4 Peasants, Commoners and Clerics Resistance and Rebellion: 1820–1860

"Warfare was a quicker as well as a more honorable route to riches than trade."
—Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (1997).

The mimetic character of violence is so intense it cannot burn itself out. . . . Only violence can put an end to violence and that is why violence is self-propagating."
—René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (1977).

There has been reawakened interest in the forms that peasant resistance are likely to assume, particularly in historical situations where open defiance is either impossible or entails considerable hazards (Scott 1985; Colburn 1989). Under such circumstances, it is argued, peasant resistance is prone to remain in the "hidden realm of political conflict." Hence, it is less likely to take the form of open collective acts of violence such as riots, rebellion, sedition, or revolutionary movements. Since peasant uprisings, anyway, are "few and far in between," it is more meaningful, Scott and Colburn tell us, to shift analysis to the more prosaic means of everyday resistance. In such instances, petitions, rallies, boycotts, sabotage, foot-dragging, false compliance, pilfering, and other such acts of resistance become part of the arsenal of relatively powerless and subordinate groups. Or, more likely, such hidden or muted hostility is seen as an expression of groups deficient in class consciousness or denied access to collective forms of mobilization. Such ordinary forms of everyday resistance become, to employ James Scott's apt expression, the "weapons of the weak."

Lebanon's experience with peasant uprisings is, in this regard, instructive in more than one respect. First, peasant resistance did not remain in the hidden or quietist realm of political conflict. Nor were such acts confined to the conventional forms of everyday resistance that seemingly mute and helpless social groups resort to in mobilizing protest or redressing their grievances. Second, peasants in Lebanon, perhaps more than other such insur-

rections in the Middle East (Baer 1982: 275), evinced attributes of collective solidarity and class consciousness rare among movements in small and highly factionalized sociocultural settings. In some instances, Christian peasants were revolting against rulers and overlords who were also Christian. Collective class-consciousness in such cases, clearly assumed primacy over confessional and fealty ties. Yet, these uprisings rarely remained in their pure form. They either merged with intercommunal tensions, rampant at the time, or were deflected into confessional hostility. It is then, as will be demonstrated, that fairly contained forms of collective protest degenerate into random and reckless belligerency. Finally, the Lebanese experience departs in a striking sense from another basic feature commonly associated with peasant revolts; namely, that they "have been repressed far more often than they have succeeded . . . and that for them to succeed requires a somewhat unusual combination of circumstances that has occurred only in modern times" (Moore 1966: 479–80).

In an exhaustive comparative exploration of peasant rebellion in Egypt and the fertile crescent during the last 200 years, Gabriel Baer concludes that the only such successful instances in the nineteenth century took place in Lebanon. This is particularly true of the Kisrwan revolt of 1858–61, which to him stands out as a "unique phenomenon . . . different in most of its features from any peasant rebellion in the Middle East" (Baer 1982: 312). It was clearly the longest, having established a "peasant republic" which lasted for about three years. It adopted principles of equality and democratic government. It was inspired and initiated by the peasantry itself, incited by the Maronite clergy, and drew support from among the prosperous independent elements of the new bourgeoisie of small towns. It enjoyed a populist leadership, reinforced by an elected council of representatives *(Wakils)*. It also articulated a set of explicit demands and managed to bring about a profound redistribution of property between the lords and peasants. Finally, and most telling perhaps, it accomplished all this without much bloodshed or violence. Baer concludes his seminal study by asserting that "such a unique revolt could occur only in a country whose social features differed from those of all other areas in the Middle East" (Baer 1982: 312).

The legitimacy of this claim can be ascertained only if efforts are made to probe into that set of "unusual combination of circumstances," to invoke Moore's query, which might account for the comparative success of peasant uprisings in Lebanon.

My intention here is not to provide yet another chronicle of such events. There is one too many already. Indeed, no episodes in the social and political history of Lebanon have been, perhaps, chronicled as much. One has to

wade through a medley of discrepant accounts, situate their authors, check with alternate sources to verify the authenticity and credibility of their version of the story. Fortunately, quite a few have already been edited and subjected to such meticulous scrutiny and reexamination, let alone the impartial accounts and interpretations of contemporary observers.

My task here, instead, is less ambitious: to extract from such accounts recurrent features to substantiate the changing pattern of collective protest. What inspired and motivated the insurgents to collective action? When and why did such action begin to assume more belligerent manifestations? Were the 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?

Since the uprisings were, to a large extent, a reaction to some of the institutions and loyalties of "feudal" society, it is pertinent to begin our discussion by identifying those features of feudal society of Mount Lebanon which could have initiated and sustained collective protest.

Feudal Society of Mount Lebanon

In its broad features, the socioeconomic and political organization of Mount Lebanon during the early part of the nineteenth century may be characterized as feudal. In both its origin and evolution, the *iqta'* system had much in common with other feudal societies: The system of vassalage and the institution of the fief, the idea of the personal bond, the hereditary and hierarchical nature of social relations, patron-client ties and obligations, decentralization of the power of the state and the consequent autonomy of feudal chiefs in the appropriation of justice, collection of taxes, and maintenance of law and order. These and other attributes were similar to the predominant form of European feudalism. Yet, the system of *iqta'* in Mount Lebanon had some peculiar features that differentiated it from both European and Ottoman prototypes.

As the term itself suggests, *iqta'* denotes a system of socioeconomic and political organization composed of districts *(muqata'as)* in which political authority was distributed among autonomous feudal families *(muqata'jis)*. The *muqata'ji* was subservient to the amir or hakim who, as supreme ruler, occupied an office vested in a family—in this case the Shihabi Imarah or principality. Within the context of the Ottoman system of government, the sultan was formally the highest authority over the rulers of Mount Lebanon and their subjects. The amir received his yearly investiture through one of

the sultan's representatives, the *walis* of Saida, Tripoli, or Damascus, under whose administration Lebanon and its dependencies were divided. Through the pashas, the amir also forwarded his annual tribute *(miri)*, which he owed the Ottoman Treasury. In effect, however, neither the sultan nor the *walis* — with the noted exception of Jazzar's governorship of Saida (1776–1804) — meddled very much in the internal affairs of Mount Lebanon. The amirs enjoyed considerable autonomy in exercising their independent authority. They had the double task of dealing with the demands of the Ottoman pashas and acting as arbitrator among the muqata'jis in case of internal conflict. The specific duties of collecting taxes, maintaining peace and order, requiring a limited annual amount of unpaid labor from peasantry *(corvée)*, and exercising judicial authority of first instance over all local, civil, and criminal cases involving penalties short of death were all part of the traditional authority of the *muqata'ji*.

Four rather unusual political features of the iqta' system of Mount Lebanon, all of which have implications for understanding the special character of peasant uprisings, can be emphasized:

First, and perhaps most striking, the *muqata'as* in Lebanon were not organized as military fiefs. Nor were the fief holders expected to perform any military duties in return for the *muqata'as* allotted to them, as was the case in Syria, Egypt, Palestine, and Iraq. The feudal sheikhs of Mount Lebanon lived in rural estates and not in garrison towns. The Shihabi amirs did keep a small number of retainers mostly for administrative purposes, but they had no significant armies or police force.

Second, the nonmilitary character of Lebanese feudalism was an expression of the personal nature of political authority and allegiance. Legitimacy was more a function of personal loyalty between protector and protégé than an attribute of coercion or impersonal authority. The amir, in other words, did not have to resort to coercion to generate and sustain conformity to his authority. Instead he relied on the good will of his *muqata'jis* and the personal allegiance of their followers *(atba'* or *uhdah)*. This generated a measure of mutual moral obligations and feelings of interdependence. Typically, such relationships assumed the form of a patron-client network. They involved the exchange of support for protection. The client strengthens the patron by giving him support, and receives aid and protection in return. Primordial as it was, this form of allegiance was not sectarian. The *muqata'ji* usually presided over districts that were religiously mixed. In contrast to this nonconfessional system stood the government of *iltizam* where only Sunni Muslims had the right to hold authority (Harik 1965: 420).

Third, the *muqata'ji* was a hereditary feudal chief whose authority over

a particular district was vested within a patrilineal kinship group. He lived in his own village and maintained ties of patronage with his *atba*'. In contrast, the *multazim* was not idigenous to the tax farm he controlled. He was more akin to government official than a feudal sheikh.

Finally, the *muqata'jis* enjoyed more independence in exercising their control at the local level. Unlike the *multazims* in other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, they were autonomous feudal chiefs and not officials in a decentralized Ottoman hierarchy.

The system of taxation was flexibly, obscure, and generally irregular in its exactions. A system, however, did exist. Whether the fiscal organization was technically an *iltizam*, or something peculiar to the *iqta*' of Mount Lebanon is a moot point still debated by some historians, (Polk 1963: 32; Chevallier 1971: 82:89). What is undisputed, however, is that the Shihabi amirs were charged with the duty of forwarding taxes to the Ottoman Treasury by way of the governor of Saida, and that neither the amount of this yearly tribute *(miri)* nor their tenure in office were fixed.

Officially, the *miri* was supposed to be levied upon all sown land, and the amount of the tax depended upon the crop sown (Volney 1788: 66). Yet neither in its assessment nor collection was the system consistent or regular. Indeed, the tribute was arbitrarily set and varied considerably with changing circumstances. Rather than being proportional to wealth (Burckhardt 1822: 188; de Lamartine 1835: 294), the *miri* was often a reflection of the amir's power or special standing vis-à-vis the Ottoman pasha. In instances, when the Ottoman policy played rival amirs against one another, the governorship of Mount Lebanon normally went to the highest bidder.

The *miri* was not the only form of taxation demanded by the Imperial Treasury. In addition, a poll tax *(kharaj or jizy*a) was imposed on non-Muslims who, for religious reasons, were not subject to military service. Another head tax *(fardah)* was also levied on occasion.

During the early nineteenth century, the system of *metayage* was beginning to transform the peasant-proprietor into a mere farm hand or *metayer*. As metayers or sharecroppers, the farmers were expected to pay their feudal landlord a specific share of the harvest, the size of which depended on conditions such as the type of crop cultivated, whether the *metayer* owned seeds and implements, and the existing irrigation conditions. Typical of the *metayage* system common in Western Europe during the eighteenth century, the Lebanese sharecropper paid rent in kind and was bound by personal obligations of subservience to his feudal lord: he did not have the right to marry without the lord's permission, and he was also forbidden to leave this

feudal lord at will, whereas the latter could forcibly transfer him to another estate. Furthermore, the abusive practice of corvée often entitled the ruling amirs and feudal chiefs to demand free labor from peasants for construction of palaces, forts, and other public works.

In addition, the peasants owed their landlords other traditional payments and presents *(idiyya)*, which symbolized their fealty loyalty and obligations. These often took the form of prescribed presents on holidays, weddings, and other ceremonial occasions (Chevallier 1959: 48–50; Porath 1965: 78–80). These and other such taxing obligations indicate that the peasants' dependence on their lords was not entirely economic in character. For example, a newly born Christian boy was anointed in oil and baptized in order to symbolize his fealty to the lord (Porath 1965: 80; Aowad 1933: 130). The landlords often told their tenants what to grow, even on their private plots. Most intrusive, perhaps, a peasant had to secure a license from his landlord, for a fee, in order to get married (Churchill 1853, vol. 1: 45; Porath 1965: 80).

It is curious that despite the seemingly deplorable conditions of the peasants and the general impoverishment of the country, the economy of Mount Lebanon at the end of the eighteenth century was still considered by several observers as being relatively prosperous and viable. (See, for example, Polk 1963: 75). Although the land is constantly referred to as *miri*, it was actually the private property of the person or group holding the *miri* rights. At the end of the eighteenth century, Volney estimated that about one-tenth of the Lebanese land was held directly by the *muqata'jis* as their estate *(arzaq or aqarat)*, often committed to managers. The remainder was held by their vassals *(atba')* — who became in effect the hereditary farmers of the village — and by Christian monasteries and churches (Volney 1788: 64; Poliak 1939: 58).

The economy of Mount Lebanon was also remarkably self-sufficient. The Biqa valley was a major source of grain and animal products. Caravans from Hawran and other parts of inland Syria imported grain and rice from Egypt, which made up for the shortages not covered by what was grown locally. Cottage industry supplied much of the daily wants of the peasants.

The backbone of the Lebanese economy was, of course, its silk production. For centuries, Lebanon's highly prized silk had been the most prominent item of its industrial and agricultural exports. The production of silk was compatible with the basic features of Lebanese agriculture and its labor-intensive household economy. For example, mulberry trees, suited to the climate and moisture pattern of the mountain, were relatively easy to grow and could be exploited for a variety of uses. Likewise, much of the process of cultivating and reeling silk did not require the peasant to interrupt his

daily tasks; and virtually all age groups could be productively engaged in the activity (Guys, 1850: 170). European demand for Lebanese silk increased sharply during the eighteenth century and with the introduction of modern processing methods by local and European entrepreneurs, entire village communities experienced considerable prosperity.

Some of the sociocultural features of Lebanon at the time were also striking and account, in part, for the successful integration of its pluralistic and differentiated social structure. Vertically, the society was highly stratified with marked social distinctions on the basis of status and kinship affiliation. A recognized hierarchy of ranks among the feudal elites had evolved as a rather formalized system of social prestige sustained by elaborate forms of social protocol and rules of conduct. The distribution of prestige among the different families was not arbitrary. It reflected a continuity of traditional considerations. A few of these salient features deserve brief mention. The most striking was the real power each of the families wielded. This was visible in the hierarchy of noble titles differentiating that of an amir, *muqaddam* and sheikh. Such rigid social stratification was naturally an expression of the vintage of their kinship genealogy, and the esteem the families enjoyed in the eyes of the ruling Shihabs. For example, only three houses held the title of amir (Shihab, Abil-lama, and Arslan), one *muqaddam* (Muzhir), and several (Jumblat, Imad, Abu Nakad, Talhuq, Abd al-Malik among the Druze; and Khazin, Hubaysh and Dahdah among the Maronites) were entitled to the rank of sheikh. Together these eight sheikhly families formed a special stratum of "great Sheikhs" *(al-mashyikh al-kibar)*, differentiated from other feudal families (such as Azar, Dahir, and Hamadeh) in terms of titular prestige and the extent of their feudal tenure and control over their respective *muqata'as* (Shihab 1933; Aouad 1933; Salibi 1965; Harik 1968; al-Shidyaq 1970).

Property in itself was not the principal factor in determining one's social position. More precisely, the social honor the notables enjoyed in their respective communities did not vanish with diminished wealth. Given this intimate association between kinship and social status, it is little wonder that the family survived as the fundamental socioeconomic and political unit in society. So strong was this consciousness of lineage that families were closely identified with the particular *jib* or *bait* ("branch" or "house") they descended from. The whole spatial configuration of a village or town and the physical arrangement of housing patterns into well-defined quarters and neighborhoods reflected kinship considerations. Such cloistered territorial entities played, as will be seen, a crucial role in reinforcing communal identities and intensifying the magnitude of factional violence.

Kinship solidarity was further reinforced by the prevalence of strong endogamous ties. Marriage outside one's family or village was rare. Doubtlessly, economic and moral considerations, such as the desire to concentrate wealth within the family, to avoid payments of dowries, and the concern for family honor and virtue all played some part in sustaining endogamy.

Typical of highly stratified society, there was also little intermarriage between the various strata and even fewer instances of social mobility. The possible exceptions were the movements of Abillama *muqaddams* into the rank of amir and a few others — Talhuqs, Abd al-Maliks, Ids, Junblats — who were bestowed with their sheikhly titles by the Shihabi amirs after the battle of Ayn Dara in 1711. While the feudal aristocracy could be readily differentiated into well-defined strata of amirs, *muqaddams*, and sheikhs, no such hierarchies characterized the commoners. They were all lumped into one undifferentiated strata of *ammiyyah*.

Apart from the distinctions of status and kinship, the social structure of Mount Lebanon was differentiated horizontally into isolated and closely knit village communities. The mountainous terrain and the natural divisions of the country into distinct geographic regions, each with its own particular customs, dialect, folklore, and social mannerisms, rendered the village community a fundamental unit in the society of Mount Lebanon. Strong endogamous ties, continuities in the patterns of residence and landownership, attachments to feudal families who also resided in the village, along with the geographic isolation from other communities, all tended to reinforce village loyalties and make the village more conscious of communal interests. So strong were these loyalties that village identity often superseded kinship, religious, or class attachments.

The convergence of this unusual combination of strong village solidarity, rugged mountainous terrain, and consequent isolation from centers of government authority and control must have incited the predisposition for collective protest. Several social historians have, incidentally, singled out such ecological considerations as basic preconditions for peasant rebellions all over the world (Baer 1982; Mousnier 1970: 337; Wolf 1971: 264–65). Eric Wolf, in particular, is very explicit on this point. He asserts that the "tactical effectiveness of rebellions in peripheral areas is tripled if they contain also defensible mountainous redoubts" (Wolf 1971: 264).

Despite these divisions, the integrative institutions of feudal society managed to maintain a state of harmony and balance among the various sects and strata in society. If there were any tensions, they at least did not break up into open hostility until early in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the

Druze and Christians, in the words of an impartial observer, had "lived together in the most perfect harmony and good-will" (Churchill 1862: 25).

New Forms of Collective Protest

The state of harmony and security did not, however, survive for long. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Lebanon witnessed various forms of societal change that began to dislocate feudal relations and disrupt the balance of forces between the various groups.

Although the three uprisings were sparked off by different circumstances and expressed varying grievances, they had, nonetheless, much in common. They were all manifestations of the same socioeconomic and political changes that began to weaken the feudal system and challenge the legitimacy of hereditary feudal authority. The more specific issues provoked by the uprisings — such as taxation, land tenancy, conscription, disarmament — were all reactions to essentially the same phenomena: attempts by successive Ottoman pashas to impose tight controls on Mount Lebanon, and an enfeebled feudal aristocracy trying to preserve its eroding power and privilege. The uprisings were also an expression of an emancipated peasantry and clergy who were articulating a new spirit of collective consciousness. All those features were making their presence felt at the turn of the century.

From a broader historical perspective, the uprisings in Lebanon substantiate the three major patterns of political conditions which, according to Baer (1982: 255–263), have contributed to the outbreak of peasant rebellions. First, they are more likely to occur in situations where the central government has been weakened. The two earliest rebellions, that of 1784 and 1790, took place at a time when the rule of the Shihabi Amir Yusuf was undermined by the civil war initiated by Jazzar Pasha. Second, they are also likely to occur under the opposite conditions; namely, when the central government, through the imposition of central rule, becomes stronger. Under such circumstances, the feudal lords are weakened to such an extent that the peasants, as was the case in the Kisrwan uprising of 1857, were able to exploit the situation and revolt against the Khazins. Finally, when local feudal lords are strong and influential enough among their subordinate peasants, they become more empowered to react against the impositions of central government. This is, in fact, what happened during the 1840 uprising. Some of the Khazin sheikhs incited their peasants to revolt against Bashir II and his Egyptian allies who were coercing him to impose the exactions associated with direct rule, such as taxation, conscription and *corvée*.

The Uprising of 1820

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Lebanon had just emerged from three prolonged and turbulent decades of the oppressive tyranny of Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar. Appointed by the Ottomans to the pashalik of Sidon in 1775, Jazzar managed to become the dominant figure in Syrian history until his death in 1804. Partly by intrigue and partly by inciting confessional rivalry and quarrels between Druze factions, he asserted his authority over bickering feudal chieftains, controlled lawlessness in the countryside, and was fairly successful in exacting and remitting the necessary dues to the Imperial Treasury. He detached Beirut from Mount Lebanon and proceeded, as he had intended, to bring the Shihabi Emirate under his complete control.

Jazzar's rapacious and tight control of the vilayet of Sidon offers the classic instance of monopolization of a province. He was in complete possession of the agricultural lands and had them cultivated for his own profit. He was virtually a partner of merchants and artisans, imposed himself as their money-lender and banker, fixed arbitrary prices for their goods, and demanded excessive custom duties. He increased the revenues from direct taxation by farming out the towns and districts of his province at exorbitant sums. Growing insecurity in the countryside, usurious rates of interest, poor means of transportation, shortages of credit, and the primitive state of agriculture were beginning to deplete the modest economic prosperity the Mountain had enjoyed thus far.

The effects of all this were momentous. Jazzar had in effect converted the Druze amirs into "instruments of oppression on behalf of the Turkish authorities" (Gibb and Bowen 1957: 68). In doing so he contributed, in no small part, to the decline of feudal authority. With Jazzar's exit, Amir Bashir proceeded to restore the diminished prestige of the Shihabi Emirate. To this end he sought to consolidate his position by curbing the power of the feudal families, particularly the Druze *muqata'jis*.

Between 1804 and 1819, Bashir was the unrivaled master of Lebanon. He had eliminated all possible sources of local rivalry. He opened up the country to persecuted Christians, Druze, and other dissident Muslims and fugitives from the interior of Syria. He launched upon an impressive array of public works and substituted his own stern but benevolent justice for the caprice and tyranny of feudal amirs and sheikhs. Consequently he could pose as the champion of the Ottomans in Syria (Salibi 1965: 23–24). Circumstances, however, took a sharp turn for the worse in 1819 and generated the set of events that were to plunge Lebanon into a series of protracted crises.

In 1819 Abdallah Pasha succeeded Suleiman as governor of Akka. Like

his notorious predecessor, Jazzar, he did not relish the prospect of a strong and autonomous amir in Mount Lebanon. Accordingly, shortly after his appointment, he started his incessant demands for an exorbitant tribute from Bashir. When the Amir showed reluctance, the Pasha applied pressure by arresting Bashir's subjects who happened to be in Sidon and Beirut at the time. Eventually, Bashir was compelled to concede to the Pasha's demands and had no recourse but to send his agents to collect the additional tribute. The tax agents had hardly started their work when the peasants of Kisrwan and Matn, incited by the clergy and two of Bashir's cousins coveting the emirate, (Amir Hassan and Amir Salman) rose in rebellion against Bashir. Unable to contain the uprising or to collect the needed revenue, Bashir went into voluntary exile to Hawran.

The central feature of the *ammiyyah* uprising remains no doubt the changing perspective of the Maronite clergy and their emergence as a powerful group in challenging feudal authority and in generating new forms of Maronite consciousness and communal loyalties. A brief consideration of how these transformations came into being becomes vital for understanding the role of the clergy in mobilizing peasants and commoners and inciting them for collective and organized resistance.

Typical of ties of patronage, the relationship between the *muqata'jis* and the clergy in the North until the end of the eighteenth century was one of mutual benefit and support. The *muqata'jis* provided the church with their protection and in return the clergy pledged their spiritual and material support. The Khazin sheikhs, throughout the period of their feudal authority in Kisrwan, which dates back to the early seventeenth century, had almost total control over the wealth of the district. Together with the Hubayshes and Dahdahs, they virtually owned all the land. They also exercised considerable control over the administration of the affairs of the church. Since it was part of their family prerogative to select prelates, they influenced the election of patriarchs and had almost complete control over the appointment of archbishops and bishops.

This convergence of interests between the *muqata'jis* and the church survived until the end of the eighteenth century. Under the impetus of new ideas, reform-minded clerics began early in the nineteenth century to advocate measures to rationalize church bureaucracy and to reorganize its economic resources in a more enterprising manner. Achievement criteria and merit were introduced to replace nepotism in recruiting and promoting clerics. Efforts were also made to render the Church free from interference by notables and more economically independent.

To this end monastic orders with considerable autonomy were established early in the eighteenth century. Typical of other monastic organizations, the orders led a disciplined, austere, but productive life. Since individually the monks were not entitled to possess any private property or wealth, they worked hard as collective bodies to secure their economic independence. Through their own labor, donations, gifts, and religious services (such as education for which they were compensated in land), they were able to extend cultivable land under their control and augment their wealth. One estimate claims that by the middle of the nineteenth century they occupied "nearly a fourth of the entire surface of the Mountain" (Churchill 1853: 88–89). The orders were also very active in industrial crafts such as wine, spirits, bookbinding, and printing. To free themselves from the domination of *a'yan*, they secured in 1812 a decree that deprived the latter of the right to levy taxes on the order's monasteries. Instead, the monks themselves were now authorized to collect and remit the *miri* directly. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the recruitment process. For example, while in the eighteenth century the upper echelons of the Church's hierarchy were almost an exclusive preserve of the notable families, in the nineteenth century the proportion of commoners in the same offices was significantly larger than that of the notables (Harik 1968: 122–26).

More important for understanding the active involvement of the clergy in the *ammiyyah* uprising was their role as articulators and carriers of a new Maronite ideology, one which reinforced the identity and solidarity of the Maronite community within Ottomany Syria, and in doing so undermined further the supremacy of the feudal system (Salibi 1959 1988; Hourani 1962: 226–45). In one sense or another they were articulating a new form of communal consciousness, which challenged the sense of personal allegiance, and kinship ties which were the hallmarks of feudal society. In fact, it was the clerical rather than the secular writers who first defined the community's revolutionary attitude toward the *iqta'* system (Harik 1968: 165–66). As we have seen, up until the last few decades of the eighteenth century, feudal society was held together by primordial ties of kinship and patron-client loyalties. Recognition of Mount Lebanon as a sort of national home for the Maronite community, ethnicity, and confessional allegiance, was emerging as a new source of political legitimacy.

The Church, early in the nineteenth century and particularly in North Lebanon, was in a favorable position to assume the intellectual and political leadership necessary for changing the world view or political outlook of the peasants. The priest was doubtless the most ubiquitous and central figure in

the village. He was not only entrusted with the task of attending to the spiritual needs of his community and administering sacraments at various stages of the life cycle such as baptism, communion, marriage and death, but was also authorized to resolve family disputes and marital problems, and was often sought as mediator in factional conflict and village rivalry.

The enterprising monks were also a source of employment to the surplus manpower of the village. They were active in establishing voluntary associations and religious societies. But most important, perhaps, they virtually monopolized the school system and the printing press — the only media available at the time. Education was almost entirely under their control. Graduates of the Maronite College in Rome had, since 1584, been returning to Mount Lebanon and the clerical profession was the only vocation compatible with their advanced training and knowledge.

Prominent schools like 'Ayn Turah (1734) and 'Ayn Waraqah (1789) were established by graduates of the Rome College and served as models for other schools in Mount Lebanon. So fundamental was the instruction in these schools that almost all the individuals, both lay and cleric, who played a central part in the political and cultural awakening of Lebanon in the nineteenth century had received their training there (Hitti 1957: 401–11; Salibi 1965: 122–27; Antonius 1938: 37–38). So did many of the secretaries and assistants to the Shihabi amirs and Ottoman Pashas. Several of the graduates, particularly those who occupied the key office of *mudabbir* (administrative assistants or managers who, among other things, served as scribes, financial controllers, political advisors, and in some instances military commanders), rose to positions of great influence during the Shihabi *Imarah*.

In short, there was hardly an aspect of the secular life of the community that remained untouched or unaffected by the omnipresence of clerics or clerical education. Second to the family, no other group or institution figured as prominently in the daily lives of individuals. With a ratio of roughly one priest for every two hundred lay Maronites, (Harik 1968: 154), their presence was bound to be pervasive, let alone their growing prestige and influence.

The point being emphasized here is that even if the Church had chosen not to, it is doubtful whether it could have restrained itself from becoming involved in the political life of Mount Lebanon. Furthermore, no other group could have offered the organizational and intellectual leadership necessary for challenging the political legitimacy of the *iqta'* system. Clerics were far from selfless in this regard. They had a stake in undermining the supremacy of feudal families. So when the occasion availed itself, as it did

in 1820, they had their share in inciting and organizing the *Ammiyyah* uprising.

The immediate issue at the time was taxation. A newly appointed pasha at Sidon had demanded an extra tribute from Bashir II. To be exact, the new impositions amounted to doubling the levies on peasants intended to satisfy the rapacious demands of the Ottoman Pasha along with Bashir's lavish expenditure on his palace and private mercenaries (Smilianskaya 1972: 68–69; al Shidyaq 1970, 2: 144–45). The Druze community in the South was solidly united under the leadership of Sheikh Bashir Jumblat, and would have certainly resisted such demands. Accordingly, the Amir turned to what he thought were the leaderless *muqata'as* of the North. He did not anticipate that organized sedition was already in the making.

Bishop Yusuf Istfan (1759–1823), as recognized by several historians, emerged as the prime mover and architect of the rebellion. As founder of the College of 'Ayn Waraqah and Christian judge for North Lebanon he had already assumed a prominent role in the affairs of the Mountain. His background and eventful life is instructive for understanding the role of the clerics in mobilizing the *'ammiyyah*. Like many clerical recruits, Istfan was an orphaned child of humble origins and a descendent of a family with extensive contacts within the church. He also had the benefit of a good education and opportunities, through contacts with foreign travelers and scholars (e.g. Burckhardt and Jirmanous Adam) to acquire knowledge of law, foreign languages, and exposure to western intellectual and political trends. Early in his career as an amateur historian and a young priest, he displayed an active interest in the wellbeing of the Maronite community. Later on, as titular archbishop, patriarchal secretary, and judge, he pursued such interests with devotion, often bordering on zealotry.

Istfan's relationship with Bashir was strained precisely because he had seen in some of Bashir's actions a threat to the hegemony and welfare of the Maronite community. His special affinity to the poor and common folk aroused his outrage against Bashir's taxation policy. He was equally incensed by the Shihabs' ambivalent treatment of their true religious identity, and the proclivity of the Amir in particular to disguise his Maronite faith in public. One particular episode in 1818, disclosing the strained relationship between church and state during the period, compounded Istfan's indignation. Amir Bashir had issued an order to his kinsmen to fast during Ramadan and to present themselves as Muslims in public (Harik 1968: 212). These and other such episodes offended religious susceptibilities and heightened the level of discontent, particularly among the lower clergy. By the time Bashir sent his

tax agents to collect the added impositions, Bishop Istfan was already in a contentious and rebellious frame of mind.

Discontent was widespread. Many of Istfan's colleagues (particularly Bishop 'Aynturini) were similarly inclined to mobilize insubordination and protest. They also received the tacit support of Patriarch Hilou. The movement, however, was clearly Istfan's brainchild. His innovative leadership proved instrumental in one significant respect: he organized the peasants into village communes and asked each village to chose a *wakil* (representative) as a spokesman who could act on their behalf with other *wakils* and government authorities (al-Shidyaq 1970, 2: 145; Shihab 1933: 685; Churchill 1862: 38). Simple as it may seem, this innovative institution had revolutionary implications for transforming the political perspectives of peasants and challenging feudal authority and the nature of political allegiance to it. Insurgents from the Maronite districts of the North (Christians of the Druze-dominated districts of South Lebanon did not participate) drew up a covenant (composed by Bishop Istfan) in which they pledged their solidarity as *ammiyyah*, their unrelenting loyalty to their *wakils*, determination to oppose additional taxes, and to struggle collectively in safeguarding their communal public interest. A similar covenant was drawn between the village of Bash'alah and their wakils on August 15, 1821. Iliya Harik provides the following text of this interesting document:

> We the undersigned, all the natives of Bash'alah in general, old and young, have freely accepted and entrusted ourselves and our expenses to our cousin, Tannus al Shidyaq Nasr, and whatever is required of us in general and in detail with respect to the ammiyyah. His word will be final with us in all matters of expenses and losses. Regarding the call to arms, we shall obey him in the recruitment of men in our interest and that of the common people. We shall not disobey or relent, and whoever disobeys or relents in what we have written here shall incur upon himself our hostility and severe punishment.
>
> This is what has been agreed upon between us and him [i.e., the wakil], and he shall act according to his conscience, not favoring anyone over the other nor relenting in the questions of our interest. Whatever he arranges as the tax, we shall accept; and if he relents in pursuing our interest, we shall hold him accountable. . . .
>
> If we suffer a loss, it will be shared by all of us equally. We should all be united as one person, having one word and paying one tax. . . . (Harik 1968: 213–14).

Both the substance and tone of the covenant makes it clear that the uprising should not be dismissed as a mere localized grievance against the heavy exactions imposed on the peasants. Underlying such concrete demands lurked other more subtle issues and perspectives. First, and perhaps most important, the uprising reveals that *iqta'* society was far from a closed system incapable of internal transformation. The very fact that the sedition was sparked off by the joint efforts of clerics and peasants is sociologically significant. It is one indication that the personal allegiance to the *muqata'jis* did not restrain the *ammiyyah* from entertaining other forms of allegiance. Second, by choosing a *wakil* from among the *ammiyyah* and entrusting him with the task of being their spokesman on all matters of common interest, the covenants were, in effect, articulating a new concept of authority that necessitated a shift from the ascriptive ties of status and kinship to those based on communal and public interest. Third, this also involved a change in the peasant's political perspective: he no longer perceived himself as being bound by personal allegiances to his feudal lord. Instead, and perhaps for the first time, he was made conscious of his communal loyalties and the notion of public welfare *(al salih al umumi)*. Finally, inspired by the Maronite ideology of the clerical and secular writers of the day, the uprising embodied a spirit of Maronite communal consciousness against Druze aspirations for domination and privilege. It also articulated a nationalist fervor and a desire to seek greater autonomy and independence from Ottoman control (Abraham 1981: 41–46; Harik 1968: 221).

By standards of the day it managed to mobilize a fairly large number of participants. More than 6,000, it is estimated, were present at the Intilias mass rally when the *ammiyyah* covenant was drawn up (al-Shidyaq 1970, 2: 145; al-Hattuni 1884: 242; Daww 1911: 155). Faced with such massive resistance, Bashir opted to retire from the government of Mount Lebanon. Abdallah Pasha, the wali of Saida, had no option but to call for the investiture of two of Bashir's cousins (Salman and Hassan) to fill the abandoned post. The peasants and their supporters were, of course, jubilant and marched in triumph to Dayr al-Qamar to celebrate the ceremonial investiture. Their jubilation was, however, short-lived. Promptly, the two amirs dispatched their tax collectors to levy the added impositions demanded by the wali of Saida. Once again, the *ammiyyah* were outraged. They rose in protest and expelled the tax collectors. The Ottoman wali had no choice but to recall Amir Bashir from his voluntary exile.

Upon his return Bashir sent his sons to collect the *miri* from the Maronite North. The peasants again resisted and mobilized another mass rally at Lih-

fid. Their demands this time were not confined to the issue of taxation. They insisted on being treated at least on equal terms with the Druze and, more far-reaching perhaps, they were demanding that their governor should not be invested by an Ottoman wali and that he should be one of them (al-Shidyaq 1970, 2: 155; Harik 1968: 218).

The defiant, revolutionary, and independent spirit of the Maronite *ammiyyah* was too much for Bashir. He rejected categorically all their demands and called upon his mercenaries and Druze supporters in the Chuf for military assistance. It is at this point that the uprising, thus far bloodless, became more belligerent. Fighting broke out in various towns and villages; particularly Lihfid, Kisrwan, and Jibbat Bsharri. In one of the most violent encounters, a largely spontaneous and unprovoked scuffle near Ihmij, sources speak of almost 80 casualties (Daww 1911: 173; al-Shidyaq 1970, 2: 156). Even the leaders of the revolt were not spared. Bishop Istfan fled to Akkar, vowing to lead a life of worship and solitude. He was denied such felicitous longings. Being pardoned by Bashir, he went to pay his respects in 1823 only to be poisoned and die shortly after leaving the Amir's palace. Al-Aynturini met the same cruel fate. He too was caught, tortured and died soon afterward in a Maronite convent in Jubayl (Yazbak 1955: 159).

Despite the enthusiasm touched off by the initial stages of the rebellion the *ammyiyyah* sedition had some peculiar, often anomalous, features that detracted from its credibility as a genuine peasant uprising.

First, the initiative for political change remained essentially a Maronite phenomenon and was predominantly confined to the Christian *muqata'as* of the North. Only one Druze feudal family (the Imads of the Yazbaki faction) expressed willingness to support the *ammiyyah* cause. Efforts to seek the assistance of others in the South proved futile. The uprising clearly failed to spark the same spirit of revolt among the *ammiyyah* of the Druze. The Druze sheikhs, in fact, looked with aversion at the prospects of participating on equal terms with commoners, let alone the Christians of the North. When, for example, the two Shihabi amirs (Hassan and Salman) espoused the cause of the uprising and called upon the Talhouq Druze Sheiks to do likewise, their response to Tannus al Shidyaq who was acting as messenger at the time displayed deep repugnance. He was told: "We do not get led by the Christian commoners of that country . . . it is held a shame by us" (al-Shidyaq 1970, 2: 154). Given this enmity, one may infer that the ideological nationalism generated and encouraged by the Maronite clergy was parochial not civic. Even when perceived as a "class" rivalry, the commoners of the South remained loyal to their feudal sheikhs. They refused to heed the call of "class" or "public" consciousness articulated in the North.

Second, the *ammiyyah* was, to a considerable extent, *ammiyyah* in name only. At least in terms of sources of inspiration and leadership much of the support came from outside the ranks of peasants and commoners. The clergy provided the intellectual and ideological justifications and much of impetus for organization. A Khazin sheikh, initially, was chosen as leader. Other *ayan*, sheikhs, and amirs, were drawn into the movement because of factional rivalry and competition for office. They did not, clearly, harbor much genuine interest in the ultimate welfare of commoners.

Third, the uprising was not an entirely local affair. The great powers, particularly England and France, were already embroiled in the internal affairs of Lebanon in the aftermath of Napoleon's retreat from Palestine. Bashir, concerned about Lebanon's autonomy and neutrality, refused to come to the aid of the French general. This naturally endeared him to the British whose patronage he willfully used in his struggles with the Ottoman walis. During Bashir's brief exile in Egypt he negotiated with Muhammad Ali and his son, Ibrahim Pasha, the prospects for Egypt's expedition into Syria in an effort to secure Lebanon's independence from the Ottoman Empire (Abraham 1981: 52–53).

Altogether, the *ammiyyah* uprising was the first instance in which some of the established beliefs and institutions of iqta' society were seriously challenged. Significant as it was, however, the challenge did not signal the obsolescence of the *a'yan*, nor did it radically rearrange the forces that held the society together. Initially, the uprising brought about the exile of Bashir and the deposition of his successors. This is no mean accomplishment. Bashir's exile, however, was very brief. With the help of the Druze *ayan* he was, after all, able to crush the rebellion and reestablish order in the country. He also succeeded in collecting the taxes he had originally intended, and in imposing additional penalties for insubordination.

In this respect all that the rebellion did was to initiate the transition from the traditional ties of kinship, status and personal allegiance to a more communal form of social cohesion where the sources of political legitimacy were defined in terms of ethnicity and confessional allegiance. In short, it substituted one form of primordial loyalty for another.

The Uprising of 1840

The uprising of 1840 came in the wake of a decade of Egyptian occupation when Mount Lebanon was subjected to a thorough and intensive form of centralized control. Some of the reforms and changes introduced

by Ibrahim Pasha, particularly in the economic sphere, were far reaching. The growth of public security, reforms in the fiscal system, rationalization of land tenure, growth in foreign trade, movement of capital, and the opening of village society, etc., produced a pronounced shift in the relative socioeconomic and political positions of the various groups and communities. The delicate balances that had held the society together were deeply shaken.

Evidence of disenchantment with the Egyptian presence (particularly the despised measures of conscription, *corvée* and taxation) began to appear earlier in the decade. The magnitude and intensity of all these dreaded impositions witnessed a sharp increase. Taxation became more oppressive. The 1820 uprising, as we have seen, was largely a revolt against the doubled tax Amir Bashir had imposed; hence, the rally-cry of the Intilias covenant "*mal wahid wa jizya wahida*"; i.e. that taxes should be levied only once a year. By 1840, taxes were being collected several times a year. Ibrahim Pasha went even further and sought to levy the polltax for seven years in advance. Taxes also increased enormously, at least if measured by revenues acruing to the Ottoman treasury. Citing Russian and French diplomatic sources, Smilianskaya (1972: 40–41) reports that the Lebanese *Jizya* amounted to not more than 150,000 piasters in the 1770s and 600,000 at the end of the century. By 1820, a sum of 2.5 million piasters was collected. This figure leaped to 8.75 million for the time of the Egyptian occupation, i.e. a five-fold increase accounting for currency depreciation. What compounded the outrage of the peasants was that revenues from these rapacious exactions were used for the maintenance of the Egyptian army and the wars waged by Ibrahim Pasha.

The system of *corvée* also became more ruinous. As we have seen, a measure of forced labor for public and welfare needs was common and considered legitimate, particularly if perceived as part of the fealty obligation peasants owed their feudal sheikhs. Under the Egyptians, however, *corvée* became much more abusive. It was extracted for contemptuous and disagreeable services such as the transportation of munitions and provisions to army camps and labor in the deplorable conditions of the coalmines of Salima and Qurnayil. These, and other such offensive measures, such as the billeting of soldiers with peasants to secure the payment of taxes (Baer 1982: 264), provoked the added outrage of villagers.

Of all the abuses associated with the Egyptians, conscription was by far the most widely feared. Like other exactions, it too witnessed a sharp increase. Prior to the Egyptian occupation, one out of three males was recruited in each family. By 1840, the proportion increased to one out of two (Baer 1982: 263). The dread conscription provoked was understandable. Since it involved a prolonged absence from a village or town, it imposed a

drain on the economic resources of Mount Lebanon. It meant isolation from kinship and other primordial ties which are sources of personal reinforcement and support in village society. Indeed, it was so despised that potential conscripts would do their utmost to avoid its terrors. Beiruti Muslims — and their coreligionists in Saida and Tripoli — were known to seek refuge in European consulates and foreign residences, hide in caverns and excavations, or take to the sea in vain efforts to flee from the pursuit of Egyptian officers. Druze sought immunity in baptism or conversion, and there were cases of mutilation and emigration.

As early as 1834, there were uprisings in Palestine, Tripoli, and Lattakia against the imposition of such measures, and in each case Ibrahim Pasha was successful in subduing the insurrections with the assistance of Amir Bashir. He then turned to Mount Lebanon and requested from Bashir the conscription of 1,600 Druzes to serve for the regular fifteen-year term in the Egyptian army.

The initial success of the major Druze insurrection of Hawran in 1838 encouraged their coreligionists in Mount Lebanon to take up their arms in support of the same cause. Through French and European consular intervention, Christians had gained a temporary respite from conscription. They were, however, dragged into the confrontation in a more damaging manner. Ibrahim Pasha requested Bashir to recruit some 4,000 Christian mountaineers to assist in subduing the Druze rebels. In appreciation of such assistance, the Maronites were allowed to keep possession of their arms and promised no additional tax increases (Hitti 1957: 124).

This request was uprecedented in the history of Mount Lebanon. So far the "tradition of asylum" and the sort of peaceful confederacy that evolved between the various communities prevented any direct clash between them. For generations Lebanon was torn by internal strife, but it was the strife of factions and feuding families. Little of it took the form of religious rivalry. The Hawran episode, by pitting Christian against Druze, was bound to arouse bitter confessional hostility.

In 1840, however, Muhammad Ali reversed his decision and insisted on disarming all Christians of Mount Lebanon, which was correctly perceived by the population as a step toward general conscription. Even in normal times, mountaineers are generally reluctant to abandon their rifles. Indeed, village folkways have it that "the Lebanese would rather part with his wife than with his rifle" (al-Halabi 1927, 2: 6).

By then Bashir II had been reduced to a mere instrument of his Egyptian masters. Despite his initial reluctance, he had no recourse but to succumb to Mohammad Ali's commands. Accordingly, in May 1840 he summoned the

Druze and Christians of Dayr al-Qamar to surrender their arms. Throughout the months of April and May, in fact, Mount Lebanon was in a state of ferment and widespread anxiety. It was rumored that Muhammad Ali was conscripting Lebanese medical students in Egypt and that Egyptian officers were already rounding up recruits in Tripoli and Baalback. Indeed, shortly thereafter an Egyptian vessel called on Beirut, reportedly to carry off able-bodied males for military service (al-Shidyaq 1970, 2: 225; Farah 1967: 110).

The outcry, this time, was total. First in Dayr al-Qamar and then in other towns and villages the call for armed struggle became more audible. Christians, Druze, Sunni Muslims, and Shi'ites temporarily suspended their differences and acted collectively to resist Bashir's orders. The first phase of the insurgence began on May 27, when a handful of Maronite and Druze leaders met at Dayr al-Qamar and pledged to resist the conscription campaign. A covert committee, composed of ten Maronites and two Druze, was organized to solicit funds and arms. Secret dispatches went out urging villagers not to surrender their arms and to shelter their sons from the reach of conscription officers.

From its inception, it was apparent that the insurgents were not acting alone. Indeed, growing sources of internal unrest notwithstanding, much of the impetus for the uprising was largely a byproduct of superpower rivalry. The British, at the time, were still convinced that an Ottoman-controlled Syria would be a better safeguard for their trade routes to India; hence the successful diplomatic efforts of Palmerston in forging a delicate alliance among Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia to rescue Syria from its Egyptian occupiers. Russia, eager to widen the rift between France and Great Britain, endorsed Palmerston's plans. So did Metternich. With the exception of France, all the concert powers had perceived their national interests to be better served by evicting the Egyptians from Syria. None of the allies, however, were willing to commit the necessary forces to engage Ibrahim Pasha in ground battles. Inciting the armed struggle of local insurgents, already outraged by the abusive policies of the Egyptians, seemed a less hazardous course. It was certainly less costly to the concert of European powers.

France, because of its friendly relations with both the Maronites and the Pasha of Egypt, was in an awkward diplomatic predicament. Official opinion in France was divided and inconsistent. One faction, led by Prime Minister Thiers, was supporting Muhammad Ali; another, close to King Louis Philippe, was advocating a policy of reconciliation and appeasement (see Farah 1967: 110–113). The King, in fact, dispatched his nephew, Comte d'Onfroi, to assist the insurgents. The Comte came reinforced with

a letter from the Pope to the Maronite Patriarch urging and blessing the call for armed struggle (Guys 1850: II, 266).

The Pope's blessings were needed because the higher echelons of the Maronite clergy in Mount Lebanon were also divided. Beirut's Maronite Bishop, Butrus Karam, had ordered the inhabitants of Dayr al Qamar to desist from any acts of hostility against Amir Bashir and his Egyptian masters. The appeal was not heeded; particularly in Kisrwan, Jubayl, Sahil, and the southern districts of Shahhar and Manasif. In all these Muqata'as, the sheikhly feudal families — Khazin, Abi Lama', Nakad — were embittered by the way Bashir had undermined their traditional authority. Other regions, however, especially the predominantly Greek Orthodox, Sunni, and Druze towns of Hasbayya and Rashayya, were reluctant to take up arms against Bashir.

Much like the *'ammiyyah* of 1820, leadership did not devolve entirely around the commoners. For example, initially, the Beirut branch of the rebellion was led by two commoners. Soon, however, Francis al Khazin took over. Other descendents of notable families, *"Wujuh al-'amiyyah"* as they were popularly labelled, assumed leadership.

Comte d'Onfroi managed to solicit enough support to raise a force of about 10,000 Maronite fighters. Early in June, rebel leaders, mostly dispossessed feudal sheikhs and relatives of Amir Bashir, gathered at Intilias, elected Comte d'Onfroi as their "French Commander of Troops," expressed firm determination to resist the oppressive injustices of Egyptian rule, and pledged "to fight to restore their independence or die." They also drew up a covenant outlining a set of explicit grievances to abrogate the abuses of conscription, disarmament, *corvée*, and taxation. Reminiscent of the *'ammiyyah* of 1820, the covenant evinced the same confessional and class-consciousness. "We have come together in a real Christian unity free from (personal) purposes and from spite, made rather for the welfare of the common folk *(jumhur)* of the community" (Harik 1968:248).

Similarly, the rebels of 1840 were calling for the end of foreign rule and the restoration of Mount Lebanon's autonomy and independence. They were also demanding the reorganization of the administration by forming a new administrative council representing the various communities to assist the amir in governing the public affairs of Mount Lebanon.

Military operations were masterminded by d'Onfroi who had established his headquarters at the little town of Zuq al-Kharab near Junieh. He kept the insurgents well supplied with ammunition, crosses, and French banners. For logistic purposes, they were split into two groups; one led by d'Onfroi

and the other by Yusuf Shihab, a dispossessed cousin of Amir Bashir. A Jesuit missionary was assigned to counsel the inexperienced Yusuf along with other leaders. Bourée the French consul, also played an active part in helping French agents secure military supplies for the insurgents through Cyprus. So did the consuls of other Catholic powers; particularly Austria and Sardinia. (For these and other details see Farah 1967: 110–117.)

Such blatant intervention only served to arouse the hostility of Amir Bashir and the Egyptian Pasha. They called upon further troop reinforcements. On June 20, Muhammad Ali's son, Abbas, landed in Beirut with 12,000 troops. Ibrahim Pasha mobilized another 12,000. Suleiman Pasha, the Ottoman wali at Saidon, committed around 20,000. So did Amir Bashir. The combined forces, almost six times the size mustered by insurgents, converged on their strongholds and easily overwhelmed them.

The first phase of the revolt (roughly between mid-May and the end of July 1840) ended with failure. Towns and villages in Matn and Beqa' were sacked, insurgents surrendered their arms and fifty-seven of their leaders were exiled to Egypt. By then, however, the "Eastern Question" was attracting the attention of European powers. During this second phase, it was the turn of the British consuls and their agents to mobilize the insurgents. Richard Wood, who had served as British observer on two earlier occasions, was dispatched to Lebanon in 1840 with explicit instructions from the British Ambassador at Istanbul, to incite the Lebanese against the Egyptians (Farah 1967: 110–116).

Reinforced by the terms of the London Treaty of July 1840, in which the Quadruple Alliance had agreed to expel the Egyptians from Syria, the British spearheaded the massive naval and military campaign launched for that effort. By September, they had succeeded in amassing twenty-two warships, joined by a token number of Austrian and Turkish naval units. An allied ground force of more than 11,000 troops was also mobilized. In the words of one observer it was, indeed, "a strange spectacle, Metternich and Palmerston inviting rebels to revolt against Ibrahim, an Austrian archduke fighting for freedom and helping a British admiral to foil the designs of France." (Temperley 1964: 117).

On September 9 Beirut was bombarded from the sea, followed the next day by a landing of troops at the Bay of Junieh, seat of the Maronite patriarchate. So thrilled was the patriarch that he offered the British commander a church to serve as headquarters of the operations. While the allied forces established their dominance over the coastal regions, insurgents engaged Egyptian troops in the hillsides of Matn and Kisrwan.

Within two weeks the allies occupied the main towns and cities, and by early November the Egyptians withdrew their demoralized forces from Syria. The defeat of Ibrahim Pasha carried with it the humiliating downfall of Bashir's illustrious reign of more than half a century. He had steadfastly supported the Egyptians and had no recourse but to deliver himself up for exile.

More damaging, perhaps, was the sectarian enmity the Egyptian interlude left in its wake. By pitting Maronites against Druzes in 1838 and then Druzes against Maronites in 1840, Muhammad Ali violated the spirit of asylum and the culture of tolerance which had characterized communal relations. Mount Lebanon was also made more accessible and vulnerable to foreign intervention. From then on, communal hostility and internationalization of its polity were destined to become inveterate features of its political destiny.

The Uprising of 1857–60

The peasants' involvement in the political events of 1840 might have contributed to putting an end to both the Egyptian occupation and the eventful reign of Bashir II. They did little, however, to transform the underlying loyalties of peasants or those aspects of the feudal system that were the source of their grievances.

Indeed, by the mid-fifties Mount Lebanon continued to display all the ingredients of a feuding and fractured social order: factional conflict between rival feudal chiefs, family rivalry between factions of the same extended kinship group, a bit of "class" conflict between a feudal aristocracy eager to preserve its eroding power and privilege and an emerging Maronite clergy and the mass of exploited peasantry determined to challenge the social and political supremacy of feudal authority. This intricate network of competing and shifting loyalties was reinforced, often deliberately incited, by Ottoman pashas playing one faction against another or the intervention of Western powers each eager to protect or promote the interest of its own protégé.

By and large, however, civil strife was largely nonsectarian. At least until 1840, nineteenth-century travelers and local chroniclers continued to be impressed by the spirit of amity and harmony that characterized communal relations. From then on, cleavages began to assume a more confessional form. One outburst of factional strife provoked another until they culminated in the harrowing massacres of 1860.

What brought about this convergence of social protest and intercommunal strife? Why were the former—seemingly genuine peasant uprisings

sparked by collective outrage and a measure of revolutionary consciousness — muted or deflected into bitter and bloody sectarian hostilities? In the language of our study, how and why did the largely "civil" forms of social unrest and collective protest degenerate into "uncivil" violence, the type that became a protracted cycle of often indiscriminate and self-destructive blood letting? This is of particular relevance to our exploration because the change in the pattern of conflict also brought with it a marked increase in the magnitude of violence.

Doubtless, this is a reflection of the confluence of internal and external sources of disruptive transformations Lebanon was witnessing at the time. The great power rivalry and the consequent internationalization of Lebanese politics had already left their toll. Foreign powers, eager to gain inroads into the region, sought to pit one religious community against another. The centralized policies of the Ottomans, directed at undermining the privileged status of Mount Lebanon and the local authority of feudal chiefs, exacerbated the tension further. So did the liberal policies of Ibrahim Pasha and the egalitarian provisions of the Ottoman reforms.

A decade of Egyptian rule opened up the village society of Mount Lebanon to all sorts of societal changes and secular reforms while generating a pronounced shift in the relative socioeconomic position of religious communities. The precarious balance that held society together and sustained confessional harmony was disrupted. The Ottoman Tanzimat did little to assuage these dislocations. On the contrary, the secular and innovative tones of the reforms were a threat to the vested interest of traditional Muslims, and the egalitarian provisions of the edicts provoked further hostility between the sects. (For further details, see Khalaf 1979: 45–63; Porath 1965: 81–86). The escalation of hostility is also a reflection, as has been propounded by another premise of this study, of its own self-propagating character. Once initiated, violence quickly acquires a life of its own and is sustained by forces often unrelated to the initial sources that had provoked the hostility.

The communities were already seething with confessional enmity and required little provocation. The downfall of Bashir II and the appointment of his incompetent cousin, Bashir III, as his successor, gave the Ottomans a welcome opportunity to undermine the local autonomy of Lebanon's feudal chiefs. Upon the insistence of the Ottoman authorities, Bashir III organized a council or diwan of twelve men (two from each of the dominant sects; Maronites, Druze, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Sunni Muslims, and Shi'ites) to assist him in the administration of justice. Both Druze and Christian feudal sheikhs saw in this an encroachment of their traditional authority

and refused to cooperate in this arrangement. Druze sheikhs in particular, especially the Junblats, Arslans, and Talhuqs, who were eager to restore the rights and privileges they had lost during Bashir II's reign, were not prepared to suffer further usurpations. More provocative was the circular issued by Patriarch Yusuf Hubaysh, and signed by leading Maronite families, calling on their coreligionists in the Druze districts to assume the judicial authority traditionally held by the feudal chiefs. "This was tantamount to an assertion by the Patriarch of the power to withdraw authority from the Druze sheikhs" (Kerr 1959: 4).

Following a dispute in October 1841 over the distribution of taxes, a party of Druze led by the Abu Naked sheikhs attacked Dayr al-Qamar, set the town on fire, pillaged Christian homes, and besieged Bashir III. The incident touched off other sectarian clashes throughout the Shuf, Biqa, and Zahle. This was the first sectarian outburst, and it left a staggering toll: a loss of about 300 people, the destruction of half a million dollars of property (Churchill 1862: 63–64), the dismissal of Bashir III under humiliating conditions, the end of the Shihabi Emirate, and a large residue of ill-feeling and mutual suspicion. (For further details, see Churchill 1862: 46–62; Hitti 1957: 434–35.) The animosity was further aggravated by the complicity of the Ottoman authorities. Not only were they suspected of having been involved in the initial Druze plot against the Christians (Salibi 1965: 50; Hitti 1957: 434–35), but also there were instances in which Ottoman troops participated in the acts of plundering. Such instances gave rise to the saying common then among Christians: "We would sooner by plundered by Druzes than protected by Turks" (Churchill 1862: 52).

By 1842 it was becoming apparent that an irreparable breach was drawing the religious communities further apart. The Maronite-Druze confederacy, which had sustained Lebanon's autonomy for so long, suffered its first serious setback. The Ottomans were eager to step in and impose direct rule over Mount Lebanon. They declared the end of the Shihabi Emirate and appointed Umar Pasha "al-Namsawi" ("the Austrian") as governor. The Druze, already jealous of Christian ascendancy in power and prosperity, greeted the downfall of the Shihabs with enthusiasm, without realizing that the introduction of Ottoman centralized rule would ultimately have adverse effects on their own community. The Christians, naturally, refused to recognize the new arrangement and insisted on a restoration of the Emirate, which could only be achieved with Druze cooperation (Salibi 1965: 53).

Umar Pasha's main concern was to gain support for his efforts to establish direct Ottoman rule. He turned first to the Druze and Maronite feudal

sheikhs who had been dispossessed by the Shihabs. By restoring their estates and traditional prerogatives and appointing several of them as his advisors and agents, he won their support for the new regime. Second, he was eager to demonstrate to European powers that direct Ottoman rule enjoyed wide support in Lebanon. To this end, agents were hired to circulate petitions and secure signatures (a sort of plebiscite by coercion) in favor of direct Ottoman rule. He resorted to bribery, entreaties, false premises, threats, intimidation, blackmail, and "every species of personal indignity" (Churchill 1862: 66–75) to procure the necessary signatures. So flagrant were the extortionist pressures that European consuls in Beirut collectively protested against the use of such measures, and declared the petitions to be "completely unrepresentative of true Lebanese opinion" (Salibi 1956: 55).

In the meantime, internal alignments within Lebanon were being swiftly redefined. The petitions had hardly been circulated, when the Druze had serious afterthoughts about direct Ottoman administration and their place within it. They had considered themselves responsible for the collapse of the Shihabi Emirate and the establishment of Ottoman rule, and were therefore reluctant to assume a subservient position and accept the arbitrary dictates of Ottoman officials. Confronted with such Druze pretensions, and in desperation, Umar Pasha turned to the Maronites for support and started his policy of ingratiation to win their favors. This only aroused the suspicion of the Maronites and the bitter resentment of the Druze. So intense was Druze opposition that Umar Pasha was forced to arrest seven of their prominent sheikhs. The outrage was instantaneous. An open Druze rebellion was declared demanding the immediate dismissal of Umar Pasha, immunity from conscription and disarmament, and exception from taxes for a three-year period (Salibi 1965: 62). Despite strong resistance, a contingent of Turkish and Albanian troops forced the surrender of Druze leaders.

The rebellion, nonetheless, was a clear indication that direct Ottoman control was disagreeable to both Druze and Maronites. Efforts for a new Druze-Maronite coalition had failed, but the insurgents enjoyed the moral support of Maronite leaders (Kerr 1959: 5–6; Churchill 1862: 64–79). Druze feudal sheikhs were resentful of the loss of the traditional prerogatives and the arbitrary arrests and imprisonment they were subjected to under the autocratic control of Umar Pasha. The Maronites were equally appalled by the demise of the Shihabi dynasty and, with it, the frustration of their hopes for establishing an autonomous Christian Imarah (Harik 1968: 268). In the face of such opposition, the Ottomans were forced to dismiss Umar Pasha before he completed his first year in office. So ended this brief interlude of

direct Ottoman rule. More important, this interlude had intensified the enmity between the religious communities. The desperate efforts of the Ottomans to assert their direct authority over Lebanon prompted them to resort to their time-worn ploys of inciting sectarian suspicions and hostility.

European intervention (particularly on behalf of France and Britain) prevented the Ottoman government from imposing direct control over Lebanon, but failed to reconcile the Druze and Maronites. Consequently, the five powers and the Porte agreed in 1843 to a scheme of partitioning: a northern district under a Christian *qa'immaqam* ("sub-governor"), and a southern under a Druze *qa'immaqam*, each to rule over his coreligionists and both responsible to the local Ottoman governor residing in Beirut. The Beirut–Damascus road was used as an arbitrary line of demarcation. The partition scheme was a compromise plan (advanced by Prince Metternich) between the French and Ottoman proposals. The French (supported by the Austrians) continued to hope for a restoration of the Shihabi Emirate; while the Ottomans (backed by the Russians) insisted on the complete integration of Lebanon into the Empire and opposed any reinstatement of Lebanese autonomy.

The double *qa'immaqamiyyah* was an ill-fated plan from the day of its inception. The partition was an artificial political division that aggravated rather than assuaged religious cleavages. In the words of a contemporary observer, "it was the formal organization of civil war in the country" (as quoted by Salibi 1965: 64). According to the scheme, each *qa'immaqm* was to exercise authority over his own coreligionists. The religious composition of the two districts, however, was far from homogenous. This created the problem of how to treat those who belonged to one religious community but happened to be living under the political authority of another, especially in areas like the Shuf, Gharb, and Matn.

To overcome the jurisdictional problems created by the mixed districts, the Porte decided to limit the authority of each *qa'immaqam* to his own territory, thus denying Christians in the Druze districts the right of appealing to a Christian authority in judicial and tax matters (Kerr 1959: 607). As usual, European powers intervened on behalf of their protégés. France, as the protector of Maronite and Catholic interest, opposed the Ottoman plan and encouraged the church to remove Maronites from the jurisdiction of the Druze *qa'immaqam* and to place them directly under the Christian one. Britain, eager to safeguard the prerogatives of the Druze feudal sheikhs, approved the revised scheme. In the meantime, Russia maintained that the Greek Orthodox community of 20,500 was populous enough to justify the

creation of a special *qa'immaqamiyyah* (for further details, see Salibi 1965: 63–66). In the face of such conflicting expectations, an arrangement was arrived at whereby in each of the mixed districts, a Christian and Druze *wakil* would be chosen, each with judicial authority over his coreligionists and responsible to the *qa'immaqam* of his sect. Mixed cases, involving Christian and Druze, would be heard jointly by the two *wakils*. The wakils were also empowered to collect taxes, each from his own sect, on behalf of the feudal chief (Kerr 1959: 8–9; Salibi 1965: 66–67).

A fresh outbreak of hostilities in the spring of 1845 finally convinced the Ottomans of the inadequacies inherent in the double *qa'immaqamiyyah*. Nevertheless, the Ottomans opted not to resort to a thorough reorganization of Mount Lebanon. Instead, they modified the existing arrangement by settling the jurisdictional problems of Christians living in Druze districts. A review of the articles and provisions of the Règlement Shakib Efendi, as the plan is identified by historians, reveals that altogether it reinforced rather than undermined the prevailing social and political power of the feudal families (For further details, see Jouplain 1908: 297–353; Chevallier 1971: 174–79; Poujade, 1867: 34–35).

It is against this background that the confluence of peasant uprisings and communal hostility should be viewed: the demise of the Shihabs, growing disparities between religious communities, increasing foreign intervention, and the eagerness of the Ottomans to impose direct rule on Mount Lebanon and to undermine all vestiges of its local autonomy.

Peasant agitation in Kisrwan, which began gaining considerable momentum in 1858, can still be better understood when viewed within the context of the economic transformations (particularly the expansion of European trade and the consequent emergence of an urban bourgeoisie) which weakened the stability of the feudal economy. "From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards," Gabriel Baer asserts, "peasant revolts in Egypt and Lebanon were no longer caused by fiscal pressure alone or by political coercion of fellahs . . . but rather by economic processes which brought about the deterioration of their position" (Baer 1982: 264).

These transformations, at least in Mount Lebanon, were not exclusively the byproduct of the inevitable transition from a subsistence agricultural economy to one based on cash crops. The French Revolution, crisis in silk trade in the wake of the Crimean War, and a host of natural calamities all severely affected the status of the Khazins as suppliers of raw silk to the French spinners.(For further details, see Buheiry 1989, Dubar and Nasr 1976: 51–59, Saba 1976). By the mid nineteenth century silk trade with Europe was restored, but in a modified pattern: European traders now re-

exported the silk to Lebanon in processed form, thereby competing ruinously with the local cottage manufacturers. The situation deteriorated further when the French set up modern spinning mills in regions closer to Beirut's harbor, such as the Shuf and Matn, but further away from Kisrwan (Baer 1982: 266; Porath 1965: 85).

The burgeoning urban middle class (mostly Christian merchants and agents for European traders) continued to prosper. The rest of the society, particularly craftsmen, artisans, peasants, and small traders, were adversely affected by the growing dependence of the Lebanese economy on European production and trade. The new trading patterns deprived a large portion of the rural society of its traditional sources of livelihood and rendered the economy sensitive to external circumstances. Any disturbance in the European economy had its reverberations within Lebanon. The French consul general in Beirut noted that the French financial crisis of 1857–58 had had "disastrous consequences for Syrian business. Numerous and important bankruptcies, and extraordinary financial uneasiness felt until the end of 1859, loss of credit everywhere, and all this added to by two years of poor harvest" (Chevallier 1968: 219). Furthermore, in violation of the Anglo-Turkish commercial Treaty of 1838, which established the principle of free trade and laissez-faire, the Ottomans imposed a tax on silk cocoons at the place where they were raised, an act which contributed to the consequent ruin of many of the local reeling factories (Issawi 1967: 115; Chevallier 1968: 218).

Feudal families tried to curtail their growing indebtedness and recoup their losses by intensifying the forced exactions and taxation on peasants. Others ceded or sold portions of their land to villagers and then tried to reclaim them forcibly through their armed retainers. These abusive strategies were more apparent in the Christian districts since, unlike the Druze *qa'immaqamiyyah*, there were no *wakils* there to protect the peasants or bargain on their behalf.

The impetus for mobilization was, once again, initiated in the predominantly Christian districts of the north. The clergy were openly active in inciting and organizing the protest. As in earlier episodes the conflict also created an unlikely coalition, this time pitting the Khazin sheikhs against the *qa'immaqam*, the peasants, and the clergy (Porath 1965: 84). Early in 1858 the protest continued to assume rather civil and contained forms of gatherings—public rallies to vindicate grievances, draft petitions, and organize delegations of protest.

Appropriately, the first such public gatherings took place in towns like Zuq Mikhayil, Ajaltun, and Mazra'at Kafr Dubyan, whose livelihood and relative prosperity was largely linked to silk processing and trading. The

gatherings were fairly small. The largest, claimed not more than 200 people. They were spontaneously organized, often independent of each other and with no evidence of coordination or concerted planning. They also displayed little traces of radicalism; other than announcing the formation of *Shuyukh al Shabab* (youth organizations), electing *wakils*, and forging alliances with other oppressed villages and towns. "We band together," one of these petitions declared, "in a spirit of unmalicious love, refraining from any deed that might give offence." (Porath 1965: 91). At one of those gatherings, Salih Sfeir, the moderate *Sheikh Shabab* of Ajaltun, was elected *wakil'am* or supreme commander of the villages.

The demands of the peasants, at that early phase of the rebellion, were concerned only with the cessation of some of the oppressive measures they were being subjected to. They did not challenge the legitimacy of the Khazin's authority, nor were they making claims to expropriate any of their estates. They were merely demanding that government authority, exercised by the Khazins, be invested in three of its members as *ma'mur* (government official).

The "unmalicious" and "unoffensive" demands, well-intentioned as they might have been, clearly did not remain so. By early May of the same year, participants in a mass rally at Bhannis were already carrying arms and talking about rebelling against the Khazins. From then on the tone and structure of the movement became more confrontational. Peasant agitation began to assume violent forms. In one village after another, *sheikh shababs* organized village councils, usurped power, and demanded further concessions from their feudal lords. The reluctance of the notables to grant these concessions only provoked added bitterness among the peasants. Leadership also passed into more radical hands. The relatively moderate Salih Sfeir was replaced by the more intemperate, arrogant, and ambitious Tanyus Shahin of Rayfun.

The transfer of leadership to Shahin, the illiterate farrier who had "little to recommend him other than his tall and muscular frame and violent temper" (Salibi 1965: 85), was a turning point. The day he was proclaimed general commander of Kisrwan, Shahin launched an aggressive campaign to collect arms and funds and to extend the rebellion to the more moderate northwestern regions. Almost overnight he became a folk hero; the avowed and undisputed spokesman of peasants and their redeemer from feudal tutelage. His adulators sang paeans in his praise. His arrival in villages and towns was greeted by volleys of rifle fire. He clearly enjoyed the deference and respect normally accorded to a legitimate ruler. He was even addressed

as "Bey," a title that bore Ottoman administrative connotations (For these and other details, see Porath 1965: 94–117; Kerr 1959: 49).

The heightened belligerency of the movement was first visible in the intransigent and escalated concessions the rebels were demanding: full equality of status between sheikhs and peasants; an end to the exactions of gifts, dues, and the imposition of forced labor; an abolition of contrived taxes on land already sold by the sheikhs to peasants; and the abolition of the right to authorize marriages and administer floggings and jail sentences (Porath 1965: 100–101).

The intransigence of rebels was not confined to the grievances and new claims they were making. Their belligerency acquired more hostile dimensions as they set out to drive the Khazins out of Kisrwan. Often without much resistance, the Khazins abandoned their estates in Rayfun, Ajaltoun, Ghadir, Dar'un and sought refuge in villages further north and Beirut. Accounts of these events do not reveal much by way of violence. It was not, in fact, until mid-July 1859 that the first fatal casualties were reported when the wife and daughter of one of the Khazin sheikhs were killed in Ajaltoun.

Another striking feature, particularly during episodes of evicting the Khazin and confiscating their property, was the absence of wanton acts of violence. It is estimated that 500 Khazins were driven from their homes and their estates were taken away (Porath 1965: 98). Of course, there were instances of looting food, household utensils, tools, and supplies. Orchards, particularly olive groves and mulberry trees, were willfully destroyed and vandalized. Herds of goats and sheep were grazed in devastated woodlots. Villagers in the northwest who demurred from accepting Shahin's authority were subjected to harassment and coercive ploys. Their houses were mauled and robbed. Others were victims of extortion and involuntary tributes of food supplies and money.

On the whole, however, on reading the diversity of accounts, one emerges with a relatively tame portrait: not of rootless brigands on the rampage, eager to wreak vengeance in acts of unrestrained terrorism but of socially-minded rebels bent on correcting injustices and rooting out oppressive features of feudal society. Tanyus Shahin comes out more in the image of a Robin Hood than an insolent bandit. For every act of unrestrained looting attributed to his partisans, one encounters others where confiscated property and crops were collected and redistributed for the common welfare.

Shahin clearly was not acting alone. It is rare for uprisings of this sort to be inspired and sustained by local initiative only. The peasant movement enjoyed, it seems, the moral encouragement of the Ottoman authorities and

Patriarch Mass'ad. At least they were not very eager to contain the rebellion. Some observers go even further to maintain that since the Ottoman's ultimate objective was the establishment of direct rule, the uprising was the outcome of their explicit incitement in an effort to eliminate or undermine Christian hegemony in Lebanon (Hattuni, 1884: 332–34). England and France continued to display their discrepant viewpoints and roles. While the British consul was a fervent supporter of the Khazins, the French were more sympathetic to the rebels though they had reservations about Shahin's style of government. As in earlier instances, the Maronite clergy, partly because of their humble social origins and their anti-aristocratic sentiments, offered more than just moral support, though it remained suspicious of Shahin's character and personal ambitions (See Porath 1965: 137–46 for further details concerning the type of assistance the clergy offered).

By the spring of 1859, the peasant insurrection became a full-fledged social revolution; at least in the Christian districts of the North. The Khazins and other feudal families were evicted from their homes and stripped of their possessions. Feudal property, household provisions, and ammunition were parceled out among the peasants, and Tanyus Shahin was issuing his commands with the "authority of the people" *(biquwat al-hukuma al-jumhuriyya)*. (Kerr 1959: 53; Churchill 1862: 111–12; Porath 1966: 115).

It is not clear what Shahin might have meant by these sublime catchwords. As a protégé of the French Lazarite monks who ran, it seems, a school in his own village of Rayfun, he was probably reiterating populist sentiments evoked by the French Revolution and its aftermath in Europe (Porath 1965: 115). What is clear, however, is that Shahin was recognized as governor of Kisrwan, that he governed with the assistance of a council empowered with the maintenance of public order, the regulation of judicial proceedings, and "taking cognizance of acts of disobedience" (Churchill 1862: 127). It is odd that a rebel and maverick of sorts, notorious for his intemperate character, dreaded as a "riot-monger," should be dispatching instructions to religious dignitaries imploring them to caution villagers against drunkenness during festivals and other acts of public disorder (Churchill 1862: 127). He did. He also managed the affairs of government as though the sources of legitimacy were inherent in the will of its people. By so doing, he won more than just the devoted allegiance of aggrieved peasants. Even the Patriarch recognized him as the lawful ruler of Kisrwan.

It is also apparent that the organizational structure of government, such as it was, rested on village *wakils*; a total of 116. Some were appointed by Shahin himself; others were chosen by the villagers (Churchill 1862: 127).

As in earlier *'ammiyyahs*, a fairly large number of those were drawn from wealthy and notable families. At least ten were priests and around 25 figured among the signatories of the agreement to restore the Khazins to Kisrwan (Porath 1965: 114).

Successful as the peasant revolt had been in raising the hopes of other peasants throughout Lebanon, the movement remained predominantly a local upheaval. There were efforts, whether spontaneous or deliberate, to "export" the rebellion to other regions of Lebanon. The Khazins, in fact, in their petition to the British consul, spoke in alarming terms of how the "evil spirit" of revolt had spread to al the *muqata'at*. It is understandable why the Khazins might have deliberately exaggerated the magnitude of disorder provoked by the revolt in order to invite the intervention of central authorities. There were incidents in Batrun, al-Matn, and al-Qati'. By the time agitation reached the Shuf and other southern regions, early in 1860, it began to change its character. Rather than inciting the peasants to social revolt against their overlords, the rebellion started to assume an intercommunal strife. It is at this point that the social unrest in Kisrwan merged with the sectarian tensions in the central and southern districts. The convergence proved disastrous. It is also then that manifestations of barbarism, wanton violence, and incivility became visibly more cruel and treacherous.

Druze peasants were apprehensive about taking similar action against their own feudal sheikhs. Indeed, the peasant movement in the Druze districts assumed a sectarian rather than a "class" conflict. Druze sheikhs were successful in muting and deflecting the grievances and discontent of their own peasants by provoking sectarian rivalry, particularly in the religiously mixed communities of the Shuf and Matn. The communities, as we have seen, were already seething with confessional enmity and required little provocation. After the first clash of 1841, both Druze and Maronites continued to rearm themselves. The supply of arms and ammunitions that cleared Beirut customs in the years preceding the war was quite voluminous (Buheiry 1989: 499–511; Tibawi 1969: 123).

The two communities had also been preparing for the confrontation, although Christians went about it much more openly, and with greater deliberation and boasting, often taunting their adversaries. Several of the Christian villages, for example, were in a state close to actual mobilization. Units of armed men, with special uniforms, led by a *sheikh shabab*, were organized in each of the villages. In turn, these small units were placed under the command of higher officers. In Beirut the Maronite Bishop himself organized and headed such an armed group, while wealthy Maronites competed

with one another in raising subscriptions for the purchase of arms and ammunition (Jessup 1910: 165–66).

Confrontations started in earnest when appeals for help and military assistance, from the religiously mixed regions, reached Kisrwan. Tanyus Shahin responded by mobilizing expeditions to rescue his besieged coreligionists. Christians in Shuf, Jazzin, and Dayr al-Qamar feared the hostility of Druze; those in Zahle and Biqa dreaded their Shi'ite neighbors. Somehow, the expedition faltered. Partly because of Shahin's illness, his rivalry with Yusuf Karam the popular leader vying to displace him or, as other sources claim, the involvement of Ottoman forces, the expedition failed to accomplish its mission (Scheltema 1920:92–96). Indeed, the arrival of Christians from the north sparked off the conflagration and fuelled the aroused hostility of the Druze. More disruptive, perhaps, it gave the Ottomans the pretext to step up their direct intervention. Rebel areas in the north were embargoed. Economic sanctions were imposed by interdicting the Kisrwan coast and prohibiting the importation of wheat and other amenities. The army, dispatched by Khurshid Pasha to separate and pacify the embattled communities in Matn, accomplished just the opposite. It blocked efforts of other Christians to reach and assist their coreligionists and was, some sources claim, directly involved in butchering Christians (Scheltema 1920: 68–69; Porath 1965: 124).

Once ignited, the religious character of strife became more pronounced. Confessional agitation and violence were readily sparked. The ferocity of fighting intensified. Priests enticed recruits and accompanied fighters to battle. Shahin made reconciliatory contacts with the Khazins to renunify Christian forces.

Although the Maronites, with an estimated 50,000 men, were expecting to overwhelm the 12,000 Druze forces (indeed they often boasted of exterminating their adversaries) early in the struggle, the Druze manifested superiority in fighting effectiveness. In one battle after another, they defeated and humbled the Maronites.

So sweeping was the Druze victory that historians talk with amazement about the "flagrant temerity of the Druzes . . . and the seemingly inexplicable Christian cowardice" (Salibi 1965: 93). The Druze forces were better organized, disciplined, and fought more fiercely and menacingly; while Christians suffered from inept and bickering leadership (Churchill, 1862: 142–43). The magnitude and intensity of violence was most astonishing.

Sometimes within hours entire villages and towns would fall, often with little resistance. Townsmen, seized with panic, would abandon their villages

and homes to be burned down, plundered, and pillaged and seek refuge in Christian strongholds. Other fugitives on their way to Beirut or Sidon were often overtaken, robbed, and killed indiscriminately by their assailants. Even the Christian strongholds were not spared. In fact, it was in these towns that the worst atrocities were perpetrated. First in ʻAyn Dara, then in Babda, Jazzine, Hasbayya, Rashayya, Zahle and Dayr al-Qamar the same savage pattern of violence repeated itself with added intensity. The Ottoman garrison commander would offer the Christians asylum in the local seraglio, request the surrender of their arms, and then stand idly by watching the carnage.

In the short span of four weeks (from mid-May until June 20), an estimated 12,000 Christians lost their lives, 4,000 had perished in destitution, 100,000 became homeless, and about £4 million worth of damage to property had been done (Churchill 1862: 132; Hitti 1957: 438; Salibi 1965: 106). Added to this devastation of life and property was the legacy of confessional bitterness the war had generated. Lebanon was in urgent need of swift and sweeping measures to pacify, rehabilitate, and reconstruct the fabric of a dismembered society. It was also clear that more than a mere restoration of order and tranquility was needed. The political reorganization of Mount Lebanon became imminent. Once again, Lebanon was both a victim, and at the mercy, of foreign intervention.

Through French initiative, major powers (Great Britain, Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Turkey) convened and decided to set up an international commission to fix responsibility, determine guilt, estimate indemnity, and suggest reforms for the reorganization of Lebanon. After eight months of extended discussion, agreement was reached on June 9, 1861 on a new organic statute *(Règlement Organique)* which reconstituted Lebanon as an Ottoman province or Mutasarrifiyyah (plenipotentiarate) under the guarantee of the six signatory powers.

Inferences

During the relatively short span of forty years, Mount Lebanon experienced successive outbreaks of collective strife. Typical of small, highly factionalized societies, many of these episodes often assumed a befuddling medley of factional feuds, peasant insurrections, and sectarian rivalries. As we have seen, on at least three occasions — 1820, 1840, and 1857 — peasants and commoners were incited to rebel against some of the repressive abuses of feudal society.

Despite the varied historical circumstances associated with these episodes, they evinced recurrent features which elucidate the changing character and magnitude of communal strife. Some of these features, as will become apparent in subsequent chapters, have become distinctive characteristics of Lebanon's political legacy. Others share much with instances of collective violence in comparable historical settings. It is possible, nonetheless, to extract a few inferences regarding the nature of participation, as well as the timing, location, and form protracted conflict is likely to assume.

1. *The circumstances which impelled groups to resort to political violence were not necessarily those which sustained their mobilization and informed the direction and outcome of conflict.* All three uprisings, as we have seen, were initially sparked off by a sense of collective consciousness and a concern for public welfare. Yet, all were deflected, at one point or another, into confessional hostility. Likewise, episodes of communal conflict, originally provoked by socioeconomic disparities and legitimate grievances, were transformed (or deformed) into factional or confessional rivalry. Again and again, in other words, struggles over "divisible goods," i.e., contests of distributive justice as to who gets what and how much, are deflected into struggles over "indivisible principles," those embedded in primordial loyalties and the inviolable attachments of faith, creed, community, and family. The enthusiasm for "class" struggle and collective mobilization among Christian peasants in the North found little appeal among their counterparts in the Druze districts. By arousing latent confessional enmity, traditional Druze leaders could easily manipulate such sentiments to ward off or caution against such involvement. The lapse of nearly forty years, (i.e., between 1820 and 1857) in other words, had done little to transform the loyalties and attachments of peasants. Expressed more concretely, confessional, local, and feudal allegiances continued to supersede other public and collective interests. A Druze remained a Druze first, a Jumblatti second, a Shufi third and then, a fellah or part of the *'ammah*.

2. *The form and magnitude the conflict assumed was also distinctive.* Unlike other comparable protest movements, all three insurrections were not confined to prosaic acts of everyday resistance so common among powerless and furtive social categories. The insurrections managed to mobilize a fairly large number of participants. The Intilias *'Ammiyyah* of 1824 recruited around 6,000 insurgents. By 1840, the figure leaped to about 20,000. During the latter stages of the 1858 uprising, close to thirty villages and towns in Kisrwan were directly involved. The rebellion was also sustained for three years.

Initially, the uprisings employed nonconfrontational strategies of collective protest. Rallies, gatherings, petitions, mass agitation were very common. In some instances, particularly in 1858 when peasants felt strong enough to resist impositions of their feudal lords, they often ceased payments of rent they owed their Khazin sheikhs. When these strategies failed, rebels had no aversion to experiment with other, more contentious ones.

Indeed, in all three uprisings, conflict spiraled into violent scuffles, armed hostilities, and frontal clashes between masses of armed peasants and state-sponsored armies. In some instances, particularly in 1840, peasants employed the conventional logistics of guerrilla warfare, such as ambushing and attacking Egyptian convoys transporting ammunition and supplies (Smilianskaya 1972: 81; al-Shidyaq 1970, 2: 226). On the whole, however, the instruments of violence involved little more than ordinary rifles and hatchets common at the time in factional combat and local rivalries. By the time regional and European powers were drawn into the conflict, violence had escalated into actual warfare with regular armies, reinforced by the technologies of mass destruction; e.g., massive troop movements, naval blockades, bombardment, heavy artillery and the like. It is also then that the damage to life and property and other manifestations of incivility became more devastating.

3. *Inevitably, strife generated by the insurrections assumed a vast array of forms.* There was much, however, in its underlying pattern and character to support René Girard's (1977) insight regarding the nature of "surrogate victims." Given the multilayered hierarchical structure of feudal society, compounded by regional and global rivalries, all the protagonists (powerful and weak, rooted and marginal, internal and external) were equally embroiled in juxtapositions of competing interests and shifting loyalties. Hence, many of the episodes of strife were replete with situational ironies, often creating unlikely coalitions of awkward political bedfellows. European powers and their protégés and agents, Ottoman sultans with their *walis* and *pashas*, feudal sheikhs, *'ayan*, clerics, *Wakils*, *Shuyukh Shabab*, and an undifferentiated mass of commoners were all caught up in an intricate hierarchy of contentious relationships.

In such a milieu, to paraphrase Girard, when hostility is unappeased, it seeks and always finds surrogate victims. Groups and individuals responsible for its original fury are promptly replaced by others. Such proxy targets of renewed hostility are victimized only because they happen to be vulnerable and accessible (Girard 1977). Examples of such displaced victimization are

legion. A Sultan, eager to ingratiate himself with a given Western power, spares its local protégé or protected communities but oppresses others. An amir, unable or unwilling to defy the rapacious exactions of a pasha turns to leaderless muqata'as. Rebellious peasants, not powerful enough to confront their main adversaries (central government), vent their vengeance on weaker groups (Khazin Sheikhs).

4. *The character, manifestations and consequences of violence displayed by the three uprisings provide vivid evidence in support of the two broad perspectives on civil strife*. As elucidated by James Rule (1988), one encounters much to substantiate the "consumatory" or expressive character of collective strife — the kind which is incited and sustained by group solidarity, the sharing of revolutionary excitement engendered by the insurrections. Here, the flux of events themselves, the unfolding episodes associated with the outbreak of hostilities served to draw insurgents together. Conflict and the threat of violence became, in the words of Alain Touraine (1981) the "glue" which cemented groups together. Mass rallies, animated gatherings, collective agitation, Shahine's charisma, the resourcefulness of *wakils*, the camaraderie of *shuyukh al-shabab*, and the exhilaration of combat all contributed to this. It is also here that one sees manifestations of emotional contagion, the frenzy of aroused peasants incited by anger, rage, vengeance and, hence, their predisposition to vent their wrath through unrestrained looting and plunder. In short, the appeals of expressing solidarity with one's group, assailing one's enemy, and the destruction of hated symbols provided the catalyst for collective violence.

However, one also sees perhaps more evidence of the "instrumental" character of collective strife, the type that bears closer affinity to the rational calculation of costs and benefits inherent in protest movements. Here rebels were driven not only by an impulse to correct injustices and seek some reprieve from feudal abuse but also by a desire to secure material benefits and basic necessities. As we have seen, acts of looting and confiscating the Khazin's property and crops were merely parts of organized operations designed to place expropriated property at the disposal of the rebellion. Hence, they were not symptoms of unrestrained acts of marauding and pillaging or a compulsion to wreak vengeance for its own sake. Indeed, particularly in 1858, the expulsion of the Khazins lasted long enough to be accompanied by their de-facto expropriation and, hence, a substantial redistribution of property in favor of commoners (Baer 1982: 300–301).

This instrumental character of warfare — i.e. the employment of war as a

shortcut to wealth and material well-being — is neither unusual nor unique to Lebanon. Gellner, in fact, attributes it as a generalized feature for most agrarian societies. In medieval Spain, he tells us, "warfare was a quicker as well as a more honorable route to riches than trade" (Gellner 1997: 18).

Mount Lebanon's geography, the density of village settlements, and the personal allegiance and loyalty inherent in the system of *iqta'* must have inhibited the emergence of peasant brigandage typical of "primitive rebels" and wanton banditry (Hobsbawm 1985).

5. *Unlike other instances of peasant uprisings which are, generally, deficient of resources and organized leadership to mobilize and institutionalize political participation, peasants in Kisrwan were comparatively successful in translating their disaffection into political action*. Indeed, Gabriel Baer argues that Lebanon was a "conspicuous exception" in this regard (Baer 1982: 305).

Because of the educational activities of the Maronite church, Lazarists and other missionary orders, Kisrwan peasants enjoyed a comparatively high degree of literacy. Western contacts, enterprising monks, and local initiative generated a relatively prosperous and viable economy with an appreciable degree of security of life and property. Despite some of its abusive features, feudal society remained open to sociocultural innovation. The institution of *wakil*, as elected representatives, reinforced by bands of *shuyukh shabab* provided a pool of integrated resources amenable to mobilization.

In his analysis of the French Revolution of 1848, Marx argued that the revolt was the work of a temporary coalition among the Parisian proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie, and an enlightened fragment of the bourgeoisie. They joined in toppling the regime, "as a miserable but incoherent peasantry sat by" (Tilly 1978: 12). The Kisrwan peasants were miserable but they were neither incoherent nor did they sit idly by. They had a consciousness of common interest, collective vision, and a readiness to be mobilized.

Villagers in the predominantly Druze districts of the South suffered the same indignation and were victims of similar abuses. Yet they never displayed the same enthusiasm for collective mobilization. Their stronger fealty and communal ties muted and deflected the public grievances they shared with other peasants. They also possessed little of the resources available to their Maronite counterparts in the North.

6. *Peasants rarely acted alone*. In all three instances, to varying degrees, organizational and ideological leadership was assumed by Maronite clerics. It was they who first articulated the peasants' revolutionary attitude toward

the *iqta'* system. They organized them into village communes and appointed *wakils* as spokesmen for the *ammiyyah*.

In addition to ecclesiastical intervention, the peasants almost always received either the direct or moral support of Ottoman authorities and foreign consuls who manipulated the uprisings for purposes unrelated to the grievances or interests of the 'ammiyyah as a genuine protest movement. The Ottomans, as we have seen, were eager to undermine the privileged status of Mount Lebanon and the local authority of feudal chiefs. Indeed, pitting one group against another, through alternating strategies of ingratiation and manipulation, became a popular shorthand for Ottoman barbarity and repression.

Foreign powers, eager to gain inroads into the Middle East and win protégés, also reverted to the same divisive strategies. This was poignantly apparent in 1840. While European powers — France, Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia — were all acting in concert to rescue Syria from its Egyptian occupiers, each had their own diplomatic agendas. Sometimes, discord within a country (e.g., the conflict in France between Prime Minister Thiers and King Louis-Philippe) left its reverberations on the course and outcome of the rebellion. Consequently, a genuine local uprising was, literally, appropriated and deflected into a global crisis. Indignant peasants, already violated by the adverse effects of European economic transformations, were victimized further.

7. *Finally, a disconcerting but explicable inference stands out*. It is one with prophetic implications for the course and magnitude violence was to assume in the future. As long as the conflict remained a "class" rivalry, exacerbated by fiscal pressures, socioeconomic disparities, political coercion and the like, it was comparatively bloodless. If and when, however, it was transformed or deflected into a confessional or communal hostility, the magnitude and intensity of violence became much more menacing.

This, as René Girard reminds us, bears even more ominous implications. "Religion shelters us from violence just as violence seeks shelter in religion." As this happens, communities are entrapped in a vicious circle of vengeance and reprisal. "The mimetic character of violence is so intense it cannot burn itself out. . . . Only violence can put an end to violence and that is why violence is self-propagating" (Girard 1986: 24–26).