saw in fascist movements, in their various forms, a solution to the crisis of capitalism by ending class struggle, forcing an increase in productivity at home, plundering other nations, and destroying the Soviet Union. After the West had colluded with the fascist-Nazi beast, it realized that it was going to crush everyone. At that point, an international alliance was formed, similar to the one Russians, Iranians, Syria and Hezbollah are proposing today to face Islamic fascism.

Why are they fascist? ISIS, al-Nusra, and other terrorist organizations are not a mere extension of al-Qaeda, which the U.S. previously employed in Afghanistan and then in Iraq. Instead, they are an expression of a total collapse caused by the exacerbating crisis of the Arab order, which has been led by the Gulf since the 1970s. The latter no longer merely follows Western capitalism, as is commonly believed, but has become a partner that has fallen into a two-fold crisis. The first part is due to the ramifications of the crisis of global capitalism that has imploded since 2008 as the world has been witnessing the rise of grand economic powers such as China. The second part is because the Arab regional order fell into crisis by failing to solve issues of development, modernization, and social and political democracy.

Given this international and regional context, jihadi Salafi movements, “al-Qaeda”, and Brotherhood-affiliated movements, etc. have fallen under a fascist movement whose comprehensive title I call“the Islamic State (ISIS)”. Just like European Nazi-fascism, it is based on a popular right that developed fromthe degeneration of a socio-political order that had already been in crisis.

Sayyed[[5]](#footnote-5) Hasan Nasrallah’s call for a comprehensive coalition that sets all disagreements aside in order to confront ISIS and its affiliates is a cry of the historical conscience. It is a cry that tomorrow everyone will find themselves taking part in what it calls for or remorseful for colluding with terrorism that will unquestionably make them pay the price.

**(4)**

I had no doubt that Mrs. Fairouz is fond of Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah. Nonetheless, Ziad al-Rahbani, during a touchy and witty interview with al-Ahd news website on December 16, 2013—which was finer than most of his other interviews—preferred turning that intuition into news. I do not know when my intuition that Nasrallah is himself a fan of Um Ziad[[6]](#footnote-6) will be confirmed. This is how I see it: It is impossible for the finest two people from Lebanese society notto have an existing spiritual connection. The two legends are saturated with treasures of the spirit, cosmic secrets, innovation, captivating presence, and modesty. All the dignified stands for nationalism and humanitarianism Fairouz embodied on stage Nasrallah embodied in reality. She resembles a humanitarian, cultural beacon, capable—sufficingwith the energy of freedom and love she has instilled in us—of escaping to a silence loaded with meanings. Whereas Nasrallah, as a political leader, is impelledto make appearances and speak.

If it were not for the struggle’s necessity and political obligations, I assume Nasrallah would have preferred silence like Fairouz, leaving the energy of resistance to act upon our spirits without speeches. However, the fact that an artist and intellectual the weight of Ziad keeps an archive of these speeches means they have some kind of artistic shade, some kind of spirit, that we, taken by daily politics, cannot appreciate. The archive kept by our generation’s prodigy is not arbitrary. Its artistic day will come. How will it be? When? That is kept in the realm of surprises. With Fairouz—and Assi—the matter is simpler: For example, I feel that in the interplay of time and meaning, the musical intro to the *Al-Sawwan Mountains* play is an anthem that was written to Hezbollah fighters.

In the jargon of the Lebanese left, there is a cynical criticism of the image of the homeland Fairouz sings of. However, does not Nasrallah—and his men—in fact realize genuine features of that image; “al-Sawwan Mountains… are still resisting, they have been marched upon, tragedy has befallen them…”, but they kneel not, flee not, and fear not.

Attacks no longer come only from the south. They were never only from the south, but today the alliance between Tel Aviv and Riyadh has become barefaced. Whatever the occupation army pulled back from, now the men of the House Saud, takfiris and terrorists jump to achieve. The objective is clear: to hit the security of Hezbollah’s milieu, bases, and institutions through assassinations and booby-traps. The Saudi-Israeli plan sequentially escalates. The plan is to drain the resistance internally and to force it to fall back. Exhausted and broken in Syria and Lebanon, this is the prelude for the Zionist war machine to pounce on it.

Bandar Bin Sultan is setting the stage for a Talmudic revenge for the 2006 defeat. The dark “Arab Spring” has made way for getting rid of the rebellious “Sawwan Mountains”, from southern Lebanon to Damascus. The effective weapon is hatred, that demon who runs off**,** fleeing the echoes of Fairouz’s songs, especially when “love is anger”.

Saudi Arabia is waging a war of hatred on Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Bahrain, and Yemen. It has no limits, of any kind, on the deliberate killing of innocent people. Its criminals are losing in military battles against the Syrian army. As a result, it has been indiscriminately bombarding two besieged towns inhabited by Shiite strivers in northern Syria. This results in more deaths of “others”: the Shiites of “Noubbol” and “Zahraa” in Idlib’s countryside following Alawites, Christians, and Druze—as well as non-Wahhabi Sunnis—from Latakia’s countryside to Damascus’s neighborhoods to Adra, and including “al-Dahiyeh” and southern Lebanon.

Fairouz and Nasrallah. This is the response of the civilized Mashreq to the Wahhabi desert: armed love; we shall not hate and we shall resist! The hearts that carry “al-Sawwan Mountains” on the shoulders of time will not be mired in hatred but will prevail through the dignity of the fighting anger. The resistance’s choice, in spirit, thought, pen, art, and weapon, goes against hatred and fighting victims. Instead, it aims to bring down the Zionist-Wahhabi fortresses of Talmud and liberate humans: “I wish I could go around and liberate those enslaved!”

A minor unconcealed “secret” in a news interview, a secret Ziad, like a child, fears he has given away illuminates the joy of rediscovery: anger not hatred, resistance not murder, and the brotherhood of humans, who no religion, doctrine, or ethnicity renders them “others” deserving of slaughter, the way the Saudi-Israeli alliance does, but brothers, peers and free citizens.

Fairouz and Nasrallah. It is not new. It is the “bride’s bracelet” itself… made with gold, blood, promise, and will. We have seen its glimmer, and in the midst of the anguish, pain, and tears we have taken a quick glance at its approaching victory from Jerusalem to Damascus, Baghdad, Beirut and Amman, to Antakia… and the rest of the Mashreq!

**(5)**

One of the finest texts in the legacy of Karl Marx is a short text for a personal press survey published in the 60s of the 19th century. It shed light on the main personal characteristics of the greatest thinker history has known. It highlighted aspects intellectual and political texts did not. The text has been used in researchanalysis on Marxism, an example in Arabic literature is Salem Himmich’s book *On Critiquing the Need for Marx* (1983). Following is an excerpt from the survey:

The quality I like best, in general, is simplicity, in a man, strength, in a woman, weakness. My idea of happiness is to fight and of misery is to submit. My favorite color is red. My favorite dish is fish. My motto is doubt everything. My maxim is nothing human is alien to me.

My colleagues at al-Akhbar conducted an interview with Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah, published on August 14, 2014, titled “Julys Apart, the Resistance Leader Recalls”. In my opinion, the part on his personal life, in addition to its fascinating humor for his fans, is critical in order to delve into the mind of the resistance leader and his conscience. It is true that certain understandable reservations restricted peeking into al-Sayyed’s personality, as there were no questions or answers on love, women, colors and the like, as was the case in the interview with Marx. Yet, the possible amount of statements on soccer, favorite dishes, favorite places in Lebanon, Facebook, satellite channels, readings, and adapting to covert transportation, etc. might partly be enough to get a glimpse of al-Sayyed’s inner thoughts.

Surprisingly, with Marx as with Nasrallah, the exceptional complexity of their intellectual and political tasks and their unique ability to perform them do not affect their psyches with similar intricacy. Marx liked in a woman her “weakness”, just like any other man, and al-Sayyed used to love *Muloukhiyah*, *Moujadara*, and fish until the circumstances of the struggle, which are sensitive from a security aspect, impelled him to stop craving food and settle for what is available, without complaint. It is as if that contentment has become second nature to him. This resembles the psychological capabilities of a Jesus-Husayn character, without belittling others, but through ennoblement. That applies to the man’s adjustment to constantly changing his mattress and bedroom, things that would naturally drain the ability to sleep in normal circumstances.

Al-Sayyed likes soccer and used to play it even after wearing the turban, and he was a fan of the Argentinian player Maradona. That means that Nasrallah’s sentiments were cultivated outside the psychological circles of intellectuals who feel a psychological need to disengage from soccer given its popularity. It is normal for the man to give up his hobby of watching games and playing soccer given his age and massive responsibilities. Yet, he watched the World Cup Final with his son to at least share that sentimental experience with him. This is a small indication of the strength of the fatherlyfeelings of the resistance legend.

“Baalbek” is al-Sayyed’s favorite spot in Lebanon. He attributes that to the friendships he made when he lived there. From my experience, among the Lebanese, the people of Baalbek and the Bakaa in general most closely resemble Arab temperaments and deep friendships. This mark has lasted in al-Sayyed’s consciousness from the days of living in space-time. Today, Nasrallah’s relationship with Lebanon is conceptual and therefore he no longer prefers one place over another. He loves all of it. Love, in this sense, is a stand not a feeling. This is a psychological weakness resulting from the circumstances of leadership and deprivation of a normal life due to security precautions. It is human nature to get attached to a certain place, a nature, an environment, and to people. That is why Nasrallah’s attachment to Baalbek pertained more to his makeup, since he is one of the people.

Nasrallah, however, moves around. He can neither live in a tower nor give in to security considerations. Deep down, the man is not afraid. This allows him to balance moving around and living in houses but under covert conditions that are dictated by security for objective rather than personal reasons. Al-Sayyed knows al-Dahiyeh and is familiar with its neighborhoods, streets and people. He stays updatedon al-Dahiyeh as well as southern Lebanon and the Bekaa.

Al-Sayyed’s preferences in terms of TV series and movies are political and religious. In other words, he is not drawn to the aesthetics of drama. We can understand that, given that the man has not had the opportunity to build a cultural sensitivity in this field. However, he like allexposed young men in Bilad al-Sham, has read Gibran Khalil Gibran. “Gibran” is a cultural-psychological station that has remained essential for generations. One usually passes throughit and forgets it, but it has a profound mark on one’s subsequent psychological makeup: tolerance and love in their holistic sense, namely, love of creation and rejecting the monopolization of theCreator.

In line with the approach of serious research intellectuals, Nasrallah links his readings to the central issue at stake in a given stagein order to set the theoretical groundfor confronting intellectual challenges. The challenge now lies in the issue of takfir. It is unfortunate that al-Sayyed’s sourcesfor reading about takfir are still religious books, Sunni and Shiite. Understanding this phenomenon is only possible through stepping out of this context into a broader context, especially that of Marxists like Hussein Mroueh, Hadi al-Alawi, Samir Amin, al-Afif al-Akhdar, etc.

**The Resistance Fighter is a Combatant in Syria**

**Steps toward a National Liberation Discourse**

**On the Syrian Front, the Resistance Fighter is a Thinker**

The speech of Hezbollah’s Secretary-General Hasan Nasrallah on the sixth anniversary of the July War (July 23, 2012) marked a juncture in the evolution of his intellectual-political discourse. With the onslaught of the Syrian war, al-Sayyed is no longer the same.

In that speech, al-Sayyed resolvedambiguities and filled many fundamental gaps, which we had always noticed in his analysis and reasoning. One example is his new outlook on the essence of the Iraqi tragedy, especially the role of the resistance perspective in building a framework of national secularism. I was eager to see a serious critical discussion on Nasrallah’s speech address the impact of that intellectual progress by an intellectual as esteemed as Fawwaz Traboulsi, a veteran leftist and well-known researcher.

However, I was shocked by the flimsiness with which this old friend addressed that speech. In fact, the approach was a mere disjointed spat fit for café chatter. I keep intellectual writing at a distance from bicker and idle talk, and I assume that publishing a text signed by an intellectual is a heavy responsibility. It is inexcusable to neglect this responsibility the way Traboulsi did in his text titled “A Calm Dialogue on the Anniversary of the July War”, published in al‑Safir (Wednesday, July 25, 2012).

The loose text began with a flat wrangle about why Nasrallah revealed the resistance’s ploy against the Israeli army that led to foiling the latter’s operation, Specific Weight, which aimed to destroy the resistance’s missile launchers. Traboulsi ridiculed that disclosure ignoring that, apart from its dramatic necessity in a mobilizing popular speech, it stands on the margins of an intellectual-political dispute central to the resistance against two prevalent claims. These claims have become very damaging in the midst of unfolding regional development. The first claim undermines the significance of the Lebanese resistance’s accomplishment in the July war, specifically in terms of denying Israeli defeat. In his speech, Nasrallah cited several texts of Israeli leaders in which they plainly acknowledged Israel’s defeat in July. While Israelis were boasting the success of Operation Specific Weight, Nasrallah sought to dispel it by revealing that the operation was, in fact, a failure. According to the second claim, Hezbollah’s capabilities have been declining due to the Syrian crisis and the party’s preoccupation with domestic affairs, at the expense of its combat readiness. Nevertheless, Nasrallah explained that today the party has a combat capability of its own that enables it to deter potential aggressions, and it also has entities, whose efforts are focused in one direction, i.e. the conflict with the Zionist enemy.

The message was obviously not directed at Traboulsi but at Israel to deter it from contemplating an aggression. This is a legitimate and valid objective. The message was also directed to Hezbollah’s supporters in order to reassure and bolster them in facing the psychological, media war waged by a network of satellite channels, newspapers, websites and “intellectuals” against the resistance in terms of capability and culture.

Traboulsi vexed the question as to whether the Syrian support provided to the resistance is a grant or aid driven by interest. He went on and on in a question he formulated in a long, confusing, loose phrase with ambiguous pronouns such that we cannot cite it. Nonetheless, it essentially stated that the Syrian missiles given to the resistance have been paid for by the Syrian people, in flesh and blood…etc. Of course! It is not an overstatement to say that Syrians have paid heavy sacrifices, not to mention bearing political repression and corruption, in acknowledgment of the costly course of resistance but not because of it. There is a qualitative difference between denouncing the contradiction between the tyranny- corruption approach and the resistance approach and causally linking them. The first position criticizes the style of governance and its beneficiaries while the second repudiates the resistance.

Nations create defense capabilities through their sacrifices, but it is up to regimes to employ those capabilities and choose the direction in which to utilize them. It is clear that the Syrian regime, led by President Bashar al-Assad, sought, as Nasrallah clarified, to provide unlimited support to the Lebanese resistance and Palestinian resistance (in addition to the Iraqi one) even when that course threatened its very core. This is proof of the seriousness and devotion in practicing the “defense beyond the fences” strategy that was passed on from President Hafez al-Assad’s reign. Of course it fulfills Syria’s interest of perpetuating the conflict with Israel amid the absence of the possibility to wage a successful conventional war and arrive at, as with any conflict, political outcomes. However, what Nasrallah added, through information he knows directly is that the regime of Bashar al-Assad has become the resistance’s partner and companion in arms on one hand, and it has focused, on the other hand, on restructuring its army such that it has become a military force capable of successfully engaging in a substantial war.

Here, we can see the importance of the lessons Nasrallah recounted from the July War, which has tangibly proven that the importance of aerial weapons and armors has been diminishing in favor of missiles and special forces. It is a conclusion that has become common among military experts. As Nasrallah stated, it is clear that the Syrian regime has been occupied over the past ten years with rebuilding its defense capabilities based on this conclusion. The regime has also been developing its war industries, especially in the field of missiles, which has enabled it to adapt its new plans together with logistics.

With this information, Nasrallah also wanted to reassure his supporters of the Syrian army’s ability to fend off an external aggression. In addition, he wanted to reveal that capability, on behalf of Syria, to avert a potential aggression. Nonetheless, the crux here is that the Syrian regime was heading toward coupling the “defense beyond the fences” strategy with the “war along the fences” strategy. Here, we are witnessing, whether Traboulsi likes it or not, an actual development in the strategy of an interlocked resistance. It is a resistance that includes both the Lebanese and Syrian fronts in a reinforcing, overlapping manner, such that we can no longer say that either is using the other. Instead, they are one formation.

Here, a responsible, critical intellectual might, and should, pose the following question: Did Bashar al-Assad think that it was possible to develop the strategy and capabilities of the resistance in the absence of compatible socioeconomic policies at home?

In my analysis, al-Assad, who really admires Nasrallah and the Hezbollah experience, thought that he could focus, as Hezbollah has in Lebanon, on the issues of resistance, leaving behind the oppressive and corrupt bureaucracy to stagnate and decay and also leaving socioeconomic policies at the disposal of neoliberals and compradors. It is this contradicting formula that has made way for the conspired intervention in Syria since 2011.

Given that the makeup of Hezbollah is interwoven with the makeup of one of Lebanon’s sects, the party is not compelled to quell its constituency. It also allows it to empower part of that constituency through civil institutions so that it does not fall under the wheels of savage neoliberalism in Lebanon. On the other hand, Syria as a state cannot replicate this model, and it cannot develop its resistance while falling short of improving its administration and political system. Moreover, it cannot give up the public sector, customs protection, and social support policies without consequently losing the social bases of the state and the resistance.

Genuine communists, Baathists, and nationalists have been fighting these destructive contradictions over the past decade. They have emphasized that the domains of defense, politics, administration, economy, and society need to be reconciled in a program that integrates resistance, political modernization, development, and social democracy. This is at the heart of the Syrian national social opposition, which has been able, due to the pressures of the current crisis in Syria, to gain some official Syrian recognition of its outlook. Traboulsi has refused to acknowledge this opposition and has considered it “fabricated” it because the opposition he has advocated and recognized is against resistance not against neoliberalism. He is siding with Hillary Clinton, Bandar Bin Sultan and Hamad Bin Jassim in support of reactionary factions that are, in terms of their basic conceptual structure, sectarian, reactionary, takfiri, and tyrannical. Their agenda involves striking all the elements of Syria’s independence on a political, defense, economic, and cultural level.

According to Traboulsi, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, which is deeply rooted in Syria, is a “fabricated opposition”. Who, then, constitutes the genuine opposition? Is it the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafis, armed gangs, or al-Qaeda? They all refuse to have a dialogue with the Syrian regime not because they are against its tyranny, as they are more tyrannical (at least the Syrian regime does not suppress cultural and personal liberties). Furthermore, it is not because they are against the regime’s socioeconomic approach. In fact they set out from explicit, comprehensive, barbaric, neoliberal propositions (On the other hand, the Syrian regime has been recently pulling back from such policies. In any case, it did not destroy its public sector even during years of economic openness). They refuse to have a dialogue with the regime because they are waging a sectarian-neoliberal war whose objectives match those of the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the imperialists of the U.S., and the Ottomans of Ankara. As Nasrallah rightly stated, it is this dark coalition that has prevented reaching an internal settlement in Syria.

Traboulsi tried to play smart by mocking Nasrallah’s talk about the plans colonial powers, Zionism, and their allies have intended for Syria, i.e. plans of destruction, disintegration, and subjugation. He characterized that talk as a bunch “of talismans of conspiracies with unknown actors”! Seriously? Has Traboulsi not seen all these forces that have been mobilized locally, regionally and internationally to fight against the Syrian regime that he described the resistance’s outlook on the conflict as “talismans of conspiracies”? Moreover, what does he mean by “unknown actors”? Has he not heard the news, statements, and actions of fundamentalist, Salafi, jihadi, and Qaedist groups in Syria? Has no one informed him that the king of Saudi Arabia and the prime minister of Qatar have joined the Jean-Jacques Rousseau party and have put billions on the table in order to overthrow the “undemocratic” regime in Syria? Has he not noticed that Washington and its allies have openly declared their support for terrorists in Syria? Has he missed the al-Qaeda supporters whom Recep Erdogan has amassed at the Bab al-Hawa border crossing? Has he not followed the “Friends of Syria” conferences that have been repeatedly held by the country’s most bitter enemies? Has he not read about Western-Gulf attempts to push for the adoption of resolutions under Chapter VII in order to launch an Atlantic war on Syria? Does he seriously think that the explosion in the National Security Bureau in Damascus was planned by Abdulbaset Sieda and executed by his aides? Has he not read one of the many Western analyses that have determined that the operation was an intelligence operation par excellence?

Traboulsi has not read, heard or seen anything related to actual events taking place in concrete reality. He goes around in circles and amid all the explosions of the global war happening in Syria he cannot see anything but the following:

The reproduction of a mafia, autocratic, security, military rule headed by an individual ruler who enjoys, with the new constitution, absolute constitutional powers that exceed those of the previous constitution. On top of that, he is exempt from any accountability to any committee or authority!

Truly remarkable! This way you have asserted that you are a liberal par excellence, but this liberalism bears resemblance to *Arourism*. Those who have sought power in Syria today through weapons need a hundred years to establish an autocratic, security, military regime… etc. They will not even establish a regime because a regime requires a state and they constitute a project that is the antithesis of a national state to start with. What they could do is establish dark, sectarian emirates that execute the orders of the “*Mutawaa* Authority” in Saudi Arabia.

Sometimes, I seriously wonder: Are liberals blockheaded or do they intentionally play dumb? Do they genuinely believe that the actual conflict is between authoritarian tyranny and their democratic ideas? Do they think that what goes on in their heads will automatically come into existence with the fall of tyrannical regimes? Do they honestly think that Salafi, fundamentalist, Gulf-funded forces are fighting the “mafia, autocratic, security, military rule…” to implement Traboulsi’s ideas in a democratic republic?

With Syria’s mosaic sectarian, doctrinal, and ethnic makeup, sectarian parties would not be able to unite the state and build a regime of any kind. Instead, they would only be able to break the state up into Taliban emirates that commit atrocities, not only against followers of other sects and doctrines but also against all those who violate the details of *wouḍou’* breakers or beard length! Neighboring them, Alawite, Christian, Druze and Kurdish minorities would feel entitled to provide protection for their people within other sectarian mini-states (Perhaps they would seek foreign protection). Consequently, there would no longer be a Syrian, political, state space to democratically fix, and no public sector, culture, freedom, employment, or productivity. In any case, there would not be a national army or resistance, not only due to the destruction of the national state, but also because the U.S. and the West do not support the armed Syrian uprising except in a context that provides protection to Israel, ends Syria’s independence, and renders the country an explicitly colonial region.

Yes, it is possible for a united Syrian space to get in order but only under the control of an outside regional colonial power. These are the Ottoman dreams of Erdogan and his aides in Ankara. Nonetheless, Turkey itself faces the threat of being dismantled in the context of Syria’s disintegration; the desired Alawite and Kurdish mini-states put forward by default two parallel Turkish projects. Moreover, the jihadists, for whom Erdogan’s government has provided an intelligence operations base in Adana will soon continue their jihad in Turkey.

These are the concrete facts of the conflict. Accordingly, the Syrian opposition is divided into national and non-national, based on neither accusations of treason nor awards by Nasrallah or others but based on the opposition’s stance regarding the national state. Does it bear the hardships of struggling within this state through a difficult and risky internal settlement but preserves a united national space or does it join the barbaric campaign that involves destroying the state and the country?

These are the facts of the conflict: Yes, it is a “security, military regime…”. Do you expect it to discuss deterring terrorist attacks in parliament? Now that is ridiculous! Even in the most established democracies, states engage in wars and confront terrorists with absolute constitutional and executive authority. What is new in Syria, that which Nasrallah hints at, is that the balances of internal powers in the country no longer allow for the reproduction of the “mafia, autocratic, security military rule…”. Popular democratic change has become inevitable in Syria, but an independent and united Syria. Today, the question at stake, the question Nasrallah has posed to the national opposition, which has not yet settled on dialogue, is the following: Do you aim for a national state, a national army, a resistance, and democratic reforms, or a dismantled state, a dissolved army, and sectarian emirates? This is the actual substantive question in Syria today. It is, of course, a question of struggle. The road toward a new Syria is not like shooting fish in a barrel. Paving this road requires persistent struggle and sacrifices in the context of a prolonged conflict with the forces of tyranny and corruption. However, it remains the only safe path that guarantees the preservation of the Syrian national state.

In light of the conflict that has been taking place in Syria, Nasrallah identified the central objective of the current campaign against the country, i.e. dismantling the Syrian army as a prerequisite for breaking up the Syrian state and consequently subjugating Syria to Western and Gulf interests. Dismantling the army that fought the October War also accomplishes direct strategic objectives for the Israeli enemy. It eliminates a military force that is a potential threat, a firm supporter of the Lebanese resistance and Palestinian resistance, an ally of Russia in the Mediterranean, and a partner of Iran, whom Israel and America want crushed.

Traboulsi stated that the Syrian regime is responsible for the outcomes of dismantling the national army, given that it implicated it in internal confrontations. That would have been true had there been a peaceful democratic revolution in Syria. Conversely, what is taking place in Syria is an armed insurgency backed by regional and international powers that have been able to mobilize tens of thousands of Syrian, Arab and foreign fighters to fight in an extensive, bloody guerrilla warfare. Thus, calls for the national army to give up its duties in facing this dual model of insurgents and invaders is a call for state suicide and the army’s self-dismantling without resistance.

We have a long list of criticisms against the Syrian regime, but today we are in a state of national war against a reactionary, colonial coalition that threatens its entire existence. Consequently, the imperatives of responsible, rational politics demand that we ally with the regime against the common enemy without giving up an inch of our social-democratic program. However, the moment we use this program to side with the enemy, we become traitors rather than strivers.

Now, the top priority in Syria is crushing terrorism and cleansing Syrian land from terrorists. It is an operation the Syrian regime cannot accomplish on its own. The battle against terrorism is not only a military and security battle, but also a political one that requires the broadest possible social, national alliance in the context of a realistic, national program for change. It is no coincidence that none of the liberal democrats has put forward such a program until now.

A national liberal could propose the following program: defeating terrorism, ending foreign intervention, realizing peace, starting reconstruction, and holding free presidential and parliamentary elections within a year or two. But no! The regime must be overthrown at once… There will be no dialogue with the regime unless it is based on its surrender. Moreover, the democratic slogan is rendered a cover-up for the terrorism of fundamentalist, Salafi forces and al-Qaeda.

Traboulsi's commentary on Nasrallah employed foxlike tactics. Whereas Nasrallah defined the rationale behind his argument from a clear position, i.e. the resistance position, Traboulsi obscured his political position. He also lacked a coherent rationale and randomly cherry picked from the text. Nasrallah expresses a force that sets out from the priority of resistance against Israel. From a material analysis perspective, this priority of course reflects the social and political interests of the Lebanese Shiite community, but these interests are embodied in elites who identify with its priority. Nasrallah embodies the coalescence of strategic interests, notion, and person. This is the essence of his leadership, which transcends its party, political, sectarian and Lebanese position and is manifested in his moral character par excellence. One can only get into an actual argument with such a character from one of the following two positions: criticism from within the resistance trench itself, or enmity and hostility toward the approach and its rationale. Nasrallah’s rationale is coherent: the Syrian regime is our companion in arms, and the overthrow of the Syrian regime and the disintegration of the army for the benefit of anti-resistance forces represent a strategic loss for Hezbollah and its project. This means that the party is a principled force that has not budged from its project in the midst of the crisis. Hezbollah is serious about resisting. Therefore, Nasrallah has not let down the party’s companions in arms in the time of crisis as opposed to Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniyeh, who jumped ship and consequently gave up the resistance project and joined the American-Gulf project.

On the other hand, Traboulsi—and my main concern here is that he is a quintessential Marxist-turned-liberal intellectual—is not straightforward. He does not have the nerve to say the following: My main priority is a model, purely liberal, democratic Lebanon. Objectively, this would require disarming the resistance and establishing a well-founded peace with Israel and relations with the West that are undisturbed by resistance fighters. Is that possible without overthrowing the Syrian regime? No. Therefore, I support those who seek to overthrow it even if they come from hordes of fundamentalists, Salafis, and Qaedists who are backed by Gulf regimes and the West. I support them even if that leads to dismantling Syria. Let it disintegrate. In fact, its disintegration guarantees an “independent” Lebanon! As such, Traboulsi’s rationale is set straight and becomes self-coherent: the Syrian state is an obstacle to the independence of a comprador, liberal Lebanon. Let it fall.

Traboulsi and other commentators on Nasrallah’s speech overlooked two points that I consider critical in terms of their conceptual denotations. The first point concerns a bold reassessment that represents self-criticism of the position on the Iraqi issue. When Nasrallah ascertained that the campaign against Syria essentially aimed at dismantling the Syrian National Army, he recalled the occupation in Iraq, which was politically covered by an internal, sectarian, Shiite opposition. He therefore realized that dismantling the Iraqi National Army was at the heart of the war, which adopted slogans of democracy, human rights, and Shiite victimization, etc. He stated the following:

When the Americans entered Iraq, what did they do? They disbanded the Iraqi army. Why did they disband it? Is it because they were unable to manage it? No, armies follow political authorities and the Iraqi army could have followed the new political authority. The Iraqi army unfortunately fought the Iranian army for eight years, invaded Kuwait, threatened neighboring countries, and fought Shiites, Kurds, and Sunnis in Iraq. They dissolved it because they did not want a strong army, whose weaponry, training, and mindset were not American. The army’s weaponry was Russian, its training was Russian, and its ammunition was Russian…etc.

In this excerpt, there is a profound criticism against what Hezbollah had adopted in analyzing the Iraqi issue, which resembled the positions of traditional Shiite powers and the Iranian perspective. Today, through the imperialist war against Syria, Nasrallah has discovered the truth about the previous imperialist war against Iraq. He could have avoided that comparison, which is not in the interest of his Iraqi and Iranian allies. Nevertheless, given his systematic reasoning and personal integrity, Nasrallah continues the logic of his speech without twists or turns, chasing the truth wherever it may be. When he sees it, he states it: “The Iraqi army is gone. Today, what do we have in Iraq? We have a political police!”

This coherent logic transcends the need for sectarian-based analysis, manifests self-evaluation, and probes the ugly truth. This truth ought to be declared with integrity and it sets the ground for a serious dialogue within the resistance trench on the objective dialectic among the national state, Arabism, the resistance, and international alliances. The dialogue could generate a progressive national vision shared by national Islamists, nationalists, and leftists.

The second point concerns Nasrallah’s secular, national, realist disposition. Nasrallah is an Islamist, but—given that Islamist parties have been on the rise and have been justifying their right to rule in the name of their Islamism and divine right, regardless of their political program—he reiterated the following:

America is unconcerned whether an Islamist party, an Arab party, a nationalist party or a communist party rules in the Arab world. This is insignificant. It does not matter whether you grow your beard or shave it and whether or not you wear neckties. It is your policies that matter.

As such, for Nasrallah who is an Islamist it is also unimportant whether you are an Islamist, a leftist, or a nationalist. It is your policies toward the American-Zionist alliance that count. What matters is the political position from which you set out and arrive at in practicing actual politics. This criterion presents a national, regional and international space for dialogues and alliances that are not based on religions or sects but on actual political alignments. This precisely is the essence of secularism.

The two previous points express intellectual and political liberation from sectarianism (without relinquishing the sect as a socio-political reality). They also express liberation from linking religion and politics (without giving up the Islamic choice on an individual and party level). It is a liberation that opens up an opportunity for national, social settlements outside the exclusivist authoritarian logic of traditional political Islam, which is kept afloat today by the American-Gulf alliance in order to reestablish tyrannical, exploitative, submissive regimes under the banner of religious legitimacy.

Nevertheless, I took issue with the extremely reserved approach in which Nasrallah’s speech addressed Hamas’s departure from the resistance camp. He merely warned Hamas that throwing itself into the arms of the Arab order jeopardizes the Palestinian cause. I am well aware of Nasrallah’s difficult position, given that Hamas is a Sunni Islamist organization. I also recognize the sensitivity surrounding Hezbollah addressing the Palestinian issue. However, the time has come for the forces of resistance and national liberation to take a clear stand and declare that Palestine is not just a Palestinian issue to be left to Palestinians. Hamad bin Jassim has been deeply and overtly intervening in that issue, setting out from the organic relation between Arab reactionism and Zionism. He got Hamas leaders out of Damascus; not only did they leave the place, but also the trench. Today, Hamas has joined the alliance of submission and is being rehabilitated in order to play the most dangerous role in liquidating the Palestinian cause. Resistance forces must voice the truth about Hamas to Palestinians at any cost not in order to defame it but to limit the damages resulting fromHamas taking the route of the Qatari mediated, under-the-table agreement. The agreement involves managing the cantons that the occupation will leave behind the West Bank barrier, which would consequently pull the plug on the cause of liberation and return.

July 27, 2012

**The Resistance Fighter is Inspired by Gibran Khalil Gibran**

Secretary-General Hasan Nasrallah declared a new qualitative stage in the perpetual, bloody conflict in the Mashreq. We are witnessing Hezbollah’s decision to take an initiative—one that is a year and a half late according to Nasrallah—to break the jaws of the pincer that have nearly clamped down on its existence: Israel from the south and terrorism from the north. More fundamentally, however, we are witnessing the transition of the party, as a fighting force, from a local Lebanese level to a Mashreq-i level, and subsequently an Arab and international level. Thereby, the resistance has transformed small Lebanon into a major regional player in an outcome that has unfolded like a historic miracle due to metaphysical factors, in fact, the factors of will and blood.

Nasrallah repeats after Gibran, “You have your Lebanon with all her prejudices and struggles, and I have my Lebanon with all her dreams and aspirations”. However, today, these dreams have become embodied in an active will, and aspirations have become reinforced with determination and blood… My Lebanon–I, Nasrallah, and my companions–is as grand and glorious as its independence and role.

Lebanon deserves this role for three reasons: it is the pioneer of civilized Arabism, the pioneer of progressive culture, and the pioneer of genuine resistance. The time has come for this pioneering to feed into the miracle that has broken objective conditions and balances of power and has put, in a strategic sense, small Lebanon on a par with major players from Damascus to Baghdad to Tehran, and to Moscow. In fact, it has transformed Lebanon into the dynamo of this alliance that has formed amid the historical necessity for the emergence of a multi-polar world.

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In the midst of all that, Hezbollah does not venture or invest blood in a role. For Hezbollah, the mission is first and foremost a defense mission par excellence. The scene unfolding around Hezbollah actually resembles a pincer: From the north, there is the campaign of the takfiri army of the American-Gulf-Israeli alliance. The campaign has extended to Lebanon from the west of the Assi River and has almost disrupted the resistance’s most vital supply channels. From the south, Israel—capitalizing on the pressures of the Syrian war on the party as well as the pro-Israeli trend in the Arab-Turkish region—has been preparing to wage a revenge attack against southern Lebanon. The attack would not only avenge the 2006 defeat but also seek to realize its old-new project, i.e. uprooting the resistance, cracking down on Hezbollah, and restoring that Lebanon which was weak and subjected to Israeli deterrence and intervention. Israel may even seek to reclaim the border strip and reinstate the South Lebanon Army or establish an agreement that is more degrading than the May 17 Agreement. As such, the battle against terrorists in Qusayr, Homs, and the battle against Israelis in southern Lebanon become one and the same. They are one battle, not only in a strategic sense, but also in a tactical sense. In al-Qusayr, Hezbollah fights for Maroun al-Ras.

Without a fatwa and “with two words”, Hezbollah can amass tens of thousands of volunteer fighters to engage in the war on both northern and southern fronts. This would not be a mere show of strength but an affirmation of a reality represented in the resistance’s ability to fight, at once, takfiris and Israelis, or in fact Wahhabism-Zionism with its two facets. They should be warned of any fatal miscalculation. However, now, the current battle is a battle for securing the resistance’s back and supporter. Victory in this battle is necessary; it is therefore inevitable for those who have taught history the preeminence of will, those who have always been ready to pay the sacrifices. It is a victory that will preserve a strong, independent and pluralistic homeland for all Lebanese, one that is capable of utilizing its abilities and wealth and actualizing the necessary ground for an internal social revolution.

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Hezbollah’s battle in Syria has a Lebanese, Mashreq-i dimension. It is a defense of the Mashreq’s pluralistic spirit in the face of the barbaric campaign to eliminate “others” by forcing non-Wahhabi Sunnis, actually those who are not Qaedists, to choose between becoming killing, Qaedist Wahhabis or killed apostates. The campaign aims to eliminate “others” by also annihilating followers of other Islamic doctrines through halal slaughter, forcefully displacing Christians, banning secularism, leftism and nationalism, and enslaving women from all backgrounds.

Only this battle, the resistance’s battle against barbarism, is worth being fought, not in order to defend Shiites but Sunnis first and Christians second. As such, it is a battle to defend Lebanon, which is a small model of the pluralistic Mashreq. Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, has bestowed upon us His party, which is willing to fight this battle on behalf of us all, side by side with the valiant army of the Mashreq, i.e. the Syrian Arab Army. Since the barbaric campaign from Syria to Iraq to Palestine and Jordan is heading in one trajectory, i.e. the Wahhabi-Zionist trajectory, Hezbollah’s will, vision, and capabilities transform it today into a Mashreq-i force.

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On a regional-international level, Hezbollah’s dual battle has transformed it into the precious gemstone that supports the wall set up for the freedom of the entire East from American-Zionist subjugation. The party inscribes, with blood, Lebanon’s extraordinary role in the birth of a multi-polar world.

May 27, 2013

**The Resistance Fighter without Political Cover**

During the late hours of June 11, 2013 and early hours of the following day, takfiris from different nationalities, led by a Kuwaiti, carried out a massacre, killing 60 civilians from the families of Hatla, a town in Deir al-Zour. The call for slaughter was public in the area itself, and the perpetrators wanted it to be as such everywhere. Hence, they published a video on YouTube to celebrate cleansing the town from Shiites. In the video, they were euphoric about killing a cleric and his son and considered the massacre a victory for Islam and the first revenge for the defeat in al-Qusayr. (Al-Qusayr witnessed fighting but no massacres. Even al-Nusra militants were allowed to safely flee).

As I was watching the horrendous video, I wondered: Is there hope for the project of new Mashreq-ism, which we have proposed as a historical alternative to the region’s developmental failure, strategic rift, and ethnic, sectarian, doctrinal and political conflicts? It is a question put forward in order to look for rational exits from the criminal obsession of groups of psychopaths who have been characterized as an “opposition” by the West and who still have some sort of support, perhaps limited but still obsessive, from an audience that praises sectarian massacres. We certainly cannot ignore that for Hamas members, sectarian conflict takes priority over national conflict. However, we must not forget that they are, first and last, from the Muslim Brotherhood.

We refuse to accept the idea that sectarian and doctrinal wars were established and rooted in Syria and Iraq—such that it obliterates the Mashreq’s heritage that is well-known for pluralism in unity—not only because that idea is ugly, but also because it is invalid. Of course there are backward social groups that see in al-Qaeda and al-Nusra militants political and psychological representatives. However, the main portion of the Mashreq’s Sunnis remains far from being involved in the Wahhabi project. Wahhabism and takfirism, with their Judaized beliefs, enmity toward humanity, fatwas and fighters, are nothing more than a Gulf incursion, which has been organized, financed, and supported by Saudi and Qatari rulers and their American and European guardians. As always, invaders find in occupied societies those who follow them, fear them or are dragged along with them.

However, you will get a headache just hearing the information being circulated about the faction of Hasan Abdul Azim, the head of the Coordination Committee, which is characterized as national and democratic. According to the information, its Kurdish military wing is involved in besieging the towns of Noubbol and al-Zahraa, and it is negotiating handing them over to takfiris in exchange for a Kurdish town! Is this true Haytham al-Manna? If that is a mere allegation, where then is your anger, and that of the Coordination Committee, over the Hatla massacre?

In the video, takfiris from Deir al-Zour vowed to come specifically for these two besieged towns and slaughter their people. Should Hezbollah turn a blind eye to new declared massacres so as not to add to sectarian tensions by defending them? Are Shiites supposed to get slaughtered silently, solemnly and with a “strong sense of responsibility”? Should Hezbollah, as some Shiites want, quit playing its strategic role of supporting and welding the axis of resistanceso as to curb Gulf discrimination from kicking Shiites out of their jobs and the places they have been compelled to emigrate to?

In the Hatla video, the voice of one of the criminals screamed ecstatically and tensely, “Allah is the greatest…we have burnt the homes of the Shiite apostate *rawafed[[7]](#footnote-7)*… the *Nasarah*[[8]](#footnote-8)”! In this acclamation, there is more than the simple conclusion that Christians are also wanted dead in this revenge. For takfiri, Wahhabi aggressors, there is no longer a difference between Shiites and Christians. They are to be exterminated together in the religious cleansing project. Will massacres stop at political borders? Will they be limited to Syria or extend to Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine? (In Iraq, takfiris have accomplished most of the mission).

Syrian Christians—like Sunnis and Alawites, etc.—are fighting in the ranks of the Syrian Arab Army and the National Defense Forces as citizens first and foremost. Perhaps it is fortunate that in Bilad al-Sham, there are no distinct Christian political platforms outside the national political configuration, except in the Lebanese case, which requires observation. In Lebanon, there are forces and platforms that are openly Christian, but none of them has yet dared to grant an open political endorsement to Hezbollah’s participation—which is legitimate, necessary and brave—in fending off the takfiri, Wahhabi incursion against Bilad al-Sham.

At the heart of all analyses, the political cover the Free Patriotic Movement provided to the resistance in the defensive war against the Israeli aggression in 2006 was integral to the victory of Hezbollah, the Free Patriotic Movement and all of Lebanon. Where, then, is that political cover for the defensive war Hezbollah is engaged in today against groups that carry out sectarian slaughters on the fringes of Lebanon and perhaps, tomorrow, in the country’s interior?

This moment of intertwined, bitter conflicts requires not silence but historic courage that opens the door to partnerships among counterparts in the future of the Mashreq.

June 14, 2013

**The Resistance Fighter and the Crisis of Sectarian Division**

The fact that Hasan Nasrallah, the leading Arab resistance fighter, was impelled to speak as a “Shiite”, means the crisis of Islamic sectarian division has reached its peak and has begun hitting the edges—and possibly the heart—of Hezbollah’s audience specifically. That called for a special kind of speech, a revolving speech that strives to attain the universal through the particular. The universal, especially on Jerusalem Day, is the “Shiite” responsibility toward that which is shared on an Arab and Islamic level, i.e., Palestine.

“Shiites” across the globe have been punished for being involved in the cause of liberating Palestine. We do not linger too long on religious motives as a political engine. Iran, a rising regional power, seeking to invest its diverse progress in leading the region, has a strategic interest in confronting Israel. As for Hezbollah, the project of liberating occupied Lebanese territories and protecting the south not only reflects a healthy national sentiment, but also corresponds with the interest of Lebanon’s Shiites to centralize themselves within the Lebanese system and regional order. If it were not for Iran and Hezbollah’s serious approach in resisting Israel, regardless of motives, they would not have faced such incitement, blockade, and enmity. If it were not for their decisive stance toward the Palestinian cause and their insistence on strategic confrontation with the Israeli enemy, Iran, specifically, would have hadgreat opportunities to reach an understanding with the West. However, this would have been at the expense of the country’s independence. Iran under the Shah’s reign—despite being Shiite—was an ally of imperialism and Zionism and the object of the Gulf rulers’ loyalty. The image in which Iraqi poet Muzaffar al-Nawab portrayed them as bowing down to the Shahanshah is still present in the literary memory of Arabs. Before the resistance, when the Shiites of Lebanon were at the disposal offeudal lords who were subservient to the Lebanese comprador system, which was in turn subservient to the West, the looks they received alternated among greed, exploitation, percussion, pity and subjugation, but not sectarian hostility.

Of course not all Shiites are anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism and not all of them give priority to Palestine. Perhaps it is time to emphasize political standards over sectarian, religious and doctrinal ones in searching forunity in the struggle against the American-Israeli enemy.

The current animosity toward Shiites has other reasons that cannot be ignored. The reasons are linked, in particular, to the mechanisms of breeding fundamentalists, takfiris and terrorists, whose functions extend beyond attacking Shiites—and Alawites*,* Ismailis, Christians, etc. Their mission includes tightening control over the Sunni majority itself and containing it within the framework of intellectual and political hegemony of Gulf regimes, especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which have espoused Wahhabism. The terrorist hostility of Wahhabis toward Shiites is old and deep-seated. Up until the mid-1920s, Wahhabi raiders regularly attacked Shiite Iraqi clans and raided their holy shrines. What is intriguing, however, is that they also attacked Sunni Jordanian clans with the same violence. Wahhabism, with its inception and history, is a takfiri doctrine that is hostile toward both Shiites and Sunnis. Wahhabism is a social, political and cultural machine that produces terrorist thought and terrorists, uninterruptedly.

There are apparent and hidden doctrinal links among Wahhabism, the Brotherhood, militant Salafism and Islamist groups. These links were created, defined, and established in the approach of the *Ikhwanji*[[9]](#footnote-9) Sayyid Qutb. He was the one who categorized all Muslims who were outside the *da****‘****wah* under “the 21st century Jahiliyya”. He declared non-abiding Sunnis as infidels. What, then, did he leave for Shiites?

Field and intelligence research estimates affirm that anti-Shia sentiment is ten times more effective than other factors in recruiting terrorists. This makes sectarian incitement the finest and quickest way to form the terrorist army, which today has replaced regular imperialist armies. It is fighting their battles that aim to hit nationalist regimes (as is the case in Syria), prevent the reunification of society and state (as is the case in Iraq), and break the national back of the resistance (as is the case in Lebanon).

As a secularist and a leftist, I have the required impartiality that allows me to clearly see the daily massacres chasing Shiites in Iraq and Syria just for being so, regardless of their political leanings. I have also witnessed the threats against Lebanon, the horrific persecutions in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, and the Gulf’s warmongering against Iran.

The anti-Israel Shiite inclination—that has developed due to the Iranian Revolution and the liberation interest of the Shiites of southern Lebanon and the Beqaa—is among the factors for the campaign against Shiites. However, there are other factors, e.g. the rise of those historically persecuted, the growing Shiite political presence, and the geological coincidence that most of the oil riches are found specifically in Shiite areas. However, the main factor lies in the historical-cultural failure to modernize Islam, which has kept the ember of sectarian enmity ignitable all these centuries.

Hezbollah’s main proposal to bridge the schism is through the Palestinian gateway. Nasrallah has reemphasized it, this time from a “Shiite” position, in the hope of consolidatinghisconstituency—that has suffered hostility, massacres, and threats—behind the unity of Muslims and the unity of the resistance. It is truly a noble discourse, but its actual possibilities are limited. Hamas, which Nasrallah has called on leftists and nationalists to back off from, continues to send “mujahedeen” to Syria and lose more enlightened Sunni, Christian, secularist, nationalist, and leftist supporters. Meanwhile, Hezbollah is winning over these supporters not because it is “Shiite”, but because it is valiantly taking part in deterring the terrorist, takfiri campaign that threatens all Arabs. Nonetheless, it is evident that for Hezbollah, appeasing Hamas and the Brotherhood is still more important than strengthening its alliance with those supporters.

August 5, 2013

**The Resistance Fighter and his Party’s Ambiguities**

The apology of the Lebanese Communication Group–al-Manar TV for covering the peaceful Bahraini popular movement, in an attempt to avoid an Arab resolution to stop broadcasting the channel–as was the case for Syrian TV channels–was not merely a “slip” or “a behavior specific to the members of the delegation”. The first characterization is moral; it is as if al-Manar’s representatives “abandoned” and “betrayed” the cause. This adds nothing to a serious analysis, and the party’s justification is unconvincing. Al‑Manar’s delegation is partisan and subject to the party’s authority. Let us then address the event by uncovering its root causes:

First, perhaps the political-intellectual coherence, for which Hezbollah had been known for before 2011, was subjected to many rifts due to the significant qualitative developments the Mashreq and the Arab world have witnessed. The party transitioned from Sufi assurance about one intellectual-political central idea i.e. resisting Israel to entering and becoming involved on the ground in a network of contradictions imposed by reality. It has transformed the party into a multi-front, intertwined regional power. This has only been addressed in a number of Hasan Nasrallah’s speeches, but the party has not delved into an intellectual-political reassessment, which seems to be postponed until further notice perhaps due to its twofold difficulty. On one hand, it requires political imagination, intellectual creativity, and open and bold discussion workshops. On the other hand, such reassessment brings to the fore the need to rebuild the consciousness of the members and supporters of the party.

1. Hezbollah, as is well known, is an Islamist party that has found itself fighting in the ranks of a secular nationalist regime, i.e. the Syrian regime against Islamist forces. It is true that the focus here is on takfiri groups, but the confrontation in Syria also involves the Muslim Brotherhood and every Islamist current opposed to the secular state. Two justifications have emerged to warrant that. The first is political and has been emphasized and—rightly—clarified in Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah’s speeches: Defending the Syrian regime is realistically, operationally, and strategically defending the resistance itself, its weapons and its course. The second is a popular one that cannot be overlooked: The party’s participation in Syria’s battle is viewed with approval and fervor from an underlying sectarian standpoint.
2. Given the conflict in Syria in particular, Hezbollah got involved in a contradiction in terms of its position toward Hamas. Initially, the political ideology that centered on one idea, i.e. the priority of fighting Israel while disregarding all other political dimensions, could have preserved relations between Hezbollah and Hamas. The party attempted to pursue such compartmentalization, but it failed or stumbled because of the Syrian rejection, pressures from the party’s new nationalist and leftist allies, or pressures from the party’s constituency itself, which saw in the behavior of Hamas a betrayal to the resistance.
3. In any case, the confusion extended to the Egyptian issue. Hezbollah’s principles push it toward the Brotherhood and Islamists, in lines with Supreme Leader al-Khamenei’s saying about the “Islamic awakening”. However, on the other hand, the party has found itself impelled to consider the Egyptian army—and its regime—a new ally of the Syrian regime whose presence and qualitative weight cannot be undermined.
4. If the resounding fall of Sunni political Islam in the Arab world has been convenient for Hezbollah in the Syrian battlefield, then it has also raised questions about the future of Arab Shiite political Islam too in Lebanon itself, but more critically in Iraq. In Iraq, it has become clear that putting an end to the security breakdown and chaos and bringing back the state and its developmental, regional and service roles hinge on returning to state secularism.

Second, the overlap, or rather the coalescence of Hezbollah and the Islamic Republic in Iran was flowing with no fundamental disagreements except in approaching the Iraqi issue. Nevertheless, today, with the Iranian-American agreements underway, an objective split, in form and substance, has emerged between Hezbollah and Iran’s approaches toward Saudi Arabia and the Gulf regarding Syria, Lebanon, and Bahrain. Hezbollah’s approach is one of open confrontation. Nasrallah’s speech outlined its features by accusing Saudi Arabia of terrorism. On the other hand, the approach of the Iranian state leans toward expanding the scope of its pragmatic reconciliationswith the Gulf (which of course involve giving concessions) and persistently seeking to reach an understanding with Saudi Arabia. This realizes the legitimate interests of the Iranian state.

All the aforementioned forms of contradictions—and many others—have affected the members of Hezbollah—maybe not its fighters—especially its administrative and technical teams, institutions and media outlets. These contradictions stir up many tendencies e.g. disruption, pragmatism, populism and mercantilism… etc. This presses the party to take on the task ofmaking an urgent reorganizational step that redefines the party’s ideology and strategy and emphasizes its intellectual and political independence in a discussion that does not exclude allies or friends.

December 11, 2013

**The Resistance Fighter Facing the Worst Case Scenario**

During his hosting of the former Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, Hezbollah’s Secretary-General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah revealed an extremely dangerous Western-Israeli scheme. It iscentered on annexing parts of Syria and Iraq to Jordan, resulting in a state that would realize the Zionist dream of terminally liquidating the Palestinian cause through a new version of the alternative homeland. Has this been the plan since the beginning of the 2011 events? This plan is probably the product of many developments: first, the failure of the reactionary Western, Ottoman aggression to overthrow the Syrian and Iraqi states; second, the sharp sectarian division that opens the door to establishing a state in the Fertile Crescent. The state would contain the bulk of the Sunni *ʿasabiyyah* in the region and incorporate it into a sectarian entity, in which sectarian identity trumps basic national identities. This would achieve many objectives at once: (1) dividing Arab Iraq and separating its southern and central parts from its western and northern areas. (2) annexing parts of the Syrian state along sectarian and ethnic lines and channeling the resources of these regions to aid in the emergence of a capable state. (3) realizing the actual regional ground for Israel to become a Jewish state while gradually getting rid of the Palestinians of ‘48 through laws and compensations and the Palestinians of ‘67 by driving them out of the West Bank to the east of the river in order to integrate them into the new state.

“Greater Jordan” would more than double in terms of area and its population would become more than 25 million people, including Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian immigrants who are already in Jordan now. By expanding the area of the alternative homeland and more than tripling its population, the new plan seeks to mitigate traditional obstacles that previously obstructed the implementation of the alternative homeland project. The most significant obstacle is the Jordanian resistance, which is expected to decline in strength, political presence and influence within the current Jordanian state to the extent that it is no longer capable of political action. Second, the plan also facilitates overriding national identities that have impeded the integration of various elements and identities, i.e. Jordanian, Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian, into a sectarian umbrella identity. This identity considers itself part of the Gulf–Egyptian alliance, which is at odds with and at least defines itself against the Shiite entity in Iraq and the pluralistic entity in what would remain of Syria (Alawite, Christian, Shiite, Isma‘ili, Druze, and enlightened Sunni). Third, this composite sectarian, confessional state, which would be tied to the U.S. and the Gulf and cooperative with Israel on a political, security, and economic level, would become a major reactionary power, a tool of American imperialism, and a regional policeman. Israel would not fear any security threats from the new state in the short and medium terms because on one hand, the state would be administered by the trusted Hashemite regime, which is competent in terms of security. On the other hand, with the sectarian umbrella identity, enmity would be directed toward other sectarian elements as a prime conflict, setting aside the confrontation with Israel.

This scenario may seem fictional, but it is in fact under imperialist-Zionist deliberation. In this context, we can note the following: First, Washington, Riyadh and Amman provided great support to the “Alliance of the Iraqi Revolution” in western and northern Iraq. The alliance included clan forces, Islamist and Baathist organizations, and ISIS and was given all forms of support in order to capture Mosul and control western Iraq as a prelude to its secession. However, many issues ruinedthisarrangement: First, ISIS monopolized power and knocked out other forces. After it had become financially independent, it declared a caliphate and clashed with its former commanders. Second,the long-term program of Washington’s alliance has aimed to contain ISIS rather than defeat it. Third, a local guard has been mobilized in the western and northern governorates, one that is not subject to the authority of the Iraqi state. Also, compliant forces have begun receiving training so that they supplant ISIS in the areas it controls. Fourth, the Jordanian authorities have supported—inexplicably from the viewpoint of Jordanian interests—the ISIS coup in Mosul and expedited intervention operations in southern Syria. Fifth, Israel has been eager to introduce the Jewish state bill and Lieberman has proposed to forcefully displace the Arabs of ’48. Moreover, al-Aqsa Mosque, with all its symbolic and political value for Jordan and Palestine, has sufferedunprecedented attacks. It is clear that Israeli policy is headed toward pulling out of the Oslo accords and the Wadi Araba treaty. For Israel, there is no state in the West Bank, which is torn by settlements, detours, checkpoints and the siege, and there is no one democratic state over all of Palestine that would blast the ideology of Zionism.

Many factors have opened the door to various forms of half-realistic fantasies. Among these factors are Turkey’s greed and hostility toward Syria, the Gulf-Israeli alliance, the continued financing of terrorism against the Syrian and Iraqi states, the popular shift—including the Palestinians’—toward elevating sectarian identity over national identity. However, these half-realistic fantasies will remain as such so long as the Syrian army and its allies are fighting.

November 3, 2014

**The Resistance Fighter in the Thick of Mashreq-ism**

Al-Sayyed did not mention Antoun Saadeh by name, but listening to Nasrallah’s speech during the commemoration of the Martyred Leaders triggered a memory of the great nationalist Syrian leader.

Nasrallah expressed a clear Mashreq-i sentiment through his explicit reference that today history is being made in the countries of the Mashreq (Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan). Hezbollah’s secretary-general considers these countries, in his strategic consciousness, one body, which is the battleground for fighting the two archenemies of this region’s *nahda* (renaissance) i.e. the Zionist entity and terrorist, takfiri, sectarian forces.

Following that, there will be a long heated discussion on the courses of the Mashreq-i *nahda* in terms of political organization (confederation), economic organization (state-controlled development), and social organization (social democracy, justice, and equality). However, today, we have a critical mission i.e. resistance. There is no future for our countries if we are unable to defeat the Zionist-takfiri alliance. Of course, this requires reaching a consensus on a local—non-imported—secularism, which al-Sayyed concisely outlined when he stated that “there isn’t anything in Islam that goes against innate human nature”; anything that is inhumane and anything that threatens human rights, dignity or freedom is un‑Islamic, and of course un‑Christian.

Mashreq-ism naturally develops in a consciousness that is characterized by resistance given that Hezbollah has plunged into actual conflicts in the Mashreq, especially in the Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian-Jordanian confrontation triangle in Golan where Zionist terrorism and takfiri terrorism have coalesced, and in Iraq, where Baghdad is fighting the battle of preserving the unity of Mesopotamia/Bilad al-Rafidayn.

Nasrallah addressed Yemen and Bahrain. The significance of the armed resistance of the Yemeni revolution and the peaceful resistance of the Bahraini revolution is linked to the conflict taking place in the Mashreq. The House of Saud, which loathes the Mashreq’s politics, culture and civilization, has spent billions to destroy it. Yemen and Bahrain are the jaws of the pincer that will clamp down on the Saudi base of destruction and stop it from exporting petrodollars, Wahhabism, and terrorism to our bleeding civilized Mashreq, in fact the one “making world history”.

This is a very valid strategic assessment. Depending on the outcomes of the conflict in the Mashreq, the capabilities of the Russian-Chinese-Iranian alliance either progress or decline. Thisalliance is capable of reconstructing the framework of international relations and rearranging the balances of power in the modern world. The victory of the resistance forces in the Mashreq against Zionism-takfirism would push the aforementioned emerging alliance major steps forward: Politically, the qualitative weight needed to impose an international authority, as the only framework of relations among states and peoples, would be formed. Economically, an international economic system would emerge, one that is unrestrained by the dollar and the impact of the barbaric sanctions regime and that is capable of pushing development in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In terms of defense, military capabilities would consolidate, thereby turning imperialist wars into global ventures.

Hezbollah is well aware that in spreading from Lebanon to Syria and Iraq it is not merely taking part in the internal battles of its allies, but it is completely engaging itself in these battles. This achieves two objectives: First, it expands the scope and forces of the resistance in facing the Zionist entity and liberates the resistance from the confines of the Lebanese borders. Second, it interlocks the Mashreq in that context specifically. Accordingly, Hezbollah is no longer a Lebanese party but has, in reality, transformed—not necessarily intellectually—into a party for the entire Mashreq.

This rising movement in our countries’ history makes the Western-Iranian deal on the nuclear issue marginal despite its importance. It also pushes the Iranians and the Russians into a strategic alliance to consequently take on changing the world. This prospect that Hezbollah opened up through strife is what prompted the Iranians not only to be present in Golan, but also to politically declare this presence, which is covered by Russian consent. This undermines the impacts of any agreement with the West, which—let the record show—reluctantly swallowed Iran’s presence on the borders of occupied Palestine.

One of the theorizers of the Syrian “revolution” has written in an ISIS-liberal newspaper that the “revolution” awaits the Iranian-Western deal. If the deal is goes through, the “revolution” will have to face a new difficult reality, and if that deal fails, it will have a chance at inciting a Western aggression against Syria. The problem here lies in the stooge-like thinking approach, which Nasrallah dispels through his independent mindset: We are the ones who make history! We are the ones who pave the ground in order to set in motion one course over another in Iran and in Russia and lead global change… Through strategic dialectic, this change in turn creates the fate of our countries. There is no future for Lebanon—or Jordan or Palestine—through adopting a policy of “disassociation” but through inevitable engagement in the major conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and the region: Get into the battlefield, fight terrorism and Zionism, and earn your place in the future of the Mashreq.

February 18, 2015

**The Resistance Fighter Poses the Arabism Question**

The speech of Security-General Hasan Nasrallah on Yemen received widespread backlash. What is new about this attack is that it included new critics not only from the usual ranks of Salafis, sectarians, and liberals who are in sync with Saudi Arabia, but also from the ranks of “leftists”, “nationalists”, “national liberals”, and secularists…

It is clear then that we are witnessing a campaign, which can be explained as follows: First, as the victories of the Yemeni revolt have been mounting, the efforts of Saudi-Qatari-Brotherhood networks have intensified in order to push more sleeper political and media cells to attack Nasrallah from unprecedented “nationalist” and “secular” angles. Second, voices that oppose that campaign have been blocked from various platforms, and all discussions regarding it have been banned. Third, the scope of those who are characterized by sectarian tension regarding the growing Shiite presence in the Arab part of Asia has expanded. The first two factors are artificial and financed. Therefore, they have no value. However, the third factor is actually alarming. The Sunni-Shiite rift has progressively deepened. Moreover, sectarianism has almost infected parts of the enlightened, civil and secular circles.

Arab intellectuals know a lot about Egypt and Lebanon, two countries that hold sway over circulating political knowledge and media coverage. On the other hand, two extremely significant countries, i.e. Syria and Iraq, remain obscure in terms of awareness of their social, cultural, political, religious, and sectarian makeup and the forms of local ideologies, etc. What does that leave for countries whose specific realities have been off the radar like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yemen?

There has been a number of concurrent phenomena**,** such as Hezbollah’s transformation into a regional force, Syrian resilience, the rise of the Iraqi popular movement, the Bahraini democratic movement, and the Yemeni revolt as well as Oman’s neutrality. Given the prevalent ignorance and indifference, the interlock of these phenomena is perceived by the Arab public opinionas a big blow vis-à-vis a Shiite “conspiracy” woven by Iranians, actually “*Majus* Persians”!

The majority that allegedly supports Arabism is utterly ignorant about the social-political-cultural structures of Arab countries. It does not know anything serious or tangible about the historicism of the Arab Christian presence and is even more oblivious of the highly complex doctrinal pluralism outside the Sunni doctrine, or in fact outside the dominating Sunni-Wahhabi-Brotherhood doctrine. As such, Alawites, Ismailis, Zaidis, and Ibadis, etc. become one solid mass of “Shiites” rather than a pluralistic milieu. It is unquestionable that knowledge about (Twelver) Shiites is extremely superficial and stereotypical. It does not recognize the various schools, approaches, and *ijtihadat* Shiism encompasses, and it casts all Arab Shiites under Iranian Shiism. The gist of this pseudo-awareness is as follows: All those who are not Wahhabis are not Arabs but are instead “Persian” tools.

In his last speech, Nasrallah tried to deconstruct the prevalent stereotype of relations that tie Arab forces to Iranians. According to his assessment—which is absolutely valid—Arab rulers who despise the people are inherently incapable of recognizing the local self-will of popular forces just as they are unable to conceive of having alliance relations with regional and international powers *as counterparts*. They recall their own experience of humiliating subordination to the Shah of Iran and their submission to American hegemony and consequently cannot imagine forms of relations other than subordination and submission.

Anyone with the slightest knowledge about the structure of the regime and state in Syria would undoubtedly scoff at the absurd statements about Syria’s subservience to Iranians. The Syrian political mindset is extremely sensitive about sovereignty and the independence of decision-making, even in the toughest times. I have had the chance to get a look at Syrian-Iranian discussions, which really surprised me. At the height of the war, Syrians were discussing periods and commas! If Damascus were to compare itself to another capital, then it would put itself on par with Moscow. Why is it imperative to stand with the Syrian state until the end? Regarding this point specifically, any free Arab would know that it is because Syrian independence is in fact unmatched among all Arab regimes, without exception.

Hasan Nasrallah? Is his mien that of a follower? When in Tehran, a question grows in one’s mind. Is Tehran more influential in al-Dahiyeh or is it the other way around? However, those who are enslaved cannot comprehend the posture, mindset, and spirit of the free!

In Yemen, there are no rigid doctrinal delineations to begin with. Zaidis are closer to Sunnism, and Shafi'is are closer to Shiism. The House of Saud has spent money and put in efforts in order to divide these two sides through spreading the Wahhabi doctrine. The Muslim Brotherhood has also played its part. These two destructive powers have meddled with the cultural fabric of Yemen, which is inoffensive, simple and impoverished in order to perpetuate control over its structure, decision-making, and capabilities. The Yemeni people have grown dissatisfied with the situation that has been characterized by subservience, poverty, chaos, and corruption, and therefore they revolted. The Brotherhood and the Gulf stole its revolt for four years, but then the Yemeni people reclaimed it through the strength of the Ansar Allah movement.Although this movement stemmed from a particular grievance, what is intriguing about its journey is that it is Yemeni in vision and in practice. It aspires for a prosperous sovereign homeland and does not strive for a special sectarian arrangement. Given that it is a Yemeni movement, i.e. given its national deep-rootedness, it refuses sectarian strategy.

Nasrallah asserted that the relation between Houthis and Iran has only very recently been established. Moreover, Houthis had knocked on every Arab door. At some point, they even appealed to Jordan, asking for mediation. However, their request was ignored! Meanwhile, Amman responded to the Bahraini regime’s calls for security support. What is truly distressing is that Arab intellectuals continue to neglect the purest and most peaceful and national revolt, i.e. the democratic revolt in Bahrain. They continue to remain silent on the atrocities committed against strivers who are detained in Jaw Prison and whose lives are threatened by the worst detention conditions in the world. What is more appalling is that detainees are being segregated on a sectarian basis! What kind of mad malice is this toward the unity of the Bahraini movement?

Up until 2003, when Gulf rulers supported the American occupation of that great country, I had not imagined, given my direct knowledge of the Iraqi society, that Iraqis would fight along sectarian lines. An Iraqi, regardless of religion, sect, and political views, was still an Iraqi in his way of thinking, consciousness, cultural sentiment, leanings, and outlook on life and the world. How much money then has Saudi intelligence spent, and how many terrorist takfiris has it mobilized in order to spread the criminal Wahhabi doctrine in Iraq, divide the greatest resistance Arabs had known along sectarian lines, and divert its flare from the confrontation against the occupier to the infighting among brothers and cousins?

The approach of sectarianism and terrorism is not a mere byproduct of Wahhabi culture and Saudi intelligence interventions. Instead, sectarianism and terrorism are the two pillars of Saudi existence. Without them, the kingdom and the entire Gulf order would cease to exist. The Gulf order is a system of family monopoly over natural wealth, neoliberalism, and recycling petrodollars in a globalized market economy, which is the foundation of globalizing terrorism. Perhaps the U.S. is now vacillating between two courses: The first supports the continued reliance on the terrorist tools of religious fascism. The second leans toward dismantling the Gulf order and rebuilding the Gulf on liberal foundations within the same context of subservience. Both courses support Saudi Arabia’s mad war on Yemen. If the war results in the defeat of the Yemeni revolt and the spread of chaos and terrorism in both countries, it would be “good” for Washington, as it would lead to a complete seizure of oil fields. On the other hand, if Yemen wins, liberals would have an excellent opportunity to dismantle Saudi Arabia and rebuild a subservient Gulf order, but one that is rationalized. In both cases, Riyadh destroys Iraq and Syria, prevents Egypt from independence, and then self-destructs. On the other hand, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been sustaining its economic, scientific, and defense progress, etc. Who, then, is more loyal to Arabism? Is it Hezbollah that has been fighting to safeguard the power and future of Arabs in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen or those of you who have been wrecking Arab countries with sectarian, doctrinal and terrorist destruction? Is there an outcry for Arabism greater than Nasrallah calling you out: “You are indolent”?

March 31, 2015

**The Resistance Fighter Confronts Wahhabi “Intellectuals”**

Today, the House of Saud is broadcasting on a new frequency. The petrodollar has expanded its reach to include “secularists” and “communists” who support the war against Yemen’s impoverished people because the Houthis are going to bring the Wilayat al-Faqih into Yemen! It is as if the House of Saud is the successor of Jean‑Jacques Rousseau and Karl Marx rather than Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab!

“Progressive intellectuals” are shifting the debate from the realm of reality, the reality of the Saudi-American aggression against the Yemeni people, to the realm of beliefs and theories. This circumvention plays into the hands of the aggression and the cover-up of the aggressors’ massacres. It is deception, in fact it is a cheap shot to discuss whether the children and elderly women and men bombed by the coalition’s planes are secularist or not.

The “fairest” among “progressive intellectuals” are those who consider the current battles in the Arab part of Asia to be battles between two camps both of which are reactionary and religious. These battles do not concern us: There is no point in standing with Syria, with tyranny against terrorist Salafism, and there is no point in supporting the Hashd al-Shaabi that follows the *marji*ʿ*iyyah* against ISIS; both are the same! As for the war in Yemen, it is a war raging between Saudi Arabia and Iran, between the Brotherhood-terrorism alliance and Houthis, both of which are Salafi and reactionary!

The new front for attacking Secretary-General Hasan Nasrallah is now fixed on his statement that he believes that Imam Ali al-Khamenei is the *walī* of Muslims! The specific analytical framework he presented in his important speech on the Saudi-American aggression against Yemen does not matter. The information, facts, and positions he put forward are unimportant either. What matters is his faith and belief! It is the same trick, the tactic of shifting the debate from the context of the historical process actually unfolding, i.e. the context of theexisting social, political, strategic conflict to the context of beliefs.

Nasrallah is a sayyed, and his turban and faith are obvious. This is a private matter, which concerns him and his party. What matters is that he does not demand his fellow citizens and compatriots to follow his religion, faith or doctrine, neither through *da***'***wah* nor through force. In his political discourse and practice, Nasrallah—and his party—set out from a clear secular recognition of religious, doctrinal and intellectual pluralism. He does not seek to force Christians to pay the jizyah. Instead, his followers have shed blood defending Christians, their churches and their religious freedom. He does not seek to “Islamize” Druze or convert Sunnis to Shiism, etc. He recognizes the elements and respects them, sometimes to the extent that it harms the resistance, its presence, and standing. However, Nasrallah and his party’s sensitivity, especially about secularism, compels him to take conflicting positions here and there, e.g. holding fast to the party’s cooperation with Hamas despite the sectarian, political and practical hostility it has exhibited toward its former “allies” in the axis of resistance.

Secularism is not atheism and does not require giving up religiosity. It is neither a shot of vodka nor a bikini. Secularism is the separation of religion from politics and political goals. It is a separation not in terms of personal faith on an individual or organizational level but in terms of recognizing religious, doctrinal, and cultural pluralism in the context of an actual specific social structure rather than a theoretical discussion derived from the history of Western societies.

Is the Syrian regime authoritarian? Yes, but it is as secular as the de facto Syrian structure allows for secular practice. While Hezbollah has been fighting alongside this secular regime, we have seen many “secularists” siding with terrorist takfiris and glossing over their criminal atrocity by nonchalantlyreferring to them as “rebels” and “the opposition”.

On the same frequency, fellow “communists” have shamed us, i.e. Mashreq-i leftist forces, for allegedly turning into Shiite-communists! One of them wrote the following: you just stopped short of shouting “Oh Hussein!” However, fellow “communists”, what is communism if not the unconditional siding with the poor, the persecuted, and the victims of injustice? What is communism if not involvement in every place and opportunity to fight imperialism? Does communism involve putting the planes of the House of Saud on par with the blood of Yemeni children? Does communism mean backing away from actual conflicts because the side fighting against colonialism, Zionism, and oil-reactionism does not fit the theoretical measure? Read Marks, Engels and Lenin to learn that a communist is someone who gets involved in actual conflicts in actual concrete conditions. A communist is not someone who leaves the circle of conflict because he is doctrinally ambivalent or sides with imperialists and terrorists because the forces that face them are not leftist!

Russia is no longer communist, but it is fighting for a multipolar world. Doesn’t that give peoples the freedom to choose their paths toward social progress and material and spiritual prosperity? To some of you, Russia is an eastern “imperialist” power fighting its Western “double”. Accordingly, we must join al-Qaeda and its offshoots to fight the two imperialist powers! To some of you, Iran is an anti-Arab, *Majus,* Persian project! To some of you, the whole conflict does not concern Arab communists because it is a sectarian conflict between two Salafi sides! In this case, you are either sidelining yourselves or allowing yourselves to actually side with the coalition of the House of Saud.

April 1, 2015

**The Resistance Fighter Recalls Gamal Abdel Nasser**

Since the sixties of Gamal Abdel Nasser, no cry for the truth has resounded in the Arab scene as did yesterday’s cry during the Solidarity with the Yemeni People event held in Beirut. Al-Sayyed settled and defined, with precision and clarity, the main mission of the Arab national liberation movement (the mission that has been absent and buried since the June 1967 defeat and because of its ramifications). The mission is to confront and defeat the Saudi regime as a necessary condition for foiling the Zionist project, putting an end to political subservience, cultural backwardness, and social and economic lag in Arab countries, and eradicating sectarianism, doctrinism, takfirism, and terrorism in the Arab and Muslim world.

The Wahhabi-Saudi alliance originally emerged as a terrorist desert organization in Najd, building on a religious version that parts with the entire civilizational heritage of Islam. It eliminates all forms of doctrinal, religious and cultural pluralism formulated by Arab and Islamic societies throughout centuries of human effort in order to impose an approach adopted from the *Israʾiliyyat* and substitute a god derived from “Yahweh”, the god of soldiers and death, for Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The civilization-hating, humanity-loathing mindset merged with the mindset of raiding, killing and capturing thereby establishing a “state” with a dark heart, mind and conscience. Both British imperialism and American imperialism sponsored it and therefore enabled it to control, through bloody criminal violence, the most civilized areas of the Arabian Peninsula, i.e. the eastern regions, al-Hijaz, and the Yemeni regions (Najran, Jizan, Asir). The paradox often overlooked in Arab debates is the following. What prompted imperialist powers, specifically British imperialism at that time, which had vigorously sought to rip apart the center of Arab nationalism and civilization in Bilad al-Sham and Iraq through the Sykes-Picot conspiracy, to provide support in order to unify the areas of the peninsula under the command of the House of Saud? This flagrant, unifying formula, which was achieved through violence, was the convenient way to subject the areas capable of progress in the Arab peninsula to the rule of the Wahhabi, desert reactionary rule.

By the end of the Second World War, the Saudi regime was transferred from English protection to that of American imperialism. Riyadh became the center for conspiring against the Mashreq’s unity, the Egyptian-Syrian union, the Yemeni revolt, and Nasser’s liberation endeavor to the point of inciting Americans and Israelis to strike his regime before 1967. Even before and after that, Riyadh held the reins of the Palestinian liberation movement and politically overpowered it. It also fought every liberation, progress and resistance tendency in the Arab world and supported Sadat’s coup d’état. The English, followed by the Americans, saw in Saudi reactionism a strategic tool to realize four main objectives: (1) controlling the spiritual center of Islam and employing it in spreading a takfiri reactionary version that corresponds to the Israeli discriminatory religious outlook; (2) plundering the oil; (3) preventing independence and development trends in the oil-rich region; (4) using the Saudi regime and its financial surpluses in confronting the Arab liberation movement.

The House of Saud financed and used, in full agreement with the strategy of American imperialism and with its support, reactionary religious movements like the Muslim Brotherhood, and the propaganda networks of Wahhabism in the Arab and Muslim worlds and among Muslim minorities in the world. Moreover, it was able to mobilize the largest terrorist army in history, at that time, to fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. It also launched the al-Qaeda organization and militant Salafi movements and employed them where the West wants, as what happened in the war that broke up Yugoslavia.

The House of Saud was the center for conspiring against the Iraqi state by implicating it in a long war with Iran and then abandoning it, along with the Kuwaitis and the Gulf, after the war. It also pushed for striking, blockading, occupying, and destructing the country. Afterwards, the House of Saud infiltrated Iraq’s resistance, pushed it toward becoming Wahhabi militias, and ignited a sectarian war in a country whose society had long been harmonious and civilized. The House of Saud was the financier, facilitator, and manufacturer of the al-Qaeda-ISIS phenomenon in Iraq. Since 2011, Saudi Arabia—along with Qatar, Turkey, and the Wahhabis in the Gulf—has been waging a war of terrorist, sectarian, takfiri extermination against the Syrian state and society. Saudi Arabia has continued to reject any possibility of settlement that would put an end to the bloodbath in Syria. Furthermore, it has allied with Israel, covertly and openly, against the axis of resistance claiming that the priority is to confront the “Iranian threat”. The Saudi forces, the so-called “Gulf Shield”, have been cracking down on the peaceful people of Bahrain for four years and the people of the Arabian Peninsula who are Shiites, enlightened, and national. At the height of the hateful madness, they have been waging, month after month, a war of extermination against the Yemeni people to prevent it from liberation and progress. It is a historic process that could alter the geopolitical balances in the Arabian Peninsula.

“Enough!”, Secretary-General Hasan Nasrallah said, thereby bringing down the curtain on forty years of silence about the crimes of the House of Saud and their political, religious, financial, media and terrorist networks. If there are so-calledleftists, liberals, and nationalists entangled in these networks, then it is no longer acceptable for serious leftist, nationalist, and democratic forces to hesitate about adopting the mission put forth by al-Sayyed at the right place and time. They should adopt the mission not by virtue of his position as thesecretary-general of Hezbollah but given that he is the guardian of the new stage of the Arab national liberation movement.

In addition to defining the central mission of Arab liberation, Nasrallah presented three credentials for this new position that situate him at the forefront of a confrontational bloc. The first is recognizing the diversity of the forces of resistance in Lebanon (Hezbollah, Amal Movement, the nationalist communist-resistance front). The second is his unprecedented, deep, beautiful, sentimental, eloquent language in praising Arabs, their history, ancestry and tribes, and the attributes of Arabism before and after Islam when he praised the people of Yemen, who are the origin of Arabs and the chivalry of Islam. The third is his heartfelt appreciation for the steadfastness of Syria—which is, as a reminder, nationalist and secular—in the face of the herds of terrorists and their plans to invade Lebanon, slaughter Lebanese, and destroy their mosques and churches.

April 18, 2015

**The Resistance Fighter Moves toward the National Liberation Discourse**

Islamist forces ranging from liberalism to the Brotherhood have moved toward Wahhabism, terrorist Salafism and sectarianism. Islamic thinkers and nationalist intellectuals who presented themselves as rationalists and democrats respectively have fallen in the quagmire of identifying with al-Nusra, ISIS, and Jaish al-Islam. Leftists have remained either silent or “neutral” on the cultural, moral and humanitarian catastrophe sweeping Arab countries. Darkness has taken over**.** In the midst of all of this, the commander of the Islamic resistance, his eminence al-Sayyed, the secretary-general of Hezbollah has astonished us with progressive conceptual-political breakthroughs. They give us hope for the coalescence of the national liberation project with the resistance project and hope forthe formation of the historic social bloc capable of achieving the missions of Arab progress.

**The first** is regarding liberation and emancipation. The concept of resistance does not carry a socio-political meaning per se. The objective of resistance is to liberate an occupied country or an occupied territory. Resistance fighters do not necessarily put forth the next objective. Historically, with the exception of resistance movements led by dominant communist parties, liberation projects have not engendered emancipation projects centered on independence, a political, economic and cultural independence. The closest example of resistance movements to this model is the Iraqi one. Arab history has not witnessed a shock force against an occupier like that of the Iraqi resistance, which achieved its liberation goal in record time (2011-2013). However, it has failed to ensure the independence and unity of the country and the unity of its society and to rebuild its state and its development capabilities. This also applies to the resistance in Lebanon. It managed to drive out the Israeli occupiers in 2000 and erode their deterrence capability in 2006, but it has not realized political outcomes for Lebanon. As such, the country has lacked a developmental state and even a service state and has remained subservient, fragmented, and a bastion of conspiracies against the resistance, which has brought about liberation and deterrence.

Until recently, the thought of al-Sayyed—as well as Hezbollah—focused on the concept of resistance as a movement of armed struggle and on the community of the resistance as an incubator environment, one that interacts with the movement on civil levels, but did not put forth any notions of emancipation. The harsh and heroic experience in Syria has put Hezbollah and its leader in the face of a critical intellectual juncture regarding the priority of the concept of independence. Nasrallah has long justified his party’s combat in Syria in terms of defending the Lebanese residing in Syrian territory, protecting the shrines of Ahl al-Bayt, and paying back Syria, which constitutes the backbone of the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine. Today, in al-Sayyed’s logic, these rationalizations have taken a back seat to the priority of defending Syria’s independence. The main advantage of the Syrian national state is its independence and the aim of the terrorist, reactionary, imperialist war against it is to destroy this independence. Criticize the Syrian regime all you want, but no one can deny the independence of its political, defense, and economic decision-making. This independence is the most valuable element Syrians have because despite all difficulties, it opens the door to democracy—as there is no democracy, as a socio-political system, without independence—and the door to development and social progress. Of course, this is a process of struggle, but it is taking place within a national context. For this reason precisely, it has infinite possibilities.On the other hand, subservience ends all prospects of progress for states and societies.

In his fervent defense of the Yemeni people’s revolt, al-Sayyed emphasized, above all, the right of Yemenis to emancipation from subservience and their right to ensure the independence of their homeland as a necessary prelude to achieving security, stability, and prosperity in Yemen, whose time has come to thrive. Just as the goal of the Saudi Gulf war on Syria lies in taking away its independence, the main goal of the aggression against Yemen is to prevent the establishment of an independent national state in this ancient Arab country.

**The second** is regarding secularism. There are many forms of secularism. Not all of them are atheistic and not all of them are Western either. Secularism is a conceptual-political framework, whose substance is determined according to the needs of nationalist societies. In the Mashreq, secularism is not founded on the fundamental separation of religion and politics but rather on the civil element of the national state, its neutrality toward sects, doctrines and ethnicities, and its recognition of religious, doctrinal and cultural diversity. It is established on individual citizenship rights and human rights. In the legacy of Imam Ali, there is a text about this form of secularism. To him, a human is either your brother in faith or your equal in humanity. If the concept of the nation-state had been established in his time, he would have added “or your compatriot”.

In his resistance mindset, al-Sayyed has always made secular references by insisting on the priority of resistance over religious, doctrinal, intellectual, and cultural allegiances. However, after the Syrian experience, he and his party faced the reality of the engagement of the resistance fighters in the battle in defense of the pluralistic, secular, nationalist state in Syria. The sacrifices of Hezbollah’s resistance fighters in Maaloula are manifest. The image of one of the resistance heroes giving a military salute in front of the statue of the Virgin Mary continues to bear witness to the deep-rooted spirit of pluralism in the culture of the resistance.

From fighting in Bosnia alongside Salafis and Wahhabis to fighting against them in Maaloula, Hezbollah has made a leap that has propelled it into a progressive position. Nasrallah has finally developed it by refocusing on the resistance’s secularists in Lebanon and recounting the efforts of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, which launched the resistance against the Israeli occupier in 1982. This development calls for rewriting the history of the resistance in Lebanon from a pluralistic perspective. This will be fundamental in order to deeply instill the culture of resistance and citizenship in Lebanon.

**The third** is regarding Arabism. For the resistance and emancipation movement in our countries, the spirit of Arabism is not merely an option but a necessity in order to weld together national forces with different ideological backgrounds and various social, political, and substantial makeups. Today we are facing an intensified use of the Arabism banner against Arabs. (1) Wahhabi reactionism and its sponsors in Washington and Tel Aviv are waging a comprehensive campaign against all that is national, humanitarian, progressive, and honorable to Arab people in the name of Arabism. It is a masquerade that has worked because of the spread of sectarianism and the network of reactionary media in parts of the public opinion in Arab countries. (2) For Hezbollah, the reactionary propaganda against it centers on denying the party’s Arab character and casting it, not only in a political sense, but also in a symbolic sense and in terms of identity, under the Iranian ally.

In facing this dark propaganda and the deceit and misinformation it stands for, al-Sayyed delved deep into his Arab consciousness. He presented a list of characteristics of Arabs in praising the authentic Arab Yemeni people, none of which apply to the House of Saud. According to al-Sayyed’s characterization, Arabs are people of eloquence, rhetoric, fervor, magnanimity, kindness, generosity and disdain toward injustice.

The time has come for al-Sayyed to stop holding back and say the following: We are Arabs! They have a problem with us because we are Arabs!

These are my ancestors; show me their likes

If, O Jareer, assemblies call us together

The concept of Arabism is only set straight with *madaniyyah* and the civilizational precedence over religions and doctrines. Before Islam, Yemenis were the embodiment of Arab civilization. When the people of the Arabian Peninsula did not read or write proficiently, fought over water streams and had no political rank that topped a clan sheikh, Yemen had civilization, *madaniyyah*, states, and kings, who were the kings of Arabs.

In this text, al-Sayyed emphasized the traits that distinguish real Arabs, i.e. traits that warrant nationalist pride, and he reached secular nationalist thought and connected with it. Its first pillar is the independence of Arabism, as a concept, sense of belonging, history, civilization, and culture, from religions and doctrines. Arabism is therefore a pluralistic framework for all of its elements. The second pillar is the civilization-urbanization aspect of Arabism as there is no Arabism without the process of civilization-urbanization; those who are short of that are Arab desert-dwellers.

April 21, 2015

**The Resistance Fighter… on the Verges of Historical Materialism**

On October 15, 2015, Hasan Nasrallah delivered a speech to a crowd gathered to mourn the martyr al-Hussein bin Ali. The speech covered the set of concepts on which the national liberation movement was founded. The literature of Arab communist parties had long familiarized us with those concepts before becoming mired in liberalism. Who would have expected that a turbaned Sayyed would be the one to revive the Arab communist discourse? The dialectic between revolutionary thought and social history is undoubtedly taking unexpected rough terrain. In the Arab case, this dialectic is now expressing its necessary presence through a qualitative shift in the mindset of the leader of the Islamic resistance in Lebanon rather than the literature of forces affiliated with the left.

In this speech, the religious element was described as one of the motivating factors for joining the national liberation course. Here, we move from the hegemony of the religious element, as a doctrine and Sharia, to kindlingfaith with the example of the revolutionary martyr al-Hussein bin Ali and employing that in the struggle for emancipation. In conclusion, Nasrallah stated that American imperialism has offered us a choice between servitude and war, kneeling and fighting. This is the choice al-Hussein faced, and he chose to fight for his freedom, dignity, and principles until martyrdom. He thereby became an example of struggle, which captures the essence of his memory. Must one be a believing Muslim to follow the example of al-Hussein, or a Christian to follow the example of Jesus, who chose the cross for the sake of the Son of Man? Must one be a Marxist to be inspired by the Argentinian revolutionary martyr Ernesto Che Guevara?

Nasrallah does not define the two sides of historical confrontation in terms of faith and apostasy but in terms of the clash between colonialism and national liberation. He does not call on believers to fight in order to instituteSharia but for the freedom of countries and peoples and their right to have power over their decisions, wealth, and fates. As such, Nasrallah has made a complete break with political Islam in all its forms, Sunni and Shiite, traditional and modern, hardline and enlightened, moderate and radical. Political Islam is a political current founded on the religious solution, i.e. imposing Sharia (as per the specific doctrinal interpretation of each movement) as the solution to all political, economic, social, and cultural problems even intellectual, scientific, and health problems, etc. Political Islam defines its position toward others not in terms of issues of national and social struggle but in terms of religion, doctrine and faith. Political Islam even ultimately turns the issue of the Israeli conflict into an Islamic-Jewish conflict just as it turns the conflict with Western colonialism into an Islamic-Crusades conflict. Political Islam does not recognize citizenship, partnership or brotherhood outside its religious-doctrinal faction. Consequently, it rejects nationalism, which is the bond between equal citizens regardless of their beliefs.

In contrast, Nasrallah defines the ongoinghistorical conflict not as a clash of civilizations, religions, doctrines, and beliefs, etc.,as does political Islam, but as a clash between the forces of global colonialism and peoples aspiring for national liberation. The colonial motive is not a Crusader-like hatred against Islam but the motive is to plunder the wealth of the Arab and Muslim world and to subdue it like a market for commodities, most importantly weapons. This has been the case for other countries that are neither Arab nor Muslim, some of which have given in and others, like Russia and Venezuela, have stood up to the plunderers. Contrary to claims by political Islamabout Crusader-like, Jewish, or Masonic, etc. control over American decision-making, Nasrallah has asserted that decisions are in the hands of oil and arms companies.

Nasrallah clarified some issues in order make sense of the series of takfiri and sectarian wars on Syria, Iraq and Yemen. They are proxy wars on behalf of American and Western colonialism waged by takfiri organizations and reactionary regimes that function as tools. They use sectarian incitement to mobilize misguided fighters who fight to achieve American goals by “draining the capabilities of the states and people in this region, draining their human, financial, economic, social and psychological capacities.”

Concerning his position toward Israel, Nasrallah’s discourse has completely coalesced with the leftist Arab liberation discourse of the pre-liberalism era. He declared that “Israel is not the project per se” but an instrument of American colonialism, and it is not Israel that controls the U.S. but the other way around. As such, Nasrallah has refuteda whole set of prevailing conceptions about the conflict with Israel. The first is political Islam’s conception that the conflict is an eternal battle between Muslims and Jews. The second is the traditional, reactionary and liberal conception that has been held by Arab regimes and elites, according to which the U.S. could be a neutral power in the Arab-Israeli conflict if Arabs strengthen their relations with it and work on weakening the influence of the Jewish lobby there. This conception was the foundation of the peace process from Camp David to Oslo and Wadi Araba. It still governs Arab policy, of those in power and the opposition. The aim of this policy is to justify subservience to American colonialism despite its support of Zionism. The third conception, which has been adopted by the Palestinian Liberation Organization ever since Fatah took over it, is based on the presumption that the conflict with Israel is a Palestinian-Israeli conflict that could be resolved through bilateral confrontation or, as is the course now, bilateral settlement.

However, Israel, in the liberation rationale—that Nasrallah has completely adopted—is a mere colonial instrument for realizing colonial goals. Therefore, a confrontation with Israel is an all-out confrontation with colonial hegemony and its other instruments, including reactionary and subservient regimes as well as sectarian and takfiri forces. Israel is part of an entire colonial picture, and it is not possible to be part of that picture and confront Israel at the same time.

**Excerpts**

* **Colonialism is the main enemy:**

“America, as the heir to the powers of old colonialism, along with the rest of the powers of old colonialism, primarily France and Britain, aim to dominate our region and our countries in every aspect and to bring this region under their control in terms of politics, military, security, economy, and culture. This is the goal, i.e. to make everyone in this region, including governments, peoples, political powers, and social elites, subjugated, submissive, and subservient to the will of the United States of America. We must accept what it wants for us regarding politics. We must accept what it wants for us regarding science. We must accept what it wants for us regarding the economy. It has even interfered in culture and religion. America wants all of us to recognize “Israel” in the region so we must recognize “Israel” in the region! It is forbidden to contend, fight, or resist Israel or even question the conditions of its existence, its identity, and its substance! Everyone must succumb to what America wants and everyone must accept it. Those who do not succumb and concede will face war, a military, political, economic, security and media war. This is the price of free will in the world today not only in the Arab world and in the Muslim world. Anyone who seeks to be free in this world, sovereign in his country and among his people and anyone who seeks to be independent and make decisions according to the interests of his country, people, and nation, must prepare for any form of American war as this is unacceptable for America.”

* **Plunder, rather than religion, is the basis of the colonial motive:**

“They (the Americans and the West) want to have the oil, the gas and all the natural resources of the Arab and Muslim world in their grip. On the face of it, oil and gas are for Arab and Islamic governments, but in reality they are for America and major oil companies in the U.S. through their companies in the region. Arab and Islamic governments are helpless….The governments cannot even set the price of oil. Therefore, when America wants to strike a major economic blow against for example Iran, Iraq, Russia, Venezuela or any state in the world within the circle of confrontation and subjugation, it orders Arab and Islamic governments to lower the price of oil, even if these governments themselves consequentlysuffer poverty, shortages, and losses. That is because the decision is not in their hands. They want the resources of our countries for themselves. They also want our countries to be markets for them, for all their products, even their weapons. In the past two to three years alone… how much were the arms purchases of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Emirates, and other countries from America, specifically, and from France and Britain? Tens of billions of dollars only in the past two to three years, tens of billions of dollars to purchase planes, ships, artillery, and tanks and God knows whether they need them or not. Nevertheless, they are setting up markets for major American arms companies because America is not governed by human rights organizations but by the owners of major oil and arms companies.”

* **The elements of subservience to colonialism are economic and political:**

“What does America want from the states and governments of this region? It wants to control foreign policy, security, oil and gas. The rest is not an issue. If we were to characterize many of our states and governments, we would describe them as authoritiesof administrative self-ruleheaded by a so-called king, prince, or president. However, they are neither real states nor real authorities because decisions regarding foreign policy, war and peace, oil and gas, and the big market are up to America. This is the reality of our region.”

* **Local wars are a colonial necessity:**

“Today, in order to perpetuate its hegemony over our countries, America’s purpose from wars, belligerence, and conflicts… is to drain the capabilities of the states and peoples of this region financially, economically, socially and psychologically”

“After Israel’s defeats in the region, from the 1980s until 2000 in Lebanon, the withdrawal from Gaza, the 2006 July War, America’s defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan, the latest developments in the Arab and Muslim world, and the so-called Arab Spring, America has once again entered the scene and launched a new war. After reading, studying, and putting together all similar cases and numbers, I tell you, it is an American war against all those who refuse to submit to American hegemony.”

“When we assess what has been happening in Syria and Iraq for example, we find that western, Arab and regional states have been crowding tens of thousands of takfiri militants from all over the world and providing them with facilitations, money and thousands of tons of arms and ammunition. They have even provided them with very advanced weapons like anti-tank TOW missiles. We pose the following question: Are these Arab and regional states doing so without America’s consent and knowledge?

No, this is an American project in the first place, a project in which Saudi Arabia, other Arab states, Turkey, and Western states are taking part. This project, the war currently taking place in the region, is actually headed by the United States of America. It is the one supporting, backing, pacing, coordinating and running this whole battle in our region.

The objective of the war on Syria is to subdue Syria to America’s will, Syria which has defied America’s will. They are fighting in service of the American project, whether they know it or not, whether they are secularist or Islamist, whether they carry the Quran or speak of anything else. This current war in Syria and against Syria and everyone in it is a war to subdue Syria to America’s will.”

“In Iraq, who provided money, arms, support, and facilitations for ISIS? America and all of America’s friends in the region. Why? Because America wants to subdue Iraqis after they kicked it out and defeated its occupation. America wants to subdue them, humiliate them, and make them compliant. It wants to tell them that today you have no one to protect you from ISIS and its affiliates except America. Come, express your obedience, and submit to me. You do as I say. When I tell you I want to establish bases in spite of your will, you must accept American bases.”

“The war on Yemen is an American war. They want to subdue Yemen not only for Saudi Arabia but also for America and in order to keep it within the circle of American hegemony. The truth about this war is that they wanted it to take on a sectarian dimension and a doctrinal dimension and to specifically turn into a Sunni-Shiite war so that they can mobilize militants on a sectarian basis…”

* **Israel is a mere colonial tool:**

“Israel is not the project; it is an executional tool in the American, Western hegemony project against our region. It plays an executional and operational role in the service of American hegemony over our region. That is why they protect it all over the world, including the Security Council, and provide it with financial, economic, and military support. If it faces a serious threat, they will fight to defend it. This is Israel. Suppose the day comes when America is weak, leaves the region, or becomes preoccupied for internal socioeconomic reasons and the like. What would be the fate of Israel then? Is this Israel capable of surviving in our region? Not at all, this Israel is a true American tool and today the Palestinian people, and the people of the region, especially the Lebanese people, who have suffered from Israeli aggression, occupation and massacres, bear the burden of the American hegemony project... The main and original culprit for all of Israel’s crimes, massacres and occupation and for what it is perpetrating today in Jerusalem, the Aqsa Mosque, the West Bank, the Gaza strip, and inside Palestine—before Netanyahu and the terrorist army of Netanyahu—is America and the successive American administrations. The current and successive American administrations bear the responsibility.”

* **Claims vary, but the colonial objective remains the same, i.e. preventing development and independence:**

“When we see America demanding elections, democracy, and human rights in all states, do we believe it? The United States supports the most tyrannical dictatorships, the most corrupt regimes in the region and the worse regimes in terms of human rights abuses. It also supports regimes that have no constitution, elections, rotation of power, and no room for expressing opinions, not even a slight one on the internet. Those who express their opinions are sentenced to a hundred lashes, a thousand lashes, or death. When we see America supporting such governments and regimes, that means all its claims about democracy, elections, human rights, the rotation of power, and fighting corruption, are lies and distortions.” They use these lies to “subdue states that have refused to submit to American hegemony. As such, they subjectthem to wars, blockades, sanctions or internal conflicts.”

**The Ideological Delay in the Socioeconomic Issue**

After becoming involved in defending the Syrian Arab Republic, Hasan Nasrallah and his party are no longer the same. The Syrian war, they originally engaged in to defend the resistance and under the pretext of defending Shiite shrines and sacred sites, has taken them to another terrain.The leader and the party did not have the intellectual groundwork to comprehend the developments and complexities of the conflict in Syria and against Syria. However, Nasrallah, with his leadership agility quickly understood them and boldly addressed them, thereby leaving behind the precedents of ideological delay that has characterized the most revolutionary and credible Islamists. It is clear that Nasrallah has made exceptional efforts in this course, and we have discerned them in previous chapters, analyzed their implications, and reached our main conclusion. It is the following: There is a qualitative leap in Hasan Nasrallah’s transition toward the discourse of the national liberation movement in a number of fundamental issues e.g. viewing the global conflict as a conflict between the colonial powers of plunder and aggression on one hand and independent states on the other hand. It is a perspective that defines other issues such as the conflict with Israel, the form of local, regional and international alliances, and the priority of independence, the national state and development, leading to a realistic acceptance of a specific form of secularism.

However, Nasrallah and his party have not been able to realize the second aspect of the ideology of the national liberation movement, namely the social aspect. Regarding this issue, there are two critiques I wrote in 2009 that have remained relevant until now:

* **The Case of Salah Ezzedeen and its Implications**

(September 15, 2015)

Of all organizations of political Islam, Hezbollah has demonstrated that it is the most credible, progressive and influential. Moreover, the party’s Secretary General Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah is unmatched in the circles of political Islam and all of its history. He is a truly great national, broad-minded leader, a man with a defined cause, i.e. resisting Israel, and a brave fighter who is undoubtedly characterized by honesty and integrity. Despite all that, in fact because of all that and other attributes, Nasrallah’s statements concerning Hajj Salah Ezzedeen’s issue call for an open discussion.

Nasrallah has a point. There are many who await Hezbollah’s fall given its strife against Israel. Some of them have benefited and will benefit from the story of Hajj Salah Ezzedeen’s bankruptcy. The rumors may actually be exaggerations of the truth. It could be revealed that the party, as an organization, is not implicated in the case that is under two investigations, judicial and party investigations. All that, despite its importance, supposedly only concerns the judiciary, the party, its audience, and the victims and is irrelevant in the public space for intellectual discussion, which the party can no longer overlook. For this discussion, we will refer to the defense Nasrallah himself put forward (al-Akhbar Newspaper, September 8, 2009). He stated the following: (1) “What happened is a misfortune that has affected many families, and it is troubling and saddening” (2) “The party did not encourage citizens or party members to put their money with HajjSalah… However, the party may have some money with the man, no more than four million dollars”. (3) “Some have really exaggerated the numbers. The actual amount that Ezzedeen lost is around 400 million dollars”. (4) “A very, very limited number of Hezbollah officials invested their money with Ezzedeen. Some of them put the compensations they had received for the destruction of their homes in the July War”…. As for the official who invested one million U.S. dollars, he clarified that “he raised money from his siblings, relatives, friends to put with Ezzedeen.” Alright;

1. Ezzedeen’s bankruptcy is therefore a “misfortune”. A misfortune is an episodic accident and for believers it is predestination. However, this “misfortune” specifically was imminent. The investments, in the case of Ezzedeen, are not stocks in a registered company, are not subject to oversight and accountability, and are not guaranteed by assets, laws, or bank or business entities. Therefore, they are illegal in the first place and entail, from the start, a risk the investor implicitly understands but accepts driven by greed to make greater profits that are unattainable through regulated, conventional investments. In order to make these profits, those managing the money gathering, assuming their credibility, resort to various forms of illegal activities and financial and real estate speculation to guarantee profits that exceed conventional profit rates in the market (that range around 8 percent in actual production and around 15 percent in regulated banking operations). In this case, those managing the investments with higher profitability are compelled to recycle and inflate money many times in a complex network of deals and ventures that undoubtedly outweigh the real assets that are takenas guarantees. Here, bankruptcy is an inevitable consequence of the resulting discrepancy between the amount of funds and size of assets. Consequently, Ezzedeen’s “misfortune” was foretold in the root of his activity, and it was an inevitable outcome of this activity that relied on the approach of savage neoliberalism in making more profits than the actual economy generates through financial and real estate bubbles. What happened with Ezzedeen is a lateversion of what happened in the global capitalist system, whose financial transactions reached 2000 trillion dollars whereas the value of the actual world economy was no more than 44 trillion dollars. As such, it was inevitable for the financial crisis of capitalism to break out in a series of bankruptcies…
2. We do not believe that Hezbollah issued a directive to its members and followers to invest their money with Hajj Ezzedeen. However, the party encouraged them to do so because, first, the party’s political and cultural approach is devoid of any critical, anti-capitalist attitude or even one that is against neoliberal capitalism and its worldview and values that are based on making quick, dirty profit at any cost. Second, the fact that the party itself invested 4 million dollars with Hajj Ezzedeen legitimized his activity and reassured party members and supporters about him. Third, party officials invested money with Hajj Ezzedeen, one of them, by his own admission, even worked in gathering money to invest with him. Here, we reflect on the actual tragedy that unfolded with the fall of Ezzedeen, which can be summarized as follows: Part of the officials of the resistance party, its cadres, supporters and followers is involved in the neoliberal business culture, in its worst and most backward forms. While one would expect Hezbollah to encourage, in his supporters, the values of productivity, contentment, rising above greed, refusing easy profit, steering clear of illegal activities, and elevating human spirit, the party is implicated, to a certain extent, in encouraging the opposite. In my opinion, this is an unavoidable slope for political Islam even in its finest political forms, as is the case of Hezbollah, because it has not yet attained a progressive, social vision that promotes productivity, employment, civil and union organization, and equitable distribution of wealth through class struggle, a vision that also devises an anti-neoliberal development concept. The social outlook of political Islam remains governed by the concept of charitable work. This, apart from being a pragmatic mobilizing tool for the organizations of political Islam, conceptually represents a recognition of the legitimacy of social inequality and a partial treatment of its tragedies rather than its eradication. In any case, the legitimacy of social inequality in political Islam stems originally from the legitimacy of private ownership, business, and profit.
3. The money that Ezzedeen lost, according to Nasrallah’s estimates, is no less than 400 million dollars. Although al-Sayyed has taken the amount lightly, it is a very huge sum in relation to the actual Lebanese economy, especially that it resulted from gathering (and exporting) the savings of a large number of families. This has amplified the recession effect of taking that money out of circulation, whether from starting family production projects or buying goods and services. It is a blow to the national economy that did not come from the expected side, i.e. powerful capitalists who are linked to the American project, but from the side of forces that fight that project with weapons but enable it culturally, morally, and practically. The tragedy of the families that lost their savings with Hajj Ezzedeen is primarily a cultural and moral tragedy. Politically, it points to the spread of the obsession to climb up to the ranks of the upper classes and join them as a central life obsession. Where did the 400 million dollars go? They were transferred from the hands of many middle-class families to the pockets of a few local and foreign capitalists, to whom Hajj Ezzedeen lost. In other words, Hajj Ezzedeen, through Hezbollah’s backing and through exploiting the culture of profit makingamong its followers, served as a mechanism for plundering social savings for the benefit of big parasitical capitalists. He was, in the ultimate analysis, one of them.
* **A Discussion with Dr. Seif Daana**

(September 22, 2009)

In response to my previous text, Dr. Seif Daana stated the following. “Part of the complexity of Hezbollah’s case is that it is engaged in a double liberation operation, i.e. lifting the injustice and oppression from a social group that was persecuted throughout history, a mission that the previous national experiment in Lebanon failed to achieve, and leading the process of liberating society as a whole. The oppressed are the most eligible to lead the liberation project, and their liberation not only liberates the oppressors too, but also society as a whole.” I quoted this paragraph in full because in my opinion it represents the gist of Daana’s two articles in responding to me. We will render what Daana stated into clear, unambiguous language: Hezbollah is, ultimately, a project of liberating the Lebanese Shiite sect from the injustice it suffered at the hands of the Lebanese system, which is built on the alliance of the Christian comprador and Sunni comprador. Before Hezbollah, previous emancipation movements, whether nationalists, communists or Palestinian organizations, failed to recognize this actually legitimate socio-political need. Here, we agree with Dr. Daana and recall that the first spark of awareness of this need was set off by Imam Musa al-Sadr, an enlightened, social, humanitarian, and defiant spark. Thereafter, without him, it veered into militia-ism and comprador-ism in the Amal Movement. However, Hezbollah launched the call again effectively and successfully, albeit without the Sadrist enlightenment. At first, it had a Salafi tendency, which was imperative in order to eliminate the political pluralism of the armed resistance forces in the south, leading to the establishment of a unified institutionalized resistance that paired, ingeniously, between liberating the sect and liberating the south. Consequently, that enabled the sect to establish effective self-rule in its areas, from the south to al-Dahiyeh. Clearly, this situation was unsustainable without integrating it in developing the resistance against Israel into a comprehensive ideology thatpreserves the legitimacy of the sect’s weapons and safeguards its own entity. This course has corresponded with the Syrian national strategy of fighting “beyond the fences” and with the Iranian regional strategy in their anti-Israel axis.

Here, I take Dr. Daana’s sociological remark to its limits and consider the complexities of its local and regional implications. If we do not consider that analysis all the way, we will fall into a sectarian slope that interprets the resistance in terms of Shiism or fall into obscuring the history of Hezbollah’s process of monopolizing the Lebanese resistance, with what that untold history includes (a history than has not yet been studied).

In a structural-functional model of analysis, he ignored the qualitative differences (economic, social and ideological) between classes and *ʿasabiyyahs* and used them interchangeably in a quantitative action approach that is subject to the political moment rather than the political landscape, which is ultimately the ground for social conflicts. Dr. Daana “imported” Marx’s saying, according to which the working class, through its emancipation, emancipates the whole society, and he used it to state that the Lebanese Shiite sect, through its emancipation, emancipates the whole Lebanese society. Here, I do not want to get into a theoretical discussion regarding this functional statement, which is knowledgeably unconstructive. Instead, I just want to remind that the emancipation of the Lebanese Shiite sect—realized, in part, at the hands of Hezbollah through fighting a national enemy and not through internal fighting, which boosts its legitimacy—has not led to the emancipation of the whole Lebanese society. This goal has not even been put forward. On the contrary, in the 2006 victory speech, Hezbollahmade an explicit offer to the Lebanese regimeto uphold it, support it, and definitively integrate in itbased on two foundations: The first is a strong unifying state (for sects), one that is fair (among them) and in which no one excludes the other. The second is the coexistence between the resistance (the secret of the Shiite sect’s power) and comprador-ism (the secretof the power of the Sunni sect canton and its allies).

Dr. Daana deduced the revolutionary substance of Hezbollah’s approach, what he calls “the spider discourse”. To him, Nasrallah’s use of a literary Quranic expression in describing Israel as “weaker than a spider’s home” is an authentic local revolutionary “concept” derived from Islam. Here, it is clear that we are addressing a literary expression, similar to the one Mao Tse-Tung used in describing imperialism as a “paper tiger”, rather than an intellectual or political concept. The Quran is loaded with descriptive expressions and literary insights that can be used in all intellectual and political discourses. For example, I recall that in 1977, one of the intelligence officers used to begin torturing me by saying “In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. We wronged them not, but they were unjust to themselves.Allah Almighty has spoken the truth”! Using Quranic literary expressions in any discourse does not necessarily reflect intellectual authenticity or represent a theoretical concept. Therefore, let us put that aside as it cannot be used in concluding anything regarding the development of an Islamic revolutionary concept, regardless of how well Quranic verses were employed. Moreover, the stances of prominent figures from the history of Islam, who are from one doctrinal line, cannot be relied on to produce Islamic revolutionary authenticity, except in terms of motivation but not theory for the following reasons:

**First,** the revolutionary theory in the age of capitalism is only that which represents a systematic break with capitalism, i.e., Marxism. In the Quran, there is no socioeconomic theory in the first place that could be used to derive a revolutionary theory in the age of capitalism. Regarding the social outlook, the Quranic text conveys two attitudes that are brought together in the Tawbah chapter. We think they are far apart in time:

1. The Christian-communist attitude, as in the Tawbah Chapter (9:35) “And those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend them for the cause of Allah, bring them tidings of painful punishment. The day when they [the gold and silver] shall be heated in the fire of Hell and therewith their foreheads and their sides and their backs shall be burned. [It will be said unto them]: This is what you hoarded for yourselves, now taste what you used to hoard." All the subsequent capitalist interpretations fail to tone down the communist character of this verse. The pronoun in “spend them” refers to all of the treasures, not some of them as many have tried to bend it. Moreover, spending them for the cause of Allah cannot be explained in terms of investment in a private project because on one hand the cause of Allah is the path of the absolute, overarching universal, on the other hand, private investment results in more hoarding and therefore more Hell.
2. The Jewish–business attitude, as in the Tawbah Chapter (9:103): “Of their wealth, take a *sadaqah* (alms), to thereby cleanse them and purify them [of their sins], and pray for them. Truly, your prayer is [a source of] comfort and security for them.” This verse allows for hoarding and investing in return for giving zakat to the poor, which establishes the concept of charitable work as an alternative to communist social justice. On a socio-historical level, the conflict has remained and continued between an opposition that firmly holds that hoarding is prohibited and aristocrats and power-grabbers who firmly hold on to the *sadaqah* verse and consider that it *nasakh* (superseded)previous verses. There is no room here for presenting the history of that conflict. Nevertheless, the *naskh*of a verse does not omit it from revelation. Moreover, no *naskh* can indicate, from a faith perspective, that a mistake in revelation has occurred. Instead, it indicates the acknowledgment of social and political pressures at the time of revelation. Therefore, it is not absolute. Only a holistic view of the Quranic text guarantees building a liberation jurisprudence, in which the verse about hoarding, among other issues, is held on to on a general level. As such, wealth and investment are only for the cause of Allah, i.e. through the state for the sake of the whole society while zakat concerns paid workers, farmers, professionals and artisans, who own their farms and small enterprises, provided they undertake direct work in them. This is only an example of what a national intellectual could resort to in seeking to ground a local revolutionary theory on Islam.

**Second**, owning the Arab-Islamic history cannot be achieved, on a revolutionary level, through sectarian bias but through having a full picture of the socio-political history, with its conflicts, achievements, failures and symbols, from a doctrinally unbiased nationalist perspective. It is one that recognizes the brilliant statesman Muawiyah bin Abi Sufyan, the revolution man, i.e. the martyr al-Hussein bin Ali, and the men of the Islamic social opposition like Abu Dhar al-Ghifari and Islamic communism like the Qarmatians. In each, there is one‑multiple that is internally conflicted. The authenticity of history, its richness, and meaning all lie in its diversity. Its diversity is the guarantor of its unity and therefore the unity of the *ummah*’s historical consciousness in its political present.

With our comprehensive outlook on the history of Arab Islamic establishment, we objectively see that thispoliticization was realized through the clash of four courses. (1) The state course (Omar, Muawiyah, Hisham bin Abd al-Malik, and Abou Jaafar al-Mansour, and al-Rasheed, etc.), (2) the course of political opposition (Ali and al-Hussein, etc.), (3) the course of social and communist opposition (Abu Dhar, Salman al-Farisi, and the Qarmatians, etc.), (4) and the course of cultural opposition (Muʽtazila, philosophers, and prominent Sufis). The authenticity of owning the heritage in the present lies in the non-sectarian, methodological ability to see the Arab-Islamic formation in its contendingtotality rather than taking sides, shedding light on part of that heritage and bringing it to the present because that constitutes fragmenting history, present and future.

**Is There a Shiite Project?**

**(1)**

Idealist Marxists haughtily dismiss the Khaldunian reading of contemporary Arab history, but this reading enforces itself with facts that cannot be ignored. Who can deny that the first Arab *nahda* (renaissance), from the last quarter of the 19th century until the forties of the 20th century, was linked to Arab Christians? It was linked to their social and cultural ascent and their specific need to break free from the control of the Ottoman mullah system and to push the idea of Arabism as a framework to integrate on a nationalist, non-religious basis. It was a course that developed from the level of cultural and literary activity to that of intellectual-political-organizational activity.

Who were the most prominent leaders of the Mashreq at that stage if not Antoun Saade, Michel Aflaq, and Fahd, the founder of Iraqi communism? All that was not a “Christian conspiracy” but an authentic Arab Mashreq-i movement brought about by the most advanced socio-cultural group at that time.

With Abdel Nasser, the Sunni bloc leaped to the forefront of the Arab scene. It discovered itself through engaging in a semi-secular nationalist movement, one that was on good terms with centrist Islam, which was against the Muslim Brotherhood and Wahhabi reactionism. The *nahda* moved from the religiously and culturally diverse Mashreq to Egypt which is homogenous and which transformed into a nationalist center. The heroes of that stage became Nasser, Ben Bella, Yasser Arafat, Muammar al-Gaddafi, and Saddam Hussein. (Hafez al-Assad, in spite of his Alawite origins and his secular progressive mindset, was politically and semiotically “Sunni”, but the Arab sectarian psyche did not accept his integration).

The Nasserist-oriented Arab nationalist movement expressed the rise of Sunni Arabs. Under Nasser, Egypt’s Copts lost—without being harmed—their former active role in the Egyptian national movement. As for the Sunni bloc in Syria, it went for a unity with Nasserist Egypt to break free from Baathists, Syrian nationalists, and communists who were politically and culturally organized and active and who generally came from non-Sunni communities. In Iraq, Nasser opposed the 1958 popular revolution, which reflected the power of the Iraqi Shiite-Kurdish bloc that was headed left. The 1958 revolution suffered consecutive blows that had a latent sectarian character. This resulted in the gradual shift of the Iraqi Baath party toward Sunnism. The party ruled the country from 1968, and it became and remained, up till the end, hostile toward the secular Baath party ruling in Syria. Saddam Hussein viewed a unity with his fellow Syrians as essentially an attempt to rectify the balances of the socio-cultural masses in the two countries. To him that represented a “betrayal” to the authority of the Sunni Arabs in Iraq for which pro-unity Baathists deserved to be executed, given their involvement in the “unity plot” in 1978. In Lebanon, Fatah militias ruled the country thanks to the sectarian base that was provided to them, and they formed the “critical mass”, behind which nationalists and leftists tagged, to the extent that they fought against al-Assad’s Syria.

The law that has governed the rise of Arab groups is hostility toward Wahhabism and reactionism, adherence to a nationalist framework internally, and the adoption of liberation policies that are against imperialism and Israel. Thus, al-Sadat’s contravention of the law with all of its elements chimed the decline of political Sunnism and its fall into the clutches of Wahhabism, the Brotherhood, and takfirism on one hand, and the network of neoliberal ideas and relations as well as subordination to the West on the other hand.

Despite its resounding echoes, the 1979 Iranian Shiite revolution did not engage the Arab scene, except to the extent that it triggered forces of Sunni political Islam to Islamize Arab political life. The Shiite appearance on the Arab stage was linked to Hezbollah, which was able to ascend by relying on the basic nationalist law for the rise of Arab social groups, i.e. launching a resistance against the American-Israeli alliance. The resistance has been gaining more political standing since the 1980s, but more specifically with the end of the civil war in Lebanon. Hezbollah, which forced Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon in 2000 and overcame the 2006 Zionist aggression, which was backed by Arab reactionism, has transformed today into a regional power that is deterring Israelis and fighting in Syria and Iraq. In Syria, pluralistic, nationalist secularism has persevered in the face of Wahhabi,takfiri terrorism. In Iraq, after a decade of political confusion and sinking into corruption and relations of subservience to imperialism, the *marjiʿiyyah* has reengaged the masses of the Shiite bloc and pushed them into a uniting nationalmovement that not only aims to defeat terrorists, but also to reunite Iraq. This step is long overdue and still requires conceptualizing and formulating.

However, the finest movements of political Shiism are those active in Bahrain and Yemen. Although the Bahraini movement has relied on Shiite masses, it has adopted a comprehensive national program for Bahrain’s *nahda* through democratic means, and it has emphasized its local identity. As for the Yemeni Ansar Allah movement, it has the needed national consciousness, boldness, self-confidence, and freedomfromsectarian complexes that it acts as a Yemeni national movement, without yielding to sectarian considerations—like those of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Shiite forces in Iraq. Hence, it has brought and will continue to bring all of Yemen’s free people around it, regardless of sectarian and tribal affiliations, in the battle for liberation from Gulf hegemony and takfiri terrorism.

As such, we are witnessing therealities of the third stage of Arab awakening, i.e. the Shiite stage, and the time has come to discuss the elements of its strength and weakness.

(2)

A quick look at fields of struggle against imperialism, Zionism, Arab reactionism and its terrorist organizations is sufficient to notethat the social masses that are engaged in these struggles belong to the Shiite milieu.

It is true that where there are Christian blocs, they stand in the trench of political Shiism and we cannot overlook Sunni circles and figures that also stand in this trench. However, we can say, with great precision, that the Arab movements that are dominating the course of the liberation struggle and supplying it with a flow of human power today are movements that draw upon the Shiite *ʿasabiyyah*: Hezbollah has transformed into a Mashreq-i regional force. The Iraqi Hashd al-Shaabi is becoming politically defined and is reestablishing the Iraqi national movement. Moreover, we can say that the Bahraini opposition is the only popular-democratic movement in the Arab world. Last, but not least, the Yemeni Ansar Allah movement is a rising force that will rebuild the political map of the Arabian Peninsula, starting with the independence of Yemen and leading to the liberation of its usurped regions (Najran, Jizan, and Asir). It will also inspire revolution in the areas of eastern Saudi Arabia in a historic movement that will not stop before the collapse of the Wahhabi kingdom, the center of Arab reactionism and the prime source of all terrorist, takfiri movements.

Is it a coincidence or is it, as we called it, the Shiite stage of the Arab *nahda*? It relies on a (Khaldunian) social, cultural, political law, whose implications we identified: Socio-religious *ʿasabiyyahs* have governed the stages of the modern Arab *nahda*, which was first dominated by the Christian *ʿasabiyyah*, then the Sunni *ʿasabiyyah*, and now the Shiite *ʿasabiyyah*. If the development of each of these *ʿasabiyyahs* had a socioeconomic basis then each *ʿasabiyyah*’s exercise of its historical role has been linked to its cultural formation. The Christian *ʿasabiyyah* dominated through modern ideas (secular nationalism and leftism) and the Sunni *ʿasabiyyah* dominated through linking nationalism to moderate Islam. As for the Shiite *ʿasabiyyah*, it is presenting itself as Shiite dominance. This is the fundamental shortcoming that impedes its progress and allows imperialism and Arab reactionism to foment open sectarian hatred against it. It is true that Shiite movements are in line with the basic element of the law of nationalist movements, i.e. confronting imperialism, Zionism, and takfiri reactionism, but they have not yet figured out the ideological discourse suitable for their dominance. It is true that they have developed a political framework for the historical understanding with Christians, but their real problem remains the lack of a suitable discourse to accommodate Sunnis. Perhaps that is because they have not yet considered the central element of the law of nationalist movements, i.e. nationalism. Here, all the ambiguities of the relation with Iran come to the fore.

Iranian Shiism is, in the ultimate analysis, an ideology for the rise of a nation-state as there is no fundamental disagreement between the nationalist element and the religious element in Iran (as is the case, ironically, with Turkish Islam). On the other hand, for Arabs, the contradiction between the nationalist element and the Islamic element has a longstanding history. The Umayyad state was founded on a non-Islamic Arab *ʿasabiyyah*, while the Abbasid revolution was established, in opposition to it, throughnon-Arab, Islamic *ʿasabiyyahs* coming together. It was the Islamic discourse, in its fundamentalist Sunni approach, that enabled Turks, Kurds, Caucasians, Mamluks and Ottomans to reign over Arabs for centuries. During that time, the Arab national dimension was lost, language stagnated, intellectual activity deteriorated, and the civilizational, cultural influenceof Arabs declined until the Syrian Christian bloc gave rise to secular Arabism in confronting the Ottomans. Consequently, a certain context was established over which no Arab *ʿasabiyyah* could jump, but the enduring predicament remained in the disjunction between the nationalist element and the Islamic element. Nasserism sought to resolve this problem through reconciling nationalism and a moderate version of Sunni Islam. However, this version degenerated with the collapse of the Nasserist regime under Sadat, and it paved the way for adark period of Wahhabi Islam, which is linked to imperialism and is an objective ally of Zionism.

How can rising Arab Shiite movements solve that problem? This is the essential question that confronts and imposes itself on them with every progress they make. Today, they need, as a historical necessity, a uniting nationalist discourse that not only takes into account the distinction between Iranian Shiism and Arab Shiism, but also comes up with a comprehensive nationalist thesis. Separation from Iran by no means signifies ending the close alliance with this major regional power, but it means putting an end to the ambiguity between subservience on a doctrinal basis and alliance on a nationalist basis.

The Arab Shiite ascent is utterly legitimate from a historical perspective and requires no apology. However, it is impelled to fulfill its necessary ideological elements, particularly the nationalist thesis, and to contemplate a secular state model specific to our countries. Syria, despite its drawbacks, is a possible model.

(3)

Is there a Shiite project?

This question implies that there is a center that studies and decides strategy and tactics on a sectarian basis. This center, as many imagine, is represented in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

However, this idea is fundamentally misleading. I do not mean, however, that it is incorrect. It is impossible to deny the presence of an Iranian regional strategy that seeks to benefit from the forces of Arab Shiism, but I mean that Arab Shiism expresses an objective historical social dynamic rather than a “conspiracy” created by Iranian intelligence.

Here we must very clearly note that the only dynamic that has remained active throughout Arab-Islamic history is the Shiite dynamic—with all its schools and branches—and it has so far gone through four phases. The first began as an expression of Iraqi Islam that accommodated the accumulated religious and cultural traditions of Bilad al-Rafidayn/Mesopotamia and pushed the renewal of the Iraqi presence in history. In Bilad al-Sham, it was faced by a pagan-Christian state i.e. the Umayyad “Caliphate”, which triumphed for two reasons. First, it relied on the Arab *ʿasabiyyah*. Second, it integrated the forces of this *ʿasabiyyah*, heritage and the social blocs that predated Islam. At that time, Islam was still developing, in a historical sense, in a Shiite context in particular, which allowed for the birth of the second phase of the Arab Shiism movement under the Abbasid Caliphate and in conflict with it. The entire subsequent Arab history, until the Ayyubids (followed by the Mamluks and then the Ottomans), was driven by the Shiite dynamic and the conservative and revolutionary doctrines and movements that stemmed from it.

Throughout four centuries (8th-11th centuries AD), this dynamic accommodated the continuity of this region’s old-renewing heritage and expressed the interests of farmers, laborers, and intellectuals as well as the Arab course and the local national formation against aggressor states. These centuries, which were troubled by rivalries, uprisings and cultural vigor, witnessed the birth of Shiite emirates like the Hamdanid Emirate fighting in Aleppo. The emirate relied on the discourse of fighting against the Romans, which reminds us today of Hezbollah’s discourse in resistance. Another example is the socialist Qarmatians republic in greater Bahrain. However, the most significant expression of the Shiite dynamic was the Fatimid Caliphate. With its dissolution, Arab history ended to the advantage of aggressors, including Kurds, Mamluks, and Ottomans who managed, through bloody violence, to freeze Arab intellectual and political life and to impose a single doctrinal model. It was outlined by Ibn Taymiyyah in an authoritarian ideology that remains a source for oppressive authorities and movements that express the traditions of raiding, plundering and killing of the Arabian Peninsula’s deserts. The dynamics of Arab modernity in the 20th century would have been capable of putting an ultimate end to that ideology had it not been for the coincidence of oil. This coincidence allowed old forces coming from the caves of history in Najd to have the necessary money, Western support, and political weight to revive a religious model that is still influential in states and among masses and movements from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to the Muslim Brotherhood and to al-Nusra, ISIS, and their likes.

Iraqi researcher Abd al-Amir al-Rikabi noted that it was the modern Iraqi Shiite dynamic that launched the third Shiite phase, which did not constitute a continuation of old Shiism. Instead, it was an expression of a modern, Iraqi, national, social formation that lasted for more than two centuries (18th and 19th centuries AD). It discontinued after the establishment of a foreign-imposed Iraqi state in 1921. Al-Rikabi emphasized two issues. First, the modern Shiite dynamic in Iraq “came along with transformations within Najaf—the modern holy “city-state”—that corresponded with the structure of the southern Iraqi clan and its characteristics that resembled collective ownership and native democracy. Given that, the mechanisms of practicing *ijtihad*, taqlid, and *hawzah*, which are the creations of a “city-state”, emerged with standards and outcomes that did not fall under authoritarian coercion or the monopolization of violence and weapons. Taqlid is a means of linking tribes to the *maraji*ʿ, in terms of beliefs, and *ijtihad* is a process that is closer to the internal clan system and the forms of rotating power in the sheikhdom and influence therein. The second issue is that modern Shiite traditions emanated from Iraq outwards “as opposed to what has been said, without evidence or examination, about Safavid dominance. In fact, Iran, from Qom to Mashhad, has adopted the Iraqi Shiite process of *ijtihad* and not the Safavid authoritarian system, which faded away and whose principles are no longer practiced”.

Today, the Shiite dynamic is entering its fourth phase. It is entering it as a final, late realization of Islam, as a national-democratic ideology that will bring about an intellectual break—not necessarily a political one—from Iranian Shiism. Here, we note that the system of the Wilayat al-Faqih and imposing a conservative Shiite-Wahhabi model on social life have no historical potential in Arab societies in which political Shiism plays a key role. Hezbollah, despite its ample power in Lebanon, remains constrained by the political and cultural pluralism in the country. Moreover, the heavy presence of its fighters and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in Syria cannot change the country’s secular system, which is built on religious and cultural pluralism. In Yemen, victoriousZaidiyyah has nothing to do with Iranian religious ideology, and the Ansar Allah movement presents itself with a discourse built on national partnership. In Bahrain, political Shiism has gained a clear democratic character. However, the center of gravity of Arab Shiism remains in Iraq, and the outcomes of Iraqi Shiism specifically, will determine the future of the Shiite stage of the Arab *nahda*. Will it head toward national secularism, liberation and Mashreq-i unity, or toward social, political and cultural degenerationand the downfall of Shiite political Islam?

The best aspect about the Shiite milieu is its endless pluralism. Therefore, efforts to impose a single Twelver doctrine in its Iranian form on the masses that belong to the general Shiite milieu will turn the Arab Shiite dynamic from a dynamic that is nationalist, civil and open to emancipatory awakening to Shiism with a Salafi substance.

March 23, 25 and 27, 2015

1. Souraqiya is a term coined by Anton Saadeh in 1936 by merging “Iraq” with “Syria” in Arabic in order to emphasize that Iraq (Mesopotamia/Bilad al-Rafidayn) is an integral and complimentary part of Syria (Bilad al-Sham). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Al-Khidr al-Akhdar” denotes the color green in Arabic [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Damascene [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. literally, People of the Book; refers to Christians and Jews [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Sayyed broadly means Mister in Arabic, but it also denotes people who are recognized as descendants of the Islamic prophet. In Lebanon, Hasan Nasrallah is often referred to simply as “al-Sayyed”. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. a nickname for Fairouz [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. literally, rejectionists; a pejorative term for Shiites [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. a pejorative term for Christians [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. a pejorative term that refers to a member of the Muslim Brotherhood [↑](#footnote-ref-9)