

قوات التحرير الشعبية

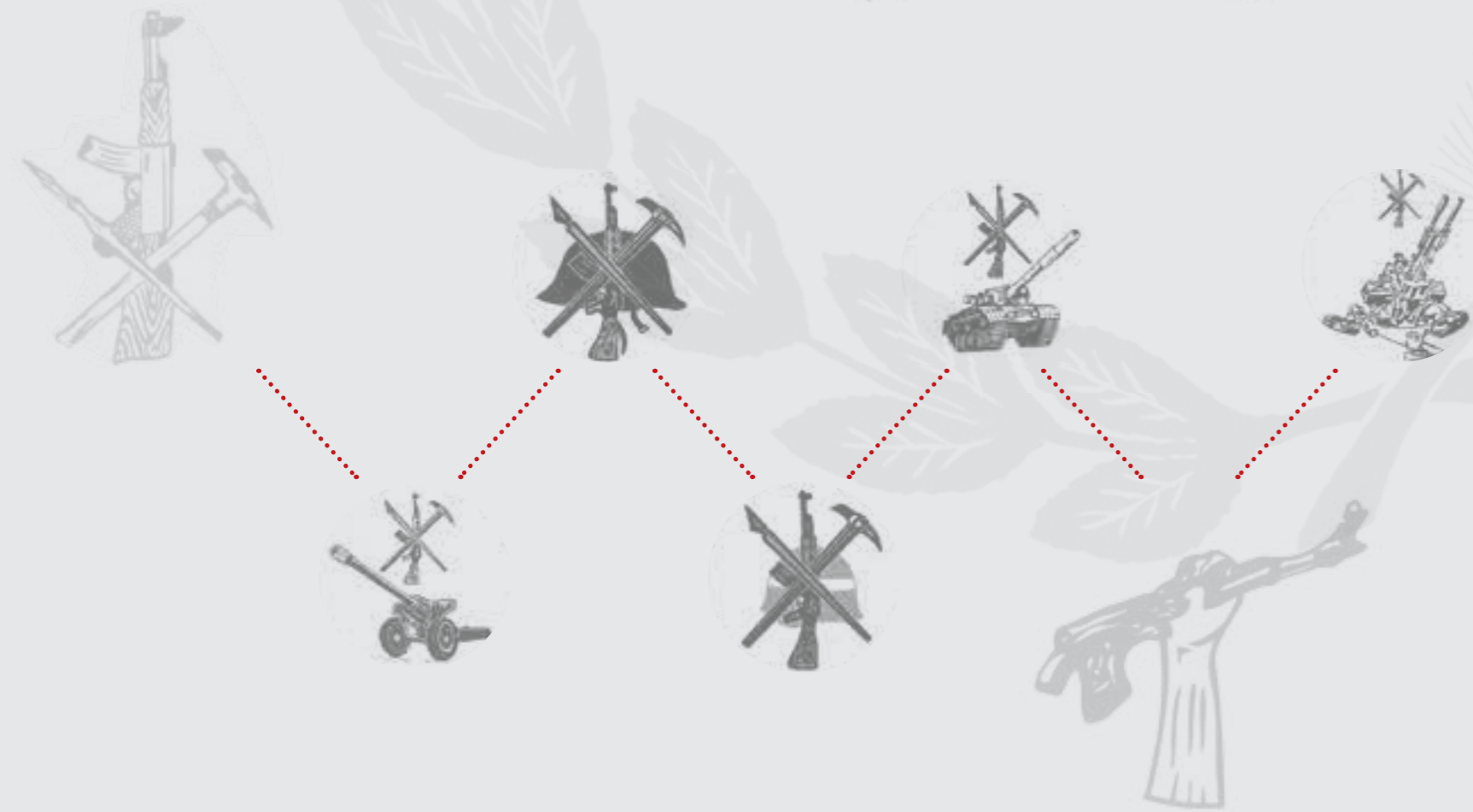


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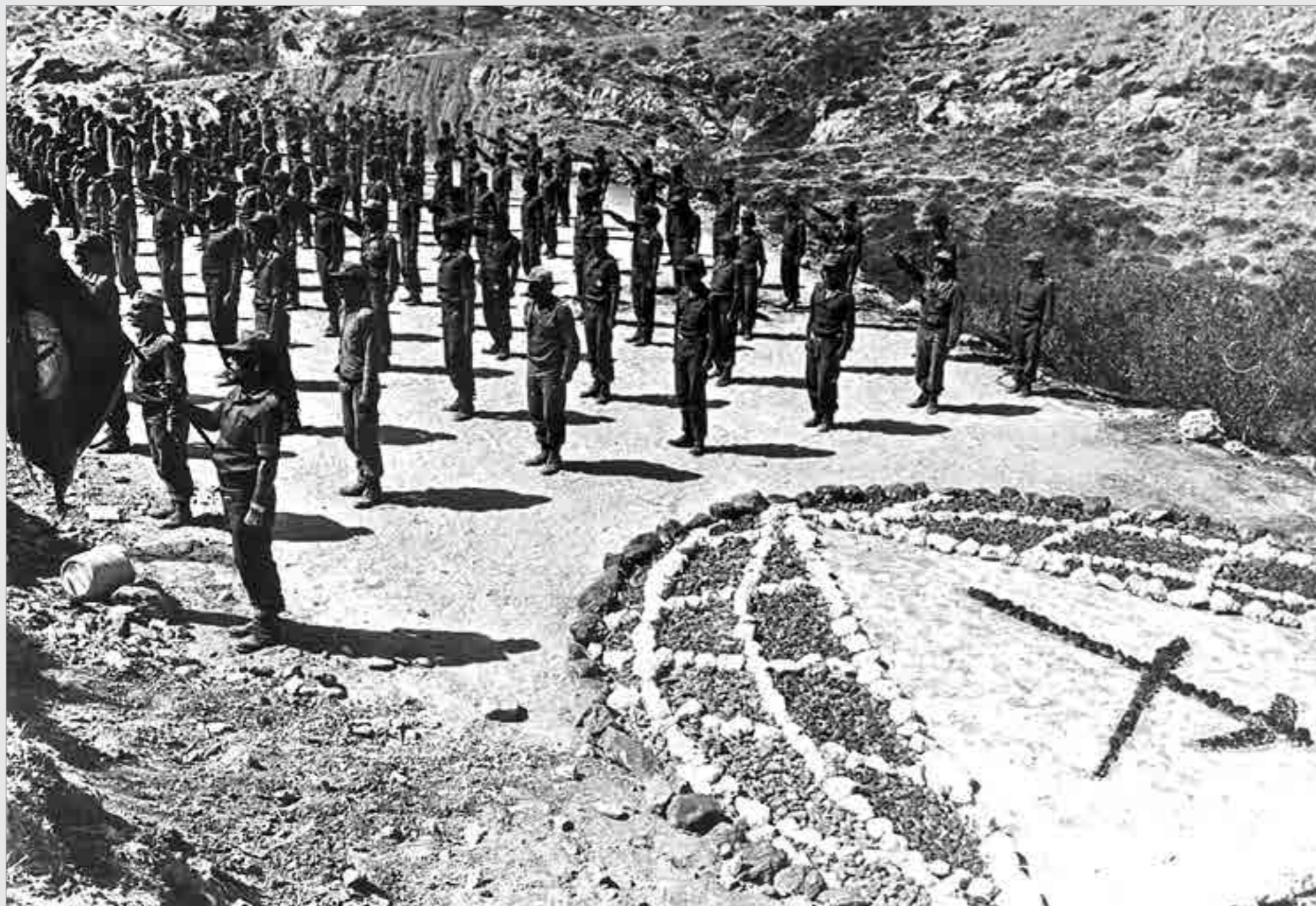
INTRODUCTION

My book could not have been compiled without the generous wholehearted care, encouragement, and support of the Progressive Socialist Party Leader Walid Beik Jumblatt, Taymour Beik Jumblatt, the late Mouqaddam Sharif Fayad, Dar al-Taquadumi, Mr. Mahmoud Safi, Mrs. Hiam Kiwan, and my family and honorable friends who preferred anonymity.

Why this book? Although in my current life I have never been in a battlefield, fired a gun, or experienced the hardships of the Lebanese Civil War, yet the images of the PSP's and PLA's heroic moments have remained vivid in my thoughts and imagination, since my early years. This finely drawn yet strong sense of belonging to a community I have never actually lived in created the urge and motivation within me to seek and search for facts capable of capturing my flashbacks and unexplainable memories. After years of relentless pursuit and research, I was able to put the pieces together, and in the process I ended up with a valuable set of memorable and rare items. Through this compilation of historical images, I aspire to share and reflect my passion and respect for and deep appreciation of the PSP martyrs and fighters who fought with valor and conviction to protect the values of the Druze community during the Lebanese Civil War. Above all, I present this work as a special tribute to the martyr "Yousef Fouad al-Jawhary", me in my previous life, who died at the young age of 16 from his injuries in February 26, 1984 in the West sector of Aley. He passed on to me all the memories I have in my present life.

Last but not least, my greatest thanks go to my parents Dr. Shibli and Ghada for their unlimited support and patience in my long strive to compile the information for my book.

To the reader, let the photographs take you on a journey of pride, to the times when young brave men took a firm stand to defend the Druze. The Druze community now proudly says, "We have prevailed, despite our modest arms and equipment, thanks to the determination, courage, conviction, and faith of these young men, and to the shrewd leadership of the PSP Leader Walid Beik Jumblatt."





PLA

(People's Liberation Army)

GENESIS AND HISTORY



 The People's Liberation Forces Emblem, 1977

 **Toumat Niha, 1978**
Initiation of the new PSP recruits

The Progressive Socialist Party, under the direction of its Leader Kamal Beik Jumblatt, started out as a small militia, whereby each fighter financed himself. In 1971 – 1974, Colonel Ghazi Karami a former Colonel in the Mexican Armed Forces, was assigned the task to train the fighters. The result was the transformation of the fighters into a platoon of 175 – 185 fighters with highly trained military skills and tactics. Accordingly, they were designated the title “Forces of the Popular Commandos”. Their insignia was a skull with two swords. This strong platoon led by Ramez Assaf saw their first action during “The Battle of the Hotels”, 1975 – 1976, and soon became the People's Liberation Forces, “The Tanoukhi Brigade”, in August 7, 1976. In 1978, the Leader of The National Movement, Walid Jumblatt founded The People's Liberation Army – “Forces of the Martyr Kamal Jumblatt”.

By 1984, Leader Walid Jumblatt restructured The People's Liberation Army into a full-fledged organized army that consisted of 7 brigades which were the:

- Infantry Brigade
- Artillery Brigade
- Tank Brigade
- Anti Air Brigade
- Communication Brigade
- Engineering Brigade
- Logistics and Transportation Brigade

The PLA with the aid of the Soviet Union became highly equipped and well trained. The PLA saw action on most of the fronts, mostly in Beirut's Street Fighting from 1975 to 1976, as well as during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, in 1982, the Mountain War, in 1983 – 1984, and the Flag War in 1986.



Chouf, Mount Lebanon, 1975
PSP fighters saluting the Leader Kamal Beik Jumblatt. During the early stages of its formation, the fighters wore the scouts' uniform.



Mount Lebanon, 1975
PSP fighters in the early stage of the war, wearing the scouts' uniforms, and carrying the PSP flag high with pride.



Choueifat, Lebanon, 1974
The People's Liberation Forces fighters during the early stages of its formation, during their training, wearing the Czech Vz.60 mlok uniform.

Choueifat, Lebanon, 1974

Col. Gazi Karamah awarding the Skull Badge to one of the commandos, after completing his training. **1**

Col. Gazi Karamah training selected fighters for the Commando Platoon, on the first weapons received. **2**

A trained platoon of the People's Liberation Forces fighters posing for a photo, with Col. Gazi Karamah. **3**





Battle of the Holiday Inn, Beirut, 1976

PSP fighters, after the fall of the Holiday Inn. A PSP fighter standing on a Staghound fires rounds with a AEC turret.

Battle of the Holiday Inn, Beirut, 1976

Street fighting in Beirut's Hotel district. **1**

PSP fighter on a 4x4, taking aim at the Holiday Inn Hotel while under sniper fire. **2**

People's Liberation Forces on patrol, in the Kantari District, driving Land Rover series III gun trucks. The first one is mounted with a Soviet SG43. The other two Land Rovers are mounted with Soviet DShKs. In the far back, a Chevy pickup is also mounted, with a DShk. **3**

PSP fighter armed with a Yugoslavian M70 with a Spigot launcher for rifle grenades, taking cover from a Phalangist sniper in the Holiday Inn behind a barricade. **4**





Battle of the Holiday Inn, Beirut, 1976
PSP fighters, posing doing the victory sign, after freeing the Holiday Inn from the Phalangists.



Aley, Mount Lebanon, 1976
Conflict zone in downtown Aley. PSP fighters behind a barricade, posing with two Soviet made B-10 recoilless guns.



Metn, Lebanon, 1977
The People's Liberation Forces fighters, on a Land Rover 4x4, armed with a 50 cal., during the war against the Syrians.

Mount Lebanon, 1977
PSP Gunman at a 50 cal. mounted on a Land Rover. 1


Sofar, Mount Lebanon, 1977
PSP fighters well dug in, from the advancing Syrian Forces during the first Mountain War. 2






ARTILLERY



 The People's Liberation Army's Artillery Logo, 1984

 **Metn, Lebanon, 1983**
A PLA Artillery Brigade North Korean 122 mm BM-11 firing on Phalangist position in Bhamdoun.

The PSP's Militia started out in the late 70s, with a couple of artillery pieces and mortar weapons, which consisted of: 57 mm Zis-2s, 4 122 mm D30 artillery guns, and a couple of 120 mm mortars (PM-38), acquired from Lebanese Army Barracks supplies. They were initially used in the first Mountain War, against the Syrian Army, in 1977. Later on, the PLA acquired more heavy artillery pieces from the PLO. As the war progressed, the PLA started importing from the Soviet Union. The PLA's Artillery Brigade was a major contributor on the front. They proved to be effective during the Mountain War and left an eminent impact. Shelling had a profound mark on the battlefield.

The PLA's artillery mainly consisted of heavy and light arms, long and short range arms such as:

- 122 mm BM-11s
- 122 mm BM-21 Grads
- 122 mm D30s
- 152 mm D-20 Howitzer guns
- Zis-2 57 mm
- Type 59-1 (130 mm towed Soviet field gun M1954 (M46)
- 100 mm BS-3 Field and AT guns
- 122 mm M-30 Howitzers
- Type 63 107 mm rocket launchers
- 120 mm M1943 (PM-38) mortars
- 120 mm M240 mortars
- 107 mm M1938 mortars
- 160 mm MT-13 division 1943 model mortars



Choueifat, Lebanon, 1990
 PLA BM-21 122 mm Grad, Soviet made MLRS, on the last parade of the PLA before handing over their arms to the Lebanese Army.



Ain Zhalta, Mount Lebanon, 1991
 The handing over of PLA Soviet 130 mm M46s to the Syrian Army, 1991.

Ain Zhalta, Mount Lebanon, 1991
 The handing over of PLA Soviet 122 mm D30s to the Syrian Army, 1991.

Metn, Mount Lebanon, 1986
 PLA Anniversary. On display are two Czech made T55s, with locally made fenders, a Soviet BM 21 122 mm MLRS, and a North Korean BM 11 122 mm MLRS.

Damour, Lebanon, 1986
 PLA Army Parade. A Soviet made 122 mm BM21.



Bhamdoun, Mount Lebanon, 1983

The first received PLA North Korean made 122 mm BM-11, ready to shell enemy positions.

Bhamdoun, Mount Lebanon, 1983

PLA Zis-2 57 mm artillery gun towed by a gun truck to an artillery position in the area.

Damour, Lebanon, 1985

Coastal highway, a PLA column of Zis-2 57 mm guns being moved to the Chouf region, Mount Lebanon.

Rashaya, South Lebanon, 1986

PLA 120 mm mortar PM-38 during a military drill. Three high ranking officers inspecting the drill. The man to the near right is Officer Kamal Sahly.

Aitat, Mount Lebanon, 1986

PLA soldier radioing for coordinates, to launch a Type 63 107 mm North Korean made MLRS, on Lebanese Forces positions, during the Mountain War.





Chouf, Mount Lebanon, 1985
PLA Soviet made 152 mm D-20 Howitzer covered with leaves and branches, at an artillery point.



Chouf, Mount Lebanon, 1985
PLA 120 mm PM-8 mortar, used during military training.

Beirut, Lebanon, 1986
Locally made and modified PLA 107 mm MLRS with launch button, on display.





Beiteddine Chouf, Mount Lebanon, 1984
PLA Soviet 152 mm D-20 Howitzer, on display during the Beiteddine Festival, 1984.



Barouk, Chouf, Mount Lebanon, 1987
PLA Soviet 152 mm D-20 Howitzer, on display during the Beiteddine Festival, 1984.



Barouk, Chouf, Mount Lebanon 1987
PLA Soviet 152 mm D-20 152 Howitzer battery, during military drills, in Barouk, 1987.