5 Civil Strife of 1958: Revolt and Counter Revolt

"Lebanon is a country which must be kept completely still politically in order to prevent communal self-centeredness and mutual distrust from turning into active and angry contention."
— Edward Shils (1966): 4.

For almost a century, from 1860 to 1958, an epoch normally marked by internal, regional, and global turmoil in the lives of new nations, Lebanon was comparatively peaceful and free of any manifestations of civil strife or collective violence. Emerging from decades of bloody communal strife, it weathered the dislocations it was beset with as a plural society embroiled in the tumultuous transformations of a troubled region. Handicapped by a fragmented political culture, uneven development, dissonant growth, inept archaic polity, and deficient resources, Lebanon managed to evolve into a fairly liberal, democratic, prosperous, and vibrant little republic.

Given its deficient civility, Lebanon might have never become a nation-state. Instead, it might have been doomed to remain, as Albert Hourani would say, a "republic of tribes and villages" (Hourani 1988:6). It was a republic nonetheless. With all its grievous faults, it survived the collapse and dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, successive foreign penetrations and political rearrangements, ravages of a devastating famine, the ferments of two world wars, and the sociocultural dislocations associated with swift, discordant societal transformations.

These are not trivial or ordinary accomplishments. A century is also a long time in the history of a young republic. Detractors of Lebanon, and they are many — particularly those who dismiss it as a genetically flawed, artificial entity or a victim of its own belligerent culture and innate proclivity for violence — are remiss when they continue to overlook this felicitous stretch in its eventful history.

Certainly, Lebanon was not and could not have remained conflict-free. Very few societies are. It has had its fair share of unresolved tensions, recurrent cycles of public protest, and militant mobilization of collective grievances. On the whole, these were nonviolent. Its struggle for independence, for example, was bloodless; "child's play compared to the struggles through which other nations have won their independence" (Hourani 1966: 28). Political conflict in the post-independence years assume, generally, the form of personal feuds between rival political factions seeking to extend their clientage support or bickering over the spoils of office. Even crises of political succession were nonbelligerent. Bishara Khoury's tenure in office as first president of the republic (1943–52) ended with a so-called "Rosewater Revolution." When his otherwise stable and successful administration showed growing signs of corruption and nepotism, a powerful coalition of sectarian leaders and a national strike mobilized by a "Committee of National Liberation" compelled him to retire.

The military in most adjacent regimes was already, often through a succession of violent putsches and coups d'état, the main vector of revolutionary change. In Lebanon, in this as in earlier political crises, the army opted for a neutral, timid or reconciliatory role. Indeed, the whole tone of political mobilization in the post-independence decades was quiescent.

> Lebanon also has no substantial urban mob of unemployed, beggars, cast-offs, and rejects from the routines of society or idlers extruded from an overcultivated and underproductive agriculture. Lebanon has its boot-blacks, taxi drivers, loitering errand boys, indolent household servants absenting themselves from their tasks. It has a little of the tinder of street conflagrations, or the frontline fighters who involve themselves in altercations with the security forces, the first crystals around which mass demonstrations are formed. But on the whole it has too few idle or unemployed loungers, and thus far no great demagogues whose eloquence can arouse slumbering ideological propensities and dormant demands (Shils 1966: 7).

Even when the various communities did not genuinely love each other they coexisted at tolerable degrees of enmity. The "National Covenant" of 1943 (*Mithaq al-Watani*), an unwritten pact to secure Lebanon's independence from France, evolved into a pragmatic political strategy to alleviate the tension engendered by the two inveterate and nagging issues in the country's political history: national identity and confessional harmony.

As will be shown later, despite some of its noted shortcomings, this largely gentleman's agreement, a sort of solemn pact between the two leading spokesmen of their respective communities, managed for nearly three decades to contain communal enmity and ensure more that just a modicum of prosperity and political stability.

There is considerable legitimacy to the claims made by a growing number of observers that the destabilization of Lebanon, at least at the critical juncture, was more the outcome of broader regional tensions, particularly the creation of the State of Israel and the consequent Palestinian-Israeli struggle and ideological rivalries in adjacent Arab regimes than internal disparities and/or deeply-rooted communal hostilities (See Harik 1987; Scruton 1987; Corm 1988, 1989; Messarra 1988, among others). Druze and Maronites, despite their ingrained enmity, managed to coexist for three centuries as participants in one commonwealth. The political stability and economic prosperity Lebanon enjoyed in its post-independence years helped in converting Muslim adherents to the Lebanese state. Ideological and socioeconomic differences were visible but did not erupt into belligerent confrontations.

It is in this sense that the crisis of 1958 marked a significant watershed in Lebanon's political history. It was the first major breakdown in political order, a foreboding signal that the *Mithaq* might not be able to contain or mitigate the sources of simmering tensions for too long. Until then impartial observers could still marvel over Lebanon's propensity to preserve itself as a virtual island of calm in a region raging with fury and political turmoil. Even after the civil unrest of 1958, Edward Shils prefaced his celebrated essay on the prospects for Lebanese civility by saying:

> Contemporary Lebanon appears to be a happy phenomenon, uniqe in the third world, a prosperous liberal country. It has a parliamentary body, freely elected in the competition of a plurality of independent political parties. Its politicians are, as politicians go, relatively reasonable men. The tone of public debate is not strident. The Chamber of Deputies is an orderly assembly. Elections are conducted with a minimum of violence, and reports of coercion of the electorate are rare. Lebanon enjoys freedom of association and freedom of expression. Its press is literate and not too sensational or abusive. Its citizens, freely organized, feel free to approach their parliamentary representatives either as individuals or through their organizations. It is a law-abiding country in many important respects and passions are held in check; public order is maintained without a large display of force. People do not disappear in the night. . . .

> Strikes, violent demonstrations, angry class antagonisms are relatively infrequent for a country of growing economic differentiation. Finally, the country is prosperous (Shils 1966: 1).

Shils, of course was not oblivious to the underlying tensions exacerbating Lebanon's deficient civility. Given its deeply rooted communalism, lack of national attachments, or a sense of identity and consensus which transcends subnational loyalties and interest, it is not unusual that Lebanon should display symptoms of fragmentation. What, however, compounds this situation further is that this "incivility" is not confined to the mass of the population whose access to, and interest in, the center is normally feeble and sporadic. More unsettling is how far this phenomenon had pervaded the elite and Zu'ama, those who dominate and speak of behalf of the primordial and religious communities.

Shils's guarded optimism is also a reflection of the country's vulnerability to regional and international sources of instability. "Lebanon," he maintained, "is a country which must be kept completely still politically in order to prevent communal self-centeredness and mutual distrust from turning into active and angry contention" (Shils 1966: 4). In 1958 the country began, perceptibly, to experience the disquieting symptoms of progressive erosion of such political stillness.

When compared to the massacres and mayhem of 1860 and the protracted cruelties of the 1970s and 1980s, the 1958 crisis seems benign and pacific as a civil war.[1] Oddly enough, it was also happening at a time when this so-called "Merchant Republic" was at the peak of its golden age, a period when peace and prosperity were miraculously combined (Owen 1988: 36). It was a civil war nonetheless. Whether instigated by a massive infiltration of subversive elements or saboteurs (as pro-government forces claimed), or inspired and sustained by a genuine and spontaneous uprising (as the opposition maintained), it had all the ingredients of civil strife. Various groups within the population resorted to armed struggle. Political order broke down; authority at the center disintegrated; leaders normally reticent about violent politics became progressively more involved in it. As in earlier episodes of communal conflict, a bewildering plurality of factions, driven by shifting allegiances and motives, were entrapped in an escalating spiral of hostility. Predominantly nonsectarian, involving issues of presidential succession, constitutional amendments, foreign policy, political grievances, and the like, the crisis degenerated willy-nilly into a confessional hostility; thereby reawakening religious enmity and heightening the intensity of violence.

Here again this dialectical and escalating interplay between reawakened confessional enmity, the heightened intensity of violence, and the drift into all the cruelties of incivility became more compelling. As in other such episodes, the original issues provoking the conflict receded. Lebanon was increasingly embroiled in the regional and international conflicts of the period and became, once again, an object and victim of cold war rivalries.

What changed the non-strident tone of public debate and how did it become more belligerent? How and why did the contentious groups in the conflict resort to, or drift into, insurgency? How did they rationalize their participation in political violence and what form did such violence assume?[2]

Drift Into Insurgency

To assert that the drift into political violence was largely a byproduct of the interplay between internal dislocations and external pressures is, in many respects, an affirmation of the obvious. Yet, it is an affirmation worth belaboring given some of its persisting features and consequences. Early in the 1950s the destabilizing consequences of this interplay were already much in evidence.

Lebanon's economic prosperity, impressive as it was, was not evenly spread. The dislocations were exacerbated by rapid urbanization, growing disparities in socioeconomic standards and symptoms of relative deprivation. These were visible in the mounting, predominantly Muslim, grievances against the political order denying them equal access to benefits and privileges. They were also critical of the government's neglect of outlying regions, rampant corruption, and favoritism.

The upsurge of Pan-Arab nationalist sentiments, inspired by Nasser's charismatic and messianic leadership, had gained considerable inroads in Lebanon; particularly among disenfranchised and marginal groups who were openly resentful of the avowedly pro-Western foreign policy of the government. Nasserism, with its anti-imperialist, nationalist fervor, and ideological support for the mobilization of underprivileged masses, awakened muted spirits of rebellion and defiance. It also undermined the authority of traditional Muslim leaders and aroused the anxiety of the Maronite political establishment.

Early during Chamoun's tenure in office (1952–58) his foreign policy was already suspect because of his predisposition to place Lebanon's external sovereignty in the hands of Western and, more particularly, British interests.

By the time of the Suez crisis in 1956, the pro-Western policies of the regime were becoming more pronounced. Chamoun, for example, refused to sever relations with Britain and France or to condemn the aggression; thereby provoking an outcry among Muslim leaders and the resignation of the Prime Minister, Abdallah Yafi, and Minister of State Saeb Salam. He supported the Baghdad Pact of 1955 and cultivated closer ties with anti-Nasserist Arab regimes like Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey. In open defiance of the ascendant public mood, prodded perhaps by Dr. Charles Malik, his Foreign Minister and arch proponent of a pro-Western and activist foreign policy role for Lebanon, Chamoun was too hasty in endorsing the Eisenhower Doctrine, launched in 1957 in an effort to curtail the spread of radical and leftist ideologies in the Middle East. The outcry, this time, was more outrageous. Prominent figures (e.g. Rashid Karami, Sabri Hamadeh, Ahmad As'ad, Hamid Frangieh) resigned from the government in protest. The internal cleavages were aggravated further by electoral reforms of 1957, which undermined the parliamentary constituencies and popular bases of support of some of the leading traditional zua'ma. Indeed, despite Chamoun's open political style and demeanor and his fondness for reaching out and responding to the needs of ordinary citizens, he managed to alienate a sizeable cross-section of the country's political leaders and their respective constituencies. Hence, regions like Tripoli, Beqaa, Southern Lebanon, the Chouf, Zgharta threw their weight with the opposition, thereby undermining the territorial base on which Lebanon's internal sovereignty was predicated.

The pattern and heightened intensity of conflict became predictable. In the early phases of mobilization, the opposition had no intentions of resorting to political violence. Nor did it demand the resignation of Chamoun. Instead, it perceived the forthcoming parliamentary elections of May 1957 as a popular referendum on its policies as opposed to those of the government. Because of its mistrust of the Sami al-Solh cabinet, particularly its open-Western and anti-Nasserist strategies, the opposition was demanding its resignation in favor of a more neutral caretaker cabinet to oversee the elections. Hence, on May 30, 1957, they called for a general strike and peaceful demonstration to mobilize popular support on behalf of their demands.

As in many such instances, the peaceful demonstration degenerated into a violent scuffle between the opposition and security forces, with each side accusing the other of firing the fateful first shot. When the fighting was over, the opposition claimed that 15 persons were killed and more than 200 wounded; while the government official communiqué declared that only four men and one women were killed, accused foreign agents and agitators for inciting violence, even staging a coup d'état.

What was certain, however, was that firearms and tear gas were used and two politicians (Saeb Salam and Nassim Majdalani) were wounded and taken to hospitals under custody. Overnight, Salam, already prominent, became a national hero. In a dramatic gesture, from his hospital bed he went on a hunger strike until the government resigned. It was at this point that General Chehab, commander of the Army, stepped in as a mediator. A compromise was arrived at where Chehab assumed full control of security forces and two so-called "neutral" ministers were added to safeguard the honesty and freedom of elections.

Results of the elections (held for security reasons on four successive Sundays beginning on June 9) were a stunning and resounding victory for the government. The opposition barely sneaked in with only 8 of the 66 seats of the new Chamber. Virtually all the veteran politicians and prominent leaders of the opposition — Saeb Salam (Sunni), Kamal Jumblat (Druze), Ahmad As'ad (Shi'te) — were displaced in favor of pro-government candidates. Outcries of foul play, intimidation, bribery, and vote tampering were very audible. In fairness though, observers were more inclined to assign blame not so much on outright fraudulence as on Chamoun's disingenuous electoral reforms and gerrymandering, which stripped the zua'ma of their traditional bases of support.

From then on tension mounted. After a short and deceptive lull, the incidence of violent episodes increased. Clan feuds, sabotage, bombings, arms smuggling, as well as clashes between armed bands and security forces became virtually daily occurrences. Slowly, but perceptibly, Lebanon was descending into anarchy and anomie.

A cursory review of the chronology of events, for at least two years prior to the outbreak of hostilities, reveals that ferment was already building up. Here again, the "inside-outside" character of episodes of political violence was starkly visible. Taken together, changes in the pattern and magnitude of violence reflect some of the troublesome, often intractable, issues underlying the crisis; namely, socioeconomic disparities, the grievances of neglected groups and regions, factional rivalries, sectarian hostility, and the heated polemics over Lebanon's national identity and foreign policy orientation. The pattern of violence, as a consequence, falls ostensibly within four generic categories; ranging in intensity from strikes, demonstrations, and rioting, to subversive acts of sabotage, terrorism, and political assassinations:

1. *Waves of strikes*, particularly those of October 1957, in which workers and employers, in both the private and public sectors were demanding higher wages and better working conditions.

2. *National elections in Lebanon*, rent with schisms and factional rivalry, are an occasion for mass mobilization and display of emotionalism. The parliamentary elections of 1957 were particularly turbulent and ideologically charged, with claims and counter-claims of government intervention, bribery, and fraudulence. For security reasons, balloting was phased out over a period of four successive Sundays, with restrictions on public gatherings and rallies. This, invariably, led to scuffles, mob rioting, and politically motivated murders.

3. *Anti-Western demonstrations* in the wake of the Israeli attack on Egypt and mounting terrorist activities against British and French targets and interests.

4. *Episodes of infiltration and subversive activities attributed to political dissident groups*, particularly Palestinians, Syrians, Egyptians, and other political refugees. The Syrian and Egyptian regimes, in particular, were openly hostile to the Chamoun administration. They had launched a sustained invidious media campaign against its pro-Western policies and were directly involved in providing funds, as well as tactical and arms assistance to the opposition. The Egyptian Ambassador in Beirut, Brigadier Abdul Hamid Ghaleb, kept close and personal contacts with leaders of the United National Front (UNF) and the Embassy's residence in West Beirut became virtually the oppositions headquarters (see Qubain 1961: 55 for further details). During periods of heavy fighting, gun-running and arms smuggling across the Syrian borders became very common. Armed bands of volunteers were crossing and recrossing the frontiers at will. The intervention was so flagrant that the government was compelled periodically to ban Egyptian and Syrian papers, jam their radio programs and take coercive measures to deport infiltrators from there (Qubain 1961: 51–60).

An inventory of a selective sample of such recurrent episodes should suffice by way of identifying their character, diversity and magnitude.[3]

- Beirut was placed (November 21, 1956) under army control following violent anti-Western demonstrations.
- An Egyptian military attaché (November 22, 1956) was linked to a terrorist campaign of bombing British and French buildings in Beirut. Two hundred "Arabs" were arrested in connection with these and other subversive activities.
- Several new caches of arms were discovered (November 26, 1956), in a round-up of subversive elements.

- Col. Ghassan Jadid, a leader of the Syrian Nationalist Party (PPS) in exile in Beirut, was assassinated (February 19, 1957) by a gunman.
- Pre-election rioting broke out in Beirut (May 30, 1957) when security forces attempted to halt a demonstration and a strike led by former premiers Saeb Salam and Abdallah al-Yafi. Eight persons were killed and more than 20 wounded.
- Security forces (May 31, 1957) broke up two small demonstrations by opposition groups in Beirut.
- Twenty persons were killed and thirty wounded (June 16, 1957) in pre-election clashes in the Northern village of Miziara.
- It was revealed in Beirut (September 3, 1957), that during the past 48 hours security officers had seized 15 Czechoslovak sub-machine guns coming from Syria.
- Three gendarme and six arms smugglers were killed (September 12, 1957) in a gun fight near Deir al Ashayir on the Syrian frontier.
- The government (September 25, 1957) indicted 400 persons, including former Premiers Abdallah al Yafi, Saeb Salam and Hussein Oweini, on charges of attempting an armed coup and inciting to riot during the election campaign the previous May.
- The Lebanese Security Department announced (October 5, 1957) the arrest of seven persons charged with bombing newspaper plants under orders of Syrian Army Intelligence Bureau.
- A Lebanese gendarmerie post was raided (December 5, 1957) by bandits operating from Syria.
- The Lebanese army has reported to have taken over (December 8, 1957) the border zone of the northeast where raiders from Syria attacked.
- A band of 150 mountaineers (December 21, 1957) attacked a police post in North Lebanon resulting in the death of at least 18 persons and 50 wounded. This attack increased pressure on the Government to put the area under martial law.
- Twenty-three persons, most of whom were Palestinians, were sentenced (February 24, 1958) to terms of imprisonment ranging from three to 15 years for acts of terrorism.
- Four persons reported killed and at least 10 wounded in Tyre (April 2, 1958) in riots protesting the sentencing of three youths accused of defaming the Lebanese flag during pro-Nasser demonstrations.

In response to such growing manifestations of disorder the government introduced successive repressive measures to curb infiltration and to control

sabotage and terrorism. Early in 1957 the Lebanese Internal Security Council was already recommending strict control of the Lebanese-Syrian border, a ban on movements of political refugees as well as any form of political activity on their part. For that purpose the government announced, on January 16, the formation of a new national guard for sentry duty at important installations. Likewise, rigid controls were imposed over all Palestinian refugees. Abdel Aziz Chehab, director general of the Interior Ministry, went further to declare that in an effort to end terrorism, Lebanon was considering establishing "concentration camps for foreigners who are suspect, where we can keep them under surveillance." He confirmed that the measure is aimed at Palestinian refugees (*Middle Eastern Affairs* 1958: 81).

Such impositions were visibly more stringent during elections. Frontiers with Syria were closed on such occasions. There was a ban on the importation of Syrian and Egyptian papers. Palestinians were confined to their camps. All arms permits were suspended. So were the sales of alcohol and the licensing of political meetings.

The government was also displaying greater indignation and sensitivity to criticism. This is seen in the flurry of decrees and the enactment of successive legislations intended to curb the freedom of the press and the mobilization of dissent. A selective inventory of such measures is, again, instructive by way of identifying their magnitude and intensity.[4]

- The Government issued (May 12, 1957) a military warning to newspapers, with penalties up to five years imprisonment for publishing anything considered as inciting the population or criticizing the army.
- Jon Kimche, editor of the *Jewish Observer* was expelled (May 14, 1957). On the same day, all copies of the no. 5 issue of the *Manchester Guardian*, which carried a critical dispatch of Beirut City Administration, were confiscated.
- Prior censorship concerning the army, the rebels and anything regarded as likely to endanger security, cause sedition, or criticize the government was imposed (May 28, 1957) on all press reports.
- Decree (June 9, 1957) allowing the government to cancel the official status or job security of any government employee who joins a strike, does anything that damages the interest of the state, or belongs to a political party.
- Editor of an opposition paper was arrested (June 19, 1957) for violating censorship regulations. Warrants were issued for six others.
- Arrest warrants were issued (June 20, 1957) for 15 opposition leaders on a charge of inciting disturbances.

- The Cabinet approved a bill (June 26, 1957) authorizing the detention before judicial inquiry of any journalist whose writing was considered to offend the government.
- The Beirut daily newspaper *Le Jour* announced (July 18, 1957) that it would suspend publication indefinitely since there was no freedom of the press.
- The Ministry of Information banned the entry of the *New York Times* for publishing reports considered defamatory to Lebanese officials.

By early May of 1958 Lebanon was entrapped in a spiral of escalating violence; almost a textbook expression of the threefold manifestations of injustice, revolt, and repression inherent in virtually all forms of political violence. (Brown 1987: 8–13; Camara 1971). First, a growing segment of the population was already perceiving itself as violated by a deepening sense of injustice, social dislocation, inequity, and disaffection with the government's policies and its rampant favoritism and corruption. Second, these largely subtle and symbolic forms of deprivation were becoming more acute and oppressive, particularly after the elections of 1957. Outraged leaders, stripped of their traditional constituencies, called for open revolt against those held accountable for the abuses and usurpation of their power. Third, confronted with mounting symptoms of disorder and threats to its hegemony, both by the mobilization of internal dissent and infiltration of dissident groups, the government resorted to repressive measures, which only compounded the hostility and militancy of the adversaries.

Two events, predictably external and internal, provided direct impetus for the outbreak of fighting. The creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) by the union of Syria and Egypt in February of 1958 generated added enthusiasm among the Lebanese already outraged by Chamoun's anti-Nasserism. Jubilant students, particularly those affiliated to the Maqassed Sunni Benevolent Society, took to the street.[5] There were widespread celebrations, rallies, and popular manifestations of adulation in support of Nasser's heroic political feats during the Suez crisis. Early in 1955 the Mufti of Lebanon was already sending telegrams to Nasser as "the Arab Muslim President . . . in the name of the Muslims of Lebanon we greet you and endorse your magnificent stand . . . and your defense of the Arab cause and Islam." On the occasion of the nationalization of the Canal, 30,000 signatures of support were collected from Tripoli alone (Atiyah 1973: 240). Nasser's imposing portraits, insignia, and graffiti overwhelmed the urban scene. So did the vitriolic press and radio programs, particularly the acrimonious campaigns the "Voice of the Arabs" launched against the "Villainous trio": Chamoun, his maligned

Sunni Prime Minister (Sami al-Solh), and Foreign Minister (Charles Malik), who were depicted as infatuous stooges of the West. At the Maqassed school, observed Desmond Stewart who headed its English program, "Every classroom had its portrait of Nasser, never of Chamoun; every wall-newspaper told of Nasser's exploits, whether in getting the British to evacuate the Canal Zone, or in distributing the land of the Pashas to the landless, and in uniting the Arabs" (Stewart 1959: 14). An unending steam of visitors and delegations from Lebanon went to Damascus to pay homage to Nasser. Some leaders of the UNF, in riveting speeches, implored him to involve himself directly in the internal affairs of Lebanon. These and other such popular manifestations aroused suspicion and hostility and widened cleavages between the already polarized political coalitions.

What, however, triggered the insurgency was the assassination of Nassib al-Matni on May 8, 1958, an independent Maronite journalist and an ardent critic of the regime. If an episode may be singled out as the "Sarajevo" of 1958, doubtless this event merits the label. The motive for the assassination, rumored to have been entirely nonpolitical, was never discovered; neither were the suspects. Leaders of the UNF nevertheless charged that Chamoun's henchmen were responsible for this and other "crimes" and were clamoring not only for their punishment but also for the resignation of the president himself. The fact that al-Matni happened to be a Maronite Christian served as an expedient alibi for a Muslim insurrection, muting thereby the sectarian sentiments fueling the hostility. Leading spokesmen of the opposition were also claiming that their call for a general strike was a purely internal conflict, directed against the pervasive corruption of the regime, and that they had no intention of undermining Lebanon's integrity and independence.

Both these claims, incidentally, i.e., the nonsectarian and internal character of conflict, were challenged and discredited by the unfolding events. No sooner had the peaceful strike been called for that it escalated into violent confrontations in different regions of the country with clear evidence of massive infiltration of arms, fighters, and other modes of interventions from across the Syrian borders and the UAR.

The spark that touched off and fostered organized manifestations of collective violence elsewhere in the country ignited in Tripoli on May 10. Internal security forces (gendarmerie) clashed with demonstrators killing ten and wounding more than sixty persons. The outrage was instantaneous and widespread. In West Beirut, Sidon, and Tripoli, streets and quarters were barricaded. Sporadic clashes and kidnappings terrorized the population and threatened order and daily routines. Leaders of the opposition, particularly

Saeb Salam in West Beirut and Kamal Jumblat in the Chouf, openly called for armed struggle. So swift were the incursions, doubtless evidence of earlier preparation and coordination, that in less than two weeks the opposition was in control of more than two-thirds of Lebanon's territory—much of the coastal regions, along with Beqaa, Akkar, the South, and the Chouf.

President Chamoun tried in vain to draw the army into the struggle. General Fuad Chehab, however, demurred. Sensing the dangers of involving the military in what was perceived at the time as a factional struggle, he feared that such intervention would split the Army. Chamoun had no recourse but to fall back on the Gendarmerie which was poorly equipped and factionally splintered. In desperation, he solicited the help of the Kata'ib and the Syrian Socialist National Party (PPS), exacerbating thereby the sectarian character of the conflict.

Given the profusion of Pan-Arabist sentiments, particularly in the wake of the UAR union under Nasser, and the cultist appeal he was generating among Lebanese Muslims, no wonder that many Christians perceived the insurgency of their compatriots in threatening terms; i.e., as efforts to engulf Lebanon in a messianic wave of Arab nationalism and to undermine its autonomy and independence. Indeed, Chamoun incited such fears to solicit the support of the Kata'ib and the PPS, who despite their ideological differences showed a common enmity against the onslaught of Pan-Arabism.

It was also understandable, given the interplay of internal and external sources of unrest, why the Lebanese crisis was internationalized. Lebanon was getting more deeply embroiled in the post-Suez ferment and the Cold War rivalry raging at the time. Each group was also accusing the other of soliciting outside support. In their daily communiqués and press releases each side went to great lengths (by supplying photos, confessions, personal documents) to reveal the identity of such infiltrators and "hired agents." The opposition continued to insist that the crisis was an internal uprising, inspired and supported by internal forces. It was the government, they charged, that was arming its supporters among the Maronites and PPS, deploying the armed and security forces, and receiving secret and illegal military and financial aid from the U.S., Turkey, Iraq; even British officers in Arab clothes (Karami 1959:187) in crushing the rebellion. The government, on the other hand, was more likely to incriminate Syrians, Egyptians, Palestinians, communists and other such subversive elements and "outlaws." Indeed, the government filed an official complaint accusing the UAR of massive intervention in Lebanon's internal affairs and in undermining the country's independence. When recourse to the League of Arab States failed to reduce

tension, the U.N. Security Council was convened. In his address to the Security Council (June 6, 1958), Dr. Malik provided detailed substantiation of six sets of facts (supplying arms, training in subversion, the participation of UAR civilians and government agents, press and radio campaigns, etc.) as evidence of "massive, illegal and unprovoked intervention." A United Nations Observer Group (UNOGIL) was dispatched to observe and report on such allegations.[6]

The internationalization of the crisis took a sharper and more dramatic turn on July 14, in the wake of the Iraqi revolution which destroyed the Hashemite monarchy, the seat of the Baghdad Pact. Alarmed by the renewed frenzy of anti-Western sentiments, growing Russian influence in the region, and the prospects of further turmoil in Lebanon and Jordan, the U.S. promptly dispatched, in less than 24 hours, Marines to Lebanon. Within hours of the coup in Baghdad, Chamoun was already asking the U.S. ambassador for immediate intervention, insisting that "unless this took place within 48 hours, he would be a dead man, and Lebanon would become an Egyptian satellite" (Thayer 1959: 28). On that hot summer day in mid-July about 2,000 Marines, in full battle gear and supported by its amphibious forces, landed on the sandy beaches south of Beirut. They were reinforced shortly after by 15,000 men along with the mobilization of the entire Sixth Fleet, consisting of about 70 ships and 40,000 troops, in the eastern Mediterranean.

Robert Murphy, Eisenhower's emissary, was clear and unequivocal regarding the circumstances associated with that momentous event:

> Settlement of the Tunisian conflict in 1958 did not bring peace to other Mediterranean countries, and machinations by Arabs throughout the Middle East created a perilous situation. This highly sensitive area was of political importance to the United States, and even more important to our European allies who depended on it as their major source of petroleum. Among other danger spots, the state Department was particularly concerned about the Republic of Lebanon. That small country had about a million and a half inhabitants, normally balanced delicately between Christians and Moslems, but now distorted by the presence of three hundred thousand Moslem refugees who had fled from Palestine. Many of these refugees were desperate men, bitter against the United States because it supported the State of Israel which had caused their exile. We learned that Arab nationalists, under the direction of President Nasser of Egypt, were spending money to influ-

> ence the swollen Moslem population of Lebanon and were sending clandestine arms to rebellious elements there. The prospect of the spread of Nasserism into Lebanon, one of the most pro-Western countries in the entire area, awoke lively reactions in Washington. Congress expressed considerable interest in helping our friends, especially when some Lebanese factions openly revolted against the duly constituted Government. By early June the situation had deteriorated badly, the country was in a state of civil war, and a vociferous radio and press campaign in Egypt was calling for the overthrow of the Republic of Lebanon (Murphy 1964: 396–97).

The Marines' landing was eventless, at least if compared with the calamitous consequences of subsequent interventions. Here again Murphy's recollection of that stirring, albeit bizarre, event is worth quoting in full:

> By the time I arrived in Beirut, almost seven thousand Marines had landed and were patrolling the vicinity with tanks, armored amphibians, and self-propelled atomic howitzers, although no nuclear weapons were unloaded. The landings had been made with eclat, with no unfortunate incidents and no casualties. By July 18 about seventy or seventy-five warships of the Sixth Fleet were near Beirut Harbor, providing quite a spectacle for the fashionable diners on the terrace of the Pigeon Rock restaurant. Marine columns were marching past the luxurious St. George Hotel, where girls were sunning themselves on yachts in the hotel's private basin while Navy jets from the carriers Saratoga and Essex were shrieking over the city. By July 25 the American shore forces numbered at least 10,600 men — 4,000 Army, 6,600 Marines — more than the entire Lebanese Army.
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> As our forces had come to Lebanon at the invitation of Chamoun, the first thing I did in Beirut was to pay my respects to the President at his official residence. There I found a tired and worried man, who for sixty-seven days had been a self-made prisoner. Apparently he had not so much as looked out of a window during that time, and this undoubtedly was wise as his chances of assassination were excellent. Under the Lebanese constitution the President of the Republic was limited to one term in office, but Chamoun was proposing to amend the constitution and seek a second term, and this political issue was one of the main reasons for the civil war.
>
> Since Berlin in 1945, I had not been in a more trigger-happy place

> than Beirut was at that time. Wild fusillades, bombings and arson were the order of the day and more especially the night. Almost across the street from the presidential palace was the Basta, a complex of ancient streets and buildings forming the type of district sometimes called the Casbah. The British Ambassador had asked for the protection of a Marine guard and this was assigned to him. But the first night the Americans were on duty, the British Embassy was peppered by shootings from the Basta which narrowly missed some of our Marines. President Chamoun told me that he had ordered and begged General Fuad Chehab, who was in command of the Lebanese Army, to clean out the Basta, but without success. My immediate reaction was that Chehab ought to be fired, a competent new commander appointed, and action taken to restore order and authority of the Government. I found it was not quite that simple (Murphy 1964: 399–400).

While Western allies applauded the intervention, Russia decried it as a "direct act of war and open piracy" and warned that the Soviet Union could not remain "indifferent to events creating a grave menace in an area abutting on its frontiers." Nasser, of course, was equally indignant and condemned the landing "as a grave violation of the U.N. charter and a flagrant threat to the Arab countries" (Agwani 1963: 340).

Within Lebanon the Marine landing polarized the adversaries. Chamoun expressed "profound gratitude" and felt "happy and honored." The opposition, on the other hand, was stunned. Saeb Salam, its leading spokesman, declared bitterly that "imperialism had returned with its armies" and issued a call to "repel the enemy" (Agwani 1963: 341). Eventually, however, Murphy was able to lend support to the mediation efforts of the so-called "Third Force," a nucleus of moderate politicians working for a nonbelligerent resolution of the conflict. A compromise was arranged and General Chehab was prevailed upon to become the new President.

Embattled Groups and Regions

No sooner had the fighting started than the country was divided into five regions: virtually independent territorial enclaves, war zones, or "fiefdoms" under the control of one of its local Zu'ama. Perceptions of the crisis — its underlying causes; rationalization for armed struggle; the pattern, intensity and timing of violence; the degree of organization and motivation of partic-

ipants, mobilization of resources, and the forms collective strife assumed — differed from one region to another. Invariably, however, they also displayed some common attributes.

Beirut

In Beirut, the city and its suburbs were split into its two traditional communities on largely sectarian grounds. Western Beirut, particularly the predominantly Muslim quarters of al-Basta, Museitbeh and Mazra'a, was under control of the opposition, while the Christian quarters of Eastern Beirut remained under the control of loyalist forces. Leaders on both sides of the divide made repeated appeals and pronouncements to ensure that civil strife did not slip into confessional conflagrations. Yet, despite these efforts the fighting in Beirut almost inevitably degenerated into a bloody communal war between the Christian quarters to the east and the Muslim quarters in and around al-Basta. Strongholds and quarters of adversaries were already akin to embattled war-zones. They needed little by way of provocation. In the words of Robert Murphy, they were "trigger-happy, seething with wild fusillades, bombings and arson."

Initially, the opposition-held quarters in West Beirut were independent, loosely coordinated groups of insurgents falling, generally, under three separate commands: Saeb Salam, Mu'in Hammoud, and Adnan al-Hakim as head of al-Najjadah party, something of a Muslim counterpart to the Maronite Kata'ib. Efforts to unify the groups failed, in part because of intense rivalry between Salam and al-Najjadah. The latter, established in 1939 as a youth movement, never succeeded in broadening its constituency beyond the limited appeal it inspired among the urban Sunni Muslim underclass. With the upsurge of Nasserism and Arab Nationalist sentiments, the party became more of a paramilitary mass movement espousing extremist views such as uniting Lebanon with the UAR, even at a time when Muslim Zu'ama and Nasser himself were only calling for cooperation and a certain degree of foreign policy coordination. Doubtless, al-Najjadah were drawing on the appeal of such populist sentiments and the glamour of paramilitarism in its bid to undermine the clientelism of the traditional zu'ama.

As leader and spokesmen of the opposition, Saeb Salam was very reluctant to abandon his nonbelligerent strategies in challenging the loyalists and their allies. Like other leaders, he spoke of being coerced into insurgency in self-defense against the repressive and criminal deeds of the regime.

Indeed, in accounting for the causes of unrest, Salam identified the "regrettable" stages which transformed "the popular, peaceful uprising into a bloody revolution." Initially, Salam asserts that the uprising took the form of a "popular opposition to foil the conspiracy hatched by the President against the constitution with the aim of renewing his term for another six years. . . . The suppression, oppression, terrorism and criminal acts committed by the President and his clique, however, transformed the battle into a peaceful popular uprising to preserve the sanctity of the Constitution and national unity" (Agwani 1965: 72).

On May 12 the armed insurrection in Beirut broke out with an almost identical replay of the bloody rioting in Tripoli two days earlier; namely the sacking and burning of the USIS library and blowing up of the IPC pipelines. Given the savagery of the events, the government promptly decreed a state of alert and imposed a curfew. Foreign Minister Charles Malik hastened to protest to the government of the UAR the "massive interference in the events now unrolling in Lebanon . . . and the streams of armed men still pouring in from Syria" (*Middle Eastern Affairs* 1958: 240).

Of course, leaders of the opposition were outraged by such charges. Five days after the outbreak of hostilities in Beirut, Salam went further to declare that:

> The President did not respect the will of the people, but resorted to steel and fire, thus transforming this peaceful political struggle into a bloody revolution in which the people have been forced to defend themselves and their principles in the face of instigation, aggression and murder. Hundreds have been killed and wounded in Beirut and elsewhere.
>
> The President, Foreign Minister Charles Malik and their clique were not satisfied with their methods aimed at dominating the majority of the people, who opposed their stupid policy. They turned to more serious and shrewder methods. They are now attempting to deal the heart of national unity a mortal blow by inciting communal disputes and civil war.
>
> We are convinced that the vigilant Lebanese people, who have defeated previous conspiracies by Chamoun, Malik, and their former supporters, will now defeat these evil conspiracies. The revolution of the people will remain purely nationalist. There is no room for communal exploitation. We are all true Lebanese working in the interests of the Lebanon alone. Today we do our utmost to resist this evil conspiracy and prevent civil war (Agwani 1965: 72–73).

So alarmed by the escalation of rioting and violence, particularly after a bomb explosion in a Beirut streetcar killed, on May 26, eleven persons and injured dozens more, the Cabinet passed a decree authorizing the recruitment of a civilian militia to help quash the rebellion. The move was bitterly denounced by religious leaders including the Maronite Patriarch Paul Ma'ushi who went further and demanded the replacement of Chamoun by General Chehab since he considered the situation too grave for a compromise (*The Middle East Journal*).

By the time U.S. troops were landing in Lebanon (July 15, 1958), Salam invoked national duty and honor and called upon "valiant youth" to defend their country.

> Valiant youth of the people's resistance, today we turn to you while the country is passing through the most sordid period in its current history. There is grave danger, and imperialism has returned with its armies to the beloved homeland in a hideous plot hatched with the traitor agent Camille Chamoun and his criminal gang. National duty calls upon you to comport yourselves on the field of honour as daring heroes in defence of your country, territory and freedom. You have fought and struggled to liberate your country from the atrocities and afflictions of imperialism. But here is traitor Chamoun, who has pledged loyalty to the homeland, betraying his trust and pledge and calling on the enemy to occupy the country. In this way Chamoun unmasks himself and discloses his intention. He is a traitor to his country and a plotter against those who believe in sovereignty and independence (Agwani 1965: 293).

Signing his declarations as "Commander-in-Chief of the People's Forces," he condemned the invasion and warned the aggressors to withdraw their forces from Lebanese soil. Even after Chehab's election (July 31, 1958), welcome as it was to the opposition, Salam continued to insist on the downfall of Chamoun and the withdrawal of the forces of aggression; otherwise the popular resistance would not abandon their resistance (Agwani 1965: 377).

From the Kata'ib's perspective the crisis was not simply a conflict over political succession, the quality of leadership, or a consequence of the dislocations and grievances generated by a corrupt and unjust political system. Rather, it was seen as an expression of a fundamental tension involving the very nature of Lebanon's national identity and growing anxiety over the country's autonomy and sovereignty as an independent state. Indeed, to leaders of the party, the issue of presidential succession was dismissed as an

expedient alibi employed by the pan-Arab and Nasserite elements among the insurgents in their effort to discredit, fragment, destroy, and then reconstitute Lebanon's polity into something approximating the other "revolutionary" and "progressive" regimes in the region.

The old atavistic fears of the Christians, particularly the Maronites, that they are an endangered minority about to be engulfed in a sea of Islamic states and the impassioned frenzy of Arab masses were once again reawakened. President Chamoun was savvy enough to work on such fears in soliciting the support of the quietist and politically inactive elements of the Christian community. Manifestations of such confessional consciousness were already apparent in Maronite communities and did not require much by way of incitement. Desmond Stewart, living in Junieh at the time, had this to say:

> Living among Maronites, one might have thought that the Christian religion had started on the Seine, not the Jordan. There were French priests in soutanes; bells rang more frequently than I remembered them in Oxford. . . . The spirit of Junieh — despite its beauty, a lugubrious town — came alive on religious feasts such as Assumption or Pentecost: then the pavements were jammed with Maronites, then floats covered with allegorical groups moved from the central square, with its French municipal building, towards a church: sweating enthusiasts posed in the sunshine, Crusaders in tinfoil with scarlet crosses, a moslem dragon, turbaned enemies of the Faith, transfixed. After the floats would come a lorry with priests saying Mass at an altar. Odd occasions, and very fervent.
>
> Most of the handsome stone-built houses were owned by people who had fawned on the French, then on the British, and who now cast interested glances towards America. They boasted of being quite unlike the Arabs. Sometimes they claimed to be Phoenicians, sometimes the by-blows of Frankish crusaders. They were proud of speaking French; in Arabic they had referred to France as umm al hannoun, the nourishing mother. They rang the Angelus, a challenge to the minarets, not so far away, in Beirut and Tripoli. If you asked, "Are there any Moslems here?" They would look astounded and reply, "Here, in Junieh? Not one: we are all Maronites" (Stewart 1961: 10–12).

Chamoun's predicament was very critical, particularly since some prominent and visible Maronites (e.g. the Patriarch, former President of the Re-

public al-Khuri, the Franjiyehs, Ammouns) and members of the "Third Force" (i.e., Emile Bustani, Henry Far'awn, Charles Helou, Alfred Naqqash, Philip Taqla, Ghassan Tueni) were already supporting the opposition, at least on the issue of succession. In impassioned editorials, Tueni, perhaps the most outspoken of this group, repeatedly cautioned against the use of violence, foreign patronage, the incitement of confessional enmity, and implored both — loyalists and insurgents — to transcend their petty squabbles and spare Lebanon the foibles of a specious "revolution."

As a member of the "Third Force," Tueni attempted to mediate a compromise solution between the two sides. He did not, though, hesitate to rebuke both sides sharply or to address candidly some of the most sensitive issues underlying the conflict. In an editorial on March 15, two months before the outbreak of violence, he remarked that the Muslims of Lebanon look to Nasser for leadership almost to the point of deification; thereby provoking Christians to transform Chamoun into such a symbol. "Provocation was met by provocation. . . . The jubilant gunfire in the air in celebration of either of the deified leaders was only a small step away from gunfire in the street. This step, which could easily exacerbate Lebanon's eclipse, is accessible to the folly of any foolhardy or trigger-happy mercenary" (Tueni 1958: 5).

Tueni's and the "Third Force's," criticisms of Chamoun rested on two issues: reelection and the internationalization of the crisis. While insisting that Chamoun should complete his legal term rather than resign at once as the opposition demanded, Tueni nonetheless insisted that Chamoun's duty was to renounce publicly all thoughts of a second term, and that his failure to do so only lent moral support to the opposition. Tueni was also critical of the government's action in taking their complaint against interference from the UAR to the Arab League at the UN, not on the grounds that there was no such interference, but because appealing for outside aid would only enhance Lebanon's proclivity for such dependence. The real crisis Tueni cautioned was apt to resurface once the fighting ceased: "the problem of deciding the destiny of a country which we have made a state, but which we have not known how to make into a nation" (Tueni 1958: 38).

The day after the Marines landed on July 15, Tueni was sharper and more poignant in his criticisms of combatants.

> To certain Christians who still tell themselves that the age of protectorates and Crusades is not over, we say quite frankly that the Sixth Fleet did not land its troops to protect them, but to protect its own

> vital interests; and that its vital interests have no religion, but that if we must give a religious label to those with whom its interests lie, we should say that it is the Muslims with whom the West will try to make friends (Tueni 1958: 54).

Likewise, he repeatedly taunted the opposition leaders for allowing themselves to become prisoners of their own followers' extremism, for sustaining the insurrection long after the reelection of Chamoun was out of the question, and for being more interested in their own personal political status than in the country's welfare. He declared, in another impassioned editorial, that much as he longed to see radical reform in Lebanon, he could not support the revolution because it promised little worth the shedding of a drop of blood. "Shall we liberate the people with the tribes of Sabri Hamadeh or the gangs of Suleiman Franjiyeh?" (Tueni 1958: 41).

It did not take much, incidentally, for Chamoun to whip up sectarian sentiments. In Lebanon, religious phobias have long been easy to ignite. This why little is required, by way of provocation, to transform civil strife into the treacherous cruelties of uncivil wars. Chamoun was partly successful in winning the loyalty of a sizeable portion of the Christian Community. For example, most of the lower clergy and several of the bishops deserted Patriarch Ma'ushi. In some instances, priests exhorted their flock during mass and religious ceremonies to support Chamoun (Qubain 1961:83). It was also evident that the government went as far as to arm some of them (e.g. supporters of Mughabghab in the Chuf) in lieu of its repeated failure to draw the more active involvement of security forces into the conflict.

The Kata'ib, contrary to prevalent assumptions, were not uncritical admirers of Chamoun of his regime. Privately, as well as in public pronouncements and successive editorials in the opinion columns of *al-Amal*, the organ of the party, they were adamantly opposed to any attempt at amending the constitution to permit Chamoun, or any other incumbent for that matter, to renew his term. In other words, while Chamoun to them was dispensable, the system was not. The party was also leery of aligning itself too closely with a regime about to lose its credibility. Nor was the Kata'ib particularly happy about the confessional undertones and religious fervor the conflict was arousing—a feature they attributed to the opposition along with the explicit incitement of Egypt and Syria.

With the polarization of the conflict into pro-Arab and anti-Chamoun rivalry, the Kata'ib had no choice but to shift its allegiance and started to perceive any apposition to Chamoun, at least by implication, as a design or

conspiracy to undermine Lebanon's sovereignty and nationalist loyalties. It is then that they became unequivocal and steadfast in their support of the government.

Initially, however, this support did not manifest itself in any militant activity or involvement in street fighting, despite its burgeoning image as a paramilitary movement sparked by the fanaticism of supervigilantes and the machismo of the devoted hard core striking force of its younger recruits (Staokes 1975). Indeed, the party did not relish its paramilitary role — especially since it perceived civil strife as an instigation of foreign elements and "borrowed ideologies" conspiring to enfeeble the internal social fabric of the state and, thereby, generating conditions germane for such foreign intervention.

For sure, the Kata'ib, along with the PPS and Armenian Tashnaq, offered assistance to government security forces in fighting insurgents. By all accounts, however, the role of the Kata'ib was limited; particularly when compared to the PPS, who assumed the brunt of the heavy fighting, often waging battles and provoking confrontations of their own in virtually all areas of conflict. On the whole, the Kata'ib's involvements were limited to Beirut and the Christian strongholds of Mount Lebanon. Even there their activities consisted of little more than assisting the gendarmerie in patrolling the streets (Qubain 1961: 84; Entelis 1974: 176). Doubtless, this explains why much of the opposition literature on the crisis spared the Kata'ib the pugnacious outcries it leveled at Chamoun, Malik, al-Solh and the PPS.

This seemingly bizarre collaboration between the Kata'ib and the PPS deserves, nonetheless, brief explication. Despite their deep-seated hostility and ideological differences, and by an odd confluence of circumstances, they found themselves part of the same tenuous but expedient alliance. Crises in Lebanon, as elsewhere, render the cohabitation of such strange bedfellows more plausible. This is simply one of recurrent instances rooted in the factionalism of a fragmented political culture sustained by shifting political alliances and personal rivalries.

Other than the transient hostility they harbored against the insurgents, they had little else in common. Indeed, clashes between the two parties, shortly before the outbreak of hostilities in May, were very common. The very ideology of the PPS was, after all, antithetical to the existence of Lebanon as an independent entity. As such the party has no genuine interest in Lebanon's long-term stability. Nor did it relish, given its avowed secularism, the preservation of a plural society sustained by confessional and primordial loyalties.

Like other political parties and movements rooted in the 1930s struggle for independence, the PPS espoused nationalist and emancipatory sentiments. Ideologically, it professed a secularist, progressive, anti-feudal program and advocated a doctrine of Syrian nationalism committed to the reunification of so-called "Natural Syria," encompassing the fertile crescent, along with Iraq and Cyprus. Sparked by the charisma, powerful intellect, and adroit manipulation of its leader and founder, Antoun Saadeh, and reinforced by a tinge of European fascism and totalitarian discipline, the party grew from a small, ostracized secret society to a sizeable party of about 25,000, drawn largely from a cross-section of intersectarian groups (Yamak 1966, Suleiman 1967; Showeiri 1973).

Its failure to achieve power or even gain legitimacy intensified its feelings of frustration and, with time, increased its leanings toward violence. In fact, since 1949, violence had become the only method by which it hoped to create favorable conditions for the realization of its objectives. In 1951, it plotted and successfully carried out the assassination of Riad al-Solh, several times Prime Minister of Lebanon. In 1955, under the direct orders of the president of the party, a party member assassinated Col. Adnan Malki.[7] In 1956 and 1957, the party was implicated in a plot against the Syrian government. It was suppressed in Syria and many of its leaders were either jailed or sentenced to death (Yamak 1966: 146).

Its anticlerical, secular ideology and its claims for advancing a rational philosophy to address and reform the pathologies of Near Eastern Sociocultural, political, and economic life was very appealing to a generation of intellectual idealists, political activists, and extremists. The party's mystique of active combat also attracted a large reservoir of militant zealots from the disenfranchised and uprooted elements of society.

The PPS had little to lose. It was driven by pure enmity and bitterness. The party's distrust of Communism, the Ba'th, and Nasser's brand of Arabism was compounded by its seething fury over the treacherous execution of Sa'adeh. Ostracized and despised everywhere, Lebanon was its last battlefield. Yet, it evinced no loyalty to Lebanon's independence or its preservation as a political entity. It was clearly not motivated by any such idealistic fervor but by a desire for self-preservation. A victory for the opposition would have spelled its liquidation. Hence, they fought recklessly and everywhere.

Although the PPS was banned in Iraq, Syria and Jordan, the Iraqi regime found it expedient, nonetheless, to support its subversive activities in Lebanon largely because of their mutual hatred of the Syrian regime and the recently established UAR. Much of the party's support, both in funds and arms, came from Iraq. Its armed militias of about 3,000 waged some of the

most vicious battles with little regard to the havoc and destruction the fighting generated in vital and infrastructural facilities.

Tripoli

Civil unrest in Tripoli, by far the fiercest and most damaging, displayed patterns of mobilization and violence quite distinct from those observed elsewhere. The overall character of the "Popular Resistance," much as in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and Sidon, was largely insurrectionist. As in other predominantly Muslim regions at a time of ascendant Arab nationalist sentiments, Tripoli was bitterly opposed to the pro-Western foreign policy of Chamoun's regime. Rashid Karami, the scion of a long line of urban zua'ma was spared the humiliation of defeat other traditional leaders suffered in the infamous elections of 1957. He was, nonetheless, openly critical of the N-government's neglect of Tripoli, his political constituency, and the second-largest city in the country. He also decried the corruption and favoritism of the Chamounists and their allies.

All other similarities, however, end here. The sparks that touched off waves of civil unrest throughout the country were, it must be recalled, initiated in Tripoli. The ensuing tension and fighting was sustained, at escalating intensity, throughout the five-month interlude of civil strife. In Beirut, by comparison, much of the heavy fighting took place over one weekend—that of June 14 and 15. The ferocity of violence in Tripoli was largely a reflection of the bitter rivalries between the PPS, Ba'th, and Communist parties, compounded by the cross-cutting loyalty the great mass of Tripolitanians felt for the Karami family.

Incidentally, the fragmented political culture of Tripoli had been a source of political strife for quite some time. Early in December, six months before the outbreak of hostilities, the government had already declared the northern district as a "military area" because of the escalating incidence of bombings, attempted assassinations, and other acts of sabotage. It is clear that the insurrectional movement was initiated by these parties and was touched off, characteristically, by the plundering of the American Information Office (USIS) and the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC)—favorite targets of nationalist demonstrators. The local PPS headquarters, the mortal enemy of the Ba'th, was also sacked and burned (Hottinger 1961: 132–33). In one day of rioting, May 9, fifteen persons were reported killed and 128 wounded (*Middle East Affairs* 1958: 239).

The army was also more heavily and directly involved. Elsewhere,

because of Chehab's intent to maintain its neutrality, the role of the army was comparatively incidental. Only during rare, critical confrontations was Chehab persuaded to commit armed forces into the battle. In Tripoli, the army assumed major responsibility, employing armored cars, tanks and heavy artillery. Casualties, as a result, were much heavier. It is estimated that close to 170 persons were killed in the city and its harbor, al-Mina (Karami 1959: 256). Since the figures are derived from sources close to the insurgents, they most probably exclude the equally heavy casualties loyalists and government security forces suffered. Physical destruction was also comparatively heavier in Tripoli. Dense urban quarters, in both the old city and the harbor, were demolished through shelling and counter-shelling.

The army's direct involvement might well be a reflection of local political developments in the region. Zgharta, traditionally the Christian counterweight against Muslim Tripoli, was embroiled at the time in a bloody leadership struggle of its own; a replay of the endemic factional rivalry between its feuding clans. The Chamoun government had tried, in compliance with its "antifeudal" strategies, to bolster the Dwaihis, the anti-Fanjiyah faction of Zgharta. The heated preelectoral campaign had degenerated into an infamous shootout (June 15, 1957) in an open church courtyard ("la tuerie de Miziara") where thirty-eight innocent victims were slain and more than thirty were wounded. The involvement of the Dawihis in their strife-torn town in the north, prevented their participation in the broader national crisis being waged in Tripoli. The armed forces most probably stepped in to act as surrogate.

Much like Beirut, Tripoli was also split into two main war zones. The Old City — with its labyrinthian quarters, covered souks and pedestrian alleyways, with al-Mansuri Mosque at its epicenter — came under the control of the rebel forces. Together, the Old City and al-Mina, had a predominantly Sunni Muslim population of about 40,000. Fervor for Nasser and Arab Nationalism was intense and highly voluble. Impassioned masses, public slogans, graffiti, and Friday mosque sermons were openly idolizing Nasser and calling for unity with the UAR. The other outlying new suburbs, with religiously-mixed groups of relatively more recent out-migrants from the Old City and adjoining towns and villages, were largely pro-government. (See Gulick 1967 for demographic and sectarian composition of various neighborhoods in Tripoli.)

The insurgent movement in Tripoli also appears to have been better organized. It may not approximate the features of a "Paris Commune," as one enthusiastic observer claimed (Stewart 1958: 110). It did, though, dis-

play a clear organizational structure with an eight-man central command and a seven-man executive office with explicit chains of command and division of responsibility. A revolutionary court and other auxiliary appendages of government were also established. Rashid Karami was more than just a titular head. By virtue of his kinship descent and professed enthusiasm for Nasserist and Arab nationalist ideologies, he wielded considerable authority and popularity among a broad cross-section of his constituency. His subordinates in commanding positions (e.g. al-Rafi'i, 'Adra, Ma'sarani, Hamzah, al-Baghdadi) were of like-mind and background; drawn largely from prominent urban Sunni Muslim families with Ba'thist and Nationalist leanings.

There is also evidence, suggestive if not conclusive, that Tripoli's "Popular Resistance" benefited from a much larger volume of infiltration of arms and men from the Syria and other sources. The bulk of the northern frontier area was held by the opposition, which, along with the inaccessible nature of the terrain, doubtlessly accounts for such massive infiltration. Published chronologies, extracted from local sources, confirm such tendencies. Early in 1957, one encounters entries involving smuggling of guns, ammunition, and the participation of UAR civilian nationals and government officials in subversive activities or in the direction and mobilization of the insurrection (*Middle Eastern Affairs* 1957, 1958; *Middle East Journal* 1957, 1958).

The Chuf Region

Some of the heaviest and sustained fighting took place in the Chuf where Kamal Jumblat, reaching beyond other opposition leaders, declared his own autonomous local government in defiance of state authority. The rudiments of administrative units were established to regulate provisions and supplies, security, police, justice, and armed forces. Jumblat's imposing family estate and palace at al-Mukhtarah served as capital and headquarters of his insurgent movement. He clearly relished the rebellious role he was playing and often went about it with aplomb and studied fanfare. The international and local media played up to him and sensationalized their coverage of the battles in the Chuf, in part because of the dramatic turn of events there and the images they evoked of yet another Druze–Maronite bloody conflict — a replay of the massacres of 1860.

It was not difficult for Jumblat to justify his resort to armed rebellion. As a passionate reformist, often a doctrinaire revolutionary pamphleteer, and something of a wide-ranging intellectual dilettante, he could easily conceal

his parochial and personal interests behind the guise of radical political rhetoric and the call for liberation. He prefaced his impassioned book, largely a seething political tract written shortly after the civil war of 1958, by lambasting the "anarchy, crass materialism, hypocrisy . . . and the corrupt and corrupting influence of mercantilism rooted in the Phoenician heritage . . . and the opportunism, clientelism of Lebanese politicians and the foreign hands which squandered its resources and fragmented its political culture" (Jumblat 1959: 10–15). He spares no one. Of course, Chamoun and his "stooges," particularly al-Solh and Malik, emerge as prime culprits. They are held responsible for betraying Arab nationalist sentiments, being lackies of Western imperialism, deepening sectarian hostility, and violating morality of public life. "Prostitution, white-slave traffic, drugs, gambling . . . reached their zenith" Jumblat charged, in Chamoun's "accursed regime" (Jumblat 1959: 33). To Jumblat, it is these and the complicity of other self-serving politicians which account for the failure of the insurrection in bringing about a radical transformation of society and its despicable political institutions.

In advancing his socialist program he maintains that:

> The theory of liberalism, or absolute freedom in politics, is a mistake as far as Lebanon is concerned. It has bequeathed to us this individualist anarchy in our public and private life, so that people in this country have become selfish and wrapped up in their own interests, heedless of everything except what directly concerns themselves, exerting themselves only for what falls within their narrow horizons, interested in nothing that does not bear them a definite advantage (Jumblat 1959: 161).

To him, much of the economic prosperity Lebanon was enjoying was due in large part to the fact that Beirut had become "a nightclub for the royalty and capitalists of the Arab world and a cosmopolitan center for licit and illicit commerce" (Jumblat 1959: 33).

The turning point, however — and Jumblat is quite explicit on this — was his failure to regain his parliamentary seat. It was a devastating blow to his credibility and stature, particularly since an electoral position in the National Assembly was seen as an inevitable appendage to his feudal ancestry. The failure was a decisive watershed which prompted him to entertain, not without agonizing hindsight, more militant forms of opposition. Thus far, often

invoking Gandhi's strategies of passive resistance, he had refrained from considering such radical options. From then on, however, all such restraints melted away. Curiously, being cast out of parliament and his exclusion from the assembly, and its open forum for public debate, meant to Jumblat that he was thrust back into feudal society with its contentious and warring predispositions.

> Our failure in the Chuf . . . after Chamoun used his armed gangs, (gendarmes and civilians) to terrorize the Christian villages to force them to vote against us, was the third incitement in the crisis. . . . When I became certain of my personal failure. . . . I left the house secretly through a back door, to Beirut, for fear that my brethren would revolt if I remained among them . . . and in fact, a few hours later, news of the Chufites reached us. They immediately cut telephone lines, congregated on public roads, and carried out provocative acts against authorities, who accepted them and avoided facing them for fear that they would develop into something more serious. We tried the impossible to stop such acts. . . . For tens of armed men stationed themselves in our house in the Chuf refusing to leave it. . . . Our remaining in Beirut near the security forces, who could detain me anytime they wished, was the only guarantee that the revolt in the Chuf would not break out before we have prepared for it. . . . From that hour (i.e. after the election defeat), we began to think that the revolt had become inevitable . . . and after a short interlude of rest, mixed with feeling of despair, disgust and resentment of politics and its vile practitioners, we started to think that revolt was necessary and inevitable. Otherwise, we would have been guilty of failure in harnessing and directing the legitimate rage of the new generations of radical change (Jumblat 1959: 83–89).

It is revealing that Jumblat's espousal of violent politics, despite the depth of his outrage, was ambiguous and tentative. This was visible in the way he justified and accounted for the initial and increasing involvement of his followers in acts of terrorism and sabotage. He was equally evasive as to the sources of arms and military assistance he received. "our men and supporters had only a small number of rifles, not more than thirty. We made contacts with those that had to be contacted. Despite our efforts we lost control and could not restrain the enthusiasm of nine determined men who climbed

Mount Kanisah and launched terrorist acts in retaliation. Bridges, railroads, hydraulic installations, electric and telephone networks, municipal headquarters were ambushed and destroyed. This small but heroic adventure served as a safety valve to release pent-up aggression and a training ground in live ammunition and actual combat" (Jumblat 1959, 86). In glowing terms Jumblat went further to depict of impact of such "redemptive acts" in generating self-sacrifice, valor and manly virtues. Those imbued with such spirits "rushed to their death as if it were a spring betrothal, a joyous and regenerative celebration" (Jumblat 1959: 87).

Benign as these "little excursions" were, they awakened Jumblat and his followers to the impact of violence in exposing the vulnerability of Chamoun and his exploitative regime. "It is the irony of fate," he exclaimed, "that we too should become versed in the new art of instilling terror and fear among those in power without violating their lives as was to happen, unfortunately, in subsequent episodes of urban strife" (Jumblat 1959: 88).

In this, as in other justifications of his initial guarded entry and growing involvement in political violence, Jumblat was in effect exonerating his own participation as a defensive strategy to curb the arrogance and cruelty of those in power. Since the state, he argued, in Chamoun's era had degenerated into a collection of armed bands, the only legitimate response was to organize one's own armed bands. "A police state," he declared, "can only be resisted by similar rebellious and coercive measures" (Jumblat 1959: 90).

Once the fighting started it acquired an escalating momentum of its own; more so, perhaps, than in other regions of conflict. The bitter personal enmity between Chamoun and Jumblat, the mixed interconfessional composition of villages and towns with strongholds of government loyalists coexisting in close proximity to rebel forces, along with Jumblat's threatening intentions to march on Beirut and occupy the presidential palace to force Chamoun's resignation heightened the ferocity of fighting.

The Chuf battles started in earnest on May 13, just three days after the bloody clashes in Tripoli. On the 9th the UNF had taken the decision to launch the armed revolt to be spearheaded by Jumblat's offensives in the Chuf. Just a day after Jumblat reached al-Mukhtarah, rebel forces under his command attacked the presidential palace at Bayt al-Dine, thereby initiating armed hostility. So swift was the progression of events that they clearly bespeak of a high level of anticipatory mobilization and preparedness.

The battle of Bayt al-Dine raged for three days. Accounts of the fighting, men, casualties, movements, extent of destruction, etc. varied markedly with claims and counter-claims made by government and rebel sources (see

Qubain 1961: 76–78). It is clear, however, that Jumblat's forces were successful in occupying the greater part of the town and were about to reach the Palace before being repelled by the army garrison stationed there and the reinforcements of loyalist supporters; mostly PPS and followers of Na'im Mughabghab, Majid Arslan and Qahtan Hamadeh. Another attack, the next day, also failed to break government defensive positions.

On May 15, government forces launched a major counterattack with the objective of occupying al-Mukhtarah and capturing Jumblat. Accounts of the fighting by rebel sources are very dramatic, colorful, and suffused with exaggerated tales of townsmen, armed with little other than ordinary rifles, resisting the massive incursions of troops with automatic weapons, armed vehicles, heavy artillery, and air cover.

At this point, a shift in the sectarian alignment of forces occurred; reminiscent of similar episodes of communal strife in the nineteenth century. Druze spiritual leaders (*uqqal*) made efforts to reconcile the warring factions within their own community by invoking communal solidarity and the perils of internecine strife. Thereby, Majid Arslan (Minister of Agriculture at the time) and subsequently Qahtan Hamadeh withdrew from battle and disbanded their followers. Once again, in other words, sectarian loyalty prevailed over ephemeral ideological and political interest.

With the withdrawal of Druze forces, the Chamounists had to rely more heavily on the PPS, the gendarmes, and other loyalists, particularly Na'im Mughabghab's , who remained throughout one of Chamoun's staunch and loyal supporters.[8] As in other embattled areas, the PPS were also heavily drawn into the fighting. Their irregular recruits and disciplined party members fought ferociously. In the meantime, Jumblat was also reinforcing his own forces with volunteers from among the Druze in Syria. Throughout the month of June, pitched battles were fought for the control of villages in the central Chuf (e.g. Batlun, Fraydis, and 'Ayn Zahalta). Some of the fiercest fighting, sustained for a full week in early July, took place on the strategic ridge overlooking Beirut's International Airport. Confessionally mixed villages of Shimlan, 'Ainab and Qabr Shmul and surrounding hilltops were the scenes of successive attacks and counterattacks, with each side claiming advances and accusing the other on relying on infiltrators, foreign agents and mercenaries (see Karami 1959: 187–90; Qubain 1961: 77–79).

So deep were some of the offensives mounted by the rebels that at least on two such occasions (at 'Ayn Zahalta on June 13 and Shimlan on July 2) the army felt it necessary to respond to President Chamoun's appeals for intervention, employing tanks, field guns, armored cars and jets for air cover.

By the end, faced with such forces along with the failure of the opposition in Beirut to deliver their anticipated support, Jumblat bitterly abandoned his plans of storming and occupying the capital. He wrote with visible anguish: "Our forces had reached ten kilometers from the capital, Beirut. . . . Suddenly by strange magic direction, the operations and skirmishes of the popular resistance forces in Beirut ceased, and left us alone in the field battle" (Jumblat 1960: 9–10).

Ba'lbak and Hermel

In this region, comprising approximately half the country, the situation was considerably more obscure and complex. By virtue of the plural and diverse political subcultures that coexisted, the area clearly lacked the single unified pattern of command and leadership witnessed in other dissident territories. For example, the area north of Tripoli, stretching from the coast to the northeast frontier with Syria, was under the control of Karami and Hamzah. Southward along the border other relics of the Ottoman feudal fiefdoms, with their inveterate zua'ma and tightly circumscribed constituencies, were still very much in evidence. The local leaders (Hamadeh, Haydar, al'Aryan, Skaf) were each in control of their own district. With the exception of Zahle, which was entirely pro-government, and a few other PPS strongholds, mostly small villages like Nabi Uthman, much of the region was in support of the insurgent movement. Indeed, the entire Beqa'a and northeast region became virtually a "no man's land." Several belligerent tribes, particularly the Ja'fars, sustained their private wars with the army and gendarmerie. The few Christian villages in the area made "pacts" with the Muslim armed bands, affirming their "neutrality" in the national struggle and securing, in compensation, the injunction of keeping the bands out of their fields. The peasants tried to patrol their own boundaries (Hottinger 1961: 134).

The pattern of violence, predictably, displayed a bewildering array of forms: ranging from tribal feuds, acts of sabotage and terrorism to confrontations between security forces and Lebanese army, UN observers, and bands of infiltrators and smugglers. Because of its proximity to the Syrian border, however, much of the strife involved confrontations between security forces, often patrol and customs guards, and infiltrators and armed bandits from Syria. For example, as early as December 6, 1957, the UN Security Council was already meeting in an emergency session to discuss the raiding and

looting of a gendarmerie post near Akroun, in the northeast, by bandits operating from Syria (*Middle Eastern Affairs*) 1958: 42). Recurrent acts of sabotage, terrorism, smuggling, infiltration of armed men, were becoming so massive that at least on two occasions (May 27 and June7) air force planes, stationed in Riyaq, were deployed to strafe columns of mules carrying ammunition through the Beqa' and to deploy rockets and napalm bombs to smash a column of 500 men smuggling arms and explosives down the main road from Homs to Ba'lbak (Middle East Journal 1958: 309).

Of all the rebel forces in the Beqa'-Hermel region, those under the leadership of Sabri Hamadeh were the most cohesive and numerous. They were also relatively better equipped, given their access to sources of smuggled arms and ammunition from Syria. The only opposition they received, short of direct government intervention, was from the PPS who managed to retain a camp for military training in one of the fortified villages and a radio transmitter under the name of the "Voice of Reform." Despite its fairly large number of fighters, the PPS stronghold could not resist attacks of the opposition forces. Following a fierce battle in mid-May PPS partisans were hunted down and rooted out of the area. Many were killed; others sought refuge in government-controlled regions.

By late May, all that remained of the devastated pro-government forces in the area was an army unit stationed at a fortified hilltop on the outskirts of Ba'lbak. The army, assisted by the air force, was able to repulse repeated attacks of the opposition, and managed to retain control of that strategic fort throughout the crisis. The government's successive attempts to penetrate areas under rebel control were likewise met with failure (Qubain 1961: 88).

Sidon

In Sidon the insurgency also assumed, more so than in other regions, the manifestations of a local insurrection. While other parts of south were dominated solidly by Shi'i feudalists, particularly the As'ad family, Sidon's militancy was inspired and controlled by Ma'ruf Saad, a burly ex-police officer, a "man of the people" who had risen to political prominence swiftly by defeating the government's candidate in the elections of 1957.

Saad's charisma and populist appeal evinced features of Hobsbawn's "primitive rebels," or social banditry so characteristic of incipient and inchoate mass uprisings. This is apparent in the political memoir he wrote shortly after the

civil war; a rather idealistic tract rationalizing the sources and motivation underlying his recourse to armed struggle. There is a bit of the Robin Hood syndrome; the avenger and fighter for social justice infused by a nationalist fervor for emancipation and liberation (Saad 1959). His background and political tutelage were also strikingly different from other leaders of the UNF with whom he collaborated. All the other compatriots in the struggle (Salam, Jumblat, Karami, As'ad, Hamadeh, etc) were, as we have seen, scions of traditional zua'ma threatened or embittered by the usurpation of their power; hence the label the civil war had acquired as a "Revolt of the Pashas" (Petran 1987: 50). Other than his humble social origins, Ma'ruf Saad was directly involved in militant activities. He interrupted his high school education in 1936 to volunteer as a fighter in the Arab resistance in Palestine, where he was imprisoned. Upon his release in 1945 he became a protégé of Riad al Solh, the nationalist Sunni Muslim leader, taught athletics at the Maqased Benevolent Society school in Sidon, and then became an avid follower of Nasser. He also maintained close ties with the Palestinians. Their presence in large numbers, as displaced refugees in camps in Sidon and adjoining areas, gave him opportunities to be involved in supportive activities on their behalf. They reciprocated by providing military assistance.

Much like Jumblat and other opposition leaders, he, too, speaks of a "popular armed uprising," an intifadah and not a revolt. The uprising, he maintained, was spontaneous. "We were driven into it. We never entertained carrying arms. . . . We had no access to weapons at the time. We only wanted to declare a strike until the government resigned" (Saad 1959: 13). Events, he went on to say, particularly the assassination of Matni, Chamoun's opposition to the UAR, the government's repressive measures, the Sixth Fleet, etc., developed in directions they had not intended or welcomed. Ma'ruf Saad had no problems consolidating his control over the town. A central command was formed and various revolutionary committees (security, courts, training, publicity, etc.) were organized.

The "popular uprising" was able to recruit at least a thousand fighters and other volunteers. In successive skirmishes with loyalist and security forces they were able to repel all efforts to break up their resistance. Throughout the five-months of civil hostility, they kept Sidon free from government interference and often assisted the UNF by dispatching volunteers to neighboring areas. On the whole, however, insurgents in Sidon were predominantly interested in maintaining their hegemony over the city. Hence, they refrained from attacking regions where they had no traditional influence over the inhabitants.

Kata'ib's Counterrevolution

The election of Chehab on July 31, 1958 marked the resolution of at least one major contentious issue underlying the crisis; namely presidential succession. This was, after all, one professed justification for America's intervention although Chamoun had never publicly stated that he would either amend the constitution or attempt to succeed himself. Sami al-Solh, speaking on behalf of the government on May 27, before the landing of American troops, reconfirmed that the government had not and would not seek such an amendment, nor would the parliament entertain the likelihood. At any rate Chehab's election brought about a perceptible relaxation in the level of hostility.

The transition to normalcy, in the wake of civil strife, is rarely free of tension. As in "Thermidor" the dread of eruption and return to the terror of war, is always there. Once aroused, violent impulses are not readily quelled. More so when necessary agencies of law and order, let alone the collective desire for reconciliation, have not as yet been embedded in the new order. Chehab was elected on July 31, but was not to be sworn in and assume power until September 23. This seven-week interlude proved fateful.

Early encouraging manifestations of the return to normalcy were visible in virtually all regions of conflict. Clashes between rebels and security forces were becoming less frequent, ceasefires were in effect, roads were opened to traffic, security forces were ordered to confiscate all arms, shops in the central business district were permitted to remain open until 11:00 P.M., clandestine radio stations were closed down. Even in remote regions of Beqa' and Hermel, leading factions declared their allegiance to the new government.

Beneath such signs of a return to order, however, new forms of violence, more personal and vengeful, surfaced. Acts of banditry, hooliganism, theft, pillage, looting, disdain for public order became more recurrent. So did kidnappings, torture, reprisals, and other religiously motivated offenses. For a few days, out-of-control masses rampaged, venting their rage and unprovoked hostility against innocent targets. These self-destructive manifestations, as I have been repeatedly arguing, epitomize some of the most decadent forms of uncivil and guilt-free violence. Two features disclosed the seriousness of such seemingly atavistic and free-floating violence. First, they were carried out mostly by followers without the consent or knowledge of leaders and often without their control. Second, many of these episodes

assumed a pronounced Christian-Muslim character, revealing thereby the confessional amity aroused by the conflict. While these largely nonpolitical forms of violence surged, the country was also undergoing a contentious political battle over the composition of the first cabinet under the new regime. Cabinet crises in Lebanon, even in normal times, are fractious and cumbersome; more of a hazardous high-wire act than a benign game of musical chairs. This one, in particular, had much at stake. Coming in the wake of a bloody but unresolved civil war, the embattled communities were each upping the ante, so-to-speak, to reap the lion's share of seats in the new government and thereby tilting the outcome of the war in their favor.

Late in August a delegation of opposition leaders presented president-elect Chehab a statement which called for the formation of a government composed of opposition leaders and "other faithful persons" to fulfill the goals of the revolution and return the country to normal. The statement also accused "subversive and foreign elements . . . for inciting communal agitation, delaying the withdrawal of U.S. troops, and Chehab's assumption of his duties . . . with the aim of resisting the national movement and preventing it from achieving its aspirations" (*Mideast Mirror*, August 31 1958: 5).

The next day government loyalists came forth with their own set of demands. In the name of a United Parliamentary Bloc, a group of twenty-three deputies insisted that an ultimatum be issued to all armed elements to surrender their arms; that those responsible for riots, terrorism and arming of insurgents — i.e., opposition leaders — intended "to carry out a plan aimed at destroying political and economic conditions and Lebanon's existence" be brought to trial. They also declared that they would refuse to cooperate with any future government which included any leader of opposition, and thanked Chamoun for having realized the aspirations of the Lebanese people (*Mideast Mirror*, August 31 1958: 6).

In this heady political atmosphere — one teetering between the dread of rekindled anarchy and violence and the hopeful prospects of a new peaceful order — any episode, spontaneous or provoked, could tilt the metamorphosis of society in their direction: reconciliation and coexistence or further bloodletting. The ominous event occurred early afternoon of September 19 when Fuad Haddad, assistant editor of al-'Amal the organ of the Kata'ib, was kidnapped and presumed to be assassinated. If the assassination of Nasib al-Matni on May 8 was the spark that touched off the revolt and ensuing civil strife of the past five months, Haddad's abduction can be similarly singled out as the event that triggered the revival of political tensions and much of the tumultuous circumstances associated with what has come to be known

as the "counterrevolution." As in earlier such episodes, particularly when the political setting becomes volatile and highly charged, any event or alibi can serve as the spark to unleash all the pent-up hostilities and set in motion that deadly cycle of vengeful violence.

The Kata'ib's response was instantaneous and equally deplorable. They issued an ultimatum to the opposition forces demanding the release of Haddad within two hours and, in reprisal, kidnapped a number of their men, thereby generating the treacherous cycle of random kidnapping. The "Voice of Lebanon," the Party's clandestine radio station, resumed its transmissions, which had been suspended a few weeks earlier with Chehab's election. Their messages this time were more vociferous and threatening; calling for merciless reprisals if the journalist were not released. On the 20th of September, they declared a general strike to start on September 22 in protest against Haddad's kidnapping. The reprieve was intended to give mediators the time to find and release him (for further details see al-'Amal, September 20 1958; Entelis 1974: 178–79).

The three alleged kidnappers were soon arrested and Saeb Salam, as leader of Beirut's insurgents, denounced all kidnappings and denied any involvement in this particular incident. The Kata'ib, nonetheless, did not suspend their call for a general strike. What aggravated matters was the assassination of yet another prominent party member (Cesar Bustani) the evening of the 20th of September. From then on the Kata'ib escalated their militancy and were heedless to all appeals made by Maronite leaders (including President Chamoun and Chehab) to call off their strike. Suspecting that these events were the work of infiltrators and saboteurs, they erected barricades in their own quarters just as the UNF did earlier under the Chamoun administration in the Basta quarter of West Beirut.

The Kata'ib, though, went much further. They discovered that day that they could, given the strategic location of their suburbs and villages around the capital, actually sever Beirut and the government from the rest of the country. By blocking a few of the main thoroughfares, they could besiege and embargo the city. For several days all kinds of merchandise, even two of the newly appointed ministers, were denied passage into the capital. Much of the ensuing fighting was, in fact, over the control of roads and transport in and around Beirut. Politically, the formation of the new cabinet, announced by President Chehab on the 24th of September, just a day after being sworn in by the Chamber of Deputies, only added insult to injury. The eight-man cabinet, under the premiership of Rashid Karami, was heavily tilted in favor of the opposition. The Kata'ib could hardly contain

their outrage and perceived the new government as an unjustified victory for the rebels, and threatened to escalate their protest.

Once again the central issue of Lebanon's national identity awakened the Kata'ib's anxieties. From their perspective, if they did not act forcibly to challenge the skewed composition of the new government, Lebanon's precarious equilibrium could be fatally upset in favor of Muslim-Arabist elements. Hence to them the cabinet was not merely an ordinary squabble for seats or greater access to the privileges of office. The hegemony of the Christian community was in jeopardy of being compromised. They were adamant in strenuously resisting all such threats.

Throughout the earlier summer months of turmoil, the Kata'ib had perceived the crisis as essentially one of presidential succession. Hence their support did provide military assistance but it generally took the form of patrolling. The strategy of the party at the time, given the overwhelming petite bourgeois character of its constituency and its predilection for the preservation of Lebanon's laissez faire and economic liberalism, was largely defensive. All it desired was to protect the sources of its own economic vital interests; namely the Matn and free access to downtown Beirut, the port, and adjoining suburbs.

The Kata'ib saw the formation of the Karami cabinet, with its avowed intention of "harvesting the fruits of revolution" (see Agwani for the full text 1965: 388–89) as a new threat — heralding the advent of greater measure of state control and undue restraint on free enterprise. More ominous, perhaps, Pierre Gemayyel was distrustful of the personal admiration both Chehab and Karami bore to Nasser and, hence, dreaded the prospects of seeing Lebanon engulfed further in the ascendant wave of Arabism. In short, to the Kata'ib the composition of the cabinet with which Chehab inaugurated his regime was more than just an unjustified victory for the opposition. It imperiled the foundations of Lebanon's economic order and undermined its political autonomy as a Christian-Maronite homeland.

For roughly three weeks (September 20–October 14), the country slid further into anarchy and violence, with all the sordidness that such events generate. The general strike was rigidly observed in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and Zahle. As districts were being barricaded the army was compelled to impose a curfew on the capital that led to the suspension of all activities except, of course, the upsurge in violence. And violence began to assume more pernicious forms. Initially, much of it involved anti-government demonstrations and clashes between Muslim merchants and shopkeepers in the central business district of Beirut and the "storm-troops" and partisans of the

Kata'ib entrusted to enforce the general strike. Soon these activities degenerated into vicious, spiteful acts of sectarian violence: kidnapping, torture, and gangster-like operations became more recurrent and were committed with unprecedented savagery and display of religious bigotry. For the first time, and on both sides, religious symbols and edifices were desecrated. Tortured victims were often branded with religious insignia. And, of course, leaders on both sides hastened to disclaim any responsibility for such acts and assigned blame on "irresponsible elements," "hired agents," "saboteurs." In so doing they were, doubtless, disclosing their own inability to restrain the frenzy of aroused masses.

Alarmed by the symptoms of such fanatic outbursts of confessional enmity, Christian and Muslim religious leaders made repeated appeals for calm and established a "Committee of Union," on October 11, to alleviate the sectarian hostility exacerbated by the conflict. Political leaders also made frantic efforts to arrive at an acceptable compromise. Finally, intense political negotiations among all factions, through President Chehab's persistent personal interventions, began to result in some easing of tensions. Embattled communities seemed, for the first time, on the verge of considering more reconciliatory options for resolving the crisis. The first such auspicious sign, one which was to become a political landmark of sorts, occurred on October 10 as a result of a meeting between Gemayyel and Prime Minister Karami. This was, incidentally, the first such meeting between these two archrivals in more than three years. Both emerged from it with pronouncements of reconciliation, appealing for harmony and an end to bloody discord. More explicitly, they professed their support for the "no victor, no vanquished" formula — an ironical but expedient diplomatic ploy for suspending hostility without addressing or resolving the issues provoking it.

A compromise government was formed which received the overwhelming support of all adversaries and factions except the PPS. In his policy statement Karami reiterated the major tenets of President Chehab's acceptance speech; namely the withdrawal of foreign troops, the strengthening of relations between Lebanon and the Arab states, the revival of the economy, abiding by the National Covenant of 1943, and cooperation with all countries on the basis of friendship and equality (for the complete text of these and other supportive declarations of other leading spokemen see Agwani 1965: 373–94).

Reactions were swift and reassuring. The Kataeb responded by calling off their strike, dismantling the barricades, and suspending their clandestine radio station. Warring factions and partisans of the UNF followed with similar mea-

sures. Barricades cordoning off other quarters in Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, and Zahle disappeared. The curfew, in operation since May, was lifted. Roads and thoroughfares linking Beirut to the provinces were opened. Economic and commercial activities gradually started to recapture their pre-war vitality. Even Jumblat, the most recalcitrant of the insurgents disbanded his private army and reintegrated his partisans into the normal routine of village life.

Inferences

The events of 1958 mark a significant watershed in the political history of Lebanon. They stand out as the first major breakdown in political order after nearly a century of relative stability. Some go further to herald the insurrection as the "first fully sustained popular revolt in the Arab world . . . one that did not wither away, and that was not suppressed" (Stewart 1959: 109). This might well be an exaggerated claim. What is true, however, is that until then internal and external sources of tension were, as we have seen, present but never erupted into belligerent confrontations. In 1958, Lebanon began to lose its political tranquility. Limited and sporadic as the events were, they served as an ominous warning that the precarious balance, delicately held together, could be easily disrupted.

Indeed, from then on, the tone of political discourse started to undergo some visible changes. Consent, manipulation, compromise, bargaining, guarded contact, avoidance, "mutual lies"—thus far the hallmarks of the political process—were giving way to more contentious and malevolent forms of political confrontations.

Politics in Lebanon has long had elements of playfulness, often bordering on the tragicomic theatrics so common in other forms of public entertainment and sporting contests. One has only to read the memoirs of some of the veteran politicians, themselves scions of established political families, to realize how deeply-rooted this feature of competition for public office is in the ethos of Lebanon's political culture (see, for example, al-Khuri 1960; al-Solh 1960; Riyashi 1953). Discontent and grievances, much like competition for public office, found outlets in street demonstrations, rallies, and heated and acrimonious debates. Of all forms of political mobilization, however, elections were doubtless the most appealing and colorful. They became much-anticipated popular events charged with emotional intensity, something akin to a spirited and absorbing national pastime.

At times the whole country would be engulfed in a succession of relent-

less electoral campaigns: presidential, parliamentary, by-elections to fill vacated seats in the National Assembly, and municipal and other public contests for elected officers of professional and voluntary associations. They were launched with much ado and popular enthusiasm. Parliamentary elections in particular became overindulgent affairs involving lavish expenditures of money and passions. Spaced, for security reasons, over a four-week period, the whole country would be transmuted and would peak in a national mood of frenzy and high expectations. Voters were transported en masse in their electoral districts in boisterous motorcades and convoys. Performing one's civic duties was more a festive occasion to revisit one's ancestral village or town — a nostalgic excursion rather than a display of ideological commitment or a demonstration of one's concern over public issues.

The aggrieved in rigged elections — and elections were rarely free of pressure, vote tampering, or other nefarious strategies to manipulate the outcome of balloting — normally cried foul. Attempts to assuage one's injured political stature and public image would often lead to scattered incidents of violence. These, however, rarely became the basis for the mass mobilization of armed men.

The crisis of 1958 began to change all this. Emile Bustani, a prominent public figure and a presidential hopeful until his resourceful life was cut short when his private plane crashed in 1963, had this to say about Lebanon's transformation into a "nation of disputants."

> With its population made up almost equally of Arab Christians and Arab Muslims, Lebanon was bound to be a house divided against itself politically, as well as on sectarian grounds, no matter how cordial a front it might display to the outside world. The schism that existed was in many ways a legacy of past years, when the Turks taught the Muslims to hate the Christians and the French taught the Christians both to fear and hate the Muslims. . . . Following the allied victory in the second World War, the Lebanese became a nation of disputents. What had been a long-term bone of popular contention, a subject of leisurely mental and oral strife, turned dramatically into an issue of political life and death. . . . The two groups became at once more closely knit among themselves and more hostile to each other (Bustani 1961: 80–81).

In retrospect, the brush with civil unrest in 1958 has been instructive precisely because it marks the threshold at which the character of political contests dramatically changed from a subject of "leisurely mental and oral

strife into an issue of life and death." Or, in the language of Theodor Hanf invoked earlier, it is then that the conflict degenerates from a struggle over "divisible goods" to a struggle over "indivisible principles." The moment, in other words, socioeconomic rivalry is transmuted into confessional or communal enmity, with all its attendant fears of marginalization, erasure, threats to identity and collective consciousness, that hostility descends into the incivility of atavistic violence.

Episodic feuds, personal slurs, grievances, and minor provocations normally dismissed as tolerable manifestations of a fractious political culture were transformed into sources of bitter hostility and polarization. Any move by either side became suspect and was always interpreted as motivated by the worse possible intentions. Parliamentary debates, electoral campaigns, political pronouncements became forums for exchanging insults and invectives. Being barred from entering parliament was, suddenly, a legitimate justification for armed insurrection. Attribution and demonization of the "other" evolved into common strategies for rationalizing belligerency. Insurgents became "outlaws," "infiltrators," "terrorists," "unanchored masses" wreaking havoc in society and undermining its sovereignty and autonomy. Loyalists became a malicious "clique," a den of "criminals," "traitors," "western stooges" and "infidels." Every atrocious misdeed from political corruption and bigotry to prostitution, drugs, and thievery was attributed to Chamoun and his maligned "gang" (Jumblat 1959: 32).

Enmity, in such a charged political milieu, can become highly combustible. It is then that politics becomes, to borrow Henry Adams's axiom, "the systematic organization of hatred" (Wills 1990: 3). When provoked, it could easily spark off hostility and heighten the predisposition to belligerency. This is, in fact, what was transpiring at the time. Grievances, demonstrations, and other forms of collective protest were being transformed into riots, clashes, and violent confrontations. Charting the networks of such enmity, i.e., who hates whom, where, and why provides at times a better understanding of the shifting character of political alliances than ideological disputes and public issues.

As an "uprising," "sedition," "insurrection," "revolt," or "civil war" — to mention a few of its many labels — it must not be judged by the structural transformations it unleashed. By standards of the day, the ensuing violence and destruction was massive. It took a toll of some 3,000 lives, had dire economic consequences, deepened communal enmity, and rendered Lebanon more vulnerable to regional and international rivalries. Yet, the insurrection did not result in any fundamental restructuring of society or its political system. Indeed, since the call for armed struggle was largely made by

a disgruntled political elite, demanding little more than the resignation of President Chamoun, the "revolt" ended by the restoration of the status quo.

If measured against the protracted cruelties of the 1970s and1980s, it pales by comparison. It seems more of a benign and sporadic excursion into violent politics. Yet, it jolted the country. It drew together, albeit on a limited scale, diverse elements that had not before been commonly engaged in collective protest. In that sense it offered political tutelage and initiated a wide spectrum of individuals and political parties into the fray of political mobilization and violent politics. Leaders of the insurrection had little in common, other than their hostility to the regime and its pro-Western policies and, to a lesser extent, a transient ideological infatuation they shared with Nasserism. They were drawn from different regions, articulated varying justifications for their participation in an armed struggle and displayed distinct political styles. It is rather odd that a coalition of tribal feudal chiefs, landlords, urban gentry, clerics, revolutionary pamphleteers, intellectual dilettantes, militant commoners, etc. should all find common cause in rebellion. They did. They also drew around them a coterie of young political upstarts and activists, mostly intellectuals, journalists, artists, and professors, sparked by the novelty and idealism of collective struggle and the prospects of launching a career in public life. In addition to the organized commands, councils, and other revolutionary committees, leaders in the various war zones established, they also relied on an informal network — an array of close relatives, friends and hangers on — of personal assistants and advisors. These often served as self-appointed think tanks; they gave interviews, issued press releases, drafted speeches, suggested strategies. Saeb Salam, for example, relied on Walid Khalidi (his brother-in-law, an Oxford don and recently appointed professor at the American University of Beirut), Clovis Maksoud, Rashid Chehab al-Din, Abd al-Karim Zein. Rashid Karami, drew upon the help of Tal'at Karim, Abd al Majd al-Rafi'i and Amin Hafez. Kamal Jumblat sought the advice of partisans like Gibran Majdalani, Nauwaf Karami and Shafik Rayyes. To Ma'rouf Saad, Muhannad Majthoub served as his political confidante and intellectual counsel.

Mass support was also a broad and loose coalition of peasants, blue-collar workers, lower-middle-class elements, progressive students, and other marginal recruits and volunteers. Armed men received nominal wages, family allowances, and a daily ration of cigarettes, beverages, and snacks in return for their services. Palestinian refugees, already in Lebanon for nearly a decade, many of whom had strong pro-Nasserist sympathies, took an active part in the fighting. At the time, Palestinians in the diaspora were not as yet

politically organized. Their involvement, nonetheless, sent a warning signal and provoked the fear of the Christian community.

To many of the participants at all three levels (that of leadership, hard-core assistants, and the mass of rank-and-file activists and fighters) the events of 1958 served as a venue for their initiation into militancy; the clamor of street fighting and communal strife. Since many of the actors were still around in 1975, their experience came in handy. Indeed, to activists like Ibrahim Qulailat, an impressionable adolescent of 18 at the time, he had hardly completed his high school education in 1958. Like other lower-middle-class Sunni Muslims from West Beirut, he was a Nasser enthusiast, maintained close ties with Fatah and radical and populist elements of the "street," and was involved in successive acts of violence. Shortly after 1958, he established *al-Murabitun* as an independent Nasserist movement, which was to play a prominent role in the civil war of 1975.

Altogether, the nature and consequences of the events of 1958 reinforce certain attributes that have become embedded in Lebanon's rather unusual legacy with civil strife. One sees relics of the earlier forms of communal and factional hostility, those aroused and sustained by deep-seated animosities, atavistic fears of local groups coexisting in close and dense sociopolitical settings. But one also sees features that prefigure much of what was to come; namely, the violence of deprived and dislocated groups, Lebanese or otherwise, inspired by nationalist and secular ideologies, transcending endemic sources of conflict and with nebulous allegiances to Lebanon or concern for its sovereignty. Obviously the involvement of groups like the PPS, Ba'th, Palestinians, Communists; the coalitions they formed and the character of their militancy was bound to be different from those of the more endogenous factions. Much of the violence in this latter instance became more proxy in character and more devastating in its cruelties. It was also then that Lebanon became, because of its political vulnerabilities, a battlefield, so-to-speak, for the wars of others.

Within a more conceptual context, the events of 1958 provide persuasive evidence to support a basic premise of this study; namely, that the sources often associated with the initiation of political violence are not necessarily those which sustain or exacerbate its intensity. Several inferences can be made in this regard, especially by way of highlighting those features which were to become more pronounced in the protracted strife of the seventies and eighties.

1. *Clearly, the resort to collective violence was initially rooted in grievances, legitimate or otherwise, which various groups perceived as sources of injustice.*

Socioeconomic disparities and imbalances in regional development, the role of the state in privileging Maronite communities, government corruption and favoritism, electoral reforms, and opposition to the state's pro-Western policy, all played a role in initiating or predisposing groups to entertain armed struggle. So did the repressive measures launched by the government to control the insurgency and its incursive elements.

Drawing again on the mundane distinction made earlier between "horizontal" and "vertical" divisions, one may better understand or at least elucidate the difference between "civil" and "uncivil" violence. As long as disputes remained predominantly horizontal in character (i.e., grievances over distributive justice, feelings of relative status and material well-being, deprivation, even political succession), the conflict is likely to remain fairly mild and contained. Deprived, neglected, underprivileged groups feel that their socioeconomic standing is being undermined. They resort, as we have seen, to various forms of collective mobilization (street protest, demonstrations, boycott, public outcries of dissent) to dramatize their dispossession or political marginalization. These, however, remain "civil" in at least three senses: civilians are the ones generally involved in initiating and mobilizing discontent; the conflict is likely to be less belligerent and, finally, as long as it remains a genuine socioeconomic rivalry it is less predisposed to turn into a proxy and surrogate venue for other sources of conflict.

2. *Primordial rivalries, like other "vertical" alignments, are usually incited and sustained by factional, personal, communal and sectarian loyalties.* Adversaries here are not as much embittered by feelings of socioeconomic deprivation, loss of status, or privilege. They are, instead, threatened by the more ominous fears of loss of identity, heritage, autonomy, and freedom. One's very existence is at stake. Reawakened communalism allays such fears, which are more likely to exacerbate the intensity of tension and sustain the communal character of violence. The initial issues underlying the conflict were nonsectarian. So were the composition and motives of the main adversaries. Both insurgents and loyalists were broad and loose coalitions of religiously mixed groups. Yet, fighting in urban and rural areas assumed at times a religious character. Indeed, leaders on both sides incited such sentiments to reawaken communal solidarities and extend the basis of their support.

3. *The internationalization of the conflict also contributed to the protraction of hostility.* As Lebanon became increasingly embroiled in the regional and international conflicts of the period, it could not be sheltered from the destabilizing inter-Arab rivalries and Soviet-American power struggles. As

this occurred, the original issues provoking the conflict receded. In short, Lebanon once again became an object and victim of cold war rivalries. Events outside Lebanon (the Suez crisis of 1956, the formation of the UAR in February of 1958 and the Iraqi Revolution in July of 1958) threatened Western interest in the region, raised the specter of growing Soviet influence, and legitimized the internationalization of Lebanese politics. Heated debates in the Arab League and the Security Council, riveting world attention and the ultimate landing of U.S. troops, did little by way of addressing or assuaging the internal sources of discord. The intervention, as was the case in similar earlier and subsequent instances, only polarized the factions and deepened sources of paranoia and hostility.

4. *As violence unfolded it acquired its own momentum and began to generate its own belligerent episodes.* Embattled groups were entrapped, as it were, in an escalating spiral of violent confrontations; a feature that became much more pronounced in 1975. Leaders themselves often helplessly admitted that once incited, violent episodes were escalating out of control and there was little they could do to quell the fury of aroused passions. This, too, supports another basic premise of this study—that the origin of violence is not necessarily located in enduring structural and attitudinal conditions but in the flux of events associated with the outbreak of hostility. Here as well one is able to account for another seeming paradox inherent in collective violence; i.e., the initial reluctance of leaders to entertain belligerency but that once it erupts, they are inclined, as Saeb Salam, Kamal Jumblat, Ma'ruf Saad, among others did, to romanticize its redemptive and regenerative attributes.

5. *The forms of violence also displayed some anomalous features.* These made it seem more of a "structural" and "negotiated" phenomenon than one primarily driven by an irresistible urge to inflict reckless injury and damage on others. There was, clearly, a discrepancy between the outward, often dramatic and stirring, rhetoric of war and the rather cautious and nondeadly form combat actually assumed on the ground. The war, in short, was much too voluble on words but short on casualties.

Indeed, the unfolding pattern of violence seemed surrealistic at times; more of an incredulous spectacle, and "opera bouffe" than a real insurrection: an army that would not fight; opposition leaders officially declared as "rebels" with warrants for their arrest, yet free enough to circulate, hold press conferences, and appear on public television; pitched battles that would suddenly stop to permit army trucks to supply rebel forces with amenities and rescue

casualties (Qubain 1961: 71; Hottinger 1961: 132). Emile Bustani, who kept contacts with both factions and bore close witness to the actual course of fighting, observed that the "uprising was both launched and contained with a certain old-fashioned courtesy more in keeping with a private duel between members of the nobility than a political revolt" (Bustani 1961: 86).

Accounts of fighting are replete with episodes displaying similar symptoms of disarming courtesy and concern for the niceties of conduct. Fighters, for example, were known to apply for curfew passes before they staged their raids. Others took out licenses for carrying arms. Fighting in Beirut usually took place in the afternoon and at night; often over weekends, as if not to disrupt too drastically the orderly regularities of daily routines. Truces were mutually arranged to relieve the pressure of combat. After a particularly fierce bout of fighting in the Chouf, a cease-fire permitted Christian villagers to be provisioned from Beirut. In return, wounded Druze were brought to Beirut for medical treatment (Hottinger 1961: 32). Deliberate efforts were made, by both sides, to avoid random and unnecessary victims. Explosives were placed at time when it was reasonably certain that premises would be vacant. Desmond Stewart, who claimed acquaintance with a bomb-thrower named Adnan, noted that he "has undoubtedly taken scrupulous care only to make noises, symbols. When he bombed Dory Chamoun's shop, he made sure there was no one in the house upstairs at the time" (Stewart 1959: 61).

The role of the army is perhaps most intriguing in this regard. It maintained its neutrality, refusing, despite its superiority, to crush the insurrection. It acted as an arbiter between the embattled factions. Often it went further to shelter one group from onslaught of the other. For example, it repelled advances of the rebels upon regions inhabited by partisans of the government. It also gave protection to the rebels by prohibiting the PPS from starting fighting in Beirut. During the Marines' landing, it acted as a buffer between American troops and the insurgents (Hottinger 1961: 134).

These and other symptoms of the domestication and routinization of violence became much more pervasive in the seventies and eighties. It is, nonetheless, instructive to encounter such manifestations in 1958, whereby some of the grotesque features of the war were already becoming a form of discourse or political language stripped of any belligerent undertones. This was also happening in a political culture where light arms are accessible and widely used on festive occasions.

6. *The conflict was also sustained and rendered more problematic by a bewildering maze of factions, shifting allegiances, and sources of external pa-*

tronage. These, as we have seen, made for some unlikely and awkward coalitions and accounted for the diverse manifestations violence assumed. These turf wars were largely factional feuds and confessional rivalries fueled by personal and local animosities. These were also aggravated by the squabbles of partisanship, ideologies, and nascent "haves" and "have nots." Hence the patriotic vigilantes of the Kata'ib were collaborating with, often pitted against, mercenaries with little, or at best, idiosyncratic attachments to Lebanon. The Ba'th, Communists, Najjadah, started the war on the side of the insurrection. By the end, the Ba'th and the Communists became mortal enemies; mostly a consequence of Syria's persecution of Communists. When Karami ran into some difficulties with the Ba'th in Tripoli, the Communists were more than eager to give him largely unwelcome support (Hottinger 1961: 137). Just as cleavages within the ranks of the loyalists created tenuous and shifting alliances, so did the personal squabbles between and among leaders of the opposition. Tension between Salam and Karami, Salam and Jumblat, Salam and the Najjadah, Tashnak and Khantshak, were always resurfacing and affecting thereby the course and direction of hostilities.

7. *Fnally, the events of 1958 reconfirmed another curious attribute of collective strife in Lebanon; namely the ethos of "no victor, no vanquished."* This, as we have seen, also characterized much of the earlier episodes of communal conflict in the nineteenth century. Somehow, violent confrontations never ended, or were never permitted to end, by the unequivocal defeat or victory of one group over the other. From one perspective, this might be taken to mean that disruptive as the events were, they did not dispel the hope for reconciliation and compromise between the warring communities. More explicitly, it could well mean that the differences and grievances which led to armed struggle had not quite reached the point where they could not be reconciled. Leaders of the major factions in the conflict were, as we saw, still able to take part in the same coalition government.

But the "no victor, no vanquished" formula also carries less auspicious implications: that the Lebanese have not as yet heeded the lessons of their troubled history with recrudescent civil strife. Had any of the earlier episodes of political violence been more explicitly resolved, by designating a winner or a loser, and resolving thereby the issues associated with each, then perhaps the country might have been spared many of the cruelties of subsequent strife.