

Chibli Mallat

March 2221
Lebanon's Cedar Revolution
An essay on non-violence and justice



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To my son Tanner,
when I am so
proud

Chicki N. Pitt
28 Feb. 2007

March 2221
Lebanon's Cedar Revolution

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* *Gubernare* is the latin origin of the term *govern*.

Chibli MALLAT

March 2221
Lebanon's Cedar Revolution
An essay on non-violence and justice

Gubernare

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Presidential Choices, Beirut 1998.

The Middle East into the 21st Century, Garnet, Reading 1996.

The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhamad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf, and the Shi'i International, Cambridge University Press (Middle East Library), 1993.

*For Tamer and Wajdi
who can now be proud of Lebanon*

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Preface

A year and a half after the Cedar Revolution broke out, I heard the following story from a friend watching with a group of colleagues a DVD about the large historic gathering of March 14, 2005. At one point, intrigued by a heavy silence, he looked around. Every one was quietly crying. For all those who were there, and believed in a different future for the country, was the acknowledgment of failure.

At the time of concluding this essay, in gilded exile in the fall of 2006, the severe setbacks to the Revolution can hardly be gainsaid. The question we owe ourselves, and that immense movement of civilization that was so hopeful on March 14, 2005, is how the Revolution was won and lost.

On February 14, 2006, the first commemoration of Rafiq Hariri's assassination, suddenly things looked up again for a few days. By February 2006, my vision of the Revolution had gone from that of advisor, 'public intellectual' and foot soldier, to actor, as candidate to the presidency. This is a different type of story, personal then collective. I try here to detach my own political action from the appreciation of the Cedar Revolution in the larger course of human history.

This essay was started as a first historical sketch of the dramatic developments in Lebanon in 2005, on the occasion of two seminars conducted at Yale University and at Princeton University on 7 and 11 November 2005. At Yale, the talk was part of the Middle East conversations at the Law School's Orville Schell Centre on International Human Rights. It focused on justice in the light of the UN investigation under way for

the assassination of Rafiq Hariri. At Princeton, the reflection centered on how a historian will 'read' the Revolution with the appropriate distance. I am particularly grateful for Paul Kahn and John Borneman for hosting the respective occasions.

In its own way, this little book is a militant essay. It is also how we win our Revolution back.

Princeton, January 2007

i. Meanings

The political contradictions on the Lebanese and regional Middle Eastern scenes appear complicated. They aren't as intractable as they seem. With some determination and method, policies and events can be comprehended, and they are largely understood by those who live them. The Lebanese Cedar Revolution is no different. In the web of historical and cultural legacies – institutional straitjackets; sociological structures; professional and class interests; economic yearnings, individual idiosyncrasies and collective logics; serendipitous events, including mass rallies, sudden outbreaks of violence, and assassinations –, various factors can be tracked down and identified. The more difficult task is to distil the Cedar Revolution's *meaning*.

Two central meanings unfolded in the Cedar Revolution: non-violence, and the search for political and judicial accountability. Of the two, non-violence is the more important. Underlying its novelty is what Paul Kahn expressed in a recent essay, building on the construction of Europe: 'The longing to join the EU among the countries of Eastern Europe is not just about economics, but also about depoliticalization, i.e., about an emerging perception of sacrificial politics as a form of pathology. Indeed, the entire effort of the international human rights movement is rooted in this vision of well-being. No one, in this view, should die or suffer for politics.'¹ Violence should have no place in the

¹ Paul W. Kahn, 'Sacred violence', paper contributed to SELA (Seminar in Latin America on Constitutional and Political Theory), Yale law school, 2003, 13.

16 natural bid of humans for political power, and Lebanon added in 2005 a significant contribution to a trend which found its most remarkable success in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a colossal achievement which is yet to be appreciated as the one major non-violent breakthrough in the history of humankind.

The Lebanese addition to non-violence is distinct. Non-violence as the defining trait of the Lebanese Revolution is the more momentous because the prevailing reality of the contemporary Middle East systematically undermines the fundamental right to personal *security* from harm, a right which was expressed by the French revolutionaries in the first *Declaration of human rights*.² In modern history, massive violence, which is the flip coin of security, is the one dominant characteristic that sets the larger Middle East apart from the rest of the planet. Surely other regions have known violence, often on a horrendous scale. But nowhere like the Middle East has violence for the sake of politics gone on so relentlessly in the last two centuries. The Cedar Revolution, for the first time in modern Middle Eastern history, fought with non-violence for the right for the people to be secure, – that is to be free of violence –, in Lebanon and the region. And it did so in response to an immensely violent act: the killing of Rafiq Hariri and twenty-two other innocent people on 14 February 2005.

The Cedar Revolution rose in direct response to the ‘killing of Mr Lebanon’.³ By choosing non-violence as the privileged and exclusive way of conducting politics, it marked the promise of a watershed. The Lebanese route is all the more remarkable since Middle Eastern and world history have collapsed into one violent continuum stretching to New York since September 11, 2001, after having marked for decades the fate of Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq. On February 14, 2005 the good people of Lebanon said ‘enough’, there is another way to conduct politics:

2 Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen, 26 August 1789, Art.2: ‘Le but de toute association politique est la conservation des droits naturels et imprescriptibles de l’homme. Ces droits sont la liberté, la propriété, *la sûreté* et la résistance à l’oppression.’ Emphasis on security added.

3 Remarkable first book-length account by Nicholas Blanford, *Killing Mr Lebanon*, London 2006.

it is non-violent, and it can succeed.

The second meaning of the Cedar Revolution, accountability, flows from a positive application of non-violence on the larger scene of history. On its own, non-violence can be construed as non-action, a passive form of making history. Antecedents from Christ to Mahatma Gandhi show that passive resistance can have tremendous effects. But even compared to these bearers of world revolutions, the Lebanese revolutionaries had something of their own to add. A new meaning was ushered in on the streets of Beirut when the Cedar Revolution created a positive, tangible application to non-violence: judicial accountability.

The search for accountability was also political. There is little new in the search for political accountability, since all revolutions are accountability in action against the standing order and those responsible for it, and I will argue that one of the weaknesses of our Revolution was its failure to hold politically accountable a number of leaders who remained openly supportive of the Ancien Régime. This was the case, at the top of the political ladder, of the president and, in a more nuanced way, of the speaker. Two years after the Revolution, they were still entrenched in extended mandates. That failure was costly, but it did not prevent the novelty of the Cedar Revolution developing its open embrace of *judicial* accountability in response to the assassins' relentless hand.

The Cedar Revolution sought an end to impunity in the Middle East, and elevated the region to the new horizon developed by human rights organizations the world over and taken up by states in the symbol of the International Criminal Court. The Cedar Revolution had this particularity: it consciously sought its meaning in judicial accountability, rather than in violent revenge, and unfolded in the demand for an international investigation, then for a UN tribunal for Lebanon. No revolution in modern history has so consciously expressed itself in the persistent search for an independent and effective judicial process. No revolution had adopted as the measure of its success, as its fundamental meaning, truth in justice.

This dual meaning, non-violence and judicial accountability, is at risk. To salvage it, we need to put the Cedar Revolution to the larger test of history's special moments. I believe our Revolution meant something distinct in

the long span of human history, Lebanese and otherwise. To protect the revolution's memory, its importance, its sacrifices, its *uniqueness*, and its place in human history, it is essential to elevate and substantiate the meaning to the level deserved by the Lebanese who made it happen. The present essay is a battle for the place of our Revolution in history, now and in 2221. It believes in knowledge and its accumulation. For that, the historiography of the French Revolution over two hundred years is one powerful guide for understanding 'what happened'⁴ in Lebanon in 2005. Hence 2221.

4 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, Paris 1980, chapter 8: '1874 - Trois nouvelles ou «qu'est-ce qui s'est passé?»'

ii. 2221

Fast forward to 2221. What will a historian standing in the 23rd century say about the Cedar Revolution of Lebanon of 2005? When 2221 comes, the bicentenary of the Cedar Revolution will have passed, with many historians' corresponding flurry of writings, maybe even in the order of the 170 conferences worldwide which were held around the bicentenary of the French Revolution in and around 1989.⁵ 2221 is a simple arithmetical equation: 2221 to 2005 is what 2005 is to 1789. The distance represents the historical perspective acquired, and underlines the accumulated knowledge that marks the bicentenary of the Lebanese Revolution and a few years more, 216 solar years exactly. Add 216 to 1789, you get 2005. Add the same to 2005, when the Cedar Revolution happened, you get 2221. Now 2221, or 2205, or even 2021 is a long time in human memory.

Should the Cedar Revolution rise to a world event on the scale of the French Revolution, there will be some François Furet battling its meaning out with the disciples of an Albert Soboul, or a stormy debate as the one which took place between historians Hyppolite Taine and Alphonse Aulard at the turn of the 20th century, maybe then in a more 'fundamental science' way complicated by some time warp machine physically revisiting some of the details of that event, including whether it is moral to do so, and what to pick from the February or March 2005 scenes in Beirut. One

⁵ T.C.W. Blanning, 'Introduction', in T.C.W. Blanning ed., *The rise and fall of the French Revolution*, Chicago 1996, 1.

certainty by 2221 is that all the protagonists of the Cedar Revolution will be dead. But if I want to be coherent with my own writings, even death as human kind knows it in 2005 may not be a certain fact then.⁶ Death may be behind human beings in 2221. Like other questions on where science takes humanity in the age of cloning and stem cells, this is a wild guess.

Still, guessing what a historian standing in the 23d century will say about the Cedar Revolution is easier than anticipating what hard science discoveries have in store for shaping retrospectively an event in ways unpredictable today. If the measure of comparison is kept to a reasonable scale, one can learn a lot from writings on momentous events, and from the accumulation of scholarship. One pole of that accumulation of scholarship is Furet and his companions two hundred odd years after 1789. The school of François Furet, who died prematurely in 1997, is the latest major school in the historiography of the French Revolution. The opposite pole, like the present essay for the Cedar Revolution, is formed by the writings of the contemporaries: Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*,⁷ Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*,⁸ are remarkable early contributions from outside France, but there are many first essays and polemics from within, including 2539 pamphlets in the four first months of 1789,⁹ most lasting being Sieyès's *What is the Third Estate?*¹⁰ The non-specialist reader of these early pamphlets will consider most of them fairly tedious and fragmentary works on 'what happened' in 1789. Some might find that even the more reflective essays from outside France read, with the passage of time, rather dull, Burke as a cautiously appalled royalist, Paine repeating the far more alluring prose of the *Declaration of the rights of man and the citizen*, while Sieyès says little in his pamphlet beyond asserting that the Third Estate is no less important than the other

6 Argument made in my *Democracy in America*, Beirut, 2001 (in Arabic), chapter 8, 'The conquest of life and the conquest of space: contours of a scientific policy.'

7 First published in London on 1 November 1790.

8 Thomas Paine, *Rights of man*, London 1791, cited here in Paine, *Common Sense and other writings*, New York 2005.

9 Blanning, 'Introduction', 1, citing Jeremy Popkin, *Revolutionary News*.

10 Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le tiers état?*, first published in January 1789.

two; in fact, since he Sieyès belonged to it, a far more important one; and to simplify it in his own words, 'all of it'.

Maligning Sieyès, Burke and Paine is preposterous. I wish we had such writings as theirs for the Cedar Revolution, and we'd be hard put to find in comments on Lebanon the equivalent of Tom Paine's memorable lines about the 'Revolutions of America and France': 'Monarchical sovereignty, the enemy of mankind, and the source of misery, is abolished; and the sovereignty itself is restored to its natural and original place, the Nation. Were this the case throughout Europe, the cause of wars would be taken away.'¹¹ These are strong concepts, which have not yet lost their pith about the need to take away the causes of war, a hope that stood high in the Enlightenment, and was crowned in 1795 by Kant's *Treaty on Perpetual Peace*.¹² Paine overshot on that score, but his words remain powerful. And he was right on when he underlined the importance of the French Revolution vesting sovereignty in the citizens, peoples and nation rather than in kings, for 'when it is laid down as a maxim, that a *King can do no wrong*, it places him in a state of similar security with that of ideots and persons insane, and responsibility is out of the question with respect to himself.'¹³ No person is above the law. This is a message of the French Revolution that remains to date, as powerful as when it was first expressed.

A year or two into the French Revolution, the lucidity of these authors is remarkable, despite our unease in appreciating the spirit of 1789 just by reading what they say so close to it. The windows they opened on the new French reality offered *meaning*: Burke doesn't like the new Republican order, he sees it as disruptive, excessive, and wrong. Paine is sympathetic to the Revolution in its (hu)man rights, a legacy that also lasts to date. Even Sieyès, pamphleteering for the Tiers Etat, managed to underline the new structure of France as one that cannot exclude anyone from power, least the majority of its people in the shape of the Tiers-Etat.

11 Paine, *Rights of man*, 167.

12 Immanuel Kant, *Zum ewigen Frieden: ein philosophischer Entwurf*, first published Königsberg 1795.

13 Paine, *Rights of man*, 164. Emphasis in original.

That was the first year, as decisive for the French Revolution as the first year, in fact the first month, was for the Lebanese Revolution. With the passage of time, and the brutality of the French Revolution, things appeared ever more clearly to some contemporaries. Striking is Alexander Hamilton, writing in 1794 : 'In the early periods of the French Revolution, a warm zeal for its success was in this Country a sentiment truly universal. The love of Liberty is here the ruling passion of the Citizens of the United States, pervading every class, animating every bosom. As long therefore as the Revolution of France bore the marks of being the cause of liberty, it united all hearts and centered all opinions. But this unanimity of approbation has been for a considerable time decreasing. The excesses which have constantly multiplied, with greater and greater aggravations, have successively though slowly detached reflecting men for their partiality for an object which has appeared less and less to merit their regard.'¹⁴

These excesses, Hamilton considered them as 'accomplices with Vice, Anarchy, Despotism and Impiety.' They should have stopped soon after the Revolution put the French monarchy in check. Instead of calm and moderation succeeding 'the first shocks of the political earthquake', Hamilton observed, the world has 'been witness to one volcano succeeding another, the last still more dreadful than the former, spreading ruin and devastation far and wide – subverting the foundation of right security and property, of order, morality and religion – sparing neither sex nor age, confounding innocence with guilt, involving the old and the young, the sage and the madman, the long tried friend of virtue and his country and the upstart pretender to purity and patriotism – the bold projection of new treasons with the obscure in indiscriminate and profuse destruction.'¹⁵

The advent of Terror is what Hamilton had in mind, although he fell just short of using the word. By 1794, Terror had been on the official order of the Revolution for a year, with its cohorts of victims. By 1794, the Revolution had squandered its credit of innocence and universal appeal,

14 Alexander Hamilton, 'Memorandum on the French Revolution, 1794', in *Writings*, (Library of America series), New York 2001, 833-36.

15 Id.

after having cannibalized, together with its declared villain, Louis xvi, its two main heroes: Danton and Robespierre. A similar risk cannot be discarded for the Cedar Revolution, and Saturn, the god of revolutionary history as portrayed by Goya in a disturbing painting, has a sad tendency to eat its own children.

iii. Chou en Lai

We have this note of caution from a great revolutionary authority. 'It's too early to tell,' was Chou en Lai's answer to what he thought of the French Revolution. Apocryphal or not, the report emerged in the 1950s, when the Chinese Revolution had something to stand for morally, before it turned into the monstrous dictatorship through its so-called 'cultural' metamorphosis and the consequent descent into totalitarian Maoism. 1789-1950, one hundred and sixty odd years of accumulated scholarship, should have given Chou en Lai confidence to say something more constructive about the French Revolution in 1950.

A disturbing depth attaches to Chou en Lai's caution, as one hears him warning historiography against turning into a perversion of history. Historiography pretends to be scientific, while we know that it is always contemporary. We also know that some events are more portentous than others. The 'Australian butterfly flutter' theory is at worst incorrect, at best another paradox: human beings discern in events those that are meaningful, and those that are peripheral. A butterfly flutter in Australia in 2435 BCE could have contributed to the sinking of the Titanic, through a tortured chain of events, but the theory triggers a smile on the historian's face, and a shrug by the common sense citizen. For good reasons, the causes of the French Revolution provoked a deeper kind of interest, a *meaningful* interest which renews itself for every generation. The French Revolution captured the imagination ever since it came about, for reasons that are commonly known: a kingship several hundred years' old came tumbling

in a few weeks; the fascinating rhetoric of Marat, Robespierre, and Danton still inflames their readers; universal declarations of rights were made and redrafted; constitutions and civil codes got enacted; crowds thronged Paris and other cities; innocents were massacred by the old order and neighbouring monarchies' armies; other innocents were led by the dozens to the scaffold in an official reign of Terror; and Napoleon usurped the Revolution to spread dictatorship in France and his brand of monarchy, together with death, across Europe in the name of the Revolution. This last trait is considerable in its implication for modern Lebanon. Revolutions one had, which turned soon into civil wars, stretching over several, interminable decades. No wonder that humanity remains puzzled by the French Revolution, so fast in its revolutionary phase, 1789-1794, five years before people were off the streets and the Directoire set its placid pace on daily life. For Michelet, Jaurès, the Société Robespierriente, the Lefebvre School, the Revolution was over in 1794. Napoleon could be left out of it altogether, but Napoleon there was, whose brutality scarred Europe for a century. 1789 master historian Georges Lefebvre's book on Napoleon is simply dull, for there is no Revolution in it.¹⁶

So what to do about Chou en Lai's quip: is it too early to assess, let alone write, about the Cedar Revolution? And where should we stop, and what should we leave out?

There may be a deeper dimension to Chou's quip than meets the eye. The French Revolution has not ended yet, and its meanings are still being forged, including radical departures from the images that it might jell into at various moments of its never-ending historiography. Two examples, one civilizational, the other legal-historical, will illustrate this contention.

Civilizational shift first: in a posthumous book by the co-founder of the *Annales* school, Lucien Febvre noted that the French Revolution resulted in the idea of Europe significantly receding from the collective mind, in effect being delayed two hundred years. Whereas Europe is a concept on the rise throughout the first three quarters of the 18th century, Febvre wrote, the Revolution comes to displace it with nationalism, French nationalism

¹⁶ Georges Lefebvre, *Napoléon*, Paris 1935.

directed inwards at first, then nationalism spreading across the Continent: 'And then, this being said, we can go back to our question, to our tragedy. For it is a tragedy, a great tragedy. In the first quarter, in the second quarter, in the third quarter of the 18th century, Europe was everywhere. There was more and more Europe. Europe covered the nations. Europe covered France. In the fourth quarter of the 18th century, it is the nation which sets its claims, the nation which gets larger, the nation that affirms itself, nation, and national, and nationalism, and France which no longer sighs : Europe, Europe... France which shouts at Valmy : "Long live the Nation".'¹⁷

Febvre is right, one can only be struck by how strong the common European legal world was until the fourth quarter of the 18th century when the French Revolution broke out, and how the idea of Europe started receding inexorably, until two world wars and Jean Monnet forced its institutional resuscitation. Its cultural reality through the 18th century is well illustrated by a passage from Voltaire about Europe, 'a kind of big republic, shared by several states, some monarchies, some mixed; some aristocratic, the other democratic; but all in close relation, all having the same religious base, the same principles of public law, the same political ideas.'¹⁸

Valmy starts the retreat of Europeanism for the benefit of French and other nationalisms, and strict nationalism gets entrenched with Napoleon and the Metternich-dominated Berlin Congress of 1815. Not until Jean Monnet after the Second World War does Europe have a chance again. This momentous development Febvre doesn't know, of course, as he lectures on Europe in the middle of the most devastating European war the continent had ever known. This actually makes Febvre's prescient sense overwhelming, and his conclusion all the more compelling: the French

17 Lucien Febvre, *L'Europe. Genèse d'une civilisation*, Paris 1999, 239: 'Et alors, ceci dit, nous pouvons revenir à notre question, à notre drame. Car c'est un drame, un très grand drame. Au premier quart, au second quart, au troisième quart du XVIII^e siècle, l'Europe était partout. Il y avait de plus en plus d'Europe. L'Europe coiffait les nations. L'Europe coiffait la France. Au quatrième quart du XVIII^e siècle, c'est la nation qui réclame, la nation qui grandit, la nation qui s'affirme, nation, et national, et nationalité, et nationalisme, et la France qui ne soupire plus: l'Europe, l'Europe..., la France qui crie à Valmy: 'Vive la Nation'...'

18 Voltaire, *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), cited in Garnier ed., Paris 1947, 7.

28 Revolution killed the idea of Europe for two hundred years, and that may be its most powerful legacy.

What Chou en Lai failed to see a century and half after 1789, almost every other questioner of the Revolution's meanings also got wrong, until Europe started slowly being built by Jean Monnet and his colleagues in the early 1950s. Therein lies the genius of Febvre as historian. As a humanist and universal scientist, he could rise above the straitjacket of French historiography and its ingrained nationalist bent. But there was also the contingency of history: before the birth of institutional Europe, that is the EC then the EU, the question was never central in the historiography of the French Revolution. A civilizational shift had to take place before the French Revolution started to strike historians as an 'anti-Europe' Revolution.

Posthumous Febvre should strike a chord. What has Lebanon's Revolution done to the Middle East, indeed to world history? No doubt an extraordinary awakening of Lebanese nationalism, against Syria in particular. A new slogan got forged in the first year of the Lebanese Revolution: 'Lebanon first'. In the sectarian mosaic of Lebanon, the Sunni community, after the Christian communities, and the Druze, had become 'Lebanese'. Since the Hariri assassination, that priority of Lebanon is the priority for the massive majority of Lebanese. That this is not a foregone conclusion is underlined by the corresponding backlash led by Syria's allies, chiefly Hizbullah and behind it the Shi'i community of Lebanon: they have different priorities, a different view of Lebanon, another way of being Lebanese. But the Lebanese logic of the Cedar Revolution cannot be doubted even for them. This is a break in Lebanese history, a paradigm shift reminiscent of Febvre's.

Another illustration of the constant rewriting of the French Revolution is informed by law. The latest bout of historiographical dispute is more disciplinary than it is global, it pits the lawyer, with his narrower but more precise view of things, and the historian, with his larger and more varied bird's eye view on life. Here we have historian François Furet battling it out with jurist Michel Troper over whether the French Revolution was institutionally over in 1789; and whether, more generally, the truth of the Revolution is historical or legal. The result is a strong exchange between

the contemporary leading historian of the French Revolution and its leading contemporary legal scholar.

The battle was engaged by Troper in an article on the 'usage of legal concepts in history', published in the celebrated *Annales*. Criticism leveled at Furet is about a central thesis, and an adjunct one. Furet's central thesis, says Troper concurringly, 'is that all is played out in 1789'.¹⁹ Secondary thesis: the Revolution is institutionally over in 89, because the Monarchy is essentially over as a 'power' by then. The nation is represented henceforth by the National Assembly, where sovereignty exclusively vests.

It is on the adjunct thesis that the lawyer operates, by analyzing the will of the revolutionaries in the Assembly. The debate is whether the veto accorded to the King makes him an institutional competitor to the Assembly, a joint power holder, or whether the veto, being suspensive, is effectively inexistent. An intricate analysis ensues, where the concept of sovereignty is dissected, subjecting the whole issue of separation of powers to scrutiny, and the King's veto to modulations that make it absolute, suspensive, or void. Ultimately, Troper concludes, Furet's intuition remains correct. By 1789, the Monarchy was over, not because of lack of a decisive, common understanding of sovereignty, or because the king remained a recognized power in 1789. The game was up when the Revolution, through the National Assembly, brought the King down as the holder of any meaningful role since the summer of 1789.

Furet's rejoinder starts with a denial: no, the Revolution was not over in 1789.²⁰ The lens of the historian being far more embracing than the

19 'Tout est joué en 89', says Troper in 'Sur l'usage des concepts juridiques en histoire', *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 47, 1992, 1171-1183, at 1171, citing François Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française*, new ed. Paris 1983, 16: '1789, année où l'essentiel du bilan terminal est acquis.'

20 'Je ne suis pas sûr de me reconnaître pleinement dans ce qui est pour lui une thèse générale de mon livre : l'idée qu'il m'attribue, par exemple, que 'tout est joué en 1789' n'est certainement pas mienne. Je pense simplement que dans le domaine civil, l'essentiel de ce qu'accomplira la Révolution française est conçu et entrepris très tôt, entre le 4 et le 11 août 1789; et qu'en matière politique, bien des éléments de ce qui constituera le dilemme constitutionnel français sont présents des les premières années de la Révolution. Sans que, pour autant, leurs conséquences soient inscrites.' Furet, 'Concepts juridiques et conjuncture révolutionnaire', *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 47, 1992, 1185-1194.

lawyer's, there are in fact several moments for the Revolution, 1789 is one, the advent of regional wars in 1792 another, a third is Thermidor, a fourth is the coup d'Etat of Napoleon, a fifth is the restoration of the Monarchy in 1815.²¹ In this reading of the multiple dates of when the Revolution was 'over', Augustin Cochin, a forgotten historian of the turn of the 20th century whose importance Furet revived in his last writings, appears as the most convincing. The *terminus ad quem* the Revolution operates as a whole, indivisible compact, is 1795: 'It is actually clear', wrote Cochin, 'for whom judges on the basis of texts and not of feelings, that we are in presence of one and the same historical phenomenon, from 1788 to 1795. It is, from beginning to end, the same principles, the same language, the same means. One cannot put on the one side the voice of the people, the "patriotism" of 89, the other, as the lie of conspirators, that of 93'.²²

As in the case of the French Revolution, the choice of dates will also fascinate the historians of the Cedar Revolution. I tend to acquiesce with Cochin's dismissal of '89 as the be-all and end-all of the French Revolution a hundred years before the Furet-Troper debate. ' "Eighty-nine-ism" is perhaps a wise position in politics, it cannot be defended in history.'²³ Less than two years after it started, we do not have the luxury of the time needed to respond adequately for the *terminus ad quem* of the Cedar Revolution. But the question of dates is inevitable, and we must already try to map their importance. For the ultimate question is already upon us: is the Cedar Revolution over?

21 Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française*, 15-16: 'La Révolution a une naissance, mais pas de fin.'

22 Augustin Cochin (d.1916), 'La crise de l'histoire révolutionnaire' (1908) in *Les Sociétés de pensée et la démocratie moderne*, Paris 1921, 131: 'Il est clair en effet, pour qui juge d'après les textes et non d'après des raisons de sentiment, qu'on est en présence d'un seul et même phénomène historique, de 1788 à 1795. Ce sont, d'un bout à l'autre, les mêmes principes, le même langage, les mêmes moyens. On ne saurait mettre d'un côté comme la voix du peuple, le "patriotisme" de 89, de l'autre, comme le mensonge d'intrigants, celui de 93.'

23 Id: 'Le "quatre-vingt-neuvisme" est une position sage peut-être en politique, indéfendable en histoire.'

iv. Dates

Let's simplify the argument by saying that Furet and Troper are quarrelling about what happens in 1789, but that they agree on one central conclusion: 1789 ends the bulk of what the Revolution stands for in history as *revolutionary*. Here is a corresponding thesis for the Cedar Revolution: 14 March 2005 ends the one month of Lebanese Revolution, in the same way 1789 ended the French Revolution. Everything afterwards adds little and subtracts a lot. Hariri is murdered on 14 February. The Revolution is over on March 14. That's it.

Let me develop some of the lessons of 1789 and its aftermath regarding dates and dating. Napoleon was the ultimate death of a process gone awry. Here comes dictatorship to close an episode of liberty already dented by the association of the French state with a declared, official policy of terrorism. By end 1794, the protagonists of the Terreur have turned into the victims of their own excesses. In 1795, practically all the great actors are dead or marginalized. The Directoire hobbles on for four years, as if waiting for a dictator to restore order, and Bonaparte eventually arrives. Despotism came in the shape of Napoleon, who killed the Revolution in the name of the Revolution, and destroyed any commonality of Europe by seeking to impose over the continent his own brutal monocephalic order. Napoleon had the nerve to acknowledge, in a bout of apocryphal wisdom, that the best thing he left behind him was the French Civil Code, indeed a matter of pride for France and the Revolution; but the Civil Code is a marginal footnote to the dominant

fact of King Louis XVI being replaced at the helm of France by Emperor Bonaparte I.

This is also the conclusion of Tocqueville. One wonders when reading *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, how much the Revolution changed the social order of pre-revolutionary France. At least, the sense from Tocqueville's belaboured book, so different in tone and spirit from his masterpiece on American democracy, is that there was little change before and after the Revolution.²⁴ But even without contrasting the post-1789 order with the Ancien Régime, the dates separating Napoleon from 1789 are troubling. Between 1790 and 1795 an exercise in self-cannibalism culminated in the execution of Danton, Robespierre, and so many of their illustrious colleagues. Immediately before Napoleon, the Revolution had already withered into a nameless Directoire, an uninspiring game of sterile musical chairs.

We do not have that dual luxury of events stretching over a decade for the Cedar Revolution. It's too early to tell whether it's over, and we do not have enough time to judge it. But we can ask the right questions on how to read our Revolution, and start assessing what its important dates are: its beginning, its end, and its most meaningful moments.

Dating the end of the Cedar Revolution will be difficult to get a consensus over. There is also a problem of beginning, which Furet himself, in slight contradiction with his above quote, also underlines for French history: 'I have long thought that it could be intellectually useful to displace the beginning of the French Revolution further up, towards the beginning of 1787 and the meeting of the Notables: this displacement offers a double advantage of a more exact dating of the crisis of traditional powers, and to integrate what is commonly called the "aristocratic revolution" in the Revolution.'²⁵

So problems of date on both sides of history: beginning and end. As in the argument that the French Revolution started two years before 1789,

24 Alexis de Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, first published in Paris in 1856.

25 Furet, *Penser la Révolution Française*, 66.

when did the Cedar Revolution start? Was it the summer of 2000, when the Israelis withdrew from Lebanon, and the first voices demanding a similar action by the Syrians were heard, by the Maronite bishops in a retrospectively founding statement on September 20? Or when, earlier that summer, Walid Jumblat, until then Syrian ally, Druze and socialist leader (in that order) single-handedly fought the Syro-Lebanese political-security system through the parliamentary battle which he waged and won in the Mountain? Or was the beginning September 2, 2004, when UN Security Council Resolution 1559 initiated the international snowball to save Lebanon from Syria's clutches? Or September 3, when a minority of Members of Parliament stood up against Emile Lahoud's coercive extension in power and refused to sign the constitutional amendment forced on them by Syrian president Bashar al-Asad and his Lebanese allies? Or October 1, 2004, when MP Marwan Hamadeh, Jumblat's right-hand man, was the target of the first car bomb planted under the Syrian Lebanese security order? Or was it 14 February 2005, when Hariri and his companions were killed? Or 16 February 2005, when the first angry demonstrations broke out during his funerals to request the departure of Syrian troops?

So with questions of beginning, pressing questions of end: Did the Revolution end, after accomplishing what it could, when the Karameh government fell the first time, on 28 February, or the second time, on 14 April? Or upon the formal departure of Syrian troops, on April 26, 2005? or when Parliament produced a majority of anti-Syrian parliamentarians in June 2005?

Did the Revolution end when it culminated on March 14, 2005, in its largest demonstration? Or a week earlier, on March 8, when the Shi'i crowds led by Hizbullah rallied to regain the initiative and undermined the national trend? Or on May 7, when the return of exiled general Michel Aoun formally started the split in the ranks of the opposition to Syria? Or upon Samir Kassir's murder on June 2, which brought fear back to those who openly criticized the Syrian leadership and its supporters in Lebanon? Or the second assassination, that of Georges Hawi on 21 June, which confirmed a pattern of organized killing? Or in the third week of

June, when parliamentary elections resulted in a deadlock? Or on 28 June, when the Speaker of Parliament was reelected to the position for a fourth, consecutive time, after twelve years of pro-Syrian unadulterated support? Or on 25 September, with the deliberate maiming of Mai Chidiac, the first woman so targeted? Or upon the killing of Gebrane Tueni, symbol of free speech, and his two aides on 12 December? or later, with the Hizbullah-Israel war in July 2006, or in the mass demonstrations of the Counter-Revolution, which occupied the centre of Beirut weeks on end starting 1 December 2006?

Beginning, end, but also special moments: how about the *One Day* history will assign to the Lebanese Revolution, in the way it has assigned 14 July, Bastille Day, to the French Revolution? A number of candidate dates is possible. One possible choice is February 14, when Rafiq Hariri was killed, setting revolt in motion. But why not, also, the death of former Minister Basel Fleihan, whose body finally collapsed on April 18, after an agony of two months, to the burns he suffered on February 14 as he rode with Hariri? By a stroke of bad luck for Lebanon and for the memory of Basel Fleihan, the Revolution was by April 18 facing a lull after the departure of the Syrian troops and the emergence of a new government. This was bad luck because the shock of Fleihan's death did not occasion the political consequences it merited to make its own mark on Lebanese history. Why 14 March, rather than 14 February then, or April 18? Indeed why 14 March rather than those fatidic dates of the coming of the Lebanese Revolution, for instance, once again, when 29 brave parliamentarians stood up on 3 September 2004 against Emile Lahoud's pursuit of another term in power? Or the day previous, when Resolution 1559 was passed by the United Nations Security Council?

There is one simple answer to the choice of March 14: the size of the demonstration, the largest in Lebanese history ever. The day will long exercise the country's memory, especially as it came to counter the large, but half its size rally on March 8, engineered by Hizbullah 'in fidelity to Syria'. Surely the choice of March 14 sits poorly for a massive, Shi'i dominated, part of the Lebanese population, which had taken to the street

less than a week earlier to hear a slate of speakers extolling the *status quo ante*, parading pictures of the Syrian president, and chanting carefully chosen slogans in support of Syria, amidst the surprising display of equally well chosen Lebanese flags. And since the Lebanese Revolution was conceivably a fight between those two logics, pro and against Syria, the far larger number of Lebanese who came on the side of those opposed to Syria on March 14 marks the point of the Cedar Revolution's culmination.

Events get always more subtle upon closer analysis, and royalist historiographers systematically pooh-pooed the storming of the Bastille as a non-event, considering that the symbol of oppression had seven inmates, including one freed drunkard who was surely not worth all that trouble. This was received counter-Revolutionary dogma, until Georges Lefebvre showed that Bastille Day was a far more significant event in terms of innocent blood spilt. Bastille Day came after revolutionaries were shot by the established order, in direct reaction to excessive reaction of the King's men.²⁶ And so the 14th of July 1789 is rightly considered the acknowledged tipping moment after which Louis xvi's established order was unable to use open force against its opponents.

The people have a good sense of their own safety. The French have celebrated Bastille Day since July 14, 1790, the first year after the failure of the monarchy's security apparatus to protect or regain that symbol of power. Similarly, the Islamic Revolution in Iran celebrates its victory every year on February 11. The old order gave up running the country's security in the night of the 10th to 11th February 1979. That night, the army stopped receiving orders from the Shah's government. The people in France and Iran know better. In Iran, it was on the night of 10-11 February that the security apparatus could no longer shoot to win, and this date was for them more significant than the flight of the Shah, or Khumaini's return from exile. Same popular science in France: rather than the October 1789

²⁶ Georges Lefebvre, *Quatre-vingt-neuf*, Paris 1939, 130. Ninety eight Parisians were killed on Bastille day.

march of the revolutionaries on Versailles to bring the King to Paris, or the execution of Louis xvi in January 1793, the French knew that the Ancien Régime was over when the Bastille fell, never to be regained by the Bourbon Monarchy.

To be precise, the equivalent date for the Cedar Revolution was the night of Sunday 27 to Monday 28 February 2005. Late that night and in the early morning, Lebanon's armed forces sided with the Revolution, when they refused to implement the executive order to ban the demonstrations just issued by the President and his security officers. In the early hours of Monday 28 February 2005, by 10-11 am decisively, Lebanon's Revolution tipped. The evening previous, a central meeting of security forces was held in the presidential palace, and the order to evacuate Martyrs' square signed by a plethora of army and civilians officials, and formally issued by the Minister of interior. That night was the turning moment for the Ancien Régime, which lost its power to repress. The night of 27 to 28 February 2005 must be restored to the Lebanese Revolution collective memory: like Tien an-Men, the Revolution could have been physically destroyed, people shot or detained, and demonstrations against the ruling order prevented. This did not happen. It could have. The Cedar Revolution came of age that night. The security forces and the army had remained the uncertain tool of a steadily pro-Syrian government for two weeks after Hariri was killed. In the night of 27-28 February, they stood neutral and let the Revolution proceed.

By March 14 mid-day, they receded from the repressive scene for good, although the Old Regime retained some parallel security forces. It was only by the evening of March 14 that all fear vanished, to reappear again when Samir Kassir was assassinated on June 2. But even on the morning of March 14, before the popular tide filled the streets to an extent that surpassed all expectations, the security men of the Ancien Régime prevented protesters from holding out banners calling for the Lebanese president's resignation. In the evening, they were gone. But it was too late by then, for there was no political direction for the movement other than what has already been achieved: the physical departure of Syrian troops, and the collapse of the Karameh government.

Thus the short answer of history: the Cedar Revolution peaked on March 14, 2005, a month after it started. After March 14, it was mostly downhill. The French Revolution, distinguished historians two hundred years after 1789 argue, may have been over in 1789. The Cedar Revolution was over in a month. The Ancien Régime ended on 27-28 February, and its passing was sealed on March 14.

v. Geography

A word on the geography of the Lebanese Revolution is in order. Geography is no less important than history in great events, but it gets more easily lost on account of the difficulty of spatial perception. On March 14, speaker after speaker stood in the midst of Martyrs' Square, also known as Liberty Square, also to be known as *Nahar* square, in the name of a paper which elected to have its new offices on the seaside western corner, and which would soon offer to the Revolution the life of its two most courageous writers, Samir Kassir and Gebran Tueni. Tueni, the editor in chief of the *Nahar*, was one of the speakers who rallied the assembly onto an oath bringing Muslims and Christians forever into national unity. On that day, the joy of liberation saw no shadow. So large was the demonstration that it filled the huge square and spilled over onto Riad Solh's square, where the counterdemonstration had assembled six days earlier.

But why Martyrs' square, other than the fact that it is the acknowledged centre of downtown Beirut, and the long Lebanese civil war's central dividing square in the capital?

Geography plays a major role on more occasions than can be fathomed. Georges Lefebvre, the steadiest historian of the French Revolution, calls July 14 'the Paris revolution'.²⁷ In Paris came together the three revolts which he convincingly describes as the three converging movements that brought down the Old Regime: the revolt of the Nobility, meeting already

27 Ibid., 125-38.

defiantly in 1787, that of the Bourgeoisie, meeting in May 1789, and the revolution of the 'masses' in Paris, giving their voice also to a peasantry gripped by the Great Fear of the summer of 1789. The fact of Versailles' distance is obvious, and the republican revolution knew that constraint well. The rebels put an end to eight hundred years of Monarchy when they went to Versailles and brought Louis xvi and his family to the Tuileries in downtown Paris on October 6, 1789.

Lebanon's geography of the Revolution was no less important for the targeting of the symbols of the Ancien Régime. But unlike Versailles, the Revolution failed to go that extra-physical mile to unseat the tenant of the presidency in suburban Baabda, a two-hours walk from where the demonstrators rallied. A similar phenomenon occurred with another symbol of the long Syrian rule, the parliamentary speaker. Parliament, albeit literally three hundred yards from Martyrs' Square, where 'street history' took place from 16 February to 14 March, was spared by the marchers, but it could have gone otherwise – the first two weeks smaller groups demonstrated noisily before Parliament on their way to Martyrs' square from near the assassination scene. Despite that temptation, Parliament came to be considered neutral partly because it was the site where the verbal spark fused when MP Marwan Hamadeh openly accused the Syrians of Hariri's assassination as soon as he learnt the news, minutes after the blast shook the building soon after noon. Parliament became a symbol of courage, not to be assailed or undermined. It was different for the presidential palace at Baabda, two miles from the centre of Beirut, which remained beyond the reach of the demonstrators simply because it was not close enough. Beirut was the site of the Revolution. Geography prevailed. Investing Baabda didn't come naturally to the demonstrators. '[Had] the Presidential Palace been within reach and not in the suburbs of Ba'abda, it would have been stormed much like the Bastille.'²⁸ Had it been closer, the demonstrators would have inevitably marched on it, with consequences that are hard to predict, except that the turn of events would have perforce been profoundly different.

28 Samir Khalaf, *Heart of Beirut: Reclaiming the Bourj*, London 2006, 244.

It will be hard in 2221 to realize how much the topography of Beirut, within a radius of literally 800 meters, weighed on events large and small. Already disappearing is the memory of early gatherings on the slope leading to Hotel Phoenicia, which is the closest place to the assassination scene that could be reached by demonstrators. The street where the assassination was carried out, flat and by the sea, was cordoned off for the purpose of the investigation, and it so remained for weeks on end as public anger prevented those in government from turning the site into just another normal place. There was a decision to be made in the first days: where would the crux of the demonstrations take place, near 'Ground zero', as the site of the assassination was briefly called after the New York precedent, or in Martyrs' Square? Some demonstrators preferred Ground zero, especially as candles' vigils were being held there for Basel Fleihan and for remembering those killed with Hariri, but also because Martyrs' Square was simply too large to make an impression. As the crowds grew, it made more sense to be in the wider, more central place. Martyrs' square prevailing was also function of two other factors: the new, massive Muhammed Al-Amin Mosque in the midst of the square, which was controversial to non-Sunnis because of its dwarfing size, was suddenly vindicated as the eternal resting place of Rafiq Hariri who had it built but did not live to see it completed. Samir Khalaf's refined spatial sense again: 'Had Hariri's family, for example, opted to bury him in Saida rather than in the Bourj,... it is doubtful whether his stirring martyrdom would have generated such dramatic consequences.'²⁹ Hariri was buried in a mausoleum rapidly erected in the Mosque's adjacent yard, and young Lebanese demonstrators started camping out on the Square from 18 February on, two days after his burial, as Hariri's tomb turned into a politically charged pilgrims' site. There was also that little topographical quirk: nearest the site of the assassination was the corner of the Phoenicia hotel, which stands down the hill. It is awkward to meet on a slope, especially as the corner stood in the middle of roads one did not want shut to a traffic that had already been disrupted by the closure of the nearby murder site for the investigation. One wonders what a continued

29 *Id.*, 194.

gathering in 'Basel Fulaihan's place', as it lingers in memory, would have meant for the Revolution. For this is where demonstrators naturally came back every time they heard some news about his deteriorating health, then his death. Would the proximity to the ultimate sacrifice, rather than the baroque gathering of Martyrs' Square, have prevented Hizbullah from demonstrating on Riad al-Solh, in Sunni heartland, keeping them to the Shi'i suburbs where they had gathered until then?

So it was Martyrs' square where the Revolution would unfold. Every single square meter became the battleground for the war of wills. People were angry at the beginning, but they were also apprehensive if not downright scared: Marwan Hamadeh's statement accusing the Syrians of the assassination was exceptional for its courage, which came minutes after he heard of Hariri's death. It is hard in retrospect to appreciate what it takes to challenge the Syrian leaders in this way *then*. Walid Jumblat, the only national leader left when Hariri was killed, was particularly heartened to hear the direct accusations leveled at Bashar al-Asad in the large funeral procession on February 16, two days after the assassination, which turned into the first large demonstration of the Revolution.

Another spontaneous outburst came the day following the burial, on 17 February, with telling political consequences. *Time* recounted the event months later, as 'a dozen thirty something friends, Christians and Muslims alike, began a sit-in near [Hariri's] downtown grave site. On impulse they asked passers by to sign a petition calling on the pro-Syrian Lebanese government to resign; after four days, they were wrestling with a scroll of signatures some 400 m long.'³⁰

Like all such stories, there is a dark side, and ownership of the banner did create a stir a few months later between 'the thirty something friends'. This is unimportant. What was important was the slogan chosen, 'resignation' understood as 'resignation of the pro-Syrian Prime Minister and his cabinet'. I recall receiving a call from a friend at the scene around noon on February 17. He wanted suggestions for the motto on the soon

30 Scott McLeod, *Time Magazine*, October 10, 2005, posted on October 2, <http://www.time.com/time/europe/hero2005/andraos.html>.

to be celebrated petition. I suggested, in French actually, political *lingua franca* for many of those who had gathered round the embryonic text, a few formulas including 'Lahoud démission'. The petition's first edition was eventually couched it in three languages, but it said simply, also in three languages, démission, resignation, *istiqala*. The motto came to be the driving horizon of the movement all the way to March 14. Démission, as correctly understood by the *Time* story, was that of the Karameh government.

So Lahoud's presidency was not challenged, and this deserves an explanation. The Revolution was young and uncertain, three days after Hariri's murder, two weeks before the security apparatus finally gave up on repression. Lahoud's rule had become characteristically brutal. The people sensed that he had a hand in the killing of Hariri, and he was reportedly elated by the death of his nemesis. Considering his confirmed brutality, people were hesitant to call on his resignation. In contrast, Karameh is a placid man, generally incapable of violent mischief, and he eventually resigned on February 28 of his own will, albeit under street pressure. Had he decided to stay, the Revolution could not have brought him down institutionally. Karameh left because he did not want to shoulder the responsibility of Hariri's death. A decent old-style politician, he was mainly innocuous for the Revolution, and the Syrians succeeded in replacing him with a similar prototype. That Karameh remained in the Syrian camp is unfortunate, but he at least resigned. By targeting him, the Revolution failed to designate its real problem, the president of the Republic whose coerced extension in power six months earlier was the original point of the crisis that exploded in Hariri's death. This failure has lived ever since to haunt the Cedar Revolution.

As the few dozen youth elected to stay overnight on Martyrs' square, and a few tents came up to stay on February 18, day 4 of the Revolution, there was grumbling from different quarters. For some, it was simply indecent to have young men and women mingling there. Others hid behind the argument of law and order. Notebooks and recollections from the tents will emerge one day to cast light on daily developments, logistics, the role of the youth leaders, and the patrons, who supplied food, direction or legitimacy.

This will be important for history, like those many petitions and pamphlets unearthed by historians for the French Revolution.³¹ Testimonies will offer evocative recollections, but I suspect that, like the French *cahiers de doléances*, they will remain marginal: for the direction of the Revolution was elsewhere, in more rarefied circles assembling around Walid Jumblat, who also generally controlled the mood of the street. Even on the ground, the archetypal figure of the Revolution in Martyrs' square, if one were to be chosen, was Nora Jumblat, whose presence day in day out proved to be a rallying point for the upheaval: the middle class. Several women actively participated in the logistics that sustained the Revolution, but a wider appreciation of what made the Revolution is in order. The Revolution's political and social center of gravity was in the educated middle class, and was not gender-coloured.

The socialite dimension is not unimportant. The Cedar Revolution was also dubbed 'the Gucci revolution', and the protean figure of Mrs Jumblat on this score is remarkable: in her met the elegant wife of the leader forced into absence by the imminent risk on his life, but also unusual poise, ease in three world languages, much intelligence and common sense, organizational skills, and a good enough appreciation by a Syrian native of the limitations of the Lebanese political scene. Nora Jumblat was even threatened by Emile Lahoud's security people, although she didn't tell her husband at the time. And so she was perceived by other upper middle class women who formed the nerve of the Revolt as a courageous surrogate of her husband. Although people were ready at the time to rally behind Bahiyya Hariri as Prime Minister, who gave the most noted speech in the first, decisive month of the Revolution, women were never ambitious enough to take over its leadership. It's also true that the Saudi system to which the Hariris owed so much could not stomach a woman as a pillar of Lebanese politics.

31 Michel Denis, Pierre Goubert, 1789: *les Français ont la parole*, Paris 1973.

vi. Names

Independence *intifada*, Gucci Revolution, Cedar Revolution. If we want to be serious about Lebanon's Revolution, we better have a name for it that lasts till 2221. In English 'Cedar Revolution' has stuck, and I always favoured its Arabic equivalent, *thawrat al-arz*, over other appellations. Ten days after the demonstrations started, the Bristol people, named after the hotel where the motley group of politicians opposed to Syria's rule used to assemble, sought to baptize a movement which they were seeing growing. They settled on 'revolt for independence', in Arabic *intifadat al-istiqlal*. 'Independence 2005', the corresponding English title that saw its way on stickers and pins, was meant as a revolt against Syrian domination. After fifteen years, a long time in Lebanon's short history of independence (1943), breaking the shackles in that form was natural, and independence became the rallying idea for Lebanon regaining its sovereignty. I never liked the appellation *intifada* much. It was obviously associated with its Palestinian namesake, which had simply not succeeded. We all supported the first Palestinian *intifada* in its early days in December 1987, because of the unique sense that something different was afoot, namely a non-violent revolution in Palestine. Throwing stones is not an altogether peaceful exercise, but the result, - no death, though some injuries -, remarkable in the Middle East. And then, slowly and inexorably, the Palestinian *intifada* turned violent, as much against Israelis as against Palestinian so-called 'collaborators', who were ringed with tires and set ablaze. By then, towards the end of 1988, the Palestinian *intifada* had exhausted its historical calling.

The second *intifada* was started by Ariel Sharon on 28 September 2000 and deftly taken over by Yaser Arafat to perpetuate his rule over a Palestinian body politic which had grown exhausted by his nepotism. The second *intifada* was ugly from the very beginning. On 28 September 2000, it should be recalled, Sharon moved onto the esplanade of the Haram Mosque in the heart of Arab Jerusalem, triggering the protests that would bring him and Israeli extremism to power within months. The Haram scene, exactly as he expected, turned into a massacre perpetrated by Israeli security forces who shot at the protesters, killing six people. A few days and more Palestinian deaths later, the world was shocked by the death of young boy Durra cowering in fear behind his father, which was recorded live on camera. Calls to bring the boy's killers to justice went nowhere, as was any move to punish those Israeli policemen who shot into the crowd a week earlier. The second *intifada* quickly turned into the burial of the peace process, bringing symbols of hatred and death to power in both societies, Ariel Sharon in Israel and the Hamas leaders in Palestine.

In fact the Palestinians owed the word *intifada* to Lebanon. In the internecine wars of Lebanon in the mid-1980s, politicians ran out of appellations for the turns and twists of the successive outbursts of violence. In one instance, which was pitting 'Lebanese forces' leader Samir Geagea to 'Lebanese forces' leader Elie Hobeika, -- or was it rising military strongman Michel Aoun? --, Geagea's *éminence grise* Karim Pakradouni sought a new term for his boss's latest 'corrective movement, *haraka tashihiyya*.' Corrective movement is an appellation dear to Arab putschists of the Hafez Asad-Saddam Hussein type turning violent on their own companions to take over power. That appellation was evidently not in favour in Lebanon. Then the word *intifada* fused, which Pakradouni said was provided by my father in casual conversation. I am not sure how it arrived to Palestine in December 1987, but the word quickly caught on in the narrow Levant of a globalised Middle East.

Knowing that pedigree, and the disturbing image which associates the word with chicken literally 'shaking off' when they get slaughtered, I resisted the word *intifada* for our Revolution. Our Revolution was different, because it was premised on non-violence, a pact the Lebanese

people contracted amongst themselves as they were carrying it out.

Looking into antecedents, I realized that Hanna Batatu, the great historian of 20th century Iraq, mentions *intifada* for one of the larger street revolts against the Monarchy in Baghdad in 1952.³² Maybe the disastrous fate of Iraq was an additional reason why I dislike calling our Revolution *intifada*. ‘Cedar Revolution’ was coined by Paula Dobriansky, then US ‘Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs’, in a press conference on 28 February 2005. In the report available, the expression is recorded in bracket and in the singular form, ‘Cedar Revolution’. Despite its foreign origin, an American one to boot, it stood out against the word *intifada* because of the violent and inconclusive Palestinian precedents. One reason was also selfish: my grandfather being known as the poet of the Cedar, *sha‘er al-arz*, I naturally identify with the name. Less selfishly, the battle is also symbolic, and probably also atavistically sectarian. The Cedar is the symbol of old Mount Lebanon joining Druze and Christian territory, as opposed to the Sunni coast, or Hizbullah’s strongholds in the suburbs, the Biqa’ valley, or the South, where there are no cedars. And the Cedar was uniquely Lebanese, a beautiful and majestic symbol sitting on our flag since 1943, rather than the ugly and non-descript colours that form the flag of most Arab countries.

There is more to names and slogans than meets the eye: throughout the demonstrations, we were plagued with a tripartite empty slogan that came from the Aoun movement. It said *hurriyya, siyada, istiqlal*, liberty, sovereignty, independence. Sovereignty and independence are redundant enough, with liberty adding a further sense of repetition. What was missing in our Revolution was democracy, and the recognition of its most remarkable trait, non-violence. The redundant slogan stuck, symbolically failing to inscribe non-violence and democracy alongside independence. Fortunately, another slogan developed. ‘Truth and Justice’ covered Beirut streets, and all novelty was not lost.

32 Hanna Batatu, *The Old social classes and the revolutionary movements of Iraq: A study of Iraq’s old landed and commercial classes and of its communists, Ba’thists and Free Officers*, Princeton 1978, chapter on ‘the Intifadah of November’, 666-70.

And so it was that between independence and *intifada* we constrained our Revolution, whilst missing its more important characteristics: the people's demand for democracy, and their pursuit of security through non-violence. Words have a logic. One should never underestimate their power. *Liberté* and *égalité* are enduring concepts from the French Revolution, *fraternité* never quite made it.

vii. Social structure

Karl Marx never harboured a doubt on the social structure of the French Revolution, and his stubborn diagnosis prevailed in revolutionary historiography: 'The French *bourgeoisie* rose to power through the most gigantic revolution that history has known... Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, Saint Just, Napoléon, the heroes, as well as the parties and the mass under the ancient French Revolution accomplished in their Roman costume, and with a Roman vocabulary, the task of their era, that is the liberation and establishment of a modern *bourgeois* society.'³³ The French Revolution was *bourgeois*. So was the Cedar Revolution. When March 14 came, with half the population of Lebanon on the street, the cross-section was immense, and it was also for many a family outing. But March 14 was the climax, which came after so many demonstrations, only a few comprising thousands as opposed to the more common crowd, usually in the hundreds. Some will consider the Revolution to be that of the youth, and of a nucleus of zealots at that, mostly from those most frustrated groups belonging to one Christian leader in prison for over a decade, Samir Geagea, and another Christian leader in exile for a decade and a half, Michel Aoun. Nuclei are important, and the continued physical presence of the tents since February 18 prevented a sense of 'back to usual business' from setting

33 First section of the text taken from *The German Ideology* (1846), second section from the *18 Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), excerpts in François Furet, *Marx et la Révolution Française*, Paris 1986, 182 and 245 respectively. Emphasis in original.

50 in. The eventual departure of the campers in May was a strong signal that the Revolution was over.

The Revolution's middle class backbone was dual: what is traditionally described as bourgeoisie, more specifically in that case middle aged professionals, bankers, lawyers, doctors, journalists, state employees, combined with *housewives*. Robert Fossaert has written in his Summa on society how trade-unionists know that a political order is coming to an end when housewives descend on the street to demonstrate: 'All trade-unionists know that when housewives, often frightened by strikes and other forms of open struggle, enter the field of action, then the paroxysm is near.'³⁴ Housewives and mothers on the streets of Beirut carried the Revolution to its paroxysm.

It was always a figment of the imagination that the Lebanese youth led the revolution. One of the Revolution's greatest disappointments was the absence of a youth leader *à la 68* emerging from the scene. But this absence is better understood as an early illusion trumpeted by Lebanese politicians in the anti-Syrian camp, part wishful thinking part demagoguery. The Revolution never risked being led by the youth. Despite all the rhetoric to the contrary, leading politicians of the Hariri-Jumblat camp, and their Christian supporters of the time, weren't ready to see their leadership being taken over by unknown youth. Paradoxically also, the strong family structure prevailing in Lebanon may have also constituted a key component of the Revolution's success, at a time when the conservative setback brought to the fore family values, the more so in a disoriented and naturally timorous Lebanese society emerging from two decades of war followed by one and a half decades of Syrian-led thuggery. Youth is an active section of nuclear and extended families alike, but never the decisive part.

Sociologist Melhem Chaoul offered the first serious sketch of 'Lebanese

34 Robert Fossaert, *La Société*, tome 5, *Les Etats*, Paris 1981, paragraphe 20: 'Tous les syndicalistes savent que, quand les femmes-au-foyer, souvent effrayées par les grèves et autres formes de lutte ouverte, entrent à leur tour dans l'action, c'est qu'un paroxysme est proche.'

society faced by March 14'. In part he distinguished between the *mujtama' ahli* of Lebanon, the traditional society, which consists of family, tribal and communitarians alliances suddenly meeting in a narrow geographical space, and the *mujtama' madani*, civil society as understood in the vast modern literature around that concept. The massive dimension of March 14 made the two fuse, with the brief dominance of civil society taking over the hierarchical mode of traditional society. Leaders evaporated that day:

'Against the verticality of the structure of the traditional political movement, against the one way relation from the direction to "the base", the spirit of March 14 initiated the network society, horizontal connections, egalitarian relations, mobilisation by choice for the individual. The leadership became accessory, subsidiary, and decorative: there is someone making a speech, but one doesn't listen, one doesn't follow the speaker above, what is important gets exchanged in the throng. End of "directives" and of "prefabricated slogans", time for the disorder of words and to slogans invented on site.'³⁵

So it was not the youth, I contend, nor the traditional political leadership, nor even the families who were the nerve of the Revolution. They all did share in of course, and the housewives and whole families descending onto central Beirut transformed the revolt into a Revolution, with rare precedents in history for any society. When over a half of the active population of a country is in the street, surely the phenomenon is awesome. The question is, who was the mainstay of the Revolution? My answer, to be tested quantitatively by historians: the Lebanese professional middle class, the *bourgeoisie*, to use Marx's awkward obsession. When company executives, bankers, lawyers, doctors take to the street, the

35 'Face à la verticalité de la structure du mouvement politique traditionnel, au rapport à sens unique de la direction vers "la base", l'esprit du 14 mars a initié la société en réseaux, les connexions horizontales, les relations égalitaires, la mobilisation par choix s'adressant à des individus. Le leadership est devenu accessoire, subsidiaire, décoratif: il y a bien quelqu'un qui fait un discours, mais on n'écoute pas, on ne suit pas le locuteur d'en haut, l'important est ce qui s'échange dans la foule: finis les "mots d'ordre" et les "slogans préfabriqués", place au désordre des mots et aux slogans inventés sur place.' Melhem Chaoul, 'La société libanaise face au mouvement du 14 mars', *Travaux et Jours*, 76, Autumn 2005, 89-100, at 92.

rest of the society follows in a country which does not have a core party like the Baath in Syria, or a core military like in Turkey, that can muster enough centralization and coherence to shoot into this powerful type of demonstrators.

Missing in prominence from the Cedar Revolution was a class identified in French history as the *sans-culottes*. The French Revolution knew two high moments: 1789 and 1793. Historians agree, the 1793 Robespierre moment of the Revolution, tainted as it was by state-initiated terror, charted also the rise of an expanded form of social egalitarianism. This contention has been supported by the Mathiez school, and the Société d'Etudes Robespierriistes which he founded in 1907, adding much to our understanding of the dynamic associated with Robespierre's access to the effective headship of the Comité de Salut Public in September 1793, and the real popularity he commanded amongst a strata identified as the 'sans-culottes'. A corresponding argument could focus on Hizbullah, and the non-bourgeois dominant character of its followers. A major difference remains: Hizbullah and his allies, lasting or temporary, stand for Counter-revolution. In 1789, Robespierre was on the side of the Revolution against the Ancien Régime. In 2005, Hizbullah was against the Revolution, and remained openly faithful to the Syrian order.

The more important parallel between the defining moments of 1793 Jacobinism as opposed to the original spirit of 1789 was a promise of something else, an enhancement of social equality as opposed to formal equality. It did not work in France, of course, but it opened a window which remained a dominant trait of historiography, through the Bolsheviks who loved the Jacobins, until the demise of the Soviet Union in 1989. This is why Furet's work is so pregnant. It corresponds to the end of a century-long debate. In Lebanon, that debate never really started, for those who might have aspired to some form of egalitarianism squarely stood against the Revolution.

Like the French Revolution, the Cedar Revolution was bourgeois, in that the bourgeoisie led it, which was naturally associated with that most successful of the Lebanese bourgeois, Rafiq Hariri. The 'people' followed,

though not all the 'people': the overall mass of Lebanese Shi'is stood by, then opposed it. Here Lebanon becomes impossible to compare with modern world revolutions, at least in their western varieties. Suddenly, time-honoured sectarianism sets in. Suddenly Middle Eastern religious atavisms come to the fore, trumping the revolutionary scene and compelling a different type of analysis.³⁶ The central question of the Cedar Revolution at the height of its surge, in and around March 14, was: where were the Shi'is? Why did they not rally, in their mass?

They did rally, of course, around Hizbullah, against the Revolution, starting March 8. And no one had any doubt: on March 14, everyone else in Lebanon descended onto the street in reaction to the immense Shi'i tide of the previous week. The Revolution was also sectarian, as all things Lebanese, indeed as all things Middle Eastern.

36 A telling text from 1870, shared by Jamil Mruwwe as I was completing this book: 'Written by W.M. Thomson, Protestant minister, in *The Land and the book*, published in London in 1870: Lebanon has about 400,000 inhabitants, gathered into more than six hundred towns, villages and hamlets...

The various religions and sects live together, and practice their conflicting superstitions in close proximity, but the people do not coalesce into one homogeneous community, nor do they regard each other with fraternal feelings.

The Sunnites excommunicate the Shiites – both hate the Druse, and all three detest the Nusairiyeh. The Maronites have no particular love for anybody and, in turn, are disliked by all. The Greeks cannot endure the Greek Catholics - all despise the Jews. And the same remarks apply to the minor divisions of this land. There is no common bond of union.

Society has no continuous strata underlying it, which can be opened and worked for the general benefit of all, but an endless number of dislocated fragments, faults, and dikes, by which the masses are tilted up in hopeless confusion, and lie at every conceivable angle of antagonism to each other. The omnific Spirit that brooded over primeval chaos can alone bring order out of such confusion, and reduce these conflicting elements into peace and concord...

No other country in the world, I presume, has such a multiplicity of antagonistic races; and herein lies the greatest obstacle to any general and permanent amelioration and improvement of their condition character, and prospects. They can never form one united people, never combine for any important religious or political purpose ; and will therefore remain weak, incapable of self-government, and exposed to the invasions and oppressions of foreigners. Thus it has been, is now, and must long continue to be – a people divided, meted out, and trodden down.' For the Lebanese crises and revolutions of the 19th century, an excellent introduction is Samir Khalaf, *Persistence and change in 19th century Lebanon : a sociological essay*, Beirut 1979.

It was somewhere, like all Revolutions, social, but that depth was faint and skewed. A class struggle would be loud, one would think, considering the massive coalescing of Shi'is around Hizbullah, the 'voice of those who do not have a voice', of those 'who are left behind', of the 'dispossessed and wretched of the earth'. But it is not so simple, however strong the association of the Shi'i mass of the population with deprivation and marginality in modern Lebanese history. The paradox is easy to discern: as the closest to the French Revolution sans-culottes in class terms, Hizbullah's people stood actually on the opposite side, on the side of the counter-revolution. Another paradox is also worth noting: they never asked, individually or as leaders, for political, let alone social reform. They just harked to the disappearing Syrian order, seeking its restoration along with a non-Lebanese agenda concerned primarily with Israel.

Hizbullah spoilt the Lebanese Revolution, and its leadership remained behind at all stages of its development: it stood against Syrian withdrawal, against justice for Hariri, against the change of Emile Lahoud and Nabih Berri, the two foremost symbols of the Ancien Régime. And when Hizbullah started the war against Israel on July 12, 2006, it was clearly to stage a coup d'Etat. Lost for the Cedar Revolution was the hope, through a Shi'i voice, of any social change that would address social inequality. As a strongly sectarian movement, Hizbullah made prospects for a non-sectarian public space, let alone of democratic equality against sectarianism, totally absent from the Cedar Revolution's scene.

So it was left for the Lebanese bourgeoisie, as middle class professionals mainly living in the city, to lead the Cedar Revolution. As Chaoul correctly noted, there was a fundamental *disconnect* with the leadership. The mass meetings of the Cedar Revolution were spontaneous; this made their charm, and their universal appeal. Those on the other side looked 'embrigadés', and their black shirts, their military appeal, their stilted language, their callous slogans, were and will remain on the wrong side of history. Their leadership was never capable of appealing to equality, whether democratic or social, so conservative and counterrevolutionary was their political bent. As a result, those who could give an additional depth to the Revolution in

the sense given by Robespierre and his successors of the socially egalitarian movement, Babeuf and Blanqui, sounded far more as unrepentant royalist defenders of the neighbouring dynasty: their motto, fidelity to Syria, was made worse by the blunt and insistent association with a dictatorial and corrupt sectarian dynasty that ruled Damascus with an iron fist for almost half a century.

viii. Leadership

Disconnect between the people of March 14 and the leadership came first with the brutal disappearance of Rafiq Hariri's towering figure. It turned him *'tel qu'en lui-même enfin l'éternité le change'*, and deprived the Revolution from its larger-than-life leader. In the pantheon of Lebanese figures of the Revolution, Walid Jumblat and Rafiq Hariri tower highest on the right side of history for year one, month one.

The psychology of revolutionary actors is a fascinating exercise, as much needed for Rousseau, Louis xvi, and Robespierre, as it is for the Lebanese political figures during the Revolution. Other than Hariri and Jumblat, the many lesser political figures on the Lebanese scene will find in La Bruyère's sarcastic portraits a far more appropriate model. There were many brave participants, some of whom will have had a biography of sorts by 2221. But those who were on the wrong side of history, disliked the Revolution, fought it, or turned their back on it, will have deserved footnotes.

A brief portrait is in order for my choice of the two leaders of the Cedar Revolution.

For Hariri, the *grandeur* was posthumous. True, he had reached in his lifetime success by any standard, rising to Prime Ministership from nowhere official. When he was called to the job by Syrian-appointed president Elias Hrawi in 1992, after the first Karameh government collapsed in the wake of street protests in the face of economic adversity, Hariri had never exercised an official position, elected or otherwise. His prime ministership was owed to moderation and networking, to Saudi support, and to his

proverbial wealth. In 1992, he hardly knew how to speak in public, in any language, and his apprenticeship on this score was remarkable over the next decade. Contrary to the many wooden-language prototypes, run-of-the-mill Lebanese politicians who are always careful and never speak their minds, Hariri was by the time he was murdered capable of interesting interviews, and occasionally good speeches, even in French which he learnt on the street, so to speak, in the corridors of the Elysée Palace. Hariri was no orator, but he was astute politically, standing on the right side of history by virtue of his intelligence and moderation, without realizing that the contemporary Middle East carries a non-discriminating killer logic that does not spare moderates.

I met him on several occasions, especially after the enthusiasm he expressed toward the case against Ariel Sharon in Belgium. His support was welcome and uplifting, but any political or financial translation of that support meant the death of the case, and he understood that well. Hariri knew the importance of the law, as much as he knew the power of money, but for him money spoke louder in politics. The cabinet position he was most keen to keep for his camp was the ministry of finance. Next came the ministry of justice. No surprise then that his two closest non-family aides, Fouad Siniora, his chief money manager and adviser, and Bahige Tabbara, his chief legal counsel, became respectively ministers of finance and justice when Hariri was Prime Minister. Both were able number 2s, with a mind of their own, but they did not quite project the warmth and unique generosity that came naturally to their patron.

Looking into the foibles of political life is easy; the sinews of politics are as disheartening to the idealist as the kitchens of great chefs to the happy diner, and Hariri as leader was incapable of making a distinguishing mark in his lifetime. The reconstruction he presided over came at a heavy cost, driving the country into deep structural indebtedness. Even the architecture of downtown Beirut was controversial, and raised much

37 See e.g. Jad Tabet, *'al-i'mar wal-maslaha al-'amma, fil-turath wal-hadatha: Madinat al-harb wa dhakirat al-mustaqbal* (Reconstruction and public interest. On tradition and modernity, the city of war and the memory of the future), Beirut 1996.

opposition amongst respectable Lebanese architects.³⁷ Hariri's followers, save a few, were unpalatable sycophants literally waiting in the Saudi-style corridors of his gilded mansion for the boss to make an appearance and accord them a few precious minutes they could then translate in a lucrative deal.

Hariri became much greater in death than in life, for the revulsion at killing such a gentle soul was commensurate with the accommodating temper he manifested in the worst adversity. In the Middle East tough neighbourhood, accommodation also comes at a price. Hariri's last accommodation on August 26, 2004, when he gave in to Bashar al-Asad's injunction to extend Emile Lahoud's presidency, cost him his life.

It is in death that he became suddenly big, as big potentially, I wrote in the first days of the Revolution, as Mahatma Gandhi.³⁸ It may be difficult to imagine Rafiq Hariri's ultimate sacrifice on 14 February 2005 standing in history like the murder of the Mahatma on 30 January 1948. Still, the argument that Hariri is to Lebanon and the Middle East what the Mahatma was to India I continue to defend. There was hardly a more peaceful soul in the Arab world than the former Lebanese Prime Minister: he was simply unable to conceive violence as a tool for policy. Not only did he reject violence against rivals or enemies in political life, he always refused to get drawn, in a country and region where violence is a daily occurrence, into a process that *might* turn into bloodshed. Even his opposition to Emile Lahoud, which was real and palpable, never developed on his part into an attitude conducive to armed confrontation. And as in the case of Gandhi, his rivals did not have any scruple in resorting to violence to get rid of him.

Non-violence prevailing on the political scene is the critical test for over half the Lebanese population who adopted Hariri as the icon of March 14, 2005. The month of demonstrations after his death was both a fulfillment and a message: a fulfillment of the silent and steady resistance

38 Mallat, 'Hariri et le Mahatma Gandhi, de la non-violence au Liban comme promesse d'avenir', *Le Monde*, Proche-Orient edition, 20 May 2005. The article was written in the first week after Hariri's death, but it wasn't published then. Another version appeared as '*Ahd al-ra'is al-hariri wa 'ahduna lah* (the tenure/commitment of president Hariri and our commitment to him)', *al-Mustaqbal*, 24 December 2005.

of the Lebanese people to humiliation, domination and heavy-handedness over the previous fifteen years; and a message of active non-violence from Lebanon to the region and the world, so that people in the streets of Beirut should take the political lead in society.

To win the challenge, Hariri's sacrifice needed to herald a Middle East where consistent refusal of the use of force for political ends could slowly transform him into a Mahatma Gandhi figure for Lebanon and the region. The achievements of the first month of the Revolution were impressive, but they remained the tip of the democratic and non-violent iceberg which did not materialise into a stable course and failed to create the alternative.

The man bears the historic mantra of a Gandhi only if his successors succeed in extricating the non-violent profile from the rest of Hariri's personality, which was nothing like Gandhi's. To put the contrast mildly, Hariri never offered sacrifices like Gandhi's constant near starvation. Gandhi had no property in his legacy, save his remarkable soul. Hariri's wealth ranked amongst the most impressive in the world. But Hariri's world was no longer Gandhi's, and the greatness of India is inconceivable without its slow but determined transformation into a world industrial-technological power. Nothing of the sort appears in Gandhi's economic philosophy. His call for a return to basics in daily life and in the economy is not only impossible. It is wrong, as was the whole socialist idea which impressed its charitable dimension on Gandhi and his colleagues in the anti-colonial struggle. Even Nelson Mandela, a half century later, left at the door his militant socialism and his weapons as the means of liberation, before taking over the presidency of South Africa. Hariri would have nothing to do with communal-socialist economic schemes as world vision, and he was right, for Gandhi's India has inexorably moved in the opposite direction to where better things lie, in liberal capitalism. 'Better' relatively of course, for even capitalist societies have their moments of compassion, their marginal efforts to bring everyone on board, and their occasional taxes for the benefit of the poor. The politicians manipulate the language of social equality, but who wouldn't? Hariri knew the system, and he played it well, until he pushed his luck too far. And he was candid. Hariri never

hid his companionship to the money march of the late 20th century, and money was also for him a way to avoid violence:³⁹ in 21st century terms, Hariri is the embodiment of soft power.

But he was ultimately naïve. After he succumbed to Syrian pressure for the extension of Lahoud's mandate in September 2004, he thought he would recoup in the parliamentary elections planned for May 2005, but the illusion he harboured with Walid Jumblat to get back at the Syrian order by way of a parliamentary victory betrays his weak sense of timing, and the narrowness of his constitutional understanding. Never was power vested in Parliament in Lebanon. Hariri was guided by the precedent of 2000, when parliamentary elections resulted in the defeat of his Sunni nemesis of the time, sitting Prime Minister Selim al-Hoss. That victory he owed primarily to the courage of Walid Jumblat, who took on the challenge against the deepening Asad-Lahoud order single-handedly, and won elections in the Mountain against all odds. By a special Lebanese twist to Jumblat's unexpected victory, Hariri benefited from the shock and profited from the tide obtaining from staggered elections Lebanon has managed to distinguish its system with. Twist, because in a tiny country like Lebanon, the vote should be easily managed over one day. Instead, it is staggered over four successive Sundays. In 2000 Beirut voted after the Mountain, which Jumblat had won, and Beirut rallied behind Hariri against the government then led by Hariri's Sunni rival, Selim Hoss. Lahoud and the Syrians had a brief setback.

Building on his vicarious victory of 2000, Hariri focused after Lahoud's extension in September 2004 all his energies on the parliamentary elections engineered, oddly and unconstitutionally enough, to take place four years and six months (rather than the constitutionally prescribed four years) after the 2000 summer elections. He thought he could win a decisive majority to

³⁹ Nicholas Blanford reports a telling story on Hariri's unfortunate propensity to use money as a solution to political problems: 'According to a veteran pro-Syrian Lebanese politician, Hariri made a last-ditch effort to stave off Lahoud's three extra years by offering Rustom Ghazaleh [the head of the Syrian security services in Lebanon at the time], \$20 million to tell the Syrian leadership he was unable to arrange the presidential extension. Ghazaleh, however, refused the offer'. *Killing Mr Lebanon*, 107.

change the system. That was at best naïve.

Walid Jumblat was also naïve. According to published accounts of the aftermath of the tragic Asad-Hariri meeting at the end of August 2004, Jumblat advised Hariri to yield to the Syrians over Lahoud. That was lethal advice.

Walid Jumblat is an endearing man, full of charm, with a sharp brain and an impossible temper. Amongst some twenty speeches during the longest day of the Revolution on March 14, most notable was the absence of his. Then was lost a chance for the democratic dimension of the Revolution to make headway, and Jumblat would have no doubt called for the removal of Emile Lahoud. Amongst the other speakers, only Carlos Eddé requested that the president step down, and he deserves a salute for that mention, the only meaningful one politically during the day. But the mention was expressed too sarcastically to make an impact: take some rest for yourself and us, Eddé said to Lahoud, *btirtah wa bitrayyih*. That was not sufficient to force a president out, considering the atmosphere the world over about presidents' sacro-sanctity, let alone Lebanon.

When was the last time that a president or a Prime Minister resigned in the world? The Middle East is far worse. The last resignation which came willfully at the top level was Israeli PM Itzhak Rabin's in 1974, over the illegal bank account he held abroad with his wife. In 1983, Ariel Sharon was dismissed kicking and shouting from the Defense Ministry after the Kahane Commission concluded he was 'personally responsible' for the Sabra and Shatila massacres in September 1982. He remained in government, playing on the words of the Commission: out of Defense, but not out of the Cabinet. Instead of seeing an end to a massively brutal career, Sharon eventually came back to lead Israel and Palestine again into the abyss twenty years later.

Why did Jumblat fail to develop the democratic character of the Cedar Revolution? He was the undisputed leader of the movement in the first few weeks, but surrendered people's expectations on March 14, or on March 27, depending on one's appreciation. On March 14 he did not join the demonstrators, for reasons of security, and the Revolution appeared suddenly leader- and rudder-less. On March 27 he paid a visit to Hizbullah's

chief, signaling a weakness he came to regret too late. Before and after March 14, there were many other occasions when leadership failed him. He advised Hariri wrongly to give in to Asad in August 2004, and then pushed parliamentary elections as the panacea for presidential change when they would obviously fall short politically and constitutionally. He failed to rally the large, massive movement into some institutionalized structure, including a common front to face the parliamentary elections when they took place in May-June 2005. He swung dramatically from one pole to the other, losing more credibility at each and every turn. And so on, one could lengthen the list significantly. And yet Jumblat was the incontrovertible leader of oppositional, decent Lebanon, for three decades, like his father was for half a century before him. The fact that, born Druze, they didn't belong by birth to the sects that commandeer the three key constitutional positions in the Republic (president, speaker, prime minister) forced them to always bow to some secondary character who would use their support gladly, and turn his back on them once in power.

In the course of three decades of upheaval, Walid Jumblat comes out in Lebanon's history as a courageous, visionary leader of sort in the tragic epic of the 20th century Middle East. He generally knew how the regional winds blew, who was worth vesting confidence and political capital in, and how some moral value could be added to the brutal Mideastern hallmark of history. On occasions, even that moral value failed him, as when the Christians of the mountain were killed or ejected from their homes by Jumblat's men in 1983. That blot will never go away. But like his father from 1946 to 1977, Walid Jumblat set the tone of Lebanese politics soon after he took on the feudal mantle upon Kamal's assassination by the Syrians in March 1977.

In the Cedar Revolution, Walid Jumblat lacked two depths: a horizontal sense of revolutionary reach, as he never realized the power that Lebanon's relative though real democratic vantage point had upon the rest of the Middle East. Only a full year after March 14 did he see that regional overdetermination had to be addressed in a frontal way, and called for changing the Syrian regime. This came late, for he ignored at the crucial moment the regional dynamism of the Cedar Revolution. Such dynamism

64 is hard to get back, for great historic occasions are unique.

The other depth he did not have was intellectual. That was surely a revolt against the father, who read and wrote a lot. Kamal Jumblat authored some seminal books of 20th century Arab political literature, an exception rather than the rule in politics. In comparison with politicians the world over, Walid Jumblat is a good reader, but a certain critical mass was never reached that would have turned his speeches, and his reference points, into Danton's or Robespierre's.⁴⁰ It is true that neither Danton nor Robespierre was necessarily a marking thinker of the French Revolution. When you act, you usually do not have the luxury to think a lot, or to express that *thinking* philosophically. Jumblat and Hariri were no philosophers. Nor did they have any pretense to being so.

But could the Cedar Revolution remain without any philosophers whatsoever?

⁴⁰ Except perhaps Jumblat's emotional speech of 14 February 2006 challenging the Asad government, a powerful testimony on Lebanese anger against the Syrian order.

ix. Intellectual roots

Historians of the French revolution dedicate a choice place to its 'intellectual roots', which they discuss in the context of the Enlightenment's battle against absolute monarchy. Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu, two hundred and thirty years later, are the political philosophers to whom historians generally ascribe the Revolution's intellectual pedigree.

The causes of the Cedar Revolution are plain. Here is a country where the domination of Syria was paramount over a period of fifteen years. In its simplest form, the Cedar Revolution was about breaking Lebanon's shackles from Syrian control and the people who represented Asad's rule in Beirut. When one of the least provocative contesters of that domination showed his persistent concern with reducing its power, he was killed, and the country revolted. Opposition to Syria + Hariri's assassination = the Cedar Revolution.

An unimpeachable equation indeed, but as we learn from the history of the French Revolution, an insufficient one. The intellectual roots, also known as cultural or ideological, may be more difficult to follow, because Lebanon did not have a Voltaire or a Rousseau whom people recognized, even during the French Revolution, to be its intellectual forerunners:

Je suis tombé par terre, c'est la faute à Voltaire

Le nez dans le ruisseau c'est la faute à Rousseau.

In Lebanon, the Cedar Revolution's closest to be philosopher figures were two Christian men of religion: the Maronite Patriarch, Mar Nasrallah Butros Sfeir, and Jesuit anthropologist Sélim Abou, the rector of Saint

Joseph's university. Their style was most contrastive. As the head of the most important Christian community of Lebanon, Sfeir had a matter-of-fact, affectedly naïve style: he met everyone and told everyone what he exactly thought. In a country where double talk and self-inflicted taboos are the norm, this was a considerable feat, but he was simply brushed away by the Syrians as a harmless nuisance. Sfeir had stayed the course of decency throughout the war years first, when extremist Christian Maronites of different persuasions ended up killing each other, after heavy participation in blind violence against Muslims. And he carried through the years of Syrian domination with the same equanimity. The credit accumulated during these years meant that he emerged as the wise man for Christians, and the *marja'*, the society's 'reference', a staple of Middle Eastern politics in search of a beacon of wisdom. 'Reference' was found in Sfeir in Lebanon, as it was in Ayatollah Sistani, the *marja'* of Iraq.

What the prominence of religious leaders also meant was the collapse of leadership amongst non-religious politicians, and a continuous deadlock: because one had no Sfeir or Sistani to turn to amongst Lebanese and Iraqi politicians, one needed to turn to Sfeir and Sistani, a turn which oiled the vicious circle of sectarianism. After all, these are heads of religious communities, not political leaders. The moment they become the reference for political leadership, they do not stop being the religious heads of their community.

In Lebanon, Sfeir offered the best possibilities available, and stayed a course which sounded dull: no violence, no extremism, dialogue, no subjection to the Syrians.⁴¹ But the course struck root, and offered limited but effective intellectual and political leadership by way of a political group called Qornet Chahwan, and more solidly by way of regular statements issued by the Council of Maronite Bishops who met under the aegis of the Patriarchate, and expressed the pondered line of resistance that was its hallmark. While nearest to it for the Cedar Revolution, theirs was not however a philosopher's language of liberation.

41 Good biography of the Patriarch by Antoine Sa'd (Saad), *Al-sabe' wal-sab'un, Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir*, 2 vols., Beirut 2004-5, English translation of the first volume as *The Seventy Sixth, Mar Nasrallah Boutros Cardinal Sfeir*, Beirut 2005.

A more articulate philosophy of liberation came in the annual lectures of Sélim Abou, which he gave starting March 1996 as he took the helm of Saint Joseph's University, the century-old educational institution which the French Jesuits founded and developed to educate most of the political leaders of independent Lebanon. Abou's lectures offer the ideological pillars of the Cedar Revolution much in the way the writings of the French philosophers in the second half of the 18th century offered the ideological pillars for the 1789 Revolution.

There were three moments I personally relate to in Abou's lectures. The first was early on, I had been just a year back in Lebanon, and shared the country's enthusiasm for the courage of the man, and for the quality of his language. The second was in March-April 2005, as the revolution was on the march, with a promise that was larger than Lebanon. The third is now.

Through these three moments spanning a decade, it is worth reflecting on why those lectures remain the staple of Lebanon's philosophy of liberation associating with its Revolution.

Moment I was an occasion for the translation of his speech of 1997 in English, and its publication with an introduction by Gareth Smyth, then opinion editor of the Beirut *Daily Star*, which Jamil Mruwwe, a man of subtlety and vision, had revived in Beirut as the leading English regional newspaper a year earlier: 'On March 19, [1997] Sélim Abou, the rector of St Joseph's, Beirut, gave a speech to the university's annual meeting. Rarely in modern Lebanon has an "academic" talk provoked such controversy – in the press, in politics, and in education circles.'⁴² The tone was exactly right. Here is my own introduction to that translation, published a few days after the speech in homage to the man's courage. To appreciate the context better, one should know that any criticism, veiled or open, of the Syrian order in Lebanon at the time stood way beyond the security services' tolerance. Abou was paid a threatening visit by men sent by then Army

42 Gareth Smyth, introduction to the English translation of Abou's speech, 'The challenges of the university', *The Daily Star*, 15 April 1997. The speech, which was read on 19 March 1997, appears as chapter 2 in Sélim Abou, *Freedoms: Cultural roots of the Cedar Revolution*, Beirut 2005, 45-64.

commander Emile Lahoud a few days later, and he refused to see them. Also at the time, a huge storm followed the talk because of accusations leveled at Abou as 'Christian extremist' by then minister Walid Jumlat. Here are my impressions as I wrote them down then:

Le Silence de la Mer ('the silence of the sea'), 1942: the book was the most powerful cultural and literary expression of French opposition to occupation during the Second World War. Written by Vercors, the pseudonym of Jean Bruner, one-time communist party activist, it remains a signal literary memory of the years of occupation.

Vercors, a towering literary figure since that short novel, went on to establish one of the most creative publishing houses in twentieth century France, les Editions de Minuit, before his death in 1991.

Since Sélim Abou, the rector of the Université Saint Joseph, pronounced his speech on the annual occasion of the faculty meeting three weeks ago, I have been haunted by the imagery of Vercors' short novel, which I read years ago. In *Le Silence de la Mer*, the author-narrator depicts the mute dialogue taking place between an educated Nazi officer and his silent host on whom he foists his presence during Germany's occupation of France.

My memory of the novel is understandably faint, but its lingering power has remained. I am not certain why, but the reflections of Professor Abou have reawakened this reminiscence in a quasi-obsessive manner.

For nothing happens in *Le Silence de la Mer*. Page after page, the reader feels a heavy and muted presence in the Frenchman's house, while the German officer, graced with an immersion in Goethe's literature, and in Beethoven's music, is unable to achieve a rapprochement with his unwilling host despite his rarefied aesthetics. They share a refined European culture, but opposite the German is silence. The barrier cannot be broken. Although the occupation is not mentioned once, it is there, ever-pervasive, in the most oppressive form.

But I must try to make sense of my subconscious, and to offer elements of response to that obsession, which, considering the ripples created by Abou in Lebanese circles, is the sign of a wider feel of unease towards, or identification with, that speech. Sélim Abou's reflections may be offering the outlines of a watershed in Lebanon's intellectual history.

And yet, there is little in the speech's learned construction which should have triggered the recollection of *Le Silence de la Mer*. The reader will find a patiently built, three-fold argument, developing around history, sociology and politics. In it is little silence.

In history, Abou's message is a call for addressing Lebanon's past in its *Mille Plateaux*, to borrow the title given by the French thinkers Gilles Deleuze (d. 1995) and Félix Guattari (d. 1992) to their groundbreaking philosophical tractatus, published in 1980, perhaps not coincidentally, at the Editions de Minuit.

'A thousand levels': this is the rich reality of Lebanon's history, and Abou argues for the need to reclaim, from within Lebanon, those vast tracts of history which have been left to the research of foreign scholars.

I have experienced this void, as Abou aptly remarks, in more than just the Lebanese context. In many years at the School of Oriental and African Studies, one realizes the richness of the whole field of Mesopotamian studies in Britain, France and the US. I have not stumbled, despite my better efforts, on anything near the amount of depth or width conducted in Arabic, in Iraq or elsewhere.

In sociology, the call is for a defense of pluralism, which is an integral part of Lebanese identity. In some of the criticism leveled against it, the accusation has been directed, particularly by minister Jumblat, at this part of Abou's speech.

Walid Jumblat's contention is that Sélim Abou conjures up some of the extremist Christian leaders' veiled call, during the civil war, for secessionism in the name of Lebanese Christendom. I beg to differ with this reading, even though my legal apprenticeship

suggests much more care before trying to force on Middle Eastern societies a common personal status code in the name of nationalism or secularism.

I am not as supportive as Professor Abou of Tunisia's proto-secular code, and noted once how the Iraqi personal status code of 1959 was the first mark of the downside slope, in Iraq, towards the false unity we now have in that wretched country.

I have great attachment to a four-generation friendship between my family and the Jumblats, but I would argue that Walid bey and Sélim Abou are much closer to each another in their appreciation of the interface between the Lebanese mosaic of communities and their advocacy of secularism, than I am to either of their views.

And then there is the third, most troubling part of the rector's speech, where the paltry, poor, and empty political discourse which surrounds us in this at country is confronted with the exigency of truth, which Abou vests in the university.

I must confess that I cannot stand five minutes of news on Lebanese television, let alone of those endless interviews of local politicians. The reason is exactly what Sélim Abou courageously spoke about: the emptying of fundamental words, like 'independence', 'sovereignty' and 'democracy' from their basic meaning.

A few years hence, hopefully when the situation in Lebanon will have stabilised as it should for a normal nation-state, I have no doubt that the rhetorical cacophony we have heard since 1990 will not be different from that of France between 1940 and 1944.

From all the speeches will remain nothing, but the sounds of embarrassed silence. Then, people will read Abou's speech as the articulate version of Vercors' *Le silence de la Mer*. For my part, perhaps lacking courage or literary ability, I might stick to silence.⁴³

Moment 2 was the publication of the book, in English, soon after the

43 Mallat, 'Ideology and Arabism: the challenges of the university', *The Daily Star*, 15 April 1997.

Cedar Revolution was under way. The quality of Abou's eight annual speeches, and the courage displayed at a time of great fear in the country to express any dissent from the received mantra, had originally led me to translate all the speeches in English so that a sophisticated testimony of courage from within reaches a larger audience in Lebanon and abroad. A decade later, Abou asked me to write the preface to the English version of the book. This offered the occasion, in the midst of the Lebanese upheaval, to underline the power of Abou's words as the ideological pillars of the Cedar Revolution:

This ambitious depiction is made as the Lebanese, and the larger Middle Eastern, Revolution starts yielding results. Weeks only after the mass protests took to the street following Hariri's murder, the process stands very much at its beginnings, but it has fulfilled a central demand that the reader will find expressed early on in this book: the fulfillment of sovereignty with the departure of Syrian troops and security agents from Lebanese territory.

In a larger historical context, the mention of Syrian security agents appears bizarre. This oddity finds its explanation in the immense impact of Abou's lectures, as he underlined time and again over the years that the full apparatus of Syrian control remove its grips from the country. Here is one sample, in his lecture of 19 March 2001: 'But it is not so much the physical presence of this army which wounds the dignity of the Lebanese, as the symbol of domination which it represents, and the effective domination which its intelligence apparatus exercises over all sectors of public life. This Syrian control is not about to be relaxed, and there will be no dearth of Lebanese sycophants to laud its alleged benefits in a discourse which reflects a true culture of servility and which, therefore, belongs to the category of disrespectful speech.'⁴⁴

While the Lebanese people, free from apparent Syrian domination, will need to continue asking themselves for a long time how to put an end to disrespectful speech, the reference to the full apparatus

44 'The University on watch', 19 March 2001, chapter 6 in Abou, *Freedoms*, 139-167.

of repression is present throughout these lectures, – rather than intelligence gathering by people who operated in the dark, but whose names were known to all as the decision-makers at the highest level in the Lebanese Republic, including on commercial and financial deals. Here rests one incontrovertible evidence of a direct causal link: in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2 September 2004) requesting the departure of foreign troops from the country, one will not find mention of security services. The omission was soon rectified, and the mention appears emphatically in the Report of the UN Secretary General, written by the Swedish diplomat Terje Roed-Larsen: ‘In addition to the uniformed armed forces Syria has deployed in Lebanon, the Syrian government has informed the United Nations that there is also a substantial presence of non-uniformed military intelligence officials which, it says, are usual components of military units. These officials, together with the uniformed forces, constitute the full Syrian troop strength.’⁴⁵

Since then, the emphasis on Syrian intelligence has been taken up both domestically and internationally by the leadership of the opposition in Lebanon, as well as by the American and French presidents. This precision is owed in the first place to the foresight of Sélim Abou. It is rare for such a specific mention to find its way to becoming a universal demand. While a detail in the larger scheme of things, that evidence is telling on the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of these lectures’ impact.

Even more striking is the courage displayed in the rector’s annual speeches from 1996 to 2003. Now that most political taboos have been broken, after half of the Lebanese population found itself on the streets on 14 March 2005 putting into effect the leitmotifs underlined over eight years by the USJ rector, courage may be less apparent. But the first public figure in Lebanon to speak up was Sélim Abou, and he

45 Report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to Security Council resolution 1559 (2004), New York, 30 September 2004, para. 14.

46 Abou, *Freedoms*, chapter 2, 45-64.

did it with the authority of a scientist. When he embarked on his first lecture, on March 19, 1996, it was received as a bolt of lightning in a charged sky. The following year, his lecture on 'the Challenges of the university'⁴⁶ led to a torrent of abuses from various quarters, who saw correctly how these lectures undermined the Syrian-established order. In the weeks following the lecture, literally dozens of comments for and against the speech appeared in the media.

It was clear that this was the language the country needed, because it was the language of truth. Truth is the one central slogan of the Lebanese Cedar Revolution. In his report on the assassination of Hariri, the police officer in charge of the enquiry noted that the large demonstrations of Beirut carried one dominant motto, the truth: 'During our stay in Lebanon, ordinary people stopped us in the streets of Beirut and thanked us for our efforts to find "the truth", urged us not to leave this matter unresolved, and reminded us of the importance of bringing the culprits to justice "for the sake of Lebanon"'. Posters in the streets of Beirut carry one word, in two languages: the truth, al-haqiqa. Politicians, officials in the government at all levels, and even some security officials, told us that finding the truth "this time" is crucial for restoring civil peace in the country, reducing the tension and allowing Lebanon to move toward normality.'⁴⁷

What [*Freedoms*] had been building, year after year, was a call to restore through the University the spirit of truth which was wanting in the country. In Abou's words, 'ten years were necessary before the tongues unwound and freed themselves from coded language, that is from periphrases, metaphors, metonymies and other figures of speech under which was expressed the increasing unease caused by the presence of the Syrian army on the whole of Lebanese territory and the intervention of its intelligence apparatus in all the fields of

47 Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Lebanon inquiring into the causes, circumstances and consequences of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, 25 February – 24 March 2005 (Fitzgerald Report), para. 53. See *infra* section xii.

48 Abou, *Freedoms*, chapter 6, 'The University on watch', section on 'Liberation of political language'.

social, political and economic life.⁴⁸

In February 2005, the dyke finally broke. Tragically, it needed the shock occasioned by the attempted assassination of Marwan Hamadeh three months earlier, and the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, two close friends of Sélim Abou, whom the reader will see referred to often in Abou's lectures. That closeness was no coincidence. Beyond the sacrifices offered by Hamadeh, Hariri and their aides who perished in the crime, words had been the central actors of the fight for freedom. 'Never underestimate the power of words in history', the great French historian, Lucien Febvre, reminded his small academic audience at the Collège de France in the midst of the darkness of Nazi occupation.⁴⁹

The reader will find in *Freedoms* a rare instance of words buttressed with science finding their way to the street, which carried their promise of change in non-violence through the hearts of the demonstrators across the country. Michel Barnier, the French Foreign Minister whom Sélim Abou had presciently brought on board the Strategic Council of the university when he first established it in 1998, expressed the clear causality chain upon his hosting the Council in the Quai d'Orsay on 10 December 2004, two months before the Cedar Revolution broke out: 'Saint Joseph is the incarnation in Lebanon of the defense of freedoms and democratic values.'⁵⁰

In *Freedoms*, the reader finds a reflection on how to move the country forward beyond 'crashing the infamous', as Voltaire called gruesome dictatorship, as well as a political program yet to be fulfilled: 'It is not enough to request the phased withdrawal of Syrian troops and their intelligence services. The opposition, which I willfully call Resistance, has the right to request the departure of the Syrian "High Commissioner" and his followers, as well as an

49 Lucien Febvre, *Michelet et la Renaissance*, Paris 2002, original 1942-43, 21: 'Precisely what this course would like to be is, in ultimate analysis, an essay on the power of words in history.'

50 Speech of Michel Barnier at the meeting of Saint Joseph's University's Conseil Stratégique in Paris, *USJinfo*, January 2005, 32.

exchange of ambassadors between the two countries.⁵¹

There is more. Like the philosophers of the Enlightenment, whom one will find often quoted in these lectures, this book is destined to start a debate in Lebanese, Arab, and Mideastern societies, and beyond in their natural European partners, which will be with us for the better part of the 21st century.

This is yet another dimension of the book, which elevated public speech to a plane which is unusual on the Lebanese political scene: suddenly, Montesquieu, Kant and Habermas appeared relevant. Suddenly, the mantra of 'Arab' and 'Lebanese' identity, sacred cows of empty words, started yielding unsuspected riches. As the country recovers its sovereignty, as truth slowly finds its way through the international commissions set up to stop impunity, new horizons for Lebanese, Arab, Middle Eastern and European democracy will face difficulties and choices that this book informs in ways unprecedented in the literature.⁵²

This comment was written at the height of action, in February-March 2005. Now, in the fall of 2006, is *Moment 3*. A year after the Cedar Revolution's series of setbacks, the many questions raised in *Freedoms* remain as much in need of answers as they were when first raised. Reform of society, of laws, institutions, and education is more needed than ever, but the ways of reform are also fuzzier than ever. Abou primarily cared to keep his world, the world of the university, protected from the corruption and mediocrity that the ambient dictatorship was forcing on higher education in the country. One such form of corruption came from a proliferation of newly baptized universities which operated first and foremost on a profit-making base. Between 1990 and 2005, Lebanon witnessed the corrupt licensing of dozens such establishments, including one consisting of a building, maybe only a few flats in a building – as I never saw it – called Hawaii University. With my sense of libertarian laissez-faire, I never cared much for these

51 'The Wrath of the university', chapter 7 in Abou, *Freedoms*, 168-90, section on 'the alienated state'.

52 Mallat, 'Sélim Abou's power of words', Preface to Abou, *Freedoms*, 11-20.

institutions, and believe that time and the market will deal with them eventually, but the annoying effect they have on respected and hard-working institutions that see many students lured away from their walls is palpable, including the conferring of degrees to non-meriting graduates artificially made at par with students who went through hard college studies.

This dimension of Abou's struggle to preserve university quality may not count much in history, although one can see in Egypt and Iraq how once decent educational institutions become derelict when the state turns into a dictatorship. More important a legacy was Abou's close rendering of the dominant mood amongst the honest people of Lebanon: one of constant shock and humiliation at the base performance of politicians seeking their cue from Damascus, either directly – but these are easy to take one's distance from –, or in a subdued, more elusive way by many who were too coy to speak their mind: the mental break with the latter's ugly habits is far more difficult. Abou spoke their minds for the people of the Cedar Revolution, and far better than they could ever have expressed it.

The Abou annual demonstration, which brought together a university community of over a thousand people of faculty and staff on St Joseph's celebration in mid-March, became the expected rallying point for articulate dissent. In this regular and cumulative manifestation the intellectual roots of the Cedar Revolution grew, and the buzz these lectures created was palpable in the country after 1997. When the people rose in March 2005, their mood looked very much in its first weeks as the vindication of Abou's speech. The mass of assembled people in downtown Beirut was inchoate, naturally. It lacked the purposeful attention of a university community, but the Revolution also suffered from the Rector's narrow geographic horizons. Abou's criticism focused on Syria, because Syrian rule was the dominant problem in Lebanon. Abou occasionally gave examples of better Arab practices, for instance in reference to the equality between men and women in Tunisian family law, but his horizon was restricted to Lebanon by conscious choice. The horizon was mirrored in the Cedar Revolution's sway, which never went beyond Lebanon into the Middle East. This, despite an overwhelming regional overdetermination.

x. Regional overdetermination

Demonstrations in Beirut were followed by demonstrations in Damascus and Cairo. They were brutally suppressed in Damascus, where the technique, well honed in Tehran, was to send in counter-demonstrators organized by the government, who would beat up the smaller and far less structured dissident gatherings. In Cairo, demonstrators were contained differently. The Kefaya ('enough') movement had been particularly active in 2004, focusing on a simple slogan against an Egyptian president who had succeeded to remain in power more than any other ruler of Egypt but two since the earliest Pharaohs: *la tamdid la tawrith*, no extension, no succession. A few months away from the formal end of his mandate under the Egyptian constitution in September 2005, an occasion which would have otherwise gone unnoticed as a simple repeat of the perennial solution for such constitutional dates in the Arab world, Kefaya suddenly turned into a serious challenge to the presidency on the back of the Beirut demonstrations. Husni Mubarak responded to the growing Egyptian version of the Cedar Revolution by a constitutional maneuver which he combined with a calculated endorsement of the Lebanese leadership of the Revolution. On February 26, Mubarak suddenly announced an amendment to the Egyptian constitution which allowed for a more open competition between contenders, but he ensured the dwarfing of any opponent by keeping the ballot under tight control with a string of complicated conditions. He further defused the Lebanese model by receiving Walid Jumblat on March 21, 2005, a week after the largest *democratic* demonstration in recorded Middle Eastern history. Jumblat came out from the meeting with the

Egyptian dictator to declare that the removal of the Lebanese president was no longer an objective of the Cedar Revolution. This simple statement broke the joint democratic calling on the Egyptian and Lebanese streets, and abruptly severed Egyptian protests from a regional dynamism which was starting to look like the East European tide of 1989. In effect, Jumblat let down the Arab protesters. True, he needed Arab support against Syria, and his trip had taken him to Riyadh then Cairo, offering some balance to Syrian influence. But Saudi or Egyptian support came at a dear price, and when the chips went down, the two authoritarian Arab governments were, once again, on the side of the status quo. Three decades after they turned their back on Kamal Jumblat, who underlined their letdown in his posthumous civil war *Memoirs*,⁵³ Arab governments turned their back on Walid Jumblat. To criticism, Walid Jumblat's answer was that 'he was not responsible for the revolution in Egypt'. He meant that Egypt was far too big an issue for him, and that he had no pretense or ambition to reform the Egyptian system. The fact remains: he succeeded in undermining both revolutions in the same breath. While this did not totally come as a surprise, since Jumblat's unique acumen was often short of the statesman's vision needed both for Lebanon and the larger regional set-up, it was also a grave political mistake. Unwittingly, Jumblat stopped a peaceful revolution in Egypt dead in its tracks, and undermined the higher democratic calling of the Cedar Revolution for the Middle East.

Regional overdetermination is not new to Lebanon. Veteran Lebanese statesman and *Nahar* publisher Ghassan Tuani had entitled his most famous book 'a war for the others',⁵⁴ and Lebanon remained for a long time the battleground for Middle Eastern despots. Sometimes it cost interlopers dearly, like the Israelis after Ariel Sharon's brutal adventure in 1982. When

53 'An honest and patriotic minister of the Gulf States once asked our socialist comrade, Abbas Khalaf, who was on a mission to the area, "What on earth are you after in Lebanon? You demanded democracy, but surely you must know that none of the Arab States want anything to do with it?" Kamal Jumblat, *I speak for Lebanon*, London 1982, 113, original French *Pour le Liban*, Paris 1978, 251-2.

54 Ghassan Tuani, *Une guerre pour les autres*, Paris 1985; I have developed the concept of overdetermination, which is originally psychoanalytical, to characterize the dominance of regional and international factors over domestic factors in Lebanese history.

the Cedar Revolution peaked in 2005, it was the turn of the Syrians to be worried by the domestic backlash. Exceptionally, outside influence was positive, as when Ukraine underwent a massive popular revolt against authoritarianism exactly at the time of Hariri's assassination. The Ukrainian revolt directly inspired the Lebanese as a model for effective mass protest. It was inconceivable outside the larger East European tide, which started in 1982. Regionally, the Cedar Revolution was inconceivable without the end of dictatorship in Iraq, however tragic the aftermath of that regional earthquake turned.

Generally, overdetermination in the shape of outside patronage was disastrous, as it withdrew all internal checks and balances between Lebanese factions, which did not hesitate, when the wind was not blowing their way internally, to resort to foreign patrons. Nor is it easy to avoid the temptation to turn to outside support in civil wars: you always hate your immediate local enemy, when he's shedding your blood, more than the foreign power who offers his help, and you invariably end up taking up that help, if not soliciting it. At heavy cost.

Overdetermination caught up with the country most spectacularly in the 2006 summer war, which Hizbullah initiated in order to deflect the domestic agenda, once again, from presidential change, by redirecting the country towards its own priority: the fight against Israel. The war between Israel and Hizbullah was also a war between Lebanon and Israel, a war between Iran and Israel, between Syria and Iran, arguably a proto-war between Iran and the United States. The war brought back the worst possible nightmare to Lebanon as the playground, sometimes directly, more generally by proxies, of a regional and planetary fight. Mostly, it turned out to be a coup d'Etat engineered by a factional military group which decided, without consulting anyone, least the government of which it was part, to start and pursue a major military adventure. It resulted in the renewed devastation of Lebanon because of the combination of Hizbullah's bravado and a brutal overreach of Israel, the latter coupled with ineffective diplomacy by a blind American supporter. Soon after the war, Hizbullah's coup turned inwards.

A few days before the war started on July 12, I had an occasion to

express my concern about regional deadlocks weighing heavily on the country. While it was not possible to know that bloodletting would take the tragic form it did, imminent large-scale violence was evident. The analysis offered listed the many regional flashpoints which would inevitably have repercussions on the Lebanese scene. Gloomy though it was, the assessment made then does not require much after the war, as can be appreciated under the eight flashpoints identified in the original lecture:

- (i) In Iran, a radical populist leader was elected to the presidency in 2005. The system is entrenching against a reformist movement in disarray. Iranian reformists are overtaken by events, unable to regain the initiative, which is increasingly lost to the provinces. Instability inside Iran takes the form of guerilla movements mounting challenges of a mainly national nature, Arabs, Azeris and Kurds against Persians, who represent slightly over half the total Iranian population. Instability outside Iran takes the form of exacerbated language against Israel and the US, and the pursuit of nuclear experimentation as a matter of national pride.
- (ii) In Iraq, it took five months after the January 2005 elections for the government to be formed, despite a severe security situation with insurgents on the offensive across the country, and increasingly succeeding in a strategy of civil war between Shi'is and Sunnis.
- (iii) In Syria, the government tightened the screw on dissidents, while its rhetoric increased in a declared three-forked resistance to western policy in the region, in Palestine in open support to Islamic factions, in Iraq in continuous challenge to the presence of foreign armies, and in Lebanon with attempts to compensate the forced withdrawal of troops in April 2005 by intimidation and support to its Lebanese allies inside and outside power.
- (iv) In the West Bank and Gaza, elections led to the victory of the Islamists at the end of 2005, with a chill across the region resulting in radicalisation and the breaking of all contacts on both sides of the divide. The new Israeli government has adopted a systematic policy of assassination against leaders of the movement, whilst stonewalling as a matter of principle on any negotiation.

- (v) In Israel, the government continued to remain oblivious to a large section of its population on account of it representing a Trojan force at worst, at best an oddity in a self-styled Jewish state. The Supreme Court supported an openly discriminatory law against Arab Israeli citizens, preventing them from uniting inside Israel with spouses from outside the 1967 Green Line.
- (vi) In Egypt, a president in power for over a quarter of a century fights the slightest challenge to his rule, going as far as jailing a former rival to a presidential contest he had himself called for, while taking on a rebellious judiciary in open resistance to executive abuse of power. Entrenchment is deepened by the dogged attempt of the ruling nuclear family to secure a dynastic takeover.
- (vii) The Gulf States witnessed a combination of political retrenchment and petrodollars-bought consent, made easier by the rise of oil prices. In Saudi Arabia the ruling family stonewalled on any political reform by putting on the same level peaceful advocates of liberalisation and violent Islamic factions. Entrenchment of dynasties is the trend across the region. Even Kuwait, where a parliamentary tradition is over half a century strong, the ruling family signaled its determination to put limits on parliamentary life, dismissing Parliament after its scrutiny of the Council of Ministers performance.
- (viii) In the West, despite all the talk about democracy, US and European signals were at best ambiguous. The Libyan dictator was brought back from a three-decade cold on the argument that he has foregone his Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) programs. Normalisation with Libya suggests to other similarly bent autocrats a model for survival: an open strategy of arming, or threatening to develop such arsenals, against international acceptance, in due course, of the domestic status quo. The regime then disarms or gives up its WMD, real or projected, on its own terms. Such is also the logic of the Iran-US developing clash. Since Qaddafi's Euro-American rehabilitation, the US administration has explained that Libya is a good example for Iran and others to follow. As a result of this logic, Iran needs to develop its WMD research as a bargaining chip for

normalization. Whether it wishes to restrict itself to civilian nuclear power, as it claims, or whether the real objective is an atomic bomb, like Israel or neighbouring Pakistan, the Libyan logic now prevails, and the Iranian government calls the shots. That events can develop in unpredicted manners is immaterial to the strategy.

How do all these flashpoints affect Lebanon? The country remains the sounding board of regional, and now characteristically international, conflicts. This is in part owed to its socio-historical setup, where communities mirror East-West contradictions in a unique way. Lebanon's diversity, which is its blessing, becomes its curse. The indicators in the region being so unanimously negative, there is little breathing space for the Lebanese for an unprecedented Revolution to yield decisive results.

Iranian populist radicalism, Iraqi civil war, Syrian violent brinksmanship, Palestinian extremism and factionalism, Israeli occupation and exclusionism, Egyptian dynastic dictatorship, Gulf countries' authoritarian entrenchment, Western retreat from democratization policy: the effects of this array of negative regional and international overdetermination on Lebanon are plain.

- (i) In the case of Iran, the large Lebanese Shi'i constituency, which is driven by the dominant military power of Hizbullah, has little leeway to chart an independent course. Not only is the religious structure of the leadership a striking example of how Hizbullah's politics is dominated by mullahs in the *velayat-e faqih* (religious rule) fashion; but the open embrace of its Iranian colleagues by the Lebanese leadership, and its acknowledged following of the Supreme Leader in Iran, is matched by a one-directional flow of material support. Depending on sources, this support takes the shape of 300 to 500 million USD a year. Figures are difficult to document with any precision. What is undisputed is an increase over the past two years, which was facilitated by the rise of oil prices, and the strident ideological bent: with an Iranian president who openly advocates the destruction of Israel, Hizbullah is the acknowledged forefront of the battle for civilization as seen from Tehran.

- (ii) The case of Iraq is more complex, but the announced visit of Iraqi radical leader Muqtada al-Sadr to Beirut in Spring 2006, which was cancelled at the last moment, captures some of the Iraqi projections onto Lebanon. Sadr hurriedly returned to Iraq upon the news of the sectarian mosque bombings that led to a state of civil war between Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'is. The interruption of the visit underscores a similar concern in Lebanon; there are other telltale signs, such as a Sunni murder conspiracy, apparently the act of a small group, against the leader of Hizbullah two weeks later. With the exacerbation of the crisis in Iraq between the two large communities, and the lack of governmental cohesion in Lebanon because of the split between the President and the Prime Minister, the lack of trust between the dominant Muslim communities the world over carries grave threats for Lebanon. As in Iraq, such an open crisis would be unprecedented this century, where the strategy of civil war announced by the infamous 'Zarqawi letter' is now real.⁵⁵ The country is at risk from fringe groups which drive policies against the will of the majority of citizens, and carry the violent order of the day with the help of a millennium-deep antagonism. To these dark forebodings adds the American and British dismal sinking in the Iraqi shifting sands.
- (iii) There is little to be said about Syria in Lebanon that is not obvious. With increasing tension resulting from additional demands by the Security Council upon the Syrian government, Damascus sees a freed Lebanon (specifically if its press is free) as a clear and present danger. Syrian leaders are convinced that conspiracies are being hatched in Beirut, Paris and Washington for their demise. It is hard to see how the downward spiral can be stopped, which the investigation into Hariri's assassination may bring to a head. Iraqi, Palestinian, Iranian and Israeli fights on Lebanese soil operate in fateful triangles where Syria and Lebanon are the two other sides, with Lebanon always on

⁵⁵ The Zarqawi letter was intercepted by Kurdish police in February 2004. It describes a chilling plan for Sunni-Shi'i civil war in Iraq as the way forward. English text on <http://www.state.gov/p/nea/rls/31694.htm>. Jordanian Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi was killed in Iraq on 7 June 2006.

the receiving end of immense violence.

- (iv) Palestine in Lebanon is a footnote to the Syrian triangle, as the recurrent Syrian-based Palestinian troubles show. One day, it's the Jibril faction, another the all but forgotten Fatah dissidents.⁵⁶ More worrying is the dynamic emerging independently, which follows the fluid situation in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian camps in Lebanon have traditionally been sympathetic to Yaser Arafat's leadership. With the rise of Hamas, an inevitable rivalry has been developing in the camps. Lebanon witnesses a race against the clock from the Fatah factions to consolidate their 'embassy' at a time when Hamas is in government. The slide into civil war witnessed in Gaza can hardly leave untouched fragile Palestinian camps, which are awash with weapons and lawlessness.
- (v) It is received wisdom in the Middle East that Israel calls the shots, and benefits from Arab internecine fighting. This no doubt is true, but as in the case of the Lebanese civil wars, patterns of unrest in the immediate neighbourhood engulf the principal sooner or later. The Israeli government is aware of the slide into civil war in the West Bank and Gaza, and has devised a policy of 'unilateralism' to disengage with the view that such a conflict will further weaken Palestinians. This may be true, but in a cheese-like territory where desperate peoples are stranded and strangled, there will be no let up of violence against the principal. Whether it takes the form of nagging Katyushas across the barbed wires in Gaza, suicide bombs in Tel Aviv, or the more threatening weaponry of Hizbullah on the Northern front, unilateralism as remedy is wishful thinking. 'Unilateral disengagement' may buy some more assent in Washington to the

⁵⁶ Ahmad Jibril is the leader of an extremist faction of the Palestinian leftist movement called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC), and is based in Damascus with outposts in Lebanon, especially in the region of Jiyee in South Lebanon. The Fatah dissidence was led by Abu Saleh and Abu Musa in the Lebanese Biqa' Valley in fall 1983. It disappeared from the news soon afterwards, but reemerged in 2006 in connection with military activities in Lebanon and an Islamic offshoot, called Fath al-Islam.

Israeli policy of assassinations, but it will not bring peace to Israelis. Lebanon in this context is another frontier of unrest so long as the outstanding issues are not negotiated by Israel with Palestinians as willing partners. Meanwhile, radicalism prevails on both sides and renders any negotiation impossible. To that negative picture is also added the Israel-Iran looming confrontation, over Hizbullah and/or the nuclear file.

- (vi) How are Egypt and its ruling despots – father and son – relevant? By the mere fact of its 70-million strong population, Egypt always affects the region, and Lebanon owes much of the 1982 Israeli invasion to Egypt's negative disappearance from the scene. A renewed Egyptian interest in Lebanon operates by ricochet. Like other Arab countries, the Egyptian ruler dislikes the Cedar Revolution profoundly, especially as it shows to his own dissenters a real possibility that the street could bring down the head of state. The constitutional amendment in Egypt was a direct reaction to the Lebanese street, but it was also clear that no change in the presidency would be tolerated. Egypt appears as the central weight in an Arab system of leaders-for-life standing up against any precedent for peaceful change that follows the example of the Cedar Revolution.
- (vii) This is true *mutatis mutandis* for the Gulf and other monarchies, which unwillingly fan further items of frustration for export to Lebanon, via Syria, in the Qa'eda and Zarqawi type of bombers. This at ground level. Brutal export happens also at the top. In an extraordinary display of *chutzpah*, the ruler of Sudan dispatched an envoy to mediate Lebanon's crisis with Syria. Considering the several civil war fronts in Sudan, the absurdity is telling: the Omar Bashir envoy represents the worst form of Arab nationalism, hanging on by a combination of oil buyouts and sheer repression. In the Lebanese context, such sinister brand of Arabism seeks to prevent any political solution that would vindicate the Cedar Revolution as a successful precedent against those who use strong-armed policy to simply remain in power.
- (viii) To add to the gloomy picture, it's hard to describe US administration

policy in the region other than as strong-armed. This translates in Lebanon into Realpolitik counterbalance, lacking in principles because of its blindness to the absence of democracy elsewhere, but dogged and eventually fierce, against Syria, Iran, Hizbullah or Palestinian or Islamic factions.

The ever deepening regional deadlock is a pressing challenge, and has no easy answers. Violence, if not war, is upon us. Shutting one's eyes to the regional and international complications is not an option.⁵⁷

Predictable as the looming violence illustrated in that text was, it exploded on July 12 in one of the worst possible shapes: an open confrontation between Hizbullah and Israel. With the war also predictably ending in stalemate, regional tensions translated into prodromes of civil war inside Lebanon. One knows the country and the Middle East enough to expect that something had to let go, and that it would take again the usual shape of immense violence. Regional, and now straight international over-determination, will continue and intensify in Lebanon as the new fracture point between East and West, Islam and Christianity, Arabs and Jews, Shi'is and Sunnis. As a privileged locus of a strange but real third World War, a war officially described in Washington as 'global war against terrorism', GWAT, Lebanon will compete with other such Middle Eastern places where the fracture is gravest: Iraq, the Sudan, Palestine, Somalia. Nor are other countries immune, including Western countries which are the inevitable place of regular outbursts of violence. New York, Madrid and London have experienced dire foretastes of such predictable and hard to prevent outbursts.

Against this persistent over-determination, what does the French Revolution tell us?

This is the one area where the historian of the Cedar Revolution is hard put to offer answers drawn from French revolutionary historiography. Still, revolutionary France offers, in sheer numbers, a useful contrast. In 1789, France was the largest and most populated country in Europe

57 'Lebanon and Middle East flashpoints: An analytical list'. Lecture read at Saint Joseph's University, 31 May 2006. Text also in Mallat, *Presidential talk*, Beirut 2007.

with 23 million inhabitants, far ahead of England, which had about 9 million inhabitants. In the Middle East, Lebanon is a small country, with some 4 million people, at a time Israel counts 7 million people without the Occupied Territories, and Syria more than 15 million. Both are small compared to the larger, massive neighbours: Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, Iran. Like the countries' economies, scale demography is important, and Lebanon's small size commands also its reduced importance. In size and population relative to its neighbours, revolutionary France could never be over-determined regionally in the same way, although the conspiracies fomented by an unhappy monarchical Europe were feared, and real, and regional war was very much part of the French Revolution from 1791 on. At this level, comparison is too skewed to be meaningful, but the spirit of the interlocking problems, including the regional or foreign dimension, was well captured by Victor Hugo in his novel 93.

In a formidable scene, the perils threatening the Revolution bring together Danton, Marat and Robespierre into a fictive discussion that provides the master grid of ever present questions. For Danton, the enemy of the Republic is abroad, fomented in England and Prussia. For Robespierre, it is the insurrection inside, in Vendée. For Marat, the enemy is within, amongst conspiratorial factions inside the Revolution.⁵⁸

58 The text deserves to be quoted extensively : 'Danton venait de se lever ; il avait vivement reculé sa chaise.

– Écoutez, cria-t-il. Il n'y a qu'une urgence, la République en danger. Je ne connais qu'une chose, délivrer la France de l'ennemi. Pour cela tous les moyens sont bons. Tous ! tous ! tous ! Quand j'ai affaire à tous les périls, j'ai recours à toutes les ressources, et quand je crains tout, je brave tout. Ma pensée est une lionne. Pas de demi-mesures. Pas de prudence en révolution. Némésis n'est pas une bégueule. Soyons épouvantables et utiles. Est-ce que l'éléphant regarde où il met sa patte ? Écrasons l'ennemi.

Robespierre répondit avec douceur :

– Je veux bien. Et il ajouta :

– La question est de savoir où est l'ennemi.

– Il est dehors, et je l'ai chassé, dit Danton.

– Il est dedans, et je le surveille, dit Robespierre.

– Et je le chasserai encore, reprit Danton.

– On ne chasse pas l'ennemi du dedans.

– Qu'est-ce donc qu'on fait ?

– On l'extermine.

– J'y consens, dit à son tour Danton. Et il reprit : =

This is a powerful key for any Revolution. Enemies outside: Syria, Iran, Israel. Enemies inside: Syria's allies, Hizbullah and its weapons. Enemies within: sectarian leaders pursuing the narrow scope of their community, Maronite contenders to the presidency pursuing their petty personal interests without heed to the larger pressing issue of removing the 'coercively extended president', as Lahoud's description will remain in history. Minus the formidable rhetoric of Victor Hugo, the variations sound close, and similarly cacophonous. But the reality of regional overdetermination, at various moments, is invariably overwhelming.

= – Je vous dis qu'il est dehors, Robespierre.

– Danton, je vous dis qu'il est dedans.

– Robespierre, il est à la frontière.

– Danton, il est en Vendée.

– Calmez-vous, dit une troisième voix, il est partout ; et vous êtes perdus. C'était Marat qui parlait...

[Marat] Vous avez chacun votre dada ; vous, Danton, la Prusse ; vous, Robespierre, la Vendée. Je vais préciser, moi aussi. Vous ne voyez pas le vrai péril ; le voici : les cafés et les tripots. Le café de Choiseul est jacobin, le café Patin est royaliste, le café du Rendez-Vous attaque la garde nationale, le café de la Porte-Saint-Martin la défend, le café de la Régence est contre Brissot, le café Corazza est pour, le café Procope jure par Diderot, le café du Théâtre-Français jure par Voltaire ; à la Rotonde on déchire les assignats, les cafés Saint-Marceau sont en fureur, le café Manouri agit la question des farines, au café de Foy tapages et gourmandises, au Perron bourdonnement des frelons de finance. Voilà ce qui est sérieux...

[Marat] Ah ça ! citoyen Danton, pourquoi m'avez-vous fait venir à votre conciliabule, si ce n'est pour avoir mon avis ? Est-ce que je vous demandais d'en être ? loin de là. Je n'ai aucun goût pour les tête-à-tête avec des contre-révolutionnaires tels que Robespierre et vous. Du reste, je devais m'y attendre, vous ne m'avez pas compris ; pas plus vous que Robespierre, pas plus Robespierre que vous. Il n'y a donc pas d'homme d'État ici ? Il faut donc vous mettre les points sur les *i*. Ce que je vous ai dit voulait dire ceci : vous vous trompez tous les deux. Le danger n'est ni à Londres, comme le croit Robespierre, ni à Berlin, comme le croit Danton ; il est à Paris. Il est dans l'absence d'unité, dans le droit qu'a chacun de tirer de son côté, à commencer par vous deux, dans la mise en poussière des esprits, dans l'anarchie des volontés...

Ainsi parlaient ces trois hommes formidables. Querelle de tonnerres.' (Victor Hugo, *Quatre-vingt-treize*, 1874, chapitre 2, 'Magna Testanture Voce per Umbras')

xi. Counter-revolution and war

On December 1, 2006, when Hizbullah's campers settled in the same place in downtown Beirut which the Revolution had occupied in February 2005, it was clear that the Counter-revolution was on the march, with one declared determination: to physically besiege the government and intimidate it into resignation.

That was the latest phase of a steady counter-revolution. The earlier phase had taken place in the large demonstration on March 8, 2005, as Syrian withdrawal was becoming a pressing demand. March 8 was defensive and backward looking. In the summer of 2006, Hizbullah went on the offensive. The devastation lasted thirty four days and shook the region; so the Hizbullah-Israel war needs a reading.

Narratives over wars are fluid, either in their causes or their outcomes. Few doubt that the First World War dominated the 20th century, in the Middle East and elsewhere, but causes and consequences long remained a fascination for the generations that suffered from the war, not to mention the special concern of historians. Two polarized readings of World War I emerged early on: the Leninist 'imperialist' description, and a less convincing Britain-France victors' reading of an expansionist and militaristic Germany that 'democracies' were there to check. One common narrative eventually jelled: WWI's unique absurdity, best illustrated in Thomas Mann's *Zauberberg*. While this is true of all wars, WWI is the paragon of unwarranted wanton deaths. Another jelled narrative of WWI, this time specific to the Middle East, is that the war was followed by a

peace that ended all peace in the region.⁵⁹

While apposite and opposite positions are inevitable, a consensual opinion does also jell. Opposed readings, and a consensual core, offer a parameter of sorts for all wars, large and small.

There are two additional important factors that bear on the legacy of war and its representation: time, and consequences. Time tends to underline all wars' vacuity, but shifts in time constantly occur, giving renewed or altered meanings to the core perception of what a war coheres into. Immediately after hostilities cease, some sense of victory may emerge, for instance that of France and Britain against Germany in 1918, or as a long-lasting feature, say US world preeminence after World War II, or Muslim victory against Christendom as the Crusades unfolded, or the 1967 expansion of Israel. As time passes, however, shifts occur, and the core meaning, – sometimes, not always –, does change. The Franco-British victory in WWI increasingly became meaningless, operating as a shadow game for Hitler, and causing WW2, indeed giving way to the characteristic vacuity and wantonness of four years of senseless human slaughter. This became the lasting, dominant perception of WWI.

Consequences are different from time shifts. They tend to operate on a separate register, and do not causally flow from the war military outcome. The emergence of Bolshevism in the shape of the October Revolution, or the Palestinian problem in the wake of WWI's Balfour commitment, are two such illustrations for WWI. Consequences are particularly difficult to perceive during the hostilities. They also tend to overwhelm the original event, and outweigh and outlast the protagonists' foreseeable consequences, indeed their lifetimes. A similar exercise is possible for the French revolutionary wars, including Napoléon's. Lucien Febvre's conclusions on the death of Europe consequent to the French revolution⁶⁰ show the most unexpected consequences of violence run amok.

59 Classic account by David Fromkin, *A Peace to end all peace: the fall of the Ottoman empire and the creation of the modern Middle East 1914-1922*, New York 1989.

60 Developed in section iii.

The summer war between Hizbullah and Israel had nothing of the magnitude of great wars, but the parameters just identified apply: *Contrastive narratives, common core, shift over time, breach in causality* with regard to major *consequences*.

Here is how the above four-pronged grid applies on the 2006 war.

Contrastive narratives. The war immediately created its own narrative, which was inevitably dual, and shifting. It shifted over the month-long conflict as an inevitable form of propaganda, *de bonne guerre* as it were in all wars. On the side of Hizbullah, the position changed considerably, from the initial 'world battle for Islam' argument on July 12, to a far more Lebanese agenda, with express support to the Lebanese Cabinet's ceasefire proposal on August 3, and even a curious apology in the regretful afterthought expressed by Hizbullah's secretary-general just after the Ceasefire. On the Israeli side, declared objectives to teach Hizbullah a lesson, overconfidence, and hesitation over the territorial objectives also expressed a moving narrative: so the inevitable contrasting parameters, with nuances under the general banner of a battle for civilization defined by each side on its own, absolutist, terms.

Common core. One consensual line may have already jelled: Hizbullah was wrong to start the war, and Israel's reaction was excessive. Considering the absence of judicial accountability over 'war crimes' committed on both sides,⁶¹ this seems inconsequential, but it explains a moral and political deadlock: no hero is expected to emerge from the war, whatever claims to the contrary. As in WWI, that common core will play an important role over time, and the question is whether it will morph further into faulting Hizbullah for its reckless act on July 12, or, conversely, condemning Israel's disproportionate reaction and unnecessary prolongation of the hostilities.

Time will polish the narratives and the common core. The battle over names is already on. 'July war', says Hizbullah neutrally enough to take the sting out of its initiation of the conflict on July 12, or 'divine victory', to hammer in its legitimacy. It could also be called Lebanon-Israel III

61 John Borneman, *Jarae'am al-harb ba'd harb isra'il-hizbullah* (war crimes after the Israel-Hizbullah war), *Nahar*, 14-15 January 2007.

or whatever number the war could carry, the sixth Arab-Israeli war, and so forth. Six months after the Ceasefire, the Israeli government was still looking for an official appellation. I offered mine early on, by choosing to call it the Hizbullah-Israel war in the first week of the hostilities,⁶² as I did not think Lebanon as state, government, or society at large, could identify with the war as an active protagonist. It was not quite an Israel-Lebanon war. Ninety per cent or more of the physical destruction was Hizbullah territory. Other names are possible, but it sounds politically incorrect to speak of the war as a Shi'i-Jewish war, which it also was. There is no doubt however that the war was also a Lebanon-Israel war, an Arab-Israeli war, a continuation of the Palestine strife, indeed a mini-world war of sorts between allies clearly identifiable on the large divide between Islam and the West, and between the Syria-Iran-Hizbullah v. Israel-US-'moderate' Arab axes. Lots of controversies in perspective over the appellation.

As *consequences* go, which are by nature difficult to anticipate, they often turn out, as in other large military conflicts, dwarfing the immediate hostilities. Michael Young was the first to underline the more significant consequences of the Hizbullah-Israel war: it was the beginning of a 'coup'. Having started its perilous military adventure and prosecuted it doggedly and unilaterally, the Hizbullah coup was not so much against Israel, since the word makes no sense in that context, but against Lebanon. As events unfolded, especially since the physical siege of the Lebanese government by Hizbullah and its allies materialized in December 1 in the heart of Beirut, these consequences were becoming tangible.

The whole three paragraphs of 'Hizbullah's Coup d'Etat'⁶³ deserve to be saluted as a unique intellectual compact, but the two opening lines

62 Mallat, 'Who is really at war? The patterns so far', [*New York*] *Times Select*, 4 August 2006.

63 Michael Young, 'Hezbollah's Coup d'Etat', [*Washington*] *Postglobal*, August 7, 2006: 'Beirut, Lebanon - There is real danger today that Hezbollah will inherit Lebanon after the war. If it does, an uncontrollable civil war will probably ensue.

Militarily, Israel has not scored a decisive victory that would compel the militia to disarm. Hezbollah will use this "triumph" to defeat its adversaries inside Lebanon who want it to surrender its weapons. =

are particularly insightful: 'There is real danger today that Hizbollah will inherit Lebanon after the war. If it does, an uncontrollable civil war will probably ensue.'

One has indeed witnessed Hizbollah turning its 'victory' and weapons to Beirut, pushing back the Cedar Revolution, and bringing the country, alternatively, to civil war. This is the war's most important consequence as it unfolds: the Hizbollah's coup. Even graver is the civil war which I mention as an 'alternative'. Here another dynamic is at play, and a deeper one, as it connects with the region, and the sectarian world war developing from within the Middle East.

Lebanon remains in the midst of the evolving coup, which constitutes the most disturbing consequence of the war, a springboard for Hizbollah to take over Lebanon, while the civil war is looming. How to deal with the coup will define the legacy of the Hizbollah-Israel war. So how does one prevent Hizbollah from taking over Lebanon? And how does one prevent the descent into civil war?

The premise, naturally, is that civil war is a bad thing, and, slightly more controversially, that Hizbollah as it stands is a bad thing for Lebanon. Everyone will agree on the former, excuses can be found to reject, or at

= At the same time, the Israelis have devastated the Shiite community. They have broken down any Lebanese consensus around the party and have neutralized Hezbollah's military deterrence capability (there to serve Iran) since the party cannot possibly put its coreligionists through another catastrophe similar to the one faced today. These setbacks, in turn, will encourage the party to go on the offensive domestically to refocus the anger of its supporters away from its own responsibility for the disaster and toward its domestic foes.

What will this mean for the Middle East? It will be a severe setback for a rare liberal outpost in the region and may carry Lebanon into a new civil war since no one will long accept Hezbollah's hegemony. It will heighten Sunni-Shiite tension in the country and the region. It will be another nail in the coffin of the Bush administration's ambition to create a democratic Arab world. It could transform Lebanon into a new version of Gaza, proving that Israel is remarkably adept at ensuring that its worst foes inherit power on its borders. And it will mean the death of a country that, for all its faults, nonetheless tried to recreate a formula for peaceful coexistence between its religious communities in 1990 when that Lebanese civil war ended.' [Update: In a conversation with Carlos Eddé on 11 August 2007, it was clear he was the first to describe the war as a coup d'Etat by Hizbollah, in the early days of the conflict.]

least temper the latter. I find it difficult to introduce nuances at this stage – even if my audience is also naturally the people of Hizbullah. My position was and remains that this war was absurd, unnecessary and cruel, like all wars tend to be, and that it is therefore important to insist on Hizbullah's responsibility in triggering it. That's for a start. It's true that Israel, and American diplomacy behind it, prosecuted the war in a bungled way, but considering that the Hizbullah has since been trying to take over Lebanon by force, the argument is irrelevant insofar as the outside 'coup' was actually redirected inwards: we, the rest of the Lebanese who did not support the war, were turned into enemies. It is no coincidence that we were also the supporters of the Cedar Revolution which Hizbullah fights. From there flows that surrendering to the thesis of Hizbullah's 'victory' constitutes the most dramatic *mistake* in the political conduct of the war.

'Victory' may have come in part from tangible facts, such as the brave and sustained resistance of Hizbullah fighters in the South, making any Israeli advance extremely costly, and belying triumphalist expectations of the Israeli Prime Minister who did not understand that war against a seasoned guerilla movement could not square with classical wars 1967-style. But this is immaterial to Hizbullah's coup against Lebanon.

Hizbullah's self-congratulatory 'victory' is normal for its leadership, *c'est de bonne après-guerre*. One would not expect otherwise. Nor would one chiefly blame those within Lebanon who opposed the war, a position shared at the outset by the massive non-Hizbullah partisan section of the population, including its Lebanese allies at the time.

One could not have expected more than unease from Hizbullah's declared allies in Lebanon. The graver share of the *mistake* came from those who are the object of the unfolding coup, namely the Lebanese Prime Minister, as the man in charge, and Walid Jumblat, as the central leader of the Cedar Revolution. Fouad Siniora never openly denounced Hizbullah's coup, even if everybody knew of his frustration and anger at being sidestepped, and of his sincere tears of frustration at the Arab foreign affairs meeting in Beirut on August 7. Jumblat probably bears the heavier political responsibility. For he provided the springboard for the 'divine

victory' when he repeatedly asked, a week into the war, 'to whom will Hizbullah offer its victory'?⁶⁴

Now what kind of victory was that for Lebanon, especially for over a thousand civilian casualties, and a million displaced Lebanese Shi'is, a number of whom should naturally ask, if the destruction of their homes gets described as victory, how defeat would look like? Since then, Jumblat has derided the 'divine' dimension of the victory, openly identified and resisted Hizbullah's coup, but there is much to blame in his initial position, and that of the Prime Minister, who allowed the Hizbullah leadership to turn a costly adventure into bombastic, indeed divinely ordained, victory.

The upshot, then, was that Hizbullah's position jelled into a 'victory' which its own Lebanese rivals/foes, and now victims, were openly admitting, leading to Hizbullah's consequent bid for dominance in Lebanon. Hizbullah's call was loud and clear: since we were victorious, they said, and stood up for the country on our own, then we should indeed lead it. One can see how the political mistake in Jumblat describing the war as Hizbullah's victory provided that logic. A proper anticipation of that consequence was one which should have been formulated differently from the first day: considering the quasi-deafening silence resulting from a stunned country and a real fear of Hizbullah's vindictiveness, Hasan Nasrallah's initial speech having expressed a clear warning of the type 'those who are against us in Lebanon, beware...', the only way was to candidly ask how Hizbullah could take the rest of us to war, whatever its outcome, by openly breaching international and Lebanese law that would put the whole country in jeopardy.⁶⁵

Israel's brutal behaviour and unnecessary prolongation of the hostilities did not help. A Security Council Resolution denouncing the kidnapping of the two Israeli soldiers, and potentially coercive mechanisms to get lasting results on the border, was offered on July 13. It didn't pass. A replay of the 1996 Israeli war crime at Qana on July 30 made things worse, further

64 See e.g. statement reported in *Washington Post*, 29 July 2006.

65 Argument developed in Mallat, 'Nasrallah has dismissed international law', *Daily Star*, 14 July 2006, and throughout the war.

cornering Siniora and Jumblat, while American diplomacy was busy stalling so that Israeli could teach Hizbullah 'a lesson' on the back of wide-scale destruction and the physical elimination of the leadership.

So how to prevent Hizbullah from taking over Lebanon? and how to prevent the civil war? I see no other tools but law, domestic and international, that is determining responsibility under a framework of law, and not of raw power. It may not be an adequate response, but it is the only response the Cedar Revolution should seek to formulate. For that, it has two incomplete tasks started in Year 1 which it has failed to address: legally, justice for the people who suffered and died for it; politically, the emergence of a leadership that looks more like the Revolution, and that speaks the language of democracy.

xii. Revolution restored: truth and justice

How as victim do you react to a policy of targeted assassinations against the political leadership of your country without launching a war, or without responding in kind by carrying out political counter-assassinations?

This is where the Cedar Revolution has been most noble. The request for judicial accountability is the institutional response to regional overdetermination, which the Lebanese Revolution underlined with a message of unique civility. It is more, a civilised collective response to that age-old conundrum: how to respond to violence without violence?

The idea of judicial accountability emerged in the persistent efforts to set up an international court in response to the assassination of Rafiq Hariri, to be eventually called the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) in UN documents. It is international because it was set up at the Security Council, although it is a mixed court that includes Lebanese and foreign judges and investigators. The Revolution fought hard for the STL, which stands also for the principle that government is a government of laws, not a government of men. There is no appropriate response to barbarity outside the framework of law, domestic and international. Law is the only response, and international law takes the form of retribution by an internationally sanctioned court to address efficiently such an over-determined regional and international context playing itself out in Lebanon.

This is new. Calls for justice always surface in revolutionary times, but the common characteristic is the failure of carrying it out, and its replacement by violence. The French Revolution has its own history of

legal failure in the shape of Terror, which is the worst possible distortion of justice. In France, the revolutionary government's response to the challenges it perceived on the domestic and international fronts in the shape of various real or imagined plots was to remove basic procedural rights. This was couched in an infamous set of laws and practice, from the Law of Suspects in September 1793 to the Grande Terreur, introduced by the Loi du 22 Prairial An II (10 June 1794). Simply put, the law said that mere suspicion suffices for the guillotine. The absence of any due process led some 2500 'suspects' to the scaffold in Paris alone.⁶⁶

With the rejection of violence, the attachment to international justice is one of the Cedar Revolution's unique characteristics, a novelty indeed on the international scene if this faith in justice is eventually vindicated by tangible results and the punishment of the culprits.

Now international criminal justice was not an absolute novelty, in the Middle East or elsewhere, when Rafiq Hariri was killed. In 1996 leading Iraqi, British and American activists founded in London the Indict movement to bring Saddam Hussein and his aides to trial. In June 2001, twenty eight families who lost a close relative in the Sabra and Shatila massacres brought a case against Ariel Sharon and other Israeli and Lebanese commanders responsible for the killings and disappearances which had taken place twenty years earlier in the Palestinian camps of Beirut. They won the case, and the judicial victory achieved in the Supreme Court of Belgium on 12 February 2003 offered an important contribution to the reality of international justice despite its political reversal by unprecedented retroactive legislation which stopped the proceedings in September of that year. In the summer of 2004, the Lebanese chief prosecutor indicted Mu'ammarr Qaddafi and seventeen other conspirators and false witnesses for the disappearance of Shi'i Imam Musa Sadr and his two companions on an official visit to Libya in 1978.

This web of cases, to which must be added the advances and retreats of

66 Georges Lefebvre, 'Sur la loi du 22 Prairial', in *Etudes sur la Révolution Française*, Paris 1954, 67-89. Original in *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 1951, 227-256.

international criminal law with the cases of Chile's Pinochet, Yugoslavia's Milosevic, Chad's Habre, Sudan's Haroun and eventual Bashir, through the International Criminal Court and other judicial outlets, created a culture against the impunity of large-scale political criminals. It jelled upon Hariri's assassination into a call for an international investigation, then into the demand for a Tribunal established by the Security Council. What would become the Special Tribunal for Lebanon was set up against continued resistance from those who participated, aided, abetted or covered the murders carried out since October 1, 2004.⁶⁷ This is the day when former Minister Marwan Hamadeh was gravely wounded in a car bomb which took the life of his driver sitting next to him and maimed an aide sitting behind. It was clear that the attack was a response to his resistance and that of Rafiq Hariri and Walid Jumblat to the coercive extension of Emile Lahoud's mandate. Since this was an international matter, flowing from UN Security Council Resolution 1559 that requested presidential elections 'free of foreign influence', I advocated at the UN an international investigation as soon as news of Hamadeh's bomb reached New York. The investigation did not happen then, but the culture of accountability, which had found its uncertain way to the Middle East in the Saddam trial, and in the indictments of Sharon in Belgium and Qaddafi in Lebanon, started to oil the future court's wheels. When Hariri was killed three and a half months later, the idea of judicial accountability had taken root in influential circles. The day after Hariri's assassination, the French government put forward the need for an international investigation, which eventually developed into the enquiries and reports of the three successive investigators, Peter Fitzgerald, Detlev Mehlis and Serge Brammertz. A natural legal consequence was the

67 'There is hereby established a Special Tribunal for Lebanon to prosecute persons responsible for the attack of 14 February 2005 resulting in the death of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and in the death or injury of other persons. If the Tribunal finds that other attacks which occurred in Lebanon between 1 October 2004 and 12 December 2005, or any later date decided by the Parties and with the consent of the Security Council, are connected in accordance with the principles of criminal justice and are of a nature and gravity similar to the attack of 14 February 2005, it shall also have jurisdiction over persons responsible for such attacks.' Article 1 of the Agreement between the United Nations and the Lebanese Republic on the establishment of a Special Tribunal for Lebanon, text released by the UN Secretariat end December 2006.

STL. It was excruciating slow: the earliest Security Council Resolution could have included the tribunal, sparing disputes on nature, competence, composition, and related complications, and establishing a potential deterrent to future assassinations, and, if not, an expectation which the families of the victims would see as a tangible response to their suffering. It took over two years to materialize.

Legally, a number of related questions were bound to arise, chiefly what sort of tribunal it should be, and how to qualify the killing of Rafiq Hariri.

From the beginning, advocacy was for a mixed tribunal rooted in the UN, to be formally set up under international legitimacy without excluding Lebanese judges. The format seems to have carried the day, although the two other poles were also possible: a fully Lebanese tribunal, like the one eventually set up in Iraq, or a fully international tribunal, like the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia. Because of the heavy political shifts within the countries concerned, it's hard to prescribe the best course of action with any confidence, so the internationally-rooted, mixed tribunal, located outside Lebanon if need be, looked like a logical compromise.

The qualification of the crime, and the remit of the investigation and tribunal, were more difficult to solve. On the basis of Amnesty International's qualifications of bombings, suicidal or not, that claim lives indiscriminately, the qualification of crime against humanity is more useful than terrorism. This is true for the 11 September massacre, as much as for such acts as the Hariri assassination.⁶⁸ But the assassination of Hariri was early on described by the Security Council as 'an act of terror', and so it

68 See the argument in Mallat, 'September 11 and the Middle East: Footnote or watershed in world history?', *Crimes of War Project*, September 2002 (Special issue on September 11, a year after), www.crimesofwar.org; 'The original sin: 'Terrorism' or 'crime against humanity'?', *Case Western Journal of International Law*, 34, 2002, 245-248.

69 All relevant UN Security Council Resolutions qualify the Hariri assassination as a 'terrorist' act. (Resolution 1595, 7 April 2005; Resolution 1636, 31 October 2005; Resolution 1644, 15 December 2005) All were taken unanimously, and refer to the '14 February 2005 terrorist bombing'; this was the early qualification adopted in a statement by =

remained through the various Security Council Resolutions.⁶⁹ Despite the qualification, early draft statutes of the Hariri tribunal included the 'crime against humanity' category. This came as a surprise, and I was not able to unravel the twists and turns of the discussions that led to this unexpected development, which coincided with a consistent attempt in my own work to replace an elusive concept of 'terrorism' with a far more precise concept offered in 'crime against humanity', an effort which is informed by my wariness towards the term because of a long-standing familiarity over its misuse since the French Revolution through the ICC discussions in Rome in 1998.⁷⁰ Rather than a tribunal ad hoc, there was also a possibility to involve the ICC, but Lebanon has not yet ratified the Rome treaty. It may well be that the perspective of an ICC referral like in the Darfur case was on the mind of some of those involved in the discussions, but the picture may have simply been complicated by an approximate understanding of the field: the removal of the term 'crime against humanity' does not have as a consequence to grant any immunity to the accused, even if, acting for the Syrian leaders, the reported insistence of Hizbullah on the removal of the term may have been caused by their fuzzy understanding of international criminal law.

The political dimension was in fact simpler: for or against justice. From day one, there were two clear camps in Lebanon, those who wanted 'truth and justice', and those who considered that it wasn't worth it, 'it' being the stability of the Syrian government, the Syrian order in Lebanon, the fight against Israel, and other primacy considerations which are believed

= the President of the Security Council one day after Hariri's assassination: 'The Security Council unequivocally condemns the 14 February 2005 terrorist bombing in Beirut...' (S/PRST/2005/4).

⁷⁰ Ben Saul, *Defining terrorism in international law*, Oxford 2006, notes at page 5 that 'international attempts to define terrorism in legal terms have been exceedingly difficult', but considers skepticism about definition to have become 'irrelevant', because 'the term now has legal consequences and cannot be ignored, as merely of academic interest, or wished away'. The main quandary remains about the boundary in law between terrorism and political violence, and between State terrorism and terrorism of non-State actors, whether organizations or individuals. In the ICC Rome treaty of 1998, terrorism does not figure on the list of crimes under the jurisdiction of the Court.

by their supporters, essentially the pro-Syrian factions of Lebanon, to be more important than any rocking the boat by way of justice and accountability. Morally and politically, the line was and remains clear: the international tribunal is the only way to preserve the non-violent character of the Revolution. On the effectiveness of justice depends the character of the Cedar Revolution and its place in history.

More important than the qualification of 'crime against humanity' as a category to be included in the STL statutes, was the remit of any court in view of the continuing assassinations, from the bomb planted on 1 October 2004 through to the killing of young minister Pierre Gemayyel on 21 November 2006 by point blank assassins blocking his car and shooting him dead with one companion. The pattern was systematic over two years, and wreaked havoc on the Cedar Revolution's leaders and symbols. The pattern was so consistent that the UN was finally forced into including these attempts, albeit timidly by way of 'criminal connection', to the Hariri case. Eventually, the STL turned into an irresistible moral argument.

The substance of the investigation is more controversial. This is because of the seesaw conclusions of the successive investigators.

First investigation. 'United Nations Fact-Finding Mission', 25 February-24 March 2005. One report, released 24 March.⁷¹ Main protagonist: Ireland's former deputy police commissioner Peter Fitzgerald. Main results: a powerful framework which sets on its head the security system in Lebanon and other similarly authoritarian countries so common in the Middle East. Instead of protecting the citizen, Fitzgerald concluded, the security forces were used to intimidate him: 'It is the Mission's view that the Lebanese security services and the Syrian Military Intelligence bear the primary responsibility for the lack of security, protection, law and order in Lebanon. The Lebanese security services have demonstrated serious and systematic negligence in carrying out the duties usually performed by a professional national security apparatus. In doing so, they have severely failed to provide the citizens of Lebanon with an acceptable level of

71 Fitzgerald Report, above n.45. In all UN reports cited here, available on the United Nations website (un.org), the bold and italic passages in the original are kept.

security and, therefore, have contributed to the propagation of a culture of intimidation and impunity. The Syrian Military Intelligence shares this responsibility to the extent of its involvement in running the security services in Lebanon.⁷²

The conclusions were damning for the Syrian leadership and its Lebanese allies: 'It is also the Mission's view that the Government of Syria bears primary responsibility for the political tension that preceded the assassination of former Prime Minister Mr. Hariri. The Government of Syria clearly exerted influence that goes beyond the reasonable exercise of cooperative or neighborly relations. It interfered with the details of governance in Lebanon in a heavy-handed and inflexible manner that was the primary reason for the political polarization that ensued. Without prejudice to the results of the investigation, it is obvious that this atmosphere provided the backdrop for the assassination of Mr. Hariri.'⁷³

On the particulars of the assassination, Fitzgerald noted the likely motive of the killing as the coerced extension of Lahoud's presidency against the resistance of Hariri and his allies, and underlined the importance of the last meeting between the Syrian president and the Lebanese Prime Minister on 26 August 2004, which would be taken up in much more detail in the subsequent investigation.⁷⁴ The report concluded 'that there was a distinct lack of commitment to investigate the crime effectively, and that this investigation was not carried out in accordance with acceptable international standards. The Mission is also of the view that the local investigation has neither the capacity, nor the commitment to succeed. It also lacks the confidence of the population necessary for its results to be accepted.'⁷⁵

Second investigation. United Nations 'International Independent Investigation Commission', appointed by the Security Council on 7 April 2005. Two reports, released 19 October, 10 December 2005. Main

72 Fitzgerald Report, Executive Summary.

73 Fitzgerald Report, para. 61.

74 Fitzgerald Report, paras. 9 and 10. See below text at nn. 78 and 79.

75 Fitzgerald Report, para 49.

protagonist, German federal prosecutor Detlev Mehlis. Mehlis followed Fitzgerald's leads with powerful details. Furthermore, between the end of the Fitzgerald mission and the first report of his successor, an important development took place: 'On 30 August 2005, the Lebanese authorities arrested and detained four high-level officials of the Lebanese security and intelligence apparatus, pursuant to arrest warrants issued by the Lebanese Prosecutor General based on recommendations from UNIIIC that there was probable cause to arrest and detain them for conspiracy to commit murder in connection with the assassination of Rafiq Hariri. The individuals arrested were General Jameel Al-Sayyed, former director general the Sûreté Générale; General Ali Al-Hajj, former head of the Internal Security Forces; General Raymond Azar, former head of military intelligence; and General Mustapha Hamdan, Commander of the Republican Guard Brigade.'⁷⁶

The conclusions were unequivocal in the first Mehlis report: 'Building on the findings of the Commission and Lebanese investigations to date and on the basis of the material and documentary evidence collected, and the leads pursued until now, **there is converging evidence pointing at both Lebanese and Syrian involvement in this terrorist act.** It is a well known fact that Syrian Military Intelligence had a pervasive presence in Lebanon at the least until the withdrawal of the Syrian forces pursuant to resolution 1559. The former senior security officials of Lebanon were their appointees. Given the infiltration of Lebanese institutions and society by the Syrian and Lebanese intelligence services working in tandem, **it would be difficult to envisage a scenario whereby such a complex assassination plot could have been carried out without their knowledge.**'⁷⁷

The Mehlis reports fill the gaps intimated by Fitzgerald on the infamous ten-minutes meeting that took place between Prime Minister Hariri and Syrian president Bashar al-Asad on August 26, 2004: 'The apparent growing conflict between Mr. Hariri and senior Syrian officials, including Syrian President Bashar Assad, was a central aspect of the information

⁷⁶ Report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1595 (2005), (Mehlis I), 19 October 2005, para. 166.

⁷⁷ Mehlis I, 19 October 2005, para. 9.

provided to the Commission through interviews and documents. A meeting in Damascus between Mr. Hariri and President Assad on 26 August 2004 appeared to bring the conflict to a head. In that meeting, which allegedly lasted for 10-15 minutes, President Assad informed Mr. Hariri, who was then Prime Minister, that President Assad intended that Lebanon would extend the term in office of Lebanese President Emile Lahoud, which Mr. Hariri opposed.⁷⁸ The most poignant finding was the following:

‘Rafiq Hariri, taped conversation with Walid Al-Moallem on 1 February 2005:

“In connection with the extension episode, he (President Assad) sent for me and met me for 10 to 15 minutes.”

(...)

“He sent for me and told me: “ You always say that you are with Syria. Now the time has come for you to prove whether you meant what you said or otherwise.” (...) He did not ask my opinion. He said: “I have decided.” He did not address me as Prime Minister or as Rafiq or anything of that kind. He just said: “I have decided.” I was totally flustered, at a loss. That was the worst day of my life.”

(...)

“He did not tell me that he wished to extend Lahoud’s mandate. All he said was “I have decided to do this, don’t answer me, think and come back to me.””

(...)

“I was not treated as a friend or an acquaintance. No. I was asked: “Are you with us or against us?” That was it. When I finished my meeting with him, I swear to you, my body guard looked at me and asked why I was pale-faced”⁷⁹

The lead offered by Fitzgerald was confirmed, in this tape in the voice of Hariri, and in a large number of concurring testimonies. In the investigation,

78 Mehlis I, 19 October 2005, para. 25.

79 Mehlis I, 19 October 2005, para.28.

the Commission also underlined the contradictions in the statements of Walid Mu'alleem, the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, accusing him of misleading the investigation: 'The recorded interview clearly contradicts Mr. Al-Moallem's witness interview of 20 September 2005 in which he falsely described the just mentioned 1 February meeting as "friendly and constructive" and avoided giving direct answers to the questions put to him.'⁸⁰

A strong moment in the report was the connection made by Mehlis between the execution of the murder and a personal call to the mobile telephone of Lahoud: **'Mahmoud Abdel-Al's telephone calls on 14 February are also interesting: he made a call minutes before the blast, at 1247 hrs, to the mobile phone of Lebanese President Emile Lahoud and at 1249 hrs had contact with Raymond Azar's mobile telephone.'**⁸¹ The killing took place at exactly 12:56:26 pm, eight minutes later.

The overall conclusion of the investigation confirmed Fitzgerald's: **'Conclusion: There is probable cause to believe that the decision to assassinate former Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri, could not have been taken without the approval of top-ranked Syrian security official and could not have been further organized without the collusion of their counterparts in the Lebanese security services.'**⁸²

Another troubling finding appeared in the following paragraph: 'One witness of Syrian origin but resident in Lebanon, who claims to have worked for the Syrian intelligence services in Lebanon, has stated that approximately two weeks after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1559, senior Lebanese and Syrian officials decided to assassinate Rafiq Hariri. He claimed that a senior Lebanese security official went several times to Syria to plan the crime, meeting once at the Meridian Hotel in Damascus and several times at the Presidential Place and the office of a senior Syrian security official. The last meeting was held in the house of

80 Mehlis I, 19 October 2005, para. 30.

81 Mehlis I, 19 October 2005, para.20. Mahmoud Abdel-Al and his brother Ahmad are shadowy figures in a Sunni Muslim militant group known as Al-Ahbash, and both were reported to have strong connections with the presidential palace. Raymond Azar was the head of military intelligence in the Lebanese army.

82 Mehlis I, 19 October 2005, para 123.

the same senior Syrian security official approximately seven to 10 days before the assassination and included another senior Lebanese security official. The witness had close contact with high ranked Syrian officers posted in Lebanon.⁸³

Irrespective of the witness's character, which became subject to great controversy, the report created considerable commotion because it was released before the final changes on the draft were effected. The Word programme 'Track Changes' device, which had been kept on, revealed a number of crossed names next to the mention of Syrian and Lebanese officials.⁸⁴ The Syrian names included Maher al-Asad's, Asef Shawkat's, Hasan Khalil's, and Bahjat Suleiman's. Maher Asad is the brother of the president and the head of the presidential guard. Asef Shawkat is Asad's brother-in-law, married to his sister Bushra. Hasan Khalil was the head of military intelligence, succeeding Ali Douba in 2000. On 18 February 2005, he was formally replaced by Asef Shawkat. Bahjat Suleiman was Syrian Internal Security Forces chief in the General Intelligence Department, and is said to be one of the three members (the others are Maher al-Asad and Asef Shawkat) of the Syrian president's 'National Security Committee.'⁸⁵

On the Lebanese side were named, then crossed, Jamil al-Sayyed, director

83 Mehlis I, 19 October 2005, para 96.

84 Here is how the relevant paragraph read: 'One witness of Syrian origin but resident in Lebanon, who claims to have worked for the Syrian intelligence services in Lebanon, has stated that approximately two weeks after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1559, *Maher Assad, Asef Shawkat, Hassan Khalil, Bahjat Suleyman, and Jamil Al Sayyed*, senior Lebanese and Syrian officials decided to assassinate Rafiq Hariri. He claimed that *Sayyed* a senior Lebanese security official went several times to Syria to plan the crime, meeting once at the Meridian Hotel in Damascus and several times at the Presidential Place and the office of *Shawkat* a senior Syrian security official. The last meeting was held in the house of *Shawkat* the same senior Syrian security official approximately seven to 10 days before the assassination and included *Mustapha Hamdan* another senior Lebanese security official. The witness had close contact with high ranked Syrian officers posted in Lebanon.' Mehlis I, 19 October 2005, para. 96. The mystery persists over the omission of these names in the final report, and who at the United Nations was responsible for the deletion.

85 See on the Syrian Leadership e.g. Esther Pan, 'Syria's leaders', Council on Foreign Relations website, updated 10 March 2006, http://www.cfr.org/publication/9085/syrias_leaders.html

general of the Lebanese Security Services, the most powerful security agent in Lebanon until he was forced to resign on 25 April 2005 under the pressure of the Cedar Revolution; and Mustafa Hamdan, the head of Emile Lahoud's presidential guard. Both were incarcerated on 30 August 2005.

The next Mehlis report was dated December 10 and released on December 11 for discussion in the Security Council. On the morning of December 12, Gebran Tueni, the editor in chief of the *Nahar* newspaper, a uniquely courageous journalist who had been elected MP for Beirut, was killed with his two aides in a bomb blast on his way from home to the paper. He had just returned to Lebanon from 'temporary exile' in Paris, at a moment of significant tension resulting from high expectations following the release of the second Mehlis report.

Those expectations took the form of an official list of Syrian suspects drawn in that report of December 10: 'Following the adoption of Council resolution 1636 (2005), the Commission immediately summoned six Syrian officials whom it considers as suspects. After arduous discussions and considerable delay due to procedural maneuvering and sometimes contradictory feedback from the Syrian authorities, a location was determined for the questioning of five Syrian officials. The interview of the sixth suspect has been postponed. The Commission is also still awaiting the provision of other requested materials. At the same time, the Syrian Judicial Commission organized a press conference with a Syrian witness who gave journalists an opportunity to question him before the Judicial Commission could do so, and who contradicted prior sworn evidence given to the Commission. The Syrian official statements that ensued, calling upon UNIIC to reconsider past mistakes and to revise its report, was a clear indication that, while an official channel of communication was operating between the Commission and the Syrian authorities regarding cooperation, the Judicial Commission and the Syrian authorities were aiming to cast doubt on the content of UNIIC's report. This was, at the least, an attempt to hinder the investigation internally

86 Second report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1595 and 1636 (2005). (Mehlis II), 10 December 2005, para. 9.

and procedurally.⁸⁶ This was a direct accusation by the UN mission that the Syrian government was not cooperating, indeed was obstructing justice. More importantly, Mehlis confirmed the existence 'a list of 19 suspects'.⁸⁷

These two central conclusions - lack of cooperation, list of suspects some of whom high-ranking Syrian officials -, were damning, and the Commission requested the application of 'the Council deci[sion], in this context, [namely] that: *Syria must detain those Syrian officials or individuals whom the Commission considers as suspected of involvement in the planning, sponsoring, organizing or perpetrating of this terrorist act, and make them fully available to the Commission.*'⁸⁸ None of those suspects was arrested, but the extremely charged atmosphere at the United Nations after the assassination of Tueni resulted in pressing Lebanese and international requests to extend the investigation to the other assassinations and bombings since Marwan Hamadeh, and toward the tribunal sought to try those arrested and those who would eventually be incriminated.

Then it was all downhill.

Third investigation, ongoing since a new investigator was formally appointed on January 11, 2005. Main protagonist, Serge Brammertz, former Belgian federal prosecutor and then assistant to the ICC chief prosecutor, Luis Ocampo. Four reports dated 15 March, 10 June, 25 September, 12 December 2006.⁸⁹

87 Mehlis II, 10 December 2005, para. 21.

88 Mehlis II, 10 December 2005, para 74. Italics added.

89 Four reports released since Serge Brammertz started his work as Commissioner UNIIIC in early 2005: Third report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), and 1644 (2005), 15 March 2006; Fourth report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005) and 1644 (2005), 10 June 2006; Fifth report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), and 1644 (2005), 25 September 2006; Sixth report of the International Independent Investigation Commission established pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), and 1644 (2005), 12 December 2006. [Update, summer 2007: as this book was going to press, two additional, and similarly empty reports, had been issued, but the good news was that Brammertz would not carry on his investigation beyond December 2007, and that a Prosecutor would =

As soon as the first Brammertz report was issued, it was clear that the thrust of the Fitzgerald-Mehlis investigations was being undermined. Even before he issued his first report in June 2006, Brammertz's absence of action on suspects identified in the last Mehlis report was troubling. The year that followed the appointment, and the meager results achieved, raised serious questions on Brammertz's competence and honesty.

The new investigator's pusillanimity was particularly manifest in his third report on September 25, 2006, when he passed under total silence the attempt against the life of his Lebanese counterpart in the investigation and the killing of his four aides on September 5, only two weeks earlier.⁹⁰

Brammertz's lack of professionalism appeared in the prolonged detention of a number of accused without adding a shred of evidence why they should be kept in jail without trial. Justice delayed is a plague of the developing international judicial system, and the UN investigator could be given the benefit of the doubt on account of a tight building up of his case. This however is not a tenable position. By staying mum for a full year, he undermined the conclusions of his predecessors, without mustering the courage to derive the legal consequences of his silence. Either the previous investigators did not have enough evidence, and were wrong, so those arrested should be released. Or the evidence was sufficient, and the investigation must have followed through their leads, especially on the significant list of suspects identified by Mehlis.

Lack of legal leadership was apparent in the repeated vacuity Brammertz served to the public and to the Security Council through the four reports he has delivered over the course of a full year, in contrast with the advances made by his two predecessors.⁹¹ Reading through the belaboured, vacuous

= finally take over. Meanwhile, more assassinations had taken place, including against majority MP Eido on 13 June 2007, killing him and his son, and eight other innocent people. Against systematic obstruction by the Syrian government and its Lebanese allies, the Security Council established the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in UNSCR Resolution 1757 (30 May 2007).]

⁹⁰ Attempt to kill investigator Colonel Samir Shehadeh in a car bomb, death of four men escorting him, September 5. Serge Brammertz did not mention this dramatic episode in paragraphs 95, 96 of the Fifth report of 25 September, which deal with the security of the investigation.

reports, it is hard to come up with one single new element that can be identified with a year-long investigation.

Even giving him the benefit of the doubt, how could Brammertz expect that over a year of absolute silence coupled with the *tabula rasa* he made of the important conclusions reached by his two predecessors would go unchallenged? If he does come up with any conclusion that incriminates the Syrian leaders, it will be attacked as entrapment. Even his repeated statements that Syria is cooperating with the investigation sound bizarre and counterfactual: the Syrian leaders have been obstructing and denouncing, through their allies in Lebanon, and in official statements in Damascus, the international tribunal. More gravely, Serge Brammertz is responsible for deflecting that immense yearning of the Cedar Revolution for truth to come out in a judicial investigation. A year after he was appointed, the Revolution was in full retreat, and the Syrian leadership on the ascendancy inside Lebanon, and in the region as a whole. Here is the immensely negative impact of one individual on history.

Silver linings could always be found, but perhaps the most disturbing dimension was the repeated Syrian assertion that it would not be concerned by the tribunal, while Brammertz was continuously praising Syrian cooperation. This brought up the grave following conclusion, reached together with colleagues like Professor Duraïd Bsherrawi, from Strasburg University, that a different type of investigator-prosecutor was required.⁹² The case was too important for Lebanon and the Middle East, and the STL prosecutor holds such a pivotal position, that far more important skills and courage were needed where the two first investigators performed remarkably well, and the third so questionably.

In the larger order of things, justice is about process, not about persons. However inept or slow the Brammertz investigation, Lebanese history as defined by the Hariri assassination and the quest for truth and justice

91 See the detailed analysis of Professor Duraïd Bsherrawi (Doreïd Becheraoui), 'Brammertz a'ada al-tahqiq ila niqtat al-sifr (Brammertz sets back investigation to starting point)', *al-Siyasa newspaper*, 26-27 September 2006.

92 Correspondence with Duraïd Bsherrawi, 3-4 November 2006.

112 witnessed the steady emergence of an unprecedented horizon for justice in Lebanon as model for the Middle East. Restoring the revolution on that score needs not only the protection of the judicial process put in train for the Hariri assassination. It also means a more coherent approach to violence in Lebanese recent history, and in the region.

xiii. Revolution restored: democracy

'Citoyens, voulez-vous une révolution sans révolution'?⁹³ In 2221, a great wonder will remain. How could the Cedar Revolution be entitled to its place in history when the top symbols of the Ancien Régime remained in power? How could the Lebanese version of Robespierre's question have remained unrequited on that simple score, let alone on the far more demanding reforms that at least some wanted to see the Revolution addressing?

Beyond the tragically mediocre persona of many protagonists, political accountability failed on three levels.

The first is epiphenomenal. Here is a revolution where the person responsible for the country's descent into mayhem, in a coerced extension now firmly documented in the Fitzgerald and Mehlis reports, was still in power as president two years after the Revolution. Similarly, the same speaker remained in position, after thirteen years of faithfully serving the old order and openly acknowledging its fidelity to Syrian, and beyond, Iranian leadership, organising meetings at his residence in open opposition to the revolutionary march, and then consistently and relentlessly rejecting demands to convene parliamentary sessions for the international tribunal and for the election of a new president.

There is a processual, though not qualitative, difference between the president and the speaker staying in power. The contradictions of the Lebanese scene were such by June 2005, when the parliamentary elections

93 Robespierre, speech at the National Assembly, 5 November 1792.

were held, that the Speaker was reconducted in position by a free vote of the new Parliament. The fact that Nabih Berri ran unopposed is a sign of a serious flaw in the democratic process: No election in a democracy is meaningful without a contest. Whatever the nuances in his reconduction, the failure of the country to replace a pillar of the old regime (and a pillar poorly regarded in the population at large), was a signal failure in political accountability. Still, parliament had chosen freely, and the parliamentary leaders of the Cedar Revolution voted for him. It is a typically Lebanese irony that his eventually strong ally, Michel Aoun, abstained.

The president, in contrast, had by then acquired a legally acknowledged position of usurper, which came to the fore increasingly strongly until 14 February 2006, when the largest crowd since the demonstration of March 14 had assembled in the centre of Beirut, with one, exclusive slogan this time: 'Emile Lahoud must go.'⁹⁴ The immense momentum created by the popular impulse, adding to the international isolation of Lahoud in the wake of the Fitzgerald and Mehlis revelations, failed to remove him for lack of determination and coherence in the March 14 leadership. Without a new president, the country remained doubly headless domestically, lacking in a functioning head of executive power, as well as in its political representation of the Christian community in the sectarian-based constitutional system. A new president was an imperative request for order, domestic and international, and a *sine qua non* for Lebanon to turn a traumatic page in its history.

By 2221, such nuances will have been lost in the wider picture, save one tragic trait: a Revolution without a revolution in basic political terms, with two out of the three constitutional top positions in the Republic unchanged, and the third, that of the Prime Minister, isolated and weak.

⁹⁴ I had devised a full international and constitutional plan for presidential change, on which my presidential campaign, which started in November 2006, had been built. The plan had been agreed with Walid Jumblat in late December 2005, and pursued systematically until mid-February. I hope to write one day a more personal account of the Revolution, which I am avoiding to develop here for fear that my limited personal story jars with the far more important phenomenon carried out by the people of Lebanon.

The Revolution also failed the political accountability test on a deeper level: the renewal of political leadership altogether. In Lebanon, as elsewhere, strong yearning for basic decency means the dual rejection of blood spilling and money abuse. Violence and corruption Lebanon shares with a Third World replete with bribery and leaderships established by sheer force. In Lebanon, blood spilling is typical of the record of several top political figures who, Hariri excepted, share a past of violence since the 1975-1990 civil war. Corruption attaches to the same, + the Hariri 'Saudi system of patronage'. On that score, the Cedar Revolution did not produce the leadership it deserved and was looking for. Nor should one have expected too much, since the revolt was in large part started over the killing of Hariri, and his aides and heirs came first in line to take over his mantle.

Nevertheless, the Revolution was able to project a diffuse sense of the weak legitimacy of all dominant politicians, and the muffled demand that they should all go home, starting with those who support Syrian and Iranian influence in Lebanon because of the brutal nature of these governments' policy at home and in Lebanon. Singling out the supporters of Asad's Syria in Lebanon reflects a sense of moral gradation: those who shed blood and did not recant, opposed or pussyfooted on the tribunal, refused the replacement of the speaker and president, muffled or declared ignorance of the continued assassinations of anti-Syrian figures, and generally acted in support to, or nostalgia for the Syrian order, deserve to go first. The Revolution failed to push its enemies out of office, let alone produce a fresh leadership, and turned into Robespierre's revolution without a revolution.

There is a third level of democratic yearning, a far more elusive and far deeper problem which is typically Lebanese, indeed Middle Eastern: sectarianism. Sectarianism doesn't work with democracy, because it undermines the principle of citizens' equality. This is ancient, complex and cannot be easily solved, because people identify with their communities/sects as legitimate political agents. The problem with the Cedar Revolution is *that it did not even open the debate* on the need to reduce sectarianism other than by sporadic and unconvincing sloganeering by the occasional

politician or by marginal groups. It could have at least tried, by expanding the political space and the legitimacy of top elected executive officials through direct, universal election of the president/prime minister, and by reducing the grip of sectarianism to a 'higher' level, Christian-Muslim, rather than the detailed apportionment down to the smallest sects within the larger denominations.

The failure of the Revolution was not total on any of the above scores. Syrian troops had physically left the country two months within its outbreak, and the sitting president's legitimacy had been all but removed internationally. From January 2006, Emile Lahoud was reduced to meeting only with the other presidential pariahs of the world. Even in the Arab world, he was unwelcome, his weak position making a visit to his declared allies in Damascus or Tehran inconceivable. Domestically, he was heavily constrained: in the so-called national dialogue which brought together a number of leaders in April 2006, Lahoud was not invited to attend. Short of replacing the president, the Revolution had succeeded in rendering him marginal, by removing any role in active decision-making and by considerably reducing his domestic and international recognition as head of state. But his capacity for nuisance remained constitutionally significant. With him and the speaker remaining in office, the Counter-revolution had strong constitutional pegs, and it used them to maximum effectiveness.

xiv. Epilogue: the future of non-violence and justice

In 2221, either the Cedar Revolution will have marked the turning moment of peace in the Middle East, or very little will have been written about it, for it would have turned into another Beirut Spring without the Summer fruit. The Cedar Revolution was not the first occasion for non-violent revolutions in modern history. They were heralded in Berlin in 1989, and spread eastwards, despite difficulties in Yugoslavia, Rumania, and the former states of the Soviet Union. But the Cedar Revolution was the first such identifiable non-violent moment in modern Middle Eastern history.

The specter of massive violence was upon the country since Rafiq Hariri was threatened into submission by Bashar al-Asad on 26 August 2004. As he and his allies, Jumblat and Hamadeh in the first place, resisted the continuation in power of Emile Lahoud in the style so well perfected by Middle East dictators at the beginning of the 21st century, they were the object of brutal assassination. So were all those who continued their resistance after the Revolution broke out.

The Counter-revolution, domestic and regional, chose to escalate by violent means, with renewed and relentless targeted assassinations from June 2005 on, and with the more massive violent stances in the war initiated by Hizbullah in the summer of 2006, which it then carried out by intimidation into the heart of Beirut.

At the beginning of 2007, violence loomed high again on Lebanon. The first sectarian killing took the shape of the murder on 3 December

118 2006 of a young Shi'i Lebanese who had ventured in a tense Sunni neighbourhood, as Hizbullah and its allies were developing their bid to take power by force, occupying inimical terrain and closing down roads. In January, seven people at least were killed on the streets of Beirut, and the Cedar Revolution now risked losing its central meaning: its non-violent character. Unless a judicial process is established for the families of these victims to take the process of accountability off the street, civil war will have technically started in the country.

Non-violence as the exclusive means of politics, and judicial response instead of unfettered vengeance, offered for almost two full years the central meaning of the Cedar Revolution. Windows onto the future mean that they need success to blossom into institutionalized permanence. They also need to be complemented with other horizons that are still missing.

Fuller horizons on the front of political accountability are regained by addressing the three central items of unfinished business: removal of the pillars of the Ancien Regime at the top, starting with the president; renewal of the political establishment with men and women who made the Revolution what it was, and remained shorn of representation; shake-up of the sectarian system in the direction of equality on the basis of merit, and not on the basis of religious denomination.

Fuller horizons on the front of judicial accountability mean an indivisible justice. While the battle is on for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon to get under way, and to exercise competence for all the assassination attempts since the one against Marwan Hamadeh on October 1, 2004, including the likely future murders, the immediate past of Lebanon's protracted civil and regional wars cannot be ignored. It is not possible to occult the heavy legacy of crimes in Lebanon's difficult modern history, or the regional trail of assassinations. A cutoff date in late 2004, or in 2005, may be a pragmatic compromise, it will not efface the pattern of (generally) regionally commandeered assassination of Lebanese political and opinion leaders. Justice has yet to shed light on, let alone to make accountable, the assassins of Mustafa Saad (1975), Linda Jumblatt (1976), Kamal Jumblat (1977), Tony Franjiiyeh (1978), Riad Taha (1980), Salim Lawzi (1981),

Bashir Gemayyel (1982), Ragheb Harb (1984), Subhi Saleh (1986), Rashid Karamah (1987), Hasan Khaled (1989), René Mouawwad (1989), Dany Chamoun (1990) and Elie Hobeika (2002), or the disappearance in Libya of Imam Musa Sadr and his two companions in 1978.

Nor is the responsibility for such killings limited to regional powers: as militiamen, actual and would-be warlords, local actors have participated in the bloodshed since the collapse of internal peace in 1975. At the same time the killing pattern of Lebanese leaders underlines the propensity of Middle East governments to use Lebanon as the playground in which they settle their own accounts and promote their violent policies.

In law, coverage of these crimes remains possible in theory, in so far as most of those cases have remained open in Lebanese courts under the category of 'Judicial Council cases.' The Judicial Council is a special tribunal which includes the senior judges of the Republic, and which was set up precisely for crimes that undermine the stability of the country. Criticized by human rights organizations for not providing a second-tier of appeal, a right now well established as fundamental in criminal law, the Judicial Council has been largely ineffective. Because of the proven or suspected involvement of foreign parties, usually governments, which have contributed to the regional bloodied over-determination of Lebanon, judicial accountability has not been forthcoming internally. These murders and disappearances have remained largely untried, and their foreign commanders at large. The STL is technically limited to the assassination of Rafiq Hariri. Indivisible justice requires the widest possible competence of the international court.

If justice is indivisible, then the leaders assassinated in the Lebanese wars were not alone suffering: 'The legacy of the crimes of the past must be addressed. This requires the repeal of the amnesty laws which have ensured impunity for crimes committed in the context of the 1975-1990 Civil War, and in the period since. Amnesties and similar measures that lead to impunity for serious human rights violations are contrary to international law... Without holding perpetrators to account, the families of the thousands of ordinary people who have "disappeared" and the other victims and survivors of that Civil War would be denied their right to

truth and justice.⁹⁵ Thus Amnesty International's Secretary-General, upon a visit to Beirut in December 2006, calling for commissions of enquiry South-African and Moroccan style to address failed justice in Lebanese history.

There may be other ways, and the search for justice means first the stated recognition of the victims' enduring pain. Even a basic list of the people who died in Lebanon during the civil war does not exist, and the families of the disappeared continue their difficult battle to receive a final word on their beloved, some of whom having been lost over three decades ago.

It is true that such a policy requires a leadership in Lebanon and the UN which may not be readily available. But the Lebanese may have succeeded in bringing the STL to life, and to enlarge its competence to cover seventeen (and counting...) bombs and assassination attempts which share the same pattern. By holding high and tight the bar of accountability as key for the future of Lebanon, the non-violent Cedar Revolution may yet prevail in preserving one of its essential meanings.

95 Irene Khan, 'Lebanon's justice system on trial', *The Daily Star*, 22 December 2006.

Appendix 1

Chronology

Chronology of the Cedar Revolution, August 2004 – end 2006⁹⁶

- 26 August 2004, Rafiq Hariri meets in Damascus with Syrian President Bashar Assad to discuss the extension of the term of President Lahoud.
- 2 September 2004, the United Nations Security Council adopts resolution 1559 concerning the situation in the Middle East, calling for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon [*requesting the disarmament of all the militias, and asking for free and fair presidential elections conducted without foreign interference*].
- 3 September 2004, the Rafiq Hariri bloc approves the extension law for President Lahoud. [*29 MPs out of 128 refuse to amend the Constitution.*]
- 3 September 2004, the Lebanese parliament adopts the extension law for President Lahoud and forwards it to the Lebanese government for execution.

⁹⁶ The following chronology appeared in the first Mehlis report (19 October 2005) as 'Chronology, mid-2004 to mid-September 2005'. It is amended in places to correspond to other significant dates and events mentioned in the text, and brought up to December 2006. Amendments and additions are in italics. Names may be spelled in different ways (Rafic or Rafik for Rafiq, May for Mai etc). The reader can find a good chronology of the period September 2004 to March 2005, with stunning pictures of the Revolution, in Ghassan Tuani and Eli Khoury, *The Beirut spring*, Beirut 2005.

- 7 September 2004, Economy Minister Marwan Hamadeh, Culture Minister Ghazi Aridi, Minister of Refugee Affairs Abdullah Farhat and Environment Minister Fares Boueiz, resigned from the cabinet in protest at the constitutional amendment.
- 9 September 2004, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri indicates to journalists that he will resign.
- 1 October 2004, Assassination attempt on Marwan Hamadeh, in Beirut, Lebanon.
- 4 October 2004, Rafiq Hariri resigns as prime minister.
- 11 October 2004, Syrian President Bashar Assad delivers a speech condemning his critics within Lebanon and the United Nations.
- 19 October 2004, United Nations Security Council expresses concern that resolution 1559 has not been implemented.
- 20 October 2004, President Lahoud accepts Hariri's resignation and names Omar Karame to form the new government.

2005

- 14 February 2005, Rafiq Hariri and 22 other individuals are killed in a massive blast in a seafront area of central Beirut.
- *16 February 2005, first street demonstration in Beirut for Hariri's funerals.*
- *17-18 February, petition on 'resignation'. Tents set up in Martyrs' square. Recurring demonstrations until March 14.*
- 25 February 2005, the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission arrives in Lebanon.
- *26 February 2005. Following growing street demonstrations in Egypt, Mubarak announces cosmetic constitutional change.*
- *27-28 February, Revolution tips. Order to disband ignored. Prime Minister 'Umar Karameh announces resignation.*
- 8 March 2005, Hezbollah organizes a one [half?] million strong "pro-Syrian" march.
- 10 March 2005, Prime Minister 'Umar Karameh reinstated.

- 10 March 2005, *protestors in Damascus heavily repressed.*
- 14 March 2005, *[an almost twice as large a demonstration as March 8] Christian/Sunni-led counter demonstration demands the withdrawal of Syrian troops and the arrest of the chief of the security and intelligence services.*
- 19 March 2005, a bomb explodes in Jdeideh, a northern suburb of Beirut, wounding 11 people.
- 21 March 2005, *Walid Jumblat, after visit to Egyptian president Husni Mubarak, announces that presidential change is no longer a demand of the Cedar Revolution.*
- 23 March 2005, three people are killed and three others wounded in an explosion in the Kaslik shopping centre, north of Beirut.
- 25 March 2005, the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission issues its report in New York.
- 26 March 2005, a suitcase bomb explodes in an industrial zone in northeast Beirut, injuring six.
- 1 April 2005, nine people are injured in an underground garage in an empty commercial and residential building in Broumana.
- 7 April 2005, the Security Council forms the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission into the assassination of Rafiq Hariri and 22 others on 14 February 2005.
- 13 April 2005, *'Umar Karameh resigns again.*
- 18 April, *Basil Fleihan succumbs to 14th February burns.*
- 19 April 2005, Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati *[forms cabinet,]* announces that parliamentary elections will be held on 30 May 2005.
- 20 April, *Hariri family announces that Saad Hariri will succeed his father as political leader.*
- 22 April 2005, General Jamil Al-Sayyed, head of the Internal Security Forces and General Ali Al-Hajj, head of the Sûreté Générale, decide to put their functions at the disposal of Prime Minister Najib al Makati. *[Sayyed resigns formally on 25 April.]*

- 26 April 2005, the last Syrian troops leave Lebanon ending a 29 year military presence.
- 26 April 2005, the United Nations Verification Mission starts its mission to verify the complete withdrawal of Syrian military and intelligence agents from Lebanon and its full compliance with the resolution 1559.
- 6 May 2005, a bomb explodes in Jounieh north of Beirut injuring 29 people.
- 7 May 2005, Parliament convenes to adopt the proposed changes to the electoral law of 2000. *[All changes are in fact stalled by Speaker Nabih Berri, and the law remained the same as that of 2000.]*
- 7 May 2005, return of Michel Aoun from 15-year exile. *Cedar Revolution splits. Beginning of shifts in alliances.*
- 30 [Sunday 29] May 2005, the first round of the elections was held. *[Last, fourth round held on Sunday 19 June 2005]* The Rafiq Hariri Martyr List, a coalition of Saad Hariri's Future Movement, the Progressive Socialist Party and the Qornet Shehwan Gathering, won the majority of the seats in Parliament. *[Strong showing of Michel Aoun in central Metn, Kesrouan and Jbeil districts. Dominance of Hizbullah and Amal in the South. Hizbullah supports Jumblat in Baabda.]*
- 2 June 2005, journalist Samir Kassir is killed when his car explodes in east Beirut.
- 21 June 2005, former Lebanese Communist Party leader George Hawi is killed when his car explodes close to his home in Wata Musaytbeh.
- 28 June 2005 Nabih Berri, Speaker of Parliament, reelected without opposition after thirteen years in power. *Aoun bloc abstains.*
- 30 June 2005, Fouad Siniora, former finance minister under Rafiq Hariri, forms the new government composed of 23 ministers.
- 12 July 2005, Defence Minister Elias Murr is wounded and two other people are killed in a car bomb attack in Beirut.
- 22 July 2005, at least three people are wounded near rue Monot when

a bomb explodes in the Ashrafieh quarter.

- 22 August 2005, three persons are injured in an explosion in a garage near the Promenade Hotel in the Al-Zalqa area north of Beirut.
- 30 August 2005, *Generals Jamil al-Sayyed, Raymond Azar, Mustafa Hamdan, Ali al-Hajj arrested by Lebanese authorities upon request of UN investigator Mehlis.*
- 16 September 2005, one person is killed and ten others wounded by a bomb near a bank in Ashrafieh.
- 19 September 2005, one person is killed and two wounded in a small explosion at the Kuwaiti information office in Beirut.
- 25 September 2005, a car bomb injures prominent news anchor, May Chidiac, in north Beirut.
- 12 October 2005, *Ghazi Kenaan, former head of Syria's security services in Lebanon, and Syria's Minister of Interior, is reported to have committed suicide.*
- 19 October 2005, *first Mehlis 'track changes' report. High Syrian officials, Lahoud and entourage implicated.*
- 2 November 2005, *Mallat starts presidential campaign. Intensive campaigning for seven months.*
- 10 December 2005, *second Mehlis report. List of 19 suspects, undisclosed.*
- 12 December 2005, *Gibran Tueni killed with two aides in car bomb.*
- 27 December 2005, *Mukhtara plan announced for constitutional removal of Emile Lahoud.*
- 30 December 2005, *Abdel Halim Khaddam, former Syrian Vice-President defects.*

2006

- 11 January 2006, *Serge Brammertz takes over from Detlev Mehlis as UN lead investigator*
- 23 January 2006, *UN presidential statement requests 'free and fair*

presidential elections for Lebanon.'

- *14 February 2006, largest demonstration since 14 March 2005, calls for new president.*
- *16 February 2006, Bristol meeting to chart constitutional course for presidential change.*
- *2 March 2006, 'National dialogue' convenes. Several inconsequential sessions held. Presidential change scuppered.*
- *12 July 2006, Hizbullah kidnaps two Israeli soldiers and kills 8 in cross-boundary action. War with Israel starts. Lebanese Shi'i population forced out of most of its villages and neighbourhoods.*
- *30 July 2006, Israeli massacre at Qana.*
- *7 August 2006, Arab foreign ministers meet in Beirut to support Siniora's government, after Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia denounce Hizbullah's initiation and prosecution of war.*
- *12 August 2006, Ceasefire. UNSCR 1701 calls for disarmament of Hizbullah and starts deployment of new UN troops in South Lebanon. Hizbullah declares 'divine victory' and regroups North.*
- *5 September 2006, Attempt to kill investigator Colonel Samir Shehadeh, in a car bom. Shehadeh wounded, four aides killed.*
- *11 November 2006, six ministers, five of them Shi'i, resign.*
- *21 November 2006, Minister and MP Pierre Gemayyel and aide assassinated.*
- *1 December 2006, Demonstrations staged by Hizbullah and allies to bring down government. Tents set up in Central Beirut.*
- *3 December 2006, scuffles in Beirut between Sunnis and Shi 'is. Ali Mahmoud, 19, killed in Sunni neighbourhood.*

Chronology of the French Revolution 1787-1795⁹⁷

1787	February 22	<i>The first Assembly of Notables convenes</i>
	July-September	Conflict between the king and the Parlement de Paris
1788	August 8	King convokes Estates General for May 1789
	November	Meeting of the Second Assembly of Notables
1789	January-May	Preparation of <i>Cahiers de Doléances</i> (popular lists of grievances) and elections to the Estates General. Sieyès publishes <i>Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-Etat?</i>
	May 5	<i>Estates General assemble at Versailles for the first time since 1614.</i>
	June 17	Adoption of the title 'National Assembly' by the Third Estate.
	June 20	Members of the Third Estate (plus some reform-minded clergy and nobility), excluded from their meeting place, assemble and take the 'Tennis Court Oath', swearing not to disband until a constitution is established.
	July 9	National Assembly declares itself a Constituent Assembly.
	July 14	<i>Fall of the Bastille.</i>
	July 17	<i>Beginning of the 'Great Fear', the peasant revolt against feudalism, and of municipal revolts.</i>
	August 4-11	National Assembly decrees the abolition of feudalism, equality of taxation and the sale of offices.

⁹⁷ The following chronology was assembled from various sources. I have amended it, in brackets and italics, to correspond to relevant references in the text.

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|--|
| | August 26 | <i>National Assembly approves the text of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.</i> |
| | October 5-6 | <i>The 'October Days'</i> - women's march to Versailles and force return of the king to Paris. |
| | October 10 | Louis XVI decreed 'King of the French' rather than 'King of France'. |
| 1790 | February 13 | Suppression of religious orders and monastic vows. |
| | June 19 | Abolition of nobility and titles by Constituent Assembly. |
| | July 14 | <i>Fête de la Fédération: first public celebration of Bastille Day.</i> |
| | August 18 | First counter-revolutionary assembly at Jalès (between Loire and Rhône). |
| | November | Publication of Edmund Burke's <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> . |
| 1791 | May 15 | Black inhabitants of French colonies born of free parents declared to have equal civil rights with whites |
| | June 20 | Louis XVI flees Paris for Varennes. |
| | June 25 | King forced to return to Paris. |
| | July 17 | 'Massacre of the Champs de Mars'- National Guard fire on crowd during protests against the king's reinstatement. |
| | August 27 | Declaration of Pillnitz - Austria and Prussia ready to intervene in French affairs, but Britain remains neutral. |
| | September 13-14 | Louis XVI formally accepts constitution. |
| | September 30 | Constituent Assembly dissolved. |
| | October 1 | First meeting of Legislative Assembly. |

- November 9 Assembly orders all *émigrés* to return under pain of death. Civil marriage and divorce instituted.
- November 11 *King vetoes Assembly's ruling on émigrés.*
- December 19 *King vetoes Assembly's decrees against non-juring priests.*
- 1792 January- March Food riots in Paris.
- January 2 Decree that 1 January 1789 shall be reckoned the start of the 'Era of History'.
- April 20 'War of the First Coalition' begins - France declares war on Austria.
- April 24 'La Marseillaise' composed by Rouget de Lisle.
- August 10-13 Revolutionary days of 10 August. Storming of Tuileries. King imprisoned with his family
- August 19 Lafayette, commander of the National Guard, flees to Austria.
- August 22 Royalist riots in La Vendée, Brittany and Dauphiné.
- August 23 Prussian army captures Longwy.
- September 2 Prussian army captures Verdun.
- September 2-6 'September Massacres' - Paris crowd murder 1200, including 100 priests.
- September 20 *French defeat Prussians at Valmy.*
- September 20-21 Final sessions of Legislative Assembly. First session of the Convention. Unanimous vote to abolish monarchy. Revolutionary calendar introduced.
- September 21-22 Year I of the First Republic proclaimed
- September 29 French occupation of Nice (Sardinian territory)
- October 10 Convention decree forbids use of *madame* and *monsieur*, and replaces them with *citoyen* and *citoyenne*.

November 6	French victory over Austria at Jemappes; occupation of Belgium.
November 19	Edict of Fraternity offers aid to all subject people everywhere 'struggling to be free'.
December 11	Trial of the king at the Convention begins.
1793 January 21	<i>Louis XVI executed.</i>
February 1	France declares war on Britain and Holland.
February 13	First Coalition against France formed by Britain, Austria, Prussia, Holland, Spain and Sardinia.
February 25	Food riots in Paris.
March 7	France declares war on Spain.
March 11-16	Beginning of revolt in La Vendée.
March 18	France withdraws from Belgium.
April 6	<i>Committee of Public Safety established as executive branch of government with dictatorial powers.</i>
May - June	Insurrection leads to fall of Gironde and purge of all government committees except the Committee of Public Safety.
May 4	'Maximum' imposed on grain prices.
June 24	The Convention accepts the 'Jacobin' Constitution of 1793 (Year I).
July 10	Danton leaves Committee of Public Safety.
July 12	Royalist insurrection in Toulon.
July 13	Marat stabbed to death in his bath by Charlotte Corday.
July 17	Abolition of all feudal rights without compensation.
July 27	<i>Robespierre and St Just appointed to Committee of Public Safety.</i>
August 23	Decree of <i>Levée en masse</i> .
August 27	Surrender of Toulon to British.
September 4-5	Popular riots in Paris.

- September 6 *Robespierre dominates Committee of Public Safety.*
- September 17 *Law of Suspects and beginning of Terror.*
- September 22 Beginning of 'Year II' of the Revolution
- October 10 Decree suspending constitution and sanctioning Revolutionary government for the 'duration of the war'.
- October 16 Execution of Marie Antoinette.
- November 10 Festival of Liberty and Reason.
- December 19 Toulon retaken by French.
- December 23 Revolt in Vendée crushed by Republican forces (Battle of Savenay).
- 1794** February 4 Abolition of slavery in all French colonies.
- February 15 Tricolour adopted as French flag.
- March 31 *Danton arrested. He is executed on April 5.*
- June 10 *Law of 22 Prairial increases power of the Revolutionary Tribunal, mass executions start.*
- June 26 Battle of Fleurus - French reconquest of Belgium.
- July 27 *Thermidor: fall of Robespierre in National Convention. Robespierre executed with Saint Just the following day.*
- July 30-31 Reorganisation of Committee of Public Safety.
- August 10 Reorganisation of Revolutionary Tribunal.
- September 28 Britain, Austria and Russia form Alliance of St Petersburg against France.
- November 12 Jacobin Club closed.
- 1795** August 22 Convention approves 'Constitution of Year III' which establishes Directory.
- October 5 Defeat of attempted Parisian insurrection of 13 Vendémiaire by Napoleon Bonaparte's 'whiff of grapeshot'.

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|--|
| | October 26 | Convention dissolved. Directory is inaugurated. Place de La Revolution renamed Place de la Concorde. |
| 1799 | June 18 | Directory resigns. |
| | August 22- | Napoleon abandons army in Egypt and returns to France. |
| | October 9 | |
| | November 9-10 | <i>Coup d'état</i> of 18 Brumaire. Napoleon proclaimed First Consul. |

Appendix 2

Victims of assassinations and bombings, October 2004 to December 2006⁹⁸

Date - Location – main target	dead	wounded	Names of killed	Seriously injured
01-Oct-04 Corniche, Beirut - Marwan Hamadeh	1	2	Ghazi Bukarrum	Marwan Hamadeh, Usama Abdel Samad
14-Feb-05 St Georges, Beirut - Rafiq Hariri	23	135	Rafiq Hariri, Basil Fleihan, Yahia al-'Arab, Talal Nabih Naser, Ziad Muhammad Tarraf, 'Umar Ahmad Nasri, Muhammad Sa'daddin Darwish, Mazen al-Zahabi, Muhammad Ghalayini, Abdel-Rahim Ghalayini, 'Abdo Abu Farah, 'Ala' 'Asfur, Haytham 'Uthman, Joseph Aoun, Rima Bazzi, Rawad Haidar, Subhi al-Khudr, Yamana Dامن, Zahi Abou, Ahmad Ghalayini	Muhammad Jamal Shafik Dia, 'Amr Shchadc, Hasan al-'Ajuz, Rashid Hammud
19-Mar-05 Jdeideh		11		
23-Mar-05 Junieh/Kaslik	3	6	Narimdair Sinth, Surjit Sinth, Sukhbinder Sinth (Indian nationals)	Ibrahim Khury, Salah 'Abd Yusef, Haikal Abu Faisal, Charbel Khalil

98 List originally prepared by Nisrine Abiad.

26-Mar-05	Jdeideh /Industrial zone		6		Including one US citizen
01-Apr-05	Brummana		9		
06-May-05	Junich		29		Eleven severely wounded
02-Jun-05	Ashrafiyyeh, Beirut - Samir Kassir	1		Samir Kassir	
21-Jun-05	- Wata Musaitbeh, Beirut - Hawi	1		Georges Hawi	
12-Jul-05	Antelias - El-Murr	1	9	Khaled Mora	Elias el Murr, Elias al-Baisari, Amin al-Murr, Ziad Kassis, Charbel Tohme, Karl Khalil, Roger Mrad, Arbil Baksian, Lina Baksian
22-Jul-05	Monot, Beirut		5		Joseph Elias, Mahdi Achour, Yassin Nabil, Nicolas Joseph, Rita Hourani
22-Aug-05	Zalka		9		Issam Moussa Kiriako, Dani Moughamess
16-Sep-05	Ashrafiyyeh, Beirut	1	10	Hikage Hovanian	Roni Assaf, Rima Saikali, Stefanie Rached, Nadia Hochar, Souad Younes, Suad Fawaz, Joseph Machaalani, Eliane Tohme
25-Sep-05	Sarba -Mai Chidiac		1		Mai Chidiac
12-Dec-05	Mkalles - Gebran Tueni	3	30	Gebran Tueni, Andre Mrad, Nicolas Flouti	Tarek Ali (Iraqi), Mosbah el Ahmar (Syrian), Joseph Abu Sleiman, Fadi Rizk, Joseph al-Mohr, Rabih Abu Yunes, Joseph Habr, Muna Hanna, Joseph Abusleiman, Muhammad Rizk, Fady Zaini, Chawuki Ahmed, Mohammed Hasawi, Sami Farah, Claudia Haddad, Chadia Elia, Youssef Bachri
5-Sep-06	Saida -Samir Shchadeh	4	4	'Umar Muhammad al-Hage Shchadeh, Nemr Yasin. Shehab Husain Aoun, Wisam Lutfi Aoun	Samir Shchadeh, Zaher Qudeih Jihad al-Dabet, 'Ali Ahmad al-Rabi'
21-Nov-06	Jdeideh -Pierre Gemayyel	2		Pierre Gemayyel, Samir Chartouni	

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