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A New Leader For Troubled Lebanon

By Minor Yanis

Elias Sarkis, inaugurated September 23rd as the sixth president of Lebanon, inherits a country decimated by civil war. Little remains of its former political structure and traditional institutions or its economic and social order. The continued existence of Lebanon as a country in many ways now depends on his courage and skill.

While there are many inevitable questions about the role which the new President may be able to play, there is no doubt that Mr. Sarkis can invest the office of the presidency with qualities and abilities which are sorely needed during this dark period of Lebanon's history. Most Lebanese are thoroughly disenchanted with some, if not all, of the traditional politicians who for the most part have been on the political scene since Lebanon's independence in 1943. Mr. Sarkis is of a different generation and mentality from the elder statesmen who have brought Lebanon to the brink of disaster. His reputation for being nonpolitical and his personal preference for living quietly and avoiding publicity in his private and professional life are qualities which seem particularly suitable to the times and which recommend this man to the serious tasks ahead of him. The Lebanese people will hope that his attitude of serious dedication and conservative approach to any job will enable President Sarkis to give new dignity to his office and much-



needed efficiency to the business of running their country.

Elias Sarkis is a fifty-one-year-old bachelor who was born and raised in a small mountain village about twenty miles east of Beirut. The son of a shopkeeper, Mr. Sarkis worked to put himself through law school and help support his family. Rather than being involved in the social and political limelight of Beirut, he much prefers spending his time indulging his interests in growing roses, reading and listening to classical music, and maintaining strong ties with his family and village. Technocrat, civil servant, administrator and banker are various titles which describe Mr. Sarkis professionally. Such titles are invariably accompanied by adjectives such as efficient, meticulous, honest and diligent.

Mr. Sarkis first received public attention as director-general of the

presidential office in 1959, under President Fuad Chehab. Lebanon was then recuperating from the effects of the 1958 civil war, and Mr. Sarkis made a significant contribution to the rebuilding of the country as the chief administrative officer in the new administration. In 1967 he was appointed governor of Lebanon's Central Bank, a position which he held with great distinction until he was elected President of Lebanon in May 1976. In this capacity Mr. Sarkis was responsible for the reorganization and reform of Lebanon's banking system and the institution of stringent laws governing the banking profession following the crash of one of Beirut's largest banks in 1966.

His ability as administrator and reformer, demonstrated in these posts brought him frequently into the public eye. In 1970 he was nominated for the presidency and narrowly missed election when he was defeated by the margin of one vote on the second ballot.

Now the office is his. Can Sarkis achieve the impossible? As the new president of Lebanon, he must face the harsh reality of bringing back political and economic stability to his country. It is in the interest of the Middle East in particular and of the world in general that Elias Sarkis should be given the support of all men of good will in his peace efforts and in his struggle to bring justice, prosperity and brotherhood to his war-torn land.

The following article, reprinted from *Comment*,
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Comment on Lebanon



Children play among debris of Dbayeh Camp refugee shelters destroyed in January 1976 civil disturbances. (UNRWA photo by George Nehme)

More Arabs have been killed in the Lebanese war than the total of Israelis killed in the four Arab-Israeli wars. In the process the intellectual centre of the Arab world has been destroyed; the mistrust between the Arab states has deepened and the only functioning Arab democracy has collapsed. The Lebanese conflict is not just a question of Christian fighting Muslim; nor is it simply the result of the Palestinians' refusal to respect the sovereignty of the Lebanese state.

The Republic of Lebanon is some 10,400 square kilometres in area. The capital, Beirut, was before the present conflict the commercial and financial centre of the Middle East. In 1974 gold and foreign-exchange reserves amounted to \$1,673.7 millions, largely because of Arab oil funds. About a quarter of the land is cultivated. The coastal strip produces olives, citrus fruits, and bananas. The main cereal-growing region (the principal crop is wheat) is the Bekaa valley. There are two major oil pipeline terminals in Lebanon—at Tripoli and Zahrani, near Sidon, with large refineries at both. The manufacturing sector consists mainly of food-processing, textiles, woodworking.

It is generally assumed that the total population at the start of the civil war was about three million, including four hundred thousand Palestinians (roughly 20% of whom live in refugee camps).

The Religious Communities

The *Maronite Christians* are Catholics in the sense that they recognise the authority

of the Pope, and are recognised by the Roman Catholic Church, but they have their own patriarch, resident in Lebanon, and their own liturgy in the Syriac language. They tend to think of themselves as a fiercely independent mountain people, preserving their faith through the centuries from the surrounding tide of Islam. Since the seventeenth century they have developed strong links with France and with the wider Christian world. Though they speak Arabic, Maronites are on the whole reluctant to define themselves as "Arabs," especially in a political context, and the better-off usually have their children educated in French. Their patriotism is centred on Lebanon and not on the Arab world.

The *Sunni Muslims*, whose main population centres are the towns of Beirut and Tripoli and the Bekaa valley, live mainly in areas outside the historic Mount Lebanon, and in the past have tended to feel a stronger loyalty to the wider Arab community than to Lebanon as such.

By contrast the *Druze* are historically a mountain people, living closely intermingled with the Maronites. The Druze religion is officially secret but is probably best described as a heretical sect of Islam. Druzes under pressure will describe themselves as Muslims, but other Muslims do not usually accept them as such.

The *Shi'i Muslims* were concentrated mainly in the south, but after 1968 as the area became a war zone many of them moved to the Beirut area. The Shi'i is the minority in the main division of Islam and is based on the dynastic claims of the

descendants of the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law 'Ali. In the 1932 census the Shi'i were under 20 per cent of the Lebanese population but they were also the poorest and have had the highest birth rate. According to some estimates they may even by now be the largest community.

The *Orthodox Christian* community, unlike the Maronites, is widely scattered through the Arab world and has traditionally adapted itself without difficulty to life in a predominantly Muslim society. But in times of acute religious tension such as the present civil war, the Orthodox Christians are divided in their support between the Maronites and the Muslims.

The *Armenian Christians* are an ethnic as well as religious minority, but well integrated into Lebanese society. Their largest political party had an electoral alliance with the (mainly Maronite) Phalangists, but in the civil war they have tried to remain neutral.

Historical Background

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Mount Lebanon was a group of districts within the Ottoman Empire, with its own hereditary Emir. After the European intervention of 1860 it became a privileged Sanjaq with a predominantly Christian representative council. At the end of the First World War the Ottoman Empire was dismantled, and, under the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, Lebanon and Syria fell to France. France regarded herself as the protector of the Christians in the Levant and therefore decided to build a Greater

Lebanon (Grand Liban) as a predominantly Christian State, separate from Syria, to act as a bastion of her influence in the area. For this purpose she added to the historic Mount Lebanon the ports of Tripoli, Beirut and Saida (Sidon) together with the rich fertile plain of the Bekaa and the land to the south as far as the northern frontiers of Palestine. This *Etat du Grand Liban* was proclaimed in 1920 and France obtained a separate mandate for it from the League of Nations. Its frontiers were those which Lebanon has retained to this day. They included what was then a substantial Muslim minority but today is almost certainly a majority. They also included, in Beirut and Tripoli, what had been two of the main ports of Syria and remained the chief outlets for its capital, Damascus.

This French policy was obviously likely to provoke both Muslim resentment within Lebanon and Syrian resentment from outside. In the 1930s and 40s, however, some Christians joined with Muslims in a political struggle to obtain full independence from France.

Lebanon became independent with a constitution modelled broadly on that of the French Third Republic, with a President elected by parliament and a prime minister chosen by the President but responsible to parliament. More important than this, however, was the unwritten National Pact of 1943 under which the highest offices of the state were shared out between the various religious communities. In particular, the President was always to be a Maronite, the prime minister a Sunni, and the President of the National Assembly a Shi'i. The Maronites were also assured of a narrow but permanent majority in parliament. This together with the Presidency, which in practice also controlled the defence ministry and the army, assured the Maronites of a de facto predominance, which at the time corresponded to an economic, educational and demographic superiority. In return the Maronites agreed to forego French or other Western protection in favour of national independence and to recognise Lebanon's Arab identity. In 1945 Lebanon became a founder member of the League of Arab States, which passed a resolution respecting her independence and sovereignty. Syria thus implicitly waived her claim to all or part of Lebanon's territory. Even so, the Syrians could never bring themselves to treat Lebanon as a foreign country, and formal diplomatic relations between the two states have never been established.

Lebanon in the Wider Arab Context

Lebanon played only a small role in the fighting between Arab states and Israel in 1948-9 and took no part in the subsequent wars of 1956, 1967, 1973. It was accepted that she was not militarily strong enough to influence significantly the outcome. Her neutrality, though never officially proclaimed, was accepted as such for practical purposes by Israel—and thus became from the Arab point of view a cheap way of securing Syria's right flank. In 1973 especially the availability of reserve oil-refining and electricity-generating capacity in a friendly neighbour country "out of bounds" for Israeli strategic bombing was a key factor in maintaining the Syrian economy.

This has certainly been one of the considerations influencing Syrian policy in the current civil war.

Lebanon contributed to the general Arab cause in a number of other non-military ways. In 1948 she gave asylum to some 130,000 refugees mainly from northern Palestine. This population swelled both by natural increase and by the arrival of political exiles from Jordan after the fighting there in 1970-71, so that by 1975 Lebanon was harbouring a Palestinian population of about 400,000—equivalent to one-fifth of the indigenous Lebanese.

Lebanon also became the most important point of contact between the Arab world and the West, as a centre of business and communications, and thus played a major role in Arab efforts to win over Western public opinion. This was mainly because of the remarkable resilience of Lebanon's pluralist political system. The elaborate balance of religious and political forces, and the relative sophistication of Lebanon's Western-educated elite, made it possible to maintain the forms and to a considerable extent also the substance of parliamentary democracy, long after attempts to domesticate such a system in other Arab countries had broken down. Lebanon retained not only a free market economy but also a fairly free market in political ideas, with a lively and variegated press acting as a debating chamber in which the various Arab regimes could be exposed to criticism of a kind which they normally suppressed in their own countries. This in turn obliged them to

defend themselves, and many of them secured a platform either by financing new Lebanese papers or by contributing generously to existing ones.

The rise of Nasser had a profound effect on Lebanon, as on other Arab states. Nasser's United Arab Republic uniting Egypt and Syria provided inspiration as well as financial support for Lebanese efforts (mainly Muslim) to impose a more radical Arab direction on the Lebanese state and to break the hegemony of the pro-Western Maronites. In 1958 these efforts, and the ill-judged reaction to them of the then President, Camille Chamoun, led to six months of muted civil war, in which Syrian infiltrators played a significant part. After the Iraqi revolution of July 14th, 1958, when all pro-Western regimes in the Arab world seemed in danger of being overthrown, the United States, at Chamoun's request, sent a force of marines to restore order, but in fact they did not have to do any fighting. The shock of their arrival was enough to bring the rival leaders to their senses. A compromise was reached under which the army commander, General Fuad Chehab—a Maronite who had won the respect of the Muslims by keeping the army neutral during the fighting—succeeded Chamoun when his term of office ended in September. He inaugurated a period of strong government (by Lebanese standards at any rate), based initially on co-operation between the toughest leaders on both sides. These were Pierre Gemayel, leader of the Kataeb (Phalanges) on the Maronite side,

Vestiges of famous cedar forests, dating from biblical times, are found near Besharre and have become the symbol of Lebanon. (CNT/FATTAL)



and Kamal Jumblatt on the Muslim side.

The personality of Jumblatt is one of the most important but also one of the most complex factors in recent Lebanese history. He descends from an old family of Druze Shaikhs in Mount Lebanon, inheriting great personal wealth and influence among the Druze community. Yet—perhaps because as a Druze he is barred under the National Pact from the highest offices of the Lebanese State—Jumblatt has been a consistent and bitter critic of the whole system of traditional and confessional leadership in Lebanon. His party is called the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and its programme calls for a secular state in which every vote would be equal and every office open to the best qualified candidate irrespective of religion. Similar ideas have at times been expressed by the Kataeb, as well as by Raymond Eddé, who may be said to have voiced the aspirations of the more enlightened faction of the Westernising Maronite elite. Theoretically the Kataeb are a nationalist, anti-confessional party. But their nationalism is emphatically Lebanese rather than Arab, their membership is 85% Christian (mainly Maronite) and their role in successive crises since independence has been essentially that of an inefficient defence force for the Christian community. By contrast Jumblatt appeals to Arab as well as Lebanese nationalism, and has cultivated relations with the international and Arab left. Consequently although both parties theoretically condemn sectarian conflict, when it does occur they tend to find themselves taking up extreme positions on opposite sides.

The Palestinian Presence

The catalyst which caused these various festering conflicts to explode into actual civil war was undoubtedly the growth of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. The presence of Palestinian refugees was not itself a major problem. But the appearance of a standing army—or rather several competing armies—of guerrillas, which claimed virtual sovereignty over the Palestinian refugee camps (and in practice over much of the surrounding area as well), inevitably caused friction between Palestinians and Lebanese. Officially there were good relations between the two. Lebanon acknowledged the justice of the Palestinian cause, while the leaders of the resistance proclaimed their respect for Lebanese sovereignty. But, while condemning the activities of Palestinian gunmen who committed acts of banditry against the Lebanese population, or usurped police functions outside the camps, the resistance insisted on its rights to deal with these malefactors itself, and in Lebanese eyes it did so ineffectively or not at all. And the Lebanese state was inhibited from taking effective action because it knew that for many of its citizens the legitimacy of the Palestinian resistance, a pan-Arab phenomenon, was stronger than its own legitimacy as a state. The Palestinians thus highlighted both the inadequacy of the Lebanese state and the reason for it, which was the different value put on the state by its Christian and Muslim citizens.

The problem was aggravated by the situation in the south, where Palestinian raids into Israel provoked Israeli counter-raids and bombardment of Lebanese territo-

ry. These raids often took the form of temporarily occupying villages, blowing up houses or other buildings, and even carrying off villagers alleged to have given shelter to the guerrillas. The southern population was mainly Shi'i; that is, they belonged to a group which was under-privileged and under-represented in the Lebanese power structure. The Israelis calculated that this group would resent the presence of the Palestinian fedayeen, would be further alienated from their cause by the Israeli reprisals, and therefore would make common cause with the Christians to demand stricter control of their activities by the Lebanese state. In fact the result was the opposite. Although many southerners certainly did resent the Palestinians' behaviour, most resented the Israeli raids far more, and began to see themselves as fellow-victims with the Palestinians of Zionist aggression and expansion. They turned their resentment against the state itself, for its failure to protect them, and attributed this to the fact that the state, and particularly the armed forces, were under Christian control. It began to be said that the only real purpose of the Lebanese state and army was to maintain Christian domination over Muslims. Moreover many southerners left their homes to escape the bombing and

way of pledging respect for Lebanese sovereignty and limiting guerrilla activity from Lebanese territory, they remained a dead letter.

Among the Lebanese, the consensus on which Chehab's rule had been based gradually crumbled. Under his successor, Charles Hélou (1964-70), the regime increasingly came to rely on the Deuxième Bureau, its secret service. In the 1970 presidential election the "Chehabist" candidate, Elias Sarkis, was defeated by one vote. The victor, Suleiman Franjeh, was a semi-literate clan leader from northern Lebanon. Such political ideas as he had were fairly reactionary, but he obtained qualified support from the left (including Jumblatt) by promising to dismantle the Deuxième Bureau. This promise was faithfully carried out, and the state thus lost virtually its last line of defence. Jumblatt became Minister of the Interior and legalised the Communist and Ba'ath parties, which thenceforth became his allies.

The Palestinian problem became more acute after 1970 when King Hussein suppressed the Palestinian military and political organisations in Jordan, and Lebanon became the Palestinians' main political and military base. It reached a climax in the spring of 1973 following the Israeli raid on



School children from Dikwaneh Camp returned last January to find their classrooms a shambles. (UNRWA photo by Najeh Abu Nab)

became refugees in slum quarters of Beirut, particularly Qarantina, where they lived in squalor which increased both their resentment against the Lebanese ruling class and their sense of sharing the Palestinian destiny. Their presence there was in turn perceived as a threat by the neighbouring Christian quarters of the city, and so the situation deteriorated.

The point of no return may well have been passed as early as 1969, when the guerrillas took over total control of the Palestinian refugee camps, and this was ratified by a formal agreement in Cairo between Lebanon and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). The contents of this agreement were officially secret, but whatever concessions the Palestinians made in the

Beirut in which three Palestinian leaders were killed. Fierce battles were fought between the fedayeen and the Lebanese armed forces in May 1973, but President Franjeh held back from ordering a general assault. He may have feared a mutiny by Muslim soldiers in the army. He certainly knew that the Muslim politicians would not support him.

The result was therefore a stalemate, but both sides prepared for a further conflict. The Palestinians equipped their camps with rockets—ostensibly for protection against Israeli air raids. The more nationalist among the Christians, chiefly the Kataeb, saw that the army was not going to do what they considered to be its job and therefore imported weapons with a view to doing it

themselves, almost certainly with the President's encouragement. Other Maronite groups—notably Chamoun's "Tigers"—followed suit in order not to allow the Kataeb to appear as the sole defenders of the Christian community. The Muslims and the left in turn became alarmed at this show of right-wing Maronite muscle, and successfully turned to the Palestinians for arms. The left (by no means wholly Muslim) grew rapidly in strength, and when the Kataeb finally embarked on their attempt to cut the Palestinians down to size in the spring of 1975 they encountered much greater resistance, including Lebanese resistance, than they expected.



Refugees stand within explosion-racked shelter at Dbayeh. (UNRWA photo by George Nehmeh)

Still, there can be no doubt that the Palestinians were the key factor in the equation. In the heavy street-fighting in Beirut from September to December 1975 they provided most of the weapons and a good deal of the manpower for the left; and since January 1976 their forces have been committed quite openly, alongside those of Jumblatt and of the mutinous "Lebanese Arab Army." In short, it is not enough to say that the Palestinians aggravated existing tensions. They were one of the sides in the war from the start, even if until January 1976 their leaders officially proclaimed their neutrality.

Outside Involvement in the Conflict

It is clear however that Palestinians and Lebanese are not the only parties to the Lebanese conflict. More than likely the Lebanese right received covert help and encouragement from conservative Arab regimes—especially Jordan, but in the early stages probably also Egypt and perhaps Saudi Arabia as well. On the other side, Iraq and Libya have been very open in their support of the Lebanese left.

The most complex role, of course, has been

that played by Syria. When the fighting started, Syria was very closely associated with the PLO; and throughout 1975 most of the weapons for the PLO and the left were coming from or at least through Syria. Syria was certainly not going to allow the Palestinian resistance to be destroyed by the Lebanese right, acting as the catspaw of Israel and the United States. But by late 1975 it was clear that this was not going to happen, whereas an outright victory for the Palestinians and their Lebanese allies began to look possible. But the Syrians did not want this either. They feared that a Palestinian-dominated Lebanon, in which Iraqi and Libyan-sponsored factions were likely to play a considerable role, would provoke a new Arab-Israeli war in very unfavourable circumstances for the Syrians. Egypt had virtually withdrawn from the battlefield by signing the Sinai Agreement of September 1975; Jordan was crippled by lack of an air defence system; and the new Lebanon would certainly be incapable of defending itself against a full-scale Israeli attack. Syria would have to fight virtually alone and to face an Israeli outflanking movement through Lebanon.

In January 1976, therefore, the Syrians moved into Lebanon—having first, it may be assumed, secured the approval of both superpowers—to try and save the status quo, or something recognizably like it. They might perhaps have succeeded in this if they had been careful to secure full Palestinian co-operation. Instead they tried rather clumsily to intimidate the pro-Iraqi wing of the PLO and instead succeeded in driving the PLO as a whole (minus the Saika movement which is directly controlled by the Syrian Ba'ath Party) closer to the Iraqi position. The Syrian theory that the Lebanese conflict was really an Israeli-American-Egyptian plot to distract attention from the Sinai Agreement was now matched by a Palestinian theory that it was really an American-Syrian-Jordanian plot to bring the PLO under King Hussein and so negotiate a settlement with Israel not including a separate Palestinian state. This second theory was espoused with opportunistic but understandable eagerness by Egypt, which now became an enthusiastic if somewhat unexpected supporter of the PLO and the Lebanese Left. By June 1976 Syria found herself in open military conflict with the PLO in Lebanon and in diplomatic conflict with virtually the whole Arab world except Jordan. Her role as "mediator" had clearly failed, and the time had at last arrived for the official "Arabisation" of the conflict—a long overdue recognition of reality.

European powers have played little or no role in the conflict, although France as the former mandatory power and architect of modern Lebanon has felt a certain historical responsibility for it. The French government came under pressure from Lebanese Christians, and to some extent also from French public opinion, to do something to help Lebanon in its hour of travail. A former French prime minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, was sent in November 1975 to attempt mediation but had little success. A second envoy, Georges Gorse, sent in April 1976 made even less impact. Finally in May, during a visit to the United States, President Giscard d'Estaing publicly offered to send French troops to help police a ceasefire, if

there was a consensus of all parties in favour of it. This was a fairly safe offer, since there was no such consensus in sight, but even so it was taken by the left, the Palestinians and various Arab states as a threat of military intervention and accordingly denounced with great vigour. Ironically enough a week later, when the Syrians launched their full-scale military invasion of Lebanon, Jumblatt appealed to France for political and diplomatic help—but without result.

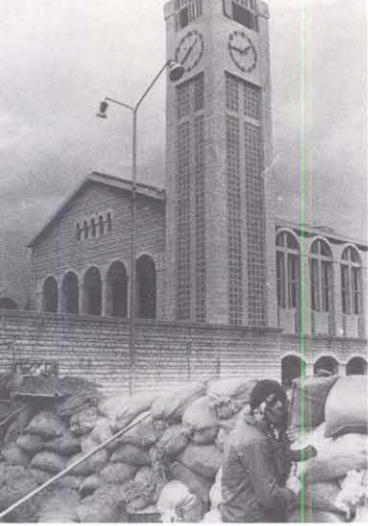
Prospects for Peace

Prospects for peace do not seem very good in the short term. This is less because of the hostility between Lebanese than because of the chronic disunity of the Arab states, which means that if any solution appears favourable to one of them, another will do its best to make sure that it does not work. There are so many rival factions within the Lebanese left and among the Palestinians, that a foreign government with money to spend finds endless opportunities to get the shooting started again if ever it stops.

The present condition and future prospects of the Maronites are clearly intensely difficult and anguishing both for them and for their sympathisers overseas. Together with other Lebanese Christians they constitute (apart from the Egyptian Copts) the most considerable Christian community in the Middle East, with its own strong political and cultural tradition. From one point of view they are victims of the privileged position they have held in Lebanon for the last hundred years, largely as a result of French influence; from another viewpoint they are victims of the deep quasi-identification of "Arab" with "Muslim" which somehow threatens the corporate existence of any non-Islamic community in the Middle East, however native it may be. The fragile balance of power achieved in the past between the many communities of Lebanon, Christian and Muslim, has been shattered by the pressures of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the chief long-term losers are only too likely to be the Christians.

If the Maronites had a rather privileged position in the past, they now see themselves as fighting for their very identity. However, the Christian enclave is too small and is unlikely ever to get international recognition as an independent state, and the Maronites on their own do not form a convincing national group. Hard as it may be for them, there is probably no way they can survive in the long term other than through loss of corporate political power and the recognition that they constitute a minority inside a predominantly Muslim, Arab world. There are several million Coptic Christians in Egypt, and they do survive. The Christians of Lebanon need help to readjust to a somewhat similar position rather than encouragement in a fight to the death to remain a little Christian state of their own.

Lebanon is essentially the victim of the Arab-Israeli conflict and is likely to remain so. It may find itself annexed in all but name by Syria; it may emerge as a "radical" Arab state dominated by the Palestinians; in either case the danger that the south will be occupied by Israel is clearly considerable. Lebanon could easily be the *causis belli* of the next Arab-Israeli war.



OFFICIAL LEBANESE POSITION EXPLAINED



Statement

by

*H.E. Ambassador Edouard Ghorra,
Chief of the Lebanese Delegation,
at the 31st Session
of the*

*United Nations General Assembly
on*

October 14, 1976

The general debate has revealed to us the growing interest of friendly nations in the fate of our country and people, and we are deeply moved and appreciative of their outpouring of expressions of sympathy. We note with satisfaction their call for the restoration of stability and peace in Lebanon and for the preservation of its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, as well as of the unity of its people.

Similar calls and assurances have been made by our esteemed Secretary-General, Mr. Waldheim, on several occasions. We extend to him Lebanon's appreciation for the constant concern he has shown for the Lebanese people through their long and tragic ordeal. His many appeals and initiatives to end the bloodshed and destruction have been a testimony to his courage, statesmanship, and deep interest in the welfare of a Member State. To him and through him we express the gratitude of the Lebanese people for the varied humanitarian assistance granted to them by many agencies in the United Nations family and for the initiative for the establishment of a special fund of \$50 million for Lebanon under the leadership of the able Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Buffum. It is our hope that when peace reigns again in Lebanon, which we hope will be soon, it will be possible for the fund to operate speedily and efficiently in meeting the growing needs of the country, which will require a new assessment in the light of more recent developments.

Lebanon has been in the throes of unprecedented, cruel and tragic events for over 18 months. The world has been baffled by the intensity of the fighting, the passions it

has aroused, the large number of casualties and the extent of destruction. Much has been said and written about the original causes of the fighting and about the obstacles which have prevented a satisfactory settlement until now. In the maze of analyses and theories, a good deal of emphasis was wrongly placed on the internal character of the conflict, particularly in the first phase of events.

Lebanon is no different from other countries and naturally has its own political, economic and social problems. While this is not the forum to discuss our internal problems, we should like to stress from the outset that never were our internal problems of such magnitude as to generate so much violence, bloodshed, and destruction. In themselves, they could have been resolved in the traditional spirit of conciliation, compromise, and national concord which has always characterized the relationships between the various communities and parties in Lebanon. Mr. Kamel Al-Assad, Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, recently stated, "If there should be an inter-Lebanese conflict, it can only be solved through constitutionally established institutions." Lebanon has been a classic example of how various religious communities can live and prosper together in peace, harmony, and freedom and within the framework of a democratic and progressive system of government. The vast majority of Lebanese realize that violence is not a means of improving or restructuring institutions, for it only begets destruction. The only sane and rational way is through dialogue and concensus and according to the organic laws of the country.

What, then, are the origins of the tragic and complex events that have disrupted Lebanese society for so many months? We believe that they are to be found in the web of Middle Eastern contradictions and complexities — that is, the establishment of Israel, the displacement of the Palestinians, the Arab-Israeli wars, the failures of the United Nations to implement its resolutions regarding the withdrawal of Israeli troops

from the occupied Arab lands and the recognition and restoration of Palestinian rights, the Arab rivalries, and the assaults perpetrated by Palestinians against the sovereignty of Lebanon and the security of its people. The unsettled conditions that resulted from these factors have maintained a state of tension and turbulence in the area, which was bound to affect directly a small country like Lebanon, lying at the crossroads of Middle Eastern political currents and subject to their pressures.

This state of affairs was indeed accentuated by the presence of about 400,000 Palestinians in Lebanon, amongst whom the Palestine revolution established deep roots. For years, friction between the Lebanese authorities and people, on the one hand, and the Palestinians, on the other, has intensified and resulted in a steady deterioration of their relationship. That was caused by constant Palestinian intervention in the internal affairs of Lebanon and intolerable encroachment on its sovereignty. By their very activities, Palestinian irregular and revolutionary forces aroused the apprehensions of the Lebanese population. In 1969 President Charles Helou called attention to the risks that might occur from the disrespect of Lebanese sovereignty by various Palestinian factions. Nevertheless, the situation continued to deteriorate and the fighting which erupted was finally contained when the crisis was resolved by the Cairo Agreement. That agreement regulated the activities of the Palestinians in Lebanon.

Further conflicts occurred in May-June 1973 between the Lebanese authorities and the Palestinians, resulting in yet another agreement. At that time, President Suleiman Franjeh, while reiterating his support for the Palestinian cause, denounced the illegal occupation of parts of Lebanese territory by Palestinian elements, as well as the contradiction, in a country as small as Lebanon, between the logic of the Palestinian revolution and the logic of the State which wants to preserve its sovereignty.

But the Palestinians did not respect the

Left: Leftist gunmen barricade near St. Michael's Church, Beirut, last December.
 Center: In April, another gunman relaxes amid rubble of a Beirut street.
 Right: Top floors of Beirut Holiday Inn erupt into flames during "battle of the hotels."
 (Wide World Photos)



accords that were concluded. And it pains me very much that I, after so many years' service to the Palestinian cause and to the rights of the Palestinians, should stand at this rostrum to bring these hard facts to the attention of the international community. The Palestinians acted as if they were a "State" or "States" within the State of Lebanon and flagrantly defied the laws of the land and abused the hospitality of its people.

Furthermore, after the events in Jordan of September 1970, the Palestinians introduced several units of their forces into Lebanon and transferred various commands of the resistance movement to it — without the approval of the Lebanese authorities and, sometimes, despite them. For years, they steadily increased the influx of arms into Lebanon — arms of all calibres and from various sources. They transformed most of the refugee camps, if not all, into military bastions around our major cities, in the heart of our commercial and industrial centers, and in the vicinity of large civilian conglomerations. That was done mainly in remote areas having no connection with the Palestinians' struggle to regain their rights and their homeland.

Moreover, common-law criminals fleeing from Lebanese justice found shelter and protection in the camps, where the arm of Lebanese law could not reach them. Those camps in fact became the center for the training of mercenaries sent and financed by some other Arab States under the pretext of assisting the Palestinian resistance movement, but who, at the first call, found themselves fighting against the Lebanese authorities and people. Palestinian elements belonging to various splinter organizations resorted to kidnapping of Lebanese — and sometimes foreigners — holding them prisoners, questioning them, torturing them and sometimes even killing them. Those elements took the liberty of erecting check-points on our major highways and crossroads, stopping traffic, checking the identity cards of passengers and hampering the normal life of our people.

They committed all sorts of crimes in Lebanon and also escaped Lebanese justice in the protection of the camps. They smuggled goods into Lebanon and openly sold them on our streets. They went so far as to demand "protection" money from many individuals and owners of buildings and factories situated in the vicinity of their camps.

It is difficult to enumerate all the illegal activities committed by those Palestinian elements — sometimes described as undisciplined and uncontrollable — which gave rise, in turn, to the dissatisfaction of the Lebanese Government and the resentment of its people, which charged an atmosphere already fraught with tension. That atmosphere became so explosive that it needed a mere spark to ignite it. A few incidents that occurred in the spring of 1975 provided that spark.

The friction between Palestinians and Lebanese could have been settled in a spirit of goodwill and brotherly cooperation, a spirit which had permeated their relations in the past. But it became apparent that the Palestinians had designs of becoming a major factor in the battle for political power in Lebanon. They openly allied themselves, and continue to do so to this very hour, with one group of Lebanese against another. Whatever grievances the Lebanese had amongst themselves or in their relationship with their Government, the Palestinians had neither the right nor the justification to become a party to any internal dispute whatever.

Why did the Palenstinians risk all the gains we have achieved together for their cause? Why pursue a war in a country that stood by them in all their years of exile and ordeals? Fifty thousand dead. One hundred thousand injured. One million Lebanese refugees in Syria, the Arab World, Europe and America. The dismantling of our administrative, economic, social, and educational institutions and enterprises. All that could not be justified by any objective of the Palestinian revolution, nor by any principle of morality and brotherhood. So much

human suffering and so much destruction were the result of the Palestinian participation in the fighting and their stubborn persistence in it. It is deplorable that those who have been the victim of a gross injustice are inflicting an injustice of such inhuman proportion on Lebanon and its people.

It is incomprehensible to the Lebanese why western Beirut and peaceful towns and villages in northern Lebanon, in the Beka'a Valley, or in the heartland of the Lebanese mountains, or Sidon, having no connection with any aspect of the conflict, should be besieged, occupied, and sometimes destroyed by Palestinian forces. Why have so many innocent civilians been killed in the name of "liberation" and "revolution"? And why should many public utilities and buildings be under Palestinian control? Has all that happened in order to prove what a leading Palestinian personality has said, that "the road to Palestine cannot but pass through Aintoura, Aiyoun es-Simaan, and must even reach Jounich itself"?

It is indeed sad for a Lebanese diplomat to stand before this Assembly and denounce the actions of the Palestinians in Lebanon. It is needless to remind delegations here that we have always been in the vanguard of all endeavors to promote the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Lebanese diplomacy has devoted its major activities here and elsewhere to the defense of the Palestinian cause and of every Arab cause for the last 30 years. Every President and Government of Lebanon has spared no effort in that connection. That was, and is, in keeping with our belief that an injustice was done to the Palestinians which must be rectified, in other words that they have the right to return to their homeland.

That was not the only service rendered to the Palestinians. About 100,000 of them came to Lebanon in 1948 after they were expelled from their homeland. Their number swelled to over 400,000 by 1975. Lebanon provided them with a refuge and with several opportunities. In our midst, they

(Continued on page 10)

Humanitarian Response For Lebanon

By Mary Anne Kolidas

The civil war in Lebanon has lasted seventeen months, with no end in sight. Its impact on the country has been devastating: more than 40,000 dead, 75,000 wounded, countless more homeless, property damage in the billions of dollars, and an estimated one-half of the population scattered abroad. Most of the casualties have been civilians hit by snipers or by artillery and rocket exchanges. Many of the homeless have moved into residences vacated by those who have left the country.

Shortages of medical supplies and difficulty in getting the wounded to hospitals have meant that only the slightly wounded or those lucky enough to reach a hospital may survive. With the virtual cutoff of water and electricity service in Beirut, even the hospitals have lost their preferred status in receiving these vital services.

Information concerning relief work in Lebanon is scanty due to the fluctuating war zones and dangerous conditions. The de facto partition of the country has complicated the relief process in every way. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has established a network of field hospitals in areas where the Leftists are dominant; areas controlled by the Rightists have their own relief mechanisms. A number of hospitals such as the American University of Beirut (AUB) Hospital respond to human suffering on a non-sectarian, non-discriminatory basis.

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), which includes Protestant and Orthodox members, has maintained an effective relief system in Beirut. With staff in Cyprus and a committee in Beirut, the MECC periodically assesses needs and arranges for the distribution of supplies. Other



major denominational relief agencies such as Lutheran World Federation, Catholic Near East Welfare Association, the Mennonite Central Committee, and Catholic Relief Services contribute to commodity distribution programs in Lebanon. Items in shortest supply include powdered milk, canned meat, blankets, and medical supplies. In addition, groups like the American Middle East Rehabilitation (AMER), Division of American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), U.S. OMEN, United Holy Land Fund (UHLF), and Arab-American churches have been sending medical supplies for distribution by others. UHLF also recruits medical personnel for short-term service in Lebanon.

The Agency for International Development (AID), as the largest single American donor for humanitarian assistance in Lebanon, has sent several million dollars worth of medical supplies to the AUB Hospital, which shares the items with other institutions including the Barbir, Maqassed, Beirut, and

Lebanese Red Cross hospitals.

Link readers desirous of helping in Lebanon may wish to contribute through one or more of the organizations listed below. (The list is only representative since space does not permit naming all groups now active in Lebanon relief work.) Those wanting to make donations in kind are advised to contact the relief agency to learn what is needed and acceptable. For instance, drug samples are often of little use unless they are available in large quantities of a single product and have the generic name indicated along with the trade name. Dollar donations to the listed organizations are tax deductible.



Relief agencies offer many vital forms of assistance—food, clothing, medicine, shelter. (UNRWA; Wide World Photos)



American Committee for the People of Lebanon
7617 Little River Turnpike
Annadale, Virginia 22003

American Middle East Rehabilitation (AMER Division of ANERA)
777 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017

American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)
733 15th Street, N.W., Suite 900
Washington, D. C. 20005

Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc. (AAUG)
Lebanon Emergency Relief Fund (LERF)
Post Office Box 7391
North End Station
Detroit, Michigan 48202

Catholic Near East Welfare Association
1011 First Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Catholic Relief Services
1011 First Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Church World Service
475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027

Lutheran World Relief
315 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10010

Mennonite Central Committee
21 South 12th Street
Akron, Pennsylvania 17501

United Holy Land Fund
P. O. Box 6253
Washington, D. C. 20015

U. S. OMEN
708 Ellis Street
San Francisco, California 94109

OFFICIAL LEBANESE POSITION EXPLAINED

have enjoyed all the freedoms enjoyed by the Lebanese — the freedom to assemble, to organize, to express themselves openly, to disseminate information, to publicize, and to contact the entire world through our communications facilities. In the environment of Lebanon and of the Lebanese experience, the Palestinian concept of a free, democratic, and secular state in Palestine was born. The best research centers on Palestinian affairs were, in fact, established in Lebanon, and the finest publications on the subject emanated from Beirut.

Because of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, southern Lebanon endured Israeli bombardments and assaults for 7 years. One hundred thousand of its inhabitants fled and became refugees in their own country. They swelled the misery belts around our major cities, aggravating an already complex economic and social problem caused by the nearby presence of several Palestinian refugee camps — and, mind you, that is in a small country of two and one half million people.

Many delegations have referred to the fact that the Lebanese crisis is a direct consequence of the Middle East conflict. We agree with that statement. We are convinced that, had a definitive solution been reached about the binate Palestinian-Middle East problems, the conflict in Lebanon would not have erupted. We respect the assessment of the Soviet Union regarding Lebanon in its proposal concerning a settlement in the Middle East and the Geneva Conference in that respect.

We also welcome the statements made earlier in this debate by the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Kissinger, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Mr. Gromyko, about the need to reconvene the Geneva Conference in search of a comprehensive solution to the problems of the Middle East. On our part, we should like to stress the urgency of such an action. I repeat — on our part, we should like to stress the urgency of such an action. We have become a principally interested party, for our future and the lives of our people are at stake. We have consistently advocated the necessity of dealing with all aspects of the Palestinian and Middle East problems. Whatever steps were taken in the past must now lead to an overall settlement. We cannot stress that urgency enough.

The changes resulting from the war of October 1973, and the subsequent efforts made to reach a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, whether through the Geneva Conference or through partial agreements, had a potentially explosive impact on Lebanon. The Palestinians and the Arab countries which favored or rejected those peaceful plans took advantage of the liberal and democratic system and life in Lebanon and clashed on Lebanese soil in order to advance their different political objectives.

However, no matter how, where, and when a comprehensive settlement is reached, it cannot delay the solution of our problem or affect our interests. Our position must be clearly understood. We want to restore peace and order to Lebanon as soon as possible and reestablish our total authority and sovereignty on our land.

I should like now to deal with another point which has created some concern in the past. It was feared that events taking place in Lebanon might lead to its partition. Sometimes the fears were generated by talks about “plans” and “plots” undertaken on the international level to achieve partition. We have never known of any such scheme advocated or approach made by anyone in or from Lebanon having as its objective the partition of Lebanon.

Despite all the tragic events that have taken place, the Lebanese authorities and forces which persevered in the defense of legality and constitutional institutions have constantly proclaimed their determination to protect the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Lebanon for the benefit of all its people without distinction, any fear, or any accusation to the contrary notwithstanding.

Despite the various positions in the present conflict about any other aspect of the crisis, there is one aspect about which all the Lebanese are united — namely, in their total opposition to partition and their determination to preserve Lebanon's unity. That was strongly affirmed by President Sarkis the other day in his inaugural speech when he said: “In my view, what are sacrosanct and inviolable are the sovereignty of Lebanon and the unity of its territory and its people.”

Now I should like to make a few remarks about peace-making efforts. We welcome some efforts deployed by some friendly states and by several truly sister Arab states which can perceive that the higher Arab interests could be better served in the spirit of Arab brotherhood, fairness, and justice to all than through the abuse of Arab wealth for the funnelling of arms, money, and men for disruption and sedition in Lebanon.

We also welcome the efforts of the League of Arab States, although timid in the beginning, to help restore peace and order.

However, we should like to pay a special tribute to our closest sister Arab state, the Syrian Arab Republic. Our special relations are such that anything which affects or afflicts Syria, affects and afflicts Lebanon. The Syrian Government, under the wise and firm leadership of President Hafez al-Assad, perceived the dangers inherent in the Lebanese crisis in all their dimensions and initiated several efforts to mediate differences between Lebanese factions and to end the fighting between the Lebanese and the Palestinians.

The Syrian Army was sent to Lebanon in a peace-making effort to separate the combatants and to help restore peace and order. It was resisted by the Palestinian forces and their allies. They called for the withdrawal of the Syrian forces as a condition for the cessation of hostilities and their own withdrawal from positions they occupied. The presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon is subject to Lebanese sovereignty and Lebanese sovereignty alone. The Lebanese authorities and they alone can exercise the sovereign right to determine any position regarding that presence. The Palestinians have no such right and certainly cannot speak for Lebanon nor determine what is best in its interests.

President al-Assad said that the Palestinians should not disregard the fact that Lebanon is not Palestine, and that Beirut is the capital of Lebanon and not of Palestine. He added that Syria would accept a demand for withdrawal of its troops from the Lebanese President, or Prime Minister, or Speaker of the Parliament, but not from the Palestinians. In this connection, I should like to bring to the Assembly's attention what President Elias Sarkis stated in his inaugural address on September 23rd. He stated that the presence of the Syrian Army in Lebanon must be considered within the framework of the special relationships that exist between Syria and Lebanon. He stated further: “I am in a position to declare that the future of this presence and all that ensues from it depends on the Lebanese constitutional authorities, which must take on their responsibilities and decide their position in conformity with the higher interests of Lebanon and in the light of events.”

This leads me to some final conclusions and thoughts. First, we deeply regret the deterioration in relations between Palestinians and Lebanese. But, more than that regret, we in Lebanon are grieved and appalled at the number of casualties our people have suffered, at the extent of destruction in the country and at the damage incurred to our way of life and on our world image.

Secondly, peace and confidence between

the Lebanese and the Palestinians can be restored, and it must be restored. It is in their mutual interest to end the fighting speedily. The position of the Lebanese authorities and people is clear. Lebanon cannot and will not allow any encroachment on its sovereignty. Any settlement of its dispute with the Palestinians must ensure the following: dissociation of the Palestinians from the fighting in Lebanon; their withdrawal from all military positions they are now holding; their respect for the sovereignty of Lebanon and its laws; their strict adherence to the accords concluded with them by Lebanese authorities; and their refraining from interfering in Lebanon's internal affairs.

Thirdly, while we welcome some Arab and non-Arab efforts to help us solve the crisis, we regret the activities of some Arabs that are heightening tensions in Lebanon. Fourthly, we believe that the time has come to solve the problems of the Middle East by effecting the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Arab lands and by enabling the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights, which have already been recognized, among them the right to self-determination and to nationhood in their homeland of Palestine.

Fifthly, while we welcome diplomatic ef-

forts through the Geneva Conference or by others to find a comprehensive solution to the problems of the Middle East, we consider that any delay in achieving this objective should not impede the speedy restoration of peace to Lebanon nor affect its interest. Sixthly, while the Lebanese reject any thought of partition, their determination is to restore the freedom and unity of all the regions of the country, so that they can shape and determine their future together in a manner that will preserve their independence, sovereignty, and fundamental liberties.

The question is often asked: Can Lebanon survive? Can Lebanon stand on its feet again and recover? My answer is an emphatic yes — and it will. Our people have faced adversity many times in the past. They have the capacity and virility to absorb the present calamity, hard as it may be. We have suffered great material losses. However, we cherish our freedoms and the unity of the Lebanese people, regardless of sacrifice. We pray that those who have died did not die in vain. As our President, Mr. Sarkis, stated: "If we rediscover the right path, that of Reason, of Love, and of Conscience, our sacrifices will not have been in vain, and the Lebanese martyrs of today will have died so that Lebanon might live."

The Lebanese have cut stones from the

mountains to build their homes, places of worship, and schools. With these stones, they built walls against the slopes of the mountains, backed them with earth, terraced them, planted trees on them, and transformed Lebanon into the verdant fruit basket of the Middle East. Without any significant help from outside, our people developed a thriving economy, despite the lack of natural resources. They have made Lebanon one of the best centers for education, health, trade, tourism, and communications in the Middle East. Those who have built in the past can rebuild in the future. With the grace of God, with the aid of all Lebanese at home and abroad, with the assistance of our sister Arab states, friendly nations, and the United Nations family, Lebanon will rise and thrive again.

Lebanon will transform the legend of the Phoenix into reality. Out of the flames and ashes a new Lebanon will be born — a Lebanon that is more united and more free, more resolute and more strong, more dedicated to the social and human progress of its people, to equality and justice amongst them, to amity and cooperation amongst nations, and to peace in the world.

I am confident that the image of Lebanon as a land of peace, concord, love, and conciliation will shine once again.

Crossroads to Civil War, Lebanon 1958-1976

Dr. Kamal Salibi, Caravan Books, 1976. 178 pp. \$15.00. Our price \$10.00.

This book review appeared in the June 1976 issue of EVENTS, The Weekly Newsmagazine of the Middle East. Formerly printed in Beirut, EVENTS is now published in London due to the current troubles in Lebanon. Information about this outstanding new magazine can be obtained by writing to EVENTS (AL-HAWADESS), 7/8 Savile Row, London W1X 1AF.

There are not many countries in the world which, at one stage or another in their history, had to rebuild from scratch. Once they were dead they were dead.

But the East Mediterranean Republic of Lebanon is somewhat different. For more than a year, a bloody civil war has destroyed every conceivable institution that is essential for the existence of a sovereign and independent state.

At least 20,000 people have been killed and twice as many wounded. The army has disintegrated and the government—now a misnomer—has become totally impotent. Thousands of rival militiamen have taken the law in their hands, and are now ruling the country at gun-point.

But Lebanon is still on the map, and its presence continues to be felt on the international level. This month, a new President was elected to replace the current head of state, Suleiman Franjeh and, alas, inherit

the same problems that had originally triggered the war.

Obviously, it would be far too difficult to produce a comprehensive historical account of the Lebanese crisis when it is not yet resolved.

But for Dr. Kamal S. Salibi, the eminent Lebanese historian and author of *Crossroads to Civil War*, the job of the historian "is to tell the story, not to predict the outcome."

His book is the first direct account of contemporary events in Lebanon. In 178 pages, Dr. Salibi, professor of history at the American University of Beirut (AUB), makes a successful attempt at tracing the stages by which the Lebanese Republic, with its established order, advanced towards disintegration.

But he admits that the sequel of the story, whatever it may be, should better be left to the future, to which it legitimately belongs.

Salibi, well-known to Western readers on the Middle East for his studies on Lebanese history and politics, takes the present civil war in Lebanon back to 1958, when the first major civil strife in that Arab country took place. He elaborately traces subsequent developments which led to the 1975-76 civil war, without burdening the reader with minute details in which only veteran historians may be interested.

In general, he looks at the Lebanese civil war, which began on April 13, 1975, as a conflict on two levels:

First, the clashes among the Lebanese themselves who, as Christians and Moslems (or alternatively as conservatives and radicals), have been in serious disagreement over a number of domestic and regional issues for nearly two decades.

Second, the clashes between the Christian Lebanese and the Palestinian resistance

movement—that is, those Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon since Israel was created in 1948.

Like most students of Middle East affairs, Dr. Salibi recognizes the fact that the Lebanese crisis was not exclusively Lebanese. The conflict between Moslems and Christians, conservatives and radicals, Palestinians and Lebanese, "is inextricably connected internally with social pressures resulting from rapid urbanisation, and externally with the issue of the Middle Eastern settlement between the Arab states and Israel."

Many optimists in Lebanon argued that the Lebanese crisis would be settled with the election of a new head of state to succeed President Franjeh. For Dr. Salibi, however, the unrest is likely to continue, though in various proportions, until the overall Middle East question is finally resolved.

This is obviously due to the lack of confidence between the Palestinian resistance movement and certain Lebanese right-wing groups, particularly the Phalangist Party of Deputy Pierre Gemayel. How much tension will remain depends on how successful Lebanon's new President, Elias Sarkis, will be in restoring Lebanese-Palestinian confidence.

Crossroads to Civil War constitutes a serious attempt to expose the complex structural dynamics of the conflict in Lebanon in the form of an objective historical narrative, even though the author is generally regarded as a spiritual leader of the ultra-rightist factions of AUB's student body.

For anyone interested in gaining insight into the Lebanese situation, in its full domestic and regional context, *Crossroads to Civil War*—a study and a document—is indispensable reading.

Use this Convenient Order Form for books, etc.

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, editor, **THE TRANSFORMATION OF PALESTINE**. 522 pp. \$15.00. Northwestern University. Distinguished scholars reexamine the history and development of Palestine during the mandate period and the issues underlying the Arab-Israeli conflict. Our price, \$9.00.

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Sabri Jiryis, **THE ARABS IN ISRAEL**. 314 pp. \$12.50. Monthly Review Press. A new and much expanded version of Jiryis' previously

published 180-page study which bore the same title. A careful, well-documented, judicious work which gives an authoritative picture of the deprivation of the rights of the Arabs living in Israel. Our price, \$7.75.

Malcolm H. Kerr, ed., **THE ELUSIVE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**. 347 pp., plus maps. \$6.95 (paperback). State University of New York. Widely diverging views of six knowledgeable writers—a Syrian, an Israeli, a Canadian and three Americans. Each presents aspects of the Middle East conflict as he sees them. The one point of agreement is that the conflict has reached a dangerously explosive point and that some solution is imperative. Our price, \$4.50.

Felicia Langer, **WITH MY OWN EYES**. 192 pp. £ 2.50 (paperback). Ithaca Press. The author, a noted Israeli Communist lawyer, presents a chronological series of case histories which document examples of the seizure of land, confiscation of property, blowing up of houses, the torture of prisoners, arbitrary deportations and other violations of justice in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights. Our price, \$3.00.

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Kamal S. Salibi, **CROSSROADS TO CIVIL WAR, LEBANON 1958-1976**. 178 pp. \$15.00. Caravan Books. A history book containing a direct account of contemporary events, so current that it brings the reader up to March 1976. This timely study is extremely valuable for those interested in understanding what is happening in Lebanon today. Our price, \$10.00.

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The Link aims at maintaining contacts among Americans who believe that friendship with the people of the Middle East is essential to world peace, who would contribute to this goal by spreading understanding of the history, values, religions, culture and economic conditions of the Middle East, and who would—in this context—press for greater fairness, consistency and integrity in U.S. policy toward that area.

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