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'Standing with My Brother': Hizbullah, Palestinians, and the Limits of Solidarity

LALEH KHALILI

School of Oriental and African Studies

International solidarity is not an act of charity. It is an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains toward the same objective.

—Samora Machel, FRELIMO (Mozambique)

INTRODUCTION

On 30 January 2004, after months of negotiations between Hizbullah and the state of Israel via German mediators, a major exchange of bodies and prisoners was completed. In return for a kidnapped Israeli citizen—alleged to belong to Israeli intelligence services—and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers captured three years previously, Israel released twenty-nine Lebanese and other Arab prisoners, the remains of fifty-nine Lebanese citizens, and, astonishingly, 400 Palestinian prisoners. The prisoner release was something of a coup for Hizbullah and its success led Hizbullah on 12 July 2006 to emulate the same capture operation hoping to precipitate the release of the last remaining Lebanese prisoners in Israeli prisons.[1] In 2004, many from across the political spectrum in Lebanon and Palestine praised Hizbullah's achievement. In Beirut, the welcoming ceremonies for the released Palestinian prisoners were awash in both

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[1] The Israeli response to the capture of their soldiers was to unleash thirty-four days of war upon Lebanon, during which 7,000 targets were hit through aerial bombardment, while the Israeli navy conducted 2,500 bombardments (Israeli Defence Forces [IDF] 2006). Hizbullah deputy leader Na'im Qasim was to admit later, "We were expecting the Israelis would respond at the most by bombing for a day or two or some limited attacks or targeting certain places, such that it would not go beyond three days and some limited damage" (Reuters, 27 Aug. 2006).

Palestinian and Lebanese flags. Among the celebrants were tens of thousands of Palestinians. The superior effectiveness of Hizbullah in comparison with then Palestinian leadership was not lost on observers. After all, in its most successful negotiations with the Israeli state the previous August, then Palestinian Prime Minister Abu Mazen had been able to secure the release of only 338 Palestinian prisoners of Israel, most of whom had reached the end of their terms anyway. In his welcoming speech to his Palestinian and Lebanese audience, Hizbullah Secretary General, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, further took a swipe at the Fatah-dominated Palestinian National Authority (PNA) by insisting that "*We* should not fall under any illusions and let *ourselves* believe that peaceful negotiations are an alternative to military resistance. Effective [military] resistance was the main factor behind *our* success" (*Daily Star*, 30 Jan. 2004, my emphases). One Lebanese analyst claimed that the Hizbullah success could not possibly be "a popular deal with Palestinian leadership" (*Daily Star*, 26 Jan. 2004), because it showed the relative effectiveness of Hizbullah compared to the Fatah-dominated PNA.

For decades, perhaps even centuries, transnational solidarity has been a significant element of the discourse and practice of modern political movements throughout the world. A significant body of scholarship examines the relations of political actors (often Euro-American intellectuals and activists) with their 'Third World' counterparts, interrogating the role of the (Western) intellectual as spokesperson or in solidarity with popular movements (Alcoff 1991–1992; Bourdieu 1991; Derrida 2003; Foucault 1977; Laclau 1996; Pels 2000; Spivak 1988). Other comparative analyses of transnational activism generally utilize social movements theory, but underplay references to solidarity as a concept in practice or discourse, often focusing on the mechanisms of movement construction, rather than the motives behind transnational solidarity.[2] Transnational solidarity is usually analyzed where one actor is European or North American (often in the context of labor internationalism), rather than where both are from the global South.

This article, by contrast, examines a 'South-South' instance of solidarity, where the relevant political actors are not individual agents. By examining the relationship between Hizbullah and Palestinians, I hope to contribute to our understanding of what motivates political actors—particularly in 'Third World' settings—to declare their solidarity with one another, the shapes this solidarity can take, and especially the limits of solidarity. Drawing on non-essentialist notions of identity, and on the basis of fieldwork in Lebanon and

[2] Even in Giugni and Passy (2001), the question of motivation, quality, and effect of solidarity (as opposed to rationally self-interested collective action) is touched upon rather than analyzed extensively, and the terminology of social movements theory is used to explain transnational activism, rather than the discourse of solidarity itself. Furthermore, the focus here is on European activists in solidarity with others, rather than South-South solidarity.

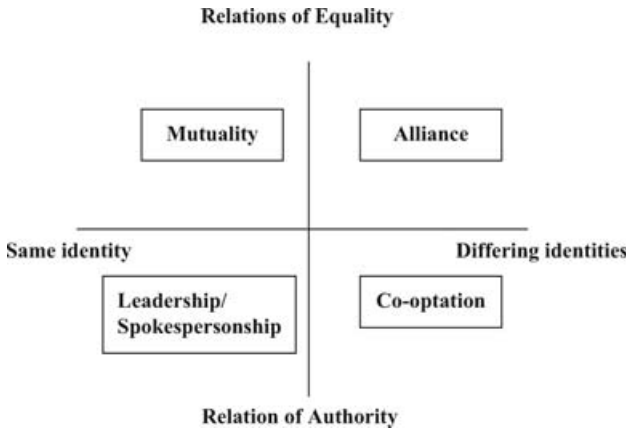
Palestine, formal and informal interviews with refugees, NGO and factional leaders, and extensive research in texts of speeches by and interviews with Hizbullah officials, I argue that Hizbullah has a complex relationship with Palestinians which in many instances can be classified as a relation of solidarity. However, Hizbullah's shifting and overlapping identities (as anti-imperialist movement, Islamist or pan-Arab organization, and Lebanese political party) have influenced its solidary relations, while its occasional use of its substantial moral and material authority—sometimes even in coercive form—has circumscribed solidarity. Whereas many scholars, especially those debating Gramscian versions of (counter)hegemony, would see such exertions of authority as part and parcel of forging unity and solidarity, I argue that authoritative exertion can also work to undermine solidarity. However, where coercive authority is *not* used in the relations between political actors, such solidary relations can result in gains on both sides. More broadly, I argue that solidary relations are dynamic and influenced by two important factors: the symmetry of power between the actors, as well as the compatibility of their identities and conditions of struggle.

SOLIDARITY AND COGNATE RELATIONS

Solidarity is usually defined as the sense of unity between two political actors on the basis of shared interests, understandings, or aspirations, and sometimes on the basis of a common enemy. Solidarity belongs to a family of similar relationships. These are *alliances* between different actors, *mutuality* (or in-group solidarity), *co-optation*, and *leadership/spokespersonship*. These relationships are distinguished from one another by two qualities: identity and authority.

Actors can have the same identity and the same shared circumstances of suffering, or where they have different identities their solidary relations can "comprehend those who suffer and those who seek to make common cause with them even though they do not find themselves in the same objective, factual circumstances" (Reshaur 1992: 725). However, an important though oft-neglected consideration here is the fluidity of identities of actors in solidarity with one another. We usually imagine such actors as unitary, fully constituted, and united in strategy, identity, and aspiration, but such assumption of conformity can be erroneous. Whether a collective political actor has incorporated through a volunteer act, circumstance, or attribution,[3] it can always be imagined and described in manifold ways. For example, when Nasrallah speaks

[3] A *volunteer* act is an act through which individual members of the group *choose* to become a collective. *Circumstance* can also constitute a collectivity: conditions of living, or a shared history of eviction from a particular locale, for example, can be bases of the constitution of collectivity (see Spivak 1988: 276). Finally, where the condition of collectivity is enforced by an external, and perhaps a more powerful actor, the constitution of the collectivity is *attributed*.



of "the Palestinians," he can be referring to Palestinian territory, national cause, or people. Indeed, Palestinians can be recognized as a collective because of any number of the following: their shared ancestry, expulsion from Palestine in 1948, national mobilization in the 1960s, or recognition of their collectivity by external actors. As importantly, Hizbullah itself can have different identities. It can be construed (or represent itself) as an anti-imperialist force, a Lebanese political party, an Islamist organization, or a pan-Arab nationalist movement. Multivalence and fluidity of identities are important elements to which I shall return.

Beyond identity, circumstance, and strategy, differences in authority also influence solidarity. Between actors with distinct identities, where one has authority over the other (by dint of superior access to economic, political, and social capital), the more powerful actor can co-opt the other. Co-optation involves attaching the less powerful actor to the project of the more authoritative one, without necessarily fulfilling the interests of the former. When political actors have the same identity, authority can permit the more powerful actor to don the mantle of leadership or spokespersonship. In such a relationship, the represented actor delegates authority to the spokesperson or leader. "Spokespersons by definition speak in the name of, and hence *in the place of* others, who must first be reduced to (or seduced into) silence before they can effectively be spoken for" (Pels 2000: 2; also Bourdieu 1991: 182–83)

If power is distributed equally between the two political actors, mutuality or alliances can obtain. An alliance allows for two political actors who may differ in ultimate condition of existence or identity, but who share some basis of solidarity or have a common enemy, to enter a mutually beneficial relationship, in

which the exchange of material and ideational support allows achievement of future goals. Mutuality, or in-group solidarity, allows for the same but within a group that already has experienced the same conditions of existence or the same political identity. Importantly, transformations in power, interests, and identities of actors can change the relation between them from mutuality or alliance to co-optation or leadership, and vice versa.

In what follows, I examine the multi-faceted relationship between Hizbullah and Palestinians since the advent of the former in the early 1980s. After describing Hizbullah's emergence and its evolution, I analyze Hizbullah support for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the appropriation of Palestinian symbolic capital, and the military support Hizbullah provides for Palestinians. At the end of the essay I evaluate the shifting character and limits of Hizbullah solidarity with Palestinians.

HIZBULLAH: PRAGMATIC MILITANCY

Hizbullah, the "Party of God," was founded in Lebanon in 1984 by several young radical Shi'a clerics, including Hasan Nasrallah, and their first cadres were supported and trained by Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Radicalized by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (Hamzeh 2004), many members of the main Shi'a political party at the time, Amal, were disillusioned with the founding of a National Salvation Committee in Lebanon, which brought together Amal and their main Lebanese adversary, the Lebanese Forces (LF). They were further disappointed by Amal leader Nabih Birri's decision to negotiate with the LF despite the latter's alliance with Israel (Norton 1987: 151).[4] The 1980s saw furious contention and armed clashes between Amal and Hizbullah as the two parties competed for the loyalty of the large Shi'a constituency in Beirut and the south. The end of the civil war in 1989–1990, and the moderation of Iran's revolutionary stance after Khomeini's death in 1989 both led to Hizbullah's transformation from a revolutionary, armed group, toward a political party eager to participate in the electoral process.

[4] Amal—the Arabic Acronym for Lebanese Resistance Detachments—was formed in 1975 as the militia adjunct of Imam Musa Sadr's Movement of the Dispossessed. The latter was the first Shi'a popular movement in Lebanon, with which Sadr "vowed to struggle relentlessly until the security needs and the social grievances of the deprived—in practice the Shi'a—were satisfactorily addressed by the government" (Norton 1987: 47). The Lebanese Forces militia consolidated a number of different Maronite militias in Lebanon under the leadership of Bashir Jummayil. Many LF cadres were trained by Mossad in Israel and assisted Israel with its invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (Picard 2002: 124–26). Palestinians in Lebanon have had stormy relations with both Amal and LF. In fact, LF has been responsible for several massacres of Palestinian refugees, most prominent among them those at the Tal al-Za'tar camp (1976) and at Sabra/Shatila (1982). Amal is blamed for the devastation wrought on Beirut and southern Lebanese camps during the War of the Camps (1985–1988). Ironically, while Syria supported LF's operations at Tal al-Za'tar and Amal during the War of the Camps, Israel provided logistical support for LF during Sabra/Shatila massacres (Khalili 2007).

Since the first post-war elections in 1992, Hizbullah's political wing has become a force with which Amal has had to reckon. In both parliamentary and municipal elections, Hizbullah consistently increased the number of their elected candidates. Its pragmatic electoral strategies have seen it enter coalitions with former adversaries in some areas of the country. In the 2004 elections, Hizbullah made inroads in Amal-dominated southern Lebanon, while in the 2005 elections, it entered into coalitions with Amal, which allowed it to secure fourteen seats in a bloc of thirty-five allies. The 2005 withdrawal from Lebanon of the Syrian military—an important ally of Hizbullah—led to further integration of Hizbullah into the Lebanese political system, and for the first time since its inception the Party fielded ministers in the cabinet. In a Lebanese political arena known for its rampant corruption, Hizbullah parliamentarians are recognized as trustworthy, pragmatic, and professional. The incorruptibility and efficiency of its municipal civil servants have made the political wing of the party popular with the Shi'a communities in Beirut and the south (Harb and Leenders 2005: 188).

Similarly, Hizbullah's social welfare services provide inexpensive clinics and modern and well-equipped hospitals for the Party's constituencies. Its after-school programs and nurseries are open to working women living in the southern suburbs and its urban engineering service (Reconstruction Jihad) has been instrumental in the rejuvenation of destroyed neighborhoods, and has provided clean water to those without access to potable water (Deeb 2006: 172–201; Harik 1994).

Meanwhile, Hizbullah's military wing has garnered symbolic capital in Lebanon and beyond as the only militant organization to have forced Israel to cede occupied territories in 2000 and to have defeated the Israeli military in asymmetric conflict in 2006. Throughout the 1990s, Hizbullah's armed adjunct, the Islamic Resistance, fought a guerrilla war against Israel that saw great numbers of Israeli military casualties matched with Hizbullah cadres' sacrifices.[5] The 'martyrdom' of Nasrallah's son in a military operation secured the respect of many Lebanese and Palestinians who saw the Party leader's loss as an index of the resolve of Hizbullah, as well as a sign of its more egalitarian structure. Significantly, Hizbullah's military strategy for Lebanon has also been pragmatic. In 1996, and immediately after the devastating Israeli attacks on Lebanese infrastructure and civilian targets, Hizbullah entered a multilateral cease-fire negotiation process with Israel, which produced a document known as the 'April Understanding.' In this document, in return for Hizbullah and Israel agreeing not to attack civilians, Hizbullah's

[5] Hizbullah's primary mode of armed struggle has been guerrilla warfare and the Party claims only twelve suicide bombings (or "self-sacrifice operations") against the Israeli military during its occupation of southern Lebanon. I am grateful to an anonymous *CSSH* reviewer for this information.

"right to continue resistance activities against Israeli and SLA combatants" in southern Lebanon was recognized (Harik 2004: 122; Norton 2000: 29). After the Israeli evacuation of southern Lebanon in 2000, Hizbullah's military forces quickly took control of the border region, and the militant organization continues to justify its armed status by pointing to the continued Israeli occupation of a strip of land called the Shab'a Farms, as well as the "Palestinianisation" of its aims (International Crisis Group [ICG] 2002). At least until the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, this increased focus on the Palestinian struggle against Israel was central to Hizbullah's militant wing. The Syrian withdrawal has seen increasing external and internal pressures to disarm, as the United Nations resolution 1559 (September 2004)—supported primarily by the United States and France—calls for the disarmament of militias in Lebanon, a call clearly aimed at Hizbullah and Palestinian armed groups. Local Sunni and Maronite political groups, wary of Hizbullah's strength, have also called for Hizbullah disarmament with varying intensity. Israel's assault on Lebanon in 2006 was touted as a forcible implementation of Resolution 1559; however, since the end of the conflict, while the pressure for disarmament is still present, the means are not.

The multidimensionality of Hizbullah's activities strengthens its hand when securing the respect and loyalty of Palestinians. In most studies of the relations between Hizbullah and Palestinians, the focus has either been entirely on the centrality of Jerusalem in Hizbullah ideology (Saad-Ghorayeb 2002; Hamzeh 2004), or on the 'terror' connection between the two (Levitt 2004; for an excellent critique of these studies see Harb and Leenders 2005). This essay will, by contrast, sociologically examine Hizbullah's relations with the most proximate group of Palestinians, the refugees in Lebanon, and follow that with an analysis of the relations between Hizbullah and the broader Palestinian polity.

SUPPORTING PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

Hizbullah and the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have over time forged a mostly cordial and cooperative relationship. In day-to-day management and provision of social services, Hizbullah-controlled municipalities in Beirut have coordinated their social welfare activities with the United Nations Relief and Welfare Administration (UNRWA) and Palestinian NGOs that serve the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.[6] The Ghubayri municipality in southern Beirut, led by one of the founding members of Hizbullah, Muhammad Khansa, has cleared the environs of Shatila camp of war debris, maintains the site of Sabra/Shatila mass graves, and coordinates the provision of

[6] UNRWA is the UN agency established in 1949 to administer the affairs of Palestinian refugees, and provide them with basic social services such as health and education. Since 1993 and the Oslo Accords, UNRWA funding has been steadily cut back, and the services it provides have been heavily curtailed.

environmental services to the camps with UNRWA (personal interview with Khansa, Ghubayri, 24 Aug. 2004; *al-Hayat*, 2 Feb. 1999; *al-Liwa'*, 13 Feb. 2004; *al-Nahar*, 25 June 1999). Hizbullah's exemplary health clinics are open to Palestinians, although the refugees are expected to pay a nominal fee. Hizbullah's Reconstruction Jihad has provided water tanks to the camps in order to alleviate the severe water shortages resulting from the degradation and pollution of water tables (Harik 1994: 28).

Hizbullah's terrestrial television station, al-Manar, has acted as a media forum for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Its 2001 series, *A'idun*,[7] deployed the telenovela genre to explore the histories of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, telling the Palestinian story in Lebanon with real footage of 1948 and the Lebanese civil war, as well as the refugees' oral histories, songs, and lullabies. In 2002, a new al-Manar series, titled *Huna Filastin* (*This is Palestine*), became a forum for the refugees' oral histories, previously collected by a few Palestinian nationalists and academic researchers. Each episode included a section titled *Yatazakkirun* (*They remember*) in which Palestinian refugees spoke about their lives in Palestine before 1948 and their eviction from their villages. Borrowing the nationalist trope of focusing on peasant life as the signifier of Palestinian nationalism (Swedenburg 1990), the episodes told the story of twenty Palestinian villages depopulated in 1948. A second section of *Huna Filastin*, *Hatta Naltaqi* (*Until we meet*) connected Palestinians in Hamas studios in the Occupied Territories with al-Manar's Beirut studios in order to reunite families torn apart by war, displacement, and migration. Many refugees in Lebanon considered the use of al-Manar as a platform for nationalist reproduction of history and community to be a generous and popular act of solidarity.

The record of Hizbullah political and parliamentary support for Palestinian refugees, however, is uneven. The contradictions and inconsistencies arise from, first, Hizbullah's role as a legitimate political representative of the *Lebanese* and a pan-Arab ally of Palestinians, and second, its attempts to reconcile its alliance with Syria with its sympathies for Palestinian refugees.[8] Between 1985 and 1987, during the War of the Camps, Amal brutally besieged Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and the south. In response, Hizbullah organized demonstrations (Wighton 1990: 117), and at the risk of death, attempted to smuggle medicine and supplies into the camps (Cutting 1988: 168; Sayigh 1997: 595; Wighton 1990: 138). After the end of the civil war, unlike most other Lebanese parties, Hizbullah has argued that granting Palestinians civil

[7] *A'idun*, or "returnees," is a more "dignified" synonym for "refugees."

[8] Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have consistently suffered the attempts of successive Syrian regimes to control and co-opt them. These attempts have resulted in extensive violence several times over the last few decades (Talhami 2001), as well as the institution of severe restrictions on Palestinian political activity, the legacy of which still remains.

rights does not lead to their naturalization (with the latter being a much-feared Lebanese taboo) and as such, punitive legislation against Palestinian refugees should be annulled (Qasim interview in *al-Liwa'*, 30 Mar. 2004).

However, where national consensus has required compromise from Hizbullah, it has retreated from its discourse of civil rights for Palestinians in order to avoid parliamentary conflict with other Lebanese parties. When in spring 2001 the Lebanese parliament introduced legislation preventing Palestinians from owning or inheriting any property in Lebanon, Hizbullah ministers tried to stall the law (*al-Nahar*, 2 Sept. 2002). When it passed anyway, they lodged a complaint, but after a series of political maneuvers by various groups, including Amal, Hizbullah withdrew its complaint.[9] Again, in October 2003, Hizbullah MPs attempted to overturn the law, but when Emile Lahud and Nabih Birri, respectively the presidents of Lebanon and Amal and both staunch allies of Syria, vocally opposed Hizbullah, the MPs withdrew the initiative in the interest of political harmony (*al-Jazeera*, 1 Nov. 2003). In June 2005, after Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, the Labour Minister Trad Hamadeh, a former leftist close to Hizbullah, issued a decree allowing Palestinians access to menial and clerical jobs previously barred to them, although legal work permits still cost several hundred dollars. However, there are some doubts over the munificence of this act—because Syrian withdrawal has resulted in a massive shortage of manual (Syrian) labor in Lebanon, and because Palestinians are still barred from professional jobs, most attribute the decree to Lebanon's appetite for cheap manual labor. Simultaneously, Hizbullah, like *all* Lebanese parties, vehemently advocates Palestinian right of return as a means of preventing the refugees' settlement in Lebanon. This position conveniently expands the common ground between Hizbullah and its allies and rivals, and also, interestingly, places the Party on the side of the Palestinian refugees and in opposition to Palestinian leaders in the Occupied Territories who have suggested restricting or abdicating the refugees' right of return.[10]

In declaring its solidarity with Palestinian refugees, Hizbullah represents them as members of the Islamic *umma* (community) and the Arab nation with whom a common enemy is shared. However, Hizbullah also insists on the distinctiveness—even foreignness—of Palestinian refugees, in order to bolster its own Lebanese identity and because the lived experience of the Shi'a and Palestinian refugees—other than shared poverty—tend to be different. Because little authority is exercised in much of the support Hizbullah provides, this aspect of Hizbullah's relationship comes closest to a pure alliance.

[9] Personal interview with Suhayl Natur, member of the General Union of Palestinian Jurists, Mar Ilyas camp, 30 Nov. 2001.

[10] In an opinion piece in the *New York Times* (3 Feb. 2002), Yasir Arafat wrote that the refugee's right of return "must be implemented in such a way that takes into account [Israel's demographic] concerns." Similarly, after coming to power as the president of PNA, Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) called for 'realistic' assessment of the refugees' right of return (*Haaretz*, 15 Mar. 2005).

Arguably, Hizbullah reaps much benefit from its solidarity with the Palestinian refugees. The Party acquires prestige among the Palestinians and confirms its revolutionary credentials, and as such can gain their consent to its local and regional political agenda more easily. By promoting the refugees' "return," Hizbullah not only advocates the publicly stated refugee position on the right of return, but also conveniently voices the vehement Lebanese rejection of any eventual Palestinian settlement in Lebanon. By expressing support for Palestinian civil rights, Hizbullah further expresses its principled position, even if in the process it bows down to the exigencies of pragmatic parliamentary politics and Syrian pressures. Other aspects of Hizbullah's symbolic and militant practices are, as we shall see, even more complex.

PROMULGATION AND APPROPRIATION OF PALESTINIAN POLITICAL ICONS

Hizbullah accumulates prestige and social capital, both locally and regionally, through its promulgation and appropriation of specific Palestinian national icons. Palestinian symbols—foremost among them the Dome of the Rock—are among images adorning Hizbullah controlled neighborhoods in Beirut, while commemorative markers of the Sabra/Shatila massacres are among the most important Palestinian symbols appropriated by Hizbullah.[11] The prominence of Sabra/Shatila in Hizbullah discourse and the Party's appropriation of the symbols of the massacre, as I show below, are instances where Hizbullah either dons the mantle of spokespersonship vis-à-vis the Palestinians or co-opts their symbols and cause.

Although the massacre at Sabra/Shatila is central to Palestinian *nationalist* iconography, Hizbullah has appropriated it as *its* founding moment. The open letter with which Hizbullah announced its birth to the world classified the victims of the massacre as the downtrodden (*mustad'afun*) who were the Party's constituency: "The Israelis and Phalangists massacred several thousands of our fathers, children, women and brothers in Sabra and Chatila in a single night but no practical renunciation or condemnation was expressed by any international organization or authority against this heinous massacre. . . ."[12] Already Hizbullah was speaking of *and for* the entire collectivity within the

[11] On 14 September 1982, and after Palestinian fighters and their leaders had been evacuated from Lebanon, Bashir Jumayyil, the head of the LF and the president-elect of Lebanon, was killed by a gunman, thought to be an agent of Syrian secret service. Immediately thereafter, then Defence Minister of Israel Ariel Sharon ordered the invasion of West Beirut. The IDF transported militiamen from the LF and the South Lebanese Army to the camps to 'mop up Palestinian terrorists,' blocked entry to the area, and illuminated the camps at night by lighting flares continuously, while the militiamen massacred whomever they could find. The number of the dead is estimated anywhere between 1,200 and 3,000 (al-Hout 2004; Kapeliouk 1983; Schiff and Ya'ari 1984: 250–85).

[12] *Text of Open Letter Addressed by Hizbullah to the Downtrodden in Lebanon and in the World*, 15 Feb. 1985 (quoted in Norton 1987: 171).

camp—Palestinian and Lebanese—as a single constituency, "*our* fathers, children, women and brothers." This assumption of spokespersonship is at once ideological and utilitarian. On the one hand, however problematically, Hizbullah claims to speak for the downtrodden among the Shi'a, a number of whom had been the victims.[13] On the other hand, Hizbullah co-opts a semiotically-rich Palestinian memory-object, and lays claim to a righteousness secured through internationally recognized suffering.

More importantly, Hizbullah has appropriated the commemorative space of the massacre site for its symbolic performances. Despite annual commemoration and cleaning ceremonies held by Lebanese and Palestinian intellectuals, by 1999, when the Hizbullah-controlled Ghubayri municipality took over the maintenance of the site, it had been transformed into a rubbish dump by the street vendors who did business in that corner of the camp. The municipality enclosed the mass grave, marked its entrance, and planted white roses and trees on its margins. The key to the site was given to a groundskeeper, himself related to many of the massacre victims. Hizbullah has festooned the desolate and empty space with banners bearing anti-Zionist and anti-U.S. slogans almost entirely in English. Large photographs of bloated bodies and mutilated corpses have been added to the site, among which one particular poster-board stands out, as it commemorates a family of massacre victims. They are all al-Miqdads, belonging to a Shi'a family displaced from the south during the war, and at the time of the massacre, residing in the camp. The al-Miqdad family members are identified by name and photograph, the only massacre victims that are individually recognized. Though thousands of Palestinians are buried at the site, nothing indicates that it was once a refugee camp or its significance in Palestinian history. There are no Palestinian flags, no chequered Palestinian scarves, no identifiable markers of Palestinianness. However sympathetic its restoration of the site is, Hizbullah's narrative of Sabra/Shatila massacres erases the identity of the Palestinian victims.

On the twentieth anniversary of the massacres on 17 September 2002, Hizbullah took control of the commemorative events and held a memorial ceremony on the site. The ceremony—much like the massacre site itself—strangely effaced Palestinians, while spotlighting Hizbullah's intricate political maneuvering. Thousands of Palestinians had joined the memorial march that ended at the site, but once they discovered to their horror that Hizbullah had invited an Amal parliamentarian, Abdullah Musa, to speak alongside Hizbullah and Palestinian representatives (Muhammad Khansa and Khalid al-Shamal, respectively), many Palestinians left the ceremonies.[14] A Palestinian woman from Shatila asked rhetorically, "Why should I stay and listen to an Amal politician tell me about Sabra/Shatila, when his party was the one who massacred

[13] In all, 27 percent of the named massacre victims were Shi'a (Al-Hout 2004: 345).
[14] On the ceremony, see *al-Safir*, 17 Sept. 2002.

my family in the War of the Camps?" The memorial service said nothing about the Lebanese nationality of the perpetrators of the war crime, focusing entirely on the Israeli enablers of the massacre. Subsequent memorials at the site have also included officers of Amal, while remaining silent about the culpable Lebanese groups, with whom an uneasy peace prevails. In remembering Israeli war crimes and 'forgetting' the local political parties that were also complicit in committing atrocities against Palestinians, Hizbullah successfully advances its own anti-Israeli agenda—which coincides with that of many Palestinians—without endangering its extant relationship with local parties. Furthermore, inclusion of Amal politicians in such ceremonies tramples over profound Palestinian sensitivities, even if it allows Hizbullah to make local gestures of friendship to its rival. Hizbullah has taken its pragmatic calculations so far as to ally with the Lebanese Forces—the primary culprits of Sabra/Shatila massacres—on at least one electoral slate in Lebanon's most recent elections in 2005.[15]

The same elision of identities and political agendas which makes a Palestinian memorial into a memorial of violence against Hizbullah's constituency can also be observed in the way in which "Jerusalem" as a semiotically saturated and multivalent space has been transformed into a *Muslim* icon pivotal to Hizbullah political doctrine.[16] For Hizbullah, Jerusalem (al-Quds) has become the single most important symbolic representation of struggle, but the city's mythico-historical location in Hizbullah discourse often obscures its concreteness as a place of residence and worship for all Palestinians. Hizbullah follows Iran's example in celebrating al-Quds Day as a day of unity "for Sunni and Shi'a, for Lebanese Muslims, and Palestinian Muslims, for 'Arab, Ajam, and Turk,' because al-Quds Day was 'for the whole Islamic umma against its enemies' " (quoted in Sharara 1996: 354). Hizbullah pamphlets about Jerusalem recall its importance in Islam, blame Israel for the fire that nearly destroyed al-Aqsa mosque in 1968, and conclude by excerpting speeches and writings by Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Khamene'i, Imam Musa Sadr, and Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, neither of whom is Palestinian (Anonymous 2000).[17] Such documents rarely include much on the city's current Palestinian residents. The city as a living urban center, as a place of worship for *all* of the world's monotheistic religions, and as a central locus of Palestinian politics and

[15] In Aley, Hizbullah instructed "its supporters to respect the party's national alliances and to vote accordingly for an entire list" of candidates which included the LF alongside members of Hariri's Future Movement (EU 2005: 32; *IRIN*, 23 Jan. 2006).

[16] Needless to say, many Palestinians also consider Jerusalem a Muslim icon, but they also regard it as a great many other things: the capital of an eventual Palestinian state, the place of residence of many Palestinian, a nationalist symbol, etcetera.

[17] Khomeini was the leader of the Iranian revolution and the theological forbear of Hizbullah. Khamene'i is the current leader of Iran and spiritual leader of Hizbullah. Imam Musa Sadr was the first Lebanese Shi'a cleric to marry Shi'ism to a political agenda.

nationalism, simply does not exist in Hizbullah pamphlets or its political rhetoric.

Does the narrowing of Palestine's identity to Muslim Jerusalem erase the concrete history of dispossession? The easy elision that is often made between Jerusalem as Palestine, Palestine as a solely Muslim space, and the Palestinian people, often effaces the latter, silences their voices, and deems the very real tribulations and struggles of a dispossessed people (and *their* rich symbolic system) as secondary to the abstract sanctity of a religiously holy space. Jerusalem-as-Palestine, in a sense, erases Nazareth, or Jericho, or Galilee, or Gaza, or the hills of the West Bank, as part of the Palestinian territorial imaginary. Although Jerusalem also plays a substantial role in Palestinian nationalist and nationalist-Islamist iconography, it is not the sole geographic or indeed geo-symbolic reference point, whereas in Hizbullah rhetoric it becomes so. Hizbullah, like many others in the Middle East and beyond, appropriates Jerusalem as an "empty signifier"—an abstract symbol—(Laclau 1996) that can be filled with the Party's preferred political and semiotic content.

In a sense, this single-minded focus on Jerusalem allows Hizbullah to co-opt the Palestinian national project to its own. When deploying Jerusalem as its primary symbol, Hizbullah's shifting and overlapping identities are reduced to its Islamist one, eliding "ideological differences between Shi'ism and Sunnism" in order to "become a bridge between the two [as well as between] Iran and the Arabs" (Hamzeh 2004: 40). Such attempts at co-optation of concrete political entities such as Jerusalem and their transformation into potent symbols result in a reification of the very thing they co-opt, silencing its multivalence and effacing its internal meanings.

ADVOCATING HIZBULLAH'S MODEL OF MILITANCY

Hizbullah's advocacy of its model of militancy as the universal mode of resistance is one of the more complex instances of its solidarity with Palestinians. Nasrallah's speech quoted at the beginning of this essay echoes another he gave in May 2000, after Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon. In that speech Nasrallah directly addressed Palestinians: "We grant this victory to our oppressed people in the occupied Palestine and to the peoples of our Moslem and Arab nations. Our people in Palestine . . . you can regain your land without any negotiations over a village or a street, you can return with your families to your villages and territories without begging and humiliation . . . Leave and discard all these pretexts and negotiations. The real intifada and resistance are the ones which restore your rights completely as in Lebanon . . . We give this ideal Lebanese pattern to our people in Palestine as a gift, and an example to follow" (2000: 34–35).

In speaking to all Palestinians, Nasrallah featured armed resistance as the sole path to national self-determination. If Hizbullah offered the 2000 liberation of southern Lebanon as a gift to Palestinians, it very insistently refused to

recognize its 2006 war with Israel as anything but a Lebanese struggle. In the nine speeches and interviews Nasrallah gave during the 2006 war, a united Lebanon, Hizbullah patriotism, and national liberation were the consistently repeated motifs. Palestine was rarely mentioned, and if it were, its fate was considered *subsidiary* to the fate of Lebanon: "Today, Hezbollah is not fighting for the sake of Syria or Iran, but for the sake of Lebanon. Yes, the consequences of this battle in Lebanon will be observable in Palestine. If our battle is victorious, they will be victorious too. However, if, heaven forbid, we are defeated, then our Palestinian brothers will face testing and tragic times" (*al-Jazeera*, 20 July 2006). Only in the "victory rally" held after the end of the war did Nasrallah briefly invoked Palestine, but only in a "supportive" mode: "Let us give moral, political, and military support to the Palestinian people" (*al-Manar*, 22 Sept. 2006). The complexity of regional politics and multiplicity and dynamism of Hizbullah identities accounts for the subtle shifts in Hizbullah's position vis-à-vis Palestine and Palestinians.

Hizbullah's leadership has often labeled its support of Palestinians as an expression of solidarity; Palestinian activists certainly consider Hizbullah a model or comrade in arms. Shortly after the second Intifada began, Marwan Barghuti, the respected and popular Fatah activist in the West Bank, said admiringly of Hizbullah, "The thinking of the entire new Palestinian generation is influenced by the experience of our brothers in Hizbullah and by Israel's retreat from Lebanon" (Sobelman 2001).[18] After Hamas' election victory in Palestine, in a speech broadcast by *al-Jazeera* (16 Feb. 2006), Nasrallah stated that forced to make a choice, "we will unquestionably choose" a coalition expanding "from Gaza to Beirut, Damascus and Tehran . . . to our brother Chavez in Venezuela" over one which "extends from Tel Aviv to America." This time, Gaza (the home of Hamas) and "our brother Chavez" were given equal billing in the invocation of solidarities. Hizbullah's military, financial, and logistical support and training for the militant Palestinian organizations, and psychological warfare against Israelis waged by its television station, al-Manar, are in fact cited as enactment of such solidarity. On at least three recent occasions, captured arms shipments near Gaza or the Israeli coasts have been attributed to Hizbullah, although the Party has denied the charges with varying degrees of vigor.[19] In March 2002, however, when Jordan captured three activists attempting to smuggle Katyusha rockets into the West Bank, Nasrallah admitted that the activists were cadres of Hizbullah and added, "To supply arms to the Palestinians is a duty . . . It is shameful to

[18] Similarly, after the 2006 war a commander of al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, Imad Abu-Hamad, spoke of his pride in Hizbullah's struggle, because Hizbullah had "destroyed the myth of the Israeli superman" (*al-Hayat al-Jadida*, 14 Aug. 2006).

[19] Israel intercepted the ships *San Torini* (Jan. 2001) and *Karine A* (Jan. 2002), and the fishing boat *Abu Hasan* (May 2003), each time alleging the shipments could be traced to Hizbullah.

consider such an act as a crime" (Blanche 2002). Furthermore, in numerous speeches, Nasrallah has denied that Hizbullah is fighting against Israel as representatives or substitutes (*niyaba*) for Palestinians, but has stated that it will gladly take on a role in provision of armament and financial and spiritual support (*al-Ahram*, 27 May 2003; *al-Musawwar*, 13 June 2003; *al-Safir*, 27 Mar. 2002).

Hizbullah is also alleged to have provided training, intelligence, and logistical support for the activists of Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and more recently al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade (AMB) (Binnie 2004; Fanney 2003; Harik 2004: 187; *al-Shira'*, 23 Sept. 2002). Hizbullah relations with the PIJ began in 1988 when Israel expelled PIJ founders Fathi Shiqaqi and 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Awda from Gaza to Lebanon. 'Awda and especially Shiqaqi developed close relationships with Hizbullah which included PIJ-Hizbullah coordination of military operations in Lebanon against occupying Israeli forces (see interview with the head of Hizbullah politburo, Muhammad Ra'd, in *al-Diyar*, 1 Nov. 1999). The relationship further deepened with the Israeli expulsion of some 425 Islamist activists belonging to Hamas and Jihad from the Occupied Territories to Lebanon in December 1992. The period spent by the activists in camps in a no-man's land in southern Lebanon in winter was considered to be an important founding moment for the alliance between the Palestinian Islamist groups and Hizbullah (Ma'lawi 1994). Aside from the bonds of fraternity established through interaction, Hizbullah provided military training to the activists.

Hizbullah politburo's Palestinian Affairs Committee "follows up on strengthening ties with Palestinian groups, in particular the Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and other[s]" (Hamzeh 2004: 67). The shared bond of Islamist commitment ties together Hizbullah to Hamas and PIJ, while militancy and common enmity against Israel forms the basis of the relationship between Hizbullah and AMB, alleged to have begun during the al-Aqsa Intifada. Ed Blanche argues persuasively that "the tactics the Palestinians suddenly began employing with considerable success against the Israelis [in the Occupied Territories during the al-Aqsa Intifada] . . . were straight out of the Hizbullah operational manual" (2002), indicating some degree of training, if not coordination.[20] After the assassination of two senior Hizbullah activists in 2003 and 2004, allegedly masterminded by Israeli intelligence, most Lebanese analysts speculated that these cadres where Hizbullah liaisons to the militant groups in Palestine.[21] In military activities in southern Lebanon, Hizbullah has often 'coordinated' with Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC),

[20] All information about such relationships, however, is at best speculative, and since the primary sources are often (though not always) Israeli intelligence officials, the allegations have to be treated with caution and skepticism.

[21] See newspaper analyses of the assassination of Ali Huysan Salih (*al-Nahar*, 4 Aug. 2003) and Ghalib 'Awali (*al-Nahar*, 20 July 2004).

though arguably PFLP-GC cannot operate without Hizbullah authorization.[22] Hizbullah has further shown its solidarity with Palestinian militant groups through limited—and often symbolic—military activity against Israeli positions in the occupied Shab'a Farms in the south. During the Israeli re-occupation of the West Bank in Spring 2002, Hizbullah maintained fire on the Israeli military for thirteen days (Harik 2004: 187; ICG 2002: 10), while after the Israeli assassination of Hamas leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, after five months of artillery silence Hizbullah fired more than sixty-five rockets and mortars at Israeli positions in the area (*Daily Star*, 23 Mar. 2004).[23]

Hizbullah has been open about the dedication of its satellite television station, al-Manar, to the al-Aqsa Intifada, as an expression of solidarity. Al-Manar's station manager has identified Palestinians in the Occupied Territories as the station's "main target" (*Daily Star*, 2 Nov. 2000). Throughout its broadcasting day, al-Manar solicits donations for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. In 2001 and 2002 its broadcast programs included a reading of the names of Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks as well as in attacks against Israel (Harik 2004: 161), iconic images of Palestinian struggle such as children throwing stones or armed fighters in heroic action, and messages in Hebrew aimed at potential Israeli audiences—"[the Palestinians'] strength is greater than yours" (Sobelman 2001). In another recurrent clip, Nasrallah assures his Palestinian audiences, "We are behind you, we will not desert you, you are not alone" (ibid.). In the month of Ramadan in 2001, al-Manar broadcast a series about Shaykh Izz al-Din al-Qassam, a Muslim preacher and Palestinian revolt leader of the 1930s (*Christian Science Monitor*, 28 Dec. 2001).[24] Various Palestinian groups from across the political spectrum have appropriated Qassam as a hero of Palestinian struggle; however, in more recent years Qassam's religious role and piety have more emphatically

[22] Talal Naji, the deputy general secretary of PFLP-GC has confirmed that the faction has provided Katyusha rockets to Hizbullah: "we are very proud to have this strategic partnership, and we are pleased that the Hizbullah can benefit from our resources" (Strindberg 2002). After the assassination of Jihad Jibril, PFLP-GC military liaison to Hizbullah and the son of PFLP-GC general secretary Ahmad Jibril, by a presumed Israeli car bomb, Nasrallah personally condoled Ahmad Jibril in Damascus (*al-Hayat*, 20 May 2002). Hizbullah has also utilized demonstrations by young PFLP-GC sympathizers as a diversionary tactic to carry out the capture of three Israeli soldiers at the border. On 7 October 2000, the first week of al-Aqsa Intifada, Palestinian factions organized a visit to the Lebanon-Israel border to show their solidarity with Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. On this occasion, the usual curses and the occasional stone lobbed across the border by Palestinians (and answered by tear gas from the other side) unusually escalated into throwing Molotov Cocktails. In response, Israeli troops shot and killed two young Palestinian men. On the same day, and simultaneously, Hizbullah kidnapped three IDF soldiers patrolling further along the border (*al-Nahar*, 8 Oct. 2000).

[23] Interestingly, although the Hizbullah capture of two Israeli soldiers in July 2006 occurred only two weeks after the Hamas capture of an Israeli soldier in Gaza, Nasrallah was emphatic that the operation was *not* performed out of solidarity, but rather to win back the remaining Lebanese prisoners in Israel.

[24] The military wing of Hamas is named after Qassam.

transformed him into a symbol of Islamist resistance. Thus, al-Manar—like Hamas before them—is invoking a sphere of Islamist mobilization when they present Qassam's struggle as a metaphor for the Palestinian cause. Al-Manar is popular in the Occupied Territories and is considered the only viable competition with al-Jazeera (*Christian Science Monitor*, 28 Dec. 2001; *Jerusalem Post*, 15 June 2004). During the 2006 war, al-Manar became "the 10th most-watched satellite station in the Arab world . . . up from 83rd in the previous survey period" (*The Guardian*, 4 Sept. 2006).

Al-Manar's popularity is not considered an unalloyed good by some of Hizbullah's allies in Palestine. In a meeting of Hamas' Communications Council, Hamas' media communications officer, Fathi Hamad, lamented that despite the higher political commitment of Hamas to the cause, its sometime rival, PIJ, had better access to satellite television outlets (i.e., al-Manar) and more prominent media presence. Hamad went so far as to claim PIJ is not really "a domestic group" because "they are supported by Hizbullah" (*Haaretz*, 15 Dec. 2004). Surprisingly, in this instance, political rivalry meant that Hamas officials resented Hizbullah's advocacy on behalf of Palestinians and perceived closeness with PIJ. In the same speech, Hamad spoke of alleged sectarian divisions exacerbated by Hizbullah support, "If the Islamic Jihad take over [because of Hizbullah support], that would mean the Shi'ites take over, and if that happens [Palestinians] will all be turned into heretics." Casting differences in tactic and strategy between PIJ and Hamas in sectarian terms could only occur because of the PIJ's intimate relationship with Hizbullah, and the perception that the PIJ followed Iran's line. Coming in the context of rising sectarian tensions in Iraq and Lebanon, rivalry between Palestinian organizations led to the highlighting of differences in religious identity between Palestinians and Hizbullah, which qualifies instances of solidarity. I will return to this point.

While sometimes Hizbullah insists that its model of militancy is offered only in solidarity, some of the Party's activities, rhetoric, and political positions indicate that Hizbullah strives for a more dominant role in its relationship with the Palestinians. In an interview with al-Jazeera, Nasrallah stated, "that he regarded his party as the 'vanguard' (*al tali'a*) of the Palestinian armed struggle" (Harb and Leenders 2005: 176).[25] In his book-length elaboration of Hizbullah's political principles, in a chapter wholly dedicated to 'the Palestinian cause,' Deputy General Secretary Na'im Qasim insists, "without armed resistance, Palestinians cannot defend their national Palestinian identity" (2002: 243). He writes acidly of the ineffectuality of negotiations, and adds that mass mobilization and peaceful resistance "in the manner of Gandhi or Mandela are of no utility either, because Israel is not at all affected by this kind of struggle" (2002:

[25] On the vanguardist/Leninist discourse and practice of Hizbullah, see AbuKhalil 1991.

244). He likewise dismisses alliances with like-minded Israelis, and considers "throwing stones, demonstrations, and economic boycotts" all necessary but insufficient modes of mobilization and only secondary to armed militancy. Qasim argues that because of Israeli racism, the only way in which Israel can be made to pay attention is through armed attacks against its population and military (ibid.). The former head of al-Manar, Nayif Qrayim, has similarly argued, "the only way to achieve *our* goal [of liberating land] is by armed resistance, *not just by throwing stones*" (*The Independent*, 2 Dec. 2000, my emphases).

Hizbullah tries to influence the outcome of the Palestinian groups' maneuverings by polarizing tactics to further radicalize them. During a cease-fire between Hamas and Israel in 2003, Hizbullah "sought to play down the significance of the ceasefire, both by predicting that 'Israeli provocations' would soon put an end to it and by describing it as a mere tactical move by armed Palestinian groups to avoid a confrontation with the Palestinian Authority" (ICG 2003: 10). When asked why Hizbullah could not agree to negotiations to which the Palestinians themselves acceded, Nasrallah claimed that "we don't want to be an alternative leadership for Palestinians," yet, he continued that *he* knew what the Palestinian people wanted better than the PNA, which according to Nasrallah had lost all credibility because of the Oslo Accords (*al-Musawwar*, 13 June 2003). Though many Palestinians also oppose the Oslo Accords because the concessions extracted from Palestinians were not reciprocated by the Israeli state, Nasrallah's opposition to Oslo was far more fundamental and indicated a principled position that brooked no alternatives. Arguably, Hizbullah's provision of arms and funding to militant organizations in the Occupied Territories are aimed at subverting Fatah leaders in Ramallah and their preference for accommodating—rather than struggling against—Israel. In an al-Manar broadcast shortly after the beginning of the second Intifada, Nasrallah exhorted Palestinian youth to form "cells of three people," and to attack settlers "with knives" (*Associated Press*, 9 Oct. 2000). He pointedly stated that cells were preferable to a "central command structure" (*Financial Times*, 28 Oct. 2000).

The extent to which Hizbullah represented itself as an alternative to Palestinian leadership—at least until the coming to power of Hamas in January 2006—becomes apparent when one notes the tension and competition that existed between Hizbullah and the Fatah-dominated PNA. Arafat himself gave some indication of this competition when, in the aftermath of Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, he stated, "Hizbullah are being portrayed as heroes, while the Palestinians look like losers" (*Financial Times*, 28 Oct. 2000). In the aftermath of the 2006 war, disgruntled Fatah activists repeated the same charge, while concerned factional leaders worried about the Palestinian public's turn to Hizbullah. After Abu Mazen came to power in the Occupied Territories in 2005, PNA officials expressed their fear that Hizbullah may try

to assassinate him in order to prevent any negotiations. Leaflets distributed in Ramallah at the end of March 2005 accused those Palestinians who had cooperated with Hizbullah in military operations of working against Palestinian interests (*Jerusalem Post*, 31 Mar. 2005). Abu Mazen himself sent a former PNA minister, Abdul-Fattah Hamayil, to Beirut to hold talks with Hizbullah. "The envoy reportedly demanded that Hizbullah stop interfering in Palestinian internal affairs by funding Fatah gunmen" (ibid.). During the 2006 war, various commentators close to Fatah and to Abu Mazen consistently lamented the effects of a possible Hizbullah victory on their position (*Christian Science Monitor*, 27 July 2006).[26]

The veiled rivalry between Fatah and Hizbullah goes back a long way and has flared up on a number of different occasions. In one instance Hizbullah supported a death warrant on a Fatah representative in Lebanon. In late 1999, during Camp David negotiations between Yasir Arafat and Ehud Barak, Arafat attempted to strengthen his hand in negotiations by reasserting Fatah control over the camps of Lebanon. Immediately, a Lebanese military tribunal issued an unprecedented death sentence in absentia against the Fatah representative in Lebanon, Sultan Abu-al-Aynayn (Kahwaji 2000). Various Arabic newspapers speculated that Fatah's reassertion of its power in the camps was seen as a direct challenge to Hamas, PIJ, and Hizbullah, and had to be countered (*al-Watan*, 19 Nov. 1999). More likely, Syria was asserting its control over the camps in continuation of its enmity against Arafat. The head of Hizbullah politburo, Muhammad Ra'd, obliquely supported the death warrant—"when arms are not used in the service of the national cause but for other unsavory affairs, then this endangers faith and nation"—and in response to a question about Fatah attempts to control the camps he stated, "we believe that the camps need to be controlled by the Palestinian people and the people have to decide how to run the camps, far from the hegemony of one group or another; especially, if those who want hegemony [i.e., Fatah] have become the allies of the enemy against the will of their own people in the camps" (*al-Diyar*, 1 Nov. 1999). Ra'd was not only invoking the legitimizing force of the "Palestinian people" to discredit Fatah—regardless of the latter's popularity in the camps—he was doing so to support a death sentence against a Palestinian political representative.[27] In a sense, the awkward position taken by the Party was a result of its attempt to reconcile its principles and its alliance with Syria.

[26] During the 2006 war, Palestinians compared Nasrallah to Palestinian leaders, and the unfavorable comparison was even extended to the Hamas leadership. One Hamas supporter told a reporter that "as a leader, I feel [Nasrallah is] better than our leaders . . . . He's more credible, more organised, and they have more capabilities" (*British Broadcasting Corporation*, 23 July 2006).

[27] In 2006, after Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon and shortly before the PLO was to reopen its offices in Lebanon for the first time in thirteen years, the death sentence on Abu-al-Aynayn was revoked (*Daily Star*, 16 May 2006; *Associated Press*, 30 Mar. 2006).

On another occasion, after Israeli military reoccupation of the West Bank in spring 2002 and the sustained bombardment of several cities and the PNA offices in Ramallah, Arafat saw a groundswell of support among the refugees in Lebanon (Strindberg 2002). In Beirut, protests against Israeli military actions in the West Bank were frequently organized by Hizbullah, and the Party's yellow flag often outnumbered other banners during the demonstrations. On more than one occasion at these demonstrations, aggressive altercations took place between Hizbullah militants and Fatah activists carrying photographs of Arafat. A resident of Burj al-Barajna refugee camp in Beirut, Umm Walid, recounted one such instance: "I was about to head out on the demonstration, when these Hizbullah guys in black clothes started attacking our *shabab* (young men), and for what? Only because they had Fatah banners and pictures of Abu 'Ammar (Arafat). I was so angry I decided to stay away from the Hizbullah-organised demonstrations" (Burj al-Barajna, Aug. 2004). Despite the fact that Umm Walid herself was no Fatah sympathizer and had on previous occasions expressed her admiration for Hizbullah, she took umbrage at Hizbullah silencing *Palestinian* youth in a matter that she considered to be a *Palestinian* affair.

Palestinian opinion vis-à-vis Hizbullah also reflects these contradictory sentiments. Young Fatah activists in Lebanon, while they admire Hizbullah's achievements in southern Lebanon, are quick to point out that Fatah had fought longer and harder against Israel "than any new party" (Abu Khalil, Burj al-Barajna, 19 Feb. 2002). Yet, Hizbullah has enjoyed widespread support among Palestinians, both in Palestine and in the camps of Lebanon, particularly since the 2006 war. In Palestine, the Party's military exploits are met with admiration and sometimes outright jubilation. Polls taken during the 2006 war showed that 97 percent of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories voiced their full support of Hizbullah (*Jerusalem Post*, 9 Aug. 2006). Meanwhile, in the Lebanese camps, photographs of Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah are widely displayed throughout the camp. In one of my interviews, a former Fatah activist claimed that Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah "always goes in a straight line, no zigzags or crookedness" and "if he asked for Palestinian fighters, tomorrow he would have 100,000—and even women before men" (Abu Hasan, Burj al-Barajna, 21 Jan. 2002). Another former member of Fatah's Force 17, and an activist in AMB in the Burj al-Barajna camp, similarly claimed, "if tomorrow Shaykh Hasan asks us to go to the front, we will" (Abu Husayn, Burj al-Barajna, 14 Feb. 2002). In summer 2006, a Palestinian song extolling Nasrallah, "the Hawk of Lebanon," was could so popular that it could be heard on the ringtones of mobile phones throughout the Occupied Territories (*Washington Times*, 25 Aug. 2006).

There are various ways in which Hizbullah's identity and interests are bound up with its militant ideology and support for Palestinian armed groups. In the absence of a Lebanese arena of military confrontation with Israel, Hizbullah's

championing of the Palestinian cause and promotion of an agenda of armed struggle for the Palestinians reproduce and bolster Hizbullah military struggle against Israel. Continued militant struggle enhances Hizbullah's credibility as a regional anti-imperialist movement that bridges the Sunni-Shi'a divide, and gives it the necessary authority and popular footing to engage in local Lebanese politics. The extent and intensity of Hizbullah's militancy vis-à-vis Palestinians has as much to do with solidarity on the basis of shared aspirations and ideologies as it does with finely-tuned politics, whether this politics be the relations of Hizbullah with Palestinian political actors, or Lebanese politics, or Islamist or anti-imperialist mobilization. The complexity of the solidary relations between Hizbullah and Palestinians is further increased by the implicit and explicit elision of Hizbullah to the Palestinian cause by Israel, the United States, and other international powers. In the reductive discourse of the United States it is often difficult to distinguish between Hizbullah and militant Palestinian groups.[28] In particular, Israel's sustained and sensationalist claims about the extent of Hizbullah's military aid to Palestinians portrays Hizbullah as at the helm and as a "vanguard" of Palestinian militant groups. Similarly, UN resolution 1559 makes no distinction between the arms held by Hizbullah and those held by Palestinian groups in Lebanon. In this way the Resolution pushes Hizbullah further towards "guardianship" of Palestinian militant groups based in Lebanon, and thus effectively replaces a relationship based on solidarity with one imbued with authority.[29]

THE LIMITS OF SOLIDARITY

As outlined above, Hizbullah has, on the basis of ideological considerations, but also out of a genuine sense of identification, acted in solidarity with various Palestinian actors. However, it would be analytically reductive and politically naïve to imagine that in its relationship with Palestinians—be they refugees in Lebanon or militant activists in the Occupied Territories—ideological commitment and human empathy are not inflected by shifts in the Party's role in Lebanon, the region, and beyond, or the expansion and contraction of its power and authority. In this section I examine the factors that place limits on Hizbullah-Palestinian solidarity specifically and all relations of solidarity more generally. These are: (a) the asymmetric symbolic and material authority of Hizbullah which sometimes manifests itself as coercion; (b) incompatibilities and fluidities of identities and aspirations; and (c) the multivalence and heterogeneity of an already constituted Palestinian polity.

[28] Even a politically sophisticated critical commentator like Amos Elon has made this elision (*New York Review of Books*, 22 June 2006). When a reader wrote to clarify that Hizbullah is not a Palestinian organization, Elon responded that Hizbullah "may be based in Lebanon but its bombs kill Israelis in Israel" (*New York Review of Books*, 5 Oct. 2006), implying that the basic criteria for Palestinianness is the killing of Israelis!

[29] I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer of *CSSH* for this very astute observation.

Hizbullah's centrality in ousting Israeli military from southern Lebanon in 2000 and 2006, its professional welfare activities in the slums of Beirut, and its political savvy, competence, and pragmatism in office have all secured the Party substantial moral, material, and political capital not only among its Shi'a constituency, but also among Palestinians both in Lebanon and in the Occupied Territories. Hizbullah has translated this moral and political capital into political authority to consolidate its position in Lebanon and the region. Vis-à-vis the Palestinians, this has meant that Hizbullah has sought to radicalize Palestinian political groups to ensure a continued regional alliance against Israeli/American encroachment. The process of radicalization has included the use of physical coercion on some of the most proximate Palestinian political actors—those activists who reside in Lebanon. But Hizbullah has also attempted to discursively restrict the domain of Palestinian activism in such a way that armed resistance—its preferred mode of struggle—elbows out all alternatives, including mass mobilization and boycotts. The extent of Hizbullah's exercise of authority has varied over time, but where Hizbullah has chosen coercion, it has clearly overstepped the bounds of solidary relations, at times verging on a vanguard or leadership position. In most analyses of relations of solidarity, this exercise of authority is seen as an erasure of the less powerful actor's agency (Alcoff 1991–1992; Bourdieu 1991; Derrida 2003; Foucault 1977), and must be monitored through holding the authority accountable for its discourse and practice. Palestinians are neither members of Hizbullah nor its immediate and primary constituency, and therefore they cannot really call Hizbullah to account for those of its actions that affect them (as can be observed from, for example, Hizbullah appropriation of Sabra/Shatila). As such, Hizbullah's exercise of authority to some extent subverts its claim to solidarity. One can see the qualitative difference between solidarity and a relation of authority when one compares Hizbullah's relationship with "our brother Chavez" as opposed to that with Palestinian groups.

A second constraint on Hizbullah-Palestinian solidarity is the possible incompatibilities and tensions of their identities and roles. Although Hizbullah has persuasively laid claim to pan-Islamist militancy, attempting to underplay its Shi'a roots when engaging in politics outside Lebanon, the Party's sectarian origins can prove to be a liability in their solidarity with those Palestinians for whom their Sunni identity is important. Although a solidary relationship does not require sameness between two political actors, and although the very basis of an alliance is difference, overspill from the sectarian conflict in Iraq may intrude on Hizbullah solidarity with Islamist Palestinian groups. Hizbullah has been notably sanguine about the alliance between the United States and various Shi'a parties in Iraq (although at other times it has supported the anti-occupation Iraqi Shi'a cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr). This instance of Shi'a solidarity trumping anti-imperialist identifications affects relationships with Palestinians, as indicated in the case of Hamas described above. In personal

interviews conducted in September 2005 in Ramallah and Nablus, a few Fatah and Hamas cadres, while commending Hizbullah as "a worthy ally," nevertheless voiced their suspicion about a possible Shi'a crescent in the Middle East, a concern that surprisingly echoed those of powers-to-be in Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.[30]

Potential sectarian discord is not the only node of identity/role incompatibilities. In determining its discourse and practice vis-à-vis Palestinians, Hizbullah has to take into account not only a continued adherence to its ideological tenets, but also the political exigencies of being at once a *Lebanese* political party, a populist and popular *Islamist* movement, a regional *Shi'a* organization with alliances in Iraq, Iran, and elsewhere, and a *radical anti-imperialist* organization. To be effective in any one of these roles would require compromise in others, and Hizbullah-Palestinian relations are influenced by the priority Hizbullah places at any given time on one of them. As a Lebanese political party, Hizbullah's pragmatically conciliatory approach to other Lebanese parties in the aftermath of Rafiq Hariri's assassination and during Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon all point to the balance of militancy and politics in the party shifting towards the latter.[31] While on previous occasions Hizbullah donning the mantle of militancy and assuming spokespersonship for the Palestinian cause have garnered it support and prestige among its Shi'a constituency, today, the Party's desire to be recognized as a *Lebanese* organization requires a reduction of its role as a transnational revolutionary vanguard.[32] This might explain the persistent insistence of Nasrallah during the 2006 war that the struggle was to free *Lebanese* prisoners, and to drive Israel from *Lebanese* soil, rarely if ever mentioning the Palestinians. As pressure increases on Hizbullah to limit its activity to Lebanon, it increasingly claims to provide only moral support to Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, while considering solidarity with Palestinian refugees as part of its *raison d'être* (ICG 2005: 19–20). Simultaneously, in co-opting certain important Palestinian political symbols Hizbullah benefits from the "accumulated symbolic capital" (Bourdieu 1991: 109–11) of the Palestinian struggle without taking account of Palestinian sensitivities (e.g., in including Amal representatives in Sabra/

[30] Two Saudi clerics, Abdullah bin Jibrin and Safar al-Hawali, issued edicts during the 2006 war, refuting Hizbullah as heretics. However, the head of Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood rejected Hawali's edict, and indeed all indications point to the massive popularity of Hizbullah in Egypt, Jordan, and other Sunni countries of the Middle East (*New York Times*, 4 Aug. 2006; *Associated Press*, 5 Aug. 2006; *Agence France Press*, 23 Sept. 2006).

[31] This happens not just because Hizbullah had been supported by Syria, and that Syria's withdrawal would leave the Party exposed. As discussed previously, the Party increasingly plays a prominent role in electoral politics in Lebanon.

[32] Israeli military intelligence officers told *Haaretz* (6 Apr. 2005) that they had seen "a recent reduction in the number of directives and amount of funding that has flowed into the hands of activists in the territories."

Shatila commemorative events of 2002 or entering alliances with the Lebanese Forces in the 2005 elections).

As an Islamist movement, Hizbullah has been more naturally sympathetic towards Palestinian Islamist organizations, Hamas and PIJ. Their ideological kinship has been cemented by conjoined histories and practical military and political alliances, though with radicalizing pressure being applied by Hizbullah on its smaller, weaker Palestinian allies. As a radical anti-imperialist organization, alliance with militant Palestinian groups (including the secular AMB) allows Hizbullah to counter geostrategic dominance in the region by the United States, Israel, and their allies (ICG 2003: 9). This latter role has also pushed Hizbullah into rivalries with Fatah and the PNA under Arafat and Abu Mazen, as Hizbullah perceived capitulation by Fatah as a chink in this anti-imperial line of defense. With the Iraqi Shi'as willing cooperation with occupying U.S. forces in Iraq, Hizbullah's dual roles as an anti-imperialist and a Shi'a movement can potentially come into conflict (ICG 2005). This constant tension between Hizbullah's different roles certainly leads it to vary and calibrate its relationship with Palestinians, and places constraints on its solidarity with them.

Finally, and most importantly, in declaring their solidarity with Palestinians, Hizbullah imagines a homogenous collective sympathetic to its aims and unified in its mobilizing strategies, whereas the overlapping groups of Palestinians with whom Hizbullah interacts often resist such homogenization. Palestinian communities inside and outside what was once Mandate Palestine have for years struggled to constitute themselves successfully as a transnational political community. Throughout their ongoing struggle, Palestinian polity has voiced a variety of political positions and articulated a range of political strategies. A simultaneous strength and weakness of the Palestinian struggle to constitute itself as a transnational collectivity has been the persistent presence of lines of fissure within the Palestinian body-politic. Whether these lines of fissure have been familial (as in pre-1948 Palestine), factional (as in the 1960s and 1970s and again today), or dividing the homeland and the diaspora (especially since the Oslo Accords), many have asserted that these divisions have served to weaken the Palestinian community. I argue, however, that the persistent and laborious (and on occasion, even bloody) struggle to arrive at a negotiated political position across these lines of fissure has paradoxically resulted in a reinforcement of the Palestinian identity. It has done so because the divisions have been recognized and contested, various political positions have been included and engaged, and contentious difference has been allowed to persist, thus preventing the alienation of different groups. The persistence of lines of fissure has in a very real sense allowed a noisily fractious polity which nevertheless accommodates differences of opinion, position, and strategy. In their discussion of hegemony and radical democracy, Laclau and Mouffe (2001: 65) point to just such a fractious and multivalent polity as a radically democratic one.

The impact of Hizbullah's constitution of Palestinians as a monolithically militant collectivity is complex. On the one hand, Hizbullah's confirmation of Palestinian homogeneity reconfirms Palestinian identity. Since the vast majority of Palestinians are politically and economically dispossessed, by speaking of Palestinians as if they are a fully contiguous, homogenous political body, Hizbullah's naming them makes them visible (see Bourdieu 1991: 186). Since a significant element of Palestinian nationalist struggle has been the affirmation of a Palestinian collective identity (Khalidi 1997), this act of constitution is productive. However, by effacing the lines of fissure and by implying that the concrete situation of Palestinians is directly analogous to its own, Hizbullah attempts to silence the noisy though vibrant debates and struggles within the larger Palestinian collectivity, works to narrow the range of Palestinian identities, and overlooks the strategic and political obstacles which exclude a total correspondence of strategies of struggle.

CONCLUSIONS

Invocation and enactment of solidarity have long become the mainstay of transnational politics. Political actors of all stripes appeal to solidarity in order to justify their discourse or actions on behalf of another actor, to shape the political arena in which they operate, and to influence other political actors. Particular moments, places, and movements can become central to expressions of solidarity. The Third Worldist movements of the mid-late twentieth century and the anti-apartheid global mobilization are two such foci of the kind of transnational solidarity that is predicated on anti-imperial (or anti-colonial) resistance.[33]

Palestinian nationalist struggle has similarly generated solidarity among Arabs, Muslims, Third-Worldists, anti-imperialists, and internationalists throughout the world. Many aspects of Hizbullah's relationship with Palestinians fit the solidary model: its provision of social services to Palestinians, its deployment of its military and technological prowess in alliance with Palestinian militant organizations, its defense of refugee rights in Lebanon. But in other instances, Hizbullah's championing of the Palestinian cause accrue it symbolic capital, allow it to consolidate its power in the Lebanese political domain, and secure it prestige and support in the region. The tension between instrumental calculations, ideological engagement, and political sympathy—not to mention the profound importance of context and circumstance at any given time—has meant that sometimes a relationship of mutuality or alliance between Hizbullah and various Palestinian actors has given way to direct or indirect intervention, claims to leadership, or co-optation of the Palestinian struggle.

[33] For more on transnational solidarities, see Khalili 2007. Solidarity, however, is not confined to those resisting empire. The discourse of "with us or against us" invokes solidarity of another sort in the era of the "War on Terror." I am grateful to Andrew Shryock for pointing this out.

It is also important to note that it is not only within the bounds of Hizbullah-Palestinian relations that an ally attempts to promote its own vision of what the Palestinian collectivity "should" be and do. For example, the International Solidarity Movement, though much appreciated by many Palestinians, is nevertheless criticized by many of them for its privileging of non-violent strategies of mobilization and seemingly impugning Palestinian militancy (Seitz 2003).

As political actors increasingly reach across borders to mobilize together, it is important to remember Eugene Debs' admonishment: "Solidarity is not a matter of sentiment but a fact, cold and impassive as the granite foundations of a skyscraper. If the basic elements, identity of interest, clarity of vision, honesty of intent, and oneness of purpose, or any of these is lacking, all sentimental pleas for solidarity, and all other efforts to achieve it will be barren of results" (in O'Rourke 2005). In other words, identities, interests, and strategies of two actors in solidary relations must be sufficiently compatible as to allow action in concert. In more recent times, our understandings of power relations—inspired by Gramscian, feminist, and anti-colonial thought—also demonstrate that disparities in power can transform the nature of solidary relations between equals to one of co-optation or spokespersonship. Because of the heterogeneity of Palestinian identities and strategies, a solidarity that at once legitimates Palestinian struggle and silences its multivalent voices can be problematic. In a relation between two political actors working for a common purpose, some measure of authority has to be subtracted from their affiliation, and the richness and plurality of their collectivities has to be recognized, so that they can overcome political disjunctures and borders and stand shoulder-to-shoulder in struggle.

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