

SOCIAL CONFLICTS AND CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON

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Annotation: This article analyzes the social conflicts that have arisen in Lebanon and their causes that led to the Civil War. The article analyzes factors such as interconfessional balance in Lebanese society, uncertainties in the political system, external interventions and economic downturn. Attention will also be paid to the Civil War process, its results and the reforms necessary for the stability of the country.

Keywords: Lebanon, social conflict, civil war, confessions, political system, external influence, stability.

In accordance with the National Pact of 1943, which was a compromise between the Muslim and Christian communities after the declaration of Lebanese independence, it was envisaged that the basis of the structure of the state would be based on the principle of confessionalism, that is, the religious-collective principle. In particular, parliamentary seats were divided between Christians (among them maronians, orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, adherents of the Armenian-Gregorian church) and Muslims (Sunnis, Shias, Druze) in a strictly 6:5 ratio [Joseph Chamie 1976/77 World affairs journal vol.139, No. 3 pp.171-188, The Lebanese civil war: an investigation into the causes]. At the same time, the number of Deputies of individual religious communities was clearly indicated (of which there are 16 in Lebanon). The three main seats were allocated as follows:

- first, according to the Constitution, only maronians, who had exclusive powers, could become president of the Republic;
- secondly, the post of Prime Minister was given to Sunni Muslims;
- finally, the representative of the Shiites became the one who holds the position of Speaker of the parliament.

In addition, confessionalism literally penetrated and negatively affected all spheres of socio-economic, political and cultural life of Lebanese society. The collective-religious conflict has become one of the most complex domestic political factors in Lebanon, especially considering that many communities have gained first political organizations and then armed groups. The national pact strengthened the unequal position of the Lebanese communities, which gave preference to representatives of Christian denominations, mainly maronians, in political, financial, economic and some other areas. They also held command posts in the army and security service. At certain stages in the development of Lebanese society, the religious-collective compromise served as a pledge of peace, but the legalization of the confessional system led to a deterioration in the political, socio-economic and cultural situation over time.

The Lebanese Christian elite was traditionally associated with the West, primarily with France and the Vatican; Shiites naturally focused on the shia states - Iran and others. Together, these factors set the stage for an increase in confrontation in society, in which case the existence of Lebanon as a single and independent state was threatened.

The rapid growth of the Muslim part of the country's population, the influx of Palestinians, as well as the high birth rate in Muslim families (48.8 percent of the Muslim population on the eve of the adoption of the National Pact of 1943 in 1975, when the civil war broke out-62.5%, and at the end of the war-about 64%)[Samir it assumed that the system would become a source of constant tension.

The Palestinian problem gradually gained a prominent place in Lebanon. Thousands of Palestinian refugees found shelter on Lebanese soil, and after the Jordanian events of 1970, Lebanon became the mainstay of the Palestinian Liberation Movement (FATH). The 1969 Cairo agreement between the Lebanese government and the Palestinian Liberation Movement, brokered by the Egyptian president, became the legal basis for the military-political activities of the organization in Lebanon. In almost thirty years after the first arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949, the number of Palestinians in Lebanon increased from 110,000 to 400,000[Michael C. Hudson Middle East Journal, vol.32, No. 3 pp.261-278: The Palestinian factor in the Lebanese civil war.]. Here, unlike other arab states, the "Palestine factor" became one of the important catalysts due to a number of reasons. Reaction to the Palestinian presence in Lebanon was mixed. The escalation of tensions around the Palestine problem coincided with the intensification of the social crisis that swept across different areas of the country in the late 60s and early 70s of the last century, leading to a sharp polarization of Lebanese society. The national patriotic forces of Lebanon (NPF), a progressive socialist party within it (PSP, prominent social and political figure in 1949, led by Druze community leader K.Composed by Jumblatt), the Lebanese Communist Party and other left-wing organizations sided with the Palestinians. At the same time, a number of Muslim groups came out in support of Palestinians.

The right-wing Christian bloc held a completely opposite view on the issue and included the "Kataib" (Phalangists), the "National Bloc", the Kamil Shamun National liberal Party, etc. Fearing any change in the existing balance of power, the leaders of this bloc in society took an anti-Palestinian position. They wanted to blame the country for falling into a deep crisis only on the existence of Palestine, while ignoring other serious reasons for the tension in the country. They hoped to withdraw Lebanon from the then pan-arab (anti-Israeli) position. The situation was aggravated by Israeli aggression against Lebanon, which had become the object of constant provocations and armed attacks since 1968. The south of Lebanon in particular suffered. The Israeli invasion there resulted in many civilian casualties. At the same time, Lebanese right-wing forces defended Tel Aviv's aggressive actions, calling them measures in response to Palestinian resistance efforts. It should be noted that Palestinians were not granted Lebanese citizenship and lived in southern Lebanon. This territory also became the base of FATH, and the strikes that were being carried out on Israel were carried out from this territory.



Lebanese Civil War on the map

(Source wideangle.com)

The prelude to the Lebanese Civil War was the armed conflict that took place with the support of right-wing Christian forces, sometimes the Lebanese army, led by the Kataib party (in violation of the 1969 Cairo agreement). In this situation, Palestinian brigades are supported by leftists. In early 1974, Israeli aircraft began to mount air strikes

deeper into Lebanese territory. At the same time, pressure from outside by Israel caused the situation to escalate. By the spring of 1975, an explosive situation had developed in Lebanon: One Spark was enough to activate a civil war flame. The spark was the events of April 13, 1975, when a phalanx on the outskirts of Beirut attacked a bus carrying Palestinians and Lebanese, resulting in 27 deaths-the beginning of a large-scale armed conflict in Lebanon that escalated into a long civil war. Lebanon is divided into two camps of religious affiliation. The Kataib and its allies controlled Christian territories, while the National Patriot bloc controlled mostly Muslim territories, including the capital Beirut. The National Patriots included the Progressive Socialist Party, the Lebanese Communist Party and the neighbouring Organization of the left Communist movement, as well as the pro-Syrian and pro-Iraqi organizations of the Baath Party, The Independent Nazarene Movement (pro-Egyptian). In the creation and leadership of this alliance, the Druze leader K. Jumblatt played a big role. The Lebanese Patriot alliance (LNM) acted in close alliance with the Lebanese Democratic Unity Party (PYD). They were joined by the coalition of right - wing forces-P.The aforementioned Kataib party led by Jamail, the Kamil Shamun National liberal Party, the extremist “Cedar Defenders Front” and others resisted. This camp was supported by the United States and Israel.

In August 1975, the rightists (LNM) bloc promoted a program of “democratic reform of the political regime”, reflecting Lebanon's vision of a way out of the long-running crisis[Muadth Malley-the Lebanese civil war and the Taif accord: conflict and compromise engendered by institutionalized Sectarianism, The history teacher, vol.52, No.1 (November 2018), pp. 121-159.]. Its main proposals included: the implementation of fundamental reforms, the improvement of Lebanon's political and state system; democratic changes in the Constitution; the abolition of the confessionalism system; the “regulation” of Lebanese-Palestinian relations; the solution of pressing socio-economic problems; the struggle against the domination of foreign capital and attempts at external intervention in the Internal Affairs of Lebanon. This document for the first time promoted the demand for the elimination of the confessional system, the existence of which predetermined the transition of political divisions in the country to a religious-collective channel. Given the surviving demographic processes (i.e. changes in number ratios between different religious communities that have occurred since 1943), it has been proposed to achieve only by revising the proportions of representation in public bodies. Muslims outnumbered the Christian population and sought to ensure decent representation in the central state bodies and were in favour of increasing the role and swing of the government and prime minister in the life of the country. The maronians did everything to maintain privileges in the political and other spheres.

This program was rejected by the Christian Leadership and did not receive the support of traditional Muslim leaders. By the end of the summer of 1975, hostilities were in full swing. The scale of the conflict expanded to include more and more populated areas. Soon the fighting in the areas around the city spread to Beirut. The capital was divided into two parts, which were ruled by the warring parties - Eastern (Christian) and Western (mainly Muslim). Fierce fighting ensued. In early 1976, right-wing Christian forces launched a large-scale offensive against Muslim neighborhoods and Palestinian refugee camps, leaving them under several months of siege. The situation was complicated by the army's involvement in the conflict. In the Army, as in Lebanese society in general, there was a division along religious lines, divided into Muslim and Christian parts, only certain military units retained a neutral position. In the spring of 1976, the military initiative passed into the hands of the LNM, as well as achieving significant success: by June 1976 they controlled 82% of the country's territory, in which 75% of the population lived. The events in Lebanon were closely followed by neighboring Syria, which followed the principle of “special relations” with Lebanon. Since the beginning of the war, Syria has sent mediation

missions to Beirut, repeatedly proposing its own plans to resolve the conflict but, due to the intolerance of the warring parties, they ended in vain. Syria was directly involved in the Lebanese conflict on June 1, 1976, on the pretext of helping end the Civil War, when the dominance of the forces was clearly on the side of the LNM. Under these circumstances, the penetration of Syrian troops greatly complicated the situation. Beginning to weaken the LNM forces, the Syrian Army gradually occupied the Biko Valley in the center of the country, Tripoli in the North and areas in the South. Such a development of events increased the activity of right-wing Christian forces, which gave new blows to the "Patriots" units. Some time later, the presence of a Syrian military contingent (35,000 men) in Lebanon was legitimized by an Arab League (October 1976) decision: according to it, Syrians formed the basis of the "Arab peacekeeping force" (MSF). In addition to Syria, the "Arab peacekeeping force" included units from Saudi Arabia, South and North Yemen, the UAE, Sudan, and Libya. By November, hostilities had ceased [Fred H. Lawson Syria's intervention in the Lebanese civil war, 1976: a Domestic conflict explosion, International organization, Vol.38, No.3 (Summer 1984), pp.451-480.]. The outcome of the first half-year war in Lebanon was the threat of major human losses, material damage, and a division along the religious lines spread across the country. At the moment, the reasons that led to the armed conflict were not eliminated. The LNM and PYD bloc weakened significantly, although in 1977 the cooperation of these forces with Damascus was officially restored. Another strong blow to the national patriotic forces came on March 16, 1977, when the recognized leader of the bloc, chairman of the Progressive Socialist Party, K. Jumblatt was given when he was killed en route from his camp on Mount Lebanon. The stabilization of the situation was further hindered by Israeli actions that continued to strike regularly at PYD positions and refugee camps in southern Lebanon. This sector, according to one of the country's prime ministers, became "Lebanon's blood-draining wound".

On June 4, 1982, Israel launched a large-scale army operation in Lebanese territory and set itself three tasks: to destroy the PYD in Lebanon militarily, to put pressure on the Lebanese on the issue of Middle East regulation, and to defeat the Syrian troops remaining here [Kristen E. Schulze Israeli crisis decision making in the Lebanon war: Group madness or individual ambition? Indiana university press vol.3. No.2. Law and the transformation of the Israel Society (Fall, 1998), pp.215-237 (23 pages).]. The movement received condemnation from the world community. However, Washington's position prevented the effective use of the UN mechanism to stop aggression. The Israeli invasion did not bring decent resistance from the Arab regimes, who were unable to provide any real assistance to Lebanon. The defense of Western Beirut lasted 78 days; here, in a military alliance, lightly armed fighters - Palestinians and Lebanese "patriots" - fought against the regular Israeli army. The Syrian army showed passivity in the early phase of the operation, receiving a series of intense Israeli attacks from land and air.

Eventually, the Palestinian units were forced to leave Beirut along with leader Yosir Arafat, and the FATH headquarters was moved from here to Tunisia. In August 1982, "international forces" were introduced into Lebanon (mainly U.S. forces that had been sharply activated in the Middle East since the second half of the 1970s and their NATO allies), where they remained until March 1984. The events that took place caused enormous damage to Lebanon, deepening its internal crisis and dramatically changing the balance of power within the country in favor of the right-wing Christian bloc. On 23 August 1982, the parliament, assembled in an almost complete composition, declared the son of the founder of the Kataib party and its "field commander", Bashir Gemayel (E. Sarkis instead) voted to elect the president of the country-but, he was killed a little later. On 23 September, however, parliament appointed his brother Amin Gemayel to the highest office. For the first time in Lebanese history, the highest power was in the hands of one of

the leaders of the Falangist party (once created under the guise of a Francoist organization in pre-war Spain). In those days, Falangists organized a bloody massacre in two Palestinian camps in Beirut - Sabra and Shatila. At this time, the figures of this party had held important positions of power, such as commander-in-chief and head of the Lebanese security service. However, Israel failed to achieve its goals. The PYD did not cease to exist and, although its forces were significantly damaged, maintained its military presence in Lebanon along with Syria. On May 17, 1983, Israel and the United States proposed to Lebanon a treaty that essentially undermined the country's sovereignty, the so-called "peace treaty". The treaty was terminated by the Lebanese government on 5 March 1984.

The situation in the country remained tense due to the ongoing clashes in Lebanon and the presence of the Israeli army. However, the Israeli army left the strategically important Chouf mountain area in September 1983[Kristen E.Schulze Israeli crisis decision making in the Lebanon war: Group madness or individual ambition? Indiana university press vol.3. No.2. Law and the transformation of the Israel Society (Fall,1998), pp.215-237 (23 pages).]. From that moment on, the Marine Corps and the US 6th Fleet began to participate in the conflict on the side of government troops and right-wing Christian groups. By June 1985, Israeli forces had left most of southern Lebanon and remained in a "security zone" along the border, where the situation was controlled by General Antoine Lahad, who led the "south Lebanon Army" after Saad Haddod's death in 1984.

The country saw an intensification of the trend of nomarization, and the process of formation of confessional cantons-i.e., politically and economically isolated areas-began. Since the late 80s, the Christian Canton has emerged, the Druze and shia zones have become isolated and thus a real threat to the existence of Lebanon as a single state. A number of arab states resumed mediation efforts to resolve the Lebanese conflict. In may 1989, under the auspices of the Arab League, a committee was formed on the Lebanese question, consisting of the Kings of Saudi Arabia and Morocco and the president of Algeria. The purpose of this committee was to achieve national reconciliation in Lebanon, where the conflict was prolonged. On their initiative, a conference of Lebanese parliamentarians was organized in Toif, Saudi Arabia, with the participation of 62 Lebanese parliamentarians (the last parliamentary elections in Lebanon at the time were held in 1972 and since then the mandate of Deputies has been repeatedly extended). There, in November 1989, they signed the "Charter of National Accord" [Samir Maksidi, Richard Sadaka: the Lebanese civil war, 1975-90, Understanding civil war: evidence and analysis, World Bank]. Its basic rules can be summarized as follows:

- first, the modernization of the confessional system, which will increase the inequality of societies and the disproportionate development of the Lebanese regions, will interfere with national consolidation;
- secondly, the disarmament of paramilitary groups in order to ensure the security of the country;
- thirdly, to solve the problem of the existence of Syria.

The"Nizam "specified that the withdrawal of the Syrian contingent (first from Beirut and then from other parts of the country) would take place" when favorable conditions arise". In may 1991, Syria signed a "treaty on friendship and cooperation" while remaining faithful to the concept of special relations with its neighbor (based on the common fate of two fraternal peoples "according to the phrase officially adopted in Damascus). The agreement in the category was in many ways close to the "tripartite agreement" made in Damascus in 1985 by the leaders of the then three

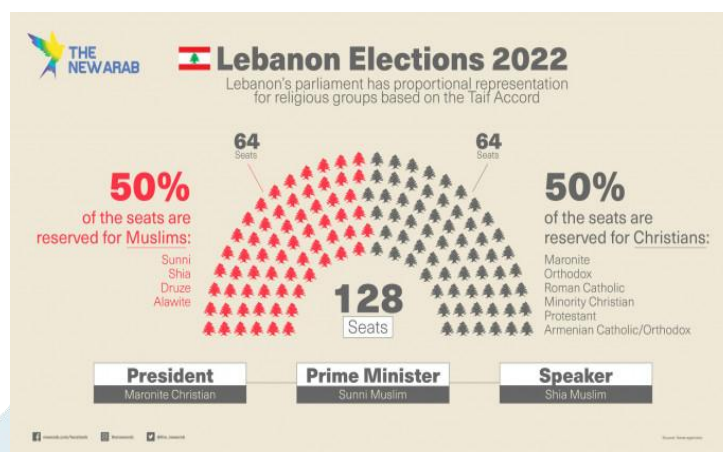
main rival Lebanese parties, the LNM, Amal and the Lebanese government forces (Christian right). It aims to end the Civil War and bring about fundamental reforms in the country. However, the implementation of these was later opposed by right-wing Christian forces. With this, another real opportunity to end the armed conflict in Lebanon was missed.

The Treaty of Toif ended a thirteen-year civil war that left Lebanon, once a prosperous arab state, in ruins. Essentially a complex set of compromises, the deal received the approval of almost all Lebanese teams. But then, general Michel Aun, commander of the rebel Christian army group, who received financial and military assistance from Baghdad, an uncompromising opponent of the Damascus leadership, opposed the treaty. Aun tried to transfer his leadership to the entire Christian society. In January 1990, there were fierce clashes between an army of twenty thousand loyal to him and Lebanese Forces recognizing the agreement in the category. More than 1,200 soldiers were killed as a result.

There was also another split between Muslims: in parallel, there were battles between Amal and the pro-Iranian Hezbollah party for leadership in the shia community. The influence of external forces was increasingly evident in the Lebanese situation. Regional contradictions were introduced and escalated into Lebanese soil, or rather into society. The position of various political and religious-collective forces was directly influenced by the situation in the arab world, the nature of relations between different arab countries, the presence and depth of inter-Arab contradictions. In October 1990, Lebanese government troops with the support of Syrian units put an end to the Michel Aun uprising. He stopped receiving aid from Iraq in connection with events in the Persian Gulf and surrendered. First he sought political asylum and took refuge from the French embassy, then fled to France. Thus ended another phase of the Lebanese crisis.

At a later stage of development in Lebanon, a weak consensus emerged in the form of an occasional disturbed balance of power[Muadth Malley-the Lebanese civil war and the Taif accord: conflict and compromise engendered by institutionalized Sectarianism, The history teacher, vol.52, No.1 (November 2018), pp. 121-159.]. The search for a formula of national harmony in the Livandek state inevitably involves the elimination of the traditional system, the implementation of radical reforms, the abolition of privileges for others, and for others, the elimination of inconveniences, and this is a painful process that lasts a long time. It is not surprising that it was not possible to solve the problem of internal political stability later.

Structure of the Lebanese parliament according to the terms of the “Treaty of Taif



The confessional system of government was partially suppressed by amendments to the Constitution (1991) and electoral laws (1992), but continued to exist in a reduced form. In addition, the development of events has repeatedly confirmed the thesis that the solution of the Lebanese crisis largely depends on the effectiveness of solving other regional problems, first of all, the problems of the Middle East.

The Lebanese Civil War, which lasted from 1975 to 1990, ended with the signing of the Taif agreement in 1989. The agreement was made in Taif, Saudi Arabia, aimed at restoring political stability by redistributing power among various Lebanese religious sects. This restructured the political system, increasing the powers of a Sunni Muslim prime minister and a Shia Muslim parliamentary speaker while reducing the influence of the Maronite Christian president. The agreement called for the demilitarization of all armed forces except Hezbollah and the withdrawal of foreign forces, notably the Syrian army, from Lebanon.

The Taif agreement ended the Civil War and laid the groundwork for political reform. However, this agreement strengthened sectarian divisions, which still influence the political landscape of Lebanon today. Syria's military presence in Lebanon continued until 2005. Despite the problems, the Taif agreement was an important step towards peace and reconstruction, laying the groundwork for Lebanon's recovery and reconciliation efforts. The end of the war marked a new era for Lebanon, and this period of progress is marked by political complications.

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