Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon

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*A History of the Internationalization
of Communal Conflict*

Samir Khalaf

To My Family

Roseanne, George and Ramzi
A tender heaven in a heartless world

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Preface

"Bloody encounters have been the most visible molders of
peoples' collective destinies."
— A. B. Schmookler, *Out of Weakness* (1988)

Lebanon's national image has been, for much of its check-
ered political history, associated with three seemingly intractable aberrations:
protracted and displaced hostility, reawakened communal solidarities and
obsessive dependence on, often subservience to, external patronage or for-
eign intervention. To a considerable extent, in fact, these are also the coun-
try's defining elements which, off and on, have informed much of the coun-
try's sanguinary history with collective strife.

The overriding thrust of the study is predicated by the view that by prob-
ing into the persisting character of those three basic elements one can better
understand the destabilizing consequences of the interplay between internal
divisions and external dislocations and, consequently, the changing form
and magnitude of collective strife.

The internal disparities are generally a byproduct of deep cultural cleav-
ages inherent in sharp communal, confessional, and other primordial and
segmental loyalties. Juxtaposed to these are the uneven socioeconomic and
cultural transformations that have always had a differential impact on the
relative standing of the various communities.

The external sources are discordant and divisive in at least three respects.
First, in earlier and more recent episodes of collective strife, as the country
became increasingly embroiled in superpower rivalries, it could not be shel-
tered from the destabilizing consequences of such struggles. As this oc-
curred, the original issues provoking the conflict receded. Threatened and
marginalized groups, victims of internal socioeconomic disparities or politi-
cal neglect, sought external protection and patronage. Foreign powers, keen

on gaining inroads into the region, have always been too eager to rush into the fray. Such intervention, solicited or otherwise, almost always served to polarize the factions and deepen sources of hostility. In short, Lebanon again and again became an object and victim of these "inside-outside" dialectics.

Second, unresolved regional conflicts, incited by ideological rifts and personal rivalries, also managed to find receptive grounds among the disenfranchised and neglected groups. Much like the insidious character of super-power intervention, regional rivalries were also used as wedges or sources of political patronage. Hence, ideological shifts in adjacent regimes—be they Pan-Arabist, Ba'thist, Socialist, Islamist, or the resurgence of Palestinian resistance—managed likewise to reinforce communal and sectarian cleavages. They also served as proxy platforms for the radicalization of discontent and social unrest.

Finally and, perhaps, more penetrable are the recent global transformations engendered by the transnational information highway, media technologies, and the diffusion of mass culture, life styles, migrant labor, marketing, and consumerism. Here, as well, local groups markedly differ in their resistance or adaptation to such threatening incursions.

For purposes of analysis, three different layers or magnitudes of violence are identified. First, there is social strife, the byproduct of forces such as economic disparities, asymmetrical development, relative deprivation, and ideological rivalries. Normally, these are not militant in character and express themselves in contentious but fairly nonbelligerent forms of collective protest and political mobilization. Second, if the disparities persist and the resulting hostilities are not redressed, conflict and discord could readily become more militant and bellicose. More so when such disparities are accompanied by feelings of threatened communal heritage and confessional loyalties. It is here that social discord is transformed (or deformed) into communal violence. It is also at this point that *civil strife* passes the threshold of no return into *civil war*. Finally, civil violence is not, or does not always remain "civil." When incited by the atavism of reawakened tribalism, enmity, and deep-seated suspicion of the "other," internecine feuds and unresolved regional or global rivalries, collective violence easily slips into the incivility of proxy wars and surrogate victimization. Willfully or otherwise, regional and foreign powers are drawn into the conflict. Invariably, such intervention heightens the intensity of internal conflict. It is here that violence acquires its own self-destructive logic and spirals into that atrocious cycle of unrelenting cruelties.

Given the anomalous ethos of "no victor and no vanquished," which has

long characterized Lebanon's political history, it is understandable how violence can find the recurrent circumstances to reproduce itself. Or, more likely, when the cruelties of protracted strife become a sanitized or ordinary routine, they also become more tolerable than the intolerable psychic wounds of defeat. Indeed, even bloody decisive confrontations never ended or were never permitted to end, by the unequivocal defeat or victory of one group over the other. It is in this sense that virtually all the wars that beleaguered Lebanon were for naught. Despite the intensity, massiveness, and depth of damage and injury, the fighting went on. More disheartening, the resort to violence neither redressed the internal gaps and imbalances nor ushered the country into a more civil and peaceful form of pluralism or guarded co-existence.

Violence was not only relentless, protracted, and futile. It also assumed, particularly during the last interludes of civil strife, even more pathological forms: it became random, diffused, and displaced. Unlike other comparable encounters with civil strife, which are often swift and localized and where much of the population could remain sheltered from its cruelties, the Lebanese experience has been much more overwhelming and homogenizing. The savagery of violence was also compounded by its indiscriminate, random and reckless character. Hence there is hardly a Lebanese today who could be exempt from some of its atrocities, either directly or vicariously as a mediated experience. Virtually no area of the country has been spared the ravages of war.

Equally unsettling, the rounds of fighting had no predictable or coherent logic to them. They were everywhere and nowhere. Everywhere, because they could not be confined to one specific area or a few combatants. Nowhere, because they were unidentified or linked to one explicit or overt cause. Repeated cycles or episodes of violence erupted, faded, and resurfaced for no recognized or coherent reason.

Most menacing, perhaps, was the displaced and surrogate character of violence and victimization. As the hostility degenerated into internecine fighting between fractious groups, combatants were often entrapped in localized turf wars where they ended up avenging almost anyone, including their own kinsmen. This is, doubtless, the most perfidious feature of the incivility of violence. Fighters were killing not those they wanted to kill but those they could kill. In repeated episodes of such in-group hostility wanton killing was the bloodiest in terms of its victimization of innocent bystanders.

Within this context it is instructive, both empirically and conceptually, to identify and account for those critical watersheds during which commu-

nalism, foreign intervention and the magnitude of violence converge and reinforce each other. Indeed, an exploration of the future prospects of any society caught up with such indelible realities necessitates a comprehensive and probing analysis of their manifestations and consequences. It is bizarre after all to journey into a future without having some notion about where a society is going, how it is going to get there and what one will find upon arrival? No one today can plot such a journey in Lebanon without first considering the probable outcomes of this fateful interplay.

By way of preamble the first three chapters sketch out some of the conceptual and analytical considerations deemed relevant for elucidating and accounting for the unsettling consequences of this interplay. Attempts are also made to advance a few premises and/or propositions to render the presumed relationships more plausible and cogent.

Chapter 1 explores the meanings and manifestations of proxy wars and surrogate victimization. Under what circumstances and why, it is asked, are ordinary forms of socioeconomic and political protests deflected into more militant violence? More graphically, how and why was Lebanon transformed into a killing field for other people's wars?

I focus, in answering this query, on how the protracted and displaced features of collective strife feed on each other and how, by doing so, they compound the pathologies of each. The insightful views of René Girard (1977) on the release of unappeased hostility are invoked here. When grievances and feelings of anger are not pacified, Girard tells us, they are prone to be released on proxy targets unrelated to the sources that originally provoked the hostility. Such targets, or alibis of displaced enmity, are often chosen, as was to happen repeatedly in Lebanon, on the basis of how vulnerable and accessible such groups happen to be at the time.

An attempt is also made to provide a more balanced and realistic view of the inside-outside dialectics. Rather than assigning blame exclusively either on the internal disparities or on the unresolved regional rivalries or divisive foreign incursions, the study will argue for and substantiate the mutually reinforcing character of the inside-outside dynamics.

Chapter 2 shifts the analysis to the circumstances in Lebanon's socioeconomic cultural history that heighten and mobilize the radical consciousness of communal identities. How and why are communal loyalties, which conventionally serve as vital sources of sociopsychological support and venues of welfare, benefits, and privileging networks, transformed into belligerent vectors for radical mobilization? More concretely, how are feelings of communal solidarity undermined and under what conditions do the undefined

fears and threats become sharper? It is during such moments that communal identities are heightened to reinforce the intensity of enmity toward other groups perceived as different and hostile. Special focus is based on elucidating those particular features of Lebanon's "retribalization" exacerbated by the inside-outside dialectics.

The prosaic distinction between "horizontal" and "vertical" divisions is introduced here to shed further light on the circumstances that radicalize communal identities. "Horizontal" socioeconomic disputes, though aroused by embittered feelings of injustice, loss of status, material advantage and privilege, are likely to remain less militant unless deflected into confessional or communal hostility. "Vertical" divisions, on the other hand, particularly when engendered by communal and sectarian loyalties, are threatened by more compelling and existential issues such as the loss of freedom, identity, autonomy and heritage. In the language of Theodor Hanf (1995) it is then that the conflict shifts from a struggle over "divisible goods" to "indivisible principles". As this happens, the intensity of violence is bound to become more savaging and, hence, the prospects for resolving the conflict peacefully all the more remote.

Chapter 3 extends the analysis to the third layer of violence; namely a consideration of the circumstances under which collective civil strife degenerates into the incivility of reckless, indiscriminate and random killing and destruction. Stated more poignantly, how can a fairly peaceful and resourceful society exhibiting a rather impressive history of viable pluralism, and coexistence, be mobilized into so much barbarism and incivility? Rather than seeking the answer in symptoms of reawakened communalism and the macro geopolitical forces of unresolved regional and global rivalries, I focus here on the unfolding and escalating character of violence itself.

Two distinctive features, which are generally overlooked by both conceptual and empirical explorations of collective strife, are exposed here. First, that the circumstances which *initiate* or impel marginalized and oppressed groups to resort to political violence are not necessary those which *sustain* their mobilization or inform the direction, character, and outcome of conflict. Second, once violence is unleashed it becomes difficult to quell. Its self-destructive dynamics acquires a life of their own and begins to generate their own belligerent momentum. In conceptual terms, violence in this sense is no longer a dependent variable but is transformed into an independent variable reproducing its own ferocious cycles of violence.

Here, as well, the chapter is guided by a few conceptual and analytical premises extracted from the seminal works of scholars like Paul Ricoeur

(1967), Randall Collins (1974), Natali Davis (1975), Robin Williams (1981), J. Bowyer Bell (1987) John Keane (1996), Sudhir Kakar (1996) among others to highlight these and other features which can account for the descent of violence into incivility. Special efforts are made to disclose the sociocultural and psychological circumstances associated with the normalization and sanctification of cruelty, particularly conditions closely aligned with the manufacturing of enmity and the sanctioning of violence. Or, in the words of Collins (1974), how violence becomes both morally indifferent and morally motivated?

With the first three chapters serving as a conceptual backdrop, the study moves on to re-examine in Chapter 4 the recurrent episodes of peasant and sectarian uprisings (1820–1860) in Mount Lebanon. Since the uprisings were largely a reaction to some of the abusive institutions and loyalties of feudal society, part of the exploration is concerned with those features which could have initiated and sustained collective protest. A set of direct and cogent queries frame the discussion: What inspired and motivated the insurgents to collective action? When and why did the protest begin to assume more belligerent manifestations? Were peasants acting on their own, or were they instruments and/or surrogate victims of other sources of conflict? What, if anything, did these episodes accomplish?

We find much here in support of our proposed conceptual premises. For example, all three uprisings were originally incited by a sense of collective consciousness and a concern for public welfare. Yet, at one point or another, they were all deflected into confessional hostility. Likewise, episodes of communal conflict, initially sparked off by legitimate socioeconomic grievances, were transformed into factional or sectarian rivalries. Expressed more conceptually, struggles over "divisible goods," i.e., contests of distributive justice as to who gets what and how much, are deflected into primordial struggles over "indivisible principles," those loged in the ingrained sentiments of kinship, community, faith, and creed.

The forms and consequences of the nineteenth century uprisings also provide persuasive evidence in support of the two broad perspectives on civil strife advanced by James Rule (1988). In one respect there is much to substantiate the "consumatory" or expressive type of collective strife, the kind impelled and sustained by group solidarity, in which the sharing of emancipatory excitement and the frenzy of agitated gatherings and mass collective mobilization, the sheer ardor and devotion to collective struggle become the glue that cements the groups together. In other respects one also encounters evidence to support what Rule labels "instrumental" violence. Here the in-

surgents were not only incited by the impulse to correct injustices and seek some respite from feudal abuse or to wreak vengeance for its own sake. They were also driven by a utilitarian desire to secure basic amenities and material rewards.

Finally, the peasants rarely acted alone. Several groups were more than eager to step in and appropriate or manipulate the uprisings for purposes unrelated to the original grievances of the peasantry as a genuine protest movement: The Maronite clerics, Ottoman authorities, and foreign powers each had their own motives for meddling in the conflict. In the process, a genuine local uprising was deflected into a global crisis. Irate peasants, already violated by the adverse effects of Ottoman repression and European economic transformations, were victimized further.

The comparative insights of Gabriel Baer (1982), Charles Tilly (1978), Ernest Gellner (1997), among others, are invoked here to render these and other relevant features of collective strife more cogent and plausible.

The crisis of 1958, explored in chapter 5, stands out as a striking watershed in Lebanon's political history. For nearly a century, despite the disruptive burdens of the inside-outside dialectic, the country managed to evolve into a fairly prosperous, peaceful, and vibrant republic. This was all the more remarkable since this interlude is normally marked by turmoil in the lives of new nations.

In 1958 a succession of fairly benign political events—presidential succession, mounting political grievances and disputes over constitutional amendments and foreign policy—started to change the non-strident tone of public discourse. Bargaining, compromise, guarded contact, consent, avoidance, even "mutual lies," until then the hallmarks of the political system, started to be displaced by more contentious forms of political confrontations.

As in earlier episodes of collective strife, the generally non-sectarian disputes degenerated into confessional hostility and, thereby, reawakened communal solidarities and heightened the magnitude of violence. Here as well Lebanon became increasingly drawn into the regional and global conflicts of the period and became once again an object and victim of Cold War rivalries.

The questions we pose here are a variant on those we addressed in the preceding chapter. Why did the tone of public debate become more belligerent? How and why did the contentious groups resort to, or drift into, insurgency? What forms did the violence assume and how did they rationalize their participation in it?

There is much in our conceptual propositions that can be fruitfully ap-

plied to elucidate those features of political violence which were to become more pronounced in the protracted strife of the 70's and 80's namely, that the sources often associated with the origins or initiation of violence are not necessary those which sustain and heighten its intensity. By doing so, we can better understand how violence acquires a more perilous life of its own and how it crosses over into incivility.

The brief interlude — between 1958 and 1975 — has invited a relentless stream of polemical writing. Those who see this rather perplexing period as a prelude to the protracted cruelties of 1975 tend to exaggerate the country's internal contradictions and hold them responsible for much of the havoc, violence, and destruction. Others, with a more optimistic frame of mind, are more predisposed to see this period as a privileged interlude, a testimony of the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the Lebanese. Chapter 6, Lebanon's Global/Gilded Age, tries to offer a more balanced and realistic appraisal of the overall legacy of this interlude by reassessing some of its salient socio-cultural, economic, and political attributes; both those which reinforce its salutary image as a "success Story" and those which render it more vulnerable to the inside-outside dialectic.

Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the protracted hostilities of 1975–90. The discussion departs from much of the prodigious volume of writing on Lebanon in at least two distinct ways. First, it does not provide yet another blow by blow account or a chronology of the war. Nor is it exclusively concerned with the inception or origins of collective strife.

We know too much already about the preconditions, changing political settings (both regional and global), economic disparities, psychological, and sociocultural circumstances that predisposed groups to resort to collective protest. Instructive as these are, they tell us little about the forces which sustained violence and heightened its cruelties. More grievous, perhaps, they do not help us in understanding how seemingly ordinary and pacific groups became entrapped in relentless cycles of chronic hostility and how they came to cope with its gruesome realities. Similarly, this almost obdurate obsession with the origins of violence is of little relevance in elucidating the impact of the war on collective memory, on changes in group loyalties, collective psychology, perceptions, and changing attitudes towards the "other."

Chapter 9 shifts the analysis to a reconsideration of all the five major covenants, pacts, and attempts at reconciliation: from the partition scheme of 1843 to the Ta'if Accord of 1989. Virtually all these schemes came either

in the wake of bitter communal or collective strife (1843, 1861, and 1989) or after critical watersheds in the country's political history like the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1819 or national independence from the French in 1943. All five dealt with the contested issues of national identity, sectarian balance, foreign policy in a changing regional and global setting. More relevant for our purposes they were all brokered by foreign governments.

The thesis I propose here is that the pacts that where comparatively more successful (i.e. the Règlement Organique of 1861 and the *Mithaq* of 1943), had recognized the realities of confessional loyalties but sought to secularize them in such a manner as to encourage harmonious coexistence between the various communities. In essence, they made efforts to transform some of their divisive features into a more constructive and enabling system.

The final chapter on "Prospects for Civility" is predominantly concerned with exploring measures to reduce or contain the country's vulnerability to the destabilizing consequences of the inside-outside dynamics while enhancing opportunities for self-determination and empowerment of lethargic and excluded groups. The discussion skirts issues of national sovereignty, political reform, and economic development and focuses instead on matters more accessible to viable modes of voluntarism and participation in public life.

The chapter considers programs and measures, proved effective in other comparable settings, which can provide venues for participation in public space and nurtures some of the attributes of civility and collective consciousness. A largely self-evident proposition is advanced, namely that offering more accessible opportunities to participate in civic and welfare associations, rehabilitative ecological, environmental, public health and heritage programs, even competitive sports and popular culture can be invaluable as strategies for healing symptoms of fear and paranoia. More important they can also serve as venues for transcending parochialism and allaying the indifference to others still salient in post-war Lebanon. I also consider, by way of conclusion, pertinent views and measures for the articulation of new cultural identities more germane for a political culture of tolerance and civility.

I wish to end this preface by a personal caveat. There is more to my interest in exploring the changing character of collective strife than a pure, dispassionate, and conceptual analysis of the circumstances associated with their transformation into the more barbarous incivility of protracted and displaced hostility.

Except for the comparatively benign civil unrest of 1958 (and I was pursuing my graduate studies in the U.S. at the time), my generation has been

spared the menacing encounters with collective violence. This is why the almost two decades of free-floating hostility and treacherous bloodletting served as a crude awakening, often received with shock and disbelief. What compounded the shock was not only the magnitude and futility of violence, but also how, in the process, Lebanon was unduly maligned and defiled. At times, in fact, the country was reduced to an ugly metaphor, often no more than an allegoric figure of speech used to conjure up grotesque images by way of evoking the anguish of others.

More grievous, perhaps, is the fact that much of Lebanon's felicitous history, or at least interludes when the country managed to sustain more than just a modicum of peaceful co-existence, economic prosperity and so-ciocultural mobilization, was either overlooked or dismissed as fortuitous byproducts of external circumstances. Lebanon, as it were, was only ac-knowledged when it was being held accountable for the havoc and collective violence it was beleaguered with. Here, as well, much of the violence was seen as a mode of self-destruction as if the Lebanese were collective victims of national suicide. No sooner had the fighting erupted in 1975 than the pundits, self-appointed and otherwise, rushed to vilify and pillory Lebanon as a flawed, artificial entity, doomed for self-destruction since its wavering birth.

Within this context, the laborious research and writing demanded by this undertaking were made more palpable, even redemptive. Writing was more than just an effort to validate the "social facts" associated with the changing forms of collective strife. I found myself groping to exonerate Lebanon from such faulty perceptions and allegations. It became an effort to demystify its abiding and defining elements, both enabling and disabling.

Cathartic as writing might be in such instances it served, at least in my case, to only add insight to injury. The more lucid and insightful the analysis (and I have been enriched by borrowing so liberally from the seminal work of other scholars), the more grievous the injury.

By then the work started to acquire an existential tinge. It became an anguishing quest to grapple with the disheartening realities of witnessing the pathologies of human bestiality at such a close range. When collective strife descends into random and reckless killing without mercy and without guilt, and when it is transformed into a sanitized ordinary routine, one can no longer free oneself entirely from the realities that people have natures or impulses that are often vile and offensive to human sensibilities. But by accepting the fact that people have natures that are often so repugnant, one begins to harbor the hope for ameliorative action. Indeed, this study is also

buoyed by the hope that rehabilitative strategies can be designed to mitigate the effects of man's baser instincts.

It is in this existential sense that any encounter with collective violence, like most other encounters with the darker and more foreboding foibles of humanity, will serve as the most visible molders of people's collective destinies. We are indelibly marked by them. For better or worse, we are never the same again.

Samir Khalaf
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Acknowledgment

This book has been a long time coming. By nature of its multiple perspectives, let alone its extended time frame, my debts to others are innumerable. It is virtually impossible to thank all those who helped in developing the sensibilities which informed the study. The extensive bibliography is a testimony of how liberally I borrowed from others. I do want, though, at the risk if the inevitable sins of omissions, to recognize a few.

Foremost I must acknowledge the continuous and generous foundation support I have been privileged to enjoy. Initially, the study was launched in 1982 as part of an empirical survey, funded by the Ford Foundation, to explore the impact of collective strife on three communities in Beirut. The escalation of unrest compelled me and my associates on the project (Salim Nasr and Samir Nassif) to suspend the survey. While on leave at Princeton University, I was the beneficiary of a MacArthur Research and Writing Award (1987) that enabled me to review the extensive literature on comparative political unrest, civil violence, and third-world insurgency. The graduate seminars I offered at Princeton, New York University, and MIT (1988–92) allowed me to deepen and extend the scope of the study and formulate specific queries which merit further exploration.

In 1990 work on the study witnessed yet another unexpected suspension. A long-term Lilly Endowment research grant — to study the impact of New England Puritanism as a cultural transplant on sociocultural change in the Arab world — required my full-time commitment for more than three years. I must express here my gratitude to Sister Jeanne Knoerly of the Endowment for permitting me to return from time to time to address a few of the sus-

pended issues, particularly when political events in the region became more compelling, conceptually and otherwise.

Upon my return to Lebanon in the spring of 1995 to resume my appointment at the American University of Beirut and to reactivate the Center for Behavioral Research (CBR), my writing and research suffered yet another inevitable setback. The travails of reviving the Center in a postwar setting were much too distracting. My research interests also shifted, understandably, to problems of reconstruction and rehabilitation. I must acknowledge here the initial and renewed support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, without which the CBR would not have evolved during the past six years into an animated research site for local and visiting scholars. Nor would I have been able to benefit from the much-needed summer respites for uninterrupted research and writing. It is my hope that the credible standing of the CBR and the Research output it is generating are a testimony of well-earned support. I am grateful to President William Bowen, Vice President Harriet Zuckerman, and Martha Sullivan of the Foundation for their sustained encouragement and understanding of the needs of the Center.

Colleagues, students, friends, and relatives have all sustained me over the years in ways too numerous to count. Some, by merely asking about progress on the book(s) as years swiftly ticked by, helped to goad me on. Others, in perhaps more substantive ways, have been immensely generous in offering enlightened and critical advice. Richard Yorkey, ever since he taught me English in High School, until his passing two years ago, retained that same tutoring intensity for uplifting the quality of my prose. I hope I have inched closer to his exacting demands and regret he is not around to bear witness to whatever modest improvements I have made in this regard.

Philip Khoury, once a recalcitrant but spirited student of mine, has evolved into an accomplished scholar, writer, and university administrator. We have had stints of joint teaching and authorship. In these, and as Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at MIT, as Trustee of the American University of Beirut, and in his leadership of the Middle East Studies Association, he has been an constant source of stimulation and enlightened concern for upgrading the creative potential of students, colleagues, and friends. He is an endearing colleague and friend, but a hard act to follow.

Some colleagues, particularly Michel El-Khoury, Farid El Khazin, Ghassan Tueni, Fawaz Gerges, Walter Wallace, Ghassan Hage, Mohammad Ali Khalidi, Peter Johnson, and Chibli Mallat were generous in returning solicited comments on earlier drafts. Others, like Suzanne Keller, Edward Said, Richard Norton, Joseph O'Neil, Ali Banuazizi, Shibley Telhami, and Micheal Centano suggested useful premises, readings, and perspectives.

Leading the life of a displaced scholar at a time one's country was being savaged by senseless violence is not a very felicitous state of being. Likewise, reentry into postwar Lebanon, beleaguered by unresolved hostility, political uncertainty, lethargy, mediocrity, and creeping indifference, has been even more disheartening. Thanks are due to a growing circle of caring friends and colleagues in Lebanon, Princeton, and elsewhere who rendered the anguish of exile and return salutary, even beneficent. In ways I cannot fully enumerate, the following offered the coveted intellectual companionship and other genial venues of self-renewal and well-being: Fadlou and Alison Shehadi, David and the late Doris Dodge, Woody and Elizabeth Littlefield, Jane deLong, Charles Westoff, Henry Beinen, Serane Boocock, Carl Brown, Marvin Bressler, John and Marianne Waterbury, Ted and Mary Cross, the late Charles and Yanina Issawi, Touma and Layla Arida, George and Alexandra Assiely, Ghassan and Chadia Tueni, Myrna Boustani, Nasser Chamaa, Khalil Bitar, Fadi Tueni, Hashim Sarkis, Nadim Shehadi, Oussama Kabbani, Asaad Khairallah, Maher Jarrar, Chibli and Nayla Mallat, Riad Tabbarah, Fawaz Traboulsi, and Fadi Tueni.

Kate Wittenberg, formerly Senior Executive Editor at Columbia University Press, was initially very supportive of the project. Her successors at the Press, particularly Anne Routon, have been equally forthcoming. I am grateful to Leslie Bialler, who copyedited the manuscript with such scrupulous and professional care.

Mrs. Leila Jbara, my administrative assistant, has become now fully adept at the cumbersome task of typing numerous drafts and preparing the final version for publication. She is also disarmingly genial and accommodating.

In paying tribute to the boundless gratitude I owe my family, one and all, I am reminded of the advice Leo Tolstoy gave his son's fiancée as they were about to commence their matrimonial life together: "One can live magnificently in this world," he told her, "if one knows how to work and how to love." At the risk of sounding self-indulgent, I have been privileged to enjoy generous doses of both and, always, in tandem. Indeed, I owe so much of my well-being and inspiration to my family that three of my earlier books were dedicated to each individually. At different interludes of our blissful life together, and in different ways, each managed to nurture this enabling symbiosis between love and work.

George was barely a toddler, still unaware of the raging war outside the serenity of our home in West Beirut, when I started to probe the character of communal unrest in nineteenth-century Lebanon. The joys of parenting a first child were a soothing antidote to the savaging world outside. Hence, *Persistence and Change in 19th-Century Lebanon* (1979) was dedicated to

him. *Lebanon's Predicament* (1986) was Rosanne's book. We suffered the travails of war and exile together. She suspended her career to the be the tender and nurturing mother to all her "three boys" as she was keen on refraining from work at the time. Ramzi was not yet ten when we made our first trip back to Lebanon in the summer of 1992. It was then, buoyed by the intuitive sensibilities of a precocious child, that he came face-to-face with all the nagging disharmonies between the country's captivating landscape and rich history and its treacherous political culture. *Reclaiming Beirut* (1993) was his book. It was inspired by him and, thereby, addresses issues of concern to his own generation in the hope that they will be able to reconnect with, and reclaim, their country's disinherited legacy.

A book like this one, which chronicles the magnitude and futility of violence while bearing witness to some of the pathologies of human bestiality, is hardly a fitting tribute or gift to a loving and peaceful family. Yet the entire life-cycle of our family for almost three decades has been enveloped in the trials and tribulations of relentless collective strife and political uncertainty. By virtue of the abiding love and filial devotion we felt for each other, our family became more than just a haven in a heartless world. Perilous as it was at times, the pathos out there was transformed into an indelible, often redemptive, reality to be probed and lived. In the process all four of us became not only more compassionate and caring, but also more appreciative and jealous of our life together. The exigent tasks exacted by arduous research and writing, like all the other pressing demands of public life, were transformed, thanks to Roseanne, George, and Ramzi, into a labor of love. This book is lovingly dedicated to them.

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