

**INTERCOMMUNAL RELATIONS
AND THE
1958 CRISIS IN LEBANON**

by

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Abstract

The 1958 crisis in Lebanon was a significant event in modern Middle Eastern and international history. Interpretations, however, overlook or subordinate the Lebanese dimensions and how the Lebanese interpreted crisis and causation, through the lens of established community mythologies.

Lebanon contains different, confessionally-defined communities, with a long history of tensions and clashes between them. Examination of these enables the Lebanese dimensions to the 1958 crisis to be given due weight. While regional and international dimensions are of clear importance, the crisis resulted from internal Lebanese factors, long and short term, relating to the different communities, rather than to the impact of international issues such as Nasserism. Where such issues were significant it was because they were not imposed, but invoked by Lebanese elements in the name of Lebanese foreign policy, in order to further their own cause and agendas for Lebanon.

The mythologies surrounding the 'historical' evolution of the communities helped shape the differing agendas for Lebanon. Of the communities, the Maronite community and its invocation of mythology has played a consistently significant role. The Druze and Sunni, were, at different times, of significance also, particularly in terms of relations with the Maronites. These groups used their interpretations of the 'history' of Lebanon to justify their agendas for the future of Lebanon, and in so doing, helped to precipitate a crisis. The political compromise set up to administer Lebanon was based on 'historical' assumptions and differences, and was consequently vulnerable. In this context, the role of Chamoun in escalating the ever-present level of intercommunal tension, in 1957 and 1958, is another major element in the study.

The study uses a range of sources, including official and private papers, unpublished memoirs, oral evidence and newspapers, to map communal feelings and tensions leading to the crisis itself, and its resolution.

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Abbreviations and Transliteration/Spelling Usage

In this thesis, for Lebanese/Arabic names of individuals or places that were, or still are, in common usage in a Europeanised form, particularly in the 1950s, such as Camille Chamoun or General Shihab or Nasser, or Beirut, the convention followed has been to use the familiar form. Otherwise a transliteration convention based on IJMES has been followed.

Abbreviations Used:

AUB:	American University of Beirut
CLS:	Centre for Lebanese Studies (Oxford)
FO:	Foreign Office
PPS:	Parti Populaire Syrien
UAR:	United Arab Republic
UN:	United Nations
UNOGIL:	United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon

Introduction

The 1950s were a period of tremendous socio-political upheavals for the Arab world as a whole, with the rise of Nasser to power in Egypt and the impact of Nasserism and a resurgent pan-Arab nationalism. The 1958 crisis in Lebanon has tended to be interpreted as part of those broader upheavals; being most frequently referred to by historians in the context of this period of change in the Middle East in the 1950s, and/or in the context of the Cold War, because of the issue of American intervention in that crisis. There would seem to be considerable justification for such a perspective. This was the period during which Western hegemony in the Middle East was threatened by pressures from within the region itself; and by the growing power of the USSR. At one level, this consisted of a struggle over the political leadership of the Arab world. This resulted in the polarisation of Arab politics into two hostile camps, with an eventually anti-Western Egypt leading one, and a pro-Western Iraq leading the other. The struggle was apparently (if temporarily) resolved in 1958 with the coup in Iraq which brought down the pro-Western government and replaced it with one identified with an anti-Western stance such as that taken by Egypt.¹ The crisis of that same year in Lebanon, another state identified with a pro-Western stance, has thus seemed to many historians to be clearly linked to this broader struggle. But it is the contention of this thesis that the 1958 crisis in Lebanon originated mainly in a failure of consensus over the identity of Lebanon; a failure linked to differing perceptions of community identity within Lebanon. Such perceptions were based on profoundly divergent interpretations of Lebanon's past, and the dependence of coherent community identities upon such interpretations. Current developments in the region were interpreted in ways that fitted in with such interpretations. As a result, the broader issues affecting the Arab world and its relations with the West in the 1950s were invoked by the different communal groupings in Lebanon, to justify and explain their actions, in the interests of sustaining their community identity.

¹ For a more detailed discussion of these events in the Middle East see Malcolm Yapp, The Near East Since the First World War, Longman, London, 1991, Chapters 9, 10, 11.

Outside Lebanon it is certainly true that a number of important contemporaries at the time, including American observers of the region as well as President Nasser of Egypt, interpreted the Lebanese crisis as part of the upheaval in the Arab world, both in terms of its origins and resolution. But this was because such observers (even within Lebanon), and later, historians, have misunderstood or underestimated the Lebanese contribution to the crisis, and the longer term dimension added to that crisis by the Lebanese contribution. An interpretation based primarily on short-term, regional factors, however neat, ignores a major factor in Lebanese life: that a significant part of the population of Lebanon in the 1950s did not accept that Lebanon was part of the Arab world and used versions of 'Lebanese' history to 'prove' their contentions. The resultant creation of community mythologies has played a crucial role in moulding and sustaining popular attitudes - at times of crisis in particular.

The Christian Maronite community saw itself, and Lebanon, as part of the world of Western civilisation, as honorary Europeans, and acted accordingly. The existence of a separate Lebanese entity was crucial here, enabling such a perspective to be sustained, with all its implications for community identity. According to Kamal Salibi, 'Since the emergence of Lebanon as a state in 1920, the Christian and Muslim Lebanese have been in fundamental disagreement over the historicity of their country'.² In contrast to the Maronite belief in the 'naturalness' of a Lebanese entity, the perspective of the Muslim populations in Lebanon has generally seen the Lebanese state as an artificial creation, dependent largely on the actions of Western (French) imperialism, as with other states in the Arab world such as Syria or Iraq. The result has been the creation of a different popular mythology amongst Muslim communities, where the political boundaries of such a state are ones of political convenience (or inconvenience); but do not detract from the cultural unity of the Arab world. By contrast the Maronite perspective sees the state boundaries of Lebanon as reflecting a non-Arab cultural integrity. As Camille Chamoun insisted in his retrospective on the 1958 crisis:

² K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions. The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988, p. 3.

Les frontieres du Liban ont été relevés en 1862 par le contingent Francais envoyé par l'Europe à la suite des massacres du Liban...On voit ainsi que ce n'est pas la France qui a créé le Liban ou en a fixé les frontieres qui existaient avant le Mandat Francais'.³

It can be argued that one Muslim community, the Druze, has a tendency to sympathise with aspects of the Maronite perspective, because of elements of shared history. The memorial to the Druze 'Martyrs' of 1958 at Mukhtara refers to their brave defence of 'la liberté, l'indépendance' and also 'pour sauvegarder la souveraineté nationale (*al siyadat al Wataniyyah*) pour renforcer l'unité nationale (*al wahdat al Wataniyyah*),' - but also a defence of 'l'arabisme', so this tendency cannot be taken too far. Also, it had more conscious support at elite levels of society, amongst the traditional land-owning class, whose interests were best served by maintaining a discrete entity.⁴

Thus an interpretation of the crisis that depends primarily on a regional or international perspective cannot provide a real comprehension of the Lebanese dimensions of the crisis, including its causation. In the Lebanese context the crisis was a repetition of its history where there has been a sustained pattern of internally generated crises which have invoked external intervention. The 1958 crisis, including the external dimensions to the crisis, conforms to the established pattern where the communities, particularly the Maronite community, had habitually sought to invoke active external interest at times of crisis rather than relying on internal mediation and compromise to resolve any tension. So traditionally there has been no will demonstrated amongst the different communities in Lebanon to solve any crisis through an internally-generated compromise. For this reason, it is important to examine the crisis from the Lebanese perspective, rather than the international one; and this includes the issue of the external interventions in the 1958 crisis.

The thesis thus aims to examine the crisis primarily in the context of tensions between the Lebanese communities, and their conscious and

³ Camille Chamoun, *Crise au Moyen Orient*, Gallimard, Paris, 1963, p. 118.

⁴ Kamal Jumblat, Inscription at Mukhtara, quoted in Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban à l'Époque de la Révolution*, Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1971, p. 22.

unconscious contributions to the escalation of tension to crisis point in the summer of 1958. But to do that, an understanding of the composition of Lebanon is necessary, since it is, apart from anything else, a state including a number of different communities, which had, by the 1950s, developed self-conscious, distinct and discrete community identities. There are a number of Christian communities, with the Maronite community being the largest; there are in addition a number of Muslim communities, with the Sunni community providing the bulk of that population. This thesis will focus heavily on the Maronite community and on their relationship with other communities in Lebanon, notably the Sunni and Druze communities. This is partly because of the continuity of an identifiably Maronite community as a factor in the intercommunal equation throughout Lebanon's history. This community developed its own agenda relatively early, compared to the other communities, and it is the impact of this agenda as it developed that has, in turn, tended to set the agenda for intercommunal relations, between Maronites and Druze, and Maronites and Sunnis in particular. The impact of the Maronite agenda was significant in 1958 in this respect. But the focus on the Maronite community is also due to the fact that, despite this continuity, it has been less studied than any of the other communities in terms of their role in the 1958 crisis. Work has been done on the Sunnis in particular in the 1950s, including an informative PhD thesis by Najla Attiyah.⁵ But there has been no comparable study of the Maronite community, preventing a full comprehension of the internal dimensions of the crisis in terms of the conscious and unconscious contributions of Maronite as well as the Sunni community to the escalation of tension within Lebanon to crisis point.

The fact that the majority of history written about Lebanon at any point in its history has been written by Maronite historians can lead to the assumption that Maronite communal identity has been subject to a considerable amount of critical analysis. However, such an analysis has not been undertaken in any sustained way, and particularly not in relation to 1958. Taking 1958 as a focus, this thesis will examine the creation of community

⁵ Najla Attiyah, 'The Attitude of the Lebanese Sunni towards the State of Lebanon', unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1973.

identity amongst the Maronites and the role of clashes between such feelings of communal identity at times of crisis, including 1958 as part of that pattern. Such an approach to the 1958 crisis requires an assessment of the extent to which the seeds of conflict in 1958 lie within Lebanon's history rather than being simply a matter of factors arising post 1943, with the emergence of the independent Lebanese state: taking a long durée approach to the 1958 crisis. E H Carr has commented that history is 'a dialogue ... between the society of today and the society of yesterday'; but in the Lebanese context history performs a more powerful role, as a crucial factor unifying the Maronite community in particular through their common 'awareness of a common history'.⁶ For instance, the period of co-habitation between the Maronite and Druze communities between the late sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries has been of crucial importance in the evolution of Maronite identity in relation to 'their' territory of 'Lebanon'. A consideration of this has required a synthesis of Lebanese history based on existing secondary sources and some primary source material, such as that of Henri Lammens to add to the research on primary source materials undertaken for the 1950s. It is, perhaps, more usual to see Lammens' work listed as a secondary source since his work forms an important part of Lebanese historiography. However, the way that Lammens' ideas on the origins of the Maronite community, and on the centrality of such origins to a discrete Maronite identity, are referred to in this thesis makes it more appropriate to categorise him as a primary source.

The history of Lebanon's communities and intercommunal relationships and the history of the Lebanese entity, as well as the links between this entity and its communities need to be drawn out if the internal cultural dimensions to the crisis are to emerge. The need to examine a long term historical perspective when examining the 1958 crisis can be partly justified by an examination of the political rhetoric of Lebanese politicians, particularly Maronite ones, within independent Lebanon. A consistent element in Maronite speeches has been the theme of Lebanon's evolution from an ancient historical past and the effects of Lebanon's unique geography on the Maronite

⁶ E.H. Carr, What is History, Penguin Books Ltd, Handsworth, 1964, p. 55; John Tosh, The Pursuit of History, Longman, New York, 1984, p. 3.

character, both used to interpret and justify more predictable themes such as the importance of the Maronite religion, kinship ties, the nature of Lebanese nationalism and issues of external relations. In other words, the Maronite communal identity lays a stress on its historical dimension, relying on scholars such as Lammens to give intellectual defence to the perspective. And, as the thesis will demonstrate, it is a stress that goes further than the usual rhetoric about the historical nature of national identities, as the following example from a 1982 speech to the United Nations by Amine Gemayel indicates:

My country ...is one of rugged mountainous terrain. The people are hardy and proud, like their mountains'.⁷

This Maronite perspective has been recognised, if not welcomed, by other communities. The Sunni opposition figure, Saeb Salam, comparing the 1975 and 1958 crises, commented critically that their origins lay in history and its interpretation, implicitly laying blame on the Maronites.⁸ Recently Walid Jumblat, in June 1995, raised the issue of the dependence of Maronite identity on interpretations of history, when he commented that 'Life is a continuous battle with the inner self and with history' and urged the Maronites to move away from this dependence for the sake of Lebanese unity.⁹

But for the Maronite community, and the Druze, the traditions derived from Mount Lebanon have a continuing impact on socio-political attitudes. While much of the Maronite community is now located (as it was in the 1950s) in urban settings, strong connections to the concept of the village and village cultures, traditions and loyalties have been maintained. Kinship ties have remained powerful. Even if born in urban surroundings, the majority of Maronites feel ties to a village where relatives congregate at weekends and on holidays. The political system of Lebanon actually sustains this factor, because it is to the villages that voters have to go to vote, rather than in their place of daily residence.¹⁰ Even in communities that have traditionally been more urbanised, such as the Sunnis, there is a dimension of this tradition. In such a

⁷ Amine Gemayel, *Peace and Unity*, Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross, London, 1984, p. 19.

⁸ Saeb Salam, *Massirat al Salam*, [The March of Peace], Markaz Saeb Salam, Beirut, n.d., p. 21.

⁹ Walid Jumblat, *Al Hayat*, 13 June 1995.

¹⁰ David McDowall, *Lebanon: A Conflict of Minority*, Report no. 61, Minority Rights Group, London, 1983, p. 9.

context, traditional patterns and loyalties can be shown to have a powerful effect on voting behaviour and popular beliefs and agendas.

The communal mix contained in Lebanon has ensured that there has been a long tradition of co-habitation in that territory, where different social groups that regarded themselves as being significantly different to other social groups inhabiting the same territory have lived side by side - but not in a spirit of mutual trust and harmony resulting from the development of a consensus between the perspectives of these groups. Rather these perspectives have tended to compete with each other, ensuring the continuance of tension and suspicion. Co-habitation, then, will be interpreted in this thesis as the relationship of communities occupying a shared territory, seen by all participants as 'theirs'; but 'theirs' for different reasons and with agendas which tend to either assign one particular community superiority over another, or even to reject the ability of another community to claim any intrinsic 'right' in the territory at all. This individual sense of possession can co-exist with others, but equally, it contains a perpetual element of tension and stress. At times, the tension and suspicion have escalated to crisis point. At other times, consensus has apparently developed, at least at elite levels. Consensus is here interpreted as individuals and communities sharing territory and laying claim to it, but doing so on the basis of a mutually-developed compromise between the agendas of the communities involved. But such consensus can be shown to have depended on a self-interest that was usually, for whatever reason, short-lived. The setting up of an independent Lebanon in 1943, governed by the terms of the National Pact of that year, was undoubtedly a genuine attempt at achieving a durable intercommunal consensus. Certainly virtually all subsequent political leaders in Lebanon have consistently praised the consensus enshrined in the National Pact.¹¹ But as this thesis will show, the basis for that consensus was not sufficiently wide to overcome the long-established reactions based on co-habitation between the communities, even amongst those figures who praised the concept of consensus. All too

¹¹ See, for example, the words of two leaders from opposing traditions: Saeb Salam, Massirat al Salam, p. 21; Amine Gemayel, Peace and Unity, p. 5; and also a 'neutral' figure, Raymond Eddé, Raymond Eddé & Raymond Helmick, Correspondance: La Question Libanaise selon Raymond Eddé expliqué aux Américains par Raymond G. Helmick, Libanica II, Cariscript, Paris, 1990, p. 46.

frequently, for what they identified as reasons of individual and communal self-interest, consensus was abandoned. This was even more true at mass levels of society, at times when grievances and suspicions between communities reached critical heights of tension and where the benefits of consensus advertised by their leaders seemed less obvious. The pattern of Lebanese history also indicates that the community that most frequently acted as one element in the equation (either on its own or in concert with other communities such as the Greek Orthodox) was the Maronite community.

Thus an interpretation of the 1958 crisis through the communal perspective is crucial to an understanding of that crisis. As Amine Gemayel has commented 'The Lebanese are first and foremost members of their community, not citizens of their state'.¹² The resultant impact of this on the question of a definition of what constitutes the Lebanese national identity has been considerable. In the political dimension, it has enshrined a fundamental difference between the Maronites (and other Christians) and the Muslim communities. For the Maronites in particular, a sectarian-based political system has to be at the heart of the political system, acting as an insurance policy for the various religious interests. For the Muslim politicians, such sectarianism is unnecessary and even divisive.¹³ To be able to examine usefully the impact of historical patterns and interpretations on Lebanon's communal history, what is required is an effective marriage between the theoretical and the empirical perspectives and not just either a narrative of events or an abstract theory unrelated to the chronology. The empirical historian may be tempted to highlight the uniqueness and individuality of differing case studies and periods, with the argument that 'History consists of the compilation of a maximum number of irrefutable and objective facts'.¹⁴ Such an approach may be the most practical and informative for extracting the maximum detail of a particular case study, but the resulting concentration on individual narratives can obscure the development of sustained patterns of communal behaviour that are also apparent within such case studies. This may

¹² Amine Gemayel, Rebuilding Lebanon, University Press of America, Boston, 1992, p. 14.

¹³ See Ibid, pp. 14; 17, for example. It is interesting to note that in these comments, the Maronite Amine Gemayel clearly views the Muslim political perspective as being linked to that of the '*ulamas*, so emphasising the theoretical unity of politics and religion in Islam. This underlines the attitude of Maronite suspicion of 'real' Muslim motivation.

¹⁴ E.H. Carr, What is History, p. 15.

be important in the assessment of an individual case study, as the study in this thesis of events in the 1950s will indicate. But this does not mean that the longer term factors, in the shape of the recurrence of attitudes and behaviour, the expression of which may differ according to chronological context, are not also of critical significance.

It is thus a fundamental strand in this thesis that historians cannot afford to neglect the mass human dimension when studying political history; especially when examining the operation of mass democracies such as that in Lebanon at the time of the 1958 crisis. Such a dimension provides the clues leading to an understanding of the evolution of political orientations and feelings of national identity at the popular level, as well as to communal and individual behaviour - behaviour that is frequently dictated by cultural considerations and constraints at the popular level, which in turn had an impact on policy. This means that the historian interested in this perspective must seek an approach which accesses sources that enable a better understanding of the popular level and of the operation of community identities and cultural mythologies. Such approaches are commonplace to the social sciences but history has made a lesser use of these approaches, partly because it is not always easy to combine these with the demands of a historical perspective; one that includes a firm chronological dimension. In the case of the 1958 crisis, it is important to assess the interrelationships between social structure and culture on the one hand, and popular behaviour in terms of identifiable events on the other. The former element, the cultural approach, can be used as part of an attempt to understand the patterns of political behaviour identified from a non-empirical perspective as being of significance in the evolution of the crisis. Such an approach thus provides a conceptual tool with which to assess political culture, at popular as well as elite levels. In such an approach an attempt to identify community psychology is as significant as an analysis of the actual events and the actions undertaken by those communities, because the attitudes resulting from that community psychology are seen, as in this interpretation of the 1958 crisis in Lebanon, as key triggers to action. Important elements in this might include, where evidence is available, mass surveys of public opinion and attitude; but failing that, some attempt through

other sources to assess such opinion and attitudes. It must also include a close study of the roles of key individuals and their opinions and attitudes, drawing on private sources and comparing and contrasting these with their public statements and speeches. In this way, some assessment of the public and popular gloss that such individuals felt it necessary to place on their opinions and policies at particular times and in particular contexts becomes possible. The survival and significance of popular myths and legends in the various communities can also provide a useful channel of analysis when these can be shown to have been interpreted so as to have played a role in the development of key episodes such as those leading to the 1958 crisis.

As Vansina has pointed out, the 'importance accorded to the events is a matter of general consensus in a community'. Equally, Eric Hobsbawm has commented that 'the past is ...an inevitable component of the institutions, values and other patterns of human society', but a component dependent on selections from a range of information and ideas 'remembered' by individuals and groups on the basis of their own interests.¹⁵ In any political system, such a democracy of some kind, dependent on input from a sizeable element of the whole population, such remembering will affect the evolution and practice of policy: 'our political judgements are permeated by a sense of the past' because 'our sense of personal identity demands roots in the past'. Essentially, groups of people, such as the communities in Lebanon, 'assimilate and interpret their own experience' in ways that place 'history' at the 'heart of political culture'.¹⁶ As Benedict Anderson has pointed out, the result in states such as Lebanon has been the creation of 'imagined' communities that have assumed a real solidity because there is a powerful will to believe that they are real.¹⁷ This thesis will show that an understanding and interpretation of the past by participants in the 1958 crisis, and that a study of such factors provides the necessary cultural dimensions to a history of Lebanon and its communities. There are dangers for the historian in seeking to involve such factors in an analysis. These dimensions are difficult, if not impossible to quantify. The

¹⁵ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, James Currey, London, 1985, p. 119; Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Social Function of the Past', *Past and Present*, 55, 1975, p. 3.

¹⁶ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, p. 1.

¹⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1983.

historian seeking to assess the extent of the significance of these dimensions to a particular incident or set of incidents must therefore rely on a range of judgements relating to a series of subjectivities. But to ignore these is to ignore the extent to which mythologies rooted in the past, justifying community identity, have had an impact on institutional as well as cultural and social contexts, as Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson have argued.¹⁸ An example of this is the way that the office or institution of the presidency in Lebanon had acquired a quasi-mystical significance relating to the survival of group identity for the Maronite community by the mid 1950s, as will be seen later in the thesis. Equally, as the thesis will show, 'the ruling groups' in a society will have what Tosh calls 'an interest' in creating an imagery that promotes 'mythical pasts' where that imagery serves to sustain or 'legitimise' the power base of such groups. In particular, such imagery can be shown to have been invoked to create or sustain 'popular' support within electoral constituencies for potentially contentious policies, through propaganda linking the survival of community identity to the success of particular policies.

There was certainly a belief, borne out by events, that cultural myths relating to community identity influenced people's perceptions and actions in relation to clearly identified policies.¹⁹ Arguably, such behavioural patterns were strongest in communities that had in the past, or perceived themselves to have been in the past, excluded from power, making collective 'memory' or myth relating to such past exclusion more relevant to community action as well as community perceptions, because of the presumed linkage of such with the survival of the community as an identifiable, discrete identity. A perception of persecution was thus frequently a crucial element, acting as a powerful bond within a sizeable community by providing elements of a common history based on endurance in the face of considerable difficulties, and making it more difficult, therefore, either to criticise or to modify elements of the community identity.²⁰

¹⁸ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, p. 224; Raphael Samuel & Paul Thompson, *The Myths We Live By*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 52.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20; 60.

²⁰ Raphael Samuel & Paul Thompson, *The Myths We Live By*, pp. 14-15; 19; 60; John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, p. 3.

The 1958 crisis is officially seen as beginning with the murder of Nassib Al Matni, a newspaperman, on 8 May of that year, and lasting through to 8 August, a period of three months, so it was not a brief interlude but a significant upset. However, a consciousness of the factors discussed above must lead the historian into thinking that it is misleading to see the crisis purely in terms of those dates. Instead it is important to see the roots of the crisis as lying in an earlier period so far as Lebanon itself is concerned, regardless of the factors apparently involved in the broader Middle Eastern context. Thus a study of the social structure of Lebanese society and its historical evolution is necessary to any attempt to explain the development of the 1958 crisis; because such an examination of the social structure and its workings indicates that conflicts within Lebanese society like the 1958 crisis were part of a long-established pattern of the social dynamics of Lebanon, rather than something relating predominantly to the events of the 1950s in the region.

It is common to see Lebanon's social structure, or at least the structure of some of the communities as being 'feudal'. Yet such an approach to explaining the Lebanese social structure is not entirely satisfactory. What may be termed a feudal structure was at best limited to just some of the communities; it was never a universal. For instance, it has been identified by some commentators in the Druze community and also, by the beginning of the nineteenth century at least, in the Maronite community - or at least the rural sector of that community.²¹ Insofar as 'feudal' characteristics did develop, they did so within the Mount Lebanon region, but not in the peripheries that were to be included in the independent Lebanese state. Equally, feudalism was hampered in its development even in the Mount Lebanon region by the impact of Koranic law. This, for example, laid down the basis for inheritance, including land, as a division among the children of the deceased, thus lessening any potential for the acquisition of large tracts of land by a succession of single heirs. Another complication to the development of feudalism as key factor in social organisation was the involvement of the Ottoman empire. Officials in the administration of this empire either were beneficiaries themselves or

²¹ In 1858, for example, there was a revolt in Kisrawan which is best classified as a revolt of Maronite peasants against their feudal lords, yet even so the issue is complicated by the fact that the peasants were backed by the Maronite order.

conferred benefits on favourites by a system of land endowment *iqta'*; but such benefits were not permanent or hereditary. Land grants under this system reverted back to Ottoman control on the death of the beneficiary.²² Thus though Lebanon did not witness the beginnings of private hereditary ownership on a really large scale till the middle of the nineteenth century, as a result of Ottoman reforms at that time, the system that prevailed previously is not easily classified for any community, and so assumptions about the evolution of communities from such bases cannot be made in a straightforward way.²³

Related to this is the issue of hierarchical patterns within social groupings in Lebanon. According to Khoury:

Classes undoubtedly existed before this time but they were much more difficult to identify and their lifespans much shorter mainly because their relations to the means of production and especially property were much less stable.²⁴

Equally, a class structure did not easily cross confessional boundaries in Lebanon except perhaps at elite levels where it can be argued that there was sufficient economic interest in common to promote a conscious sense of sharing the same social level between communities, at least for the Maronite, Druze and Sunni communities. But despite the apparent common interests of the *zu'ama* or land-owning elites in these communities, the perceived need of these elites to identify themselves with their own confessional grouping and its policy stance (especially in terms of foreign policy) ensured that any class feeling at this level was generally tenuous and short-lived. Instead the dominant social hierarchies in Lebanon tended to be those specific to particular communities. In terms of the overall social hierarchy of the state, it is difficult to sustain an argument that certain confessional groupings occupied a lower socio-economic position than another one. The range of exceptions is so wide that any coherent case collapses. In other words, the evolution of a

²² See Joseph Syzliowicz, 'The Ottoman Empire', in C.A.O Van Nieuwenhuijze (ed.), Commoners, Climbers and Notables, Brill, Leiden, 1977, p. 109.

²³ Philip Khoury, Urban, Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860-1920. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 4.

²⁴ Ibid.

modern class structure was certainly not a factor in Lebanon in the historical period, and it is difficult to interpret the groups in Lebanon even as late as the 1950s in classical class terms.

One alternative approach used mainly by sociologists to interpret such communal structures as found in Lebanon is the 'community approach'. This has been used to examine the Lebanese social structure in terms of the different communities, enquiring whether such communities were homogeneous or heterogeneous.²⁵ This approach, allied with the sectarian one, is what seems to fit best the Lebanese setting. According to Tonnies, the German sociologist, the *Gemeinschaft* or community is described as revolving around three intertwined elements: the 'element of descent' in which the focus is on blood and kinship ties resulting in a situation where 'family' life provides the basis of social organisation.²⁶ The second element was provided by location, the actual territory linked to a particular 'village community'.²⁷ The final element was provided by employment or occupation, expressing itself through trade or craft guilds, corporations and offices.²⁸ Unlike feudalism or tribalism, these three elements can be said to be clearly identifiable within the Lebanese social system regardless of sectarian community. It is general that family life has provided the centre of social organisation, and that village territoriality and (predominantly male) occupation have also been key characteristics in all the communal sub-groups found in Lebanon. Such a pattern holds good to this day. Even in the urban areas of Lebanon these three factors are still significant. For instance, the majority of the population of Ashrafiyyah, in the eastern part of Beirut, identify themselves primarily as village emigrants, rather than urban dwellers. In other words, the links to non-urban locations remains a strong factor in their sense of individual and group identity.

Linked to this, geographical factors can be said to provide another key to the communal patterns of Lebanon. The terrain of Lebanon promoted

²⁵ Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1987.

²⁶ G.P. Murdock, *Social Structure*, Macmillan, London, 1949, p. 82.

²⁷ J. Coleman, 'Community Disorganisation and Conflict', in R. Merton (ed.), *Contemporary Social Problems*, Harcourt, New York, 1971, p. 658.

²⁸ F. Tonnies, *Community and Association (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft)*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, London, 1955, p. 69.

geographical isolation, on a village and a community basis. This led villages, each usually identifiable as belonging to a particular sectarian community, to regard other villages, linked to different communal affiliations, with fear and suspicion; also the communications between such villages were so difficult that regular and positive social intercourse was more the exception than the rule. It can be said that the more that communities isolate themselves, the more they distrust each other, and the more society is fragmented. This certainly has held true historically of Lebanon, and it has left a significant legacy in the modern period.²⁹

In the modern period, the majority of the population of Lebanon has been located in urban surroundings. In these surroundings, the Maronite community and the Sunni community found themselves in close proximity, even though they tended to live in particular districts, identified as 'belonging' to their particular confessional grouping.³⁰ With the urban population in the majority by the 1940s at the latest, it becomes possible to talk of 'masses' in relation to particular communities, but not in relation to the Lebanese population as a whole. A working class or proletariat or 'lower' class that crossed confessional boundaries simply did not emerge within Lebanon, partly because the economic activities of the respective communities were too different and competition for access to jobs and commercial activities were too strong between the communities.³¹ The Maronites, for example, dominated the profitable trade with Europe and sought to ensure that its major benefits were kept within their own community. But if it is not possible to talk of a Lebanese working class, it is possible to identify within the Maronite and Sunni communities what may be termed Maronite or Sunni 'masses'. By the masses what is implied is the bulk, quantitatively speaking, of the members within a particular community who, in terms of the individual social hierarchy of that community, belong to the middle and lower strata. Thus in class terms the masses might be said to include the petty bourgeoisie, the proletariat or

²⁹ See M. Hudson, 'The Problem of Authoritative Power in Lebanese Politics: Why Consociationalism Failed', in Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills (eds), Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988, p. 225.

³⁰ This was also true for other communities, meaning that maps of urban areas would display a patchwork of districts monopolised by particular communities.

³¹ Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840-1985, Ithaca Press, London, 1986, p. 4 also makes this point.

working class and the sub-classes of a community; as well as (where appropriate) the rural working or peasant classes. In other words, the masses comprise the people economically dependent on commercial, administrative or landowning elites - but who, particularly in an urban context where they are in constant contact with each other in living and working conditions, develop a sense of shared interests against these elites that is likely to come into play at times of crisis for those masses. Consequently, what is implied by use of the term 'masses' in this thesis is the ability, and willingness, of very substantial numbers of people within a community to act together in order to put across a point of view that evolved among themselves, and was not handed down by an elite, or adopted from an element in the community elites and modified in such a way as to make it populist. In 'normal' conditions, the masses would usually be prepared to let themselves be led, or 'manipulated' by their community elites. However at times when the masses felt their own interests to be threatened, they would seek to bring pressure on their elites in order to bring about a change in policy, for instance. At such times, it was common for the masses to describe their own interests as that of the community as a whole.³² In the case of the Maronite and Sunni communities, this expression of mass community interest generally justified itself by reference to community mythology; in other words to perceptions of past events, which were used to interpret more immediate causations of a crisis.

So as part of dealing with community identity in the modern period it is necessary to examine a variety of contemporary perceptions of the past, rather than simply examining the events of the twentieth century. In particular, the period of Ottoman control over the region has left a crucial series of consequences for mass and elite agendas in the various communities. It can be argued that one of the most significant in terms of present definitions has been the differential impact, on the communities, of corruption in government and administration. During the Ottoman period, different treatment was offered or forced on the communities, with the Maronites being frequently adversely affected by that treatment. The continuation of habits and customs of the administration of the region, established when it was under Ottoman control

³² See *ibid.*, pp. 4-8 for a discussion of the social composition of the Sunni community in Beirut.

was not popularly acceptable during the modern period, that of an independent Lebanon seeking to be 'democratic' along Western lines. The problems involved in a continuation of such Ottoman habits, including the opportunities it gave for an opposition to form around the issue of corruption were particularly well displayed during the regime of Bishara Al Khoury.

But there was another factor linked to the confessional structure of Lebanese society. The Ottoman tendency had been to seek to structure societies under its control in ways that reflected an Islamic point of view. Thus social stratification in the region during the period of Ottoman control was based on function, but also on the overall status awarded to the different religious communities. Regardless of the experience of rare individuals, lasting group mobility upward or downward was difficult within this context. Stratification on the basis of religious affiliation was part of an already established Muslim practice.³³ At one level, Islam organised Muslims as a *Jama'ah* or community and thereby excluded the non-Muslim social groups, who were either polytheists or People of the Scriptures or the Book (Christians and Jews). The status of Christians and Jews came to be regulated by a *dhimma* or contract. Thus at its simplest, society came to be divided simply into Muslims and *dhimmis*. This principle of social classification was followed by Muslim rulers from the seventh century on, and it established Christian groups as being inferior in social ranking to Muslims because of their faith. This inferior status was demonstrated by the particular taxes which *dhimmis* had to pay, the *Jizyah* or poll-tax and the *Kharaj* or land-tax, and by the range of restrictions on movement and opportunities placed on them.³⁴

But this level of social division was not the only one operating in the Ottoman empire. Differences were made between Muslim groups on the grounds of sectarian allegiance. In a predominantly Sunni empire such as the Ottoman empire, 'nonconformist' Muslim sects such as the Druze and the Shi'ite were differentiated and granted a lower social status. That status might be higher than that granted to non-Muslims, but it created a distinct and lasting

³³ B. Turner, *Weber and Islam, a Critical Study*, Routledge, London, 1974, p. 97.

³⁴ Antoine Fattal, *Le Statut Légal des Non-Musulmans en Pays d'Islam*, Imprimerie Catholique, Beirut, 1958, pp. 81-82.

social gulf between the various Muslim sects. Moreover, these social rankings were not a matter of simple acceptance: the operation of such a ranking system built into the relations between communities a variety of degrees of resentment, mistrust and even outright hostility and fear. For instance, the *dhimmah* could give a certain protection to Christian groups at the same time as leaving other Muslim sects such as the Druze and Shi'ite open to persecution by their fellow Muslims with all the authorisation of Ottoman power. At other times Christian groups were persecuted by all the Muslim groups, including the 'nonconformist' ones, again with Ottoman endorsement. Thus this type of social ranking gave, in practice, no sense of social stability to the communal relations in the region.

The involvement of external forces (notably Europe) in the region also had an internal impact, especially from the nineteenth century on. From the eighteenth century, Europe was becoming more secular in its attitudes and the significance of religious divisions in European society were lessening. Instead, the various European states were moving towards the concept of an individual state existing by right for reasons which had little to do with the religion of its elite or with loyalty towards that elite simply on a hereditary base. The role of the individual at all levels of society was given a higher profile with the evolution of the concept of the 'citizen'; a concept which theoretically (if not always practically) gave individuals certain fundamental rights regardless of social status or religious affiliation. This development had little impact on the Ottoman empire as a whole. Within that empire the idea of communities distinguished on confessional grounds continued to have legal force, continuing thereby the linkage between temporal and religious power structures.

However, in areas such as Lebanon - where for at least some of the communities, there was access to European ideas - the different path being taken by Europe was known to members of non-Muslim communities through education. Students learned about Western ideas of secular democracy and the ways in which this could (at least in theory) permit individuals and groups in society to initiate desired changes in society without fear of reprisal on the

grounds of confessional allegiance. Equally, it was demonstrated through this system that communal groups acquired rights to make their voices heard because of a long-standing presence in a particular location. It was shown that having an established territorial identity conferred upon groups and individuals in the West a national identity that superseded any confessional differences; and that such a situation permitted change which did not involve a loss of individual or group identity.

But a change in confessional allegiance was the only permanent way for groups or individuals to effect alterations or reforms of grievances within the Ottoman empire. Saadeh has pointed out that in the region of Lebanon, 'where identity is not based on residence and land, but on religious communal ties' change threatened 'the very existence of the community' in the historical experience of the region. As a result, a deep conservatism developed within the minority communities in particular, as the best way to prevent 'the eradication of the community' in a particular location.³⁵ Anything that prompted a reassessment of the identity of the community by central authority might be dangerous to the survival of the community. Thus such change as did occur was likely to be given a strong appearance of conformity to established practice, rather than challenging established practice as was happening in the West. It meant that there was little reliance on the powers of communities themselves to bring about useful and positive change, even where it was identified as necessary for the good of that particular community. Instead, there was a growing reliance on the intervention of outside forces to effect such change, with the indigenous community performing an apparently passive role as a matter of self-defence.³⁶ This helped to set the agenda for the low-ranked Christian communities in particular in their relations with and expectations of the Western powers.

Essentially, the classification by authority of communities on religious grounds conferred upon individuals a sense of identity that was essentially religious, and ensured that they, in turn, classified others around them in the

³⁵ Sofia Saadeh, *The Social Structure of Lebanon: Democracy or Servitude?*, An Nahar, Beirut, 1993, p. 41.

³⁶ Marwan Buheiry, 'External Intervention and Internal Wars in Lebanon: 1770-1928', in Laurence Conrad (ed.), *The Formation and Perception of the Modern Arab World*, Darwin Press Inc, Princeton, 1989, p. 137.

same or in different communities on precisely the same religious terms. This was true of those in dominant and those in inferior positions and it established a base for the interpretation of the identity of other forces becoming involved in the region. Thus when the West dominated the Arab countries, it was more the religious dimensions and differences which were identified as the 'obvious' features of Western identity, and thus became the element that was most likely to raise antagonisms in Muslim Arab society, rather than reaction to concepts of colonialism or economic domination in a more Western sense.³⁷ This perspective can be identified amongst certain Muslim groups in Lebanon in 1958; with the West being interpreted as a Christian bloc that was consequently intent upon undermining identity of Muslim groups there. Given that the attitude of the Maronite Christian grouping was to see the West as its natural protector, this meant that potentially, clashes over the role of the West in Lebanon could affect the actual sense of identity of some communal groups within Lebanese society.

The interpretation of the historical context of the various communities in Lebanon has equally the potential for producing radically different understandings of the historical narrative of the region. There is a powerful belief that each community has its own particular history and its own background. Histories of Lebanon are a real issue for controversy on a communal basis, rather than, for example, on a class or national basis as found in the West. The question of how to write the history of Lebanon, including the acceptable starting date for such a history has, since the nineteenth century, become a question that bears directly on the attempts of one or other community to impose its own interpretation as the standard, and thereby to establish that standard as a keystone to the construction of a 'Lebanese' identity. Thus the Maronites wish to begin with the Phoenician period, while the Sunni seek to focus on the Islamic period, underlining thereby the Arab identity of the state. This leads to a very fundamental fragmentation of opinion about what constitutes a 'Lebanese' identity.³⁸

³⁷ Hisham Sharabi, Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years, 1875-1914, John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1970; Albert Hourani, Arab Thought in the Liberal Age 1798-1939, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1962.

³⁸ K.S. Salibi, House of Many Mansions, Chapter 11, especially pp. 201-3, pointing out the 'war' over Lebanese history in recent years, but also pointing out that as early as 1935, a text was produced by Nakkash and Farrukh in which

Nor is it just a matter of invoking the historical past in order to attempt to define a 'Lebanese' identity in the image of a particular communal identity. The issue of how to define 'modernism' is another controversial issue. At one level it is related to support or antipathy to the West and the nature of Western impact on Lebanon in terms of social values and lifestyles. Equally Modernisation is associated with ideas of change, frequently imparted through an educational system. This in turn leads on to another set of complexities relating to communal identity that does go beyond the confessional dimension. Modernisation as change, spread through education, helped the evolution of an identifiable educated urban middle class in Lebanon in the 1950s. Yet that (predominantly Maronite) middle class found itself excluded from any real exercise of power, particularly political power. Such power remained in the hands of the traditional, predominantly rural elites for the Maronites as for other communities. It is a measure of the continuing significance of original village locations that even for most Maronites, this educated class did not have a widespread appeal. Yet at the same time, the traditional elites were also having difficulties in maintaining a popular appeal to the extent they had done in the past.

The role of traditional leaders or 'notables' had not remained totally static over time within Lebanon, particularly since the evolution of Lebanon as a distinct entity. The traditional, quasi-feudal nature of some of this leadership had modified into what Hottinger calls the *Za'im* concept.³⁹ The initial evolution of confessionally identified social groupings helped the development of a social hierarchy dominated by a land-based aristocracy amongst the various groups. Such an aristocracy was not a focus of common loyalty across all the communities; rather each community developed its own aristocracy which invoked loyalty predominantly from its own confessional members. Within such a social hierarchy, it was the notables who generally set the agenda in terms of values and beliefs - freedom to express ideas and thoughts outside the ideas passed down by one's own community notables was

'Lebanon was denuded of all special historicity outside the Syrian Arab context'. The Maronite response was a work published in 1937 which 'emphasised the special historical character of Lebanon'.

³⁹ Arnold Hottinger. 'Zu'ama in Historical Perspective', in L. Binder (ed.), *Politics in Lebanon*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1966, pp. 85-105.

minimal. Such social hierarchies were under threat in all communities in Lebanon by the early twentieth century - and the process was undoubtedly helped by the period in which France ruled Lebanon through the mandate system.

Economic power was shifting away from these land-based aristocracies, and becoming more concentrated in the hands of urban commercial elites. Yet the political power structure set up during the mandate, and modified for the independent Lebanese state, relied heavily upon the involvement of the traditional elites. Thus political arrangements which essentially depended on intercommunal relations via a network of relations set up between the traditional elites of these various communities relied on an ability to command loyalty within their communities that could no longer be taken largely for granted by the traditional elites. It was even more of a problem when the traditional elites did not always realise the change themselves and made political assumptions that were based on their ability to call on widespread demonstrations of loyal backing for policies from within their own communities - only to find that it was not automatically forthcoming. Such developments tended to produce intra- and well as inter-communal tensions. This is particularly well demonstrated in the workings and breakdowns of the so-called National Pact. This, as will be seen later in the thesis, was an agreement between two traditional notables, Bishara Al Khoury and Riyadh Al Solh, and was intended to provide the basis for political compromise between the various communities in Lebanon, especially the two identified as the 'dominant' communities by the 1940s: the Maronites and the Sunnis.⁴⁰ But far from being a recipe for stability, the National Pact not only allowed successive crises to occur, but arguably even encouraged them.

A major aim of this thesis is to examine the breakdown of communal consensus and a return to patterns of co-habitation in 1958, to demonstrate that while external factors undoubtedly made a contribution, it was the internal dynamics of the Lebanese state that ensured the events of the 1950s produced a major crisis that shook the state to its foundations. Gabriel Almond

⁴⁰ For comment on the National Pact, see Raghid Al Solh, 'Lebanese and Arab Nationalism, 1936-1945', Unpublished PhD thesis, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, 1986.

has sought to classify political systems and he argues that a culturally fragmented political system is liable to be static, even to produce dictatorships.⁴¹ He also argues that a culturally fragmented political system 'resists' social change because of the need for changes to be agreed on by all the constituent elements in the state. Such agreement is virtually impossible to obtain, because each social element perpetually seeks to gain more for itself, while refusing to yield up part of whatever it already has. Thus compromise and collaboration become practically unachievable. The question is, how far does such an analysis reflect the realities of the independent Lebanese state during the 1950s?

According to Michael Hudson in his comments on the political structure of Lebanon:

'Consociationalism led to a degree of immobilism that prevented government from dealing with socio-economic and ideological challenges. From this point of view consociationalism is a cause of breakdown and chaos',

something he sees as applying in 1958.⁴² He argued that by the 1950s, Lebanese society was organising itself behind a range of essentially secular political identities and ideologies, and rather than behind confessional sects as in the past. Equally, Saadeh has argued that 'Consociation is a system that contradicts the rules of Western democracy because it does not treat equally all citizens in a country'.⁴³ Both these and other commentators evoking the concept for Lebanon of consociational democracy in the modern period downplay the confessional element. They do so on the following basis. First the identification of distinct lines of cleavage; second a multiple balance of power; third the existence of popular attitudes favourably disposed to a coalition between the various elements; fourth the existence of an external threat; fifth levels of national feeling that do not outweigh other potentially divisive factors; and sixth, a 'relatively low total load on the system'.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Gabriel Almond & James Coleman, *The Politics of Developing Areas*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1960.

⁴² Michael Hudson, *The Precarious Republic*, Boulder, New York, 1985, pp. 87-105; 325-30.

⁴³ Sofia Saadeh, *The Social Structure of Lebanon*, p. 122.

⁴⁴ A Lijphart, 'Typologies of Democratic Systems', *Comparative Political Studies*, 1.1, 1969, pp. 3-44.

Dekmejian, for instance, identified the consociational approach as of considerable relevance to an analysis of the segmented political cultures in Lebanon. He argues that Lebanon fits the consociational model in important ways even though he also admits ways in which Lebanon departs from the model. He suggests that these 'deviations' are significant in the breaking down of the consociational model in Lebanon.⁴⁵ He cites as an example of this the Maronite refusal to seek a compromise in which the Maronite community would compromise with the Muslim sects there by giving up some of their power base in the state. Dekmejian points to the lack of coercive control possessed by the state, and places stress also on the regional context of Lebanon, which was traditionally very unsettled. This, he argues, could have been significant as well as a breakdown in the consociational formula in the 1950s. His argument is that 'refusal to change can generate dissatisfaction with the system and when the situation is under stress or in a conflictual state because of different perception of events there are no chances to change it for better; this degenerates into a crisis'.⁴⁶

These points all have some merit: but that merit is limited by the failure to take the long-standing confessional element in community identity into sufficient account, implying a greater ease in the modification of communal identities that can be justified on closer examination. Dekmejian himself uses a confessional case to support his case without identifying the potential for it to undermine his more secular interpretation. It is certainly true that, as A. N. Oppenheim points out, the process of perception is 'not a passive process but a dynamic one'. Perception is evolved not just in relation to external factors, but also by existing attitudes possessed by 'the perceiver's culture, attitudes, expectations, needs, experience and many other aspects'.⁴⁷ But this does not mean to say that the process must necessarily become increasingly secularised, as many commentators tend to imply on the basis of the Western experience.

⁴⁵ R.H. Dekmejian, 'Consociational Democracy in Crisis: The Case of Lebanon', Comparative Politics, 10.2, 1978, pp. 251-66.

⁴⁶ A.N. Oppenheim, 'Psychological Aspects' in Margot Light & A.J.R. Groom (eds), International Relations: A Handbook of Current Theory, Pinter, London, 1994, p. 208.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 203.

The process in Lebanon by which individual and group perceptions affect communications with other groups, especially those in closely linked or the same locations, is undoubtedly complex. Potential for division and agreement are contained within language and linguistic values, social and cultural values, visual expectations of others, and, of course, the historical past as it affects the present. It is argued here that, rather than consociationalism, the result has been a continuation into the modern period of habits based on co-habitation. Social groups that conceive themselves as having different cultures (even if 'outsiders' perceive considerable similarities) will often be prepared to draw on these issues to underline differences rather than seek for similarities. Decision-makers who wish to retain the support of such social groups in situations where group loyalty to decision-makers is no longer automatic, find it necessary to stress such differences themselves, making the potential for compromise and collaboration with other groups more difficult. It can be argued that this was the case in Lebanon in the 1950s; but equally, the basis on which the communities in Lebanon saw themselves as different from other groups was predominantly still confessional at least as regards attitudes to other groups. If it can be argued that individuals and social strata in these groups had personally developed a greater degree of secularism in their own personal beliefs, it should not be assumed that such secularism allowed them to see the other groups in Lebanese society in equally secular terms, permitting the tensions between groups to be shaped by such secular perceptions.

It is also the case that the Lebanese perceptions of the regional context of the 1958 crisis, and of Lebanon's foreign policy, had strongly confessional overtones; as indeed, if unconsciously, do the perceptions of external powers involved in Lebanon at that point, as in earlier historical times. Such external powers at least partly defined the social groups in the region of Lebanon on the information received from such groups. Thus external definitions of Lebanese group identity related to internal, and consequently, to confessional definitions. This is especially true as elements of identity within the identities of the relevant external powers frequently related most directly to that confessional element. Modern France, with its history of Roman Catholic Christianity,

related readily to the Christian communities in Lebanon and was prepared to be convinced of the 'difference' of the Muslim communities. The use by involved external powers of coercive control and control by consensus during Lebanon's history is thus of significance to an understanding of the external dimension to the 1958 Lebanese crisis, as well as of the internal dimensions. But, it must be asked, how does that relate to the more widely accepted definitions of the crisis and its evolution - and particularly to these external dimensions?

In terms of the wider, regional and international dimension, the short term factors of significance date from 1955 in particular, though the period 1952-55 was also one of tremendous socio-political upheaval for the Arab world. These upheavals undoubtedly had implications for Lebanon. This was the period during which Western hegemony in the Middle East was threatened by the growing power of the USSR and also by pressures coming from within the region itself. At one level this consisted of a struggle over the political leadership of the Arab world. This resulted in the polarisation of Arab politics into two hostile camps, with Egypt leading one and Iraq the other. Yet, as Qubain makes plain, these upheavals went much further.⁴⁸ Diametrically divergent concepts such as revolutionary republicanism versus monarchical gradualism; aristocratic conservative government versus socialist or semi-socialist states; and co-operation with the West versus development of independence from the West all began to play a major role in the thinking of the Arab world.⁴⁹ This polarisation split the Arab world on two levels, governmental and popular, and it involved Lebanon as much as it did other countries: 'in Lebanon, the cleavage on the popular level took an acute character and because of the structure of the country carried with it confessional overtones'.⁵⁰

Other studies of the 1958 crisis have been undertaken but, as already indicated, in terms of examination of the internal dimensions of the crisis there is relatively little secondary work that illuminates aspects of the crisis from a

⁴⁸ F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, The Middle East Institute, Washington DC, 1961, p. 38.

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 38-9.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 39.

Lebanese perspective. One work by Fahim Qubain, published in 1961, three years after the crisis, provides a near contemporaneous study. It is a relatively comprehensive study in terms of the themes covered, and provides a useful narration of the events that links them to the international and regional context. He also indicates key internal issues, such as Chamoun's attempt at re-election to the presidency; political corruption; and Muslim dissatisfaction; and also argues that there was a division in Lebanese society: 'The division involves the concept which the Lebanese holds of his identity, the nature and function of his country, its relation to its Arab neighbours and the world at large but particularly to the Christian West'.⁵¹ Yet as Qubain himself points out, his useful survey cannot give the full story of the Lebanese crisis; it is a broad overview and lacks the dimension of an in-depth study of any particular aspect. In terms of the lack of focus on the Maronite community, and indeed the identification of specific agendas for all the communities in Lebanon, this is a significant weakness.

A documentary selection produced shortly afterwards in 1965, by M.S. Agwani, together with his perceptive but brief introduction, provides some amplification of Qubain. He attempted to summarise the respective viewpoints of the major players linked to the 1958 crisis, and the possibilities for co-operation in post-crisis Lebanon. But key sources were still not available in 1965 and the need to select extracts from documents and to summarise other documents prevents a real focus on the role of the communities in 1958. Wade Goria's work, Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon, 1943-1976 examined, from the perspective of the early 1980s, the relationship between these elements and the contribution made to the 1958 crisis by a crisis in this relationship. But the book focuses on an elite perspective and takes little account of the popular dimension, despite the use made of sources such as periodicals and newspapers. A chapter by William Quandt on the 1958 crisis in Barry Blechman and Stephen Kaplan's Force Without War focused on the relationship between force and diplomacy, and in particular the US intervention in Lebanon, linking this to the broader context of US policy in the Cold War era and of the importance of the Middle East to that policy. All of these works have

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

tended to bring a narrow focus to bear on the 1958 crisis, though in differing ways; and none has shown a consciousness of the importance of links between the political elites of the different communities and the masses. Some attempt to remedy this has been undertaken in the case of the Sunni community, with an MA thesis by Nasser Kalawoun on 'The Role of the Sunni Leadership and Community towards the State of Lebanon in the 1950s'; and a PhD thesis on Sunni Attitudes by Najla Attiyah. But even the Kalawoun thesis has emphasised the role of the elite, while that of Attiyah focused on the issue of Sunni attitudes towards the state of Lebanon.

In terms of primary sources none of the authors of these studies has made consistent use of newspaper sources, or of private papers such as those of Moussa Moubarak or General Bustani. Such sources, along with oral interviews with selected individuals and with the use of American, British and French official sources where possible, are the main sources utilised for this thesis. In general terms, the value of private papers needs no discussion. However, it is worth pointing out, in a thesis that seeks to illuminate popular attitudes, the particular value of oral sources as a complement to other sources such as newspaper reports. As Tosh has pointed out, oral traditions are an important element of popular culture in societies or communities, especially those without high literacy levels.⁵² Politicians' papers relating to 1958 tend to concentrate on the immediate issues, and on self-justification. An examination of newspaper evidence, and oral traditions relating to the crisis, can give an indication of the extent to which non-political perceptions interpreted the crisis as part of an established tradition. Thus the oral evidence of journalists like Ghassan Tueni and Salim Nassar give important insights into the attitudes of certain sections, at least, of the masses in the confessional communities. As journalists, as they emphasised in their interviews, it was important to them to have a sense of the popular mood amongst their readership, at least, and to seek to identify that of other communal groups, and to reflect those in their newspapers, in terms of the choice of 'news' reported and editorials and articles carried. Without such a reflection, the sales of their productions was likely to decline, and as the crisis escalated, both commented on the increased

⁵² John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, pp. 30; 206.

pressure that they felt to reflect a 'popular' mood 'in tune' with their readership.⁵³ They emphasised that such was also the attitude of the other editors and journalists, something of importance to this thesis, given the use made of newspaper sources to assess popular attitudes, as will be discussed later.

Insofar as private papers utilised are concerned, some were already in the public domain, such as those of Saeb Salam and Kamal Jumblat, though sustained use of them in relation to an analysis of the 1958 crisis had not been undertaken. But other, largely untapped sources, did prove fruitful. For instance, some access to the Patriarchal archives at Bkirki was possible, enabling an assessment to be made of the role of the Maronite Church at all levels, including the Patriarch and the ordinary clergy, and even the relations of the ordinary clergy with their congregations, also of importance in assessing popular attitudes. The papers of Pierre Bart, Lebanese ambassador to France, and the unpublished memoirs of General Bustani were also drawn on for the 1950s. The unclassified Al Khazin family papers also became available in the last months of this thesis. While a full survey of these would have entailed a lengthy process of classification, a preliminary sampling of those papers was undertaken, and some useful information relating to the themes of this thesis, notably the role of the Maronite Church, were uncovered. Dr. Albert Moukheiber is currently engaged in writing his memoirs, for An Nahar to publish in book form, but he agreed to give an interview, providing an oral source. Charles Malik's papers are currently in the USA, in the possession of his son. In some cases the private papers of significant individuals have not survived. Dory Chamoun, son of Camille Chamoun, has claimed that his father's papers, certainly those relating to this period, were destroyed by shelling during the civil war. The same has happened to the papers of Bishara Al Khoury, and, according to Amine Gemayel, to the papers of Pierre Gemayel. The wife of General Fouad Shihab deliberately destroyed his papers.

Oral interviews were undertaken with Raymond Eddé, Saeb Salam, and Amine Gemayel, among others, providing some useful information and

⁵³ Ghassan Tuani, Oral Interview, Beirut, 30 July 1992 ; Selim Nassar, Oral Interview, London, 20 May 1995.

perspectives, especially in terms of their understandings of popular perceptions of Chamoun's intentions and aspects of the relationship between elite levels and the masses within the Maronite and Sunni communities relating to events in 1957 and 1958. As already mentioned, an interview was also undertaken with Salim Nassar, a leading figure in the Lebanese newspaper world in 1958. As well as his overview and insight into newspaper policy, he was able to comment on a number of issues and episodes that were subject to censorship or were for other reasons not fully reported in 1958. This interview was of particular significance as in 1958, Nassar was writing for Al Sayyad, a journal with pro-Egyptian leanings. It was necessary to make use of such oral evidence because of the destruction or inaccessibility, for a variety of reasons including the recent civil war, of a number of archives of private papers of individuals significant in the evolution and course of the 1958 crisis. Oral evidence has been utilised because the evidence given by these individuals could be cross-referenced against each other and against the information and perspectives provided by the other sources used, notably the official archives and newspaper sources. In addition, as Catherine Hall has commented, the process of selectivity involved in oral evidence, of what is remembered and what is forgotten, is in itself an important clue for the historian. It aids an assessment, in this case, of the different communal perspectives and of the persistence of important mythologies related to community identity, such as that of a Phoenician origin for the Maronites or the Maronite conviction that there was a real threat to Lebanese independence in 1958 that was only prevented by Maronite efforts.⁵⁴ It should also be remembered that despite the increasing literacy of the Lebanese population, it still maintains significant elements of an oral culture, particularly amongst the Muslim communities there.⁵⁵ While access to Christian, especially Maronite, interviewees was easier to arrange than access to Muslim interviewees, there was a consciousness of a need to try to establish a balance here. Thus an interview with Saeb Salam, a leading spokesman for the Sunni opposition in 1958, was

⁵⁴ Catherine Hall, 'Rethinking Imperial Histories', unpublished conference plenary paper, Women's History Network Conference, 16 September 1995.

⁵⁵ For some comments on communities in a transition between the reliance on oral culture and on a literate culture, see John Tosh, The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History, 2nd edition, Longman, London, 1991; Jan Vansina, Oral Tradition as History, James Currey, London, 1985.

significant, as were interviews with the neutralist/opposition figure of Raymond Eddé. An interview with Mrs. Geneviève Gemayel, wife of Pierre Gemayel, and another with Amine Gemayel, the son of Pierre Gemayel, the leader of the Maronite populist party, the Kata'ib party were undertaken, giving insights into a party that had a mass following in the Maronite community. Sadly however, no access was possible to figures representing the Sunni activist stance at a more populist level than that provided by Saeb Salam.

In terms of more traditional archival research, for the period up to the 1940s much of the archival research had already been done by other historians such as K.S. Salibi, Meir Zamir, Gerard Khoury and Engin Akarli. Such historians, and Salibi in particular, have utilised archival sources outside Lebanon, including the Italian State archives for insights into European perspectives on Fakhr Al Din II and the setting up of the *Imarah*; on the 1860s and the European intervention of that period. Salibi has also had access to Italian sources relating to the Christian communities of the Orient. He has utilised Russian archives on nineteenth century Lebanon and also the archives for the earlier period of the Syriac Maronite convent of Kannoubin and many other similar religious sources. Consequently, it was not felt either sensible or necessary to undertake major research into these sources. Instead, Chapters One and Two in particular, draw on the secondary sources available, and the documentary collections provided. However, for the nineteenth century, in relation to the evolution of a conscious Maronite identity, the work of Henri Lammens has been treated as a primary source. It has not been the intention of this thesis to rewrite the earlier period of Lebanese history, but simply to examine the way that it was utilised in the creation of community identities, particularly in the case of the Maronite community. In this latter respect, the works of Henri Lammens were, and have remained, significant however strongly they may now be criticised by scholars interested in providing an accurate account of Lebanese history. It is Henri Lammens, for instance, that was used in the 1940s and 1950s to provide a quasi-intellectual justification for the central myth of Maronite community origin, that of a Phoenician origin. This in turn was used to justify Maronite claims for primacy within the

Lebanese state and the popular perspective that the Maronite community was Lebanon.

For the period of the Mandate, and for the 1940s and 1950s, some use has been made of British, French and American official archives. In the case of the American archives, this has been on the basis of the copies of the Department of State archives held at the Centre for Lebanese Studies at Oxford University. These archives were not fully organised when used by me. While some boxes had references, other useful documents existed simply as unclassified, loose documents.⁵⁶ Consequently, some references to the Department of State Archives held at the Centre for Lebanese Studies have box references, and some do not. Use has also been made of the properly referenced, recently-published collections of key documents for the Middle East between 1955 and 1960. In the case of the British archives, research into the Foreign Office papers was undertaken at the Public Records Office, Kew, with a concentration on the comments provided by observers of the crisis at the British Embassy in Beirut. In the case of the French archives, some research was undertaken at the Quai d'Orsay archives in France; again with a concentration on reports from the French Embassy for the 1957 and 1958 period. While the French archives are illuminating for the earlier period, more reference in this thesis is made to the British and American sources. Partly this is because of their easier accessibility on a regular basis; but also because the archives of the Quai d'Orsay are still closed for the sensitive 1958 period, except for the Documents Diplomatiques, the volumes of selected papers, which I have utilised. This restriction is less serious because during the 1950s, France was less of a key player than the USA or even Britain. In any case, such sources can only give an onlooker's perspective on developments of inter and intra-community tensions. Consequently, they have not provided the main focus of research for this thesis since their main value is related to the insight they give into the decision-making of the powers. This is not the main concern of the thesis.

⁵⁶ I have been informed that a proper classification is now being undertaken of some items at least, but too late for the purposes of this thesis.

Instead, the most intensively used type of source material used in this thesis is that provided by the archives of the Lebanese press. While official archive material, and material from sources such as private papers, have been used to support perspectives provided by the press, the need to illuminate the popular levels within the communities has meant that the press has been the most useful source. Relatively speaking, the Lebanese press in the 1950s was a free press. When press censorship was introduced, as during part of the 1958 crisis when it was applied to the opposition press, it was seen as unusual and unjustified and was short-lived and indeed, not particularly effective.⁵⁷ Consequently the Lebanese press can be said to have reflected people's ideas without these necessarily being subject to the filtering of direct censorship. In addition, the Lebanese press was prolific, with a wide range of daily newspapers and weekly and monthly periodicals. Most of these were targeted at specific audiences, in terms of their community allegiances and consequent political perspectives, but also in terms of their social position within the community. Such newspapers and periodicals carried 'relevant' information for its target audience in terms of political and socio-economic facts. The dissemination of the press and the information it carried was most significant amongst the Maronite community (and other Christian communities) in the 1950s. This was because literacy levels within that community were higher. However, at least basic levels of literacy, enabling reading aloud, had spread significantly amongst the Sunni community (and other Muslim communities) by that time, ensuring that newspapers had an important role to play in this community also.⁵⁸ The press has played an important part in political life in Lebanon in the twentieth century. According to one survey undertaken within a decade of 1958, 74% of the population over 16 read a newspaper; with Beirut providing the highest levels of readership: 56% of readers in Lebanon being Beirut-based at that point.⁵⁹ While obviously allowance must be made for an upward trend in such figures, it seems likely, given the numbers of titles aimed at all shades of opinion within Lebanon, that the figures for the 1950s were not significantly lower. Amongst the Maronite

⁵⁷ Salim Nassar, Oral Interview, London, 20 May 1995.

⁵⁸ For comments on the importance of newspapers to communities with only a basic literacy see David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 230; 241-58; 175-6.

⁵⁹ Bernard Voyenne, *La Presse dans la Société Contemporaine*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1969, p. 194.

community, the wide variety of newspapers and periodicals provides a useful indication of how widely political views within that community diverged: enabling the cliché of a united Maronite community to be critically reassessed and showing that in 1958, for instance, intra-communal unity was only likely to last for short periods and be manufactured out of fear of a common threat or enemy such as seemed to be provided by Nasserist-inspired Arab intervention in Lebanon and the negative reaction of the UNOGIL report on their plight'.

Thus another aspect of the usefulness of the Lebanese press is that it permits an insight into the opinions and ideas of various factions and communities, and their modifications over time, and thereby, the arguments used to justify and explain such modifications. There is a debate over the extent to which in any society the press creates opinion or simply reports or mirrors opinion already in existence.⁶⁰ Certainly individual newspapers and newspaper editors have (and do) claim either to create or to mould the opinion of their readership.⁶¹ However, such an expectation of the readiness of the readership to be guided indicates a passivity on key issues that certainly does not seem to have existed at any point in Lebanon, where the tensions of competing community agendas and other aspects of co-habitation have ensured a very conscious sense of identity. According to Anis Moussallem, the stance taken by individual newspapers and periodicals within the Lebanese press is the result of popular opinion within the communities. The existence of such clearly defined positions, and their resulting political opinions, meant that a newspaper wishing to be purchased on a regular basis had to reflect the perspective of a particular community, or part of a community, to ensure its survival. The Lebanese press 'is the voice of all the political factions, as well as read by these factions, their leaders and the government to the extent that it diminishes the role of parliament as the representative voice of public opinion, as well as being a link between the government and the citizen'.⁶² Or, in the words of Bernard Voyenne,

⁶⁰ See Bernard Voyenne, *La Presse*, p. 194; Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 2 vols, Hamilton, London, 1984.

⁶¹ See, for instance, the claims of editors of nineteenth century British newspapers such as *The Times*, as discussed in Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press*, Vol. 1.

⁶² Anis Moussallem, *La Presse Libanaise*, pp. 20-22; Salim Nassar, Oral Interview, London, 20 May 1995.

'Qu'elle parle ou qu'elle se taise, la presse Libanaise reflète dans la société Libanaise les échos des événements selon les convictions et les intérêts de chaque journal, ou au contraire, leur interdit cette consécration, elle authentifie ou elle étouffe'.⁶³

Certainly American observers at the time believed that the Lebanese press provided a useful insight into popular opinion because it was largely uncensored:

'Embassy believes press generally reflects public reaction accurately. Newspaper comments perhaps more important as mirrors than as influence on opinion ...Press mirrors official opinion only somewhat murkily'.⁶⁴

So the press in Lebanon provided a channel through which pressure groups of a religious and ethnic nature placed their opinions in the public domain and sought, thereby, to increase popular levels of support for this perspective and in turn to bring pressure on the government to respond to their agenda.⁶⁵ Within the Maronite community, the Maronite Church was one powerful pressure group that made use of the press in this way; others included the populist Kata'ib party. This factor is underlined by the fact that the most important section of any particular newspaper was the editorial section, which provided a comment on the information contained elsewhere in the newspaper appropriate to the attitudes of the readership.⁶⁶ The most important newspaper sources for this thesis on a regular basis have been those identified by Anis Moussallem as reflecting significant or influential bodies of opinion within Lebanon: Al Hayat, An Nahar, L'Orient, and Le Jour.⁶⁷ All of these have been researched for the 1950s, with particular attention being paid to the years 1957 and 1958; but when these titles were in existence, they have also been consulted for earlier periods in the twentieth century history of Lebanon. The comments in these papers on their rivals, and comment gleaned from corroborative sources like British, French and American official archives as well as private papers and oral interviews, underline the

⁶³ Bernard Vuyenne, La Presse, p. 191.

⁶⁴ Foreign Relations of the US, 1958-1960, Vol. XI, Lebanon & Jordan, Department of State Publication 9932, Washington DC, 1992, pp. 196-7, reporting American Embassy, Beirut to Department of State, 13 January 1957.

⁶⁵ Anis Moussallem, La Presse Libanaise, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 73.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 92.

contemporary stress laid on the editorials of Kamal Mroueh (Al Hayat) and Ghassan Tueni (An Nahar).⁶⁸ These two newspapers have therefore been quoted from most heavily in the chapters on the evolution and course of the 1958 crisis. Other newspapers have also been examined where these were accessible to me. The civil war and its aftermath prevented sustained examination of titles such as Beirut Al Massa, Beirut, or Al Siyassa. For titles such as these, only a more limited study could be undertaken for copies of these titles that existed either outside Beirut or in the library at the American University of Beirut (AUB). However, the crisis years of 1957 and 1958 were fairly well represented for these titles.

In terms of the quality of information provided, An Nahar undoubtedly has proved the most useful single source. It sought to provide its readership with 'authentic' information on the affairs of the government, reporting the speeches of ministers and deputies of all shades of political opinion and community allegiance. It also sought to report, where possible, on the 'secret' affairs of government. Ghassan Tueni was a highly respected figure and thus had access to types of information not necessarily readily available to other newspapermen because he and An Nahar took what he described as a 'neutral' stance, particularly in terms of foreign policy. In the spirit of the National Pact, the compromise that was supposed to govern the political life of Lebanon, Tueni and An Nahar sought to maintain a stance that was identifiably neither pro- nor anti-Western, and neither for nor against an Arab world context for Lebanon. In practice what this meant was that while aimed primarily at an opposition Christian readership, it was not too overtly hostile to the government of the time but at the same time, it contained ideas and opinions likely to appeal to various elements of the opposition to the government. In addition, the appearance of a stance of neutrality was endorsed by the fact that, because of the quality of information contained in the newspaper, it was quite widely read outside its target readership, even by members of the Sunni political and commercial elites.⁶⁹ Al Hayat was in the 1950s, the newspaper

⁶⁸ Salim Nassar, Oral Interview, London, 20 May 1995. In 1958, Nassar was working for Al Sayyad, a weekly periodical with pro-Egyptian leanings; currently he is working for Al Hayat.

⁶⁹ It is worth noting, here, that Anis Moussallem's survey of the Lebanese press endorses my own conclusions based on research into the Lebanese press in the 1950s. See Anis Moussallem, La Presse Libanaise, p. 202.

most widely read in the Arab world; in other words while Lebanese-based it had a non-Lebanese readership as well and this was reflected in its attitude, particularly on foreign policy. This wider dimension ensured that it was a particularly useful source for gleaning information on foreign policy matters, including the extent to which Nasser's speeches and actions were reported within Lebanon. In terms of foreign policy, however, it maintained a pro-Western stance and advocated right-wing ideas and policies, accounting for its opposition to Nasser and his agenda for the Arab world.⁷⁰

In addition to these sources, a Muslim opposition newspaper with a consciously sectarian stance has been a major source, if less often directly quoted because of certain difficulties of access to a complete run for the 1950s.⁷¹ The Beirut-based Beirut Al Massa played an important role from 1957 in mobilising Sunni opinion (and also had an effect on the other Muslim communities) It sought to identify Sunni grievances and suggest remedies for them, remedies which often clearly derived from the Nasserist agenda for Egypt and eventually, the United Arab Republic after its setting up in February 1958. It also encouraged its predominantly populist Sunni readership to express a more vocal resentment of their position, demanding their 'rights', and supported the move to direct action by Muslims on the streets in the course of 1958.⁷² Other newspapers and periodicals have been consulted on a more intermittent basis, partly because of difficulties of access and partly because of their lesser significance in reporting the events of the 1950s as a whole, though they can provide useful insights into particular episodes and community perspectives. Notably these include Al Amal, the newspaper outlet for the activist Maronite grouping, the Kata'ib party. The majority readership of this newspaper were Kata'ib party members, and it is notable that as the membership of the Kata'ib party increased as the 1958 crisis escalated, so

⁷⁰ Al Hayat maintained this stance and this wide readership until the assassination of its founder and editor, Kamel Mroueh, in 1967. See also Anis Moussallem, La Presse Libanaise, p. 210 for her comments, which again support my own investigations. In my research into Al Hayat, I have benefited from being allowed to use the Al Hayat archives in London and to discuss the past history of the newspaper with its present staff and ownership.

⁷¹ It is only over the last two and a half years that travel between (Christian) East and (Muslim) West Beirut has been practical or safe. Even now, however, the war damage to Beirut has ensured that where archives have survived they have moved and their new locations are not always easy to identify. In addition, there are no accurate maps of Beirut as it is now, and drivers are unfamiliar with the layout of the city outside their own confessional localities.

⁷² The Beirut Al Massa ceased publication in 1960. As before, my own research and opinion on the value of this source are endorsed by the conclusions of Anis Moussallem, La Presse Libanaise, p. 85.

also did the readership of Al Amal according to its own circulation figures.⁷³ Al Bina reflected the perspective of the Parti Populaire Syrien, a political grouping with a complex stance in 1958, as will be discussed in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Nida' Al Watan acted as the unofficial channel through which the Maronite Church, at least at elite levels, put across its views. In particular in 1957 and 1958, it reflected the views of the Patriarch, Boulos Meouchi. This is significant, because at this time, the ordinary clergy were distancing themselves from the stance taken by the Patriarch, and expressing their views more regularly through newspapers such as Al Hayat and Al Amal; thus an examination of these sources at times when the Patriarch was actively involving himself in the evolution of the 1958 crisis reveals the opinion of other levels of the Church hierarchy and the ways in which the ordinary clergy sought to identify itself with the congregations.⁷⁴ Two of the newspapers consulted were French-language newspapers, and consequently, their readership was essentially Maronite, certainly Christian, and also bourgeois: they were little read by the less-educated Maronite masses. As a balance to this, a pro-Egyptian opposition newspaper with a predominantly Sunni readership, Al Siyassa, was also consulted.⁷⁵

While the major focus of the thesis is on the Maronite community and its role in 1958, this requires also a survey of Lebanese history and of the attitudes and role of other communities, notably the Druze in the historical context and the Sunni in the contemporary one, in order to demonstrate the extent to which the Maronite community evolved its identity and its agendas in direct relation to events and ideas involving these other communities. The other communities in Lebanon, notably the Greek Orthodox and Shi'a communities, had roles to play in 1958 as in previous episodes of intercommunal crisis. However, the principal protagonists in the history of intercommunity co-habitation in Lebanon have been the Maronites and the Druze, and in the context of 1958, the Maronites and the Sunni.

⁷³ This information has been given via information from Amine Gemayel. See also Anis Moussallem, La Presse Libanaise, p. 87.

⁷⁴ See also Anis Moussallem, La Presse Libanaise, p. 84 for some further comment on this newspaper and its orientation.
See also Ibid, p. 101.

Chapter One focuses on the development of mythologies that contributed to a sense of distinct community identity amongst the Maronites by the end of the nineteenth century: a sense based on an interpretation of their history which involved distinguishing the Maronites from the Druze community in particular. This does include some discussion of the mythological Phoenician roots of the Maronite community, but the concentration is on the Ottoman period. Consequently this chapter concentrates on Mount Lebanon, the geographical area identified by both Maronites and Druze as their heartland, and the location in which, historically, a distinctive sense of territorially-linked community identity emerged, first amongst the Maronites and subsequently amongst the Druze. No attempt to give a narrative account of events is undertaken. Instead, certain episodes in the history of co-habitation in Mount Lebanon between the Maronite and Druze communities that were of key importance in the evolution of mythologies are highlighted; notably those which highlighted the competition between the communities for power, both political and economic. The argument is that such episodes enabled the development of a sense of difference, at least from the Maronite perspective, that was based on concrete examples and events, and not just on more intangible emotions and claims, such as that of a Phoenician heritage for the Maronite community. In addition, it was episodes such as that of the *Imarah* which fuelled the process whereby the Maronites were able to identify for themselves a sense of the boundaries of 'Lebanon'. A series of confrontations, escalating to crisis point, between the Maronite and Druze communities was the background also to the evolution of a distinctively Maronite interpretation of the history of 'Lebanon', providing the basis for claims that Maronite community identity was a 'national' feeling.

Chapter Two examines another contribution to the development of community identity; that made by external powers; or rather by the willingness of external powers to let themselves be drawn by the communities, particularly the Maronite community, into the intercommunal confrontations and crises via patron-client relationships that identified particular powers or groups of powers with particular communities, but did so, at least from the European perspective, on the basis of reaction to community mythologies. Thus external agency in a

variety of crises had a significant impact on the development of distinct community identity because of the contribution it made to strengthening patterns of co-habitation because of external endorsement of aspects of community mythology. External involvement undermined the necessity for a move away from co-habitation towards compromise and consensus. It was the Maronite community that, for a variety of reasons including the role of the Maronite Church in the community, instituted the pattern of involving outside intervention at times of crisis and also defined the nature of that intervention from the perspective of the Maronite community. The Maronite Church's links with the Roman Catholic Church ensured that the outside intervention in their interest was both Christian and European. However, the Druze community, in the nineteenth century, imitated the pattern of seeking external (European) support in intercommunal crises. For most of the key periods in Lebanon's history it was the Ottoman empire that was the most powerful agency in regulating affairs in Lebanon. However, the collapse of the Ottoman empire in the twentieth century ensured that a new phase in Lebanon's history would develop. In this, the Maronite community played a key role in ensuring that Europe, and notably France, remained a key player in Lebanon's affairs.

Chapter Three will deal with the next phase in Lebanon's history, that of the French mandate over Lebanon. Established as a discrete entity, partly as a result of pressure from the Maronite community, it comprised a wider territory than the Mount Lebanon heartland. In terms of intercommunal relations, the major consequence of this expansion was to place the emphasis on Maronite-Sunni relations, rather than the historical Maronite-Druze relationship. By the early twentieth century, emigration of Maronites from Mount Lebanon had ensured a sizeable Maronite population in urban centres such as Beirut, where they had become major participants in commercial activity, with the Maronites (and other Christian communities) having an advantage over the Sunni in taking the best advantage of trade with Europe. These migrant Maronites, both in and outside Lebanon, took with them their community mythology as the basis on which they could maintain a separate identity from other communities in Lebanon. From the setting up of the Mandate, the major competitor with the Maronites, in co-habitational terms, was the Sunni community. Against the

background of the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the setting up of the mandated Lebanese state, a Sunni community identity emerged. But it was one that was not confined, locationally, to Lebanon. Indeed opposition to the creation of Lebanon was one distinguishing element in the Sunni community identity, since that community linked its dreams of fulfilment of its community agenda to the setting up of a larger, and distinctively Arab and/or Islamic state, something that acquired its own mythological status. Such divergent perspectives on Lebanon made it difficult for these two communities to move beyond co-habitation. However a growing mutual hostility to the French administration of the Mandate, at least at elite levels, enabled a collaboration based on expediency to emerge at a time of crisis, instead of confrontational behaviour. Both communities believed they could move away from habits of dependency on outside interventions to solve the problems between the communities. This belief in the possibility of present and future co-operation was shared by all the communities in Lebanon. In its political aspect, this collaboration, termed the National Pact, enabled a move to a fully independent Lebanon with a wide base of support - but with the removal of France as a direct factor, the temporary nature of that expediency began to become apparent, and there was a return to the patterns of co-habitation, confrontation and crisis.

Chapter Four will examine the breakdown of collaboration, or consensus, within the administration of Lebanon, culminating in the crisis of 1958, and locating that crisis within the patterns of intercommunal confrontation already identified. The basis of the collaboration was the National Pact, and the interpretation of that pact and its scope acquired its own mythological dimension, according to the divergent agendas of the different communities at times of crisis. During the period up to 1958, an administrative system theoretically intended to overcome permanently intercommunal confrontation was demonstrated to have significant weaknesses. This was particularly so in the area of Lebanon's foreign policy, as orientation of that foreign policy was increasingly linked with the agendas of the different communities by the leaderships of those communities. Such a development had not been really recognised within the National Pact, as it was linked to the



development, unforeseen in 1943, of anti-Western feeling in the Arab world, and to the Cold War. Thus there was no mechanism within the National Pact to organise compromise, and, even at elite levels in Lebanon, there was a lack of will to seek consensus in this area without invoking outside agency to strengthen the case of the competing sides. The coincidence of an international crisis in the Middle East with an essentially internal Lebanese crisis caused by an ambitious Maronite politician escalated the tension within Lebanon to levels of crisis that apparently threatened the very existence of the Lebanese state. Certainly it revealed the flawed nature of the consensus encapsulated in the National Pact, though ultimately a restoration of its provisions was arranged partly (as in the past) as a result of external intervention to defuse that crisis and apparently restore equilibrium to the state. But the 1950s atmosphere of growing intercommunal confrontation and the eventual crisis of 1958 affected more than just the elite levels, those directly involved in managing the Lebanese state. The reasons why these Maronite and Sunni elites were not able, or willing, to prevent the escalation of the crisis in 1958 were linked not so much to external factors as to pressures from within their communities, and an understanding of the 1958 crisis must therefore go beyond consideration of the high politics of the period. In this context, then, the popular interpretation of the past was a major factor in the maintenance of separate community identities.

Chapter Five will focus on the attitudes and agenda, and consequent role in the 1958 crisis, of the Sunni masses in Lebanon. It cannot be assumed, despite the claims of the Sunni leadership, that the opinions and beliefs of the masses were the same as those of the community's elite. These masses had not been consulted over the terms of the National Pact and its broader implications in terms of its impact on the socio-economic profile of the community and a resultant willingness to develop a relationship with the Maronite community in particular that was based on consensus. In practice, it was increasingly to be the patterns of co-habitation that seemed most attractive, for if they had come to accept the existence of a separate Lebanese entity they were increasingly unhappy with the way it operated and the way it conflicted with the mythology associated with their own sense of community

identity and destiny, with consequent implications for their socio-economic as well as political role in Lebanon. For instance, there was a consciousness amongst the Sunni masses of a differential between the socio-economic benefits experienced by them, when compared with the Maronite masses; and a consequent resentment not just of the Maronites but also of their own leaders for endorsing the status quo. In this context, the rise of Nasser was to have a crucial impact. Lacking a charismatic popular Sunni (or other Muslim) leader within Lebanon itself, Nasser provided an ideal model. The agenda he promised for Egypt, and later the United Arab Republic, seemed to sum up what the ordinary Lebanese Sunni wanted for themselves in Lebanon. Thus without necessarily wishing to see Lebanon absorbed into the United Arab Republic, significant numbers of ordinary Sunnis were willing to use Nasser as a hero in a quasi-mythical sense, as part of a strategy to try to persuade their own leaders to develop an agenda more in the interests of the ordinary Sunni in Lebanon, setting the ground for a competition with the Maronite community. As the Chamoun government, from the mid-1950s, began to take a foreign policy stance that was, in the eyes of these ordinary Sunni, hostile to Nasser and having the aim of detaching Lebanon from the Arab world, the need to persuade their leadership to distance itself from the current political status quo, seen as being based on an intercommunal consensus that gave the advantage to the Maronites, became more acute. The masses expressed this through their increasing willingness to safeguard the Arab nature of Lebanon by taking direct action, encouraged by the willingness of Nasser to support their behaviour even to the extent of providing arms and funds - the so-called Arab intervention. As the crisis escalated in 1958, the masses and the leadership did draw closer together - but out of expediency to oppose the policy of the Chamoun government and to counteract the effects of Maronite behaviour at this point. The leadership was, ultimately, to acquiesce in the American-brokered solution: for the masses, this settlement was a less attractive proposition as it offered no more, really, than a return to the status quo ante 1958. In this sense, there are interesting parallels and contrasts with the Maronite community and their attitude towards intercommunal consensus at popular levels.

Chapter Six explores the attitudes and agenda, and consequent role in the 1958 crisis, of the Maronite community, but focusing on the masses. As with the Sunni community, it cannot be assumed that there was an automatic coincidence between the opinions and beliefs of the masses and those of the leadership; and there was the extra complication of intra-communal tensions in relation to Chamoun's personal political agenda. There was a popular belief in the 'right' of the Maronite community to primacy in setting the political agenda of Lebanon, conferred by their 'history' or rather, mythology. But the invocation of this agenda was linked to a sense of insecurity. Fundamentally, the fact that, historically, the Maronites had been a minority community, even if they were now theoretically presumed to be part of a Christian majority in independent Lebanon, helped perpetuate a popular willingness to see external support for a Maronite agenda as an essential factor in achieving that agenda. The desire of the Sunni community to see Lebanon move away from links with Europe, and the Western world as a whole, towards a closer relationship with the Arab world was thus interpreted as a threat to the community and consequently to Lebanese independence. The popular Maronite reaction can be summed up as a return to patterns of co-habitation because intercommunal consensus now became linked with a threat to Maronite security because of the perceived threat to a discrete Maronite identity. As the political rhetoric surrounding developments in 1957 and 1958 grew more alarmist, the Maronite community began to see itself as under threat by the Sunni community and, with the Sunni and other Muslim communities apparently willing to take direct action in support of their goals, to answer this threat by direct action of their own. In an interesting parallel with 1943, it was only the direct intervention of American troops that was able to persuade sufficient elements in the Maronite community to return to a position where consensus was again possible, and assurances of Lebanese independence and of Maronite security within Lebanon could be accepted.

Such an approach will enable the pivotal role in the 1958 crisis of the Maronite community and its persistent mythologies at all levels; emphasising thereby the internal dimensions to the crisis.

Chapter 1

Community Relations in Lebanese History - The Long-term Internal Perspective

This chapter examines the process of creation of mythological traditions by the Maronite community in particular over a sustained period, rather than providing a narrative account of the evolution of the communities, because 'the historical consciousness expressed in a body of tradition' links not just to the concerns of the time in which they were first recorded, but also to the concerns of the successive periods in which they were repeated, elaborated and re-interpreted.⁷⁶ Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson have argued that 'powerful myths influence what people think and do', and it is the purpose of this chapter to illuminate that the long period over which mythologies relating to community identity gave such mythologies considerable power within the modern Lebanese context. At one level, such mythologies were part of a tradition passed on to 'children and kin, their neighbours, workmates and colleagues as part of the personal stories which are the currency of such relationships'. At another level, such personal stories acquired a broader cultural and social context that affected popular understanding of institutions including the Lebanese state itself.⁷⁷ The impact on other communities such as the Druze and Sunni ones of the powerful Maronite mythology prompted the creation, in reaction, of mythologies interpreting the past in ways that sustained their community agenda against the pressure of the Maronite agenda. Such reactive processes were particularly noticeable at times of crisis, when the Maronites were also particularly concerned to publicise their mythology. Thus the roots of many of the political perspectives of the 1958 crisis can be linked to different communal myths.

⁷⁶ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, James Currey, London, 1985, p. 120. In terms of the contents of this chapter acting as an acceptable scholarly narrative of this period, it is realised that much of the interpretation relates more to 'the community's present-day self-image put into time perspective' than a dispassionate account of the history of the region. But it is precisely this contemporary perspective on the past that is crucial to this thesis. John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, Longman, London, 1984, p. 224.

⁷⁷ Raphael Samuel & Paul Thompson, *The Myths We Live By*, Routledge, London, 1990, pp. 14-15; 25.

One of the most significant elements in the Maronite mythology is the attempt to identify a 'genesis' myth which distances them from the other Lebanese communities. According to Vansina, 'Every community in the world has a representation of ...the appearance of their own particular society and community'.⁷⁸ But the Maronite community has sought to create a mythology in relation to their origin which specifically confers on them a different racial and cultural orientation to that of the other communities in Lebanon, and one which establishes the primacy of their position in the region. The Maronite community seeks to relate itself to a Phoenician or Aramaic ethnic identity, claiming the right to an essentially Western cultural identity for Lebanon. By contrast, the Muslim communities in Lebanon relate to an Arab ethnic identity, and its associated genesis, stressing the Arab cultural dimension of Lebanon. This, as Selim Abou points out, makes for a 'soul-searching' difference in perspective.⁷⁹ The positions taken by the Maronites and the Muslim communities in the period up to, and including, the 1958 crisis bear out this. The Lebanese participants in the crisis, particularly the Maronites, used incidents from the past and their interpretation of the meanings of these incidents to justify their different agendas in ways that went beyond rhetoric. In 1958, the sense of identity of the Maronite community in particular can be shown to have depended on establishing the veracity of the Maronite version of Lebanon's history and the role of the Maronite community in that history. So while short term factors were of great importance in the causation of the 1958 crisis, an understanding of the Maronite agenda in particular requires an assessment of the longer term historical dimensions. Mythology thus played a crucial role in the political behaviour of the communities during the 1958 crisis.⁸⁰

The incidents of importance to this mythological dimension relate primarily to the pre-Mandate history of Lebanon. For that period of history, the major players in the various clashes were the Maronites and the Druze. This chapter, therefore, will concentrate on Maronite-Druze relations and the

⁷⁸ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, pp. 21-22.

⁷⁹ Selim Abou, *L'Identité Culturelle, Relations Interethniques et Problèmes d'Acculturation*, Éditions Anthropos, Paris, 1981, p. 42.

⁸⁰ J.E. McGratto, *Social and Psychological Factors in Stress*, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1970, Chapters 9;10;11;14; N.J. Demereth III & Richard A. Peterson, *System, Change and Conflict*, The Tree Press, New York, 1976.

evolution of a distinct Maronite, and Druze, community identity in that context, as each community defined itself as much in terms of difference from the other as in terms of an internal agenda, using myth as a major tool in that process. The main geographical focus of this chapter, then, becomes Mount Lebanon rather than the area of modern Lebanon as a whole, since this is the area consistently evoked as the birthplace of Maronite identity. Because of the inaccessible nature of the terrain there, it is generally accepted that the population of Mount Lebanon has retained a population that, at least in part, can justifiably claim an ancient pedigree. The crucial debate is over how ancient a pedigree can be claimed for the Maronite community, since that community is undoubtedly the oldest of the Lebanese communities. In this context, the actual geography of Lebanon has played a part in the evolution of a Maronite mythology, as many modern general histories indicate through the space they devote to a discussion of this factor in their discussions on Lebanon's history. Stress in such works is laid on the mountainous nature of the territory and its rugged nature which has, it is claimed, favoured the evolution of communities with distinct, self-sufficient identities insulated from contact with the outside world. This has supposedly enabled the Maronites (and the Druze) to keep their special characteristics.⁸¹

From at least the nineteenth century Maronite mythology has sustained a popular belief that the community had evolved directly from the Phoenicians, who had moved inland after the collapse of 'Phoenicia' or 'Ancient Lebanon'. This myth undoubtedly had its origins in the increasing Maronite desire to distinguish themselves from an Arab as well as a Muslim heritage. The most effective way to do this was by claiming one for themselves that pre-dated any meaningful Arab or Islamic heritage in the area. The work of nineteenth century Western archaeologists and scholars gave the concept of a Phoenician heritage some substance, providing evidence of Phoenician remains in the area, and enabling nineteenth century Maronite historians like

⁸¹ See, for example, K.S. Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions. The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988, p. 58; Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace. Ottoman Lebanon 1861-1920*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993, p. 6; Antoine Nasri Messara, *Theorie Generale due Systeme Politique Libanais*, Cariscript, Paris, 1994; Phillippe Hitti, *Lebanon in History. From the Earliest Times to the Present*, Macmillan, London, 1957.

Henri Lammens to produce scholarly works based on this idea.⁸² It remains a factor that modern Maronite historians have had to take into account. In his book, A House of Many Mansions, Salibi shows that in antiquity, the Phoenicians, a maritime race, developed a city-state system along part of the seaboard between modern Latakia and Acre.⁸³ In other words the Phoenician settlement was indeed established in some of the areas which today form part of Lebanon. It is, of course, important here to stress that there is no academically credible evidence that the Phoenician city-state system ever coalesced into 'Phoenicia', a single entity, let alone one that could be identified with Lebanon. If anything the evidence seems to indicate the separateness of these city states.⁸⁴ In assessing the Phoenician period, then, as Salibi indicates, there is no evidence that a sense of unity ever existed in this first period which could have been maintained over a long historical descent by the Maronite community. It is thus difficult to suggest with any academic veracity that some kind of proto-Lebanon existed, despite the existence of a popular Maronite mythology looking to such a Phoenician past.

Yet such scholarship has had little impact on popular Maronite belief in the twentieth century, because the claim to a Phoenician heritage remains at the core of Maronite perceptions of their difference from other communities in Lebanon. This rests on the belief that the Phoenicians were originators of key aspects of Western civilisation, notably the alphabet, subsequently taken over by the Greeks.⁸⁵ Laying claim to this heritage has enabled the Maronites to feel they have a claim to having been part of Western civilisation from times of classical antiquity, sharing key elements of that civilisation with Western Europe.⁸⁶ The importance of this idea for popular Maronite ideology has ensured its continuing mass acceptability that resists re-interpretation in the light of the research of men like Salibi. Phillippe Hitti wrote a history of

⁸² See, for example, Henri Lammens, 'Inventaire des Richesses Archeologiques du Liban' Al Machrig, Beirut, Vol, 1, 1898, and also the 1914 edition of this work.

⁸³ K.S. Salibi, A House of Many Mansions, pp. 4; 12.

⁸⁴ See Dominique Chevallier, La Société du Mont-Liban à l'Epoque de la Revolution Industrielle en Europe, Librairie Orientaliste, Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1971, p. 21 for instance; K.S. Salibi, House of Many Mansions, p. 27.

⁸⁵ An important element in Maronite craftwork offered for sale today in Artisanats remains pieces of embroidery featuring the letters of the Phoenician alphabet. See also Phillippe Hitti, History of the Arabs: From the Earliest Times to the Present, Macmillan Education, Basingstoke, 10th edn, 1970 (1st edn 1937), p. 71.

⁸⁶ Salibi points out the 'basically polemical nature of Maronite historiography' as well as the origins of that historiography in the West, among Rome-trained clerics, K.S. Salibi, 'The Traditional Historiography of the Maronites' in B. Lewis and P. Holt (ed) Historians of the Middle East, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1962, pp. 212-16.

Lebanon in 1957 that included the Phoenician period. In doing so he refrained from specifically stating a belief in the theory of a Phoenician heritage for the Maronites. However, his inclusion of the period implied some endorsement of such a link.⁸⁷ The work of Henri Lammens was a particularly important articulation of this belief, and his work has been consistently referred to in the last half century by Maronites, despite more serious academic revision of his thesis.⁸⁸ By the 1950s it had been incorporated into the Maronite school curriculum as 'history', and it still remains part of that curriculum.⁸⁹ A further measure of the continuing popular affection for the myth is underlined by the recent attention given in the Maronite press to the discovery of the walls and other parts of the Phoenician predecessor of Beirut.⁹⁰ Certainly Maronite political figures have consistently evoked this image when claiming for Lebanon's greatness and the Maronite role in that greatness:

'We are the heirs to a great - indeed unique - cultural heritage...Ancient Lebanon sent out her ships not to conquer the world, but to disseminate learning and the use of the alphabet...'⁹¹

Arguably, the linked Maronite tradition of being, through its history, a minority community out of step with official authority in the region and so subject to persecution for its beliefs, but determinedly maintaining those beliefs in the face of odds. This justification has helped the Maronite community to survive as a discrete community.

⁸⁷ Or at least that he found it politic not to indicate in any way his disagreement. Phillippe Hitti, Lebanon in History, From the Earliest Times to the Present, Macmillan, London 1957; see also K.S. Salibi, House of Many Mansions, p. 173.

⁸⁸ For indications of the implicit use still made by Maronite academics of this issue, other than Phillippe Hitti, see also Jawad Boulos, who has argued, for instance, that Mount Lebanon has been densely populated ever since the Phoenician period; Jawad Boulos, Tarikh Lubnan [History of Lebanon], Dar An Nahar lil nashr, Beirut, 1972, p. 53; see also Henri Seyrig, 'Statuettes Trouvées dans les Montagnes du Liban', in Dominique Chevallier (ed.) La Société du Mont-Liban a L'Epoque de la Revolution Industrielle en Europe, Syria, 1953, pp. 5; 39; 47. A measure of the popular affection for the myth is underlined by the attention given to the discovery of the Phoenician walls in the centre of Beirut. See An Nahar, 5 June 1995. The most famous contemporary Lebanese poet Said Akl, is the symbol of this school of thought; and one book of his verse is even titled 'Phoenicianism' Boutros Khawand devoted a whole chapter to the Phoenicians in his study of the Kata'i'b party, see Boutros Khawand, Al K'uwat al Nizamiat al Kata'ibiat, [The Kata'ib Organised Forces] Habib Eid Publishing, Beirut, 1986.

⁸⁹ For example, Jean Hayek, Al Tarikh Al Ilmi, (The Scientific History), Al Jizq al Awal Maktabith Habib, Beirut, 1994, aimed at 12 to 13 year olds, traces Lebanon's history from Phoenician times. Walid Jumblat, current leader of the largest Druze faction, made links between the events of 1958 and incidents in more recent Lebanese history, especially to the fact that the Maronites have 'always denied our Arab origin in favour of claiming the Phoenicians as their ancestors just to refute this Arab origin', thus underlining the continuing impact of this myth.

⁹⁰ For instance, see An Nahar, 5 June 1995.

⁹¹ Amine Gemayel, Peace and Unity: Major Speeches 1982-1984, Colin Smythe, Gerrards Cross, 1984, p. 120.

The mythology of the Phoenician period gives little in the way of individual accounts of past events, relying more on general cultural statements such as those related to the alphabet. But the Maronite stress on the past does not just relate to this period. Events within the last millennium are also important in the creation of Maronite community identity. For instance, historiography does indicate the Maronite community was early identifiable, due to its distinctive religious profile, as a distinct grouping in the Mount Lebanon area. Certainly it was within the Mount Lebanon area that the Maronite Church, with its separate theology, originally based on monothelism, evolved in the period after 685, after the Islamic conquest of the region.⁹² The evolution of the Maronite Church certainly gave a coherence that enabled the development of community feeling in a religious sense from that period on. As Benedict Anderson comments, one of the most important elements in a sustained community cultural system is the existence of a distinctive religious community. Such communities develop a 'confidence in the unique sacredness of their languages and thus their ideas about admission to membership', so undermining secular impulses towards assimilation with other communities with common interests.⁹³ In this context, it is important to stress that this Maronite self-identity, especially in the religious dimension, was also evolved historically in relation to another minority community out of step with official authority in the region and also located in Mount Lebanon, with which the Maronites had to co-exist; the Druze community. The distinctive religious profiles of both communities acted as an effective barrier to assimilation between the two. Essentially the Druze are an Islamic group but (in an interesting parallel with the Maronites) not an orthodox sect. The Druze movement derived from the Ismaili strand of the Shi'ite element in Islam, becoming an identifiable factor in the communal map of Mount Lebanon by the end of the eleventh century.⁹⁴ Like the Maronites, the Druze were conscious

⁹² Monothelism, in theological terms, represents 'an attempt at compromise' between the doctrinal positions taken by the Western (or Roman) Church and the Eastern Church, and groups such as the Nestorians: 'the Monotheletes...held that Christ had two natures but one will', according to the brief summary provided by Hourani. Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, Faber & Faber, London, 1991, pp. 8-9.

⁹³ Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, Verso, London, 1991, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁴ It is argued by Salibi that the Druze actually became Druze in a religiously identifiable sense in Mount Lebanon, as had the Maronites. See K.S. Salibi, House of Many Mansions, p. 12.

of the special nature of their religion and culture and determined to resist efforts either to eradicate or to assimilate the group.⁹⁵

While never entirely confined within the Mount Lebanon region, certainly in the Ottoman period, both these communities identified themselves particularly with this location. The result was a degree of co-existence and compromise between the two communities, at times breaking down into outright hostilities, in a pattern of co-habitation rather than collaboration. Each group defined the region, or parts of it, as peculiarly their own, and in some areas the mixed Maronite-Druze nature of the population and consequent claims to identical territory led to particular tensions, with wider implications for Mount Lebanon as a whole. As the rest of this chapter will demonstrate through a series of case studies, competition for land, power and privileges within the Mount Lebanon region over a prolonged historical period has helped to shape not just the self-perception of communal identity for these two groups; but also the habits or 'rules' for co-habitation. Such rules evolved in relation to the clashes which, over time, highlighted and hardened the traditions of 'difference' between the communities. The history of the region helps to illuminate the extent of past co-habitation, and the ways in which it was sustained, establishing patterns, in particular for Maronite behaviour in invoking mythology relating to their own sense of identity, in modern Lebanon. Various theories have evolved that seek to explain how such mixed societies do evolve and co-exist, and how they can even form a unified entity that can be termed a nation-state with clear elements of internal cohesion and a shared sense of tradition in a cultural sense. But equally, it is recognised that such a process is not inevitable and that the 'imagined communities' that evolve in a political state may not be coherent, as in the case of Lebanon.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Karam Rizk, Le Mont Liban au XIXe Siècle de L'Emirat au Mutasarrifiyyah, Publication de l'Université St Esprit, Kaslik, Lebanon, 1994, pp. 43-45; Sami Makarem Nasib, The Druze Faith, Caravan Books, New York, 1974, p. 28; Robert Brenton Betts, The Druze, Yale University Press, 1988; Toufic Touma, Paysans et Institutions Féodales chez les Druze et les Maronites du Liban du 18e Siècle à 1914, publications de l'Université Libanaise, Beirut, 1971, p. 22.

⁹⁶ Charles H. Codey, Social Organisation, Harper & Row, New York, 1962, pp. 23-31; Kenneth P. Laughton, Political Socialisation, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1969, pp. 3-20; 140-179; Gabriel Almond & B. Powell, Comparative Politics. A Developmental Approach, Little Brown & Co., Boston, 1966, pp. 64-72; Edward Shils, 'The Prospect of Lebanese Civility', in L. Binder (ed.), 1966; Politics in Lebanon, John Wiley, New York, 1966, p. 966; Kenneth Laughton, Political Socialisation, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1969, pp. 3-20; 140-179; Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, p. 6.

Until the twentieth century, for most non-Maronite elements inside and outside Lebanon, 'Lebanon' has been simply a geographical term (not even used for all the area comprising the modern state) for a region that was part of a variety of eastern Mediterranean empires. From 685 to 1918, the region was under the control of successive Muslim empires, culminating with the Ottoman empire, and so subject to a process of attempted Islamicisation.⁹⁷ But Christian communities, including the Maronite, continued to exist throughout the period of Islamic rule despite periodic persecutions.⁹⁸ From 1516 to 1918, Ottoman sovereignty over the region was officially unbroken, and this period has been of key significance in coalescing the individual communal identity of the Maronites, and in settling the basis on which they were prepared to cohabit, peacefully or not, with other communities, most of which were also well entrenched in the region by this time.⁹⁹ Thus the Maronite community felt a need during this period to begin to evolve myths that supported the right to existence of their community. Equally, the Ottoman period was the one which saw the evolution of many of the prejudices and assumptions of other communities about the possibilities and practicalities of co-existence and co-operation between themselves and other communities. In most cases, such assumptions did not, up to 1918, coalesce into any major coherent traditions or mythology of self-identity in direct reaction to Maronite beliefs (with the exception of the Druze community). But such traditional assumptions about the nature of the Maronites were to have an effect on post-1918 non-Maronite mythologies. In this sense, the 'history' of relations with the Maronites can be said to be of importance to most of the region's other communities.¹⁰⁰ An important cultural fracture was that the Muslim communities, even the Druze, were seen, and saw themselves as integral parts of the Ottoman empire. By contrast the Christian communities were seen as outsiders and not truly part of

⁹⁷ With the exception of the period 1098 to 1291 when the coastal and northern areas were part of the Christian crusader kingdoms.

⁹⁸ As a general comment it can even be said that greater tolerance was shown by the Islamic empires for the Christian communities in their jurisdictions than the Byzantine empire had usually shown towards religious minorities; that such tolerance was usually part of the ruling policy of such Islamic empires. See N.A. Faris & M.T. Husayn, The Crescent in Crisis, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 1965, p. 108.

⁹⁹ The majority elements in the intercommunal mix had been settled in the region of modern Lebanon by the end of the eleventh century, and included a variety of Christian communities but notably the Greek Orthodox community and also the Greek Catholic community; and a sizeable Shi'ite community, settled mainly in parts of the Biqa' valley, as well as the Sunni population of the coastal areas of modern Lebanon, especially in the developing towns there.

¹⁰⁰ See the comments on this made by Churchill in the nineteenth century. Charles H. Churchill, The Druze & the Maronites under Turkish Rule from 1840 to 1860, first published London, 1862, republished Garnet Publications, London, 1994.

the Islamic world, and if tolerated to an extent, there was, equally, an implicit pressure on them to conform and to assimilate. But as part of their strategy for survival as a discrete entity, the Maronite community continued to insist on their 'right' to territory, and to the consequent status this conferred.¹⁰¹ This tension between perspectives was a consistent undercurrent no matter how out of favour with official authority the Druze might have been at times, or how in favour the Maronites may have been.¹⁰²

Sunnism had become established as the majority system of belief in the Ottoman empire by the end of the fifteenth century.¹⁰³ Both the Maronite and the Druze communities of Mount Lebanon were the focus of discrimination against them at times by Sunni authority and evolved defence strategies invoking mythology relating to community identity.¹⁰⁴ In an interesting parallel with the Maronite example, Abdul Rahim Abu-Hussein has argued that the sense of discrimination experienced by the Druze was a key factor in turning this rural community of mountain peasants into a quasi-feudal society by the sixteenth century, a society culturally conditioned by and for war with a social hierarchy that centred on military service and leaders who were also military figures, with consequent implications for the modern self-imagery of the community.¹⁰⁵ He also argues that this mixed relationship with the Sunni had a significant impact on the Druze in that it worked to sustain the quasi-feudal system into the modern period, and thus to concentrate power in the hands of the Druze chiefs who provided the leadership of the community, and who were generally prepared to collaborate with Ottoman authority.¹⁰⁶ While such

¹⁰¹ Raphael Samuel & Paul Thompson, *The Myths We Live By*, pp. 18-19. This points out that such a reaction is common for excluded groups, as well as the invocation of 'collective memory and myth'.

¹⁰² The Druze were periodically severely persecuted by Ottoman authority, especially near the beginning of the Ottoman period, during the sixteenth century. Yet despite this, even European powers in the region, such as the French, saw the Druze as an integral part of the Ottoman empire. See K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*. For the Ottoman persecution of the Druze see Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, 'The Korkmaz Question. A Maronite Historian's Plea for Ma'nid Legitimacy', *Al Abhath*, , XXXIV, 1986, pp. 7-8; Abdul Rahim Hussein, 'The Ottoman Invasion of the Shuf in 1585: A Reconsideration', *Al Abhath*, XXXIII, pp. 13-21.

¹⁰³ Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, p. 221.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

¹⁰⁵ Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, 'Problems in the Ottoman Administration during the 16th and 17th Centuries: the Case of the Sanjak of Sidon-Beirut', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24, 1992, pp. 666-70; Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont-Liban*, p. 9; See also Robert Betts, *The Druze*, Yale University Press, New York, 1988, p. 54.

¹⁰⁶ Abdul-Rahim Abu Husayn, 'The Feudal System of Mount Lebanon as Depicted by Nasif Al Yaziji', in S. Seikaly, R. Baalbaki, P. Dodd (eds), *Quest for Understanding: Arabic and Islamic Studies in Memory of Malcolm H. Kerr*, American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1991, pp. 36-40. This study argues that certainly in the period up to the mid nineteenth century, the social organisation of the Druze community was more 'tribal' than feudal. K.S. Salibi, however, considered the organisation of the Druze as essentially feudal, at least by the end of the nineteenth century. See K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, Caravan Books, New York, 1990, p. xxi. It may be that these two

claims are notoriously difficult to prove, in a scholarly sense, a belief that this was so was part of the Druze communal tradition which continued even after the fall of the Ottoman empire in 1918. It was thus of significance in shaping Druze participation in communal politics leading up to the crisis of 1958.

The Maronite community had a different social organisation which reflected the fact that the Maronite Church, as well as secular elites, provided their leadership. It was not a community that used its military skills or reputation as a saleable commodity, as the Druze community did, though the Maronites had been equally determined to fight if necessary to prevent themselves being overrun. The Maronites were certainly not seen as potential Ottoman mercenaries in times of need; and did not so see themselves. However, during the Ottoman period, they showed a capacity to co-operate with local Ottoman authority in essentially non-military ways if this seemed to their advantage.¹⁰⁷ Maronite social evolution took a different path from that of the Druze, therefore, both in the Ottoman period and in more contemporary times. For example, in the early part of the Ottoman period the Maronites seem to have developed a social system that some Maronite historians have claimed paralleled European feudalism. This Maronite 'feudal' social system was based on a system of land-holding utilising a complex range of taxes and requirements for service, with Maronite 'lords' passing on the taxes extracted from their 'tenants' (or proportions of them) to the Ottoman state.¹⁰⁸ It was a system that certainly lasted into the nineteenth century in rural areas, and created a land-owning Maronite elite that remained important into the twentieth century because, apart from anything else, that elite provided many political leaders.¹⁰⁹ While it would not be desirable to take too far the parallels between European and Maronite 'feudalisms', it can be said that especially in the Kisrawan district, a particularly tight social structure existed, which gave considerable power to the landed elite, where a form of labour service was

perspectives can be reconciled by seeing the last half of the nineteenth century as the period of transformation from tribal to feudal for the Druze.

¹⁰⁷ Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, 'The Korkmaz Question', pp. 3-5; K.S. Salibi, House of Many Mansions.

¹⁰⁸ Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, 'The Feudal System of Mount Lebanon', pp. 33; 37-8.

¹⁰⁹ Families such as the Shihab, the Eddé and the Al Khazin families, for instance, though not the Gemayel or Chamoun families.

owed by the peasantry towards their lords, service which also kept them tied to the land.¹¹⁰

The rise of a more urban-based Maronite commercial elite spreading outside Mount Lebanon itself eventually provided a challenge to the power of traditional land-owning Maronite leaders, especially as the majority of the Maronite population was, as the twentieth century progressed, also to be found outside Mount Lebanon, taking advantage of the economic opportunities offered by the commercial elite. The result was the evolution of a slightly modified, nostalgic, Maronite mythology that saw the 'old' values as being essentially rooted in the peasant society of Mount Lebanon, rather than in the land-owning elite of the region. But it was a mythology that still emphasised the importance of the territorial roots of the community's identity.¹¹¹ These two traditions existed alongside each other over a sustained period, but Hourani has argued that by the Mandate period, 'influences radiating from Beirut' had achieved dominance, even within the Mount Lebanon region itself.¹¹² A commercial elite did begin to evolve in the sixteenth century as a result of trade with Europe, particularly the silk trade, and began to locate itself in urban areas, though it was not until the nineteenth century, and in areas largely outside Mount Lebanon, that this elite acquired significant influence over the Maronite masses.¹¹³ However, certainly in the period up to the 1958 crisis, the influence of the land-owning elite over the masses remained powerful, if only because of the linkage with events seen as contributing to Maronite community identity.

Within the period of Ottoman sovereignty it was a general rule in the Ottoman empire that Ottoman central authority was administered through local

¹¹⁰ There is some debate over the parallels that can be drawn. Chevallier argues for important distinctions while Harik draws clear parallels between Lebanese feudalism in this period and that of the European Middle Ages; see Dominique Chevallier, La Société du Mont-Liban, p. 85; Iliya Harik Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1968, pp. 37-38; Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, Provincial Leaderships in Syria, 1575-1650, American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1985, pp. 70-81.

¹¹¹ Raphael Samuel & Paul Thompson, The Myths We Live By, pp. 140-41.

¹¹² Quoted in K.S. Salibi, House of Many Mansions, p. 163.

¹¹³ Lewis points out that the crusaders had first 'opened the way' to closer commercial relations between the Muslim world of the Middle East and the Christian West, and that these became more regular and sustained from the sixteenth century. In the region of Lebanon it was increasingly the Maronites who were to take advantage of this. See Bernard Lewis, 'The Use by Muslim Historians on Non-Muslim Sources', in Lewis & Holt (eds) Historians of the Middle East, p. 182. See also Maurice Shihab, Le Role du Liban dans l'Histoire de la Soie, University of Lebanon Press, Beirut, 1968 and Karam Rizk, Le Mont Liban du XIX Siècle de l'Emirat au Mutassarifiyyah, pp. 198-215, for details of the silk trade in Lebanon.

functionaries. But such general rules tend to disguise a vast range of different practices and effects.¹¹⁴ Thus in terms of Ottoman authority over the area of modern Lebanon the question needs to be asked to what degree and in what ways did that central authority make itself felt and what impact did this have at varying periods on the various communities of Mount Lebanon and their relationships with each other and with Ottoman authority, both local and central. In terms of the experience of the area that was later to form Lebanon, the Ottoman state officials with most direct contact and influence over local districts and their peoples were the *amirs* or the governors of sub-provinces or *sanjaks*. The region contained several such units and it was common for the *amirs* to compete amongst themselves for favour and for power from the centre - with all the consequent implications for their districts. But local Ottoman officials were also likely to find themselves responding, in terms of policy implementation and practical government, to forces from below quite as much, if not more, than to pressures and instructions from above, a common experience in an imperial context.¹¹⁵

An example of this provides the first case study. The *Imarah* has traditionally been considered by Lebanese historians as providing a prototype for a separate Lebanon, something that could be termed a truly 'Lebanese' and local administrative entity. Certainly it was referred to as such by the Maronites into the 1950s, and was to be used as a justification for the creation of an independent Lebanon within its modern boundaries. Recently the work of historians like Abdul Rahim Abu Husayn, drawing on Ottoman sources, has forced a reassessment of what Salibi now refers to as the 'imagined principality'.¹¹⁶ But this does not alter the importance of the traditions surrounding the *Imarah* in Maronite mythology, including the belief that it was the precursor of the *Mutassarifiyyah*, and thus of an independent Lebanon.

The *Imarah*, emerged within the context of Ottoman rule as early as the seventeenth century, lasting into the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ It was an

¹¹⁴ Claude Dubar and Salim Nasr, *Les Classes Sociales au Liban*, Presse de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1976, pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁵ See, for instance, Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1993, pp. 230-1.

¹¹⁶ K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, p. 117.

¹¹⁷ The term *Imarah* is used by historians, but was not used by the Ottomans at the time. They referred to it as an *Illizam*, a term used for the farming out of taxes.

administrative entity that did not have fixed boundaries during that period; the territory included in the administrative scope of the *Imarah* expanded and contracted with the different *amirs*. This fluctuation resulted from the differing relations of these *amirs* with the Ottoman state: *amirs* on good terms with the state were likely to find their administration expanding to cover larger areas and vice versa.¹¹⁸ Mount Lebanon was always part of the *Imarah*, but at its widest extent, such as in 1861, the *Imarah's* boundaries more or less paralleled those of mandate and independent Lebanon. It is a consciousness of this that has led members of the Maronite community to invoke the *Imarah* as justification for the shape of modern Lebanon. But the importance of the *Imarah* to the Maronites also relates to what is interpreted by them as its 'Lebanese' nature because of their perception of the role and importance that the Maronites came to assume within the *Imarah*; and their belief in the consequent pre-eminent status they saw this as conferring on the Maronites in comparison to other communities included within its boundaries. The history of the *Imarah* illuminates the developing community consciousness of the Maronites and also, of the Druze, though the entity also had an impact on other communities in the region, such as the Sunni and the Shi'ite.

The usual interpretation in Maronite historiography has been that the *Imarah's* initial evolution was largely Druze, resulting from the efforts of Fakhr Al Din II, *amir* between 1590 and 1633.¹¹⁹ A considerable amount of predominantly Maronite mythology has surrounded Fakhr Al Din; something increasingly resented by non-Maronite communities because of what they see as the 'misrepresentation' of this perspective. From the 1920s, Lebanese schoolchildren have been taught through their history texts to regard him as the first ruler or *amir* of 'Lebanon' and so the historical founder of the Lebanese state.¹²⁰ For the purposes of this thesis, the scholarly realities are less

¹¹⁸ The favoured *amirs* were effectively rewarded by being given extra administrative districts removed from less successful *amirs*.

¹¹⁹ Fakhr Al Din died in 1635. See K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, Caravan Books, New York, 1977, p. 3. An alternative interpretation of the origins of the *Imarah* is provided by Abu Hussein who argues that in fact, the historical validity of seeing Fakhr Al Din as the founder of the *Imarah* is dubious, despite the support for this view of most modern Lebanese historians. He argues that the *Imarah* had 'no real existence before 1667, with the coming to power of Ahmad Ma'n'. See Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, 'The Korkmaz Question', pp. 3-4. However, the importance to this thesis of popular communal belief justifies the presentation of the established arguments, rather than a consideration in depth of such an alternative.

¹²⁰ Underlining the importance of this, Salibi points out that Walid Jumblat has argued that a rewriting of such texts, to eradicate 'Christian-fabricated myths' would be essentially in any 'lasting political settlement in Lebanon'. K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, pp. 200-202.

significant, however, than the established mythologies. An indigenous Druze chief, Fakhr Al Din was first appointed *amir* of the *sanjak* of Sidon-Beirut, which included the Druze heartland in Mount Lebanon, and from this base, sought to increase his local power.¹²¹ At the time of his holding office, in the early seventeenth century, the Ottoman empire was going through a period when central authority was weak.¹²² Delegated authority by the Ottoman state to control the region, Fakhr Al Din worked to take full advantage of this weakness. Another factor was also working to his advantage at this time, that of European intervention in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire in this area anyway.¹²³ As a result of the European interest in the area, Fakhr Al Din seems to have believed that his attempts to carve out more power for himself would have European backing against any central Ottoman attempts to bring the area back under central control - though this was to prove a miscalculation. But the way in which Fakhr Al Din tried to extend his power was by bringing about, as an initial step, a positive co-habitational period, based on a degree of real co-operation between elements within the Maronite and Druze communities, in Mount Lebanon. It can be argued that a genuinely collaborative and local administrative system with considerable autonomy within the Ottoman empire evolved and worked for much of this period, creating an entity that began to make Lebanon more than a mere geographical term. This in turn had an effect on Maronite mythology, giving it focus and substance.

It has generally been accepted by Lebanese historians that though Fakhr Al Din was removed from office by central Ottoman authority in 1633, the concept of the *Imarah* survived.¹²⁴ It is argued that this was because the

¹²¹ A modern view might see Fakhr Al Din as a Syrian strongman given an opportunity by the Ottoman state to subdue and destroy local leaderships in Mount Lebanon on their behalf who actually succeeded in achieving a 'symbiosis' between the Maronites of Kisrawan and the Druze of the Shuf. K.S. Salibi, *Ibid.* For an older view, see Michel Chebli, *Une Histoire du Liban à L'Epoque des Emirs*, Librairie Orientale, Beirut, 1955; Adel Ismail, *Histoire du Liban du 17ème siècle à nos jours. Le Liban au temps de Fakhr Al Din II (1590-1633)*, Maisonneuve, Paris, 1959, Vol I, p. 11; Chebli argues that 'l'Histoire des Shihabs est l'histoire d'une résistance. C'est l'histoire d'une communauté Nationale, faite de communautés confessionnelles établies sur une montagne maritime qui leur sert d'inviolable refuge et unis pour la défense et la préservation de leurs libertés spirituelles et temporelles'.

¹²² On this point, see, for instance, M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1928: A Study in International Relations*, Macmillan, London, 1966.

¹²³ See Chapter 2 for more detailed discussion of the European intervention and perspective on events in this area.

¹²⁴ Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, 'The Korkmaz Question', pp. 3-4; Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920*, University of California Press, London, 1993, p. 17; K.S. Salibi, *Histoire du Liban du 18ème Siècle à nos Jours*, pp. 38-114. Fakhr Al Din was 'sent in chains to Istanbul where he was put to death by strangling in 1635', K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 3.

Ottoman authorities valued the *Imarah* for the greater effective control it seemed to give over the area and so endorsed its continuation, initially under another Druze chief, Ahmad Ma'n. On his death, however, a Sunni Muslim dynasty, the Shihabi, was imported from the south-eastern Biqa' region at the end of the seventeenth century.¹²⁵ By this time, it was obvious to successive *amirs* that the *Imarah* worked on the basis of a continuing overall co-operation between leading elements in the Druze and Maronite communities based on a degree of resistance to central Ottoman authority.¹²⁶ It was one thing on which leaders in both communities were prepared to agree, even though the Druze were undoubtedly the dominant element. The Shihabis, faced with this factor, found it practically necessary to endorse this Mount Lebanon 'tradition' of some resistance to central authority to an extent, though they consistently attempted to modify this tradition. Thus, despite Ottoman state expectation, the *Imarah* actually did little to make the area more amenable to central control. This was even more the case given the factor of continuing European interest in the region. This had the effect generally of restraining central Ottoman intervention in the area, because of the relative power balance between the Ottoman empire and the Christian West in the eighteenth century.¹²⁷ The overall result, in practical terms, was that within the *Imarah* at least the elites of both communities had a degree of freedom unknown elsewhere in the Ottoman empire. For instance, it proved difficult for Ottoman authority to exercise any sustained direct control in the region: they remained dependent upon local co-operation with their fiscal, military and political policies from local elites. While they were able to remove *amirs* who seemed to be becoming too powerful, such as Fakhr Al Din II, the Ottoman state realised that on a daily basis, it had to work through the *amirs*, rather than being able to impose directly a long-term coherent central authority. This meant that, in the words of Abdul Rahim Abu

¹²⁵ Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, 'The Korkmaz Question', p. 3, points out that the Shihabs were related through the female line to the Ma'n's, giving the Shihabs a certain local legitimacy in the eyes of local elites.

¹²⁶ These leading elements were initially essentially the landed elites of both communities. Over the period of the *Imarah* these leading elements expanded, especially amongst the Maronite community, to include the educated classes, often with a strong clerical element, and the commercial/mercantile classes. It should also be noted that this co-operative spirit had little impact on the lower orders of society in each community; as is indicated by the constant danger of small-scale intercommunal violence at this level, a violence kept in check by local leaders for the most part.

¹²⁷ See Frank Bailey, *British Policy and the Turkish Reform Movement: A Study in Anglo-Turkish Relations, 1826-1835*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., p. 42; Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in Modern Times*, p. 281; Toufic Touma, *Paysans et Institutions Féodales au Liban*, p. 66.

Hussein, the *Imarah* became 'a political institution that became a quasi-autonomous hereditary principality'.¹²⁸

This had real implications for the development of a self-conscious, separate and culturally-based sense of community identity, at least at elite and educated levels, trickling down the social hierarchy in the form of repeated mythology. This was strongest and most widely felt amongst the Maronite community, largely because of the increasingly important administrative role assumed by that community within the *Imarah*. Initially, Druze interests dominated the *Imarah's* affairs and so, administrative policy. Given the social structure of the Druze community, Druze interests essentially meant those of the Druze chiefs, the landowning class.¹²⁹ But despite the primacy given to Druze interests Ottoman central authority generally tolerated the existence of the *Imarah* since they believed that an *amir* could generally be relied on to prevent the autonomy getting out of hand and developing into outright rebellion such as that of Fakhr Al Din II. At this stage the personal co-operation between elite levels in the communities had the effect of promoting the already-mentioned quasi-feudal landowning elite amongst the Maronites, mirroring the primacy accorded to the land-based Druze chiefs in dealing with the respective communities and in some senses, it can be argued, bringing the communities closer together. Undoubtedly in the first century and a half of the *Imarah's* existence, this Maronite elite identified its interests firmly with those of the Druze, despite their religious differences.¹³⁰

But this apparent intercommunal collaboration did not last and was, anyway, restricted to elite levels. The Maronite elite was not at first in any position to do more than accept Druze leadership, and seems to have recognised this and to have acted accordingly, to protect its interests. But at lower levels of the hierarchy things remained rather different. If there was little active intercommunal hostility, thanks to the capable administration of Shihabi *amirs* such as Bashir I (1691-1707) and the influence of community leaders,

¹²⁸ Abdul Rahim Abu Hussein, 'Problems in the Ottoman Administration', pp. 671-3; K.S. Safibi, 'The Lebanese Emirate, 1667-1841', *Al Abhath*, XX, 3, 1967

¹²⁹ Toufic Touma, *Paysans et Institutions Féodales chez les Druzes et les Maronites du Liban du 18e Siècle a 1914*, publication de l'Université Libanaise, Beirut, 1971, pp. 23-4.

¹³⁰ Albert Hourani, Lebanon: 'The Development of a Political Society' in L. Binder (ed) *Politics in Lebanon*, p. 15.

the differences in religious cultural backgrounds ensured that neither the mass of Druze nor the mass of Maronites felt particularly close to one another. For one thing, unlike the landowning elites of the two communities, they had no real shared interests to move them beyond a periodically uneasy co-habitation.

However, gradually, from 1711, the Druze community at all levels began to feel at a disadvantage vis à vis the Maronites within the *Imarah*, something that was eventually to undermine the potential for successful co-operation between the elite members of the communities and so to bring down the *Imarah* itself. This development became discernible by the mid-eighteenth century, and by that time, the Druze did indeed have real grounds for fear of oppression and unequal treatment by the *amirs* and the bureaucracy of the *Imarah*. The result was a consequent gradual breakdown in the previous co-operation and a return to a state of co-habitation at all levels; a state of co-habitation increasingly marked by Druze resentment of the Maronite community. The Sunni Shihabi *amirs* of the eighteenth century were not able or ready, for a variety of reasons, to cultivate close links with the Druze.¹³¹ The Battle of Ayn Dara in 1711, between warring Druze factions, weakened the Druze community as a whole. As a result of the battle Druze numbers were reduced as the defeated faction in the community was largely slaughtered or exiled.¹³² However, this factional conflict was to prove particularly unfortunate for the Druze elite, in terms of their ability to sustain a high profile administrative role within the *Imarah*. The Maronites showed themselves able and willing to take advantage of this chance to consolidate a position of power within the *Imarah*. The potential for this had already been developing slowly and after 1711 Maronites took over more and more of the administrative posts available within the *Imarah* and thereby were able to control access to the *amirs*. This helped to give the Maronites an influence they had never before achieved, and consequently, in their community mythology, a lasting interest in the history of this period as well as a sense of the possible benefits of

¹³¹ For further details of the relations of the Shihabi *amirs* and the Druze, see K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 6-12.

¹³² There is currently a debate over the Druze factions involved. Relying on the work of a nineteenth century historian, Nasif Al Yaziji, it has been traditional to see this battle as taking place between the Qaysi and the Yemeni. Hussein argues that it was, in fact, between the Yazbaki and the Jumblats. See Abdul Rahim Abou Hussein, 'The Feudal System of Mount Lebanon', pp. 39-41; K.S. Salibi, Histoire du Liban du 18e Siècle a nos Jours, pp. 50-3.

sustaining attitudes of co-habitation, rather than consensus. Equally, this development gave the Druze a new sense of oppression.¹³³

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Maronites, with their long-established traditions and culture combined with their recent experiences within the *Imarah*, had become an increasingly cohesive community, with all social levels sharing a sense of special identity that derived from their collective mythology. The community proved itself capable of sufficient internal discipline to permit the community to be said to be acting as a community on certain key issues. Certainly the community can be said to have shared certain aspirations relating to the exercise of a degree of autonomy in their own affairs, and to have been able to achieve these through the *Imarah*. The quasi-feudal social structure touched on earlier was undoubtedly one cohesive factor. But there were others that promoted this sense of shared identity.

As already suggested, one of the most significant factors was the existence of the Maronite Church. This not only provided internal coherence for the Maronite community on the basis of religious distinctiveness, but also promoted external links that sustained the 'Western' orientation of the community. By the start of the nineteenth century the Maronite Church had had links with the Roman Catholic Church over a long period. Starting from an informal contact level during the eleventh century, these had developed into a formal relationship in 1584. These links had reached a stage by the end of the sixteenth century where the Papacy granted a certain status and acceptance to the Maronite Church.¹³⁴ This meant that Maronite priests could, and often did, go to Rome for training. When they returned they retained their sense of Maronite identity, and sought to define it in ways acceptable both to their fellow Maronites and the Roman Catholic tradition, which was an essentially Western tradition.¹³⁵ This equally meant that using their Roman Catholic connections,

¹³³ K.S. Salibi, *Histoire du Liban du 18e Siècle a nos Jours*, Nawfal Publishers, Beirut, 1988, pp. 52-3.

¹³⁴ Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History*, Syracuse University Press, 1986, pp. 220-21; 280; K.S. Salibi, 'The Maronite Church in the Middle Ages and its Union with Rome', *Orients Christianne*, XLII, 1958, pp. 92-104; Nasser Gemayel, *Les Échanges Culturels entre les Maronites et l'Europe du Collège Maronite de Rome (1584) au Collège de Ayn Warqa (1789)*, no publisher, Beirut, 1984, 2 Vols.

¹³⁵ Nasser Gemayel, *Les Échanges Culturels; Iliya Harik, Politics and Change in a Traditional Society, Lebanon 1711-1845*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1968 p. 130. This last work gives the examples of Ibn Quillan, the earliest Maronite writer, and of Istifan Al Duwayhi (1629-1704) Maronite Patriarch, as stressing the 'unbroken orthodoxy' of the Maronite faith. It is interesting to note how many of the Maronite historians have been priests, and how they have effectively glossed over the earlier monotheistic heresy of the Maronite Church, for instance, while stressing the Western origins and orientation of the community as a whole, something they argued was 'proved' by the

the leaders of the Maronite community (including religious leaders) were able to secure and maintain political support from the West with the aim of protecting them, at least to a degree and in their own perception, from any serious acts of central Ottoman hostility that might be directed against them.¹³⁶

This was not all. As well as helping sustain links with the West, such priests performed another function of major cultural importance to the Maronite community at popular levels. For the bulk of the Maronite population, contact with Maronite clergy was a major factor in sustaining their social solidarity as a community. This bulk must be classed as peasants or share-croppers, working for landowners, both Maronite and Druze, whose interests were generally removed from those of the peasants. Even though many of the clergy came from the landowning class up to the nineteenth century, the clergy still provided the regular leadership for the Maronite community on a daily basis, and so provided a major channel through which the mythology relating to community identity was interpreted. This was particularly so since clergy founded and ran village schools to spread literacy in both French and Arabic, and used these schools also to provide a version of information about the community that promoted both the Maronite Church and its Western orientations, and the distinctiveness and superiority of the Maronite community.¹³⁷ A number of these schools even developed into more sophisticated and important educational centres. The motivation of the Church was plain: such a policy helped to perpetuate their role and power within the community, but the result was that the Maronite community was, by the nineteenth century, a much more educated social group than the Druze. This relatively literate community was then exposed to the history of their community as written by Maronite historians who were also clerics, and whose aim in writing such history was 'not so much to establish its history as to vindicate its claims' in the

closeness of the Maronite and Roman Catholic Churches. K.S. Salibi, 'The Traditional Historiography of the Maronites', in Lewis & Holt (eds), pp. 213-4.

¹³⁶ Salibi points out that though in fact the Maronites 'remained comparatively free from Muslim tutelage', they were a people 'on the defensive as a community and as a Church'. K.S. Salibi, 'The Traditional Historiography of the Maronites', in Lewis & Holt (eds), *Historians of the Middle East*, Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 215-6.

¹³⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 12-13; K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, p. 113.

contemporary period to a special identity produced and justified by this past: i.e., to develop a mythology that was accepted as 'valid' historically.¹³⁸

All of this also had the effect of helping to modernise the internal social and class structures of the community, especially since it was associated with Maronite involvement in trade with Europe. The increasingly literate and Western-orientated Maronites had an advantage here over the other communities in Lebanon. The silk trade was of great significance here, as Maronite links with the West flourished, particularly with France. The socio-economic impact of the silk trade on the Maronite community as a whole was considerable, especially in the Mount Lebanon region.¹³⁹ Silk from Mount Lebanon was of a high quality, and both in Mount Lebanon and Beirut, the port through which most of the silk was exported, it generated an economic dynamism based on consciousness of the potential of the trade and its profits. Certainly it provided the economic base on which to build an educated class in the Maronite community, as more families found themselves both able to afford the expenditure, and conscious of its benefits in terms of the ability that such education gave for a participation in the trade on a more equal basis with their Western partners.¹⁴⁰ The sustained existence of a Maronite educated class able and willing to take on positions of authority in the public affairs of the *Imarah* meant that in this sphere as well the Maronite community had become more prominent as early as the seventeenth century. Graduates from these Maronite advanced educational sectors were increasingly employed by the Shihabi *amirs* in particular. But even local Druze chieftains had found it useful to employ them in their administrative affairs in particular. As a result there had been Maronites in a position to determine or at least have a significant influence on the policy of the *amirs* and on local intercommunal politics over a sustained period within the *Imarah*.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

¹³⁹ This is not to say that the Maronite community was the only one to benefit economically from the silk trade; it was, however, the community that benefited most. See Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, p. 137.

¹⁴⁰ The presence of disease in the mulberry trees of Italy and France and the demand for silk from centres such as Lyons ensured that the French merchants who were particularly involved in the trade were very eager to foster the trade and see that all sides benefited financially. See Maurice Shihab, *Le Role du Liban dans l'Histoire de la Soie*; Karam Rizk, *Le Mont-Liban au XIX Siècle*, pp. 200-201; Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, p. 201.

¹⁴¹ Iliya Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society*, p. 170; Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History*, p. 284.

It all meant that the Maronites replaced the Druze as the politically dominant community to such an extent that it can be said that by the reign of Bashir II (1788-1840) the *Imarah* had acquired a Christian character, something which had a profound impact on the communal balance of the region. This Christian character was the more apparent because Bashir II was a convert to Maronite Christianity, and the remaining Shihabi *amirs* were also Maronite.¹⁴² Thus for both practical and ideological reasons, the use and the power of Maronite officials in the administration increased still further, as did the power of the wealthy and well-organised Maronite Church.¹⁴³ However, the next stage in the communal history of the region was to be less happy for the Maronites; though as the case studies of events in 1820, 1840-2 and 1858-60 demonstrate, this unhappiness was also to advance Maronite communal identity.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Ottoman central authority sought to seize an opportunity to restrict what seemed to them (with some justification) the growing autonomy of the *Imarah* region. This created a complex scenario. The battle lines were eventually drawn up in 1840 between central Ottoman authority, the Christian *amir*, Bashir II and his largely Maronite supporters, and leaders of the Druze community, predominantly from the Jumblat family, with the scenario complicated by efforts from external European powers to intervene on one side or another.¹⁴⁴ The Maronites then and now (and other Christians under his rule) interpreted Bashir II as a 'reigning prince and the scion of a dynasty of reigning princes'. This was in direct contrast to Ottoman interpretation at the time, and the perspective on Bashir II that entered Druze and Sunni mythology. In this interpretation Bashir II was 'a mere fiscal functionary of the Ottoman state'. At stake was the issue of the legitimacy accorded to any independent rule or policy of Bashir II's.¹⁴⁵ In 1841 a nasty civil war broke out - the first that can with any veracity be termed a Lebanese civil war - directly relating to this issue. The origins and aftermath of this war to 1860 are worth examining in some detail, given their long term impact on

¹⁴² K.S. Salibi, *Histoire du Liban du 18e Siècle a nos Jours*, p. 53.

¹⁴³ It is recognised that other Christian communities, such as the Greek Orthodox, also benefited from these developments. However, the main focus of this chapter is on the Maronites.

¹⁴⁴ K.S. Salibi, *Histoire du Liban du 18e Siècle a nos Jours*, p. 74.

¹⁴⁵ K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, pp. 109-10.

Maronite-Druze mythologies in relation to the other community and to 'Lebanon'. The period saw the development of a political mythology for the area based on assertions of the primacy of religious and communal identity that has proved remarkably durable, as the events of 1958 demonstrate.

The background to this conflict was a clash between Bashir II and his senior in the Ottoman administration, Abdallah Pasha, the governor of Acre, that dated back twenty years before the incidents of 1840-1. Both as an Ottoman official and on his own account, Abdallah sought to reduce the autonomy of the *Imarah*. Abdallah saw the key as being the *amir*, and so was determined to find an opportunity to bring Bashir II to his knees. Consequently no sooner had Abdallah taken up his appointment in 1819 than he demanded from Bashir II an exorbitant tribute, hoping thereby to cause conflict. Bashir II was forced to obey, but the attempts of his tax collectors in 1819 to collect the tax provoked the population of the Matn and the Kisrawan, two regions in Mount Lebanon, to outright rebellion.

The importance of this rebellion, known as the '*ammiyyah* or commoners' rising, is that it was an essentially and consciously Maronite rebellion, involving members from all levels of the Maronite community in the region, and also the Maronite Church, justified by reference to community mythology.¹⁴⁶ The Maronite nature of the rising is further underlined by noting that even though taxes were to be raised from the Druze also, their dislike of paying failed to rouse them to active dissent.¹⁴⁷ Given that poverty levels amongst the Druze were, on the whole, lower than among the Maronites, this is a fair indication that the Maronite rising was not a result of an economic overburdening to breaking point of the Maronite population. Instead, what the *ammiyyah* does indicate is the development of a mythologically-based community social culture among the Maronites that had a religious and secular base; where the sophisticated institutional organisation of the Maronite Church

¹⁴⁶ Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1987, pp. 32-3. The involvement of members of the landed elite was limited and related to particular agendas. For instance, two of Bashir's own cousins who wished to take the emirate for themselves were involved, along with their immediate supporters. So while it was largely a rebellion of the lower orders it did have a wider constituency. This rebellion even included some of the personnel of the Maronite Church, which was now recruiting from the lower orders, something the educational system it had instituted made possible.

¹⁴⁷ Attempts were made by Maronite leaders of the uprising to involve the Druze, but without success. See Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, p. 35.

promoted this sense of shared identity amongst the congregations by evoking mythical 'rights' of exemption from Ottoman control. Through clerical channels, information and ideas were spread to the Maronite community in the region, and the spiritual authority of the Church was used to increase popular resentments to the point of physical resistance. The Maronite Church had accumulated both land and cash over the previous three centuries. Whereas it had been dependent upon the protection of the Maronite landed elite in the period up to the late eighteenth century, by the nineteenth century it was independently powerful within the community. Even its personnel was now drawn from all levels of the Maronite social strata and not just from the elite.¹⁴⁸ That it was prepared to use that power against what it interpreted as an Ottoman attempt at intervention, underlines the extent to which the Church was a powerful force in creating and maintaining a self-conscious, mythologically and ethnically-based Maronite communal identity; something with profound implications for events in the twentieth century. For example, a letter in 1818 from the Maronite Patriarch, Joseph Tyan, to Pius VII made reference to the Maronite 'nation' - a term which is best understood in the context of the time as 'people', or 'ethnic group'.¹⁴⁹

While it would be hard to sustain a case that in 1820, this closed communal identity amounted to 'nationalism' in a Western sense, the *ammiyyah* is of importance in terms of indicating the strength by this time of a sense of separate identity bound up in a sense of location among the Maronites, one that was widespread and coherent in its beliefs and aims. Those aims were far more than a resistance to paying taxes; the demand was presented to the Maronites in the region, and accepted, as part of a resistance to Ottoman authority that was necessary to the maintenance of the community and its separate traditions. Traditional hierarchical bonds remained important and powerful within the community. They simply combined with what Khalaf has termed 'a more communal form of social cohesion where the sources of political legitimacy were defined in terms of ethnicity and confessional

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 32-35.

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Tyan, Patriarch of the Maronite Church, to Pope Pius VII, 24 October 1818, in the unpublished Al Khazin Family Papers.

allegiance'.¹⁵⁰ In a sense, though, as events in Kisrawan were to show, it could be argued here that the peasantry and the Church were in advance of the landed and commercial elites in terms of their position on the autonomy of the community, as these elites still found reasons for co-operating with both Ottoman authority in the shape of the *amir*, and with leaders from other Muslim communities where their interests coincided.

The impact of the *ammiyyah* on Ottoman authority in the region is indicated by the inability of that authority to control the rebellion or to collect the revenue required. Bashir II abandoned the emirate in 1820 and went into voluntary exile in the Hawran. However, Abdallah was also unable to cope with the situation in the Lebanon and the situation deteriorated to such an extent that Abdallah was forced to accept Bashir II's return to office in 1821. Further complications affecting Ottoman authority in the region meant that Bashir II's return at this point was short-lived, and he again went into exile within months of his return.¹⁵¹ This time, he went to Egypt, where he was well received by Muhammad Ali Pasha (1805-49), a strong figure who effectively ruled Egypt as an independent entity within the Ottoman empire. Muhammad Ali increasingly acted as an independent ruler and he was interested, by this period, in extending his power base. In particular, he coveted Syria.¹⁵² As a result of Muhammad Ali's intervention with Ottoman central authority, Abdallah and Bashir II were both returned to their old positions in 1822.¹⁵³

Bashir II seems to have been convinced that his return to his emirate at this point would not again be challenged by officials senior to him in the Ottoman hierarchy; and that consequently he could afford to take a strong line in reasserting his authority within the Mount Lebanon region. Over the next eighteen years, Bashir II successfully alienated virtually all his subjects from his rule. But his policies also increased intercommunal hostility, and in so doing, created a crisis which was to result in considerable intercommunal

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35. Khalaf argues also that the rising 'embodied a nationalist fervor and a desire to seek independence from Ottoman control'. However, this is taking matters to an unsustainable extreme: a continuance of autonomy, yes; outright independence was not yet an issue.

¹⁵¹ For details of the dispute involving Abdallah Pasha of Acre, Muhammad Darwish of Damascus and Bashir himself, leading to the exiles of both Abdallah Pasha and Bashir and the installation of Muhammad Darwish in Acre as well as Damascus, see K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 25-6.

¹⁵² Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, pp. 22-3.

¹⁵³ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 26.

violence and the ending of the *Imarah*, since the splits between the vital elements in that entity had become too acute for it to continue. Bashir II turned the Druze community even more strongly against him shortly after his return in 1822. He was aware that there was opposition to his return from that community, notably from Bashir Jumblat, a leading Druze and former ally, who had worked to prevent his return from Egypt. Back in power, Bashir II initially tried to make Jumblat pay for his plotting by imposing a crippling fine. Jumblat's refusal to pay, and his attempt to raise the Hawran district against Bashir II, gave the latter an excuse to destroy him militarily. By January 1825, Jumblat headed a coalition of Druze leaders in open revolt. But Bashir II gained the victory, and used it to establish a position of political dominance in Lebanon, supported at this point by the Maronite community.¹⁵⁴ The importance of this, as Salibi points out, is that the Druze were convinced that Jumblat had been crushed because he was a Druze, rather than because he was a dangerous 'political rival'.¹⁵⁵

In the consequent power vacuum, Maronite dominance in the administration of Mount Lebanon increased, ensuring their support for Bashir II in the period to 1831, while the Druze seethed in practically powerless resentment. However, from 1831 things were to develop differently. For the rest of that decade, the Druze community had another cause for dissatisfaction with Bashir II and an opportunity for demonstrating it by turning to open support for Ottoman central authority, as from that date, the region was effectively under Egyptian control. Bashir II's return to power in 1822 as a result of Egyptian backing and protection, rather than that of central Ottoman authority, ensured that he was dependent on a continuation of Egyptian support if he was to remain in power in the *Imarah*. Muhammad Ali intended to establish control over Syria, including the *Imarah*, and expected to use Bashir II in achieving his goal. In 1831 Muhammad Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, was despatched to

¹⁵⁴ Bashir was determined to make his victory complete; consequently he arranged for Jumblat to be returned from Damascus, where he had taken refuge, to Acre, where he was conveniently strangled, thus robbing the Druze of their most prominent leader at the time. At the same time, he also had other Druze leaders arrested and confiscated Druze property on a widespread basis. Though Druze leaders then appealed to Ottoman central authority, and were indeed granted decrees for the return of their property etc., neither that authority nor the Druze were, in the aftermath of this defeat, able to enforce the *firmans* (written orders or decrees) that were granted against Bashir in this respect. See K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 26-7.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

establish Muhammad Ali's hold over Syria, and it was also planned that Lebanon would be used as a base and as a source of goods and manpower in the venture. Conscious of the willingness of central Ottoman authority to depose him if the opportunity offered, Bashir II had little choice but to accept his involvement with Egyptian plans.

Within the *Imarah*, one result was that the Druze discovered a new loyalty to the Ottoman state, and actually took up arms on behalf of this cause after 1831. The immediate result was a series of clashes within the *Imarah* between Druze and Maronites, because initially Bashir II's alliance with the Egyptians was acceptable to the Maronites, as the Egyptians were prepared to establish a state of genuine religious toleration and equality between them and the Muslim communities, which the Maronites hoped would make their position within the *Imarah* even stronger.¹⁵⁶ But relatively swiftly the situation became still more complex in terms of communal relationships, as elements in the Maronite community, especially at the lower levels, became resentful of the practical impact of the Egyptian involvement. Ibrahim Pasha remained in charge in Syria for nine years with Bashir II acting as his vassal or agent in the *Imarah*. In order to run Syria effectively and to build a strong Egypt, Ibrahim Pasha had to impose a heavy burden of taxation, and to establish a system of administration within the *Imarah* that would enable the taxes to be collected effectively.¹⁵⁷ He also had to employ methods of forced conscription into the Egyptian army. If the Maronites had originally welcomed the arrival of Ibrahim Pasha, the ordinary Maronites and the Maronite Church soon grew to resent the taxation and the conscriptions, which involved them in fighting for a Muslim state.

The Druze were even more hostile to these developments during the 1830s. Bashir II was forced by his Egyptian overlords to become involved in suppressing Druze revolt - and to use Maronite conscripts to aid in the suppression. The suppression was successful and Bashir II attempted to restore peace between the Druze and his administration, and between the

¹⁵⁶ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 28.

¹⁵⁷ Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, p. 35-6. Khalaf points out that the period of Egyptian control led to an expansion in foreign trade, and not just with Europe, as well as to other administrative developments.

communities, by as generous peace terms as he could get away with. But it still saw fines and impositions, and the exiling of Druze leaders, and so it hardly had the conciliatory effect hoped for.¹⁵⁸ The Druze could not forget or forgive the fact that the *amir* had used the Maronites to suppress them, with considerable implications for the future of co-operation between the communities in the context of the *Imarah* at least.

Yet within a short period of time, Maronite leaders there were seeking collaboration with other opponents of Bashir II's rule, within the *Imarah* and outside it, including the Druze. Maronite fear of the impact of further conscription from their community to fight for the Egyptians in Syria was the spur to this development, one that resulted in an effective revolt that helped to bring down Bashir and Ibrahim Pasha. The eviction of the latter from Syria, primarily the result of the intervention of external powers like Britain, France and Russia seeking to settle 'The Eastern Question', also brought down his ally, Bashir II.¹⁵⁹ But the final collapse of the *Imarah* was due primarily to local factors, despite an involvement of European powers in arranging the nature of the post-*Imarah* administration of the region.

In 1840, Bashir found that he was opposed by Maronites and Druze, brought together by their hostility to him. In May 1840, the majority of leaders from both communities in Mount Lebanon led their followers in an uprising against Bashir II. With help from Ibrahim Pasha during the summer of 1840, Bashir II was initially able to suppress the uprising. However, once the Egyptian army had begun to collapse, during September and October 1840, Bashir II's ability to contain the uprising also disappeared. Two days after the final defeat of Ibrahim Pasha on 10 October 1840, Bashir II fled Lebanon for the final time.¹⁶⁰ It is not necessary to go into great detail about the events of 1840, but certain points do need to be made. First, as in 1819-20, the initiative against Bashir II within the Maronite community was taken by the peasants,

¹⁵⁸ K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 34-36; p. 40; Toufic Touma, *Paysans et Institutions Féodales*, p. 145.

¹⁵⁹ The European powers were prepared to support Ottoman authority at least partly because the Ottoman empire had begun a programme of administrative reforms, collectively known as the *Tanzimat*, which seemed to be in line with European developments at this time. For a Lebanese perspective on this, see K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 40.

¹⁶⁰ He was taken by the British into exile in Malta.

backed by the Church. Secondly, the events of 1840 made it plain that co-operation between the Druze and Maronite communities over the period of the *Imarah* had developed no basis beyond narrow self-interest: it did not mark an attempt on either side to reconcile their differences. This is highlighted by the reasons for the failure of the first phase of the 1840 rebellion, during the summer of 1840. As well as getting support from the Egyptians, Bashir II succeeded in splitting the Maronite-Druze alliance against him and turning their attention back to intercommunal hostilities by promising to Druze leaders that he would 'make them masters of the Maronite district of Kisrawan'.¹⁶¹ In the event, Bashir II never had the chance to put his promises into effect, and despite this initial success, neither the *Imarah* nor Bashir II were to survive the continuing tensions in the region.

With Bashir II gone into exile, the interested European powers arranged for the replacement of Bashir II by Bashir III, another member of the Shihabi family. Bashir III turned out to be a particularly incompetent (and short-lived) *amir*.¹⁶² But it is fair to say that even a competent *amir* might not have been able to avoid the intercommunal unrest that followed within the region between 1840 and 1860, a period including the civil war of 1841. The violence of 1841 started with a small scale quarrel in the spring between Maronite and Druze in the Dayr al Qamar region. But the quarrel was essentially about the respective property rights of members of the Maronite and Druze communities and during the summer of 1841 hostilities escalated in scale. In October 1841, the scale of intercommunal hostilities escalated significantly, with a high rate of casualties on both sides initially. The intervention of central Ottoman authorities in November tipped the scale against the Maronites, however, especially as by this time Bashir III was in Druze hands.¹⁶³ In January 1842, Bashir III left Lebanon for Istanbul, ending the period of Shihabi rule in the *Imarah*, and effectively, if not yet officially, the *Imarah* itself. The degree of consensus between the Maronite and Druze elites that had been present at the start of the *Imarah* had undergone a process of slow erosion; but now its last remnants had disappeared, since there was no reason for either side to

¹⁶¹ Samir Khalaf, *Lebanon's Predicament*, p. 37.

¹⁶² K. S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 40-44.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-52.

sustain it. Under the administration of 'Umar Pasha, appointed by the Ottoman state to restore order in the Mount Lebanon region, anti-Maronite violence was reduced in scale, but an anti-Maronite bias was clearly present in that administration's policy in the region.

The violence of 1841 can be directly attributed to the legacy of intercommunal suspicion and resentment created by Bashir II's policies and the consequent mythology surrounding him.¹⁶⁴ The Druze resented the administrative set-up and officials of the region left by Bashir II's regime, and the visible extent to which the Maronites had profited by Bashir II's activities against the Druze. Under Bashir II, confiscated Druze property had been given to Maronites, and the Druze community had had to watch the Maronites enjoying and displaying their newly-acquired wealth and property. Even if the Maronites had turned against Bashir II in the end, they had also for a long time profited from his emirate in terms of improved status and power within the administrative system - displaying itself in a spirit of confidence in political life that was deeply irritating to the Druze community from the highest level to the lowest.¹⁶⁵ If Bashir II had succeeded in destroying, to a large extent, the political power of the Druze feudal lords, he had not undermined the feudal social organisation of the community. The loyalties of the Druze masses, mainly rural peasants, remained firmly with their lords and they were not happy, therefore, to see these lords reduced in power and status.¹⁶⁶

Thus the relationship between the communities and between the Druze and the administration of the area was anyway extremely unstable and Bashir III had swiftly managed to make things worse on coming to power by continuing the policy of oppressing and seeking to crush any remaining Druze power.¹⁶⁷ A further complication was the attitude of central Ottoman authority in all this. The Ottomans saw the deterioration of affairs within the region as being useful to them, hoping it would make the area ultimately more amenable to direct rule from Istanbul. So they were prepared, discreetly so as not to

¹⁶⁴ K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, pp. 109-10, pointing out that Maronites in the twentieth century still viewed Bashir II as an essentially benevolent despot, while the Druze in particular typecast him as a malign figure in history.

¹⁶⁵ Iliya Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon 1711-1845*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1968, pp. 225-227; Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1994, pp. 21-3.

¹⁶⁶ Toufic Touma, *Paysans et Institutions Féodales*, p. 136-147.

¹⁶⁷ K. S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 45.

upset the interested European powers, to encourage dissent between the communities and to encourage non-co-operation between both communities and Bashir III.¹⁶⁸ But the suspicions and resentments were also part of longer term intercommunal resentments stemming from beliefs that each of the two communities had, by the 1840s, 'rights' to pre-eminence in the Mount Lebanon region. In this context, bloodshed between the communities amounting to civil war in 1841 and 1842 can be said to have been both predictable and nasty.

But the situation then, and the subsequent troubles up to the 1860s, was complicated by external (European) intervention concerned about the shedding of Christian blood in particular. By this time, the weakness of the Ottoman state meant that the Ottoman authorities could not afford just to ignore such intervention, notably the European protests about events in the region of Lebanon and the Ottoman failure to control the violence there in 1841.¹⁶⁹ The development of the *Tanzimat* throughout the Ottoman empire is a good example of this.¹⁷⁰ Overall, during the *Tanzimat* period, 1839-76, sincere efforts (if only as a result of prior European pressure and a consciousness of continuing European observation) were undoubtedly made to include non-Muslim subjects in the empire's operation to a greater degree, through associating them with the administration. But the *Tanzimat* had the advantage, for the Ottoman state, of creating a policy where the European powers could not really complain if Lebanese autonomy had ended, so long as it was done apparently in the name of improving administrative efficiency and democratic participation for both Muslims and non-Muslims. It has to be said, however, that as far as Mount Lebanon was concerned, the real Ottoman priority was to bring the region under direct control from Istanbul. Thus they continued, despite assurances to the contrary, to seek to prevent a restoration of stable, if not friendly, co-habitation, as continued instability was seen as the only effective way to end Lebanese autonomy without provoking a hostile European intervention.¹⁷¹ Ottoman authorities consequently did little initially to halt the bloodshed in 1841 and there is evidence that they even encouraged

¹⁶⁸ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 46.

¹⁶⁹ Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁰ The essence of the *Tanzimat* could be said to be a series of Ottoman reforms encouraging centralisation. See H. Lammens, *La Syrie Précis Historique*, Dar Lahad Khater, Beirut, 1994, p. 303.

¹⁷¹ Karam Rizk, *Le Mont Liban au XIX Siècle de l'Emirat au Mutasarrifiyyah*, pp. 170-71.

and armed the Druze. Certainly Ottoman troops did join in against the Maronites on occasions. At other times, they merely stood by and watched the conflict; if they did intervene to protect the Maronites it was after a long time.¹⁷²

However, the Ottomans were not the only ones intriguing to prevent a restoration of stable co-habitation in 1840-2. The Maronite Patriarch in 1841 wanted to see a restoration of Bashir II, and hoped to bring about a situation of such instability that the Maronites and Druze would both be prepared to forget the past and demand his return, and the Ottomans would be forced to endorse it, to the long term advantage of the Maronite community and Church.¹⁷³ In intercommunal terms the result of all this intriguing was to destroy for the time being any basis for peaceful relations despite the need for consensus between the communities if any Ottoman efforts at centralisation were to be resisted. When Druze lords sought, with Bashir II gone, to reclaim former property, a series of disputes with the current owners, who were mainly Maronites, ensured that resentments were maintained and developed into clashes and a series of massacres of Maronites by Druze, and Druze by Maronites.¹⁷⁴ Eventually, in late 1841, interested Western powers, notably France and Britain, did force the Ottoman authorities into an apparently more active role in trying to settle the dispute.¹⁷⁵ In fact they took advantage of the clear collapse of Maronite-Druze collaboration, to announce in January 1842 that it was no longer possible to sustain a Lebanese autonomy based on that assumption. The time had come for a new arrangement, in effect the establishment of direct Ottoman rule over the area.

The new governor of Mount Lebanon, 'Umar Pasha, appointed after the fall of Bashir III in January 1842, had no connections with the area. He swiftly made it plain that his main objective was to consolidate direct rule by destroying any remnants of the *Imarah* and past autonomy and any hope of a

¹⁷² Charles Churchill, The Druzes and the Maronites, pp. 52-56; K. S. Salibi, The Modern History of Lebanon; Karam Rizk, Le Mont-Liban au XIX Siècle, p. 239; Engin Akarli, The Long Peace, p. 30; Joseph Abou Nohra, 'L'Évolution du Systeme Politique Libanais dans le Contexte des Conflits Regionaux et Locaux 1840-1864' in Shehadi & Mills (eds) Lebanon, p. 42.

¹⁷³ This was perhaps, in contemporary perspective, not as unlikely as it might appear now. After all, Bashir II had returned before from exile, and he was a son of the Maronite Church, which had also benefited from his emirate. The Patriarch's efforts for a Shihabi restoration came to an end in 1845 when Bashir II's son, Amine, became a Sunni Muslim.

¹⁷⁴ See K. S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 49-52, for some discussion of events in this period.

¹⁷⁵ Engin Akarli, The Long Peace, p. 31; Charles Churchill, The Druze and the Maronites, p. 132; Philippe Hitti, Lebanon in History, p. 438.

Shihabi restoration. His initial policy was, as far as possible, to gain the support and loyalty of those elements that had opposed the Shihabis. Essentially in the Mount Lebanon area this meant the Druze community, though there was some potential for favouring some among the Maronite lords who had opposed both Bashir II and Bashir III. But despite the efforts of 'Umar Pasha, there was no real improvement in terms of either the governability of the Mount Lebanon region, or intercommunal relations there. Maronite-Druze hostility remained at a high level in the aftermath of the recent bloody events. Without incentives to solve these issues, which would have compromised Ottoman control over the region and risked a further European intervention, neither side was willing to co-operate to any useful extent in the administration of the area by 'Umar Pasha.¹⁷⁶

In terms of intercommunal relations, matters actually became worse as 'Umar Pasha ensured the return of some Druze lands to their former owners, and made other concessions to the Druze to try to reconcile them to his rule. He failed, but his efforts did give the Druze a renewed sense of superiority over the Maronites in the Mount Lebanon region, increasing thereby Maronite resentments.¹⁷⁷ It is a measure of the strength of this intercommunal hostility that even at elite levels, the shared hostility felt by both communities to the imposition of direct Ottoman governmental control could not bring the communities together. A meeting between Druze and Maronite leaders was held in Mukhtara on 19 November 1843 to discuss the setting up of a Druze-Maronite pact - but it never came to anything because the intercommunal hostility was still too great to be overcome, though leaders from both communities did try to rebel against 'Umar Pasha. The elites from both communities, however, refer to the Mukhtara meeting because, as Tosh points

¹⁷⁶ Joseph Abou Nohra, *L'Evolution du Systeme Politique Libanais*, pp. 42-3.

¹⁷⁷ The level of Maronite fears about Ottoman policy at this point, and the fact that beyond rhetoric, no attempt was made by Ottoman authorities to relieve those fears, is indicated by a letter of 1847: 'Il est possible que les habitants de la Montagne en voyant enlever leurs armes croient que quelques anciens privilèges que la Sublime Porte leur a accordé relativement a l'administration arrêtée ici, de concert avec les représentants des 5 grandes puissances, et que votre excellence est chargé d'établir seront modifiés et chargés, et que cette idée inspire de la frayeur. Ou la Sublime Porte n'a aucune pensée a pareille chose'. Letter extract from a *Vizir* (unidentified) to *Amir* Chekib Effendi, 12 November 1847, in the unpublished Al Khazin Family Papers.

out, such groups will always seek to promote 'mythical pasts which serve to legitimise their power or win support for particular policies'.¹⁷⁸

European involvement in the area during the 1840s and 1850s did not help matters, as European governments and European missionaries brought their own rivalries to the area and a consequent willingness to endorse indigenous rival mythologies to boost their standing with different communities.¹⁷⁹ There was also an internal religious dimension, because of the Maronite Church. The modernisation of the Maronite community during the nineteenth century, including the gradual development of a class system, lessened the power of the traditional Maronite landowning elite, especially outside the Mount Lebanon area itself. This meant that more and more the Church had become the institution through which the values and traditional culture of the community were sustained and passed on. For example, it was Maronite clergy such as Bishop Nicola Murad who continued and made even more coherent the development of a 'Lebanese' historiography. This was based on an essentially Maronite view of the past history of the area, perpetuating and giving an intellectual gloss to the beliefs, for example, that the Maronites were directly descended from pre-Arab inhabitants of the Mount Lebanon area.¹⁸⁰ The Church had thus been responsible for collecting and presenting in a coherent and authoritative manner many of the traditional beliefs of the community, and so justifying the development of an exclusive Maronite identity separate from that of the Arab Muslims in the region and throughout the Ottoman empire.¹⁸¹

It is not surprising that, given its links with Rome, the Maronite Church should be actively hostile to British Protestant missionaries on purely religious grounds, forcing the British to turn their attentions to the Druze. But the Church and, following its lead, the mass of the community were hostile on cultural grounds as well. The religious dimension established in Maronite cultural

¹⁷⁸ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, p. 20; K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, p. 203.

¹⁷⁹ Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, Chapters 2 & 3. Karam Rizk, *Le Mont Liban au XIX Siècle*, p. 226.

¹⁸⁰ Salibi argues that Maronite historians have 'never had a clear understanding of the relationship of Maronite and Lebanese history to the history of Muslim Syria and Islam'; also that 'historiographical isolation led Maronite historians to depend only on predecessors and so repeat them'; or in other words, there was little will to understand the broader context of this history. K.S. Salibi, 'The Traditional Historiography of the Maronites', in Lewis & Holt (eds), pp. 216-7. See also Iliya Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society*, pp. 126; 140.

¹⁸¹ Iliya Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society*, pp. 128; 142.

thinking ensured that the British in general were seen as heretics and a threat to the Roman Catholic, and thus to the Maronite, Church; and thus in turn to Maronite cultural identity. France, by contrast, was a faithful daughter of the Roman Catholic church, and thus could be seen as a protector of Maronite religious and cultural interests. And of course, there were the already established trade links which favoured France in the main and so linked Maronite economic prosperity with contact with France; and the Maronite Church certainly benefited from the general prosperity of the communities.

Both the Druze and Maronite communities were aware, by the 1840s, that European interest in Lebanon could be used to reduce the impact of Ottoman rule there; but equally both communities were concerned to ensure that any European intervention was to the advantage of their particular community at the expense of the other, where possible. The Druze during this period sought to counteract the impact of the Maronite links with France and the Roman Catholic Church by utilising the interest in the region of France's main rival, Britain. British interest was demonstrated through a number of channels, including those of the state and British Protestant missionaries. The small amount of British missionary success indicates the extent to which the Druze took little account of the 'civilising' conversion message, simply using British interest as a counterbalance to French and Roman Catholic interest in the Maronites. Equally support from the British state was seen as critical not only in Druze attempts to resist the full force of Ottoman direct rule, but also in containing Maronite ambitions within Mount Lebanon, particularly given the power of the British at this point.¹⁸² With inter-communal relations in the period 1841 to 1860, as well as relations with Ottoman authority, being marked by frequent clashes, the European powers remained concerned and thus susceptible to appeals from the communities in which they had an interest.

In 1843, the *Imarah* was replaced by a new administrative system that resulted from a plan initially put forward by the European powers, but accepted, with modifications to its advantage, by the Ottoman state. The European aim was the restoration of intercommunal stability: that of the

¹⁸² Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, p. 27.

Ottomans, an increase in central authority.¹⁸³ In fact, the new system served to entrench and formalise the patterns of intercommunal hostility in the period to 1860 while it failed to bring about anything but a temporary increase in Ottoman power. This system involved the division of Mount Lebanon into two *qa'immaqamiyyah* or administrative districts, with the basis of the division theoretically being a separation of the two main religious communities under the direct rule of an official of their own religion, answerable to the *amir* appointed by the Ottoman state.¹⁸⁴ The reality was that the European powers demonstrated the extent to which they understood the communities involved on the basis of the mythologies they put forward, with the Maronites in particular claiming primacy in certain locations, rather than seeking a more practically-based division. (It is worth pointing out that these *qa'immaqamiyyah* covered an area that more or less paralleled the area of modern Lebanon: under Bashir II the area of the *Imarah* had expanded and the arrangements of 1843 reflected that expansion.)

The effective continuation of civil war under the *qa'immaqamiyyah* resulted from the fact that though the new system aimed to separate the two communities, there was a sizeable Druze population in the official Maronite district, and, according to Salibi, a majority Maronite population in the official Druze district. This more or less ensured the continuity of intercommunal strife, especially since some Druze peasants had Maronite landlords, and some Maronite peasants had Druze landlords. These peasants were thus swift to interpret any harsh policies by landlords as having a confessional dimension, rather than being simple economic oppression.¹⁸⁵ Various attempts were made to get the system working effectively, but given the circumstances of the continuing intercommunal tension, it was almost inevitable that these should fail. In some years such as 1845 the tensions flared into bloody conflict - at other times an apparent calm reigned, but one that easily degenerated into hostile intercommunal incidents. As indicated, the continuance of Anglo-French interest and rivalry in the region was an important

¹⁸³ In other words, it imposed another layer of administration between the *amir* and the population of the old *Imarah*. See Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon*, St Anthony's College, Oxford, 1977, p. 38.

¹⁸⁴ The line of division ran roughly along the Beirut-Damascus highway with the Maronites to the north and the Druze to the south, with the northern district administered by a Maronite official and the southern one by a Druze official.

¹⁸⁵ K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 63.

factor in sustaining the intercommunal hostility and in making it still more complex.¹⁸⁶ There was an increasing willingness of leading Maronites to invoke French support against both Ottoman authority and the Druze, as the correspondence in the Al Khazin family papers illustrate.¹⁸⁷ In addition, in the Maronite-administered districts the divisions were intra- as well as inter-communal. The Maronite administration were drawn from the traditional land-owning elite, but their policy of co-operation with Ottoman authority and Druze elites, was opposed by many among the Maronite masses and even the ordinary clergy, many of whom were now drawn from the people because of the continuation of intercommunal violence and resistance to Islamic rule.¹⁸⁸

In 1858 the seething unrest and tensions burst out into full scale violence once more, both inter and intra-communal. The Maronites were the main sufferers; they both felt and were at a disadvantage. Partly this was because the Maronites at this period lacked outstanding leaders to whom a mass loyalty could be given. This was one consequence of the intra-communal tensions between the ordinary Maronites and the feudal land-owning elites. Those of the latter involved with the administration of the new system had proved themselves in the eyes of the masses to be untrustworthy and incompetent; hence the revolt of Maronite peasants against their Maronite landlords in Kisrawan.¹⁸⁹ But this was not the only problem. Maronites throughout Lebanon were aware that an anti-Christian feeling was no longer simply a local affair, that it was extant at higher than normal levels in the

¹⁸⁶ Yussuf Karam to Patriarch Boulos Massad, extract from letter quoted in K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 79.

¹⁸⁷ See, for instance, French Consul in Beirut to Shaykh Wadih; Shaykh Elias and Shaykh Wablin Al Khazin, 4 September 1845, responding to Maronite pleas for intervention. For discussion of the European perspective on such pleas, see Chapter 2.

¹⁸⁸ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 18-19, comments on the international implications of this also Karam Rizk, Le Mont-Liban au XIX^e Siècle, p. 153.

¹⁸⁹ Another complication was the gap between the secular Maronite landed elite and the Maronite Church leadership at this point. In November 1854, Bishop Boulos Massad was elected Patriarch. Unlike his predecessors he was not from the landed elite and was noted for marked dislike of this feudal class, which had important implications for the unity of the community as a whole at this point. After his election the Church was never to return to its former degree of support for the landed element, but had a wider popularity as it took a more broad-based perspective towards the Maronite social hierarchies. See Malcolm Kerr (ed.), Lebanon in the Last Years of Feudalism, 1840-1868. A Contemporary Account by Antun Dahir Al Aqiqi and Other Documents, American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1959, pp. 12-13; 95-150. This is a contemporary manuscript history first published only in 1938, and providing a description of 'the disintegration of political and social authority in the northern half of Lebanon', especially in the Kisrawan; according to Malcolm Kerr, Preface p. x. See also K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 93-4; for a more detailed discussion of the events in Kisrawan in 1858; also Samir Khalaf, Lebanon's Predicament, p. 39.

Ottoman empire as a whole, a result of the development of the *Tanzimat* and Christian European involvement in that development.¹⁹⁰

Maronites received information about anti-Christian incidents where the Ottoman authorities, including the military, had either turned a blind eye to the events or had even encouraged and become directly involved in them, such as the massacres of Christians in Damascus, Aleppo and Jerusalem.¹⁹¹ One of the key areas of tension in Lebanon itself in the 1850s was Kisrawan but the unrest did not stay confined to this area; it spread to neighbouring areas where it acquired an inter-communal aspect, involving Druze and Maronites.¹⁹² According to Samir Khalaf, Druze leaders in Mount Lebanon as a whole were successful in deflecting grievances against themselves from their own Druze peasantry by provoking sectarian rivalry. Mixed areas such as the Shuf and the Matn were particularly vulnerable to this between 1858 and 1860.¹⁹³ Thus the pattern of events in 1859 and 1860 seemed to bear out the worst Maronite fears of Ottoman connivance in massacres. Certainly the Ottoman authorities made no effective attempts to halt the intercommunal violence which reached a peak between May and August 1860. The Maronites were badly defeated, because of intracommunal tensions which ensured they did not band together to fight the Druze. It was only their defeat and the subsequent massacres and plunder of Maronite property that served to overcome the divisions in the community. According to Meir Zamir, 10,000 Christians, mostly Maronites, were massacred and another 100,000 made homeless.¹⁹⁴ The impact of 1860 has had a lasting effect. Not only was it evoked during 1958, but as recently as 1981, in L'Orient Le Jour, Bashir Gemayel made explicit links between the events of 1975 and the massacres: 'The immediate cause of this war was the threat addressed to the Maronite community by the Druze leader Kamal

¹⁹⁰ FO 787/1383, Mr Finn, Vice Consul of Sidon to Mr. Malmesbury, 22 July 1858, Beirut.

¹⁹¹ Karam Rizk mentions the anti-Christian graffiti painted on the walls of the churches of Acre and Aleppo, as well as referring to meetings between elements from the Sunni, Shi'ite and Druze communities, plotting for a general massacre of Christians in the region. See Karam Rizk, Le Mont Liban au XIX Siècle, p. 184; K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 93-4. During the Damascus massacres, for instance, the Pasha there had refused to use his troops against the Muslim agitators. See Karam Rizk, Le Mont Liban au XIX Siècle, pp. 184; 224.

¹⁹² Malcolm Kerr (ed.), Lebanon in the Last Years of Feudalism, pp. 55; 94-150; K. Rizk, Le Mont Liban au XIX Siècle, p. 151-231.

¹⁹³ Samir Khalaf, Persistence and Change in Nineteenth Century Lebanon, American University of Beirut, Beirut, 1979, p. 87.

¹⁹⁴ Meir Zamir, The Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 8. The massacres particularly affected the Kisrawan district, indicating Muslim incursions. See also Charles Churchill, The Druzes and the Maronites, Chapter 6 for some contemporary comments; and Leila Fawaz, Occasion for War, pp. 47-77. This latter book is primarily an account of the massacres.

Jumblat, a threat that could not but awake in our Christian subconsciousness the memory of the 1845 and 1860 massacres'.¹⁹⁵

In addition, to the fury of the Maronites the peace settlement that was arranged in 1860 made no serious attempt to punish the Druze for their excesses, further exacerbating the long-term base of hostility between the communities, and of Maronite resentment of Ottoman rule though it did serve to bring the Maronite community closer together.¹⁹⁶ For practical reasons little could be done, given the large numbers involved and the reluctance of Maronites to stand up and testify against their attackers. Somewhat understandably they feared unchecked reprisals if they did so.¹⁹⁷ Yet the ultimate importance of 1860 to Maronite communal mythology was that it provided Maronite martyrs, to act as a focus for shared grief and pride.¹⁹⁸ It helped, also, to coalesce political feelings in the Maronite community and to further a common Maronite agenda. As Zamir has commented, the tragedy 'proved' the need for an autonomous entity from their perspective.¹⁹⁹ This coalesced at a time when European thought was developing concepts of national identity justifying the existence of independent states. Elements in the Maronite community, aware of these developments, began to express their ambitions in nationalist terms, terms which included reference to a specifically-defined 'national' territory as the rightful location for the Maronite 'nation'.²⁰⁰ On this basis, a political agenda began to develop that started to dream of a 'Lebanese' independence, and which found its first expression in 1861, as a result of the reaction of Ottoman authority and European interest to the events of 1860 and the consequent attempts to restore stability to Lebanon.

¹⁹⁵ Al Hayat, 14 June 1985; Bashir Gemayel, L'Orient Le Jour, 23 June 1981.

¹⁹⁶ Several prominent Druze chiefs, including Said Jumblat were arrested and tried, but with the exception of Said Jumblat, who died from natural causes in prison, the sentences against them were allowed to lapse. As for the lesser Druze chiefs involved, along with those Sunni and Shi'ite who had joined in, nothing was done to punish them.

¹⁹⁷ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 109.

¹⁹⁸ Again, Bashir Gemayel in 1981 referred to the fact that he 'never felt an inferiority complex' as a result of his minority background, because of his heritage and links to these martyrs. L'Orient Le Jour, 23 June 1981.

¹⁹⁹ Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 8.

²⁰⁰ The traditional sense of community and place, and a shared history and religion all fitted in with the European agenda of the time for identifying a national people, and for accepting that such a national people should express that national feeling through a state coinciding with 'national' territory. This encouraged the Maronites, who had long referred to themselves in the old sense as a 'nation', to develop an essentially Christian sense of nationalism in the context of the Ottoman empire. It should be stressed, however, that if the Maronites used European terminology as it developed to express that feeling, the feeling was locally originated, and not 'created' by European intervention. Anthony Smith, for example, provides a definition that includes the Lebanese, or Maronite national movement as fitting his definition of a national movement. See Anthony Smith The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1981, pp. 3-4.

In late 1860 to 1861, a new administrative entity was set up to replace the *qa'immaqamiyyah*. But an underlying belief of Ottoman and European authority was that the failure of the *qa'immaqamiyyah* was at least partly due to the extent of territory included in the districts and the settlement of 1861 aimed to rectify this. A *Mutassarifiyyah*, or autonomous province within the empire; was set up to replace the *qa'immaqamiyyah*, regulated by the 1861 *Reglement Organique* and its later modification, the *Protocole* of 1864. The terms of the settlement were worked out so as to modify the impact of central Ottoman control over the area.²⁰¹ Though the Ottomans did their best to restrict this return to autonomy by decreeing that though the governor was to be Christian, he was also to be non-Lebanese, or in other words, not a Maronite, in practice arrangement actually involved a series of compromises worked out by the Ottomans and European powers, first between Druze and Maronite interests; then between the local wish for a return to complete autonomy and the Ottoman desire to restrict it; and finally between the Ottomans who wished to retain full sovereignty over the area and the interested European powers who sought to ensure their role. The *Reglement Organique* thus represented an official recognition by the Ottomans of Mount Lebanon's unique autonomous status at a time when they were otherwise conducting a centralisation policy for the empire as a whole. For the first time 'Lebanese' identity had acquired a legal definition and was associated with a 'modern' system of administration²⁰² Moreover, this new entity was essentially Christian in character, with the Maronites as the dominant element.²⁰³

But while welcoming this dimension, from the Maronite perspective, a crucial issue was that the *Mutassarifiyyah* was, by comparison with the *Imarah* in 1841-2 and the *qa'immaqamiyyah*, very restricted in area, covering only Mount Lebanon itself and omitting the Beirut, Biqa', Tripoli and Sidon regions. This was because the international commission working out the settlement had

²⁰¹ The *Reglement Organique* gave the interested European powers a voice in the nomination of the *mutassarif* or governor, who was now to be a Christian, for instance. As a further indication of the erosion of Ottoman authority, only a small Ottoman garrison could now be stationed in the Mount Lebanon area. The *Sanjak* now had its own council and administration and drew up its own budget. Its inhabitants enjoyed tax privileges and exemption from Ottoman military service, a privilege arranged by European intervention. See Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, pp. 82-3; 103-4; 133-47.

²⁰² Modern, at least in the European sense of the time, which was one valued by the Maronites themselves, and certainly a contrast to the rest of Syria.

²⁰³ Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in Modern Times*, p. 287; Youssef M. Choueiry, 'Ottoman Reform and Lebanese Patriotism', in Shehadi & Mills, (eds) *Lebanon*, p. 70.

wanted to include in the *Mutassarifiyyah* only those regions which had what they classified as an identifiable 'Christian' (i.e.: Maronite) majority, in order to reduce the risk of interconfessional conflicts.²⁰⁴ However, since the Maronites had become conscious of a need to link their claims to be a national group to a territory that could reasonably be described as more than a mere region, and with some natural defining boundaries. Mount Lebanon was, in fact, too limited an area to qualify. Despite the concessions given to the Maronites in terms of internal autonomy within the *Mutassarifiyyah*, there was thus considerable dissatisfaction with the *Mutassarifiyyah* within the community. The Maronites used their mythology to develop an argument that there were 'natural' geographical boundaries to the area which 'proved' a Maronite 'historical' claim to predominance within a wider territory. The geographical limits of the 'country' were defined as Nahr al Kabir in the north, the crest of the Anti-Lebanon in the east, and the Litani river in the south. The Maronites ignored the fact that in geographical terms the quoted lines were not, in fact, boundaries that defined a discrete territorial unit by this reliance on myth rather than cold reality.²⁰⁵

However, the Maronites also used myth to argue that their historical claim to the areas was underpinned by the contemporary fact that most of the Christians (mainly Maronites) in these areas were in favour of annexation to Mount Lebanon to create a wider entity. This was undoubtedly the case. But it ignored the claims of the Druze and Muslim populations of the areas, and in these areas it was these Muslim communities that were in the majority; the reason why they had been excluded from the *Mutassarifiyyah* in the first place.²⁰⁶ But cultural national feelings were not the only factor behind the Maronite determination to lay claim to these four areas. Another important one was the practical consideration that the reduction in area had been seriously detrimental to the economy of the *Mutassarifiyyah*. The Maronites realised

²⁰⁴ This element of European policy was supported by the Ottoman government, because it sought to limit the area within which its sovereignty would be restricted and to reduce the revenue loss that would ensue from the economic privileges granted to the residents of the area.

²⁰⁵ Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in Modern Times*, p. 287; Ahmad Beydoun, *Identité Confessionnelle*, Chapter 1; M Jouplain, *La Question du Liban: Etude d'Histoire Diplomatique et de Droit International (1908)* Fouad Bitan & Cie, Jounieh, 1961.

²⁰⁶ Necessarily so, given that consideration of their perspective would destroy the Maronite claim. As John Tosh points out, part of the problem with mythology is the extent to which it supports the focus on one's own community at the expense of knowledge or understanding of the perspectives of other peoples. John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, p. 22.

that Mount Lebanon alone could never be completely autonomous within the Ottoman empire, let alone independent outside it, without an expansion in territory.

The economic problems involved were complex and varied. Mount Lebanon had a shortage of arable land, with no open plains for the cultivation of cereals or high grade pasture. Also it was cut off from the coast and thus from access to port facilities and direct access to the external contacts and trade upon which so much of Maronite prosperity depended. In addition, Mount Lebanon had come to rely on imported food stuffs because their own crops were largely cash crops - silk and tobacco. Without port facilities of their own, from 1861 the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon faced having to pay heavy tariffs to the Ottoman empire.²⁰⁷ From 1861 on, up to the final collapse of the *Mutassarifiyyah* in 1920, the Maronites consequently repeatedly called for the 'return' of four regions which they regarded as integral to their idea of 'Lebanon'. They repeatedly quoted their 'historical', 'geographical' and even economic arguments to justify their claims over these areas, arguing that the *Imarah* had had clear boundaries and that these should be restored to their fullest extent. If it was a specious claim, given the fluctuating size of the *Imarah* in historical reality, it was also a necessary one if Maronite 'national' ambitions were to have any political and economic reality; and the Maronite reasoning to this effect shows the relative sophistication of their political mythology and its expression by this period.²⁰⁸

But the Maronites under the *Mutassarifiyyah* continued to feel vulnerable within their restricted territory, fearing both renewed Ottoman attempts to restrict their autonomy and Druze hostility. Such fears led as early as 1861 to the first concrete expression of Maronite dissatisfaction with the new arrangements, both administrative and territorial. A Maronite political agenda, supported by the Maronite Patriarch, developed as the terms of the *Reglement Organique* became clear in the course of 1861; one which saw the best way of safeguarding current Maronite autonomy as being the return of a

²⁰⁷ Marwan Buhelry, 'The Rise of the City of Beirut' in Lawrence I Conrand (ed.), *The Formation and Perception of the Modern Arab World*, Darwin Press, Princeton, 1989, pp. 483-97.

²⁰⁸ Fouad L. Bustani, *Introduction a l'Histoire Politique du Liban Moderne*, p. 126; Yussuf Saouda, *Fi Sabil al Istiklal* (For Independence), Beirut, 1967.

Shihabi Maronite as governor instead of a Christian Ottoman representative.²⁰⁹ This agenda provided an opportunity for a group which can even be termed a nationalist Maronite movement to take action to further the cause of Maronite autonomy.

The leader was Yussuf Karam, a Maronite figure from the North. The movement's supporters were, in general, influenced by the Western ideas on nationalism already touched on in terms of the territorial definition of 'Lebanon'; but also by the 'Lebanese' history presented by writers such as Nicola Murad. Inspired with patriotic fervour by such writings, and convinced by Western inspired ideas of the need to express patriotic feelings in terms of a political agenda demanding independent national status within a defined territory, the movement rebelled openly in 1861 against Ottoman authority and the current administrative system in Mount Lebanon. The uprising of 1861 was defeated and Karam went temporarily into exile. But the grievances that had inspired the movement and had gained it wide support and not just from the Maronite masses still remained. A further rebellion was attempted by Karam in 1866, but was again defeated. Karam went into permanent exile in 1867, but his actions gave the Maronites a popular hero with whom to identify their national feelings and their resistance to the *Mutassarifiyyah's* limits. Of great significance anyway in terms of myth creation in this community, the fact that the Maronite Church had supported Karam and his ideas, even though it stopped short of open rebellion, ensured his continuing high profile as a national' hero.²¹⁰ As Zamir has pointed out 'The strong support he [Karam] continued to receive even after his expulsion proved how deeply nationalist ideas were already rooted in the Maronite community'.²¹¹

However, especially after the failure of Karam's rebellions there was little chance of the Maronites succeeding in their attempts at expansion of the *Mutassarifiyyah*. The European powers approved the administration of the entity as successive governors set up programmes to ensure administrative honesty and efficiency and to develop a sound infrastructure for Mount

²⁰⁹ Engin Akarlı, *The Long Peace*, p. 37.

²¹⁰ Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, pp. 10-11.

²¹¹ Meir Zamir, *Ibid*, p. 11.

Lebanon by setting up public works programmes. But despite these efforts between 1861 and 1914, many Maronites emigrated from the *Mutassarifiyyah*; many to Beirut though many also overseas to places like the USA, Egypt and West Africa.²¹² This exodus, however, did not erode Maronite communal feeling. It can be said to have deepened rather, both amongst those who went and those who stayed. France played a significant role in this development, endorsing Maronite national claims in its political and intellectual rhetoric, though not in terms of active interference.²¹³ As a community and a culture, the Maronites flourished between 1861 and 1914. By contrast, the state of the various Muslim communities in the area of modern Lebanon during the same period was far less satisfactory. Inside or outside the *Mutassarifiyyah*, they all shared a considerable resentment over the new concessions granted to the Maronites and other Christians, though this was especially acute for the Druze as so many of them did live within the *Mutassarifiyyah*. As effective cultural and economic contacts between the Maronites and the West increased, and the Maronites became more prosperous and vocal in their demands, these communities had to watch the Ottoman empire decline ever more rapidly, culturally, politically and economically.

If the Maronites feared the long-term consequences of not having their own coastal access, Muslims increasingly feared the reality, as it seemed to them, of unofficial Christian expansionism and domination. The Druze were, according to Salibi, 'reconciled after 1861 to their status as a minority'.²¹⁴ But acceptance, *faute de mieux*, can hardly be termed a permanent reconciliation and renouncing of past hostilities. Rather it was a continuation of co-habitation, as the Druze there realised they had little other option. The same held true for the other Muslim communities required to cope with this increased practical and cultural Maronite self-confidence.

By comparison with the increasing confidence and coherence of the Maronite 'national' culture, the Muslim communities immediately after the

²¹² Albert Hourani & Nadim Shehadi (eds), *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1992, pp. 4; 21-22. See also Meir Zamir, *Foundation of Modern Lebanon*, p. 15, who argues that approximately one quarter of the population of the *Mutassarifiyyah* emigrated.

²¹³ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 114; Meir Zamir, *Foundation of Modern Lebanon*, pp. 16-17.

²¹⁴ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 118.

setting up of the *Mutassarifiyyah* had little to match it, and certainly nothing that could be termed a national feeling. But the work of missionaries amongst the Druze and the Sunni, in terms of spreading literacy and setting up an Arabic press for example, did begin to have a real impact, though not in terms of conversions.²¹⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century popular literacy amongst the Druze and Sunni had made enormous advances. As a result intellectuals in these communities became better equipped to take Western ideas and extract from them those concepts which were not in direct conflict with Islam. They could then utilise these to create coherent and widely acceptable cultural concepts. It was a contrast to the cultural development of Maronite ideas, where the Western contact was cherished for its own sake. But as in the Maronite community, such skills promoted the spread of more uniform versions of Druze and Sunni myth-based community identity.

An Arabic literary revival developed in the Islamic world at the end of the nineteenth century; one that was centred in Lebanon, indeed even in Beirut. This sought to draw on an indigenous cultural tradition in the area, not a Western one, in evolving a mythology. While this was a literary reawakening that involved both Christians and Muslims, its most important effect was to encourage a wider cultural reawakening amongst Muslims generally, and this was very obvious among the Lebanese Muslims. Drawing on ideas initially put forward by Christian Arabs a concept of 'nationalism' was evolved that drew essentially on the idea of Arabia rather than being pan-Islamic. It looked back to a pre-Islamic origin and then to a golden age in the early days of Islam, and went on to argue that the days of Arab glory had been stolen by the Persians and the Turks. Now, it was argued, there was the opportunity for Arab history to be rediscovered and made the basis of a great new cultural and national movement that was essentially secular.²¹⁶ It is, in this context, interesting to note that it was during this period at the end of the nineteenth century that as Muslim historiography developed in Lebanon and began to take an interest in a past golden age, the period of the Crusades first assumed a significance for

²¹⁵ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 113-15.

²¹⁶ Ahmad Beydoun, *Identité Confessionnelle*, pp. 25-33; Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1958, p. 52.

the Muslim element in the region in terms of their myths relating to a characterisation of the Maronites in particular.

For example, during the period of the Crusader Kingdoms, 1098-1291, part of the region of Lebanon had been under Christian rule, and the first real links between the Roman Catholic and Maronite Churches had developed. More, while some Maronites did clash with the crusaders, many others had supported them, either actively or passively.²¹⁷ Muslim historians began to research this period from their own perspective, and, ignoring the evidence of co-operation from their own side in the past, began to argue that Muslims had long-standing grounds, as well as the more recent ones, for resentment against the Maronite population in Lebanon.²¹⁸ Such ideas made a certain progress in Lebanon, as elsewhere, in the last years of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth century. But while they helped to restore a degree of pride to the Lebanese Muslim communities, and a feeling of a worthwhile culture with long historical roots to give it global credibility, it was not nationalist in the way that the Maronite cultural feeling had become. It was part of a sense of a greater Arab entity, comprising a 'Syria' including Lebanon, and Iraq and Arabia.

The final case study in this chapter concerns the period 1908-9 in particular, when a series of events took place which were to accelerate the cultural and national developments and differences of the Maronites and the Muslim communities of Lebanon; the latter in the context of a general Arab feeling, and to coalesce still further the different communal agendas and perceptions of the 'other'. The decline of the Ottoman empire had, in Turkey, encouraged the development of an essentially secular Turkish nationalism, encapsulated in the so-called Young Turk movement. This aimed to restore the central authority of the Ottomans in an essentially modern and secular way, and it involved eradication of any separatist feeling within the Ottoman empire, whether Christian or Arabist.²¹⁹ The involvement of the army in the Young

²¹⁷ There were, in terms of actual historical accuracy, also Muslim leaders who had co-operated with the crusaders, such as Bani Ammar in Tripoli. However, this element in the history of the period was ignored, largely.

²¹⁸ K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 157-158; see also Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, Ithaca Press, London, 1986, p. 16, for comments on the development of Arab nationalist ideas as well as 'Lebanese ones relating to this concept.

²¹⁹ Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, pp. 71-3.

Turk revolt was particularly ominous for the non-Turkish parts of the empire, given that it provided the Young Turks with the means to enforce their policies of Turkification.²²⁰

Until this time the Muslim Arabs of Lebanon had been willing to accept the Turks as brothers in Islam, even if they did blame them for denigrating Arab culture by wresting control of the Islamic world from them. But the activities of the Young Turk regime ensured that they felt alienated and resentful.²²¹ The reaction was to speed up the development of a popular Arab feeling in areas like Lebanon, where Arab elites were beginning to protest against young Turk policies. This was done via demands for specifically Arab entities to be recognised and protected by being given special administrative entities. At the same time the Maronites and other Christians in the region of Lebanon were distinctly alarmed by the Young Turks. While they still expected to rely on European protection for their special status, they were worried by the apparent degree of European approval for the developments initiated by the Young Turks.²²² Hence the appeal of Abbé Louis Al Khazin to Pius X, in which he begged the Pope to assure 'la sécurité de la nation Maronite au Liban et a préserver sa foi dans des situations critiques'.²²³ Even if the plans of the Young Turks did not mean an automatic ending to the *Mutassarifiyyah* they feared the impact on their continuing plans for independent status, and demands for an expansion of their territory.

After the setting up of the Young Turk regime in 1908, one effect of the Arabic cultural reawakening in Lebanon became apparent. Those amongst the Christian population (which included some Maronites, but by no means a majority) who supported the concept of an Arab nationalism came together with members of the Muslim elite there, promoting the development of an essentially 'Arab' mythology. It was a limited collaboration quantitatively and in terms of a practical agenda. However, some historians have identified this as

²²⁰ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 157.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, p. 75.

²²³ Abbé Louis Al Khazin to Pope Pius X, undated but from the internal evidence of the letter from the period 1909-14, in the unpublished Al Khazin Family Papers. The letter seeks particular assurances that the Young Turks will not be allowed to secularise the educational system; by now a critical element in the power of the Maronite Church itself, and in the maintenance and development of Maronite communal or 'national' feeling. It is worth noting the reference here to the Maronite 'nation'; by this time it is clearly meant in the modern 'nationalist' sense.

the start of modern Arab nationalism, with real implications for the separation of Lebanon from the Ottoman empire and the institution of a nation-state of Lebanon based on a compromise between Christian and Muslim elements.²²⁴ Yet such interventions gloss over the very different agendas. The Maronites, in particular, sought full independence from Ottoman rule, while the Muslims would have been content with an arrangement guaranteeing special status to an Arab homeland within the empire. The Muslims in Syria and Lebanon hoped to invoke British support for this, using their interpretation of a great Arabic historical and cultural heritage and a shared language as the basis of their claim.²²⁵ By 1912 these demands were alarming the Maronites who feared that an Arab empire would still be essentially Islamic in character and that they would lose out if Western sympathies put the Arab case higher on their agenda than the Maronite case. Such a development might well be in British interests, for example. If such an Arab empire was set up they feared they would even lose the autonomy they had under the *Mutassarifiyyah*.²²⁶ Maronite fears about Muslim attitudes towards them, both in Lebanon and around it, were undoubtedly heightened in the years 1911-14. In those years popular pan-Islamic feelings in the region were sparked off by fears of foreign invasion, by resentment of the Turkish programme of intervention and above all, by the humiliation of Turkish arms in the Balkan wars.²²⁷

With the Ottoman empire clearly on the brink of collapse, the Lebanese Muslims viewed the active involvement of the French in the region with even increasing fear of imminent occupation. This, they were convinced, would lead to the setting up of a Maronite Lebanese state with a Muslim minority at the mercy of the Maronites, and stretching to areas of real importance to Sunni, Druze and Shi'ite communities. Muslims leaders attempted to forestall such developments for seeking reforms of the area's administration as a whole, including all the areas coveted by the Maronites. It was in this context that Muslim leaders sought to enlist Maronite acceptance of continued existence

²²⁴ Georges Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, first published 1939, re-printed Librairie du Liban, Beirut, 1959, Chapter 5.

²²⁵ Zein N. Zein, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism, with a background study of Arab-Turkish Relations in the Near East*, first printed 1958, re-printed Caravan books, New York, 1973, pp. 54-9.

²²⁶ Youssef M. Choueiri, 'Ottoman Reform and Lebanese Patriotism', in Shehadi & Mills (eds), *Lebanon*, p. 75; Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, p. 78.

²²⁷ Engin Akarli, *ibid*.

within the Ottoman empire in an autonomous, essentially Arab entity covering the area of Lebanon. Offers were made of shared equal representation in any future administration, even though in such a province the Christians would, numerically, be a minority.²²⁸ Some Christians were attracted by the idea, even some of them Maronites. But on the whole it won little widespread Christian support.²²⁹ Yet in the context of increased Turkish efforts at crushing Arab and Maronite separatist efforts in 1913, a genuine degree of co-operation even without a concrete agenda for any joint future did begin to emerge. However it was still a co-operation relating more to co-habitation, being based on mutual hostility to the current Turkish regime rather than a development of cultural unity based on shared local feelings and ambitions. The Maronites still sought independence, and most Muslims, autonomy within the empire.

It was in this atmosphere, then, that in the two years before World War One various societies and communities were developed by the Maronites as centres for political activity, and as the mediums through which the goal of an independent political state could be achieved. Despite an undoubtedly small membership, these groups had a great influence on the expression of Maronite Christian aspirations in national terms.²³⁰ In addition, such groups presided over an expansion of the secular element in Maronite communal feeling, as many of them were Western educated lawyers and journalists, less susceptible to the control of the Maronite Church.²³¹ These groups sustained the links with France, through secret contacts with French representatives in this pre-war period, laying the ground for Maronite involvement in the setting up of the Mandate. The objective of such groups was an independent Lebanon with extended boundaries, but as an entity under French protection. Such developments could not aid the spread of co-operation between Maronites and Muslims.²³² However, matters were brought to crisis point in 1914 with the

²²⁸ Such an offer can be seen as the precursor of the National Pact of 1943, see Chapter 3.

²²⁹ Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace*, p. 100.

²³⁰ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 159.

²³¹ One of the first such societies was *Al nahda Al Lubnaniyyah* (the Lebanese revival).

²³² See Claude Dubar & Salim Nasr, *Les Classes Sociales au Liban*, p. 322; Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, pp. 16; 22; 25. The latter argues that Christian economic dominance was resented by the Muslims, but that the commercial links did create some sort of link between elements within the communities, essentially the commercial/mercantile classes and the elites or notables. Certainly these elements shared a common wariness of the impact of a popular radical movement that might endanger their political and economic dominance. Yet equally, Maronite leaders started using rhetoric of various kinds, including an appeal to religious values, to sustain their power, thereby raising confessional tensions. This tactic was also adopted by Sunni leaders; and the tendency of leaders of both communities to use these tactics continued, as subsequent chapters will show.

outbreak of the First World War. The impact of this war on community relations in Lebanon was crucial.

The Turkish regime, allied with Germany, installed a Muslim Ottoman governor in Lebanon, Ahmed Jamal Pasha. His rule was marked by a degree of harshness and cruelty towards any in the region with separatist aspirations. Thus the Maronites and Muslim Arab nationalists became particular targets. A number were executed adding to the list of Maronite 'nationalist' martyrs and creating 'Arab nationalist' ones. It has to be said that the links of both groups with the Allies ensured such harsh treatment.²³³ In 1916, however, came the beginnings of dramatic change for the Ottoman empire and consequently for Lebanon. Encouraged by the British, Arab revolts spread through the Ottoman empire in the Middle East. In Lebanon the resultant collapse of Ottoman authority left an Arab administration in charge, under the leadership of 'Umar Al Da'uq, a local Sunni Muslim leader. In 1918, Faisal, the son of Sharif Hussein, arrived in Lebanon with a token force to signify endorsement of this development, as part of the claim to the setting up of an Arab kingdom, including all of Syria, and including the Lebanon. The Maronites were dismayed, and the Muslim communities delighted, but these feelings were swiftly reversed. The intervention of the victorious European powers was the key to understanding this development - and the role of these powers in the region will form the focus of the next chapter, because they also were affected by the myths when exposed to them, and formulated policy that took such myths into account in most cases, rather than making a dispassionate assessment of the situation and then formulating policy.

²³³ K.S. Satibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 159-61.

Chapter 2

External Perspectives in the Historical Setting

One constant in twentieth century Lebanese politics has been the fact that each of the major communities has held to myths that have involved an external power identified within a community perspective as a 'protector' of its particular interests. For the Maronites in particular, such myths have become part of the unconscious collective tradition of the community, adhered to uncritically but also constantly susceptible to reworking to suit a particular situation or crisis. But such perspectives are sustainable because of the collaboration in such traditions of external powers, for a range of reasons relating to their own agendas over time, and because of the success of indigenous communities in presenting a community profile likely to evoke sympathy. This, in turn, has resulted in the creation of mythologies relating to Lebanese communities (and indeed the Middle East as a whole) on the part of such external powers. As well as the impact on community identities within Lebanon, the impact has been the establishment of a series of myths about 'Lebanon', particularly Western ones, that, as this chapter will demonstrate, were based on superficialities rather than on a genuine, historically-based understanding of the region.²³⁴ The importance of such shared myths relating to community identity at times of crisis such as 1958 was great, because of the habit of the indigenous communities of invoking 'protection' from outside forces to defend their interests; and because of the willingness of the external powers to be drawn in.

Marwan Buheiry has commented that in the case of Lebanon there is no instance of internal conflict without external intervention, something which he sees as 'constituting perhaps a law of Lebanese history'.²³⁵ His interpretation

²³⁴ See John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, Longman, London, 1984, p. 3, for some historiographical comment on such processes.

²³⁵ Marwan Buheiry 'External intervention and internal wars in Lebanon: 1770-1938' in Laurence I Conrand (ed.); *The Formation and Perception of the Modern Arab World*, Darwin Press Inc, Princeton, 1989, p. 137. Buheiry also commented on a series of further external interventions in Lebanon without the excuse of internal conflict to justify intervention, but that concept does not seem to be borne out by case studies of external interventions. Certainly it was not a factor in those interventions highlighted in Chapter 1, and was not a factor in 1958.

that territorially and culturally, Lebanon's strategic position has 'provided a fertile ground for the patron-client game in international relations', where the different Lebanese communities have considered that they 'possessed one or more traditional sponsors' from outside Lebanon and have involved these sponsors in Lebanese affairs from time to time, is a useful one through which to consider external involvement.²³⁶ It is also useful for an understanding of the dimension external perspectives have added to the evolution of community mythologies and so, identities, over time, both in terms of experience and the rhetoric used to define such identities.²³⁷

One of the most significant external contacts throughout Lebanon's history has traditionally been with Western Europe, including the papacy, from the period of the Crusades, at the end of the eleventh century.²³⁸ The crusader period was to have lasting effects, if only because the involvement of the Western powers in the region was the result of an appeal from that area, and not a question of 'unprovoked' Western interference.²³⁹ Essentially many of the assumptions made by external Western European powers, notably France and the Vatican, about the region of Lebanon and its inhabitants have their origins in this period, or are at least perceived to have done so.²⁴⁰ In the eleventh century Western Europe or Latin Christendom was emerging from the chaos of the previous century and beginning to regain confidence in itself and its wider destiny as the only true guardian of the Christian message. The Crusades were in many ways a manifestation of these feelings, particularly the feelings of superiority felt by Western or Latin Christianity towards other

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

²³⁷ This rhetoric has increasingly related to the European concepts of nationalism; see Chapter 1, p. 88.

²³⁸ The First Crusade started in 1096-7. For comments on the European background at the time of the crusades, see David Nicholas, *The Evolution of the Medieval World, Society, Government and Thought in Europe 1312-1500*, Longman Group Ltd, London, 1992, pp. 264-5 in particular.

²³⁹ The Byzantine emperor, Alexius I Comnenus appealed to Pope Urban II (1088-99) for aid against Turkish invaders which he saw as threatening Byzantium. However, the emperor had expected cash aid and a few reinforcements, rather than the crusading army which actually turned up; especially since that army turned its attention against the Muslim ruler of the Holy Land, rather than helping Byzantium to repel the Turkish invaders from Central Asia. See David Nicholas, *The Evolution of the Medieval World*, pp. 262-6; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, Athlone Press, London, 1987, pp. 1-2; Maurice Keen, *Medieval Europe*, Penguin Books, London, 1968, p. 124.

²⁴⁰ See, for example, Edward S. Creasy, *History of the Ottoman Turks from the Beginning of their Empire to the Present Time*, London, 1878, reprint Khayat, Beirut, 1961, p. 64; also J.A.R. Marriott, *The Eastern Question*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1951, p. 66. This work explicitly sees the Eastern Question, from the European perspective, as dating back to the crusading period.

versions of Christianity notably those prevalent in the Middle East. They also involved a mixture of religious and materialistic fervour.²⁴¹

The existence of even 'corrupt' Christian communities such as the Maronites in the area provided further justification for the crusading enterprise.²⁴² If the Franks were the natural leaders of Christians everywhere, then it was their duty to liberate the Holy Land and recover Jerusalem - but equally, Frankish willingness to undertake the task was tangible proof of their having been granted the leading role and having the right to judge their fellow Christians! Thus they could also argue that they were coming to rescue such communities from their own heresy, which Byzantium had failed to do, as well as rescuing the region as a whole from Islam, for which they would be duly rewarded by God.²⁴³ Such justifications laid the foundations on which later mythology about the Maronites in particular could be laid.

However, if their motivation was plain to the Crusaders, the 'infidel barbarians' of the region were apart from anything else puzzled by western Christian motivation and horrified by what they saw as the 'barbarism' of the crusaders.²⁴⁴ Faced with an invading army, Islam prepared to defend its territory and its faith. As Islam mobilised to resist the crusaders, the region of Lebanon saw a split amongst its inhabitants which was to begin the process of the creation of Western stereotypes, and so perceptions, of the region's peoples: stereotypes based more on confessional assumptions than anything else. The Maronites, or elements of that community at least, came to side with the Christian West and earned a special status in the eyes of the West as a result.²⁴⁵ Even those Maronites that did not openly or actually side with Latin

²⁴¹ It is not intended here to go into great detail on the Crusades. But it is important to make the following comments. Western Europe had an established tendency by 1096 to see the heresies that afflicted it as coming from the East, with the consequent impression that only Western Christianity preserved the 'true' faith in unadulterated form. This resulted in hostility not just towards Islam but also towards Byzantium. Both states and individuals hoped for material gain as well as a demonstration of moral superiority from these adventures. See Maurice Keen, *Medieval Europe*, p. 123; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, pp. 4; 5-7;14-15; Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe*, Longman Group Ltd, 1979, p. 127.

²⁴² The conviction of moral superiority comes out clearly from the messages of Pope Urban to his flock, rallying support for the Crusades, where he talks of the Franks as the natural leaders of Christianity. See J.R.S. Phillips, *The Medieval Expansion of Europe*, p. 117; Maurice Keen, *Medieval Europe*, pp. 123-5.

²⁴³ Such a reward was to be both earthly and heavenly; communal and individual. See Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe*, p. 117; Maurice Keen, *Medieval Europe*, pp. 123-5.

²⁴⁴ This horror was not just religious, distaste at the 'barbarity' of the personal hygiene and medical knowledge of the crusading invaders was also expressed. See David Nicholas, *The Evolution of the Medieval World*, p. 266.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 263. This was increasingly invoked by the Maronites as well, especially from the nineteenth century on. See, for example, Henri Lammens, *La Syrie: Précis Historique*, first printed 1921, reprinted Dar Lahad Khater, Beirut, 1994, pp. 146-7. While Henri Lammens may be a problematic historical source, he is useful in the indication he

Christendom were regarded by the Crusaders as doing so, earning them the status of 'natural allies' of Christendom. In Western eyes this had the effect of creating an enduring myth about their 'right' to interfere in the region, which could be evoked at times of need even if relations with Middle East Christian communities were not of regular importance. Of equal long-term significance, the Maronites were also seen increasingly as natural allies of Christendom by the world of Islam - possibly having the effect of driving them further towards the West's side in the conflict between Christendom and Islam.²⁴⁶

It might be expected that the Druze would, by contrast and in the context of Islamic expectations, take the side of Islam in the conflict. In reality the Druze position in this period was much more complex and their motivation much more ambiguous to outside perceptions. Druze ideas of their own localised self-interest, rather than any sense of loyalty to the Islamic world, dictated their actions. As a result, the majority of the Druze were perfectly prepared to take the side of the crusaders rather than that of Islam if it seemed to suit their agenda at the time.²⁴⁷ The long-term effect of this willingness to collaborate had little impact on Islamic perceptions of the Druze.²⁴⁸ As regards Western perceptions, it did have some effect, but the Druze had little importance in Western eyes over succeeding centuries until a revival of Western expansionism in the nineteenth century. The same was not true of the links between the Western world and the Maronite community - or at least elements of the latter in the period from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century.

provides of later European traditions and perceptions, as well as Maronite ones, of the crusading period. See K.S. Salibi, 'Islam and Syria in the Writings of Henri Lammens', in P. Lewis & B. Holt (eds), *Historians of the Middle East*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1962, p. 342. See also Chapter 1, p. 89 for comments on Maronite and Muslim perspectives on this period.

²⁴⁶ The evidence would seem to indicate that the crusaders almost took it for granted that the Maronites would look to Christendom and that they treated the Maronite community in the light of that expectation. See M. Jouplain, *La Question du Liban: Etude d'Histoire Diplomatique et de Droit International*, first published 1908, reprinted Fouad Biban & Co, Jounieh, Lebanon, 1961, p. 61.

²⁴⁷ This was particularly so for the period 1100-1125, when the crusaders were occupying the area of the modern Lebanese coast, more or less, and the Druze community felt it necessary to collaborate with them. However, later in the crusading period, at least, both the Franks and the Muslims were to take harsh measures against them.

²⁴⁸ The crusading period has traditionally been of much less significance to the Islamic world than the Western world and so participation by a group like the Druze who were apostate anyway was of less long-term significance than their general apostasy - an interesting contrast to the emphasis laid on Maronite participation by the West. As Bernard Lewis points out, at the time and subsequently, the crusades were 'not regarded by Muslims as something separate and distinctive'. Bernard Lewis, 'The Use by Muslim Historians of Non-Muslim Sources', in Lewis & Holt (eds), *Historians of the Middle East*, p. 181. See also Henri Lammens *La Syrie: Précis Historique*, pp. 195-6.

The point that impressed itself firmly on the psyches of those involved in sustaining such links was that they were not just informal. Nor were they simply religious. With the failure of the crusading movement, secular Western interest in the region of Lebanon was primarily economic until the late eighteenth century, when it again acquired a strategic dimension. France was the Western power that succeeded in sustaining long term links during this period, though attempts were made periodically by other powers to gain economic benefits for themselves in this way. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for example, the Italian Medici family attempted to create a sphere of influence in Lebanon. Venice was involved in trade with other parts of the Ottoman empire, and sought to take over from France in Lebanon. But both efforts were abortive.²⁴⁹ France had, by the early modern period, established the basis for lasting and sustained contact, very largely on its own terms, by establishing a presumption that was both ideological and practical that acknowledged them as the superior element in the link. This link originated in the efforts of the French monarchy to assert its power in Christendom. Using the Crusades as part of these efforts, Louis IX promised the Maronites his special protection in 1259.²⁵⁰ The assumption of French 'special protection' was to be sustained and formalised by successive Kings of France because of the tangible benefits it brought to France. Letters to this effect exist from Kings of France from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, including Henry IV, Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis Phillippe.²⁵¹ French influence was even acknowledged by Islamic authority at times. For example, a treaty was signed in 1535 between Francis I of France and Sulayman the Magnificent, when France gained privileges which included a tacit acknowledgement of its role as a protector of the Maronite community.²⁵² French involvement in the trade of the region focused on the silk trade from this period, and thereby on the Maronites, because it was the Maronites that dominated this trade; and it was to French advantage to play on the 'traditional links' between France and the

²⁴⁹ Henri Lammens, *La Syrie: Précis Historique*, pp. 242-5; M Jouplain, *La Question du Liban*, pp. 104-6; 111.

²⁵⁰ Later canonised, something which undoubtedly added to the status of the French monarchy, Louis IX (reigned 1226-70) was seeking in this instance to gain an advantage over Henry III of England, his rival both in Europe and in the Holy Land.

²⁵¹ See Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, Faber & Faber, London, 1991, pp. 258-9, for instance

²⁵² France at this time was seeking to develop economic links with the Ottoman empire as a whole, though it was not a major part of its trading policy. See Henri Lammens, *La Syrie: Précis Historique*, p. 242.

Maronites.²⁵³ But though the context in which the link operated between France and the Lebanon changed, as well as French motivations for sustaining the link, the presumption of a French cultural superiority did not disappear, rather it strengthened.

It was not just France that developed a 'special relationship' based on an exchange of presumptions rather than realities with the Maronite community in the crusading period, and then sustained it. The spiritually and temporally ambitious Latin or Roman Church also became directly involved through the channel of the Maronite Church.²⁵⁴ Serious missionary efforts brought the Maronite Church into a form of union with Rome in 1180. The 'heresy' of the original Maronite Church was forgotten and Rome worked hard to improve on and to expand its links with the Maronite Church, with considerable success.²⁵⁵ The Papacy established for instance the concept that the appointment of a Maronite Patriarch had to be 'approved' by Rome as a result of which the Patriarch was given a special ambassadorial status. Many Maronite clerics trained or studied in Italy from the late fifteenth century and a Maronite college was established in Rome in 1584.²⁵⁶ But the Vatican did not just rely on the presence of Maronites in Rome for sustaining its influence in the Maronite Church and through that, on the community as a whole. Roman Catholic missionaries (Franciscans, Jesuits, Capucins and Lazarists mainly) were active in Lebanon itself, working hard to develop the links between the Papacy and the Maronite Church still further. From the late sixteenth century in particular, these missionaries materially increased the importance of the Maronite Patriarch and the Church itself in the localities, but also strengthened the confessional base of Maronite community identity by emphasising the links with Rome.²⁵⁷

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 242-5.

²⁵⁴ Indeed, Rome was able to view its efforts with the Maronite Church as one of its few, as well as one of its lasting, successes stemming from the crusading movement.

²⁵⁵ M. Jouplain, *La Question du Liban*, p. 38.

²⁵⁶ K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, Caravan Books, New York, 1977, pp. 12; 122.

²⁵⁷ In the context of the *Imarah*, the Roman Church ensured its missionaries used their influence with Fakhr Al Din II, for instance, and with subsequent *amirs*, to advance Maronite interests - and they made sure that the Maronites were aware of this. The Capuchins were of particular importance during the time of Fakhr Al Din II, when they played on his ambition to develop an independent power base in Lebanon. See Henri Lammens, *La Syrie: Précis Historique*, pp. 244-5.

From the late eighteenth century, in the context of the weakening of the Ottoman empire relative to the power of European states, the Middle East, including Lebanon, again became a focus of interest to a number of those states, and not just to France. The Eastern Question, as it is commonly termed, in this period can be summed up as the clashes and tensions surrounding relations between the Ottoman empire and the Christian West, focusing on the relations between Ottoman authority and minority communities, especially Christians in that empire.²⁵⁸ These minority communities increasingly sought protection and support from the West and used the rhetoric of the West to express their ambitions for autonomy, or even independence, within that empire. This had an important impact on intercommunal relations in Lebanon, especially in terms of the expectations expressed by the Maronites on the basis of co-habitation with Muslim communities, and the reactions of those communities to the Maronite agenda. These expectations and reactions were made comprehensible to the West in relation to the background of myths already established about the region. At this period, only France had a serious economic interest in the region, through her involvement in the silk trade. For other European powers, interest in the region of Lebanon was a mixture of strategic interests, and cultural imperialism, including a renewed missionary fervour, but this time focusing on a largely Protestant evangelicalism, which in itself led to myth creation.²⁵⁹

In addition, the Enlightenment movement had seen a hardening of European cultural attitudes towards non-Europeans, because one product of Enlightenment thought was a habit of 'classifying' and 'listing' the objects of the natural world, both animate and inanimate. Long before the publication of Darwinian ideas, Europeans had become accustomed to ranking things around them according to ideas of 'superiority' and 'inferiority'. The ranking was extended to human peoples and the ranking here tended to be based on physical appearance and the resemblance of cultures to European cultures.

²⁵⁸ See M.S. Anderson, The Eastern Question, 1774-1923, Macmillan, London 1966 and William Doyle, The Old European Order, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, pp. 288-9. For a non-European perspective see K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 16-17; Malcolm Yapp, The Making of the Modern Middle East, 1792-1923, Longman, London, 1987, pp. 59; 114.

²⁵⁹ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 56-7; D Chevallier, La Société du Mont-Liban à l' époque de la Révolution Industrielle en Europe, Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1971, pp. 202-208, p. 293.

The higher the degree of resemblance, the more 'civilised' the people and thus the higher up the ranking they were placed. But such exercises also included potential for a people moving up the rank order by improving their civilisation (and consequently their physical appearance would also become refined). One of the key things in this was possession of or subsequent acceptance of Christianity. The comment of one nineteenth century children's text gives an indication of the kinds of stereotyping established:

We will not say that the Turks cannot mend, but that they are not a hopeful people; they are trying for the externals of our civilisation without the Christian faith on which in every instance it has been based. Before any great improvement can take place in their condition, they must....renounce almost every quality which we in Western Europe have hitherto considered to be synonymous with the name of a Turk.²⁶⁰

The publication of Darwin's ideas and the subsequent development of ideas of social Darwinism simply gave scientific reinforcement to already established myths. So Lebanon could be valued because it had a well-established 'civilised' Christian community which in European eyes gave the Europeans a duty of protection over that community. This enabled the West, or at least the Roman Catholic element in it, to endorse unequivocally their preference for their Maronites. The Western Protestant perspective saw the Maronites as Christian but in need of help to see the light, and identified the Druze as a backward group, greatly in need of Western help if they were to be 'improved' and converted. In particular, this helps to explain the nature of the nineteenth century British (and American) interest in the area, and to give the background to Anglo-French rivalry.²⁶¹

In terms of European imperialism in the nineteenth century, as Edward Said argues, 'In the expansion of the great Western Empires, profit and hope of further profit were obviously tremendously important, but there is more than that to imperialism and colonialism'. Said adds, furthermore:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and even

²⁶⁰ Mrs Bessie Parkes-Belloc, Peoples of the World, Cassell, Petter & Gilpin, London 1867, p. 158.

²⁶¹ John Spagnolo, 'Franco-British Rivalry in the Middle East', in Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills, Lebanon, History of Conflict & Consensus, I.B. Tauris, London 1988, p. 107.

impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination.²⁶²

This perspective was not new in Lebanon's experience of contact with the West: French missionaries had long seen themselves as having a 'civilising' mission in the region.²⁶³ However, its expression in the shape of paternalism and in the context of a European global dominance such as existed in the nineteenth century was new.²⁶⁴ In terms of attitudes towards the Lebanese communities, confessionally based stereotypes were still powerful. It is instructive to note the Protestant British attitude of the time towards the Maronites and the Druze in Mount Lebanon:

Taken by themselves, they (the Druze) are a race with many good qualities - bold, active and industrious, but their sense of religious animosity once roused, they are most ferocious, and while they retain their peculiar tenets, there is no hope of their ever becoming a really civilised people.²⁶⁵

The Maronites, identified as 'members of the Church of Rome', were an improvement on the Druze - being, for one thing, physically cleaner. But implicit in the description of the Maronites and their dispute with their Druze neighbours was the idea that despite their Christianity, they were not really civilised because their form of Christianity, Roman Catholicism, was an inferior or debased form of Christianity as compared to Protestantism.²⁶⁶

Popular British mythology about the region was affected by the perspective of Charles Churchill, who settled in Lebanon in the mid-century and used his writings to spread his vision of a future when the region would

²⁶² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Chatto & Windus, 1993, pp. 8-9. Said also refers to 'An almost metaphysical obligation to rule subordinate, inferior or less advanced people', *Ibid*, p. 9. The various communities of Lebanon, Christian or not, certainly fell into this subordinate category.

²⁶³ Henri Laurens, *Le Royaume Impossible*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1990, p. 118.

²⁶⁴ See, for example, Kathryn Tidrick, *Empire and the English Character*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1990, p. 3 for some comments on paternalism in operation.

²⁶⁵ Mrs Bessie Parkes-Belloc, *Peoples of the World*, p. 219.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 216; 217-218. Another British observer, Charles Henry Churchill, accused the Maronites of 'persistent jealousy' which led to outbreaks of violence in the area, such as the events of 1860. See Charles Henry Churchill, *The Druze and the Maronites Under Turkish Rule, from 1840-60*, Bernard Quaritch, London, 1862, pp. 1-3. The British focus on the Druze in this period was first established by Lady Hester Stanhope. She first aroused British consciousness of the region at the level of popular literacy, as a result of the publication of her own colourful memoirs. Churchill was another British eccentric and refugee from disapproval at home. See Robin Bidwell, Introduction, reprint of Charles Churchill, *The Druze and the Maronites*, Garnet Publishing, London, 1994, p. x.

become independent from Ottoman rule. In such a case it could acceptably only 'become English or else form part of a new independent state' which he again envisaged would be pro-British before anything else. He attempted to further British links with the area through works like Mount Lebanon in 1852 and The Druze and The Maronites in 1862. In the introduction to the latter he wrote:

The time is fast approaching when the imperative claims of Christianity and humanity must and ought to absorb all others in the much vexed Eastern Question. I would fain hope that this present work may induce some to take the point of view when contemplating England's present or anticipated action in the political affairs of the Ottoman empire.²⁶⁷

Such British attitudes laid the foundation for an Anglo-French rivalry in the area; given the long-established French links there, and an equal French conviction of their superior civilisation.²⁶⁸ Both powers had realised that the Ottoman empire was a crumbling edifice in political terms. This consciousness increased a general European belief in their own superiority in all identifiable aspects, but also gave a conviction to Britain and France that they had a duty, or even a right, to oversee the affairs of the Ottoman empire, a duty they expressed partly by reference to their established mythologies about communities in regions like Lebanon. The result was a new phase in European-Ottoman relations.

Due to a complex variety of political, religious and cultural strategic European interests in the region covered by the Ottoman empire, European powers in the period up to 1914, especially Britain and France, believed their own interests were best served by keeping that empire going. As a result the various interested European powers, but again especially Britain and France, felt they had a right and a duty to intervene in aspects of internal Ottoman policy that in their eyes impinged on their interests or those of their 'clients'. It was in defence of their own wider interests, for example, that the European powers of Britain and Austria had intervened in Ottoman affairs to expel the

²⁶⁷ Charles Henry Churchill, The Druze and the Maronites, Preface, p. v.

²⁶⁸ See, for instance, Colin Mooers, The Making of Bourgeois Europe, Verso, London 1991, pp. 44-6.

Egyptians from Syria in 1840.²⁶⁹ Such demonstrations of European might served to emphasise Ottoman dependence on these powers for its survival to those powers, and the Lebanese communities looking to them for support. European pressure on the empire produced between 1836 and 1876 the *Tanzimat* programme, a programme which was intended to 'civilise' the empire in a European sense through a process of 'democratisation'.²⁷⁰ If the Ottoman empire was able to use the programme for its own ends, it also produced a considerable amount of resentment within the empire which tended to be directed against the minority communities favoured by the Europeans. This in turn created practical dilemmas for the European powers which claimed to support and protect the interests of these communities.²⁷¹

The confessional dimensions to the Lebanese problem, including the Catholic-Protestant tensions of the European powers, ensured that nineteenth century Europe would not be able to produce a solution acceptable to all the European powers, let alone the confessional communities in Lebanon.²⁷² In escalating the tension between Maronites and Druze, the *Tanzimat* programme thereby ensured that the interested European powers would act to sustain Ottoman rule in the region; and it is certainly possible to argue that expectations of European intervention lessened the chance in this period of any compromise of interests between the communities.²⁷³ Yet the series of crises in Lebanon in the nineteenth century did confirm the belief of both Britain and France that management of the region including Lebanon was

²⁶⁹ See Chapter 1, pp. 77-8; see Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont-Liban*, p. 37.

²⁷⁰ This programme was discussed in terms of its impact on Lebanon in Chapter 1; but for a more general survey and for the European dimension, see Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Middle East*, p. 111; also Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury & Mary Wilson (eds), *The Modern Middle East*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1993.

²⁷¹ In terms of Lebanon, of course, this was brought home to the European powers with the events of 1858-60, when they had to face the fact, as did the Ottoman government, that the *Tanzimat* was not well received by those it was intended to benefit. See Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Middle East*, pp. 59; 114.

²⁷² In this context, it is interesting to compare the cases of Lebanon and Montenegro within the Ottoman empire. They had in common the geographical setting of remote mountains and a past of virtual autonomy for Montenegro and periods of practical autonomy for Lebanon (during the emirate period for example). But Montenegro became secularised from the mid-nineteenth century. Thus when the inhabitants of the region united to fight for independence from the Ottomans in 1878 they won general European aid and approval. European intervention advanced Montenegro's claims for independence essentially because it did not directly impinge on existing European rivalries. See Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Middle East*, p. 60.

²⁷³ The British gave their support primarily to the Druze; while the French maintained their long-standing support of the Maronites. Ottoman officials could, and did, take advantage of this to neutralise European support for any further autonomy in the region by setting one European power against the other. In an age of rivalry between the European powers, especially Britain and France, in the imperial arena this had the effect of increasing the tensions between these powers in areas outside the Middle East as well as within it. As a result, the European perspective on the Middle East problem became so involved that any incident taking place in Lebanon had its echoes in Europe and political relationships there. See Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Middle East*, p. 136; K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 3; John Spagnolo, 'Franco-British Rivalry in Lebanon', Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills (eds), *Lebanon. A History of Conflict and Consensus*, I.B. Taurus & Co Ltd, London, 1988, pp. 109-10.

essentially an Anglo-French concern, rather than an Ottoman one, where the nature of Anglo-French relations, rather than local agendas, would be decisive in setting the terms of European intervention.²⁷⁴ Given that it was plain to interested parties in Lebanon that any autonomy, let alone independence, from the Ottoman empire would depend on European support, this led to a situation where the Maronites, in particular, expressed their agenda increasingly in terms acceptable to European powers, rather than addressing the other communities and seeking to evolve joint agendas. This deepened the patron-client relationship between the Maronites and France; it also ensured that co-habitation, rather than co-operation would be seen by the Maronites as being in their best interests in terms of intercommunal relations.

From the French perspective, policy in the region up to 1914, and subsequently, was focused on efforts to maintain influence in the management of the Eastern Question as a whole by retaining its influence in Lebanon. There was also a continuing economic dimension to their interest in Lebanon, a dimension that was given priority by banks and commercial houses and companies involved in textile, mainly silk, production in Lebanon. The production of silk was important to the Lebanese, especially in the Mount Lebanon area.²⁷⁵ But French textile firms, especially silk firms, made an important contribution to the French economy; and these had a heavy reliance on the supply of cheap silk from Lebanon. In the immediate pre-war period, France was absorbing 93% of Lebanon's silk.²⁷⁶ These factors meant that French interests were best served by fostering the concept that France was the

²⁷⁴ French willingness to co-operate with the British in the region varied according to a variety of factors. After 1870, France was in direct competition with the British in areas like Africa, and was seeking to assuage her humiliation in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1. In the period 1870-1905, French co-operation with Britain in Lebanon was minimal, therefore. The renewal of good relations between the powers, in the 1905 *Entente Cordiale* also signalled a new willingness to seek solutions to rivalries in this area, as elsewhere, on a basis of compromise. However, it would always be a mistake in this period, as later, to ignore the continual strand of French suspicion of British motives and actions in Lebanon, and elsewhere. See John Spagnolo, *ibid*; also John Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon*, St Anthony's College, Oxford, 1977; Gerard Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1993, pp. 30; 65. For the wider perspective see Bernard Porter, *The Lion's share: A short History of British Imperialism 1850-1983*, Longman, London, 1984; Dominique Chevallier, *La Société du Mont Liban*, pp. 162; 167.

²⁷⁵ It is estimated that between 1911 and 1912, for instance, 50% of the population of Mount Lebanon was dependent on the trade for their living. See Boutros Labaki, *Introduction à l'Histoire Économique du Liban, Soie et Commerce Extérieur en Fin de Période Ottomane*, publication de l'Université Libanaise, Section des Etudes Économiques, IV, Beirut, 1984, pp. 147-9.

²⁷⁶ The indigenous production of raw silk in France was badly affected by disease; Lebanon's low taxes and cheap labour, relative to levels in France, ensured a supply of silk that was cheap, making French silk cloth a profitable commodity to all concerned. *ibid*.

natural ally of the Maronites in times of difficulty.²⁷⁷ France thus emphasised its 'time-honoured' role as protector of Catholics and Catholic-related Christians.²⁷⁸

France recognised that at least virtual independence from the Ottoman empire was part of the Maronite agenda for which they expected French support.²⁷⁹ But by this time, the Europeans had established a set of reasonably coherent criteria for the establishment of an independent state, and there was considerable debate over whether those criteria were fulfilled in Lebanon. From a European perspective at this time, the only 'genuine' basis for the creation of an independent state was the existence of national feelings and aspirations.²⁸⁰ French political circles became receptive to the idea of a national feeling developing in Lebanon, under French tutelage. The emergence of Yussuf Karam and his appeal for French support was thus greeted by French political and intellectual circles with enthusiasm and encouragement, but without much surprise.²⁸¹ In exile in France, Karam became not an unsuccessful malcontent, but a gallant, heroic martyr who had sacrificed all he had, except his life, for his country.²⁸² It became possible, now, to claim there was a 'nationalist leader' in Lebanon, with popular support. From this it was possible to construct a theory of an emerging national feeling in Lebanon which was essentially Christian, and dependent on France for

²⁷⁷ This was not to be difficult in the period up to 1914. The Maronites accepted French advertisement that they had intervened on behalf of the Maronites in 1860, for instance, convinced by the rhetoric that France was committed to furthering Maronite interests, but failing to comprehend the wider agenda involved from the French perspective.

²⁷⁸ It must be remembered that other Catholic powers, notably the Austrian and Italians, were also interested in increasing their power in the region by persuading the Maronites to look to them, but their interest was not reciprocated by the Maronite community.

²⁷⁹ In fact, French willingness to commit themselves to any major extent to the Maronite cause was limited; especially since the French did not feel their hold over the community was threatened by the British. In 1860, for instance, it was not until after the massacres of Christians in Damascus that the French government despatched troops to intervene. The instructions to the 7,000 troops sent to Beirut were that they were to help the Ottomans re-establish order in Lebanon, as well as to guard the Christians there. Equally, the compromise that settled the 1860 crisis consisted of a formula that supported Ottoman power rather than supporting the Maronites or any other local community such as the Druze. See K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 109; Leila Fawaz, *An Occasions for War*, I.B.Tauris, London, pp. 192-228.

²⁸⁰ It had been this that had 'justified' the creation as nation-states of Italy and Germany, for example. There was an example of a creation of a nation-state in a former area of the Ottoman empire - Greece, established in 1830. But all these examples had, in European eyes, the gloss of nationalism according to European definitions. Gerard Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, pp. 20; 30; E Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1983; E Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, Praeger, London, 1960.

²⁸¹ Karam was a Maronite leader from Ihdin in the north, who first came to prominence in the *Tanzimat* period, co-operating with the Ottoman authorities, notably in subduing the Kiswaran peasant revolt. He had expected to be rewarded with high office in the aftermath of the 1860 settlement. Disappointed, he turned to rebellion against the Ottoman state. On his defeat in 1866, Karam had been sent into exile in Europe. See K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 113-14; John Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861 - 1914*, Ithaca Press, London, 1977 pp. 151-5; Meir Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon*, Croom Helm, Beckenham, 1985, p. 17; Gerard Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, p. 30.

²⁸² John Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon*, pp. 201; 151-5.

support, providing an interesting development of the myths about Lebanon in the patron-client context.²⁸³

However, the situation was complicated by the fact that it was not only among the pro-French, pro-Roman Catholic Maronites that ideas of nationalism had begun to have an impact by the last decades of the nineteenth century. The influence of European and American Protestantism was significant in the development of the 'Arabic scholarly and literary revival of the nineteenth century'.²⁸⁴ This encouraged the development of an Arab nationalism that saw Lebanon as part of an essentially secular Arab world, not as some outpost of Western Catholic civilisation. While this perspective initially entailed no threat to the ideas of the Maronites, since both advocated the ending of Ottoman dominance as their first goal, the reaction of the interested European powers to this development of Arab nationalism was not so neutral, and this was inevitably to have its effect on Lebanon. For instance, it implied the creation of an independent Syria including Lebanon, a concept favoured by Britain because it seemed to offer more opportunities to her. By contrast this idea of a secular Arab Syria was vehemently opposed by France because it seemed to be contrary to French interests.²⁸⁵ Equally, British 'support' for the Arab cause was to have its long-term impact on the level and seriousness of Arab nationalist expectations of British support, especially after 1914, in ways that did not necessarily relate to concrete expectations of economic or other benefits, but instead had more to do with established ideological patterns.²⁸⁶

What was to bring Britain and France together in the early years of the twentieth century, was not developments in Lebanon itself, but their perception

²⁸³ In fact, the support even among the Maronite community in Lebanon was by no means universal, but by this time, there was an established Maronite emigrant community in France which ensured Karam a certain publicity. See L. Baudicour, *La France au Liban*, Dentu, Paris, 1879, Chapter 6.

²⁸⁴ A leading 'Lebanese' figure in this was Butrus Al Bustani, an American-educated scholar who drew on the techniques of European scholarship to fuel the discovery of a notable and noble Arab culture in the past. There was a European perspective on Arab history which pointed to past influence of Arab culture on European thought. This movement was not just confined to Lebanon, but Lebanon played an important part in this movement. See K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 147; 154-6; Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 100-1; 132-45.

²⁸⁵ France felt the need to demonstrate the linkage between French and Maronite interests explicitly, to counter British support for Arab nationalism in the period to 1914, See Adel Ismail, *Documents Diplomatique et Consulaires relatifs à l'histoire du Liban et des pays du Proche Orient du XVII^e siècle à nos Jours*, Editions des oeuvres Politiques et Historiques 1975-178, Vol 20, No. 69, pp. 214-16.

²⁸⁶ See Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1917*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1918, p. 19.

of a growing German threat, in the Middle East as elsewhere.²⁸⁷ The tangible result of this was a defensive drawing together, expressed in the 1905 Entente Cordiale; which saw the first tentative arrangements which were to dictate the post-1918 pattern of European involvement in the Middle East.²⁸⁸ The spirit of general co-operation between Britain and France in the Middle East continued up to the outbreak of war against Germany in 1914, and the involvement of the Ottoman empire increased it, since it was tacitly acknowledged that the spoils of any victory would include a dividing up of the imperial possessions of the losers; and in terms of the Ottoman empire, Britain and France expected to be the major beneficiaries and made plans accordingly.²⁸⁹ This had implications for the future of Lebanon itself, a factor swiftly realised by elements in the Maronite community which had well-established links with France. Along with their counterparts in France, a publicity campaign was undertaken to make known to the French public, through speeches and articles dealing with the disposal of the post-war Ottoman empire, that it was important to ensure that French influence was maintained in the region.²⁹⁰ This was particularly so for Lebanon, since it was, in the words of the British, not a 'purely Arab' area. Insofar as it had time to consider it, then, the mood of the French public was that the 'civilising mission' of France should continue and prevail in Syria and Lebanon, because France had 'rights' there. This emotional dimension meant

²⁸⁷ The 'Arab Question' was assuming a greater importance in the early years of the century, as the Ottoman empire became ever more unsettled as a result of internal unrest. In 1905 Young Turk activity in the heartland of the Ottoman empire became significant; and a manifesto on the Arab dream was addressed to the Great Powers. In 1908 the Young Turk movement came to power. In the period 1908-14, this had a considerable impact on Lebanon; and resultant appeals were made by the Maronites to the European powers involved in the 1860 settlement. But the new *rapprochement* between Britain and France cannot be seen as a direct response to this local unrest; it was part of wider considerations. See Chapter 1, pp. 84-5 for the Maronite position; Zeine N. Zeine, The Emergence of Arab Nationalism, 1973. With a Background Study of Arab-Turkish Relations in the Near East, Caravan Books, New York, 1973, pp. 66-72;86-91.

²⁸⁸ For instance, German plans for a Berlin to Baghdad railway set alarm bells ringing in London and Paris as part of a German global strategy. As part of the *Entente Cordiale*, there was an agreement between Britain and France on a series of imperial rivalries in areas where their interests had clashed during the nineteenth century. Thus Britain was to have a free hand in Egypt in return for France having similar freedom in dealing with Morocco. Equally spheres of hegemony in the Levant were agreed; with France looking to Lebanon and Syria and Britain to Palestine and Iraq. Elizabeth Monroe, Britain's Moment in the Middle East, p. 79; Zeine N. Zeine, The Emergence of Arab Nationalism, pp. 102-3. See also J.A.S. Grenville, A World History of the Twentieth Century, Vol 1, 'Western Dominance, 1900-45', Fontana Press, London 1987, pp. 50-60, for a brief summary of diplomatic patterns in this period.

²⁸⁹ J.A.S. Grenville, World History, p. 54; Zeine N. Zeine, The Emergence of Arab Nationalism, pp. 100-106.

²⁹⁰ The economic dimension to this must not be forgotten; the war seriously affected the silk trade, for instance, as French firms were expelled from Lebanon in 1914, and the banks, commercial houses and firms involved in the trade wished to see that trade restored and with greater guarantees of its continuance - something best achieved by a formal acknowledgement of French involvement in the area in some form or other. See Boutros Labaki, Introduction à l'Histoire Économique du Liban, IV, pp. 147-9; Michel Seurat, L'État de Barbarie, Editions du Seuil, 1977, pp. 173-220.

that it had implications for French domestic politics, and thus it became a sensitive national issue.²⁹¹

The other major power involved in the Middle East equation was Britain. France's stance on the region was relatively straightforward; she wished to preserve her influence in Syria and Lebanon essentially, in some form or other. Britain's position was complicated by the immediate considerations of the wartime campaign against Germany in the region, by her imperial responsibilities including India and Egypt, and by the competing claims for British support of Arab nationalists and Zionist activists.²⁹² The British need for an Arab revolt is highlighted by the correspondence between Sir Henry MacMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, and the Arab leader Sharif Hussein in 1915 and early 1916. Sharif Hussein indicated to MacMahon in July 1915 that, in return for a series of 'basic provisions' that amounted to the creation of an Arab nation that would include Syria and Lebanon, Britain would be granted preferential status, and an Arab revolt would be undertaken.²⁹³ In a subsequent change of letters, Sir Henry MacMahon responded with a rhetoric that certainly can be read as promising British support for the creation of an Arab state at least partially covering Syria and Lebanon, although equally, it was open to other interpretations, as the Arabs were to find.²⁹⁴ British interests in Palestine and Mesopotamia, in the context of her wider imperial responsibilities and the need to gain support at home for a post-war settlement that included these areas as part of the British sphere, were the key to the British failure to support the Arabs at the Peace Conference.²⁹⁵ It was these considerations that lay behind the British

²⁹¹ Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1968 edition, pp. 44; 81.

²⁹² See Zeine N. Zeine, The Emergence of Arab Nationalism, pp. 103-4;106-8;115-23; George Antonius The Arab Awakening, first published in 1939 by J.B. Lippencott Co, New York, re-print by Hamish Hamilton Ltd, London, 1969, pp. 127-36; 258-70.

²⁹³ Sharif Hussein to Sir Henry McMahon, 14 July 1915, given in full in George Antonius, The Arab Awakening, Appendix A, pp. 414-15.

²⁹⁴ Sir Henry McMahon to Sharif Hussein, 30 August 1915; Sharif Hussein to Sir Henry McMahon, 9 September 1915; Sir Henry McMahon to Sharif Hussein, 24 October 1915; Sharif Hussein to Sir Henry McMahon, 5 November 1915; Sir Henry McMahon to Sharif Hussein, 13 December 1915; Sharif Hussein to Sir Henry McMahon, 1 January 1916; Sir Henry McMahon to Sharif Hussein, 30 January 1916, all given in full in George Antonius, The Arab Awakening, Appendix A, pp. 415-27. Antonius argued that 'The area of the Turk's defeat was precisely the area of Arab aspirations....The leaders felt that they had amply fulfilled their share of the bargain concluded between Sir Henry McMahon and the Sharif Hussein, and they confidentially looked to Great Britain to fulfil hers. But when it came to a reckoning at the Peace Conference, there was a wide divergence between what the Arabs claimed and what Great Britain was willing to recognise as her share of the bargain'. See George Antonius, The Arab Awakening, pp. 276-7.

²⁹⁵ The Balfour Declaration had been made in 1917, establishing the principle that Britain was favourably disposed to a 'Jewish national home in Palestine, provided this did not prejudice the civil and religious rights of the other

negotiations with France in 1916 over the disposal of the former Ottoman empire. The British informed the French of the content of the McMahon letters, and made it plain that they need not affect the progress of negotiations.²⁹⁶ In the spring of 1916, Francois Georges-Picot and Sir Mark Sykes drew up an agreement sharing out between France and Britain the spoils in a post-Ottoman Middle East.²⁹⁷ Essentially the resultant Sykes-Picot Agreement underlined and incorporated the perception that Lebanon was a part of Syria, rather than a separate entity. Essentially, the French government considered Lebanon as a geographical region within Syria; despite the existence of groups even within France that were in favour of a separate existence in some shape or form for Lebanon in the post-Ottoman world. Yet at the same time the French Foreign Ministry at least was aware that there might be problems in setting up such an entity; that the formerly privileged Maronites would not easily be absorbed into a wider Syria. But it comforted itself with the belief that the Maronites would realise that they could not demand the continuation of the privileges after their 'liberation' from Ottoman dominance, since the reason why the privileges had been needed would no longer exist.²⁹⁸ Yet the post-war settlement saw the setting up of separate mandates for Syria and Lebanon; the question is, why did this change of emphasis come about?²⁹⁹ The answer is that both Britain and France realised that it was necessary to reconcile conflicting perspectives, and for a time, to relegate the mythologies to a supporting position.

In September 1919, the British announced that they were withdrawing from Syria and handing over military control to France, with General Gouraud, Commander-in-Chief of the French troops there, becoming the French High

inhabitants of the country', a position which established a basic contradiction. Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, pp. 318-9; George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, p. 261.

²⁹⁶ Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Paris A-Paix, vol 178, folios 1-3, Paul Cambon, French Ambassador to London to Aristide Briand, 11 November 1915. The French were not happy, and were not fully informed of the extent of McMahon's rhetoric, but in the short term, the letters had little effect on the progress of Anglo-French negotiations in 1916. See Gerard Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, p. 88; Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, p. 73.

²⁹⁷ In broad terms, this Agreement effectively agreed to French control over Syria and Lebanon; and British control over Palestine and Iraq. For a more detailed outline, see K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 159-60. See also Antoine Hokayem & Marie Claude Bitar, *L'Empire Ottoman, Les Arabes et Les Grandes Puissances, 1914-1920*, les Editions Universitaires du Liban, Beirut, 1981.

²⁹⁸ Antoine Hokayem & Marie Claude Bitar, *L'Empire Ottoman*; Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Paris, A-Paix, vol. 178, folios 1-3, Paul Cambon, French Ambassador to London to Aristide Briand, 21 December 1915.

²⁹⁹ Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Nantes, Canton 2364, Telegram, Francois George-Picot to Mustapha Cherchali, Jeddah, 23 May 1917, from the Papers of Francois George-Picot.

Commissioner for the region, and effectively in charge of setting up the post-war civilian administration.³⁰⁰ In the peace negotiations that followed the ending of the war in November 1918, it became apparent to the negotiators that, despite the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the claims of Arab nationalists, French ambitions in the Middle East had become considerably inflated. Their demand now was for an acknowledgement of their control over all of 'Syria', which they interpreted as including not only Palestine but also northern Iraq, Cilicia and a large area of Asia Minor. Longrigg points to the stress the French now put on their 'traditional' 'rights' in the region so outlined, 'based on her ancient Capitulations; her protectorate of Catholics, her educational and philanthropic work, her economic effort in the territory'. As with her other imperial interests, significant elements of French intellectual thought, and certainly a large section of French popular thinking, perceived Syria as a part of France 'outré mer'.³⁰¹ But in the context of the post-war thinking of the victorious Allies, France believed her trump card in terms of her claim to this entire region was the 'affection' in which she believed she was held by the 'Syrian' people, which she expected to counter any talk of national feeling in the peace negotiations.³⁰²

It must be remembered that the French had a long-standing resistance to any idea of a pan-Arab national feeling; any talk in the pre-war period of a pan-Arab Syrian unity, for instance, had been firmly rejected as being contrary to French interests. The English had commented on French sympathies for Christian minorities in the Ottoman empire and the resulting disregard for any incipient Arab national feeling as early as 1913.³⁰³ Faced by the concepts of Maronite and Arab national feeling in the context of negotiations over the future of the former Ottoman empire, French negotiators initially refused to give either serious credence. In terms of Arab nationalism, the French argued that it was

³⁰⁰ In the aftermath of the success of the Arab revolt, the British had established military control in Syria and Lebanon, as well as Palestine, from October 1918. See K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 160-2; Zeine N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, pp. 122-3.

³⁰¹ Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate*, p. 73; K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 160; Malcolm Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Middle East*, p. 277. See Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Paris, A-Paix, vol. 178, folios 1-3, Paul Cambon, French Ambassador to London to Aristide Briand, 11 November 1915, for some hint that the French might move to such a position; M Seurat, *L'État de Barbarie*, pp. 177-204.

³⁰² This, of course, underlines the extent to which the French were in the immediate aftermath of peace, ignoring the existence of indigenous agendas in the area, including the Maronite agenda. See Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate*, p. 73; Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, p. 70.

³⁰³ Le Caire, *Documents Diplomatiques et Consulaires* Adel Ismail, 19 June 1913, vol. 20, no. 69, pp. 214-16.

the work of Britain, who had deliberately created an anti-French feeling, rather than genuine nationalism, amongst the Arabs.³⁰⁴ The French argued that a 'Bedouin', Sharif Hussein, despite being the ruler of Mecca and a member of the Prophet's own tribe, was not capable of inspiring or leading any genuine mass national feeling in the region. This could be found only amongst the more Westernised, or 'Catholic' communities of the region, and France was convinced that they favoured French control, and argued accordingly in the negotiations.³⁰⁵

In their arguments, the French ignored the evidence of the recent past.³⁰⁶ Any form of self-government such as the Arabs seemed to be claiming was not suitable, it was argued, for such a primitive group as the Arab, and experience of French benevolent policy would show them their folly.³⁰⁷ It was in this belief that the French began to talk to Arab leaders even before the formal start of peace negotiations; a position which helps to explain the emphasis on a Syrian entity and not a separate Syria and Lebanon. In this way, the French hoped to convey a message that France was the protector of Muslim as well as Christian interests, and consequently, that it was in the interests of all that the French secured a mandate over the whole region.³⁰⁸ Picot attempted to persuade Faisal that if he looked to a future pan-Arab entity which included Lebanon, the only way of achieving it would be as a result of a French mandate over the region, since only France could unify the region securely and peacefully in the short term.³⁰⁹ In a meeting on 13 April 1919, the French believed they had achieved a basis for co-operation, where Faisal

³⁰⁴ They also accused Britain of being motivated by a spirit of anti-Catholicism, which blinded them to the 'real' interests and desires of the inhabitants of the region, as well as to French disinterest in seeking to pursue her 'mission civilatrice' there. In their pro-Protestant bitterness at their failure to establish themselves as a major force in the area, they argued, the British were using 'a Bedouin and his horde of bandits' to create a false impression of Arab popular nationalism, because they had bribed the 'Bedouin' into a pro-British stance. Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, pp. 74-81; Lyon Republicain, 4 August 1920.

³⁰⁵ Ibid; Henri Lammens, La Syrie: Précis Historique, pp. 329-40.

³⁰⁶ For instance, they ignored the 1912 incident of the Syrian Martyrs and the impact it had had on Arab feelings in arguing that Arab nationalism was a purely British creation which would disappear once France embarked upon their great and historic task of civilising the Middle East. See Henri Lammens, La Syrie: Précis Historique, pp. 335-40; Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, pp. 73-4; Meir Zamir, The Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 59.

³⁰⁷ Henri Lammens, La Syrie: Précis Historique, pp. 335-40; Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, pp. 73-4; Meir Zamir, The Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 59.

³⁰⁸ Indeed, it was Picot who was entrusted with the task of negotiating with Faisal. He certainly had no wish to see a separate Lebanon, which he saw as being 'incompatible' with the good administration of a French mandate over the whole of Syria. Meir Zamir, The Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 56.

³⁰⁹ Ibid, pp. 56-64.

would gain popular Arab approval for a French mandate over a Syria that would take the form of a 'federation of local communities'.³¹⁰

Things were not to be so easy as the French had hoped. Faisal was also exploring the extent of British and American support for the Arab nationalist cause. He proposed, for instance, that the Peace Conference base a settlement on the wishes of the population in the Middle East, and that they set about finding out the wishes of the population in the area - a move calculated to win American involvement in the settlement of Syrian affairs. Faisal's belief was clearly that any such enquiry would endorse Arab claims, something which concerned the French and the Maronite community.³¹¹ It is in this context that the French government switched to taking more seriously the claims for a separate Lebanon. When Faisal's plan was mentioned at the Conference, the response of the 'Lebanese' delegation was that 'Lebanon' would not consent to an integration with Syria; that 'Lebanon' was not Arab, despite the infiltration of the Arabic language during the time of Ottoman rule; and that the maintenance of its distinctive non-Arab personality was dependent on French protection.³¹² This provides an interesting indication of the extent to which the French government, led by Clemenceau, was also exploring alternatives to his agreement with Faisal, particularly with this evidence that Faisal was not prepared to stand by the April 1919 agreement.

What caused the French concern was the advocacy by President Wilson of the principle of self-determination for formerly subject peoples. The claims of the various groups such as the Arab and Maronite nationalists convinced Wilson that there was a real need to investigate the situation in the Middle East. In relation to Lebanon, Wilson's attitude was aided by the opinions of Howard Bliss, the principal of the Syrian Protestant College of Beirut (later the American University of Beirut).³¹³ In the summer of 1919, a Commission of Inquiry, into the feelings and aspirations of the peoples in the Middle East was set up, the King-Crane Commission, with a brief to visit Syria,

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1.

³¹¹ Gerard Khoury, *La France et L'Orient Arabe*, p. 174.

³¹² Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Paris, Arabie vol. 5, fol. 69/70/t/v; Gerard Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe*, p. 187.

³¹³ Bliss had Wilson's ear because his father-in-law, Cleveland Dodge, was a close friend of Wilson.

Lebanon and Palestine.³¹⁴ It was in this context in order to counter the impact of Arab nationalism and any findings of the Commission not favourable to French aspirations that the French were forced to abandon their grand dreams for the Middle East, and, falling back on the Sykes-Picot Agreement, to make the most of their traditional influence. Thus they proceeded to capitalise on their old links with the Maronite community in Lebanon. They sought to ensure this community would express support for the establishment of a French mandate there. It was now necessary to move to a position where a separate Lebanese entity was part of French policy. So, rather than ignoring them, it became important to convince Maronite nationalists that accepting a period of rule by France was 'perhaps the best guarantee for a separate and independent Lebanon' - eventually.³¹⁵ Finally, to quote Salibi, 'French and Maronite interests clearly converged' from the later months of 1919.³¹⁶

The King-Crane Commission visited Lebanon in the summer of 1919. However, as their 1922 Report indicated, they found that only the Maronite and Greek Catholic communities were whole-heartedly in favour of a French mandate, and the Commission questioned their dominance in the area. But equally, there was no real unity amongst the other confessional communities in the region. If the Sunni, for instance, generally supported the idea of incorporation into an Arab state, the Druze generally tended to support the idea of a British mandate over the region. The conclusions of the Commission were effectively negative in terms of the French claim to a mandate in Lebanon, but by the time the Report was published, in 1922, the affairs of the region had already been settled essentially on the basis of the Sykes-Picot Agreement.³¹⁷ With the backing of Britain, the French were able to convince the Allied Supreme Council of their case and the right to set up mandates in Syria and

³¹⁴ It was initially intended to be a four-man commission, consisting of representatives from France, Britain, Italy and the USA. However, opposition to it by the European countries meant that it was in fact a two-man Commission, conducted by two American delegates who gave their name to the Commission: Dr Harold King and Charles Crane. See Gerard Khoury, *La France et L'Orient Arabe*, pp. 171; 190; Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East*, p. 63.

³¹⁵ K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 164.

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 163.

³¹⁷ It was fairly swiftly apparent that the Commission was going to be an irrelevancy to the settlement of the region and that this was realised even by leaders such as Faisal. Gerard Khoury quotes an accord of 6 January 1920 between Clemenceau and Faisal in which Faisal agreed to recognise a separate Lebanese entity under a French mandate, but leaving it to the Peace Conference to decide the limits of the entity. Gerard Khoury, *La France et L'Orient Arabe*, pp. 243-4; 311.

Lebanon was offered to France on 28 April 1920.³¹⁸ Under the terms of this offer, the Peace Conference even left it up to France to decide on the extent of a separate Lebanon, despite furious protests from Damascus.³¹⁹ Thereafter, the French moved swiftly to set up their mandate administration. In the event, the Peace Conference was to leave it up to France to decide on the limits of a Lebanese entity, despite furious protests from Damascus. Given her 'free hand', France was eventually to decide that her best interests lay in the creation of a Greater Lebanon.

From the point of view of French-Maronite relations, research by historians such as Gerard Khoury has revealed a complex process which led the French to this position, in which the most consistent element in French policy between 1916 and 1920 was willingness to use the Maronite agenda when, but only if, it suited their broader strategy. This interpretation is significant in that it helps to explain intercommunal relations in Lebanon in the post-war period, and to explain French-Maronite relations in the mandate period. A key factor which altered the emphasis of French policy in relation to Syria and Lebanon from 1919 was Faisal's refusal during that summer to accept the persuasions of men like Clemenceau and Picot, and his decision to rely instead on the international commission of enquiry to settle matters in the region and give due weight to Arab claims. Faisal's attitude was the basis of the rift that was to develop between the continuing and expanding Arab and Lebanese nationalist movements, and within Lebanon, it was to have a direct influence on Sunni thinking and consequently on their relations with the Maronite community.³²⁰ The Sunni, being used to being part of a greater entity, were less attracted by the concept of an independent Lebanon; they were also conscious of being a group not favoured by the Western powers and thus were instinctively opposed to any future that drew Lebanon further into contact with a Western power, seeing no personal, political or economic

³¹⁸ K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 162-4.

³¹⁹ Faisal had, by this time, declared independence and been 'crowned' as King of Syria in March 1920. In the summer of 1920, he led his troops in an attempted invasion of Lebanon. General Gouraud defeated Faisal's army with relative ease, and proceeded to evict the Arab nationalists from Damascus also, as a prelude to the setting up of French administrations in both Syria and Lebanon. See K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 164; Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, pp. 77; 88-93; Gerard Khoury, *La France et L'Orient Arabe*, pp. 307; 336.

³²⁰ Gerard Khoury, *La France et L'Orient Arabe*, pp. 307; 336; Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, pp. 79-80; Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate*, pp. 106-7.

advantages to this on the whole. In this sense, the Sunni community was more definitely opposed to the policy of the Maronites than were the Druze. It was, after all, at this point that French policy provided a Greater Lebanese entity which entailed the creation of a larger Sunni element in that entity because it took in parts of what had been Ottoman Syria. It is at this point, and in reaction to this external dimension, that the internal power struggle over the future of Lebanon switched from being between the Maronites and the Druze primarily, to being between the Maronites and the Sunni, primarily. The focus of that power struggle was increasingly to express itself in terms of Sunni hostility to Maronite myths about Lebanon, and the apparent endorsement of those myths by the French.

Once the plans for creating a unified Syria under a French mandate in co-operation with the Arabs had finally collapsed, the French became more susceptible to pressures from the Maronites in and outside Lebanon - including the pro-Maronite lobby in France itself.³²¹ This was particularly so given that the French were, in late 1919 and early 1920, beginning to be concerned about the decline of pro-French feeling among the Maronite community within Lebanon itself, if not amongst emigrant circles. Maronites had been made unhappy and suspicious by the negotiations with Faisal and had feared a sell-out. These fears became more concrete with the report of a Maronite deputation that heard Picot saying 'Since France would have the mandate over all of Syria, Lebanese Christian interests would be safeguarded so there would be no need to separate Lebanon from the rest of Syria.'³²² With such reports circulating in Lebanon, anti-French speeches began to be made, backed up by large demonstrations giving an indication that the Maronite community as a whole were opposed to French policy at this time. Bkirki, the seat of the Maronite Patriarchate, was the focal point for this Maronite opposition to French policy. Patriarch Howayek's fears of Muslim domination in a greater Syrian entity, and his consequent sense of being betrayed by France, was sufficiently great to lead him into taking a step that represented a very

³²¹ The possibilities for a separate Lebanon, and for that to be of a significant size, had always been part of French rhetoric. At the same time as negotiating with Faisal, Clemenceau had taken care to make noises of support for the Maronite agenda. See, for example, Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Paris, E. Levant, 1918-1929, Syrie, Liban, vol. 19, folio 40, Clemenceau to Howayek, Maronite Patriarch, 10 November 1919.

³²² Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, p. 62.

considerable break with tradition in terms of Maronite loyalties; he approached General Allenby to request, at the Peace Conference, British protection within a British mandate over the area.³²³

The French authorities were not pleased by these developments: Picot complained to the Quai d'Orsay that the Maronites, and the Patriarch in particular, were acting in a selfish and short-sighted manner. According to him, they were creating an anti-French agitation 'inspired only by the concern to protect the privileged status which circumstances had granted to them in former Lebanon'.³²⁴ Despite the outrage, however, the French realised that it was in their own interests to restore good relations and dispel Maronite resentments.³²⁵ After all, if control over Syria was ever to become difficult, France could at least fall back on Lebanon. Thus the French began to mark out a Lebanese entity that, apart from anything else, included the best part of the coastline of the region.³²⁶

Despite their continuing unhappiness with the French government, the Maronites had come to the conclusion that the only way to counter the claims of the Arabs, claims which had the sympathy of the British and the Americans, was to rely on the French. Consequently the Maronite delegation to the Peace Conference was encouraged to ask for a French mandate.³²⁷ The French Foreign Minister, Stephen Pichon, was in favour of this development.³²⁸ These groups were mainly made up of Maronite emigrants settled in France, who had begun to coalesce into coherent groups in the early part of the century. For example, the Comité Central Syrien, the CCS, was founded in June 1912 by a

³²³ In fact, the British stayed loyal to the spirit of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, if only so as to protect their own plans from French interference, and responded with advice to the Patriarch to appeal directly to the King-Crane Commission. See FO 371/4181 105815/2117, GHQ, Cairo to Foreign Office, 8 July 1919.

³²⁴ Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Paris, E Levant, vol. 13, no. 724, Beirut, Francois George-Picot to Stephen Pichon, 23 May 1919; 3 June 1919.

³²⁵ Clemenceau wrote to the Patriarch, promising to help the Lebanese maintain an autonomous form of government and an independent national status, in the expectation that this would provide a basis for Maronite acquiescence in the French take-over. Clemenceau hinted that this entity would take account of Maronite territorial claims, giving the 'Mountain' access to the coast and the territorial plains since these were 'necessary to its prosperity'; and argued that French sympathy with the aspirations of the 'people' of Lebanon had led him to these conclusions. In this light, he was sure that the Lebanese 'people' would welcome a French mandate over them, saying that 'I want to hope that the definitive solution to the Syrian question...will allow the French government to advance the wish of these people'. Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Paris, E. Levant, 1918-1929, Syrie, Liban, Vol 19, folio 40, Clemenceau to Howayek, 10 November 1919.

³²⁶ Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate*, p. 117.

³²⁷ Gerard Khoury, *La France et L'Orient Arabe*, p. 187.

³²⁸ Gerard Khoury, *La France et L'Orient Arabe*, p. 176, quoting Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Nantes, fonds Beirut, carton 2208, Telegram, Stephen Pichon to Francois George-Picot, E. Levant 1918-1929, Vol 57, Syrie, Liban folios 25-52; B. Oudet, 'Le Role du Comité Central Syrien dans la Politique Syrienne de la France, 16 June 1917-24 July 1920', unpublished MA thesis, Sorbonne, Paris, 1986, p. 41.

group of Paris-based Syro-Lebanese, headed by Chekri Ganem, with Dr George Samne as the Secretary General. It had close ties with the Comité de l'Orient and to imperial interests generally in France. Like other similar groups, it is believed by historians such as Gerard Khoury, drawing on French Foreign Ministry archives, that the Quai d'Orsay found it in its interest to fund such groups occasionally, so that at times of need, such as during the settlement of the old Ottoman territories, the Ministry could make use of them.³²⁹

Yet it would be a mistake to emphasise the contribution of these Maronite pressures on the French government to the establishment by France of a separate Lebanese entity based on the concept of a Greater Lebanon. Ultimately, the French had no objections to the demand for expanded borders for Lebanon as this was compatible with the seizing for France of as much territory as possible, and leaving the British with as little, through capitalising as much as possible upon the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement and so blocking Arab aspirations in the region.³³⁰ By 1920, the only way to do this effectively was by responding positively to the demands of the Maronite community, effectively endorsing their mythology about a separate Lebanon. The confusion and conflicting claims surrounding the peace process in the Middle East, and the report of the King-Crane Commission, when that emerged, served, however, to exacerbate tensions between the communities in Lebanon itself.³³¹

When it came to the shape of a Greater Lebanon, it is possible to argue that the interests of the Maronites did have a predominant effect - but the French decision to endorse that solution had already been taken primarily in the light of French interests, not Lebanese ones. Indeed the impact of Maronite thinking on the shape of Greater Lebanon arguably had more to do with the accident of the 'man on the spot' being General Gouraud, Commander-in-Chief of the French forces in the region, and so the man who played a major role in shaping Lebanon's borders. The evidence of many sources, both anti-French such as Faisal himself, and pro French, such as de

³²⁹ Meir Zamir, The Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 48; Gerard Khoury, La France et L'Orient Arabe, pp. 172;181.

³³⁰ Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, pp. 87-8.

³³¹ For instance, there was a breakdown in co-habitation and intercommunal violence, with killings on all sides, in the early months of the mandate. Ibid., pp. 87-93; Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, pp. 56-8;80-7.

Caix, Gouraud's own secretary, was that Gouraud was for personal reasons, very susceptible to pressure and suggestion from the Lebanese Christians.³³² Men like de Caix warned of the dangers of creating a Greater Lebanon that took in too much territory where there was an overwhelming and undoubted Muslim majority in the population. But Gouraud, inspired by the concept of the 'grandeur' of France in the region, and his own religious fervour, ignored such warnings. He was personally sure that 'the real Syria desired and awaited France', and he acted accordingly.³³³ His policy was to lay a fresh emphasis on the links between the Christian (and especially the Maronite) communities and France, and this added to Muslim hostility towards France - not the best basis for administering the new entity, as the French were to find out. This was even more the case since there was also an element of Maronite disappointment with France, especially since the French troops in Lebanon under Gouraud's control had not managed to prevent a number of Muslim killings of Christians during the 1919-20 period. France itself, or at least important elements there politically and intellectually, were disappointed to be awarded only a mandate, and had already begun to identify the task as a thankless one. French freedom to govern as they saw best would be practically restricted by the terms of the mandate, and the impact of the French civilising mission would be consequently reduced. So the mandate period started with no great feelings of optimism on any side.³³⁴

Yet despite this, the setting up of the mandate went ahead with due swiftness and ceremony once the problem of Faisal had been dealt with. General Gouraud issued the formal notice of the institution of a self-contained Greater Lebanon on 1 September 1920.³³⁵ Greater Lebanon was proclaimed as being the result of France's aim to help the populations of Syria and Lebanon to achieve their aspirations of freedom within the context of autonomous entities, wherein it was the intention of France to help the new state to achieve its dreams by overseeing its early stages. Of course, the

³³² Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate, pp. 100-7; Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, pp. 74-5; 93-4.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, pp. 89-90; 100-2.

³³⁵ For details of the constitution and the decrees setting up Greater Lebanon, as well as its territorial extent. See Nicola Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1957, pp. 49-51.

reality, was that it fulfilled the ambitions of the Christian population - though not even all of them, given the support of some Christian elements for Arab nationalism - but definitely not the desires of the vast majority of the Muslim population.

It has been argued that a nation exists 'when a significant number in a community consider themselves to form a nation or behave as if they formed one'.³³⁶ Anthony Smith states that 'Nations' are formed 'on the basis of pre-existing ethnies and ethnic ties', in a process where 'ethnies' were transformed into 'national ties and sentiments through processes of mobilisation, territorialisation and politicisation'.³³⁷ In the case of the Lebanese experience, what can be described as national feeling can be identified as coalescing in the nineteenth century, but in relation only to one single, and self-consciously well-defined ethnies: the Maronites. It was a vision based on what Salibi describes as the core to any politically conscious community: 'a common vision of their past'.³³⁸ The other communities in the mandate territory, however, did not share that common Maronite vision.

³³⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

³³⁷ Anthony Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, Camelot Press Ltd, London, 1971, p. 22.

³³⁸ K.S. Salibi, *House of Many Mansions*, p. 216.

Chapter 3

The Creation of Independent Lebanon

The proclamation that established Greater Lebanon under a French mandate set up a scenario that theoretically also confirmed a state based on a Christian-Muslim co-operation. In reality, it was more of a continuation of the established co-habitational patterns that made use of differing reactions to the myths surrounding that scenario. But eventually, towards the end of the period 1920-43, Lebanese from widely different backgrounds and outlooks in terms of their confessional and other orientations did manage to find a way of balancing the tensions over such myths. Under the pressure of a mutual hostility to the French agenda, they did create something new: a consensus that was to be a basis for setting up an independent Lebanon. This chapter will examine the evolution and basis of the consensus in this period, to demonstrate the extent to which it was based on compromises relating primarily to particular issues current in those years, rather than being a genuine compromise based on a settlement of those tensions and resentments that were expressed in the various community mythologies, especially those of the Maronites and the Sunni. The reason for this will be shown to be the reality that the 'consensus' was primarily an arrangement based on short-term expediency that, in the long-term, was only satisfactory to the political elites of these two groups in particular. Thus it did not really represent a move away from co-habitation to real consensus, as will be shown in subsequent chapters which will examine the continuation of conflicting community mythologies. Here it must also be remembered that if the 1920 proclamation did set up the concept of a Christian-Muslim co-operation, it also encapsulated the potential for very divisive and contradictory ambitions for the future within that state.

Yet there were new dimensions to the intercommunal patterns in the period 1920-43. There was the expansion of intercommunal tension at significant levels to areas outside the Mount Lebanon area itself.³³⁹ In addition

³³⁹ Though the Maronite community had spread outside the Mount Lebanon area, tensions between Maronites and other communities in places such as Beirut did not reach the levels of tension within Mount Lebanon where there was competition over the same territory.

the focus of intercommunal tension in the context of Greater Lebanon switched. From 1920 onwards, the focus was on the relationship between the Sunni community and the Maronites; rather than between the Druze and the Maronites. The tension expressed itself in terms of concern about the balance of power between those communities in a separate Lebanese entity, with each side seeking to protect its own position and mythology. Thus it is on the relations between Sunni and Maronites based their differing perceptions of themselves and the 'other'; and how these understandings translated themselves into action and policy, that this chapter, and the rest of the thesis, will focus. The Sunni were quantitatively the majority Muslim group within the new mandate and, in 1920, also identifiably the most significant group whose agenda and hopes for the future (as part of an Arab entity) looked along a path widely divergent from that hoped for by the Maronites. The Sunni came from a tradition of dominance within the Ottoman Empire where they had been in the majority, quantitatively and qualitatively throughout its existence.

The Ottoman empire had been an essentially Sunni entity in confessional terms. With its collapse, many of their leading figures had had expectations for a future that would sustain that historical dominance within an Arab context. Now they were forced to define themselves in a context that was neither Muslim nor Arab. The other Muslim groups in Lebanon, the Druze and the Shi'a, were not unsympathetic to the Sunni vision for the ideal future of Lebanon, but it was not of such fundamental significance to them, for a variety of reasons linked to their history as minority groups within the Ottoman Empire and their resultant community mythologies. Thus neither community felt the sense of defeat that the Sunni community felt with the setting up of the mandate, even if they resented the intrusion of the French and feared that the Maronites would be overly favoured. Individual elements in the Druze community did take up an actively anti-French and pro-Arab stance, notably the Arslan family, but most of the community sought compromises with the French, if not the Maronites. The Shi'a swiftly recognised they were better off as a sizeable minority in a Greater Lebanon, as opposed to a minority in an overwhelmingly Sunni Arab entity or French-administered Syria. In both

communities, the traditional social structure ensured that the position of leaders was generally adopted by their followers.³⁴⁰

It was not just the Sunni community that felt itself to be dealing with a new situation. The same was true of the Maronite community in 1920. This was not just because the Maronites now saw the Sunni as their major protagonists in any future struggles over the evolution of Lebanon as a separate state. In the context of Greater Lebanon, they feared they were no longer automatically seen by the West as an unquestioned majority community. In Mount Lebanon, the Maronites had been a powerful force, but in many of the areas of Greater Lebanon they had no such tradition. In areas outside Mount Lebanon there were other Christian communities; but these did not automatically fall into line with the pro-Western stance of the Maronites. This was particularly true of the Greek Orthodox community, whose situation was very complicated. Primarily located in the coastal towns and ports, where they formed a significant presence, they had no particular commitment to a separate Lebanese entity. The wealthy Greek Orthodox merchants, particularly in Beirut and Tripoli, relied on trade with the Syrian interior and wished to remain on good terms with the Sunni community in general. Concepts of Arab nationalism had attractions for some Greek Orthodox elements also. Thus they took up a consciously neutral stance in relation to the internal tensions of Greater Lebanon and the differing communal agendas, seeking to hold themselves aloof from any potentially clashing community visions.³⁴¹ Practically, many Maronites were fearful of finding their heartland submerged in a Muslim sea; making them more in need of protection from traditional European allies, rather than less. It meant that Maronite perceptions about the desirability of a separate Lebanese future were linked to a feeling of insecurity about its durability on its own terms.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ This was particularly true for those in Jabal Amil, though the Shi'a of the Biqa' were less content. See K.S. Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988, p. 169; Meir Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon*, first published 1958, reprinted Croom Helm, Beckenham, 1985, p. 136.

³⁴¹ See Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, p. 133; Rachid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, Reeve S. Simon (eds), *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, Columbia Press, New York, 1991, pp. 3-23; Zeine N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, Caravan Books, New York, 1973.

³⁴² Fadia Kiwan, 'La perception du Grand-Liban chez les Maronites dans la période du mandat', in Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills (eds), *Lebanon. A History of Conflict and Consensus*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988, pp. 127-9.

The first major dissension between these two 'new' protagonists focused on the issue of the geographical outlines of Greater Lebanon, and thus predated the actual setting up of the mandate. It underlines the extent to which the differing perceptions became fundamental to the relationship from the start. The fate of the coastal area and the four *qada's* claimed by the Maronites to be part of 'Lebanon' was a major issue, resulting in the description of them as the 'disputed territories'. Without these, the majority of Maronites believed that a separate Lebanon could not exist. But the population of the areas, predominantly Sunni, considered the territories as part of 'Syria'.³⁴³ The inclusion of Tripoli in Greater Lebanon, and its role within that entity also provided an issue surrounded with particular acrimony. The importance of Beirut can obscure the earlier importance of Tripoli, as a port and as a political centre.³⁴⁴ Tripoli's inclusion in a Greater Lebanon would be a real boost for that entity and by the same token, Syria would feel it a real loss. Ultimately, Maronite pressure was effective in persuading the French to choose Beirut over Tripoli as the headquarters, because of its nearness to Mount Lebanon, providing thereby an enduring cause of Sunni resentment.³⁴⁵

The endorsement by the French of the main essentials of the Maronite vision of Greater Lebanon was disguised to an extent by the presentation of the official announcement of the new mandate in 1920. The attendance of both the Mufti and the Maronite Patriarch at the ceremony gave the

³⁴³ They invoked the past Ottoman government of the areas to support their claims that the idea of a Greater Lebanon involved the 'dismemberment' of traditionally Arab land, and called on support from the population of the proposed Syrian mandate to prevent the incorporation of the disputed territories into what they saw as a predominantly Christian entity. Maronite assumptions were based on the fact that many of these territories had been part of the *Imarah* at some period in the past. See Chapter One, pp. 59-60.

³⁴⁴ Buheiry argues that up to the nineteenth century 'in terms of population size, construction activity, artisanal production and trade' Tripoli was the leading city in the region. Though Beirut's importance developed during the nineteenth century, Tripoli remained important. Marwan Buheiry, 'Beirut's Role in the Political Economy of the French mandate 1919-39' in Laurence I. Conrand (ed.), The Formation and Perception of the Modern Arab World, Darwin Press Inc, Princeton, 1989, p. 538; Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut. The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State 1840-1985, Ithaca Press, London, 1986, pp. 11-12.

³⁴⁵ From the perception of French administrators of the mandate it possibly made most sense to include Tripoli in Greater Lebanon because a number of experts favoured the idea that the administrative quarters of the mandate be located there. Arguably this might have compensated the inhabitants of Tripoli for their official detachment from Syria. But Emile Eddé and the Patriarch, Howayek, seem to have played pivotal roles in switching attention to Beirut. Their perception, and that of the Maronite mercantile elite which was predominantly Beirut-based, was that Tripoli needed to be in Lebanon, but subordinate to Beirut, promoting chances of Maronite economic dominance at the same time as allowing an exploitation of the trade that traditionally passed through Tripoli. According to Salibi and Salam, the realisation of this agenda by inhabitants of Tripoli helps to account for the enduring resentment displayed by Tripoli at its inclusion in the Lebanese entity. This demonstrated itself in rhetoric that was both anti-Maronite and anti-French into the period of independence. See Marwan Buheiry, 'Beirut's Role', in Laurence Conrand (ed.), Formation and Perception of the Arab World, p. 538; Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 118; K.S. Salibi, The Modern History of Lebanon, Caravan Books, New York, 1965, p. 169; Saeb Salam, Oral Interview, Geneva, 4 January 1991.

appearance of the support of both communities for the mandate.³⁴⁶ But the actual words used by Gouraud indicate the degree of rejection by the French of the Muslim position. He stressed the role of the French soldiers in freeing 'the Lebanese' of what he described as 'the evil power that wanted to dominate them'.³⁴⁷ He rubbed salt in the wounds of those in Lebanon that resented the French role in ending this kingdom by informing 'the Lebanese' that they owed a debt of gratitude to France for the French blood so generously 'donated' to safeguard them from this 'evil power'; with the implication that France expected that this should lead them to demonstrate this gratitude by docility within the mandate and its policies:

C'est en partageant votre joie et votre fierté que je proclame solennellement le Grand-Liban et qu'au nom du gouvernement de la république Française je le salue dans sa grandeur et dans sa force, du Nahr-EI-Kebir aux portes de la Palestine et aux crêtes de l'anti-Liban... Il y a cinq semaines, les petits soldats de France... donnaient l'essor à tous vos espoirs, en faisant s'évanouir en une matinée de combat, la puissance néfaste qui prétendait vous asservir.³⁴⁸

There was no such spirit of gratitude amongst the Sunni element. The proclamation simply served to emphasise the extent of their defeat.³⁴⁹ From start, the Sunni element in particular were to prove themselves willing to co-operate with any groups in Lebanon that opposed French policy. It was a question of the greater enemy. It was thus on emotional rather than on considered, rational grounds that in 1920 the overwhelming majority of Muslims refused to indicate an acceptance of the mandate by participation in its political mechanisms.³⁵⁰ This is underlined by the fact that those few Sunni figures who did co-operate with the mandate in the early years, in terms of taking up political positions, had no personal followings to take with them into

³⁴⁶ Fadia Kiwan, 'La Perception Maronite du Grand Liban', in Shehadi & Mills (eds), *Lebanon*, p. 128.

³⁴⁷ In other words, the Syrian kingdom Faisal had briefly set up in 1918.

³⁴⁸ No mention was made of an Arab connection for Lebanon; instead mention was made of the Phoenician, as well as Greek and Roman, heritage of the area. See the report in *Le Reveil*, 2 September 1920. See also, Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation Historique du Liban Politique et Constitutionnelle*, Publication de l'Université Libanaise, Beirut, 1986, p. 372.

³⁴⁹ The timing of the proclamation was a further sting; it came just after the entry of French troops into Damascus to put down forcibly protests against French rule in Syria. Under such circumstances the Muslim population of Greater Lebanon, and particularly the Sunni element, regarded the French as an occupying force and the existence of a separate Lebanon as a demonstration of French power. See Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East, 1914-17*; Chatto & Windus, London, 1981, p. 80.

³⁵⁰ This is not to claim that there were no such rational grounds for Muslim hostility; simply to emphasise the emotional nature of this initial reaction. See Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation Historique du Liban*, p. 381.

the mandate system and were rather the focus of hostility from within their own community. Men like Al Jisr, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies from its institution in 1926 until 1932 and a presidential candidate in 1932, can be held as representing only their own personal opinions.³⁵¹

Emotion was equally important to the Maronite community in its initial reaction to the mandate.³⁵² The Maronite Church had taken a leading role in the setting up of the mandate and expected to continue to take such a role, preaching the necessity of a separate Lebanon and of Maronite primacy in that entity.³⁵³ As Zamir points out, there was an 'almost mystical belief' in the validity of a Greater Lebanon as the natural 'homeland' of the Maronite 'people'; and the involvement of the Church in sustaining that belief was of considerable importance.³⁵⁴ Here, the important thing is the firm conviction that this was the case.³⁵⁵ As a result, this 'crucial' role played by the Maronites in the creation of a separate Lebanon, by ensuring the setting up of the mandate, became part of Maronite tradition in a way that gave popular justification to the view that, in the words of Salibi:

In the story of modern Lebanon the principal line of historical continuity between the Mount Lebanon of the nineteenth century and the Greater Lebanon of the twentieth, certainly at the internal political level, was the Maronite connection. Their destiny is linked with the survival of the Lebanon.³⁵⁶

The belief that where Maronite visions of a Greater Lebanon conflicted with French policy, it was French policy that altered, not Maronite visions, served to establish Maronite claims of a 'right' to dominance in Lebanon as a matter beyond question. In other words, 'Lebanese nationalism' was essentially based on Maronite communal mythology.

³⁵¹ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 174.

³⁵² Nor was this emotion confined to the Maronite community in Lebanon itself; it was also a powerful force in the various emigrant communities, such as those located in France.

³⁵³ Elias Howayek, the Patriarch, seems genuinely to have played a key role in convincing Gouraud that Greater Lebanon was the 'right' path to follow, for instance. See Chapter 2, pp. 118-19.

³⁵⁴ As a result of the experiences of wartime starvation in Mount Lebanon, the Maronite Church had been very insistent that Greater Lebanon included the ports, for instance. See Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, pp. 117-19.

³⁵⁵ Elias Howayek, 'Revendication du Liban: Memoire de la delegation Libanaise a la Conference de la Paix', 25 October 1919, Paris, in Documents of the Maronite Patriarch, Maronite Church, Bkirki, 23 February 1936.

³⁵⁶ K.S. Salibi, The Modern History of Lebanon, p. 1.

Nationalism has been described as the myth of historical renovation. In the mandate period, that process in Lebanon involved little in the way of myths of origin that were not specific to the promotion of Maronite traditions. The myths discussed in Chapter One relating to a Phoenician and Mardaite ancestry for Lebanon were central to the nationalism supported by both Maronites and the French, and Maronite leaders such as Emile Eddé cited as 'proof' of the validity of such myths the work of nineteenth century Maronite scholars and clerics, such as Henri Lammens.³⁵⁷ In the pre-1914 period, also, a number of Maronite societies such as *al Nahda al Lubnaniyyah* [The Lebanese Revival] had developed which, despite a small membership, had a real impact on the expression of Maronite 'nationalism' in political terms.³⁵⁸ The diaspora of Maronites identified in Chapter One also had an effect, as groups of emigrants in France, Egypt, South America and the USA established societies supporting the concept of an 'independent' Greater Lebanon and using mythology to 'prove' that the origins of Lebanon were Western rather than Arab, effectively distancing the Maronite community from those other communities in Lebanon which did claim an essentially Arab origin.³⁵⁹ There was thus little attempt by the Maronite community to seek to develop a Lebanese nationalism that was not exclusive of non-Maronite traditions. Equally, those elements of the population conscious of Arab descent, mainly the Sunni, Shi'a and Druze communities, reacted angrily to being expected to acquiesce in a scenario that rejected their Arab heritage. In particular, they rejected, comprehensively the myths of Phoenician and Mardaite descent - not just for themselves but also for the Maronites. There was, in 1920, no obvious common ground for the creation of a discrete national feeling among the communities in Lebanon through reference to a shared past, mythical or otherwise.

³⁵⁷ This was a very public exercise in the mandate period, not something confined to scholarly circles. See, for example, the comments of Emile Eddé reported in *An Nahar*, 28 August 1937.

³⁵⁸ Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, p. 23.

³⁵⁹ Some historians like Edmond Rabbath have even suggested that 'Lebanese nationalism' arose amongst such emigrant Maronite communities rather than in Lebanon. See Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation Historique du Liban*, pp. 360-8. However, this ignores the emotions within Lebanon itself. There was undoubtedly an interchange of ideas, and these undoubtedly served to reinforce the development of a 'nationalist' agenda for Lebanon. Equally such societies were undoubtedly utilised by the French to demonstrate support for the mandate. See Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, pp. 70-8.

In understanding the operation of the mandate, the reactions of the various communities to French perceptions of that mandate and of the Greater Lebanon that it created also need to be taken into account.³⁶⁰ For one thing, the men entrusted with setting up the mandate's administrative systems consciously set about establishing a meticulous, perfectionist structure that would be a contrast to the laxer structures of the Ottoman Empire.³⁶¹ It was this, arguably more than any resentments amongst the communities in Lebanon, that was to bring about the constant stream of troubles and crisis that were eventually to alienate both the Sunni and the Maronite communities from French administration. Ottoman administration had been based on a parochialism that resulted from a lack of effective control at the centre. Local leaders in Lebanon had become accustomed to brokering much of the daily administration of their region for themselves in the absence of a firm hand at the centre. In addition, bribery had habitually been used in the establishing of a range of privileges and powers at all levels of local society. Nothing in this had prepared the inhabitants of the region for a system that would emphasise strict application of any laws and deference to a strong central authority. But it was this that the French were determined to set up in Lebanon.

In setting up their administrative structures and policies, French officials were aware that they would have to cope with confessional complications; that they would need to create a balance between Christians and Muslims. Gourard's hopes of achieving a suitable formula were initially high.³⁶² Before the official setting up of the mandate, he made this public in a speech on 22 November 1919:

Mais si nous sommes les descendants des croisés, nous sommes les fils de la Révolution épris de liberté et de progrès, respectueux de toutes les religions et fermement

³⁶⁰ The creation of the Lebanese and Syrian mandates was a complex issue in France itself. For example, there were those in France who were hostile to the mandate, either because they were anti-colonial, or because they wanted a colony and not a mandate. For further details of the creation of the mandate, and for further details of French expectations, see Briand's addresses to the Senate, 5 April 1921 and 12 July 1921, as recorded in *Asie Française*, no. 192, 1921, pp. 205-8; 378-80; Poincaré, address to the Chamber of Deputies, 1 June 1921, as recorded in *Asie Française*, no. 192, 1921, p. 268. See also Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1968; and Philippe Gouraud, *Le Général Henri Gouraud au Liban et en Syrie, 1919-1923*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1993.

³⁶¹ Elizabeth Monroe, *The Mediterranean in Politics*, London, 1939, p. 76.

³⁶² Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, p. 114.

résolus à assurer une justice égale aux adeptes de chacune.³⁶³

This was not an isolated expression. He returned to this theme on 6 December 1919, speaking at the Omari Mosque:

Representant de la France dans ce pays aux religions si nombreuses et si diverses, j'étends les faire respecter toutes en me placant au-dessus de toutes les confessions et je fais appel en retour au plus large esprit de tolérance de tous.³⁶⁴

But his early confidence was soon replaced by exasperation over the attitudes of the local population.

The French were very conscious that they were setting up a mandate, while they were used to administering a colony.³⁶⁵ But even so, they were determined to try to set up a system that was, in their perception at least, sound. However, to achieve this they saw it as necessary to involve all elements of the communal mix in Lebanon in a balanced participation. But they could not order, only persuade - and in doing this successfully they faced an uphill task with the Sunni community, who demonstrated a resistance to such participation.³⁶⁶ Equally they faced a problem with achieving a balanced participation because of the overenthusiasm of the Maronite community for participation. The Maronite belief that they were responsible for the creation of a separate entity in the first place led them to believe also that they had a right to be centrally involved in the evolution of policy for, and the active administration of, Greater Lebanon.³⁶⁷

Yet even the Maronite willingness to participate developed into a complex issue, as the French were to find out. The gratitude that the French

³⁶³ Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, p. 118; Henri Gouraud, Speech given at a reception, 22 November 1919. See Philippe Gouraud, *Le General Henri Gouraud*, p. 39.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ The French public servants entrusted with this task were accustomed to having total powers in this respect, and found it difficult to adapt to a situation where they were expected to act only as advisers, rather than giving orders. See Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, p. 114.

³⁶⁶ From the French perspective, the Sunni position was contradictory and thus profoundly irritating. On the one hand, accustomed to participation in the Ottoman administration, they complained of being underrepresented in the new state and were resentful at their 'omission'. Yet on the other hand, they refused to endorse the legitimacy of the mandate by agreeing to participate in its mechanisms. For instance, in 1922, they refused to participate in the elections to set up a Chamber of Representatives. See Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, p. 127; Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, pp. 23-4.

³⁶⁷ See the comments in Bishara Al Khoury, *Haga'iq Lubnaniyyah* [Facts About Lebanon], Maktabat Basil, Harissa, 1960, Vol. 1, pp. 124-6.

had expected to invoke did not materialise in the shape of a co-operative attitude towards the administration of the mandate. This was because the actual operation of the mandate clashed with Maronite expectations of the dominant role they would take therein, expectations raised by the Maronite tradition of French endorsement of their mythology and the 'rights' it conferred. The issue was also complicated by the persistence of some fear in the community that France might abandon both the mandate and the Maronite cause. There had been persistent rumours in the period 1918-1920 that the French would evacuate both Syria and Lebanon; and fears about a French commitment to the Maronite cause seemed to be given some substance by the French insistence on trying to involve all the communities in administration of the mandate. It was the Maronite nightmare that French efforts to establish better relations with the Muslim communities might be successful to an extent that would affect Maronite primacy in the French order of priorities.³⁶⁸ If there was general Maronite support for Greater Lebanon, this did not lead to a consequent general agreement within the community over the exact methods and policies that needed to be pursued in order to achieve the continuance and prosperity of this entity. Rather the Maronite community was politically divided from the start and prepared to be critical of the French. For example, some elements in the community swiftly began to press for a French policy in the mandate that would lead to rapid independence; others for a practical autonomy that would leave the French in the mandate as figureheads and no more. To further these separate agendas, individual Maronite leaders soon showed themselves willing to co-operate with politically conscious leaders from other communities in Lebanon in order to put pressure on the French.³⁶⁹

The result of all this was a continuation of the patterns of co-habitation, patterns based on mutual suspicion and mistrust. Maronite Sunni relations, for example, were dominated by this to the extent that, in the words of Zamir, 'To

³⁶⁸ The case of Cilicia seemed ominous, since France had evacuated Cilicia despite previous declarations that this would not happen. French sensitivity to their position and international links that was far from welcome to the Maronites; who saw it as something of a betrayal. See Yussuf Al Sawda, Personal Papers, unpublished and unclassified, Université du Saint Esprit, Kaslik.

³⁶⁹ There were even some small Maronite elements openly opposed to the mandate to the extent of being prepared to forge alliance with Muslim opinion. However, this did not signify a willingness to endorse an Arab nationalist position; rather attempts were made to recruit politically conscious leaders from the Muslim elements to the cause of a separate and independent Lebanon. See Fadia Kiwan, 'La Perception du Grand-Liban' in Shehadi & Mills (eds), *Lebanon*, p. 124; Meir Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, p. 124; Farid Al Khazin, 'The Communal Pact of Identities', Papers on Lebanon, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Oxford, October 1991, p. 8.

every action taken by one community there is a counteraction from the other' - and these actions and counteractions had little to do with the new practicalities the French were attempting to institute and much to do with established mythology and the expectations raised thereby.³⁷⁰ French administrators found all this exasperating and incomprehensible. Gouraud, for example, went so far as to describe the Maronites as 'difficult, spoilt and greedy'.³⁷¹ But it was within this communal complexity that they sought to make the mandate work.

It can be argued that the setting up of the French mandate was a negative thing in terms of communal relations in Lebanon, because particularly in terms of majority Maronite-Sunni relations it did deepen divisions. Yet at the same time the French presence during the mandate period was to be a key factor in the process by which Greater Lebanon became more than an artificial entity sustained only by an external power.³⁷² It was solely due to the French presence, and to the actively interventionist stance taken by French mandate officials, that any Muslim opposition to the concept of a separate Lebanese entity was ineffective for a sufficiently long period to make the survival of an independent Lebanon in a post-mandate period possible. The continuance of the mandate was to force sufficient numbers among the Muslim communities to a position of collaboration if not always directly with the French, then at least with elements in the Maronite community; and the Maronites were even more committed than the French to the continuance of a separate Lebanon.³⁷³ Thus the positions of the relevant players did not remain fixed throughout this period; and the factors leading to shifts and developments in Maronite-Sunni communal relations will provide the focus for the rest of this chapter.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 117.

³⁷¹ From the French perspective in the early years of the mandate at least, the Maronite attitude was unnecessary, if only because of the practical constraints that resulted from the continued minimal co-operation of the Sunni in particular with the mandate. Effectively, the French had to continue to involve the Maronites! Ibid., pp. 121-3.

³⁷² Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate, pp. 114-18.

³⁷³ Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 91; Philippe Gouraud, Le General Henri Gouraud, pp. 77; 128.

³⁷⁴ The various other communities in Lebanon also had a mixture of reactions to involvement in the mandate, but it was the Maronite-Sunni axis that has been most significant. For the attitudes and reactions of the Greek Orthodox community, see Joseph Abou Jaoude, Les Partis Politiques au Liban, Université Saint Esprit, Kaslik, 1985, pp. 170-1; Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 102. For those of the Shi'a, see ibid., p. 68. For those of the Druze, whose main concern was undoubtedly the traditional one of desiring to prevent Maronite dominance in Mount Lebanon, see ibid.; and Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate, pp. 148-52.

Under the terms of the mandate declaration, a constitution was to be granted to Lebanon, to inaugurate a period of indigenous administration under French tutelage. This was required to be in place before the end of September 1926.³⁷⁵ Insurrection in Syria in 1925 had spread to Lebanon by 1926, but it had not created a major crisis. It was to avoid this developing, according to Philip Khoury, that the constitution was set up while, at the same time, the French army was utilised to contain agitation among the Muslim elements in Lebanon.³⁷⁶ French hopes that the promulgation of a constitution would defuse Muslim agitation at the time were to prove misplaced, because the Muslim perspective was that an acceptance of the constitution would imply an acceptance of Greater Lebanon within its current boundaries. This line of thinking was made plain at a meeting on 5 January 1926; when 37 of the most important Sunni leaders and notables of Beirut voiced their refusal to participate with drafting of the constitution.³⁷⁷

But despite Sunni hostility, a Lebanese republic with a parliamentary system was installed under French guardianship from 1926.³⁷⁸ The extent of this new republic's freedom of action was limited by this latter condition: the political and legal system was still essentially controlled by France as the mandatory power in a way that was actually enshrined in the constitution of that year.³⁷⁹ The 1926 constitution recognised Lebanon as an entity distinct from Syria, in the shape of a constitutional republic, with the new republic being given a measure of independent action. But its constitution also included a fundamental acceptance of French power, under the terms of the original mandate, by its inhabitants.³⁸⁰ The provisions of the constitution were to be at

³⁷⁵ This promise was endorsed by the Representative Council for Greater Lebanon, set up in 1922, as the first attempt by the French to create an administrative system. For further details see Edmond Rabbath, La Formation Historique du Liban, p. 379.

³⁷⁶ The spread of trouble to Lebanon was a cause of very real concern to the French authorities there because it was not just confined to one social level or Muslim community. It involved the masses and the intelligentsia, for example, and can be taken as an indication of a very widespread discontent with the mandate. Philip S. Khoury, Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987, pp. 151-204. For further details of the Syrian insurrection and its impact on Lebanon, see Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate, pp. 148-52; Edmond Rabbath, La Formation Historique du Liban, pp. 379; 401-2.

³⁷⁷ Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, p. 210; Edmond Rabbath, La formation Historique du Liban, pp. 378-9.

³⁷⁸ Though this hostility did not, from 1926, lead the Sunni to continue their 1922 boycott of elections. Instead, they used 'parliamentary democracy' as 'an expression of protest rather than a means to government'. In other words, they participated to disrupt the process, rather than to further it. See Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, pp. 23-4. See also Edmond Rabbath, La Formation Historique du Liban, p. 399.

³⁷⁹ Fouad L. Bustani, Introduction a L'Histoire Politique du Liban Moderne, FMA, Beirut, 1993, pp. 150-151 for the text of the Constitution.

³⁸⁰ The extent of the new republic's freedom of action was limited: the political and legal systems were essentially controlled by France as the mandatory power; and this was actually enshrined in the constitution. In addition, the Governor inherited the wide range of prerogatives that the High Commissioner had held, and the extent of French

the heart of Lebanese political life for the rest of the mandate, because they set the agenda for both opposition to and support for Lebanon as a separate entity.

In Sunni eyes, the constitution gave formal endorsement to an entity and a mythology that they profoundly opposed.³⁸¹ In addition it introduced an element of populism into the management of affairs within Lebanon that had implications for the ways in which the hierarchies of power in the Sunni community traditionally operated.³⁸² The elected assembly had a democratic base, and this was seen as a threat by traditional elites, heightening their hostility to the Lebanon that this constitution encapsulated.³⁸³ By contrast, for the Maronite population it meant a permanent settlement of the Lebanese question in a way that they had long desired.³⁸⁴ Once again the majority of Maronites could look to France uncritically, accepting France as their traditional saviour as well as the guarantor of their safety.³⁸⁵

One idea behind the terms of the constitution was the setting up of a political system that would provide for the equitable representation of the various communities. To enable the constitution to react to a changing communal balance, the constitution did not lay down a formula that fixed a ratio for proportional representation nor did it reserve specific government positions for each community. According to Salibi 'the constitution did not lay down hard and fast principles for co-operation between the various confessions' because the French believed that the system would work best if it

control over the local bureaucracy was enormous. The mandate administrative system came to include services dealing with nearly all the functions of a modern state, and these services were expected to operate according to standards and agendas laid down by the French and not by the indigenous communities. For the text of the constitution see Fouad Bustani, *Introduction a l'Histoire*, pp. 150-238. For further comments on the constitution and administrative system see Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation Historique du Liban*, pp. 370-9; 399; K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 165-7.

³⁸¹ For instance, the 1926 constitution declared that the boundaries of Lebanon established in 1920 were permanent and unchangeable, and required an elected president of the republic to swear loyalty to a Lebanese nation as it existed within these boundaries. See the text of the constitution in Fouad Bustani, *Introduction a l'Histoire*, pp. 229-38.

³⁸² This, of course, was also true for other Muslim communities.

³⁸³ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 167.

³⁸⁴ There were 'Kiyanists' who were ready to accept and endorse Greater Lebanon or *al Kiyān* (the entity) regardless of their religion, and these did include a small number of Muslims leaders who were even in 1926 ready for economic political or personal reasons to endorse the idea of *al Kiyān*. But the majority were from the Christian communities.

³⁸⁵ The setting up of the constitution did lessen the sense of insecurity about French intentions that had existed at the start of the mandate. See Edmond Rabbath, *La Formation Historique du Liban*, p. 379.

was not too prescriptive but left room for a spontaneous 'process of give-and-take'.³⁸⁶

In practice the system was slowly to bring the Maronite and Sunni communities closer together, but not in ways that the French had hoped. This closer relationship was based on shared resentment of the French, based on things such as raised expectations amongst interested parties that often ended in disappointment and frustration when expectations could not be fulfilled. According to Kiwan, the series of crises that characterised the 1926-34 period in particular was caused not so much by the French as by the attempts of various Maronite leaders to exercise their 'right' to a powerful role.³⁸⁷ In the immediate post-1926 period, continuing lack of input from the Sunni community meant that in practice, much of the power that was in Lebanese rather than French hands on a daily basis was in fact exercised by a French-educated Maronite intelligentsia. Prominent figures included men who had participated in the Peace Conference in Paris: Habib Pasha El Saad; Daoud Ammoun; Emile Eddé; and Bishara Al Khoury. The Maronite Patriarch, Elias Howayek, was also influential. Sunni leaders in Lebanon felt a particular resentment of these men and their high profile under the mandate.³⁸⁸ But when it stimulated Muslim leaders to express opposition to this development, that opposition was demonstrated outside the mandate structure. To French disappointment, it did not persuade Muslim leaders to participate in the administration of the mandate.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁶ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 167. It was also seen in Lebanon as being partly a continuation of the 'divide and rule' approach used by the French in their colonial past, as well as a genuine attempt to take account of the internal map of Lebanon, as the work of Zamir, first published in 1958, makes plain. See Meir Zamir, Formation of Modern Lebanon, pp. 203-15.

³⁸⁷ Fadia Kiwan, 'La Perception du Grand-Liban', in Shehadi & Mills (eds), Lebanon, p. 124. As Salibi has pointed out, though, any Maronite resentment of the French was initially restricted to the political elites, and did not represent the attitude of the masses, for whom the period was one of 'consolidation and achievement'. K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 177. If this disappointment was most acutely felt by the ambitious among the Maronite community both Sunnis and Maronites (and leaders from the other communities) shared in the dislike of a number of French officials such as General Sarrail, High Commissioner of Lebanon, who, ignorant of the Levant, made unnecessary errors of judgement in dealing with leaders from the various communities. See Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate, pp. 148-54.

³⁸⁸ They were seen as having played a significant role in the creation of a separate Lebanon. Howayek's words in 1919, that 'Rien n'unit ces deux pays (le Liban et la Syrie)' were not lightly forgotten or forgiven. See Le Reveil, 23 November 1977, which reprinted Howayek's words, thus providing a useful indication of the enduring effect of this text. See also K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 169-77.

³⁸⁹ Perhaps inevitably, it was those who had been Arab nationalists before the mandate that took the lead here. See Rachid Khalidi, 'Ottomanism and Arabism', in Rachid Khalidi et al (eds), The Origins of Arab Nationalism, p. 55. They sought inspiration and tactics from Syrian opposition groups. For instance, the General Syrian Congress met in 1928 and twice in 1933 to voice their opinion about the existence of Lebanon in its present boundaries. It was argued that the 'disputed territories' be returned to Syria, but that Mount Lebanon should be independent. However, after the suppression of the insurrection of 1925-7, this stayed largely at the level of rhetoric. See Edmond Rabbath, Unite

Up to 1932, there was no sign of any co-operation with the mandated Lebanese republic on the part of any Sunni political notables with significant followings. The only Sunni figure of any note who was prepared to work with the republic was Shaykh Muhammad Al Jisr, but while he did have a following in his own community, it was not large.³⁹⁰ Jisr had been a politician during the Ottoman period, and, between 1926 to 1932 he was to become effectively the sole representative of Sunni community in the administration of the Lebanese republic.³⁹¹ With the French seeking Sunni involvement, Jisr became Speaker of the new Chamber virtually unopposed. In terms of the political arena, it was Jisr's involvement in the affairs of the mandate that provided the excuse that eventually drew other Sunni political leaders (as well as figures from the other Muslim communities) into a degree of involvement on their own account. This was because in 1932, despite the criticism levelled at Jisr for his co-operation to date, he decided to stand in the presidential elections.

By the early 1930s, it was becoming plain to the leaders of the Sunni community at least that Lebanon as a whole was, in economic terms, flourishing under the mandate and that standards of living across the board in Lebanon were rising.³⁹² Shrewd leaders amongst the various communities needed to take this into account when evolving their political (and other) strategies towards the mandate. By 1932, local political groupings were evolving among the Sunni community in Lebanon. But leaders in these groupings, like Salim Salam and Abd Al Hamid Karami or Riyadh Al Solh, were still not willing to abandon their calls for union with Syria.³⁹³ The problems faced by these men in reconciling their desire for involvement in local Lebanese politics with their refusal to follow any policy lines that might seem to endorse the existence of Greater Lebanon is clearly demonstrated by their reaction to Jisr's candidacy in 1932.

Syrienne et Devenir Arabe, Librairie Marcel, Paris, 1937, pp. 166-7; Amine Naji (ed.), 'Minutes of the Congress', Al Amal, no. 7, 1977, pp. 119-55.

³⁹⁰ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 174.

³⁹¹ Jisr was prepared to become involved because he held no personal ideology that led him into conflict with the aims of the mandate, while he did have personal ambition and a dislike of being out of power.

³⁹² As Longrigg points out, Lebanon (and Syria) were even less affected by the depression of 1928-35 than France itself, for example, to say nothing of other states in the Middle East. Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate, pp. 271-83.

³⁹³ This, of course, ensured that the French mandate authorities were at best cautious in their attempts to involve them until they had demonstrated that they had abandoned this position.

Jisr's participation in the administration of the new republic had ensured that he had co-operated with Christian leaders, notably Maronite ones. But in 1932, the likely alternative to Jisr was a president who was not only Christian, but also Maronite: and almost certainly a figure associated with persuading the French into creating Greater Lebanon. Jisr was the only figure likely to be able to contest the presidency with men like Bishara Al Khoury or Emile Eddé, both of whom planned to stand in 1932. Not only would he collect Muslim votes; he could also hope to secure some Christian backing.³⁹⁴ But men like Al Solh could not bring themselves to endorse Jisr's candidacy because of this perception that in so doing they would 'recognise' the existence of Greater Lebanon, and so they continued to stand aloof. Yet at the same time, elements from the Sunni mercantile elite in Beirut began to find it in their own interests to accept the reality of Lebanon, rather than dream of being part of Syria.³⁹⁵ Thus by the mid 1930s, tentative efforts were being made by the Sunni mercantile elite began to make moves towards co-operation; and since this mercantile elite was one provider of Sunni political elites, this had an effect on willingness to move towards political involvement by some Sunni leaders.³⁹⁶

The irony was that by this time the French mandate officials had undertaken a policy that served to drive the Maronites away from a whole-hearted co-operation with the French. At the time of the 1932 presidential election, the French had become extremely concerned about the continued lack of collaboration from Muslim leaders, especially the Sunni ones. They felt the state was insecure as long as this continued and so sought ways to end the stalemate. But they tended to blame Sunni-Maronite hostility rather than any failure in French policy. The French hoped to lure the Sunni into developing a degree to support for the mandate by distancing themselves to a degree from the Maronites and sought to use the occasion of the elections to achieve this.

³⁹⁴ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 175-6.

³⁹⁵ As Johnson points out, only through co-operation with the mandate could the mercantile elite make the most of their key economic position. See Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 25.

³⁹⁶ Marwan Buheiry, 'Beirut and the Political Economy of the Mandate' in Laurence Conrand (ed.), The Formation and Perception of the Modern Arab World, p. 558.

Within the Maronite community, the two leading political leaders at that time were Bishara Al Khoury and Emile Eddé, both well-respected and successful lawyers with considerable ambitions in the political field. Both intended to stand for the office of President in 1932.³⁹⁷ Eddé was more French in his cultural orientation than Khoury, and a strong supporter of anti-Arab views. He also gave endorsement to aspects of popular Maronite mythology. For instance, he was a supporter of the idea of a Phoenician origin for the Maronites and was close to the poet Charles Corm, one of the most vocal proponents of this concept as the following lines indicate:

Si je rappelle aux miens nos aieux Phéniciens
C'est qu'alors nous n'étions au fronton de l'histoire
Avant de devenir musulmans ou chrétiens
Qu'un meme peuple uni dans une meme gloire
Et qu'en évoluant nous devrions au moins
Par le fait d'une foi encore plus méritoire
Nous aimer comme au temps ou nous étions paiens!...
Mon frère musulman, comprenez ma franchise;
Je suis le vrai Liban, sincère et pratiquant.³⁹⁸

If Eddé did not go to the extremes of Corm, he certainly liked to think of Lebanon as Christian and part of a Western Mediterranean world; while according to Salibi, he associated the Arab world 'with the desert'.³⁹⁹ It was a popular position among the Maronites, though less welcomed by the other Christian communities, but it effectively ensured that if elected, he would confirm Muslim hostility to the Lebanese republic.

By contrast Bishara Al Khoury was less openly and vocally devoted to the concept of Lebanon as part of a Mediterranean world. If he was personally inclined towards such a position, and was a firm supporter of a separate Lebanese entity he was also a pragmatist. He believed that to secure this entity in the long term, it would be necessary to co-operate with the Arab context of the region and so sought to take a position that would further Muslim-Christian co-operation. However, since his strategy was to develop

³⁹⁷ Camille Chamoun, Mudhakkaratij, [Memoirs], Beirut, 1969, p. 8, lodged in the headquarters of the Bloc National.

³⁹⁸ This poem has remained important to those Maronites who endorse the Phoenician concept. See Charles Corm, 'La Montagne Inspirée', republished in La Revue Phénicienne, Beirut, 1964, pp. 53-61.

³⁹⁹ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 172-3.

linkages between himself and Muslim elements by opposing a continuance of the mandate, and arguing for full Lebanese independence instead, he was less popular with the French officials.⁴⁰⁰ Like Eddé, Al Khoury was also able to find considerable support for his views amongst the Maronite community. Both were to set up political parties with predominantly Maronite followings; Khoury the Bloc Constitutionale and Eddé, the Bloc National.⁴⁰¹

The determination of French officials in 1932 was to find a compromise position between the communities in the political arena. In 1926, a Greek Orthodox, Charles Dabbas, had been appointed to the presidency, rather than elected.⁴⁰² He had held office 1926-29, and had been so successful, it seemed, that he was reappointed for the period 1929-32.⁴⁰³ It had been hoped that by 1932, the mandate was sufficiently established to permit a move to selecting the president through an electoral system, as envisaged in the 1926 constitution. However, the manoeuvrings of the three candidates and their supporters as the election approached did not indicate that a compromise candidate supported by significant elements from all the communities was likely to be elected.⁴⁰⁴ Also, a fresh cause of tension had been added to the 1932 scenario when the result of a census, demanded by the Muslim Congress, had indicated that there was not a Muslim majority in the territory included in the mandate.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁰ He was deeply influenced by the ideas of his brother-in-law, Michel Chiha. As a banker, Chiha was an important figure in the commercial world, but he was also a figure in the intellectual world. A far-sighted pragmatist, Chiha argued that a genuine nation-state of Lebanon could only come about if all the communities were able to feel their perspectives were valued. Chiha had been an important influence in ensuring that the Constitution did in theory permit such a state to evolve. Yet even so, Chiha, in his writings on Lebanon referred frequently to the Phoenicians. K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 167; 173-4. See Michel Chiha, Politique Interieur, Edition du Trident, Beirut, 1964 for a further discussion of his ideas.

⁴⁰¹ These parties were to represent the two key positions around which Maronite alliances were formed, whether in opposition of some kind or support for the mandate. Thus these two determined much of the nature of Maronite political life during the mandate. But for all their differences, both shared a fundamental support for the idea of a distinct, separate Lebanon. Even Al Khoury did not take his support for collaboration with the Arab position to the extent of endorsement of ambitions to restore all or part of Greater Lebanon to 'Syria'. Michael W. Suleiman, Political Parties in Lebanon, Cornell University Press, New York, 1967, pp. 251-60; W. Awwad, Ashab al fakhama ru'assa Lubnan, [Their Excellencies, the Presidents of Lebanon], Dar Al Ahliyyah, Beirut, 1977, pp. 112; 131; 157.

⁴⁰² His main qualifications in French eyes were that, in the atmosphere of tension in 1926, he was sympathetic to pan-Arab ideas, and so might hope to conciliate the Muslim communities. However, his commitment to a separate Lebanon had been demonstrated by his membership of the 1919 delegation to the Peace Conference.

⁴⁰³ He had shown himself to be a capable administrator, and made few mistakes. However, arguably, he did make one significant mistake, to endorse moves to increase the role of Roman Catholic missions in the country, which effectively meant an increase of foreign influence. But despite this, the evidence indicates he was a popular figure across confessional boundaries. See K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 170-1.

⁴⁰⁴ Some deputies saw Jisr as best option; but the Maronite Patriarch vehemently opposed his candidacy. But Eddé decided to endorse Jisr's candidacy to block Al Khoury's chances. See Fadia Kiwan, 'La Perception du Grand-Liban', in Shehadi & Mills (eds), Lebanon, p. 124.

⁴⁰⁵ The Congress, held in Beirut in January 1932, had demanded that the constitution be amended to make it mandatory that the president be a Muslim, since the delegates (including Jisr) believed that there was a Muslim majority in Lebanon. See Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 24; Fadia Kiwan, 'La Perception du Grand-Liban', in Shehadi & Mills (eds), Lebanon, p. 146.

Table 1:
The Results of the 1932 Census in Lebanon⁴⁰⁶

Community	Population figures	Percentage (approx.)
Maronites	226,378	29%
Greek Orthodox	76,552	10%
Greek Catholic	45,999	6%
Armenians	31,156	4%
Other Christian groupings	22,308	3%
Total Christian Population		52%
Sunni Muslims	175,925	22%
Shi'ite Muslims	154,208	19%
Druze	53,047	7%
Total Muslim Population		48%

The short-term solution arrived at by the French was a suspension of the constitution, and the re-appointment of Charles Dabbas as president for a further term. In 1933 he was replaced, by Habib El-Saad a seventy-five year old politician who, it was hoped, would not be strong enough (in any sense) to cause trouble.⁴⁰⁷ In addition, the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved, with the promise of new elections in 1934. Thus moves towards a directly-elected administration were delayed and effective administrative power remained in the hands of French officials, who simply continued appointing local figures to

⁴⁰⁶ David McDowall, *Lebanon: A Conflict of Minorities*, Minority Rights Group, London, Report No. 61, p. 11.

⁴⁰⁷ For further details of Habib Al Saad, see K.S. Sallbi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 165; 170-1; 177.

the Chamber of Deputies, men who they expected would be co-operative such as Charles Dabbas. Initially, it served to increase tensions between the communities; but the French attempt at even-handedness and compromise was to be a significant factor in changing the nature of French-Maronite relations and Maronite attitudes to the mandate.⁴⁰⁸

More than just disappointed Maronite leaders began to doubt the Maronite role under the mandate.⁴⁰⁹ By the time that the Chamber of Deputies was summoned in 1936 to elect a successor to Al Saad, a considerable legacy of mistrust had built up.⁴¹⁰ Emile Eddé was elected - by a majority of one vote. But popular Maronite opinion was that the French had attempted to prevent this outcome, because they had not wished for the election of a powerful figure with a strong following in the Maronite community, but had hoped for one dependent on the French. It is an indication of the lowering of respect for the mandate amongst Maronites at this period.⁴¹¹ Another indication of deteriorating French-Maronite relations had come in 1935, when the Maronite Patriarch, Arida, began a dispute with the High Commissioner. Given the status of the Patriarch, this was an unfortunate development for the French. The dispute was over the future status of the tobacco monopoly in Lebanon, currently under French control under the terms of the *Regie des Tabacs et Tombacs*. The Patriarch wanted to see this extremely lucrative monopoly opened up for Lebanese (essentially Maronite) participation. In the face of French resistance to this, he began to take a very critical position towards the administration of the mandate by the French.⁴¹² His demands for a high degree of Lebanese control over its own economic affairs, and, linked with that, its political affairs, caught the notice of the Syrians. Syrian leaders actually began to come to Bkirki to talk to the Patriarch, and a working relationship began to develop.⁴¹³ The following statement by the Patriarch in

⁴⁰⁸ Fadia Kiwan, 'La Perception du Grand-Liban', in Shehadi & Mills (eds), *Lebanon*, p. 146.

⁴⁰⁹ Al Khoury's followers, for instance, began to talk of French despotism as Al Khoury, on personally bad terms with Henri Ponsot, made it plain that he thought he had no future politically under a French-run mandate. See *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ Ponsot's successor as High Commissioner, Count Damien de Martel, was prepared to take a more pro-Maronite stance

⁴¹¹ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 179; Raymond Eddé, Oral Interview, Paris, 19 July 1994; Dr. Albert Moukheiber, Oral Interview, Bayt Melri, 15 April 1995.

⁴¹² Stephen Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, pp. 205-7.

⁴¹³ Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987, p. 454.

1935 provides an important indication of the change in attitude taken by the Patriarchate at this point:

J'ai montré que je n'occupais avec intérêt de la question Syrienne. Le Liban et la Syrie sont liés par la communauté de langue, des moeurs, des traditions, d'interets économiques. C'est pourquoi il est difficile d'établir entre eux une separation absolue.⁴¹⁴

It was a huge change, and important because it had a real impact coming from this source. Bkirki was now established as a channel for discussion, though not always fruitful ones, between Muslims and Maronites, but this helped to create an illusion, at least, of consensus between the communities.⁴¹⁵

This was to be of enormous importance in creating an atmosphere where a greater degree of co-operation could evolve between the leadership of the Lebanese Muslim and Christian communities, especially in terms of Sunni-Maronite links, over the last years of the mandate. In 1936, trouble flared again in Syria, again finding an echo in Lebanon. Amongst some elements of the Maronite and Sunni communities, these troubles worsened intercommunal hostility. It was in this context that the Kata'ib party emerged. This was a Maronite or (as they advertised it) a 'Lebanese' Phalange grouping, composed of mainly urban-based young radicals that had at the centre of their agenda the defence (by militant means if necessary) of the Maronite community and its mythology of a separate Lebanon. Equally, a group of Sunni formed the Muslim equivalent, the Najjadah party.⁴¹⁶ The reaction of the French to the potential for violent unrest that seemed to be emerging was to seek to re-negotiate the terms of both the Syrian and Lebanese mandates; with the object of establishing a basis for recognition of the two as sovereign states, eligible to

⁴¹⁴ Le Jour, 11 September 1935.

⁴¹⁵ Said Murad, Al Haraka al Wahdawiyyah fi Lubnan Bayn al Harbayn al Alamiyatayn 1914-1964 [The Unionist Movement in Lebanon Between 1914 and 1964], Maahad al Inma al Arabi, Beirut, 1968, pp. 264-5.

⁴¹⁶ But while these groups caused concern to both community leaders and French mandate officials in the late 1930s, they were actually still small groupings, relatively and certainly in the case of the Kata'ib party, also capable of more pragmatic politics. See Itamar Rabinovich, 'Arab Political Parties: Ideology and Ethnicity', in Milton J. Esman & Itamar Rabinovich (eds), Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State in the Middle East, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1988, p. 163; Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 24; Michael W. Suleiman, Political Parties in Lebanon, p. 114; Rabiha Abou Fadel & Antun Saadeh, Al Naqidwaal Adib Al Mahjari [The Critics and the Writers of Emigré Literature], Maktab Al Dirasat Al Kimat, Al Matn, 1992; Stephen Longrigg, Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate, pp. 225-6. For a more detailed discussion of the events of 1936, including the riots of November 1936, see K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 179-81; Farid El-Khazin, The Communal Pact of National Identities, especially p. 12.

join the League of Nations. By doing this, the French hoped to defuse tension in Syria and Lebanon. However, France still intended to maintain a considerable control over both through establishing its own pre-eminent status: for instance, the armies were to remain under French supervision; and the French ambassadors were 'to take precedence over all others'.⁴¹⁷ On 13 November 1936, the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies ratified the proposed treaty, on the grounds that this would create a situation where the end of the mandate was in sight, and at the same time, the continuance of a separate Lebanon was guaranteed. In addition, under the terms of the treaty, a 'just' representation of all the different communal communities in Lebanon was to be guaranteed in government and administration to the highest levels.⁴¹⁸

But it was the Franco-Syrian treaty of the same year that had an even greater impact on Lebanese Muslim opposition groupings than the Franco-Lebanese treaty and its promises. The terms of the Franco-Syrian treaty included a Syrian acceptance of the existence of Greater Lebanon as a legitimate entity in its own right. This development left the pro-Syrian elements in Lebanon isolated. While some individuals and groups still maintained the dream of union with Syria; the majority at this point saw the way forward as lying 'in the creation of an internal unity within the various states of the Arab world'.⁴¹⁹ This development brought to prominence one particular Sunni politician, Kazem Al Solh. He was the first major Sunni politician to argue that the way forward for Muslims and Christians in Lebanon was through an acceptance of an independent Lebanon in which common ground between the communities could be sought.⁴²⁰

Sensibly, Kazem Al Solh was vague about the nature of any future relationship between Lebanon and the wider Arab world. For him the crux of the current situation was that if his fellow Sunni were successful in promoting the absorption of Lebanon in Syria, the results of the 1932 census indicated

⁴¹⁷ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 181. Salibi also provides a useful discussion of the further details of the treaties, *Ibid.*, pp. 181-2.

⁴¹⁸ In the end, neither the Franco-Lebanese treaty nor the Franco-Syrian treaty were ratified by the French. Albert Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay*, Oxford University Press, London, 1946, pp. 202; 314; 337. Also K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 181-3.

⁴¹⁹ Najla Attiyah, 'The Attitude of the Lebanese Sunni' p. 131. See also Raghid Al Solh, 'The Attitude of the Arab Nationalists towards Greater Lebanon During the 1930s', in Shehadi & Mills (eds), *Lebanon*, pp. 157-61.

⁴²⁰ Kazem Al Solh Papers, unpublished, held by Raghid Al Solh, Oxford.

that half the population would be alienated by that development. Yet if Mount Lebanon were to be excluded from a Greater Syria to avoid this, Mount Lebanon would inevitably seek to maintain French protection and so a French colonial presence would be maintained in the region. This could lead to a position where Mount Lebanon would effectively become a 'French province', and a centre of subversion against the Arab nation.⁴²¹ Kazem Al Solh saw no reason why an independent Lebanon should automatically be left out of any larger Arab entity created at some unidentified future point: it need be no more of an issue than the existence of separate and independent Syria and Iraq, for example if that Arab entity were to be a decentralised one.⁴²² Thus instead of displaying hostility towards the Maronites, Kazem Al Solh wanted Sunni leaders to become missionaries for Arab nationalism among the Christian Lebanese. He argued that the positive attitude being taken by the Maronite Patriarch towards Syria and his open criticism of the French, demonstrated the potential that did exist for changing attitudes amongst even the Maronites. It would involve a rejection by the Maronites of the mandate; but in return, acceptance by Muslims of an independent Greater Lebanon with a strong Christian element. Kazem Al Solh's position had an impact on some other Sunni politicians, especially those from Beirut, and including Riyadh Al Solh, the later architect of the National Pact.

However neither Sunni nor Maronite politicians were, in the last years of the 1930s, prepared to take collaboration between the communities forward on this basis in anything but a tentative fashion. If there was discontent with the French amongst the Maronites, it was not yet so extreme as for a majority of leaders to seek an end to the mandate. Equally if there was a growing interest in liberal-minded Christian intellectual circles in Arab nationalism, it tended to be more theoretical than practical in its programme. But at the same time closer collaboration between Muslims and Christians became more possible at elite levels, as a mutual acceptance of a separate Lebanon was evolving during the last half of the 1930s. It was a help in this respect that the constitution was restored in January 1937. This led to a period of indigenous

⁴²¹ See Kazem Al Solh Papers, 'Mu'tamar al Sahil' [Conference of the Coast], unpublished manuscript. See also Farid Al Khazin, The Communal Pact of National Identities, p. 14.

⁴²² Ibid.

constitutional government which, for the first time began to include Sunni politicians who were accepted by the mainstream of Sunni opinion.⁴²³ It was during this period that a pattern was established where a Maronite president had a Sunni prime minister.⁴²⁴

The Second World War, starting in 1939, was to provide the final spur needed to produce a situation where a practical compromise for working together in the context of an independent Lebanon could evolve, at least at an elite level. It was the war that confirmed a feeling amongst the majority of even the Maronite elites that a continuation under direct French rule was not in their interests. The way forward lay with an independent Lebanon. If the various communities hoped that an independent Lebanon would develop in different directions - the Maronites as part of a Western world, ideally still with close (but not colonial) links with France; the Sunni and other Muslim communities as part of an Arab world - it was considered less important to resolve this potential conflict than to bring to an end the mandate. Events as the war proceeded could only heighten this willingness to work together in an atmosphere of agreement about where the greatest evil lay for the traditional Lebanese elites.

For one thing, the outbreak of war saw a further suspension of the constitution. Gabriel Puaux, then High Commissioner, swiftly dissolved the Chamber of Deputies and appointed Emile Eddé as president and head of state. Puaux believed this was necessary in order to keep control over the situation in the Lebanese mandate (and a similar pattern was followed for Syria) in a wartime emergency situation when France could not afford the efficiency of an administration being disrupted by petty local politics - an interesting indication of how the French viewed the intercommunal relationship at elite levels at least in Lebanon. What was in the best interests of both France and Lebanon was 'a good perfect and an obedient general council'.⁴²⁵ Predictably the resentment felt at the way in which the mandate was actually

⁴²³ In 1937, for example, a Sunni deputy, Khayr Al Din Al Ahdab, formed a government under Eddé's presidency. Having previously been a fervent Arab nationalist, this was a significant move. His actions were to set an important precedent for the involvement of Muslim leaders in a Lebanese government.

⁴²⁴ In March 1938 Khayr Al Din Al Ahdab was succeeded by Khalid Shihab, a Sunni Shihabi emir, and he in turn was succeeded by Abdallah Yafi, a Sunni lawyer.

⁴²⁵ Gabriel Puaux, *Deux Années au Levant*, Hachette, Paris, 1952, pp. 56; 60-65; 225-226.

undermining, and not promoting, the freedom of action of community elites, ensured the willingness of the elites to regard collaboration with each other as preferable to a continuation of the mandate.

Resentment at elite levels at least deepened as the war progressed.⁴²⁶ The fall of France and the setting up of the Vichy regime complicated the situation considerably because it meant that the situation in Lebanon was no longer a matter of significance just to France and the population of Lebanon. The Maronites, in particular faced a dilemma over whether to support Vichy or the Free French, as it was unclear to them which side would best serve their own agenda. The Middle East as a whole was strategically important to all sides in the conflict, and thus the internal state of Lebanon became an issue of more than local importance, especially in terms of winning the allegiance of internal factions. Initially, Vichy France officially carried on the administration of the Lebanese mandate, and did so by suspending any promise of an imminent move to independence. It did not increase the popularity of the mandate administration, and gave an opening to the other side in the form of the British-backed Free French government in exile.

As part of the various arrangements reached between the British government and the Free French government in exile, Britain initially promised to continue to respect the privileged position of France in Syria and Lebanon. Churchill felt it necessary to reach a compromise that would enable the Free French to act to undermine the Vichy-run administration in Lebanon, so it could be replaced with something more sympathetic to the Allied position. Foreign Office officials informed the Free French leaders that Britain would recognise them as exercising 'the rights which France derives from the mandate' in the Levant, agreeing that the mandate system could be terminated only if it was replaced with a treaty along the lines of the intended 1936 treaties, so binding Lebanon to France.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁶ Emile Eddé was prepared to work with the French in the mandate, but that should not be taken as an indication that he was opposed to Lebanese independence. After all he had signed the Franco-Lebanese treaty of 1936. But he did feel in 1939 that Lebanese, and Maronite, interests were best served by a continuation of French interest and protection. Raymond Eddé, Oral Interview, Paris, 19 July 1994.

⁴²⁷ Charles de Gaulle, *War Memoirs: The Call to Honour, 1940-42 Documents*, London, 1955, pp. 312-13; Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East*, p. 80; Salwa Mardam Bey, *Awraq Jamil Mardam Bey Istiklal Suria 1939-45*, Shirkat Al Matbu'at lil al Tawzi' wa al nashr, Beirut, p. 154.

But this spirit of co-operation was not to last. The British became more aware of the realities of the situation inside Lebanon, and its likely impact on British strategy if the British were to continue endorsing a position which delayed any announcement of Lebanese independence. This was the background to the announcement of British support for Lebanese and Syrian independence, on 6 June 1941.⁴²⁸ The reaction of the Free French was to issue of a counter-proclamation that announced the continuation of the mandate. This was not well received within Lebanon. A measure of the degree of hostility felt at elite levels at least can be gauged by the public meeting of 25 December 1941, at Bkirki, attended by representatives of nearly all the communities within Lebanon, including some dissident Eddéists. The meeting ended with the public expression of a rejection of a continuation of the mandate by those present, including Maronite leaders and the Maronite Patriarch.

It was this joint rejection of the mandate, setting the tone for relations with France over the following period that can, for the first time, be termed genuinely 'Lebanese'. But it would be a mistake to take this spirit of collaboration between the communities as also expressing a genuine resolution of the areas of conflict between them - though this was not realised by most community leaders themselves at the time. For instance, the Maronites would never be prepared to accept an interpretation of a Lebanon that was in existence simply as a prelude to the creation of a future unified Arab state, though the potential for this was still part of the Sunni agenda and so implicit in their insistence in the National Pact on locating Lebanon as part of the Arab world. Equally the Sunni would not accept a long-term future for Lebanon that sustained a perception of Lebanon as part of the Western world, but this was still central to Maronite thinking and also implicit in the National Pact.⁴²⁹ But in the emergency context in which they perceived themselves to be in 1941 such conflicts did not act as serious obstacles.⁴³⁰ The communities' leaders were searching for common denominators and so ignoring any need to

⁴²⁸ *An Nahar*, 27 November 1941. See also Raghid Al Solh, 'Lebanon and Arab Nationalism 1936-45', Unpublished PhD thesis, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, 1986, pp. 202-04.

⁴²⁹ See Farid Al Khazin, *The Communal Pact of National Identities*, pp. 13-18.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

define clearly their different positions for the future.⁴³¹ It was in this spirit that the National Pact itself was to be evolved in 1943.

British support for Lebanese independence was a crucial factor in 1943.⁴³² Between 1941 and 1943, Sir Edward Spears, the British Ambassador in Lebanon, deliberately used his position to undermine the French position there by promoting collaboration between the communities in Lebanon on the basis of shared anti-French feeling.⁴³³ Spears succeeded in acquiring an increasing influence.⁴³⁴ Against this background, the attempt by the French to regain control over Lebanon in 1943 was likely to be a failure. The French administrators in Lebanon arrested the independent administration of Lebanon, and its leaders, including Bishara Al Khoury, were imprisoned. Emile Eddé agreed (out of a sense of duty, he claimed) to take on the leadership of an administration under French mandate rules.⁴³⁵ This precipitated a crisis, with demonstrators taking to the streets to demand the release of the prisoners and the restoration of a free administration. Given the unequivocal British backing for the demonstrators, the French could only back down. Lebanese independence *de facto* started at this point. It was in this context of crisis that the National Pact emerged; and its content needs to be understood as a response to crisis rather than as a carefully calculated plan based on long-term aspirations. It was essentially what Michael Johnson has termed 'an unwritten gentlemen's agreement' between Riyadh Al Solh and Bishara Al Khoury for the future running of the state, drawn up as it became apparent it would be needed.⁴³⁶ It drew on the experience of the landed and commercial elites

⁴³¹ There was a wider dimension to this that involved the acceptance by Syrian leaders of a separate Lebanon so long as Syria itself was independent from France. See Raghid Al Solh, 'Lebanon and Arab Nationalism', p. 216.

⁴³² The regional balance of power was drifting in Britain's favour, and Arab leaders in Syria were generally more British than pro-French. Equally the realities of the situation meant that the Free French regimes in Syria and Lebanon were dependent on British support; and this was widely apparent to the populations in the mandates. See Salwa Mardam Bey, *Awraq Jamil*, pp. 188-91.

⁴³³ Spears realised that this was one thing that, in the context of events in 1943 at least, would hold the communities together; that it could earn a long-term goodwill for Britain at least from the pro-Arab elements (more important than the Maronites, given Britain's wider responsibilities in the Middle East), and that it would give him a chance to work out a personal grudge against de Gaulle. See Raghid Al Solh, 'Lebanon and Arab Nationalism', p. 185; A.B. Ganson, *The Anglo-French Clash in Lebanon and Syria, 1940-45*, Macmillan, London, 1987, pp. 146-51; Farid Al Khazin, *The Communal Pact of National Identities*, p. 34.

⁴³⁴ He used this to promote the concept of future Lebanese co-operation with other Arab states, though leading figures such as Bishara Al Khoury and Riyadh Al Solh. See Salwa Mardam Bey, *Awraq Jamil*, p. 189; Farid Al Khazin, *The Communal Pact of National Identities*, p. 18.

⁴³⁵ Nicola Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1957, p. 76; Raymond Eddé, Oral Interview, Paris, 19 July 1994.

⁴³⁶ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 26. The Pact was an agreement worked out in private between these two men, broadly to preserve the interests of the elites in their communities. It was never formally recorded in writing. Insofar as it does exist in any written form it is to be found referred to in Riyadh Al Solh, Speech, 7 October 1943 in *Cabinet Papers 1926-1948*, Muassassat al Dirasat al Lubnaniyyah, Beirut, 1986, Vol. I, p. 126; in Bishara Al

across confessional boundaries, working together under the mandate, and against the French administrators; as well as on the agreement reached in the abortive 1936 Franco-Lebanese treaty that the basic principle for a political compromise in Lebanon was 'the fair representation of all the country's sections in the government and high administration'.⁴³⁷ This meant a division of responsibilities in the government of Lebanon on a confessional basis. Almost certainly it was the commercial significance of the Maronites that ensured an arrangement that enshrined a Maronite and Christian 'majority' in government for the future.⁴³⁸ In other words, there was an element of practical acceptance at elite levels among the non-Maronite communities that the Maronite role in the economy needed to be safeguarded by guaranteeing their political voice. Thus not only were there to be more Christian deputies in the Chamber of Deputies, but also the President was to be a Maronite. However, the Prime Minister was to be a Sunni, enshrining also the influence of that community relative to the growing Shi'a community.⁴³⁹

This Pact was intentionally vague in terms of numbers of deputies and relative powers of the various offices of state, in order to permit future flexibility and modifications of the constitution within the broad outlines of the Pact. Being accepted by the elites, it was to become the basis of the permanent political arrangement for an independent Lebanon.⁴⁴⁰ The impression of the Pact put forward by the political elites of the Maronite and Sunni communities has been that it represented a genuine intercommunal consensus; that it was a position that moved the communities beyond co-habitation to co-operation based on mutual conciliation.⁴⁴¹ But as Al Khazin points out, in 1943 the pact was, for Lebanon's Sunni and Maronite leaders, merely an expression of the 'lowest common denominators' at that time rather than a carefully developed

Khoury, *Haga'iq Lubnaniyyah* Vol. I, p. 264; Vol. II, pp. 15-21. See also Bassem Al Jisr, *Mithaq 1943: Limaza Kan Wa Limaza Sagat* [The National Pact, 1943, with Reasons for its Existence and Failure], Dar an Nahar III nashr, Beirut, 1978, pp. 142-60; Raghid Al Solh, 'Lebanon and Arab Nationalism', pp. 274-8.

⁴³⁷ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 181-2; Michael Johnson, *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ As Michael Johnson points out, the Muslim commercial sector had no wish to upset the Christian commercial sector, and could see advantages for themselves in such an arrangement. See Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, pp. 117-8.

⁴³⁹ Shi'a numbers were growing, but the community was little regarded by either the Sunni or the Maronites within the terms of the National Pact. Most members of the community were poor, and consequently relatively powerless in this period. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁴⁴⁰ Farid Al Khazin, *Communal Pact of National Identities*, p. 34.

⁴⁴¹ Raghid Al Solh argues, for example that the main significance of the pact was its 'contribution to the emergence of a democracy by conciliation', arguing that for men like Al Jisr, it 'came to symbolise national integration and confessional unity'. Raghid Al Solh, 'Lebanon and Arab Nationalism', pp. 274-78.

agreement that provided a genuine basis for the communities to collaborate in the long-term.⁴⁴²

In other words, this informal agreement was not in fact a 'national' pact. It was born out of particular conditions, and with the intervention of external forces, for it materialised only when the Syrian and British interests, as well as internal Lebanese interests, all converged in a desire to defeat the French in their desire to maintain the mandate. This pact did not provide any new basis for dealing with the confessional problem in Lebanon; rather it provided a basis on which, against a greater enemy, it was possible for the communities to work together. But in practical terms, in non-crisis situations when reasons for co-operation were less apparent, it perpetuated the likelihood of co-habitation rather than consensus, because it institutionalised, rather than modified, existing confessional divisions; and thereby different conceptions of a 'Lebanese' national identity.

The Western powers, especially the French and British, utilised the established myths as it best suited them - but this also ensured that they tended to see the Maronites in particular as the Maronites defined themselves, in terms of that mythology. This was to have profound implications for the relations that an independent Lebanon was to have with external powers at times of crisis. Required to react, Western powers were likely, at times of pressure, to resort to the resultant stereotypes in order to interpret what was going on instead of making more dispassionate assessments.

⁴⁴² *Ibid*, p. 23.

Chapter 4

The Development of the Crisis, 1943 - 58

The National Pact of 1943 has been described as 'a compromise formulation on the identity of the country and on power-sharing between the religious communities', because it involved 'a number of mutual renunciations and guarantees'.⁴⁴³ If such an interpretation of this unwritten, 'gentleman's agreement' is a fair summing up of the Pact, both in origin and in practice, then the collapse of the Pact in 1958 requires more explanation than indicating a return to the habits of co-habitation. Some other factors would seem to be needed to account for the breakdown of the new 'Lebanese' consensus. Certainly this has been traditional in many of the explanations of the 1958 crisis which have highlighted external intervention, especially by Nasser and the USA, as the major causatory factors. Salibi, for example, comments that 'It was largely events external to the Lebanese domestic scene which caused the last years of Chamoun's Presidency to be marred by violence and crises'.⁴⁴⁴ But this chapter will show that, once again, it was the internal dynamics of Lebanese intercommunal relations that ensured the events of the 1950s resulted in a major crisis and that the undoubted involvement of external powers needs to be seen in the context of a continuation of Buheiry's patron-client game.⁴⁴⁵

The National Pact needs to be reassessed, and seen as essentially an attempt, made at elite levels, to reconcile the various community mythologies relating to self-identity and a 'naturally' separate Lebanon, and the role that the various communities (or their elites) would play in any future state. That attempt was seen as necessary because of the 'crisis' of 1943, and was accepted as being in the interests of the elites of the communities involved in its evolution. But it was an attempt that took little practical account of any other

⁴⁴³ Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon*, Centre for Lebanese Studies & I.B. Tauris, London, 1993, p. 72.

⁴⁴⁴ K.S. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, Caravan Books, New York, 1977, p. 198; Marwan Buheiry, 'External intervention and internal wars in Lebanon 1770-1928' in Lawrence I Conrand (ed.) *The Formation and Perception of the Modern Arab World*, Darwin Press Inc, Princeton, 1989, p. 138.

⁴⁴⁵ Marwan Buheiry in Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills (eds), *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988.

interests within the community, being made in haste and under pressure. A new mythology was created in association with the National Pact, which has seen it established in political rhetoric as something central to the existence and survival of an independent Lebanon. Even here, however, it has been differently presented to the various communities. Moreover, the attempts to 'sell' the National Pact and an independent Lebanon to the masses of the various communities did not tackle basic underlying disagreements and differences at the lower levels of society. This was particularly true for the Sunni masses, both urban and rural. They were less influenced by the supposed material opportunities for the Lebanese state and in general, as Najla Attiyah has pointed out, still emotionally disposed to favour a link with Syria, as being in the best interests of their religion and traditions.⁴⁴⁶ On the Maronite side, there was still a large part of the community (notably the followers of the Eddés) who were not favourably inclined towards the National Pact and immediate Lebanese independence, preferring a continuation of the mandate or even a future as a 'territoire d'outre-mer'.⁴⁴⁷

Explanations of the crisis need to test the validity of the assumptions contained within the National Pact about the state and nature of intercommunal relations, especially those between the Maronites and the Sunni. These assumptions could not be tested out before being put into practice as the basis for a long-term consensus; they were a matter of expediency. But it certainly seemed in 1943 to be in the interests of the various political, land-owning and commercial elites to assume that the consensus contained in the Pact was workable, and that these elites either represented anyway, or could dictate, the opinions and loyalties of their followers, so giving the gloss of universal support for the Pact. One important assumption tacitly accepted by these elites was that the intercommunal balance of power within Lebanon was stable and that the balance of power within the region as a whole would remain the same for the foreseeable future.

⁴⁴⁶ Najla Attiyah, 'The Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis towards the State of Lebanon', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1973, p. 101.

⁴⁴⁷ This perspective was put to me by my father, Nouad Boueiz, in my youth.

As Michael Johnson points out 'Under the terms of such a vaguely defined Pact, the Christian and Muslim bourgeoisies could agree that while their economic links with Europe and the West were essential, their moderate 'Arabism' would also ensure they maintained their market in Syria and extended their access to the wider Arab market beyond'.⁴⁴⁸ In other words, it was an arrangement that was supposedly based on mutual self-interest at elite levels, and one that was expected to work sufficiently flexibly to ensure that benefits would be appropriately distributed at these levels. It was the gradual discovery that these assumptions were flawed in the context of developments in Lebanon itself, and the Middle East, in the years after 1947 in particular, that brought about the events culminating in the American landings of 1958.

The limited nature of the Pact is underlined by the fact that even as the administration of an independent Lebanon got under way, there were identifiably mixed feelings amongst the leaderships of the communal groups involved. This was particularly true of the Maronite and Sunni groupings. Maronite leaders remained somewhat nervous about the prospects of working with the various Muslim communities without the direct involvement of a Western imperial power to protect their interests.⁴⁴⁹ Sunni leaders were happy about the apparent Maronite willingness to cease running to France at every point of difficulty, but still unsure of the extent to which the Maronites saw Lebanon as primarily an Arab entity.⁴⁵⁰

Inherent contradictions contained in the National Pact began to create difficulties in the practical running of the state shortly after the ending of the Second World War. This chapter will focus on the gradual collapse of the Pact and the reasons therefore via three main themes:

- Government corruption

⁴⁴⁸ Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut. The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State 1840-1985, Ithaca Press, London, 1986, p. 26.

⁴⁴⁹ This is understandable, given that Lebanon was unique in the Middle East in having a Christian element in the population that was neither '*de jure* nor *de facto* second class citizens'. Theodor Hanf, Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon, p. 3.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 4.

- The role of individuals in positions of political power seeking to change the outlines of the way in which Lebanon was governed for personal reasons
- Lebanon's foreign policy and the use made by Lebanese politicians and political parties of traditional contacts with both Western and Arab states to bolster up the positions and ambitions of individuals and groupings at elite levels.

The corruption issue is one of recurring importance in an understanding of the collapse of the National Pact, because it was one of the earliest to become apparent, and was to remain a matter of concern. The Al Khoury regime, in power from 1943 to 1952, swiftly acquired a reputation for corruption, favouritism and nepotism. In the early months of 1946, Gebran Tueni and Kamel Mroueh, two leading newspapermen, highlighted the issue in a series of editorials. On 12 January, Tueni attacked the 'favouritism, clientelism and nepotism' of the regime; asking in March 'How much longer can the government continue with this profiteering mentality?'⁴⁵¹ On 24 April, Mroueh wrote: 'Silence is not golden. We need to tell the thieves that they are thieves'.⁴⁵² The President's brother came to embody the corruption of the regime. 'Sultan Selim', as he came to be known, was widely seen, with justification, as exercising huge influence behind the scenes. Gebran Tueni, for instance, condemned the 'use of power by the relatives of the President for his own purposes'.⁴⁵³

The corruption issue caused significant tensions in 1947 when elections for a new legislature were held, the first since independence, and elections which would be a preliminary to a presidential election in 1949. It also involved a clear attempt by self-interested members of the political elite to modify the government of Lebanon bringing together the themes of corruption and the role of individuals. Under the terms of the constitution, the composition of the Chamber was of crucial importance in terms of deciding the presidency. Under the terms of the constitution also, a president could not stand for office for a

⁴⁵¹ Gebran Tueni, Editorial, An Nahar, 12 January 1946; 1 March 1946.

⁴⁵² Kamel Mroueh, Editorial, Al Hayat, 24 April 1946. Similar editorials appeared on 30 January 1946; 11 May 1946.

⁴⁵³ Gebran Tueni, Editorial, An Nahar, 24 January 1946.

second consecutive term, but in 1947 Bishara Al Khoury wanted a second term. For this to be possible, he needed a Chamber favourably disposed towards him to the extent of being willing to amend the constitution to permit his candidacy as an emergency expediency. On 13 May 1947, Kamel Mroueh indicated his fear that the elections would be corrupt, commenting that 'We are behaving morally and politically like a people who have become decrepit; we are reaching the period of collapse'. The day before the elections on 25 May, he warned that 'the whole country is being used for the benefit of some families'.⁴⁵⁴ The outcome of the elections, and reactions to it, certainly seemed to bear out accusations of fraud. Serious accusations came from several prominent figures, notably Antun Boutros, the Maronite Patriarch, and two prominent and respected Archbishops, Augustus Moubarak and Boulos Akl.⁴⁵⁵ Moubarak's stance is of particular importance in indicating the validity of the accusations. He was a relative of Al Khoury's and had been a friend of his for over 45 years. Now he was referring to the Al Khoury regime as 'a despotic government' and the new Chamber as 'a fake Chamber' because it was elected through 'fraudulent elections'.⁴⁵⁶

A whole range of newspapers representing a wide range of confessional allegiances joined in the chorus of accusations of electoral fraud, representing a more populist perspective.⁴⁵⁷ Those political parties who also voiced protests at the conduct of the election may have been unified in their identification of the corruption in the regime. However there was no other consensus between them, as a brief survey of the parties themselves indicates. Opposition came from the loyalist Maronite grouping, the Kata'ib party; but also from the more moderate Bloc National, which looked to a membership that was not exclusively Maronite. The pan-Arabist Parti

⁴⁵⁴ Kamel Mroueh, Editorial, Al Hayat, 13 May 1947; 24 May 1947.

⁴⁵⁵ Antun Boutros to Riyadh Al Solh, Letters, 29 May 1947, complaining about electoral fraud. These were published in pamphlet form. See The Crime of 25 May 1947, Bloc National Party, Beirut, 1947.

⁴⁵⁶ Augustus Moubarak, Letter, 27 May 1947, Archives, Bloc National Party Headquarters. The letter also appeared in print in The Crime of 25 May 1947.

⁴⁵⁷ These include the following: Al Diar; Nidal; Asia; Al Ruad; Nida Al Watan; Sada Al Ahwal; Beirut; Beirut Al Massa; Kul Shay'; Telegraph; Al Hadaf; Lissan Al Hal; Al Ahrar; Al Bayrak; Al Jadid; Al Yaoum; Le Soir; L'Orient; Saut Al Sha'b; Al Zaman; Al Dunia; An Nahar; Al Akhbar; Al Dabur; La Revue du Liban; Zahla Al Fatat; Sada Al Shimal; Sada Lubnan; Al Afkar; Al Mustaqbal; Al Safa. See also The Crime of 25 May 1947 for some comment on the newspaper reaction.

Populaire Syrien (henceforth the PPS), came out in opposition, as did other parties with agendas that looked beyond Lebanon itself, the Ba'ath and Communist parties. The reaction of political opponents, however, became more vehement in the aftermath of the passing of the Bill to amend Article 49 of the Constitution on 22 May 1948. The Bill, passed by 48 deputies to 7, permitted Al Khoury's candidacy at the forthcoming election of 27 May 1949 as a 'special case'.⁴⁵⁸ An examination of the protests underlines the fact that the apparent unity provided by the concern of the opposition about the regime's corruption was complicated by a series of self-seeking agendas that indicate the limited nature of the co-operation on the issue from these opposition groupings.

This is made particularly plain through a focus on leading political figures protesting at this development. Kamal Jumblat was motivated partly by principle but also by self-interest. 'Sultan Selim' was by this time perceived as a threat to Jumblat's power base in the Shuf because he had developed links with the Maronites there; therefore a continuation of the Al Khoury regime, implying a continuation of Sultan Selim's activities, was personally unwelcome.⁴⁵⁹

Camille Chamoun, a member of Al Khoury's own party from 1943 to 1948, took the lead amongst Maronites unhappy with developments in 1947-8, again out of mixed motives. Chamoun had hoped to stand for the presidency himself, but frustrated in this, and fearful of threats to his power base in the Shuf, he shifted towards outright opposition to Al Khoury taking a series of actions designed to give him a high profile in the opposition.⁴⁶⁰ He had publicly absented himself from the Chamber on 22 May 1948, the day the constitution was amended. In so doing he certainly established his credentials as the leading Maronite opponent to Al Khoury, furthering his chances of future success in a presidential contest.⁴⁶¹ But for Chamoun there was also a

⁴⁵⁸ Edmond Rabbath, La Formation Historique du Liban Politique et Constitutionnelle, Publication de l'Université Libanaise, Beirut, 1986, p. 558. Not only was this point about corruption made at the time; it was recently given prominence in L'Orient Le Jour, 16 March 1995.

⁴⁵⁹ K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, Caravan Books, New York, 1977, p. 194.

⁴⁶⁰ As with Kamal Jumblat, Chamoun feared the impact of Sultan Selim in the Shuf. See K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 194.

⁴⁶¹ An Nahar, 11 March 1995; K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 193.

genuine concern, shared by other opposition figures, that Al Khoury desired a permanent hold on the presidency and that this renewal was to be the first step in that development.⁴⁶² Thus both Chamoun and Jumblat were prepared to work together in opposition to Al Khoury - but it was an alliance of expedience and not a meeting of minds on wider political issues.

With Al Khoury returned to power in 1948 the third theme also became of significance: that of Lebanon's foreign policy and the use by political figures for their own ends of interested external powers. In the years following the end of the Second World War, the Middle East entered a period of upheaval and change focusing in particular on the circumstances surrounding the termination of the British mandate over Palestine in 1948 and the creation of an Israeli state. In the aftermath of the resultant Arab-Israeli war of 1948-9, the Arab Islamic world became increasingly hostile to Western interventions in the Middle East, since the Western powers were blamed by Arab governments for their defeat in that war.⁴⁶³ Lebanon was not immune to the effects of the upheavals, in particular the military coup in Syria in March 1949, but the Al Khoury regime was determined that the success of military or para-military groupings in other Middle Eastern states would not be mirrored in Lebanon. Action would be taken, whether legitimate or not, to ensure this.

This was made plain quite early. The Syrian example induced the Lebanese PPS, led by Antun Saadeh, to attempt a coup on similar lines in early July 1949. It did not succeed; indeed it received relatively little backing, but its aftermath served to indicate to the Lebanese opposition the lengths to which the Al Khoury regime would go. Saadeh took refuge in Syria, but as a result of pressure exercised by Riyadh Al Solh, Saadeh was returned to Lebanon.⁴⁶⁴ His return was followed by what has been described as the swiftest and most unfair trial in the history of Lebanon with Saadeh being

⁴⁶² The intention behind the system of terms of office that were non-renewable on a consecutive basis was that this would prevent any one grouping in the political jigsaw from gaining too much power by establishing a monopoly over the presidency.

⁴⁶³ The defeat is now generally seen as resulting from Arab disorganisation, something recognised at the time by the masses if not the governments themselves. See Malcolm Yapp, The Near East Since the First World War, Longman, London, 1991, p. 138.

⁴⁶⁴ Riyadh Al Solh was connected by marriage to Husni Al Zaim, the Syrian leader. See Nazir Fansa, Ayam Husni Al Zaim, Dar Al Afak, Beirut, 1982, pp. 75-81.

refused the right to make any defence, and being tried, convicted and executed all on the same day.⁴⁶⁵ This drove the PPS into bitter opposition to both the Al Khoury regime and to the Zaim regime, something that was to have long-term implications for a Lebanese consensus, since the grounds on which they would co-operate with any other political groupings in Lebanon depended on their attitude to the events of 1949, rather than to any broader political agenda.⁴⁶⁶

But the harsh reaction of the Al Khoury regime to the attempted coup did serve in the short-term to create an opposition alliance based on mutual expediency. Para-military parties like the Kata'ib party and its Muslim counterpart, Najjadah, were subject to repressive policies that drove them towards temporary alliance with each other and with other opposition groupings. Kamal Jumblat, having organised his followers in 1949 into a Progressive Socialist Party in direct reaction to these developments, forged an alliance, apparently based on a shared socialist perspective, with Chamoun.⁴⁶⁷ The resultant Socialist National Front was, however, based more on mutual opposition to Al Khoury than a real sharing of political ideology.⁴⁶⁸ In continuing to denounce the widespread corruption of the Al Khoury regime, the Bloc National took the lead.⁴⁶⁹ But opposition figures also began to take a perspective on events that looked outside Lebanon itself and sought to place the republic in its regional context, playing on the fact that the polarisation going on within the Arab world between pro- and anti- Western camps had a

⁴⁶⁵ The records of this trial are still not to be found in the archives of the Ministry of Justice. Information beyond popular rumour has been provided by M. Chlouk, a journalist for An Nahar, who has researched the trial, but has not yet published his conclusions; see also K.S. Salibi, The Modern History of Lebanon, p. 193.

⁴⁶⁶ In 1958, the PPS actively supported Chamoun because they refused to link themselves to an opposition that contained Al Khoury and had links to the Syrian regime that had betrayed them in 1949. See Editorial, Al Bina, August 1958; Press Release No. 5, PPS, December 1958.

⁴⁶⁷ See K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, pp. 193-4; Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 122; Michael Suleiman, Political Parties in Lebanon: The Challenge of a Fragmented Political Culture, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1967, p. 214.

⁴⁶⁸ Salibi, for instance, argues that the Front was partly a public relations exercise, indicating a perceived need among Lebanese politicians to take a publicly united stance where possible to maintain popular credibility for their opposition stance. See K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 194.

⁴⁶⁹ Raymond Eddé, leader of the Bloc National in 1952, made it a matter of pride to make a stand against government corruption. He is still leader of the party in 1995. He has been referred to in the Lebanese press, notably by Michel Abou Jaoude in his editorials for An Nahar, as 'the conscience of Lebanon'. Salim Nassar in articles to mark Eddé's 80th birthday referred to him as 'the best president Lebanon will never have'; see Al Hayat, 15 March 1993; 17 March 1993.

direct relevance to the internal concerns of the various Lebanese communities.⁴⁷⁰ Despite the fact that the National Pact was supposed to ensure an even-handed attitude towards both the Western and the Arab camps, an ideal foreign policy was interpreted by most Lebanese at all levels of society as having a direct impact on the superior security and status of their particular confessional grouping relative to others.⁴⁷¹ Thus Al Khoury's refusal, which he justified by reference to the National Pact, to join the 'Common Defence' pact, conceived in 1951 as a Western project to counteract the interest in the region of the USSR and of the growing local Communist parties, alarmed the Maronites, while it pleased even those Muslim elements who were otherwise opposed to the regime.⁴⁷²

Despite such complications, the opposition front did eventually succeed in toppling the Al Khoury regime, helped by two developments that may be said to be opposition linked. In the 1951 elections a Chamber was elected that was not so overwhelmingly linked to Al Khoury's interests.⁴⁷³ On 16 July 1951, Riyadh Al Solh, one of Al Khoury's most significant supporters, was assassinated by the PPS.⁴⁷⁴ This had very far-reaching results, because Al Solh was unequivocally the most popular Sunni leader of the time, and his loss undermined further the basis of support for Al Khoury's government. The immediate aftermath of Al Solh's death, however, saw an apparent increase in the practical power exercised by Al Khoury. As one of the architects of the National Pact, Al Solh had effectively restrained Al Khoury; now it was unlikely (and indeed impossible) for Al Khoury to choose a successor who could hope to be on such terms of equality in terms of power resources. Thus even if it was not recognised at the time, Al Solh's death amounted to a breakdown in the national consensus. Influenced by his brother, Al Khoury appointed Sami

⁴⁷⁰ See F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, Middle East Institute, Washington D.C., 1968, p. 31.

⁴⁷¹ For instance, in 1945 the Arab League Pact had accepted the existence of a separate Lebanon. See Leila Meo, Lebanon: Improbable Nation. A Study in Political Development, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1965, pp. 90-1.

⁴⁷² The proposed pact was significant, because it was the first real attempt by the Western powers to get the Arab states (and Lebanon) to demonstrate publicly an alignment with the West against the USSR. Leila Meo, Lebanon: Improbable Nation, p. 111.

⁴⁷³ On the basis of a new electoral law, passed in 1950, according to Nicola Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1957, p. 111.

⁴⁷⁴ For details, see L. Yamak The Syrian Social Nationalist Party, Harvard University Press, 1966; Nicola Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, p. 112.

Al Solh as prime minister; although a member of the same Sunni family, Sami Al Solh was a less powerful politician.⁴⁷⁵

It was to be the corruption issue, though, rather than foreign policy complications, that brought down the Al Khoury regime in September 1952. A series of editorials underlines the continuing significance of this factor. Kamel Mroueh, for instance, claimed in May 1952 that trust between 'governed and governors' had broken down because of corruption. In September he labelled Al Khoury's regime and its supporters, especially Selim Al Khoury, as 'arrogant thieves and profiteers'.⁴⁷⁶ In September 1952, the opposition began to arrange a general strike 'against corruption', to call for Al Khoury's resignation.⁴⁷⁷ A cabinet crisis resulted, as Sami Al Solh apparently broke ranks to endorse the accusations of corruption. Despite Al Khoury's efforts to create a new government, the actual strike, on 15-16 September, ensured that these would fail, especially when the strike was combined with the army's refusal to become involved to back the president in his crisis. The only resolution of the crisis could be Al Khoury's resignation and new presidential elections in May 1952.⁴⁷⁸

The result was the election of a triumphant Camille Chamoun who found that foreign policy matters were assuming an increasingly high profile during his term of office because of Lebanese reactions to the changing Middle Eastern context. As the experience of Al Khoury's government had demonstrated, despite the National Pact, foreign policy issues still had the power to generate intercommunal tensions. There were, in 1952, two main strands to the foreign policy dimension which were to converge in the aftermath of the Suez crisis. One strand related to Lebanese-Syrian relations.

Under the terms of the constitution, the powers of the president were very wide, because he inherited most of those held by the High Commissioner during the mandate period. See Malcolm Kerr, 'Political Decision Making in a Confessional Democracy' in L. Binder (ed.), Politics in Lebanon, John Wiley, New York, 1966, p. 204; K.S. Salibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 195.

⁴⁷⁶ Kamel Mroueh, Al Hayat, 10 May 1952; 13 September 1952. Ziadeh indicates that, as in 1947-8, accusations of corruption were widespread in the press. Nicola Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, p. 11.

⁴⁷⁷ Kamel Mroueh, Al Hayat, 6 September 1952.

⁴⁷⁸ Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 122. Despite the suggestions of Rabbath, there is no sustainable evidence that Western intervention engineered this development. Certainly the West had become anti-Khoury and was pro-Chamoun by 1952; but the events of September 1952 in Lebanon were internally generated. Edmond Rabbath, La Formation Historique du Liban, p. 560; Nicola Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, pp. 124-5.

These had been habitually strained since the setting up of the separate mandates in 1920.⁴⁷⁹ In the 1950s, the tension related primarily to the divergent economic states of both countries, and to the question of political refugees. The greater economic success of Lebanon, with its visibly higher standards of living for most communities, including the Sunni there, was a cause of considerable resentment to Syrians; but this was a long-term issue that contributed extra vigour to more short-term clashes.⁴⁸⁰

These clashes, in the early to mid 1950s, related primarily to the habit of Syrian political refugees fleeing to Lebanon where they took advantage of their continuing proximity to Syria and of relative Lebanese press and media freedom to make sure that their views were publicised in ways that would be heard in Syria. The number of coups in Syria after 1949 were an added problem for Lebanese-Syrian relations. This crisis in relations came to a peak in 1955, when members of the PPS, Ghassan and Fu'ad Jadid, were implicated in the assassination of a prominent Syrian official, Adnan Al Maliki, in revenge for Syria's behaviour over Saadeh. As a result, Syria's hostility against the Chamoun government became complete because of continued Lebanese tolerance of the PPS and its anti-Syrian propaganda, and in particular, the support of the PPS for the Chamoun regime.⁴⁸¹

The other foreign policy strand had wider dimensions, relating to the impact on the Middle East of the Egyptian coup which brought Nasser to power as President. In the context of the Cold War, Nasser's policy of distancing himself from the West, and seeking to persuade his fellow Arab states to do likewise was to have a considerable impact on political relationships within Lebanon. The West, and those more Western-orientated Arab states of the early 1950s, such as Turkey, Pakistan and Iraq, sought to develop an anti-Soviet defence strategy based on 'friendly co-operation' between the Middle

⁴⁷⁹ See Inmea Sader (ed.), Syro-Lebanese Relations 1934-1985, CEDRE, Bayt Al Moustakbal, 1986, 2 volumes, for a chronological survey of the archival and bibliographical material charting the tensions between the two countries.

⁴⁸⁰ For the factors promoting this, see Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, pp. 28-9; 120-3.

⁴⁸¹ This support had developed as a result of Chamoun's opposition to Al Khoury and the Ba'athist regime in Syria. For details of the Syrian position see Nicola Zladeh, Syria and Lebanon, pp. 162-3; Itamar Rabinovich, 'Arab Political Parties: Ideology and Ethnicity', in Milton J. Esman & Itamar Rabinovich (eds), Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State in the Middle East, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1988, p. 158.

Eastern states, with US backing.⁴⁸² The outcome of the talks was the Baghdad Pact, initially between Turkey and Iraq, reached on 24 February 1955. Thereafter, Iraq took a lead in seeking to pressure its Arab neighbours into joining. In 1954 Nasser had succeeded in getting the removal of British troops from Egypt, including the Suez Canal Zone. The concept of the Baghdad Pact was thus deeply unwelcome to him involving as it did an Arab state, Iraq, which he saw as a rival to his ambition to lead the Arab world, and Britain. For Nasser, the pact was 'part of a Western scheme to support the creation of small, easily manipulated Arab states in order to combat the tide of Arab nationalism and perpetuate their colonial rule'; as well as being a personal affront to his personal dream of Arab unity.⁴⁸³ Nasser, therefore, sought to pressure Arab states not to join the Pact.⁴⁸⁴ Lebanon was one of those states subject to pressure by both camps.

Chamoun's term of office had apparently started well: he had made conciliatory noises to leaders of all the major political and commercial groupings in Lebanon, but by the mid 1950s the goodwill was evaporating, especially amongst the Muslim elites. With no leader of the stature of Riyadh Al Solh, the Sunnis felt particularly discontented, believing with some justice that their influence had lessened.⁴⁸⁵ Thus opposition leaders were looking for excuses and opportunities to attack and undermine Chamoun. The wider Middle Eastern conflict provided such excuses and opportunities. Chamoun did turn down the opportunity of joining the Baghdad Pact but not in terms that aligned the state clearly with the opposing, Nasser-led camp. His attempt at neutrality obviously did not please the various interested parties outside Lebanon; of more significance, it increased tensions within the country along confessional lines.⁴⁸⁶ As a result, attitudes within Lebanon to the state's

⁴⁸² Documents on American Foreign Relations, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1955, pp. 276-8; New York Times, 20 September 1953. Albert Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, Faber & Faber, London, 1991, p. 365 points out that independence had not led to an ending of expectations by such state governments that 'the former imperial rulers' would still maintain a protective military relationship with them.

⁴⁸³ Al Ahrām, 17 January 1956; Documents on American Foreign Relations, Daily Report, Foreign Radio Broadcasts, Foreign Daily Broadcast Information Service, 13 December 1958, A.3.

⁴⁸⁴ Leila Meo, Lebanon: Improbable Nation, pp. 94-7.

⁴⁸⁵ K.S. Sallibi, Modern History of Lebanon, p. 198.

⁴⁸⁶ F0371/12605 VL1011/1 British Embassy, Beirut, to Foreign Office, 1 January 1956, highlights the dilemma faced by the Chamoun government in terms of a 'choice between East and West'; and also mentions in its summary of principal events in Lebanon, the letter of appeal of the Maronite Patriarch to Chamoun, on 21 April 1955, urging Chamoun to 'remain neutral' because of fears of division amongst the Lebanese population.

foreign policy between 1955 and 1958 relate more to the perspectives dictated by confessional traditions than to the actual developments within the Middle East, such as the Suez crisis.

In the same year as the Baghdad Pact, Nasser arranged an arms deal with the Soviet bloc, signalling to the West that he was willing to work with the USSR and causing considerable alarm thereby in the West. The USA, which had been offering to fund Nasser's Aswan Dam project, something of huge symbolic importance to Egypt as a whole and to Nasser, sought to bring Nasser back into line by withdrawing the funding. But Nasser's reaction was promptly to negotiate a deal for the dam's funding with the USSR, and also to nationalise the Suez Canal Company.⁴⁸⁷ The 1956 Suez Crisis was a major international event, but its impact was also significant for individual states in the Middle East, including Lebanon, with its balance between the Western and Arab worlds set up by the National Pact. The resolution of the consequent Suez Crisis in Egypt's favour served to increase enormously Nasser's standing within the Arab world; and consequently to alarm those not in sympathy with Arab nationalist ideas. It can be said that the crisis had created a situation throughout the Arab world where popular enthusiasm for Nasser threatened the ability of any state government that was identified as taking an anti-Nasserist position, either explicitly or implicitly, and particularly in terms of maintaining relations with the West or advocating the Baghdad Pact. This had important implications for Lebanon and the operation of the terms of the National Pact, because it meant that the balance envisaged by the Pact would not be easy to maintain, especially if there was pressure for or against either Nasser or the Western world from within Lebanon.

In the aftermath of the Suez Crisis, Nasser put pressure on the Chamoun government to make at least a token gesture of solidarity with the Arab world by withdrawing the Lebanese ambassadors to Britain and France. Chamoun refused, invoking the terms of the National Pact to claim that he could not break with the West. Instead he merely endorsed a condemnation of

⁴⁸⁷ Dwight Eisenhower, Waging Peace: 1956-61, Doubleday, New York, 1965, p. 24; Raymond Salame, 'The Eisenhower Doctrine: a Study in Alliance Politics', unpublished PhD thesis, American University, Washington, 1974, pp. 182; 192-4

the actions of these powers; but he thereby precipitated an internal crisis in his Cabinet, indicating the existence of potentially destabilising forces in Lebanon.⁴⁸⁸ Abdallah Al Yafi had been Prime Minister, and Saeb Salam, Minister of State from 3 June 1956, but both men were dissatisfied with the current power balance in the regime and at odds with Chamoun over economic issues relating to their communities. They sought to use the opportunity offered by the Suez Crisis to redress matters by an assertion of their power over Chamoun. So they pressed for the ambassadorial withdrawals on the grounds that such a policy was in line with both the policy of the Arab League, of which Lebanon was a member, and the obligations of the National Pact. On 18 November 1956 both men resigned in protest at Chamoun's refusal to take 'an Arab stance'; claiming he was breaking a promise made to them to do so. However, they failed to bring down Chamoun himself.⁴⁸⁹ He reconstructed his Cabinet on the same day, bringing in Sami Al Solh as Prime Minister, but Al Yafi and Salam had now identified themselves with the broadly pro-Nasserist camp within Lebanon, and found it expedient to continue to do so, thereby distancing themselves from Chamoun.

Between 1956 and 1958 Nasser came increasingly to represent the ambitions and agendas of the Muslim political opposition in Lebanon. In the absence of a genuinely strong internal leader, the charismatic figure of Nasser provided a useful symbol for those politicians seeking to inspire their own followers. Nasser's message was of 'dignity, social justice, development, anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, and pan-Arabism'; and all of these were already part of the Muslim political agendas within Lebanon. Thus Nasser and his words provided a useful focus through which the Muslim political leaders in Lebanon could interpret their existing agendas, giving them a higher profile and greater weight in the eyes of their supporters.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁸ Leila Meo, *Lebanon: Improbable Nation*, pp. 97-8.

⁴⁸⁹ Yussuf Khoury (ed.), *Cabinet Papers, 1926-1984*, Muassassat Al Dirassat Al Lubnaniyyah, Beirut, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 447, recording the events of 18 November 1956; Leila Meo, *Lebanon: Improbable Nation*, pp. 98-9, recounts the Sunni claim that Chamoun had promised that Lebanon would sever diplomatic relations with Britain and France as an expression of solidarity with Egypt, but that he did not fulfil that promise triggering the resignations of Salam and Yafi. However as Meo also points out, Chamoun denied ever having made such a promise.

⁴⁹⁰ Michael Hudson, *Arab Politics*, Yale University Press, Connecticut, 1979, p. 243.

The new cabinet chosen by Chamoun on 18 November 1956 was not likely to increase support for the regime amongst the opposition. This was particularly so in the case of the appointment of the Greek Orthodox Dr Charles Malik as Foreign Minister, a man well-known for his pro-Western orientation. As Salibi states, 'The inclusion of Charles Malik, in the new government was in itself a declaration of policy'.⁴⁹¹ It is against this background that political debate in Lebanon over the Eisenhower Doctrine needs to be understood rather than putting the emphasis on the Doctrine itself and the pressures that external powers, notably Egypt and the USA, were putting on the Lebanese government. The Doctrine announced on 5 January 1957 by President Eisenhower was intended by the Americans to counteract moves towards communism in the Middle East.⁴⁹² As Salame puts it, it was 'a joint resolution of the United States Senate and House of Representatives authorising the President to employ the armed forces of the United States to protect the independence of any nation controlled by international communism', with Egypt implicitly identified as the villain.⁴⁹³

In presenting his proposals, Eisenhower emphasised his perception of a 'critical' situation in the Middle East, and argued that America's global responsibilities demanded a policy that would enable her to defuse any crisis there. Consequently, America had to be prepared to modify traditional support for national aspirations amongst states which had formerly been European colonies, judging whether those aspirations were tainted by communism or not. The Doctrine aimed to go beyond the mere protection of territorial integrity, to the provision of necessary military assistance and economic aid to counter the growth of international communism. One state specifically identified as a possible client for such assistance was Lebanon, where there was a perceived threat to its established nationalism from the forces of communism masquerading as Arab nationalists.⁴⁹⁴ Once passed by Congress and signed by Eisenhower, on 9 March 1957, the USA sought to sell it to the Arab world,

⁴⁹¹ K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, p. 199.

⁴⁹² Paul Zinner (ed.) *Documents on US Foreign Relations*, New York, 1958, pp. 195-204 for extracts from Eisenhower's speech to Congress, 5 January 1957.

⁴⁹³ Raymond Salame, 'The Eisenhower Doctrine', p. 11; for the text of the joint resolution of Congress, 9 March 1957, see M.S. Agwani (ed.), *The Lebanese Crisis in 1958. A Documentary Study*, Asia Publishing House, 1965, p. 15.

⁴⁹⁴ For the full text see *Department of State Bulletin*, XXXVI, January 1957.

but with little success. Both Syria and Egypt rejected it vehemently and sought to ensure that other states in the region did the same.⁴⁹⁵ In On 14 March 1957 James P Richards arrived in Beirut to persuade the Chamoun government to endorse the Doctrine.⁴⁹⁶ By this time, however, there was considerable opposition resentment of Chamoun's domestic policies, linked to fears about his future political plans, and Muslim (especially Sunni) bitterness over their exclusion from real power. Any opposition to reaction to the Doctrine would be likely to be based more on this than on a considered judgement of its merits and demerits for Lebanon.

Certainly the pro-Nasserist elements in the opposition, such as the Al Yafi faction, had begun to demand rejection of the Eisenhower Doctrine before Richard's arrival. But the less ideologically aligned factions in the opposition, including those led by Christian leaders such as Fouad Ammoun, were less decided in their stance, as a survey of reports in Al Hayat and other newspapers indicates. Al Hayat reported that both Jumblat and Bishara Al Khoury and his Constitutional Bloc were conscious of merits in the Doctrine, for instance.⁴⁹⁷ This was despite any danger of isolating Lebanon from the rest of the Arab world. What ensured rejection of the Doctrine by most of the opposition was the perception that Chamoun's acceptance of the Doctrine was linked to American endorsement of any plans Chamoun might have for following Al Khoury's precedent and seeking re-election via a constitutional amendment. The official acceptance of the Doctrine came in the joint American-Lebanese statement of 16 March 1957; but the opposition came to believe that Richards' visit also enabled Chamoun to confirm American support for his re-election.⁴⁹⁸

Thus endorsement of the Doctrine divided Lebanon into two main groups; essentially pro and anti government policy - both explicit and implicit. Notable amongst the administration's supporters were the Kata'ib Party, with

⁴⁹⁵ Leila Meo, Lebanon: Improbable Nation, pp. 107; 115-7. She points out that there was considerable justification for Arab refusals to endorse the Doctrine, as endorsement would be likely to bring the Cold War 'to their own doorstep'.

⁴⁹⁶ Foreign Relations of the US, 1955-1957, Volume XIII, Near East, Jordan-Yemen, Department of State Publication 9665, Washington DC, 1988, p. 208.

⁴⁹⁷ Al Hayat, 28 March 1957.

⁴⁹⁸ See Foreign Relations of the US, 1955-1957, Vol. XIII, p. 120; Leila Meo, Lebanon, Improbable Nation pp. 124-5.

their fears of Arab nationalism and of Egypt and Syria in particular.⁴⁹⁹ The opposition comprised a majority of the influential leaders from the Muslim community; but also a number of Christian leaders, especially those unwilling to see Chamoun re-elected. Their fury at the government's acceptance of the Doctrine was increased by their fear that it had strengthened Chamoun's own power and chances of success through electoral fraud. Consequently, they claimed that acceptance of the Doctrine compromised the National Pact, and amounted to government corruption.⁵⁰⁰ In the face of the storm caused by protests against the Eisenhower Doctrine, the cabinet agreed to hold a parliamentary debate on foreign policy and to submit itself to a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies starting on 6 April 1957. It was a stormy debate, lasting three days, but the undercurrent in that debate concerned the established fears and resentments of the parties involved over essentially internal matters. The government won the debate, by a majority of 30 to 1, but before the vote was taken six deputies resigned in protest over government policy.⁵⁰¹

One result of this debate was the formation of new opposition groupings linked primarily by their hostility to Chamoun and his regime, and focused on expressing that hostility in the forthcoming elections. The predominantly Muslim United National Front formed on 31 March 1957, published on 1 April 1957, an agenda which summed up the range of feelings about Chamoun's policies. It contained accusations about government corruption and a commitment to the conditions of the National Pact, which it argued Chamoun had broken, and consequently it contained rhetoric about the desirability of interconfessional collaboration.⁵⁰² Figures involved included Sunni leaders like Saeb Salam and Abdallah Al Yafi, and some leading Christian figures with

⁴⁹⁹ Pierre Gemayel, leader of the Kata'ib party, spoke of his fears of being 'engulfed in a Muslim sea' without the protection of the Doctrine and of the consequent duty of supporting the government. See Al Hayat, 4 March 1958; F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, p. 84.

⁵⁰⁰ Al Hayat, 19 March 1957 contains a useful summary of these opposition claims. Interestingly enough, despite their general support for Chamoun's position, the PPS could not bring themselves to endorse the Eisenhower Doctrine. See Abdallah Mohsen, Speech, 2 March 1958, PPS Archives.

⁵⁰¹ Al Hayat, 7 April 1957.

⁵⁰² Al Hayat, 31 March 1957; 1 April 1957 giving the Manifesto of the United National Front; see also M.S. Agwani, The Lebanese Crisis, pp. 29-33 for the full text of the Manifesto.

broadly Nasserist sympathies such as Bishara Al Khoury, leader of the Constitutional Bloc.⁵⁰³

It also included political groupings such as Najjadah, the National Organisation and the Al Ba'ath Party. In addition, what came to be known as the Third Force appeared on the political scene at the same time. The Third Force included a number of political leaders from the Catholic and Greek Orthodox sects, which traditionally sought to take a neutral stance in Lebanese political conflicts. Certainly Third Force figures such as Henry Pharaon, Yussuf Hitti, Joseph Salem and George Naccache, as well as the newspaperman Ghassan Tuani, did seek initially to act as a mediating element between the United National Front and the government. But as attitudes hardened on both sides, the Third Force moved closer in its views and attitudes to the Front. Eventually, little but the personalities remained to differentiate it from the United National Front in terms of relations with the government.

But as the United National Front's agenda suggests, the unity of the opposition to the Chamoun regime was again driven by expediency rather than shared agendas. Resentment over the regime's endorsement of the Eisenhower doctrine, as a symbol of the dissension on foreign policy issues linked to fears that foreign policy was being used by Chamoun for his own ends. On internal issues, the respective domestic agendas were very different and there is no evidence of any discussions to move these agendas closer together for the longer term.⁵⁰⁴ The high profile given to the Doctrine needs to be linked to Chamoun's plans for a new electoral law, the terms of which were first published on 18 March 1957, underlining the links between these issues. The number of deputies was to be increased from 44 to 66, and some constituencies were to be changed, establishing the basis for major political changes in both confessional terms and the power bases of currently powerful leaders. This proposed law ran directly counter to opposition demands for a larger Chamber, one of 88 members, because it was argued that this was necessary to provide a fairer confessional representation in the spirit of the

⁵⁰³ Al Khoury's motivation was more inspired by personal bitterness than ideological convictions; though he did have some sympathies with a more pro-Arab position.

⁵⁰⁴ *Al Hayat*, 19 March 1957; F Qubain, *Crisis in Lebanon*, p. 53.

National Pact, reversing the established bias towards the Maronite community. The opposition claim was that Chamoun's electoral reform would confirm that bias, rather than reverse it.⁵⁰⁵

As expected, in April 1957, Chamoun's version of the new electoral law was passed. But opposition protests continued and increased in vehemence. Indeed the resignation of the six deputies at the time of the debate over the Eisenhower Doctrine is better understood when it is realised that a major motivation behind the resignations was the desire of these men to improve their chances of support in constituencies that were predominantly Sunni in the forthcoming elections.⁵⁰⁶ In a strategy that was to become general during the election campaign, and the subsequent debates, foreign policy issues were used in the rhetoric of both sides but because such issues were held to sum up attitudes on a range of other essentially domestic issues, including political corruption and the relative status of the various confessional communities.⁵⁰⁷

As Michael Johnson points out, one effect of Chamoun's reforms, probably intended was a reduction in the power of the traditional landed classes of all communities, bolstering that of the 'commercial-financial bourgeoisie'.⁵⁰⁸ But Chamoun's prime motivation seems to have been the production of a Chamber of Deputies packed with his supporters, which he expected to come predominantly from that commercial-financial bourgeoisie, even across confessional boundaries, to some extent. A Chamber favourably disposed and grateful to Chamoun would be more likely to co-operate in any attempt by Chamoun to renew his mandate through an amendment of the constitution. Certainly by increasing the numbers of deputies by only 22 he reduced the power of existing strong leaders, without making it more difficult for the government to gain a majority in the Chamber.

⁵⁰⁵ This point was made plain in *Al Hayat*, 28 March 1957; 29 March 1957; 16 April 1957.

⁵⁰⁶ The reasons for their resignations and the reactions to it, making specific allusions to the debate on the electoral law, were widely discussed in the Lebanese press. See, for example, *Al Hayat*, 7 April 1957; 8 April 1957; *An Nahar*, 6 April 1957; 9 April 1957. The deputies were Hamid Frangieh, Sabri Hamadhi, Rachid Abd Al Hamid Karami, Abdallah Al Yafi, Ahmad Al Assad and his son Kamel Al Assad.

⁵⁰⁷ See, for instance, editorial, *Al Hayat*, 18 June 1957.

⁵⁰⁸ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 123. A 1952 electoral law had broken up the large electoral districts into 22 single and 11 two members constituencies, starting a process of undermining the *Zu'ama*. The 1957 reform merely continued the process.

While first political moves in the campaign were made in March and April official campaigning did not begin until May. On 12 May 1957 electioneering started with a government procession and a rally held by the United National Front, intended to raise the points on which the Front planned to campaign. These points demonstrate the basis on which the Front felt that political co-operation could continue within Lebanon:

1. The constitution should not be amended to enable President Chamoun to stand for re-election;
2. Lebanon should not be neutral in any dispute between foreign powers;
3. Lebanon should refuse to house foreign military bases or to join foreign military pacts such as the Baghdad Pact;
4. Any aid tending to restrict Lebanon's sovereignty or to influence her foreign policy should be rejected;
5. Lebanon should pursue a policy of close, impartial and effective co-operation with other Arab states;
6. The existing government should make way for a caretaker government to supervise the elections.⁵⁰⁹

This list underlines the main fears of the opposition; notably that even though he had not articulated this, Chamoun intended to seek another term of office; and to use the election for this purpose. The United National Front also underlined the opposition belief that the Chamoun regime was corrupt. On 20 May Hamid Frangieh alleged that Chamoun was guilty of corruption including bribery; and also of scare mongering by seeking to use foreign policy issues for his own purposes. He was seeking to deceive the electorate into thinking the

⁵⁰⁹ An Nahar, 13 May 1957.

very existence of Lebanon was at stake in the election, to divert attention from the real issues of corruption and Chamoun's personal ambitions.⁵¹⁰

On 27 May 1957 the United National Front sought to escalate the tension and so gain an advantage for its agenda, by warning Chamoun that unless he dismissed the Al Solh government within 24 hours in favour of a neutral caretaker cabinet which would act to supervise the elections, there would be a general strike and 'peaceful demonstrations' beginning on 30 May.⁵¹¹ Similar tactics had succeeded in bringing down the Al Khoury regime in 1952, but this time, the government was, or felt itself to be, in a stronger position. Thus all demonstrations likely to lead to a breach of the peace were banned and the Ministry of the Interior requested to enforce this. The army was also instructed to hold itself ready to intervene if it became necessary.⁵¹² The demonstration went ahead in Beirut on 30 May. It escalated into a fight between the demonstrators and the gendarmerie, though as was the case with all the fighting during this period the scale was limited by army reluctance to get too deeply involved.⁵¹³ However, it set the tone for a bitter campaign, as the press reporting indicates. The government claimed that only 4 men and 1 woman were killed; while opposition leaders maintained that more than 15 people were killed and about 100 were wounded.⁵¹⁴ One Sunni opposition leader, Saeb Salam, received a head wound and was taken to hospital in custody; and some 350 other demonstrators were arrested and detained in a stable.

The government also sought to minimise the popular impact of the demonstration and its aftermath by confiscating the next day's issues of the five leading opposition newspapers.⁵¹⁵ While the army then moved in to ensure that the fighting did not start up again, such government action ensured that a relatively minor demonstration became not only a major election issue

⁵¹⁰ Al Hayat, 20 May 1957.

⁵¹¹ An Nahar 28 May 1957.

⁵¹² Al Hayat 30 May 1957; 31 May 1957.

⁵¹³ F.O. 371/142208, British Embassy Beirut to Foreign Office 24 April 1959. This states 'the Commander in Chief anxious to prevent the disintegration of the army and lacking sympathy for the President's political plans could seldom be persuaded to use his small force for offensive actions'.

⁵¹⁴ An Nahar, 31 May 1957. The full truth is not known but it is certain that both sets of figures were inaccurate as, apart from anything else, accuracy in such figures on such occasions is in the interests of no parties involved.

⁵¹⁵ An Nahar, 3 June 1957. One of the leading newspapers that did appear, because of its generally neutral stance, it did report this set of developments, including the figures for both sides and the censorship of other portions of the press.

but a symbol for the opposition of a misuse of government power. The opposition was not defused, but encouraged, to further defiance, with a consequent increase in tension and disorder within Lebanon. As Najla Attiyah comments, 'The nature of the issues over which the government and the opposition were fighting made the election campaign a fight for survival' for the government and the policies it represented.⁵¹⁶

In fact, the rest of the actual campaigning was relatively peaceful: it was the aftermath of the election that can be described as a situation of escalating crisis for the government. After his arrest, Saeb Salam announced he was going on hunger strike in an attempt to force the government, including Chamoun, to resign.⁵¹⁷ At this point the Lebanese army became a potential player, since Chamoun wished to use the army to intervene against the demonstrators. However, the head of the army, General Shihab, was opposed to this. Shihab was a Maronite, from an important landowning family, but he did not share Chamoun's agenda in 1957. Instead, motivated by his desire to avoid use of the army, he sought to mediate between both sides and did win three major concessions from the government intended to appease the opposition. From 31 May to 4 June, Shihab took over control of all the state's security forces, not just the army, relieving immediate fears that Chamoun would misuse these again. Second, he secured the appointment of two additional ministers to the Cabinet, to act as neutral observers. Dr Yussuf Hitti and Muhammad Ali Bayhum were given the task of ensuring the conduct of the elections would be fair and free. Finally it was announced that a committee would also be set up to oversee the proper conduct of the elections.⁵¹⁸

Shihab's efforts did have some effect in the short term. The threatened strike was called off and Salam ended his hunger strike on 2 June. But as An Nahar, reporting these developments, commented, effectively the potential for

⁵¹⁶ Najla Attiyah, 'The attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis Towards the State of Lebanon', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1973.

⁵¹⁷ Al Hayat, 1 June 1957; see also Al Hayat, 3 June for reports on how this compromise was reached.

⁵¹⁸ For an indication of how this arrangement was received by the opposition, see Al Hayat, 2 June 1957; 4 June 1957. Hitti was an ex-deputy. He had the reputation of being an honest man, but also for being a go-between and a political 'fixer' probably the reason for his choice. Bayhum was a Sunni, from a traditional political family, but not a leading figure, again meaning that he was a relatively neutral choice. See FO371/134115 VL1012/1, No. 68 (Confidential) Sir George Middleton to Mr Selwyn Lloyd, No. 68, (Confidential), 2 May 1958, 'Leading Personalities in Lebanon'. See also F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, p. 56.

any national consensus in the forthcoming elections was now minimal, amounting to an effective breakdown in the National Pact.⁵¹⁹ Even without major violence, the election campaign certainly saw a deepening of the divides between politicians, often, though not exclusively, along confessional lines. For example, pro-government candidates did include a number of Muslim candidates who clung to the traditional idea of intercommunal compromise, or who felt that their best chance of personal success lay in continuing support for Chamoun.⁵²⁰ On 9 June the elections began, to be held over four successive Sundays to facilitate the peace-keeping efforts of the security forces. On this first Sunday, Beirut and South Lebanon, with 11 seats each, voted, and on 16 June, Mount Lebanon with 20 seats. On 23 June it was the turn of the Bīqa', with 10 seats and finally on 30th June, North Lebanon, with 14 seats, took its turn at the polls. The emphasis on the traditional Maronite stronghold of Mount Lebanon, indicated by the high number of seats allocated to it, despite its rural character, is a useful indication of how Chamoun's regime had attempted to skew the balance of constituencies in their favour.

Analysis of the results indicates that both opposition and government had, to some extent, been successful in pressing their perspectives on their followers on issues such as corruption and attitudes for and against the Eisenhower Doctrine. In the Matn district, the electoral lists were pro-Docctrine in outlook, for instance. Chamoun's calculations on the importance to his cause of the Mount Lebanon district were borne out with the return of 20 deputies who were all 'loyalists' in terms of supporting not only the government, but also Chamoun's plans for re-election.⁵²¹ Table 1 provides an illustration of this:

⁵¹⁹ An Nahar, 3 June 1957.

⁵²⁰ Saeb Salam, Oral Interview, Geneva, 4 January 1991.

⁵²¹ Al Hayat, 21 June 1957, made this point. Interestingly, however, some of these 20 deputies had made it public that they had reservations about government foreign policy; again highlighted in the Al Hayat report. See also Table 1 following.

Table 1
Mount Lebanon⁵²²

Constituency	Deputy	Political allegiance	Votes
Baabda	Elia Abou Jaoude Edouard Honein Mahmoud Ammar Bashir Al Awar	Loyalist Maronite B N Maronite P C Shi'ite P C Druze	12578 13838 14891 14359
Matn	Salim Lahoud Assad Al Achkar Albert Moukheiber	Loyalist Maronite P P S Maronite B N Greek Orthodox	11172 12168 9063
Baaklin	Kahtan Hamadi Henri Traboulsi Naim Mogabgab	P C Druze P C Maronite P C Maronite	9074 1048 10153
Aley	<i>Amir</i> Magid Arslan Leader George Akl Mounir Abour Fadel	Loyalist Druze B N Maronite Loyalist Greek Orthodox	14600 13793 13784
Kisrawan	Nohad Boueiz Clovis Al Khazin Traditional Leader Maurice Zouain	B N. Maronite Pro B N Maronite Maronite Traditional Leader	16388 16375 16179
Dayr al Qamar	Emile Bustani Anwar Al Khatib	P.C. Maronite Independent Sunni	11530 11605
Borj Hammoud	Dicran Tosbath	Armenian Unan*	
Jbeil	Raymond Eddé	B N. leader Unan* Maronite*	

Key:

- P.C. = Pro Chamoun
- B N. = Bloc National
- P.P.S.= Parti Populaire Syrien
- * = No opponents stood against these candidates

The results of the election were set out in the press after each round.⁵²³ As the pattern of results became clear, Chamoun began to be widely accused of attempting to rig the election, first through the electoral law and subsequently

⁵²² Figures taken from *Al Hayat*, 17 June 1957.

⁵²³ For example, *Al Hayat*, 10 June 1957 gave the results for Beirut and the south; *Al Hayat*, 11 June 1957, gave the results for Mount Lebanon; *Al Hayat*, 24 June gave the results for the Bl'qa; *Al Hayat*, 1 July 1957, gave the results for North Lebanon.

through fraudulent conduct of the election campaign and the electoral process itself.⁵²⁴

Some of the most bitter defeated candidates were from the *zu'ama* classes in the various communities, and so members of the traditional landowning political elites. They claimed that Chamoun had deliberately discriminated against any potential opposition through the electoral law and had followed this up by actual electoral misconduct.⁵²⁵ The evidence indicates that this was not just the rhetoric of defeat. For instance, the outcome of elections in Beirut indicates how disadvantaged opposition candidates were. Both Saeb Salam and Abdallah Al Yafi were standing here. They were popular sitting deputies, and could have expected re-election. Both these opposition leaders lost.

An examination of the composition of the new constituency boundaries here is illuminating. To the strongly pro-Sunni and pro-opposition areas of Musaytiba and Mazraa, three Christian sectors had been added, Ashrafiyyah, Rumayl and Sayfi. Theoretically such a system should be ideal for a multi-confessional state such as Lebanon, as it meant that candidates would need support from all sectors of the electorate, promoting consensus thereby. However, in this case the Christian proportion now outnumbered the Muslim by a ratio of 60 or even 65 per cent. The Christian sector could be relied on to come out in opposition to candidates taking a pan-Arabist, pro-Nasserist stance, just the position which would ensure success in the Muslim areas. The results as published by An Nahar on 14 June, 1957 illustrate the extent to which it had proved practically impossible for opposition candidates to succeed. However, the pro-Chamoun candidates, headed by Sami Al Solh, reaped the benefit of support from the Christian areas; as the table below indicates:

⁵²⁴ Kamal Jumblat, Haqiqat al Thawra al Lubnaniyyah [The Truth about the Lebanese Revolution], Dar Al Nashr al Arrabiyyah, Beirut, 1959, p. 115; Yussuf Al Sawda, al Khiyana al 'uzma [The Biggest Betrayal], Beirut, 1957. This pamphlet is held in the Al Sawda Papers, l'Université de Saint-Esprit, Kaslik, and specifically discusses the issue of Chamoun using the election in his attempt to renew his mandate. See also Farid Al Khazin & Paul Salem, Al Intikhabat al 'ula Fi Lubnan Fi mma Ba'd al Harb [The First Election After the War], Dar An Nahar wa Markaz Al Lubnani lil Dirasat, Beirut, 1993, p. 29, which describes the 1957 election as 'conducted according to the plans of President Chamoun'.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

Table 2
1957 Election Results⁵²⁶

District Constituencies - Beirut	Sami Al Solh	Abdallah Al Yafi	Difference
Ashrafiyyah	5936	1942	3994
Rumayl	4411	955	3456
Sayfi	1969	218	1751
Total - East Beirut	12316	3115	9201
Musaytiba	4260	4844	- 584
Mazraa	2322	8270:	- 5948
Total - West Beirut	6582	13114	- 6532
Total general	18898	16229	+ 2669

This was not the only example of gerrymandering. Kamal Jumblat, another sitting deputy in the Shuf district with a significant popular following there was also defeated. Examination shows that his constituency had been modified to include a significant element of pro-government Christians who would not vote for a Druze leader of a 'socialist' party, even if he had supported the government on a key foreign policy issue.⁵²⁷ Defeat was particularly bitter for Jumblat, because though officially an opposition leader, certainly on a number of key domestic issues, he had openly endorsed Chamoun's policy of support for the Eisenhower Doctrine.⁵²⁸ Consequently he had moved to a position of general support for the government in the months before the election.⁵²⁹ The manner of his defeat ensured that he became a bitter opponent of Chamoun for personal rather than purely political reasons.

⁵²⁶ *An Nahar*, 14 June 1957.

⁵²⁷ This point was made in the opposition press very strongly. See *An Nahar*, 18 June 1957.

⁵²⁸ *Al Hayat*, 16 March 1957. Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 122, points out that Jumblat's 'moderate social democracy' had been rejected by Chamoun on his election in 1952, though they had been in alliance against Al Khoury, placing Jumblat in the opposition camp.

⁵²⁹ Saeb Salam, Interview, Geneva, 4 January 1991, which stressed this point. It was also made by Caroline Attie, 'President Chamoun and the Crisis of 1958. Referring to Foreign Service Despatch No. 487, American Embassy (Beirut) to Department of State 18 April 1957', unpublished Conference paper, Austin, Texas, 13 September 1992. See also *Al Hayat*, 18 June 1957 for comments on the unacceptable nature of Jumblat's defeat.

As newspaper comment throughout June 1957 indicates, it was not just a matter of fraud by a prior rigging of the constituencies in favour of government-backed candidates. The actual voting figures were open to question. It was pointed out by opposition leaders and newspapers that even with the constituencies rigged as indicated above, figures like Kamal Jumblat should have had sufficiently large personal followings to have ensured re-election, though possibly with smaller majorities.⁵³⁰ Instead, the results were a sweeping victory for the government, with its candidates winning over two-thirds of the seats, and the opposition a mere eight seats. For both contemporaries and historians the results indicate a degree of electoral fraud during the voting process in some way. If unequivocal hard evidence is not available, cumulative circumstantial evidence indicates that the elections were dishonest. It is hard to explain otherwise, in view of the traditional value placed on leadership in Lebanon, how so many major opposition leaders were defeated.

Investigation reveals that strong pressure was applied to ensure the election of some government candidates. Chamoun was reputedly prepared to bring pressure on candidates and voters, through tactics which included warnings to candidates or voters with relatives in the civil service, to follow a government line or bribery resulting in the withdrawal of candidates. The election of Dr Charles Malik in the Kura district of Northern Lebanon provides a case in point. One of the candidates standing there was a Communist who had not the slightest chance of success. However the leading opposing candidate was Fouad Ghosn, a Greek Orthodox and a formidable figure for Malik to overcome. Ghosn was summoned to the presidential palace and after two meetings with Chamoun - lasting, it is said, for a total of nine hours - he was induced to withdraw, and subsequently compensated with an ambassadorial post.⁵³¹ In Ghosn's absence the Communist candidate served merely to give the illusion of electoral choice in an election drama the results of

⁵³⁰ For example, *Al Hayat* in its analysis of the Mount Lebanon results reported with sympathy Kamal Jumblat's accusations that Chamoun had engineered his defeat. See *Al Hayat*, 19 June 1957.

⁵³¹ The withdrawal of Ghosn was widely commented on at the time; he was from a landowning family with a power base in the Kura district. It was agreed that no *Za'im* would choose not to stand in the elections unless something extraordinary had happened. Salim Nassar, interview, London, 20 May 1995; *Al Hayat*, 1 July 1957.

which had already been decided in a decidedly undemocratic fashion.⁵³² A further indication of electoral malpractice was provided by the events of 17 June. On that day the two 'neutral ministers' overseeing the elections, Yussuf Hitti and Muhammad Beydoun resigned. Although they could not prove any fault with the technical conduct of the elections they did suggest that the reality was different, as their comment to Al Hayat of 18 June underline. They were reported as saying that the elections were 'superficially in order, but unfair pressures on voters were obvious on examination' which affected the way they voted.⁵³³

There was a brief period following the elections during which the tensions in the Lebanon relaxed but the firm popular conviction amongst the opposition at least, of electoral malpractice ensured this did not last. Soon the general atmosphere degenerated, and certain areas rapidly returned to outbursts of lawlessness clearly linked to anti-government feeling. As bombings, sabotage, clashes between armed bands and police in mountain areas and the resurrection of clan feuds disturbed the peace, the United National Front refused to recognise the election results or the legitimacy of the government. On 3 July 1957, with all the results published, the opposition finally issued a statement 'denouncing election malpractices', and accusing the [Lebanese] government 'of trying to act unconstitutionally in order to ensure Chamoun's re-election'.⁵³⁴ In this continuing tension, foreign policy issues were increasingly the issues used by the various confessional factions to sum up their positions and increasingly, therefore, these came to symbolise confessional discord. For one thing, it was still easier to group together a number of disparate political factions on blanket foreign policy issues, while the intricacies of Lebanese internal politics consistently tended to divide attempts by politicians at co-operation.

⁵³² This point was not lost on the press, see Al Hayat, 1 July 1957. See also F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, p. 57; Salim Nassar, Interview, London, 10 May 1995, Nassar was a leading newspaperman in 1958, and his comments on the public mood at the time must be taken seriously.

⁵³³ Al Hayat, 18 June, 1957; see also Mideast Mirror, 23 June, 1957 for a repetition of the claims.

⁵³⁴ This was reported widely, see Al Hayat, 4 July 1957.

In an indication of the extent to which the government and its supporters felt under pressure, on 25 July 1957 various mainly Maronite deputies met and agreed at their meeting on the formation of a new parliamentary bloc or grouping. Invitations were issued to a carefully chosen list of 35 deputies. The aim was to include a range of deputies from various political parties and confessional groups by invoking their mutual support on foreign policy matters. The pro-government grouping was able to overcome its differences on internal policy by raising as an issue the need to guard Lebanon against Nasserism and Communism, but even this posed difficulties. Not even all Maronite politicians included in the grouping were uncritical in their acceptance of the reality of the threat posed by Nasserism or Communism. Table 3 lays out the confessional allegiances of the pro-government grouping in July 1957:

Table 3⁵³⁵

Members of the Pro-Government Grouping by Constituency and Confessional Allegiance

Beirut	Sami Al Solh Jamil Mekkaoui Fawzi Solh Rachid Beydoun Joseph Chader Chafic Nassif Katchik Babikian Khalil Al Hibri Moses Derkalousian	Sunni Sunni Sunni Shi'a Armenian Armenian Armenian
South	Adel Osseiran Yussuf Al Zein Khazem Khalil Muhammad Fadil Reda Wadih	Shi'a Shi'a Shi'a Sunni Shi'a
Mount Lebanon	Emile Bustani Anwar Al Khatib Naim Mogabgab Henri Traboulsi Kahtan Hamadih Clovis Al Khazin Maurice Zouain Assad Achkar Salim Lahoud Albert Moukheiber Dikzan Tosbath Elia Abou Jaoude Bashir Al Awar Mahmoud Ammar Majid Arslan Mounir Abour Fadil George Akl	Maronite Sunni Maronite Maronite Druze Maronite Maronite Maronite Maronite Maronite Greek Orthodox Armenian Maronite Druze Shi'a Druze Greek Orthodox Maronite
North	Charles Malik (Kura) Kabalan Issa Al Khoury (Becharre) Jean Harb (Batroun)	Greek Orthodox Maronite Maronite

The table makes it clear that the majority of invitations issued were given to deputies from the Maronite stronghold of Mount Lebanon. However, among the absentees were prominent Maronites who did not automatically follow the government line, notably Raymond Eddé and his group of deputies, including

⁵³⁵ *Al Hayat*, 31 July 1957.

Pierre Eddé, Nohad Boueiz and Edouard Honein. Equally a number of non-Maronite deputies who had regularly demonstrated their support for the government were invited. Invitations were issued only to those it was felt would demonstrate the required group loyalty, as British observers pointed out.⁵³⁶ The intention was to counter apparent unity of the opposition in the aftermath of the elections, even though much of that opposition had now to be expressed in an extra-parliamentary fashion, due to the small numbers of opposition deputies elected.

It was this lack of formal political outlets that led elements in the opposition groupings to invoke external support for their position. Essentially this enabled a new set of 'patron-client' relationships to emerge in Lebanon. Egypt and Syria were invoked by elements in the Muslim political communities, especially Sunni-dominated ones, to counterbalance the traditional Maronite reliance on Western powers. In the context of the Cold War, Maronite leaders and others interested in the continuation of a separate, non-Arab Lebanon, looked primarily to the USA rather than to France, reasoning, pragmatically, that the USA would be a more powerful and effective protector of the economic and political interests of a separate Lebanon. Hence the willingness of men like Chamoun to endorse American policy in the region, such as the Eisenhower Doctrine.⁵³⁷

Even before the elections of 1957 there had been claims by the Government of Syrian and Egyptian interference in Lebanon's affairs, as part of attempts by these powers to topple the Chamoun regime. On his visit to Beirut in March 1957, Richards reported being told that 'in the past few months the Syrians had sent money and arms to Lebanese tribesmen [i.e.: Muslims] along the Syrian border.'⁵³⁸ Such claims were used in the election campaign by government supporters to attack their opponents, who they blamed for inviting these forces into Lebanon.⁵³⁹ But from May 1957 at least, it can be

⁵³⁶ FO371/134116, British Embassy Beirut to Foreign Office, 23 January 1958; 13 March 1958, commenting on the internal political situation of Lebanon.

⁵³⁷ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 126, stresses the economic dimensions behind the focus on the USA.

⁵³⁸ *Foreign Relations of the US, 1955-1957*, Vol XIII, p. 210, footnote 3, quoting Richards' record of a meeting with Shihab, Minister of Defence.

⁵³⁹ Such attacks had their effect: Edward Naim lost in the Baabda district in the 1957 elections because his pro-government rivals labelled him a Communist, linking him thereby to such accusations and ensuring no Maronite voters

shown that the claims did have substance to them.⁵⁴⁰ Apart from indicating a willingness by Egypt and Syria to become involved; this also indicates the depth of hostility from at least some leaders of the Lebanese opposition to the Chamoun regime from this time onwards. There is little convincing evidence that any of the political leaders of the time genuinely wished for an ending to Lebanon's independent status. What was sought, instead, was what these leaders identified as a return to the principles of the National Pact, in other words, a government acknowledgement that Lebanon was part of the Arab world that manifested itself in a policy that brought Lebanon into line with other Arab states.

To achieve this, some opposition figures were willing to resort, either directly or through encouragement of their followers, to increasingly violent means to bring down the Chamoun government since this was identified as the major obstacle to achievement of their goals. Tension increased from the start of 1958. On 27 January the United National Front announced that it would oppose any attempt by Chamoun to arrange his re-election.⁵⁴¹ On 29 January a fist-fight nearly broke out during a debate in the Chamber, when George Akl, one of Chamoun's most ardent supporters, made a speech attacking the Syrian and Egyptian governments. Sabri Hamadih, a member of the United National Front, made a counterattack on the Chamoun regime, and the hostility between the two nearly erupted into physical violence.⁵⁴²

The formation of the United Arab Republic on 1 February 1958 provided an opportunity for the wider Arab world to voice a hostility to the Lebanese government that was more than just rhetoric fuelled by personal dislike on the part of Nasser.⁵⁴³ Back in the 1957 election campaign the press and radio in

would support him. He was, in fact, merely a socialist, with links to Jumblat's party. See *Al Hayat*, 18 June 1957; 21 June 1957.

⁵⁴⁰ For instance, Louis de San, Belgian Consul General in Damascus, was arrested by Lebanese gendarmes on entering Lebanon on 14 May 1957. His car was full of a large number of weapons and a time bomb, plus a letter with general instructions for a terrorist campaign. Joseph Freiha, Oral Interview, Beirut, 14 June 1992, gave details of the case. He was the Prosecuting Magistrate in the case. See also FO371/134174 Tel. No. 1095, Sir George Middleton to Foreign Office, 21 July 1958. See also claims made in *Al Hayat*, 8 July 1957; 9 July 1957.

⁵⁴¹ No such candidacy had yet been announced but it was widely believed that this was Chamoun's intention. See K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', unpublished conference paper, Austen, Texas, 13 September 1992, p. 13.

⁵⁴² *An Nahar*, 29 January 1958.

⁵⁴³ *Foreign Relations of the US 1958-1960*, Vol XI, p. 2. footnote 4, makes this point: 'In a January 8 memorandum to the Secretary of Defence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff took note of political unrest and subversion in Lebanon, with probable outside Egyptian and Syrian support'.

Egypt and Syria had begun a violent personal campaign against Chamoun, his Prime Minister Sami Al Solh and the Finance Minister, Charles Malik. They were denounced in the standard phraseology as 'traitors' and 'imperialist lackeys'.⁵⁴⁴ These attacks had been well publicised in Lebanon by the opposition. In reaction the Lebanese government had banned all Egyptian newspapers, the major source of anti-Chamoun propaganda, for the duration of the campaign and indeed after, but this had not stopped the dissemination of these perspectives because of the determination of the opposition to make use of them. This willingness of the Lebanese opposition to make use of such hostile comments had real potential to destabilise the Chamoun government. So tensions continued to grow in Lebanon. An Nahar on 11 February, for example, contained a report on the continuation of government investigations into the importation of explosives into Lebanon for use by government opponents.⁵⁴⁵ On the same day the Maronite Patriarch became involved in an attempt to restore the interconfessional balance in politics. In an important speech he warned that:

'We the Maronites, are a ship in the Muslim sea. Either we have to co-exist with them with love and peace, or we have to leave, or else we will be annihilated'.⁵⁴⁶

This speech touched on the traditional fear in the Maronite community, but sought to convince his fellow Maronites, including or even primarily those in positions of political power, that they had to return to a position of co-operation if they were to remain in Lebanon. It is a measure of the extent to which widespread Maronite fear-based hostility towards the Arab Muslim world had escalated by this point that despite the Patriarch's intervention the deterioration in intercommunal relations continued with numbers of Maronites taking ever more rigid positions.

A further complication of affairs came with the unexpected visit to Damascus of President Nasser on 24 February. The press despatches of the time demonstrate the enthusiasm amongst Lebanese Muslims that Nasser's

⁵⁴⁴ Isma'il Moussa Yussuf [The Revolution of the free in Lebanon], Al Zayn, Beirut, 1958. This pamphlet recirculated this phraseology, used by figures like Nasser. See also Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 131.

⁵⁴⁵ An Nahar, 11 February 1958.

⁵⁴⁶ An Nahar, 12 February, 1958.

visit to Damascus stirred up an enthusiasm greater than any Lebanese political leader, both pro and anti-government had expected. Thousands of Lebanese from Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre and other towns travelled to Damascus. Taxi fares to Damascus rose to L125 (five times the normal) and taxi drivers in Beirut, to drum up trade, chanted 'to Damascus, to Gamal'.⁵⁴⁷ In addition, Nasser took the opportunity to receive innumerable official and unofficial Lebanese delegations, all congratulating him on his efforts. For several days he spent most of his time addressing the cheering crowds of thousands, many of whom were Lebanese, who welcomed him with an enthusiasm verging on hysteria. One pro-Nasser demonstration in Damascus on 25 February numbered around 180,000.⁵⁴⁸ Such a reaction to Nasser's presence seemed to prove to anti-Nasserist elements in Lebanon that all they had feared about the threat posed by pro-Nasserism was true, and would materialise unless action was taken to prevent it.

An Nahar warned that those Muslim figures, such as Al Solh, who continued to support Chamoun would find themselves ostracised by their fellows.⁵⁴⁹ The Lebanese government continued its attempts to counteract the propaganda and demonstrations of the opposition in an atmosphere of continuing unrest full of rumour and counter-rumour about plots and counter-plots. Many of these plots, real or rumoured, seemed to have little particular point to them. For example, on 25 February it was announced that a Jordanian had been implicated in a plot to plant explosives in several newspaper offices. The newspapers were named as An Nahar, Al Hayat, and Sada Lubnan. However, the newspapers concerned were not government papers, one (Al Hayat) was pro the Baghdad Pact but An Nahar and Sada Lubnan were both supporters of opposition groupings.

This was the background against which the Lebanese government moved to prosecute two leading opposition figures, Salam and Hussein, on 2 March on the charge of making defamatory statements about the Lebanese government during a ceremony held by Najjadah to celebrate the

⁵⁴⁷ F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, p. 62.

⁵⁴⁸ An Nahar, 25 February 1958; Muhammad Hasanein Haykal, Sanawat Al Galayan [The Years of Jubilation], Ahram, Cairo, 1988 p. 319, quoting Reuters and Associated press reports of the time.

⁵⁴⁹ An Nahar, 26 February 1958.

Syrian-Egyptian union. The timing was clearly not ideal for such a move, but on the other hand the government felt it could not afford to set the precedent of overlooking such public comments. On 3 March a new law relating to the press was adopted which gave the government, it was hoped, greater powers to control the output of journalists from abroad.⁵⁵⁰ However an important article by the owner of the An Nahar newspaper, Ghassan Tueni, appeared in its columns on 9 March. Tueni was also a leading journalist in his own right and his comments on the situation provide a clear indication that contemporaries were aware of the dangerous situation in Lebanon:

This fear over Lebanon is a danger for Lebanon. We find in the air a mixture of anxiety and stiffness in the attitudes that may lead to the ultimate danger of the disappearance of the Lebanese entity.⁵⁵¹

The concern of the Maronite Patriarch over the continuing situation in Lebanon also resurfaced about this time. He made a speech on 11 March in which he highlighted the corruption existing in the legal establishment in Lebanon, believing that if such issues could be dealt with, confidence in the government might be restored and a political collapse avoided. One scandal filling the newspapers related to the protection given by high court judges to a brothel managed by a Madame called 'Afaf' - the so-called Afaf Scandal. While not directly related to the tensions over political matters it could not help but discredit the administration still further at a time when the administration could not afford such bad publicity.⁵⁵² The Patriarch thus hoped to galvanise the government into taking some action that might improve its moral standing. He did not, however, succeed in either sense.⁵⁵³

On 12 March the Al Solh government resigned. Sami Al Solh had attempted to stave off resignation by enlarging his cabinet, but this had proved useless in the battle to win his administration more support.⁵⁵⁴ However this

⁵⁵⁰ A fresh ban on Egyptian papers came in again on 6 April 1958 and indicates the Government's lack of success

⁵⁵¹ An Nahar, 9 March 1958.

⁵⁵² An Nahar, 11 March 1958.

⁵⁵³ An Nahar, 11 March 1958, reporting the speech, underlined its futility.

⁵⁵⁴ FO371/142208, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 24 April 1959 reflecting back on the crisis.

did not signal the disappearance of Al Solh from government in Lebanon. With Chamoun's support Sami Al Solh formed a new government with 14 members on the following day, 14 March.⁵⁵⁵ The pro-government element in the population took the opportunity to stage pro-government demonstrations on 15 March, shouting support for President Chamoun and demanding the renewal of his presidential mandate. But no attempt was made to answer the complaints of opposition leaders, so the rearrangement triggered a continuation of Muslim counter-demonstrations and fears about the impact of these.⁵⁵⁶

In such a context, many of the more moderate elements in the Maronite community, and even now within the government itself were advising on the need to evolve a policy of compromise. Charles Malik, for example, began to suggest Lebanon take the initiative in trying to arrange a *rapprochement* between the West and Nasser, instead of perpetuating the hostility between these two camps in Lebanon. Malik informed Middleton, the British Ambassador, that his government was in favour of an end to the coolness between the UAR. and Britain.⁵⁵⁷ This was not so much an indication of a fundamental change in policy as an attempt to lessen the tensions surrounding Lebanon in order to decrease internal tensions and the supply of arms to the opposition.

But as Ghassan Tuani pointed out sarcastically, there were dangers, even for the government, of too close an alliance with the West especially because (as past and present) events showed that that support could not necessarily be relied on if the policies of the West changed.⁵⁵⁸ Overall the picture facing Chamoun after the 1957 elections was that of a Chamber which was not as firmly behind him and his policies as he might have hoped, certainly as he would need for success if he were to be re-elected, because of the fears that that Chamber increasingly faced about the intercommunal tensions within Lebanon, which they could not and did not want to ignore. There were certainly 15 and possibly as many as 20 deputies who were unquestioning

⁵⁵⁵ Cabinet Papers 1926-1984, Muassassoit al Dirassat al Lubnananiyyah, Beirut, 1994, vol. 1, p. 470.

⁵⁵⁶ *An Nahar*, 15 March 1958.

⁵⁵⁷ *An Nahar*, 12 April 1958; 13 April 1958.

⁵⁵⁸ *An Nahar*, 30 April 1958.

loyalists to his cause, the majority of whom were Maronites. Equally there were between 15 and 20 deputies who could be relied on to oppose his cause vigorously, mainly non-Christian. The rest of the deputies were essentially uncommitted in the immediate aftermath of the elections. A significant number were prepared to support Chamoun on certain issues, especially among the Maronite and other Christian deputies. But their support was by no means certain, especially for a strategy resulting in his re-election.

According to Al Hayat, there was a meeting at the presidential palace on 14 July 1957, between loyalist deputies, Chamoun and members of Chamoun's family, to debate the renewal of his mandate. At that time it was reported that even the loyalist deputies were split on the issue of a constitutional amendment to permit a renewal of Chamoun's mandate, on the basis of both its practicability and its desirability. Chamoun himself sought to demonstrate that his re-election was not a matter of personal ambition, but would be a result of pressure from his peers, reportedly saying:

I will not participate in the discussion, so it cannot be insinuated that I have either accepted or rejected any proposal on the matter. You are the ones who opened the topic and must close it.⁵⁵⁹

Such an ostensibly disinterested position was, when publicised, never likely to convince the anti-Chamoun element, or convert any waverers. There was a general reluctance amongst even Maronite politicians to support a president seeking a fresh mandate because it created tensions in the political system as a whole.⁵⁶⁰ The issue of constitutional reform was a sensitive issue for them because of fears that it was only the constitution that protected the Maronite community from being subjected to the growing Muslim population in Lebanon.⁵⁶¹ Thus Chamoun needed to locate any bid for a renewal of his mandate in an atmosphere of internal crisis if he was to have any chance of succeeding in it. There is evidence that rather than making blunders in his

⁵⁵⁹ Al Hayat, 16 July 1957.

⁵⁶⁰ The recent example of Bishara Al Khoury was undoubtedly influential.

⁵⁶¹ The influx of Palestinian refugees was certainly an issue here. Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 118 again highlights the economic dimension to these fears.

conduct of foreign policy at this time, he was conducting a high-risk, and eventually unsuccessful, policy of creating a containable crisis.⁵⁶²

This point is illuminated by an examination of the position of some of the Chamoun loyalists in the period up to the spring of 1958. The Kata'ib party was only to become ardently in favour of Chamoun's re-election during the summer of 1958 as a result of events then. Traditionally, the party associated itself with safeguarding Lebanese interests by preserving the pro-Western stance of Lebanese foreign policy and opposing Arab interference, by force if necessary. The party's concept of Lebanese interests was of course an essentially Maronite understanding of the term, as Pierre Gemayel had made plain, back in 1957, at a press conference on 21 May. Gemayel had stated:

We will hold firmly to our independence and we mean by that the freedom to decide our internal as well as external fate, maintaining our relations with Arab friends on a mutual basis of non-interference in our internal affairs; and we will continue our relations with the West as long as it is in our interests to do so.⁵⁶³

The major plank in their policy in 1957 was simply a determination to see Chamoun at least finish his mandate in order to maintain that pro-Western dimension and to prevent a victory for the Muslim elements in Lebanon. Gemayel argued that it was 'premature to think of such matters' but that he was personally against renewal because it involved a constitutional amendment and he 'would only accept this in a case where the choice was between President Chamoun and someone whom we believed would work against the interests of Lebanon'.⁵⁶⁴ The reasons behind their change can be said to be crucial to the change in thinking amongst several Maronite political figures in the crisis.

In terms of internal Lebanese developments in 1958, April was to be an important month. Civil unrest continued and the question of Chamoun's re-

⁵⁶² Michael Johnson *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 128 makes reference to Chamoun's 'tactical errors' in foreign policy; but Chamoun was a shrewd politician, and his tactics make sense only if read as an attempt to create an atmosphere favourable to his re-election, despite his subsequent denial of such a desire.

⁵⁶³ *Al Hayat*, 22 May 1957.

⁵⁶⁴ *Al Hayat*, 18 July 1957.

election was still important as an unconfirmed but widely believed rumour. The increasingly interventionary role of the army was also a factor, along with speeches from Chamoun which hinted of actual American intervention to defend his administration and Lebanese independence, a development he justified by reference to intervention from Egypt and Syria. It was in this context that in April, the question of Chamoun's re-election became a matter of open debate in the Chamber for the first time. On 10 April one deputy George Akl, a noted Chamoun supporter, announced his intention of proposing a constitutional amendment to allow the re-election of President Chamoun.⁵⁶⁵ Chamoun had, at this point still never explicitly stated in public (though equally he had still never actually rejected the possibility) that he desired such an amendment to let him run for office again. However, American as well as British sources provide evidence of Chamoun's intention to stand. In March 1958 the American Embassy in Beirut reported a meeting with Chamoun during which Chamoun had indicated that 'he intended to place before parliament in May the issue of amending the constitution and his subsequent re-election'.⁵⁶⁶

The fact that the question had been raised openly stirred up matters to even greater heights of tension with the confirmation it seemed to provide of all the gossip that had been circulating for months, including re-arousing all the suspicions about the corrupt nature of the 1957 elections. The reaction of the opposition was immediate. On the same day as Akl made his announcement 300 Muslim leaders, including former Prime Ministers, Speakers of the Chamber, current opposition leaders and religious figures, came out in opposition to Chamoun's re-election. But it is worth noting that they all also took pains to declare their support for Lebanon's continued independence. The Mufti, Shaykh Muhammad Alaya decreed that there would be no congratulations offered on the Feast of the *Bayram* marking the end of *Ramadan*.⁵⁶⁷ Instead these 300 notables attended a Ramadan dinner given

⁵⁶⁵ *An Nahar*, 10 April 1958.

⁵⁶⁶ *Foreign Relations of the US 1958-1960*, Vol XI, Lebanon and Jordan, Department of State Publication 9932, Washington DC, 1992, p. 17, reporting the contents of Telegram 2967, 6 March 1958. See also F0371/134116, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 13 April 1958 reporting that Chamoun had told Toufic Suwaida, Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, of his decision to seek to renew his mandate.

⁵⁶⁷ *An Nahar*, 10 April 1958.

by the Mufti of Lebanon to which, contrary to usual practice, no Muslim members of the government were invited.⁵⁶⁸ After the party a public statement was issued in which the party-goers declared their opposition to any attempt to amend the constitution and declared that the lack of congratulations on *Bayram* was a mark of mourning as Lebanon was suffering from the policies of the Chamoun administration. This was to be followed by a declaration on 17 April from the Mufti and some 200 leading Muslims that anyone who offered or accepted *Bayram* congratulations would be regarded as having violated the unanimity of the Muslim community.⁵⁶⁹

Civil unrest not only continued but also escalated. The army was in Tyre, one of the major centres of these disturbances, and its efforts to keep the peace there were not helped by the announcement of 10 April. As the month went on other violent outbursts occurred.⁵⁷⁰ April also saw the spread of rumours in Lebanon that Chamoun had appealed to the US for military aid in the shape of the Sixth Fleet to quell the unrest. Lebanese rumour said that the fleet would arrive off the Lebanese coast in order to support Chamoun and the truth or falsity of the rumour is less significant than the popular reaction. As a widely read editorial, full of double meanings and innuendo, by Ghassan Tueni, commented 'Chamoun is not fool enough to ask for the Sixth Fleet, for he knows that the Sixth Fleet cannot stop the internal revolt'.⁵⁷¹ But the tension in Lebanon was so acute that even The Observer's foreign correspondent gave some credence to the possibility that Chamoun had appealed to the USA for the despatch of the Sixth Fleet.⁵⁷² Thus April was a tense month in Lebanon, giving some indication of the chaos to follow. Matters had reached a level of tension where only a single incident of significance would be needed to spark an explosion.

Certain incidents were of key importance. On 15 April Marouf Saad's demand for the resignation of the government on the grounds of their

⁵⁶⁸ An Nahar, 10 April 1958.

⁵⁶⁹ An Nahar, 18 April 1958.

⁵⁷⁰ An Nahar, 11 April 1958. Chamoun blamed such unrest on the opposition. Jumblat, for example, it was claimed was implicated in clashes at Dar Al Baydar.

⁵⁷¹ An Nahar, 13 April 1958, p. 1.

⁵⁷² The Observer, London, 17 April 1958. See also Foreign Relations of the U.S., 1958 - 1960, Volume XI, p. 23, footnote 2, reporting Anglo-American diplomatic reactions to the situation.

responsibility for the present chaos and the danger of its escalation into sectarian violence also contained an allegation that the government was arming its supporters.⁵⁷³ On 20 April explosives were thrown near the house of Sami Al Solh while he was receiving visitors calling to congratulate him on *Bayram*.⁵⁷⁴ Despite this, on 24 April George Akl reiterated his intention during the following week of introducing a motion for amending the constitution.⁵⁷⁵

It was an atmosphere where propagandists on either side were actively looking for incidents which they could interpret to their advantage. But it was not until May that a really major incident took place. On 8 May Nassib Al Matni, the proprietor of the pro-Communist newspaper Telegraph, was murdered. According to Qubain, Al Matni had been at odds with the administration for some time.⁵⁷⁶ On 22 July 1957 he had been arrested and subsequently tried for publishing a report that was allegedly defamatory of Chamoun. Certainly he was well known as a severe critic of Chamoun and his administration and one who had come out in favour of strengthening Lebanese relations with the UAR. He was thus clearly a target because of his high profile opposition to Chamoun. On 22 November 1957 Al Matni had been stabbed in the face when leaving his office in the early hours of the morning. After his murder on 8 May four anonymous letters were found in his pockets threatening to kill him if he did not abandon his opposition to the government. The last letter was dated 19 April 1958.⁵⁷⁷ It has still never been proved whether or not these letters were deliberately planted to lead the police astray; equally it is not known which group or even side in the interconfessional hostilities got rid of Matni. The opposition might have done it to destabilise the situation; the government to silence Matni. Either remains a credible possibility.

American sources record that on 9 May rioting began in Tripoli in protest against Al Matni's murder, and that events rapidly took a serious turn leading

⁵⁷³ An Nahar, 16 April 1958.

⁵⁷⁴ An Nahar, 21 April 1958.

⁵⁷⁵ An Nahar, 25 April 1958.

⁵⁷⁶ F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon p. 68.

⁵⁷⁷ An Nahar, 9 May 1958; F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, p. 69.

swiftly to armed rebellion.⁵⁷⁸ In these clashes with the security forces in Tripoli 15 were killed and 150 wounded. The clashes continued there on the following day with more serious results. The United States Information Services Library in Tripoli was burned; there were 10 deaths and around 100 people injured.⁵⁷⁹ Within days the country had become divided into a number of virtually independent sectors, each under the control of a local leader. Most of the heavy fighting occurred in the remaining days of May in all these regions.

Western Beirut had come under the control of the opposition by 20 May, and such areas were declared by the army to be out of bounds to all state security forces. Tripoli, besieged by government forces turned into a battle field as the opposition forces holding the city had managed to get supplies from Syria. In Sidon as well, opposition forces assumed control of the city. But the fighting there was less intense than in Beirut and Tripoli. The heaviest and most continuous fighting took place in the Shuf area, notably in the district where Jumblat's followers were found. Undoubtedly here the violence was fuelled by the bitter enmity that now existed between Jumblat and Chamoun as well as the traditional Maronite-Druze rivalry. In the Balback-Hirmel sector as along the entire length of the Lebanese-Syrian border independent local opposition leaders established control, maintaining separate commands and even separate systems of self-government.

According to General Shihab's run down of the military situation given on 13 May 1958, the major battles occurred between 9 and 18 May. According to An Nahar, over 50 were killed and 200 wounded in the period to 14 May.⁵⁸⁰ Information gathered on 20 May indicated the toll had risen to 60 dead and 300 wounded, with the major casualties in the north, especially Tripoli.⁵⁸¹ The fighting between the opposition and the gendarmerie continued after 18 May, in the Shuf district and the Biqa'. But the fighting was not the only thing going on in this period. Faced with the escalating conflict desperate attempts were being made by various figures to reach some kind of political compromise. For

⁵⁷⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960, Volume XI, pp. 35-37, footnote 2.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 41.

⁵⁸⁰ An Nahar, 14 May 1958.

⁵⁸¹ An Nahar, 20 May 1958.

many who had previously sought to remain neutral between the hard-line pro-Chamounists and the hard-line opposition, it now became necessary to identify themselves with one side or another of the conflict. It was now more than just a matter of a renewal of a presidential mandate in the eyes of most Lebanese. In the words of Ghassan Tueni, in his editorial of 13 May 1958, 'The question is: Lebanon's survival'.⁵⁸²

It was in these days, around 13 May, that the Kata'ib party, for instance, not only came out in full support of Chamoun but also took to the streets to demonstrate their support practically, seeing that as the only way to ensure Lebanon's survival. The Kata'ib party membership was predominantly drawn from the petty bourgeoisie in the Maronite community; members were small shopkeepers, clerks and minor officials, for instance. Kata'ib members saw their livelihood and their Maronite identity as threatened if Lebanon's independence disappeared. Thus Kata'ib militias demonstrated their commitment to the survival of Lebanon and accepted, if reluctantly, that this survival was, in the summer of 1958, linked to the survival of Chamoun as president. Gemayel, leader of the Kata'ib party, remained personally unhappy with Chamoun, and there is no indication that at any point during the crisis months from May to September 1958 the official policy of the Kata'ib party changed to support the concept of Chamoun's re-election rather than merely his completion of his mandate. But the latter concept was seen as sufficiently crucial that armed action was justified.⁵⁸³

A self-brokered political solution, arranged by compromise between the Lebanese communities, seemed unlikely during May and June 1958 because leading figures on either side remained apparently unwilling to seek any compromise and there was no pressure for compromise from the masses in either the Maronite or Sunni communities. The opposition as a whole continued to demand the resignation of the President as the basis of any solution, and Rachid Karami, based in Tripoli, threatened to seek a union between Tripoli and the UAR. Nor was the government silent. On 13 May the

⁵⁸² *An Nahar*, 13 May 1958.

⁵⁸³ *Al Amal*, 14 May 1958; Wade Gorla, *Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976*, Ithaca Press, London, 1985, pp. 45-7.

Foreign Minister Dr Charles Malik announced that the Lebanese government had protested to the government of the UAR. against its interference in the internal affairs of Lebanon and there was talk of an appeal to the Security Council.⁵⁸⁴ Chamoun was refusing to bow to opposition pressure or to the public demonstrations against him by resigning, while Shihab was anxious to prevent the disintegration of the army into confessional factions and so sought to use his troops to quell unrest as little as possible.

It was left to individuals and groups outside the administration itself to begin the process of seeking some compromise, though without a great deal of initial success as May and June went on. Prominent individuals involved in this process included the Maronite Patriarch, Raymond Eddé, the leader of the largely Maronite National Bloc; his brother Pierre Eddé and Adel Osseiran.⁵⁸⁵ Among the various plans which evolved the most hopeful seemed one in which Shihab would form a caretaker government, pledged to hold elections for a President under the existing constitution and on the earliest possible date (23 July). This was rejected by the opposition which stood by its demand for the immediate resignation of Chamoun before it would enter any discussions. Equally Chamoun not only refused to resign but was still refusing to make a public statement that he would not stand for re-election. Ultimately, though, the most important element in the whole mediation plan was the refusal, during May, June and early July, of General Shihab to accept the office of President.⁵⁸⁶

On 18 May, the US Ambassador announced that the Sixth Fleet would not be visiting Beirut. This announcement, however, was less of a blow for the government because, as An Nahar pointed out, the USA was arranging for the delivery of heavy armament to Lebanon, and thereby responding to a Lebanese government request in the week in which it was actually made. In addition US-provided light armament had already been despatched three days

⁵⁸⁴ An Nahar, 14 May 1958.

⁵⁸⁵ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960 Volume XI, p 35, quoting a telegram from the US Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State, 11 May, 1958.

⁵⁸⁶ .See F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, pp. 86-7; Foreign Relations of the US 1958-1960, Volume XI, p. 411. Telegram 242, Department of State, 30 July, 1958, in which he states 'Shihab...indicated he was now ready to accept the presidency but hoped for as large a vote as possible for re-establishing national unit.

earlier and it had been noted on 17 May that the US and British fleets in the Mediterranean were making unusual movements.⁵⁸⁷ It is not surprising that Ghassan Tuani described that week as the most dangerous one for Lebanon's future.⁵⁸⁸ To Tuani it seemed increasingly possible and even probable that the entire political structure of the Lebanon was under threat from factions in Lebanon seeking to involve such outside forces. Foreign invasion of some kind seemed an imminent danger. The end results of that were horrifying; political power would collapse, and either a military dictatorship would result or the reduction of Lebanon itself to a small Christian entity.⁵⁸⁹ Tuani's fears were not taken lightly by large parts of the Maronite population, who were equally aware of what they saw as the growing menace to the continuance of Lebanon, symbolised by the evidence widely accepted by that Maronite population of intervention in Lebanon's affairs by the UAR.

It was in this tense atmosphere that, according to British sources, two neutral mediators, Raymond Eddé and Ahmed Daouk, called on Rachid Karami on 20 May and persuaded him to come to Beirut to join their compromise discussions for ending the crisis. On 21 May, Rachid Karami ordered a largely successful cease-fire in Tripoli which, despite the occupation of Baalbak by opposition rebels on that day, brought some optimism to the political scene. In terms of Rachid Karami's contribution to the crisis, it is worth noting the claim of Saeb Salam that during the spring of 1958 the UAR had sent 5000 items of armament to Karami in Tripoli, but that at no point during the crisis months of May to September 1958 did Karami utilise this in the fighting against the Chamoun regime.⁵⁹⁰ While there is no proof of this claim, it does indicate the continuing Sunni perception that it was the Chamoun regime, and its Western backers, and not the Muslim or Arab world that was responsible for the trouble. Certainly while Rachid Karami was not willing to open discussions with Chamoun, he was perfectly prepared to do so with other

⁵⁸⁷ An Nahar, 18 May 1958.

⁵⁸⁸ An Nahar, 20 May 1958.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Saeb Salam, Oral Interview, Geneva, 4 January 1991.

Maronite figures who seemed prepared to return to the terms of the National Pact.

It was, though, a false optimism as the attempted mediation failed and trouble continued throughout June. It was in that month that a United Nations Observation Group (UNOGIL) arrived in Lebanon to report on the claims of Arab intervention there. A United Nations intervention had been requested by Chamoun on 13 May 1958; probably as an alternative worked out by Western diplomats in Beirut to Chamoun's personal desire to request an American military intervention.⁵⁹¹ The request had been granted, to the approval of Chamoun loyalists if not to men like Raymond Eddé who would have been prepared to endorse suggestions from both the West and the Arab world that the Arab League be invited to work out a compromise; a move that would almost certainly have been successful. It was widely recognised, in and out of Lebanon, that any solution to the crisis coming from the Arab world would prove the most acceptable for nearly 50% of the Lebanese population at least, and be the least likely to be questioned by them, whatever its terms. This would simply leave the problem of working out a compromise acceptable to the Maronite community - a not impossible task, given the terms of the National Pact. But the Lebanese government rejected this option on 5 June 1958, to the furious incomprehension of the Sunni opposition in particular. The resentment of this rejection was further increased because, in what was widely interpreted as a snub to the League, Charles Malik did not even bother to attend the League's meeting convened to discuss the issue, thereby not even giving the gloss of genuine consideration of the proposal for Arab League intervention by the Chamoun government. Instead, he went directly to New York to plead at a United Nations Security Council meeting for intervention.⁵⁹² Malik attempted to justify his actions by claiming that the Lebanese government had initially turned to the Arab League for help in solving the crisis, but that the Lebanese government had been informed that the League's Council would not meet in time to enable it to take action to stop the UAR.

⁵⁹¹ See *Documents Diplomatiques Française*, Vol I, 1 January-30 June 1958, p. 603, Chauvel to Pineau, Telegrams nos 1633-36, 13 May 1958.

⁵⁹² Bashir Awar, Minister of Justice, and head of the Lebanese delegation to the Arab League, and a known moderate, resigned his office in protest. See his comments reported in *An-Nahar*, 6 June 1958; also Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, McClintock to Dulles, Telegram no. 4912, 19 June 1958.

intervention in Lebanon.⁵⁹³ Chamoun himself had been opposed to any Arab League brokered solution because he knew that such a solution would end his hopes of re-election, while he had still hoped, on 13 May 1958 when the first request to the United Nations was made, that with American support, he might be returned to office.⁵⁹⁴

Maronite expectations of the proposed United Nations intervention was that it would endorse Maronite condemnations of a UAR. intervention. However, as British sources reported, the Sunni opposition believed that 'Malik's real intention in going to the UN is to lay the ground for US armed intervention in Lebanon'.⁵⁹⁵ There was a belief that the United Nations had a Western bias and thus was susceptible to being manipulated in this way by the Chamoun government, while the American government also could be manipulated in this way. So the arrival of the UNOGIL was regarded with suspicion by the Sunni opposition and elements of the opposition to Chamoun from other confessional groups including some Maronites who believed that an American intervention would be disastrous for Lebanon. Saeb Salam issued a six-point comment on the United Nation's Lebanon resolution on 12 June which can be taken as summing up the general Sunni opposition perspective at this stage. He stated that he considered the resolution endorsing the UNOGIL as an irrelevant and unjustified interference, since the Lebanese problem was purely internal in character. He highlighted Sunni fears of a Western intervention under the guise of the United Nations intervention, by pointedly stating that any prevention of an infiltration of arms into Lebanon would have to include stopping the import of American, British, French, Turkish, Iraqi and Jordanian arms, rather than arms from the UAR., because it was interference from these countries that was aggravating the internal tension, not the friendly 'interest' of the UAR. And despite Chamoun's rejection of Arab League intervention, Salam argued that only through the

⁵⁹³ There was also the implication, thereby, that the League would not be a neutral force. FO371/123119 VL1015/147, Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, Telegram no. 598, 23 May 1958 passes on Malik's claims, indicating also that the intention to reject the League's intervention had been taken long before 5 June 1958 when the League did meet and could have undertaken an intervention.

⁵⁹⁴ F. Qubain, *Crisis in Lebanon*, p. 90.

⁵⁹⁵ FO371/123119 VL1015/147, Telegram no. 4572, British Embassy, Beirut, to Foreign Office, 9 June 1958.

League would it be possible to gain a solution that had the consent of the Lebanese people as a whole.⁵⁹⁶

Kamal Jumblat points out that this statement encapsulated the Muslim opposition position that the crisis was a direct response to 'foreign influence' in an interpretation of such influence that did not regard Arab intervention as 'foreign'; and that Lebanon's dependence on the West was 'unhealthy' as well as a betrayal of the National Pact.⁵⁹⁷ But despite this, the UNOGIL was swiftly despatched to Lebanon, making their observations during the last half of June 1958. Their first report was published on 4 July, and to the delight of the opposition it minimised claims of an Arab foreign intervention there, implying that the infiltration of men and armaments from Syria was negligible. On 5 July the Group's leader, Galo Plaza, gave a press conference in which he re-emphasised the conclusion that there was no evidence of any massive infiltration of Lebanon.⁵⁹⁸

Such a report served to inflame matters once again. Both the attempts to find solutions and the fighting continued, while the observers continued to come to observe and compile reports, and US intelligence reports on events in Lebanon contradicted the UN conclusions.⁵⁹⁹ There seemed little prospect of breaking the stalemate in Lebanon as June ended and July commenced and the stalemate between the government and the opposition continued. But events outside Lebanon were finally responsible for its breaking. In the early hours of 14 July 1958 there was a coup in Iraq and that was responsible for a major shift in perspectives, for the Lebanese and the US governments. The July revolution in Iraq overthrew the monarchy, and the entire royal family was killed. The body of one member of the royal family was even dragged into the streets and dismembered there by a mob. These events rocked the Arab world generally and the impact of the coup in Lebanon was enormous. The

⁵⁹⁶ An-Nahar, 12 June 1958; Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram no. 4664, American Embassy to Secretary of State, 12 June 1958.

⁵⁹⁷ Kamal Jumblat, Haqiqat Al Thawrat Al Lubnaniyyah [The Truth About the Lebanese Revolution], Al Dar Al Takadoumiat, Beirut, 1987, p. 55.

⁵⁹⁸ Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, American Embassy Beirut to Secretary of State (Confidential), No. 159, 6 July 1958; Odd Bull, War and Peace in the Middle East, Leo Cooper, London, 1973, p. 8.

⁵⁹⁹ F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, p. 114.

opposition was jubilant but Chamoun was 'shaken' by the news from Baghdad and almost certainly, by the reception of it in Lebanon itself.⁶⁰⁰

Chamoun renewed his appeal for Western, effectively American, aid to protect Lebanon and its 'legitimate' government. He demanded immediate intervention, insisting that unless this was granted within 48 hours he would be a dead man himself and Lebanon would become an Egyptian satellite.⁶⁰¹ Of course Chamoun was not the only frightened leader in the Arab world. At the same time as Chamoun was demanding aid from the Americans Jordan was appealing for British support. In both cases the appeal was answered and once again the scene was set for a solution to the crisis that was imposed by Western powers. On 15 July 2000 US Marines landed in Lebanon while British paratroopers landed in Jordan.⁶⁰²

This chapter has indicated how the political figures and parties evolved and established their positions during the evolution of the crisis. It leaves untouched, however, except by implication, the position and opinions and consequent role of the major communities in Lebanon, notably the Sunni and, in reaction, the Maronite. It is a consideration of these confessional communities that is essential to a fuller understanding of the crisis and its development and eventual resolution, in terms of how these manoeuvrings affected their sense of identity and self-worth within the state. Political figures do not operate in a vacuum, nor necessarily have sheep for supporters. In this context, it is over the issue of community mythology that the differences between the two communities in 1958 becomes most apparent, with considerable implications for political developments as a crisis coalesced. There was a clear split of popular perspective on the issue of Lebanese

⁶⁰⁰ Al Hayat, 15 July 1958.

⁶⁰¹ See F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, p. 115.

⁶⁰² Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960, Volume XI, p. 245, Memorandum of a conference with the President, White House, Washington DC, 15 July, 1958, quoting the Eisenhower diaries.

'national destiny'. But it was a split that contained considerable potential for intercommunal hostility because of the way that these differing perspectives were interpreted by 'the other side', and the masses therefore sought leaders that would 'protect' them and their interests from 'attack', and would support the kind of Lebanese state that they found acceptable. The pattern of 1958 in communal terms therefore represents a return to co-habitation.

As Michael Johnson points out, there is a clear linkage between issues relating to the National Pact and the 1958 crisis.⁶⁰³ This chapter has discussed the development of the crisis at elite political levels and the stress that leaders from both Sunni and Maronite communities, from different perspectives, laid on this pact, as well as their experience of the crisis. But the impact of the 1958 crisis was not restricted to such leaders: it represents a breakdown in consensus between the communities at all levels of society. The compromise signalled by the National Pact was of importance not just to political leaders: it was also of significance to the masses of both communities, the people whom those leaders claimed to represent. These masses also had their understanding of what the pact should mean, and what it entailed in practice. That understanding was derived in part from the information given to them by their leaders, but also from their experience of the operation of the state system and its impact on them. The flourishing media in Lebanon meant that information reached the masses through a wide variety of newspapers and other publications as well as by radio broadcasts, giving a popular audience information on matters of interest to them from their leaderships, but also, in editorials and broadcasts, comment on them. Such media channels also provides a way in which comment on popular reactions to events and individuals can be accessed by the historian, backed up by comment in oral interviews, memoirs and the observations of the various interested external powers in their official documents. It is, thus, largely through media reports that the contribution to the crisis made by the masses of the Sunni and the Maronite communities will be examined in the following two chapters. As with

⁶⁰³ Michael Johnson *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 126.

the political leaders, these communities provided the most significant polarities of opinion relating to the crisis at mass levels. Since, on the whole, the mass Maronite perspective on their position will be demonstrated as having been essentially defensive - a matter of their reaction to events and the agendas of other communities, notably the Sunni, it is important to identify what the Maronite saw themselves as reacting against. For this reason, the Sunni community will be examined first.

Chapter 5

The Sunni Community in 1958

According to Samir Khalaf and Guilaine Denoueux, Nasserism, and a consequent revival in Arabism 'both crystallised latent class aspirations and grievances had acted as a catalyst of communal feeling' amounts the Sunni community in Lebanon.⁶⁰⁴ Nasserism undoubtedly had an impact on the Sunni community; but it was an essentially local Sunni interpretation, with Nasserism acting as a major factor in the creation of a protective Sunni community mythology during the 1950s. Thus merely to state that Nasserism was 'responsible' for Sunni attitudes and actions in Lebanon during the 1958 crisis and its evolution, at any level of the community, is to over-simplify a much more complex scenario.⁶⁰⁵ Nasserism, in the general use of the term in Middle Eastern history, was modified by factors internal to Lebanon, notably Sunni popular perspectives of how it might be interpreted best to serve their own agenda.

Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson have identified how myth has been used by social groups to compensate for their feelings of lack of confidence in, and solidarity with, a national identity presented to them by other social groups.⁶⁰⁶ The Sunni community in Lebanon in the 1950s was one such group. Nasser will be shown to have been important to them not so much for what he actually advertised as his agenda and policies, especially in Egypt, but for what he was represented to be by the Lebanese Sunnis. As Johnson has pointed out, Nasser (especially after the Suez Crisis) took on heroic stature as a *za'im*, who stood above the Lebanese system and united people in admiration of his supposed, or mythical, qualities: people who were otherwise divided into 'vertically-linked clientelist structures'.⁶⁰⁷ Such 'new' myths, especially relating to the creation of heroes, flourish when historical

⁶⁰⁴ Samir Khalaf & Guilaine Denoueux, 'Urban Networks and Political Conflict in Lebanon', in Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills (eds), *Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988, pp. 186-7.

⁶⁰⁵ Nasser Kalawoun, 'The Role of the Sunni Leadership and Community towards the State of Lebanon in the 1950s', unpublished MA thesis, University of London, 1987, p. 7.

⁶⁰⁶ Raphael Samuel & Paul Thompson (eds), *The Myths We Live By*, Routledge, London, 1990, p. 84.

⁶⁰⁷ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State 1840-1905*, Ithaca Press, London, 1986, p. 121.

knowledge, in the written, educational sense, is limited and there is no readily accessible alternative in the shape of oral traditions that fit a particular scenario. The high levels of illiteracy in the Sunni community (demonstrated later in the chapter) prevented the former; and Sunni traditions prior to the 1950s were too ill-defined to substitute for them.⁶⁰⁸

Nasser provided a readily accessible icon for interpretation, partly because he was distant, and partly because the iconography used by the Sunnis was so often oral rather than written down, and subject to colder critical analysis. The growing sense of crisis in Lebanon, with the Sunni community cast in a seemingly permanent 'opposition' role to the Maronite or Christian dominated government of the state, provided an opportunity for a 'national leader' to emerge to lead that opposition. Within Lebanon itself, no such Sunni figurehead emerged with major popular appeal, partly because of the involvement of so many prominent Sunnis with the established order. This left the way open for an alternative figure who could be interpreted as 'representative' of the aspirations of the Lebanese Sunnis, including their aspirations to be part of a broader community than that of Lebanon.⁶⁰⁹ West Beirut's brand of Nasserism, for instance, was an 'oppositional doctrine', a protest against the dominance of the Sunni community by 'Christian Lebanon', and also, a 'yearning' for 'a Sunni Arab order'. In a sense, then, Nasserism summed up what might be described as 'pan-Arabism' in a way that gave the Lebanese Sunni community a role in a wider international Sunni community.⁶¹⁰ The Lebanese Sunni masses felt a desire for such a role because of their dissatisfaction with their role in 1950s Lebanon. There was a popular tradition that they were exploited by 'the rich', and, as Kalawoun points out, 'the rich' in this tradition were equated with the Christian, and especially the Maronite, community.⁶¹¹

Thus there is a need to examine the shape of the Sunni community at this point, and also to take account of the impact on the community, at mass level, of a range of local issues and perspectives, including the issue of

⁶⁰⁸ See, for example, John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, Longman, London, 1984, p. 3, on this point.

⁶⁰⁹ Raphael Samuel & Paul Thompson (eds), *The Myths We Live By*, p. 86.

⁶¹⁰ Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p. 93.

⁶¹¹ Nasser Kalawoun, 'The Role of the Sunni Leadership', p. 37.

consensus or co-habitation with other confessional communities; the Maronite community in particular. Michael Johnson has shown that there is a clear linkage between issues relating to the National Pact and the 1958 crisis.⁶¹² The last chapter discussed the development of the crisis at elite political levels and the stress that leaders from both Sunni and Maronite communities, from different perspectives, laid on this pact, as well as their experience of the crisis. But the impact of the 1958 crisis was not restricted to such leaders: it was a breakdown in consensus between the communities at all levels of society. The National Pact was of importance not just to political leaders: it was also of significance to the masses of both communities, the people whom those leaders claimed to represent. These masses also had their understanding of what the pact meant, and what it entailed in practice; and it was not necessarily an understanding that was given to them by their leaders. They had other means of gaining information and of gaining a range of viewpoints on events. With a flourishing media in Lebanon, meaning that information reached the masses through a wide variety of newspapers and other publications as well as by radio broadcasts, the potential existed for the masses to be thoroughly well informed on matters of interest to them. The contribution to the crisis made by the masses of the Sunni and the Maronite communities will be examined in the following two chapters. As with the political leaders, these communities provided the most significant polarities of opinion relating to the crisis at mass levels. Since, on the whole, the mass Maronite perspective on their position will be demonstrated as having been essentially defensive - a matter of their reaction to events and the agendas of other communities, notably the Sunni, it is important to identify what the Maronite saw themselves as reacting against. For this reason, the Sunni community will be examined first. The levels of literacy in the Sunni community were not as high as those for the Maronite community; but any lack here was, in the 1950s, compensated for by the community's ready access to radio broadcasts. The Lebanese radio may have operated largely as a voice for the government or established elites, but Sunnis could also access broadcasts on Syrian and Egyptian radio. It was only at the height of the crisis, in June and July 1958, that such broadcasts

⁶¹² Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 126.

were jammed, preventing their reception in Lebanon. For the rest of the crisis period, such broadcasts were a readily accessible source of anti-Chamoun and anti-government policy information and propaganda.⁶¹³

The structure of the Sunni community was not of a nature to promote conscious cohesion within it; traditional loyalties rather than deliberate decisions tended to dominate the patterns of allegiance and solidarity within the community.⁶¹⁴ As with the other communities in Lebanon, the Sunni community had been affected by the setting up of a separate Lebanese entity in 1920. But arguably the Sunni perception of the Ottoman empire and the disappearance of the wider entity to which they had given allegiance had a more negative effect than on the other Muslim communities. As has been seen in Chapters One and Three, the Sunni community as a whole was profoundly opposed to the concept and establishment of a separate Lebanon; creating instead the vision of a Greater Syria to counter that of the Maronite Greater Lebanon. But as Nicola Ziadeh has pointed out, by the end of the mandate period, the community as a whole had become accustomed to being part of an entity separate from Syria - even if they did not always like it.⁶¹⁵

The extent to which the Sunni elites, both the traditional land-owning classes and the newer (if still small) bourgeoisie, had accepted their position in an independent Lebanon and consequently had developed common interests with, for example, the Maronites, is summed up by their co-operation in the setting up of the National Pact in 1943. As Johnson points out, the 'Sunni notables of Beirut and Lebanon' had evolved a strategy during the mandate, and continued to utilise it subsequently, that 'emphasised their role as communal leaders and champions'.⁶¹⁶ They did this by using a rhetoric that would permit them to refer at times of potential crisis within their community to the dream of a Greater Syria and their commitment to Lebanon's incorporation within it. However, as Chapter Four indicated, with few exceptions, there was no real intent behind the rhetoric. It was intended merely to enable the Sunni

⁶¹³ Anis Moussallem, *La Press Libanaise: Expression du Liban politique et Confessionnel et Forum des Pays Arabes*, Librairie General De Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1977, p. 20.

⁶¹⁴ The Sunni Muslim Community, *Class and Client in Beirut. The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State 1840-1985*, Ithaca Press, London, 1986, p. 36.

⁶¹⁵ Nicola Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1957, pp. 60-1.

⁶¹⁶ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 25.

elites to maintain their leadership role unchallenged by the masses, and not to respond directly to popular aspirations. Thus the attitude of the elites meant that at this level, the Sunni community in Lebanon had begun to feel a cultural identity that can be described as Lebanese, if it was also unequivocally Arab in nature.

A problem faced by the Sunni elites, however, was that this sense of identification with Lebanon was, for the most part, missing from the masses. Even after full independence, and the creation of the National Pact, the Sunni masses continued to perceive Lebanon, not just as an artificial creation carved out of Syria, but also as a creation that brought with it no tangible benefits for them. They had, therefore, no reason to like the status quo. Hilal Khashan has pointed out that 'it is common' for members of the Sunni community 'to insist, whether rightly or not, that the 1943 National Covenant had discriminated against them'.⁶¹⁷ In an echo of the more usual position of the Maronite community, Khashan also points out that 'their [Sunni] grievances' stem from their interpretation of the past and the implications they drew from that for their present and future.⁶¹⁸

In terms of the evolution of majority attitudes amongst the Sunni masses for the 1950s and the resultant popular mythologies, the main trends which were determinant in shaping these can be traced back to the First World War and the mandate periods though they did not coalesce into coherent mythologies until later. There were two major Sunni perspectives on Lebanon, and one more minor one. The first was that which saw Lebanon as being part of a Greater Syria in the way which Faisal had outlined during his brief period in Damascus and Beirut. And it involved resentment against the Western powers, particularly France, which had prevented its accomplishment. Faisal's presence had had a huge and positive effect on the community at popular levels. At a time when Sunnis had had to face the uncertainty associated with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, incorporation in Faisal's Arab kingdom

⁶¹⁷ Hilal Khashan, *Inside the Lebanese Confessional Mind*, University Press of America, New York, 1992, p. 67. Khashan identifies other minority communities such as the Shi'a and the Armenians who share this perspective. It is not intended to claim that the Sunni elite had come to see Lebanon as a natural entity; simply that they had accepted its existence as being in their own interests. See also Albert Hourani, 'Lebanon: The Development of a Political Society', in L. Binder (ed.), *Politics in Lebanon*, p. 25.

⁶¹⁸ Hilal Khashan, *Inside the Lebanese Confessional Mind*, p. 67.

had seemed to offer a continuation of Sunni importance.⁶¹⁹ It remained a popular symbol for what the masses felt they had unjustifiably lost in the shape of a Syria defined as a state which would be administered on decentralised lines that would echo Ottoman practice and boost Sunni importance within it. The main support for this was to be found in urban areas, especially amongst the Sunnis of Tripoli and Beirut, though that is not to deny the existence of a large following for this perspective in other parts of the country.

A further perspective was that represented by Arab nationalism; though this was more limited in its popular appeal because of the intellectual overtones associated with Arab nationalism.⁶²⁰ In the post-1920 period, it was advanced by politicians from the Al Solh family of Sidon, notably Khazim, Takkieddine and their cousin Riyadh.⁶²¹ Given that Riyadh was to become the most significant Lebanese Sunni political leader after 1943 and until his death in 1951, this ensured that there was a continuing consciousness of the Arab nationalist agenda amongst elements of the urban masses at least, even if it held less appeal than the vision of Greater Syria. A further perspective was that provided by Islamism. But in the absence of a charismatic religious leader to inspire Sunni congregations in Lebanon, and in the face of the Franco-Maronite domination of Lebanon, this made little political headway; something that provides a real contrast to the cohesion provided for the Maronite masses by the Maronite Church.

In discussing the use made of these perspectives on Lebanon by the Sunni community in the 1950s, one thing must also be stressed in terms of seeking an understanding of community policy and actions. While it is possible to speak of a general Sunni attitude in some respects, a divide did exist within that community. That divide concerned the views and reactions of the masses, both rural and urban, and the views and reactions of those who acted as spokesmen for the Sunni community. According to Najla Attiyah, for instance, 'a horizontal relationship existed between the masses and the spokesmen.

⁶¹⁹ King-Crane Commission Report on the Near East, 1920, published as a supplement to *Editor and Publisher*, December 1922; Najla Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunni Towards the State of Lebanon' unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1973, p. 69.

⁶²⁰ See Chapter One, pp. 88-9.

⁶²¹ For a more detailed discussion of Arab nationalism and the role of the Solh family in promoting it in the 1930s and 1940s, see Raghid Al Solh, 'Arab Nationalist Attitudes Towards Greater Lebanon', in Shehadi & Mills, *Lebanon*, p. 51.

The spokesmen neither received a proper mandate from the masses nor were they accountable to them'.⁶²² In practical terms this meant that policy decisions were taken exclusively by these so-called spokesmen without any real reference to those whose interests they claimed to represent. This had been notoriously so with Shaykh Muhammad al Jisr.⁶²³ It was even the case with a genuinely popular leader like Riyadh Al Solh.

So the mandate period and that of Bishara Al Khoury's presidency had established a pattern within the community which meant that the Sunni masses thus had no say in determining the political attitudes of their spokesmen. In terms of the trends identified, the ordinary Sunnis, being less exposed than the elites to the material opportunities offered to them by the Lebanese state and even more attached to religious issues or Islamism, were almost universally attracted to the idea of unity with Syria, something that Kamal Salibi commented on in his memoir of the period.⁶²⁴ Over time the Sunni elites, as indicated in Chapter Four, had become less enthusiastic about the idea of immediate union with Syria.

It is necessary to make some differentiation between the urban and the rural masses. The urban Sunni masses were in the majority quantitatively; mainly located in centres like Beirut, Tripoli and Sidon, they differed significantly from the rural Sunnis, particularly in terms of their relationship with community leaders. These urban Sunnis were reasonably independent, both economically and politically. They had received the benefits of a greater exposure to the effects of education and were more open to media propaganda, especially after the emergence of radio broadcasting. The rural masses, by contrast, were less informed and more dependent, especially financially, on their leaders and were thus more under the influence of those leaders. These rural masses, largely located in the north and south of Lebanon, were less affected by educational developments and by the media. The example provided by Aboud Abdel Razzak in the Akkar district underlines the continuance of a traditional dependency. He was essentially a feudal lord,

⁶²² Najila Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 99.

⁶²³ See Chapter 3, p. 124.

⁶²⁴ K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', unpublished conference paper, Austen, Texas, 13 September 1992, p. 6. See also Nasser Kalawoun, 'Role of the Sunni Leadership', p. 7.

in terms of his powers, as is indicated by the fact that he was able to cooperate fully with the Lebanese state without complaints during the 1958 crisis, because his followers were largely ignorant of the implications of his actions.⁶²⁵ For example in August 1958 the Sunni deputies of Akkar actively testified against Syria accusing Syria of being responsible for the trouble along the Syrian-Lebanese border with the aim of undermining the Chamoun regime.⁶²⁶

The urban masses were less easily influenced by their elites, and were so less likely to accept uncritically views and policies voiced by those elites as representative of the community where such views and policies did not represent the wishes or opinions of the masses. Kalawoun, for instance, points out that the 'permanent conference of the Muslim Commissions', established in 1953 to voice the ideas of the Muslim communities, 'did not enjoy great popular following', even though he then goes on to argue that it reflected 'the general mood of the community'.⁶²⁷ There is, however, evidence that from 1954, the urban masses made increasing demands for a greater role in evolving Sunni views and policies as voiced by the spokesmen, though it was not until 1957 that these views began to have a major impact on the elites. Up to late 1957, and even into 1958, the Sunni elites were largely able to continue to disregard the reactions and beliefs emerging among the urban masses. As far as possible they sought to maintain contact with the masses through the channels offered by the continuation of the dispensation of patronage on a traditional patron-client basis. If these channels did not enable the elites to exercise their old dominance over the urban masses, the lack of powerful populist political organisations to act as pressure groups on the elites in the period up to the 1957 elections at least meant that mass expressions of grievances against their 'spokesmen' remained incoherent and ineffective. The religious organisation of the Sunni community did not offer a channel for the expression of popular grievances with their own elites or with the state, in a direct contrast to the way in which the Maronite Church could act as a focus for popular opposition. Rather, the religious hierarchy of the Sunni community

⁶²⁵ Najla Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 133.

⁶²⁶ *Al Hayat*, 30 August 1958.

⁶²⁷ Nasser Kalawoun, 'Role of the Sunni Leadership', p. 26.

remained closely linked to the secular social hierarchy.⁶²⁸ Moreover, no real equivalent to the Maronite Kata'ib party emerged within the Sunni community.⁶²⁹

A factor which undoubtedly affected such developments, and consequently the ability of the Sunni masses to express their protests as effectively as the Maronite masses, was the relative lack of information of the former, particularly in terms of political or economic information that was available in uniform format to large numbers at a single point in time. Such availability promotes the development of shared attitudes and opinions and their coherent expression, and newspapers have been a key factor in such developments.⁶³⁰ However, the Sunni masses lacked the quality of information which was available to the Maronite masses through their newspapers. The poorer quality of education among Sunnis, including a higher level of illiteracy, ensured that there was little demand for the type of populist newspaper that could sell to the Maronite masses. The effect of this was to sustain an ultimate dependence on the leaders on the one hand and on the other to keep knowledge of the precise policies they followed at a very general level. It was not until the broadcasts on Egyptian and Syrian radio began to address Lebanese policy in real detail, rather than providing rhetorically general attacks on the government, from late 1957, that radio broadcasts could begin to act as an efficient alternative to newspapers for the Sunni masses. This created a greater political consciousness based on a greater knowledge of events in the Arab world and the role of their own leaders in Lebanon in supporting the status quo. It was not accident that the period during which the Sunni masses were able to have an effect on their political leadership coincided with the period of these broadcasts, as will be seen later in this chapter.

It is illuminating to look at the provision of education within the Sunni community. It accounts for the lower levels of literacy; and also gives a clue to some popular Sunni grievances. It should not, for example, be assumed that

⁶²⁸ Nicola Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 160.

⁶²⁹ Samir Khalaf & Guillaîne Denouéux, 'Urban Networks and Political Conflicts, in Shehadi & Mills (eds), *Lebanon*, p. 186

⁶³⁰ David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 241-58.

the Sunni masses were not aware, or not resentful, of the imbalance in terms of educational provision; especially of the failure of the government to remedy that imbalance. Government schools throughout Lebanon were limited in numbers, even in the 1950s, and attempts to expand this provision was not a significant element in government policy. In the 1953 pamphlet Moslem Lebanon Today Muslim leaders complained that no 'interest in Moslem education is manifested by the government'.⁶³¹ In 1958, Al Jisr, discussing the origins of the crisis, cited popular resentment over this aspect of policy as a major factor. His points about the importance of education to Sunnis at all levels of the community are emphasised by the evidence given by Desmond Stewart that in a development linking 'the petty bourgeoisie with the sub-proletariat under the leadership of members of the bourgeoisie' Muslims in Lebanon took up the issue of educational improvement for themselves through the *Al Maqassed* movement.⁶³² More recently, Walid Jumblat has also argued that the Muslim communities generally felt deprived of access to education in this period.⁶³³ It can thus be argued that this was one of the things that caused the Sunni masses to feel discriminated against within the Lebanese state. Government policy did not focus on educational reform because the Maronites had no need for such a policy, and also, according to Jumblat, because the government found the unimproved system useful, in that it permitted them to use 'the weapon of education' in their own interests, by promoting confessional differences within the system.⁶³⁴ The educational field had traditionally been dominated by private schooling, notably through Christian mission schools, and the Sunni community had remained understandably reluctant to send its children to be taught in such a mission environment. However, the Maronite community made full use of this provision.⁶³⁵ Sunni political leaders did not take up the cause of improving educational provision for their community in

⁶³¹ Moslem Lebanon Today, pp. 7-10.

⁶³² Desmond Stewart, Turmoil in Beirut: A Personal Account, Allen Wingate, London, 1958, pp. 14-15; Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 128.

⁶³³ Nadim Al Jisr, Speech, reported in Al Hayat 18 May 1958 (Al Jisr was a Deputy from Tripoli); Walid Jumblat, Hawiqat Al Thawrat Al Lunaniat, Dar Al Taqadumiya, Al Moukhtara, 1987, p. 87. This point was also made by Salim Nassar, a leading journalist for the pro-Egyptian As Sayyad in 1958, in his oral interview with me. Salim Nassar, Oral Interview, London, 20 May 1995.

⁶³⁴ Walid Jumblat, Haqiqat Al Thawrat al Lubnaniat, p. 87. This point was also implicitly made by the United National Front's Manifesto, which referred to the 'propagation of the confessional spirit and its exploitation by politicians. Manifesto, United National Front, 1 April 1957, in Cahiers de l'Orient Contemporain, Vol. 36 (Documents), 1957, pp. 139-42.

⁶³⁵ The factor had been formally identified back in 1938, but little, if anything, had been done subsequently to find a solution. See L'Orient, 24 January 1938.

any serious sense; because they saw no advantage to themselves in such a development since it would undermine their position in the Sunni social hierarchy. There were Sunni community schools, the *Al Maqassed* schools, but while these were important, the numbers were small in relation to the needs of the community.⁶³⁶ There was a further factor: educational standards in private, and especially mission, schools were better than they were in either the government or the *Al Maqassed* schools.⁶³⁷ This was particularly so in terms of foreign language teaching, but even at the basic level of literacy it had an effect. The following tables are illuminating of the enduring nature of this problem:

⁶³⁶ Recueil des Statistiques de la Syrie et du Liban 1945-46-47, Centre de Recherches et de Developpement Pedagogique, Beirut, 1947. See also Boutros Labaki, 'L'Economie Politique du Liban Independant 1943-1975' in Shehadi & Mills (eds), Lebanon, p. 177.

⁶³⁷ Linda Schatkowski, 'The Islamic *Maqassed* of Beirut: A Case Study of Modernisation in Lebanon', Unpublished MA thesis, Middle East Area Program, American University of Beirut, 1969.

Table 1
Proportion of Illiteracy in the Religious Communities of Lebanon in
1932⁶³⁸

	Shi'ite	Sunni	Maronite	Greek Cath	Druze	Greek Orthodox
Percentage:	83	66	48	39	53	53

Table 2
Private Schools in Lebanon according to Confessional Orientation
1944/5⁶³⁹

	Number	Percentage of Total of Private Schools⁶⁴⁰
Private Christian Schools	748	77.5
Private Muslim Schools	208	21.3

There had been undoubted improvements in the provision of state schooling in Lebanon after the end of the war. According to contemporary statistics recorded by Ziadeh, the number of state schools had increased by 1954 to 953, from 238 in 1943. Equally it must be said that it was the Muslim communities in general that benefited most from this development because they made use of state schooling where it was available. However, it must also be pointed out here that these state schools generally only offered elementary education: at secondary levels there were only five state schools.⁶⁴¹ The educational status quo in the Sunni community thus acted effectively as a handicap in adult life in terms of career opportunities. For instance, the lack of foreign languages, essentially French and English,

⁶³⁸ *L'Orient*, 24 January 1938.

⁶³⁹ *Receuil des Statistiques de la Syrie et du Liban 1945-46-47*, Vol. 3, p. 202. See also Boutros Labaki, 'l'Economie Politique du Liban Independant 1943-1975', in Shehadi & Mills (eds), *Lebanon*, p. 177.

⁶⁴⁰ These percentages emphasise the overwhelming predominance of private Christian schools, at over 77% of the total of private schools in Lebanon, over the private Muslim schools in Lebanon.

⁶⁴¹ Nicola Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 250; *Moslem Lebanon Today*, Beirut, 1953, p. 10.

available only at secondary levels of education, prevented the Sunnis from operating effectively in a wider commercial field. As Carolyn Gates has pointed out, the Lebanese economy and economic policies focused on Lebanon's 'intermediary role between the West and the Middle East', with Beirut taking a particularly important role as a centre for the passage of trade and the provision of financial and other commercial services. It was an economy that depended on profits from international trade and the servicing of that trade, expediting the passage of goods etc. in and out of states such as Syria that had more difficult contacts with the West.⁶⁴² The open economy approach maintained by governments in this period meant that the Maronite and other Christian communities had no real challenge to their dominance of what Gates identifies as the most profitable sectors of the Lebanese economy; the 'dynamic foreign tertiary sector' and the financial and commercial services sector. According to Gates 'The public awareness that only a very small number' were benefiting economically from Lebanon's success was an ongoing contributory factor to popular Sunni resentment of the Maronites and the way that community safeguarded its interests.⁶⁴³

Economic factors also generally worked to the disadvantage of the Sunni masses in Lebanon. Overall, the Sunnis still had a lower standard of living than the Maronites. The Sunni bourgeois elite was economically successful, both in the commercial and administrative sectors; the traditional land-based Sunni elite retained its old wealth. But the numbers of the bourgeoisie in particular remained small in relation to the overall size of the community, particularly in comparison with the ratio for the Maronite community.⁶⁴⁴ The negative effect of this on the Sunni masses resulted in a perception that the masses were being unfairly excluded from economic as well as political and cultural power. Sunnis believed that they were discriminated against in employment, being confined to lower paid posts with a lesser chance of promotion to the highest levels. Moslem Lebanon Today complained about Christian (essentially Maronite) dominance of the civil

⁶⁴² Carolyn L. Gates, 'Choice, Content and Performance of a "Service-Orientated Open Economy" Strategy: The Case of Lebanon 1948-1958', unpublished conference paper, Austin Texas, 13 September 1992, pp. 1-2..

⁶⁴³ Ibid., pp. 36-40.

⁶⁴⁴ Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, pp. 30; 33; 36; 127; Moslem Lebanon Today, pp. 7-10.

service, for instance.⁶⁴⁵ But, as Michael Johnson points out, the disadvantages faced by the 'Sunni petty bourgeoisie' was 'nowhere near as desperate as that of the sub-proletariat'. This element of the Sunni community not only lived in squalor but also had little opportunity, through work opportunities, to improve the economic position. According to Johnson, 'There can be little doubt that the Sunni sub-proletariat recognised their relative deprivation', and certainly this perception was picked up on by Al Jisr in his discussion of the reasons for the crisis in 1958, when he referred explicitly to popular consciousness of the 'economic deprivation' suffered by the Sunnis as a significant factor in their discontent.⁶⁴⁶

A contributory factor of importance was the obvious and disproportionate concentration of the expenditure of government funds in the Mount Lebanon districts. From the start the Lebanese government favoured Mount Lebanon in the allocation of public projects, despite the fact that these areas were already more developed than the mainly Muslim districts, such as the Biqa' and Akkar.⁶⁴⁷ The following table is a useful demonstration of this showing an imbalance even after the 1958 crisis.

⁶⁴⁵ Moslem Lebanon Today, p. 7.

⁶⁴⁶ Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, pp. 130-31. Nadim Al Jisr, Speech, reported in Al Hayat, 18 May 1958. The perception has been lasting: Walid Jumblat has also talked of the 'deliberate Maronite strategy to have complete control over the economic sector' in that, and subsequent periods. See Walid Jumblat, Hagiqat Al Thawrat Al Lubnaniat, p. 88. A further contemporary impression in line with these comments is provided by the comments of Desmond Stewart, who also reported that resentment over their economic position seemed to be a factor with the Sunnis he encountered. Such comments provide some indication not so much of the existence of such perceptions as their strength, in that Stewart's account suggests that they were a matter of common discussion. Stewart also seems not to feel a need to pass a critical comment himself on such perceptions. See Desmond Stewart, Turmoil in Beirut. A Personal Account, Allan Wingate, London, 1958, p. 13. See also Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 33.

⁶⁴⁷ Minutes of Parliament, Beirut, 1927-8, p. 17 for an early identification of this trend.

Table 3

Levels of Lebanese Government Funding by Region, 1960,

in Thousands of Lebanese Pounds⁶⁴⁸

Mount Lebanon	North	South	Biqā'
2.24	2.13	1.53	1.69

The South and the Biqa' both had a Muslim majority in the population, the South at 70%, and as the table reveals, the funding for public works and projects in these areas was significantly lower than that for the area with the highest Maronite element. This state of affairs was perceived by the Sunni as resulting from the degree of corruption that was to be found among Maronites at all levels of the administration of the state.⁶⁴⁹ The distortion in the allocation of funds added to Sunni consciousness of, and resentment over, the relatively lower standards of living of the Sunni community when compared with the Maronites. For the bulk of the Sunni community, therefore, the intercommunal compromise summed up in the National Pact had little positive impact on their lives.

The traditional solution for a discontented population, or discontented portion of one, is to seek political expression for their grievances in some way. But as pointed out earlier in this chapter, the Sunni lacked a populist party in this period; one, in other words, willing to rework the existing system to redress Sunni disadvantages. This is not to say that there was no political

⁶⁴⁸ Raymond Delpart, 'Liban: L'Evolution du Niveau de Vie en Milieu Rural 1960-1970', Documents, Ministry of Planning, Beirut 1970, p. 9 (roneotyped, copies in my possession and in the Bloc National Headquarters, originals apparently destroyed by shelling during the civil war). These figures are based on the study of the Institut International de Recherche et de Formation en vue du Development Integral et Harmonise (IRFED), Besoins et Possibilites de Development du Liban Etude Preliminare, 2 vols, I 'Situation Economique et Sociale', II 'Problematique et Orientation', Beirut, 1964, the key statistics for Lebanon in this period. The figures are based on a calculation of the different elements of public spending, eg. habitation, sanitary measures, schooling etc. This table indicates that the regions with Muslim majorities received the lowest levels of public spending when compared to the levels of government investment in areas with a Christian majority.

⁶⁴⁹ Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, pp. 117; 132.

consciousness at mass levels. Writing in 1957, Ziadeh identified an idea 'creeping into the minds of people' in the 1950s about 'the necessity of equality and justice'; which was in that period becoming 'more than just a cry'.⁶⁵⁰ But the lack of indigenous Muslim populist political parties through which discontent could be expressed remained a problem. There was the Najjadah grouping; but its predominantly secular orientation meant it was unable to attract a substantial membership from the religiously-minded Sunni masses. The Communist party suffered from the same disadvantage and was also tainted, in Lebanese Sunni eyes, by the support of the USSR for the creation of Israel. There was the Progressive Socialist Party, founded in 1949, but membership of the Druze-led party was practically confined to followers of Kamal Jumblat.⁶⁵¹ Even Riyadh Al Solh, with a considerable popular following in the masses, demonstrated little willingness to listen to their voice.⁶⁵²

But there was also a further complication surrounding the Sunni masses in Lebanon of indigenous political channels to express their discontent with the status quo. In the aftermath of Riyadh Al Solh's death on 16 July 1951, Al Khoury had demonstrated that he would seek to bypass the Sunni and other Muslim politicians to exercise as much independent power as possible. An editorial eulogising Al Solh described Al Khoury as 'the partner who took more than his share'; and talked of the resentment at this development of the Al Solh family and traditional following; and also of the 'Sunni community' as a whole.⁶⁵³ Certainly in 1951 and 1952, Al Khoury aroused considerable resentment amongst the Sunni elites by his attempts to manipulate Sunni candidates for the premiership; and his eventual choice of Sami Al Solh did not restore his popularity with that political elite.⁶⁵⁴ Equally, Al Khoury had made no attempt to conciliate the Sunni masses, to providing himself with a popular base in that community to counteract any protests from the Sunni elites.

⁶⁵⁰ Nicola Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 257.

⁶⁵¹ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client*, p. 128.

⁶⁵² The traditional Sunni elites were beginning to respond to pressure from the Sunni bourgeoisie in the 1950s, but that remained relatively small, and also had no interest in promoting the interests of the masses.

⁶⁵³ Alia Al Solh, Editorial: 'The Most Generous of All Who Have Left Us', *Al Hikmat*, February 1965, p. 44. Alia Al Solh was the eldest daughter of Riyadh Al Solh.

⁶⁵⁴ Najla Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 197 points out that his actions made the Sunni politicians feel dependent on the whims of a Maronite president, rather than partners in government.

This gives a clue to the extent to which the political establishment, whether Maronite and Muslim, believed it could ignore the Sunni masses, seeing no need to propitiate them by addressing their grievances at any level beyond the rhetorical. This did not change under Chamoun. If anything the issue became more acute, despite the rhetoric employed by Chamoun to seek to assure the Muslim element in the population that he respected Arab traditions.⁶⁵⁵ Sami Al Solh pointed out in his memoirs that the general experience of Sunni participation in the state of Lebanon depended heavily on the varied experiences of the Sunni leaders in terms of their relationships with Maronite leaders. According to him, Sunni politicians were 'only the instruments which they set up before the eyes of the public to be held accountable for their errors and misdeeds.'⁶⁵⁶ Given this context, it should not be seen as surprising that the Sunni masses in the 1950s looked outside Lebanon for sympathy with their grievances, and for a cause to ally themselves with, if only as a bargaining counter with which to extract concessions from their own, as well as Maronite, community leaders. In this sense, the Sunni masses began to echo the pattern set up by the Maronites under Ottoman rule; something that had worrying implications for the success of consensus under the terms of the National Pact, because this was part of the older tradition of intercommunal relations of co-habitation. It is true that this related also to intra-confessional strife; but the intra-communal tensions among the Sunni would have been unlikely to have developed to the levels they had in the early 1950s had there been a popular perception that the Maronite community was fulfilling its side of the bargain set up in the National Pact.

The continuing will amongst the Sunni community at mass level to identify with Syria and Syrian ambitions and interests has already been mentioned. This came together in the 1950s with another tradition in the Sunni community, dating back to the First World War. This was the seeking for heroes to inspire them among the leading figures of the Arab world in general, because of a lack of such heroes within Lebanon. Up to the early 1950s, such heroes had had little direct impact on Lebanon; representing more a general

⁶⁵⁵ Chamoun himself claimed this. Camille Chamoun, *Mudhakkarat* [Memoirs], Beirut, 1969, pp. 262-3.

⁶⁵⁶ Sami Al Solh, *Mudhakkarat Sami Bey Al Solh* [Memoirs of Sami Bey Al Solh], Maktabat al Fikr al-Arabi, Beirut, 1960, p. 320.

sense of a maintenance of Arab status in relation to the West.⁶⁵⁷ But during the 1950s the Lebanese Sunni became aware of a new dimension in the Arab world, that provided by Nasser after 1952. Nasser's impact on the Arab world generally was so great that in Syria, for example, a majority of the population began to demand that the Egyptian president became their leader. This was one factor behind the eventual creation of the United Arab Republic. On Nasser's arrival in Syria in 1958, the estimated crowd of 180,000 hailed Nasser as 'The Saviour Hero; the defender of the most sacred things.'⁶⁵⁸ In Lebanon the Sunni masses were also stirred to considerable enthusiasm by what Nasser seemed to offer in the way of 'fairer' policies: Nasser seemed a model leader, one who seemed to promote and 'protect the interests of his people' in the name of both Arab nationalism and Islam. To a community conscious of economic discrimination, his economic policies took on status as a 'champion of the poor' because he gave 'a sense of dignity to people of low social status' but did it in what appeared to be an essentially Arab and Islamic way.⁶⁵⁹

The pro-Egyptian stance amongst Lebanese Sunnis can be traced back to the Egyptian Revolution of 23 July 1952 which had brought Nasser to power and was eventually to give a whole new dimension to Lebanese-Egyptian relations. The Sunni masses of Lebanon saw Egypt as the largest and the strongest Sunni Arab country. Therefore they felt affinity with it as they have always felt with any large and strong Sunni entity; and as already mentioned, there is no doubt that the Nasserist slogans calling for social justice had an appeal.⁶⁶⁰ American policy in the Middle East then began to raise further consciousness amongst the Sunni masses of events in the wider Arab world and made the ordinary Sunnis increasingly dissatisfied with existing Lebanese foreign policy, as well as with domestic policy, bringing together the two strands that were to be so important in the crisis of 1958.

Popular Sunni awareness of both these strands, and a positive reaction to Nasser's policies and rhetoric as a possible alternative to the Lebanese

⁶⁵⁷ Najla Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 69. Such heroes had included Faisal, Attaturk and King Farouk of Egypt.

⁶⁵⁸ *An Nahar*, 25 February 1958

⁶⁵⁹ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 131.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, referring to the broadcasting of Nasser's speeches and the first appearance of Nasser's photographs in Beirut

status quo, began to have a visible effect as popular discontent with the Chamoun regime began to rise. A key event here was the visit to Lebanon in May 1953 of the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, to get the Lebanese government's support for current American policy in the Middle East highlighted the differences between politicians and masses. The Sunni politicians were not enthusiastic, but were prepared to accept some compromise along the existing lines of Lebanese foreign policy. The Sunni masses, however, indicated their different feelings by demonstrating against Dulles.⁶⁶¹ This was partly because of their long-standing resentment of the West, but Nasser's role in raising anti-American feelings was also crucial. The evidence is thus clear that Egyptian manipulation of Lebanese Sunni popular opinion started immediately after the coming to power of Nasser and continued to have a significant effect on mass behaviour amongst the Sunni throughout the rest of Chamoun's regime.⁶⁶²

The coincidence of timing indicates that it was Dulles' visit and the increasingly high profile taken in the Middle East by Nasser, that helped to promote a greater degree of organisation amongst the Sunni masses, by providing a series of issues on which they could agree, and, to an extent, act from 1953. For instance it was at this point that associations such as the Najjadah grouping, the Muslim Young Men's Union, the Muslim Boy Scouts, *Al Hayat al Watania* [The National Committee] and the *Al Maqassed* College Alumni Association, some already-established and some new, emerged into some prominence, taking advantage of this discontent to recruit members by their willingness to associate themselves with such grievances. So these groupings claimed to be the 'voice' of the masses, and from their first emergence in 1953, very deliberately made statements, reported in periodicals such as Beirut, that linked long-standing domestic grievances and potential remedies with what they interpreted as the strategies of Nasserism, rather than invoking the terminology of the National Pact, as traditional Sunni leaders did.⁶⁶³ The names of the organisations gives a clue as to the particular

⁶⁶¹ Al Hayat, May 17 1953

⁶⁶² Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 131

⁶⁶³ See, for instance, Beirut, 15 October 1953, containing a statement advocating Nasserism as the answer to Sunni domestic grievances.

constituencies within the Sunni community (and the Muslim community generally) to which they appealed. The *Al Maqassed* College Alumni Association, for instance, brought together the more literate amongst the Sunni masses, its membership drawing on the former students of the charitable Muslim schools.

It is easy to point out that such groupings did not have the standing or organisation within the Sunni community of the Kata'ib party. The initial statements from the groupings tended to be either vacillatory or conciliatory in their attitude towards the Sunni elites, for instance, and were certainly not yet essentially Sunni in their composition.⁶⁶⁴ Yet at the same time, they had sufficient popular support to bring about a state of tension between the Sunni community and the government in the summer and autumn of 1954.⁶⁶⁵ The issue was that of the equality, confessional, cultural and economic, between the sects in Lebanon. *Al Haya al Wataniyyah* raised Sunni dissatisfaction with what it defined as contemporary 'inequality' in a letter to Chamoun and made demands for immediate remedies, a letter supported by the Najjadah organisation. The latter grouping had also re-emerged during the early 1950s, and also was making claims to be a voice of popular Sunni opinion. These organisations displayed a degree of aggression which alarmed the government, and the leaders of the Sunni community, and seemed to have it within their power to orchestrate demonstrations and strikes by significant elements within the Sunni community.⁶⁶⁶ However, in the end the tension was dissolved by the efforts of Sunni leaders who were at that point still able to force the community as a whole and the organisations to accept conciliation, but no real change in policy towards their grievances.⁶⁶⁷ Such a scenario clearly indicates that these Sunni popular organisations had little power at political levels at this point.

⁶⁶⁴ Two populist deputies who were also members of another organisation, *Al Mutamar al Watani*, were Abdallah Al Haj, a Christian, and Kamal Jumblat, a Druze.

⁶⁶⁵ See the tone of concern in the statement of Prime Minister Abdallah Al Yafi, 20 July 1954, *Minutes of Parliament* V, 1954-55, pp. 1300-1301. Desmond Stewart also gave some comment on this, see Desmond Stewart, *Turmoil in Beirut*, pp. 13-14.

⁶⁶⁶ See, for instance, the comments in *Al Hayat*, 20 August 1954, reporting the events of the previous day; also *Beirut*, 24 August 1954. See also *Moslem Lebanon Today*.

⁶⁶⁷ reported in *Debate*, 9 November 1954, *Minutes of Parliament*, V, 1954-55, pp. 1682-92.

Another development came with the emergence of politicised *qabadays*. Such acted as facilitators or intermediaries between the masses and the elites, giving the masses channels for passing on their messages to their traditional leaders or *za'ims*.⁶⁶⁸ In the context of the 1950s, however, they were to become an important agency for bringing pressure on the Sunni elites because of the reliance of those elites on their services. Labib Zuwiyyah Yamak points out that even Sunni 'notables' who had become national figures, such as Bishara Al Khoury or Kamal Jumblat, were reliant on the 'elementary political organisation constituted by the *qabada'iyya*' to mobilise their supporters.⁶⁶⁹ No alternative power structures to use of the *qabadays* had evolved for the political or socio-economic organisation of the Sunni community in the period up to the crisis, and thus the Sunni political elite had no alternative but to make use of them. They were essentially an urban phenomenon, men drawn from the masses, acting as leaders at street levels, but also as channels for communication. During the 1950s, they acted to restrain the growing radicalism of the Sunni masses, in the interests of the elites, on the one hand; on the other, they acted to pass on the agendas of the Sunni masses on the Sunni leadership. They were, essentially, pragmatic facilitators without an obvious ideology to link them to either side, but equally, they were drawn from the masses themselves and were only able to sustain their role and influence, and consequently, value to the *za'ims*, so long as they kept the support of the masses. As the masses became more unified behind Nasserist rhetoric, the *qabadays* needed to reflect that development to the Sunni elites and to convince them of the need to respond positively to that rhetoric as popular Sunni perception was that the government was moving further and further towards a dangerously anti-Arab stance in its policy.⁶⁷⁰

When Chamoun came into office, his advertised pro-Arab stance meant that his mandate was initially welcomed by Sunnis at all levels and he was also linked with the British position of opposition to an independent Jewish state in

⁶⁶⁸ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, pp. 82-3.

⁶⁶⁹ Labib Zuwiyyah Yamak, 'Party Politics in the Lebanese Political System', in L. Binder (ed.), *Politics in Lebanon*, p. 153.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-4; Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, pp. 82-3.

Palestine.⁶⁷¹ But he had a need in 1952 to conciliate Muslim opinion, and there was at that point no clear breach between a pro-Arab and a pro-Western policy.⁶⁷² However, this established some high expectations of his regime which were to remain unfulfilled. At first the Sunni community had had no real complaints in terms of foreign policy matters. Chamoun's speeches had seemed to indicate to the Sunni that he was maintaining a pro-Arab policy though the substance of his policy did not bear out his fine words.⁶⁷³ As late as 1956 Chamoun's claim to be acting as a champion of the Arab cause still had an effect on Sunni politicians, even if the Sunni masses were less susceptible, given the greater appeal of Nasser's rhetoric and their own continuing discontents. But without seeming ridiculous, Al Hayat could still publish a letter in November 1956, from Chamoun to Eisenhower about the Suez Crisis, in which Chamoun portrayed himself as speaking in the Arab interest.⁶⁷⁴ However, the aftermath of the Suez Crisis was to reveal very plainly the lack of substance in Chamoun's pro-Arab rhetoric. Yet the unwillingness of the Sunni politicians to provoke a crisis over this issue, preferring to seek compromise instead, served to highlight the divergence of attitude between the Sunni elites and the Sunni masses in the mid-1950s.

But though the Sunni politicians continued to pursue their mainly conciliatory approach to policies, the Sunni masses were being more and more affected by Egyptian propaganda. The general rhetoric of that propaganda enabled the masses to interpret it in ways that had a direct relevance to their concerns. An important year in terms of the developing popular Sunni hostility to existing Lebanese foreign policy was 1955, the year of the Baghdad Pact. As a result of the Pact, Lebanon was forced to try to negotiate its position in the new regional arena and to do so against a background of a new-found strength within the Arab world. The inspiration of Nasserist policies in Egypt had played their part in this, along with the rise of a quasi-religious socialism in the Arab world. Having a cause to fight for, the Sunni masses began to exert

⁶⁷¹ It has already been mentioned that Chamoun was seen as pro-British rather than pro-French, which was also an asset. See Fiches du Monde Arabe, 1. 34-38, 42-45, La Crise 1975-76 (la 9), IL 106 11 December 1979, no. 1449.

⁶⁷² Camille Chamoun, Mudhakkarat, pp. 255-6.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ According to Al Hayat, 6 November 1956, Chamoun warned the USA that if the Americans did not intervene to halt the 'dangerous situation' in the region, with Egypt under attack by Anglo-French and Israeli armies, the Arab world would be forced by 'mass pressure' to intervene on Egypt's side because hers was a 'just cause'.

concerted pressure on their leaders, and to have an impact on official attitudes towards the Sunni masses. But this was not so much in the sense that attempts were made to remedy their grievances. For instance in April 1955 a new body, the Islamic Council, was set up under the leadership of the *Mufti*. A government decree in January of that year had made some acknowledgement of the importance and religious status of the Sunni community by placing the *Mufti's* 'bureau' under the Prime Minister, effectively giving the *Mufti* status as a government official.⁶⁷⁵ This, in turn, gave the concept of the Council some official backing. The Council advertised itself as having 'a duty to defend the rights of the community, which, so it is believed, are not being given sufficient consideration by the authorities'.⁶⁷⁶ An indication of the way that this Council was perceived as bypassing the traditional Sunni leaders is provided by the opposition of men like Saeb Salam, who feared it would lessen his power as a *Za'im*.⁶⁷⁷ But the Council was not exactly a radical body - the first genuinely radical action in which it participated officially was the 1958 boycott of the traditional government *Iftar* dinner.⁶⁷⁸

But there was some indication of a modification of attitudes by leaders of the Sunni community, as is demonstrated by the actions of the Sunni Prime Minister Sami Al Solh who succumbed to the wishes of his own confessional community in opposition to cabinet policy in attending the Cairo Conference in January 1955.⁶⁷⁹ Chamoun had opposed attendance at the conference, because official Lebanese policy was pro-Iraq rather than pro-Egypt, and Iraq had not been invited to the conference. This was the first time that a Lebanese Prime Minister acted contrary to the will of the President on such a public and important matter.⁶⁸⁰ However this conciliation of Sunni mass opinion was limited to appearances and did not signify any radical change in the attitude of Sunni politicians towards the status quo in Lebanon. Thus upon his arrival in

⁶⁷⁵ Bishara Al Khoury, *Haga'iq Lubnaniyyah*, Vol. 3, Aurak Lubnaniyyah Publications, Beirut, 1961, p. 476.

⁶⁷⁶ *Beirut*, 17 May, 1955. The Council was composed of members elected on 16 April 1955 by all Muslim bodies and organisations, and was composed of ex-Prime Ministers, Muslim members of the Municipality Board of Beirut, members of the *'Ulema* Association, members of the *Al Maqassed Society's* committee, members of the professional syndicates and popular Muslim organisations.

⁶⁷⁷ According to the British Embassy, Saeb Salam 'worked against the formation of this council, as he believed that it might tend to put an end to his control of the Moslems in Beirut'. FO371/110958/1017.

⁶⁷⁸ *Al Siyassa*, 10 June 1958.

⁶⁷⁹ *Al Jarida*, 5 April 1956, argued that Sami Al Solh had been asked by Chamoun not to attend, but that Al Solh had threatened to resign if prevented from attending. Clearly he felt that his public credibility with his community depended to a considerable extent on taking such a stand. Nicola Zladeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, p. 160.

⁶⁸⁰ Najja Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 242.

Cairo, Al Solh tried unsuccessfully to work out a compromise between Egypt and Iraq, demonstrating his continuing willingness to support the official Lebanese policy line and his sensitivity to Maronite attitudes, rather than taking an unequivocally pro-Nasser line.⁶⁸¹

Lebanon's attempt at conciliation at the conference was to have tremendous repercussions internally. Al Solh's efforts infuriated Egypt and made Egyptian politicians determined to bring the Sunni politicians in Lebanon into alignment with them. The basis for a propaganda campaign aimed at the Muslim element already existed in Lebanon, using the medium of radio, in that Egyptian became aware that the conciliatory attitude taken by the government at the conference had been unpopular with the Sunni masses. For instance, students had led demonstrations against Western alliances in general and against the Western-backed alliance between Turkey and Iraq in particular.⁶⁸² This was a good foundation for an Egyptian propaganda intervention aimed at making the Lebanese Sunni leaders dependent on Egypt's goodwill by subverting their basis of popular support so they would have to alter their political stance. This attempted subversion was to continue for the rest of the Chamoun mandate, and with increasing success as the Sunni masses responded positively to the rhetoric directed at them, as will be shown later in the chapter. There were attempts in the aftermath of this to bring together those Sunni leaders in the opposition and those in the government, which were to an extent successful, but ultimately all this was seriously to undermine the independence of the Sunni local leaders.⁶⁸³ Thus though the Prime Minister and the other Sunnis involved in government continued to give support to Chamoun, that support was increasingly lukewarm and hesitantly given in the face of Egyptian-inspired hostility to the status quo from the Sunni rank and file.

Between 1955 and 1958, pro-government Sunni leaders were effectively ceasing to carry major political weight in the Sunni community, despite their gradual attempts to respond to expressions of community opinion. The

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸² *An Nahar*, 26 January 1955.

⁶⁸³ Kalawoun Nasser, 'The Role of the Sunni Leadership', p. 29.

growing dissatisfaction of the Sunni population, for example, led to the resignation of Sami Al Solh on 19 September 1955, following a divergence in the ministerial ranks over the issue of pro-Egyptian inclination. Even Chamoun was not immune to the impact on Sunni politicians of this popular Sunni pressure. In order to defuse rising tension and the concerns of Sunni politicians, he had to appoint Rachid Karami, son of Abd Al Hamid Karami, a leading figure in the Sunni opposition to succeed Al Solh. The most senior Sunni political office was thus held by a man whose popular base was in Tripoli, therefore practically ensuring that Karami could not take anti-Egyptian attitude and would put pressure on the President to be conciliatory in order to stay on good terms with his supporters in Tripoli.⁶⁸⁴ Effectively this emphasises the extent to which 1955 needs to be seen as a landmark in terms of the ways in which Sunni politicians found themselves having to pay lip-service, at least, to the pro-Nasserist Sunni popular attitudes.

Karami's period as Prime Minister formed what Attiyah has described as a transitional period in the history of the president-premier relationship in Lebanon.⁶⁸⁵ The early part of Karami's term saw attempts by him to conform to the usual interpretation of the National Pact taken by Sunni politicians, keeping the goodwill of the President as well as the support of his community. But as the two perspectives proved impossible to reconcile, Karami demonstrated that the most important factor in deciding his actions was the wishes of the Sunni community, particularly those of his own constituency in Tripoli. This determination to champion a pro-Nasserist line brought about a new type of conflict within the government, leading to Karami's resignation in March 1956. Rachid Karami's resignation was engineered by the pro-Chamoun element, in direct reaction to the increasing ability of the Sunni masses to impose their agenda on their leaders, coming at a time when Sunni popular desires were being perceived by the Maronites as radically opposed to established Lebanese policy, rather than, as the Sunnis themselves would

⁶⁸⁴ Despite that, Karami's ministerial declaration in the assembly vote of confidence was moderate and did not take a strong pro-Nasserite stance. Cabinet Papers, Muasasat al Durasat al Lubnanyya, Beirut, 1986, Vol I 1926-66, Rachid Karami, Speech, 4 October 1955, p. 386.

⁶⁸⁵ Najla Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 254.

have claimed, being in line with the National Pact, in the sense that that compromise should be keeping a Maronite agenda in check.⁶⁸⁶

But though Rachid Karami left office, Chamoun was unable to avoid appointing a successor, Abdallah Al Yafi, on 19 March, 1956, who was also an admirer of Nasser and who took an even tougher stance.⁶⁸⁷ In an attempt to balance the impact this might have on Lebanese foreign policy, Chamoun appointed Salim Lahoud as Minister for Foreign Affairs, because of his rigidly traditional Lebanese views. But then Chamoun was forced to bow to Sunni popular pressure by appointing pro-Nasserist Saeb Salam, another Sunni, as Minister of State to assist in Foreign Affairs to counter Sunni hostility to Lahoud, another clear indication of the mounting impact of popular Sunni opinions.⁶⁸⁸ But during the summer and autumn of 1956, the majority of Lebanese Sunni, continued to demand a closer alignment with Egypt and a move towards social equality on Nasserist lines, as the Sunni media indicates.⁶⁸⁹

This produced a dilemma for Sunni politicians. The Sunni masses would not accept anything but full support for Egypt, and wished to see this demonstrated in Lebanese policy. In terms of domestic policy, this meant Sunni politicians adopting a perspective which had, superficially at least, socialist implications in the rhetoric they used. But the socialist implications of Nasserism was of less importance to the Sunni masses than the imagery they had evolved that associated Nasser with opposition to the Christian dominance in Lebanon, and so, as Johnson points out, the issue of genuine socialism in Lebanon was not central to either the elite or the popular political agenda.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁶ Minutes of Parliament, V, 1955-56, Committee Meeting, 10 November, 1955.

⁶⁸⁷ Al Yafi took a clearer stand on foreign policy matters. First he stated the following, that he 'refused to adhere to the Baghdad Pact, and second to any Western pact'; that he 'would try to work for the aims of the Arab League and the pact of mutual defense as well as for economic co-operation as well as any domain with the Arab brothers'. Cabinet Papers, Abdallah Al Yafi, 29 March 1956, p. 399.

⁶⁸⁸ Cabinet Papers, pp. 398-403.

⁶⁸⁹ For instance, see Beirut, 2 August 1956; 5 August 1956, for articles arguing that only a domestic policy modelled on Nasserist lines would institute a system based on equalities in political, social and economic terms, between the Christian and Muslim communities.

⁶⁹⁰ Indeed, Nasser's own socialism was more rhetorical than real, see Michael Johnson, Class and Client in Beirut, p. 131. According to Clovis Maksoud, there were some genuinely socialist groupings within Lebanon, reflecting socialist aspirations amongst their membership, notably the Ba'ath Socialist party or *Harakat al Qawmiyyah al Arab*, and there was a certain intellectual constituency that was also impressed by the Nasserist version of socialism and its vision of socialist justice as it was in place in Egypt. However, the power of such groupings was 'limited', and 'confined mainly to the intelligentsia with some trade union and mass following in the cities of Tripoli and Tyre'. Clovis Maksoud, 'Lebanon and Arab Nationalism', in L. Binder (ed.), Politics in Lebanon, p. 253.

The real problem lay in the fact that a demonstration of support for Nasser in foreign policy terms involved, in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis, a formal breach with the West, which the many Sunni politicians did not want to support, because of the implications for the compromises at the heart of the National Pact. They would have been happy with a policy that distanced Lebanon from open support for Western policies in the region, and brought the state closer to the Arab world. However, the Suez Crisis meant that such compromise was no longer acceptable to the Sunni masses, who were less concerned about the nuances of the National Pact. They were increasingly encouraged in this attitude by Egyptian propaganda reiterating Nasser's opposition to continued contact with the West, and the interpretation that such contact undermined the Arab world as a whole. The problems this brought for Sunni politicians is underlined by the resignations of Abdallah Al Yafi and Saeb Salam on 16 November 1956. These resignations also served to heighten intercommunal tensions, even though both ministers were eager to demonstrate that they left office on good terms with Chamoun.⁶⁹¹ On 20 November 1956, Sami Al Solh again became Prime Minister in what was intended to be a compromise move, and the new administration won a vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies by thirty-eight votes to two, demonstrating that a complete rift between Muslim politicians and the state did not yet exist.⁶⁹² Indeed the potential still existed for compromise between the leaders of the two main communities, and for this to be reflected in popular opinion. For example, a demonstration took place in Sidon after the formation of the new Cabinet which hailed both Chamoun and Nasser.⁶⁹³ A factor that aided this continuation of consensus was the attitude of the Sunni religious establishment, which at this point showed itself still to be willing to do work with the government and accept the existence of the separate Lebanese state. For example, after the formation of Sami Al Solh's new Cabinet on 20 November 1956, the *Mufti* had addressed a gathering of Sunni notables, and issued a plea that the Muslim faithful should

⁶⁹¹ Letter of resignation of Abdallah Al Yafi as Prime Minister, 16 November 1956 in *Al Hayat*, 17 November 1956

⁶⁹² *Beirut*, 28 November 1956.

⁶⁹³ *An Nahar*, 10 January 1957 giving the text of Charles Malik's Declaration in Rome, 9 January 1957, on the Eisenhower Doctrine.

'block the way of the exploiters', by which he meant that Muslims should not break their ties with the government.⁶⁹⁴

Sunni politicians started 1957 by seeking to maintain their neutrality between pro-Egyptian and pro-Western policies, justified by reference to the National Pact, even after the publication in the Arab world of the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957. The official policy of the Lebanese government, including its Sunni members, was an enthusiastic acceptance of the Doctrine.⁶⁹⁵ In this respect, the prospect of the impending elections in 1957 made the Sunni leaders reluctant to launch attacks on the Eisenhower Doctrine or the policy of acceptance of it by the Lebanese government, particularly in the absence of official Egyptian reaction to the Doctrine. This conciliatory attitude began to modify, however, once Sunni politicians realised the strength of the impact that the Egyptian propaganda against the Doctrine was having, and especially after the elections of 1957.

It was against the background of a growing popular support for Nasserism and the evolution of these organisations and agencies that the hierarchy of the Sunni social organisation, held together by tradition and lower accessibility to those factors like education which promote greater independence and individual thought at lower levels of society, began to modify - at least temporarily. By 1957, consciousness of this began to put pressure on Sunni leaders to take account of popular Sunni wishes.⁶⁹⁶ A 1958 pamphlet by Ismail Moussa Al Yussuf referred to the 'discontent' of the masses and their 'recriminations' against their leaders that their grievances were not being listened to by them. That, by May 1958, such discontent was being taken seriously by the Sunni leadership is indicated by Al Jisr's willingness to list what he identified as 'popular grievances', cultural, educational and economic as well as political, in an important speech given in Tripoli in May 1958 which sought to justify and explain the actions of the Sunni leadership at that time partly by reference to the list. The series of well-supported strikes by Sunni workers from March 1957 was another factor that Ismail Moussa Al

⁶⁹⁴ Beirut, 14 December 1956.

⁶⁹⁵ A point stressed by Charles Malik in Rome, 9 January 1957, see *Al Hayat*, 10 January 1957.

⁶⁹⁶ Samir Khalaf & Guilaine Denoueux, 'Urban Networks and Political Conflict' in Shehadi & Mills (eds), *Lebanon*, p. 187.

Yussuf identified as part of the popular Sunni resentment with their leaders. He argued quite explicitly that it was 'in reaction to not being listened to' that they 'organised themselves and took up arms'.⁶⁹⁷

The Lebanese Sunni masses adopted a policy line in keeping with the Egyptian line, emphasising the influence of Nasser on their thinking.⁶⁹⁸ During 1957, the pro-Nasserist attitude of the Sunni masses largely expressed itself in rhetoric reported in the media. For instance, plans for a series of strikes and demonstrations were drawn up on 29 March 1957, to start the next day. It was not until 30 May 1957 that a demonstration actually took place in Beirut. Its bloody resolution lessened the immediate popular enthusiasm for a swift repeat, and the next such expression of popular discontent was a strike on 5 November 1957, again in Beirut. During the disturbances surrounding this, Adnan Al Hakim, the leader of the Najjadah grouping, was arrested.⁶⁹⁹ But as 1958 progressed, the levels of resentment amongst the Sunni masses in Lebanon increased, and the Sunni elites also showed themselves more ready to respond to popular concerns and to distance themselves from the government.

It was the Eisenhower Doctrine, that was to form the common thread in both the Egyptian and Syrian propaganda aimed at the Sunni masses and, consequently, in the development of a closer relationship between the masses and the politicians in the Sunni community. Some idea of the initial strength of Sunni popular reactions against the Eisenhower Doctrine can be gauged by the aftermath of the publication on 16 March, 1957 of the American-Lebanese *communiqué* implying Lebanese acceptance of the Doctrine.⁷⁰⁰ Critical Sunni comment was widely reported; and this was not just in the days immediately following its publication, it was sustained over a longer period, encouraged by

⁶⁹⁷ Ismail Moussa Al Yussuf, *Thawrat Al 'Ahrar Fi Lubnan*, n.d. but internal evidence, notably reference to recent strikes in May 1958, makes it plain that it dates from the late spring or summer of 1958, pp. 36; 135; Nadim Al Jisr, Speech, reported in *Al Hayat*, 18 May 1958. *Al Hayat* reported that a decision to go on strike to highlight a range of popular grievances was taken on 29 March 1957, and was swiftly followed by demonstrations on 30 March. A demonstration on 30 May 1957 ended in violence with seven dead, 73 wounded and 400 arrested. A further strike of 5 November 1957 involved the populist Najjadah grouping, and saw the arrest of the leader, Adnan Al Hakim. See *Al Hayat*, 30 March 1957; 31 March 1957; 31 May 1957; 5 November 1957.

⁶⁹⁸ A point consistently brought out in *Beirut*, see for instance the article of 21 December 1956.

⁶⁹⁹ *Al Hayat*, 30 May 1957; 30 May 1957; 31 May 1957; 1 June 1957; 5 November 1957; 6 November 1957. During the May demonstration, seven were killed, 73 wounded and 400 arrested, according to *Al Hayat*.

⁷⁰⁰ For the text of the communiqué of 16 March 1957, see M S Agwani, *The Lebanese Crisis 1958: A Documentary Study*, Asla Publishing House, New Delhi, 1965, p. 16.

the rhetoric of radio broadcasts from Egypt.⁷⁰¹ Such popular expression acted as a stimulus to the formation of the United National Front on 31 March 1957, a political grouping through which opposition Sunni politicians could begin to voice their hostility against the Chamoun government and its foreign policy. The manifesto produced by the United National Front was signed by important Sunni figures including predictable names such as Saeb Salam and Abdallah Al Yafi, but also some less expected names such as Takkieddine Al Solh, one of Sami Al Solh's family group. These figures also signed a petition from the Front to Chamoun, presented on 12 April 1957, protesting against his policies: but it was a protest over domestic as well as foreign policy issues.⁷⁰² A linkage was made between the two by Front's claiming that the protests over Chamoun's domestic policy was linked to a defence of Lebanon's sovereignty. Independence could only be assured through a defence of the principles of the National Pact since, according to the manifesto, that had been 'unanimously' adopted by 'the Lebanese people' as the 'most effective means' of ensuring 'understanding, harmony and co-operation' between the communities. This element is made still clearer in Point 4 of the manifesto, which claimed that the aim was 'to ensure justice between the religious communities which form the Lebanese people so that each community which form the Lebanese people so that each community may respect one another's rights and so that none should have the upper hand over the other'.⁷⁰³

Relating to this, the petition to Chamoun also laid a stress on the need for measures to be taken to demonstrate that the 1957 elections would be fair and honest. In order to show that their petition had popular, as well as political, support a huge demonstration of support for the United National Front and the petition was organised and publicised through the media.⁷⁰⁴ But the reaction of the Chamoun government was not to seek compromise; instead the demonstration was dispersed with considerable harshness. The effect was not, however, to crush opposition but rather to increase popular Sunni

⁷⁰¹ See, for example, *Al Hayat*, 11 April 1957, making mention of such broadcasts.

⁷⁰² M.S. Agwani, *The Lebanese Crisis*, pp. 29-33, for a translation of the full text of the petition and the manifesto of the United National Front. This grouping also included figures from other Muslim communities, such as Kamal Jumblat, and even a number of noted Maronite opposition figures such as Fouad Ammoun, Phillippe Takla, and Ilyas Al Khoury.

⁷⁰³ M.S. Agwani, *The Lebanese Crisis*, p. 30.

⁷⁰⁴ See, for instance, reports in *Al Hayat*, 1 April 1957; *Beirut*, 3 April 1957.

disaffection. As An Nahar pointed out, it also made it more difficult for Sunni politicians to look for any grounds for co-operation with Chamoun, even if they had wanted this.⁷⁰⁵ In this context the government's high profile pursuit of its pro-Western foreign policy must be described as being both aggressive and confrontational. A vote of confidence on foreign policy was put forward, phrased in such an uncompromising way that even those Sunni leaders who were generally willing to accept a pro-Western policy subject to certain safeguards, felt unable to support the vote.⁷⁰⁶ Even so, the majority of Sunni deputies were reluctant to resign over the issue. The smallness of the number that did resign demonstrated the continuing disparity between the Sunni masses and their spokesmen in parliament even at this late stage.⁷⁰⁷ Only six deputies resigned but among them were five Muslims; Abdallah Al Yafi, Ahmad Al Assad, Sabri Hamada, Abdallah Al Haj and Kamil Al Assad.⁷⁰⁸ It can be said that the majority of the Sunni deputies were thinking twice before antagonising the government or the President because of the imminent elections. But amongst the Sunni masses, especially in West Beirut, Nasserism was acting as an opposition doctrine, giving shape to a populist yearning for a Sunni Arab order.⁷⁰⁹

By this time, in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis and similar triumphs, the Sunni masses had accorded Nasser the status of a local icon, with his face posted on walls and hung in classrooms. On the eve of the 1957 election a popular Sunni opposition to Lebanese government policy, essentially grounded in opposition to the foreign policy, had come into existence that was endorsed by the Sunni *'ulamas* and popular organisations. One event in April 1957 indicates how attitudes amongst the Sunni religious establishment were modifying in ways that distanced them from the general support for the government identified in 1956. Shaykh Shafik Yamut, who was the head of the Sharia Court, held a political meeting for the opposition. Among the approximately 300 Muslims notables attending were Sunni figures such as Saeb Salam, Abd Al Hamid Karami, and Al Yafi, as well as the prominent

⁷⁰⁵ An Nahar, 13 April 1957.

⁷⁰⁶ Beirut, 3 April 1957.

⁷⁰⁷ Najla Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 269.

⁷⁰⁸ Al Silyassa, 7 April 1957.

⁷⁰⁹ Fouad Ajar, The Arab Predicament, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981, p. 93.

Shi'ite leaders, Ahmad Al Assad and Sabri Hamadi. Reporting on the meeting, Al Siyassa highlighted the extent of this break with tradition by pointing out that pro-government Muslim personalities had to be excluded because of public hostility to them.⁷¹⁰

At the meeting Shaykh Shafik Yamut launched a fierce attack on the government; one that had sectarian overtones and was clearly intended for popular consumption. He stressed Lebanon's unqualified identification with the Arab world, and called for the pursuit in Lebanon of the type of policy followed by the 'liberal' revolutionary Arab states. Shaykh Yamut said that the reason for the meeting was what he described as 'public concern' over 'Islam's honour and glory' and proceeded to give an interpretation of what he saw as the role of the National Pact. He argued that Muslim support for the Pact entailed a government policy which rejected pacts with foreign powers, i.e., with the West, and argued for the development of a 'liberal' Arab policy based on independence and neutrality between the two world camps and the continuing struggle to solve the problems of the Arab world, inside and outside Lebanon. It was an interpretation that was accepted by the audience and were later supported by the Higher Muslim Council, and, according to editorials, something that also gained popular support.⁷¹¹ There is thus noticeably increasing alienation of the opposition and the Muslim religious establishment in the run-up to the election. For example, in the aftermath of the suppression of the mainly Muslim demonstration on 30 May 1957, the *Mufti* protested to the President about the harsh reprisals taken by the government and it was after this that the Higher Muslim Council joined the United National Front in demanding a neutral government in the run-up to the election, criticising the general government attitude at this time.⁷¹²

But even so the religious establishment did not want totally to break its ties with the government in the period before the election. It was the results of the election that hardened attitudes among the religious establishment, as amongst the political establishment, and again, the impact of outside

⁷¹⁰ Al Siyassa, 25 April 1957; 26 April 1957; 27 April 1957.

⁷¹¹ See, for instance, editorials in Al Siyassa, 25 April 1957; 27 April.

⁷¹² Al Siyassa, 31 May 1957.

influences on the Sunni masses was an important factor, if only because of the continuing lack of an indigenous popular leader with universal appeal. Yet at the same time, and despite the high profile given to Nasser in the absence of an indigenous leader, the leaders of a popular political opposition that did emerge at this point did not go beyond hostility to Chamoun and his policies. There was no indication that such leaders felt pressure from their community to agitate seriously for formal union with the UAR, for instance. The popular opposition concentrated its efforts on complaints about domestic policy and other local issues, given a gloss of Nasserism. As late as 16 April 1958 even the more radical of the opposition groupings, Najjadah, did not find it necessary to condemn either Lebanese sovereignty or the National Pact, so long as both were interpreted in the context of the Arab world.⁷¹³

In the run-up to the 1957 elections the majority of traditional Sunni leaders, even those in political opposition, sought to maintain the spirit of compromise. This was not just the tradition of the National Pact in operation; it was also a fear about the impact of Nasserism on their own followers. Such leaders were used to being able to wield considerable influence over their followers, and they feared a diminution of their power in a socialist and/or larger and essentially Arab entity. For this reason, their hostility to Chamoun's policies was, in itself, not sufficient at this stage to induce them to sever their ties with the state.⁷¹⁴ Chamoun's anti-Nasserism and his overly pro-British policy did not arouse a degree of opposition amongst the Sunni leaders to match that amongst the Sunni voters.⁷¹⁵ However the events of the election did result in a greater degree of compatibility in this respect, because it forced consideration of other issues besides the foreign policy ones that had created popular Sunni hostility to the government, such as the domestic grievances already discussed and the popular perception that the Chamoun government had failed to provide any remedies. To some extent Sunni leaders had already made some advances towards the popular position by the start of 1957, adopting popular mainstream slogans even when they were not willing to break

⁷¹³ An Nahar, 15 March 1958, reported an appeal, rather than a warning, from Najjadah to the government to moderate its policy towards the Arab world; Al Hayat, 16 April 1958. See also M.S. Agwani, The Lebanese Crisis, pp. 42-3.

⁷¹⁴ Minutes of Parliament, V, 1955 - 56, Meeting, 26 November 1956, pp. 107-109; 111-112.

⁷¹⁵ Beirut, 14 December 1956.

with the government entirely. The ability of the President to manipulate the premiership meant that ambitious Sunni politicians continued to seek both the support of their community and a compromise with the state.⁷¹⁶

Yet the suggestions of electoral malpractice surrounding the 1957 elections finally ensured that men like Saeb Salam and Abdallah Al Yafi, for reasons of personal and communal bitterness, finally came out in open opposition to Chamoun and his policies, abandoning the search for compromise on the grounds that Chamoun had broken the terms of the National Pact first.⁷¹⁷ Increasingly such politicians followed the example of the masses by voicing their opposition to Chamoun in terms of opposition to his foreign policy: 'The nature of the issues over which the government and the opposition were fighting made the election campaign a fight for survival on principles of consensus and within this, for a neutral foreign policy'.⁷¹⁸ The media underlined the extent to which it was popularly believed by the Sunni community, in the summer of 1957, that Chamoun had broken the rules of government by consensus.⁷¹⁹ While opposition hostility focused ever more strongly on Chamoun and his regime, the loyalty of Sunni leaders to the Lebanese states was also weakened by the bitter hostility towards Chamoun that the defeated leaders now felt. Attempts at mediation at elite levels did still take place, instituted by figures inside and outside Lebanon. For instance, King Saud, who was afraid of the growing power of Nasserism in the region, attempted to mediate between Saeb Salam and Abdallah Al Yafi on the one hand and President Chamoun on the other.⁷²⁰ The fact that the Sunni political leaders were willing to take part in this attempt and seek a compromise with the government to mitigate the effects of the election demonstrates that even at this stage there were important Sunni political leaders who attached only relative significance to the issue of foreign policy.⁷²¹ They were practically

⁷¹⁶ In the aftermath of resignation, Sunni politicians generally sought to remain on good terms with Chamoun if they wished to return to office. Hence Al Yafi's declaration that 'We have not and never shall stab a Lebanese President in the back', *Minutes of Parliament*, V, 1955-56, Meeting, 26 November 1956, pp. 107-109; 111-112.

⁷¹⁷ *Beirut*, 3 April 1957.

⁷¹⁸ Najla Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 274.

⁷¹⁹ It was sufficiently acute to be noticed even in the Maronite press, see, for example, *Al Hayat*, 31 May 1957; *An Nahar*, 19 June 1957.

⁷²⁰ *Al Siyassa*, 14 June 1957; 15 June 1957; 3 July 1957.

⁷²¹ *L'Orient*, 3 July 1957.

more interested in domestic issues, including policies to safeguard their own personal interests in the current situation.⁷²²

But another factor in the responsiveness of the Sunni elites to such popular pressure during 1957 and 1958 was a growing consciousness among Sunni politicians that they could, under the right circumstances, have an impact on the government of Lebanon: that they did not have simply to accept the attitude taken by Sami Al Solh; that of a resigned acceptance of manipulation by the Maronite political and commercial establishment.⁷²³ During the Chamoun regime, as Sunni discontent mounted, Sunni politicians began to act collectively in order to make their protests felt against Chamoun's tactics. In the final analysis it had been Sunni politicians who had played a decisive role in bringing Al Khoury's regime to an end. Remembrance of this also made the Sunni politicians place a greater emphasis on the fulfilment by Maronite politicians of what the former interpreted as both terms and spirit of the National Pact.

The significance of the National Pact in the years 1952 to 1958 was, according to Raghid Al Solh, its contribution to the emergence amongst Sunni politicians of a concept he calls 'democracy by conciliation'.⁷²⁴ There was a greater realisation that the system of compromise provided Muslims, as well as Maronites, irrespective of their numbers, with a power of veto over any major decisions which either side saw as dangerous to its own interest. Because of the veto would thus signal a national crisis, it made rule by consensus possible but equally made it dependent on mutual co-operation. Moreover it contained within it the potential for Sunni politicians to hinder the workings of government and even to bring down a president.⁷²⁵

This leads to the conclusion that many opposition leaders, if left to work out this crisis purely in terms of the domestic context and devoid of pressures from the rest of the Arab world, even if expressed through popular opinion in Lebanon, would have sought a course of action less extreme than the one they

⁷²² *Al Hayat*, 3 June 1957.

⁷²³ Sami Al Solh, *Mudhakkarat*, p. 320.

⁷²⁴ Raghid Al Solh, 'Lebanon and Arab Nationalism, 1936-1945', Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, 1986, p. 277.

⁷²⁵ Nasser Kalawoun, 'The Role of the Sunni Leadership', p. 37; Camille Chamoun, *Mudhakkarat*, pp 262-3.

eventually adopted.⁷²⁶ As Attiyah has argued, the opposition would not have expressed hostility in terms of what she calls 'a basic alienation from the state', but would have expressed it in terms of a 'struggle for power'.⁷²⁷ That the attempted mediation failed has more to do with continuing opposition to Chamoun than to a wish to see the end of a separate Lebanon. On 27 March 1958, for instance, 82 opposition politicians issued a statement emphasising that the real cause of the trouble was that 'the President is still determined to amend the constitution' to renew his term of office and that, despite Chamoun's rhetoric, 'the signatories consider that the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon were not and will never be' under threat by elements in the Arab world while the 'Lebanese people adhere to the National Pact which has sanctified national unity since 1943'. There was no reason for the constitutional amendment and therefore the Lebanese people would 'resist the renewal of the presidential term while pledging such support for the Pact'.⁷²⁸

The internal dimension was of prime significance, but what was interpreted as either 'friendly encouragement' in the majority Sunni perspective, or 'hostile intervention' from a government and/or Maronite one, by Syria and Nasser, was of great importance in giving shape and coherence to the developing hostility of the Lebanese Sunni masses, political and religious, by the end of 1957. Nasser enthusiastically seized the opportunity offered by dissatisfaction with the outcome of the election to provide the political opposition and, to an even greater extent, the Muslim religious establishment, with both moral and material support in a successful attempt to radicalise anti-government positions in Lebanon. Increasingly detailed criticisms were given in these broadcasts of government policy.⁷²⁹ For example, Nasser made generous donations to the mosques in Lebanon. It was recorded in Al Siyassa on 25 January 1958, that the Egyptian government

⁷²⁶ Najla Attiyah, 'Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis', p. 275.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., p. 276.

⁷²⁸ Al Hayat, 28 March 1958.

⁷²⁹ See, for instance, Al Hayat, 23 December 1957; 16 March 1958; An Nahar, 29 January 1958; 9 February 1958; 16 March 1958, all mentioning such criticisms and relating them to popular disturbances of a pro-Nasserist description.

had donated 30,000 Egyptian pounds to Lebanese mosques, information also recorded with due suspicion in the consular reports of the period.⁷³⁰

But the intervention did not consist merely of these peaceful instances. To the concern of the Lebanese government at least, a number of incidents from the autumn of 1957 seemed to indicate that this intervention was seeking actively to encourage the Sunni masses, and those of other Muslim communities into open revolt against the state. On 3 September a Syrian car was caught smuggling arms to Lebanon, while on 4 September there was a heated debate in parliament about a government project to place the frontiers into a state of 'emergency readiness' because of the arms smuggling. On 5 October 1957, the government officially accused the Syrians of spreading disruption in Lebanon through the agency of their Intelligence Service.⁷³¹

Certainly in taking up opposition to government policies, the popular Sunni (and other Muslim) organisations and religious bodies did begin to state that their opposition to Chamoun was now rooted in Arab issues which were not exclusively Lebanese and did invoke the figure of Nasser. But it was internal matters that led the opposition to ask, on 8 October 1957, for the trial of the ministers responsible for harsh reprisals taken against anti-government demonstrators in Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli on 30 May 1957.⁷³² It was therefore largely as a result of their own efforts that Chamoun and his Prime Minister Al Solh had succeeded in alienating Sunni opinion even at elite levels, and indeed, with some exceptions, the opinions of the Muslim community as a whole. The rank and file, the popular and religious organisations and all the prominent leaders with the exception of Sami Al Solh, were, by the start of 1958, drawn together by mutual hostility to the regime.⁷³³ This anti-government opposition within Lebanon, particularly the popular Sunni opposition, showed itself prepared by this time also to utilise this external

⁷³⁰ FO 371/1134116, Telegram no. 477, Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, 13 May 1958; FO 371/134127, Telegram no. 956, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 9 July 1958; FO371/134130, Telegram no. 991, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 14 July 1958.

⁷³¹ *Al Hayat*, 3 September 1957; 4 September 1957; 13 September 1957; 19 September 1957; 5 October 1957; 6 October 1957.

⁷³² *Al Hayat*, 8 October 1957.

⁷³³ M.S. Agwani, *The Lebanese Crisis*, pp. 35-41.

intervention and other outside events to increase the impact of its opposition to Chamoun, and to take to the streets themselves in solidarity with such hostility.

Taking a lead in the aggression were the Muslim associations with a significant degree of Sunni support, such as the Najjadah grouping, the Muslim Young Men's Union, *Al Hayat al Wataniyyah* and the *Al Maqassed* College Alumni Association. There was also a popular grouping that had been formed in Basta, one of the most populous Sunni areas of Beirut, that took as its main object putting pressure on Muslim leaders to oppose government policy and to adopt a quasi-Nasserist perspective towards domestic grievances.⁷³⁴ By 1958 these associations felt sufficiently secure of popular support, according to Ismail Moussa Al Yussuf, to declare 'popular revolution' and to 'close' key popular areas such as Basta, Moussaytbe, Tarik Jdide, Mazraha and Nourieh to established authority, marking that closure by building barricades and defending them with armed members of their associations.⁷³⁵

It was a strategy designed to frighten the government into a 'return' to compliance and compromise; a strategy made possible by the willingness of outside forces to see the Lebanese opposition bring down Chamoun, hoping thereby to see the end of a pro-Western orientation in Lebanese foreign policy, and the responsiveness of the Muslim masses to pro-Nasserist rhetoric.⁷³⁶ It ensured that there was, during 1958, an increasing appearance of the opposition having a wider, Arab dimension. At popular levels, the declaration of the United Arab Republic in 1958 was greeted with predictable enthusiasm. It gave the *Al Maqassed* association an occasion to pronounce that the day should be a national holiday. The Union of *'Ulama*, as well as the students of the *Al Maqassed* College and other Muslim schools, sent congratulatory telegrams to the Presidents of Syria and Egypt, as did the Muslim Scouts and the Union of Arab students.⁷³⁷ In the cables themselves and the associated celebrations of the occasion the broader Islamic connotations of this Muslim

⁷³⁴ Ismail Moussa Al Yussuf, *Thawrat Al 'Ahrar Fi Lubnan*, p. 135.

⁷³⁵ *ibid.*

⁷³⁶ Though Lebanese Sunni, and other opposition, politicians gave little indication in their speeches etc. that they wanted to abandon the National Pact to the extent of a complete break with the West, for practical, economic reasons if for nothing else.

⁷³⁷ *Al Siyassa*, 2 February 1958, 4 February 1958; 5 February 1958; 7 February 1958.

jubilant were made plain as the following quote from the *'ulamas'* cable to Nasser indicates:

The Association of *'Ulama* in Lebanon...congratulates the Arabs and Muslims in all the world on the birth of the United Arab Republic... You have fulfilled the great hopes of the Arabs and of the Muslims.⁷³⁸

Kamal Salibi recalls being informed that 'the Muslim Lebanese rejoicing over the union between Syria and Egypt was running wild', and that 'mobs were clamouring for Lebanon to join the union without delay' as they 'roamed the streets of every town and city'.⁷³⁹ But this popular rejoicing at the 'birth' of the UAR was interpreted through a local perspective, in that it seemed likely to strengthen the Sunni position in relation to fighting the presumed Maronite agenda of divesting Lebanon of its Arab identity in favour of a Mediterranean European one.⁷⁴⁰

Nasser's visit to Damascus in February provided another occasion for popular Muslim celebrations in Lebanon with clear anti-government overtones. Popular enthusiasm, demonstrated in the trips to Damascus to view the hero of the hour, certainly alarmed the government.⁷⁴¹ According to Hasanein Haykal, quoting Reuters and Associated Press figures, the estimated numbers going to Damascus amounted to 500,000, a considerable proportion of the Muslim community.⁷⁴² The *Mufti* and the Muslim press, and the Muslim masses, used the occasion to express openly their allegiance to Nasser, giving a clear demonstration of the extent of the degree of popular Muslim alienation from the state. The alienation continued to grow, rather than diminish as 1958 went on, partly due to Chamoun's own policies but partly due to judiciously calculated intervention from Nasser aimed at the Muslim masses. For instance, President Nasser addressed the Lebanese people on 2 March 1958, in a letter that was a shrewd piece of politics. He did not openly express a hope that Lebanon would join the UAR, but he implied that he possessed that hope, by pointing at parallels between Lebanon and Yemen and addressing his Lebanese readers

⁷³⁸ *Al Siyassa*, 4 February 1958.

⁷³⁹ K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', p. 15.

⁷⁴⁰ Muhammad Hasanein Haykal, *Sanawat al Galayan*, p. 319.

⁷⁴¹ *An Nahar*, 4 February 1958; 16 March 1958, for instance.

⁷⁴² Muhammad Hasanein Haykal, *Sanawat al Galayan*, p. 319.

as 'fellow countrymen'. Nasser praised Yemen for being the first country to join the UAR union: 'We welcome Yemen into our union and we feel that this unity which springs from the heart of the Arab National and from its will is the strength we aim at achieving'. He added that it would be the nucleus of the all-embracing unity we hope to see accomplished soon in every Arab country.⁷⁴³

The consciousness of support from the wider Arab world encouraged Sunni leaders into taking up tactics that lessened the immediate potential for compromise with the Chamoun government, but did seem to promise a return to the principles of the National Pact and to a greater Sunni political role within the state. Certainly it won approval from the Sunni masses and thereby also brought all levels of the Sunni community closer to the Shi'a and Druze communities through the invoking of both religious and Arab sentiment. On 11 April 1958 the *Mufti* invited the *'ulama* and opposition personalities for an *Iftar* dinner, but contrary to usual practice, the Prime Minister and other government ministers were excluded from the invitation. The occasion thus turned into an opposition political rally culminating in a vote of defiance against the Chamoun government.⁷⁴⁴ But it was not a vote against the continuance of Lebanese independence. Saeb Salam even claimed that 'We have made a pact with the Patriarch against Chamoun'. This snub to the government took place in the context of an opposition statement that brought Sunni leaders together with those from other Muslim communities. It was decreed that none of the traditional congratulations were to be offered during *Bayram*, the feast at the end of *Ramadan*, in view of Lebanon's suffering at the hands of her present rulers. This was to be followed up on 17 April by a declaration by 200 leading Muslims to the effect of anyone who offered or accepted *Bayram* congratulations would be regarded as having 'violated the unanimity' of the 'Muslim community'. Such moves were applauded by the Sunni masses and popular organisations, as the *Iftar* held by the *Mufti* indicated. It turned into a well-attended popular demonstration against the government.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴³ *Al Siyassa*, 4 February 1958, which provided a laudatory survey of Nasser's speeches and press interviews.

⁷⁴⁴ *An Nahar* 10 April 1958; 11 April 1958.

⁷⁴⁵ *Al Siyassa*, for instance, reporting these developments on 11 April; 12 April; 17 April 1958; 18 April 1958.

The Prime Minister responded defiantly to such demonstrations, making an announcement, for instance, that he would be receiving congratulations on the first day of the *Bayram* feast at his house.⁷⁴⁶ But the extent to which those Muslims who remained loyal to Chamoun, including Sami Al Solh, were isolated is indicated by the events of 20 April. At 4am, Sami Al Solh accompanied by the few Muslim members of the government, attended prayers in the Omari Mosque. It was reported that such was the strength of the religious boycott that the government had considerable difficulty in finding an *Imam* prepared to officiate.⁷⁴⁷ Later on the same day, explosives were thrown nearby Al Solh's house as he was receiving those visitors who did call to give him congratulations.⁷⁴⁸

The rift between the Prime Minister and his supporters and the rest of the Muslim community grew greater after this. Al Solh had offended the *'ulamas* by trying to stop them attending gatherings such as the *Iftar* dinner of 11 April, so the response of the Muslim religious establishment led by the *Mufti* as well as the *'ulamas* was publicly to declare the Prime Minister an apostate.⁷⁴⁹ The immediate impact of the *Ramadan* events was huge and it did not die away. In the longer term it also served to heighten both anti-government feelings and opposition determination to increase the scale of its activities at the same time as Chamoun was seeking to portray such developments as evidence of a Muslim and Arab-inspired conspiracy against the state; to increase support for his re-election plans by portraying the tension as resulting from an intercommunal breach, rather than a simple matter of potentially political opposition.⁷⁵⁰ Thus Chamoun used opportunities such as that offered by the spokesman of the Chamber of Deputies, Adel Osseiran, when making a speech in Cairo. Osseiran declared that it was in Lebanon's interest to join the United Arab Republic, adding 'I will go further than this: the day will come when everything will be achieved'. As An Nahar pointed out in an editorial on 23 April, Osseiran's words could not be taken seriously as representing an opposition agenda. Osseiran was notorious for making the

⁷⁴⁶ L'Orient, 21 April 1958.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ An Nahar, 21 April 1958, provided a graphic report of this incident.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

kind of speech his audience wanted to hear. Back in Lebanon he was to revert to support for Lebanese independence, along with the majority of opposition leaders.⁷⁵¹

Chamoun's efforts to portray the growing tension as a Maronite-Sunni (or Christian-Muslim) affair did have an effect on the Sunni masses as on the Maronite masses.⁷⁵² They identified themselves more strongly with the Nasser-led Arab world and against the West, increasingly now personified by the USA as a result of Nasser's invective against the Eisenhower Doctrine and of more immediate significance, because of the belief that the US government admired and supported Chamoun in his hopes for re-election.⁷⁵³ But even at the beginning of May 1958, the Sunni political opposition remained focused on the issue of Chamoun's re-election despite its general disapproval of Chamoun's overly pro-Western foreign policy. All this latter did was emphasise the importance of removing Chamoun at the end of his mandate or, ideally, before. The opposition stated that Chamoun should go because in seeking to strengthen his own position he was reducing the power of the Sunni Prime Minister and so the influence guaranteed to the Sunni community under the National Pact. They also accused him of manipulating the 1957 elections, making him guilty of corruption. Only then was he accused, in vaguer terms, of following anti-Nasserist policies. Despite differences with other opposition groupings, Muslim and Christian, the Sunni opposition was able to work with them because of the atmosphere of emergency created by Chamoun's personal ambitions and willingness to seek to manipulate tensions in Lebanon to further his ambitions. This enabled the emergence of a temporary coalition of opposition leaders and notables, with popular support, with the major pre-requisite of a successful opposition, unification on a single point - preventing Chamoun's re-election.⁷⁵⁴ With the exception of the Osseiran speech referred

⁷⁵¹ *An Nahar*, 23 April 1958.

⁷⁵² See Chapter Six, p. 273.

⁷⁵³ Saeb Salam, Oral Interview, Geneva, 4 January 1991, talking of a growing anti-Western feeling amongst the Sunni and other Muslim groups in Lebanon. See, also for example, Telegram Nos. 328, 529 Beirut, 4 May 1958, pp. 555-556, *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, Vol I, 1 Jan - 30 June 1958, Telegram nos. 328 & 529, French Embassy, Beirut to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 4 May 1958, pp. 555-6; Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, American Embassy, Beirut to Department of State, Confidential: 'The Crisis in Lebanon', 9 May 1958, pp. 1-3

⁷⁵⁴ FO371/134116, Telegram no. 433, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 5 May 1958. It is interesting here to note the parallels with the downfall of Bishara Al Khoury in 1952. For comments on the temporary nature of this unity see Nasser Kalawoun, 'Role of the Sunni Leadership', pp. 43-4.

to already, no major opposition leader made any public comment or traceable private comment indicating a wish to see the end of the Lebanese entity. Looking back, Saeb Salam, for instance, stressed that throughout the crisis he remained concerned to maintain Lebanon's independence and never supported any policy to dismantle either the free economy or the traditional political system in Lebanon.⁷⁵⁵

However, in the aftermath of the murder of Al Matni on 8 May 1958, the position of the Sunni political leadership (like that of the other Muslim communities) drew closer to that taken by the Muslim masses. A policy meeting of the United National Front on 9 May 1958 decided that open armed revolt was the only way forward against Chamoun.⁷⁵⁶ The resulting unrest included outbreaks of violence in Beirut on 12 May, and an attack by Jumblat's forces on the presidential palace of Bayt Al Din. Government reaction, including comment from Sami Al Solh and the Maronite loyalist press was to argue this violence was not internally generated, but was the result of UAR intervention.⁷⁵⁷ This is not borne out by other evidence. There is unequivocal evidence that elements from all levels of the Sunni community in Lebanon were prepared to take advantage of the willingness of the UAR to become involved in events in the country. It was the availability of this support, in terms of arms and manpower, that enabled the United National Front to launch its armed revolt after 9 May. But it was not the UAR that was responsible for creating the hostility amongst the Sunni element in Lebanon in the first place, and it was an essentially Lebanese decision to escalate the crisis by the use of armed violence.⁷⁵⁸ But it was not a conspiracy that aimed to destroy the state. From the perspective of the Sunni community in Lebanon, the armed nature that 'intervention' or Arab aid had taken from May 1958 was justified by claims that it was a final effort to resolve, not escalate, the crisis; and that Nasser, for instance, was merely showing friendly feeling in an Arab sense by providing the materials for armed revolt. For example, the pro-Sunni, Beirut-based

⁷⁵⁵ Saeb Salam, Oral Interview, Geneva, 4 January 1991.

⁷⁵⁶ Al Hayat, 10 May 1958. See also M S Agwani, The Lebanese Crisis, pp. 57-8 for the full text of the statement by the United National Front.

⁷⁵⁷ Al Hayat, 17 May 1958 contained claims from Al Solh to this effect, for instance.

⁷⁵⁸ Al Amal, 11 May 1958; 12 May 1958; 13 May 1958; Al Hayat 12 May 1958; 14 May 1958. See also the summary of Lebanese opinion in Documents Diplomatiques Francais, Vol. I, 1 Jan-30 June 1958, Telegram nos 579-588, Roche to Pineau, 12 May, 1958.

newspaper An Nas publicised Nasser's plans to propose a solution to the Lebanese crisis with approval.⁷⁵⁹

The external evidence indicates that the actual incorporation of Lebanon into the UAR in May 1958 was not even planned by the Sunni masses in Lebanon, let alone by Nasser himself. It is significant that Nasser restricted himself to attacks on the Chamoun regime, presumably believing (like many in Lebanon) that Chamoun's downfall would provide the real solution to the crisis and restore a foreign policy approach in line with the National Pact, which in turn would be acceptable to Nasser.⁷⁶⁰ One explanation for this is likely to lie in the fact that there is no evidence that Sunni political and religious leaders in Lebanon would have accepted its annexation to the UAR, and the internal structure of the Lebanese Sunni community gave such leaders considerable power over their followers. The United National Front felt able to state on 14 May 1958 that it was 'a purely national and Lebanese [movement], one aiming at preserving Lebanon's structure and independence and the unity of its people' arguing also that the opposition movement would cease its activities when 'the President relinquishes the presidency and his regime vanishes'.⁷⁶¹ The only Sunni leader to indicate serious support for the union with the UAR in the summer of 1958 was Adnan Al Hakim, leader of the Najjadah. On 7 June he called for Chamoun's immediate resignation and for him to be succeeded by a President who would follow a pro-Nasserist foreign policy leading to eventual union. It should be noted, however, that Al Hakim himself laid stress on the fact that his opposition group was not working with any other opposition group, underlining the singularity of his group's position.⁷⁶² Indeed, the group was a minority one, largely confined to Beirut and representing a small extremist body of opinion, and had little effect on the rest of Muslim opinion at the time especially in the light of the secular orientation of Najjadah. Al Hakim himself did not come from any of the traditional Sunni elites and so had comparatively little influence over the wider community.

⁷⁵⁹ An Nas, 29 May 1958.

⁷⁶⁰ Saeb Salam, Oral Interview, Geneva, 14 January 1991. It is worth noting here that it was Syria that had initiated moves to create the UAR and not vice versa. Nasser had been less eager because of what he perceived as the problems of a union that he could only control with difficulty, if only because of the distances involved.

⁷⁶¹ Al Havaṭ, 14 May 1958; reporting a United National Front press conference and press release from Saeb Salam

⁷⁶² Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram no. 4532, McClintock to Dulles, 7 June 1958, reporting an interview with Al Hakim.

A further indication that Lebanese Sunni leaders were using the intervention of the UAR and figures like Nasser to further their own agenda is provided by a claim made in 1991 by Saeb Salam. Salam claimed that the UAR sent 5000 arms to Rachid Karami, but he did not use them to stir up full scale revolt.⁷⁶³ Equally, while Syria did hope for a real destabilisation of Lebanon, and sought to encourage a development of this through the work of their Head of Intelligence, Sarraj, the Sunni leadership did not respond as Sarraj hoped. This was made particularly clear in July 1958, when suggestions were made that Shihab become a presidential candidate. Sarraj sought to convince the Lebanese Sunni leadership that this would be a bad idea. However, he was unable to influence these men into open opposition to Shihab.⁷⁶⁴ Because of their established mythology, the Sunni masses were more enthusiastic about the concept of links with the UAR and were somewhat disappointed at the lack of definite response to it from their leadership. But, as Johnson points out, any revolutionary impulses on the streets was, in May and early June, easily contained by the Sunni elites, whose interest it was to counteract such developments.⁷⁶⁵

On 5 June the Chamoun government rejected the proposed mediation in the crisis by the Arab League. This rejection seemed illogical to the Sunni leadership, though there is evidence that the opposition came to believe that 'Malik's real intention in going to the UN' was to 'lay the ground for US armed intervention in Lebanon'.⁷⁶⁶ But as the various foreign embassies commented, their disappointment was small compared to that felt by the masses.⁷⁶⁷ Their surprise and incomprehension was given an angry edge by the way in which the rejection was made and it was certainly a reaction encouraged by the astonishment and anger of the delegates to the League, who made their feelings on the issue public.⁷⁶⁸ In what was widely seen as a snub Charles

⁷⁶³ Saeb Salam, Oral Interview, Geneva, 14 January 1991.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁵ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 134, Saeb Salam, Oral Interview, Geneva, 14 January 1991.

⁷⁶⁶ FO371/134119, UL1015/147, Telegram No. 4572, Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, 9 June 1958.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*; Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 4912, McClintock to Dulles, 19 June 1958. See also *An Nahar*, 6 June 1958, giving an account of the reactions of Bashir Awar, a known moderate, who resigned his office in protest over this.

⁷⁶⁸ Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 4664, McClintock to Dulles, 12 June 1958, reporting Saeb Salam's statement that no solution would be possible without the consent of the Lebanese people as a whole, and that this could only be gained through the mediation of the Arab League rather than the UN. See also Telegram no. 4912, McClintock to Dulles, 19 June 1958.

Malik, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, did not even bother to attend the meeting of the League to give the gloss of genuine consideration of the proposal by the Chamoun government. Instead he went directly to New York to attend a Security Council meeting to press for UN intervention.

Malik attempted subsequently to justify his actions by claiming that in fact the Lebanese government had from the very beginning turned to the Arab League for help in solving the crisis.⁷⁶⁹ However, he claimed that given the current tension in Lebanon the Council of the League would not meet soon enough to enable it to take any action which would stop UAR interference in Lebanese domestic affairs; hence the request for intervention by the Security Council.⁷⁷⁰ Sunni fury at this development was increased by the fact that the Council of the Arab League met within the ten day limit stipulated by its charter for the setting up of extraordinary sessions, while Malik still insisted that this indicated the Council was not viewing the events in Lebanon with the urgency that the Lebanese government saw as being necessary.⁷⁷¹

The general Sunni perception was that there was no real justification for rejecting the help of the Arab League. Worse, by claiming there was serious external intervention and by calling on the UN to settle the case they felt that the government was lessening the importance of the internal opposition's opinion on the crisis. This, it was feared, could help Chamoun to consolidate his position with the support of the West. The opposition believed that Malik's real intention in going to the UN was to lay the ground for American armed intervention in Lebanon.⁷⁷² The Sunni opposition did not question the assumption that the UN was a Western-dominated body and would thus favour the Western interpretation of events in Lebanon. So the arrival of a UN Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL) was regarded with hostility by the majority of the Lebanese Sunni community.

The United National Front leader, Saeb Salam, issued a six point comment on the United Nation's Lebanon resolution on 12 June, which can be

⁷⁶⁹ FO371/134119, UL1015/147, Telegram no. 598, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 23 May 1958; M S Agwani, *The Lebanese Crisis*, pp 1-22 for the text of Charles Malik's speech of 6 June 1958.

⁷⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷⁷² FO 371/134119, UL1015/147, Telegram no. 4572, Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, 9 June 1958.

taken as summing up the general Sunni opposition perspective at this stage. He stated that he considered the need for international observation and intervention as irrelevant as the Lebanese problem was purely internal, the issue simply being the need to oust Chamoun. The UNOGIL had no role to play in this. He indicated Sunni fears of Western intervention under the cover of the UN by pointedly stating that any prevention of the infiltration of arms into Lebanon would have to include stopping the import of American, British, French, Turkish, Iraqi and Jordanian arms, rather than arms from the UAR.

He claimed that it was the interference of these countries that was aggravating the internal tensions of Lebanon not interest from the UAR. Salam insisted that no solution was possible without the consent of the Lebanese people as a whole and this would best be gained by the mediation of the Arab League, not the UN.⁷⁷³ As Kamal Jumblat states in his book, this encapsulated the general Muslim perception that the crisis was a direct response to foreign influence (Arab intervention not being perceived as such) and to Lebanon's unhealthy dependence on the West as a result of Chamoun's policies. This was a betrayal of the National Pact as it was a return to traditional patterns of intercommunal relations.⁷⁷⁴ Nasser's hostility to the UN was another factor in widespread Sunni resentment over this development. The Sunni opposition was thus unpleasantly astonished by the speed at which the UN implemented the resolution to send observers.⁷⁷⁵

The UNOGIL report of 5 July, however, was met with surprised delight in the Sunni press, which trumpeted that the government's complaints 'have been blown up'.⁷⁷⁶ The report undoubtedly gave a boost to the Sunni opposition, as it seemed to indicate that Western support for Chamoun's re-election, still an issue so far as that opposition was concerned, was not a foregone conclusion. A further boost to Sunni hopes that Lebanon would soon return to the principles of the National Pact in terms of foreign policy was given with the Iraqi coup. The pro-Western Iraqi government of the 1950s had

⁷⁷³ Statement, Saeb Salam, reported in Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram no. 4664, American Embassy, Beirut to Secretary of State, 12 June 1958.

⁷⁷⁴ Kamal Jumblat, *Hagiqat Al Thawrat Al Lubnaniat*, Al Dar Al Takadoumiat, Beirut, 1987, pp. 44-55.

⁷⁷⁵ Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram no. 4696, McClintock to Dulles, 13 June 1958.

⁷⁷⁶ *An Nas*, 5 July 1958.

provided the main rivalry to Nasser's dominance of the Arab world. Through the Baghdad Pact, the Chamoun government had linked itself with the Iraqi-led camp in the Arab world, in preference to the Nasser-led camp. The Iraqi coup thus had important implications for the Chamoun government, as it robbed it of any major Arab allies that shared Chamoun's pro-Western stance. In this context, Saeb Salam could rely on popular Sunni support for the claim that 'the coup was not just a victory for Arab Nationalism' but also for 'Lebanon and the Arab people'.⁷⁷⁷

The Iraqi coup certainly gave a fresh impetus to tension within Lebanon, and to street violence there. As one British observer, Desmond Stewart, commented that violence was increasingly directed at the few Sunni supporters that remained loyal to Chamoun, as well as to Chamoun himself: 'an armoured car.....guarding Sami Al Solh's house was then seized by the people. The President [was] still under fire, Solh's house gutted'.⁷⁷⁸ The subsequent American landings of 16 July 1958 to restore peace in Lebanon were thus far from welcome to either the Sunni masses or the Sunni elites, as press reactions make plain.⁷⁷⁹ This was particularly the case in the light of Chamoun's defence of this development, as well as the approving comments of Pierre Gemayel and his Kata'ib party.⁷⁸⁰ On 16 July, Saeb Salam made clear the hostility of the political opposition, through a statement in Al Hayat, for instance.⁷⁸¹ However, unlike men like Osseiran he stopped short of demands for armed resistance against the 'violation of Lebanese sovereignty'.⁷⁸²

From Saeb Salam's perspective, the landings provided an issue which might bring about Chamoun's immediate downfall. Thus a meeting was held in Salam's house on 16 July to discuss the wording of a formal opposition response to Chamoun's welcome of the landings. Confident of popular support from the Sunni and other Muslim communities the opposition political leaders took up a position where they announced a refusal of any willingness

⁷⁷⁷ Al Hayat, 15 July 1958, reporting Saeb Salam's perspective and similar ones from leading figures like Taki Al Din, Al Solh, Anwar Al Khatib, Nazem Akkar and predictably Adnan Al Hakim. It also reported popular Sunni enthusiasm for the coup.

⁷⁷⁸ Desmond Stewart, Turmoil in Beirut, p. 101.

⁷⁷⁹ See, for example, Al Hayat, 16 July, 1958.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁸¹ Al Hayat, 16 July 1958.

⁷⁸² Al Hayat, 16 July 1958; 17 July 1958; 18 July 1958.

to seek a compromise with the government so long as foreign troops remained in Lebanon.⁷⁸³ As Ali Bazzi, the Secretary General of the United National Front declared, 'the opposition would never give allegiance to any President elected with foreign troops in the country.'⁷⁸⁴ The widespread nature of the popular Muslim opposition to the American landings is further underlined by the involvement of women's organisations in the issuing of public protests. A group headed by Zahia Salman, and including the daughters of the great Sunni leader Riyadh Al Solh, met with figures from the United National Front in a move documented and publicised in the press.⁷⁸⁵ Indeed up to 18 July 1958, popular Sunni and other Muslim delegations making protests headed for Saeb Salam's house, all demanding, in the words of the Grand *Mufti* of Beirut and the senior Druze religious leader, Shaykh Akl 'the immediate withdrawal of troops'.⁷⁸⁶ By 18 July, press censorship was in force in an attempt to quell this hostility to the American landings but even so, word of the protests spread by word of mouth, keeping hostility and tensions at a high level. All of this makes it very clear that the Sunni protests were based on an interpretation of the landing as proof of American backing of Chamoun and American desire for his re-election. There is no evidence that there was any significant opinion that saw it as an action taken to support the principle of guaranteeing the legally constituted authority in Lebanon, let alone perceiving it as part of a wider American policy in the region.⁷⁸⁷

The Murphy mission was to bring a big change in the attitude of the communities in Lebanon, as well as in the attitude of the Lebanese politicians. For a start, as the opposition press at least noted with approval, Murphy put an emphasis on making contact with opposition and actual rebel leaders, such as Al Yafi, and showed a willingness to listen sympathetically to their grievances.⁷⁸⁸ He sought to make explanations of the American landings in their regional context and to emphasise American fears in this context about the survival of a separate Lebanon. Opposition leaders showed themselves

⁷⁸³ *Al Hayat*, 17 July 1958; 19th July 1958.

⁷⁸⁴ Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram no. 496, McClintock to Dulles, 18 July 1958.

⁷⁸⁵ See for example, *Al Hayat*, 17 July 1958.

⁷⁸⁶ Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram no. 4194, McClintock to Dulles, 18 July 1958. It is necessary to turn to these sources because of press censorship in Lebanon.

⁷⁸⁷ *Al Hayat*, 18 July 1958.

⁷⁸⁸ *Al Hayat*, 22 July 1958.

willing to listen to these explanations. This is not as surprising as it might appear initially, given that the Sunni opposition leaders did not have any ambitions to see the end of an independent Lebanon, and so American concerns carried a certain conviction, even if not approval. Also they could, at least, be used as an amount of 'face-saving' in enabling Sunni politicians to back down from the positions they had taken in the aftermath of the American landings, and which, if not modified, threatened to bring Lebanon to a state of total civil war, going beyond the familiar level of violence occurring between May and July 1958.

The result on the Sunni media in Lebanon was soon obvious. For example, the early opposition hostility to Murphy's mission, publicised in the press on 18 July, had claimed that either it was 'impossible' for it to succeed, that it was a 'useless way' in which to seek a compromise, or at best that there was 'great doubt of its success'.⁷⁸⁹ An opposition statement bearing Saeb Salam's name gave Murphy 48 hours to produce a compromise, and warned that then 'we will ask for help from all the free countries in the world if the American troops do not withdraw', in a clear threat to escalate the crisis. But on 22 July, the opposition was willingly collaborating with Murphy in the publicly stated belief that he could create a workable compromise. Al Yafi and Uwayni, for example, began to put forward suggestions as to how this could work. For instance Al Telegraphe, one of the leading opposition papers announced in its headline that 'Crisis is on the Way to Solution'. The Al Jarida told its readers that Murphy, the 'Man of Good Offices' had come to Lebanon to reassure the Lebanese that the American landings had only come about because of Middle East tensions resulting from the Iraqi coup, and that the USA had no intentions of widening the Lebanese split 'by supporting one faction of the population against the other'.⁷⁹⁰

Within the Sunni community, the unity of the past months began to break down as the traditional elites, and the bourgeoisie, began to distance themselves from the more radical popular elements in order to respond to the American attempts at conciliation, instead of demanding a compromise

⁷⁸⁹ See, for example, Al Hayat, 18 July 1958.

⁷⁹⁰ Al Telegraphe, 22 July 1958; Al Jarida, 22 July 1958; Al Hayat, 22 July 1958.

arranged by leaders from the Arab world. In particular the Sunni leadership was reassured by Murphy's assurance that the Americans had no intention of backing Chamoun's plans for re-election.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁹¹ Robert Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1976, pp. 405-6.

Chapter 6

The Maronite Community in 1958

Sunni mythology located Lebanon as a politically independent entity that was an integral part of an Arab, and Muslim, world, and used the rhetoric of Nasserism to express this perspective. But such expressions, in the context of increasing Arab power at the expense of Western influence in the Middle East, were interpreted by the Maronite masses as a rejection of Lebanese sovereignty, rather than an alternative one. It was a negation of the essence of Lebanese 'nationalism' contained in Maronite mythology about the state and about their own role within that state. The Sunni mythology that evolved around the figure of Nasser and placed Lebanon alongside Arab states such as Syria and Egypt was a direct challenge to the established notions of sovereignty and to Maronite interpretations of Lebanon's history.⁷⁹²

An intellectual appeal might be made to a Maronite audience to comprehend the reality that there was no such threat to Lebanon's existence or to the position of the Maronite community as established by the compromise of the National Pact from any of the major Muslim communities. For instance, on 16 March 1958, it was reported in an editorial in L'Orient that Nassib Al Matni, the journalist whose murder is seen as starting the actual 1958 crisis, was claiming that 'Some Christians [i.e.: Maronites] are frightened ...[but] All the Christians desire is to be told that the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon are not being threatened; then the present atmosphere of apprehension and mistrust will disappear completely'.⁷⁹³ However, such a Muslim opinion, despite being presented to a Maronite readership in an attempt to convey reassurance, stood little likelihood of having any positive impact on the Maronite masses. Indeed, appearing in a French language paper, it was not even directly accessible to those large numbers whose educational skills did not include reading French.

⁷⁹² Selim Abou, L'Identité Culturelle. Relations Interethniques et Problèmes d'Acculturation, Edition Anthropos, Paris, 1981, p. 160, highlights the links between concepts of nationalism and 'collective popular myths' evolving around the 'notion of sovereignty.

⁷⁹³ L'Orient, 16 March 1958.

The reality was that the Maronite masses were, by March 1958, reacting to a number of events which individually would have made them uneasy, and cumulatively, created a mood of general alarm. As the content of the more populist Arabic-language pro-Maronite newspapers indicates, these events included the formation of the UAR., the reports of Nasserist-inspired help for malcontents (mainly Sunnis) within Lebanon to demonstrate their grievances with violence, and the anti-government propaganda heard on their radios, coming from Syrian and Egyptian newspapers.⁷⁹⁴ In a direct ratio of response to the Muslim elevation of Nasser to heroic status, Chamoun assumed status as an iconic figure as the embodiment and champion of 'le Libanisme', an ideological doctrine that placed the Maronite community at the heart of Lebanon, its core and its *raison d'être*.⁷⁹⁵ As Chamoun adopted policies that brought him into direct conflict with Nasser, so his heroic stature increased and the popular will to equate him, and his continued hold on office, with the maintenance of Lebanese independence.⁷⁹⁶

In formulating the nature of this mass reaction to events and opinions inside and outside Lebanon, the Maronite-orientated press had a significant role; on the whole radio was less important to this community. Readership figures, so far as they exist, as well as general anecdotal evidence, suggests that the Maronite masses, at least, cared to be well informed about political matters.⁷⁹⁷ It has been shown that a very specific vision of Lebanon existed from a Maronite perspective, one related to myths about an ancient Maronite inheritance and the consequent 'right' this conferred upon Maronites to identify themselves as being at the core of a Lebanese national identity. That vision was not restricted to an intellectual community. The repetition of such myths in the basic education provided for most Maronite children ensured that such

⁷⁹⁴ The extent to which the Lebanese press reflected popular opinion has already been mention In the Introduction, see pp. 42-7; see also Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Vol. XI, Lebanon & Jordan, Department of State Publication 9932, Washington DC, 1992, pp. 196-7.

⁷⁹⁵ For a discussion of 'le Libanisme', see 'Le Libanisme, Une Doctrine', Action, December 1956, pp. 11134-9. It was a doctrine particularly associated with the Kata'ib party, the largest and best organised of the political groups in Lebanon, which took 'le Libanisme' as its central ideology.

⁷⁹⁶ K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', unpublished conference paper, Austen, Texas, 13 September 1992, pp. 14; 15; 17. Salibi indicated how at the time he, and his students at AUB, saw Chamoun as 'the national hero', who had got away with 'defiance of Nasser', and in so doing, 'saved' Lebanon.

⁷⁹⁷ Anis Moussalleh, La Presse Libanaise: Expression du Liban Politique et Confessionnelle et Forum des pays Arabes, Librairie Generale De Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1977 pp. 1-16; Desmond Stewart, Turmoil in Beirut, A Personal Account, Allan Wingate, London, 1958, p. 20. Stewart states 'that in Lebanon even the uneducated followed each [radio] news bulletin with close attention'.

myths had a wide popular currency.⁷⁹⁸ And at the popular level, such myths were not subjected to critical analysis relating to their validity: indeed the academic sustainability of the myths has been an irrelevancy in terms of popular perceptions about the individuality and superiority of Maronite culture and beliefs. At the popular level the myths were established and rarely questioned 'truths' rather than myths.⁷⁹⁹ These 'truths' were central to a popular Maronite consciousness of what made the Maronites so different: thus the 'proof' they provided of a genuine difference between the Maronites and other communities could not be undermined without affecting the popular self-identity of the Maronite masses.⁸⁰⁰ This 'proof' of difference, and of a more ancient existence in Lebanon than any other community, provided the justification for the Maronite 'right' to claim that without the Maronites there was no Lebanon.⁸⁰¹ Thus the continued existence and interests of the Maronites was inextricably bound up with the continued existence and interests of the state of Lebanon; but the same was not true, from a Maronite perspective, of any other community.

Because of this, and because of the existence of a popularly available Maronite historiography stressing Maronite trials during the Ottoman period in particular, the attitude of the Maronite masses in the 1950s tended to be easily alarmed into the defensiveness identified in L'Orient. This defensiveness was most likely to be roused if it seemed as if the Lebanese entity, and their privileged position in that entity, was threatened. If in the past such threats had come from the Ottoman empire; they now came from those within Lebanon itself who sought to link Lebanon too closely with Syria and Egypt. The threats, then, came from quarters identifying themselves not only with the traditional threat from Islam, but also with the newer threat of Arab nationalism.

⁷⁹⁸ Jean Hayek, Al Tarikh al Ilmi, Al Jizq al Awal, Maktabat Habib, Beirut, 1994.

⁷⁹⁹ Hilal Khashan, Inside the Lebanese Confessional Mind, University Press of America, 1992, p. 11. quoting Bulus Naaman, a former head of the Federation of Lebanese Monks who was a leading figure in the 1975-1985 years. Naaman states: 'Lebanon is synonymous with Maronite history and ethos: it is Maronitism antedates the Arab conquest of Syria and Lebanon and Arabism is only a historical accident'. He describes the Maronites as the owners of their history 'because they are attached to their land'.

⁸⁰⁰ See Hilal Khashan, Inside the Lebanese Confessional Mind, p. 11, quoting Ibrahim Najjar a member of the Phalange party political bureau who was explicit in this matter saying: 'in order for the two civilizations to meet, we want the Muslims to concede the superiority of the Christians'.

⁸⁰¹ Amine Gemayel, Peace and Unity, Colin Smythe Ltd, Gerrards Cross, 1984, p. 18. This gives extracts from his speech of 18 October 1982 to the UN General Assembly. Grandly titled 'Give Us Peace and We Shall Again Astound the World', it touched on important themes in Maronite thought, including the ancient heritage of the Maronite community and its identification with Mount Lebanon, essentially indicating the mutual interdependence of these ideas.

Maronite popular feeling, as well as that of its elites, stressed Lebanon's links with the West, rather than with the Arab world. Maronite mass reactions to the evolution of the 1958 crisis, and elements in that crisis such as the question of Chamoun's re-election, need to be understood in terms of how they were popularly perceived to relate to these long-established Maronite concerns about their own, and Lebanon's security and rightful place in the world.

For the masses, it was, consciously, not primarily a matter of pragmatic economic self-interest, but rather, part of the central core of what made Maronites different from the other communities in the state. It assumed a conscious profile only in reaction to the 'attacks' on such truths from the Muslim communities seeking to align Lebanon with the Arab world. In terms of difference, the impact of the West was felt by the Maronites most strongly not in material aspects, which were shared by other communities, but through religion and ideas of what constituted 'civilisation'. Thus the popular significance of traditional Maronite links with European Christianity and the civilisation it produced must not be underestimated. A major part of the 'difference' of the Maronites was bound up with their religious heritage. It was a heritage that not only gave them a distinctiveness in relation to Muslim communities but also in relation to other Christian communities within Lebanon, because the Maronite church was not an Eastern Christian Church, unlike the Greek Orthodox Church, for example. Thus theologically, the Maronite community was not just another Christian community in the Middle East; it was a community in official communion with the Roman Catholic Church setting its religious calendar, for example, in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church.⁸⁰² Nor did the difference stop at the theological; it had implications for popular political and cultural loyalties as well. This is clearly demonstrated by popular Maronite affection for Roman Catholic - inspired French culture, if not always for France itself, during the 1950s.⁸⁰³

French rule during the Mandate period might have been ultimately unpopular; but with independence pro-French feelings could reassert

⁸⁰² This is not a minor point, given that it means that the popularly celebrated Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter are celebrated on different dates by the Orthodox and Catholic communities.

⁸⁰³ Desmond Stewart, *Turmoil in Beirut: A Personal Account*, p. 12. The people in the Maronite areas referred to France as *umm al hannoune* [the nourishing mother].

themselves especially in the context of threats from Arab Nationalism. Maronite education continued to be modelled on French education, and to be conducted predominantly in French. In most good schools in the 1950s French remained commonly spoken amongst the better-educated elements of the Maronite community. Not only that, majority Maronite feeling retained a general pro-Western orientation, with English and American culture having a continuing impact within Lebanon⁸⁰⁴ This is a striking contrast to the pattern in other post-colonial states in the region at this time, where a spirit of anti-Western 'colonialism' was a regular and obvious feeling at all levels of the populations. These pro-Western feelings within Maronite thinking, leading to government opposition to breaking ties with the West and acceptance of the highly-contentious Eisenhower Doctrine, were not confined to elite levels. They were publicised widely in the Maronite press, and there is no evidence that the reasoning used by the government was not welcomed by the Maronite masses. The systems of education in place within the community, and the tone of the popular press all helped to reinforce pro-Western attitudes amongst the community at all levels.

Another consequence of this thinking in terms of relations with the West which also helped to mark out the Maronite community within Lebanon, was the economic element. The continuance of the traditional Western orientation of education in the Maronite community was also of importance here. The presence of Western ideas through missionary institutions had contributed not only to Maronite political development but also to attitudes towards economic development in a more Western capitalist sense.⁸⁰⁵ Both the Christian part of Beirut and Mount Lebanon had more developed economic infrastructures in capitalist terms than the largely non-Christian regions of the north, south and the Bīqā', even though there was in these regions an affluent Muslim upper class. Trading and other links with the Western world produced a self-consciously Western consumer culture within the Maronite community; one that valued Western commodities and cultural products for the demonstration

⁸⁰⁴ For example, one of the leading university institutions in Lebanon has remained The American University of Beirut [AUB], and university sector education has retained strong links with Western institutions.

⁸⁰⁵ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 125.

they made of community orientation.⁸⁰⁶ This does not mean that there was at any time, certainly during the 1940s and 1950s, a simplistic economic division within Lebanon where the poor were Muslim and the rich were Christians or even Maronites. The crisis of 1958 cannot be explained in terms of a 'reality' where the loyalist Maronites were defending the developed areas of Lebanon against rebel Muslims controlling the poor areas. The division is far more complicated. There were social classes and economic divisions amongst all confessional groups, including the Maronites. However, as far as finances allowed, the Maronite masses demonstrated a loyalty to Western consumerism and capitalism at a time when it was being attacked by Arab nationalism for its imperialist connotations. For those whose finances permitted little display, religion was the cultural product they clung to most strongly. Religion provided the most prominent and uniformly held dimension of communal identity amongst such lower strata of the Maronite masses. A factor here was that more limited access to education meant that religious belief and its associated rituals and popular myths maintained a higher importance than amongst relatively better-off, more educated strata where access to a more sophisticated community identity evolved.⁸⁰⁷

The political expression of these ideas of Maronite identity by the masses was traditionally through the Maronite notables, both the traditional land-owning class and the newer commercial and administrative bourgeoisie. This was because it was generally from these elites that the political leaders of the community generally came; and also many of the leading newspapermen and journalists.⁸⁰⁸ However, the exposure of the Maronite community to Western ideas of education and consumer culture had a political impact also. The Maronites showed themselves to be the most politically conscious of the communities in Lebanon, in a sense comprehensible to Western perspectives. In other words, education ensured that the Maronite population had a comprehension of what the West meant by a political party system in a

⁸⁰⁶ The advertisements in the Maronite-orientated media of the period underline this aspect, see, for example, French language publications like *L'Orient*, but also Arabic language ones such as *An Nahar*. For comments on commodity culture see Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England, Advertising and Spectacle 1851-1914*, Verso, London, 1991, pp. 1-3; 10; 128; 140.

⁸⁰⁷ M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, Methuen, London, 1965, Chapter 8.

⁸⁰⁸ There was considerable intermarriage at elite levels between the Maronite landowning and commercial classes, creating kinship alliances at the least.

democratic state.⁸⁰⁹ It cannot be claimed that Maronite political parties were in the same state of development as twentieth century political parties in the West. It could be argued that most Maronite political parties at this time had a greater resemblance to political parties in Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in terms of the importance of land-base and kinship affiliations.⁸¹⁰ However, the Kata'ib party, for instance, had, after its reorganisation in 1949, become a political party in this modern sense rather than just a traditional clan grouping.⁸¹¹ Also, the variety of parties that existed in the Maronite community gave a choice to voters that did not simply rely on clan affiliations. A disgruntled voter could find a party to vote for that did not ally that voter with traditional clan hostilities, for instance, in times of crisis Maronite political parties such as the Kata'ib party demonstrated an ability to mobilise their membership quickly and coherently, because the internal organisation of these political parties were set up, as in the West, to encourage precisely that.

The origins of the Kata'ib party were as an essentially Maronite 'boy scout' movement during the mandate period. But its constituency of support, including students and minor civil service officials as well as schoolboys, apprentices and men drawn from the Maronite petty bourgeoisie, had promoted the development, from 1949, of a sophisticated and effective party political organisation that reflected political developments in the West, familiar to students and officials especially through their education and employment.⁸¹² It was a popular party in that its funding essentially came from membership dues, and its leadership, equally, came from figures promoted through the ranks of members. Consequently, it was a party that saw itself as having a constant political role in the state, holding regular meetings of its membership

⁸⁰⁹ M. Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 99.

⁸¹⁰ Arnold Hottinger, 'Zuama in Historical Perspective', in L. Binder (ed.), *Politics in Lebanon*, John Wiley, New York, 1966, pp. 98-100.

⁸¹¹ It is worth noting that not all members of the Kata'ib party were actually Maronite Christians. Joseph Chader, who was elected to the Chamber in 1951, was a member and indeed its parliamentary spokesman. He was also an Armenian Christian. See K.S. Salibi, *Modern History of Lebanon*, pp. 193-4. Johnson comments 'the Kata'ib party's formal organisation can be attributed to the highly political salariat it drew on'; see Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 99.

⁸¹² John Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation in Lebanon: Al Kataib 1936-1970*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1974, pp. 9; 44; Hazem Saghieh, *Ta'rib Hizb Al Kata'ib Lubnaniat*, Dar al Jadid, 1991, p. 50. See also Joseph Abou Jaoude, *Les Partis Politiques au Liban*, Bibliothèque de l'Université Saint-Esprit, Kaslik, 1985; Boutros Khawand, *Al Quwat al Nizamiat al Kata'ibiat*, Publication of the Kata'ib Party, Habib Eid Publishing, Beirut, 1986.

to discuss policy and promote local participation and interaction between party members and elected Kata'ib politicians. According to Entelis, the party was (and is) 'the major instrument for guaranteeing Lebanese-Christian interest in the state'.⁸¹³

In this sense the Kata'ib party was unlike, for instance, the Bloc National, which must be classified as a 'cadre' party, bringing together at leadership level individuals from the established Maronite elite. The Bloc National also differed in that its main preoccupation was campaigning, and therefore meeting, with its supporters in anticipation of forthcoming elections. At other times, the emphasis was on interaction at leadership levels.⁸¹⁴ The data available for membership of the party indicates that, particularly at times of perceived crisis for the Maronite community and 'Lebanon', the Kata'ib was a party with substantial support from the community's masses. Moreover, the ability of the party to recruit extra members at such times indicates a voluntary level of support, and the extent to which the party had established itself as 'the focal point' through which the ordinary members of the community could express their concerns and seek advice and guidance on their reactions.⁸¹⁵ By contrast, the Bloc National support base at this period was significantly smaller, drawing on more automatic, or involuntary support, from the followers of the essentially *za'im* leadership of the party.⁸¹⁶

It is worth noting here that at the point in 1958 when elements of the Maronite community finally felt impelled to take up arms, they generally did so under the auspices of the Kata'ib party, the only populist alternative being the PPS, but they did not take to the streets as an unorganised mob.⁸¹⁷ Equally, it is significant of the differences between the Maronite community and other confessional groups that with the exception of the Maronite leaders of Zgortha in the north, their traditional leaders (with or without a formal political profile) took no part in the actual fighting. The atypical exception of Zgortha underlines

⁸¹³ John Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation*, p. 10.

⁸¹⁴ It is worth remembering that the Gemayels did not come from the traditional Maronite elite. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10; Amine Gemayel, Oral Interview, Paris, 27 March 1992.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 101; 142-4; Amine Gemayel, Oral Interview, Paris, 27 March 1992; Raymond Eddé, Oral Interview, Paris, 19 July 1994.

⁸¹⁷ The Kata'ib party was the single largest Christian party, and predominantly a Maronite one. Indeed, it was the largest single political party in Lebanon, something the party itself was very conscious of in the 1950s. 'Le Libanisme, Une Doctrine', *Action*, December 1956, pp. 1134-39.

the extent to which most other Maronite political parties, in terms of both leaders and members had moved in their politics to a level of complexity beyond traditional clan reactions.⁸¹⁸ Such comments should not be taken as indicating that the Kata'ib party was the only important political or quasi-political grouping amongst the Maronite community. There was, for instance, the Constitutional Bloc, led in the 1950s by Bishara Al Khoury and Camille Chamoun's Liberal Nationalist party as well as the Bloc National. In addition, other elements or institutions, such as the Maronite Church and individual clergy, had traditionally played a political role in the community. Essentially, it can be said that the Maronite community was politically aware to a considerable degree, and had a range of options open to it for the expression of its political opinions. However, equally, part of that political awareness demonstrated itself in a commitment to a maintenance of the political status quo and its institutions, established under the National Pact. Thus community opinion tended to demonstrate itself through more organised political channels.⁸¹⁹

There were differences in leadership style between the more 'modern' Maronite and the Muslim political groupings.⁸²⁰ The Maronite leaders had, on the whole, become involved in the 'modern', or Western, economic world in their careers, even those that also maintained their traditional family and clan links. Hottinger has identified Maronite political leaders from traditionally powerful backgrounds who also possessed the support of a 'locally circumscribed' community; and who nurtured their followers, or 'clientele', through a traditional kind of patronage system. A leader such as Pierre Eddé, from a traditional background, but with a career in banking, was able to operate in a way that bridged both the old methods of community leadership and more modern ones, through the dispensation of 'patronage' to political followers who

⁸¹⁸ The circumstances in Zgortha consisted of a traditional bloody village feud between the two historically prominent families of the region, the Fangieh and the Duwaihi. The feud spilled over into the wider conflict of 1958, but actually had little to do with the modern face of the Maronite community. See M Johnson *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 125; Arnold Hottinger, 'Zuama in Historical Perspective', in L. Binder (ed), *Politics in Lebanon*, p. 99.

⁸¹⁹ This was stressed strongly in several of the oral interviews conducted, notably Amine Gemayel, Oral Interview, Paris, 27 March 1992; Ghassan Tueni, Oral Interview, Beirut, 30 July 1992; Sofia Saadeh, Oral Interview, Beirut, 2 January 1993. See also General Bustani, 'Memoirs', unpublished typescript.

⁸²⁰ This is not intended to suggest that the other Christian communities in Lebanon, such as the Greek Orthodox, had not developed along similar paths. However, that community is not at issue in this chapter.

also had clan or kinship affiliation to him.⁸²¹ But the Maronite community had leaders - notably Chamoun himself - who were from commercially or professionally successful families and who lacked the traditional landed base; or newcomers like Emile Bustani. Such leaders used the patronage available through their commercial or professional connections to build up a following that enabled them to figure in the Maronite political world. Chamoun's success in 1952 provides a clear indication that it had become possible for a non-traditional Maronite leader to achieve powerful office in a way that indicated support for him from all levels of the Maronite community.⁸²²

Populist Maronite political thinking did derive from the traditional Maronite focus on the interests of the community but, developing out of that, it came increasingly to focus on their interpretation of the political role of the presidency because of the responsibility of the President for foreign policy.⁸²³ For the Maronite masses, foreign policy was, in this period of Middle Eastern Arab nationalism and anti-Westernism, the key to their security; indeed to the very survival of Lebanon as a separate entity.⁸²⁴ The 1958 crisis thus evolved as a demonstration of popular Maronite willingness to co-ordinate support in political terms around the institution of the presidency when its essentially Maronite character seemed threatened, along with existing, pro-Western, foreign policy. Chamoun certainly understood the stress laid by the Maronite community on foreign policy issues. A shrewd politician, he sought to gauge popular Maronite reaction to his rhetoric rather than the reaction of fellow politicians. Thus he sought to appeal directly to the community as a whole, relying on speeches given in public and reported in the Maronite or pro-Western media, hoping thereby to put pressure on less committed Maronite politicians by making them respond directly to concerns among their electoral following in relation to his rhetoric. In by-passing the Maronite political elite in this way, Chamoun apparently had hopes thereby of developing such a

⁸²¹ Arnold Hottinger, 'Zuama in Historical Perspective', in L. Binder (ed.), Politics in Lebanon, p. 99.

⁸²² He even developed something of a power base in a locality, the Shuf; Camille Chamoun, Crise au Moyen Orient, Gallimard, Paris, 1963, pp. 20-30.

⁸²³ Al Hayat, 4 March 1958.

⁸²⁴ See Camille Chamoun, Crise au Moyen Orient, p. 7, recounting the shouting of the Maronite crowd to Chamoun at the end of his mandate, 23 September 1958: 'you saved Lebanon, don't abandon us'. This underlines the continuance of such fears at popular levels in the Maronite community.

powerful base of popular support that the other Maronite politicians would find it expedient, in terms of the opinions of their own followings, to support Chamoun's re-election hopes.⁸²⁵ An examination of his rhetoric, therefore, provides clues to the state of popular feeling, or alarm, amongst the Maronite masses.

Chamoun's political rhetoric, aimed at the Maronite community as a whole, in 1957 and 1958 almost invariably related any internal policy matters, especially potentially unpopular ones, to foreign policy statements, playing thereby on the readiness of the Maronite masses to respond to any implication that Lebanese sovereignty was in jeopardy. In talking of Lebanese finances, for example, in March 1958 in a widely-reported speech given at Bkirki, Chamoun related the economic issues to his reassurances that under his leadership, the Lebanese people would contrive, as they always had done, to resist 'the conquerors and invaders'. In April, at a speech made during a *Ramadan* feast held at the house of Sami Al Solh, he linked internal stability and the Eisenhower Doctrine, with a justification of his policies towards the Arab world.⁸²⁶

But despite the fears that undoubtedly existed about the threat of Nasserism, and the importance of foreign policy issues, the Maronite community was, in political terms, not as easily manipulated as a superficial assessment of its undoubted fears about the threats posed by Nasserism and Arab nationalism might suggest.⁸²⁷ It was an indication of the relative degree of political sophistication among the Maronites, making them less easy to manipulate, that the Maronites were, in 1958, acting as a community despite, rather than because, of President Chamoun and his rhetoric. They responded to that rhetoric because it did echo their genuine fears, but their community

⁸²⁵ Chamoun's reliance on public reporting of his words was highlighted by several oral interviewees. Ghassan Tueni commented on his 'advanced consciousness' of the value of the media for getting the popular ear, for instance. Ghassan Tueni, Oral Interview, Beirut, 30 July 1992. Also Salim Nassar, Oral Interview, London, 20 May 1995; Dr. Albert Moukheiber, Oral Interview, Bayt Meiri, 15 April 1995.

⁸²⁶ *An Nahar*, 11 March 1958; 23 April 1958; *Al Hayat*, 11 March 1958; 23 April 1958, for instance.

⁸²⁷ If Nasserism was commonly agreed to be a threat by the Maronite community, there was a clear division in that community over how best to cope with it to preserve the interests of the Maronites by preserving the independence of Lebanon. See, for example, *Al Hayat*, 29 March 1957, in which this debate was highlighted, with the discussion in terms of reference to public opinion in the Maronites.

identity was long-established and all Chamoun did was to create a situation where communal feeling expressed itself readily.⁸²⁸

Chamoun's attitude towards other Maronite leaders with a substantial following needs to be examined. Did he attempt to make alliances with such leaders in order to widen his base of support within the Maronite community - even to extend that base to other Christian communities? Is there evidence that he sought to come to terms with the agendas of political leaders within these communities, and that, unlike the situation in the Sunni community, such agendas reflected opinion from within the communities rather than merely the self-interest of the leaders? There is no direct evidence to indicate that Chamoun was conscious of the difference between the Maronite and other Christian communities. But his direct appeals to the Maronite community as a whole, and not just leaders or particular groups, through his rhetoric and his policy during the 1957 elections which undermined traditional leaders, all suggests he was aware of a difference. Such a difference was between the operation of 'modern' Maronite political parties and that of traditional community powers, and implicitly, that means he was aware of the importance that gave to the reactions of the masses, in their capacity of voters. As voters rather than loyal followers of traditional leaders, the Maronite masses could be susceptible to appeals that touched on issues of popular concern, regardless of whether or not they were endorsed by their leaders. As the fluctuating membership of the Kata'ib party indicates, Maronite voters in the 1950s clearly were prepared to respond more directly to issues rather than to traditional loyalties when a crisis seemed sufficiently threatening. Arguably Chamoun simply instinctively recognised that what we may term a 'modernisation' of the Maronite community had actually undermined the power base of the traditional community leadership in such ways, and he sought to make use of this for his own ends. As Johnson points out 'Chamoun's political moves against the landlords reflected the dominance of the bourgeoisie at a time when urban businessmen, lawyers and other professionals increasingly represented rural districts in Parliament'.⁸²⁹ But certainly Chamoun seemed to understand how

⁸²⁸ Amlne Gemayel, Oral Interview, Paris, 27 March 1992; John Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation*, p. 175.

⁸²⁹ Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, pp. 125; 123.

to arouse concerns in the Maronite community by rhetoric designed to invoke concerns intrinsically part of Maronite mythology - an interesting contrast to his apparent position at the start of his mandate.

President Chamoun had taken up his mandate as a popular figure - one seen to be, in the spirit of the National Pact, attractive and friendly to Christians and non-Christians alike. Born in Mount Lebanon into a professional, not a political, family, he had trained as a lawyer before entering politics in the 1940s. Despite his lack of elite or political family connections, Chamoun's talents had ensured his rise - a factor which emphasises the evolution of Maronite political perceptions beyond dependence on traditional loyalties. He worked actively, and successfully, to shorten Al Khoury's mandate. But while Chamoun was popular, it would be a mistake to overemphasise the extent of that popularity. In the 1952 elections, Chamoun had stood against a traditional Maronite leader, Hamid Frangieh, but had only defeated Frangieh by a narrow margin. In office any consolidation of his popularity that Chamoun might have hoped to gather as a result of his own personal qualities was ephemeral. As seen in the previous chapter's discussion of the Sunni community's reaction to his policies, Chamoun failed to institute domestic policy programmes that addressed existing problems in Lebanon. The negative impact of his domestic policies was most powerfully felt by the Sunni and other Muslim communities, but it also had an effect on the poorer levels of the Maronite community.⁸³⁰ It would be a mistake to presume that even in the context of heightened consciousness of foreign policy matters in 1957-58, domestic policy had no impact on popular perceptions of a politician. Nor could Chamoun rely on the uncritical support of other Maronite politicians as was pointed out in Chapter Four. He was 'the despair of' the traditional Maronite political leaders. As the British ambassador Middleton observed, instead of building up his connections, Chamoun preferred to rely mainly on 'his talent for intrigue' and his 'personal popularity' a diminishing asset, even among the Maronite community.⁸³¹ By 1958, it was only the

⁸³⁰ Sofia Saadeh made this point, Oral Interview, Beirut, 2 January 1993.

⁸³¹ Salibi, who recalls positive feelings towards Chamoun in this period, identified 1956 as 'the height of his [Chamoun's] popularity', but also identified growing disappointment with him. K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', p. 13.

perceived international crisis that kept Chamoun's popular credit as high as it was.⁸³²

In terms of his popular support, Chamoun was fortunate in that his most outstanding feature, both in the eyes of the Maronite community and the West, was his strongly pro-Western line. Despite his reservations, Middleton commented approvingly on Chamoun's 'strong line' in refusing to break with the West in 1956.⁸³³ Even here, however, there was potentially a certain problem for Chamoun in view of the traditionally pro-French line of the Maronite community. Chamoun was, in fact, anti-French. In November of 1943 he had been arrested by the French, an incident of importance since it had endowed Chamoun with anti-French feelings, putting him out of step with many of those he needed to support him. Chamoun's anti-French stance was made more prominent by his pro-British sympathies.⁸³⁴ Of significance here was the fact that Chamoun's wife, Zelfa Tabet, was of mixed Lebanese and Irish extraction and so she supposedly encouraged Chamoun to develop a more British orientation.⁸³⁵ As ambassador in London (1944-47) he had made a number of connections, especially with the Foreign Office, on which he was to draw later. In addition, he was later remembered for being, during that period in London, strongly opposed to the French presence in the Middle East, which certainly increased his popularity with the Foreign Office.⁸³⁶ However, in being closely identified with the British, Chamoun laid himself open to the charge of being a Foreign Office tool, a factor with some potential to undermine his personal popularity amongst a community that was traditionally more French orientated.⁸³⁷ Certainly when Chamoun did stand for office in

⁸³² FO371/134115, UL1012, Sir George Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, Confidential, Beirut, 12 May 1958, p. 5. This despatch consisted of a discussion of the leading personalities of Lebanon; for further comment on Chamoun's policies and character, see Michael Johnson, *Class and Client in Beirut*, p. 123,

⁸³³ *Ibid.*

⁸³⁴ Salibi recalls a widespread popular knowledge of Chamoun's 'pro-British leanings' and the fact that 'it was generally believed that his British friends had actually helped him come to power, so he could contribute to the promotion of their policies in the area. K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', p. 13.

⁸³⁵ For instance, Chamoun's sons were educated in Britain, which was most unusual for Maronites in this period; Wade Gorla, *Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976*, Ithaca Press, London, 1985, p. 37, quoting Sir Edward Spears on this point.

⁸³⁶ FO371/134115, UL1012, Sir George Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, Confidential, Beirut, 12 May 1958, p. 5; General Bustani, 'Memoirs', unpublished typescript, in my possession, p. 213.

⁸³⁷ General Bustani's memoirs give an indication of the impact of this reporting the popular belief that the British had sought to get Chamoun elected in 1943; this is no supporting evidence but it was widely believed. General Bustani, 'Memoirs', p. 213.

1952, the contest between the two front runners, Chamoun and Frangieh, was, by other elites, considered to be a battle between the interests of the Quai d'Orsay and Downing Street, with the latter coming out on top that time.⁸³⁸

Chamoun's perceived talent for intrigue was certainly recognised, and even to an extent admired, by the Maronite community. General Bustani referred to popular perception of Chamoun as an 'astonishing political manoeurer' listing several things to support his claim. For instance, during the late 1940s Chamoun had actually been seen as being amongst the most pro-Arab of the Christian politicians, something could simply be seen as linked to the British (Foreign Office) position given his pro-British orientation. In the UN in 1946, Chamoun had linked the cause of Lebanese independence with the cause of 'the liberation of the Arab world from all foreign and colonial intervention'.⁸³⁹ During his period of opposition to Al Khoury in 1948-52, he had courted those Arab leaders and governments which might have an impact on a presidential election in Lebanon, notably those based in Cairo, Baghdad, Riyadh and Amman, reinforcing perceptions of him as a pro-Arab Maronite.⁸⁴⁰ However, it must be remembered that Chamoun was shrewd enough to realise that achieving his presidential ambitions required Muslim/Arab support, so he portrayed himself as a supporter of themes popular with these groups. Once elected, he perceived less of a need for cultivating such support. Chamoun thus found it easy to abandon a pro-Arab stance when this suited him better, after the events of 1955-56, because it was not a stance based on personal conviction, merely expediency. General Bustani has commented what was really significant to Chamoun was his pro-British stance and commitment to protection of the Maronite community.⁸⁴¹

As an overall assessment it must be said that Chamoun lacked the necessary political finesse to allow him to use his position as president to deal successfully from his position with the majority of Maronite politicians or their

⁸³⁸ ibid. There is, however, no suggestion that either the Quai d'Orsay or Downing Street tried to affect the outcome of the election.

⁸³⁹ ibid.

⁸⁴⁰ ibid. It could certainly be argued his British connections gave him a better basis for a comprehension of Arab issues than existed among other Maronite leaders.

⁸⁴¹ ibid.

followers. While he alienated many of the traditional landowning and political elites he did not succeed in replacing those he alienated with other political figures who were both loyal to him. Arguably it was for this reason that he sought to appeal over the heads of Maronite politicians, and to speak directly to the Maronite masses in his public rhetoric. He was successful to an extent, being able to replace the traditional leaders in the loyalties of a significant proportion of the Maronite voters, as the elections of 1957 indicate. Yet even so his popularity within Lebanon was already waning by the 1957 elections, and was sustained at popular levels after those elections only by the development of the crisis and Chamoun's ability to identify himself publicly with the cause of Maronite and Lebanese survival.

Because by 1957 Chamoun had developed an ambition to seek a fresh mandate, this provided him with a problem of how to achieve this, electoral manipulation was his only practical option. In the 1947 elections, Al Khoury had been able to draw on his links with the traditional *za'im* class. Lacking such links and having done much to undermine their power, identification of his mandate with Maronite consciousness of Lebanon's future security may well have seemed to him the best guarantee of his position. Events after the elections of 1957 then played into his hands, enabling him to sustain that perception. The new electoral law of 1957 made the role of the electorate in many of the new, smaller constituencies of greater significance. Certainly in terms of the Maronite voters, the changes in constituency boundaries generally should have worked to make their voice more powerfully heard. In many cases it actually did so, but there were also examples which indicate that the voices of the Maronite voters in a particular constituency were not properly heard. Evidence that some of the elections were fraudulent has been discussed in Chapter 4.⁸⁴² The existence of unhappiness in at least part of the Maronite community over the suggestions of electoral dishonesty can be gauged partly by the comments of some populist Maronite leaders in the press. Al Hayat had issued a challenge to the Kata'ib leadership: 'Does your party believe in the legality of the parliament of 66 and in its representative character?' The appeal was made, of course, because of the wide base of popular support amongst

⁸⁴² Chapter 4, pp. 185-193.

ordinary Maronites for the Kata'ib party. Though officially a government supporter, however, the leader of the Kata'ib party, Pierre Gemayel, replied in a letter published in Le Soir:

the parliament which has just been given to us, represents, in my opinion, only ten per cent of the population of the country. At the moment the real parliament is in the street.⁸⁴³

Nor was Gemayel the only Maronite leader who admitted in print that the election had been rigged. Alfred Naccache also went on record in Al Hayat, agreeing that the elections were dishonest.⁸⁴⁴

Two of the main Maronite opponents of Chamoun, both candidates in the general election, Dr. Elias Al Khoury and the potential presidential candidate Fouad Ammoun, had held a press conference on 20 June 1957. In that conference they had openly accused Chamoun of personal interference in the election, and of using the state apparatus to ensure the victory of his own supporters. According to Al Khoury, government employees were going to the villages and trying to persuade voters not to vote for him. Fouad Ammoun also accused the president of direct interference, alleging that in some cases violence was being used in the final hours of the hustings.⁸⁴⁵ While both these men had personal reasons for accusing Chamoun of political corruption, the fact that they not only felt able to voice these accusations, but could do so without condemnation from the Maronite press that published their comments is a useful indication that the readership of newspapers like Al Hayat were prepared to accept this perspective. Yet it did not succeed in creating a serious popular crisis of confidence in Chamoun's leadership amongst the Maronite masses, probably because the flow of rhetoric from Chamoun and his immediate followers was sufficiently successful in creating a sense of a broader, impending national crisis amongst the masses. If it did not entirely stifle criticism, it was sufficiently to make it seem less significant than it might otherwise have done. Consequently, the rhetoric coming from this quarter,

⁸⁴³ Al Hayat, 18 June 1957; Le Soir, 15 July 1957.

⁸⁴⁴ Al Hayat, 28 May 1957; 10 June 1957.

⁸⁴⁵ Al Hayat, 21 June 1957.

with its invocation of established mythology, corroborated by other evidence (including newspapers and the oral commentary of journalists like Ghassan Tuani) provides a useful indication of the popular mood amongst the masses.

The success of Maronite candidates overall in the 1957 elections, including some opponents of Chamoun, would seem to indicate that Chamoun did feel that he could rely on a degree of genuine support from the Maronite voters; those voters, of course, most likely to be concerned about developments in the region and about local Sunni reactions to them. In Maronite strongholds like Mount Lebanon, therefore, the need for electoral fraud was less than in other areas, though even in Mount Lebanon there were some notable Maronites who lost. But if there is an attempt to suggest the existence of a genuine pro-Chamoun factor in Mount Lebanon, the existence of a negative element in this support, in which Chamoun benefited from the absence of any outstanding, charismatic alternative Maronite political figure must be remembered also. Thus during the term of his mandate at least, Chamoun would be supported as there was no other Maronite figure who also endorsed a pro-Western stance but who had a more appealing or convincing internal agenda. This factor was sufficiently acute to be noted by the interested Western powers. American reports, for example, stressed that in terms of the attitude of the Maronite community 'the crux of the problem...is whether or not there is available a suitable replacement for President Chamoun' who would safeguard their interests.⁸⁴⁶ Equally Chamoun benefited in terms of public support from the high profile taken by foreign policy issues in the aftermath of the Suez Crisis and the ongoing negotiations for union between Syria and Egypt. It is a measure of the public concern that during the last part of 1957 and in the first months of 1958, there was a significant increase in the membership of the Kata'ib party.⁸⁴⁷

In a sense, Nasser himself aided Chamoun's standing with the Maronite masses, for the personal hostility expressed by Nasser towards Chamoun

⁸⁴⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960* Vol. XI, p. 6, American Embassy, Beirut to Department of State, Memorandum, 17 January 1958. American concern in this respect, of course, was based on the identification of the pro-Western orientation of the community.

⁸⁴⁷ Amine Gemayel, Oral Interview, Paris, 27 March 1992, in which he drew a clear linkage between popular perceptions of crisis and increased party recruitment. See also John Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation*, p. 142-4.

meant that Chamoun came to personify for them, as no other prominent Maronite figure did, resistance to Nasserism and its expression in Lebanon. Even the more modern elements of the Maronite community feared Nasserism, because of perceptions of its overtones of socialism. Thus the evidence is that the popular attitude of the community towards Chamoun was not based on a spontaneous popular endorsement of him; but rather of what he appeared to represent for the time being in terms of a defence of Maronite interests. By such a token, the community would have been equally prepared to support another president who could guarantee he would maintain the same line of defence. Chamoun thus had to create a scenario where it was popularly believed that he was the only Maronite figure who could be relied on to do this successfully, if he was to achieve a renewal of his mandate.

An indication that this was not entirely straightforward was also provided by the 1957 elections. In constituencies where the contest was between Maronite candidates, the contest was fought on issues that did not relate to Chamoun and Nasserism. Then it was internal issues that were crucial, including the prospect of an amendment to the constitution to permit Chamoun's re-election. The edition of Al Hayat which discussed the question of electoral fraud and the resignation of the ministers entrusted with the conduct of the elections, framed its discussion for public consumption in the context of internal issues, rather than foreign policy ones.⁸⁴⁸ The issue of constitutional reform to permit Chamoun to stand again for office was a sensitive one for all levels of the Maronite community; not just for the deputies and other political leaders. As Pierre Rondot points out, the fact that 'the President of the Republic is not immediately eligible for re-election to this office was initially designed to prevent one community or clan from perpetuating itself' in power to the detriment of the interests of others.⁸⁴⁹

Given that under the terms of the National Pact, the presidency was always going to be held by a Maronite, the idea that the constitution would prevent a particular community from developing a monopoly over the office was redundant. But to the Maronites it was important for the unity of the

⁸⁴⁸ Al Hayat, 18 June 1957.

⁸⁴⁹ Pierre Rondot, 'The Political Institutions of Lebanese Democracy', in L. Binder (ed) Politics in Lebanon, p. 129.

community that no particular family or clan developed a hold over the office. Given that sectarian and clan affiliations are at the heart of the Lebanese political life, it would be potentially deeply divisive for such a monopoly to develop.⁸⁵⁰ Such divisions in the community might threaten the security of the community by promoting intracommunal disputes, leaving the Maronites more vulnerable to attacks by other communities on their superior position.⁸⁵¹ An indication of popular attitudes towards the issue of constitutional amendment can be gained by an examination of the attitude of the Kata'ib party towards this issue in 1957 and 1958. As late as 29 May 1958, the party was opposed to such manoeuvring: Pierre Gemayel stated bluntly that 'We have always been against renewal [of the president's term] and we remain so today as well as in the future'.⁸⁵²

Thus there was a reluctance to see any amendment. In addition, there were also fears that establishing a precedent for amendment of the constitution might lead to Nasserist-inspired attempts to amend it in ways that would undermine the position of the Maronite community. In such a context, the instinctive reaction of the community was to urge maintenance of the status quo for fear of seeing the formula established under the National Pact collapsing. Yet despite this refusal to endorse amendment in May, the Kata'ib party was at the same time insisting that it supported Chamoun's present policies, especially his foreign policy, and their increased recruitment of members provides an indication that this was a popular position with the masses. But examination of the Kata'ib position also indicates that as the crisis developed, the Chamoun question for the Maronites became two questions. There was the question of whether or not Chamoun should finish his mandate and the question of whether or not Chamoun should stand for re-election, associated with a decision on the necessary change in the constitution. These two questions were understood separately at the time. However, even though the question of Chamoun completing his mandate was not articulated until

⁸⁵⁰ This is not to say that such affiliations were not equally important in the political life of other Lebanese communities. On this point of affiliations, see Michael Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernisation in Lebanon*, Random House, New York, 1985, p. 111; Michael Hudson, *Arab Politics*, Yale University Press, 1979, p. 238; John Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation in Lebanon: Al Kata'ib 1936-1970*, Brill, Leiden.

⁸⁵¹ External sources emphasise that opposition to Chamoun was found within the Maronite community. See *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, Vol. 1, 1 Jan - 30 June, Telegram No. 328, 529, Beirut 4 May 1958, pp. 55-6.

⁸⁵² Pierre Gemayel, Article, *Al Amal*, 29 May 1958.

later, it was the dominant issue in Maronite eyes; on which there was near Maronite unanimity.⁸⁵³ Even Maronites in the Third Force, and individuals personally opposed to Chamoun like General Shihab, or the Patriarch, supported the idea that Chamoun should stay in office until the end of his mandate.⁸⁵⁴

The issue at stake here was a broad question of principle that had little to do with Chamoun himself. The issue was that a Maronite president should never be forced to step down before the full completion of his mandate for any reason that could be perceived by the Maronites as being linked to foreign interference. Salibi, for instance, remembered the widespread Christian concern that it was possible that under 'popular pressure' Muslim leaders would be forced to 'surrender the sovereignty of Lebanon to Nasser' if Chamoun was 'to step down before the end of his constitutional term', thereby 'giving the leaders of the Muslim opposition the victory they wanted'.⁸⁵⁵ It is true that in 1952 Bishara Al Khoury had been forced to step down early from his second mandate. However, there had been no foreign policy dimension with a popularly perceived threat to the very existence of Lebanon in 1952: a purely internal issue of government corruption had brought about his fall and it was a fall engineered as much by Maronite, as by Muslim, opponents. In 1957-58, the Maronite perception tended to be that the only groups wishing to force Chamoun into early resignation were forces they saw as Arab nationalist at best, and pro-Nasserist at worst.⁸⁵⁶

The private correspondence of Moussa Moubarak, the Lebanese Ambassador to Paris in 1958, contains a letter to Pierre Bart, the French ambassador, giving an analysis of the situation and popular reaction to it, in which this point is highlighted. Moubarak emphasises the foreign dimension of

⁸⁵³ Salibi comments on the widespread popular perception of this point: 'his partisans as well as his opponents were convinced that he intended to seek a second term of office', but while that prospect was not widely welcomed, 'who could tell what would happen to Lebanon if Chamoun did step down'. K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', pp. 15-16.

⁸⁵⁴ See *Al Hayat*, 23 July 1958; 18 August 1958; *Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-60* Vol. X1, p. 38, 11 May 1958, American Embassy, Beirut to Department of State, recording that Shihab 'vigorously reaffirmed his support for the President for legal time in office'; and 2 June 1958, American Embassy, Beirut to Department of State, that 'the Patriarch stated his support for Chamoun so long as he did not run for a second term'.

⁸⁵⁵ K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', p. 16.

⁸⁵⁶ Nicola Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, Ernest Benn, London, 1957, p. 125.

the question in 1958 in the popular perception, and the consequent popular importance to the Maronite community of this particular issue:

The loyalists consider that it is important to support the state authority against the pressures of the people on the street [Muslim demonstrators presumed to be inspired by Nasserism] in order to ensure that M. Chamoun finishes his term of office. Even the Christian elements of the Third Force share his [Chamoun's] opinion on the deadline for the presidential term of office, in other words, until 24 September.⁸⁵⁷

This issue of completion of a presidential mandate in defiance of what was popularly interpreted as foreign, not indigenous, pressure was thus inevitably linked in the Maronite mind to the equally broad issue of Lebanese independence from any foreign pressure, especially if that pressure was pan-Arab in nature. It was thus rooted in traditional Maronite thinking, but in the context of 1958 was exacerbated by the perceived danger of Nasserism imposing its will on Lebanese politics.

The strike of 9 May 1958 that took place in Sunni strongholds such as Beirut and Tripoli, in reaction to the assassination of journalist Nassib Matni, led to opposition demands for Chamoun's resignation. But the Maronite mainstream interpreted this incident as having far-reaching connotations that linked the calls for resignation to foreign intervention, as the reports in Al Hayat reveal. Further credibility to such claims was given by government reaction at the time. The prime minister, Sami Al Solh, for instance, accused the United Arab Republic of sending arms to Lebanon to fuel rebellion on the streets; with such accusations again featuring heavily in the press.⁸⁵⁸ Thus the issue of completion of the presidential mandate developed into one that was, in popular terms seen as being an issue where, regardless of his merits or lack of them, a Lebanese and Maronite president was being faced with pressure to step down, a pressure that came from Nasser forces. The Maronite community developed a position where they were prepared to resist that pressure vigorously, as a matter of principle entirely separate from any question of re-

⁸⁵⁷ Moussa Moubarak to Pierre Bart, April 1958, Moussa Moubarak Papers, copies in my possession. Further dating of even the original is impossible as the date on the letter is blurred.

⁸⁵⁸ Al Hayat, 10 May 1958; 17 May 1958.

election and constitutional amendment to permit a renewal of Chamoun's mandate. Popular Maronite alarm reached further heights when demands began to be made for a new census. As a British Foreign Office despatch pointed out, such a demand was seen by Maronites to threaten the National Pact because it might well upset 'the foundation of the existing system of carefully calculated balances between the various sects and sections of the population'.⁸⁵⁹ For the Maronites it was up to them to decide the fate of their president because under the terms of the National Pact, he was first and foremost the representative of their community in the state, and a threat to his position from outside the Maronite community seemed a threat to Maronite interests.

One prominent Maronite political figure did react positively to the question of Chamoun's early removal and sought to win support for this. That was Bishara Al Khoury whose motives in this respect are open to question in view of Chamoun's role in his own early removal from office in 1952. Equally under such circumstances he is unlikely to have seen the possibility of Chamoun's fall as a potential constitutional crisis! Al Khoury made his public position plain on 20 May 1958, in a statement on Damascus radio, in itself a provocative act and one which underlines the extent to which he was out of step with general Maronite opinion. A report to the British Foreign Office recorded his statement as follows:

The only solution to the Lebanese crisis is the resignation of the President. He [Al Khoury] said that the allegation that the removal of the President will open Lebanon to President Nasser was false. He concluded his statement by saying: 'To sum up the situation: I must say that had a word been said by the Lebanese President a month ago, the country would have been saved the present tragic situation. But unfortunately he did not say such a word.'⁸⁶⁰

But the general reaction of the Maronite community to this broadcast was hostile, indicating the continuing high profile of popular fears in the community

⁸⁵⁹ FO371/13422 UL1015/238, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 11 June 1958, p. 4.

⁸⁶⁰ FO371/134118 UL1015/129, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 20 May 1958, citing as source BBC monitoring reports.

about the threat to Lebanese integrity posed by Nasserism, which meant that an attack on Chamoun's right to complete his Mandate was an attack on them as well.

Chamoun's re-election was another matter; and for most it was one which was not automatically linked to the first question. Experience now showed that such a scenario created a tension in the Maronite community.⁸⁶¹ As the Patriarch made plain in his published comments on the issue of a constitutional amendment in March 1958, the only acceptable grounds would necessarily concentrate less on any broad issue of principle, since no precedent would be set in this respect, than on the merits of Chamoun's candidacy itself. The Patriarch saw no reason in March 1958 to advise the Maronite community that there was no realistic alternative to Chamoun.⁸⁶²

Yet for the Maronite masses, the evidence is that whole-hearted support for Chamoun was increasingly becoming linked with the question of their political survival. Support for Chamoun's re-election could be seen as support for the kind of Lebanon the Maronite masses wanted, linked with a refusal to submit to Nasserist dictates. This development can really be attributed to the period after the formation of the UAR on 2 February 1958, and in particular after the visit of Nasser to Damascus. The demonstration to the Maronite community of just how powerful was Nasser's effect on the Muslim community in Lebanon, linked with Nasser's own rhetoric meant that, as French sources put it: 'Chamoun came to embody for the Christians of Lebanon the symbol of resistance to Nasser'.⁸⁶³ As one journalist on the moderate wing of the opposition, Georges Naccache, commented rather acidly on the Maronite reaction at the time of negotiations leading up to the creation of the UAR, and before the hysteria surrounding Nasser's visit: 'Un nouveau credo est propose

⁸⁶¹ See Chapter Four, pp. 151-2.

⁸⁶² An Nahar, 11 March 1958. Alternative Maronite presidential candidates being considered by Maronite political leaders between March and July 1958 included Alfred Naccache, Jawad Boulos, Hitti, and even Bishara Al Khoury. There was no clear candidate as late as July 1958. See Al Hayat, 25 July 1958; 26 July 1958 when all these names were still being publicly put forward as potential presidential candidates.

⁸⁶³ Documents Diplomatiques Français 1958, Vol. I, 1 Jan-30 June, Nos. 530-537, M. Roche, French Ambassador to Beirut, to M. Pineau, Foreign Minister, p. 556.

depuis huit mois aux Libanais; si vous n'êtes pas Chamounien, c'est que vous êtes un traître et un syro-bolchevik'.⁸⁶⁴

Chamoun was certainly working behind the scenes to create an atmosphere where there would be a public demand for a renewal of his mandate, an atmosphere of crisis. It was for this reason that Chamoun had decided that his most effective course was going to be not to show his hand and make a public stand on the issue of seeking a constitutional amendment and a fresh mandate for as long as possible. Of course it must also be remembered that it was in the Lebanese tradition that a politician did not announce his own personal ambitions, but gave the impression that standing for election or for office was the result of pressure put on him by friends and supporters. Thus for Chamoun to rely on hints rather than outright statement of his intentions was not unusual in itself. For instance, there was the comment he made in L'Orient in December 1957:

I have my reasons. I will let my opinions be known in due time. It will be in May, June or July I fully understand the worries that the amendment of the constitution can give you. I am myself against the amendment in principle. But there is a point I don't want to leave ambiguous. If at the due moment I am not sure of finding a successor who will ensure the continuity of my policies, I am declaring already that it means that I will reconsider my position.⁸⁶⁵

While this is a fairly clear hint that re-election was on his agenda, Chamoun was still being deliberately ambiguous. It was not a clear statement of his position or policy but it left the way open for others to 'pressure' him to stand again. He continued to leave his position publicly ambiguous. British Foreign Office sources of 13 April reveal that Chamoun had told Tufic Suwaida, the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, that he, Chamoun, had decided to stand again

⁸⁶⁴ George Naccache, 'A l'heure de Mme Afaf', L'Orient, 17 January 1958.

⁸⁶⁵ L'Orient, 31 December 1957.

for the presidency - important in signalling his intentions to the West, given Iraq's pro-Western stance at the time but no public statement was made.⁸⁶⁶

The problem was that while such a game was part of the political tradition of Lebanon, it was not usually played against such a tense background. The practical effect of all this was not so much to increase Chamoun's own chances of success, as he intended, but to increase the tensions within Lebanon itself. Also the uncertainty amongst the Maronite community was heightened because while there were many Maronite political figures with ambitions to become president, there was no single obvious candidate as Moussa Moubarak commented.⁸⁶⁷ This added a dimension of popular insecurity about prospects for the future at a time of tension which worked to Chamoun's advantage. It can be said that by April 1958, a significant element in (even a majority of) the Maronite masses had come to favour Chamoun's re-election primarily because of fears associated with the high profile of Nasser at this time. Chamoun, as Ghassan Tuani commented, had become a symbol of resistance to Nasserism.⁸⁶⁸ A top secret letter from *Amir* Farid Shihab, head of the Lebanese police to Sir Peter Coghill sums up popular sentiments.⁸⁶⁹ Farid Shihab remarked that Camille Chamoun was popularly considered by the masses 'a god' for his foreign policy and his patriotic sentiments; claiming also that Chamoun was the reason why the opposition was being helped in its activities by Egypt, Syria and Russia. He added:

We [presumably the Maronite community or that element of it with which Shihab identified himself] are going to help him because of his sound external policy and because Lebanon cannot run the risk of having either a weak President or a man won to the enemy, and especially because the other candidates are either

⁸⁶⁶ FO371/134116, British Embassy, Baghdad to Foreign Office, 13 April 1958. As late as May 1958, Chamoun was still thinking of seeking re-election; see Documents Diplomatiques, Vol. I, 1 Jan - 30 June, Telegram 328, 529 Beirut, 4 May 1958, pp. 555-6.

⁸⁶⁷ Moussa Moubarak to Pierre Bart, 28 April 1958, Moussa Moubarak Papers.

⁸⁶⁸ An Nahar, 2 April, 1958. The Tuani editorial argued that Chamoun, Malik and the USA were symbols on one side; and Nasser on another. It is a measure of Chamoun's success in establishing himself as a popular icon symbolising resistance to Muslim/Arab designs on Lebanon that he remained a popular figure even after he left office, as a survey carried out in Beirut in 1972 indicated. David Smock & Audrey Smock, The Politics of Pluralism, New York, 1975, p. 136.

⁸⁶⁹ As Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Peter Coghill, he had been head of the British Security mission in Lebanon 1941-45 and maintained contacts there with people like *Amir* Farid Shihab.

dangerous like Bishara Al Khoury or very weak like all the other candidates. There is a big gulf between him and all those men. He is far better than any one of them.⁸⁷⁰

In the context of the rise of Nasserism in the spring of 1958, the Maronite masses were afraid of the outcome if a president acceptable to the opposition were elected, something which had considerable implications for the survival of the National Pact. It was in this context that in February 1958, the Kata'ib party came out in open support of Chamoun's foreign policy after a meeting with him at the presidential palace.⁸⁷¹ Salibi also recalls 'the Christian whispers' that Shihab, the obvious candidate who did enjoy some opposition support, 'actually wanted Chamoun brought down, so he could get the presidency for himself with Muslim support'; and the rumours that 'the man was reverting to type...Had not his ancestors at one time been Muslims'.⁸⁷² And once again, a co-habitational pattern of behaviour expressed itself as public opinion in the Maronite strongholds; meaning that this public opinion was becoming well disposed towards the idea of an actual Western intervention if there was a perceived intervention by Nasserist forces in Lebanon. In Chamoun, it seemed, they had a president who could guarantee opposition to Nasserism; continue Western support at a time of increasing crisis; and even bring in Western intervention as in the past if that became necessary.⁸⁷³ With Chamoun seeking to escalate rather than to defuse the crisis, relying on increasing popular Maronite support and the promise of support from Britain and the USA it is not surprising that by the spring of 1958 it had become a major issue.⁸⁷⁴ In the aftermath of Chamoun's speech of 20 April when he made a spirited defence of his policies and attacked those of others, Moussa

⁸⁷⁰ Amir Farid Shihab was not related to General Shihab. In his letter, Amir Farid Shihab stated that he feared that if his writing to the British became known he would probably be killed. See FO371/13116, containing extracts from a letter of 26 February 1958, from Emir Farid Shihab to Sir Peter Coghill, p. 102.

⁸⁷¹ This endorsement was reported in Al-Hayat, 12 February 1958. According to Mrs. Geneviève Gemayel, the reason for the meeting was that Chamoun was seeking to assess official Kata'ib reaction to the prospect of his re-election, but conclusions were limited to endorsement of his foreign policy and a completion of his mandate. Mrs. Geneviève Gemayel, Oral Interview, Beirut, 1 March 1996.

⁸⁷² K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', p. 16. Mrs. Geneviève Gemayel also endorsed the existence of such popular concerns amongst the Kata'ib membership, Oral Interview, Beirut, 1 March 1996. See also Al Amal, 17 June 1958, discussing such concerns.

⁸⁷³ K.S. Salibi, Ibid, pp. 16-17 for his comments on the growing popular acceptance amongst Christians that Western intervention was both desirable, 'A solicited political intervention by the United Nations having proved useless', and, with Chamoun invoking, very properly, the Eisenhower Doctrine 'to which he had earlier subscribed', likely. See also Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960, Vol. XI, p. 149, reporting that Chamoun had been given assurances of intervention on 13 May 1958. It seems probable that such assurances had been 'leaked' to Chamoun's supporters at least.

⁸⁷⁴ FO371/134122 UL1015, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 11 June 1958, p. 3.

Moubarak claimed that re-election 'dominates the political scene and agitates public opinion. The opposition has taken direct action and the loyalists are continuing their propaganda campaign'.⁸⁷⁵

Yet despite a pro-Chamoun stance among the Maronite masses, Maronite political leaders remained far from united in their willingness to endorse Chamoun's ambitions to run for office again. To this must also be added the complications provided by the attitude of the Maronite Patriarch and the Maronite Chief of the Army, both of whom held important roles within the Maronite community. This was especially true of the former, given the significant defining role of the Maronite Church in Maronite communal identity. The Patriarch at this point was Boulos Meouchi, a relative of Chamoun's enemy, Bishara Al Khoury and one of Al Khoury's strongest supporters. Not surprisingly, he was a personal opponent of Chamoun's.⁸⁷⁶

Arguably, Meouchi genuinely identified himself with the elements within the Maronite community that saw the only permanent safeguard for an independent Lebanon lying with explicit consensus with the Muslim elements there. The Patriarch believed also that it was in Lebanon's best interests to maintain good relations with the Arab world. On 13 February 1958, for instance, Meouchi stated that 'the Maronite community was Arab before the advent of Islam, and will always remain faithful to Arab Nationalism'.⁸⁷⁷ Not only was the Maronite Church still a powerful force in Maronite popular thinking, but also Meouchi had a very powerful personality. Thus he sought to use his authority to assure his flock that he did not see the integrity of the Maronite Church as being threatened by closer links with the Arab and Islamic world. In a sense, he was he was trying to step outside his role as a 'Christian religious chief' to intervene in politics to promote closer links with Muslim/Arab leaders.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁵ Moussa Moubarak to ?Pierre Bart [addressee not clear], 28 April 1958, Moussa Moubarak Papers. See also Al Hayat, 6 April 1958 which reported Chamoun won a vote of confidence in the Chamber with the support of all Maronite deputies.

⁸⁷⁶ FO371/134115, Sir George Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, 2 May 1958, on Leading Personalities in the Lebanon, p. 16, describing Meouchi as a 'vindictive and intriguing leader'.

⁸⁷⁷ Boulos Meouchi, L'Orient, 13 February 1958.

⁸⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

Meouchi's intervention in the spring of 1958 must therefore be examined in some detail and its impact on Maronite thinking assessed. On 30 May, for example, Meouchi gave a press conference at his residence, Bkirki. When he was asked if he believed that the opposition leaders were acting in good faith he replied: 'Without the slightest doubt they are intelligent men who know well that to sacrifice the Lebanon would be against their own interests. Their aim is simply to rid the Lebanon of the ruffians who govern it'. To a further sensitive question, asking if he approved of the complaint by the Lebanese government against the United Arab Republic that had been filed with the Security Council at the UN, he said:

We had better not wash our dirty linen in public. The crisis is internal and no other country is involved. We do not want the Lebanon to be a slave to anyone. It should co-operate with all countries, especially its neighbours and brethren.⁸⁷⁹

The Patriarch thus made the point that in his view the opposition contained worthy men who aimed to serve their country by ridding it of a bad government, and working towards good relations with her neighbours, but who had no intention of supporting a union with the United Arab Republic.

This leaves open the question of how the Patriarch developed his ideas since they were demonstrably out of step with majority opinion in the Maronite community. In his memoirs Bustani has suggested that the Patriarch's policy may even have been inspired by the Holy See in Rome. Bustani's view is that the Vatican was aware of the danger of an isolationist policy for the Christian communities in Lebanon and so suggested Meouchi's conciliatory line. His reasoning here was based on the fact that the Patriarch was appointed by Rome and that at that time, arguably, the Patriarchy was particularly dependent on Rome.⁸⁸⁰ Some support for this view is contained in a telegram to the Foreign Office in April 1958 which contained the views of Tufic Suwaida on the subject. Suwaida also expressed concern at the Maronite Patriarch's attitude, and suggested that Meouchi was possibly receiving misguided

⁸⁷⁹ FO131/134120 UL1015, Telegram no. 642, Sir George Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, 31 May 1958.

⁸⁸⁰ General Bustani, 'Memoirs', p. 216.

support from the Vatican. Alternatively, he reasoned, the Vatican was being culpably weak in its handling of the Patriarch.⁸⁸¹

The reality seems to have been rather more complicated than suggested by Bustani or Suwaida. It must be remembered that while the Maronite Patriarch is appointed by Rome, equally the Patriarch had (and has) a special relationship with the Vatican.⁸⁸² It seems that the Patriarch at this point was in conflict with the Vatican rather than being controlled by it, that the Vatican put more stress on maintaining good relations with its congregations than in the benefits of international diplomacy. Certainly reports spoke of a cold war between the papal Nuncio and the Patriarch, with the Nuncio reporting back to Rome on what he termed the 'unsatisfactory' nature of the Patriarch's behaviour, by which he seemed to mean his anti-Western and his pro-Nasserist stance. This meant that the Vatican was aware that the Patriarch was playing a 'dangerous' role in Lebanese politics, but its power to do anything effective was limited.⁸⁸³ The British Embassy in Beirut commented in January 1958 that the Patriarch 'has been an absolute headache to the Vatican for many months'.⁸⁸⁴ This all seems to make it plain that the Vatican cannot be held responsible for Meouchi's stand and turns the focus back onto the Lebanon itself, and the interplay of personalities there, and the impact of this on popular reactions.⁸⁸⁵

It is the reaction of the Maronite masses to the Patriarch's stand on Nasserism and Arab nationalism that is important. It was hostile and full of non-comprehension. In November 1957, Al Hayat, in an editorial, commented that the Patriarch was complaining of 'rebellion against him' amongst his own clergy, including the clash between him and the Archbishop of Byblos, Yussuf Akl, because of 'his political stance' in relation to Nasser.⁸⁸⁶ This hostility grew

⁸⁸¹ FO371/134116, British Embassy, Baghdad to Foreign Office, 13 April 1958.

⁸⁸² See Chapter 1, p. 64.

⁸⁸³ FO371/134184, Sir William Hayter, Deputy Under-Secretary, to Levant Department, 17 April 1958, containing information gleaned from the Italian Embassy, Beirut.

⁸⁸⁴ FO371/134184, British Embassy, Beirut to Sir William Hayter, Deputy Under-Secretary, 13 January 1958, p. 1; see also Pierre Bart to Moussa Moubarak, 7 June 1958, Moussa Moubarak Papers, for his comments on the Patriarch's policies.

⁸⁸⁵ FO371/134184 British Embassy, Beirut to Sir William Hayter, Deputy Under-Secretary, 13 January 1958, p. 1, commenting that 'The president was as obstinate and pig-headed as the Patriarch!'

⁸⁸⁶ Al Hayat, 29 November 1957.

after February 1958, when Meouchi sent personal representatives to Nasser to congratulate him on the birth of the United Arab Republic and his election as its President. An editorial by Adli Al Hajj, in An Nahar in March 1958, attacked the Patriarch and accused him of failing to follow the edicts of the Gospel in seeking to conciliate the Arab world. As a result of that episode the Patriarch became known to the Maronite community as 'Muhammad Al Meouchi' and he became the target of open Maronite resentment.⁸⁸⁷ It indicates at this period just how far the Maronite masses were from any willingness to seek consensus in line with the National Pact, with the Lebanese Muslim communities. The Patriarch was the head of the Church, but even he could not command their obedience to an approach that seemed so against everything the Maronites thought they stood for! The core of the Maronite accusations made against him were precisely that he was pro-Muslim. Indeed, in what was seen by Qubain as a response to the Patriarch's delegation to Nasser a Maronite priest, Father Antoine Qurtbawi, wrote an article that appeared in a Maronite periodical that, again according to Qubain, had close connections with Chamoun. In the article Father Antoine reminded the world that 'Lebanon is not Arab, but is the Lebanon - a Mediterranean country whose language is Arabic'.⁸⁸⁸

But Nasser's speech of 2 March in Damascus, interpreted by the Maronite press as indicating a desire for the incorporation of Lebanon into the UAR., triggered considerable fear among the Maronite readership.⁸⁸⁹ Pierre Gemayel's open letter of 2 March to the Maronite Patriarch asking for the Patriarch's explanation of Nasser's speech and how the Patriarch could justify his claim that there was no threat to the integrity of the Maronite community or Church from the wider Arab world, sums up the basis of the fear. In his letter Gemayel stressed the intense propaganda to which Lebanon had been subjected in view to lead the Lebanese to ask for unions. Gemayel asked the Patriarch:

⁸⁸⁷ Oral interviewees recall use of this term, for instance, Mrs. Geneviève Gemayel, Oral Interview, Beirut, 1 March 1996; Amine Gemayel, Oral Interview, Paris, 27 March 1992; Sofia Saadeh, Oral Interview, Beirut, 2 January 1993. It also appears in print, see An Nahar, 12 March 1958.

⁸⁸⁸ F. Qubain, Crisis In Lebanon, p. 63.

⁸⁸⁹ Al Amal, 3 March 1958; An Nahar, 3 March 1958. See also Chapter 5, pp. 225-6; An invitation to join the UAR was never actually explicitly given, and the likelihood is that Nasser never intended to do so, but simply to stir up anti-Chamoun feeling.

'to put an end to the equivocation (caused by his pro-opposition position) from which only the enemies of Lebanon stood to gain'.⁸⁹⁰

Patriarch Meouchi's answer sought to alleviate these fears, but also to maintain good relations with the Sunni community leaders. He replied to Gemayel on 4 March 1958, but insisted that his words were intended 'for Sunni as well as Maronite consideration'; he wrote:

'To our Arab brethren, wherever they may be, we say that whatever is for the good of Lebanon is also for the good of the Arabs'.⁸⁹¹

He went on to claim that 'The independence of Lebanon has to be preserved and strengthened, with a feeling of profound love we say

"Let us not reconcile ourselves to any unity or union which accepts anything that may weaken the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon".⁸⁹²

In a statement of 9 March 1958 the Patriarch sought to be reassuring to the Maronite community, writing:

'My dear sons, I have a letter from President Gamal Abd Al Nasser, the President of the United Arab emirates and an old friend of Lebanon saying that Lebanon as it stands at present is a structure with complete sovereignty and independence and these will not be threatened'.⁸⁹³

The Patriarch's efforts had the opposite effect to that intended by him; as indicated by the popular reaction against the Patriarch from within the Maronite community. For instance, hostility towards the Patriarch was indicated by the popular credibility given to Saeb Salam's widely-reported claim on 10 April 1958 that the Muslim opposition had 'made a pact with the Patriarch against Chamoun'.⁸⁹⁴ The consequent popular resentment even had the effect of increasing popular support for Chamoun. On 11 March 1958, two days after

⁸⁹⁰ *Al Amal*, 3 March 1958.

⁸⁹¹ *Oriente Moderno*, March 1958 (translated from the Italian from a copy in AUB Library); *Al Amal*, 5 March 1958; 6 March 1958. See also M.S. Agwani, *The Lebanese Crisis 1958: A Documentary Study*, Asia House, New York, 1965, p. 46.

⁸⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 46-67.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8, quoting summary of world broadcast, part IV 2-3, 12 March 1958.

⁸⁹⁴ Saeb Salam, Speech, 10 March 1958, reported in *An Nahar*, 11 April 1958; *Al Amal*, 11 March 1958; *Al Hayat*, 11 March 1958.

Meouchi had attacked Chamoun and his regime because of the regime's corruption, and the day after Saeb Salam's attack on the Patriarch, Chamoun attended mass at Antelias. Antelias was the seat of the Armenian Patriarchate, and Chamoun had come to congratulate the new Armenian Patriarch on his election. But, according to An Nahar on 12 March, Chamoun arrived at Antelias and was 'welcomed by huge crowds' coming from all over Mount Lebanon; in other words, Maronites had turned out to attend a ceremony at a rival religious centre, to demonstrate opposition to their own Patriarch and support for Chamoun. An Nahar used its editorial columns to refer to the extent of public support for Chamoun, and corresponding hostility to Meouchi, while making a plea to the Patriarch to change his stance in this respect.⁸⁹⁵

Within the Church itself, the effect of all this was to distance the Patriarch from the rest of the Maronite Church, rather than to persuade the Church to follow Meouchi's line and seek to use the pulpit to persuade congregations to endorse his views. His clergy began preaching sermons that were implicitly hostile to him, as indicated by press reports on the Patriarch's press conference in May 1958. He was asked 'Is it true that the bishops have broken with Bkirki [i.e. with the Patriarch]?' Meouchi's answer was 'A few', but he attempted to defuse this by claiming that 'they are in the pay of the Government'.⁸⁹⁶ True or not it does indicate that there was at least some pressure from Maronite public opinion on the bishops of the Maronite church to cut their ties with the Patriarch. Certainly, the editorial comments on the press conference emphasise the degree of alienation from Meouchi within the Church, and comment satirically on Meouchi's unwillingness to accept this and modify his stance.⁸⁹⁷ It seems a reasonable inference that the majority of clerics in the Maronite Church, whatever may have been their personal feelings over the sense of Meouchi's words on maintaining a friendly attitude towards the Arab world and on Chamoun, were not prepared to risk their hold over their congregations by supporting their Patriarch on an issue where

⁸⁹⁵ An Nahar, 11 March 1958.

⁸⁹⁶ FO371/134120 UL1015, Telegram 642, Sir George Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, 31 May 1958. Al Amal, 25 May 1958; An Nahar, 25 May 1958.

⁸⁹⁷ An Nahar, 26 May 1958, 28 May 1958; Al Hayat, 27 May 1958, for instance.

popular feeling was so demonstrably against the Patriarch. It is also worth noting that by the 1950s the majority of parish priests came from the lower levels of the population, not the elites.

The popular Maronite refusal to compromise in 1958 was undoubtedly heightened by the popular, if unfounded, Lebanese belief in the willingness of the Western powers to take action to support Chamoun's re-election if the tension rose high enough repeating old patterns. There were leaders of the Maronite community, such as the Eddé brothers, who feared that Chamoun's re-election and/or any Western intervention would have an overall destabilising effect on Lebanon itself. The evidence is that such fears were popularly taken less seriously than the fears of an external Arab threat. Maronite popular perception saw the Muslim opposition as being encouraged in its unco-operative policy towards Chamoun and so to their own community by the UAR. for reasons linked to UAR. policy and ambitions. In other words these loyalists saw the possibility of Western intervention against the background of an already existing hostile, external intervention.

Chamoun and his closest supporters did their best to foster a Maronite popular perception of the reality of such an intervention. Charles Malik's speech on 13 May at a press conference in Beirut, openly accused the UAR of intervention in the Lebanon, and of causing Lebanon's problems as a result. It was the first public statement that claimed there was an intervention and it was well received by the Maronite masses. Malik insisted that any policy of conciliation towards the UAR had to be abandoned because of this intervention. He related various incidents which he claimed supported his thesis of UAR interference and then said : 'All of these incidents are only the latest manifestations of a concealed movement that has been going on for months and indeed for years, designed to undermine and destroy Lebanon as a free, independent and sovereign state and bring about a radical modification in her fundamental orientation'.⁸⁹⁸ Malik's points were reinforced later by Pierre Gemayel, the Kata'ib leader, in a press conference of 4 June 1958.

⁸⁹⁸ FO371/134120 UL1015, Telegram 642, Sir George Middleton to Selwyn Lloyd, 31 May 1958; An Nahar, 14 May, 1958; Al-Hayat, 14 May 1958.

Gemayel argued that the tensions of 1958 were not internal in origin, but dated back to November 1956, when Lebanese opposition leaders had, according to him, taken up the Nasserist option and invited Nasser's intervention, regardless, of the Lebanese nation's legitimate interests, its independence and sovereignty. In other words he argued that the electoral battle waged by the opposition had been and was still being waged under Nasser's banner. The point underlying Gemayel's statement was his belief that the Lebanese were unwilling to fight fellow Lebanese. The violent incidents that had taken place were explained by the fact that they were not an expression of internal dissent so much as armed UAR interventions, and the ending of such intervention would lead to a prompt reconciliation between the divergent Lebanese elements.⁸⁹⁹ All this helped to reinforce the Maronite perspective of an external intervention that was hostile to them and Lebanon.

The popularity of such beliefs with some Maronite elements cannot be denied. Those who supported an extension of Chamoun's mandate found a theory which argued that the troubles that beset Lebanon were externally and not internally generated very attractive. It was strongly supported by the Kata'ib party, but did also gain an audience amongst the Maronite masses as a whole. This was particularly in the aftermath of speeches such as that by Sami Al Solh, on 17 May 1958, in which he talked in alarmist terms about attacks on frontier posts, etc., as evidence of UAR. interference and incitement to revolt.⁹⁰⁰ However, this should not be taken as an indication that the Maronite masses universally shared the loyalist opinion on the best solution of the problem. Gemayel's views also found a sympathetic echo among the Western powers; certainly the US Embassy generally supported Gemayel's analysis of the causes of the crisis in Lebanon. Even so it cautioned that it gave insufficient emphasis to the role of local politicians' ambitions.⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁹ An Nahar, 5 June 1958; Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 4457, McClintock to Dulles, 5 June 1958, reporting the press conference and Gemayel's views; The Times 6 June 1958; Raymond Eddé, Oral Interview, Paris, 14 July 1993; Albert Moukheiber, Oral Interview, Bayt Meiri, 15 April 1995.

⁹⁰⁰ Al Hayat, 17 May 1958, for instance. See also F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, pp. 83-4.

⁹⁰¹ See Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 4457, McClintock to Dulles, 5 June 1958; Department of State; Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol XI, p. 41, recording Telegram No. 3286, McClintock to Dulles, 13 May 1958.

There were incidents which reinforced the loyalists' perspective, and with some justice. There was a degree of deliberate physical intervention on the part of Syria and Egypt. The evidence quoted in contemporary newspapers and also diplomatic archives on UAR supplied arms and men taking part in demonstrations in the Lebanon must be taken seriously.⁹⁰² Another factor heightening tension was the Maronite reaction to the reports in the media of Sunni feelings at this point. What was identified as popular Sunni resentment of Maronite pro-Western attitudes at this period expressed itself in accusations of Maronite insensitivity to pan-Arab aspirations in the interest of total submission to the West.⁹⁰³ But the Maronites generally did not comprehend the fears of the Sunnis about alienation from the Arab world if Maronite policies were continued. Instead the Maronite masses generally understood Sunni sentiments as confirming Sunni involvement with what the Maronites accepted as UAR ambitions to absorb Lebanon. Thus to a considerable degree, the paranoia was based on a mass misunderstanding by the Maronites of the reasons why the Sunni community was upset at this point, and of any actions that the Sunni had in mind to take so as to reduce the reasons for their discontent.

This led to a Maronite feeling of being under siege, exacerbated by a fear of an enemy within the walls.⁹⁰⁴ It must be remembered that this was a particularly emotive issue for the Maronite community. Fear of being ruled from outside was, and is still, a very sensitive point.⁹⁰⁵ It would be a mistake to make judgements about Maronite attitudes which assume a simple uniformity of reaction, even as the crisis intensified. Yet it is certain that as the crisis proceeded the popular Maronite attitude towards Chamoun's re-election did apparently become more uniformly positive out of a spirit of sheer defensiveness, as Maronite paranoia in 1958 was heightened by the comments of the Sunni Prime Minister, Sami Al Solh. His words seemed to

⁹⁰² Al Hayat, 20 July 1958.

⁹⁰³ Al Hayat is a particularly fruitful source for this. It was apparent from 1957, but particularly acute in 1958. See Al Hayat, 10 May and 11 May, 1957; 20 July 1958.

⁹⁰⁴ As early as May 1957 'groupings' such as the Kata'ib party were holding demonstrations to 'counter' rallies organised by the Sunni. See Al Hayat, 7 May 1957.

⁹⁰⁵ Albert Moukheiber, speech, reported in Al Hayat, 7 September 1995, claiming that the present rulers of Lebanon are 'Damascus puppets' who have stripped Lebanon of its independence.

reinforce their perspective that there was a threat from the UAR. Undoubtedly also, he was taken more seriously on this point by the loyalists because of his Sunni background, which seemed to give him extra credibility. Al Solh made vigorous efforts to spread information amongst the Lebanese people through the medium of radio broadcasts and newspaper articles, which publicised his interpretation of there being a UAR intervention in Lebanon.⁹⁰⁶ Al Solh's intention seems to have been the creation of a broad consensus in Lebanon as a whole, supporting the government and Chamoun's cause generally, by raising fears about the collapse of Lebanese independence. For example, in his broadcast of 5 June, Al Solh raised the spectre of foreign-inspired opposition leaders who falsely claimed that the Lebanese people wanted Lebanese policy to be 'evolved on the banks of the Barada (i.e. Damascus) or the Nile (Cairo)'.⁹⁰⁷

But Al Solh's words undoubtedly reinforced the alarm that already existed amongst the numerical majority of the Maronite community.⁹⁰⁸ The latter were increasingly convinced of the reality and the dangers of foreign intervention in Lebanon in this context. Even so a note of caution must be struck. There is no evidence to show that the logical corollary of all this was for all of the Maronite community to move to a support of Chamoun's policy of re-election. To sum up, the attempts to inspire alarm were successful amongst the Maronites. The fear of the annexation of Lebanon by the UAR, whether real or imaginary, did inspire some elements in the Maronite community to support Chamoun's re-election as part of a defensive reaction, in a way that they otherwise would not have done: but this was not universal. Even at the end of May 1958 the alarmist words of men like Gemayel and Al Solh did not convince loyal followers of Bishara Al Khoury or the Patriarch that there was a real threat. If they accepted the reality of the intervention, they interpreted it as being provoked by Chamoun's policies. The solution to the crisis, therefore, was Chamoun's retirement not his re-election

⁹⁰⁶ See, for example, *Al Hayat*, 7 May 1957.

⁹⁰⁷ See Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 4512, McClintock to Dulles, 7 June 1958, for a report of Al Solh's broadcast.

⁹⁰⁸ Raymond Eddé, Oral Interview, Paris, 20 March 1991; Albert Moukheiber, Oral Interview, Bayt Meiri, 15 April 1995.

Several prominent Maronite leaders, including the Patriarch, with faith in the compromise encapsulated in the National Pact, were convinced by the summer of 1958 that it was Chamoun and his policies, not inter-community relations, that were really at the heart of the crisis. These men sought to convince not only their own followers but also the majority of Maronites that Chamoun was destroying the National Pact and thereby dragging Lebanon down a path leading to the kind of confessional conflict that had marked the darkest periods in Lebanon's history.⁹⁰⁹ They used opportunities for political speeches, the press and the pulpit, to seek to put across their belief that Chamoun's immediate removal was the key to the restoration of peace in Lebanon. Papers such as An Nahar carried articles arguing that by turning to the West and seeking its active intervention, Chamoun and his supporters endangered the current, compromise-based political system in an unacceptable way.⁹¹⁰ Indeed even before the Patriarch had made his public statement, pro-Patriarch elements in the Lebanese press had come out against the Chamoun policy which saw the possibility of Western intervention as desirable; one stating:

'It is about time that the USA and Britain stopped smearing Lebanon's reputation by movement of planes and ships and by the misrepresentations they spread about military movements'.⁹¹¹

On 19 May, through the columns of L'Orient, René Aggiouri, added another dimension to the fears of those within the Maronite community who did not support the idea of a Western intervention despite the 'reality' of the UAR one. He argued that it was necessary to dispel the idea of such intervention, because of the implication that might be drawn that the American and British

⁹⁰⁹ Letters from the Patriarch are in existence addressed to various members of the Maronite congregation outside Lebanon. See, for example, Boulos Meouchi to Father Elias Maria Garib, Head of the Maronite Lebanese Mission, Brazil, 4 June 1958; Boulos Meouchi to Mary Moukanzel, proprietor of Al Hoda, a New York-based Lebanese newspaper, 5 June 1958; Boulos Meouchi to George Toufic Mouffarege, Cambridge, UK, 11 June 1958, Meouchi Papers, Maronite Patriarchate Archive.

⁹¹⁰ An Nahar, 1 June 1958; See also articles in An Nas, especially 1 June 1958; Al Yom, especially 3 June 1958, and even Al Hayat on 1 June 1958.

⁹¹¹ Al Hayat, 18 May 1958, translated and reported in Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 4032, McClintock to Dulles, 19 May 1958.

governments could be planning to use the Lebanese situation as a pretext for military action which might involve the entire Middle East.⁹¹²

Its publication in L'Orient published by George Naccache, a prominent member of the Third Force, is significant, as is the fact that L'Orient also published the comments of Charles Helou, journalist and another Third Force member, calling for international recognition and guarantees of Lebanon's neutrality, in a conscious imitation of Switzerland's position, a stance that aimed to prevent either Western or UAR. intervention.⁹¹³ Such press comments indicate that anti-Chamoun reactions amongst some parts of the Maronite community need to be seen as manifestations of the unease felt by some within it that the fundamental compromise in Lebanese politics was being endangered by Chamoun's manoeuvrings. It can be argued, for instance, that Aggiouri's main aim in his statement was to defuse what he saw as the unthinkingly extreme reaction of the Chamoun loyalists in their fear of an Arab threat to Lebanon's stability. Thus Aggiouri sought to show how small the importance of the Lebanon was to the USA, for example, in its dealings with the Middle East as a whole, to prevent loyalist support for a policy which might destroy the compromise and thus Lebanon itself.

Other evidence, including further comment in papers such as An Nahar, indicate, however, that such anti-Chamoun reactions did not recruit a major popular following. These appeals on behalf, essentially, of the National Pact did little to shift the fears of large numbers in the community. Al Amal, a voice for the Kata'ib party, continued to urge the need for active Western intervention, to secure Chamoun's re-election, despite Pierre Gemayel's continuing unwillingness to endorse, formally, such a policy.⁹¹⁴ The reason given by Al Amal was that anything was better than Nasser - showing now deeply entrenched in the readership of this paper, widely-read in the summer of 1958, was the idea of a Nasserist intervention.⁹¹⁵ In terms of its impact on the Maronite community, therefore, the UN intervention in the summer of 1958

⁹¹² L'Orient, 19 May 1958. René Aggiouri was a leading Maronite journalist.

⁹¹³ L'Orient, 19 May 1958. Naccache is significant because he was not only a leading pro-French newspaperman, but also was to become a minister in later governments.

⁹¹⁴ Al Amal, editorials in May and June 1958.

⁹¹⁵ Al Amal, 18 June 1958.

needs to be assessed in the knowledge that there were deep divisions within that community over Chamoun's policy of invoking the West.

The UN intervention occurred in the context of the heightening of tensions in Lebanon in the aftermath of the murder of Nassib Al Matni.⁹¹⁶ Initially Chamoun had sought to use the street violence in the aftermath of the murder to invoke US military intervention but UN intervention had been agreed on instead.⁹¹⁷ As a way of assessing the perspective of the Maronite masses at this time, reaction, indicated through the press, to this intervention is useful. The concept of the intervention won general Maronite support even though the alternative was intervention by the Arab League.⁹¹⁸ What is significant here is that the government rejection of Arab League intervention, which would have been in the tradition of compromise in the National Pact, was not criticised at popular levels: as the Maronite populist newspaper comment on the intervention underlines.⁹¹⁹ There was a widespread expectation in the Maronite community, even among those who did not support Chamoun's current policies, that the UN Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL), would endorse the claims of the Chamoun regime, because the UN was popularly seen as a Western body that would naturally favour the Maronite community.⁹²⁰ One presidential heir-apparent, Selim Lahoud, publicly described the United Nation's action as 'good and reasonable'.⁹²¹ Another would-be, if less likely, presidential candidate, Jawad Boulos, declared that the UN intervention was a 'good omen' for the future.⁹²² Opposition Maronite elements expressed their expectation of a predictably pro-Chamoun result rather more gloomily.⁹²³ Adel Osseiran, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies,

⁹¹⁶ See Chapter Four, pp. 193-4.

⁹¹⁷ See Chapter Five, p. 232; Documents Diplomatiques, Vol. I, 1 Jan-30 June, Telegram Nos. 1633-36, Chauvel to Pineau, London, 13 May 1958, p. 603.

⁹¹⁸ See Chapter Five, p. 231.

⁹¹⁹ F. Qubain, Crisis in Lebanon, p. 90.

⁹²⁰ General Odd Bull, War and Peace in the Middle East, Westview Press, Bristol, 1973-1976, p. 9. McClintock was made aware of this expectation, see his report in Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 4696, McClintock to Dulles, 13 June 1958. Even so, Chamoun still hoped for American involvement, see also Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 2958, giving Memorandum of a conversation between Malik and J J Sioco, First Secretary, 18 June 1958, in which Malik expressed concern that only military intervention would act as a real deterrent to UAR intervention.

⁹²¹ ibid.

⁹²² ibid.

⁹²³ ibid.

told an American Embassy employee that when UN observers arrived, the splits between the government and the opposition and between Lebanon and UAR would be increased.⁹²⁴

When it became apparent to the Maronite community that their confidence in a UNOGIL report endorsing claims of UAR intervention were mistaken, there was an acute popular reaction that left a permanent legacy in terms of the way that it altered Lebanese opinions and alliances. As the first hints came at the end of June 1958 that the UNOGIL report would not be to the government's liking, the pro-Chamoun press began attacking the observers.⁹²⁵ These attacks peaked with the issue of the first report on 3 July 1958. The headline in Al Amal read 'Observers Failed Their Mission', for example.⁹²⁶ The pro-Chamoun Al Ahrar gave the headline 'Observers Unable to Discover Infiltration Because Barred from Insurgent Controlled Areas'.⁹²⁷ An Nahar, Al Amal and Al Ahrar all quoted Lebanese government officials as being 'bitter' and 'worried' about the outcome.⁹²⁸ The UNOGIL assessment that there was not a massive infiltration from Syria, and in so doing, created a panic in the Maronite community that related as much to the 'betrayal' of Maronite expectations of Western support in times of need as to the actual content of the report.⁹²⁹

Summing up the report in order to relate it to its impact on Maronite opinion it should be remembered that the UNOGIL report did not give an adequate or coherent assessment of the situation from a Maronite perspective. On the one hand it claimed that the rebellion was indigenous in origin, while at the same time not denying that there was a UAR intervention.⁹³⁰ However it made no attempt to define the scale of the intervention, and it was the scale of

⁹²⁴ ibid.

⁹²⁵ See General Odd Bull, War and Peace in the Middle East, p. 9, for a discussion of this; see ibid., p. 69 for the impact of continuing opposition to the United Nations Observer Group.

⁹²⁶ Al Amal, 5 July 1958.

⁹²⁷ An Nahar, 5 July 1958.

⁹²⁸ See An Nahar; Al Amal; Al Ahrar, 5-6 July 1958; see also Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 320. 5783a/7.2258, American Embassy, Beirut to Department of State, 22 July 1958.

⁹²⁹ There were five reports in all : 3 July 1958; 30 July 1958; 14 August 1958; 29 September 1958; 17 November 1958

⁹³⁰ Robert Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, Collins, London, 1964, p. 402; General Odd Bull, War and Peace in the Middle East.

that intervention which was the main point of controversy within Lebanon itself. Thus the questions that had dominated before the United Nation's involvement still remained: could radio and press attacks against the Lebanese government count as intervention or not? Was the quantity of arms smuggled into Lebanese territory enough to provide proof of a physical UAR intervention or not? Many Maronites insisted they could and did, justifying thereby the generation of the fear, tension and resentment in the Maronite community, and the consequent defensive reaction of that community.

Maronite disappointment with the UNOGIL'S conclusions were thus acute enough to make their position more extreme.⁹³¹ The vulnerability now felt by the community had a broadly destabilising effect. Even those that were by no means pro-Chamoun shared the general alarm that the report indicated that community was losing ground both internally and internationally.⁹³² This was particularly significant in terms of the traditional Maronite belief that dependence on the West was the only final security they could depend on. If that had gone, what other hope had they? Because of this, there was an increased readiness to listen to figures like Chamoun and Charles Malik when they claimed that the only solution lay in a military intervention by the Americans, as much to demonstrate that the USA was still committed to the Maronite cause, if the UN was not.⁹³³

It was felt by many Maronites that the compromise underpinning the National Pact was destroyed if the Sunni opposition was able to impose its interpretation of events supported by the UN, since the Arab world would also line up behind the Muslim community. In terms of its external relations, the community felt deserted and isolated in a way that it had never felt before. In its vulnerability there was undoubtedly a greater willingness to seek a Maronite unity in the face of an external threat that seemed worse than the possibility of

⁹³¹ For example, Albert, Moukheiber's bitter complaint to the American Embassy. See Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 320, American Embassy, Beirut to Department of State, 22 July 1958.

⁹³² This feeling was picked up on by the Americans: 'no-one here can understand how UNOGIL could so far imply non-existence of intervention'. See Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 137, McClintock to Dulles, 5 July 1958, warning of Maronite bitterness over the report.

⁹³³ Al Hayat, 15 July 1958, for example.

Chamoun's re-election - or at least made that possibility a less immediate problem, one that could be deferred until a later point.

There is evidence to show a significant shift in popular attitudes after the publication of the UN report, even if based more on the popular fears outlined above than on intrinsic support for Chamoun and his policies. It remained popular belief that Chamoun was still trying to involve the West in order to secure his re-election; but many Maronites previously opposed to intervention were now prepared to welcome a demonstration of pro-Maronite Western feeling. It must be seen as significant, therefore, that the loyalist Kata'ib party, for example, increased still further in numbers at this stage, because of its role as an indicator of mass Maronite opinions.⁹³⁴ It can be said to have represented the hard-line core of Maronite feeling in the community.⁹³⁵ In late 1954 Kata'ib numbers had been around 26,000 - but by July 1958, according to the French-speaking newspaper, L'Orient, this had gone up to 62,200, making it the largest political party in Lebanon at that date.⁹³⁶ Indeed, Kata'ib numbers had been growing even before the report, inspired by events like the destruction of Lebanese flags during Muslim demonstrations in Tyre and Tripoli, which gave popular colour to the rhetoric of UAR intervention.⁹³⁷

Yet even so it remains impossible to claim that this represented the universal Maronite attitude at this stage, despite the increase of tension in Lebanon and the increasing feeling of Maronite isolation, in and out of Lebanon. Most of the tension was internally generated and external factors were interpreted to fit in with these internal reasons. Chamoun continued his efforts during the summer of 1958 to give the West the impression that the conflict in Lebanon was part of the wider problem of the Middle East. He sought to show it was a struggle between a pro-Western Lebanon and an external radical Arab nationalism, allied with Communism and with dissident Muslim elements in Lebanon aiming to stage a take-over there. He realised

⁹³⁴ Mrs. Geneviève Gemayel, Oral Interview, Beirut, 1 March 1996; Amine Gemayel, Oral Interview, Paris, 27 March 1992, both commented on the increased recruitment in the summer of 1958, when there was, according to the latter, a feeling that the situation had developed into a choice between pro and anti-Lebanese forces.

⁹³⁵ Amine Gemayel, Oral Interview, Paris, 27 March 1992.

⁹³⁶ Figures taken from the survey conducted by L'Orient, 11 December 1958.

⁹³⁷ Foreign Relations of the United States 1958- 1960, Vol. XI, p. 35; reporting Telegram No. 3826, from McClintock to Dulles, Beirut, 11 May 1958.

that there was not sufficient support within the Maronite community, let alone other elements in Lebanon, to secure his re-election by straightforward means and nothing he did seemed to increase his support internally so continuation in office depended on active intervention by the West, which essentially meant the Americans, in his support. Chamoun's own insecurity is emphasised by the claims that he sent his wife's jewels and his grandson out of the country in July 1958.⁹³⁸ Reports of this certainly increased the state of tension within the Maronite community. However, despite the tendency to Maronite paranoia caused by the West's apparent desertion, indicated in the UNOGIL report, the continuance of opposition amongst prominent Maronite figures such as General Shihab and the Patriarch and of support for these figures within the community ensured that some important, if numerically smaller, Maronite elements continued to see Chamoun as the cause of, not the solution, to the crisis. Shihab consistently maintained a belief that the crisis could best be settled by Chamoun openly stating that he would retire from the presidency at the end of his term of office.⁹³⁹ There is no indication of any widespread dissatisfaction with this position among the Maronite element within the armed forces.⁹⁴⁰ Equally, the Patriarch continued to draw support from elements within the Maronite community, in and outside Lebanon, even if he did not have all the officials of his Church solidly behind his position.⁹⁴¹

In negotiating with the Western powers for active intervention Chamoun had done his best, with some success, to alarm these powers into a sense of crisis relating to the internal situation of Lebanon, and Lebanon's position within the Middle East as a whole, hoping to convince them to overlook or misinterpret any lack of internal enthusiasm for his re-election.⁹⁴² But the

⁹³⁸ An alternative interpretation of this might be that Chamoun himself genuinely believed in the possibility of UAR-backed civil war in Lebanon if the West did not intervene. He was a product of Mount Lebanon, after all. However, this seems the less likely interpretation. See Robert Murphy, Diplomat Among Warriors, p. 397.

⁹³⁹ General Bustani, 'Memoirs', p. 189; Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960 Vol. XI p. 55, Telegram Nos 3949 & 3958, 16 May, 1958, on Western efforts to get Chamoun to announce his retirement.

⁹⁴⁰ General Bustani, 'Memoirs', pp. 189-90.

⁹⁴¹ See, for example, Boulos Meouchi to Brendan A. Finn, Maronite emigrant in the USA, 11 July 1958, Meouchi Papers.

⁹⁴² For an indication of Chamoun's success in this respect see FO371/134124, Telegram No. 775, British Embassy, Beirut, 16 June 1958; FO371/134117 UL1015/62 Telegram No. 1151, British Embassy, Beirut, 15 May 1958; and FO371/134124 Telegram No. 1624, Sir Harold Caccia, British Ambassador, Washington, to Selwyn Lloyd, 19 June 1958, for example; also Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960 Vol. XI, p. 71, recording Dulles' acceptance of Chamoun's fears that Lebanon was in danger of being 'lost to Nasserism'.

Western powers also had access to the opinions of men like the Patriarch and Shihab.⁹⁴³ The UNOGIL report also strengthened Western belief that military intervention in Lebanon would be counterproductive, both for Lebanon and the Western position in the Middle East.⁹⁴⁴ Thus it cannot be argued that Maronite alarms really galvanised the West into interventionary action, or that Western alarms created an atmosphere of universal Maronite hysteria even in the days immediately succeeding the UNOGIL report.

But then, on 15 July 1958, American Marines landed on the beaches of Beirut, to the surprise of most in the Maronite community. There was a mixed reaction to this American intervention. It was apparently greeted with initial enthusiasm by most Maronites, if only because it did show that the Americans did support Lebanon, while the revolution in Iraq had increased popular fears (possibly not entirely groundless) that Nasser aimed to take over the entire region, and that he had the capacity to do so without American intervention. In this context, the prospects for the survival, not just of Chamoun, but also of any pro-Western government in Lebanon, such as was supported by the Maronite community looked bleak. Even if his re-election had not been secured, up till then Chamoun's prospects of completing his term of office and retiring on 23 September 1958 had seemed good in the eyes of the Maronite community. Even people like Shihab who opposed his re-election had generally supported the policy of Chamoun completing his term, seeing that as important to maintaining the current balance in the political system.⁹⁴⁵ But the events in Baghdad made the prospect of this seem bleak. Fears were widely expressed that his government might fall before the end of its term of office; even that Chamoun himself might be assassinated, making the Maronite community deeply vulnerable to Muslim and pan-Arab ambitions.⁹⁴⁶

It was these fears that caused the firing of bullets in joy that were noted in a number of the Maronite streets of Beirut in the immediate aftermath of the American landings. Even if it can be claimed that these expressions of support

⁹⁴³ See FO371/134124 , Telegram No. 775, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 16 June 1958, for example.

⁹⁴⁴ See, for example, New York Times, 7 July 1958.

⁹⁴⁵ General Bustani 'Memoirs', p. 223.

⁹⁴⁶ Al Hayat, 16 July 1958.

were mainly confined to Chamoun loyalists, there were no serious expressions of popular hostility from the Maronites to this way of showing pleasure by the loyalists.⁹⁴⁷ It is true that the majority of Maronite political leaders remained silent in the immediate aftermath of the landings, the only exceptions being government spokesmen. This can be accounted for partly by political astuteness on the part of these men, who feared creating a degree of resentment and hostility amongst the Muslim community that would result in open civil war if they made open expressions of support for the landings. But even despite the pressure of the Iraqi coup, those Maronite politicians who were not Chamoun loyalists were equivocal about the landings.⁹⁴⁸

On the one hand they hoped that the presence of the Americans would enable the general election to be held at the due time, and would also ensure that the Maronite role in the political system would be safeguarded, but on the other hand they were aware of the problems caused by the growing hostility voiced by Sunni politicians.⁹⁴⁹ Essentially such men were aware that they were dependent upon Muslim support within the current Lebanese political formula, and it was a formula they had no wish to change. In this respect it is important to contrast the moderation displayed at this point by Selim Lahoud with the belligerent mood of Pierre Gemayel. Gemayel and his followers in the Kata'ib party were Chamoun loyalists, and showed an unquestioning support of the American presence, stating that the actions of the Muslim opposition had obliged them to take this position.⁹⁵⁰ Lahoud had come out in support of Chamoun's re-election, but now, with presidential hopes of his own he felt able, at this point, to seek moderate Maronite backing for a personal position based on compromise.⁹⁵¹ This underlines the fact that the Kata'ib party and its position of support for Chamoun's re-election was still popularly seen in the Maronite community as being too extremist in its views to gain universal

⁹⁴⁷ *Ibid*; see also Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960, Vol. XI, p. 389, Telegram No. 658, 24 July 1958, in which McClintock reported 'I also have feeling most Lebanese welcome our presence here and feel it will make it possible for them to reach a political solution'.

⁹⁴⁸ Raymond Eddé, Oral Interview, Paris, 20 March 1991.

⁹⁴⁹ Raymond Eddé, Oral Interview, Paris, 20 March 1991; Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960 Vol. XI, p. 241, reporting Telegram No. 290, indicating that McClintock believed that Pierre Eddé, brother of Raymond, was, despite his pro-government inclination, hostile to the landings.

⁹⁵⁰ See Pierre Gemayel, Speech Al Hayat, 18 July 1958.

⁹⁵¹ See Al Hayat, 19 July 1958.

support, even at this time of crisis. Yet increasingly, even those Maronite politicians who were Chamoun loyalists, in favour of his re-election, came to see the American landings as standing in the way of achieving any resolution of the internal crisis in Lebanon. They began to join with the opposition voices in seeking a withdrawal of the troops as a preliminary to arranging a compromise that would safeguard the Lebanese compromise and the Maronite role in the Lebanese state.⁹⁵²

But from the perspective of the Maronite masses, the solution was not so straightforward; in the atmosphere of tension by late July 1958, the simple removal of American troops and arrangement of a compromise seemed to be in danger of removing, not protecting, the privileged Maronite role in the state. In addition, the fear was that such a compromise might depend on the Maronites breaking their relations with the West, something that had profound economic as well as cultural implications, of course. It must be remembered that Nasser continued to have an impact on Maronite thinking, personifying, as he did, the Maronite nightmare of Arab intervention in Lebanon's affairs. It was thus Nasser, not Chamoun, that got the popular blame for the crisis. As Moubarak commented to Charles Malik, he had explained to the Portuguese ambassador in Paris that the troubles that had occurred in some cities like Tripoli and Beirut were caused not only by the proposal to re-elect President Chamoun but were also provoked by the agents of Nasser.⁹⁵³

In the press, memories of past massacres of Maronites at the hands of 'Muslim oppressors' and the need for resistance to foreign domination if the community was to survive, had been evoked throughout the crisis, first creeping into public rhetoric as early as 1956, when Pierre Gemayel had argued that it was necessary to value 'our relations with France', because France had 'helped to free us from Ottoman oppression and made us part of the civilised world', Later that year, against a background of some local Sunni unrest and the imposition of newspaper censorship, Ghassan Tueni had justified government policy, and exhorted Maronites to 'Remember 1840, 1848,

⁹⁵² See, for example, *Al Hayat*, 19 July 1958.

⁹⁵³ Moussa Moubarak to Charles Malik, Letter, 12 May 1958, Moussa Moubarak Papers.

1860, 1936'.⁹⁵⁴ By 1958, the invoking of such a dark mythology had become more frequent and, on occasions, more cryptic or implicit, implying that there was no need to explain such references in detail. Indeed, reference to this 'history' was not just restricted to the Maronites, a further indication of the widespread nature of this perception. On 17 May 1958, Nadim Al Jisr said that the reasons for the Maronite tension 'are the reasons of 1860', explaining that 'once again, the Christian minority refused to live accordingly'.⁹⁵⁵ Shortly afterwards, during a press conference, Ghassan Tuani described to 'this week' as 'the most dangerous for Lebanon since 1860', saying that 'neither World War I nor World War II had been as dangerous'. In justifying his stance, he did refer explicitly to the 'past Maronite-Druze massacres in Lebanese history', hoping that 'these would not be repeated' and a 'solution' would be found.⁹⁵⁶ Pierre Gemayel made use of more inflammatory rhetoric, linking the events of 1860 and other crises during the Ottoman period to the choice that 'Christians' in 1958 again had to make between 'liberty and slavery'.⁹⁵⁷

This did not create a popular mood that favoured consensus; rather a return to the old habits of co-habitation and mutual suspicion. After all, the Maronite masses themselves had never been consulted on the National Pact and its terms. So long as it had seemed to work in Maronite interests, it had been accepted at the popular level. The events of May, June and July 1958 were interpreted by many amongst the masses as indicating that the Muslims were seeking to reassert their old domination, leading to Lebanon's disappearance in any meaningful sense. For the Maronite masses to be willing to support a restoration of the National Pact, there had to be some real demonstration that it was not a disguised Sunni triumph. The joyful reactions of the Muslim population to the Iraqi coup seemed to indicate the expectation of that population that such a triumph was in view.⁹⁵⁸ Thus even if many Maronite politicians had a more sophisticated view of events and the potential

⁹⁵⁴ Pierre Gemayel, Speech, Al Amal, 10 April 1956; Al Hayat, 10 April 1956; Ghassan Tuani, Speech, Al Hayat, 27 November 1956. This latter is an interesting perspective for a supposedly moderate newspaperman to maintain in justification for government policy as early as 1956, and as such an indication of how instinctive was such an appeal to such a mythology of past calamity for the Maronites.

⁹⁵⁵ Nadim Al Jisr, Al Hayat, 17 May 1958. Nadim Al Jisr was a Deputy.

⁹⁵⁶ Ghassan Tuani, Al Hayat, 20 May 1958. Such a solution, however, did not, according to Tuani, lie in abandoning either Chamoun before the end of his mandate, or to breaking ties with the West.

⁹⁵⁷ Pierre Gemayel, Speech, Al Amal 25 June 1958; Al Hayat, 25 June 1958.

⁹⁵⁸ Al Hayat, 15 July 1958.

for a return to consensus, a majority in the Maronite masses were increasingly exposed to rhetoric that linked fears of Arab intervention in their affairs to passages in their past which had supposedly threatened their very existence. Consequently, it should not be seen as surprising that many came to believe that this was prevented only by the hard-line stance taken by Chamoun and by the presence of American troops, showing that despite the UNOGIL report, the West was still prepared to protect Maronite interests. The PPS papers contain a speech given by Pierre Gemayel on 18 July 1958 to his followers, in which he stated his 'unquestioning support of the US presence' because 'the actions of the Muslim opposition and their friends had obliged them to take t

his position', for instance.⁹⁵⁹ Al Hayat also referred to 'popular panic' in its discussion of the divergent understanding of the implications of the Iraqi coup of the Maronite community in general and the political establishment.⁹⁶⁰

The upsurge in popular support for the Kata'ib party, representing unwavering support for Chamoun and the American landings, continued at the end of July. Consequently Chamoun himself felt encouraged to believe that he could at least complete his mandate, if the prospect of re-election seemed remote. Thus the Maronite leaders who, with the exception of a small core such as Pierre Gemayel, now looked to a first step in the solution of the crisis by compromise rather than violence as lying with the removal of both Chamoun and the American troops, found themselves effectively out of step with what almost certainly constituted a majority in the Maronite masses.⁹⁶¹ There were appeals from leaders such as Farid Kozma for a return to consensus and for a consequent downplaying of historical mythologies: 'Let us not remember the dark past except to learn a lesson and so work together in unity, instead of being tied up in fear'.⁹⁶² But the 'dark past' did not go away, either in popular

⁹⁵⁹ Pierre Gemayel, Speech, 18 July 1958, PPS Papers, Beirut. K.S. Salibi, 'Recollections of the 1940s and 1950s', p. 15, commented on his memory of being informed of 'a full-scale Muslim insurrection enjoying the personal backing of Nasser, and provided with arms and other assistance from the UAR'. Mrs. Geneviève Gemayel, Oral Interview, Beirut, 1 March 1996, also commented on her memories of Maronite panic, and her belief that it was a factor in sustaining recruitment to the party at this point.

⁹⁶⁰ Al Hayat, 16 July 1958.

⁹⁶¹ In the interests of trade and commerce, the bourgeoisie tended to support a peaceful compromise. There is no way of getting satisfactory statistics to confirm the impression given in the press and by commentators such as Moubarak and Bustani that the majority of the Maronite masses were, towards the end of July, still firmly behind Chamoun, at least in terms of a completion of his mandate. However, there is no useful evidence to contradict this perspective.

⁹⁶² Karid Kozma, Al Hayat, 17 October 1958. This, again, emphasises the contemporary recognition of a popular reliance on mythology in the interpretation of contemporary events.

memory or in the rhetoric of leaders, as the comment of Bashir Gemayel in 1975 indicates.

Even so, there was a lessening of tension. To the extent that there was a change in popular Maronite perception from the end of July, it was a modification that began amongst the Lebanese army, including the Maronite elements there, and spread from there, encouraged by the Maronite political leaders and by the interested Western powers. The reaction of the army to the American landings had been hostile from the start. There had been occasions when the two armies had been on the verge of clashing physically. The Lebanese army deployed itself to resist any attempt by American forces to enter Beirut itself, and only the efforts of McClintock and Shihab prevented a direct clash.⁹⁶³ Shihab himself had been against the landings, seeing them as having the potential to split the army and so lead to a full-scale civil war. As Bustani commented, Shihab considers that to implicate the army would lead the country to complete disintegration and annihilation. For if the army is implicated there would be a high risk that it would collapse along confessional lines. The General preferred to leave the police and the gendarmerie to tackle these internal problems.⁹⁶⁴

By the summer of 1958, Shihab had a high, if not necessarily a popular, profile in Lebanon. He was extremely popular with his troops, and he commanded respect, if not popular liking, for his determination to keep the army out of intercommunal and political disputes.⁹⁶⁵ From quite early on in the crisis he had been one of the figures put forward as a possible alternative to Chamoun, though he himself had displayed reluctance to consider such a prospect.⁹⁶⁶ From the popular Maronite perspective, however, the replacement of Chamoun by Shihab in the immediate aftermath of the

⁹⁶³ Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960, Vol. XI, p. 254, Telegram No. 428, 16 July 1958, recording McClintock's account for Dulles of the reaction of the Lebanese army.

⁹⁶⁴ It must not be forgotten that the army was interconfessional in composition. See General Bustani, 'Memoirs', p. 89

⁹⁶⁵ It was a respect shared to an extent at least by Western observers; the British considered him to be 'honest and loyal' though they doubted his 'intelligence'; the Americans commented 'All he has is common-sense - but a great deal of that', while fearing that he was 'too apolitical' to be as pro-Western as they would like. See FO371/134115 UL1012, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 12 May 1958, on Leading Personalities in Lebanon, p. 6; Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Vol. XI, p. 12, American Embassy, Beirut to Department of State, 21 February 1958.

⁹⁶⁶ Al Hayat made this point in May, reiterating it again in July 1958, claiming it was the only acceptable solution if internal stability was to be sustained. Al Hayat, 17 May 1958; 31 July 1958. Moussa Moubarak, Letter, 2 August 1958, Moussa Moubarak Papers, commenting on Shihab 'obstinately refusing' to put himself forward. The addressee is unclear, but possibly Pierre Bart.

American landings, at a point when Shihab had consistently been refusing since May to commit the army to support Chamoun, was not a particularly popular move. During June and July, elements in the pro-Chamoun camp, including Kata'ib party members, had been demanding the active intervention of the army to deal with Lebanon's 'enemies', in the interests of state security.⁹⁶⁷ It is true that some limited action had been undertaken, such as that in Sidon on 28 May 1958, against pro-UAR demonstrators, on the few occasions when it did seem that state security was threatened.⁹⁶⁸ Indeed, since Shihab was known to have a personal dislike of Chamoun, the suggestion that Shihab should replace Chamoun was seen as 'evidence' that Shihab had been plotting and manoeuvring for political power for himself.⁹⁶⁹

However, by 30 July, even Chamoun had accepted American view that Shihab should succeed him - though Chamoun still intended to complete his mandate, while Shihab himself was refusing to confirm he was willing to stand. Chamoun is reported by McClintock as telling the loyalist deputies [that] if they did not accept his advice, meet tomorrow and elect Shihab, he would himself resign his office.⁹⁷⁰ But what was popularly seen as Shihab's 'indecision' and 'inactivity', including his refusal to confirm his position on the presidency, helped to sustain Chamoun's mass appeal and the popular support for Chamoun's completion of his mandate amongst the Maronite community. Thus the arrangement that Chamoun effectively be sidelined for the remainder of his mandate, and that he be replaced by Shihab, was one acquiesced in by the Maronite masses simply because, in the end, Chamoun himself acquiesced in it. Faced with a refusal by the Americans to support any other solution, Chamoun had no practical choice in the matter.

But for the Maronite community, the return to the consensus arrangements of the National Pact was simply a cover for the continuation amongst them of perspectives based on the old patterns of co-habitation. The majority did now accept that Shihab would act to safeguard the traditional pro-

⁹⁶⁷ General Bustani, 'Memoirs', pp. 188-9.

⁹⁶⁸ *Al Hayat*, 29 May 1958.

⁹⁶⁹ FO371/134110 UL10115/1741, British Embassy, Beirut to Foreign Office, 18 May 1958, Memorandum, making an early comment on this factor. It may well have been a factor in Shihab's failure to win real liking outside the army that, in contrast to Chamoun's handsome and charismatic appearance, Shihab looked forbidding and behaved in a stern manner.

Western stance of the community, but they continued to see no problem in the continuance of such links, and none of the shame assigned to them by the Arab world. Indeed attempts to convince the Maronite masses of this simply, defensively, increased their determination to maintain such links. To abandon them would imply abandonment of the mythology which was at the heart of their feeling of national identity, and their claim to be, morally at least, the most significant of the confessional communities in Lebanon. This perspective ensured that they would continue to remain suspicious of those elements in Lebanon which did try a policy of persuasion for the modification of this mythology - such as the Sunni community and many Sunni political leaders, but also leaders like Walid Jumblat. Maronite community mythology, therefore, was not materially altered in any fundamental way by the events of 1958.⁹⁷⁰

The National Pact was restored with support from Maronite politicians; but many amongst the masses remained suspicious of the compromise arranged in 1958, with their political perspective still dominated by confessional and clan considerations. This is indicated by the extent to which Chamoun's own status as a symbol of 'le Libanisme' was sustained, and his personality invoked in subsequent crises. In 1968, for instance, when there was again a Maronite belief that Nasser was interfering with Lebanese internal politics, over the status of the Palestinians, Chamoun enjoyed a surge in his popular status. An attempt to curtail his public appearances by the security service provides an interesting indication of the extent of public support he could still invoke at such times. Within an hour of this move, news of the attempt to restrict his movements spread, and Maronites from the Mount Lebanon region, and some from the North, converged on Jounieh, where Chamoun was to be found, and my own memory is that it appeared that the whole mountain had come to

⁹⁷⁰ Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960, Vol. XI, p. 411, Telegram No. 836, 30 July 1958.

⁹⁷¹ Its backing for Chamoun remained until the last day of mandate and weeks after. See Foreign Relations of the United States 1958-1960, Vol. XI, p. 593, Telegram No. 342, 2 October, 1958, recounting McClintock informing Dulles that 'I took half an hour to move half a mile where a helicopter landed at Chamoun's villa as the road was blocked filled with cheering adherents of the ex-President'. An estimate of average daily visits of adherents to Chamoun's residence was recorded as round 5,000.

demonstrate their support. In the subsequent elections of 1968, Maronite candidates backed by him swept to victory in the majority of contested seats.

Conclusion

The 1958 crisis was essentially a development coming out of the established pattern of Lebanon's communal politics, which was, in turn, based on conflicting community mythologies that served to underpin distinct community identities. These essentially community identities were, however, interpreted by their adherents as being the core of 'national' identity within Lebanon, and the result was the establishment of divergent visions of Lebanon's destiny in ways that gave little opportunity for a self-generated compromise and return to the consensus envisaged by the National Pact. In this context, it was the interaction with the regional, as well as the international political scene that enabled resolution of the crisis and restoration of some semblance of consensus. It was a crisis that marked a total breakdown, at least for a while, of the political compromise that had been intended to give stability to an independent Lebanon, and was thus a crucial event in Lebanese history. This is why it is impossible to explain the collapse of that compromise simply in terms of external pressures - even though it can fairly be argued that it was external sources that brokered the restoration of that compromise.

This thesis has tried to show the extent to which the Lebanese themselves brought about their own crisis because of the differing agendas and perspectives that had become institutionalised in the Lebanese political, social and cultural systems as a result of the popular status given to these community mythologies, particularly in terms of reactions to the Maronite versions of Lebanon's history. This contradicts the air of inevitability about Lebanon's part, at least, in the events in the Middle East after the rise of Nasser which is often assumed by an examination of events from an external perspective. That crises were constantly likely to occur can be said to have been predictable; that they would inevitably be linked to Nasserism and wider events in the Middle East was not. It was the existence of a vacuum within the Sunni community, in terms of an acceptable local popular champion, that enabled Nasser and Nasserism to assume the profile it took in the 1958 crisis. It is also worth noting in this context that the pro-Western state of Jordan did

not collapse despite considerable pressure from pro-Nasserist elements in the Middle East. Lebanese factors were primarily responsible for the creation of the Lebanese crisis of 1958.

This includes the extent to which elements in Lebanon were responsible for accepting, reinterpreting and manipulating external pressures and interests to further the ambitions of their own communal groups, and themselves, within Lebanon itself, consistently doing so by invoking the rhetoric of their respective mythologies. By August 1958, the outcome of a presidential election was being advertised as the way forward: choosing a president who would be acceptable to all elements in Lebanon, thus reconstructing the National Pact. Consensus increasingly focused on the issue that was now being popularly seen by politicians and people on all sides as being all-important: the issue of the withdrawal of American troops from Lebanon. The end result, accomplishment of that withdrawal and election of an acceptable candidate, was one that did appear to restore the Lebanese political compromise with the support of politicians at least from all sides.

Yet in reality, once again it was a compromise arranged by outside powers, in an echo of 1860 and so many of the other crises in Lebanon's past. Unlike the crisis itself, the solution was not internally generated. Being reached in such a way, the compromise remained a fragile one and did not tackle the fundamental problems that underlay the National Pact. It is the fact that the solution was to a large extent brokered by external powers that has led so many observers of the 1958 crisis to presume, mistakenly, that the origins of the crisis were equally predominantly external. The origins of the crisis must instead be seen as lying in the unwillingness of the communities in Lebanon, especially the community leaders, to confront the realities of the differences between them, and working them through, to then seek a basis for intercommunal consensus on an honest basis.

It must be said that the fact that the various communities were so culturally conditioned by reliance on their mythology into identifying themselves and others in confessional colours when categorising them was a major

hindrance to the development of a situation where such honesty was possible; even at the highest levels of community hierarchies. The association of religious belief and communal identity served to work against the potential for compromise between the communities. This becomes even clearer in an examination of the aftermath of the crisis and the reactions of the communities to the solution; which in itself had become part of the mythology of different communities, and so consistently differently interpreted by them.

The traditional system of inter-communal compromise had been strained to breaking point in the summer of 1958. The pressures of Chamoun's personal ambitions, his publicly pro-Western and anti-Nasserist stance were being interpreted by panicked Maronites as an attempt to protect their interests, not his own, and so increased hostility to those elements in Lebanon that were anti-Chamoun, even where they also indicated a support for the continuation of an independent Lebanon. Equally, the Sunni and the other Muslim communities were increasingly fearful that Chamoun intended to use the crisis not only to renew his mandate, but also to strengthen the position of the Maronite and other Christian elements over the Muslim position.⁹⁷² When what had been most feared by the Muslim opposition, an American military intervention, actually happened, opposition hostility was fervent. But the leaders of the opposition at least became conscious that opposition to the landings was also present amongst leaders from the various Christian communities, including the Maronites - that in political terms, Chamoun was becoming isolated and therefore weakened. Initial Sunni protests from their political leaders were based on an interpretation of the landing as proof of American backing of Chamoun and American desire for his re-election, and in the belief that the Maronite political element would seize the opportunity to bring about that scenario. Their fears on this score were lessened by the demonstrated opposition from that political element to the landings, and its demonstrated willingness to seek a compromise that would not be based on a renewal of Chamoun's mandate. This laid down the grounds for the Murphy mission in terms of the negotiations with the political elements in Lebanon.

⁹⁷² See, for example, Al Hayat, 16 July, 1958.

The reaction of the Lebanese army to the American landings is also an interesting indication of the fact that one of the short-term products of that landing was actually to unite the communities in Lebanon- in hostility against those landings. There was a real danger of hostilities breaking out between the Lebanese troops and American troops, to the surprise and dismay of those troops and of the American leadership.⁹⁷³ But Shihab insisted to McClintock that the attitude of his troops was not part of some 'conspiracy' by elements in Lebanon, with the intention of overthrowing the Lebanese government, but was a 'spontaneous' reaction that crossed confessional boundaries and was simply focused on removing American troops from Lebanese soil. Certainly this reaction did include Maronite and Sunni, officers and men, even if the original motivation had come from the latter. It is generally accepted that the ordinary, and mainly Muslim soldiers, were men who were now prepared to die at their guns as a symbolic gesture of patriotic defiance, and that this in turn inspired the mainly Maronite officers to follow their lead out of similar feelings of patriotism.⁹⁷⁴ The seriousness of the reaction is underlined by the American sources, which note that even on 16 July, Shihab himself did not know how far his staff and men would be prepared to go to put into practice their willingness to engage in hostilities with the American troops.⁹⁷⁵

Equally, it was the assessment of the American sources that the mood of the Lebanese army was in tune with the mood of the Lebanese population as a whole.⁹⁷⁶ It is against this background that Robert Murphy's attempts to make overtures to all elements in the Lebanese political dimension, and especially the opposition, to explain the American motivations in making the landing, become significant. By talking sympathetically to all leaders in the Lebanese political arena, Murphy was successful in defusing the situation. Murphy put an emphasis on making contact with opposition and actual rebel leaders, such as Yafi, and showed a willingness to listen sympathetically to their grievances. He made explanations of the American landings in ways that

⁹⁷³ General Bustani, 'Memoirs', p. 200.

⁹⁷⁴ See, for example, General Bustani, 'Memoirs' p. 200.

⁹⁷⁵ Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 496 (Section Two of Two) Robert Murphy to Secretary of State, 18 July 1958.

⁹⁷⁶ Department of State Archives, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Telegram No. 618, McClintock to Secretary of State, 22 July 1958.

explained American motivation in terms of the wider regional issues, which seems to have defused the issue from the perspective of the Sunni leaders, most of whom had anyway no wish to see the immediate end of an independent Lebanon. Thus in this context American regional concerns carried a certain conviction, if not approval, and could at least be used as part of a 'face-saving' exercise in terms of enabling Sunni politicians to back down from the positions they had taken in the aftermath of the American landings and which now threatened to bring Lebanon to an outbreak of hostilities with the USA. In terms of Lebanese particulars, the Sunni leadership was reassured by Murphy's assurance that the Americans had no intention of backing any plans by Chamoun to arrange his re-election. More widely, the Sunni leaders were reassured by the fact that the Americans had entered into discussions with Nasser by this point, and so could be popularly interpreted as having entered into process of restoring good relations in the Middle East.⁹⁷⁷

Indeed these perceptions began to have an effect on Muslim public opinion via the press in Lebanon. For example, the early opposition to his mission voiced by the opposition through the press on 18 July, when it was claimed that either it was 'impossible' for the Murphy mission to succeed, or at best that there was 'great doubt of its success', began to be publicly dispersed.⁹⁷⁸ The press reports of 19 July began to talk in terms of the opposition waiting 'in expectation' for the result of the mission.⁹⁷⁹ On 22 July it was reported that the opposition was voluntarily collaborating with Murphy because of their publicly stated belief that he could create a workable compromise, Al Telegraph, one of the leading opposition papers, announced in a headline on that date that 'Crisis is on the Way to Solution'. Al Jarida told its readers that Murphy, whom it described as the 'Man of Good Offices' had come to Lebanon to reassure the Lebanese that the American landings had only come about because of Middle East tensions resulting from the Iraqi coup, and that the USA had no intentions of widening the Lebanese split 'by supporting one faction of the population against the other.'⁹⁸⁰

⁹⁷⁷ See R Murphy, Diplomats among Warriors, Greenwood Press, Westport, p. 19.

⁹⁷⁸ See Al Hayat, 18 July 1958, for example.

⁹⁷⁹ See Al Hayat, 19 July 1958, for example.

⁹⁸⁰ Al Telegraph, 22 July 1958; Al Jarida, 22 July 1958.

Of equal significance is the evidence that Murphy's suggestions for compromise that was increasingly to be based on an immediate replacement of Chamoun found increasing support from amongst the Maronite politicians. Of course the Chamoun government itself, and its hard-line supporters, were hostile, seeing in Murphy's mission the end of their hopes for a continuation of Chamoun in power. But increasingly this group was declining in number and isolated in terms of its impact. Those Maronite politicians who had only supported Chamoun in terms of his finishing his mandate were swiftly moved to a position of favouring Murphy's efforts. However, numbers of moderates even among those who supported his re-election were coming out publicly in favour of a compromise such as that being brokered by Murphy.

However, it must be noted that in agreeing on Shihab as a compromise candidate, the Maronite politicians were ahead of the Maronite masses in their willingness to accept such a replacement for a man who, as a result of the events of the past months, was very much identified with the protection of Lebanese/Maronite integrity, especially when they did so before the end of Chamoun's mandate. It had seemed to the brokers of the compromise that the only hope for a solution lay in an immediate replacement of Chamoun, and that as a replacement, Shihab was the obvious choice. He was acceptable to the Americans, and to the two main sides, it seemed, of the political equation within Lebanon, in terms of the political elites. As it turned out, this meant that, given the powers of Sunni political leaders over their followers, there was no major dissatisfaction voiced with the compromise from that quarter since it did mean the masses had achieved the removal of Chamoun, which had become their main goal.

However, there was a discernible sense in which the Maronite masses felt that they were the losers when Shihab was installed as President, because he had popularly been interpreted amongst the Maronite masses at the height of the crisis as being in the opposition camp. It was made worse by the fact that Shihab appointed an ex-rebel leader, Rachid Abd Al Hamid Karami, as his Prime Minister, in a move that made political sense in terms of the overall political map of Lebanon but created great resentments amongst the Maronite

masses, who saw it as an affront because of the way that it conflicted with their established mythology about their role in the state. It is thus fair to say that from the perspective of a significant element in the Maronite community, given the independence of that community from its political leadership, there was no resolution of the crisis at this point - something which was to have repercussions in the aftermath of the withdrawal of American troops.

It can be argued in this context that the outcome, being generated from outside and not unanimously agreed upon from within, was as doomed as all the other 'solutions' to Lebanon's past problems. The crises of 1860, 1958 and the later ones of 1976 all bear striking similarities to one another in terms of the creation of an internally generated crisis and a solution brokered from outside Lebanon that did not address the roots of the crisis, and so was vulnerable to breaking down. The Lebanese did not seem to be willing to pinpoint the shortcomings of their system of administration and government as a prelude to evolving a solution. The Amine Gemayel draft plan of 1987 comes in the line of those compromise agreements but could not develop into a document generating consensus, although according to Walid Khalidi, it incorporated a formulation of Lebanese Arab identity as well as dismantling the sectarian system within ten or fifteen years.⁹⁸¹ In 1990, the solution to the most recent crisis, the Ta'if accord, was again based on the 1943 pact and the communal divisions incorporated in the heart of that pact, even if it was modified in certain significant ways. But it failed to confront the issue of reworking the differential community mythologies. Under the terms of the Ta'if accord, the Muslims and the Christians, essentially the Maronites, were placed on an equal footing within the state, after the weakening of the Maronite community in particular in the recent civil war. The accord thus shared out several of the prerogatives of the office of President under the constitution to the ministerial cabinet as a whole. The parliament also gained some added power, notably in terms of the office of the Speaker of the House. But these new arrangements still enshrine the idea of a relatively static communal base for Lebanon's administration and government, even if the communal balance of power is now rather different.

⁹⁸¹ Walid Khalidi, (ed.) Leila Fawaz, State and Society in Lebanon, The Centre for Lebanese Studies, Oxford, 1991, p. 34.

Effectively the state is now led by three heads in what has come to be termed popularly the 'three presidents'. There is still a Maronite President, and a Sunni Prime Minister, but there is now a Shi'ite Speaker of the House, and all three need to be consulted on every decision. In theory, even in practice, this means that the Maronite/Christian position can now be outvoted by a Muslim combination.⁹⁸²

Outside powers might be forgiven for not realising the fundamental flaws of that pact and the implications of assuming an essentially static communal mix. But few in Lebanon itself, and none of any real influence, except, of course, the new actors like the Shiites themselves, have been willing to point out that this is not the case; that the actors in the Lebanese drama had changed in status and number; that new actors had arrived and gained importance.⁹⁸³ For reasons of individual and communal self-interest, the essentially temporary nature of these solutions do not strike the protagonists, and the creation of a genuinely national identity is postponed yet again. Ever since 1943, and more than ever in 1995, the Lebanese have been running in circles, with each community attempting to get hold of an advantage in power over other communities, while still preserving the fiction of the 1943 compromise.

An examination of the Ta'if accord in operation underlines the continuing weakness of seeking consensus in Lebanon by continuing to use confessionally-based communities as the basis for the administration of the state. At one level this could be said to be indicated by the perception of a continuing need for threats or even actual force to enforce that consensus. Perhaps of greater significance, it is worth noting that the aftermath of 1990 sees a repetition of the chronic 'mistake' of Lebanese presidents. They have consistently tried to break the Lebanese constitution in order to renew their six year term of office and this has equally consistently led to crisis. If not all those crises have been on the scale of that in 1958, no renewal has been devoid of problems. Bishara Al Khoury falsified the parliamentary election of 25 May

⁹⁸² For the Ta'if accord see Lebanon: Official Gazette, Special Issue No. 39, Constitutional Law No. 18, 27 September 1990, p. 2.

⁹⁸³ Nabih Bezzi, the Shi'ite Speaker of the House on the main current political issues, *Al Hayat*, 31 August 1995; *Al Hayat*, 1 September 1995.

1947 so as to get enough support to amend Article 49 of the constitution. President Chamoun increased the number of deputies from 44 to 66 and for the same reason, rigged the election of those deputies. Fouad Shihab did, in fact, go at the end of his term of office, but allowed tensions to rise in Lebanon associated with the speculation that he intended to seek an amendment of Article 49.

In 1976, President Sulayman Frangieh also tried to renew his term of office. In 1995, President Elias Hrawi sought to follow in the path of his predecessors, seeking an amendment of Article 49 to allow a renewal of his term of office despite an urgent need to bring to an end such a corrupt regime. His actions were greeted with despair and resentment by a good proportion of the Maronite community and many of its leaders, including the Patriarch. Nor was it a development universally welcomed by other leaders from other communities. The Lebanese press underlined this in articles such as those in L'Orient Le Jour of 16 March 1995. This all served to indicate that the communal basis of rule in Lebanon, surrounded as it is with the emotions generated by confessional loyalties and prejudices, cannot be sufficiently flexible to allow for the evolution and modernisation of the state. Thus when stresses and tensions arise, and especially those internally generated and bringing with them economic and social hardships, the political dimension is strained and the political formula for government put under pressure. At times that pressure is strong enough to provoke outright crisis to the point of civil war; at other times, it proves possible to defuse it internally. Partly, this is regulated by the will to invoke outside intervention of the various communities, and their success in doing so, at such times of crisis, and in so doing, replaying the 'patron-client' game identified by Buheiry.

Each confessional community in Lebanon has identified its external patron; sometimes these may change, but often there is a considerable baggage of history carried with that patron-client relationship, as in the case of the relationship between the Maronite community and France. The significance of this is that the baggage of history has a tendency to mean that the Lebanese clients at least bring an emotional, rather than a logical

dimension of the patron's self interest in becoming involved, or abstaining from becoming involved, in a particular crisis - and therefore any accurate assessment by the Lebanese clients of the potential for escalation of a crisis resulting from outside intervention that justifies itself by claiming a response to an internal request for help. It is in this light that it can be argued that the only lasting solution for the Lebanese is likely to lie in building a state, instead of continuing a consensus; that a secular base for the state is the only likely remedy for all the problems of sectarianism.⁹⁸⁴ For instance, it would promote a uniformity of education, and one that might be able to include not only the influences and learning of the West, but also key ideas of Arab culture and thinking. According to Amine Gemayel in his book Rebuilding Lebanon, the need today is to promote a common political culture based on a historical Lebanese identity and to let this outweigh any other means of identification for citizens of Lebanon⁹⁸⁵ It is however worth pointing out that during his term of office, he failed to implement such a solution, and there currently seems little likelihood of a swift achievement of such a development of common values, common participation between the communities in political, social and economic developments in Lebanon. Such could only be based on a development of a common mythology, and this currently seems a distant prospect.

⁹⁸⁴ See Dominique Chevallier, 'Comment l'Etat a-t-il, été compress au Liban', in Nadim Shehadi & Dana Haffar Mills (eds), Lebanon. A History of Conflict and Consensus, I.B. Tauris, London 1988, p. 222.

⁹⁸⁵ There is recognition of a need for a new National Pact, but no leaders or communities seem willing to work out its terms.

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- A. Documents and Other Unpublished sources
- B. Newspapers, Journals and Other Published sources
- C. Oral Interviews

II Secondary Sources

- A. Books
- B. Articles
- C. Unpublished Material:
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152. Emile Tyan

Born about 1897; Maronite. Educated French School of Law; graduated as a lawyer and studied thereafter in Paris. Joined Lebanese Civil Service (Department of Justice). Resigned his post as Magistrate in about 1949 in protest against the laxity of the administration of justice under President Bechara el-Khoury. Reappointed under President Chamoun and rose to the top of the magistracy. Appointed Minister of Justice for a few months in 1957. Honest. Of the "formation française," efficient in his job but not an important political figure.

153. Abdallah Yafi

Born 1899, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Jesuit University, Beirut, and in France. Married. Lawyer and politician. Several times Minister. Prime Minister 1936 and again 1951-52 and 1953-54, and in 1956, when he was in effect dismissed by President Chamoun after the Beirut meeting of Heads of Arab States, over the question of breaking of relations with Britain and France. A comparatively honest but weak politician, who grew increasingly restive under the Bechara el-Khoury régime, but in 1956 fell under the spell of Saeb Salam and allowed himself to be dragged into the pro-Nasser and anti-West school, and has now become a leader of the opposition to President Chamoun's re-election.

154. Maurice Zouain

Born Mameltein (near Junieh) 1902. Belongs to a leading Maronite family of Fetouh-Kesrouan, Mt. Lebanon. On the death of his father, George Zouain (who played a leading part in the history of pre-1914 Mt. Lebanon), in 1952, resigned from his post in the Lebanese administration and entered politics. Deputy (for Mt. Lebanon) since 1953, and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber. Was once a Cabinet Minister (Public Education). Medium intelligence; French education. Married.

155. Simon Zoucin

Born 1910, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Served all his life in Gendarmerie; now head of it with rank of colonel. Honest and loyal. Visited the United States officially for two months in 1956.

156. Constantin Zurak

Born 1908, Damascus; Greek Orthodox; educated American University of Beirut and United States. Married. Professor at American University of Beirut; then president of Syrian University, Damascus, which post he relinquished in 1952 to become administration vice-president of the American University of Beirut, of which he acted as President from 1955 to 1957. Reverted as Professor. Nationalist; honest and capable.

Religious Personalities

Maronite

1. Monseigneur Antoine Abed

Born 1901. Archbishop of Tripoli since 1931. Closely associated with the French but friendly to this Embassy. Also interested in commerce.

2. Monseigneur Pierre Dib

Born about 1885. Archbishop of Cairo but lives mainly at the Patriarch's seat at Bkerké. Learned and reputedly virtuous. A member of the commission which conducts the Patriarch's affairs and a possible successor to him.

3. Monseigneur Elias Farah

A Maronite, formerly Archimandrite representing the Maronite Patriarch in Alexandria (Wakil Patriarch). Born about 1907. Studied at the Jesuit School in Beirut. A good speaker in Arabic and comes from South Lebanon, Kfarbo'hum. Appointed Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus in May 1954.

4. Monseigneur Antoine Khorais

Maronite Archbishop of Sidon and Dar-el-Kamar. Born about 1903. Before his appointment to Sidon in 1950 he was bishop on the patriarchal staff at Bkerke. Recently returned from a period of study and research in the Vatican.

5. Monseigneur Jean Maroun

Maronite Dean of St. George's Cathedral of Beirut, he was born at Beit Meri in about 1913. He was at one time principal of the Collège de la Sagesse in Beirut, then Patriarchal Vicar in Paris, and has been a Lebanese delegate to U.N.E.S.C.O. since 1954. He is highly educated, speaks French and a little English. A very loyal friend of Hamid Frangié (No. 48) although his brother Bechara Maroun, a journalist, supports President Chamoun.

6. His Beatitude Patriarch Boulos Meouschi

Born 1892. Jezzín. After living many years in the United States, was Archbishop of Tyre. Was Chairman of Apostolic Commission to manage the affairs of the Patriarchate during the extreme old age of Patriarch Arida. Has shown himself a vindictive and intriguing leader; trying to make himself popular with Moslem leaders. Several Christian leaders believe, however, that he is going too far in this policy, forgetting that he is a Christian religious chief and not a political leader. Violently opposed to Chamoun and, of course, a strong supporter of Sheikh Bechara el-Khoury, who is his relative. Indirect pressure from Rome forced him to modify this attitude in the spring of 1957. Speaks English.

7. Monseigneur Abdallah Noujaim

Maronite, born 1904 at Baalbek. Studied for a short period in Rome. For the last few years has been partly in charge of the Maronite Community in Baalbek. During the British occupation (1941-45) always entertained very good relations with the British military authorities. Supports President Chamoun's re-election. Known as the "Brigand Bishop" since he always carries a pistol.

8. Monseigneur Ignace Ziadé

Born 1906. Archbishop of Aleppo, 1945, and Beirut, 1952. An educated and pleasant personality who is also a member of the commission managing the Patriarchate. In private conversation very ready to advocate the need for a strong Western policy in the Middle East.

Greek Catholic

9. Monseigneur Philippe Nabaa

Born about 1905; studied at Rome. Now Archbishop of Beirut. A genial and cultivated prelate who shows friendliness to this Embassy and looks Westward.

10. His Beatitude Patriarch Maximos Sayegh

Born 1878, Aleppo. Archbishop of Tyre, 1917, and of Beirut, 1933, and Patriarch since 1947. Popular among his small community. Anti-Communist and believes in the need for Western support of the Christian position in the Lebanon.

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Greek Orthodox

11. Monseigneur Elie Karam

Born 1896. Archbishop of Mount Lebanon, living just outside Beirut. Maintains friendly relations with all foreigners but generally regarded as a Communist sympathiser and known to have close connections with the Soviet Embassy (e.g., he celebrated a mass for the repose of Stalin's soul). Visited Russia several times.

12. Monseigneur Elie Sallby

Born 1876. Archbishop of Beirut since 1935. A smooth-tongued ecclesiastic. He is a tough element of resistance to the all too pervasive Communism in the Greek Orthodox Church. Visited Soviet Union, 1956, and has always been friendly to this Embassy.

Syrian Catholic

13. Cardinal Gabriel I^{er} Tappouni

Born 1879. Mosul. Consecrated Bishop, 1913; Archbishop of Aleppo, 1921; Patriarch, 1929; Cardinal, 1933. Worked closely with the French who supported him during the Mandate as a counterpoise to the Maronites. A strong champion of Chamoun, and of Christian rights in Lebanon and Syria. Despite his pro-French reputation makes friendly gestures to this Embassy.

Syrian Orthodox

14. Monseigneur Jakoub Severin

Born in Batali, Iraq, in 1912, he was elected Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Syria and the Lebanon in 1957. He studied in Mosul Clerical School and was sent to Beirut as an instructor at the Syrian orphanage. In 1933 he was ordained and appointed President of the St. Ignatius School of Malabar, India. He returned to Mosul in 1946 where he was nominated member of the Sharia Court. In 1950 he was appointed Archbishop in Lebanon and Damascus. He is a well-known poet and historian and has written several books on early Christianity and Syrian Church history. Speaks English.

Armenian Catholic

15. Cardinal Grégoire Pierre XV Agagianian

Born 1895, Tiflis; studied at Rome. Ordained 1917; consecrated Bishop 1935; Patriarch of Armenian Catholics throughout the world 1937; appointed Cardinal 1945. A cultivated man of small stature but imposing presence. Speaks English and is in touch with English-speaking Catholics throughout the world. Despite his Russian origins, a vigorous opponent of Communism, and unites in his person many opposing forces of East and West (political, ecclesiastical and geographical) and is therefore generally regarded, perhaps somewhat optimistically, as *papabile*. Appointed to Vatican in 1958.

Armenian Orthodox

16. His Beatitude Patriarch Zareh Paylasian, Catholicos of Cilicia

Elected in 1956 despite opposition from a delegation from Russian Armenia led by Catholicos Vasken I of Echmiadzin. A strong Tashnaq, not well supported by other factions among the Armenians. A strong character.

17. Monseigneur Khoren Paroyan

Born about 1905, Cyprus. Came to the Lebanon at the age of 15 and is now Archbishop of the

Lebanon. He remains a British subject and still visits his parents every year in Cyprus. He is a friendly individual of no great intellectual stature. Said to have been antagonised by the Tashnaq (Right-wing) tactics at the election of the Cilician Catholicos in February 1956.

Jew

18. Benzion Lechtman

Born about 1891 in Poland. Came to Beirut 1935 and has acted as Rabbi since 1948. Even the Jewish community regard him as colourless. Acting Grand Rabbi in Lebanon of Jewish community.

Sunni Moslem

19. Sheikh Mohammed Alaya

Born 1883, Beirut; primary education only, but after many years in religious courts is experienced in Shia law. Twice married and twice divorced. Appointed Mufti of the Lebanese Republic 1952 as a result of pressure on President el-Khoury by Abdallah Yafi and the Salam family, who have since forced him into declared opposition to President Chamoun. Honest but weak and unintelligent.

20. Sheikh Hussein el-Khatib

Shia Moslem Qadi at present acting as head of the Shia Jafari Shari Court in Beirut.

Druze

21. Sheikh Mohamed Abou Chakra

Sheikh Akl of the Druze Community elected in the summer of 1948; about 55 years old; married and lives at Amatour. Sheikh Mohamed is not of a high education but a good speaker. Before his election he was the owner of a garage of transport in Damascus. He is regarded as a "foster child" of Kamal Jumblat. He is shrewd and a practical Druze, not over his religion, but over his Druze internal political party.

22. Sheikh Raschid Hamadeh

Sheikh Akl of the Druze Community elected in September 1954; about 60 years old; married and an inhabitant of Baaklin. Sheikh Rashid is a *licencié en droit* from the French School of Law in Beirut. He comes from a leading Druze family. Once a magistrate in the Lebanese Court of Appeal, but dismissed on the charge of accepting a bribe; he was in fact caught red-handed by Fuad Ammoun, then his chief.

23. Mokadem Ali Mizher

Born 1896. Cousin of Kemal Jumblatt. Formerly a lawyer with political ambitions. He was appointed Kadi of the Druzes in Lebanon in 1945. He speaks English and professes the traditional Druze friendship for the British but is probably a rather sly intriguer. Suffers from poor health.

Obituary

Mohamed Salan (No. 107 of 1957 list).

Religious Personalities :

Monseigneur Augustin Boustani (No. 2 of 1957 list).
Sayed Abdel Hussein Sharafeddin (No. 19 of 1957 list).

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LEADING PERSONALITIES IN THE LEBANON

Sir George Middleton to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received May 9)

(No. 68. Confidential) *Beirut,*
 Sir, *May 2, 1958.*

I have the honour to transmit herewith the annual report on Leading Personalities in the Lebanon.

I have, &c.

G. H. MIDDLETON.

Enclosure

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1. Ibrahim Abdel Aal

Born 1917, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Jesuit University, Beirut, and French School of Engineering, Beirut. Family of Egyptian origin. Engineer by training; civil servant by adoption. Formerly Director-General of Public Works; now Director-General of Concessionary Companies. Intelligent, hard-working and, as far as is known, honest, but without many social graces.

2. Robert Abela

Born 1908, Sidon; Roman Catholic; educated Jesuit University. Married. Owner-editor of (Arab language) newspaper, *Zaman*. Manager for Beirut of Arab News Agency. Now in third year as president of Lebanese Press Syndicate. Not a strong man but co-operative and useful. A British subject (Maltese origin—dual nationality) who speaks no English but is instinctively pro-British. Stood but failed in the 1957 elections.

3. Munir Abou-Fadel

A Greek Orthodox originally from Ain Anoub (Mount Lebanon). Born about 1908. He served in the Palestine Police from 1930 to May 1945 and subsequently collaborated with the Arabs, under the ex-Mufti of Palestine, fighting the Jews. In 1948 he returned to Lebanon where he started a trade and banking business. He has gradually lost his anti-British attitude and has become friendly with President Chamoun. Elected for the first time as Deputy for Aley (Mount Lebanon) in 1957, and is now President of the Oil Committee of the Chamber. He is clever and vain. He and his wife both speak excellent English.

4. Halim Abou Izzeddin

Born 1913, Mount Lebanon; Druze; educated at American University, Beirut. Bachelor. Lebanese Foreign Service; after serving in Cairo transferred to Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1950; he became head of the Political Section in 1951 and Chief of Protocol in 1953. Acting Director-General, Ministry of Information, March 1954-March 1955. In April 1955 transferred back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Head of Protocol; later appointed Assistant Secretary-General but on being returned to his former appointment as Head of the Political Section in January 1956 he ceased coming to the office in protest. Honest, intelligent and has political ambitions. Visited United Kingdom at invitation of Her Majesty's Government, August 1954. A Lebanese delegate to Afro-Asian Conference, Bandoeng, April 1955. Appointed Ambassador to India in 1957. Co-operative with this Embassy. Speaks good English.

5. Joseph Abou-Khater

Born Zahlé about 1905; Greek Catholic; educated Jesuit University, Beirut, and studied law in France. Married. Lawyer. A leader of the

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anti-Skaf faction in Zahlé. Formerly Lebanese Minister in Mexico; appointed Minister at Rome, 1953, raised to Ambassador, 1956. Clever and politically ambitious.

6. Camille Aboussouan

Roman Catholic, son of the late Nagib Aboussouan, one time Chief Justice of Lebanon, though his family originated in Jerusalem. Born about 1910, French education, highly cultured. His marriage with a Sidnaoui girl was subsequently annulled. Member of the P.E.N. Club and Lebanese delegate to U.N.E.S.C.O. He speaks very little English but exquisite French, is clever, but a crashing bore.

7. Ibrahim Ahdab

Born Beirut 1902; Sunni Moslem; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married. Former contractor and engineer. Lebanese Minister at Ankara since 1947. Honest and intelligent but indecisive. Transferred to Berne in February 1954. Sent to Ankara in February 1955 as Special Envoy mainly to prepare Lebanese President's visit to Turkey and to study on the spot development of situation arising out of Baghdad Pact. Appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James's in July 1955.

8. Bechir Ahwar

A Druze of Qornayil, near Hammama, Mount Lebanon. Born 1910, educated at the French Collège des Frères. Has been several times a Deputy and three times a Minister. An honest and moderate non-party politician, he was made Minister of Justice in Sami Solh's Cabinet of March 1958. Married, speaks only French.

9. Nazim Akkari

Born 1898, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. The best civil servant in the Lebanon. Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office since 1945. Temporarily Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, September 1952. Honest, shrewd and experienced. A most useful and helpful source of advice and information.

10. Georges Akl

A Maronite of Damour. He was born in 1904 and received a French education. He belonged at one time to the Eddé Brothers' National *blac* until he quarrelled with them in 1954. He has been a Deputy of Mount Lebanon since 1953 and was a member of Rachid Karamé's Cabinet in September 1955. Serves on the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber. He now supports President Chamoun. He is married and speaks only French.

11. Sheikh Najib Alamuddin

Druze. Born about 1917. Married. Of Lebanese origin, he migrated to Palestine and was in Government service there for some time. Educated at American University of Beirut and thereafter did a year at Exeter College studying the British secondary educational system. Has worked for some years in the Educational Department of the Jordan Government. Returned to Beirut from Palestine after the war of 1948-49 and has been successful in commerce. Is now managing director of Middle East Airlines and of the Middle East Air Servicing Corporation, and therefore an important figure in the building up of British interests in civil aviation in the Middle East. An able executive with a Western outlook, and pro-British (he is one of the most active members of the Board of Governors of the projected English School), but his own interests come first. He is rumoured to have political ambitions, but denies it.

12. Naim Amiouni

Born 1916. Worked for some seven years with Iraq Petroleum Company, from which he gained respect for British administrative methods. A career diplomat, has served in Russia and Brazil. Assistant Director of Economic Section of Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1953-55. Appointed Director at end of 1955 and promoted to rank of Minister Plenipotentiary. Excellent linguist. Able and ambitious, he is co-operative with this Embassy although his political ideas are Leftish. Wife is intelligent and attractive. Appointed Minister in Colombia in 1957.

13. Fouad Ammoun

Born 1899, Deir el-Kamar; Maronite; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married. Former judge. Formerly Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with rank of Ambassador, until November 1956, when he resigned in order to be able to stand for election to the Legislature in 1957. He was in fact defeated in the election by Emile Boustani (No. 27). Since this failure he has drifted further and further towards the Salam-Yafi group, and is now among the leaders of the Left-wing Christian Opposition. Well educated with a broad mind and good grasp of his profession. When a civil servant, he showed himself friendly and helpful to this embassy within his powers but not a strong character. Visited the United Kingdom in April 1956 as guest of the British Council.

14. Hussein Aoueihi

Born 1902, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Greek Catholic College, Beirut. Married. Of humble origins but while still young made a large fortune in Saudi Arabia, where he still has many contacts. He has many other business interests, including, it is said, smuggling. Formerly Deputy, 1947-51. In 1951 formed caretaker Cabinet to supervise elections which he did successfully and honestly. Still regarded as a possible "non-political" Prime Minister but somewhat discredited for his financial connections with the family of President el-Khoury and with Saudi Arabia, whose paymaster he is well known to be. Clever but an unprincipled opportunist. Took a leading part in combating Baghdad Pact and to this end joined hands with the Opposition, notable as prime mover of the Congress of Organisations and Parties (Moslem, Arab Nationalist and fellow-travelling).

15. Carlos Arida

Maronite of Tripoli, born about 1922, son of a wealthy Christian family of North Lebanon. Some education at the Jesuit School, Beirut. Is part owner of ARLEB Corporation and recently, in partnership with his brother Alphonse, bought shares in Lebanon International Airways. An active young man who has business interests in various Arab States. Despite being a Maronite, he recently married, according to Greek Orthodox doctrines, the ex-wife of Ibrahim Sursock. He is a very able business man, who enjoys presidential support in his enterprises.

16. Georg Arida

Born about 1898, in Australia; Maronite; educated abroad, mainly in Australia, Canada and Mexico. Married. A British subject, and formerly Honorary British Vice-Consul at Tripoli, having returned to his family home there and opened a textile factory which earned him great wealth during the Second World War. His wife has social ambitions (e.g., his daughter married Sheikh Khalil el-Khoury (No. 85) but a Papal annulment was obtained in January 1956) and they are anxious to cut a dash (e.g., their

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purchase after the war of Hitler's yacht which they sold at a heavy loss). But he himself is a mild and amiable character with little personality.

17. Fernand Arsanios

Born 1898, Batroun; Maronite; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married. Judge. *Persona non grata* under President el-Khoury. Appointed Procureur Général of the Supreme Court in February 1953; well known for his honesty and political independence. Serves, with President Chamoun (to whom he is sincerely devoted), as principal opposition target, owing to his obligation to enforce disciplinary measures on the more active or outspoken of the President's detractors.

18. Emir Megid Arslan

Born about 1908, Choueifat; Druze; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Anti-German during the war; helped resist Vichy France. Several times Minister since 1943 as Druze representative, loyal to President el-Khoury; bitter opponent of Kemal Joumbblatt. Again Minister in the second Yafi Cabinet under the Chamoun régime. Accompanied President on his visit to South America in May 1954. Repeatedly represented the Druzes in Cabinets since 1943, and continuously since 1954, mostly as Minister of Defence. Again Minister of Defence in the Cabinets of Sami Solh (1954), Rachid Keramé (1955) and Abdallah Yafi (1956). Minister of Health and Agriculture in Sami Solh Government of November 1956, back to the Ministry of Defence again in August 1957, and then once more to Agriculture in March 1958.

A cheerful, uneducated and highly venal feudal chieftain with a boyish passion for dressing-up and firearms. In the habit of smuggling cattle into Israel.

Having lost his wife in 1953, he remarried in February 1956.

19. Ahmed el-Assad

Born 1905, Taibé, South Lebanon; Shia Moslem; primary education only. Married to the clever daughter (who never appears in public) of his uncle, from whom he has inherited the feudal paramourcy in South Lebanon. Several times Minister since 1941; President of the Chamber of Deputies from 1951 until October 1953. The election of his rival, Adel Osseiran, as President of the Chamber since then and the appointment, twice, of another rival, Kazem el-Khalil, as Minister, made him side with the Opposition. He attacked the President personally, organising meetings, &c., in which operations he was financed by Saudi money. A reconciliation between him and the President in February 1956 did not last long and he began again his intrigues and plots against President Chamoun, but one must admit that this attitude is somewhat justified by the President's constant hostile attitude towards him. Although he failed in the 1957 elections, he is now completely in the hands of the Opposition and keeps in constant touch with the Egyptian representative, who keeps him well supplied with money. Suspected of being one of the clandestine channels used by the U.A.R. to send arms into the Lebanon. He and his son, Deputy Kamal, during the Suez crisis, aligned themselves openly against us and they were both among the Deputies who asked for the severance of diplomatic relations with Britain and France. He undermines authority by all lucrative means, including the sale of parliamentary seats and smuggling on the Israel border. At one time (1957) he maintained close touch with the Americans and was thought to be under their protection.

20. Assad el-Assad

Born about 1915; married. Shia Moslem from Taibé (South Lebanon) and a member of the

powerful South Lebanon family of the el-Assads (Ahmed el-Assad is his father-in-law). Educated American University of Beirut; appointed Director-General of the Ministry of Information soon after the 1939-45 war and still holds the post. Was suspended in 1951 for corrupt practices but recovered his post through political intervention. Opportunist, and not friendly to us.

21. Ali Bazzi

A Shia of Bint-Jebail, South Lebanon, for which he is Deputy. Born about 1905, he received a primary education and then studied law in Damascus. He is a violent Arab Nationalist and a loyal supporter of Hamid Frangié (No. 48). He speaks only Arabic. He is married but his wife does not go out. With Takiéddin Solh (No. 136) he forms a well-known tandem.

22. Raif Bellama

Born 1897, Beirut; Maronite; educated American University, Beirut. Married. Lecturer in bacteriology at American University, Beirut. Minister of Education, 1949. Appointed Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League in 1953. Witty and a good speaker but a political light-weight. Appointed Lebanese Ambassador to Rio de Janeiro in 1957, but owing to budgetary difficulties, has not yet been able to take up his new post.

23. Rashid Beydoun

Born about 1897, Beirut; Shia Moslem; primary education. Married. Deputy for Beirut since 1943, except for one failure to be re-elected in 1953. Became Minister (for the second time) in Sami Solh's Government of March 1958 when he was given the portfolio of National Defence. A genial Moslem hack politician of no great significance. Has founded, partly with his own money, a large Shia Moslem college in Beirut.

24. Amin Beyhum

Born 1907, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married. Elected Deputy 1951 but has since greatly disappointed his electors and has never spoken in the Chamber. Did not stand for the 1953 or 1957 legislative elections.

25. Nazih Bisri

Sunni Moslem of Sidon. Born about 1908. Married, and a graduate of the American University of Beirut. Enjoys popularity in Sidon and was elected Deputy in 1953. Was Minister of Health and National Economy from September 1955 to March 1956, then Minister of Health and Social Affairs from March 1956 to November 1956. Failed in the 1957 elections.

26. Jawad Boulos

Born 1900, Tripoli; Maronite; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married. Deputy and Minister for Foreign Affairs under French Mandate. Now an unsuccessful and disgruntled ex-politician posing as an elder statesman, ready to resume office *pour sauver la patrie*. Engaged in writing an interminable History of the Near East (he has now reached about 3,000 n.c.) about which, as most other things, he is a crashing bore. Has, since 1955, put himself under the wing of the United States Embassy in Beirut, and is even spoken of as a possible presidential candidate.

27. Emile Boustani

Born 1907, Sidon; Maronite (with Protestant intervals when it suits him); educated American University of Beirut and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Married to a pleasant redhead. A self-made contractor of great wealth. Head of the C.A.T.

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(Contracting and Trading) Company with ramifications in the Arab countries and Persian Gulf. Deputy for Mt. Lebanon since 1951. Strong Pan-Arabist posing as a "candid friend" of Britain with the accent on "candid." Anxious to be President of the Republic, he makes his commercial interests serve his political ambitions and *vice versa*. His main line is to gain popularity and notoriety by consistent opposition to the powers that be. The *enfant terrible* of Lebanese politics, he should not be trusted out of eyesight or earshot but his skin is so thick that he is quite an engaging rogue. Speaks excellent English. Appointed Minister of Public Works and of Planning under the Premiership of Abdallah Yafi on March 19, 1956, but threw his weight about so much that he only lasted two months. He did, however, insist on keeping the post of Head of the independent Reconstruction Office in which, if by unorthodox means, he succeeded in doing a good deal to repair the ravages of the earthquake of March 16, 1956. (He resigned from this in the summer of 1957). Member of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.

28. Fouad Houstani

A Maronite, born about 1908, married and a graduate of the French Université de Saint Joseph in Beirut. A good writer with an excellent command of classical Arabic and author of the Lebanese Encyclopaedia. Honorary doctor of letters of the French University. Began life in Rachaya, South Lebanon, where he served for some time as a junior civil servant before joining the Ministry of Education. In 1955 he was appointed President of the new Lebanese University. He is a strong Lebanese Nationalist and completely loyal to President Chamoun.

29. Nicolas Bustras

Born 1896, Beirut; Greek Orthodox; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. A rich socialite of a rather effeminate type. Entered official life as Chief of Protocol to the President of the Republic, 1937. Resigned 1938. Re-appointed 1943; later transferred in same capacity to Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1949. Holds rank of Minister Plenipotentiary. Active in intrigues leading to fall of President el-Khoury in September 1952 and now repeating the operation against President Chamoun. A quarrelsome chatterbox but intelligent and well informed, with pleasant social manners.

30. Fouad Chader

Born 1910. Has spent the greater part of his career in the Customs, where he established a reputation for honesty and good administration. Has been Director of Civil Aviation since 1953. Is friendly and intelligent.

31. Joseph Chader

Born about 1908, an Armenian Catholic, lawyer and leading Phalangist. French secondary education. He has been a Deputy since 1953 and was made Minister for Planning in March 1958. He is the first Phalangist and the first Armenian to become a Minister. He is clever, apparently honest, and brother of Fouad Chader (No. 30).

32. Camille Nimr Chamoun

Born 1901, Deir el-Kamar; Maronite; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married to the former Zelfa Tabet, an attractive woman of mixed Irish and Lebanese extraction; his sons have been educated in England. President of the Republic since September 1952; formerly lawyer and politician. Minister of the Interior, September 1943; arrested by the

French November 1943, since when strongly prejudiced against France. Lebanese Minister in London 1944-47. Minister of Finance 1947 and of the Interior 1947 to May 1948. The most consistent leader of the Opposition to President el-Khoury from 1948 to September 1952, when he was himself elected President, defeating Hamid Frangié. He proved for a long time either too weak or too idle to pursue a persistent policy on the domestic front, and was a disappointment to the Opposition and the despair of the old political bosses whom he refused to consult, relying largely on his personal popularity and his talent for intrigue. In matters of foreign policy, his British connections and superficial Anglicisms helped win him the reputation of being a British tool, though in fact his policy, while wholeheartedly supporting us in any conflict with Communism, was basically Lebanese and pro-Arab. In the events of November 1956 he took a surprisingly and encouragingly strong line, refusing to allow Lebanon to be stampeded into a break with the West and adhesion to the extremist and Russophile course of Syria and Egypt, while upholding the basic claims of the Arabs and the authority of the United Nations. He proved strong enough at this time to dismiss a pro-Egyptian Government and bring in a strong and neutral one. In the past year he has become increasingly the target of jealous, disgruntled and disappointed politicians under the pretext of opposition to his pro-Western foreign policy and continued support of Charles Malik. His attractive personality makes excellent first impressions. Speaks excellent English.

33. Joseph Nimr Chamoun

Born 1896, Deir el-Kamar; Maronite; educated Collège des Frères and American University of Beirut. Married. Brother of President Camille Chamoun. Director-General of Public Works 1944-48. Director-General of Inspection Department since June 1952, for which role he is utterly unsuited. An industrious subordinate. While carrying on with his job at the Inspection Department was also appointed acting Chief of the Telephone Department in 1954.

34. R. P. Charles de Chamussy

Born about 1903; Père Recteur (Head) of St. Joseph's University (Jesuits). He has charming manners and is always friendly to this embassy, but he is a convinced French Jesuit and consistent in his opposition (and obstructionism) to the scheme for a British School in the Lebanon.

35. Joseph Charbel

Born 1896, Zahlé; Maronite; educated Collège de la Sagesse. Bachelor. Procureur Général, 1943-52. Now President of the Conseil d'Etat. Victim of an attack by a member of the P.P.S., as a result of which he lay in hospital for several months. Honest and well educated but without much moral courage.

36. Emir Abdel-Aziz Chehab

Born 1908 at Baabda, Mt. Lebanon. Maronite. Great grandson of Emir Bechir Chehab II. Educated at Jesuit College. Formerly a magistrate, then Mohafez of North Lebanon and later of South Lebanon. Appointed Director-General of the Interior in August 1955. Very clever, cunning and an opportunist. Helpful to us.

37. Emir Farid Chehab

Born 1909; Maronite; educated privately. Head of Counter Espionage Department under the French Mandate. Imprisoned by Free French for contacts with Vichy, 1942-43. Re-entered Police Department, 1943, and became Director of Sûreté

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of his political hopes, he turned (in 1956) to increasingly open opposition to the President and he began to ally himself with the pro-Egyptian elements. Allowed himself to be appointed Chairman of an "Arab Rally" of prominent Arab personages whose aim was to support the cause of Colonel Nasser and the "liberated" Arab States against the West. This move recoiled on his head when the events of November 1956, and the subsequent rapid slide towards the left in Syria and Egypt, thoroughly alarmed Christian and moderate Lebanese. His political career was cut short by a severe cerebral haemorrhage in October 1957, necessitating surgical treatment in London. Although complete recovery is possible he is for the present out of political life.

49. Moussa de Freige

Born 1910, Beirut; Roman Catholic; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Has the hereditary papal title of Marquis which he likes to use. A wealthy socialite and race-horse owner, connected with the family of President el-Khoury and unpopular among Moslems. Had assumed responsibility for direction of *Le Jour* even before the death of his uncle, Michel Chiha, in December 1954. Speaks English.

50. Maurice Gemayel

Born 1910, Bikfaya; Maronite; educated Jesuit University and French School of Law, Beirut. Married. Lawyer. Leading Phalangist; cousin and brother-in-law of Pierre Gemayel (No. 44). Seeks to promote irrigation and electrical schemes. Relatively honest and intelligent.

51. Pierre Gemayel

Born about 1909, Bikfaya; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Leader of the Phalange Movement which affects extreme Christian and Lebanese nationalism in opposition to Moslem Pan-Arab ideas. One of the most vigorous reformist politicians outside the Chamber. Adopted a frank and courageous pro-Western attitude before, during and after the Suez affair and he and his party gained tremendously in Christian circles. A director of *Amal*. Visited United States in April 1958 for two months.

52. Colonel Jean Aziz Ghazi

Born 1900, Beirut; Maronite; educated Egypt and French Army Schools. Married to a French wife. Although next in seniority to General Chehab in Lebanese army has little to say in its affairs. A pleasant and vigorous personality, but discipline seems to irk him and he is inclined to rather loose anti-Western talk, which may reflect political ambitions and restlessness in his present job. Speaks English. In January 1954 was accused of preparing a military *coup* directed against his Commander-in-Chief and, as a result of this, was put on pension without being court-martialled.

53. Fouad Ghosn

Greek Orthodox of Koura; born 1912. Educated Ecole des Frères, Tripoli. A civil servant when his father, the late Nicolas Ghosn, was a permanent Deputy, both under the French mandate and after the Independence. Succeeded his father in the Chamber of Deputies. Appointed Minister of Education and of Posts and Telegraphs in the Yafi Cabinet of June 8, 1956, until November 16, 1956. Amiable but not very bright.

In the 1957 elections he threatened to be such a serious rival to Charles Malik that the Government (under American pressure) was forced to buy him off. He is therefore no longer a Deputy.

54. Farid Habib

Greek Orthodox from Kousba, Koura. Born 1908. Studied in Collège des Frères, Tripoli, and obtained degree of law from Jesuit School, Beirut, about 1934. Appointed magistrate in 1929, then Kaimakam (sub-district officer). Director of the Etat Civil from 1942; promoted Director-General December 1955. Fairly honest; friendly to us and co-operative. Well known in Greek Orthodox clerical circles. Married.

55. Ibrahim Haidar

Born 1888, Bekaa; Shia Moslem; educated locally and in France. Married. A tiny little man, known generally as "the giant of the Bekaa," whose bumptiousness and seniority in the Chamber gives his remarks more weight than they deserve, but a friend of the Hashemites and reasonably pro-British. A crafty and dishonest political intriguer who lost his last ministerial post for complicity in hashish smuggling, but who was re-elected Deputy for the Bekaa in 1957, and is a member of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee.

56. Selim Haidar

Born 1912, Baalbek; Shia Moslem. Doctor of law, Paris. Judge and poet turned politician, with an attractive and lively wife. Lebanese Minister in Tehran from 1948 till October 1952, when he became Cabinet Minister. Elected Deputy in 1953, but failed to be re-elected in 1957. An amiable and gentle but colourless figure with intellectual leanings. Minister of Agriculture and Posts and Telegraphs in the Sami Solh Cabinet of September 1954. Appointed Ambassador to Morocco in March 1958. Both he and his wife speak good French but no English.

57. Georges Haimari

Born 1898, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. "Chef de Cabinet" to the President of the Republic 1920-43 and from 1945. O.B.E. 1947. Chairman of Lebanese Government Commission on Palestine Refugees since 1948. Honest until a few years ago when he began to feather his own and his family's nest. Much under the influence of his father confessors but very friendly and helpful to the British. He is rather an old woman and his relations with President Chamoun, though strained at first, are now steadily improving. In 1958 he was appointed to the Department of Customs in succession to Moussa Mobarak (*q.v.*) without, however, relinquishing his duties at the Presidency.

58. Abdallah Hajj

Born 1898, Ghobairi (near Beirut); Shia Moslem, educated American University of Beirut. Married. School-teacher in Baghdad, when he was expelled, having been guilty of embezzlement. Then a politician. Elected Deputy in 1951 in the Opposition list, re-elected in 1953, but did not stand in the 1957 elections. Dishonest but dynamic. A rather unsavoury character with a nuisance value in politics. Proved to be very anti-Western and especially anti-British during the Suez affair; was one of the few who insisted that diplomatic relations with Britain and France should be severed.

59. Georges Hakim

Born 1914, Tripoli, Greek Orthodox; educated at American University of Beirut. Married to an American wife. Professor and politician; after teaching economics at the American University of Beirut joined Lebanese Foreign Service and served at Lebanese Legation at Washington and the permanent Lebanese delegation at the United Nations. Appointed Minister of Finance and National

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Economy October 1952; also Foreign Minister in February 1953. Honest and very intelligent, but stubborn and inclined to take an academic approach. Holds Left-wing economic views which he applies skilfully and with more political sense than appears at first sight. During the year 1954 underwent several surgical operations both in the Lebanon and in the United States. He recovered and although still weak resumed work as Assistant Secretary-General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until he was transferred to Bonn as Minister in 1955. Was recalled temporarily at the end of that year to advise in the negotiations with the I.P.C. Returned again from Bonn in April 1956 to become Minister of National Economy. Again returned to Bonn as Minister in April 1957.

60. Sabri Hamadé

Born about 1903, Bekaa; Shia Moslem; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married to daughter of Ahmed al-Assad (No. 19). Deputy for Baalbek-Hermel and former Minister. President of the Chamber of Deputies 1943-46 and 1948-51. A crude and venal politician whose local influence in the Bekaa gives him a nuisance value. A notorious hashish smuggler and one of the principal targets of the reformers.

61. Said Hamadé

Born about 1895, Mount Lebanon; Druze; educated American University of Beirut. Widower. Professor of applied economics, American University of Beirut. The Laski of the Lebanon (in moderation). Inspires the generally Left-wing economic views of such people as Georges Hakim and Kemal Jumblatt. But a very gentle revolutionary with much charm and a good command of English.

62. Joseph Harfouche

Born 1914, Beirut; Maronite. Unmarried. Educated Jesuit University. Served in French Consulate-General in Cairo until 1945, when he was attached to Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Has served as Chargé d'Affaires in Brussels and as Minister to the Holy See. Appointed head of the Political Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1953. Reappointed Lebanese Minister (subsequently upgraded to Ambassador) to the Holy See in 1955, and additionally to Portugal in 1957. Strongly anti-Communist and pro-Western in political outlook. Anxious to promote closer relations between Lebanon and the Western Powers. Intelligent, friendly but slightly superficial.

63. Chafik Hatem

Born 1910, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University and French School of Law, Beirut. Married. Judge. Senior and leading official of the Ministry of Justice until February 1953, when he became acting Director-General of that Ministry. An efficient subordinate who knows how to make himself useful, especially to President Chamoun, as a draftsman and expert of legal matters. Although fairly honest, he is a time-server and intriguer.

64. Charles Helou

Born 1912, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Lawyer and politician. Associated with *Le Jour*. Lebanese Minister to the Holy See 1947-49; Minister for Foreign Affairs 1951-52. Minister of Justice in the Government of Sami Solh of September 1954. Did not stand in the 1957 elections. An intelligent and patriotic Lebanese of the Christian persuasion with a close eye on his own advancement. Considered a possible presidential candidate in 1958.

65. Khalil Hibri

Born 1907, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated American University of Beirut. Married. Wealthy business man (real estate). Arab nationalist but makes no secret of his belief in co-operation with the British. Used to spend lavishly to ensure his popularity among lower class Moslems of Beirut, but has now lost much of his money and most of his popularity. Influential in Moslem organisations. Opposed A. Yafi in the 1953 elections but failed. Honest, loyal, generous but lazy. Won against Yafi in the 1957 elections and made Minister of Public Works in the Sami Solh Government of March 1958.

66. Joseph Hitti

Born 1896, Shemlan; Maronite; educated American University of Beirut, followed by medical studies in the United States and Canada. Married. Brother of Professor Philippe Hitti, the Arab historian, of Princeton University, United States. Elected Deputy in 1947; stood again in 1951 but failed. Honest and a good physician without much personality or presence. His judgment in political matters is somewhat distorted by personal disappointments. But he makes himself useful as a political go-between and "fixer." Enthusiastic supporter of proposed British School. Considered a possible presidential candidate in 1958.

67. Fawzi el-Hoss

Born about 1909 in Beirut of a Sunni Moslem bourgeois family. He began earning his living by giving swimming, riding and (later) flying lessons, and was subsequently employed by the Municipality of Beirut in a very junior capacity. He founded the Middle East Airlines Company with the financial backing of the Salam family, but later broke with them as a result of a dispute and ensuing legal action, which he won—largely thanks to Prime Minister Sami Solh. He is a member of the Board of M.E.A., and attended the Civil Aviation Convention in Chicago in 1944 as a member of the Lebanese delegation headed by Camille Chamoun. In association with his brother he runs a successful business in Kuwait, and himself owns a flourishing commercial dairy farm in Sofar. Elected Deputy for Beirut (Second Division) in 1957, and now President of the Public Works Committee of the Chamber. He is clever and ambitious, and speaks good English. He and his attractive wife lead an entirely Westernised modern life and entertain a lot.

68. Georges Hraoui

A Maronite, born about 1910, and Deputy for Zahle (Bekaa) since 1953. A Minister in the Yafi Government of 1954. He is a fairly intelligent supporter of President Chamoun. Speaks only French.

69. Kemal Jumblatt

Born 1914, Mount Lebanon; Druze; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married to a lively and intelligent member of the Arslan clan. Deputy from 1943 to 1957 and feudal leader of the Druze faction opposed to the Arslans. He is also leader of the Socialist and Progressive Party and the principal exponent of ideological socialism in the Lebanon, which he expounds on the platform and through his newspaper *Al Anba*. His reformist views and his personal attacks were a main motive force leading to President el-Khoury's fall in September 1952. But he has since not concealed his disappointment with the slow progress of reform under President Chamoun. Despite much hard work to increase his following inside and outside the Chamber, he failed to be re-elected in 1957, much to his sadness and humiliation. After several unsuccessful attempts at reconciliation with the President, he openly joined

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the Opposition in 1958, and now indulges in sporadic trials of strength with the security forces. It is hard to know how much of his influence is ideological and how much depends on his position as a Druze chieftain. Although opposed to Communism he was until recently inclined to neglect the dangers of his Left-wing neutralism; of late is showing signs of a positive pro-West policy. A fiery demagogue in public, he has gentle and unassuming manners in private conversation.

70. Mlle. Ibtihaj Kaddoura

Born 1898, Beirut; Sunni Moslem. Leading member of various feminist organisations. Appointed municipal councillor February 1953. Honest and well meaning.

71. Georges Karam

Born 1897, Beirut; Maronite; educated Antoura College (Lazarists). Married. Rich timber merchant and large share-holder in Air Liban. Elected Deputy 1951 but failed in the 1953 elections, and did not stand in 1957. The fact that he was once imprisoned for a false Customs declaration has been conveniently forgotten and he was appointed Minister of Finance in 1953, when Sa'eb Salam was Prime Minister, and again in the Yafi Cabinet of March 19, 1956. Neither honest nor intelligent but shrewd at making money. Vain and mean but quite presentable socially.

72. Joseph Karam

Born 1899, Zghorta; Maronite; educated Collège des Frères, Tripoli. Married. The principal contender with Hamid Frangié for leadership of the Christians in North Lebanon. Deputy since 1944 but failed in the 1953 elections and again in 1957. Rather weak character.

73. Rifaat Kazoun

Born about 1908, Bekaa; Sunni Moslem; educated Lycée Français. Married. Venaal and a known arms smuggler, he is also a fanatical Moslem and was arrested in December 1952 for complicity in the murder of a Christian lawyer during municipal elections and subsequently acquitted. Is now on the Opposition side, meaning opposition to the person of the President and not to the Government in office. Formerly a Deputy, he was defeated in the 1957 elections.

74. Raschid Keramé

Born 1923, Tripoli; Sunni Moslem; has law degree from Cairo. Bachelor. Feudal leader who inherited political influence and prestige in Tripoli of his father, Abdel Hamid Keramé, but which he has not yet consolidated. Deputy for Tripoli since 1951, and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber. Has served as Minister of Justice and National Economy. An ardent advocate of economic union with Syria, he has failed to achieve anything concrete. Weak, vain and moderately intelligent but honest and well meaning. Minister for National Economy and Social Affairs since August 1953. Prime Minister from September 1955 until March 1956. He showed himself obstinate and a fanatical Moslem in this office; he accomplished nothing of any value and showed strong Left-wing tendencies. Although a leader of the Moslem opposition against the re-election of President Chamoun, he harbours no personal animosity against him.

75. Charles Kettaneh

Born 1905, Jerusalem; Roman Catholic; educated American University of Beirut. Married to a charming and intelligent wife. Member of the important merchant firm of Kettaneh Frères. Although scrupulous in his personal dealings he is

a tough and ruthless business man. Has shrewd business sense but outside this field his judgment is fallible. Very wealthy and generous. Speaks good English and French.

76. Kazem el-Khalil

A Shia of Tyre, South Lebanon. Born 1903. Of primary education only, he now speaks reasonable English. He is ill-mannered and notoriously corrupt, coming from a leading family of the district well-known for their freebooting activities. He is a strong supporter of President Chamoun who, in return, tries to overlook his nefarious activities, though this is not always easy. He is, however, a useful opponent of Ahmed el Assad (No. 19), and is a brother-in-law of Adel Osseiran (No. 113). Married. He was Minister of National Economy in Sami Solh's Government of August 1957 and, in spite of a subsequent scandal involving his importation of diseased cattle from the Sudan, has managed to retain his position in the new Government of March 1958.

77. Anwar Khatib

Born 1903, Shehim; Sunni Moslem; educated School of Law, Damascus. Formerly judge, then practised as lawyer. Prominent member of the Socialist Progressive Party of Kemal Jumblatt; Deputy for Deir el-Kamar (Mt. Lebanon). Fairly intelligent and relatively honest.

78. Clovis el-Khazen

Single, and born in about 1912, he belongs to a leading Maronite family of Mount Lebanon. He has been a Deputy for Kesrouan since 1953 but carries weight only in his constituency. He became Minister for Education in March 1958, although his own education was of the most cursory kind. Speaks French.

79. Izzet Khurchid

Born 1902, Beirut (of family with Turkish origins); Sunni Moslem; educated Ottoman Government School, Beirut. Married. Chief of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1945-52, with intervals as Chief of Police. Was Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs in 1955 until he was reappointed Chef de Protocole. Honest and civilised, he tends to be used to lend respectability to a Department which has lost face.

80. Sheikh Béchara el-Khoury

Born 1892, Beirut (with family origins in Mount Lebanon); Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Lawyer and politician. After bitter opposition to President Eddé and several terms as Prime Minister under French Mandate, he became the first independent President of the Lebanese Republic in 1943, and stood firmly against French pretensions in that year, being interned for his pains. Throughout his term of office he remained grateful for British support at that time. As President he showed great skill in manipulating the balance of political forces in the country and in thereby maintaining himself as the dominant factor in public life. But his inability to say "no" to his family (wife, brothers, son and remoter relatives) led to his régime becoming a synonym for corruption and nepotism. His increasingly blind self-confidence led him to resent and to try to suppress the criticism and clamour for reform and so brought him into conflict with the Press and public opinion. During 1952 the opposition to him gradually gained momentum and forced him to resign in September, since when he has retired into private life, although reputed still to take a close, indirect interest in politics. In foreign affairs he had remained consistently pro-Western and anti-Communist throughout his term of office. His shortcomings as President derived mainly from weakness

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and inability to rise above the moral standards of those who surrounded him; but he had been a clever and successful lawyer; he conducted public business with efficiency and despatch and he is kindly and amiable in private contacts. Renewed his political activities against Chamoun in 1957 and became a possible candidate himself for re-election.

81. Elias Khoury (Dr.)

Born 1898, Mount Lebanon; Maronite; educated Collège de la Sagesse, Beirut. Married. Prominent in medical organisations and good works. Ex-Deputy (failed in 1957 elections) and former Minister of Health. Honest and well meaning.

82. Emile Khoury

Born about 1887; Maronite; educated Collège de la Sagesse, Beirut. Bachelor. Journalist and diplomatist. Formerly foreign correspondent of Egyptian paper, *El-Ahram*. Lebanese Minister at Rome, 1948-53. Intelligent, but dishonest. Is in the front row of the anti-Chamoun group.

83. Sheikh Fouad el-Khoury

Born 1894, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Wealthy merchant with a finger in almost every commercial pie. Brother of President el-Khoury whom he supported financially on the way up. During his brother's term of office greatly increased his already substantial fortune.

84. Gabriel Khoury

Born about 1910. Maronite, educated French schools, Beirut. Married. Employee of Banque de Syrie et du Liban since about 1935. President of Union of Bank Employees since 1946. President of Federation of United Syndicates. Supports the Fidé "Bloc National." Anti-Communist and pro-West. Has the confidence of trade union colleagues and leads his federation intelligently. Has a reputation for financial and mental integrity.

85. Sheikh Khalil el-Khoury

Born 1923; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married the rich and charming former Jacqueline Arida, daughter of George Arida (No. 16). Elder son of President el-Khoury and member of his law firm. Made a large fortune by exploiting his privileged position during his father's presidency. Lay low for the first eighteen months or so of Chamoun's presidency, but is now steadily resuming his political intrigues. Separated from his wife in January 1955. (Marriage annulled, January 1956.) He has since decided to lie rather low. Despite considerable personal charm he is well versed in the technique of corrupt political intrigue, but his methods are so tortuous that they tend to become transparent.

86. Sheikh Sami el-Khoury

Born 1895, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Brother of President el-Khoury. Formerly Director of Justice. Secretary-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1944-45. Lebanese Minister at Cairo, 1945-52; at Brussels and The Hague from December 1952 until July 1955, when he was appointed Ambassador to Madrid. A neat little man with no great intelligence or personality.

87. Sheikh Selim el-Khoury

Born 1896, Rashmaya; Maronite; educated at Jesuit University, Beirut. Bachelor. Brother of President el-Khoury, during whose presidency he exercised great influence behind the scenes and came to be known as "the Sultan." Though he never attended the Chamber he controlled eleven votes there. He thus made himself one of the main

targets of the reformers. Little is heard of him now and he is presumably resting on his tarnished laurels.

88. Victor Khoury

Born 1903, Hadeth; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut, and in Mexico. Bachelor whose sister acts as hostess. Formerly lawyer. In 1944 appointed Counsellor at Lebanese Legation at London; Minister in 1947 and Ambassador in 1953. Transferred to Washington in 1955, and back to Beirut as Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 1958. Not a very strong character but makes good use of his amiable social manners; pompous.

89. Salah Lababidi

Born 1896, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated American University of Beirut. Married. Civil servant, formerly Sub-district Governor (Kaimakam) of Baalbek. Appointed Chief of Police of Beirut, March 1953. Arabic scholar; honest and energetic; a great friend of Abdallah Yafi, but co-operates willingly with us.

90. Lieut.-Colonel Fouad Lahoud

Nephew of Colonel Jamil Lahoud (No. 91) and brother of Selim (No. 92). Born at Baabdat 1912. Gazetted from Homs Military Academy September 1, 1933. Attached British Army in United Kingdom and B.A.O.R. in August 1947. Staff College, Camberley, 1955. Inspector of Armour, 1956. Has been to United Kingdom in 1956 and 1957 to negotiate over purchase of armoured cars and tanks. Intelligent. Friendly disposition. Speaks fluent French and good English. Rightly regarded by General Chehab as unreliable in financial matters. Has strained relations with his uncle, Colonel Jamil Lahoud, on political grounds. Is one of the more capable and ambitious Lebanese army officers and, although thought unreliable, may be a future Chief of Staff.

91. Colonel Jamil Lahoud

Born Baabdat, 1905; belongs to a leading Maronite family of Mount Lebanon. "Town Major" or Area Commander since 1950. Pro-British. French education. Married. Has a son on a two-year course at Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, from 1958.

92. Selim Lahoud

Born 1910; Maronite. Chief engineer of the Water Company of Beirut. Studied engineering at the Collège des Arts et Métiers of Lille, France. Elected Deputy for Mount Lebanon in a by-election in April 1954 and re-elected in June 1957. Appointed in 1954 Chairman of the Litani Board for hydro-electric and irrigation development of resources of Lebanon's chief river. Appointed Minister of Public Education under the Premiership of Sami Solh in July 1955 and Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Kerame Government of September 1955, which post he managed to maintain in successive Cabinets until the fall of the Yafi Government in November 1956—rather surprisingly, since he was never a skilful Foreign Minister. (He tended to be helpless between the President and the Prime Minister and made more than one blunder.) He was subsequently made Minister of Public Works in the Sami Solh Government of August 1957; in this post, however, despite his previous reputation for honesty, he rapidly gained such a reputation for corruption (in part by a national scandal concerning the purchase of water pipes) that he became a liability to the Government and the only member of it who was not maintained in the enlarged Solh Cabinet of February 1958. He was at one time reported to be in serious financial difficulties, but since his tenure

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of the Ministry this is no longer the case. He is a director of Middle East Airlines, and serves on the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber. He is married and friendly to the West.

93. Sulhi Mahmassani

Born 1908, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Lycée Français, American University of Beirut and French School of Law. Married. A judge until 1947 when he resigned to stand unsuccessfully for Parliament. Now practises law; legal adviser to Poin. IV in the Lebanon. A clear and clever lawyer, who is also professor of Islamic law at American University of Beirut.

94. Charle; Malik

Born 1906, North Lebanon; Greek Orthodox; educated American University of Beirut and Harvard. Married. Formerly professor of philosophy and science, American University of Beirut. As Lebanese Ambassador at Washington from 1945 to December 1955 and Permanent Representative at the United Nations, he attracted much attention by public speaking in the United States and built up for himself an influential position in Washington. His reputation in his own country also gained through his long absence from the scene. Has now returned to Beirut where he is once more on the staff of the American University. He has political ambitions and accepted office as Minister for Foreign Affairs and of Education in the strong Solh Government formed in November 1956. He immediately began to follow, largely as Head of the Lebanese Delegation at the United Nations Assembly, a foreign policy which certainly reflected the views of the President but for which the Prime Minister (Sami Solh) had frequently to devise skilful public defences. Continued as Minister for Foreign Affairs (though no longer of Education after autumn 1957) in the reconstituted Sami Solh Government of February 1958. Elected as Deputy in June 1957 after the retirement of his rival at American instigation and expense. His pro-American foreign policy has made him one of the main channels for opposition attacks on President Chamoun.

95. Nasri Malouf

Born 1911, Mount Lebanon; Greek Catholic, educated Syrian School of Law of Damascus. Bachelor. Lawyer, journalist and politician. Prominent member of the National Appeal Party. Minister of Finance, National Economy and Social Affairs in Sami Solh Government of November 1956, but was defeated in the 1957 elections. Brilliant writer and orator in Arabic. Honest, vain and proud of his independence but lazy. Susceptible to feminine influence. Nominated in summer 1957 as Ambassador to Egypt, but Egyptian *agrément* to his appointment has not yet been given.

96. Abdullah Mashnouq

Born 1899, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated American University of Beirut. Married. Journalist, formerly principal of the Moslem Makassed College of Beirut. Owns and edits *Beirut al-Massa*. Until the end of 1956, edited an excellent monthly magazine, *The Oil Family*, for the Iraq Petroleum Company, but was discharged by the company for his violent hostility towards it. A fanatic on the subject of Islam and a strong supporter of Syro-Lebanese union. Clever and a strong personality, but venal. Is now strongly advocating the policy of the U.A.R. Conducted a violently anti-Western campaign in his paper during and after the Suez affair. Speaks good English. One of the leaders of the Opposition against the re-election of President Chamoun.

97. Badri Meouchi

Born 1902; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. President of the high Court since 1950. Only moderately clever and, although basically honest, has yielded to pressure from his cousin the Patriarch in his judgments on cases with a political bearing.

98. Jamil Mikkawi

Born 1911, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Lycée Français, Beirut. Married to a French wife. Influential among younger Moslems and formerly leader of the Moslem nationalist Najjadel Party. Served at Lebanese Legation at London, and Minister at Berne from 1946 until 1953 when he resigned, stood for the 1953 elections and failed to be elected. He then devoted his attention to building up a lucrative legal practice and in September 1955 under R. Kerame was made Minister of Public Works and, later, acting Minister of Finance. He kept these portfolios until the Ministry fell in March 1956. Was re-elected Deputy (Beirut District) in June 1957 and served as Minister of Finance in Sami Solh's Government of August 1957 until he resigned in February 1958. Voted against the new Government in the confidence debate of March 1958. Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber. Member of Board of Governors of the English School, Director of Middle East Airlines and legal adviser to B.O.A.C.

99. Moussa Mobarak

Born 1901, Antoura; Maronite; educated Lazarist College, Antoura. Married to an intelligent wife. Closely associated with the French Mandatory authorities 1923-41. Appointed "chef de Cabinet" to President el-Khoury 1943. In charge of Customs Department from 1944 to 1957 except for an interlude from September 1952 to February 1953 when he was Minister for Foreign Affairs. Despite his French culture and connections he is consistently friendly to the British and is honest and independent. He is almost unique in the Lebanon as having resigned a Ministerial portfolio on a point of principle. Although at first he succeeded in remaining on friendly terms with both the ex-President Khoury and President Chamoun, his relations with the former soon deteriorated. At the end of 1957 he finally achieved his long-time ambition to be appointed Lebanese Ambassador in Paris, which had been blocked for years, partly because of the Maronite Patriarch and partly because of the reported French desire not to see this ex-employee of theirs, though staunchly pro-French, hold such a position in their capital. Intelligent and good company, but given to talking too much and thus occasionally dropping bricks.

100. Naim Moghabghab

A Greek Catholic of Ain-Zhalta, born 1911. Lived in Cairo until 1942. English education. He is clever, tough, unscrupulous and a very loyal associate of President Chamoun since the days when the latter was still on his way up. He played his part in the Lebanese struggle for independence in 1943. Since 1953 he has been Deputy for the Chowf (Mount Lebanon) and served as Minister for Public Works in Sami Solh's Cabinet of 1954. He is now President of the Finance and Budget Committee of the Chamber.

101. Moukhtar Moukaiech

Born 1901, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Bachelor. Formerly lawyer. Interned for pro-German activities 1942. Served diplomatic posts including Washington, Ankara and Ottawa. Appointed Consul-General at

Marseilles in 1954. Appointed Lebanese Minister to Belgium and Holland in July 1955. Fanatical Moslem. Intelligent but restless and dissatisfied with his lot.

102. Albert Moukhaiber

Greek Orthodox of Beit-Meri, single, born about 1913. He is a graduate of the French School of Medicine and a clever G.P. He was elected Deputy for Metn (Mount Lebanon) in 1957 and is now, since March 1958, Minister for Public Health. He studied at one time in Switzerland, speaks good English and French and has considerable influence in his area.

103. Saadi Mounla

Born 1895, Tripoli; Sunni Moslem; educated Ottoman Government School, Tripoli. Bachelor. Landowner and politician. Deputy and former Minister. Prime Minister in 1946. Appointed Co-Guardian of the Electricity Company of Beirut in 1953 and Chairman of the Electricity Company Board in 1954. Did not stand in the 1957 elections. A genial old homosexual muddlehead.

104. Kamel Mroueh

Born 1916; Shia Moslem; educated American University of Beirut. Married. Journalist; now editor of *Hayat* and *The Daily Star*. Broadcast from Berlin in the war. Violently nationalist. A clever but unscrupulous journalist. Has sometimes been a useful ally but must be treated with caution. Speaks excellent English. An Arab union enthusiast. An outstanding supporter of the Baghdad Pact, as a result of frequent subsidies from the Iraqi Government.

105. Gabriel Murr

Born 1895; Greek Orthodox; educated American University of Beirut. Married. Minister from 1953 to 1955. Served in United States Army in First World War. Returned to Lebanon in 1922 and became cinema proprietor. Deputy 1943-51-53, but failed in 1957. Several times Minister. Honest and well meaning.

106. Alfred Naccache

Born 1888, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Formerly lawyer and President of the Court of Appeal. President of the Lebanese Republic under French Mandate 1941-43 when dismissed by General Catroux. Deputy 1943-47, re-elected Deputy in 1953. A Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1953 to 1955. Has done some political journalism. He is much under Jesuit influence but his opposition to President el-Khoury commends him to President Chamoun who often consults him. He is absolutely honest but neither a strong character nor a capable administrator. Has, in association with three others, founded a bank (Banque de Beyrouth & des Pays Arabes (S.A.L.)). Represented Lebanon at the Coronation in 1953, and at the Inauguration of the new Argentine President in 1958.

107. Georges Naccache

Born 1903, Alexandria; Maronite; educated Jesuit College, Alexandria. Married. Formerly civil engineer; now newspaper owner and journalist. Part-proprietor of *L'Orient* since 1924. Writes well and is clever; but gambles and is venal.

108. Adib Nahas

Born 1903, Tripoli; Greek Orthodox; educated Collège des Frères, Tripoli. Married. Government servant. Formerly Director-General of the Interior and Mohafez of South Lebanon. Lebanese Minister at Buenos Aires 1948-53, and now Minister at Rio

de Janeiro. A first-rate official, honest, intelligent, capable and pro-British. O.B.E. 1947. Promoted to rank of Ambassador at Rio de Janeiro in March 1955, and transferred to Athens in 1957.

109. General Souleiman Naufal

Born 1900, Merjayoun; Greek Catholic; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Served in the Lebanese Army under the French Mandate. Appointed head of the Gendarmerie 1941 and dismissed after collaborating with the French in November 1943. Formerly Director-General Ministry of National Economy, and then Minister of National Economy 1947-48. Now Managing Director and Chairman of the Board of the recently-established Lebanese Television Company, in addition to which he controls the Capitole Cinema and does some journalism. Honest and capable, he believes strongly in maintaining the Christian position in the Lebanon if necessary by authoritarian methods.

110. Muhieddin Nsouli

Born 1900, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married. Journalist. Former Deputy. Minister of Information under Sa'eb Salam from April until August 1953. Interned as Axis sympathiser, 1941, but is now strong supporter of co-operation with the West against communism. Despite his Arab loyalties, is ready to take a moderate line on such things as Palestine and Middle East defence. Speaks English. Has visited England. Minister of Information and at different times of Finance and of Interior in Sami Solh's Government of 1954-55. Made serious efforts to reduce corruption and maladministration, especially at Finance Ministry Health bad.

111. Mustapha Nsouli

Born 1916, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated American University of Beirut. Wife does not go out. Civil servant; joined Lebanese Administration in 1944 after working in his father's firm (glassware). Appointed Director-General of National Economy in February 1953. Honest and intelligent, but not a strong character. Speaks English and is in close touch with United States Embassy; but also helpful to this Embassy. Accompanied Lebanese President on his visit to South America in May 1954.

112. Bechir Osman

A Sunni Moslem of Akkar, born about 1913. Studied at the Collège des Frères in Tripoli and is now Deputy for Akkar (North Lebanon) for the third time. An opportunist and supporter of Nasser, he was one of the first to travel to Damascus to congratulate him on the foundation of the United Arab State. He owns property in Syria. Was made Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in March 1958. He is married, but his wife does not go out. He speaks only French.

113. Adel Osseiran

Born 1903, Sidon; Shia Moslem; educated American University of Beirut. Married. Landowner and lawyer. Rival leader to Ahmed el-Assad in South Lebanon. Elected Speaker of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies in 1953 and re-elected in 1954, 1955, 1956 and 1957. Close political associate of Camille Chamoun (now President) from 1943. Strong Arab Nationalist, especially on Palestine, but friendly to the United States and Britain though only within the limitations of the above views. A strong character, blunt and uncompromising. Speaks excellent English. Although openly and violently critical of Anglo-French action in Suez, he, nevertheless, refused to recommend severing of diplomatic relations with the West. He did, however, when

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leading a parliamentary delegation to Damascus in February 1958 to offer congratulations on the birth of the United Arab Republic, get sufficiently carried away as to declare that "Lebanon would, sooner or later, join the Arab caravan"—a remark which caused considerable indignation in almost all sections of the Chamber. He has since been a frequent visitor to Cairo, where he has made similar remarks which he has later had to deny.

114. Henri Pharaon

Born 1902, Beirut; Greek Catholic; educated privately and Jesuit University, Beirut. Widower. Banker, politician and racehorse owner, in ascending order of interest. Ex-Deputy and several times Minister for Foreign Affairs. By lavish expenditure poses as champion of Christian lower classes in Beirut. Homosexual and not above employing gangsters or bribery, he, nevertheless, believes in co-operation with the West and has spoken in favour of Middle East defence. A strong opponent of the Baghdad Pact, he was one of the first organisers of the opposition to President Chamoun's re-election.

115. General Noureddin Rifai

Born about 1895, Tripoli; Sunni Moslem; educated Ottoman Government School, Beirut. Married. Served in the gendarmerie. Formerly Mohafez of North Lebanon. Appointed Director of Internal Security Forces, June 1952 until March 1953, when he was made Inspector-General only of the Internal Security Forces. Retired 1957. An impressive little man, but a firm, capable administrator. Homosexual.

116. Mme. Hélène Riha

Born about 1907, Beirut; Greek Orthodox. Wife of Dr. Habib Riha, of American University of Beirut. A leading advocate of women's rights. Formerly taught in a school for girls in Cairo. Appointed municipal councillor, February 1953.

117. Manrouf Saad

A Sunni Moslem of Sidon, born about 1915. He is uneducated and speaks only Arabic. He began life with the police until 1953, and in 1957 was elected Deputy for Sidon. Is a violent Arab Nationalist who visited Russia in 1957 and came back imbued with pro-Russian ideas. He delivers two or three speeches a week, all strongly anti-imperialist in tone and, as a result of continuous agitation, now has a strong hold on the populace in Sidon. A regular pilgrim to the Nasser shrine.

118. Mohamed Sabra

Shia Moslem, born about 1913. Lawyer, graduate of Jesuit School of Law. Professional diplomat until, in March 1956, he was recalled from the post of Ambassador to Jordan (he had previously been Minister to Iran) to hold the portfolios of Public Works and Information in the Yafi Cabinet. He was an able Minister and was the only one (apart from the inevitable Emir Majid Arslan) to be retained in the strong Solh Cabinet which followed it in November. He is capable and is well liked in Shia circles and trusted by the President. Although he could not be described as pro-British, he maintained a reasonably objective attitude during the crisis of November 1956 and is friendly to deal with. Returned to the Embassy in Jordan in 1957.

119. Negib Sadaka

Greek Catholic from Zahlé. Studied in Al-Charkieh School, Zahlé and obtained a degree in law from the French School at Beirut. Left for France, where he remained during the war and came

back with a degree of doctor in law. Appointed to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1945. Later transferred as Director-General of Education. Retr transferred in December 1955 to Foreign Ministry as Assistant Secretary-General. On the resignation of Fouad Ammoun it proved impossible to settle the rival claims for the succession, and Sadaka was finally appointed Acting Secretary-General, a post which he filled adequately and honestly if without inspiration or real influence, until he was appointed Ambassador to Berne in 1957. Highly educated and honest. Visited United Kingdom as guest of British Council in 1955. Inclined towards socialism and progressionism. Married.

120. Abdel Rahman Sahmarani

Born 1903, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Jesuit University, Beirut, and the Sorbonne. Bachelor. His sister acts as his hostess. President of the Beirut Chamber of Commerce since 1949. A pompous bore, much given to lecturing Western representatives on how to conduct their policy so as to satisfy Arab aspirations, but unfortunately quite influential, particularly in a Pan-Arab direction.

121. Saeb Salam

Born about 1902, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated American University of Beirut. Married to a charming and gentle wife. Politician and business man. Ex-chairman, with a small personal holding, of Middle East Air Lines. Deputy in the 1943 and 1951 Chambers. Formerly Minister of the Interior. Prime Minister for a few days in September 1952 when he helped administer the *coup de grâce* to President el-Khoury. Again Prime Minister from April until August 1953. After resuming his close links with the British owing to his association with the B.O.A.C., he has gradually fallen more and more for President Nasser, whose policy *vis-à-vis* the British he supported to the maximum. During the Suez affair he was rabidly in favour of breaking off diplomatic relations with us and reason for his resignation (together with Abdallah Yafi's), while the conference of Heads of Arab States was in progress in November 1956, was the resistance of President Chamoun to side against Britain and France. A bit of an adventurer in politics and business but he is intelligent and forward looking and is likely to remain a prominent figure. Appointed Minister of State in the Yafi Cabinet of March 19, 1956. Conducted the negotiations with the Iraq Petroleum Company with a hostile spirit. Now the leading champion of Abdel-Nasser and the chief opponent to the re-election of President Chamoun. Speaks excellent English. A leading supporter of the project to establish an English secondary school in Lebanon, of which he is trustee (President's nomination), and in April 1958 succeeded his brother as principal of the Mugassed Moslem College.

122. Anis Saleh

Born 1907, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. Formerly magistrate and Director-General of Justice. He made himself too useful to President el-Khoury and did not survive his fall. Now has a very good practice as a lawyer.

123. Joseph Salem

Born 1897, Tyre; Greek Catholic; educated Collège Patriarcal, Beirut. Married. Influential business man (mainly banking and insurance). President of Association of Merchants since 1956. Lebanese Minister at Cairo, 1944-45. Minister of the Interior, 1945-46. Although rather boorish at first sight he is usually friendly and co-operative and certainly has intelligence and independent judgment. He is usually well-informed about what

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goes on behind the scenes and is a leading Christian opponent (through the *Troisième Force*, which he founded) of the re-election of President Chamoun.

124. Nicolas Salem

A Greek Catholic of Tyre. Born 1897, the twin brother of Joseph Salem (No. 123) and brother of Colonel Toufiq Salem (No. 125), the Chief of Staff. French education. An unscrupulous and clever business man who became Deputy in 1953 and Minister for Education in March 1954 under Abdullah Yafi. Re-elected Deputy (for Jezzine, South Lebanon) in 1957. Since 1950 he has been doing good business in Saudi Arabia. Married, he speaks good French and some English.

125. Colonel Toufiq Salem

Born 1904; Tyre; Greek Orthodox; educated Collège Patriarcal, Beirut. Married. Trained in the French Army (as a contemporary of General Shishakli). Chief of Staff of the Lebanese Armed Forces since 1945. A brusque and quick-tempered officer who tends to fret under General Chehab's calmer methods but is fundamentally good-natured and helpful.

126. Fouad Sarrouf

Born 1906 in Cairo, of Lebanese origin; Greek Orthodox; educated at the American University of Beirut. Married to a pleasant wife born and brought up in Manchester. Journalist. Edited *Al-Mokattam* newspaper in Cairo, founded by his father. Wrote Roosevelt's life in Arabic. Appointed Vice-President (in charge of Public Relations) of American University of Beirut in 1952. Capable and honest.

127. Fouad Sawaya

Born 1909 at Zahlé. Greek Catholic. Educated at Collège Patriarcal, Beirut. After being a judge for several years was appointed Mohafez of Mount Lebanon from 1944-46. Mohafez of South Lebanon, 1947-49. Director of Communications and Transport, 1949-55. Director-General of Education, December 1955. Bachelor. Honest and a capable civil servant but conceited.

128. Mohammed Shoucair

Born 1912, Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated American University of Beirut. Married. Politician and journalist. Member of the tiny but vocal National Appeal Party. Was a disciple and great admirer of late Riad Solh. Clever and honest by Lebanese standards but loyal to his friends. Violent supporter of a pro-Iraqi policy in Syria and is more deadily opposed to present ruling teams in Damascus, including Kouwatly and Assali, who were, until recently, his great friends. Is anti-Nasser and a friend of ours who willingly co-operates when he has a chance. Visited England 1952.

129. Sami Shoucair

Born 1923, Beirut; Greek Orthodox; married; educated Jesuit University, Beirut, and studied electrical engineering in the United States. Director of Civil Aviation in the Lebanon from 1950 until 1953 when he was dismissed because of his close connections with ex-President Bechara el-Khoury. Although born wealthy, would not miss an opportunity of making money. His main interests are women and money and he is unscrupulous and energetic in pursuit of these objectives. Very much in the pocket of the Americans.

130. Alfred Skaf

Born 1907, Zahlé; Greek Catholic; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married. A powerful figure in the Bekaa but off the political stage since an unsuccessful term as Minister of Supply in 1943.

131. Jean Skaf

Born 1908, Zahlé; Greek Catholic; educated at Zahlé. Bachelor. Ex-Deputy and former Minister. Intelligent and ambitious. Friendly. Failed in the 1957 elections.

132. Joseph Skaf

Greek Catholic from Zahlé. Born about 1918. Speaks some English and French. Elected Deputy for South Lebanon in 1947 and is now Deputy for Zahlé. Minister since 1956, now holds portfolio of Social Affairs. Popular leader of the Beka'a group of Deputies. Weak character. Although a rich land-owner, owes large sums of money to bank.

133. Adel Solh

Sunni Moslem of Beirut, brother of Qazam and Takieddin Solh and a cousin of Sami Solh. Born about 1902. Married to a Turk. Of poor education. Unlike his two brothers, he is not active and very little is known of him prior to his appointment as President of the Beirut Municipality.

134. Kazem Solh

Born 1903; Beirut; Sunni Moslem; educated Istanbul, Damascus and French School of Law, Beirut. Married. President of the National Appeal Party. Lebanese Minister at Baghdad since 1947, promoted to the rank of Ambassador in 1953. Intelligent and ambitious.

135. Sami Solh

Born 1891, Sidon; Sunni Moslem; educated Istanbul Government College. Widower. Son of a Turkish official. Formerly Magistrate and President of the High Court. Prime Minister 1942-43, 1945-46 and 1952, when he resigned in protest against President el-Khoury's attempt to throw upon him the blame for corruption in public life. He retains considerable influence with the lower Moslem classes in Beirut, but although amiable and well meaning is too vain and too weak to follow any consistent line of thought or policy for very long. Again Prime Minister from September 1954 to September 1955; visited Turkey with President in April 1955 and headed Lebanese delegation to Bandoeng Conference in April 1955. Was called in to head a strong crisis Cabinet in November 1956, in which he was Prime Minister and carried the portfolios of the Interior, Justice and Information, and added that of Defence when General Chehab resigned in January 1957. Was acting Foreign Minister during M. Malik's long absence at the General Assembly of the United Nations. Had a serious illness in April 1957; from this, however, he completely recovered, and, having been re-elected in June 1957, has since formed two new Governments, the first in August 1957, and the second, consisting of no less than fourteen members, in March 1958.

136. Takieddin Solh

Born 1910, Sidon; Sunni Moslem; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Bachelor. Cousin of late Riad Solh and nephew of Sami Solh (No. 135). Arab nationalist with political ambitions; dabbles in journalism. Failed in 1953 elections, but elected for the Bekaa in 1957. Chairman of National Appeal Party. Formerly Counsellor of Lebanese Legation at Cairo; later in Secretariat of Arab League. Very intelligent and relatively honest, but given to intrigues. Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber, opposed to re-election of President Chamoun. Member of Lebanese National Commission for U.N.E.S.C.O. Speaks French.

137. Linda Surssock

Born 1887; belongs to the leading Greek Orthodox Surssock family of Beirut both by birth and by

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marriage, being the widow of Michel Surssock. The leading Society lady of Beirut. Perfect hostess; very hospitable house. Interested in charitable work.

138. Jacques Tabet

Born 1887, Beirut; Maronite; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. A rich socialite and land-owner who keeps in the social swing but has no political significance.

139. Joy Tabet

Born Beirut 1905; belongs to a leading Maronite Lebanese family, Swiss mother. Private Anglo-Saxon education. Great wealth. Leading Society figure; is the son-in-law of Mrs. Linda Surssock. Clever and good-mannered.

140. Mme. Laure Tabet

Born 1896, Alexandria; Maronite; educated at Roman Catholic College for Girls, Alexandria. Having no children, diverted her energies into feminist activities in and outside Lebanon, notably Red Cross and International Council of Women. Appointed municipal councillor, February 1953. Highly civilised and speaks good English.

141. Bahige Takiuddin

Born 1908, Baaklin; Druze; educated Collège Patriarcal, Beirut. Married. Lawyer and politician. Ex-Deputy; formerly Minister of Agriculture. A loyal adherent of President el-Khoury, whose spokesman he has often been in the Chamber.

142. Khalil Takiuddin

Born 1905, Baaklin; Druze; educated Collège Patriarcal, Beirut. Married. Civil servant, and Arabic poet. Served mainly in the Secretariat of the Chamber until appointed Lebanese Minister at Moscow and Stockholm 1946-53 when he became Minister to Mexico. Clever and socially presentable but servile and venal. Like the rest of his family, an opportunist. A leading figure in the pro-Egyptian set. Appointed Ambassador to Cairo December 1955, transferred to Ankara in 1957.

143. Philippe Takla

Born 1914; Greek Catholic; educated Collège des Lazaristes, Antoura. Married to a rich Lebanese of Brazil by virtue of whose fortune he has acquired a certain independent standing. Lawyer and politician. Deputy for the Bekaa and loyal supporter of ex-President el-Khoury. Several times Minister for Foreign Affairs and now President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber. He is intelligent and in most respects honest and has pleasant manners. He is quick on the uptake and easy to deal with on matters of business. Represented Lebanese President at the Coronation and at ceremonies held in Uruguay on the taking of office of Uruguayan President in February 1955. Having consecutively failed to secure a portfolio under Chamoun, he now opposes his re-election.

144. Philippe Tamer

Born about 1910. Greek Orthodox from North Lebanon. Has risen from modest origin by doubtful means. He is held in some contempt in commercial circles and his economic views are purely selfish and usually unsound.

145. Afi Tibi

Sunni Moslem, born 1912. For long a struggling journalist until he obtained the favour of the Sheikhs of Kuwait, for whom he now acts as one of the general representatives, go-betweens and pimps. Director and owner of *Al-Yaum* newspaper with his

brother Wafiq, and President of the Basta Committee. He worked in Berlin for the German broadcasting during the war. A natural toady, he is nevertheless highly intelligent and quite unscrupulous. His sympathies seem to be moderate Arab Nationalist but personal interest is his dominant motive. Speaks good French.

146. Dikran Tosbath

Armenian Orthodox, born 1908 in Beirut. He received a French education and is highly cultured. He is a good journalist, owner of the French evening paper *Le Soir* and a Deputy for Bourj Hamoud (Mount Lebanon) since 1953. Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber. He has always been a strong supporter of President Chamoun. He is clever and likeable and speaks French and some English, as does his Armenian wife.

147. Colonel Fauzi Trabouki

Born 1901, Deir el-Kamar; Maronite; educated Collège des Frères, Beirut. Married. Served Lebanese Gendarmerie, later in command of Internal Security Forces. Once a personal friend of President Chamoun, has not been for the last two years on speaking terms with the President, with whom he is angry for not appointing him General, or an Ambassador somewhere. As a result he attempted to print and circulate a number of fantastic charges against General Chehab (No. 38) but before he could do so was arrested (in March 1958) on a charge of attempting to subvert the morale of the army. Honest and loyal but tactless, vain, pompous, excitable and of mediocre intelligence.

148. Gabriel Trad

Born 1893; Beirut; Greek Orthodox; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Married. A rich socialite who enjoys parties but is also generous and prominent in charitable organisations. Honest and likeable, but far from intelligent. Chairman of several organisations and clubs.

149. André Tueni

Born 1910, Beirut; Greek Orthodox; educated Collège des Frères, Tripoli. Married. Civil Servant. Formerly Director-General of Finance, and Director-General of Public Works. Relatively honest, hard worker and capable but an unattractive creature. Unpopular with his subordinates.

150. Ghassan Tueni

Born 1926, Beirut; Greek Orthodox; educated at the American University of Beirut and then studied journalism at Harvard University, United States. Journalist and politician. Prominent ex-member of the P.P.S.; Deputy from 1951 to 1957, when he failed to be re-elected. Educated, ambitious and energetic. Relatively honest. Speaks excellent English and visited England 1951. Ex-Deputy President, Chamber of Deputies. Married in January 1955 the daughter of Mohammed Aly Hamade, a Druze, without having to change his religion. One of the few Deputies prepared to stand up publicly for the Western connection.

151. Charles Tyan

Born 1900, Beirut. Maronite; married; educated Jesuit University, Beirut. Civil Servant employed in Ministry of Public Works 1943-52 where he acquired wide expert knowledge of oil and transport. Undoubtedly very corrupt but helpful to the I.P.C. Appointed Director-General of the Conseil de Planification et Développement Economique.

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