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Development of Violence and Sectarianism in Lebanon

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DEVELOPMENT OF VIOLENCE AND SECTARIANISM IN LEBANON

19th to 21st Centuries

Abstract

The pattern and acceptance of sectarianism and the resultant ethnic violence in Lebanon can be traced back to the mid-19th century as the result of European involvement in the Levant. Through the history of Lebanon in the 19th and 20th centuries, the modern sectarianism and ethnic violence can be better understood as results of international intervention and interference.

Alicia Mallo

Development of Religious and Ethnic Violence, and Sectarianism in Lebanon (19th to 21st Centuries)

Introduction

Modern ethnic and religious violence in Lebanon is a consequence of sectarianism, which became prominent in Lebanese society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Episodes of ethnic tension and violence, that were essential in creating the beginnings for a culture of sectarianism. Sectarianism is typically seen as opposition to modern nation building, and the direct opposite of coexistence, leading to a nationalist understanding that paints sectarianism as a divisive force. This paper will explore the religious tensions in the nineteenth century that erupted into violence in 1841 and 1860, culminating in the creation of Lebanon and how this compares and connects to the violence that has been a result of sectarianism in the twentieth century. The creation of sectarianism in Lebanon is part of the colonial legacy that the British, French and Ottoman empires left behind from their time of involvement in the Levant. The international involvement in Lebanon's Civil War from 1975 to 1990 further engrained the sectarian nature to be at the point it is now in Lebanese politics and society. In order to understand the fundamental problems of Lebanon's sect divides, it is essential to analyze the effect of international influences that have persisted since the mid-nineteenth century.

Modern Lebanon Background

The modern Lebanese sectarian system is currently run by the coinciding practices of political representation and personal status adjudication. The division of official positions are based not only on personal status, but largely on sect¹. The sects in Lebanon are determined on not only ethnicity, but most importantly on religion. The current religious break down of Lebanon is: 28.7% Sunni Muslim, 28.4% Shia Muslim (small percentages of Alawites and Ismailis, 36.2% Christian (Maronite Catholics the largest Christian sect), 5.2% Druze, small percentages of Jews, Baha'is, Buddhists and Hindus)².

Lebanon is home to the prominent terrorist group, Hezbollah, among other religious extremist groups. Hezbollah is often referenced in world news because of their militant actions, which has gained them recognition from numerous countries as a terrorist organization. One of the reasons Hezbollah is quite notable, is that while it is a militant group, it also participates in government and political affairs. It is also backed by the Iranian regime and has been supported since it declared support for the new Iranian Islamic Republic after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Lebanon is also divided into different sides of being pro-Syrian or anti-Syrian in response to the Syrian Civil War. Hezbollah falls into the category of those that are Pro-Syrian and have stood along-side, with Iran, to support the Syrian regime. In doing so, they have also fought against different Sunni groups. Whereas, primarily Sunni sects have taken the anti-Syrian position and the Christian sects divided relatively evenly between pro and anti-Syrian.

1800s

Ever since the Treaty of Chanak of 1806 between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain, the Eastern Question had hovered ever more prominently on Europe's Mediterranean horizons... For standing near the center of all European politics in the East was the question of minorities, whose "interests" the Powers, each in its own way, claimed to protect and represent.³

- 1- "Defining and Deconstructing Sectarianism: An Interview with Ziad Abu-Rish." The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. July 6, 2017. Accessed April 25, 2019.
- 2- "The World Factbook: Lebanon." Central Intelligence Agency. February 01, 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019.
- 3- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. (Brantford, Ont.: W. Ross MacDonald School, Resource Services Library, 2006), 190.

In the 1800's, the area that now comprises Lebanon belonged to the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was not as powerful as it historically had been, which prompted Ibrahim Pasha, of Egypt, to launch a successful invasion into the area of Mount Lebanon and Syria in 1831. Ibrahim's rule lasted until 1840, when the Druze and Maronite populations of Mount Lebanon revolted against the Egyptian rule. Ibrahim's rule also directly led to the passing of the Tanzimat by the Ottoman Empire. The Tanzimat served to modernize the Ottoman army, administration and society⁴. The Tanzimat reforms were an attempt to appease European powers that they were transforming their empire along the European model. This resulted in significant changes in policy that changed the longstanding social structures, ending the dhimmi status given to non-Muslim citizens⁵. The Ottoman Empire also allowed for an intrusion of European powers into their empire at this time. As a result, in 1840 an Ottoman-British-Austrian joint army finally expelled the Egyptians from Mount Lebanon and Syria⁶.

The Christian states of Europe have, by common consent, assumed the right of superintending and watching over the welfare of their co-religionists in the Turkish empire, - a right fully warranted by the imprescriptible sanction and requirements of religious duty and political conservatism.⁷

Between 1840 and 1860 tension erupted between two of the prominent religious groups in Lebanon, which at the time was not an independent nation-state but rather part of greater Syria under Ottoman rule. Of all of the Arab-speaking communities in this area, the Maronite Catholics had the largest population. The Maronites community held important prominence in international affairs due to their affiliation with Roman Catholic Church. The other prominent ethnic group residing in the area of Lebanon, the Druze, originated from the Islamic branch of Shia Islam. Under the Ottoman Empire, these communities lived in Mount Lebanon with two self-governing districts that were overseen by an Ottoman governor.

Prior to the Tanzimat, the Shihab noble family ruled over Mount Lebanon with their power reinforced by the Egyptians. With the restoration of Ottoman power and the Tanzimat, the Shihab dynasty ended and ushered in a new time of violence. In 1841, sectarian violence broke out between Druze notables that were returning from Egyptian exile, and Maronite villagers of Dayr al-Qamar⁸. "The conflict was, at heart, one of opposing interpretations of the restoration and contradictory invocations of rights and responsibilities in the post- Tanzimat era,"⁹. Some historians argue that sectarianism erupted in religious reaction to the modernization of Egyptian policies and then the subsequent Tanzimat. Makdisi argues that these approaches to sectarianism are wrong in their treatment of it as a cause and reaction, as they presume sectarianism as a traditional reaction. Rather, the adoption of sectarianism was a new policy that was a product created from the political and cultural turmoil during the period of 1839-1840. It was the culmination of all of the political and cultural events that occurred shaped an environment where there would be possibilities of new political rule through religious differentiation¹⁰.

The Tanzimat played an important role in the escalating tensions between ethnic groups in Lebanon as it made Christians equal to Muslims under law. The Maronite population quickly took advantage of this new situation, causing resentment to grow from the Muslim populations, specifically the

4- Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), see esp. chap. 4, "The Faces of Reform."

5- "Tanzimat Reforms." Religious Literacy Project, Accessed April 25, 2019.

6- Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), see esp. chap. 4, "The Faces of Reform."

7- Churchill, Charles Henry. *The Druzes and the Maronites under the Turkish Rule from 1840 to 1860*. (La Vergne, TN: General Books, 2010), 5.

8- Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), see esp. chap. 4, "The Faces of Reform."

9- Ibid.

10- Ibid.

Druze. One of the most important policy changes from the Ottoman Empire was the permittance for Europeans to purchase land, which they did from impoverished Muslims.

The Maronites sought support from France, and thus France took on the view that they were the protectors of the Maronite of Lebanon. While, Britain took a similar position with the Druze. Other European powers also involved themselves into the Lebanese society. For example, Russia took interest and involvement with the Lebanese Greek Orthodox population¹¹. Lebanon was seen by all of the powers as important to influence. The area of Lebanon is on the Mediterranean Sea and a gateway into more of the Middle East, which is rich of natural resources and new territory for the imperial powers to try to expand into and gain control.

The heightened tension between the Maronites and the Druze was a byproduct of the modernization of the Ottoman Empire and the growing European influence in the Levant. The European political thinkers in this period of time regarded it as their duty to colonize barbaric societies as the easiest way to bring about civilization. "Oriental despotism" was accepted as all-encompassing and at the core of Asian society¹². With the Great European powers viewing the Ottoman Empire as inferior there was the justification of intervention into the region. In analyzing France's approach to intervention from 1789 to 1860, it is clear that the primary motivation in their intervention was to protect their own interests¹³. The French empire was in their imperial stages, seeking expansion into territory across the globe. The French were also motivated to promote and protect the Catholic Church as the church held a prominent role in French politics.

In 1860 in Lebanon and Syria, what is known as the massacres of '60 or *madhabih al-siitin*, began in April and lasted until July. These massacres were premeditated from the Maronite side, as the Maronite population held the goal of a Maronite protectorate under France. The violence started with a Maronite attack on a Druze village and led to swift retaliation on part of the Druze. Within a few weeks, the Druze burned more than 60 villages while sacking churches and monasteries. The number of Christians massacred range between 10,000 and 15,000, however the number of Druze massacred is unknown¹⁴. These violent acts continued, culminating on the 9th to 11th of July with a massacre in Damascus with 5,000 to 10,000 Christians killed. The resentment of Muslims toward international influence and the Christian economic prosperity also motivated the sacking of the Russian, Austrian, French, and US consulates in Damascus¹⁵.

There is debate as to the responsibility of the Ottoman Empire, the Maronite population and Druze in these massacres. The western perspective was to place blame on either the Ottoman Empire as collaborating with the Druze, or the more prominent American sentiment being that the Druze callously murdered thousands of Maronite Christians with the Ottoman Empire failing to provide the victims with any protection. There are some who believed that the British armed the Druze in an attempt to counter French power. Most specialists associate some level of blame on the Ottoman Empire, some going as far as stating that the Ottomans conspired with the Druze to punish the Christians. However, this theory of placing blame solely on the Druze and Ottomans instead of the Maronites is not accurate. "Sa'id Janblat, the senior Druze leader, had urged both communities to show restraint, but to no avail. The decision to initiate an all-out ethnic war was taken by the Maronite leadership in Beirut with the approval of Bishop 'Awn"¹⁶.

11- Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), see esp. chap. 4, "The Faces of Reform."

12- Ibid.

13- Heraclides, Alexis, and Ada Dialla. *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015.

14- Ibid.

15- Ibid.

16- Ibid.

These massacres also set a gateway for further European involvement in Lebanon and Syria. The French Ambassador, Lavalette, recommended a military action against the Druze and local Ottoman authorities in the name of humanity. The French foreign minister, Thouvenel, reached out to the other foreign powers for unanimous support in a potential military action. The goal was not at this time to destroy the Ottoman empire, but rather have it maintaining internal conditions that align with European views on rights of humanity. While the Russian Foreign Minister, Alexander Gorchakov, expressed support for a Franco-Russian militant action, the British were reluctant to approve. At this time, the Sultan condemned the massacres and sent an extra 15,000 soldiers with a senior official, Fuad Pasha, to mitigate the problem with an amount of force needed. However, the European public opinion was already horrified, and the French continued to respond to the massacres, calling a meeting of the European countries [involved] and the Ottoman Empire¹⁷.

The European powers continued to move forward with talks about the measure of international involvement needed in reaction to the massacre.

Two Paris protocols were adopted (3 August 1860). The first justified 'active cooperation' by referring to the Paris Peace Treaty of 1856 (article IX), which guaranteed the rights of Ottoman Christians. The second provided for 12,000 soldiers to be sent, 6,000 of them French, together with sufficient naval forces from various European countries and commissioners from the great powers.¹⁸

The goal of the European troops was not to be the peacemakers or start a military conflict with the Ottomans. By the time the troops arrived on 17 July 1860, Pasha had hung 60 Ottoman officials that were deemed complicit and had reestablished peace in the region. Fuad Pasha appeased the European powers with his brutal punishment against the Druze and Damascenes¹⁹. His treatment of the Druze was deemed internationally as modern and appropriate, but in reality, this only encouraged further basis for sectarianism. The strong, violent reaction against the Druze left a massive impact on the Muslims of Lebanon as it was the first time the Christians were treated as if they were valued higher than the Muslims. While the Ottoman Empire historically had laws that valued Muslim citizens over non-Muslims, but the reality was a patriarchal governance based on nobility which then had a more prominent role of socio-economic class than religious sect. The treatment of Druze did not have socio-economic considerations, instead being purely religious based.

Discussions began on 5 October 1860 about setting up a new arrangement for Lebanon. The French wanted a Maronite Lebanon with a native Christian ruler,²⁰ with the Austrian and Prussian commissioners supporting France's desires. The Ottoman Empire managed to end this possibility with the support of the British and Russian commissioners. After eight months of negotiating, the six powers reached an agreement on a draft statute for Lebanon (May 1861). This draft was altered and signed as the Beyoglu Protocol on 9 June 1861. This gave Lebanon a new system of government and officially created a separate administrative unit from Syria. Under this new system, the six Lebanese communities: Maronites, Druze, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Sunni, and Shia participated in a twelve-person council based on population percentages. This system would remain in place until World War I¹².

This new system as created under the *Reglement* indicated that the new order in Mount Lebanon would be sectarian. The Ottomans were trying to act as if they were mediators between the modern new European order and the tribal ways. In doing so, they ignored tribal communities' inputs into the situation. The quick change of the treatment of Mount Lebanon by all parties instilled a long-lasting resentment towards each other, confirming into society the role of sectarianism. It was well-known that

17- Heraclides, Alexis, and Ada Dialla. *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015.

18- Ibid.

19- Ussama Makdissi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), see esp. chap. 4, "The Faces of Reform."

20- Heraclides, Alexis, and Ada Dialla. *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015.

21- Ibid.

the Christians, and the Maronite population in particular, would be treated specially as for the protected status they gained from outside Christian nation-states.

Current mass violence and genocide studies suggest some important theory associated with ethnic and religious violence is relevant to the 1860 case of Lebanon. Michael Mann argues that genocide occurs as a the 'dark side of democracy' and occurs as such due to the nation-state trying to determine who belongs in the nation-state²². The governance of Lebanon was in a state of change and susceptible to more change in starting a process of building a separate nation-state. In the creation of any nation-state there has to be decisions made on who is considered a citizen, and the unequal treatment of Maronites and Druze set a precedent for Lebanon that the Maronites are the preferred citizens. As established earlier, the Maronites held the final decision in the start of the massacres and begun such massacres with the intention of being able to have a Maronite state. It is not clear that the Druze shared similar sentiments towards the Maronites despite the massacre of a high number of Christians in both Lebanon and Syria.

Early 1900s

In the emergence of World War I in 1914, the Ottoman Empire decided to position itself with the Central Powers which included Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria against the Allied Powers. With the fall of the Central Powers came the fall of the Ottoman Empire. As victors of war, the Allied Powers decided to divide up the territory of the Middle East between themselves. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 established that the Arab world of the Ottoman empire would be divided under British and French colonialism. In order to gain its mandate over Syria, the French relied on the support of the Maronite Church in Lebanon. However, not all of Lebanon agreed with the Maronite Church and the Administrative Council even went as far to try to declare independence for Lebanon. Independence met significant pressure from the French to instead seek a nation-state that was under French mandate and protection. The compromise promised to delegates at this time was Lebanese independence and territorial integrity under French mandate, despite unclear definition on the territorial boundaries²³.

France's involvement in the Middle East at this point in history was motivated by self-interest. France wanted involvement in Lebanon in order to also gain legitimacy for controlling Syria. French interest in the greater Syria and Lebanon area was not new, as previously discussed. France's motivations were made clear when it dropped its claims to mandate specific areas in a deal with Great Britain. Originally, France tried to also maintain authority over Palestine and the Mosul region as part of Syria. This pretense was dropped in return for shares in the Anglo-Persian oil company that had recently discovered new significant reserves of oil in Iran²⁴. This is extremely important in understanding modern ethnic divisions and problems in the Middle East, and thus of understanding some of the ethnic violence. Lebanon was being carved out of this region as a "safe haven" for Arab-Christians, while the region was a prominent location for Sunni Islam communities to reside. Palestine and the Mosul region were also predominantly Sunni Muslim, however with the French agreement they were given to the British mandate.

Throughout the process of the dividing of mandates between the French and British in the Middle East, the Arab world was pushing for their own independence after World War I. In March of 1920 the Arab Council met in Damascus (Syria) and declared Syria an independent Arab nation. Lebanon was not excluded from this movement, with the motion especially residing in the Southern region.

Southern Lebanon had rallied to the Arab cause beginning in late 1918 and received Faysal's personal emissary, the Christian Ilias Dhyb al-Khoury. Kamil al-As`ad, Shi`ite za`im of the south, was declared governor general of Jabal `Amil, and Riad al-Sulh, son of Rida al-Sulh, the Sunni patron of south Lebanon, was named governor of Sayda.²⁵

22- Mann, Michael. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. New York: University of Cambridge, 2005.

23- Traboulsi, Fawwaz. *A History of Modern Lebanon*. London: Pluto Press, 2012.

24- Ibid.

25- Ibid.

At the end of April, around 600 of these Arabs met and revolted, declaring Jabal ‘Amil and independent district that was instead connected the Arab Syrian regime. The new Syrian President Emil Faysal regarded the issue of Lebanon by promising to consider its nationalist view of borders prior to World War I with the condition that it remain free of foreign influences. President Faysal was also in talks with the Lebanese Administrative Council throughout this time. The Administrative Council along with the head of the Maronite Church, Patriarch Huwayik, took the position against an independent Arab Congress. The Arab government then offered them [Lebanon] the right to expand its borders, the Administrative Council agreed without the support of Patriarch Huwayik and the Maronite Church²⁶.

Before this, American delegates, Charles Crane and Henry King arrived in Syria and conducted interviews all around the Greater region to determine native opinion on where the region should go politically. Of all the respondents, 80% voted for a united Syria and 74% supported independence. The majority of respondents, 60%, opted for an American mandate while the least number of respondents, 14%, supported a French mandate. Those that did support a French mandate were primarily Lebanese Maronites.²⁷ It is also important to note the statistic that the majority of the population opposed the separation of Palestine as agreed upon by the French and British. These statistics are important in understanding the future impact of colonial legacy and its impact on violence in the Greater Syria region. It is clear from these numbers that the European influence that was to be exerted on the region was generally unwanted. However, the King-Crane results were largely ignored by the international world. Just days after some of Lebanon revolted with Syria, France was awarded the mandate for the Greater Syria region that included Lebanon.

In June of 1920, the administrative council reiterated its points of claiming Lebanon’s independence despite the declared French mandate. Eight [out of thirteen] of the Administrative Council (AC) members then were sent to travel to Damascus to align with the Syrian regime under President Faysal in exchange for [Faysal’s] recognition of Lebanon’s independence. This course of action did not proceed as planned, as French soldiers intercepted the members on the Beirut-Damascus road and arrested all the AC members. Two days later (12 July 1920) the French disbanded the Administrative council and convicted the arrested eight for corruption, claiming that they accepted money and bribes from Faysal. This was all occurring at the same time that the French were threatening Faysal to accept the French mandate. The French were successful in forcing global acceptance of the mandate,

Whereas the Principal Allied Powers have agreed that the territory of Syria and the Lebanon, which formally belonged to the Turkish Empire shall, within such boundaries as may be fixed by the said powers, be entrusted to a Mandatory charged with the duty of rendering administrative advice and assistance to the population...should be conferred on the Government of the French Republic.²⁸

By the end of the month [July 1920] the French crushed the Arab revolt while using Lebanon as a bridgeway into Syria. The Greater Syria region was then split into four autonomous regions: “Greater Lebanon, Aleppo, Damascus and the Alawi state. A fifth state, Jabal al-Duruz, was added in 1921”²⁹. 1 September 1920, Greater Lebanon was declared officially created under the French mandate. The imposition of the French mandate was seen as a victory of the Maronite Church and Patriarch Huwayik, who had stood against the concept of Arab independence. This victory was over the secular Arab independent state that the Administrative Council had previously decided upon.

Since the majority of Lebanon’s Muslim Arabs had voted for independence rather than the French mandate, the consequence was the start of anti-French violence. In Southern Lebanon, the French relied on the Christians to conquest and then maintain the French control. In one month, 30 Christian villages were destroyed in Southern Lebanese retaliation. While French soldiers eventually were able to take

26- Traboulsi, Fawwaz. *A History of Modern Lebanon*. London: Pluto Press, 2012.

27- Ibid.

28- "French Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon." *The American Journal of International Law* 17, no. 3 (1923): 177-82.

29- Traboulsi, Fawwaz. *A History of Modern Lebanon*. London: Pluto Press, 2012.

enough control to stop some of the lethal raids, the death toll did not stop. Assassination attempts on officials and French continued despite strong punishments in place³⁰.

In the creation of Greater Lebanon, France also annexed numerous areas around and within the original territory of Lebanon. Many of the religious sects outside the Maronites, and even some Maronites expressed economic concerns over this annexation and even the separation from Syria itself. There was advocacy for reunification with Syria for the economic concerns and to have political unity. However, with the French mandate and Patriarch Huwayik in control, this advocacy was dismissed³¹.

The French mandate also raised questions for fifteen years on the borders of Greater Lebanon. The goal of the Maronite Church and even the greater Christian population was to create a Christian nation-state. However, there were questions of how big Lebanon could be to remain a Christian nation while also having enough economic resources to survive. There were then questions being raised by the French of how to control the Sunni population of Syria. The borders of Lebanon could be created as to break up the Sunni population to have less prominence and therefore less threat of potentially taking power. The French argued 'It will be easy to maintain a balance among three or four [Syrian] states that will be large enough to achieve self-sufficiency and, if need be, pit one against the other'³².

Independence

On November 8, 1943, and after electing president Bechara El Khoury and appointing prime Minister Riad al-Solh, the Chamber of Deputies amended the Lebanese Constitution, which abolished the articles referring to the Mandate and modified the specified powers of the high commissioner, thus unilaterally ending the Mandate.³³

The French were not in support of the ending of the mandate. In immediate response to President Khoury amending the Constitution, the French arrested all the Lebanese leaders. The French Delegate General, M. Jean Helleu, declared that there would be a new government created for Lebanon with new elections⁴. The population of Lebanon quickly developed an unified negative view on the French. Tensions were extremely high and there became a huge threat of revolt even with foreign presence in both Lebanon and Syria. This was one of the times in Lebanese history that the religious sects were all in agreement with each other. The international community supported Lebanon as well, with the United States and Great Britain among the countries to send protests to the French government. With the intense diplomatic pressure, the French conceded to their initial pledge of independence of Lebanon and released the leaders within a few weeks. "In 1945, Lebanon became a member of the Arab League (March 22) and a member in the United Nations (UN San Francisco Conference of 1945). On December 31, 1946, French troops withdrew completely from Lebanon, with the signing of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty"³⁴. However, after Lebanon gained its independence, its problems of sectarianism and religious tensions were not solved. They entered into a process of decolonization that eventually led to Civil War.

1958 Lebanese Crisis

In 1958, US Marines landed on the beaches just south of Beirut in response to the request of Maronite President, Camille Chamoun³⁵. Chamoun's government had a Muslim rebellion to deal with, motivated by other countries recent Pro-Arab successes, particularly Egypt with its popular Arab nationalist leader Gamel Nasser. Nasser allied Egypt with the Soviet Union and against Israel, both decisions going against US interests. The 1958 invasion of Lebanon by the US was set up from 1948 with the creation of Israel.

30- "Lebanon Profile - Timeline." BBC News. April 25, 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019.

31- Ibid.

32- Traboulsi, Fawwaz. *A History of Modern Lebanon*. London: Pluto Press, 2012.

33- Staff, Examiner. "HISTORY: How Lebanon Gained Its Independence." Lebanese Examiner. November 21, 2014. Accessed April 25, 2019.

34- Ibid.

35- Farajalla, Nadim. "Operation Blue Bat: The 1958 U.S. Invasion of Lebanon." Photorientalist. Accessed April 25, 2019.

Tensions in the Middle East between Israel and the Arab countries grew exponentially following the creation of the Jewish state in 1948. In 1950, Israel enacted a law that declared any Jew in good standing could emigrate to Israel and become a citizen. As a result, the population of Israel more than doubled by 1951. The 1948 conflict had displaced over 800,000 Palestinians, and this law gave new Jewish citizens residential preference over existing Palestinians, despite some having Israeli citizenship. Displaced Palestinians wished to return home, some sought to retaliate against the Israelis. This greatly impacted Lebanon as many of the refugees were displaced to there [Lebanon]³⁶.

In May 1956, Egypt recognized communist China and subsequently lost important funding from the US for the creation of the Aswan Dam. Egypt continued to operate against American influence and nationalized the Suez Canal Company in July 1956. The nationalization of the Suez Canal gave Egyptians the ability to dictate significant trade in the region, potentially harming Israel's economy. The nationalization of the Suez Canal Company prompted a tripartite decision to go to war from the Israelis, British and French. On October 29, 1956, Israel troops moved into the Sinai Peninsula from their border and remained there until March of the following year. The French and British occupied Egypt in the Sinai for a much shorter length of time from November 5th to December 23rd of 1956. Israel would only withdraw once UN forces replaced Israelis on the Egypt-Israel border and the US pledged to Israel that it would defend the Suez Canal's international water rights³⁷.

After the events of the Suez, there was another push for Arab countries to align against Israel and in 1958, the United Arab Republic (UAR) was formed between Syria and Egypt, backed by the USSR. President Chamoun refused to end close relations with Britain and France following the Suez War despite the support of Israel. Chamoun also supported the Baghdad Pact, which was pro-western, instead of the United Arab Republic³⁸. While the Christian sects continued to support Chamoun, the Muslim sects were angered by his decisions, viewing them as an insult to Lebanese Arab identity.

US involvement in 1958 is viewed as drastically more successful than their involvement in the Civil War. The US promised Chamoun's opposition that troops were not there to maintain Chamoun's control but instead allowed for new elections to take place. While a lot of extreme violence was mitigated during this crisis, it did not last long.

Civil War

In 1975, civil war broke out in Lebanon and lasted fifteen years, with at least 90,000 casualties recorded. "Nearly 100,000 were badly injured, and close to a million people, or two-thirds of the Lebanese population, experienced displacement' (Labaki and Rjeily 1994: 20)"³⁹. The damage to Lebanese infrastructure was drastic as well its reputation of being a successful multi-ethnic nation-state in the Middle East. Even after the end of the Civil War, violence has occurred in direct response to issues brought up in the war.

The Ta'if Accord that ended the war in 1989 failed to resolve or even address the core conflicts of the war, including the sectarian division of power in Lebanon, the Palestinian refugee issue, the presence of Syrian forces on Lebanese soil and Syrian tutelage, and Hizbollah's status as the only armed militia.⁴⁰

The events that marked the beginning of the Civil War occurred in April were sectarian in nature. Phalangist (Christian) gunman attacked a bus that carried mostly Palestinian passengers in Beirut. The Phalangists claimed that the attack was in response to a previous guerrilla attack in the same district⁴¹. The Civil War can be split into different stages, the first lasting about two years, 1975-1977. This period featured the Black Saturday massacre of 6 December and was the first large attack of the Civil War. On Black Saturday, members of the armed Christian party, the Phalangists, descended upon Beirut and massacred unarmed civilians. "Black Saturday served as a blood-smeared point of reference to the

36- Smith, Charles D. *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict 9th Edition*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007.

37- Ibid.

38- Farajalla, Nadim. "Operation Blue Bat: The 1958 U.S. Invasion of Lebanon." Photorientalist. Accessed April 25, 2019.

39- "The Historiography and the Memory of the Lebanese Civil War." The Historiography and the Memory of the Lebanese Civil War | Sciences Po Violence De Masse Et Résistance - Réseau De Recherche. October 25, 2011. Accessed April 25, 2019.

40- Ibid.

41- "Lebanon Profile - Timeline." BBC News. April 25, 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019.

division of the city, physically and in the Lebanese national consciousness”⁴². The city of Beirut was divided into a Christian East and a Muslim West. The Black Saturday massacre was instrumental in setting the pretense of sectarian based violence for the rest of the Civil War.

The first phase of the war featured the Lebanese Front, which was comprised of right-winged armed Christian factions and the Lebanese National Movement, a Pan-Arab left-winged coalition that had support of the Palestinians [Muslim], the Druze and the Lebanese Communist Party. The Black Saturday massacre marked a change in the nature of the Civil War and “the main events of retaliation following the massacre were the Battle of the Hotels, the Karantina and Damour massacres, and finally the Tal al-Zatar massacre later in June 1976 which eradicated the Palestinian camp completely”⁴³. The aftermath of the Tal al-Zatar massacre prompted the Palestinian Liberation Organization and its allies (the Lebanese National Movement) to go on the offensive⁴⁴. The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) were successful in their military offensive, taking control of the town Damour and conducting their own massacre. The PLO involvement was a very significant factor in outside countries deciding to then become involved in the Lebanese conflict.

The Syrian government exerted intense diplomatic pressure to halt the PLO and LNM offensive. However, this pressure on resulted in a temporary pause on the violence. Throughout this the Lebanese Army had broken down, with Christian units being pressured by the Lebanese Front (LF) to intervene and the Muslim units receiving similar influence from the LNM. In June 1976, Syria moved into Lebanon to attempt to restore peace and reduce the influence of the PLO. Other Arab states and the international community legitimized and supported the position of Syrian troops in Lebanon, creating the Arab Deterrent Forces (ADF). PLO forces were forced out of Lebanese cities and sent to return south. Violence continued against the PLO and Syrian forces throughout Beirut in early 1977. However, as the PLO returned south it was discovered that Israel had created a militia whose objective was to spread their way into the mostly Shi’a region above their northern border. Joint concern over Israel led to reconciliation between the Syrian forces, PLO, and LNM, and created the next stage of the Lebanese Civil War⁴⁵.

The shift to the next period of the Lebanese Civil War focused on control of Southern Lebanon. The PLO had significant presence in southern Lebanon despite mixed Lebanese opinions on their operations. The presence of the PLO created a target on Lebanon from Israel, causing harm to Southern Lebanese citizens even if they had no connection to the PLO. In 1978, Israel launched an invasion into Southern Lebanon in response to a Palestinian attack. While Israel decided to withdraw from most of Lebanon after this invasion, it gave control to a proxy Christian militia, the Southern Lebanon Army (SLA) rather the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon⁴⁶.

Israel did not respect Lebanese sovereignty for long and launched a second larger invasion, in 1982. This was also in retaliation to an attempted assassination of the Israeli Ambassador to Great Britain by a rival group to the PLO. The presence of Israel and their support of the Christian militias in Lebanon only damaged the dynamics between the different religious sects. It helped lead to greater Muslim hatred and anger towards Christians, who had historically been treated more favorably by the international world as discussed previously. By this point in Lebanese history, the demography’s had shifted so that the Christians no longer were the majority population⁴⁷. However, as the purpose in the creation of Lebanon was to have a Christian state, the government and military still reflected this.

42- "The Black Saturday Massacre of 1975: The Discomfort of Assembling the Lebanese Civil War Narrative." Taylor & Francis. October 11, 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019.

43- Ibid.

44- Khalidi, Rashid Ismail. *Under Siege: P.L.O. Decisionmaking during the 1982 War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

45- Ibid.

46- "Lebanon Profile - Timeline." BBC News. April 25, 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019.

47- Soffer, Arnon. "Lebanon: Where Demography Is the Core of Politics and Life." *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 2 (1986): 197-205.

In September 1982, the President-elect Bachir Gemayel, a pro-Israeli, was assassinated in the headquarters of the Phalangist party [Gemayel's party]⁴⁸. The responsible assassin belonged to the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party (SSNP) and was just sentenced to death in 2017. "After his assassination, Israel entered the capital Beirut and allowed Gemayel's militia, the Lebanese Forces, to access the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps, where their fighters killed hundreds of civilian refugees"⁴⁹. The violence continued to escalate following the assassination, leading to the involvement of international peace forces. US diplomat Philip Habib, who was of Lebanese descent, is credited with the diplomatic negotiation of the cease-fire and subsequent expulsion of the PLO following the 1982 invasion by Israel.

The United States, Italy and France all sent forces to Beirut with the claim of being peace keeping forces, with the majority of forces being American. The US initially remained rather neutral in stance to the different internal actors of Lebanon. The previously shattered Lebanese Army had shifted to act as another Christian militia group fighting against the opposition groups, and the US chose to give the army military equipment. The US then furthered their stance during a conflict in Suq al-Gharb between the Lebanese Army and opposition forces in September 1983. When it appeared that the opposition forces were winning, the US ordered gunfire support from the *USS New Jersey* for the Lebanese army⁵⁰. US warships continued to provide occasional shelling against opposition forces after the Suq al-Gharb conflict. The Suq al-Gharb conflict is consequential in that a major victory of the Lebanese Army could have altered the result of the war to favor opposition forces and potentially end the war.

The US involvement parallels the outcomes of previous French involvement during the period of the Lebanon French mandate. At both points in history, the majority of the Lebanese population supported independence with a pro-Arab narrative. It is very probable that the independence advocates would have succeeded had there not been the international intervention. It is quite apparent that international intervention in Lebanon had favored the Christian populations and created a new sense of inequality between the religious sects, which has thus led to a new type of sectarianism.

In order to understand the international involvement, it is crucial to comprehend the broader context of events occurring in the Middle East. The 1979 overthrow of the Shah of Iran led to a new regime which was built on the platform of anti-western, in particular anti-US. Iran then took hostage the US citizens that worked in the Iranian embassy and held them for 444 days. This was seen as a complete embarrassment for the US and deeply impacted domestic policy and decisions. In 1980, Ronald Reagan was newly elected as the US President and as he came into office Iran finally released the hostages. The American public and government took an extremely negative, hostile position against this new Iranian government. Some of the LNM militias were being backed by the Iranians due to their Shi's religious identification. With the Iranian hostage crisis still fresh, the US did not feel as though they could allow militant groups backed by Iran succeed in gaining power in another nation-state. Whereas, some of the Christian militias in Lebanon were instead anti-Iranian, going as far to kidnapping a senior Revolutionary officer⁵¹.

It is also crucial to understand some of Israel's motivations in their involvement in Lebanon. After its formation in 1948, Israel experienced numerous conflicts with its neighboring Arab states, as well as internally with Palestinians whose land they were taking. The Arab consensus, both from Sunni and Shi'a populations, was and still is strongly opposed to Israel. Israel had the international backing for its creation and then has enjoyed strong support from the US all throughout its existence. Modern Israel does not hold the same territorial boundaries as before, as it has taken land from Palestinians and Syrians.

48- Campbell, Colin. "GEMAYEL OF LEBANON IS KILLED IN BOMB BLAST AT PARTY OFFICES." The New York Times. September 15, 1982. Accessed April 25, 2019.

49- "Lebanese Court Issues Death Sentence over 1982 Gemayel Assassination." Reuters. October 20, 2017. Accessed April 25, 2019. "The Historiography and the Memory of the Lebanese Civil War." The Historiography and the Memory of the Lebanese Civil War | Sciences Po Violence De Masse Et Résistance - Réseau De Recherche. October 25, 2011. Accessed April 25, 2019.

50- Rosen, Nir. "Lesson Unlearned." Foreign Policy. October 30, 2009. Accessed April 25, 2019.

51- Ibid.

Israel's goal was to expand strategically and to become the leading power in the region. A Christian ally that bordered them [Israel] was much more appealing than another potentially hostile Islamic adversary.

Despite Israeli, US, and other international involvement, the LNM and opposition forces still fought back. The actions of the US in Suq al-Gharb did not go unretaliated by the opposition forces. Many US officials, who had opposed the shelling and gunfire, had predicted that the US would lose lives in the aftermath of this decision. Prior to this (April 1983), the US embassy in Beirut had already suffered from a suicide attack that caused 63 casualties⁵². The retaliation that occurred in October 1983 was much more severe. The attack was on the headquarters of the peacekeepers and killed 241 US and 58 French troops¹¹. This strongly influenced the US to withdraw in 1984 and leave the mess they helped to create in Lebanon. In 1985, most of Israel troops had also withdrawn, with the exception of the Southern Lebanese Army (Christian militia) that still occupied the security buffer zone in the south.

Even with international troop withdrawal, the Lebanese Civil War was still not concluded. 1988 saw the creation of two governments. The first was a military government under Maronite Michel Aoun in East Beirut. The second government was a rival mainly Muslim administration under prime Minister Selim el-Hoss in West Beirut⁵³. The Parliament then met in Saudi Arabia and endorsed a Charter of National Reconciliation to give most of the presidential authority to the cabinet. Following this, in 1990, the Syrian air force attacked the military government and expelled President Aoun, marking the formal end of the Civil War⁵⁴. However, when the National Assembly ordered the militias to disband after this, there was an exception made for Hezbollah, who was not included in the order. "Hezbollah is powerful because it is a successful model of resistance to Israeli and American hegemony and because it effectively serves its constituency, the largest group in Lebanon, nearly all of whom support it"⁵⁵. The South Lebanon Army refused this order and remained intact. The Civil War did establish a new sense of Lebanese identity as all of the militant groups claimed to be representative of the Lebanese population whereas just decades prior, they had been viewed as a French creation.

Post-Civil War

The allowance for Hezbollah to remain intact and operational was not a minor matter internationally. The Shiite militia group operates with strong influence and support from Iran and was classified by the US as a terrorist organization. By allowing Hezbollah to continue, it prolonged conflict against Israel and its ally, the SLA. In 1996, Israel launched a campaign bombing Hezbollah bases but accidentally hit a UN base at Qana as well. An international group was organized to try to establish a truce. Israel was given a deadline of July 2000, however due to Hezbollah victory and advancement over the South Lebanon Army the Israelis decided to withdraw early. However, this would not end the attacks between Hezbollah and Israel.

Syria still remained present in Lebanon until 2005. Pro-Syrian militants assassinated the former Prime Minister, sparking enough anti-Syrian sentiment to force troop removal. This sequence of events, however, created a new cycle of assassinating anti-Syrian figures in politics⁵⁶. Diplomatic relations were not reopened with Syria until 2008. The clashes and disputes between different sects in Lebanon and Syria have not ended to this date. For example, the Shia sects of Lebanon fight against the Sunni sects of Syria. The Syrian conflict that began in 2011 trickled into Lebanon, causing more sectarian violence⁵⁷. Lebanon is still divided by different sects into Pro-Syrian and Anti-Syrian in response to the Syrian Civil

52- "Lebanon Profile - Timeline." BBC News. April 25, 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019.

53- Ibid.

54- Ibid.

55- Rosen, Nir. "Lesson Unlearned." Foreign Policy. October 30, 2009. Accessed April 25, 2019.

56- "Lebanon Profile - Timeline." BBC News. April 25, 2018. Accessed April 25, 2019.

57- Young, William, David Stebbins, Bryan A. Frederick, and Omar Al-Shahery. "Spillover of the Syrian Conflict into Lebanon." In *Spillover from the Conflict in Syria: An Assessment of the Factors That Aid and Impede the Spread of Violence*, 25-34. RAND Corporation, 2014.

War. There is fear from Lebanese Sunni sects that by allowing the current regime of Syria to stay in power, there would be the result of another future invasion.

In 2006, Israel launched itself into another war in Lebanon, this time with the goal to defeat Hezbollah. Hezbollah had captured two Israeli soldiers on the border which prompted Israeli ground and air military responses. Hezbollah strongly resisted, but the result was widespread destruction and civilian death. The war only lasted 34 days but proved to have a significant bloody toll which led to an inconclusive war result⁵⁸.

Conclusion

Currently Lebanon experiences more sectarian violence than it did just a few decades ago. The rift between Sunni and Shiite Muslims in Lebanon had been largely healed in their seeking of an Arab state all throughout its history. Following the Civil War, this is no longer the case. The international involvement in Lebanon during its Civil War created the environment for sectarian militias and chaos. Religious violence is still largely influenced from outside actors that have some vested interest in Lebanon. The rest of the Middle East is also wrapped up in the Sunni-Shi'a conflicts, in example the Syrian and Iraqi Civil Wars also featured this type of conflict. The previous injustices committed towards Muslims by the Christians and Western influencers still creates numerous problems, as well as the hatred against Israel. Lebanon has to balance the international influences from western powers and its neighboring Middle East powers. On numerous occasions, Israel has become involved in Lebanon, which has then led to mass destruction and death tolls on civilians. Syria has also tried to influence Lebanese affairs all throughout its history, which has created a distrust of the Syrian regime in Lebanon.

Sectarianism in Lebanon is now accepted as deeply rooted in the society; however, it was not always this way. Lebanon was created out of European desire to create a Christian ally in the Middle East region. European countries created the modern territorial boundaries of the Middle East out of their own self-interests, not of Middle Easterner's interests. This set up the environment for ethnic violence to explode in these countries, motivated by the injustices to each other.

It is possible to make an argument that the reason that ethnic violence did not expand during the Civil War is due to the involvement of international peacekeepers and advocates. The presences of outside troops could have served as the deterrent from too much escalation, as when the Christians were being losing, the peacekeepers assisted them. This is a very naïve perspective as the consistent international influences throughout Lebanon's history are what set up the framework for the ethnic violence currently present. If the French did not elevate the Maronites and Christians in the 19th century, if the mandates were not imposed, if the Muslim based forces had won earlier on in the Civil War, it is likely that the ethnic violence and sectarian nature that is seen today would be very different. Lebanon is another example of at what point does the international world and world powers need to listen to what the people of other countries want for themselves rather than their own self-interests.

Lebanon's religious makeup is unique in its lack of a clear majority religious sect, as all 18 recognized sects are under 50% of the population. This is dissimilar to other countries in the Middle East that tend to have a clear Sunni or Shia majority. Going back to Mann's arguments on the role of who belongs in a nation-state, having no sect with a clear majority opens the question of who is considered the "most" Lebanese and should therefore have more of the governing power. While there have been numerous times that the Lebanese citizens of different sects have wanted to work together for their nation, the constant international influences have created an environment that is no longer conducive to that objective. Other countries that have a clear majority (i.e. Western powers - Christian, Iran - Shia) or that have the minority sect unquestionably in power (Syria - Shia) feel the need to help the sect that they

58- Booth, William. "Ten Years after Last Lebanon War, Israel Warns next One Will Be Far Worse." The Washington Post. July 23, 2016. Accessed April 25, 2019.

identify with and then intervene in Lebanese affairs. The constant pressure from outside influences to try to elevate one sect over another has simply led to more violence and sectarianism over time.

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