



The Toll of Commonplaces

Georges Corm

Understanding the nature of a conflict and of its actors is always a difficult task. And misperception of these two aspects by the international community may even have a not negligible influence on the unrolling of events and the possible solutions. The Lebanese conflict is a perfect example of a war interminably prolonged by the fact that in the absence of a pertinent analysis of the true responsibilities in the crisis, and in its perpetuation, the world public has given up the hope of understanding the dynamics and responsibilities of the confrontation, and hence the hope of influencing its evolution and outcome.

The abusive identification of the fighting parties with the various Lebanese "Christian" and "Muslim" religious communities arouses primitive emotions outside Lebanon, and facilitates biased analyses in the world press, in which the indigenous factors of the crisis are inflated and mythicised beyond any reasonable limit. They are then perceived as being autonomous, detached from the context of the regional crises and tensions, as well as from the brutal and bloody interventions by the larger actors at work on the regional stage of the Middle East.

With an approach that in fact turns upside down the real dynamics and the problems of the Lebanese conflict, the world public opinion has come to heavily negative conclusions on the whole of the Lebanese people, whose "irresponsible" behaviour is supposed to have created the conditions for the

endless perpetuation of the conflict. A "national understanding" among the "Christian" and "Muslim" factions is therefore being demanded with insistence by the international community, so that it can intervene effectively in order to put an end to the foreign occupations of the Lebanese territory. Worse still, these occupations would be justified by the "security imperatives" of the foreign occupants in the face of "Lebanese chaos", and perhaps even the division of the country or its federalisation would be pleaded for, on the basis of the existence of two different societies, the one Christian, the other Muslim.

To realise the inaccuracy of these two approaches, it is first necessary to compare them to those applied to other conflicts elsewhere in the world, of which certain ones are no less painful or atrocious than the Lebanese conflict. It will then be possible to undertake an in-depth analysis of the nature of Lebanese society and of its functioning, its insertion into the regional conflicts and finally, the principles for an exit from the Lebanese crisis which will only be possible in a more peaceful regional context, where at last the notion of law will have replaced the notions of security imperatives and *raison d'état* here implied.

Genetic failure?

A conflict cannot be studied in a closed jar, the observer taking at face value the declarations of the local combating factions and of the foreign actors who occupy the scene of the conflict or who intervene directly or indirectly. It has recently become an accepted practice among journalists and even among scholars to inform themselves as little as possible on the history and the culture of a country where a conflict is unfolding, on the thousand-and-one rebounds of the conflict over the course of years past, or to insert them into the regional and international geopolitics. To cover the violence "live", one must not have a memory, or if so, a very short one. One has to report faithfully the flamboyant proposals of the warriors, and to ignore the vast majority of the silent people who suffer the violence, but fight peacefully to keep alive a country that everything appears to be conspiring to destroy.

"Everything" i.e. the unbound power of certain states and local armed groups for which the international community has ended up recognising a "legitimate interest", to the detriment of all the principles of law and good sense. In this category fall the security imperatives advocated by Israel which occupies twelve per cent of the territory, and by Syria which holds seventy

per cent of it; the necessity in the past for armed Palestinian units to have a political and military basis in Lebanon; and finally, the desire of the Christian and Muslim communities to have their interests represented by the local militias, specialists in the mercenary terror, pillaging and rape of the Lebanese population in the service of regional policies of hegemony.

In Lebanon more than elsewhere, the reproduction and amplification by the media of the political positions of the various actors in the crisis veils the real stakes in the crisis, which are no other than regional and international, as we are going to see. Certainly, the existence of Christian and Muslim communities facilitates the task of the media, above all today, when it is trendy to revert back to "primal" or "fundamental" identities. Yet would anybody in his senses say that the partition of Poland in the eighteenth century was due merely to the disunion of its inhabitants? That the Spanish Civil War in 1936, where Europeans of all nationalities came to fight on one or the other side was a mere internal conflict, a local trap into which German, Italian, Russian, and French partisans would come to fall? That the countries of Central and Eastern Europe fell into the Soviet orbit because of the disunion of their populations and the indigenous victories of the local Communist parties? That Czechoslovakia was invaded in 1968 by Russian tanks only because the Czechs and the Slovaks could not reach an understanding in order to resist the invasion and the ensuing occupation?

And as far as Asia is concerned, would one dare stretch this impudence as far as to say that unfortunate Cambodia—whose tragic destiny since the middle of the 1960s strangely recalls that of Lebanon—is merely a victim of the disunity of its factions and of the mistakes of its ancient monarchical regime?

Everybody agrees that this very small country—another resemblance with Lebanon—was pummeled by the Vietnam War and then the Sino-Soviet rivalry, and that the Khmer Rouge was merely a criminal gang committing against its own people the worst crimes of humanity. Would one see Pol Pot, leader of the Khmer Rouge, consulted without end by Western governments, or even received officially in Western democracies, as have been the heads of the Lebanese militias since the beginning of the Lebanese conflict?

Turning to Afghanistan, prior to the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, would one have heard the French president affirm, as he has recently done on Lebanon,¹ that it is necessary to appease the internal tensions among the tribes and ethnic groups and to protect the minorities? Would one see the American

leaders recognise for the Soviet Union, as defender of the Afghan Communists, the right to maintain troops on Afghan territory or the right to back a national understanding and political reforms, that which has been recognised for Syria in Lebanon? Still with regard to Afghanistan, would one see Washington officially recognise the right of Iran, a Shia power, to take in its hands the destiny of the Afghan Shia tribes, while in Lebanon both the United States and France have let Israel have an important say in the Christian communities by way of the militias it arms and finances in the south (South Lebanese Army) and in the centre (Lebanese Forces) of the country? This not to mention the successive election of two Phalangist leaders that were in fact imposed at the head of the Lebanese State by the conjuncture of circumstances created by the Israeli invasion of 1982.

These few comparisons demonstrate to us the absurdities of the media and politics to which the Lebanese conflict is subjected. These absurdities only end up prolonging the suffering of the civil population and permitting the regional actors and their local armed proxies to consolidate their domination over a country practically in pieces. In reality, in Lebanon as in Cambodia, there is a consensus within the community of great nations to let the rules of law and of political morality be violated. Each will only intervene for or against the law to the extent to which it will be in its interest according to each circumstance. The territory of the country on which the conflict unrolls is thus no more than a playing field for the regional geopolitical game where each of the actors scores its points and affirms its influence to the detriment of others, behind the windbreak of local actors, simple toys in their hands.

The analysis of the Lebanese conflict shows that in fact the region in its entirety is in crisis, for the old order has collapsed without a new one having been able to replace it; in such a situation, the struggle among the world hegemonic powers for regional domination will concentrate itself all the more easily in one country or group of countries, for in this way, the danger of a global clash is avoided.

This has well been the case of the Indo-Chinese peninsula since the collapse of the French colonial order; it is the case of the Arab Near East since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Over there, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos with unending suffering for the Cambodians. Here Palestine and Lebanon, with unending suffering also for their populations. Evidently—as no one likes for the law to be openly mocked, or for violence to arrive only out of irrational

crimes against humanity and not out of causes which one could call just—the cloaking of the Lebanese suffering is done quite easily by eruditely decreeing the impossibility of intermixing Islam and Christianity, of making so many “ethnic groups” and “cultures” co-exist on one and the same territory, above all when the “interested parties” themselves do not succeed in understanding one another. This is the condemnation of the existence of Lebanon, by what could be called alleged “genetic” causes. In other words, the country is assumed to have been born with such malformations that it was condemned in advance to an ephemeral existence.²

In this way, all problems are resolved, consciences need not be tormented and the games of regional geopolitics can be played in all tranquillity behind the shield of commonplaces about the “internal tensions”, the threatened “minorities” and the ineffectiveness and injustice of a political regime for which no one from outside takes care to study the detail or look at the history. This is why it is necessary first to dissipate some of the principal mythologies about Lebanon.

Shrouded origins

In Lebanon there is no conflict of different peoples or cultures. There certainly exists a diversity of religious communities, but they form a *single society*, all having the same language, the same way of life, the same poets and the same music, the same cuisine and, on many points, the same social values as well as a common history. Any approach to the Lebanese crisis that starts from the assumption that there exist in Lebanon different peoples, ethnic groups or civilisations can only bring about the dismembering of Lebanon, thus resulting in the forced displacements of the population and other crimes against humanity like those which have taken place since 1975.

The culture in which Lebanese society has basked ever since the seventeenth century is an Arabo-Syrian culture. The opening up towards Europe by the Druze Emirs of the Mountain and the Maronite community in the seventeenth century followed by the diverse Western influences—including Russian—on this society evidently did not make the Christian communities an appendix of the West in the service of its emotions. It explains why the irrational and confounding appeal that was recently launched from certain French *milieus*, in the spirit of the Crusades, to come to the rescue of the Christian “minority” in Lebanon can be seen as a direct invitation to the local extremists abusively

invoking the name of Islam to throw Eastern Christians out of the Arab world as if they were a foreign body. This attitude was even more shocking, because the so-called "Muslim" zones of Lebanon have been the target of bombardments as intensive and murderous as the so-called "Christian" zones.

There is no majority or minority in Lebanon, but seventeen religious communities of which the five largest (Shia, Druze, Greek-Orthodox, Maronite, Sunni) have a demographic or historical importance which allows no talk at all of a minority. The Lebanese state is no more a modern artificial creation having had as its purpose the accommodation of Lebanese Christians than the other states of the region: actually, it is plausibly less.³ Leaving Egypt aside, the ensemble of the Arab states was born of the colonial piecing apart, in particular, of the notorious Sykes-Picot Accords of 1917⁴; Syria and Iraq contain more geographic, social and human elements of heterogeneity than Lebanon. Only the police-like and repressive nature of the political regimes of these two countries blocks the expression of this pluralism.

The Lebanese political regime that arose from its independence certainly has had its merits, in particular the climate of political liberty and cultural creativity. The social inequalities, like elsewhere in the region, the existence of certain posts in the high civil and military administrations reserved by certain Maronite leaders for themselves with the acquiescence of the notables of the other communities, cannot alone explain fifteen years of uninterrupted violence and the deployment of so many foreign military forces (Palestinians, Syrians, Israelis, Iranians) on such a minuscule territory of 10.452 square kilometres.

This is without counting the contingents of the different states and great powers that have come to Lebanon within the framework of international, regional or Western decisions: the United Nations Interim Force in southern Lebanon (UNIFIL, comprised of several contingents of the member states

Georges Corm, a professor at the Lebanese, American and Saint Joseph's Universities of Beirut, is also an economic and financial consultant in Paris. His most recent book is *L'Europe et l'Orient: De la balkanisation à la libanisation, histoire d'une modernité inaccomplie*, La Découverte, Paris, 1989.

stationed in the south of Lebanon as dictated by Resolution 425 of the Security Council), the Arab Dissuasion Force (including contingents from the diverse Arab countries along side the Syrian contingents, deployed by the decision of the Arab League countries) and the Multinational Interposition Force (deployed by the decision of the American and European governments). By itself, the state in Lebanon cannot be a real stake of internal politics, the country being stripped of all natural resources, its population of 2.5 million inhabitants being too weak, its territory too small.

The quarrels between the Lebanese leaders have, on the other hand, always been more lively in the domain of foreign policy, namely the country's position on the regional chessboard, and this has been so since the nineteenth century when the Middle East became the stake in the ferocious rivalries among the great powers, and remains the case today. The events that tore apart Lebanon in the last century between 1840 and 1860, following Egypt's occupation, were a reflection of the geopolitical confrontations between the colonial powers and the Ottoman Empire for the control of the Near East. It is the weakness and the small dimension as a country as well as the community-based pluralism that explain the irresistible impact of the external influences in Lebanon every time regional stability is seriously shattered.

Here again, it is necessary to introduce some further qualifications in order to have a correct and balanced perception of things. The performance of the Lebanese state cannot be judged according to some abstract and ideal standard; it must be seen in comparison with those of other Arab or Third World states. According to those who blame the present condition of Lebanon on the shortcomings of Lebanese public life before 1974—and sometimes mock dismissively at what Lebanon has once been—a viable Lebanese state should have been capable of eliminating all social inequalities and of harmonising all members of society to the point that each would have forgotten his religious specificities and his regional or familial attachments. It is an easy and hardly arguable remark that such a political system can exist only in the dreams of ideologues—a political system in which each person would, in the course of his existence, enjoy perfectly equal rights and opportunities, including an equal chance to hold the supreme power. And this is not all. According to such a view, Lebanon—in spite of its small size and inherent weakness, and even with its admittedly imperfect democracy, liberalism and pluralism—should have remained impenetrable by all the external influences in a region of the world toiled over by so many deep conflicts and antagonistic ideological currents.

In reality, the outside observer as well as the Lebanese parties who implicate the Lebanese regime to explain the conflict take as an implicit vantage point this ideal and imaginary political system which approaches closer to the totalitarian system than to the pluralist (yet naturally unequal) expression called for by any democracy. In any balanced approach it would instead be obvious to compare the Lebanese political regime that came out of the 1926 Constitution and the National Pact of 1943 with the police-state and predatory nature of the neighbouring Syrian regime. No one of those who condemns without appeal the Lebanese political regime seems to realise the absurdity of calling for reform towards more "democracy" or community equality in the strictest sense of the term, under the shadow of the Syrian dictatorship.

What is more, in spite of all the constraints related to its geopolitical environment, the Lebanese political system had evolved remarkably in the years preceding the conflict's outbreak, and had succeeded in eliminating all enduring community polarisation in the local political struggle, and in causing the emergence of a class consciousness.⁵ New personalities had appeared at a very fast pace in parliament, and the elections of 1972—the last ones the country has known—saw the success of several of Christian and Muslim politicians representing strong secular tendencies.⁶ Similarly, the powers of the prime minister, a position always held by a Sunni Muslim, had not ceased to expand since 1943. In what adds up to a *de facto* change in the constitution, it thus became almost impossible for the president to carry out any policy that did not have the consent of the prime minister. Hence the feasibility of trans-community government has already been proven. Truthfully, neither the institutions of Lebanon nor the fibre of its social fabric have caused the conflict, but rather it is the implacable logic of the ominous regional rivalries and conflicts that have precipitated themselves with violence onto the land of an open, tolerant and pluralist society.

Hegemony and legitimacy

The setting up of the local militias, as well as the sophisticated military means which were provided them from outside, occurred on the occasion of a worsening of the regional instability following the Arab armies' defeat by Israel in the war of June 1967. Because of this defeat, what was still left of the Palestinian territories, the West Bank and Gaza, was occupied by the Israeli army, barring any hopes for the diaspora Palestinians to have a country of their own, but by the means of forming armed movements.

It is in this context that the armed Palestinian movements first appeared in Jordan and in Lebanon. The liberal nature of the Lebanese regime and the sympathies of a good part of the population—including numerous Christians—as well as the massive support received from the Soviet Union and the Arab countries (Syria in particular) made of southern Lebanon the only Arab front open to action against Israel. Immediately in 1968, the Israeli response—an air raid on the Beirut airport destroying the entire Lebanese civilian fleet—struck like lightning (a raid which would incite the anger of General de Gaulle who saw the risks of destabilisation in Lebanon that this implied). For twenty-one years or so and without interruption, Lebanon has been subjected to the almost weekly Israeli bombardments on its civilian populations—Lebanese and Palestinian—and to two ravaging invasions (1978 and 1982) from which has resulted the permanent occupation of 850 square kilometres along its border with Israel: the number of victims reaches at least thirty thousand, without even speaking of the material destruction. These violent actions in Lebanon have been perpetuated despite the resolutions of the United Nations, in particular Resolutions 425, 508 and 509 of the Security Council. UNIFIL has not been able to accomplish its mission in southern Lebanon, due to obstacles hindering its deployment placed by the South Lebanese Army, created, equipped and positioned by the Israeli army.

It was with the reassurance and support of the West—materialised by the dispatch of American, French, Italian and English contingents of the Multinational Interposition Force—that the Israeli invasion of 1982 permitted the installation of a Phalangist power in Lebanon under the hegemony of the Gemayyel family. The partisan policies followed during this period accelerated the disintegration of the country and the pillaging of its economic institutions. The Phalangist militia, which is partly reincarnated today in the Lebanese Forces, supported by Israel and most recently by Iraq, at first was trained in Jordan and supported by Saudi Arabia. In 1975-1976, its avowed goal was the liquidation of the Palestinian left (the battle of Tell el Zataar), where the Phalangists received aid from Syria, as a consequence permitting the penetration of Lebanon by Syrian troops on a large scale.

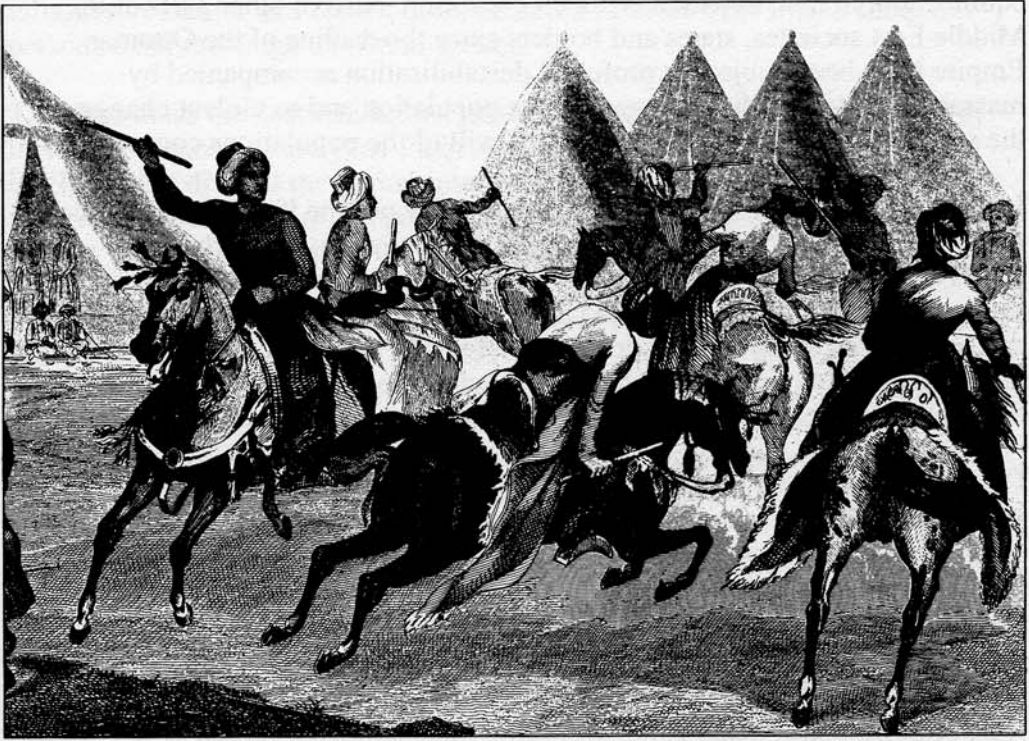
The Syrian regime in this way managed to attain the status of a power with regional responsibilities, which it seeks to maintain at any price by the control of both Lebanon and the PLO and through an unnatural alliance with the Iranian Islamic Republic, which was expected to contain the emergence of the rival Iraqi power. Syria thus has introduced the Iranian Pasdarans into

Lebanon, and they, in turn, have set up and deployed the so-called "Shia" Hezbollah militia. The Syrian army directly supplies the Amal militia, another so-called "Shia" militia, as well as the brigades of the Lebanese army that are located in Syrian controlled zones, and which it launched between 1985 and 1988 into an implacable war against the armed pro-Arafat movements in Lebanon, the so-called "wars of the camps". Let us also recall the martyring of the city of Tripoli in the north of Lebanon between 1982 and 1985, the occasion of fighting between pro-Arafat and Islamic integralists barricaded in the city on one side, and Syrian troops on the other.

The Syrian policy in Lebanon is in many aspects convergent with the Israeli one. Both have set out to satellise to their advantage the whole country (Israel with the 1982 invasion and the subsequent stillborn accord of May 17, 1983; Syria in 1985 with the unsuccessful Geneva and Lausanne Conferences and the Tripartite Agreement of Damascus, this also stillborn), aimed at perpetuating their destabilising influence and at maintaining, via the militia system, the fractioning of the country. Certain regions of the country are even under Syrian-Israeli condominium, namely the zones of the south controlled by the Amal militia, and in particular the Shuf, where the militia of the Progressive Socialist Party, a so-called "Druze" militia, entertains relations with the Israelis (through Druze officers of the Israeli army), as well as with the Syrian army.

For some Lebanese, the militias are an instrument permitting them to amass material fortunes for themselves and to acquire an internationally recognised role. Their action is first and foremost mercenary, to the benefit of external forces. They impose themselves on the population by the terror and the bloodshed they bring, without the least moral authority capable of stopping them. Even when they are presumed to be on the same side, their quarrels and rivalries sow death everywhere. (Recently, 500 were killed in one month of fighting between Amal and Hezbollah, both of which are so-called "Shia"; a similar number was killed in fighting between rival factions of the so-called "Christian" militia in January 1986.) Obviously, however, most of the time it is the civilians who are the victims.

Those well-intentioned outside forces that now and then ask the Lebanese to come to some agreement among themselves as a pre-condition to receiving help in solving the crisis, should pay a great deal of attention to two elements. First, to the question of identifying the "legitimate" representatives of the population who could arrive at an agreement on the reforms to undertake.



Second, to the place of Lebanon on the regional chessboard, in particular, to the relations with Syria and the problem of the Israeli political and military presence on Lebanese territory. Can the militias be considered “legitimate” representatives after all the murderous and destructive violence for which they are responsible? Are the deputies elected in 1972—a large number of whom have died since—still sufficiently representative to impose their point of view on the factions? One cannot fail to keep these fundamental questions in mind in order to examine a possible solution to the Lebanese crisis.

Legacy of 1917

The future of Lebanon is tied to the solution of the conflicts which tear this region of the world apart. The Lebanese conflict is not the product of a crisis of the Lebanese society or of a genetic malformation. It is merely the expression of regional contradictions, of the collapse of the regional system of

equilibrium. In this, Lebanon is not an exception. Also in other parts of the Middle East societies, states and borders since the decline of the Ottoman Empire have been subject to profound destabilisation accompanied by massacres, to forced displacement of the population and to violent changes in the social fabric, in total disregard of the will of the populations concerned.

Let us first recall that neither the Armenian state nor the Kurd state provided for in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 were able to emerge; similarly, the preservation of the Greek character of the city of Smyrne provided for in the same treaty could not be translated into practice. The causes of the well known and terrible suffering brought on by these failures are too complex to be analysed here, but the responsibility of Western powers and of their armies during the course of the First World War cannot be overlooked in silence.⁷

One will note on this subject the responsibility of France, mandatory power over Syria, in the cession to Turkey of Antioch (called Sandjak of Alexandrette), a region with an Arab majority including many Christian Arabs: this cession would bring about the progressive displacement of the population. The destruction of the Arab character of Palestine and the forced migrations of the population in 1948 and then in 1967 to make way for the colonisation of the territory by the Western-supported European Askenaze Jews is another of the great phenomena of destabilisation, source of conflicts and tensions in the region.

Closer in time, the Iran-Iraq war culminated in the destruction of several highly civilised cities, among them Basrah in Iraq, the great powers providing the belligerents with quantities of the most sophisticated weapons. Let us also recall that in 1983, one hundred-fifty thousand Christians of the Shuf region in Lebanon were displaced by force out of their ancestral territories due to actions by the Israeli army—then the occupying force—in open violation of the Geneva Conventions. Contingents of the Multinational Force, which were supposed to protect the civil populations, were only twenty kilometres away from the place where the drama was unfolding, but remained passive. In 1985, eighty thousand Christians of the south region equally would be expelled under similar circumstances, but in 1975-1976, the Phalangist militia had also forced the departure of some seventy thousand Muslims from the working class quarters of Beirut under its control; furthermore, the coalition of the leftist Lebanese parties and armed Palestinian movements had massacred more than three thousand

villagers of Damur and forced the evacuation of more than fifteen thousand persons from this large Christian section.

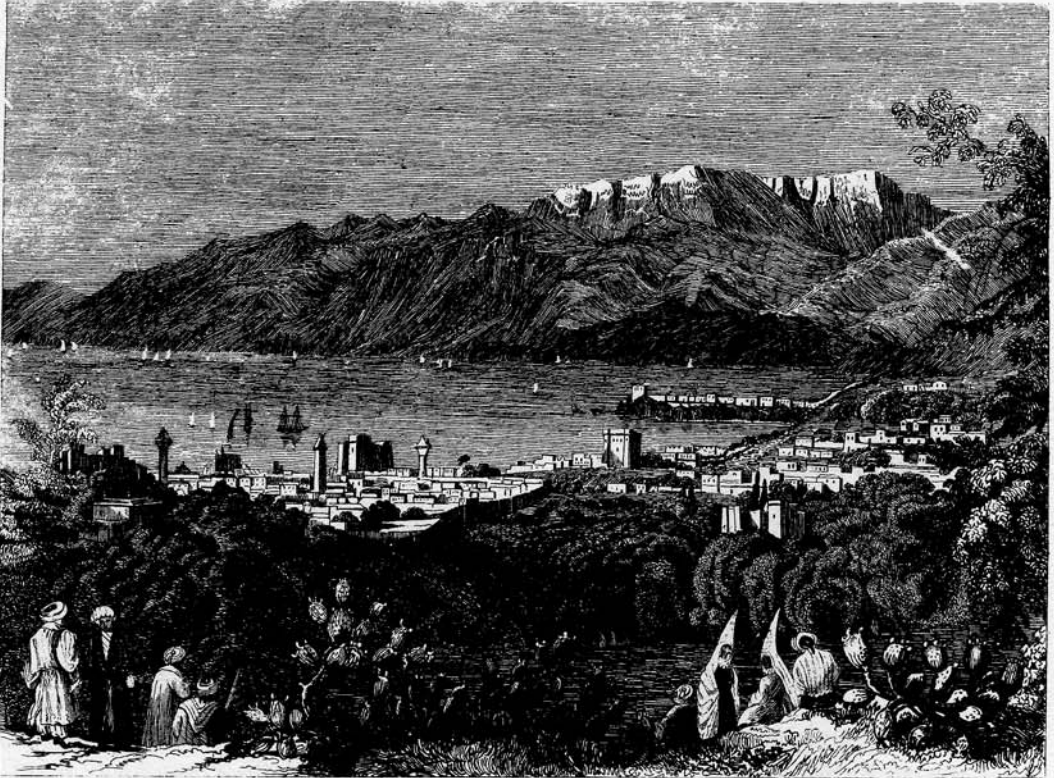
The door to all the destabilisations that we are currently experiencing had in fact been opened by the Sykes-Picot Accords of 1917 between France and England, that divided the region into little states without paying the least attention to the wishes of the population, which probably would have preferred to have been gathered into a unified Arab kingdom.

The present destabilisation arises from several factors at the same time. First of all, there is the Russian-American rivalry for control over the Middle East as well as the inter-Arab rivalries for hegemony over the Arab League. Because of this rivalry among the Arab countries, they have not been capable of countering effectively in a collective manner the external aggressions that culminate in the loss of territories and in the forced displacements of populations, nor of escaping from the destabilising actions of the great powers. Additional factors have been the various Israeli policies intent on the denial of the existence of Palestine, and therefore the division of any Arab bloc of solidarity. Furthermore, there has been the rise of the diverse Islamic extremisms, facilitated by the state of semi-anarchy and of economic crisis into which the region has plunged, in the end only strengthening Israeli power. Nor can one fail to mention the policies of fundamentalist Islam practiced officially by states like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, policies institutionalised by different organs of the Conference of Islamic States. These fundamentalist policies, even if they are of an inspiration opposite to that of the Iranian doctrines, create the conditions which end up favouring the destabilising actions led by Iran on a world scale in the name of Islam, without any serious reaction on the part of the Western powers or the Soviet Union.

The Middle East is a region of the world where none of the possible sets of rules for the political game can still be applied. Those from the Cold War which prevailed during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s have disappeared without having been replaced by any others. The different regional powers, Israel at the head, but also Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia, continue to be over-armed by the great powers, whereas international concertation is weak and above all slower than elsewhere in the zones of conflict such as southern Africa. The recent painful events in Lebanon prove the slow pace of the political processes in the region, and so does the endless daily flow of Palestinian blood that has gone on for the past eighteen months, under

the blows of Israeli repression, and the Iran-Iraq cease-fire that, one year after its beginning, still has not been consolidated by true negotiations of peace.

One must turn to the evidence: there does not seem to be any serious will on the part of the great powers to solve the conflicts or at least to reduce the tensions in the Middle East. They only offer soothing words but no concrete act capable of exercising an effective pressure on the principal actors, so



that elementary rules of law and morality are respected in the regional as well as the internal order of each country. It is, however, by this path and by no other one that a better order can be designed in the Middle East, without which one can hardly see how Lebanon truly could be restored in its integrity.

References

- ¹ "The continuity of the French policy has always been to appease the internal tensions in Lebanon... France is the friend of all Lebanese, but, today, it is the Christians whose lives and security are threatened, not to speak of the existence of Lebanon ... Whatever may be the threatened minority, we do not accept that this minority, in Lebanon or elsewhere, be sacrificed" (Le Monde, April 7, 1989).
- ² See on this subject G. Corm, "Mythes et réalités du conflit libanais" in *Cosmopolitiques*, Number 6, March 1989.
- ³ See on this point G. Corm, *Géopolitique du conflit libanais*, Paris: La Découverte, 1986.
- ⁴ Accords named for the two French and British ministers at the time, culminating in the separation of the Near East into French and British spheres of influences, against the promises made by England to Sherif Hussein of Mecca to allow the creation of a large Arab kingdom in return for the Arab revolt against the Turks.
- ⁵ See C. Dubar and S. Nasr, *Les classes sociales au Liban*, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1976.
- ⁶ On all these points, see the remarkable article by I. Harik "The Economic and Social Factors in the Lebanese Crisis", *Journal of Arab Affairs*, April 1982, as well as our contribution "Le système institutionnel libanais" in *Liban: espoirs et réalités*, under the direction of Basma Kodmani-Darwish, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Paris, 1987.
- ⁷ On this point see Georges Corm, *L'Europe et L'orient. De la balkanisation à la libanisation, histoire d'une modernité inaccomplie*, Paris, La Découverte, 1989.