Political Awareness of the Shi'ites in Lebanon:

The Role of Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din and Sayyid Musa al-Sadr

By
Hussein M. Gharbieh

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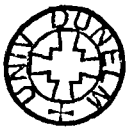

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LAA: Lebanese Arab Army.

LNM: Lebanese National Movement.

MEA: Middle East Airlines.

NLP: National Liberal Party.

PFLP: Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

PLA: Palestinian Liberation Army.

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organization.

PSP: Progressive Socialist Party.

SISC: Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council.

SSNP: Syrian Nationalist Socialist party.

Glossary

Note:

In transliterating Arabic, I have used on the system preferred by the International Journal of Middle East Studies. Non-Western terms are italicized and bolded and are defined either in the text on first occurrence or in the glossary.

Non-Western terms specifically as used in Lebanese context:

'amma: public.
'Ashura: the tenth day of Muharram. This day represents in the Islamic calendar the death of the Prophet's grandson Imam Husain at Karbala in Iraq in 680 CE.
'ayan: notables.
'uhda: something to be looked after.
'ulama: learned men of religion.
Al: one's family or kinsmen. Not to be confused with the definite article al-.
amir liwa: governor of a sanjaq.
amir: prince, governor, tribal leader.
fatwa: religious edict.
fiqh: religious jurisprudence.
hakim: governor.
hawzat (pl. of hawza): Shi'ite religious schools.
ijtihad: using reason to interpret the law.
imam: a man who leads a prayer or a community.
imamate: religious leadership of a community.
imami Shi'ism (Twelver Shi'ism): Shi'ites who believe in the succession of twelve imams.
iqta': a grant of land revenues under the Ottoman.
Jabal 'Amil: Mount 'Amil.
jihad: holy war.
jizya: special poll tax paid by Christians and Jews under Muslim rule.
kuttab: primitive type of school.
marja' al-Taqlid: source of emulation.
marajia' (pl. of marja'): an authoritative religious scholars.

matawila (pl. of mitwali): sobriquet for the Shi'ites in Lebanon.
millet: religio-national communities.
miri: belonging to state.
mufti: official expounder of religious law.
muhafaza: administrative unit.
mujtahid: one who carries out ijtihad.
Mulk: state property.
multazim: Ottoman tax farmer.
muqata'a: renting contract.
muqata'ji: holder of the right to an iqta'.
mutasarrif: governor of a mutasarrifiyya.
mutasarrifiyya: subdivision of a wilaya in Ottoman times. A special term used in 1861 in Mount Lebanon.
nahiya: an Ottoman administrative unite (locality).
qa'immaqamate: sub-district.
qada: sub-district.
risala: thesis.
Sanjaq: district.
sayyid: in Shi'ite lexicon, a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad who is identified by his black turban.
tapu: ownership registration document.
taqiyya: dissimulation of true belief in the event of danger.
timar: grant of revenue from specified area of land in lieu of salary.
wajib: religious duty.
wujaha (pl. of wajih): local notables.
wulat (pl. of wali): governor of a wilaya.
awqaf (pl. waqf): religious endowments.
wilaya: province in Ottoman times.
wilayat al-faqih: the rule by a jurisprudent.
zu'ama (pl. of .za'im): political leader.
zariba: a barn.

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Completing a Ph.D. has been something that I wanted to achieve. However, this would not have been achieved without some luck and hard work. The luck manifested itself when I was accepted as part-time student. I am very grateful for Dr. Peter Sluglett and the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Durham University accepting me at a time when part-time students were not wanted. Writing on the Shi'ite community in Lebanon has not been an easy task simply because of lack of sources, particularly as this thesis involved a historical dimension which has almost not been touched upon before. Dr. Sluglett's support, patience and direction enabled me to produce this thesis.

I would like to thank Sayyid Fadil Milani and the Khui Foundation for partly financing my studies. Completing of the Ph.D. would have proved inconclusive without conducting a series of interviews. Luckily I found certain people ready to provide me with information at a time when suspicion among people was their major character. I am grateful to Ja'far Sharaf al-Din's generosity and hospitality, and who did not hesitate to spare any time when I needed him. His contribution was of major significance as it shed light on some aspects of Shi'ite history particularly what evolved around his father's life; Sayyid 'Abd

al-Husain Sharaf al-Din. I am also grateful to Husain Sharaf al-Din whose contribution was also vital.

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Abstract

Political Awareness of the Shi'ites in Lebanon:

The Role of Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din and Sayyid Musa al-Sadr

By: Hussein Gharbieh

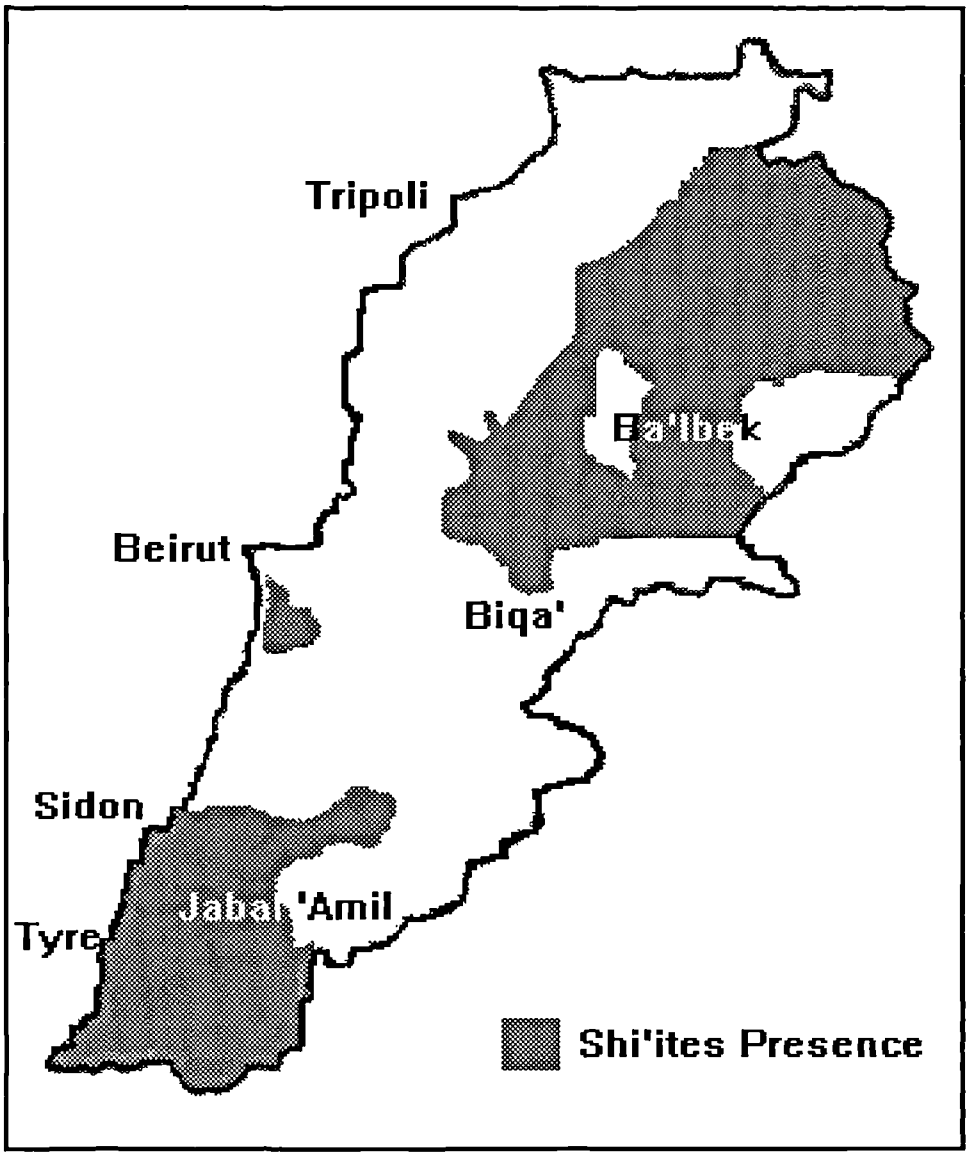
There has been little serious academic study for the Shi'ite community in Lebanon. Most research on the Lebanese Shi'ites dates only from the late 1970s, stimulated by three events of major significance to the community: the disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr in 1978, the Iranian revolution in 1979, and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. However, none of the research conducted so far deals with the development of the community over time, and thus lacks a crucial depth of understanding of its historical and contemporary status. The first objective of this thesis is to provide a much-needed historical framework. Study of the social and economic status of the Shi'ite community under Ottoman rule and the French Mandate assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the community and how it developed vis-à-vis the other major communities in Lebanon.

However, social and economic factors alone are insufficient to explain the reasons for the Shi'ite revival of the later twentieth century. The principal objective of this thesis is to show how socio-economic factors have influenced the modern development of the community, and in particular how these have been utilized to the community's benefit.

This utilization began in the early twentieth century by the Shi'ite *'ulama*, above all by Sayyid 'abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din (d.1957), the most learned 'alim in Jabal 'Amil. His efforts to maintain a Shi'ite leadership for the community were of immense importance, particularly at the height of the power struggle for the leadership between two well-established and reputable families, the Shi'ite family of al-As'ad and the Sunni family of al-Sulh, both from Jabal 'Amil. It was Sharaf al-Din's priority to secure a Shi'ite leadership by supporting al-As'ad and to strengthen the community by launching a series of welfare organisations through which to raise socio-economic levels. His most important achievement was the establishment of the modern school of *al-Ja'fariyya* in Tyre. This school played a major role in the 1958 revolution, and constituted a nucleus for the resistance movement against President Chamoun.

After Sharaf al-Din's death, his successor Sayyid Musa al-Sadr continued the process of establishing charity organisations. He also established more wide-ranging, political institutions which came to play a major role in reforming the community, including the Shi'ite Council, *Harakat al-Mahrumin*, and *Afwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnaniyya* (*Amal*). Through these he brought the Shi'ite community onto an equal political footing with the other major Lebanese communities. After his disappearance in 1978, al-Sadr's successors capitalized on these institutions and became key players in Lebanese politics today.

Map 1: Shi'ites concentration in Lebanon today.



This map has been adapted from Majed Halawi, ***A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community,*** Westview Press, Oxford, 1992.

Introduction

The Shi'ites of Lebanon are today a forceful partner in administration of the country, in contrast to their position upon independence in 1943, when they were neglected and marginalized. The process of transformation, from being marginal to essential partner, has been poorly researched. Most writing about Lebanon has concentrated on the role of the two sects which dominated its politics since 1943, the Maronites and the Sunnis. Little attention has been paid to developments inside the Shi'ite community. As a result, there is much confusion about the reasons behind their present revival.

Those few studies which did discuss the Shi'ites of Lebanon were concerned mainly with the development of the community only from the late 1960s onwards. The majority of research has been conducted since the beginning of the 1980s mainly as a result of the Iranian revolution's influence. Some academics, for example Deeb, referred to the revivalism of the Shi'ite community in Lebanon as being dependant largely upon external factors; that is the Islamic revolution in Iran, the attitudes of President Asad of Syria and finally the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.[1] Deeb also adds another factor, that is the disappearance of Imam Musa al-Sadr in 1978, which became a major rallying point for the community.[2] Ajami on the other hand, despite his research on Musa al-Sadr,[3] *and* his

[1] Marius Deeb, ***Militant Islamic Movement in Lebanon: Origins, Social Basis, and Ideologies***, Georgetown University, 1986, p. 3.

[2] Deeb, 'Shi'a Movements in Lebanon: their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis, and Links with Iran and Syria', ***Third World Quarterly***, Vol. 10, no. 2, 1988, p. 685.

[3] Fuad 'Ajami, ***The Vanished Imam***, I.B. Tauris, London, 1986.

acknowledging the socio-economic changes within the community, attributes Shi'ite resurgence to the Israeli invasion in 1982.[1] More encouragingly and in a more detailed work, Norton[2] and Cobban[3] looked at the background reasons affecting the Shi'ite community, and then lead us to the role of Musa al al-Sadr's movement, ***Amal***, analysing its role ***vis-à-vis*** the key events in 1978 and 1979. In contrast to Deeb, both Norton and Cobban reject the claim that Shi'ite revivalism was due to external factors but relate it rather to indigenous factors.

My attempt here is to show that the real cause of Shi'ite revivalism goes further back to the late nineteenth century. The formation of the Mutasarrifiyya in 1861 and the establishment of the Ottoman Parliament in 1876 were two major factors which forced the Shi'ites to interact with other communities, thus signalling the beginning of a political and social revivalism that led to the position they occupy today.

The socio-economic factors which affected the Ottoman Empire generally are important to consider because they also affected various communities in Lebanon. However, this would not be sufficient without knowing how these effects were capitalised upon by these communities. The economic weakness of the Ottoman empire ***vis-à-vis*** Europe prevented her from abolishing the old system of trade 'Capitulation', which gave European powers

[1] 'Ajami, 'Lebanon and its inheritors,' ***Foreign Affairs***, Vol. 63, no. 4-5, 1985, p. 778.

[2] Augustus R. Norton, ***AMAL and the Shi'a: Struggle for the Soul of Lebanon***, University of Texas Press, 1987, pp. 13-37.

[3] Helena Cobban, 'The Growth of Shi'i Power in Lebanon and its Implications for the Future', in J. Cole and N. Keddie, (ed.), ***Shi'ism and Social Protest***, Yale University Press, New haven, 1986, pp. 137-155.

considerable leverage for interfering in Ottoman internal affairs. This interference was conducted through participation in the affairs of local communities, such as Christians and Druzes. In Lebanon for instance, French ties with the Maronites were strong enough to enable the latter to push, whenever possible, towards achieving their aspirations for independence. 1861 was a crucial year as the Maronites succeeded with European help to attain a distinguished position under the new administration of Mount Lebanon known as Mutasarrifiyya.

Promoting the economic ties of Mount Lebanon and later Beirut as a port with France created a strong economy for the Maronites and the Sunnis in particular. Political developments from the turn of the twentieth century to the beginning of World War I, caused the defeat of the Ottomans as well as later the failure of the Sharifians in achieving independence. These events were a direct cause for the dismantling of Arab territory under colonial powers. Subsequently, this gave the Maronites what they had dreamt of, that is, independence and the rule of Greater Lebanon.

Being occupants of relatively remote areas in the Biqa' and ***Jabal 'Amil***, known today as the south, the Shi'ites were hardly affected by the economic changes which were going on in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Thus, in contrast to the Sunnis and to the Maronites the Shi'ites failed to develop a modern class structure. Lack of external patronage was an added factor that contributed to their inferior position ***vis-à-vis*** the Maronites and the Sunnis. It was their incorporation into Greater Lebanon in 1920 by the French which

proved to be the catalyst signalling the beginning of change. The French continued to control Greater Lebanon under the mandate until 1943. The Maronites who had been the strongest group in the previous regime in Mount Lebanon remained the strongest local group in Greater Lebanon. The major threat to the new French-backed regime emanated from the Sunnis of the coast, who agitated to resume their previous links with the Syrian interior. The Shi'ites were not generally thought to constitute as strong a threat as the Sunnis.

The Shi'ite population is concentrated in three areas of present-day Lebanon: the south (***Jabal 'Amil***), the Biqa' on the eastern part of Lebanon, and the capital Beirut. The Shi'ites in ***Jabal 'Amil*** were settled and dominated by a handful of ***zu'ama***. However, their power was balanced to a small degree by that of the local Shi'ite ***'ulama***. The Shi'ite ***'ulama*** played an important role in the life of Jabal 'Amil throughout the centuries. They retained and transmitted religious beliefs and they kept the community in touch with Shi'ites in different parts of the world. Jabal 'Amil has had many important religious teachers whose fame spread throughout the Shi'ite world. Their importance was evident in converting Persia in the early sixteenth century into Shi'ism. The Shi'ites of the Biqa' were different from the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil. The former were tribal people, living under the same kind of honour code that regulated the life of semi-nomads throughout the great deserts of the Syrian interior. Lastly, in Beirut, the Shi'ite community was very small but began to develop in greater numbers from the 1960s onwards. The main reason for this was the constant migration from Jabal 'Amil and the Biqa'. The differences

between the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil, Beirut and the Biqa' did not help them to develop as a community.

In this thesis my main concern will be to discuss the essential role that the *'ulama* played in the improvement of the Shi'ites' status, with especial reference to Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din and Sayyid Musa al-Sadr. The former's activities began in the early twentieth century; his main sphere of action was in Jabal 'Amil. The latter's activities began in the 1960s. His sphere of action exceeded Jabal 'Amil to include the whole of Lebanon. Despite various other factors which also contributed to the development of the Shi'ite community, it was principally these two individuals who utilised the means available to them to improve Shi'ites status in Lebanon.

Primarily, my main focus will be Jabal 'Amil[1] for several reasons. It was a settled society with a steady form of social structure represented by relationships between *zu'ama*, peasants and *'ulama*. The geographical position of Jabal 'Amil forced the Shi'ites to become an essential part of the conflict which was going on between the various *wulat*, governors, and *amirs*, local princes, under the Ottomans. Lastly, Jabal 'Amil was distinguished by possessing a number of prominent *'ulama* who played an important part in Shi'ite teaching throughout the Shi'ite world.

[1] The borders of Jabal 'Amil, according to the Shi'ites historians, are those south of Awwali River as far as the borders with Palestine. On the West is the coastal strip which includes Sidon and Tyre. On the east is Wadi al-Tim and east Biqa'. Muhammad Taqi Faqih, ***Jabal 'Amil fil-Tarikh***, Dar al-Adwa', Beirut, 1986, pp. 15-16. Muhsin al-Amin, ***Khitata Jabal 'Amil***, al-Dar al-'Alamiyya, Lebanon, 1983, pp. 61-67. Muhammad Jabir Al-Safa, ***Tarikh Jabal 'Amil***, al-Nahar, Beirut, 1981, p. 24.

As the thesis progresses, from 1960 onward, the focus will not remain on Jabal 'Amil but will include Beirut and the Biqa'. The reason for this is that al-Sadr began to establish a number of institutions with objectives broader than just the interests of Jabal 'Amil.

Chapter One will focus on the social structure of the Shi'ite community, and how it was affected by Ottoman administrative policy. It discusses three main issues. Firstly, it discusses the origin of Shi'ism and its domination in Lebanon in general and Mount Lebanon in particular, and how this domination declined. Secondly, it will discuss the Ottoman taxation system and the development and expansion of private control over land which had once been largely state-owned. This development had serious consequences on the social structure within the various communities, and produced a number of dominant families. Thirdly, the chapter will discuss the Ottoman administrative distribution of various ***wilaya***s which had immense effect on interaction between the various communities, in order to show how the Shi'ites fit into such administration.

Chapter Two will focus on two main issues. On the one hand, it will discuss economic development in the early nineteenth century, in order to show how the Shi'ites came to hold an inferior position ***vis-à-vis*** other major communities in Mount Lebanon and Beirut. On the other hand, this chapter will discuss the major Shi'ite political responses towards various nationalist ideas that emerged in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth

century, in order to know how these responses affected their position when Greater Lebanon was established.

In practice it was the Egyptian occupation in 1832 and the French support for Mount Lebanon and Beirut in the mid-nineteenth century which set the foundations for the social and economic strengths of the population of these two areas, and as a result a middle class was developed which was to play a major role in the social challenge that took place, particularly, in Mount Lebanon. This development did not reach Jabal 'Amil, which therefore, did not develop a middle class. The Shi'ites thus, remained under strict control of the ***zu'ama***.

Chapter Three will discuss how the roots of change among the Shi'ites began to develop toward creating a Shi'ite identity in the Lebanese context which has its own interest distinguished from other communities. The main feature of Jabal 'Amil in 1900 was an intense power struggle between the coastal cities of Sidon and Tyre on one side, and the interior on the other. Although Jabal 'Amil was a Shi'ite dominated district, the power struggle was primarily between the Shi'ite family of al-As'ad, dominant for almost 400 years ***vis-à-vis*** the Sunni family of al-Sulh. The former's power base extended all over Jabal 'Amil except Sidon. The al-Sulhi power base was also deep rooted in Sidon and enjoyed Ottoman support. The al-Sulh family was also famous for its activities in the Arab movements of Syria which attracted many Shi'ite ***'ulama*** and intellectuals,

especially from Sidon and Nabatiyya. This division was to polarise Jabal 'Amil into two groups: the As'adis, and the Sulhis. This power struggle set the motion for change.

However, it was not feasible for such change to occur without the presence of someone determined enough to bring it about. This duty manifested itself through the *'ulama* of the community, most of whose attempts were unsuccessful, with the notable exception of one individual, Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din. He achieved his prominent position in the community through his reputation as a widely respected *'alim* whose books were taught in prominent Shi'ite schools such as Najaf in Iraq and Qum in Iran. His awareness of the need to create a sense of communal identity started in the first decade of the twentieth century in particular, when the Ottoman call for elections to parliament in 1908 triggered the power struggle between al-As'ad and al-Sulh.

Having a Sunni as a potential leader in Jabal 'Amil was a notion totally rejected by Sayyid Sharaf al-Din. For him it was inconceivable to hand over the community's leadership to a Sunni. Therefore he supported al-As'ad. This support was a matter of principle rather than a matter of choice. At this stage, preserving a Shi'ite leadership for the community was his main objective.

Chapter Four will discuss Sharaf al-Din's main objective which was to preserve an al-As'ad leadership for the Shi'ites. He was also aware of the need to promote modern education, as an essential means of bringing the community into a parallel position with

other communities. He worked relentlessly to achieve this objective. His school, *al-Ja'fariyya*, became a nucleus for political activity in Tyre in particular and Jabal 'Amil as a whole, and played a major role in the 1950s' crisis in Lebanon. However, this political awareness was not to be utilised to advance Shi'ite interests *vis-à-vis* other communities, but rather to advance wider issues, such as the Arab cause generally. The reason for this was spread of revolutionary ideologies among the Shi'ites. As a result, despite this new political awareness, the Shi'ites did not pursue their own interests as strongly as did the other major communities and therefore, remained in an inferior position in Lebanon.

Chapter Five will discuss al-Sadr's arrival in Lebanon and how he managed to consolidate his position and overcome the opposition he faced. al-Sadr's first few years, despite the fact they were extremely tense because of this opposition, set the pace for change within the Shi'ite community. The position which he came to occupy, that is, imam of Tyre following the death of Sharaf al-Din, was a major advantage which he used to assert his position in the country in order to undertake certain social reforms. Becoming the successor of Sharaf al-Din, provided al-Sadr with the motivation to improve his own position, and to work towards becoming spiritual leader of the Shi'ites.

Chapter Six will discuss the essential steps taken by al-Sadr in order to create an official Shi'ite identity. Although he began by establishing a series of benevolent organisations, it was clear to him that the Shi'ite community would not be equal to others unless a Shi'ite

council was established similar to the Sunnis and Druzes. By 1967, the Shi'ite community was the last to establish its own council of which al-Sadr was the focal point and dynamic force.

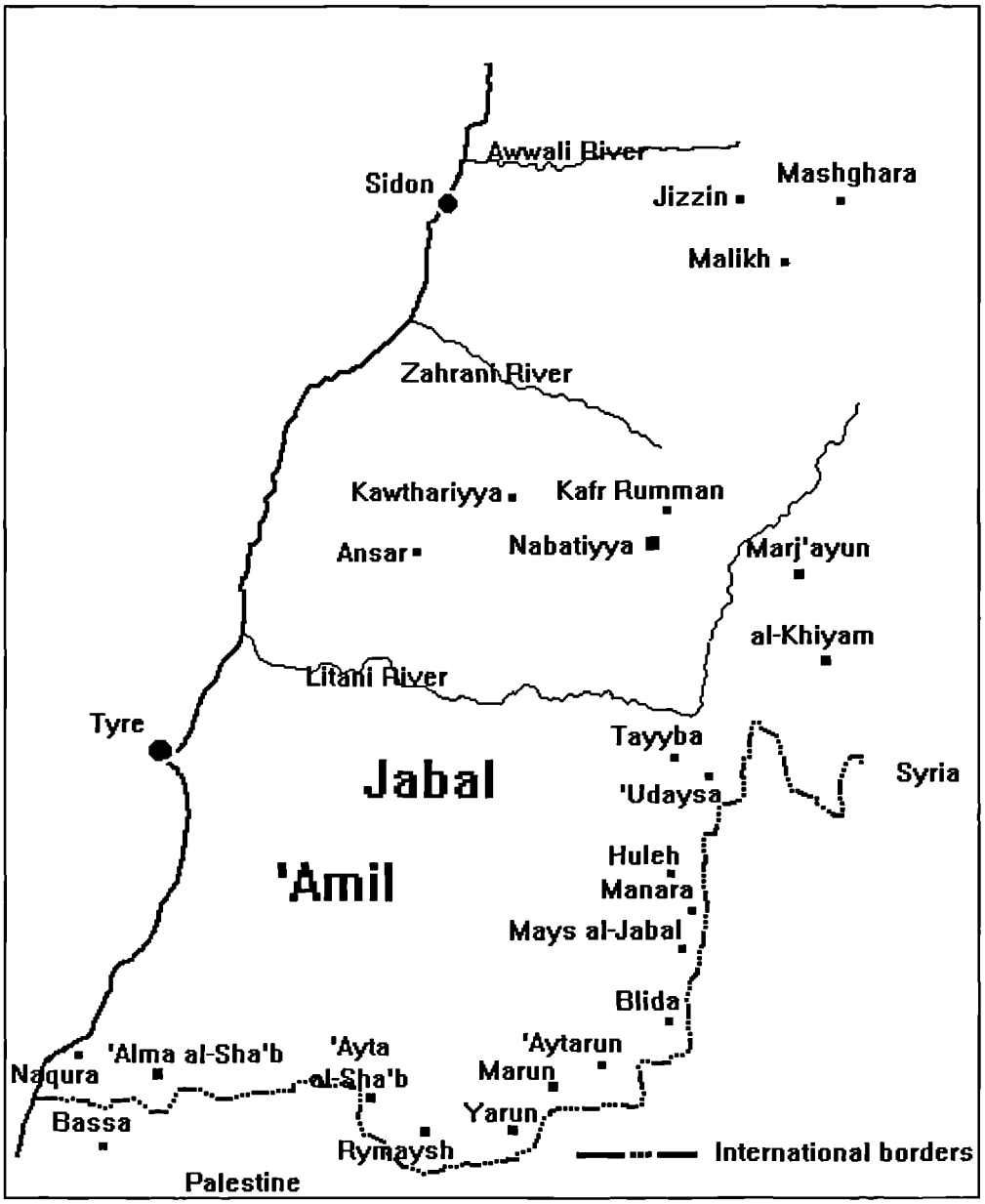
However, as a by-product of this development al-Sadr, unlike his predecessor, became part of the power struggle against the main Shi'ite *za'im* Kamil, the head of al-As'ad family. For al-Sadr, having a Shi'ite council meant that the affairs of the community were no longer dominated by a handful of *zu'ama*. The reason for this power struggle could also be attributed to the socio-economic modernisation that was affecting Lebanon as a whole and the Shi'ites in particular. This process of modernisation caused migration from villages to cities, and destabilised the relationship between the *zu'ama* and the peasants. These changes provided the opportunity for al-Sadr to strengthen his authority within the Shi'ite community. Having established a Shi'ite council, he began establishing a Lebanese reform movement, ***Harakat al-Mahrumin***, aiming at improving social and political life in society. Finally, he established a resistance movement called ***Amal*** to defend the south against Israel particularly when the government neglected this part of the state's responsibility. In the 1980s and 1990s ***Amal*** became a major partner in running Lebanon.

Chapter Seven will discuss al-Sadr's political involvement in Lebanese politics and his attitude towards various parties. The background reasons for his co-operation and conflict with the Palestinians, the progressive parties, the government, the Syrians, the

Shi'ite *zu'ama* and the Shi'ite *'ulama* will be examined. This is in order to find out whether he was committed to preserving the integrity of Lebanon and the interest of the Shi'ite community.

Finally, the conclusion will show the essential influence that the *'ulama*, mainly Sharaf al-Din and al-Sadr, have had on the life of their followers and consider whether the development that the Shi'ites experienced would have happened without their activities. The *'ulama*'s activities were affected by the social, political and economic circumstances which dominated the Lebanon. As will be shown, these circumstances dictated the way that the *'ulama* acted in society. Certainly, Sharaf al-Din and al-Sadr's activities were essential in the life of the Lebanese community, which without the Shi'ites would have remained fragmented and under the control of their *zu'ama* well into 1990s.

Map 2: Main towns and villages in Jabal 'Amil mentioned in chapter one, along with the main villages bordering Palestine and Syria.



This map has been modified from Moojan Momen, ***An Introduction to Shi'i Islam***, Yale University press, 1985, p. 271.

The Ottoman Administrative System and the Autonomy of Jabal 'Amil

In general, for much of the period between the sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the manner in which the Ottomans administered their provinces gave local communities a certain measure of autonomy with which to run their own affairs, as long as they recognised Ottoman rule and paid the required taxes. Development of the taxation system eventually transferred control over land from state to private thus providing certain families with strong power bases which allowed them to control the affairs of their communities.

This chapter is going to discuss three central issues: firstly, the origins of Shi'ism and its domination in Lebanon in general and Mount Lebanon in particular, and how this domination declined; secondly, the development of control over land and its effect upon the autonomy of the local Lebanese communities; thirdly, in view of the two previous issues, the Shi'ite relations with Mount Lebanon and the Ottoman *pasha*s will be discussed in order to find whether the Shi'ites managed to achieve their autonomy.

1. The Origins of the Shi'ites in Lebanon

The Shi'ites of Lebanon are almost all ***Ithna Ashari***, Twelvers, and are believed to be among the oldest of all Shi'ite communities. One of the earliest Shi'ites was Abu-Dharr al-Ghafari, a companion of the Prophet, and who was one of the first supporters of the claims of ***Imam*** 'Ali to be the Prophet's successor;[1] Jabal 'Amil was where he recruited support for the ***Imamate*** after the Prophet's death. There are two mosques bearing his name in Sarafand and Mays al-Jabal, although it is doubtful whether Abu-Dharr built them himself.[2]

Shi'ism was particularly dominant in the Muslim world in the 10th Century, at a time when the Shi'ite Buwayhids were ruling in Iraq and Persia, the Hamdanids in Syria, and the Fatimids (who were Isma'ilis) in North Africa, Egypt and Syria.[3] However, the downfall of the Fatimids and the conquest of Syria by Salah al-Din in the eleventh century began to change things radically. Subsequently, the military expeditions launched by the Mamluks between 1291 and 1305 expelled the Shi'ites from many areas in Lebanon. Initially, the Shi'ites of the coast were replaced by Sunnis[4] because the coastal cities constituted vital trade centres for the Mamluk and it was important to clear threats of pressure from any potentially hostile

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[1] Muhammad K. Makki, ***al-Haraka al-Fikriyya wa al-Adabiyya fi Jabal 'Amil***, Dar al-Andalus, Beirut, 1963, pp. 16-17. Albert Hourani, 'From Jabal 'Amil to Persia', ***Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies***, 1986, p.133. Moojan Momen, ***An Introduction to Shi'i Islam***, Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 264-272.

[2] al-Amin, ***Khitat*** ..., p. 84. Moojan, op.cit., pp. 264-272.

[3] al-Amin, ***Khitat*** ..., pp. 85-91. Hourani, ***From Jabal*** ..., p. 133. Muhammad H. al-Muzaffar, ***Tarikh al-Shi'a***, al-Zahra Press, Beirut, 1979, pp. 139-192. M. H. Tabatabai, ***al-Shi'a Fil-Islam***, al-Ta'ruf Press, Beirut, pp. 66-73.

[4] Kamal Salibi, ***Modern History of Lebanon,*** Weidenfeild & Nicolson, London, 1965, p. 4. Iliya Harik, 'The Ethnic Revolution and Political Integration in the Middle East', ***International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies***, Vol. 3, 1972, p. 313. Omar A. Tadmuri, ***Tarikh Tarablus al-Siyasi w'al-hadari 'Abr al-'Usur,*** Vol. 1, Dar al-Bilad, Tripoli, 1978, p. 176.

elements. Having established this, they turned to the mountains overlooking the coastal highway in order to secure the various trade routes. Three separate Mamluk expeditions were sent to subdue the Shi'ites in Kisrawan, the last of which was successful. Subsequently, "the Mamluks brought Turkoman clans and settled them in the lower parts of Kisrawan to keep watch over the region and the coastal highway, and also to secure the mountain roads leading inland to Damascus."[1] These expeditions forced the Shi'ites to resort to ***taqiyya,***[2] and accordingly they declared themselves to be Shafi'i Sunnis in order to escape annihilation.[3]

After Ottoman rule was established in 1516, Shi'ite decline in Mount Lebanon continued unabated, as land and authority was lost to the expanding Maronite and Druze presence. The Maronites pushed south from the north and settled in Kisrawan driving out the Shi'ites completely from the region, so that by the end of the seventeenth century they sought employment as agricultural workers among the Druze in al-Shuf as well as settling in villages alongside them.[4]

The period of Druze dominance began in about 1585 when the Ottomans appointed Fakhr al-Din Ma'n II (1585-1633) to administer the two ***sanjak***s of Beirut and Sidon on their behalf, leaving it to him to establish control of the coastal and mountain territories involved.

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[1] Salibi, ***A House of Many Mansions***, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988, pp. 3-14.

[2] Taqiyya is an Islamic concept but only recognised by Shi'ites-whom allows Muslim to conceal their true belief and declare another so as to avoid oppression.

[3] Majed Halawi, ***A Lebanon Defied: Musa al-Sadr and the Shi'a Community***, Westview Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 31.

[4] William Polk, ***The Opening of South Lebanon 1788-1840***, Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 81.

By 1605, this Druze leader, whose official title was ***Sanjak Beyi***, or ***Amir Liwa***, came to control the whole territory of these two ***sanjak***s, which included Jabal Kisrawan along with the different parts of Jabal al-Shuf. Due to the resumption of war between the Ottomans and the Safavids in the early seventeenth century, the Ottomans had also assigned to Fakhr al-Din the ***sanjak*** of Safad, which included the whole territory of Galilee and Jabal 'Amil along with the coastal towns of Tyre and Acre.[1]

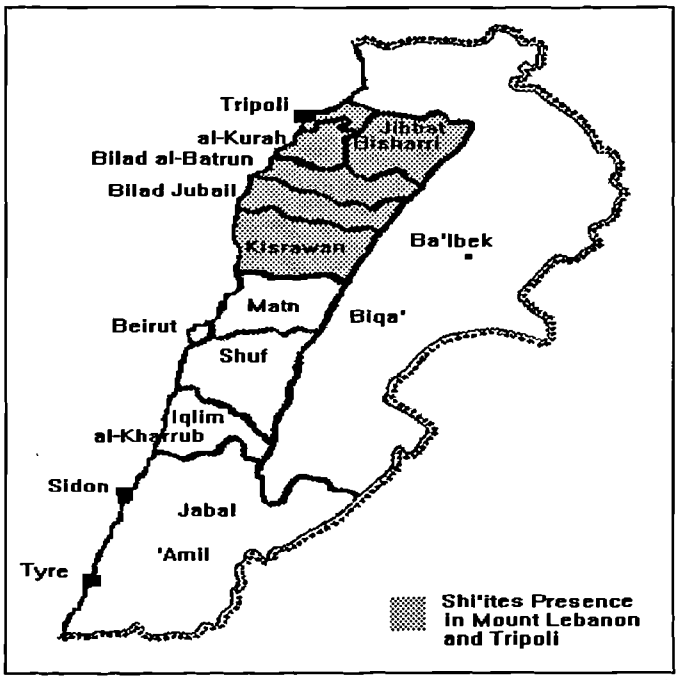
The Druze influence increased when an alliance between the Maronite and Druze communities was concluded in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. As a result, northern Lebanon was incorporated into the ***imarate*** of the Druze Fakhr al-Din of southern Lebanon, and thus the establishment of the ***imarate*** of Mount Lebanon in 1627.[2]

Despite these development in Mount Lebanon, the Shi'ites in the north did make a comeback to Mount Lebanon under the leadership of the Hamadeh shaikhs from the Ba'lbek region. Since the mid-seventeenth century the Maronite districts of Bisharri, Batrun, and Jubayl, as well as the Melchite district of the Kura had fallen under the control of the Hamadeh shaikhs who had held these Christian districts under licence from the Ottoman Pashas of Tripoli. However, they enjoyed this renewed influence only for a brief period. In the Kisrawan, Maronite sheikhs of the Khazin family, backed by the Ma'ns, had succeeded in recovering a

[1] Salibi, ***A House*** ..., pp. 66, 126.
[2] Leila Meo, ***Lebanon Improbable Nation***, Indiana University Press, 1965, p.12.

considerable expanse of land from the Shi'ites who had resettled there since late Mamluk times.[1]

Map 3: Shi'ite presence in Tripoli and Mount Lebanon Before Mamluk and Ottoman rule.



This map has been drawn according to the information presented by: al-Amin, ***Khitat*** ... , pp. 85-91. Hourani, 'From Jabal ...., p. 133. al-Muzaffar, op.cit., pp. 139-192. Tabatabai, op.cit., pp. 66-73. Salibi, ***Modern History...,*** p. 4. Harik, 'The Ethnic Revolution ...., p. 313. Tadmuri, op.cit., p. 176. Polk, ***The Opening*** ...., 1963, p. 81.

The Shi'ites decline continued when the Shihab family tookover the ***imarate*** in 1697. The Maronites in Jibbat Bisharri rose up in arms against their Shi'ite lords in the middle of the eighteenth century and proceeded to join the feudal system of southern Lebanon headed by the Shihab dynasty, which by 1764 had united Mount Lebanon under their authority.[2] By the mid nineteenth century the Shi'ites had become the second smallest community within Mount

[1] Salibi, ***Modern*** ..., p.4. Hourani, 'Lebanon: the Development of a Political Society', in Leonard Binder, (ed.), ***Politics in Lebanon***, John Wiley, London, 1966, p. 19.

[2] Harik, 'The Ethnic Revolution ... pp. 313-314.

Lebanon. The aggregate population of Mount Lebanon, excluding the Sunnis,[1] was 213,070 out of whom 95,350 were Maronites, 41,090 Greek Catholics, 35,600 Druzes, 28,500 Greek orthodox, 12,330 ***Matawilah*** (Shi'ites) and some 200 Jews.[2]

As a result of Maronite-Druze expansion in Mount Lebanon, the Shi'ites became concentrated only in the Biqa' and Jabal 'Amil on the East and the south of Mount Lebanon consecutively. Being confined in these two areas, the fortunes of the Biqa' became more closely involved with those of the Syrian interior. As for Jabal 'Amil, its geographical position between Mount Lebanon and North Palestine put the area in the heart of the conflict which was going on between the various Ottoman ***wulat*** and governors of ***sanjak***s mainly Mount Lebanon.

Our concern here will be Jabal 'Amil as the Shi'ites there interacted much more with neighbouring areas than did the Shi'ites of the Biqa'. This increased interaction came about due to changes in the Ottoman taxation system which gradually transferred control over land from public to private. This interaction began when Jabal 'Amil, which was a ***nahiya*** in the ***Sanjak*** of Safad, was put under the authority of the ***amir*** of the Mountain, Fakhr al-Din, to administer. As the ***amir*** was responsible for tax-collecting, conflict with the Shi'ites arose when they refused to pay taxes in time of crisis.

[1] The Sunnis were not considered part of the minorities.
[2] Philip Hitti, ***Lebanon in History***, Macmillan, London, 1967, p.435.

2. The Ottoman Taxation System and the development of land control

The Ottoman taxation system greatly affected the relationships between the communities of Mount Lebanon and the neighbouring areas, causing extensive social change and the development of a new landlord class.[1] Due to the militant character of the early Ottoman state, cultivated lands in newly-conquered areas were always declared state property and their revenues assigned in the way most efficient to support the military-administrative organisation of the state. However, the archetypal Ottoman timar system was not introduced into Lebanon. Instead the Ottomans attempted from the first to impose state control through use of short-term tax-collecting contracts (***muqata'a***) held by local Lebanese notables. By the end of the sixteenth century such contracts had begun to develop into longer-term appointments in the hands of a few increasingly prominent local families, leading eventually to the rise of influential muqata'ji notables.[2] Until the late eighteenth century, Ottoman control in Lebanon was exercised largely through this system, and resulted in a relatively large degree of autonomy.

2.1 Development of control over land since the eighteenth century

The Ottoman empire passed through a serious crises during the period 1768-1839 which prompted the empire to initiate major reforms (the so-called ***tanzimat***) promulgated by a firman in 1839. From 1847-1858, the extension of hereditary rights on ***miri*** lands allowed

[1] Wajih Kawtharani, ***al-Ittijahat al-Ijtima'iyya wa al- Siyasiyya fi Jabal Lubnan wa al-Mashriq al-'Arabi***, Bahsun Press, Beirut, 1986, p.13.

[2] H. Inalcik, & D. Quataert, (eds.), ***An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914***, Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 55, 139-40, 170-71.

certain families to consolidate and extend their control over large areas and population. These developments were more evident in the case of Mount Lebanon than elsewhere. Due to the Ottoman taxation system the two major communities in Mount Lebanon, the Druzes and the Maronites, enjoyed considerable freedom in the running of their own affairs under the leadership of the Ma'ns (1516-1697) and the Shihabs (1697-1842). Moreover, sometimes the *amir*s, because they were intermediaries, were given authority which far exceeded Mount Lebanon. In return the Ma'ns and the Shihabs made sure that the Ottoman treasury received the taxes for the areas under their control. However, it was also the case that the autonomy of Mount Lebanon fluctuated according to the strength of the Ottoman central government at any given time. The autonomy of Mount Lebanon has been thoroughly documented,[1] but what is known about the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil is minimal.

3. Shi'ite relations with Mount Lebanon and the Ottoman Pashas

As shown above, *iqta* in Mount Lebanon developed due to Ottoman administration. *Iqta* denotes:

> a system of socio-economic and political organisation composed of *muqata'a*s in which political authority was distributed among quasi-independent feudal families (*muqata'ji*s). Now unlike other areas, the *muqata'a*s in Lebanon were not organised as military fiefs, in the sense that

[1] Yusuf Choueiri, 'Ottoman Reform and Lebanese Patriotism', in N. Shehadi, (ed.), ***Lebanon***, I.B. Tauris, London, 1988. Mas'ud Dahir, ***al-Intifadat al-Lubnaniyya did al-Nizam al-Muqata'ji***, Dar al-Farabi, Beirut, 1988. Dahir, ***al-Juzur al-Ta'ifiyya Lil Masa'la al-Lubnaniyya 1697-1860***, Beirut, 1981. Dahir, ***Tarikh Lubnan al-Ijtima'i 1914-1926***, Dar al-Farabi, Beirut, 1974. Leila Fawaz, ***Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth Century Beirut***, Harvard University Press, 1983. Carolyne Gates, ***The Historical Role in the Development of Political Economy in Lebanon,*** Center for Lebanese Studies, No. 10,1989. Yusuf Hakim, ***Beirut wa Lubnan fi 'Ahd al-Othman***, al-Nahar, Beirut, 1980. Harik, ***Politics and Change in a Tradition Society: Lebanon, 1711-1845,*** Princeton University Press, 1968. Kawtharani, ***al-Ittijahat*** ... . Samir Khalaf, ***Lebanon's Predicament***, Culombia University Press, New York, 1987. Meo, op.cit., Polk, ***The Opening*** .... Salibi, ***Modern*** .... Salibi, ***A House*** .... John Spagnolo, ***France & Ottoman Lebanon 1861-1914***, London, 1977.

> the fief holders were not expected to perform military duties in return for the mulatto's allotted to them. The ***muqata'ji***s of Mount Lebanon lived on rural estates and not in garrison towns. [1]

The various ***muqata'ji***s of Mount Lebanon were subservient to the ***amir*** or ***hakim*** who occupied an office that was naturally vested in a particular family. The ***amir*** received his yearly investiture through one of the sultan's representatives, the ***pasha***s of either Sidon, Tripoli, or Damascus under whose administration Lebanon and its dependencies were divided. Through the ***pasha***s, the ***amir*** also forwarded his annual tribute, ***miri***, to the Ottoman treasury. In effect, however, neither the sultans nor most of the ***pasha***s until the time of Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar of Sidon (1776-1804) meddled very much in the internal affairs of Mount Lebanon, with the result that the ***amir***s of Mount Lebanon enjoyed considerable autonomy in exercising their authority. They had the double task of dealing with the demands of the Ottoman ***pasha***s and acting as arbitrator between the ***muqata'ji***s in cases of internal conflict.

> The specific duties of collecting taxes, maintaining peace and order, extracting a limited annual amount of unpaid labour from the peasant, and exercising judicial authority of first instance over local, civil, and criminal cases involving penalties short of death were all part of the traditional authority of the ***muqata'ji***s.[2]

The importance of each ***amir*** varied according to the size of the territories he commanded and for whose taxes he was responsible. At various times the ***amir***s extended their influence over more territory and reached as far north as the hinterland of Syria and Palestine and even

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[1] Khalaf, ***Lebanon's*** ..., p. 25.

[2] Ibid., p. 24. E. Hagopian & S. Farsoun, (ed.) ***South Lebanon***, special report No. 2, AAAUG, August, 1978, p. 12. Polk, op.cit., p. 10. Dahir, ***al-Intifadat*** ... pp. 32-34.

towards the borders of Damascus.[1] It was therefore the size of the tax farm which counted.[2] However, the influence that the Ma'ns and later the Shihabs enjoyed put them in direct conflict with the neighbouring ***nahiya*** of Jabal 'Amil. The Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil therefore had to deal with them directly. Being of different religions and because the memory of the Mamluk and the Ottoman expedition against the Shi'ites was still vivid, tension between the Mountain and Jabal 'Amil developed.

In view of the development of the taxation system, two issues will be examined. First is Ottoman attitudes towards the Shi'ites and their effect on the interaction between the Shi'ite, Druze and Maronite communities on the one hand and with the Ottoman ***pasha***s on the other. Because of these interactions a Shi'ite leader was needed to protect the interests of Jabal 'Amil. The powerful Shi'ite family of 'Ali al-Saghir assumed this role from 1649[3] onwards but its influence had diminished by the mid twentieth century. The second point for examination is how the Shi'ite autonomy was established.

3.1 Ottoman attitudes towards the Shi'ites and their effects on inter-communal conflict

The role of the Shi'ites in inter-communal conflicts in Lebanon has been generally overlooked by historians,[4] and whenever Shi'ites are mentioned it tends to be not for their own sake but in

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[1] Kawtharani, op.cit, p.14. Spagnolo, ***France & Ottoman*** ..., pp. 10-13. Basim al-Jisr, ***Mithaq 1943***, Dar al-Nahar, Beirut, 1978. p.121.

[2] Kawtharani, op.cit, p. 17.

[3] al-Faqih, op.cit., p. 370.

[4] Some of these studies are: Dahir, ***al-Intifadat*** ... . Salibi, ***Modern*** .... Meo, op.cit. Polk, ***The Opening*** .... Salibi, ***A House*** .... Spagnolo, ***France & Ottoman***....

a wider context in order to complete, for instance, study of a Druze-Maronite relationship in Mount Lebanon. These historians and their studies often refer to battles between the Ma'n and the Shihab Amirs of the Mountain and the Shi'ite leaders of Jabal 'Amil and the Biqa in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It is important to understand the attitudes of the Ottomans towards the Shi'ites, so as to establish how it affected the latter's relationships with other communities. There were two major factors which formed the basis of the Ottoman-Shi'ite relationship which subsequently contributed to the deterioration in relations between them. The first factor was external and related to the war between the Ottomans and Safavids, while the other was due to the Ottomans' perception of non-Sunni Muslim sects in general.

Because of Ottoman-Safavid conflict, early sixteenth to eighteenth century, the Ottomans were automatically suspicious of the loyalty of any Shi'ite community within their territories. In addition, Iran's invitation to a number of 'ulama from Jabal 'Amil was an added factor in Ottoman attitudes to Lebanese Shi'ites.

The accession of Shah Abbas I (d.1629) to the Iranian throne in 1587 renewed the Safavid threat to Ottoman territories.[1] Salibi relates antagonism towards the Shi'ites to some co-operation between the Safavids and the Shi'ites of Lebanon, but he does not mention the nature of this co-operation and what assistance the Shi'ites of Lebanon received and how

[1] Salibi., *A House* ..., p.126.

effective it was. He claims that the Safavids could use local Shi'ite political leverage against the Ottomans not only in Jabal 'Amil but also in the Ba'lbek region. He says:

> There, it seem, they had long been associated with the house of Harfush, to whom the Ottomans normally entrusted the management of the Nahiya of Ba'lbek. With the resurgence of Safavid power in Persia, the Harfush Amirs began to seek an extension of their power to the strategic town of Mashghara in the southern Biqa valley in order to secure contact with their fellow Shi'ites within Jabal Amil.[1]

In fact, as far as Jabal 'Amil was concerned it does not seem that there was any diplomatic co-operation with the Safavids. On the contrary, Shi'ites' opposition to the Ottomans was locally motivated, as shall be explained later.

Due to the Ottoman-Safavid conflict it was important that the former protect their trade routes from any possible Shi'ite threat. In order to do so, the Ottomans chose Fakhr al-Din II who was appointed in 1585 ***Amir Liwa***, governor, of the ***Sanjak*** of Sidon within the ***wilayat*** of Damascus. Fakhr al-Din's authority stretched over the ***sanjak*** of Beirut, Sidon and Safad. As a result, this gave him direct control over the Shi'ites of Jabal Amil which was a ***nahiya*** of Safad.[2] Relations between the Druzes and the Shi'ites began to deteriorate during Fakhr al-Din's ***imarate***.

Shaikh Ahmad Rida describes the situation of the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil under the rule of the Ma'ns:

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[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.

> The rule of Bani Ma'n squeezed all of the resources from Jabal 'Amil. Prince Fakhr al-Din occupied the area surrounding Kawthariyya, which is the centre of the 'Ali al-Saghir family. His soldiers killed and plundered there for three days. Then they attacked the surrounding villages ... The Mutwalis were suffering ... In 1638, Milhim ibn Ma'n entered Ansar, looking for his opponent Prince 'Alam al-Din. 1,500 Mutwali were killed in the attack ... This situation made the Mutwali aware of the importance of independence, and during the rule of Prince Ahmad al-Ma'n, they announced their independence from Lebanon. The prince opposed this move and in 1665, attacked Nabatiyya ... The fire was kindled between the Ma'ns and the Matawila leaders ... The people had reached such a high point of solidarity, that even a farmer shooting an animal brought a response.[1]

The Ottoman policy of granting such a wide authority to Fakhr al-Din who was a muqata'ji inevitably lead to conflict with other ***muqata'ji***s.

The expansion of the authority of the Amirs of Mount Lebanon was closely connected with the process of tax-collecting. Shi'ite leaders generally refused to pay taxes to the ***amir***s whenever possible. According to Dahir, this had the effect of making members of the community feel that they would be more secure if they remained grouped in their communities under the leadership of a strong leader, and would thus explain the ***muqata'ji***s' exploitation of the peasants.[2] On the other hand, Khalaf and Harik have both mentioned that political allegiance was by no means always based on religious or ethnic considerations and that political loyalty often cut across sectarian lines.[3] Certainly the statement by Khalaf and Harik was still very much applicable to the Maronite-Druze relationship before it was disrupted in 1840. On the other hand, Dahir's view is very much applicable to the Shi'ites in

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[1] Ahmad Rida, 'al-Mutwali al-Shi'i fi Jabal 'Amil', ***al-'Irfan,*** Vol. 2, June 1910, p. 15.
[2] Dahir, ***al-Juzur*** ..., p. 495. Muzaffar, op. cit., p. 155.
[3] Harik, ***Politics and Change....,*** p. 42. Khalaf, ***Lebanon*** ..., p. 29.

Jabal 'Amil, whose experience of Ottoman rule was very much alive in their minds as they were expelled from various areas in Mount Lebanon and were replaced by Maronites. In addition, other factors also forced the Shi'ites to rally behind a Shi'ite leader. Such factors were that Jabal 'Amil was predominantly a Shi'ite area with the exception of few Christian and Sunni villages, that the Shi'ites lacked an external patron to advocate their interest, and that the region is quite remote and the Shi'ites therefore lived in isolation from the other major communities. In such circumstances, it was the family of 'Ali al-Saghir that acted as protectors of the Shi'ites.

There was also an added external factor which further enhanced the cohesiveness of the Shi'ites, that is, the Ottoman ***millet*** system. This system allowed Christians and Jews to live in the Ottoman Muslim state under their own religious laws which covered personal and property matters, and administered by their own clergy.[1] However, non-Sunni Muslims in the Ottoman Empire were not granted a similar arrangement. The Shi'ites were considered heterodox by the Ottomans and this placed them under the direct jurisdiction of Sunni courts in personal status matters.[2] Even Shi'ite 'ulama were not speared from conscription in times of wars like the Sunni 'ulama.[3]

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[1] Hourani, ***A Vision of History: Near Eastern and other essays***, Khayats, Beirut, p.72-3. A. Hourani, ***Minorities in the Arab World***, Oxford University Press, 1947, p. 21.

[2] Meo, op.cit., p. 60. al-Amin, ***Khitat***... , pp. 135-6. Harik, ***Politics and Change***..., pp. 272-273. This was apparent in the 1840s when Mount Lebanon was divided into two ***qa'immaqamates***, one headed by a Maronite and the other by a Druze. In addition, in 1845 an elected council was established to assist the governor. Each council consisted of twelve members, two for each sect living in Mount Lebanon and each community was represented by a councillor and a judge, with the exception of the Shi'ites who were to elect a councillor only, while their judicial affairs were handled by the Sunni Muslim judge.

[3] al-Amin, ***Khitat*** ..., p. 126.

Due to this Ottoman treatment, the Shi'ites were suspicious of their policy. Being confined and isolated in Jabal 'Amil they were in no position to extend their authority outside their area but rather they were preoccupied with trying to protect themselves. Shi'ite reaction against this lack of recognition as a separate ***millet*** thus contributed to their increasing cohesiveness

Other non-Sunni Muslims such as the Druzes also did not fit within the framework of the Ottoman ***millet*** system.

> While the Ottomans treated people of this community as Muslims for administrative purposes and taxed them on that basis, they never looked upon them as genuine Muslims. Also occasionally, the Ottomans would levy a special tax on the Druzes, a poll tax similar to ***Jizya*** collected from the Christians and Jews, which was also imposed on the Nusayris.[1]

In general it may be concluded that the Shi'ites could enjoy a measure of non-interference on the part of the government as long as they recognised the authority of the Ottomans and paid their taxes. Additional factors contributed to this autonomy, such as the alliances the Shi'ites conducted with different ***sanjak Beyi*** and ***wali***s in the eighteenth century. However, the geographical location of Jabal 'Amil brought the Shi'ites straight into a conflict between the ***wilaya***s and ***sanjak***s which subsequently affected the Shi'ites' autonomy.

3.2 Shi'ite autonomy and communal conflict 1768-1865

The Shi'ite territory of Jabal 'Amil was never a ***wilaya*** or even a ***sanjak*** but was always part of the ***sanjak*** of Safad which belonged either to the wilaya of Damascus or to that of

[1] Abd al-Rahim abu-Husayn, 'Problems in the Ottoman Administration in Syria During the 16th and 17th centuries: the Case of the ***Sanjak*** of Sidon-Beirut, ***IJMES***, Vol. 24, 1992. p.666.

Sidon. Jabal 'Amil being between Mount Lebanon and north Palestine, became a battle ground particularly when fighting broke out between the *amir*s of the Mountain and the governor of Safad. Such circumstances allowed the Shi'ites to manoeuvre and take advantage of the situation, such that for much of the period 1768-1865 the community was autonomous. This autonomy was only briefly interrupted twice in 1780 due to the ascendancy of Ahmad al-Jazzar Pasha (1775-1804), and in 1832 due to the Egyptian occupation.

Between 1768 and 1780, the Shi'ite leaders formed alliances with Zahir al-'Umar (1686-776) governor of the *sanjak* of Galilee, and with the *wali*s of Sidon at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1840, somewhat ironically, Shi'ite leaders would periodically form alliances with the Ottomans themselves against the *Amir* of the Mountain in order to maintain their autonomy as will be discussed shortly.

The issue of Shi'ite autonomy has always been controversial among the Shi'ite historians. Makki and Al-Safa discuss the conditions of the Shi'ites under the Ottomans in some detail. The former suggests 1660 as the beginning of Shi'ite autonomy, that is, when Jabal 'Amil was included into the wilaya of Sidon.[1] In contrast Al-Safa suggests 1705 when Bashir Pasha of Sidon gave autonomy to the Shi'ites after some of their leaders were captured by Bashir I Shihab. Both Makki and Al-Safa however, do agree that the first period of Shi'ite autonomy ended under al-Jazzar in 1780.

[1] Makki, *al-Haraka al-Fikriyya* ...., p. 138.

However, the years mentioned by Makki and Al-Safa cannot be considered the beginning of Shi'ite autonomy, because at these dates the Ma'ns controlled the ***sanjak*** of Safad to which Jabal 'Amil belonged. Moreover, the Shi'ites do not seem to have been able to achieve autonomy under the Ma'ns and even under the Shihabs. They suffered devastating defeats in 1698 and 1705 when orders were sent by Arslan Pasha and later Bashir Pasha of Sidon to the Shihabs to end the rebellion of the Shi'ites who were refusing to pay the taxes.[1]

Although it is true that the Shi'ites never accepted Ma'n rule and that they always launched guerrilla attacks, they nevertheless failed to achieve the autonomy they were hoping for. The first indication of Shi'ite autonomy appears only in 1768 when they rose against Zahir al-'Umar the governor of the Galilee and later established an alliance with him under which they administered Jabal 'Amil until 1780. This autonomy was established under the leadership of Nasif al-Nassar 'Ali al-Saghir (d.1780)[2] who challenged Zahir al-'Umar when the latter attempted to extend his authority over some Shi'ite villages.

> Under the leadership of Nasif al-Nassar the Shi'ite community fought successfully through four major campaigns and defended itself. Zahir al-'Umar wanted to extend his control into the Shi'ite villages of al-Bassa and Marun claiming that they were part of the territory of Palestine. al-Nassar responded by declaring war on him, and fighting broke out at the borders of Dulab Tarbikha in 1767 where the Shi'ite gained the upper hand and al-'Umar himself was captured. After the fighting, the two leaders settled the dispute and entered into a strategic alliance.[3]

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[1] Salim Hashi, ***Tarikh al-Umara al-Shihabiyn Biqalam Ahad Umara'ihim,*** Department of Heritage, Beirut, 1971, pp. 87-90.

[2] His date of birth is unknown.

[3] al-Faqih, ***Jabal 'Amil...,*** pp. 206-208.

This alliance between al-Nassar and al-'Umar was a necessity for the Shi'ites to maintain autonomy because they did not have an external patron to assist them diplomatically. Their only significant outside connections were with the Holy cities of Najaf and Karbala and those were only religious in nature. They also could not seek assistance from European powers because most Shi'ites genuinely believed that the Ottoman Empire was an Islamic state which should be defended against any foreign power. As a result, the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil were left with no choice but to try to enter into local alliances in order to protect their interests.

For al-'Umar his alliance with al-Nassar was also a necessity. This is because his influence began to increase when he joined forces with the governor of Egypt 'Ali Bey in his campaigns against 'Uthman Pasha of Damascus and his son Darwish Pasha of Sidon. Conflict between the Ottoman governors inevitably dragged local communities in Mount Lebanon and Jabal 'Amil into the fray. 'Uthman Pasha sought assistance from the ***amir*** of Mount Lebanon Yusuf Shihab against al-'Umar and his allies the Shi'ites.[1] Al-'Umar realised that an alliance with the Shi'ites would prevent any attack from the northern front while he concentrated his efforts against his rivals Darwish and 'Uthman ***pasha***s.

Both al-'Umar and al-Nassar posed formidable challenges to the ***wali***s of Damascus and Sidon, and as a result of the alliance the Shi'ites found another opportunity to stop paying taxes to Sidon. This gave the incentive for 'Uthman Pasha, ***Amir*** Yusuf and Darwish Pasha to begin their military campaign. In 1771, two campaigns were launched. The first was in August

[1] Hashi, op.cit, pp. 112-113.

against 'Uthman Pasha in the south of Jabal 'Amil near Hula lake known as al-Bahra.[1] The other was in October against *Amir* Yusuf and was known as Kafr Rumman-Nabatiyya.[2] The eighteenth-century traveller, Baron de Tott, captured the spirit of the Shi'ite community:

> The Mutualis who inhibit the Anti-Lebanon, from Sidon to Acre, are less numerous than the Druses; but the castles they occupy render them as swift to rebel and as difficult to subjugate ... [and] the cavalry in the pay of their Cheiks are much more warlike ... The expedition which advanced the glory of the Mutualis to its highest pitch was when 40.000 Druzes, armed to assist the Porte, and animated by the hope of plunder, issued from their mountains to lay waste the country. The Cheik Nassif, at the head of 3000 horsemen, supported by some auxiliary troops from Cheik-Daher, Governor of Acre, advanced to meet them under the walls of Sidon; he attacked them in good order, and put them to flight at the first onset. This celebrated victory rendered the name of Mutualis formidable, and deprived the Druses of that superiority they had always maintained in Syria.[3]

In June 1772, both *Amir* Yusuf and 'Uthman Pasha once more tried unsuccessfully to subdue the Shi'ites and al-'Umar.[4]

For a while, the Shi'ites and al-'Umar played an essential role in determining the fate of the *Amir* of Mount Lebanon. Late in 1772, tensions began to develop between *Amir* Yusuf and 'Uthman Pasha due to the misconduct of the Amir's brother, Sayyid Ahmad, who raided trade caravans coming from Damascus to the Biqa. Yusuf's reluctance to punish his brother angered the Pasha who ordered his forces to move to Dayr al-Qamar in the Mountain. As a result, *Amir* Yusuf turned to al-Nassar and al-'Umar for assistance. The Shi'ites saw this as a

[1] Al-Safa, op.cit, p. 122.
[2] Hashi, op.cit, pp. 113-114.
[3] Halawi, op.cit., p.33.
[4] Al-Safa, op.cit, p. 132.

good opportunity to weaken the Pasha's authority as they joined forces with ***Amir*** Yusuf and subsequently were victorious. On his way back to the Galilee, 'Ali, son of al- 'Umar looted the villages while al-Nassar avoided such action and maintained good relations with his neighbours.[1]

In 1776, al-'Umar was killed and in the same year Ahmad al-Jazzar was appointed Pasha of Sidon.[2] Al-Jazzar worked relentlessly to control Jabal 'Amil and managed to do so in 1780 after the battle of Yarun where al-Nassar was killed. He then sent his forces to ransack the Shi'ite libraries in various villages in Jabal 'Amil which were rich in valuable manuscripts.[3] With the death of al-Nassar the early autonomy of the Shi'ites ended. In 1783, due to the heavy-handed policies of al-Jazzar, the Shi'ites held a meeting at Shuhur village to organise guerrilla attacks against him and as a result, the attacks continued throughout his rule. In 1804 al-Jazzar died and was succeeded by Sulaiman Pasha who signed a treaty with the Shi'ites in the same year in order to end their attacks. The agreement was signed at Bayt al-Din as a result of the mediation of ***Amir*** Bashir II (1788-1840). This agreement restored the autonomy to the Shi'ites and granted a general amnesty for all Shi'ite rebels, compensation for their losses after the battle of Yarun, and granted the community the right to solve its internal problems without interference from the Ottomans.[4] This treaty was later renewed[5] by Abdullah Pasha who faced a rebellion in Mount Lebanon because of his excessive taxation.[6]

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[1] Hashi, op.cit, pp. 125-126.
[2] Salibi, ***Modern*** ...., p. 46.
[3] Salibi, ***a House*** ..., p. 105. Dahir, ***al-Juzur*** ..., p. 409.
[4] Al-Safa, op.cit, pp. 141-142.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Polk. ***The Opening*** ..., p. 20.

In return the Shi'ites agreed to submit to conscription when and if necessary, and subsequently they joined 'Abdullah Pasha in his fight against the *Wali* of Damascus, Darwish Pasha, at al-Mazza and Jisr Banat Ya'qub.[1] It may be said that generally the Shi'ites retained their autonomy until the invasion of Syria by Ibrahim Pasha in 1832.

The Egyptian occupation of Syria not only ended the autonomy of the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil but also had far more serious consequences. This occupation paved the way for European intervention in Ottoman affairs through the various Lebanese communities, and caused social and economic differences between local communities.

Egyptian policy in Lebanon caused considerable conflicts between the local communities some of which only emerged after the Egyptians' departure. Jabal 'Amil came under the control of Bashir II Shihab whose family had often attacked the Shi'ites in the past. The Shihabi-Egyptian alliance overturned the balance of power under which the various communities had lived,[2] and also contributed to other trends which profoundly affected the Middle East, making it generally much more open to foreign influences.[3]

Amir Bashir II allied himself totally with the Egyptians and followed a policy that had devastating result. The main lines of this policy were that taxes were increased many times, the communities were forbidden to keep their weapons, and universal conscription and *corvée*

[1] Al-Safa, op.cit, pp. 141-142.
[2] Salibi, ***Modern*** ...., p. 36.
[3] Cobban, ***The Making of Modern Lebanon***, Boulder: Westview Press, 1985, p. 38. Polk, ***The Opening*** ...., p. 10.

labour were imposed. The Shi'ites felt themselves and their interests under threat, and considered themselves discriminated against in favour of the Shihabs and the Maronites generally. This encouraged the Shi'ites to rebel in 1839 under the leadership of Hamad al-Mahmud of the al-Saghir family.[1] His leadership was enhanced when the Ottomans entrusted him with the task of ending the Egyptian occupation in Jabal 'Amil and Safad. The Ottomans rewarded al-Mahmud by restoring the autonomy of the Shi'ites which lasted from 1840 until 1865 when the Ottomans began to rule Jabal 'Amil directly.

3.3 The beginning of the decline

The restoration of Ottoman in Syria, and various commercial conventions between the Ottomans and other European powers between 1839-1840 opened the region to increased European economic penetration. This intervention was assisted considerably by intermediaries from the local religious minorities,[2] particularly when European powers claimed protection over any one of the minorities. The British gave support to the Druzes, the French had long and well established ties with the Maronites, and the Russians supported the Orthodox. The foreign protectors were to play a vital part in promoting and advancing the interests of these minorities. However, the Shi'ites had no external patron and therefore had to establish relations with the Ottomans.

Mount Lebanon was a major recipient of both Egyptian and European attention which eventually put an end to the old *iqta'* system in the Mountain. As a result, soon after the

[1] Al-Safa, op. cit., p. 150.
[2] Tabitha Petran, ***Syria***, Ernest Benn Ltd, London, 1972, p. 46. Polk, ***The Opening*** ..., p. 213.

Egyptian withdrawal tension between the Maronite and Druze communities began to surface and culminated in armed clashes which broke out between them in 1841. It was suggested that Mount Lebanon should be partitioned into two ***qa'immaqamates***, one to be run by a Maronite and the other by a Druze.[1] This division did not spare the two communities further conflict because the ***qa'immaqamates*** had mixed populations, and conflict was bound to re-occur and take the shape of a sectarian conflict, which indeed did result in a large scale civil war in 1860.[2] The conflict in Mount Lebanon had affected neighbouring areas. The Shi'ites of Ba'lbek joined the Druzes,[3] while the Shi'ites of the village of Shiyah in Beirut[4] and most of the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil[5] protected and defended the Maronite refugees.

Following the massacre of the Christians in 1860, the French intervened militarily to put an end to the conflict. A conference of representatives of the European powers convened in Beirut to initiate the reorganisation of Mount Lebanon as a political entity of special standing within the Ottoman system. The outcome was the abolition of the double ***qa'immaqamate*** of the 1840, and the establishment of the privileged Ottoman ***sanjak*** or ***mutasarrifiyya*** under the guarantee of the six major powers: Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, Russia and Sardinia. The ***mutasarrifiyya*** was to be governed by a Christian from outside the Mountain, who was to be nominated by the powers represented in the commission. This in fact meant that this part

[1] Salibi, op.cit., p. 97.
[2] Harik, ***Politics*** ..., pp. 273-276.
[3] Ibid., P. 138.
[4] Fuad Khuri, 'Sectarian Loyalty Among Rural Migrants in two Lebanese Suburbs: a Stage Between Family and National Allegiance', in R. Antoun & I. Harik, (ed.), ***Rural Politics and Social Change in the Middle East***, Indiana Press, 1974, p. 203.
[5] al-Faqih, op.cit, p. 311.

of Lebanon was officially and internationally recognised as territory of special administrative character within historical Syria. Europe's relations were mainly confined to Mount Lebanon, and brought to it economic prosperity. As for Jabal 'Amil, life remained unchanged. In general the Shi'ites maintained their good relations with the Ottomans, as shown when the Shi'ite leadership took part in the commission which was set up by Fuad Pasha to investigate the causes of the civil war. He appointed the Shi'ite leader 'Ali al-As'ad, who succeeded Hamad al-Mahmud in 1852, to the commission and put him in charge of maintaining order in east Lebanon, around Damascus and in the Hawran.[1] The leadership of al-'Ali al-As'ad was disrupted when Thamir al-Husain, his cousin, competed with him for the leadership of the community in Jabal 'Amil.

Continuing rivalry between 'Ali and Thamir provided the Ottomans with the opportunity to control Jabal 'Amil directly. This happened in 1865 when Khurshid Pasha of Sidon arrested 'Ali al-As'ad who was sent to Damascus and later died of Cholera. Later that year the wilaya of Sidon was abolished and Jabal 'Amil became part of wilaya of Syria which was divided into three *qadas* Tyre, Sidon and Marj'ayun, and subjected to direct rule until the end of World War I.[2]

It is worth noticing that the first and the second periods of Shi'ite autonomy came to an end because of external factors, while the third ended after an internal conflict between Shi'ite

[1] Al-Safa, op.cit, p. 160. al-Faqih, op.cit., p. 311.
[2] Khalaf, ***Lebanon's...***, p. 6. Al-Safa, op.cit., 1981, pp. 55-60.

factions. The Ottomans benefited from the situation and took over the direct control of Jabal 'Amil in 1865 after the death of 'Ali al-As'ad.

The Effect of Economic Development and the Rise of Nationalism on the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil 1800-1943

The main objective in this chapter is to discuss whether the Shi'ites benefited from the economic development which Lebanon experienced in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. This is in order to establish how the economic development affected the status of the various Lebanese communities and its effects on their social structure before and after the establishment of Greater Lebanon. Secondly, this chapter will also discuss the differing political tendencies among the Shi'ites towards various nationalist ideas which were emerging in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in order to establish their political affiliation. The effect of their political affiliation will be discussed in the next chapter.

In the course of the hundred years or so before World War I, Lebanon experienced appreciable economic progress. "Its economic, social and political structure were entangled within the complex dynamics of Ottoman reform and European expansion."[1] However, this economic progress was neither constant nor even in its impact on the various sects, regions, and classes.[2] The principal reforms took place in Mount Lebanon and Beirut while the Shi'ite area of Jabal 'Amil became increasingly isolated as it was not within the zone of any

[1] Choueiri, 'Ottoman Reform ..., p. 68.

[2] Charles Issawi, 'The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration, 1800-1914', in A. Hourani & N. Shehadi, (ed.), ***The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Immigration,*** I.B. Tauris, London, 1992, p.22.

great power interests. As a result, the role of the Shi'ites became somewhat irrelevant in the twentieth century particularly when Greater Lebanon was established in 1920. This economic differentiation was to shape the future strengths of the various Lebanese communities.

1. The world economy and its effects on the social structure of the Shi'ites

The nineteenth century was a period of dramatic economic change as various parts of the Middle East became integrated into the world system of commerce and transport. This integration benefited the mercantile and financial sector while those who suffered from this integration were generally agrarian workers, small landowners, urban workers and craftsman.[1]

The initial basis of economic reform was established under the Egyptian occupation in 1832. The Egyptian gave greater protection to Christians and Jews engaged in industry and commerce as well as to foreign merchants who settled in the towns in the interior.[2] In addition, local peasants were given immunity from taxation for a number of years if they returned to their abandoned fields. In general, cultivation increased. For instance, the export of silk increased from 582 bales in 1833 to 1760 bales in 1836 due to increase of mulberry trees.[3]

[1] Gates, ***The Historical Role*** ..., p. 5-7.
[2] Roger Owen, ***The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914***, I.B. Tauris, London, 1981. p. 70.
[3] Ibid.

The general prosperity that the peasants enjoyed was disrupted when the Ottomans regained control of Syria,[1] although the lot of the Christians continued to improve due to their special relations with European powers, particularly the French.[2] This French influence began to grow after the Egyptians' withdrawal from Syria in 1840, and gradually became stronger because of the continuous financial difficulties of the Ottoman government which favoured the expansion of French investment.[3] Eventually French companies gained complete monopoly over the Syrian railways as well as the leading harbours on the coast of the Mediterranean. In addition, French contractors had concessions on practically all the construction work on roads, ports and lighthouses in the area.[4] This increased French influence and their special relations with the Christians of Mount Lebanon caused immense economic and social change within the Maronite community far more than any other community in Lebanon.

1.1 French dominance and changing social order

French influence certainly affected the social order particularly in Mount Lebanon and Beirut. The Direct result of French influence can be noted in the increase in urbanisation, improvement of education, formation of the middle class and finally immunity from conscription facilitated the ascendancy of the Christians and to a lesser extent the Sunnis .[5]

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[1] Ibid., p. 81.

[2] Hourani, ***A History of the Arab Peoples***, Warner Books, New York, 1991, p. 236.

[3] Michael Johnson, ***Class & Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State 1840-1985***, Ithaca Press, London, 1986, p. 27.

[4] Jukka Nevakivi, ***Britain, France and the Middle East 1914-1920,*** The Hamilton Press, 1969, p. 6.

[5] Issawi, ***The Fertile Crescent 1800-1914,*** Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988. p. 26.

The concentration of trade and commerce in the cities proved a great attraction for the impoverished peasants who neglected their fields in order to obtain a better life. Due to the movement of peasants from rural areas, the population in urban centres increased considerably in a relatively short time. The population of Tripoli increased from 15,000 to 30,000 between 1830-1914 Ba'lbek grew to about 25,000 inhabitants and both Sidon and Zahleh to about 15,000. In Beirut the population grew from 60,000 in 1860 to 150,000 in 1914.[1]

Improvement of education was another character of French influence in Lebanon. Before 1860, there were about 4 girls' schools and 15 boys' schools in Beirut; by 1869 there were 23 girls' schools and 29 boys schools. The total number of students was 5,150. By 1913 Mount Lebanon had 330 schools, with over 20,000 pupils.[2] The total pre-war number of Syrian students attending French schools was to increase further to 50,000, while the total number of students attending the schools of all other nationalities was 23,000. The majority of these establishments had been founded by French religious orders,[3] and Christian missionaries.

The major factor which set the motion of change in Mount Lebanon and Beirut was the development of a modern middle classes. This was due to the specialisation of Mount Lebanon in silk production which had shaped its economy since 1820, and due to Beirut's

[1] Issawi, 'The Historical ..., p. 28.
[2] Ibid., p. 27.
[3] Nevakivi, op.cit., p. 5.

increased importance as a port and trade centre. Aside from a few Europeans who came to invest in the new markets, the chief beneficiaries of the prosperity were the Beiruti Sunni and Christian merchants, but more clearly with the latter.[1] Beirut's importance also continued to increase as a result of growing French and English trade.[2] France had been trading with the Syrian coast since at least the eighteenth century, a relationship was strengthened further in the nineteenth century. England, on the other hand, had concentrated on the route to India, and Syria's importance to England had traditionally hinged on the caravan routes crossing the Syrian interiors. These different concerns accounted for the different roles the two countries played in Syria. France had the largest share of the export trade ranging from 25 per cent in 1833 to 32 per cent in 1910. Its share in the imports of Syria was more modest: 15.9 per cent in 1833 going down to 9.3 per cent in 1910.[3] As for Britain, it maintained the largest share of the import trade throughout the period, ranging from 31.9 per cent in 1833 to 35.3 per cent in 1910.[4]

The cultivation of silkworms also tied the city more closely to the nearby countryside and to Mount Lebanon. Peasants came to the suburbs of Beirut to harvest the crop, and mountain merchants came to Beirut to conduct business. The value of silk shipped from Beirut increased by over 400 per cent between 1850 and 1856.[5] The control of the silk industry from production to export remained firmly subservient to French capital and French

[1] Hourani, *A History* ..., p. 268. Fawaz, op.cit., p. 61.
[2] Ibid., p. 39.
[3] Fawaz, op.cit., p. 62.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Owen, *The Middle East* ..., p. 155.

commercial interests. More importantly, French firms provided the bulk of the working capital, whether directly or via Beirut subsidiaries. Local entrepreneurs played an essential role in conducting French business which gave them opportunities to develop their own interests particularly because they were very often French *protégés*.[1] From 1850-1870 the industry had a set back briefly as profit from silk declined and interest in the mountain waned. This was due to Japanese production, an epidemic of silkworm disease, and the civil war in 1860.[2]

But the international aspect of the city's financial activity was reinforced by investment on the part of Beiruti businesses in Europe, West Africa and North and South America and major Mediterranean ports like Alexandria.[3] In addition, the increase in world demand, the introduction of new technology to the silk industry, and the new international administration to Mount Lebanon in 1861, the silk trade began to develop again[4]. The number of mulberry trees varied from one area to another. This variation represented, among other things, the strength and significance of these areas to France as the following table shows:

[1] Hourani, *A History* ..., p. 276.
[2] Fawaz, op.cit., p. 63-4.
[3] Ibid., p. 154.
[4] Ibid., p. 65.

Table 1: Plantation of Mulberry trees in Lebanon in 1860.

Area	Number of trees
Mount Lebanon	28,000,000
Tripoli	6,800,000
Biqa'	2,000,000
Ba'lbek	600,000
Beirut	550,000
Marj'ayun - Hasbaiyya	500,000
Rashaiyya	15,000
Jabal 'Amil	═══

W. Kawtharani, ***Bilad al-Sham,*** Ma'had al-Inma' al-'Arabi, Beirut, 1980, p. 107-8.

The merchants of Beirut played an essential role in reviving the economy of Mount Lebanon.

> Even though the town was outside the official boundary of the mutasarrifiyya, its modern banking and transport facilities and the fact that the Commercial Tribunal located in Beirut had been given such wide powers of jurisdiction made it, ***de facto,*** the economic capital of the mountain. It provided the channel for funds coming from Europe for the purchase, processing and export of silk; it generated local funds for investment in the Mountain and for loans to Mountain merchants and entrepreneurs. A further link between the coast and the interior was provided by the opening, in 1863, of the Beirut / Damascus private carriage road constructed by a French company.[1] All this encouraged the further growth of the town of Beirut itself. From a population of some 40,000 in 1857 it grew to perhaps 65,000 in 1875 and 80,000 in 1880.[2]

On an administrative level, the special status of Mount Lebanon was established in 1861, and the establishment of the wilaya of Beirut in 1888 brought the interests of the two areas even closer together.[3] By 1861, the economic order of Mount Lebanon was reorganised under what is known as the ***Réglement.***[4] This provided the framework for the future economic

[1] Owen, ***The Middle East*** ..., p. 165.
[2] Ibid., p. 166.
[3] Fawaz, op.cit., p. 21.
[4] Owen, ***The Middle East*** ..., pp. 163-164.

development of the Mountain. The establishment of better security, the institution of a regular system of tax collection and the improvements in the administrative structure all helped to create conditions in which money wealth could be accumulated without official harassment. In addition, Mount Lebanon's special status meant that its inhabitants were not conscripted into the Ottoman army nor liable to pay the special taxes which were levied in time of war. This was of particular advantage during the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-78 when agricultural life in the rest of Syria was considerably disrupted by the call-up of peasants for military duty. This represented a considerable victory for the local forces which were seeking an end to the rule of the muqata'jis in the interests of opening up Mount Lebanon further to foreign commercial interests. In addition, the Réglement was welcomed by the European bankers and the merchants of Beirut.

In addition, the Réglement provided local entrepreneurs with the opportunity to play an essential role in advancing foreign interests in Syria. They have been described as "agents of change".[1] Their role increased due to the consular protection which was extended to many locals who provided Europeans with services. The service of the local people became indispensable to the conduct of business and in return it gave them privileges and exemption from the personal and other taxes the Ottoman government levied upon its subjects. "They were eligible for the same judicial, financial, economic and other privileges granted to Europeans in the empire which were of great advantage in business."[2]

[1] Fawaz, op.cit., p. 85.
[2] Ibid., pp. 85-86.

The locals' major role was to act as intermediaries between the European wholesaler and the local retailer, and also between the European merchants and cultivators of various crops.[1] This gave the locals immense power which later on, they managed to impose their own conditions over the sellers and buyers and to earn substantial profits in the process. For instance, they lent money to silk cultivators at a high rate, and then sold the crops at high prices imposed by them on the buyers. Soon they moved from being middlemen to becoming manufacturers.[2] Although there were a number of Muslims who benefited from the European presence in Beirut, the imbalance in economic opportunities between wealthy Christian and wealthy Muslim merchants was even more pronounced in the rest of the population.[3]

1.2 Economy of Jabal 'Amil and its relevance to European powers

While Mount Lebanon and Beirut were flourishing economically, the Shi'ite area of Jabal 'Amil was gradually falling behind. It is not only that it did not benefit from the international economic expansion in the area but that its own economic infrastructure, which was mainly agrarian, was damaged. Consequently, the class structure remained unchanged and *iqta'i*-peasant dependencies remained unchanged.

Lack of statistics makes it difficult to give a precise quantitative description of the class structure of Jabal 'Amil. However, the economic stagnation of the area shows that not much

[1] Ibid., p. 87.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid., p. 98.

development occurred in comparison with Mount Lebanon and Beirut. One could conclude that there were three major classes. At the apex of the social pyramid in Jabal 'Amil was the *iqta'i*. He exercised exclusive control as well as a limited judicial function over the *'uhda*, the domain over which his governing powers extended. The *iqta'i* became the main link between the central authorities and the populace. His function and relation to the Ottoman government revolved around the specific amount of tax to be paid to the central treasury. Somewhat independent of the *iqta'i* were the 'ulama families who belonged to all strata of society as far as social prestige and marriage ties were concerned. And lastly were the *'amma*, the peasants. All of these classes were also highly stratified internally with marked social distinctions on the basis of status and kinship affiliation.[1]

Unlike the economy in Mount Lebanon and Beirut, the economy in Jabal 'Amil did not have a steady growth. Jabal 'Amil was always affected by political and economic circumstances around it. For instance, in the eighteenth century Jabal 'Amil experienced successes in cultivating high quality coloured cotton at a time when there was rising demand for cotton textiles in Europe and North Africa. The cultivation began to decline only after Ahmad al-Jazzar established a monopoly and very high duties on cotton, leading to its being replaced by tobacco.[2] In addition, the discovery of the dyeing method by the French resulted in a marked decrease in their import of 'Amili coloured cotton fabric.[3] Again, however briefly, the Shi'ite

[1] Tarif Khalidi, 'Shaykh Ahmad 'Arif al-Zain and al-'Irfan.' In M. Buheiry, (ed.), ***Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939,*** Beirut, American University of Beirut, 1981, p. 110-24. Khalaf, ***Lebanon's ...,*** p. 22-29. Halawi, op.cit., p. 32.

[2] Issawi, ***The Fertile ...,*** p. 298.

[3] Halawi, op.cit., p. 32.

economy revived but this time it was due to Napoleon's siege of Acre when he bought all agricultural products and paid 10 times more than the usual asking price.[1]

Throughout the nineteenth century Jabal 'Amil did not have a significant economy. Moreover, certain political developments eventually caused dramatic economic decline in Jabal 'Amil in comparison to the economy in Mount Lebanon and Beirut. The reason for this decline can be attributed to both internal and external factors.

Internally, the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil did not have a proper political stability. As mentioned before, they fell under the rule of al-Jazzar, who followed a heavy-handed policy in Jabal 'Amil until his death in the early nineteenth century. Thereafter, although the autonomy of the Shi'ites was restored by Sulaiman and 'Abdullah pashas, it did not last long because Syria as a whole fell under the Egyptian occupation in 1832. By then, the main agricultural product in Jabal 'Amil was tobacco which was exported to Egypt. Liberation of Syria from the Egyptians in 1840 had serious consequences on Jabal 'Amil, in that the Shi'ites lost their tobacco market in Egypt to the Greeks[2]

Although Jabal 'Amil was not stable politically, it was stable socially. That is to say that Jabal 'Amil was predominantly a Shi'ite populated area, and therefore their was no room for inter-communal conflict. The competition was limited to the zu'ama class only, even though, al-As'ad's leadership was generally accepted.

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[1] Rida, 'al-Shi'a fi Jabal 'Amil', ***al-'Irfan***, Vol. 2, 1910, p. 335.
[2] Ibid.

Externally, In 1840 with the liberation of Syria from the Egyptians, international interest in Mount Lebanon and Beirut was gaining strength and Jabal 'Amil was irrelevant to the concerns of the powers. The area, mainly Mount Lebanon, was experiencing dramatic political, social and economic changes between the Maronites and the Druzes which eventually led to partitioning of Mount Lebanon into two qa'immaqamates. This dynamism in Mount Lebanon facilitated the intervention of the European powers mainly the French and the British. Since 1840 the Maronite community found its hopes and fortunes with the French who claimed protection of the Catholics. On the other hand, the British supported the Druzes. French interests in Mount Lebanon was not only to protect their co-religionists, the Maronites, but also their was economic value. Mount Lebanon was economically important to the French because of production of silk which was vital to the French economy. French-Maronites relations grew stronger and by 1861 Mount Lebanon was recognised as mutasarrifiyya with a special political status.

In retrospect, Jabal 'Amil did not attract any European powers' attention because its specialisation in tobacco plantation was not of great importance to the economy of either France or Britain. In 1883, further decline in Jabal 'Amil was caused due to a monopolistic control of the tobacco which was granted to a French company, the Tobacco ***Régie***. The low prices the Régie offered the Shi'ite peasants contributed to decline of the product. Being tobacco planters, the Shi'ites were tide to the Régie for long time continuing into the French Mandate and independence period.

This situation continued until the creation of Greater Lebanon in 1920. In fact the years preceding 1920 further aggravated the life of the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil. The major cause of decline was the World War I in 1914 where the Shi'ites were conscripted in large numbers and as a result their fields were abandoned. One year later famine struck as Locusts did not leave any green leaf in their journey from Jabal 'Amil up to Beirut and Mount Lebanon. People left their villages and travelled to Beirut in search of a better life.[1] The deterioration in Jabal 'Amil triggered the emmigration of many Shi'ites to America and Africa.

As has been discussed European interests and the socio-economic variation between Mount Lebanon, Beirut, and Jabal 'Amil practically set the political importance of the major communities residing in these areas. By September 1920 the French announced the creation of Greater Lebanon after the inclusion of *Beirut, the Biqa', Tripoli and Jabal 'Amil. Under such* new reality the Shi'ites were left to their own initiatives to improve their position ***vis-à-vis*** the other major communities in Lebanon.

Creating Greater Lebanon had three consequences[2]. First, it augmented the pre-dominantly Maronite Christian and Druze population of the Mountain with an almost equally large Muslim population which had long-standing links with the towns of the Syrian interior. Second, having established a state composed of different religions it was important that the

[1] Hakim, op.cit., p. 249-251.
[2] Owen, 'The Political Economy ..., pp. 23-24.

French established a system that incorporated the various members of those religions. Third, by creating Greater Lebanon the French confirmed the financial and commercial hegemony of Beirut over the Mountain, and also strengthened a pattern of economic activity in which agriculture and industry was becoming more and more subordinate to banking and trade. Although agriculture in the Mountain and the silk industry were actually beginning to decline, the service sector was prospering and was "assisted by a policy of low tariffs and the creation of an infrastructure of harbours and roads ideally suited to the further expansion of trade, building, and the new business of tourism."[1]

Industry in Jabal 'Amil was of no interest to the French and was confined to crafts needed for local consumption and shoe making, for export to Palestine, in the village of Bint Jubail. Jabal 'Amil had traded with the cities of north Palestine for a long time so that Palestinian currency was used more than Lebanese in Jabal 'Amil.[2]

Although economy was the major reason which caused the inferior position of the Shi'ites, it was their political affiliation and stands which increased their inferiority ***vis-à-vis*** the other major communities. From 1920 onward two forms of political trends were dominant, that is, the pro-French policy which was represented by the Maronites and the pro-Syrian policy which was represented by the majority of Muslim zu'ama. The following section will examine

[1] Ibid., p. 26.

[2] Salim Taqi al-Din, 'al-Janub al-Lubnani fi Ri'ayat al-Istiqlal', ***Safahat min Tarikh Jabal 'Amil,*** al-Majlis al-Thaqafi li-Lubnan al-Janubi, Farabi, Beirut, 1979, p. 139.

the position of the Shi'ites towards the various national ideas prior and after the creation of Greater Lebanon.

2. Shi'ite attitudes towards rising national ideas

These tendencies dominated the political scene in the Arab provinces of the empire but their strength varied according to the crisis the empire was facing. The political activities of the Shi'ites also began to develop. Along these lines, however, the Shi'ites as such never advocated a distinctive political line because politics was the domain of their leaders who affiliated themselves with one tendency or another. The Shi'ites were in no position to adopt a tendency that was different from that of the Sunni majority. However, by 1918 some Shi'ite zu'ama were explicit in their support for Lebanese nationalism (this will be explained in the next chapter). Adopting one tendency or another by the Shi'ite zu'ama was used as a means in the power struggle between them which will also be explained later.

Most Muslims felt no allegiance to Greater Lebanon, and although the Sunni and Shi'ite leaders were incorporated into the system of government, the identification of the lower social classes with this new Lebanese entity remained ambiguous.

The initial Muslim ambiguity towards Lebanon was a reflection of their rejection of European intervention in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire. This rejection began to surface in the

nineteenth century when calls for modernisation were sounded by both Muslim and Christians despite the variation in tone.

The modernist Ottomanist elements such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1839-1897) and Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905)[1] attempted a synthesis between Islamic and Western values. Afghani said that "primitive Islam required its followers to exercise reason and examine the bases of their faith."[2] In addition, "the modernist also stated that a modified Islamic teaching was also essential so as to accommodate those European forms and doctrines which appeared to be the catalysts of economic and social progress."[3]

Parallel to this, a few Syrian Christians who shared the general idea of modernism advanced a quasi-secular Arab nationalism.[4] The missionary schools in Lebanon brought many Syrians, mostly Christians, into close contact with the West. One of the most important spokesman for the group was Ibrahim al-Yaziji who in 1868 called for an Arab national revival. "However, the Christian version of Arabism was not to the liking of the Syrian Muslim Arabs. Yaziji's secular Arabism found few followers, and Ottomanism, whether conservative or modernist, remained the dominant ideology within the Ottoman lands until 1914."[5] A more limited call for Lebanese nationalism was also developing,[6] as discussed below.

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[1] Jacob Landau, ***The Politics of Pan-Islam***, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, pp. 25, 34, 125. Hourani, ***A History*** ..., pp. 308-9.

[2] Ernest Dawn, 'From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origin of an Ideology', in A. Hourani, P. Khoury & M. Wilson, (ed.), ***The Modern Middle East***, I.B. Tauris, 1993, pp. 380-381.

[3] Johnson, op.cit., p. 14.

[4] Dawn, ***From Ottomanism to Arabism, Essay on the Origin of Arab Nationalism***, University of Illinois Press, 1973, p. 132.

[5] Owen, ***The Middle East*** ..., p. 133

[6] Meir Zamir, ***The Formation of Modern Lebanon***, Croom Helm, London, 1985, p. 7-8.

In 1876 a combination of rapid political and economic development in the world, and mounting pressure from both inside and outside the empire forced Sultan Abd al-Hamid (1876-1909) to establish the Ottoman constitution which incorporated a parliamentary system in which all the provinces were represented, however the constitution was suspended one year later.

The deterioration of the Empire due to the Balkan Crisis in 1877 encouraged the emergence of national ideas. Among the first national ideas which emerged was that of decentralisation. The governorship of Midhat Pasha in Syria (1878-1880) has always been referred to as a major contributor to the idea of decentralisation. Longrigg stated:

> The period of Egyptian rule ..., reoriented some perceptive minds; the governorship of Midhat Pasha, with his advocacy of decentralisation and the full equality of the non-Turkish races, was again suggestive.[1]

Midhat's close association with Arab notables convinced him to make Arabic the language of instruction in the new state schools. It remained the language of instruction under the rule of his successor, Ahmad Hamdi Pasha (1880-1885).[2] Al-Safa also referred to communication between Midhat Pasha and some Shi'ite leaders such as Khalil and Najib al-As'ad to the effect that they should advocate decentralisation in Jabal 'Amil. In addition, Al-Safa had the impression that Midhat Pasha gave his tacit support to the intellectuals who used to express

[1] Longrigg, op.cit., p. 26.

[2] Mahmud Haddad, 'The Rise of Arab Nationalism Reconsidered', ***IJMES***, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1994, p. 202.

their idea through poems which were wide spread throughout Syria. Most of these poems were possibly written by Ibrahim al-Yaziji.[1] Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid was aware of Midhat Pasha's intentions and nominated him wali of Izmir as a first step to removing him from office and subsequently having him murdered in prison.[2]

Al-Safa and 'Adil al-Sulh[3] claimed that the idea of Arab independence began to appear in 1877 during the Russian-Turkish war. A clandestine political movement was organised by some Arab nationalists who advocated the separation of Syria from the Ottomans. This appeared in 1877 in the Damascus Conference and among the participants were representatives from Jabal 'Amil including Sayyid Muhammad al-Amin, Shaikh 'Ali al-Jaba'i, 'Ali 'Usayran and Shabib al-As'ad. Ahmad Pasha al-Sulh conveyed the conferees' decision to Amir Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri[4] who was also chosen by them to lead Syria. However, al-Jaza'iri was hesitant to accept until he had clearer idea of the nature of the independence his colleagues sought.[5] When the Ottoman authorities discovered this movement they dispersed it and one of the Shi'ite participants, Sayyid Muhammad al-Amin, was exiled to Tripoli.[6]

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[1] Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 209.

[2] Johnson, op.cit, p. 15.

[3] Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 209. Mahmud Bazzi, ***Jabal 'Amil fi Muhitihi al-'Arabi 1864-1948***, al-Majlis al-Islami al-Shi'i al-A'ala, Beirut, 1993, pp. 31-33. The Shi'ite historians disagree on whether the Damascus Conference took place. Contrary to Al-Safa, Shaikh 'Ali al-Zain denies that it took place altogether, on the ground that the contemporary historians such as Muhammad Kurd Ali, Mikha'il Mishaqa, and Shaikh Muhammad Mughniyya would have documented the idea of independence let alone the conference itself. He also asserts that the idea of Arab nationalism began to develop in the first decade of twentieth century. Ali al-Zain, ***Lil Bahth 'an Tarikhuna fi Lubnan***, Beirut, 1973, p. 23.

[4] 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri the leader of the Algerian resistance in the 1840s who had been exiled to Damascus by the French in 1856.

[5] Bazzi, op.cit., p. 32.

[6] Al-Safa, op.cit., p.209.

Although the idea of decentralisation was not strong enough to assert itself in society as a whole, decentralisation began to assert itself in the first decade of the twentieth century. However, a number of politicised Arabs in Ottoman service gave their support to the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 which ended in the replacement of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid by Sultan Muhammad Rashad. The latter was merely a figure-head as the Committee of Union and Progress, CUP, was in full control of the affairs of the empire. They aimed at replacing the absolute rule of the Sultan with a constitutional monarchy guaranteeing religious and civil liberties to Ottoman subjects.

The proclamation of the Constitution on 23/4 July 1908 was a success beyond all expectations of the CUP.[1] However, in 1911 Arab feeling towards the Turks began to alter. The capture of Libya by the Italians subsequently weakened the Turks in Arab eyes and destroyed much of the hopes they had in a revived empire. As a result, an Arab Decentralisation Party was founded "to create concord among the potentates of the Arabian Peninsula, in order to bring strong pressure on the Turks on behalf of the Arabs and to provide for the defence of the Arab against foreign ambition, should the Ottoman Empire fall to pieces."[2] Such fears seemed to be substantiated when the Arab nationalists in ***al-Fatat*** society convened in Paris in the summer of 1913. In order to retain Arab loyalty, the Unionists made some concession to the nationalists, and they also supported the local resistance movement in Libya.

The optimism of the nationalists was also thwarted when:

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[1] Feroz Ahmad, ***The Young Turks***, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p. 16.
[2] Ibid., p. 153.

> the CUP implemented a Turkification policy which sought to centralise the empire and bring the various confessional and ethnic groups more closely together under the control of Istanbul. As soon as it became clear that the CUP was not going to grant autonomy rule to the Arab regions of the empire, the more extreme varieties of Arab and Lebanese nationalism developed. [1]

Where did the Shi'ites fit in all these developments? In Jabal 'Amil the political involvement of the Shi'ites was largely directed by the zu'ama and a new group of intellectuals who competed to draw the support of the Shi'ite masses.

> ...this awakening [among the Shi'ites] was restricted to a few members of a narrow class, and was the work of a small intellectual circle.[2]

The masses who were mostly peasants did not have the ability or the means to initiate any political activities, but they were rather a means to an end in the hands of their zu'ama. Like other Arabs, the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil were generally supportive of the CUP. A new group of intellectuals was responsible for heightened political awareness among the Shi'ites and had been heavily involved in various movements and societies. For instance, Shaikh Ahmad 'Arif al-Zain began publication of a literary and political journal, ***al-Irfan***, which became a leading forum of intellectual discourse in Jabal 'Amil. Another leading figure was Rustum Haider from the Biqa' who was a member of ***al-Fatat*** Society and later participated in the Sharifian administration in Damascus. Another example was 'Abd al-Karim al-Khalil who was hanged for treason by the Ottomans. In addition, the traditional-religious leadership and a new group of intellectuals supported the Empire against foreign interference.

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[1] Johnson, op.cit., p. 16.

[2] Joseph Olmert, 'The Shi'is and the Lebanese State', (ed.), in M. Kramer, (ed.), ***Shi'ism Resistance and Revolution***, Boulder, Colorado, 1987, p. 191. Longrigg, op.cit., p. 144.

This support was apparent both immediately before and during the first year of World War I. Shi'ite intellectuals feared occupation of Lebanon by the European powers and the prospect of Christian rule. In addition, the anti-European attitude of the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil could be attributed to a promise on the part of the Turks that the Shi'ites would be recognised as a separate community from their Sunni counterparts if they disassociated themselves from the Beirut Reform Society.[1]

The precarious position of the Shi'ites, a minority in the Arab provinces, hindered them from initiating any political trend contradictory to the general Arab one. However, their attitude towards the Ottomans changed when all attempts at reconciliation between Arabs and Turks reached deadlock, and particularly when Arab resentment culminated in the Sharifian revolution in June 1916.

The increased rift between the Turks and the Arabs had its own effect on the Shi'ites. There were two principal political trends in Jabal 'Amil. One represented loyalty to the Ottomans and the other was pro-Arab nationalism (the power struggle between the two will be elaborated in the next chapter). What concerns us here is the attitude of the Turks towards the nationalists rather than towards the traditional leadership which was pro-Turkish and was

[1] Zamir, op.cit., p. 32. The society was formed in order to pressurise the Ottomans to undertake essential reform particularly when the Christians of Mount Lebanon managed to achieve some concession with the help of European powers in 1912.

mainly represented by Kamil al-As'ad who was an Ottomanist and had good relations with the wali of Damascus Jamal Pasha.[1]

In 1908 a CUP branch in Nabatiyya was established by 'Abd al-Karim al-Khalil, Muhammad Jabir Al-Safa, Shaikh Ahmad Rida and Shaikh Sulaiman Dahir.[2] However, the Shi'ites quickly became disillusioned when they realised the real intentions of the new government and soon closed the Nabatiyya branch.[3] Hostilities between the two groups increased when al-Khalil founded the Arab Club in 1909. The Turks soon forced the club to change the adjective "Arab" to "Literary".

The entry of the Ottomans into World War I on the side of the Central Powers was a great chance for the Arabs to liberate themselves from Turkish control. However, the actual process of breaking ties with the CUP began only in 1915. Initially Shi'ite intellectuals and traditional and religious leaders lent their support to the Empire in the war. The Shi'ite 'ulama throughout the Muslim world issued fatwas legalising and inciting ***jihad*** against foreign forces as well as support for the Ottomans.[4] When it became clear that the CUP was not willing to carry out reform, Arab support melted away. As the founder of the Literary Club and a member of different political organisations such as the Committee of Arab Brotherhood, the Qahtani Committee and as a close associate of Rida al-Sulh, 'Abd al-Karim al-Khalil

[1] Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 213.

[2] 'Ali. A. Shu'aib, ***Matalib Jabal 'Amil: al-Wihda, al-Musawat fi Lubnan al-Kabir 1900-1936***, al-Mu'assasa al-Jami'aiyya, Beirut, 1987, p. 54.

[3] Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 183-4. Shu'aib, op.cit., p.55-6.

[4] ***al-'Irfan***, Vol. 6, 1915, p. 78.

organised opposition to the Turks in Jabal 'Amil and subsequently established branches of the Decentralisation Party in Sidon and Nabatiyya.[1]

The Party was betrayed since some of its members had connections with the president of the municipality of Sidon Nazih al-Bizri, who informed the Turks about the Party's activities. On 10th March 1915, the Turkish authorities arrested a number of party activists in Sidon, Tyre, Nabatiyya and Beirut and some were sentenced to death. Among them was 'Abd al-Karim al-Khalil who was hanged in August 1915.[2]

Repressive Turkish measures generally had the effect of containing Arab nationalist activity in Syria during the war. The continuation of arrests and death sentences by the Turks on the one hand and the initiation of the Arab revolt in 1916 under the leadership of the Sharifians with British encouragement and assistance put an end to Arab co-operation with the Turks and hereafter the Arabs aspired to full independence.[3]

After the Arabs forces took over Syria, it might have been expected that the Shi'ite Arab nationalists would be among those first to benefit. In fact it was the traditionalists who were favoured in these appointments. Muhammad al-Fadl, a Shi'ite notable from Nabatiyya was among those who received telegrams from Sa'id al-Jaza'iri the first Prime Minister of Syria in 1918 appointing him as a representative of the new Arab Government. [4]

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[1] Bazzi, op.cit., p. 39. Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 211.
[2] Dawn, op.cit., p. 155. Al-Safa, op.cit, 1981, p. 218. Shu'aib, op.cit., p. 62.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Nevakivi, op.cit., p. 26. Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 221.

Amir Faisal arrived in Syria as the head of the Arab government and on 5 October 1918 his representative Ilia al-Khuri, accompanied by the Shi'ite leader Kamil al-As'ad, went to Jabal 'Amil where they hoisted the Arab flag in recognition of the Arab government[1] and consequently al-As'ad was put in charge of Jabal 'Amil.

The period from 1918 to 1920 was dominated by a complex of political and military activities in which the Shi'ites played a major role. Their support of the Sharifian government and of Amir Faisal put them in direct conflict with the French. The Sharifian government was short-lived ending in July 1920 with the imposition of the French mandate. In September, Greater Lebanon was established after Beirut, Tripoli, the Biqa' Valley, and Jabal 'Amil had been added to Mount Lebanon. Consequently, the Maronites were no longer the vast majority that dominated Mount Lebanon. According to the census of 1921 the population of Greater Lebanon was as follows:

Table 2: Greater Lebanon's population in 1921.

Sect	Number	Per cent
Maronites	199,181	32.73
Greek Orthodox	81,409	13.37
Greek Catholic	42,462	6.97
Other Christians	12,651	2.08
Sunnis	124,786	20.48
Mutwalis	104,947	17.23
Druze	43,633	7.16

Zamir, ***The Emergence*** ...., p. 98.

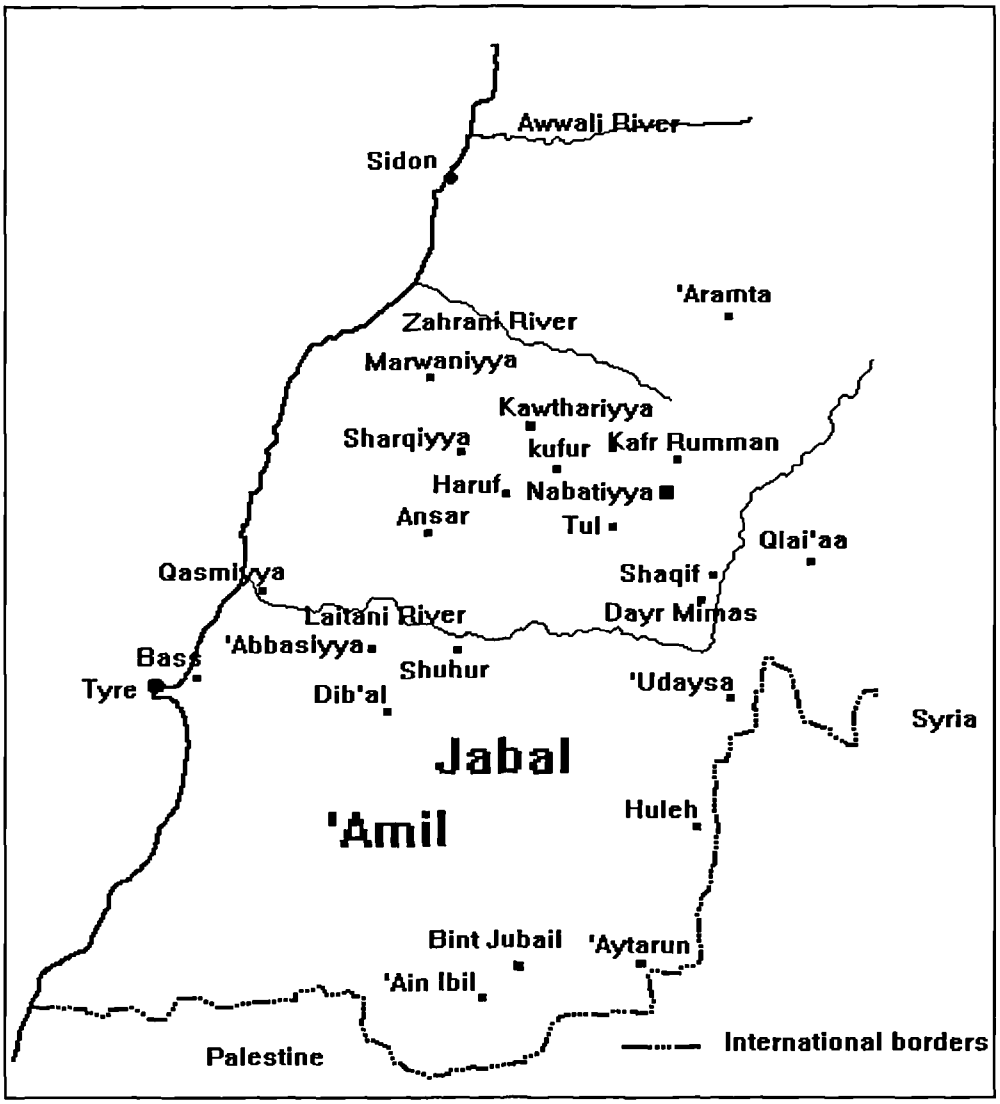
[1] Kawtharani, ***al-Ittijahat*** ..., p. 271.

As has been discussed, the economic decline of Jabal 'Amil had serious consequences for the Shi'ites' inferior position in Lebanon. Unlike the Maronites, the Shi'ites could not develop a modern middle class and consequently, they remained under the control of their zu'ama well into the second half of the twentieth century. Their political affiliation with Arab nationalism was an added factor that deepened the Shi'ites' inferiority.

It has been clear that the Shi'ites did not have any sense of solidarity as a community. This fact was particularly evident when Greater Lebanon was established. Lacking a sense of a community kept the Shi'ites well behind the two leading communities, the Maronite and the Sunni, and even other communities smaller in number than the Shi'ite such as the Druzes and the Catholics.

The next chapter will discuss effects of the Shi'ites political affiliation, and how their status began to develop analysing the internal and external factors that contributed to this change.

Map 4: Basis of guerrilla groups and major towns and villages in Jabal 'Amil mentioned in Chapter Three and Four.



The Roots of a Shi'ite Identity: Political Dynamism 1900 - 1920

The first decade of the twentieth century was the beginning of a political change among the Shi'ites. However, this change was not the making of ordinary Shi'ites but rather the undertaking of the spiritual leader Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din, who played an essential role in bringing it about. The occasion that triggered the motion of change was the reopening of the Ottoman parliament in 1908.

In Lebanon, what is meant by the term 'Shi'ite identity' is the notion that the Shi'ites recognise that they have a distinct set of interests *vis-à-vis* other Lebanese communities, and that these interests can only be achieved, maintained and promoted by a Lebanese Shi'ite leader. In Jabal 'Amil the main competition for Parliament in 1908 was, geographically, between the coastal cities of Sidon and Tyre on the one hand, and the interior on the other. The coastal areas were mainly dominated by Rida al-Sulh, a Sunni notable of Sidon who was backed by some of the leading Shi'ite families in the cities, including prominent names such as 'Usayran, al-Zain and al-Khalil. The interior was dominated by Kamil al-As'ad, of the long established family of 'Ali al-Saghir, who was supported by Sharaf al-Din.

Sharaf al-Din's role was vital as he was the main force which strengthened the position of al-As'ad against al-Sulh. The support of Sharaf al-Din was based on sectarian issues. Since, as will be discussed below, no Shi'ite spiritual leader would hand over the leadership of the Shi'ites to a non-Shi'ite, and since the main competition in Jabal 'Amil was between a Sunni and a Shi'ite, it was natural that Sharaf al-Din would opt to support the latter candidate. This support was a matter of principle rather than a matter of personal choice.

This support continued throughout the political upheavals in greater Syria from 1916 until 1920. Sharaf al-Din's political involvement became most obvious in 1920 when he was a major organiser of opposition against the French. However, the subsequent failure of the Syrian unionists to achieve their objective of a united Syria and the eventual creation of Greater Lebanon were among the factors which forced him to divert his energy and activity from political to social issues. As a Shi'ite *'alim* Sharaf al-Din's involvement in politics can be used to examine how viable are the term quietist and activist which have been used to distinguish between the Shi'ite *'ulama* who involve themselves in politics, and those who do not.

The main objective of this chapter is to discuss the roots of change, and the driving force behind it among the Shi'ites to establish their own identity. The chapter will be divided into four main sections: the 'ulama's perception of political involvement, the political involvement of Sharaf al-Din in the power struggle among the *zu'ama* in the early

twentieth century, his relationships with the French and the Sharifians, and finally, his role after the creation of Lebanon.

1. The 'ulama's perception of political involvement

The issue of the involvement and non-involvement of Shi'ite *'ulama* has been attributed to two different tendencies in Shi'ism, that is, the quietist and the activist. The quietist tendency indicates that the pursuit of power is the concern of the infallible Imam, that is to say that temporal rule is a privilege reserved for the hidden imam which can be resumed only when he appears from his occultation. The activist tendency is vigorous in condemning tyranny, and this passionate concern with the establishment and maintenance of just rule leads to political activism.

In principle, it is agreed by all Shi'ite *'ulama* that Muslims must only live under Islamic control.[1] However, it is the *mujtahid*s who decide when and how a particular form of political organisation lives up to such principles. During the lifetimes of the twelve Imams the Shi'ites deferred to them on various matters because the imam has the sole authority to decide when whether or not to rise against tyranny. Despite the fact that eleven Imams were killed either by the Umayyad or the Abbasid caliphs, the martyrdom of Imam Husain had the greatest effect on the Shi'ites. He used revolution to face tyranny and his struggle against Yazid represented a form of activism. However, after Imam Husain's death and the continuous persecution of the Shi'ites by the Umayyads and the

[1] Abd al-Hadi al-Fadli, *al-Dawla al-Islamiyya*, Beirut, 1979, p. 34.

Abbasids, the other Imams used *taqiyya,* in order to protect their faith. That the *'ulama* resorted to taqiyya when Shi'ism faced extreme danger was a major factor in preserving Shi'ism from extinction. However, it should be noted that the Shi'ites did not live their lives in hiding. One might wonder why the Shi'ites did not convert to another faith to avoid extinction by the authorities. The answer may be found in analysing the effects of the yearly commemoration of Imam Husain and the role of the mujtahids within the Shi'ite sect after the disappearance of the last Imam.

Despite the apparent contrast between them, these two notions, the quietist and the activist, were of major importance reasons for the continued vitality of Shi'ism. The form the *'ulama* would adopt at any given historical moment was dictated by social circumstances.

Nevertheless, making the distinction between the two notions in this way is rather misleading. A more useful distinction than that between activists and quietists may be that between those mujtahids who seek an active political role even if they do not manage to hold political authority themselves, and those who do seek political authority. Several examples exist of *'ulama* who were seeking an active political role. Kelidar suggests, for instance, that in 1920's Iraq, the mujtahids who advocated armed resistance to the British did not seek to take control themselves. They advocated a Muslim Arab kingdom ruled by 'Abdullah, the son of Sharif Husain.[1] Half a century later Sayyid Musa al-Sadr in

[1] Abbas Kelidar, 'The Shi'i Imami Community and Politics in the Arab East', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, January, 1983, pp. 7,9

Lebanon did not seek power and his general attitudes towards the Lebanese were peaceful. Yet he was politically active and sought justice and equality on the basis of equal citizenship. These attitudes of the Shi'ites in Iraq and Lebanon were based on a rational evaluation of their social circumstances. That is to say, neither Lebanon nor Iraq were majority Shi'ite states. The only case which differed was that of Imam Khumaini who attempted to establish an Islamic state. In all these examples it was the mujtahids who decided when to legitimise a revolt, when to become involved in politics, or when to neglect them altogether.

Here it should be showed that, contrary to Kelidar and Lewis, political activism does not necessarily imply violence.[1] The eighth Imam 'Ali al-Rida was the successor to the throne during the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun, although it was unlikely that 'Ali al-Rida would ever actually succeed him, in principle he provided a classic example of non-violent activism which certainly contradicts the views of both Kelidar and Lewis.

The early activities of Sharaf al-Din represented a form of non-violent political activism which lasted until 1920. However, the subsequent years, he became more involved in social welfare activities. This change of activities was motivated by changing of circumstances in Jabal 'Amil and the region.

[1] Ibid. Bernard Lewis, 'The Quietist and Activist Tradition in Islamic Writing', ***Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies***, 1986, pp. 141-147.

2. Sayyid Sharaf al-Din's involvement in local politics

Sayyid Sharaf al-Din was born in 1873 in Kadhmiyya in Iraq; his father had left his village, Shuhur, in Jabal 'Amil to pursue his religious studies in Iraq. When Sharaf al-Din returned he followed his father's path as a cleric,[1] and pursued his own religious studies in Iraq in turn in 1891. He reached a high religious position and received six academic ***ijazat,*** licences, from senior '***ulama*** in Iraq.[2] His religious studies were not confined to Shi'ism but also included Zaidism and Sunnism.

His religious activities took him beyond Jabal 'Amil. In 1910 he went to Egypt and engaged in a dialogue with Shaikh al-Azhar Salim al-Bishri over the differences between Sunni and Shi'ite concepts of the succession to the Prophet and other Shi'ite beliefs. This dialogue was later published as ***al-Muraja'at*** (dialogue),[3] and continued after Sharaf al-Din had returned to Lebanon in 1921. Sharaf al-Din died in 1957, only one year before the new head of al-Azhar Shaikh Mahmud Shaltut issued a ***fatwa*** confirming that the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ite sect does not differ in the basic Islamic principles from the four major Sunni sects.[4] During his stay in Egypt Sharaf al-Din received three more ***ijazat*** from Sunni '***ulama***: Salim al-Bishri, Muhammad Bakhit, and Muhammad al-Samluti.[5]

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[1] 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat al-Raghibin***, Vol. 2, al-Dar al-Islamiyya, Beirut, 1991, pp. 65-68.

[2] Ibid., pp. 87-91. A. Kubaisi, ***Hayat al-Imam Sharaf al-Din***, Dar al-Tawjih al-Islami, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980, pp. 41-43.

[3] Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat*** ..., p. 98. Kubaisi, op.cit., pp. 54, 104.

[4] Sharaf al-Din, ***al-Muraja'at***, al-Dar al-Islamiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 1986, p. 301.

[5] Ibid., pp. 199-201.

Amid the complex political developments at the beginning of the twentieth century, the main objective of Sharaf al-Din was to preserve the identity of the Shi'ites through establishing a political leadership for them. As mentioned previously, the power struggle in Jabal 'Amil was between the interior, mainly in Nabatiyya, and the coastal cities, Sidon and Tyre. Nabatiyya was the stronghold of al-As'ad and his supporters, such as al-Fadl, while Sidon and parts of Tyre were controlled by al-Sulh and his supporters, the 'Usayrans, al-Khalils and 'Arif al-Zain and some prominent intellectuals from Nabatiyya such as Sulaiman Dahir, Al-Safa and Ahmad Rida.[1] Those who were allied to al-Sulh will be named Sulhi or Sulhis while those allied to al-As'ad will be named As'adi or As'adis. It may seem confusing to associate the Sunni notable Rida al-Sulh with the power struggle among the Shi'ites, but this confusion ends when it is known that al-Sulh originally come from Sidon.

The elections to the Ottoman Parliament in 1908 triggered the political activities of Sharaf al-Din. Among the various notables in Jabal 'Amil, Sharaf al-Din lent his backing to al-As'ad. This backing was a matter of principle rather than a matter of personal choice because al-As'ad was the only prominent leader in Jabal 'Amil who possessed the ability to mobilise the majority of Shi'ites behind him, largely because he belonged to the long established Shi'ite family of 'Ali al-Saghir. Also, the other Shi'ite notables were either second in rank or lacked the abilities necessary to preserve Shi'ite interests. More importantly, as some notables were allied to al-Sulh notables, a non-Shi'ite elements,

[1] 'Arif al-Zain belongs to a branch who fled Tyre during the rule of al-Jazzar and settled in Sidon in the eighteenth century.

Sharaf al-Din did not approve of their candidacy. Sharaf al-Din's support for al-As'ad increased between 1918 and 1920 when the French were seen as being committed to promoting Maronite interests as well as sectarianism in Lebanon.

Early indications of local tension between the As'adis and the Sulhis took place during the preparations for the 1908 elections. In Tyre, Sharaf al-Din faced a direct confrontation with the Sulhis of the al-Khalil family. While he was preaching after Friday prayers, 'Abdullah al-Khalil, the head of the al-Khalil family, interrupted and accused Sharaf al-Din of dividing the community. He said; "This town was united until you divided it by calling for the election of al-As'ad." Sharaf al-Din replied;

> Everybody is free to elect whoever they wish. I did not call people to elect al-As'ad as you call for the election of Rida al-Sulh. This town has been suffering from oppression because of the backing you receive from him[1]

Hence, Tyre was torn between the families of Sharaf al-Din and al-Khalil. Tension between the two develop into a contest for control of the city, a contest which lasted until the late 1950s.

2.1 Kamil al-As'ad

The leadership of the al-As'ad family, which was based in Taiyba, has not been satisfactorily documented, despite acknowledgement of the importance of their leadership by various Shi'ite historians, even those who opposed the al-As'ads, such as Al-Safa.[2]

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[1] Interview, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, son of Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain, Tyre, winter, 1992.

[2] al-Faqih, op.cit., p. 370. Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 44. al-Amin. ***A'ian al-Shi'a***, Vol. 15, p. 103. Although an opponent of al-As'ad, Al-Safa recognised al-As'ad's leadership in Jabal 'Amil throughout his book.

Their leadership began in 1649 (1059 AH) and continued uninterrupted well into the twentieth century. What is certain is that their power base was not based on land ownership which was not as big as the land ownership of, for instance, al-Sulh, al-Zain, al-Khalil and al-Amin. Rather, as shown in chapter one, their leadership was based on their reputation as "protectors" of the Shi'ite interests ***vis-à-vis*** the M'ans, the Shihabs and the Ottoman authorities in the seventeenth century. al-As'ad's leadership was further strengthened when they formed an alliance with al-'Umar of Galilee in the eighteenth century, and again when they helped the Ottomans to end the Egyptian occupation in Jabal 'Amil in 1840.

In 1908, Kamil al-As'ad (1868-1924) had maintained his supremacy in Jabal 'Amil by winning the elections to the Ottoman parliament. Beirut and its districts, Sidon, Tyre, and Marj'ayun, were represented by three deputies Kamil al-As'ad, Rida al-Sulh, and Sulaiman al-Bustani.[1] In 1912 al-As'ad's position was further strengthened when the French backed him by persuading the Christian electorates in Jabal 'Amil to vote for him,[2] against his Sulhi opponent 'Abd al-Karim al-Khalil.

While discussing Kamil al-As'ad, some writers[3] are dependent upon Al-Safa's analyses, particularly for the period 1912 to 1916, where he is portrayed as a notable interested

[1] Hakim, op.cit., p. 36.

[2] Kawtharani, 'Wathiqatan Faransiyyatan: Kaifa Hawalat Faransa Ikhtiraq al-Bunya al-Ijtimaiyya li Shi'at Jabal 'Amil' ***Al-Muntalaq***, Vol. 15. pp. 21-36.

[3] The majority of sources which discussed al-As'ad depended on the work of Al-Safa. His work can not be taken without questioning because he was a Sulhi, and also an opponent of al-As'ads. Some of

only in preserving his leadership in Jabal 'Amil. Thus whenever critics mention Kamil al-As'ad they refer to his denunciation of the early Arab nationalists, or his good relationship with the brutal statesman Jamal Pasha the wali of Syria. Critics always portrayed Kamil al-As'ad as a notable who thought that representing the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil was a privilege precluded to anybody else whatever his personality and his capacities might have been.[1]

Critics often refer to 'Abd al-Karim al-Khalil's challenge to al-As'ad in the elections of the parliament in 1912. It has been believed that although al-As'ad won, he regarded al-Khalil as a threat that should be eliminated. This happened in 1915 when al-Khalil was among those who were executed by Jamal Pasha at the instigation of Kamil al-As'ad. My criticism to the critics who interpreted the competition between al-As'ad and al-Khalil is two fold. Firstly, they overlook the fact that al-As'ad was an Ottomanist. Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, the Shi'ite ***marja'*** in Syria, himself a Sulhi, reported that when al-As'ad was elected to the Ottoman Parliament he invited the Arab members of the parliament to have dinner in Tuqatilian restaurant where he advocated harmony and unity between the peoples of the Empire and warned of enmities and division.[2] Given these beliefs, al-As'ad naturally would oppose any moves towards separatism and, in addition, it was also normal that candidates would undermine each other. Secondly, the claim that 'Abd al-Karim al-Khalil presented a challenge to al-As'ad's leadership is quite illogical. As

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these sources are Kawtharani, op.cit., p. 266. Bazzi, ***Jabal 'Amil*** ..., p. 49. Hottinger, 'Zu'ama in historical ..., p. 92-93. Johnson, op.cit., p. 65.

[1] Hottinger, op.cit, p. 92.

[2] Muhsin al-Amin, ***A'aian al-Shi'a***, Vol. 9 pp. 22-23

mentioned in chapter two, al-Khalil was heard of only when the CUP made their coup in 1908. In addition, he did not possess an independent leadership but instead was acting in the orbit of Rida al-Sulh. The competition between al-Khalil and al-As'ad was simply a reflection of the real struggle between al-Sulh and al-As'ad.

Although 'Abd al-Karim al-Khalil was an active and energetic intellectual, he was the instrument which al-Sulh utilised in order to undermine the authority of al-As'ad. His Sulhi associate, Al-Safa, described al-Khalil as being inexperienced, outgoing and not sufficiently familiar with the power struggle in Jabal 'Amil.[1] Certainly such a personality would not be able to cause real damage to al-As'ad but would merely act as an irritant. Despite being a friend of Jamal Pasha, the authority of al-As'ad in Jabal 'Amil continued even when the Ottomans were defeated in 1918 and Jamal Pasha fell from power.

One would assume that the supporters of the Turks such as al-As'ad would have suffered as a result of the Ottoman defeat. On the contrary, al-As'ad retained his supremacy and his status was actually enhanced under the regime of Amir Faisal. After Faisal arrived in Syria as the head of the Arab Government his representative Ilia al-Khuri, accompanied by Kamil al-As'ad, went to Jabal 'Amil early in October and they hoisted the Arab flag in recognition of the Arab Government.[2] al-As'ad was put in charge of Jabal 'Amil by al-Khuri, but was displeased when the area was attached to Sidon under the new administrative system, and above all when his rival Riyad al-Sulh (1892-1951) was appointed head of the provincial

[1] Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 212.
[2] Kawtharani, ***al-Ittijahat*** ..., p. 271.

government in Sidon. This angered al-As'ad who called for a meeting in Nabatiyya in order to have al-Sulh dismissed.[1] This meeting was ineffective due to French intervention, which ordered the suspension of all political activities in Jabal 'Amil.

2.2 Rida al-Sulh

On the other hand Rida al-Sulh (1860-1935)[2] was a long established *za'im* who came originally from Sidon. The power base of the family remained in that city until Ahmad and 'Abd al-Rahim al-Sulh decided to settle in Beirut around 1860. Although they moved to Beirut they maintained strong links with Jabal 'Amil, mainly through Sidon, because of the administrative attachment of Jabal 'Amil to Beirut in 1888, the centre of the wilayat. The result was continued rivalry between al-Sulh and al-As'ad, seen most obviously in the 1908 elections.

A number of factors had determined the prominence of the al-Sulh family in Jabal 'Amil. Firstly, they belonged to the Sunni sect and as a result the Ottoman authorities gave them leverage over Shi'ite notables. In 1883 Hamdi Pasha, the wali of Sidon, visited Nabatiyya and was very impressed with its market where people came from all over Jabal 'Amil to sell their produce.[3] He then appointed Rida al-Sulh *mudir* of Nabatiyya choosing to ignore the leadership claims of the al-As'ad family. Secondly, the al-Sulh owned large amounts of land in Jabal 'Amil, mainly in Tul, al-Sharqiyya, al-Khardali and Sidon.

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[1] Hottinger, op.cit, pp. 92-93. Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 224.

[2] Hassan Hallaq, 'Rida al-Sulh: Rajul al-'Uruba w'al-Wahda al-Wataniyya 1860-1935', *al-Manabir*, issue 68, Beirut, Lebanon, 1993, pp. 91-106.

[3] Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 174.

Thirdly, in the second decade of the twentieth century their well known reputation as Arab nationalists attracted many Shi'ite intellectuals to their side. In addition, although they had moved to Beirut, some members of the family such as Rida took up residence in the Shi'ite dominated area of al-Bashura and often used to celebrate 'Ashura in his home there.[1]

It was not only the 'national factor' which favoured co-operation between al-Sulh and his Shi'ite supporters. The Shi'ite historian Al-Safa was the director of the al-Sulh businesses.[2] 'Arif al-Zain and 'Usayran supported al-Sulh for different reasons. They had their own sources of power, as both were landowners mainly in al-Qasmiyya near Sidon, where they held authority over large numbers of peasants. In addition, 'Usayran's prominence in Sidon increased after 1852[3] when they became Iranian consuls in the city. This position increased their authority and rendered those who worked for them exempt from military service.[4] The close relationship between 'Usayran and the Shahs continued until the fall of the Pahlavi dynasty.[5] Moreover, 'Usayran's status was also strengthened locally through marriage with the prominent Beiruti family of Baydun. Rashid Baydun established al-'Amiliyya, the first modern Shi'ite school in Beirut, and subsequently extended his activities to Jabal 'Amil, where he established a number of schools.

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[1] Interview, Munah al-Sulh, Beirut, winter, 1992.

[2] Hasan al-Amin, son of Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, the Shi'ite *marja'* of Damascus, interview, summer, 1992.

[3] *al-Safir*, 26, July,1990.

[4] Yusuf Tabaja, *al-Za'ama al-Siyasiyya fi Lubnan al-Janubi*, MA dissertation, Social Science Dept., Lebanese University, 1987, p.96.

[5] *al-Qawmi al-'Arabi*, No. 91, 24 June 1991, p. 43.

Yet, the combined strengths of Al-Safa, 'Arif al-Zain and the 'Usayrans were no match against al-As'ad. The only way they could challenge this family's long established leadership was to form an alliance with another well established family, that of al-Sulh. However, because al-Sulh was a Sunni, such an alliance was not of much benefit to them. One major factor contributing to their failure was the sectarian nature of the local communities emerging since the qaimmaqamate, the mutasarrifiyya and the French Mandate. Because the political structure of Greater Lebanon had been established on sectarian foundations, advocating non-sectarian political approaches would have less chance to succeed. Such rivalry between al-As'ad and al-Sulh continued during the Sharifian revolt against the Turks and during the French mandate. The support of Sharaf al-Din also continued in favour of al-As'ad.

3. Establishment of an independent Shi'ite leadership

In 1918 the majority of the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil were committed to the Sharifians. This commitment was based on three main factors. Firstly Sharif Husain's family were Hashimites, which was in itself sufficient reason to support them. Secondly, the Shi'ites were suspicious of a French supported independent Lebanon which might sentence them to oblivion. Thirdly, the general support Faisal received in 1918 placed the Shi'ite minority in a critical position where they had to show commitment to the general Sunni attitudes towards the Sharifians.

The upheaval the Arab territories were going through, especially after 1918, forced the Shi'ite *'ulama* throughout the region to act quickly and support Arab claims for independence. There were two major political visions of the future in Lebanon. The first was Muslim dominated and generally supportive of the Sharifians, and saw Lebanon as an integral part of an independent Syria. The second was Maronite-dominated and aimed at creating an independent state (taking the mutasarrifiyya as a precedent) with French assistance. As Jabal 'Amil was a Shi'ite-dominated area with the Maronites composing only the second largest community, the Shi'ites rejected the idea of a separate Lebanon and thus, implicitly, the prospect of French domination. These divergent views produced a deep rift between the local Shi'ite and Maronite communities.

Table 3: Population of Jabal 'Amil in 1917.

Communities	population
Shi'ites	63,000
Maronites	17,500
Sunnis	13,397
G. Orthodox	5,673
Druze	3,500
Protestant	1,434
G. Catholic	1,124
Jews	629
Total	106,257

al-'Irfan, Vol. VIII Sidon, 1954, pp. 1-5. The figures are not official but based on a survey conducted by al-'Irfan in 1917.

Shi'ite support for the Sharifians was best demonstrated in 1919. Upon his return to Beirut from the Paris peace conference, King Faisal was warmly welcomed by the Shi'ite leaders, although the events which took place also reflected the deep division between the Sulhis and the As'adis. Before the meeting with Faisal, Riyad al-Sulh approached Sharaf al-Din in an attempt to convince him to be part of the group headed by 'Abdullah al-Khalil which would

be the first to shake hands with the king. Sharaf al-Din was informed that if he declined and chose to be with the group headed by Kamil al-As'ad, then they would be the last to shake hands with Faisal. Sharaf al-Din rejected al-Sulh's offer and told him that he preferred to be in the group which would meet Faisal last, so that they could enjoy the longest time 'talking to him'.[1]

On 2 July, 1919, representatives from Jabal 'Amil participated in the National Syrian Congress to support Faisal's efforts to achieve the independence of Syria. It was at this point that they demonstrated the hostile attitudes of the Shi'ites towards the French presence, as well as their support of the Arab government.[2] The Shi'ites' rejection of the notion of a French Mandate was also manifested in 1919 during the visit of the King-Crane Commission.[3]

The Commission came to the region on 10 June 1919, and remained there until 21 July in order to find the real political aspiration of the Arabs, and their views towards the various mandates in general. When the Commission had concluded its work in Palestine it arrived in Tyre where it met a group of Shi'ites from Jabal 'Amil. Sharaf al-Din and Shaikh Husain Sadiq were chosen to represent the Shi'ites.[4] Their requests to the Americans coincided precisely with more general Arab aspirations for a united Syria with Faisal as king. Sharaf al-Din also demanded American assistance to achieve this objective.[5] This angered the French who

[1] Interview, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, Tyre, winter, 1992.
[2] Kawtharani, ***al-Ittijahat*** ..., p. 289.
[3] Dahir, ***Tarikh Lubnan*** ..., p. 33.
[4] Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat*** ..., p. 148.
[5] Ibid.

apparently encouraged an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Sharaf al-Din.[1] The general conclusion reached by the Commission was that the local population was against both French and British control, but that if they had to accept a mandatory authority, they would choose an American one.[2] Failing that, the Syrians would prefer the British to the French. It should be remembered that at this stage most of 'Greater Syria' was under British military control.

3.1 The aspirations of the Maronites

In contrast to the Shi'ites the Maronites were hoping for a separate entity under French protection. In this respect their aspirations had been supported by the French long before 1919. French support for the Maronites in the nineteenth century was part of wider European involvement in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire mostly through the minority communities. France had long acted as the protector of the Catholics of the Levant.[3]

The Maronites were viewed with great suspicion and hostility both inside and outside Lebanon, as they were the only community to demand separation from the rest of Syria and to seek protection from the colonial powers. Nevertheless, their hopes were realised in September 1920 when France established Greater Lebanon. France was determined from the start to assume direct political control in Lebanon because it chose to believe that the Maronites looked to it "for protection from domination of the surrounding Arab Muslim

[1] Jubran known as ibn al-Hallaq a Christian from Tyre, attempted to assassinate Sharaf al-Din. Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat*** ..., p. 149.

[2] Ibid., p. 37. Longrigg, op.cit, p. 91.

[3] Spagnolo, ***France*** & ..., p. 67.

majority."[1] Very early indications of this determination were shown in 1918 when the French ordered a suspension of all political activities in Jabal 'Amil[2] and in October 1918, Colonel De Piépapa was appointed the commander-in-chief as well as governor of Beirut and Tyre.[3]

The creation of Greater Lebanon on 1 September 1920 was a date to celebrate for the Maronite community. And yet the enlargement of Lebanon stirred mixed feelings among the French officers themselves. Robert de Caix was opposed to the creation of Greater Lebanon, and aware of the danger Maronites could face if it was established. He sent a detailed recommendation to Millerand stating that only the Biqa' valley and Jabal 'Akkar should be annexed, while annexation of Beirut and the sanjak of Sidon should be deferred until it became clear how the first two regions turned out.[4] De Caix was even cautious about the inclusion of Beirut, arguing that Beirut would probably soon have half as many inhabitants as the whole of Lebanon, which would greatly alter the character of the Lebanese state. He also recommended that Tripoli should not be included in greater Lebanon.

Gouraud rejected de Caix's reservations and "pressed Millerand to allow him to set up a Greater Lebanon. He regarded the fulfilment of Lebanese Christian aspirations as a repayment of France's moral debt to them for their loyalty and historic attachment."[5] The creation of Greater Lebanon brought a dramatic change to the position of the Christians. The table

[1] F.W. Brecher, 'French Policy towards the Levant 1914-18', *MES*, Vol. 29 No. 4, 1993, p. 645.
[2] Al-Safa, op.cit., p. 223-4.
[3] Longrigg, op.cit, pp.66-67.
[4] Zamir, op.cit, p.92.
[5] Ibid., p. 93.

below shows that the majority which the Christians enjoyed in the mutasarrifiyya had more or less disappeared in Greater Lebanon.

Table 4: A comparison of the population distribution between the Mutasarrifiyya and Greater Lebanon.

Sect	The Mutasarrifiyya	Greater Lebanon 1921	Greater Lebanon 1932
Maronites	58.40%	32.70%	29.11%
Greek Orthodox	12.62%	13.37%	9.88%
Greek Catholic	7.70%	6.97%	5.97%
Other Christians	0.73%	2.08%	5.77%
Total Christians	**79.45%**	**55.12%**	**50.73%**
Sunnis	3.50%	20.48%	22.63%
Shi'ites	5.64%	17.23%	19.81%
Druze	11.40%	7.16%	6.82%
Total Muslims	**20.54%**	**44.87%**	**49.26%**

Zamir, ***The Formation of***..., p.98.

As far as the Shi'ites were concerned, it was French planes and heavy bombardments that ended their rebellion in April 1920, as will be shown below, and consequently led to their incorporation into Greater Lebanon a few months later.[1] This violent method of incorporating the Shi'ites into the new state was greatly resented and caused long term discontent within the state.

[1] Zamir, op.cit., p. 86.

3.2 Shi'ite opposition to the French

The contradictory views of the Shi'ites and Maronites regarding Greater Lebanon and a united Syria were irreconcilable. During the armed clashes of late 1919 and early 1920, political rivalry between the Shi'ite rivals halted briefly, and so al-As'ad's leadership was assured. However, this leadership eventually suffered what may only be described as a hammer blow under French auspices.

3.2.1 French relations with Kamil al-As'ad

French relations with al-As'ad can only be described as unstable. In 1912, early indication gave the impression that the French were supportive of al-As'ad, but as years went by the French were the major factor which undermined the supremacy of al-As'ad family for a number of years.

In 1912, the French intervened in al-As'ad's favour during parliamentary elections. This could be interpreted as their recognition of his leadership of Jabal 'Amil so as to win him to their side. Until 1920 al-As'ad did not meet face to face with the French to reach an understanding,[1] and all arrangements were transacted through members of his family, or other second-rank notables acting on his intermediaries. He promoted the interests of the al-Fadl family, who were the link between himself and General Gouraud in February 1920.[2]

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[1] Kawtharani, 'Wathiqatan..., p. 21-36.

[2] Muhammad Sheraim, ***Jabal 'Amil 1920-1926: Taqallub al-Masir,*** Social Science Dept., MA dissertation, Lebanese University, 1983, p. 151.

In February and March 1920 General Gouraud visited Nabatiyya[1] and al-Khardali[2] and met al-As'ad, in an attempt to persuade the Shi'ites not to support King Faisal and to accept the idea of Greater Lebanon. The general could not convince his audience, and al-As'ad told him unequivocally that he could not encourage his people to accept the French plan since it contradicted his religious principles. In addition, his close association with Sharaf al-Din would rule out such co-operation. Both al-As'ad and Sharaf al-Din played a crucial role in maintaining order in Jabal 'Amil, particularly when tension between the Maronites and the Shi'ites began to increase.

In the late 1919, such tension increased due to contradictory attitudes towards the French, and developed into armed clashes between the two communities, particularly who each had its own guerrilla groups. On the Shi'ite side some groups were well known for their effectiveness, such as those headed by Sadiq al-Hamza, Adham al-Khanjar, 'Ali Bazzi and Mahmud al-Fa'aur. On the Maronite side two major groups were effective, those headed by Ibrahim Fransis and 'Aid al-Hawrani.[3]

al-As'ad sought to calm the situation by setting up direct communication with the French. On 15 April 1920, he and some other notables, al-Fadl, al-Zain and al-'Abdullah

[1] Hasan .M. Sa'd, ***Jabal 'Amil***, Dar al-Kitab, Beirut, 1980, p. 92.
[2] Rida, ***al-'Irfan***, Vol. 7, p. 736.
[3] Nadine Meouchy, ***Les Formes de Conscience Politique et Communautaire au Liban et en Syrie a L'Epoque du Mandate Francais 1920-1939,*** thèse de Doctorat, Universite de Paris - Sorbonne, 1989, p. 148. Taqi al-Din, 'al-Janub al Lubnani ..., p. 135. Dahir, ***Tarikh*** ..., 1974, p. 39. [3] 'Ali al-Amin, ***Sadiq Hamza al-Fa'aur***, Asia Publishing Company, Beirut, 1985, p. 73.

met at Dayr Mimas to discuss the deteriorating security situation in Jabal 'Amil. They suggested the use of local guards who would be paid monthly by the French. The French rejected this because of the high salaries suggested[1] and, more importantly, because the control of these guards would be in the hands of the notables rather than themselves.[2] They were disappointed with the outcome of the meeting in Dayr Mimas and this had further effects on the Shi'ites as a whole. In March 1920 the French authorities had established administrative offices in Sidon with employees from various communities. But as a sign of dissatisfaction, the French sacked all Shi'ite employees and replaced them with Christians.[3] Thereupon, al-As'ad called a general meeting to discuss the issue of security in Jabal 'Amil and to consider the position towards the French and the Sharifians.

3.2.2 The Shi'ite conference of al-Hujair

The deterioration of the situation between the Shi'ites and the Maronites required a quick solution in order to ease the tension. For this reason, al-As'ad sent invitations to notables, intellectuals, guerrilla leaders and '*ulama* to attend a conference to take place on 24 April 1920, at al-Hujair.

It seems from Sharaf al-Din's memoirs[4] that al-As'ad was pressed by some officers from Damascus to prepare for rebellion. The officers gave al-As'ad two choices: he would either

[1] The salary requested for each officer was 15 pounds. Shu'aib, ***Matalib Jabal 'Amil: al-Wahda, al-Musawat fi Lubnan al-Kabir 1900-1936***, al-Muassasa al-Jam'aiyya, Beirut, 1987, p. 75.

[2] Khalil M. Ismail, ***Tarikh Jabal 'Amil al-Ijtima'i 1860-1920***, MA dissertation, History Department, Lebanese University, 1986, pp.55-60.

[3] Rida, ***al-Irfan***, Vol. 35 No 8, 1948, p. 691.

[4] Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat***...,pp.151-152.

comply with their demands, or he would be considered an opponent. In order to avoid any commitment al-As'ad requested consultation with the notables and '*ulama* in an attempt to establish security through peaceful means in Jabal 'Amil, contrary to what the delegates from Damascus wanted.

Delegates to the al-Hujair conference had to consider three matters in order to establish security. First, many opportunists had joined the guerrilla groups and partly subverted their original aims. Secondly, many of the guerrilla groups were supported and trained by the Arab government in Syria, which made the position of the conference delegates very sensitive as they were aware of their delicate position *vis-à-vis* Damascus if they were to deal drastically with the guerrillas. Thirdly, the participants were well aware of French intentions towards Syria and Lebanon, and realised that effective measures needed to be taken.[1] The outcome of the conference was a definite rejection of Allied policy regarding the dismantling of Syria, and the enthusiastic recognition of Faisal as king of Syria.[2]

As far as the Christians in Jabal 'Amil were concerned, Sharaf al-Din was aware that the continuing tensions between the Shi'ites and the Maronites would be made use of by the French to consolidate their occupation. Therefore, during the conference he called strongly for understanding with the Maronites:

> The Christians (Nasara) are your brethren in the country and in destiny. Show to them the love you show to yourselves. Protect their lives and possessions

[1] Sa'd, op.cit, p. 84.
[2] Al-Safa, op.cit, p. 223.

> as you do to your own. Only by this can you face the conspiracy and put an end to the civil strife ....[1]

The conference chose him and Sayyid Husain Nur al-Din, accompanied by Kamil al-As'ad, to convey the resolutions of support to the Arab government in Damascus.[2]

On their way to Damascus, the Shi'ite delegates met with Mahmud al-Fa'aur the Amir of Qunaytra in the eastern side of Jabal 'Amil. The amir was in favour of continuing military activities against the French, but Sharaf al-Din expressed the opinion that a peaceful approach should be pursued with the French to solve the deteriorating situation in Jabal 'Amil.[3] He was aware that adopting a violent approach towards the French would have devastating effects. However, he added that if this peaceful approach failed, the Shi'ites would be more than willing to take military action.[4] al-Fa'aur promised that he would halt all action until he knew the outcome of Sharaf al-Din's meeting with King Faisal.[5] However, while in Damascus, a group of Shi'ite guerrillas attacked 'Ain Ibil, a Christian village, and atrocities were committed.[6]

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[1] Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat*** ..., p. 440.

[2] Ibid., p. 156. Sa'd, op.cit, 1980, p. 76.

[3] Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat*** ..., p.156.

[4] Ibid.

[5] This pacific approach of al-As'ad and Sharaf al-Din was long resented by the al-Sulh party, and still rankles today. In a recent interview, Munah al-Sulh accused Sharaf al-Din of being a French agent, reactionary and an opportunist. Munah divided the participants at the al-Hujair conference into two groups. The first group included the Sulhis such as Sulaiman Dahir, Al-Safa, Ahmad Rida and Ahmad 'Arif al-Zain. The second included the As'adis. Not surprisingly Munah considered the first group to be the progressive one. Interview, Munah al-Sulh, a prominent figure of al-Sulh family, Beirut, winter, 1992.

[6] Meouchy, op.cit., p. 146.

Despite Sharaf al-Din's clear massage for peace, the Maronites of Jabal 'Amil regarded the al-Hujair conference as highly dangerous. The pro-French paper, ***al-Bashir,*** went so far as to claim that Sharaf al-Din had issued a ***fatwa*** calling on the Muslims to eliminate all Maronites.[1] Certainly this report had the effect of increasing tensions between the two communities.

The Shi'ite conference at al-Hujair was the first instance of a religious community in Syria openly taking a political stand in favour of the Arab government. In addition, the conference can be considered as one of the first public rejections of the French mandatory power and of the notion of Greater Lebanon.

3.2.3 Shi'ite armed resistance

Harik suggests[2] that the Sunnis were more active in their opposition to the French than the Shi'ites, but certainly as far as Jabal 'Amil was concerned, the Shi'ite population gave very early indications of their hostility to the French presence. However, the rebellion of 1919-1920 was crushed, and as a consequence, the community was left paralysed both economically and socially.

The exact circumstances surrounding the Shi'ite rebellion are still somewhat obscure. According to Kurd 'Ali's memoirs, Dahir recalls that when King Faisal was in Paris in 1919, he promised the Allies that he would put an end to the activities of guerrilla groups, especially

[1] ***al-Bashir***, 20 May 1920.
[2] Harik, op.cit., 1972, pp. 303-323.

those who were attacking the French.[1] On the other hand, Sharaf al-Din explained that in 1920 al-As'ad did not accept any backing from King Faisal during the rebellion because of his preference for a peaceful solution. Similarly, al-As'ad ordered the villages of Jabal 'Amil not to resist the French, especially after the French used aeroplanes to crush the rebellion.[2] Although these statements of Sharaf al-Din and Dahir seem contradictory, they reflected Faisal's changing attitudes between 1919 and 1920. While Clemenceau was prime minister, there was some understanding between him and Faisal but this vanished when he lost the election to the more right wing Millerand in January 1920. The new government adopted a firm stand on the Syrian question, and this may have encouraged Faisal to assist the Shi'ites.

However, regardless of Faisal's position and deals with the French, armed groups were formed in Syria around the end of 1918 to direct attacks against the pro-French elements. Some Shi'ite groups in Jabal 'Amil were supported by Damascus while the Maronite groups were supported by the French.[3] Ihsan al-Hindi, a Syrian officer, reported in his memoirs that around 300 soldiers from the Sharifian Army fought alongside Shi'ite armed groups. Among these soldiers were Zaki al-Halabi, Sa'id al-'As, and Fawzi al-Qawuqji.[4] It has been reported that there were about seven thousand Shi'ite guerrillas.[5] Although the guerrillas were large in number only a few groups were effective. Four of these groups had wide reputation, that is, the group headed by Sadiq al-Hamza, Adham al-Khanjar, 'Ali Bazzi and Mahmud al-Fa'aur.

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[1] Dahir, ***Tarikh*** ..., p. 39. Zamir, op.cit, p. 415.
[2] Sa'd, op.cit, 1980, p. 89.
[3] Meouchy, op.cit., p. 142. Taqi al-Din, op.cit., p. 135. Dahir, ***Tarikh*** ..., p. 39. Zamir, op.cit, p. 415.
[4] Taqi al-Din, op.cit., p. 148.
[5] Ibid., p. 135.

What distinguished these groups were that their military activities were effective, and that their leaders came from prominent families.

Firstly, the largest group was led by Sadiq al-Hamza of the 'Ali al-Saghir family,[1] and his sphere of activities was limited to Tyre and its surroundings.[2] Al-Hamza's political and military activities were at their height between 1918-1920. His importance can be attributed to various factors. He had important links with amir Mahmud al-Fa'aur of Qunaytra who took up residence at al-Hula, and who in turn had links with Syrian officers. Al-Hamza also developed good relations with amir Faisal and amir 'Abdullah.

Despite being warned by the French when they entered Nabatiyya in 1918 not to carry out any political activities, al-Hamza hoisted the Arab flag in a few villages in Jabal 'Amil as a sign of rejection of French occupation.[3] As Tyre was his major sphere of activities, he co-ordinated his movements with Sharaf al-Din and was also invited to participate in the al-Hujair conference where he was in charge of security. When the French occupied Damascus in July 1920, al-Hamza left for Jordan to serve amir 'Abdullah, and remained there until his death.[4]

A second guerrilla group was headed by Amir Mahmud al-Fa'aur. His group was effective because he was amir of Qunaytra, and particularly because he enjoyed the support of the Syrian officers, mainly Ihsan al-Hindi. His base was al-Hula and he directed his activities

[1] al-Amin, *Sadiq* ..., p. 73.
[2] Meouchy, op.cit., p. 146.
[3] Ahmad Rida, 'Muthakkarat li al-Tarikh' *al-'Irfan* , Vol. 7, p. 733.
[4] al-Amin, *Sadiq* ..., pp. 82-83.

towards Hasbaiyya, Rashaiyya and Marj'ayun.[1] al-Fa'aur was known for being in favour of a military solution rather than dialogue with the French.

A third group was headed by Adham Bek al-Khanjar. He was a prominent figure of the famous family of al-Sa'bi which was prominent in Nabatiyya district. His father was a large land owner in al-Marwaniyya which also contributed to his influence and fame. al-Khanjar co-operated closely with al-Hamza and at times they inflected heavy losses on the French. He concentrated his activities around Nabatiyya and took al-Shaqif castle as his base. He was best known for his attempt to assassinate Gouraud in 1922.

Finally, a fourth group was under the command of Mahmud Bazzi who originated from Bint-Jubail. The Bazzi family was prominent in land-ownership. al-Bazzi concentrated his activities around his area,[2] and he led the attack on 'Ain Ibil which subsequently led to direct French intervention to suppress the rebellion in Jabal 'Amil.

The aim of these guerrilla groups was to resist the French, but their activities were neither organised nor co-ordinated. This was evident because they possessed no central leadership and so relied upon individual leaders to decide when and where to take military action. However, this did not stop them from inflicting heavy casualties on French troops. ***al-Bashir***, described how al-Hamza group used to challenge French tax collectors. On one occasion they arrested a tax collector along with his two gendarmes, and returned all the money to the

[1] Ibid.
[2] Sa'd, op.cit, p. 63.

people from whom it had been collected. In addition, they would threaten those who did pay taxes.[1] ***al-Bashir*** also reported a battle between the French and al-Hamza in which the former lost fifty men (dead and wounded) as well as some weapons.[2]

On the other hand, the Maronites had their own armed groups which were supported by the French, such as that led by Ibrahim Fransis from Qlai'aa,[3] and that led by 'Aid al-Hawrani from al-Kufur near the town of Nabatiyya.[4] The Maronites increased their military activities against the Shi'ites following the Syrian congress of 2 July 1919 where the Shi'ites restated their commitment to a united Syria.

Maronite newspapers depicted the Shi'ite guerrillas as gangs interested only in robbing and killing, while the Shi'ites considered the Maronites as French agents. These divergent views indicates that there was no one common view of external intervention in Lebanon's internal affairs. The difference of perceptions between the Maronites in particular and the Muslims in general continued well into the 1980s.[5] This antagonistic view of the Maronites was shared by Longrigg who adopted a negative view of the resistance in general against the French. His view of the resistance was the following:

> In the Jabal al-Druze, predominantly isolationist in feeling (as well as an asylum for the criminals of all neighbouring areas), the governorship of Salim

[1] Zamir, op.cit, p. 416.
[2] Kawtharani, ***Ittijahat*** ..., p. 308.
[3] Salam al-Rasi, ***al-Muallafat al-Kamila***, Nawfal Press, Beirut, 1977, p. 160
[4] Rida, memoir, ***al-Irfan***, Vol. 33, No. 8, Sidon, pp. 991-992.
[5] Even after forty years of Lebanese independence especially during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the Lebanese appeared not to have a common national allegiance or perception. On the contrary, for instance the Maronites called the Shi'ites who resisted the Israelis with "terrorists", a widely used word.

> al-Atrash was made uneasy by the indiscipline of the other Atrash leaders, notably the Amir Sultan. The latter, offended by the arrest of a criminal [a Lebanese Shi'ite] who sought (in his absence) asylum at his village of Quraya, raised a force of his followers in July 1922, and tried to rally the countryside; but he attracted no major support, ... a small French column was sent to remove the arrested prisoner [Adham al-Khanjar]. [1]

As so often in such tensions a minor incident was all that was needed to touch off an outbreak of violence. In May 1920, while the delegates from the al-Hujair conference were in Damascus, Bazzi's armed group attacked the Maronite inhabitants of 'Ain Ibil and many lives were lost. Various important reasons were reported as to why this attack took place, but the major reason was the difference between the Maronites and the Shi'ites regarding the French presence and the Syrian union.

This sectarian clash gave the French a golden opportunity to increase their protection of the Maronites, who had immediately asked for French intervention. An expedition was launched under Colonel Niger with some 4000 men assisted by Maronite volunteers which crushed the Shi'ite rebellion.[2] On 5 June 1920, Colonel Niger gathered the Shi'ite notables and '*ulama* and forced them to sign a document holding them responsible for the events at 'Ain Ibil. The Shi'ites had to pay 200,000 Turkish gold pounds in reparation to the Maronites, which severely affected the economy of the whole area.[3]

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[1] Longrigg, op.cit, p. 131.
[2] Kawtharani, ***al-Ittijahat*** ..., p. 315. Petran, op.cit., p. 59.
[3] Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat*** ..., p. 163.

Practically, the Shi'ite resistance against the French was ended, but an attempt on General Gouraud's life by Adham al-Khanjar was made in 1922.[1] Adham al-Khanjar was in Sultan al-Atrash's house when he was arrested by the French and later killed. It is even said that this was the principal reason which sparked the revolution of 1925.[2] As an act of honour al-Atrash burned his house, stating that "the house which is unable to protect its guests is not worthy of keeping."[3] However, most resistance activities after 1920 were undertaken by individuals and did not represent the cohesive acts of a community as such.

The downfall of the Shi'ites in April 1920 made it easier for the French to include Jabal 'Amil in the newly created Greater Lebanon which was proclaimed by General Gouraud on 1 September 1920. This proclamation took place in the presence of al-Huwaiyyek the Maronite Patriarch and Mustafa Naja the Sunni Mufti,[4] while most of the Shi'ite leaders, both notables and *'ulama*, were in hiding in neighbouring countries. This new reality caused change of attitudes among the Shi'ites in order to take part in the new state.

4. French influence and the rise of new zu'ama

The events of 1920 were crucial in the sense that all major opposition was crushed by the French both in Lebanon and Syria, and many local *zu'ama* realised that it was time to come to terms with reality. However these events left the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil deeply resentful towards the French authorities. The community was shattered, since its main

[1] Sheraim, op.cit., p. 135. Tabajah, op.cit., p. 122.
[2] Najib Bi'aini, *Rijal min Biladi,* al-Raihani Press, Beirut, 1984, pp. 221-2.
[3] Interview, Munah al-Sulh, Beirut, winter, 1992.
[4] Jubran K. Touq, *Ha'ula Hum Hukkam Lubnan*, Beirut,n.d, p. 20.

leaders had fled from their villages and taken refuge in Syria, Palestine and Egypt, and thousands of peasants had also fled, because they had participated in the revolt and feared reprisals.

In 1922, after al-As'ad had come back from exile, and in a desperate attempt he led a rising against the French but was easily suppressed.[1] Subsequently, his health deteriorated, and he died in 1924. His attitude towards the French adversely affected the standing of his family, and paved the way for second-rank families to establish their own leadership.

After 1920 the position of the second-ranking Shi'ite notables was strengthened for two main reasons. Firstly, because of the absence of al-As'ad, the French had to seek an alternative leaders in order to facilitate the incorporation of the Shi'ites into Greater Lebanon. Secondly, some Shi'ite notables believed that they should take the opportunity to consolidate their position in the new state. The new realities on the ground and the incapability of the Shi'ites to alter the new arrangement forced the Shi'ites to review their position regarding the French and Greater Lebanon.

4.1 Incorporation of the Shi'ites into Greater Lebanon

The sectarian structure which had been the guiding principle behind the qa'immaqamate and the mutasarrifiyya was utilised again in Greater Lebanon. In order to complete the

[1] Longrigg, op.cit., p. 123.

Lebanese sectarian structure the French dealt mainly with the Shi'ite notables rather than the *'ulama*. This was because the new state was of a secular nature which necessitated the exclusion of all hostile elements. On the other hand, some Shi'ite notables were anxious to come to terms with the French authorities particularly when General Gouraud's proclamation was issued in the presence of the Maronite Patriarch and the Sunni Mufti as well as Sunni notables.[1]

In 1922 some signs of agreement began to appear between the Maronites and the Shi'ites. ***al-Bashir***[2] highlighted the misery existing in Jabal 'Amil, and attributed it to the high fines imposed there after the rebellion of 1920. The newspaper even asked the French authorities to cancel the debts in order to encourage the Shi'ites to participate in building of Greater Lebanon.

In 1925 although some Shi'ites took part in the Syrian revolution[3] their participation was disorganised and ineffective. The main Shi'ite notables at the time, Yusuf al-Zain, and al-Fadl from Nabatiyya and Muhammad Sa'id Bazzi from Bint Jubail played crucial roles in accommodating the Christians who fled their villages in Jabal 'Amil during the revolution. ***al-Bashir*** published a letter by Father Ighnatus al-Hadthuni expressing his gratitude to the Shi'ites for their caring and responsible actions. He wrote:

> ... what the Shi'ites did for the Christians in the south will be cherished in our hearts for as long as Lebanon and the Christians remain. What

[1] Zamir, op.cit, p. 130. Dahir, ***Tarikh*** ..., p. 51.
[2] ***al-Bashir***, No 2945, 1922.
[3] Stuart Colie, 'A Prospective on the Shi'ites and the Lebanese Tragedy', in M. Curtis (ed.), ***The Middle East Reader,*** Oxford, 1986, p. 116.

> happened should be written in gold. Long live Lebanon, Long live Lebanese unity and long live the Shi'ites.[1]

Later that year a group of Shi'ite notables met at al-Nabatiyya and demanded to be recognised as a separate religious and independent community.[2] On 27 January 1926 de Jouvenel recognised the Shi'ite community as an independent one with its own judges and ***Ja'fari Shar'ai*** courts.[3] Sharaf al-Din subsequently visited the High Commissioner to express gratitude for the grant of separate personal status.[4]

The French continued their policy of attracting the Shi'ites through including some of their ***zu'ama*** in the first Administrative Committee in Greater Lebanon.[5] The administrative places were divided and allocated along sectarian lines. Two seats were given to the Shi'ites as shown in the following table:

Table 5: Sectarian distribution of the Administrative Committee from 22 September 1920 to March 1922.

Sunni	Shi'ite	Druze	Maronite	Orthodox	Catholic	Total
4	2	1	6	3	1	17

Ahmad M. Haidar, ***al-Dawla al-Lubnaniyya*** **1920-1953**, al-Najmah, Beirut, 1954, p. 9.

The two Shi'ites were Husain al-Zain from Nabatiyya and Ibrahim Haidar from Ba'lbek. Because of their pro-Mandate stance the al-Zain family was a target of Shi'ite rebels in

[1] Shu'aib, op.cit., pp. 97-8.
[2] Ibid., p. 98.
[3] Longrigg, op.cit., 162
[4] ***al-Bashir***, No 3437, 1926. Sharaf al-Din returned to Lebanon after 13 months in exile in Syria, Palestine and Egypt.
[5] From 22 September 1921 to 8 March 1922.

1919 and 1920. The pro-French attitudes of Yusuf and Husain, the heads of the al-Zain family, were clear when they did not participate in the Shi'ite conference of al-Hujair. The absence of al-As'ad from Jabal 'Amil after the French incursions was the crucial factor in enabling the al-Zains to consolidate their position in the community. Yusuf used his good relations with the French to obtain an amnesty so that some villages should be exempted from paying the high taxes imposed in 1920.[1] More importantly, the al-Zain family managed to bring fresh water to Nabatiyya. Previously water was fetched by women from a rain-filled well in the centre of the town. In order to undertake such an important project, the al-Zains sold many of their villages to meet the costs, an act for which they have always been remembered.[2]

In the Representative Council[3] more Shi'ites were selected, such as Najib 'Usayran,[4] and Fadl al-Fadl. It seems that the French continued to follow a policy of bringing second-ranking notables into these councils in order to broaden their control over the various communities on the one hand and to challenge the well established authority of the As'ad family on the other. The change of attitudes not only touched the traditional Shi'ite ***zu'ama*** but also reached those who vigorously resented the French mandate such as the Sulhis.

[1] Tabajah, op.cit., p. 122.
[2] Zecher, op.cit., p. 35.
[3] From 24 May 1922 to 26 may 1926.
[4] Unlike his family, Najib Usayran was well known for his pro-French sympathies.

4.2 The turning of the Sulhis to Greater Lebanon

Following 1920, the life of the Shi'ite intellectuals was in great disorder. They did not have a common view regarding political development, and therefore, they were ineffective and could not form a united bloc to speak of their interests. Rather they were fragmented and continued to work in the sphere of the Sunnis.

Change also affected the Sulhi Shi'ites, who were known for their strong support for the unity of Syria. In a sudden unexpected move, Ahmad Rida, signed a petition in 1921 recognising Greater Lebanon,[1] and many other Syrian unionists followed suit,[2] including Al-Safa who called for an independent Jabal 'Amil under the supervision of the French Mandate.[3] From 1925 the Shi'ites gradually accepted the status quo and did not try to alter it. In February 1933, the two main factions among the Shi'ites, the Sulhis and the pro-French, met in the house of Yusuf al-Zain in Kafr Rumman and demanded that the French authorities revise their policies towards the Shi'ites.[4]

Some sectarian and non-sectarian factors also contributed to the change in Shi'ite attitudes. The Shi'ites of Lebanon were disappointed with their fellow Arabs when the International Archaeological Conference was organised in April 1926 entitled 'The Persian in Lebanon and the Origin of the *Matawila* 'Shi'ites'[5] This conference raised three

[1] Sheraim, op.cit., p. 183.
[2] Shu'aib, op.cit., p. 99.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p. 113.
[5] Shu'aib, op.cit., p. 100.

controversial issues. The first stated that the Shi'ites were originally of Persian origin and that Mu'awiya, the first Umayyad Caliph, had brought them to defend the coast against the Byzantines. Another opinion stated that the Shi'ites were of Kurdish origin, whilst the third asserted that the Shi'ites were Arabs from the 'Amila tribe' who had migrated from Yemen. The Shi'ite intellectuals were shocked by this conference as it was not the time or place for their fellow Arabs to be dealing with such divisive issues, especially when the whole of Syria needed unity rather than division. Knowing whether the Shi'ites were of Arab origin or not would not alter the present situation.

On a wider level, the Franco-Syrian treaty in 1936 was received with mixed feelings in Lebanon. The Maronites welcomed such a treaty, and demanded that a similar one should be negotiated with Lebanon. The French were responsive and negotiations between the two sides began in early 1936. In an attempt to adjust to these developments the Muslims in Beirut organised the Conference of the Coast on 10 January. Views in the conference towards union with Syria varied. Karami of Tripoli demanded full unity with Syria, whilst Salam of Beirut was closer to the Maronites and suggested that it was up to Mount Lebanon to decide whether it wanted to join the Syrian entity.[1]

Despite the fact that some Sulhi Shi'ites took part in the conference of the coast, their role was irrelevant. In addition, they did not reflect a Shi'ite vision for the future of Lebanon but rather their views fluctuated between the different opinions which were

[1] Raghid al-Sulh, ***Lebanon and Arab Nationalism 1936-1945***, D.Phil. thesis, St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1986. p. 158

represented by Tripoli and Beirut. Karami's view was to prevail but when it came to sending a memorandum to the French government, only a few members signed it. Many were reluctant to sign, and some such as Kazim al-Sulh and his Shi'ite ally 'Adil 'Usayran refused to add their names to it.[1] Other Shi'ite participants, including 'Arif al-Zain, Sulaiman Dahir and Ahmad Rida, supported Karami.[2] Further differences of opinion among the Sunnis emerged. On 23 October 1936 the delegates in the Islamic National Conference convened in Beirut in the house of 'Umar Bayhum to raise a memorandum to the High Commissioner recognising Greater Lebanon.[3]

In concluding, co-operation between al-As'ad and Sharaf al-Din played essential role in maintaining a distinctive Shi'ite position in the political upheaval from 1918 until 1920. However, after 1920, new perceptions began to develop among the Shi'ites for various reasons, including the belief of some Shi'ite *zu'ama* that their fortune would be best achieved in Greater Lebanon, the difference of opinion among the Sunnis towards Greater Lebanon, and finally because of the French-Syrian treaty.

[1] Interview Munah al-Sulh, Beirut, winter, 1992.
[2] Hallaq, *Mutamar al-Sahil wal Aqdiya al-Arba'a*, Beirut, 1983, p. 33.
[3] Ibid., p. 35.

Political Awareness and the Role of Sayyid Sharaf al-Din

This chapter will focus primarily on two issues. First is the manner in which Sharaf al-Din managed to create political awareness in Jabal 'Amil through the establishment of social organizations, with special reference to a modern school, al-Ja'fariyya, in Tyre. Secondly, the social, educational and political role that al-Ja'fariyya played in Jabal 'Amil, in addition to its role in the continuing power struggle among the *zu'ama*, will be discussed. Despite the political awareness stimulated by al-Ja'fariyya in Jabal 'Amil, which reached its highest level in 1950s, this was not utilized to advance Shi'ite interests but rather to advance wider Arab causes.

1. Sayyid Sharaf al-Din's social reform

The main aspect of social reform achieved by Sharaf al-Din was the improvement of education. Therefore, some light must first be shed on the conditions and standards of education under the Ottomans and the French Mandate. In addition, other Shi'ite activities in establishing schools will be discussed in order to assess their failure and success.

1.1 Education under the Ottomans

In the Ottoman Empire the style and standard of education varied greatly between villages and towns. In villages education took place in *kuttab* schools, held in the houses of shaikhs

who only taught the Quran. Basic literacy was the highest level most students could achieve. In the towns education took place in the mosques, but it was still largely limited to reading and memorizing the Quran. Prior to the tanzimat period, the government did not have any control over education in cities except where finance was concerned.[1] Although the ***kuttab*** school was the main form of education, the Shi'ites were famous for having a number of well known and respected schools of their own, which had been established by prominent ***'ulama***. However, most Shi'ite schools remained active only during the life of their founders, and lost importance after their death.[2]

In 1840, after the Egyptian withdrawal from Syria, the Ottomans introduced new methods of education as part of the tanzimat reforms. Initially the stages of education during the tanzimat period were five, Primary, ***Rushdiya***, Elementary, ***Sultani***, and higher education with the second and the third stages being merged together later on under the elementary stage. However, these attempts to improve education were largely ineffective due to government financial difficulties. For example, in 1869 the government made four years of primary education compulsory in villages,[3] yet financial difficulties meant that it was impossible to open schools in the towns, let alone in the villages.

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[1] 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Awad, ***al-Idara al-'Uthmaniyya fi Wilayat Suria 1864-1914***, Dar al-Ma'rif, 1969, p. 252.

[2] For more information see Al-Safa, op.cit, pp. 231-252. al-Amin, ***Khitat*** ..., pp. 182-196. Momen, ***An Introduction*** ..., pp. 264-272.

[3] 'Awad, op.cit., pp. 254-256

The elementary schools were established only in the centres of the qada, while the *Sultani* schools were established in the centres of the wilaya, and higher education was found only in Istanbul.[1] This division and distribution of schools clearly shows that the rural areas hardly benefited at all from the tanzimat reforms, with areas such as Jabal 'Amil neither benefiting nor being capable of keeping up with the modernization which was taking place at the centre. Additionally, many Shi'ites did not send their children to the urban centres as they did not have faith in state institutions. Hence because of the lack of schools in Jabal 'Amil and the general lack of trust in state institutions, it was not uncommon for illiterate peasants from Jabal 'Amil to sell their land or cattle in order to send their sons to Najaf for their education.[2]

Table 6: Ottoman schools in Beirut province in 1886.

	Modern Primary		Elementary		Secondary	
	No.	Students	No.	students	No.	Students
Beirut	8	1140	=	=	1	90
Sidon	4	412	=	=	=	=
Tyre	1	43	=	=	=	=
Marj'ayun	2	70	=	=	=	=

This table has been formed from figures shown in A. 'Awad, ***al-Idara ...***, pp. 362-369.

[1] Ibid.

[2] Khalidi, 'Shaikh Ahmad ...,p. 119. Mai Shirawi, ***Education in Bahrain***, Ithaca Press, London, 1989. p. 7.

Table 7: Non-Muslim schools in Beirut province in 1886.

	Primary & Secondary		Higher Education	
	No.	Students	No.	Students
Beirut	38	2500	70	5250
Sidon	3	110	=	=
Tyre	7	340	=	=
Marj'ayun	11	674	=	=

This table has been formed from figures shown in 'Awad, op.cit., pp. 363-369.

In the nineteenth century and regardless of the Ottoman policy of establishing schools in the centre, Lebanon saw dramatic changes in education especially in Mount Lebanon and along the coastal strip as a result of missionary activities. Yet, of all the Lebanese communities the Shi'ites were practically the only ones who did not benefit from such activities, since the remote areas where they lived were not exposed either to the educational influences of other communities or of foreign missionaries.[1] The situation in Jabal 'Amil continued unchanged even when the French took control of entire Syria.

1.2 Education under the French

What fueled Shi'ite grievances further was that during the French mandate and after the independence period, most of the officials who filled state posts had to be French-speaking. Knowledge of the French language was a prerequisite for the holding of any official post, regardless of its importance. Furthermore, candidates for the higher civil service were

[1] Salibi, ***Modern History*** ..., P. 140. Issawi, ***The Fertile*** ..., p. 69.

required to have a university degree, and this put the Shi'ites well behind all other communities.

The following table shows the gross under representation of the Shi'ites in the offices of director general, director, provincial governor, ambassador, minister and service chief.

Table 8: Distribution of higher administrative positions among religious communities in 1946 and 1955.

Year	Maronite	Sunni	Shi'ite	Greek Orthodox	Greek Catholic	Druze	Total Cases
1946	38.7%	29%	3.2%	19.3%	3.2%	6.4%	31
1955	40%	27%	3.6%	11.7%	9%	7.2%	111
Population in 1950	30%	20%	18%	10%	6%	6%	1,420,908

H. Faiyyad, ***The effects of secularism in Lebanese administration***, MA thesis, American University of Beirut, 1956, quoted in R.E. Crow, 'Confessionalism, Public Administration and Efficiency,' in L. Binder, (ed.) ***Politics in Lebanon,*** John Wiley, London,1966, p. 172.

The unequal distribution of education between the communities was one of reasons which prolonged the domination of a handful of educated Shi'ite ***zu'ama***. In addition to being large land-owners, this group was the only one who possessed the skills necessary for participation in political decision-making. The gap between the masses and the ***zu'ama*** gave the latter the flexibility of maneuvering that was needed to seize and consolidate their power, and subsequently to delay any possible social change among the Shi'ites. The ***zu'ama*** were able to maintain themselves as a stable political entity long after independence.

During the mandate period, the French had a policy of spreading French culture, and allocated 1.5 million French Gold Francs to build French schools. The Arabic language became secondary to the French and colloquial Arabic was used instead of the classical.[1] In 1924 public schools were neglected as the budget decreased to L.S.138,801,[2] while one million French Francs was spent annually in support of the French schools in Lebanon.[3]

However, this French policy changed according to the attitudes of each high commissioner. In 1925 General Sarrail was a supporter of secular education encouraged the increase in public schools to 113 schools. Yet, such policy did not last long, as under Henri Ponsot in 1929, 111 schools were closed under the pretext of tightening public spending. Forty five of these were in Jabal 'Amil.[4] French discrimination against Muslims continued particularly in 1934, when their schools received only 7.5 per cent of the government's aid budget, whereas the Christians' received 92.5 per cent.[5] The following table shows the neglect of public schools under the French, confronting them with private and foreign schools, whose main beneficiaries were Christians.

[1] Dahir, ***Tarikh Lubnan*** ..., p. 162. Petran, op.cit., p. 63.
[2] Dahir, ***Tarikh Lubnan*** ..., pp. 179-186.
[3] Zamir, op.cit., p. 38.
[4] Dahir, ***Tarikh Lubnan*** ..., pp. 179-186.
[5] Halawi, op.cit., p. 42.

Table 9: Total number of schools under French Mandate in 1939

Type	Number of schools	Students				Total students
		Christians	Muslims	Jews	others	
Public	182	5982	13869	8	20	19879
Private	1002	60063	21259	278	59	81659
Foreign	325	37509	4374	1642	133	43758
Total	1509	103554	39502	1928	212	145296

This table is based on Boutros Labaki, ***Education et Mobilité Sociale Dans la Société Multicommunautaire du Liban***, Deutsches Institut fur Internationale Padagogische Forschung, 1988, p. 192.

This fluctuating policy of the French had a negative effect on the Shi'ites, who already had the highest illiteracy rates among the Lebanese communities.

Table 10: Illiteracy rate among the Lebanese communities in 1932.

Community	Shi'ite	Sunni	Roman Catholic	Druze	Maronite
Illiteracy Rate	83%	66%	53%	48%	39%

B. Labaki, Mawazin al-Quwa Bayn al-Tawa'if, ***Al-Waqi'a***, No. 5&6, 1983, p. 227. Labaki used figures published in ***L'Orient Le Jour*** 24.1.1932.

Such variations in the literacy rates between the communities continued well into the mid 1950s, and had a direct effect on the proportional distribution of community members in the government and the civil services. As jobs required qualified people, this favoured the Maronites ***vis-à-vis*** the other communities which, subsequently, resulted in their over-representation in government posts.[1] The government was the only hope for the Shi'ites to improve levels of education in Jabal 'Amil, but they were disappointed because the

[1] Michael Suleiman, ***Political Parties in Lebanon***, Cornell University Press, New York, 1967, p. 33.

primary concern of the government was promoting private schools. As a result, the Shi'ites had to depend on their own initiatives in order to improve education in Jabal 'Amil.

1.3 Shi'ite attempts to improve education

The Shi'ites were well aware of the need for educational reform. In 1912, Shaikh Sulaiman Dahir deplored the education situation, commenting as follows:

> Can the 'Amili people supervise their own education by themselves? The old style of education is no good. Has the new one been rejected already? It is a pity that we are losing our best people who are emigrating because of the bad situation ... why are there no famous people now? the government has neglected the people. The citizens should also be blamed for relying on others ... it is good to go to Najaf, but one needs more background in science ... can't the 'Amili people finance their own school?[1]

In Jabal 'Amil most of the reform Attempts were initiated mainly by *'ulama*, but most of their attempts were unsuccessful. This was due to different factors, mainly that of the *'ulama* being tied to a political *za'im* which made their activities short lived and doomed to failure. In addition, Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin attributed their failure to lack of means, as they did not have *awqaf,* charitable funds, and were thus restrained from undertaking any independent activities. Another obstacle to reform was the attitudes of people towards their *zu'ama*. This was the privileged group in society who had access to secular education, and were highly regarded in consequence. They, not the *'ulama*, were the ones expected to solve problems.

[1] *al-'Irfan*, IV, January, 1912, pp. 21-49.

Attempts at reform in Jabal 'Amil began in the early twentieth century but all failed except those initiated by Sharaf al-Din. A major attempt was launched in the late 1920s. The ***Jam'iyyat al-'Ulama al-'Amiliyyin,*** the 'Amili 'Ulama Society, was jointly established by ***'ulama*** and ***zu'ama.*** It had some thirty members whose objective was to establish schools in Jabal 'Amil.[1] The committee was headed by two main members, Shaikh Husain Mughniyya and Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, whose patrons were the al-Khalil and al-Zain families consecutively. In addition, the committee also had other prominent ***'ulama*** such as Shaikh Muhammad Ibrahim, Shaikh Yusuf Faqih and Shaikh Munir 'Usayran. A real chance to establish a school arose in 1932 when the government offered a piece of land, 30 thousand square meters, in al-Bass near Tyre. Sharaf al-Din joined the talks and suggested that the land should be surrounded by a fence and that a hall should be built in the middle for community activities. He thought that only by taking this measure would the Shi'ites be able to control the land as if it were their own. His suggestion was not taken up, and the participants differed on which part of the land the school should be built. The main division manifested itself between the allies of Ismail al-Khalil from Tyre and those allied to Shaikh Najib 'Usayran and his nephew 'Adil from Sidon. Sharaf al-Din, observing the committee's ineffectiveness, withdrew from it. The committee remained unable to achieve its objectives and, as a result, in 1939, the government repossessed the land to house, first, the Armenians who had fled from Turkey and subsequently, the Palestinians after 1948.[2] The failure of the committee can be

[1] Makki, ***al-Hayat al-Fikriyya*** ..., p. 211. Evelyn A. Early, ***The Amiliyya Society of Beirut, a case study of an emerging urban za'im,*** MA thesis, American University of Beirut, 1971, p. 41.

[2] Interview, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, Tyre, winter, 1992. Hourani, ***A History*** ..., p. 333.

attributed not only to the struggle between the *zu'ama* such as Khalil and 'Usayran but also to the lack of *'ulama* with sufficient initiative to undertake such a project.

In 1934, the death of Shaikh Mughniyya, and the decision of Sayyid al-Amin to concentrate his activities in Damascus, brought an end to the *'Ulama* Society. The collaps of the society was a blow to the hopes of the Shi'ites. After the *'Ulama* Society's dissolution, it chose to donate all its remaining funds to the 'Amiliyya school in Beirut.[1] At this stage, Jabal 'Amil had only four government primary schools located in Haruf, 'Aramta, 'Udaysa and 'Abbasiyya.[2]

The lack of unity among the Shi'ite leaders on one hand, and government negligence on the other, pointed to the need for serious reform. As a result, Sharaf al-Din believed that the only way to establish schools in Jabal 'Amil was by working independently. His major objective at this stage was to educate the Shi'ites through a modern school which he founded in 1938, and named al-Ja'fariyya. He believed that improving social status of the Shi'ites in a rapidly developing world would not come about without a modern school system and modern syllabuses. The school became the corner stone that changed the life of the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil in general and Tyre in particular.

[1] Interview, Hasan al-Amin, Beirut, spring, 1992. He boasted that his father Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin donated the money to al-'Amiliyya Society in Beirut but without referring to the reason for this donation that is the failure of the 'Ulama Society which his father was a main member.

[2] *al-'Irfan,* Vol. 11, 1925-26, p. 783.

2. al-Ja'fariyya school and its implications for Jabal 'Amil

Although Tyre was Sharaf al-Din's place of residence and had more schools than the interior of Jabal 'Amil, he was deeply dissatisfied because non of the available schools were Shi'ite despite the Shi'ites being the majority in the city. By 1909 Tyre had a population of 2800 Shi'ites, 2700 Christians and 500 Sunnis, while the total number of Shi'ites in the district of Tyre as a whole was 40,000 and the Christians, 8000. The city had one ***Rushdiyya*** school, for boys and one for girls, and three primary schools, all of which were poorly maintained and cared for. On the other hand, the Christians enjoyed the care of European missionaries who established a Russian, an English and two French schools in the city.[1]

The efforts Sharaf al-Din made will be traced in order to show what kind of obstacles he faced and subsequently overcame. The twenty years of his life after the establishment of al-Ja'fariyya witnessed great changes both regionally and nationally, and the school had a crucial role to play in these. Two more members of Sharaf al-Din's family played essential roles in developing al-Ja'fariyya, and in the political events in Tyre that dominated 1950s. These two personalities are Sayyid Sharaf al-Din's son, Ja'far, and grandson, Husain.[2]

2.1 The start of al-Ja'fariyya school

Before the start of World War I, Sharaf al-Din managed to acquire a piece of land from the Ottoman authorities during the rule of ***Sultan*** Muhammad Rashad. He began building a

[1] Ibid., Vol. 1, 1909, p. 366.
[2] It should be noted that Husain is the nephew of Ja'far

mosque, but construction stopped because of the outbreak of war. Due to fast political development and lack of funds, Sharaf al-Din could not resume the construction of the mosque until 1928. In addition, the power struggle in the city between the Sulhis and the As'adis was an added obstacle that Sharaf al-Din had to contend with. This power struggle manifested itself in the opposition of the al-Khalil family to any project undertaken by Sharaf al-Din family. al-Khalil certainly benefited from his links with al-Sulh as this family had dominant figures in the government. The links between al-Khalil and al-Sulh hindered the activities of Sharaf al-Din at various stages.

The first steps towards reform taken by Sharaf al-Din were to establish a mosque and Husainiyya. He also believed that the only way to ward off the religious and political influence of foreign missionaries was by establishing a modern school while maintaining Islamic teaching. Sharaf al-Din did not confine himself to criticizing parents who sent their children to missionary schools, but provided a school which played a major role in bringing social and political awareness to the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil. In 1938 he had to pledge his house in order to build the school,[1] and from the start he worked to maintain his independence and not rely on any *za'im*. In order to maintain his independence financially, Sharaf al-Din's first step was to build stores to help finance his project. However, the French authorities stopped the construction when al-Khalil urged them to do so, demanding 50 gold lira for permission to continue. This he paid.

[1] *Al-Ja'fariyya fi Sur*, September, 1961. Private unpublished documents obtained from Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.

Above the stores, Sharaf al-Din built a girls' school and boys' school, plus a club, and seven rooms.[1] The girls' school was called ***al-Zahra,*** after the daughter of the prophet Muhammad, while the school, the club and the mosque were named after the sixth imam ***Ja'far al-Sadiq***. However, due to financial difficulties the girls' school did not last long. Moreover, the attitude of parents towards educating girls was not particularly favourable and they preferred their daughters to stay at home.[2] Thirdly, the close links of the al-Khalil family with Sami al-Sulh, prime minister in 1942, and Riyad al-Sulh prime minister in 1943, sped up the closure of the girls' school, as they refused to treat it like any other private school and denied it support. Sharaf al-Din had then to transfer the remaining girls to his home to continue their education. The boys' school continued despite financial difficulties and was opened officially on 12th October 1938.

The first annual report of al-Ja'fariyya shows that the independent line that Sharaf al-Din followed did not stop him from co-operating with some wealthy people who did not belong to the ***zu'ama***. The money used to built al-Sadiq Club was donated by Hasan al-Ruz, while the mosque was built with a donation from As'ad Mustafa As'ad. Hudruj and Mustafa As'ad built one room each.[3]

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[1] Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat*** ..., Vol. 2, pp. 123-124.

[2] Ibid., p.131.

[3] ***al-Ja'fariyya annual report 1938-39***, Private unpublished documents obtained from Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.

2.2 The Objectives

Sharaf al-Din declared,

> ... our religious duty urges us to educate our children in harmony with modern education. However, this education should not be separate from our Arabic and Islamic values. With both, the door will open for our rebirth.[1]

The al-Ja'fariyya school felt that its students should be aware of their identities as Shi'ites and what this meant in the modern world, yet at the same time discouraged feeling of divisiveness or isolation. The philosophy of the school was based on several points: the acceptance of Lebanon as a country, support for Arab co-operation, work for comprehensive understanding between the communities, and the employment of teachers from all the communities.

To enhance Shi'ite identity in particular and Islamic identity in general, it was natural that a cleric like Sharaf al-Din should stress the principal Shi'ite occasions and make them official holidays in al-Ja'fariyya school, particularly ***'Ashura***, the birthday of the twelfth imam and ***'Id al-Ghadir***.[2] Celebrating these Shi'ites occasions would certainly improve the awareness of the Shi'ite students of their identity on one hand, and to present Shi'ism to non-Shi'ite students in a modern and civilized way. In addition to these Shi'ite occasions, Sharaf al-Din stressed common Muslim occasions such as the birthday of the prophet, ***'Id al-Fitr*** and ***'Id al-Adha*** and Fridays.[3]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] al-Ghadir is a place where Prophet Muhammad, according the the Shi'ites, appointed his cousin Ali his successor.

[3] Ibid.

Simultaneously, although education was Sharaf al-Din's primary concern, he did not neglect other activities to ensure the student's progress. He arranged for medical examinations three times a year, and made sure that the students were taught about the importance of health care. He was concerned to establish contact with the parents of students, which was achieved through parties organized by the school. He aimed first to show them the progress of their children, secondly to make them aware of the importance of education and thirdly to secure their continued support.[1] A scout group was also established and named 'the scouts of Imam al-Sadiq'. It was important for the students to get to know their country, so in accordance with these objectives camping trips and visits were organized,[2] not only in Lebanon but also to Damascus, Homs and Hama.[3] The special care that the students received in al-Ja'fariyya paid off, with above average results in the first Primary National Exam (***Brevette***).

Teaching at al-Ja'fariyya reflected one of the original objective of Sharaf al-Din, that is to say, the teaching committee was composed of members of various communities. The Lebanese members of the teaching committee were not only Shi'ite but also Christians who counted for nearly half of the staff, some in key positions such as the headmaster, Michael Sha'ban.[4] In the mid 1950s, due to good relations with Egypt, the cultural councillor at the Egyptian Embassy provided al-Ja'fariyya with fifteen teachers paid by the Egyptian government.[5]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] ***al-Ja'fariyya annual report 1950-1953***, 1953. Private unpublished documents obtained from Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.

[4] ***al-Thanawiyya al-Ja'fariyya, 'Arin al-Ashbal wa Masna' al-Ajial, 1962-63***. Private unpublished documents obtained from Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.

[5] Interview, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, Beirut, winter, 1992.

The success of al-Ja'fariyya and the increase in student numbers led to serious financial problems for Sharaf al-Din. By 1941, 400 students were receiving free education at al-Ja'fariyya.[1] It was at this stage that the role of Sharaf al-Din's son, Ja'far, began to develop.

2.3 Financial structure

Sharaf al-Din did not try to possess full control of the school. Although he was president of the administrative committee, he made every effort to include other important local families. Thus the committee consisted of some wealthy and competent members such as:[2]

Muhammad Halawi	Vice president
Hasan al-Ruz	Manager
Ali 'Ardi	Treasurer
Muhammad A. Abu Khalil	Secretary

This policy of full community participation continued through out the life of al-Ja'fariyya.[3] Sharaf al-Din aimed to get other people involved in running the school to guarantee its continuity.

The first hurdle this committee faced was securing funds. A major policy adopted to secure funds was by special appeals on the main Islamic religious festivals, ***'Ashura***, ***Hajj***, ***Ramadan***, ***'Id al-Fitr*** and ***'Id al-Adha***. By June 1939 al-Ja'fariyya had managed to accumulate 304472 Lebanese Piasters and when contacts were made with Shi'ite emigrants in West Africa the school collected 24200 Francs and 133 English Pounds.[4] Sharaf al-Din was

[1] ***al-Irfan***, Vol. 30, Saida, 1940, pp. 383-387.
[2] ***al-Ja'fariyya annual report 1938-1939.***
[3] Early, op.cit., p. 81.
[4] ***al-Ja'fariyya annual report, 1938-1939.***

particularly interested in securing *awqaf* dedicated to al-Ja'fariyya school only. The first indication of this was his registering the stores as *awqaf*. Such stores continued to increase in number over the years.

On 25 November 1949 contact with Shi'ite emigrants increased when Sharaf al-Din called on them to play their part in promoting education in Jabal 'Amil by forwarding donation.[1] This call occurred as a result of the continuing neglect of the Lebanese government.[2]

2.4 Expansion of al-Ja'fariyya

Despite financial difficulties, al-Ja'fariyya expanded rapidly to fulfill the need of the Shi'ites not only in Tyre but also in Jabal 'Amil in general. Despite al-Ja'fariyya's plea to the government for financial support, the government instead demanded a list of its teachers in order to collect tax from them.[3] While the Lebanese government denied any assistance to Sharaf al-Din, it was generous to other *'ulama*. In 1938, the same year al-Ja'fariyya was established, Shaikh 'Ali Mughniyya, another *'alim* in Tyre closely associated with the al-Khalil, family, received L.L.34,000 from the government to assist him with his social projects.[4]

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[1] *al-Ja'fariyya annual report, 1950-1951*. Private unpublished documents obtained from Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.

[2] Ibid.

[3] *al-Ma'had* magazine, No. 4, 15 April, 1947, p. 2. This magazine was the voice of al-Ja'fariyya mainly to the emigrants who substantially supported it.

[4] *al-Hayat*, issue no. 2973, 1956.

In an attempt to solve the financial problem, fees were introduced in al-Ja'fariyya in 1948, although poor students were exempted. The fees for primary and elementary education varied between L.L.60 and L.L.70 per year, and for secondary education between L.L.150 and L.L.200.[1] In order to encourage students from far off villages a discount of up to L.L.200 was made if more than one brother was enrolled.

In 1949, the deficit in the budget of al-Ja'fariyya was L.L.16,423. This deficit was later covered by subscriptions from the emigrants in West Africa to ***al-Ma'had*** which was published by al-Ja'fariyya, a contribution by the wife of al-Ja'fariyya's manager and a mortgage on Sharaf al-Din's house.[2] By 1953, after it had been in existence for fifteen years, al-Ja'fariyya was still financially dependent on private contributions and its own ***awqaf***. The Lebanese government's response to the needs of al-Ja'fariyya was a gift of L.L.750.00[3]

Sharaf al-Din also believed in the importance of preparing children mentally and psychologically before school. Therefore, in 1950 he established a kindergarten, which initially was not successful due to the negative perception of the parents. Sharaf al-Din explained that a kindergarten is neither a ***zariba, a*** barn, nor a place to waste time and play in, but his initial efforts were in vain.[4] However, he remained adamant and the kindergarten continued until it became an essential part of the establishment, where children spent three years before moving

[1] ***al-Ja'fariyya annual report, 1950-1953.*** Private unpublished documents obtained from Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

to the primary school. They were looked after from 7 o'clock in the morning until sunset and three meals were provided. Both the kindergarten and the primary school were merged and named ***Bayt al-'Anadil***, house of the nightingales.

al-Ja'fariyya provided the full range of education: primary, elementary and secondary. In 1951 the number of students was 640. This expansion was a constant burden on the schools finance, which prompted Sharaf al-Din to send his son Ja'far on three fund-raising visits to Africa in 1951, 1954 and 1956. It would not have been possible to cater for so many students without the contribution of the emigrants. As a sign of appreciation, the main building of the school was named ***Binayat al-Muhajir***, building of the emigrants.[1]

Students at al-Ja'fariyya came from all over Jabal 'Amil, and a boarding section was required to accommodate students living far away.[2] Sharaf al-Din was aware of the psychological impact of students leaving their families, and therefore appointed a matron to administer the boarding section. This facility was very successful as the annual results showed that the highest grades were achieved by students from the boarding section. They were also noted for their good manners.[3]

[1] ***al-Ja'fariyya fi Sur wa Jabal 'Amil***, September, 1961. Private unpublished document obtained from Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.

[2] ***al-Ja'fariyya annual report 1950-1951.***

[3] ***al-Thanawiyya al-Ja'fariyya, 'Arin al-Ashbal wa Masna' al-Ajial, 1962-63.***

Table 11: Expansion of al-Ja'fariyya in Tyre from 1938 to 1951

Level	Year Founded	Foreign Language	Tuition		Total Number of Students in 1951
			until 1948	after 1948	
Kindergarten	1950-1951	=		fees	640
Primary	1938-1939	French	Free	fees	
Primary	1947-1948	English	Free	fees	
Elementary	1944-1945	French	Free	fees	
Elementary	1951-1952	English		fees	
Secondary	1948-1949	French English		fees	

The figures in this table were obtained from the annual reports of al-Ja'fariyya supplied by Ja'far Sharaf al-Din. ***al-Thanawiyya al-Ja'fariyya, 1965-66.***

While education for the Shi'ites in Tyre was improving, the interior of Jabal 'Amil remained neglected. Early signs to improve education in the interior began in the late 1930s. Baydun and his school, al-'Amiliyya in Beirut established a number of primary schools in various villages in Jabal 'Amil. However, these schools were closed down in the mid 1940s,[1] partly because of financial difficulties: the Baydun family was more interested in developing the main branch of al-'Amiliyya in Beirut itself. Secondly, the government was gradually beginning to take the initiative and to establish some schools. Thirdly, although al-'Amiliyya schools were established to educate the Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil, they were utilized to strengthen the position of Baydun and his relatives from the 'Usayran families *vis-à-vis* Ahmad al-As'ad as the power struggle between ***zu'ama*** never ceased.

[1] Early, op.cit., p. 50.

There were some other modest attempts to expand education, but the most effective were the activities of al-Ja'fariyya. By the mid 1940s al-Ja'fariyya had opened summer schools as well as permanent schools in many parts of the south. The aim was to get education to remote villages as well as preparing students for the next academic year.[1] By 1963 al-Ja'fariyya had established 22 primary schools in Jabal 'Amil,[2] most of which remained in existence until 1970.

Table 12: The importance of al-Ja'fariyya School in the city of Tyre and its environs in 1950 in comparison to other schools.

School	No.	Teachers		Students	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
al-Ja'fariyya	3	25	17	524	352
al-'Amiliyya	7	7	-	340	-
Maqasid	4	4	-	145	-
al-Saiyda al-Wataniyya	1	-	3	25	30
R. Catholic	1	-	4	80	60
Anglican	1	-	4	25	35

Jawad A. Rida, ***Tatawwur al-Ta'lim fi Qada' Sur 19001950***, MA dissertation, History Department, Lebanese University, 1980, p. 57.

Apart from al-Ja'fariyya's role in improving education, it also had a role in raising political awareness, which was spreading in 1950s. The next section will discuss the major political upheavals that dominated Lebanon in general and Tyre in particular, and how this political development affected the power struggle in the city between the Sulhi group represented by al-Khalil and the As'adi group represented by Sharaf al-Din. This time Sharaf al-Din did not become directly involved in politics, as did his son Ja'far and Ja'far's nephew Husain.

[1] ***al-Ja'fariyya annual report 1950-1951.***
[2] ***Min Daftar al-Thikrayat al-Janubiyya***, Vol. 2, Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnany, 1984.

3. The political role of al-Ja'fariyya

The period in which the al-Ja'fariyya was founded and flourished was the time of the spread of "revolutionary ideologies" such as Communism, Ba'thism and later on Nasserism. As mentioned before, Sharaf al-Din was seeking to bring political awareness to the Shi'ites through establishing schools inspired by the Islamic faith. However, during the first half of the twentieth century there was a tendency in Lebanon and the Arab countries to drift away from religion towards the adoption of leftist ideologies. This situation was also evident in Jabal 'Amil and prominent especially among the students of the al-Ja'fariyya.

The Shi'ites of Jabal 'Amil were responsive to the national and regional political developments which took place in 1940s and 1950s. The Shi'ite response manifested itself in al-Ja'fariyya which became a venue for expression of political opinions and action. Three major political events had enormous effects on the Shi'ites. The first is the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 which made Jabal 'Amil a refuge for the Palestinians, and as a result Shi'ites sympathy and support for their cause was growing. The second is Chamoun's internal and external policies from 1952 until 1958 which had direct effects on various Lebanese communities. Internally, the electoral reform which Chamoun introduced was widely opposed by well-established ***zu'ama*** because he aimed at undermining their authorities. On the external level, Chamoun pro-Western policies angered the Muslims who opposed Chamoun's supportive policies for Baghdad Pact in February 1955, his neutrality during the Suez Crisis in 1956 and

his commitment to the Eisenhower Doctrine in March 1957. The third is the Egyptian-Syrian unity which increased Muslim's antagonism against Chamoun's pro-Western policies. Eventually, these events led to the civil war in 1958 which started in March in Tyre prior to the major uprise in Beirut which began in May.

3.1 The attitude of al-Ja'fariyya towards the Palestinians

The Shi'ite-Palestinian relationship has been dwelt upon in a recent study by Abu Khalil:

> Contrary to propaganda claims, Lebanese Shi'ites as well as other Lebanese communities, did not express solidarity and brotherhood with Palestinian refugees in the aftermath of 1948. In fact, many of them have actively participated in helping European Jews to infiltrate through the Lebanese border into what was then Palestine[1]

Abu Khalil's statement was based on an interview he conducted with a Shi'ite who helped to smuggle Jews into Palestine. What was said could be true, but Abu Khalil generalized the act of a few individuals into those of the whole Shi'ite community. This statement was not only surprising but also contradictory to all facts as will be mentioned below. He fails to distinguish between individual acts and the attitudes of the Shi'ite leaders towards the Palestinians.

In fact, Shi'ite support for the Palestinians was unmatched, as was shown particularly by Sharaf al-Din and his school. In 1936 Sharaf al-Din supported the Palestinian strike and Palestinian demands for independence. Hajj Amin al-Husaini was ordered out of Palestine,

[1] Asad Abu Khalil, 'The Palestinian-Shi'ite war in Lebanon: an examination of its origins', *Third World Affairs*, 1988, p. 77.

and aimed to go to Tyre to meet with Sharaf al-Din and arrange his stay, but was prevented by French patrol boats. Instead al-Husaini's boat was diverted to 'Ajaltun.[1] Support materialized in 1948 after the first Arab-Israeli war, as the Palestinians sought to reach Tyre which was a major point of refuge. Sharaf al-Din let them shelter in al-Ja'fariyya until the authorities arranged their housing in al-Bass. In order not to let the Palestinian students lose an academic year, he introduced to al-Ja'fariyya a Palestinian curriculum called "Matriculation" to allow them to finish what they had started in Palestine.[2]

Sharaf al-Din's support was part of a wider Shi'ite support for Palestine throughout the 1930s as '*ulama* in Najaf and Karbala, in particular Husain Kashif al-Ghita, were supporters of the efforts of Hajj Amin al-Husaini.[3] Kashif al-Ghita not only participated in *al-Mu'tamarat al-Islamiyya* but also demanded that conferees issue a fatwa asking Muslims to temporarily divert their yearly hajj from Mecca to al-Aqsa Mosque in Palestine in order to make Muslims all over the world participate in acknowledgment of the Palestinian problem.[4] Not surprisingly his demand was not accepted.

In 1956, al-Ja'fariyya organized a guerrilla group consisting of 25 Lebanese and Palestinian students to launch strikes in Israel. Guerrilla activities were not unknown to the ***Deuxiéme Bureau,*** military intelligence apparatus, which was then divided between the Shihabists and

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[1] Interview, Husain Sharaf al-Din, Tyre, summer, 1994.

[2] Eventually, the new students followed the Lebanese curriculum and the Matriculation was later closed.

[3] *al-Mawsim,* 'al-Marj'aiyya al-Shi'aiyya wa Qadaya al-'Alam al-Islami', issue 18, 1994, pp. 187-193.

[4] Interview, Muhammad Bahr al-'Ulum, London, winter, 1994.

Chamounists. Their activities were supported by Colonel Janadri, an army officer and close associate of Shihab, who himself knew about their activities. Shihab and Janadri did not mind the guerrilla activities so long as they did not take place on Lebanese territory. In December 1956, as the Chamounists were against any guerrilla activity, the army was ordered to confiscate all weapons from al-Ja'fariyya and to arrest the Palestinian head master Ibrahim al-Ramlawi, who subsequently was jailed for two months and then released at the instigation of Colonel Janadri.[1]

3.2 Chamoun's policy and its effects on Jabal 'Amil

In 1950s and in particular since the beginning of Chamoun's presidency in 1952, Lebanon was heading towards a civil war. Chamoun's internal and external policies were the major cause that antagonised both the Lebanese *zu'ama* and the masses alike. Chamoun had build himself a system to consolidate his presidency, and was seeking a second term in office. This manifested itself in changing the electoral system, and undermining the traditional *zu'ama*.

In order to achieve his objective of a second term in defiance of the constitution, Chamoun introduced an electoral reform bill in 1953 aiming at breaking up the "big list system". The measure replaced the existing nine large constituencies with 22 single seat and 11 double seat districts, thereby reducing the number of deputies elected from 77 to 44. In the 1957 elections Chamoun introduced another new electoral system, this time increasing the number of deputies from 44 to 66 with the aim of bringing more of his supporters to parliament. As

[1] Interview, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, Beirut, winter, 1992.

a result, some prominent Lebanese, among them the main Shi'ite *za'im* Ahmad al-As'ad, lost the election for the first time. Subsequently, on the Shi'ite level Ahmad al-As'ad, became major instigator of events against Chamoun and his allies in the south in general and particularly against al-Khalil in Tyre.

3.2.1 Continuation of power struggle in Tyre

Chamoun's policy had serious consequences not only in Lebanon in general but also in Jabal 'Amil and Tyre in particular. During his term in office from 1952 to 1958, Tyre experienced the fiercest power struggle the city has ever known. His policies had direct effects on local rivalries. The old competition between the Sulhis, that is al-Khalil family, and the As'adi, that is Sharaf al-Din's family, for the control of Tyre was inherited by Kazim al-Khalil and Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.

This rivalry took two forms: locally in Tyre, and nationally regarding Lebanon's policy towards the Arab cause. In time this rivalry took on an ideological dimension as Ja'far and Husain adopted Ba'thism while Kazim was supportive of the Lebanese president Chamoun. Being both Sharaf al-Din and Ba'thist allowed Ja'far and Husain not only to control al-Ja'fariyya but also Tyre itself following the first civil war in 1958. Ja'far was elected to parliament in 1960, 1964 and 1968.[1]

[1] Although Ja'far and Husain were supportive of Arab cause, their relations with Egypt deteriorated in the 1960s because of disenchantment between Nasser and the Ba'thists increased and subsequently affected the position of the Egyptian teachers in al-Ja'fariyya, who were expelled by Husain when he became the director of the school in 1960. Husain explained that the reason for expelling the teachers was not political but because of their breach of rules and regulations. He claims that teachers were involved in trade at the

Kazim's initial attempts to extend his influence began in 1937 with the establishment of a school in Tyre. This project failed due to his high fees and the successful establishment of al-Ja'fariyya in 1938.[1] Kazim's failure to maintain his school made him anxious to utilize every opportunity to put an end to the successful al-Ja'fariyya school. As mentioned above, the government not only declined to support al-Ja'fariyya but also took part in the power struggle in Tyre. This was manifested when Kazim managed, with prime minister Sami al-Sulh's assistance, to force the closure of al-Ja'fariyya girls' school on 12 October 1942, despite continuous remonstrations by Sharaf al-Din. In 1943 prime minister Riyad al-Sulh used the building as a public school.[2]

Kazim's range of alliances with al-Sulh was extended more effectively when he became a supporter of Chamoun, and later joined his National Liberal Party where he became Chamoun's vice president during certain periods.[3] Throughout the crisis of 1958 Kazim was the only Shi'ite minister in the Sami al-Sulh Cabinet.[4] As for the presidency of the Parliament, Chamoun made sure that his ally 'Adil 'Usayran was elected president of the Parliament, for the first time, which lasted from 1953 until 1959.[5]

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expense of their duties affected the good standard of the school. Husain was director of al-Ja'fariyya from 1960 until 1976. Interview, Husain Sharaf al-Din, Lebanon, autumn, 1994.

[1] Rida, ***Tatawwur al-Ta'lim*** ..., p. 57.

[2] Sharaf al-Din , ***Bughiat*** ..., p. 131.

[3] Goria, op.cit., p. 131.

[4] Ali Z. Balhas, ***Nazra fi al-Waqi'a al-Siyasi al-Dini fi Madinat Sur: 1943-1972***, MA dissertation, Social Science Dept., Lebanese University, 1985, p. 20.

[5] Tauq, op.cit., pp. 34-36.

Kazim's followers had a free hand in Tyre; they could carry guns on the streets while others were unable to do so. He used his connections to undermine the position of his opponents and as a deputy in parliament managed to prevent Ja'far from registering the piece of land where al-Ja'fariyya was built until 1958. The judge advised Ja'far that the case would remain in abeyance unless a powerful *za'im* intervened; Ja'far then sought the assistance of Ahmad al-As'ad who gladly offered his assistance. The case was settled and the Sharaf al-Din family became the legal owner of the land.[1]

3.2.2 al-Ja'fariyya's support for Arab-cause

Political ideologies were developing fast in al-Ja'fariyya, but in a different direction from those of the Lebanese system. In early 1947 student union's elections was permitted. In that year the Syrian Nationalist Socialist Party, SSNP, won the elections against the Ba'thists. Ja'far's nephew Husain, then a student, complained about the result to Ja'far, believing such a result should not have occurred because the SSNP did not have a wide Arab commitment, but was only limited to historical Syria. However, Ja'far rejected Husain's complaint because the SSNP members won fairly and secondly, regardless of their political affiliation, they were students of Ja'fariyya and were entitled to their own opinion. But by 1954 the Ba'this won the student union's elections because the SSNP expressed support for Chamoun.[2]

Chamoun's external polices brought the country into turmoil because, in some cases, he abandoned the country's traditional neutrality. His support for the Baghdad Pact in

[1] Interview, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, Beirut, winter, 1992.
[2] Interview, Husain Sharaf al-Din, London, autumn, 1994.

February 1955, his neutrality during the Suez Crisis in 1956, and his acceptance of the Eisenhower Doctrine in March 1957 angered the Muslims, who rejected Chamoun's external approach. In addition, Chamoun's opposition to Nasser was another major factor that brought the country to civil war.

Staff and students of al-Ja'fariyya were well aware of the various trends in international and regional politics. Their dissatisfaction with the Lebanese government's policies began to grow from 1954 until the start of the civil war in 1958 as a result of Chamoun's pro-western policies. Due to the government's support for the Baghdad Pact, the students took to the streets to show their solidarity with the Arab cause. The main organizer of the demonstration was Husain who chose 15 May, the date the Arab armies had entered Palestine in 1948, to begin the demonstration. During the demonstration the Lebanese security forces opened fire for the first time on a peaceful demonstration, causing the death of one student and paralyzing another, and Husain himself was wounded.[1]

In 1956 during the Suez Crisis, Chamoun's rejection of calls to suspend diplomatic relations with France was not acceptable to most Muslims and demonstrations were launched in many parts of the country. In 1957 Chamoun also affirmed Lebanon's commitment to the Eisenhower Doctrine which was opposed by the majority of Muslim leaders.

[1] Interview, Husain Sharaf al-Din, Beirut, spring, 1992.

The rising in Tyre began on 8 February 1958 following the declaration of the United Arab Republic. al-Ja'fariyya was the base of the opposition to Chamoun. During a demonstration organized by students and staff, four students tore up the Lebanese flag and cleaned their shoes with it. The security forces arrested them and they were sentenced to four months imprisonment. Straight after the announcement of the sentence people took to the streets denouncing the decision.

On 28 March the security forces, army units, and Kazim's followers opened fire on the demonstrators and three people were killed including a student of al-Ja'fariyya named Muhammad Qasim. Four teachers and seventy students were arrested, and some girls were beaten up and others imprisoned.[1] Husain was arrested and jailed but only for 15 days as Sa'ib Salam, Ahmad al-As'ad and Nicola Salim intervened.[2] After his release the leftist groups agreed to appoint him general secretary of the resistance movement against the regime. During these disturbances Kazim demanded the closure of al-Ja'fariyya on the ground that it was a force of unrest. To this Raymond Eddé commented "if you want to close the school you should open a school yourself of better quality and al-Ja'fariyya will close down automatically".[3] al-Ja'fariyya was practically under siege for two months. These demonstration continued and spread until the situation was inflamed by the assassination of the journalist Nasib al-Matni in Beirut on 8 May 1958.

[1] Interview, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, Beirut, winter, 1992.
[2] Interview, Husain Sharaf al-Din, Beirut, spring, 1992.
[3] ***al-Ja'fariyya fi Sur***, September, 1961. Private unpublished documents obtained from Ja'far Sharaf al-Din.

In the Beirut events the anti-government group in Jabal 'Amil was represented by Ahmad al-As'ad a traditionalist leader, 'Atif al-Jammal, a Communist, Muhammad al-Zayyat of the Arab Nationalist Movement, and Ja'far and Husain Sharaf al-Din, Ba'thists. During the civil war Ahmad al-As'ad played a major role in supplying all opposition factions in the south with weapons and support. His headquarters during the civil war were in Banias in south west Syria. In July 1958, he was accused of conspiracy against the Lebanese system and was sentenced to death in absentia.[1] As the civil war began to favour the opposition side, Kazim was expelled and the Sharaf al-Din family took over control of Tyre.[2] The role of al-Ja'fariyya in Tyre was widely appreciated. During the general elections of 1960, the list which included Ja'far Sharaf al-Din was preferred and he gained 11,000 votes out of 17,000.

3.3 al-Ja'fariyya and Iran

As Iran is a Shi'ite state it might be thought that the Shi'ites of Lebanon would have enjoyed a privileged measure of support from the Iranian government. However, Iranian involvement with the Lebanese Shi'ites was minimal. Its relationship was confined to supporting some Shi'ite *zu'ama* who had good relations with Lebanese presidents. The Shi'ites of Lebanon did not experience substantial support from Iran on a social level. Rather Iran's support took the form of offering scholarships to the 'Amiliyya school in Beirut. However, in the 1950s

[1] *al-Nahar*, 25 July, 1958.

[2] The al-Khalil family was expelled three times from Tyre. First, due to Kazim's support for Chamoun as the opposition forces took control. They returned in 1958 when life went back to normal, yet he was attacked several times by gunmen. Secondly, in the 1970s the al-Khalils were known for being anti-Palestinians, which was enough reason for them to leave Tyre as the city was under Palestinian control. And thirdly, due to their cooperation with the Israeli invasion in 1982 they were expelled in 1985 when the Lebanese resistance managed to liberate the city.

the scholarships were terminated and the assistance took a new form of supplying teachers of Farsi.[1]

As far as al-Ja'fariyya was concerned, the relationship with Iran can only be described as antagonistic. Sharaf al-Din and his grandson Husain showed their commitment to the Arab cause against Iran's imperial interests. During the time of the Baghdad Pact, Sharaf al-Din sent a message to the Shah urging him not to get involved in such an alliance because it was against Arab wishes. In 1957, the Shah visited Lebanon after an invitation from Chamoun. As was customary, nearly all prominent Shi'ite ***zu'ama*** visited the Shah and offered their support, particularly 'Adil 'Usayran whose family had functioned as Iranian consuls in Ottoman times. Only Ahmad al-As'ad, Sabri Hamadeh and Sayyid Sharaf al-Din refused to visit the Shah. Sharaf al-Din's refusal showed two points: support for Arab causes, and the independence of the Shi'ite ***'ulama*** from it's political leaders.[2]

In December 1957, Sharaf al-Din died leaving Ja'far and Husain to supervise the school. al-Ja'fariyya's continued its commitment to the Arab cause but this time against Iran. In 1960, Under the directorship of Husain, al-Ja'fariyya refused to accept an offer from the Iranian government to supply al-Ja'fariyya with teachers. At the time this represented solidarity with Bahrain to which the Iranian government was making claims.[3]

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[1] Early, op.cit., p. 81.

[2] Interview, Bahman Kashi, head of North Africa and Middle East Department in the Foreign Ministry of Imperial Iran, London, summer, 1995. He asserted that antagonism between the Shah and Sharaf al-Din was because of the latter's opposition to the Shah's political affiliation with Western politics ***vis-à-vis*** the Arab cause.

[3] Interview, Husain Sharaf al-Din, Beirut, spring,1992.

As has been discussed, the social activities of Sharaf al-Din brought an immense change to the Shi'ites. His success in establishing a modern school at a time when leftist ideologies were popular made the school a nucleus for political activity in Tyre in particular. Subsequently, his social reform, coupled with Ja'far and Husain's adoption to Ba'thism and their support for Arab cause, led them eventually to control Tyre and led Ja'far to become a parliamentary deputy.

The existing analyses of the events of the 1958 civil have overlooked the leading role of the Shi'ites in the south. Ajami, for instance, relates the revolution to acts of the Sunnis and the Druzes without significant Shi'ite involvement. Consequently, the first two communities emerged the main beneficiaries of Shihab's reform.[1] However, contrary to 'Ajami's analysis, the Shi'ites did not only participate in the civil war but they also arose against the system a few months before the rising in Beirut. [2] That the Shi'ite were not given administrative rewards under Shihab could be explained by the fact that they did not have a clear communal identity like the Sunnis or the Druzes. As shown above, the Shi'ites spoke of Arabism rather than Shi'ism, which was clear, for instance, from the adoption of Ba'thism by Ja'far and Husain. al-Ja'fariyya's commitment to the Arab cause was also apparent when it opposed Iran's claim in the Gulf. This Shi'ite attitude was the reason that the Shi'ites did not benefit from Shihab's reform. Unlike the Sunnis and the Druzes, they did not have a clear communal identity to preserve in a religiously divided country such as Lebanon.

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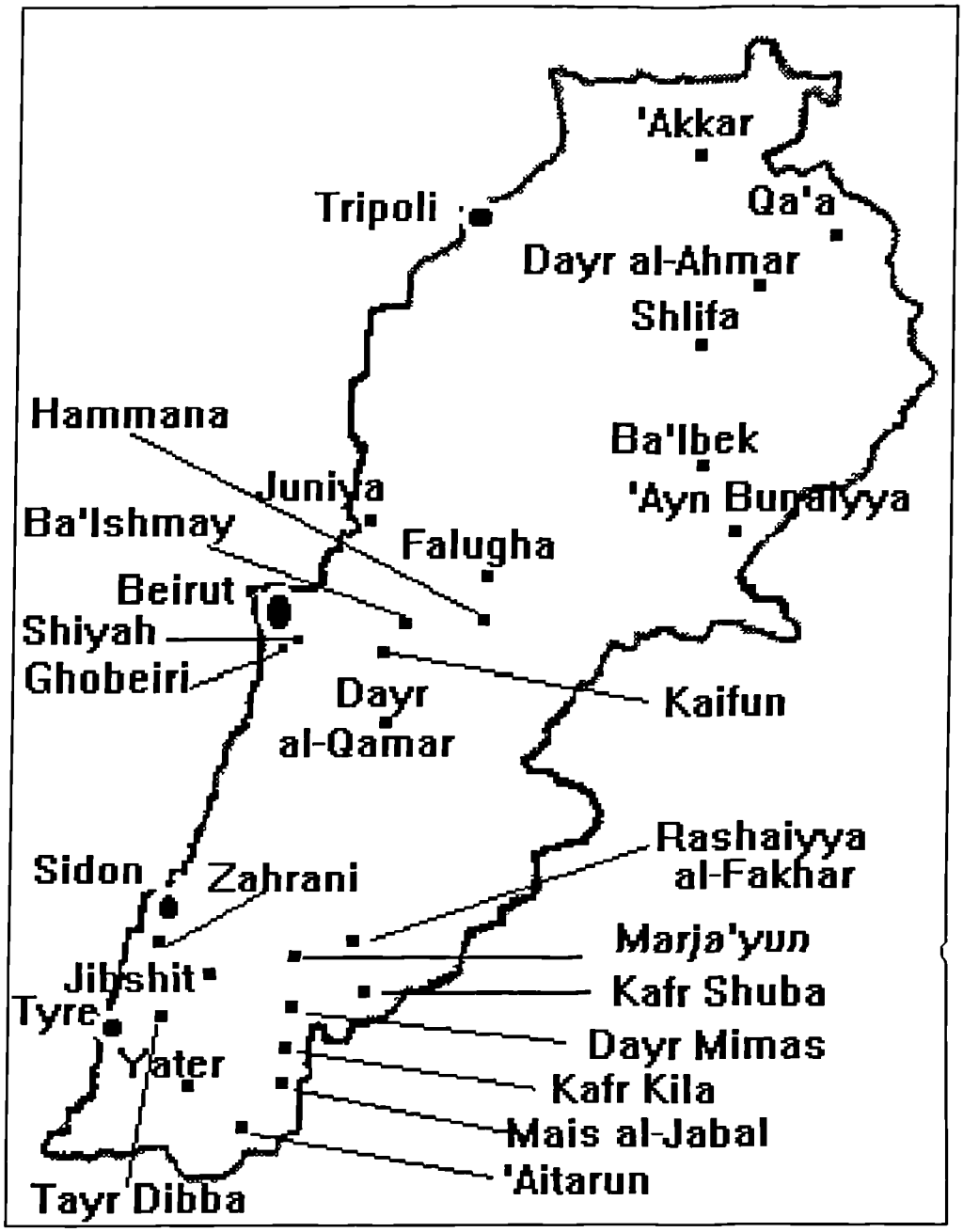
[1] Ajami, ***The Vanished*** ..., p. 87.
[2] Salibi, 'Lebanon Under Fuad ..., p. 219.

Sharaf al-Din's death on 30 December 1957, was a great loss for the Shi'ites in Lebanon. It took two years to appoint a new *'alim* to replace Sharaf al-Din, his successor was not local but was invited from Iran. The next chapter will examine the various reasons for inviting an Iranian to succeed Sharaf al-Din and the consequences of such succession for the Shi'ites in particular and Lebanon in general.

Map 5: Major cities, towns and villages mentioned in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.



Opportunities for Change and the Role of Musa al-Sadr

The issue of Sharaf al-Din's succession is important in the history of the Shi'ites of Lebanon. Although Sharaf al-Din was recognised as the spiritual leader of the Shi'ites in Lebanon, the specific position he held was that of *'alim* of Tyre. Consequently, any *'alim* who would be chosen to succeed Sharaf al-Din would become only *'alim* of Tyre and not spiritual leader of the Shi'ites. However, succeeding Sharaf al-Din would give the new *'alim* a psychological advantage over other Shi'ite *'ulama* in the question of spiritual leadership. A number of local Shi'ite *'ulama* had hoped to succeed Sharaf al-Din but in the event, he was succeeded by an Iranian cleric, Musa al-Sadr. As a result, the first few years of al-Sadr's residence was extremely critical because he faced fierce opposition from local Lebanese *'ulama*, and because al-Sadr needed to prove himself worthy to succeed Sharaf al-Din as *'alim* of Tyre. Realising how important this succession was, al-Sadr utilized all means possible to achieve the status of becoming spiritual leader of the Shi'ites in Lebanon.

It is important to understand how a Shi'ite *'alim* acquires that high status among his followers that would make him a "spiritual leader". Such factors are totally different among Sunnis and Shi'ites. Among the Shi'ites, leadership is not acquired by official

appointment but is rather a combination of two factors, requiring both the high scholarly reputation of the *'alim* and his public popularity. This is in contrast to the position of mufti in Sunni Islam, which is acquired by official appointment.[1]

This chapter will discuss first, the reasons for al-Sadr's arrival. Second, it will analyse the factors for his success in becoming spiritual leader of the Shi'ites in Lebanon. It will focus on three issues: the role of Najaf, the social changes and modernization that Lebanon was undergoing, and al-Sadr's own initiatives to bring change to the Shi'ites. Third, this chapter will consider al-Sadr's attitudes towards Lebanese society, and how these attitudes affected his status in Lebanon in general. Since al-Sadr's activities were not confined to one particular area, the focus from this chapter onwards will be upon both Jabal 'Amil and upon Lebanon as a whole.

1. Controversies over al-Sadr's arrival

al-Sadr was born in Qum in 1929. Here he studied *fiqh* as a young man, and then went on to the University of Teheran where he studied Law. After the completion of his degree he returned to Qum where he taught *fiqh* and logic, and established a magazine called *Maktab Islam* (the Islamic school). During his presence in Qum he became a close associate of Imam Khumaini with whom he was to adopt closer ties in the course of the Iranian revolution. In

[1] Some authors such as Norton and Sicking and Khairallah have erroneously described al-Sadr as a mufti. For the Shi'ites it is improper to refer to imams as muftis. The position of mufti for the Shi'ites of Lebanon was introduced only in 1967 when the Shi'ite Council was established. Norton, *Amal and* ..., p. 39. Tom Sicking & Shereen Khairallah, 'The Shi'a Awakening in Lebanon: a Search for Radical Change in Traditional Way', *CEMAN Reports*, St. Joseph's University, Beirut, 1974, p. 108.

1954 he moved to Najaf and remained there for four years in order to continue his religious education.

At the age of thirty-one he moved to Lebanon as *'alim* of Tyre and aroused a great deal of antagonism from Lebanese Shi'ite *'ulama* who considered themselves more worthy of succeeding Sharaf al-Din. However, al-Sadr's move to Lebanon was not something new for the Shi'ites. Movement of the *'ulama* is common and there are three reasons why an *'alim* might go to a certain place to become its imam. For instance, a prominent *'alim* could request another to go to a certain place to perform his religious duties. Usually such a demand would be respected and complied with. The great *marja' al-taqlid* Sayyid Abu'l Hasan al-Asfahani[1] had summoned Sayyid 'Abd al-Hadi al-Milani and Sayyid Abu'l Qasim al-Khui to go to Karbala to fulfill their duties.[2] A second reason is that a particular *'alim* could be invited into an area to become its imam. Finally, an *'alim* might ask the *wujaha,* local notables, for appointment as imam of their area. In al-Sadr's case he was invited to become imam of Tyre, as will be explained below, contrary to common stories that tell he was chosen by Sharaf al-Din to succeed him.

Inviting al-Sadr to succeed Sharaf al-Din proved fruitful for the Shi'ites in Lebanon. He was able, at least, to create a Shi'ite identity where others had failed. al-Sadr's arrival triggered a series of accusations that the force behind Shi'ite revivalism depended on external forces rather than indigenous ones. Most of these accusations were posed in the

[1] Died in 1945.
[2] Interview, Fadil Milani, the director of Imam Khui Foundation in London, summer, 1994.

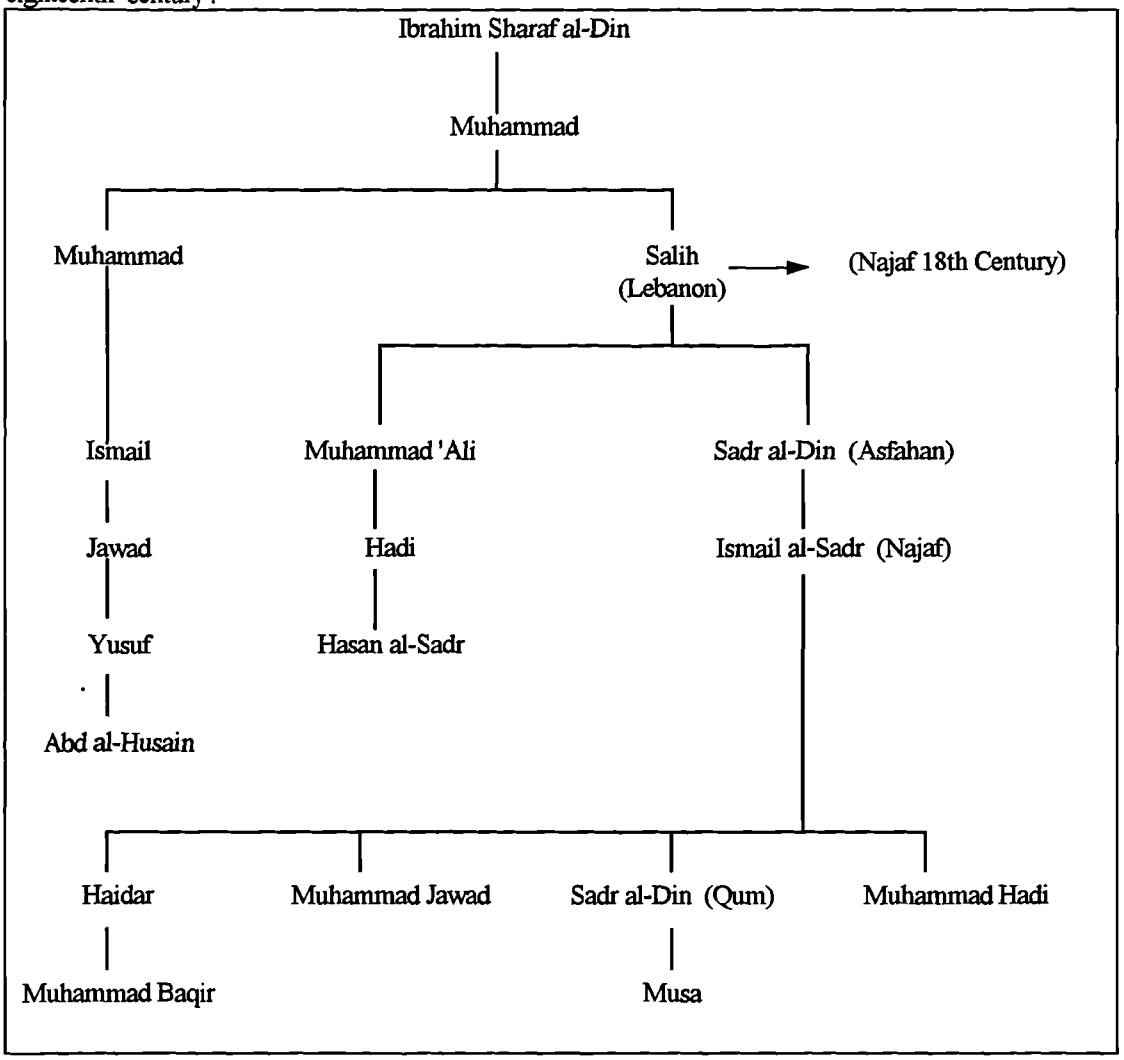
press rather than in academic circles, but press comment reflects aspects of general attitudes on the part of academics and press alike to the Shi'ite revival in Lebanon. [1]

I shall begin by tracing the origins of al-Sadr's family, in order to understand some of the reasons that helped him to become prominent in Lebanon. It has been reiterated that al-Sadr's family went to Iran to teach Shi'ism under the Safavids. Rather, it seems that al-Sadr's ancestors left Lebanon first for Iraq because of persecution by Ahmad al-Jazzar Pasha in the late eighteenth century, at a time when many of the prominent '*ulama* of Jabal 'Amil left the area to settle in Iraq or Iran.[2] The following diagram shows the descent of the al-Sadr family from Ibrahim Sharaf al-Din, the family being established separately only in the nineteenth century.

[1] Some academic such as Deeb and 'Ajami refer Shi'ite revivalism in Lebanon to external factors. See the introduction, p. 1-2.

[2] *Samahat al-Imam Musa al-Sadr, Siratahu, Afkaruhu, Mawaqifuhu wa Nidaluhu*, pamphlet, SISC, Beirut, n.d.

The origin of the al-Sadr family and its emigration from Lebanon to Najaf, led by Sayyid Salih, in the eighteenth century.



This diagram is based on Sharaf al-Din, ***Bughiat*** ..., and on Interview, Sayyid Husain al-Sadr, London, winter, 1994.

Sayyid Salih Sharaf al-Din left for Iraq in the late eighteenth century. Later on, his son Muhammad Ali and grandson Ismail came to be known as al-Sadr. They acquired this name because the Shi'ite ***marja'*** Mirza Hasan Shirazi[1] had two students named Ismail, his own

[1] Hasan al-Shirazi was famous for his fatwa against smoking tobacco in 1899 which was directed against British monopoly.

cousin and the grandfather of Sayyid Musa. In order to distinguish between them al-Shirazi gave the title Sadr (which means front) to Sayyid Musa's grandfather.[1] The al-Sadr branch in Iran came into existence only in the late nineteenth century when Sadr al-Din, the son of Ismail, emigrated to Iran.

The Iraqi branch of the al-Sadr family had some members who played important roles in Iraqi politics, such as Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr, who became Prime Minister in the 1940s, and Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr who was a leading opponent of the Iraqi regime in 1980, and who was later killed. The Iranian branch also had some prominent *'ulama* such as Sayyid Sadr al-Din al-Sadr, father of Sayyid Musa. Musa al-Sadr's Lebanese origin could have been an early legitimizing factor for his presence in Lebanon, and of use in meeting opposition from other *'ulama*.

al-Sadr first visited Lebanon in 1955 in order to meet his relatives from the Sharaf al-Din family. During this visit, he left a positive impression on 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din, and after the latter's death in December 1957, al-Sadr returned to Lebanon in late 1959 for a short period following an invitation from Ja'far to become his father's successor. In 1960 al-Sadr came back to settle permanently.[2]

[1] Interview, Sayyid Talib al-Rifa'i, London , winter, 1994. He was representative of Sayyid al-Hakim in Cairo in 1960s and 1970s, and was famous for conducting the prayer on the Shah's funeral which caused him immense antagonism in revolutionary Iran.

[2] Interview, Husain Sharaf al-Din, Beirut, august, 1994.

It is important to consider the circumstances surrounding the issue of the succession to Sharaf al-Din in order to show how al-Sadr managed to become a major figure in the history of the Lebanese Shi'ites. In the first place, why did Sharaf al-Din not appoint a local *'alim* to succeed him? Secondly, why did Ja'far call upon al-Sadr only two years after his father's death? As shown in the previous chapter, Sharaf al-Din was convinced that the local *'ulama* were either not strong enough to carry out the mission he had started, or were dependent upon the *zu'ama*. The *'ulama* were too bound to the wishes of their patrons, rather than being concerned with the needs of the Shi'ites. It has also been shown how, after a fierce struggle between Sharaf al-Din and the other *'ulama*, he eventually decided to work independently, and subsequently established a benevolent society and a modern school where the rest of the *'ulama* had failed.

On the second question, it was once incorrectly thought that Sharaf al-Din recommended al-Sadr to succeed him. For example, close associates of al-Sadr himself, the Imam of the Tyre's mosque, Sayyid al-Ghurawi,[1] and the general secretary of *al-Majlis al-Islami al-Shi'i al-'Ala*, the Supreme Islamic Shi'a Council (SISC), Muhammad Shi'aitu[2] both mentioned that it was Sayyid Sharaf al-Din who nominated al-Sadr to succeed him. However, if we recall that there was a gap of two years between the death of Sharaf al-Din and the arrival of al-Sadr, it seems that this is not the case. I was told first by Husain and later by Ja'far that the invitation

[1] Interview, Sayyid Muhammad al-Ghurawi, Imam of Tyre, summer, 1987. This interview was conducted for the purpose of MA dissertation.

[2] Biography of Sayyid Musa al-Sadr, SISC, Beirut, n.d.

to al-Sadr to come to Lebanon was issued by Ja'far himself, not his father.[1] Originally Sharaf al-Din asked Sayyid Mahdi ibn 'Ali ibn Hasan al-Sadr to take his place after his death but Mahdi declined the offer.[2]

Trying to understand the reason for this invitation one can find several interpretations. To begin with, Ja'far was his father's right hand in carrying out social reform in Tyre and Jabal 'Amil, besides making many trips to Africa to raise funds. He was well aware of the other 'ulama's almost complete submission to the *zu'ama*, and their general conservatism which made them unsuitable to replace his father. Secondly, he was aware of the conflict between his father and the other *'ulama* which naturally made him reluctant to support any one of them. He therefore decided to invite an *'alim* from outside Lebanon. The delay in doing so was caused by the first Lebanese civil war, which began in Tyre in March 1958 and which meant that there was no time then to think of a replacement for Sharaf al-Din.

Did Ja'far have the authority to impose his will in Tyre? He and the al-Ja'fariyya school played a major role in the uprising of 1958, which meant the family came to have almost full control over the city, and in 1960 Ja'far was elected to parliament. His popularity and his local backing made him a force to be reckoned with, and any opposition to his wishes on the 'ulama's part would have been easily dealt with.

[1] Interview, Husain Sharaf al-Din, Tyre, Lebanon, summer, 1994. And a telephone conversation with Ja'far Sharaf al-Din in May 1995.

[2] Correspondence, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, May, 1995.

Ja'far invited Musa al-Sadr - rather than other non-Lebanese *'alim* - because of the family connection. Among other possible reasons was the support given by Sayyid Ismail, the grandfather of Musa al-Sadr, to Sharaf al-Din's activities in Tyre. To this effect, Sayyid Ismail sent a letter to the people of Tyre enjoining them to support Sharaf al-Din.

Ja'far thus invited al-Sadr, having previously made contact with Ayatollah Shaikh Murtada al-Yasin, the ***Ra'is 'Ulama*** in Najaf, to arrange the move to Lebanon. al-Sadr visited Lebanon in late 1959 for a brief period before he made up his mind, and then came to reside in Lebanon permanently in 1960.[1]

Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, the great ***marja' al-taqlid*** in Najaf, blessed al-Sadr, who had been his student from 1954 to 1959. For Muhsin al-Hakim, Lebanon was a special place particularly since his father Mahdi was the ***'alim*** of Bint Jubail in southern Lebanon. Ayatollah al-Hakim continued his support for al-Sadr for many years and assisted him to consolidate his position in Lebanon.

2. The consolidation of al-Sadr's position in Lebanon

Upon his arrival in Lebanon al-Sadr was received as no ***'alim*** had been before. Many Shi'ite notables came to welcome him at Beirut airport, particularly the speaker of the Parliament,

[1] This is contrary to what 'Ajami belief that al-Sadr was chosen by Sharaf al-Din. He mentioned that Sharaf al-Din was disappointed with the calibre of his own sons which is not the case as some of his sons were highly qualified and well known scholars such as Muhammad Ali and Sadr al-Din. Ajami, ***The Vanished*** ..., p. 43.

Sabri Hamadeh. al-Sadr was subsequently escorted to Tyre by a great procession of people and cars.

This cordial reception and show of support for him from the Shi'ite notables did not last long, and affection and support rapidly changed to hatred and conflict. Even Ja'far, who had been largely responsible for bringing al-Sadr to Lebanon, later came to oppose him. This was because both the notables and al-Sadr had different perceptions of each other's role in society. It can be assumed that the notables thought that al-Sadr would not be different from pervious '*ulama* who had always been dependent upon them. In contrast, al-Sadr had a clear vision of his role: to serve the Shi'ites to the best of his ability rather than to defer to the influence of the notables. In addition, the prominent '*ulama* were at odds with him right from the very start. It is these attitudes that will be discussed throughout this chapter and the following two chapters. My main concern in this chapter, however is to show first how al-Sadr managed to strengthen his position in Lebanese society. There were three major factors behind al-Sadr's success: the support he received from Najaf, the socio-economic changes in Lebanon, and his own various initiatives.

2.1 The support of Najaf

There were three main reasons for al-Sadr's unpopularity among the Lebanese Shi'ite '*ulama*. First, they considered that he was too young and not qualified enough to succeed Sharaf al-Din. Hence, he faced rigorous challenges from some of the more learned '*ulama* such as Shaikh Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya and Shaikh Musa 'Izz al-Din. The former's

fierce opposition to al-Sadr even prompted mediation from Najaf. The second reason was the attitude of al-Sadr himself towards the *'ulama*. Thirdly, al-Sadr's political views on Lebanese co-existence galvanized many young *'ulama* who held or supported rather different views. The first two reasons will be discussed in this chapter while al-Sadr's political views will be discussed more fully in the last chapter.

2.1.1 Shaikh Muhammad Jawad Mughniyya and his opposition to Musa al-Sadr

al-Sadr's principal opponent, Shaikh Mughniyya, was born in the Tayr Dibba near Tyre in 1904, and spent his childhood in poverty after his father's death when he was 10 years old. The harsh situation in the south forced the young Shaikh Mughniyya north to Beirut where the only work he could find was to sell sweets which he made himself. He spent four years there and faced sharp criticism from some *'ulama* for doing such 'humiliating' work, especially since he was descended from a family of renowned reputation. During the Syrian revolution of 1925, he decided to go to Najaf in an attempt to improve his chances. The level of poverty in Najaf was similar to that in Lebanon, but at least as a student Shaikh Mughniyya was offered a place to sleep and eat. After the death in 1936 of his brother who had been imam of the village of Ma'raka, he returned to Lebanon and took over his brother's position.[1] His stay in Ma'raka did not last long and he left in 1938 for al-Jibbin where he collected some money to build a mosque, and where he remained until 1948.

[1] Muhammad J. Mughniyya, *al-Islam Ma' al-Hayat,* Dar al-Andalus, Beirut, 1959, pp. 239-268.

In 1948 he was appointed as a judge in the Ja'fari court in Beirut,[1] and was subsequently promoted to the post of President of the court in 1951. During his Presidency he disagreed with the way vacant positions were filled in the court which was based on favours and connections with those in authority. Therefore, Mughniyya introduced an examination which candidates had to pass in order to be appointed to vacant positions. His position as President of the Ja'fari court brought to him the enmity of the *zu'ama* as he generally opposed their wishes. In 1956 for instance, 'Adil 'Usayran the then speaker of Parliament, nominated a candidate to fill a vacancy, but his candidate failed the test. Although the examination committee was composed of four members; two Sunnis and two Shi'ites, 'Adil 'Usayran directed his discontent towards Mughniyya. In the same year Mughniyya refused to yield to the pressure put on him from Kazim al-Khalil to give a judgment in his favour when al-Khalil's opponent was in the right. With their combined strength both 'Usayran and al-Khalil managed to convince the Prime Minister to remove Shaikh Mughniyya from his position in early 1956.[2]

Not surprisingly, when Shaikh Mughniyya was denied the succession to Sharaf al-Din, a great deal of bitterness arose between him and the new comer al-Sadr. However, the difference in approaches of the two men were an added factor in this bitterness, as Mughniyya remained a traditional *'alim* while al-Sadr had managed to attract support from all sides in Shi'ite society during his early residency in Tyre.

[1] The Ja'fari court was established in 1926 when the French recognised Shi'ism as an independent madhab with its own courts.

[2] Mughniyya did not mention who the prime minister was but until March 1956 it was Rashid Karami and from March until late 1956 it was Sami al-Sulh.

Mughniyya's feelings of resentment towards the situation in which the Shi'ites lived in the south is apparent from a small book he wrote in the early 1940s.[1] However, although he called for change, Mughniyya did not have the means to break away from the traditional circles and framework of the *'ulama* and thus, could only confine himself to preaching. His first task was to establish a mosque, an act typical of a traditional *'alim*. In contrast, al-Sadr's main priority was to improve the social situation of the Shi'ites. This was illustrated in his attempt to end begging on the streets of Tyre. Indeed Mughniyya's desire for change could well have led him to work closely with al-Sadr yet, in reality, things were the other way round, with Mughniyya proving to be one of al-Sadr's fiercest opponents.

The success and reputation al-Sadr achieved in Lebanon served only to increase Mughniyya's dissatisfaction with him. This was made worse by the fact that although Mughniyya had reached the level of *mujtahid*, he still failed to play a significant role in society, largely because of his approach to the social and political issues of the day. His main problem was that his attitude towards people which did not win him any great popularity, especially when he made attacks on the people themselves, accusing them of being "slaves to the masters".[2] For his part al-Sadr never attacked the people in general, but rather the Shi'ite *zu'ama*, which won him great popularity.

[1] Mughniyya, *Al-Wad'a al-Hadir Li Jabal 'Amil*, Dar al-Jawad, 1983.

[2] Chibli Mallat, *Shi'i Thought From South Lebanon,* Centre for Lebanese Studies, Oxford, 1988, p. 19.

The dispute led Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim to try to reach a settlement between Mughniyya and al-Sadr. His interest in Lebanese affairs was party due to the fact that al-Sadr had been his student, and partly because he was particularly interested in promoting a positive Shi'ite identity throughout the Shi'ite world and Lebanon was part of it.[1] He sent Muhammad Bahr al-'Ulum, Mahdi and Hadi al-Hakim to Lebanon with messages for Mughniyya, Shaikh 'Abd al-Hamid al-Hurr[2] and others, to the effect that they should end their opposition to al-Sadr. The three main delegations also met with Kamil al-As'ad for the same purpose.[3]

Bahr al-'Ulum was dispatched more than once to Lebanon to try to solve the problem, and he came to realize how popular al-Sadr was, unlike his rival Mughniyya. For example, in the late 1960s Bahr al-Ulum was staying in a hotel in Ba'lishmay in Mount Lebanon, and when al-Sadr came to visit him, the manager of the hotel, who was a Christian greeted him warmly and ordered his staff to arrange a dinner party to welcome al-Sadr. Bahr al-Ulum was worried about who would pay for the dinner but al-Sadr said he should not be concerned. On his departure the manager refused to charge for the dinner and replied that his payment was in the honor of having al-Sadr in their hotel. The same evening Mughniyya arrived in the hotel after the departure of al-Sadr, but his arrival went unnoticed. Bahr al-Ulum tried hard to convince Shaikh Mughniyya to end the dispute, and to work closely with al-Sadr instead of fighting him, especially after he had seen how both men were received in the hotel.

[1] Interview, Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum, Iraqi scholar in exile, London, autumn, 1990.

[2] Shaikh 'Abd al- Hamid al-Hurr became the Chief Judge of the Shi'ite Court in 1970s, and joined Mughniyya in his opposition to Musa al-Sadr.

[3] Interview, Muhammad Bahr al- Ulum, London, autumn, 1992.

Husain Sharaf al-Din has also shown that attempts were made by other Lebanese figures to end the dispute. A small booklet written by 'Ali Shur[1] shows how al-Sadr was accused of all sorts of things unjustifiably by various people. He advised that this enmity against al-Sadr should end for no other reason than because he had won the people's confidence. According to Husain, 'Ali Shur was in fact Shaikh Mughniyya's brother, muting under a pseudonym because the enmity towards al-Sadr was so immense that he preferred to remain anonymous. Eventually, all attempts at reconciliation failed.

Mughniyya's antagonism remained unabated. His strong resentment of al-Sadr led him to display a portrait of al-Sadr in his home which shows him preaching in a church under a cross in order to show this "unlawful" act to his visitors. In addition, Mughniyya wrote a book entitled ***al-Jasus al-Mu'ammam***, a Spy with a Turban, but it was never published. Sayyid Muhammad Husain Fadlallah strongly opposed publication of the book on the grounds that if the '***ulama*** were to start accusing each other, the public would lose all respect for them.[2]

2.2 al-Sadr's perception of the 'ulama's role and the effects of socio-economic development in society

The way in which al-Sadr perceived the role of '***ulama*** in the society was criticized not only by his opponents from '***ulama*** and ***zu'ama*** as one would expect, but also by some of those who worked closely with him. The fact that al-Sadr was an outsider meant that he was

[1] Ali Shur, ***Qissatuna Ma' al-Sadr***, Tyre, Lebanon, 1966.
[2] Interview, Talib al-Rifa'i, London, winter, 1995.

not involved in local factionalism, or tied to the wishes of the *zu'ama*. He guarded this independence jealously in order to establish his own strong and free position in society. al-Sadr was not concerned with other 'ulama's opinion about him because his main concern was to get the support of the people. According to Shaikh Mahmud Farahat,[1] Director General of SISC, mentioned that al-Sadr marginalized the role of other *'ulama* in their local areas because of his increasing popularity.

2.2.1 Emerging friction between al-Sadr and fellow 'ulama

The main reason for continued antagonism between al-Sadr and his *'ulama* and *'zu'ama* opponents was his popularity among Shi'ites and non-Shi'ites alike. Also, he often failed to respect the status of other *'ulama*. In one case, after al-Sadr finished giving a talk in the Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq Club in Tyre, a few people from Nabatiyya invited him to visit their area to give a talk. al-Sadr instantly welcomed the invitation, but Ja'far, who was present, suggested that it would be more appropriate if the imam of Nabatiyya himself would introduce al-Sadr to Nabatiyya. al-Sadr agreed but his dissatisfaction was obvious.[2] Ja'far added that al-Sadr was wrong to accept invitations from people from various part of the country without cooperating with the local *'ulama*, partly because the *'ulama* usually needed the extra income from ceremonies such as weddings where they were offered money. When al-Sadr took over, and when he was often offered more money than a local imam could even dream of, this antagonized the local *'ulama*. Dissatisfaction with al-Sadr

[1] Interview, Mahmud Farahat, former General Director of SISC, London, winter, 1992.
[2] Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, correspondence, winter, 1992.

was even more the case when he became deeply involved in politics in the late 1960s and 1970s when the majority of *'ulama*, unlike him, were backing the notables.

al-Sadr's openness with Christians was an added factor in the antagonism he received from fellow *'ulama*. During a visit to a church in Tripoli in the early 1970s al-Sadr was accompanied by the vice president of the Shi'ite Council Shaikh Sulaiman al-Yahfufi and Sayyid Talib al-Rifa'i. During his talk al-Sadr three times used the word *Abuna* which means Christ as God, and in consequence, al-Yahfufi declared to al-Rifa'i that he intended to resign from the Shi'ite council.[1]

2.2.2 Independence of the 'ulama and the role of al-Sadr

Criticism of al-Sadr's approach towards the notables was also mounting. It was clear that he resented the subordination of the *'ulama* to the notables, which pushed him to establish his independence, and promote it further so as to establish his leadership. However, despite this resentment he did not stop working with them, although he was particularly cautious with regard to one particular *za'im*, that is, Kamil al-As'ad. In this section, the early relationship between al-Sadr and al-As'ad will be highlighted in order to show how al-Sadr began to challenge al-As'ad's leadership.

[1] Shaikh Mahmud Farahat mentioned another reason for al-Yahfufi's resignation. The death of Husain al-Ba'lbaki the first Shi'ite mufti, al-Yahfufi was hoping to become the new mufti, but al-Sadr instead appointed Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan. This angered al-Yahfufi who wanted to keep the position of the mufti in Ba'lbaki hands, an attitude al-Sadr clearly rejected. Farahat explained that al-Yahfufi wanted the position of the mufti because it was paid unlike the position of vice president which was purely honorary. Interview, Mahmud Farahat, London, winter, 1992.

As the al-As'ad family was the strongest in Jabal 'Amil, it was important for al-Sadr that the authority of Kamil al-As'ad should be undermined in order to establish his own. To begin with, between 1960-64 relations between the two were harmonious, but tensions emerged in 1964 because of approaching parliamentary elections. al-As'ad approached al-Sadr in order to gain his pledge of support, but al-Sadr saw the elections as giving him an opportunity to defy al-As'ad's domination in Jabal 'Amil. From then on relations had worsened between the two parties.

Muhammad Safiy al-Din, a former deputy and minister, reported that during al-As'ad's campaign for the 1964 parliamentary elections, he visited Tyre and met with al-Sadr as he was hoping that al-Sadr would support his candidates. al-Sadr indicated that he was not interested in al-As'ad's candidates and that he would not necessarily support them. Since then al-Sadr had pursued a policy of defiance towards al-As'ad. He told him:

> I cannot give you my opinion. I have my own feelings which I do not have to reveal to you.[1]

In general al-Sadr's policy was to support other candidates, but al-As'ad's list won the seats in Tyre.

Ja'far thought that it was important for the Shi'ites that al-Sadr and al-As'ad should work together. To this effect he organized a meeting in the late 1960s between the two in Kaifun where al-Sadr would spend the summer, but al-Sadr left Kaifun shortly before al-As'ad's

[1] Muhammad Safiy al-Din, Memoir, ***al-Shira'a'***, 12 October, 1987.

arrival.[1] The only interpretation of this is that al-Sadr was intent on avoiding cooperation with al-As'ad, perhaps because he thought any cooperation would put him in a subordinate position for which he had no desire. This put Ja'far in a difficult position, since his fortunes had long been tied to those of the al-As'ad family. To avoid embarrassment he called upon Fawzi Sa'd, a respected personality in the area, to announce that al-As'ad would be making a visit to them, and a large number of people duly turned out to welcome al-As'ad.

Ja'far warned al-Sadr that his policy of playing on differences between the *zu'ama* was not acceptable but al-Sadr replied that it was important to undermine al-As'ad if he wanted to enhance his own status locally, while the rest of the notables remained easy to deal with. For example, al-Sadr had given his support to Mahmud 'Ammar in 1968 during the election of the speaker of parliament. Relations between Ja'far and al-Sadr then began to worsen, primarily due to Ja'far's criticism of al-Sadr's attitudes towards the *'ulama* and the notables. While al-Sadr had hoped to be in charge of al-Ja'fariyya school, Ja'far refused to hand it over to him because it was his own chief power base. However, Ja'far did hand over the *Jama'iyyat al-Bir w'al -Ihsan*, Society for Piety and Charity, which had been established by his father.[2]

The consolidation of al-Sadr's position in Lebanon was based not only on the support of Najaf and his attitudes towards *'ulama* and *zu'ama*, but also on the rapid social and

[1] Interview, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, Tyre, winter, 1992.
[2] The society was established by Sayyid Sharaf al-Din in Tyre in 1948.

economic changes which were taking place in Lebanon. It was inevitable that the Shi'ites should mix with other communities and be affected by social and economic change and exposed to revolutionary ideologies, particularly when they migrated to urban centres. This migration resulted in considerable reduction of the zu'ama's authority over the Shi'ites.

2.2.3 Socio-economic modernisation and its effects on social structure

The socio-economic modernization which Lebanon was going through offered al-Sadr a golden opportunity to revitalize the community and create a sense of identity for it. The fact that the process of modernization was so uneven between the various Lebanese areas, posed serious problems for the state.[1] The two main Shi'ite dominated areas, the Biqa' and the south, were agricultural. However, the fact that the Lebanese economy was geared towards the tertiary sector - mainly banking, foreign investment and commerce - meant that the share of the commodity producing sector in the economy - mainly agriculture - gradually declined, and with it the prosperity of these Shi'ite areas.

The big difference between the two sectors was shown in their share in the gross domestic products, GDP. The tertiary sector's share increased from 62 percent in 1950 to 72 percent in 1970.[2] On the other hand the commodity producing sector declined to only 30 percent of the GDP. The main reason for this big difference between the two sectors was the growing importance of Beirut which became a regional headquarters for an increasing number of

[1] Michael Hudson, ***The Precarious Republic***, Westview Press, Oxford, 1985, p.53
[2] Nasr, 'The Crisis of Lebanese Capitalism', ***MERIP Reports***, No. 73, 1978, p. 3.

foreign financial institutions, particularly western ones.[1] The importance of foreign investment contributed greatly to the increase of banking deposits, which grew from 20 percent in 1950 to 122 percent in 1974. Contrary to this development, the commodity producing sector (mainly agriculture) did not receive enough support from the government, as shown by the small amount of money spent on this sector in comparison with the tertiary sector. In 1968, banking credits for agriculture accounted for 4.3 percent, while for commerce it accounted for 53 percent.[2]

The decline of agriculture had serious effects on rural population, which decreased from 48.9 percent in 1959 to 34 percent in 1964, and to 18.9 percent in 1970. The Shi'ites in the Biqa' and the south were hit hardest, because the main crops cultivated were sugar beet and tobacco respectively. This specialization contributed to the decline of agriculture mainly due to monopoly policy and minimal state investment. Prior to the Civil War in 1975 two large firms monopolized the importation of all fertilizers and insecticides, and nearly 25 merchants were responsible for the purchase of almost all agricultural produce.[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 4.

[2] M. Sluglett & P. Sluglett, 'Aspects of the Changing Nature of Lebanese Confessional Politics: al-Murabitun, 1958-1979' ***Peuples Mediterraneens,*** Vol. 20, 1982, p. 65. Gates, ***The Role of Political Economy in Lebanon,*** Center for Lebanese Studies, p. 22.R. Owen, ' The Political Economy of Grand Liban, 1920-70', in R. Owen, (ed.), ***Essays on the Crisis of Lebanon,*** Ithaca Press, London, 1976, p. 28. Suleiman, ***Political Parties...***, p. 26.

[3] Nasr, 'The Crisis ..., p. 8.

In the south, production of tobacco was controlled by the ***Régie des Tabacs*** [1] which was the exclusive buyer of the crop and was the only authority that granted licenses to plant it. The ***Régie*** contributed to the decline of agriculture because it stopped granting licenses from 1960 until 1974, which blocked the expansion of the planted areas, and held down the prices at which it was buying the crop. The processing of local production decreased from 2.2 million kilograms in 1967 to 1.5 million kilograms in 1972. The ***Régie*** preferred to increase imported cigarettes rather than develop the local tobacco production because of the rapid profits.[2]

In the Biqa', its specialization in sugar beet production also put the cultivator at the mercy of a monopoly. There was one processing plant in the Biqa', which also had a monopoly of the importation of sugar. "Depending on world prices, they had an interest in increasing or decreasing the share of the locally produced sugar."[3] At certain times, when the cost of production increased tremendously, the price paid by the processing plant to the producers was unchanged. Therefore, the producers were forced to abandon the crop, and as a result the cultivated land decreased from 35,000 to 10,000 dunums in 1974.[4]

[1] Tobacco company founded by the French in 1935, which became a mixed public-private one after independence in 1943.

[2] Nasr, 'The Crisis ..., p. 9.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.,

As a result of government economic policy, the impoverishment of the Lebanese peasantry increased, and rapid depopulation of the rural areas resulted. People left for urban centres, mainly Beirut and the Arab Gulf countries.

Table 13: Rural migration to urban centre in 1970.

Province	Total population of rural origin	% of population migrated to towns in province	% of population migrated to Beirut or suburb
Mount Lebanon	344,000	2.1%	17.4%
North Lebanon	204,435	8.6%	7.4%
South Lebanon	242,085	2.8%	29.3%
Biqa'	178,425	1.7%	16.9%
Total	968,945	3.5%	18.1%

Nasr, 'The Crisis ... , p. 10. See also Fuad Khuri, ***From Village to Suburb***, University of Chicago Press, 1975, pp. 32, 62. Also See B, Roberts, ***Cities of Peasants***, Edward Arnold, 1981, p. 9. P. Saba, 'The Creation of the Lebanese Economy-Economic Growth in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,' in R. Owen, (ed.), ***Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon***, Ithaca Press, London, 1976, pp. 1-7.

Oberai's formulation of the reasons for migration from rural areas to cities in the Third World can be applied to the Shi'ites of Lebanon:

> ... rural poverty manifested in low agricultural incomes, low productivity, and under-employment, is an important factor in pushing migrants out of rural areas towards areas with greater employment opportunities.[1]

The following table shows the big difference in manufacturing distribution which attracted migration from rural areas.

[1] A.S. Oberai, (ed.), ***State Politics and Internal Migration***, Croom Helm, London, 1983, p.2. Nasr, 'The Crisis ..., p. 10.

Table 14: Distribution of manufacturing and mining establishments in 1955

Areas	Number of establishments
Beirut	995
M. Lebanon	480
N. Lebanon	241
Biqa'	88
S. Lebanon	57

Sulaiman, ***Political Parties...***, p. 26.

This migration had serious consequences for the social structure of the Shi'ites. The process of moving from village to urban centre, which began modestly in the late 1920s and increased dramatically in the 1960s, opened for the Shi'ites to a variety of opportunities, ranging from decreasing the zu'ama's domination, susceptibility to new ideologies, potential conflict with other communities and finally to challenging state structure itself. Furthermore, the difficulties of migrants did not end with arrival in the city but multiplied simply because they did not find work. Roberts explains the migrants' situation as follows;

> ... urban economy affects social relationships, housing, local-level politics and even religious practices, producing a situation in which the poor are active but unincorporated members of the urban populations of underdeveloped countries. These poor are, however, fragmented ideologically and motivated by their short-term economic interests. Since no class or class fraction has sufficient strength and appeal to form the basis of stable government, there is a permanent crisis in government which makes it difficult to obtain the consensus needed to resolve the problems of an increasing technological and financial dependence, internal inflation, lack of private investment in production and so on.[1]

[1] Roberts, op.cit. p.3.

Shi'ite migrants to urban centres usually worked in the lowest status jobs available, which further aggravated their situation in comparison to other communities. This can be attributed mainly to them being farm labourers and lacking the appropriate skills needed in cities.

Modernization in Lebanon was not the only cause of migration of the Shi'ites. Another factor was the intensive Israeli bombing in the south of Lebanon and Western Biqa' from 1970 to 1975. The rate of forced migration from the south was 65 percent of the rural population, and 50 percent of the rural population in the Biqa'.[1] This migration was the major force that affected and developed the Shi'ites' social structure. In addition, what increased the Shi'ites misery in the centre was that the Shi'ites had the highest rate of illiteracy which only served to aggravate their position in official government employment. This is unlike the position of the Christians which was reinforced by a more direct access to education: "throughout most of the period of the mandate (1920-1946) education was still substantially in the hands of foreign missions, and thus more specifically directed towards the Christian population".[2] Some estimates have shown that the Maronites held nearly 50 percent of major public offices.

As the following two tables show, the number of governmental civil services the Shi'ites held were not in accordance with their numerical status in comparison with other major Lebanese communities.

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[1] Nasr, 'The Crisis ..., p. 10.
[2] Salibi, 'Lebanon Under Fuad Chehab 1958-1964', *MES*, Vol. 2, 1966, p. 213.

Table 15: Distribution of civil service First Category posts among the various communities (1946-1974)

Community	1946	%	1962	%	1972	%	1974	%
G. Catholic	1	3	7	10	9	9	8	6
G. Orthodox	6	19	11	16	10	11	14	10
Maronite	12	39	18	25	28	30	39	28
Other minorities	0	0	2	3	2	2	9	6
Subtotal	**19**		**38**		**49**		**70**	
Percentage		61		54		52		50
Druze	2	7	6	9	7	7	10	7
Shi'a	1	3	2	3	15	16	29	21
Sunni	9	29	24	34	23	25	31	22
Subtotal	**12**		**32**		**45**		**70**	
Percentage		39		46		48		50
Total	31		70		94		140	

D. Smock & A Smock, ***The Politics of Pluralism***, Elsevier Publishing Company, New York, 1975, p. 127.

Table 16: Major population groups in 1932, 1956 and 1977 by religion

Religious groups	1932	1956	1977
Sunni	175,925	285,698	600,000
Shi'a	154,208	250,605	850,000
Druze	53,047	88,131	250,000
Total Muslims	**383,180**	**624,434**	**1,700000**
Maronite	226,378	423,708	750,000
G. Orthodox	76.522	148,927	300,000
G. Catholic	45,999	87,788	200,000
Ar. Orthodox	31,156	63,679	160,000
Other Christians	22,308	=	=
Total Christians	**402.363**	**724,102**	**1,410000**
Total Population	**785,543**	**1,348536**	**3,110000**

The figures for 1932 are taken from D. McDowall, 'Lebanon: A Conflict of Minorities', ***Minority Rights Groups Report***, London, MRG, 1983, p.9. The figures for 1956 are taken from M. Halawi, op.cit., p. 50. The figures for 1977 are taken from, H. Cobban, 'Lebanon's Chinese Puzzle', ***Foreign Policy***, Washington DC, issue 53, 1983, p. 35.

Before the massive migration of the Shi'ites, primordial loyalties remained strong in the villages.[1] However, the authority of the *zu'ama* and family ties gradually declined in favour of a wider element, that is the sect. Khuri explains how this loyalty was greatly affected by migration:

> Among villagers in Lebanon, local politics, ... are determined by family alliances; only in this case family and sect are neither held together nor reinforce each other. The arrangement of political organization in villages seems to be so designed that it limits the rise of sect as a potential source of support. But when villagers migrate to the city and settle there, they begin to use sect instead of family as a frame of reference in politics...[2]

Khuri explains this theory through his investigation of Shi'ite migrants into two villages in Beirut southern suburbs, Shiyah and Ghobairi.[3] Ghobairi was the direction for more Shi'ite migrants than that of Shiyah which was Maronite populated.[4] Khuri relates the primary factor responsible for the rise of such identities and division between the two areas to the change from family to sect loyalty among migrants. This change manifested itself in the increasing support of the Maronites for the Kata'ib party, while the Shi'ites, although they did not support a political party as such, directed their loyalty towards the sect. This was demonstrated by the public celebration of 'Ashura in Ghobairi.[5]

This new Shi'ite loyalty to the sect benefited the activities of al-Sadr as he used it to increase his own independence in the face of the *zu'ama*. It is not a surprise that al-

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[1] Khalaf, 'Primordial Ties and Politics in Lebanon,' ***MES***, October, 1967, No. 1, pp. 243-267.

[2] Khuri, 'Sectarian Loyalty among Rural Migration in two Lebanese Suburbs: A stage between family and national allegiance,' in R. Antoun & I. Harik (ed.), ***Rural Politics and Social Change in the Middle East***, Indiana Press, 1974, p. 198.

[3] Ibid., pp. 200,205.

[4] Khuri, 'Sectarian Loyalty ..., p. 205.

[5] Ibid.

Sadr's activities in Beirut concentrated in Ghobairi and Shiyah in particular. Ashura was a major occasion which he utilized to bring a new meaning to Shi'ism and to increase loyalty to the sect rather than to individuals. The new meaning to Shi'ism which was advocated by al-Sadr will be discussed later in this chapter.

The political behaviour of the migrants thus differed from what it had been in their villages of origin. Issues relating to property, inheritance, and irrigation which ordinarily provoked family conflicts in the villages did not arise in the suburbs, where new settlers lived mostly in rented houses and worked in salaried jobs. Similarly, the fraternal associations, which "clustered around adult males because of patrilineal descent and partilocal residence, and which may stimulate family feuds, were dispersed by the process of migration."[1]

The new social change that the Shi'ites were going through, and their mingling with other communities affected al-Sadr's understanding of the importance of the Lebanese co-existence on one side and of increasing self awareness on the other.

3. al-Sadr's attitudes toward Lebanese society

When al-Sadr first arrived in Lebanon his intention was to complete his religious studies and in particular to write a ***risala*** (thesis).[2] He may well have imagined himself to be in a quiet calm

[1] Ibid., p. 206.

[2] The student of Shi'ite Islam has to pass through three stages to become ***mujtahid*** the ***Muqaddima***, ***Sutuh*** and ***Kharij***. In the third stage the student has to write a ***risala***, which if accepted earns him a certificate and recognition as a ***mujtahid***. He is then expected to continue study and dedicate himself to learning and

backwater where there would be ample opportunity for him to do research and become a ***mujtahid***. However, the initial haze soon evaporated, as he quickly became engaged in social and political activities. This led him to neglect his original plans and he never managed to finish the ***risala***.[1] Yet, al-Sadr's understanding of Islam and Shi'ism, and particularly his approach to Lebanese society made him, in effect, a first class ***mujtahid*** as he gave various fatwas regarding social and political issues, beginning with a fatwa forbidding begging in Tyre. It was clear to him that the community that he had come to serve did not need another 'traditional' ***'alim***; rather it needed someone whom it could rely upon to bring forward change and prosperity. Sayyid al-Ghurawi once accompanied al-Sadr to Falugha in Mount Lebanon in 1960 to give a lecture. al-Ghurawi was astonished at the remarkable contrast between this area and Tyre. Realizing this al-Sadr explained to al-Ghurawi that the traditional approach which the '***ulama*** had always adopted in Lebanese society could no longer work. He asked al-Ghurawi to convey this message to the '***ulama*** of Najaf.[2]

With this in mind al-Sadr developed a totally different approach from the rest of the '***ulama*** so that he could bring about both change from within and for the benefit of the Shi'ites. In such a multi-sectarian and heterogeneous society it was important to recognize that these

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education in order to reach the position of Ayatollah. However, even if a student does not write a ***risala***, he still can become a ***mujtahid***, that is, if he can arrive at judgments on points of religious law using reason and the principles of jurisprudence, ***usul al-fiqh***. al-Sadr had actually come to Lebanon with boxes full of books and notes so that he could write his ***risala***. Momen, op.cit., p.186. Interview, Sayyid Muhammad al-Ghurawi, imam of Tyre, summer, 1987. This interview was conducted for the purpose of MA dissertation.

[1] Peter Theroux, ***Imam Moussa Sadr***, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1987, p. 14.

[2] Interview, Muhammad al-Ghurawi, Tyre, summer, 1987.

various groups were often involved in the manipulation of their identity in order to advance their more immediate goals.

Fortunately for al-Sadr, his presence in Lebanon coincided with the presidency of General Fuad Shihab which in various ways helped him to carry out his activities relatively unhindered. Unlike previous Lebanese presidents who attributed the crisis of late 1950, largely to external reasons, Fuad Shihab had a wider perception of the reasons for the crisis. It was clear to him when he was commander-in-chief of the army that there were sharp contrasts between different regions in the country. This was apparent from the number of recruits who came from the most deprived area such as the South, 'Akkar and the Biqa'.[1]

Shihab realized that it was important to promote a sense of national unity in Lebanon particularly as his rise to power followed the period of civil war in 1958. He was evidently sincere in his efforts to bring about social justice. During Shihab's presidency al-Sadr was granted Lebanese nationality in 1963. Although citizenship consolidated his presence in Lebanon, it occasioned numerous accusations from his opponents that he was a lackey of the regime.[2] Although it was nearly impossible for non-Lebanese to get Lebanese citizenship, al-Sadr managed to do so. His acquisition of this nationality can be attributed to a number of reasons. When Shihab came to power he was dissatisfied with the existing power bases in Lebanese society and wanted to strengthen the Lebanese

[1] Salibi, 'Lebanon Under ...., p. 216.
[2] Ajami, *The Vanished* ..., p.86.

state. To this end he modernized the country and utilized the Deuxième Bureau undertaking social reform for the very first time, based on a state sponsored research institution.[1] However, he could not challenge the authority of the notables by such means alone; he also had to resort to creating rivals from within the zu'ama's own religious groups with whom he could work, and by 1963 al-Sadr proved that he could be a rival to the well established authority of Kamil al-As'ad. Another reason al-Sadr's gaining nationality can be attributed to the good relations of Imperial Iran with Lebanese Christians in general, which was apparent from Iran's support of Chamoun in the 1950s.[2]

Despite his efforts to achieve social justice, Shihab failed to bring the Shi'ite community onto an equal footing with the other communities. In the aftermath of the 1958 civil war, struggle took place between the two then dominant communities, the Sunnis and the Maronites, to gain as many administrative posts as possible, regardless of social justice or equality. It is true that, consequently, the Muslims' share increased yet, this was mainly in favuor of Sunnis. Safiy al-Din[3] mentioned in his memoirs that President Shihab occasionally refused requests from Saib Salam, the Prime minister, to appoint a Sunni to a high official post reserved for a Shi'ite. This incident clearly indicated the struggle between the Sunnis and the Maronites at the expense of the Shi'ites. The Shi'ites were

[1] Theodor Hanf, *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*, I.B. Tauris, London, 1993, p. 100. Suleiman, *Political Parties* ..., p. 26.

[2] Interview, Bahman Kashi, head of North Africa and Middle East Department in the Iranian imperial foreign ministry, London, summer, 1995.

[3] Safiy al-Din, op.cit., p. 24.

not only deprived from possessing an equal share in governmental offices but actually lost more posts.[1] This may be attributed to the fact the Shi'ites lacked a sense of communal identity, or rather, that their political involvement was concerned more with the Arab cause in general than with the advancement of their own communal interest. This continued to be a major factor that hindered the Shi'ites in becoming an equal partner in the running of Lebanese affairs.

Still, al-Sadr believed that Lebanon represented a unique example for the world, and that it could prove the unity of God despite its plurality of religions. He also believed that each religion had its own different way of reaching God. He did not "deny that each way to God has its own proper characteristics, but in their essence all these ways are alike because they lead to the same end." Therefore, he rejected antagonism between believers in the name of religion and he consistently preached the need for harmony among them.[2]

As will be shown, al-Sadr's understanding of Lebanese society prompted him to establish a non-sectarian approach to social reform, at a time where almost everyone was hoping to increase their own specific sectarian demands, thereby making al-Sadr's approach difficult to understand. In order to improve the political status of his community, it was important for him to build bridges with all parties in Lebanese society, so long as he managed to preserve the interests of the Shi'ites.

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[1] Salibi, 'Lebanon Under ..., p. 219. Jean Aucagne, 'L'Imam Mousa Sadr et la Communeate Chiite', ***Travaux et Jours***, Vol., 53, 1974, p. 35.

[2] Norton, 'Changing Actors ..., p. 113.

"Grasping the political potential of social services as a means of outflanking the traditional elite and entering the political arena, al-Sadr underwrote a string of religious and vocational schools."[1] From early on he had the idea of establishing a Shi'ite organization to direct the Shi'ites under a single leadership. Sayyid al-Ra'isi,[2] an Iranian cleric, met al-Sadr in Ba'lbek in 1962, and on that occasion al-Sadr revealed his desire to establish such an organization in order to put the community onto an equal footing with the other main communities in the country. How then did he work to achieve this aim in such a communally divided society?

For al-Sadr the Lebanese formula of the coexistence of a number of different religious communities provided him with the opportunity to serve *his* community by operating within these parameters. He gradually came to understand the nature of Lebanese society and the delicate relationship between the different communities. This early understanding on his part was later to prove fruitful, and his political shrewdness explains how he was able to broaden his appeal for change in Lebanese society well beyond his own community, which assured him of the support from non-Shi'ites.

Until and long after al-Sadr's arrival, the position of the Shi'ite ***'ulama*** during the 1960s was not much different from that of the early twentieth century in the sense that the ***'ulama*** community was generally both "economically depressed and politically quiescent". They

[1] Judith Harik, ***The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias***, Centre for Lebanese Studies, Paper No. 14, 1994, p. 12.

[2] Interview, Sayyid al-Ra'isi, London, 1994.

accepted the pre-eminence of the *zu'ama*, and in return they were treated respectfully when they came into their presence.[1] Sharaf al-Din had been an exception among the *'ulama* since he took an independent line, and did not rely upon a *za'im* to bring about change in society. We have seen how the independent line he followed brought him much enmity from many of the *zu'ama* and *'ulama*, and how he still managed to utilize the differences in political atmosphere to his favour. However, apart from Sharaf al-Din in Tyre, the reputation of *'ulama* in the rest of the south was a by word for stagnation, which did not win them popularity among people. Shaikh Mughniyya has best described how the *'ulama* were seen in the eyes of the people when he said:

> Some youngsters, and some of the elders as well, are always complaining that the men of religion do not fulfill their duties, do not visit and guide the faithful. But when a man of religion comes their way they escape from him as a healthy man avoids a man with a contagious disease.[2]

al-Sadr's awareness of this axiomatic statement pushed him to pursue a different style in order to appeal to a broad spectrum of people, and thus to win their trust and support. In order to do so, he began establishing a string of social welfare organizations.

3.1 Social welfare activities

al-Sadr's social welfare activities ranged from a direct involvement in improving the condition of the Shi'ites in Tyre to simultaneously improving relations with the other religious

[1] Ajami, *The Vanished* ..., p. 73.
[2] Mughniyya, 'ila 'ulama al-Shar'a fi Jabal 'Amil', *al-Irfan*, Vol., 47, 1959, p. 77.

communities. On a wider scale he worked to establish a religious council for the Shi'ites, resulting in his acquiring the label of the principal founder of Shi'ite identity.

On many occasions al-Sadr would openly reveal his feelings regarding the traditional approach of the *'ulama*, a prime example being the occasion of 'Ashura. This occasion was celebrated every year in the traditional fashion, the effects of which regularly imposed upon the Shi'ites a negative image. However, al-Sadr strove upon such occasions to create opportunities for a constructive image of the Shi'ites. He declared that there was a particular kind of enemy, (i.e. meaning traditional *'ulama*) who wanted to make the example of Husain's martyrdom a traditional and rigid ceremony and which made this kind of enemy particularly dangerous.[1]

The events of 'Ashura were always presented in a manner which ended in tears and defeat. al-Sadr however brought a new attitude to 'Ashura which stripped it of its sorrow and made it an episode of political choice and courage on the part of Imam Husain and his companions. The following two chapters will demonstrate how al-Sadr's major political activities were announced on 'Ashura and at other Shi'ite occasions related to the twelve imams. Under his auspices the celebration of 'Ashura was to become a celebration of defiance against injustice. He worked to revitalize this occasion, about which he said on many occasions in the 1960s:

> Crying and participating in funerals must not become a substitute for action or as a way of avoiding hardship, or an excuse for not doing constructive work.[2]

In a more assertive voice he advocated the need to change the way 'Ashura was celebrated:

[1] A Lecture given by al-Sadr and recorded on audio tapes.
[2] Aucagne, op.cit, p. 47

> We do not act according to truth, we don't abstain from lies. I wonder if Husain was amongst us, and saw that the truth was not respected, that we persist not to act according to truth, that we neglect it, what would he do? If we have contented ourselves with the traditional representation and if we have not learnt anything on the ways of competing against lies and of making truth triumph, then we have been insensitive to this commemoration: it is negligence, it is burying the aims pursued by Husain. We must learn something from this lamp which lights us, whose oil is drawn from Husain's blood; we must side by the righteous and compete against lies of any form.[1]

However, simply improving the status of the Shi'ite community on a sectarian basis would have made al-Sadr just another traditional personality, who aimed only at improving the position of his own community rather than working towards achieving a sense of national integration. And yet, here lies the essence of al-Sadr's desire, an improvement of the Shi'ite lot through the pursuit of a heightened of national allegiance rather than relying purely upon local loyalties. It is this attitude that will be discussed in the next chapter.

In the early days of al-Sadr's residence in Tyre he was struck by the appalling status of the Shi'ites in the city. He depended upon his own observations while traveling through Lebanon as well as by making use of the IRFED[2] reports which clearly showed considerable income disparities in Lebanon. He utilized his own researches and the government's data to start implementing a number of social projects in Tyre, building bridges with the other communities, and demanding government involvement in his projects. He set about his social reforms by using existing institutions, which had been established by Sharaf al-Din, namely the ***Jama'iyyat al-Birr w'al- Ihsan***.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] IRFED is a French organisation which President Shihab requested to undertake a study of social and economic conditions in Lebanon in 1959. Hanf, op.cit., pp. 100-101.

In the first three years of his residence in the city al-Sadr managed to put an end to begging on the streets of Tyre[1]. He preached that the followers of Imam Husain were not beggars, that they should rather die than beg.[2] In addition, he also advocated a number of communal activities, urging people not to donate individually to the poor but to form a trust which would offer services and create jobs for people in need.[3] The services of this society were to be available not only to the Shi'ite community in Tyre but to all the communities in the city. In the 1960s and 1970s he established a string of social organizations in order to improve the social standards of the Shi'ites such as vocational, nursing, and tailoring schools. Also he founded al-Zahra hospital, an orphanage and an institute for religious teaching.

His activities were financed in different ways and he was partly assisted by the government especially as Shihab was aiming at improving Lebanon's infrastructure. Shihab's attitudes made it easier for al-Sadr to extract money from the Bureau for Social Reconstruction, and the Ministry of Education. In addition to taking out a bank loan, al-Sadr also contacted the Shi'ite emigrants in West Africa, who donated money.[4]

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[1] al-Sadr, ***Manbar*** ..., p. 12.
[2] Harakat Amal, ***Al-Qiada al-Muassasiya***, Beirut,n.d., p. 14.
[3] al-Sadr, ***Manbar*** ..., p. 12.
[4] Report of Jam'aiyyat In'ash al-Qura, al-Takhalluf al-Ijtima'i fi Sur wa Qadaiha, 1963. It was obtained from private papers of Ja'far Sharaf al-Din, in Tyre, spring, 1992.

3.2 Relations with other communities

In 1962 al-Sadr formed the ***Haraka Ijtima'iyya*** (Social Movement) jointly with the Greek Orthodox Archbishop, Gregoire Haddad for the purpose of promoting literacy and health programmes in the south.[1] To justify this cooperation, he referred to the hadith of the Prophet which says that all people are children of God, and the most beloved for God are his children who serve the people best. He wanted to stress the prophet's word 'people' which did not have any sectarian connotation and, therefore, that all people are worthy of being served. This understanding with the Christians reached its peak in the early 1970s, and until the beginning of the civil war in 1975 al-Sadr preached frequently in churches. A photograph of him preaching while standing under a cross, was often used by his opponents in order to bring doubt as to his religious sincerity.[2] Indifferent to such allegations, he spoke at a church in Rashaiyya al-Fakhar in the south urging the southerners to stand firm against continuous Israeli attacks.[3] Later on, he moved his efforts to the churches of Beirut, particularly the Cathedral of St. Louis des Capucins where he was invited by the Maronite Patriarch Antonius Bulus Khuraysh.[4] In reply to such attacks al-Sadr always recited from the Quran and the hadith of the prophet, in order to justify his actions.

When al-Sadr became the official religious leader of the community,[5] he gave a new interpretation to the meaning and duties of such leadership:

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[1] Hanf, op.cit., p. 189.
[2] Such as the case of Shaikh Mughniyya.
[3] *al-Nahar*, Beirut, 3 September, 1974.
[4] Ibid., 20 February, 1975.
[5] al-Sadr, Lectures from audio tapes.

> ...the responsibility of an Imam of the community knows no limits: an Imam has to protect the interests of his people; he has to be generous; he has to serve his community persistently; he has to be willing to undergo martyrdom on their behalf. No leader can claim Islam who ignores the daily affairs of the community.

al-Sadr's activities were not confined only to social and political issue. He was also an active religious intellectual. It was important for him to show the creative face of the religious personality, and the practical importance of religion in daily life. Although this approach was welcomed by various segments of society, it also flew in the face of the advocates of secularism, most notably Kamal Junblat, as we shall see in the last chapter.

3.3 The intellectual activities of al-Sadr

On an intellectual level, he gave lectures in various parts of Lebanon, as well as in Egypt and Algeria. Before discussing his local activities, it is appropriate to shed some light upon these intellectual activities abroad, as this helped him to establish contacts with some Arab leaders.

In 1970 al-Sadr was invited to attend a conference organized by the Islamic Research Council in Cairo, where he met with Muhammad Haikal of ***al-Ahram*** who arranged a meeting with President Nasser. No details of this meeting, have survived but it appears that President Nasser strongly recommended that al-Sadr should become a permanent member of the Islamic Research Council.[1] Egypt was to become an important place of refuge for al-Sadr in the years to come, especially during the Lebanese civil war.

[1] **al-Anwar,** 7 March, 1970.

Algeria became another important platform for al-Sadr, beginning in the early 1970s, when an annual conference on Islamic Thought was held. It was important for him to participate in order to explain his interpretation of the duties of the *'ulama,* and the Shi'ite school of thought in a constructive way to his audience. In one session he gave a paper which became the focal point of discussion for the entire conference.[1]

In Lebanon itself, al-Sadr was consistently building bridges with intellectuals, regardless of their religious orientation. Meeting with intellectuals on a regular basis provided him with an arena in which to express his opinion and subsequently those participants would often become supporters of al-Sadr's movement ***Harakat al-Mahrumin.*** An opportunity came in 1964 when he received an invitation from ***al-Nadwa al-Lubnaniyya,*** a club which organized regular seminars and talks. The reason for this invitation was that the Shi'ite ***marja' al-Taqlid*** Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim was on his way to the Hajj, and this had prompted al-***Nadwa al-Lubnaniyya*** to organize a talk on Shi'ism. al-Sadr delivered a comprehensive lecture covering various Shi'ite concepts, such as the notion of ***marja' al-taqlid***[2] and how the ***marja'*** assumes this position, his position among other ***maraji'a*** and the scope of the ***marja'*** al-taqlid's authority within society.[3] The last issue was a major focus of debate among Shi'ite *'ulama* especially after Khumaini came to power in Iran in 1979. Khumaini was then the main advocate of the notion of ***Wilayat al-Faqih*** which gives *'ulama* who have political

[1] al-Sadr, 'Ruh al-Shari'aa al-Islamiyya wa waqi'a al-Tashri'a al-Yawm fi al-'Alam al-Islami', ***Al- Multaqa al-Sabi'a Litta'rruf 'ala al-Fikr al-Islami,*** Ministry of Education, Algeria, Vol. 1, 1973, pp. 210-223.

[2] In Shi'ism there are what is called the Mukallid and the Mukallad. The first are the ordinary people who should look to the second to get religious advice upon different matters.

[3] al-Sadr, ***Manbar*** ..., p. 17-23.

authority immense power similar to those of the infallible imams. In his lecture at ***al-Nadwa al-Lubnaniyya*** al-Sadr advocated a widely used perception regarding this authority. He said that the authority of the ***marja'*** did not entail political duties, as politics would divert him from fulfilling his main duties, that is the learning and teaching of religion. However, he considered that the ***marja'*** should give political opinions and authoritative pronouncement on certain political issues in order to prevent what might otherwise be harmful to Islam.[1]

The platform at ***al-Nadwa al-Lubnaniyya*** added to al-Sadr's popularity in intellectual circles, which he utilized in the mid 1970s to support his social movement Harakat al-Mahrumin. In his contacts with other intellectuals al-Sadr advocated a new standard in relation to public office. He argued that the individuals holding such offices should be appointed on the basis of merit rather than connections so that a decent administration could be created where loyalty was to the state rather than to the individual. This attitude helped him form a committee consisting of people from different backgrounds in order to advocate such an approach.[2]

As we have seen, three basic factors allowed al-Sadr to consolidate his position and therefore achieve his objectives in Lebanon. The first was the continued support of Najaf in attempting to dissolve the tensions among the Shi'ite ***'ulama*** in Lebanon. This was achieved by sending prominent ***'ulama*** from Najaf such as Muhammad Bahr al-'Ulum, Mahdi and Hadi al-Hakim upon the initiative of the ***marja' al-taqlid*** Muhsin al-Hakim.

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[1] Ibid., p.29.

[2] The members of this committee were Father Yuwakim Mubarak, Michel al-Asmar, Fuad al-Bustani, Marwan Hamadeh, Jubran Haik, Pierre Hilu, and Basim al-Jisr. Interview, Basim al-Jisr, Oxford, summer, 1994.

The second factor was the socio-economic situation which saw a large migration of Shi'ites from rural areas to urban centres. This had a dramatic effect upon traditional family, communal and local allegiances, which assisted al-Sadr in his attempt to create a sense of national rather than regional identity amongst the Shi'ites.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly al-Sadr's constant and energetic efforts at regional, and national levels which were genuine attempts to raise the standing of not only the Shi'ite community but also of all deprived elements within Lebanese society, especially in certain regions in the north such as Akkar, Ba'lbek and the south.

His general socio-political approach stemmed from the way he interpreted religious faith. For him faith was not simply a set of rituals but rather, a set of social concerns regarding the needs of people. Ahmad Qubaisi[1] states that al-Sadr asserted that the end does not always justify the means, and that ends and means must be complementary.

Having established these factors the political activities of al-Sadr will be discussed in the next chapter in order to find out whether he was successful in his attempts to establish a degree of national allegiance in Lebanon, and, if not the reasons for his failure to do so.

[1] Interview, Ahmad Qubaisi, personal interpreter of al-Sadr, Beirut, 1987. This interview was conducted for the purpose of MA dissertation.

The Basis of Shi'ite Transformation:

The Rise and Decline of National Leadership

Having established himself in Lebanon, al-Sadr began working towards a larger goal i.e., the establishment of a Shi'ite identity. He also aimed at creating allegiance to the Lebanese state. This chapter will discuss the role of the institutions that al-Sadr established and their effect on the Shi'ites in particular and the Lebanese in general, and on himself. Contradictory as these aims might seem, he had a clear vision of how to implement his policies in Lebanese society. The period from 1967 until 1975 was something of a golden period for al-Sadr for he succeeded in breaking almost all the barriers between the Shi'ites and the other communities. This is despite the fact that this period witnessed extreme political tensions between various politicians and parties which eventually led to the civil war that began in 1975. The civil war was a major factor which contributed to a decline in al-Sadr's prestige.

al-Sadr inaugurated a series of official and non-official institutions to fulfil the two above objectives. First, he managed to establish a Shi'ite council in May 1967 to represent and to look after Shi'ite interests throughout Lebanon. Secondly, as far as creating allegiance to the state was concerned, he established ***Harakat al-Mahrumin,*** Movement of Dispossessed, in March 1974, with the objective of achieving social and economic reform. As a result of the establishment of these two institutions, al-Sadr was recognised

as the official spiritual leader of the Shi'ite community and at the same time managed to extend his leadership to the national stage. However, by the mid 1970s his popularity suffered a setback, for two reasons: first, the civil war, which put an end to his peaceful demands for social reform, and second, his establishment in July 1975 of a militia known as *Afwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnaniyya*, (Lebanese Resistance Detachments), better known by its acronym Amal (which also means "hope"), whose objective was to defend the south against Israeli attacks. Establishing a militia meant that al-Sadr limited himself to a single group; he was no longer a national leader but only a Shi'ite one. Unlike national Shi'ite council and Harakat al-Mahrumin, the establishment of Amal was not planned. al-Sadr was virtually forced to found it in response to the devastating Israeli attacks on the south in the late 1960s and 1970s, in circumstances in which the Lebanese authorities were virtually powerless to act. Originally, he had tried to force the Lebanese authorities to take the responsibility of defending the south, but all his attempts were in vain.

al-Sadr's motives in establishing the Shi'ite council, Harakat al-Mahrumin and Amal have often been misinterpreted. My main objective here is to discuss the various circumstances behind each of these activities. It is worthwhile first to discuss what others have written on this subject to provide an overall view in order to show how inaccurate their discussions were.

Salim Nasr's study for instance did not distinguish between al-Sadr's three objectives, creating a Shi'ite identity through the SISC, creating national allegiance through Harakat al-Mahrumin, and defending the south against Israeli attacks through Amal.[1] As a result, Nasr did not identify the various motivating factors for al-Sadr's activities and instead concentrated on one issue only, that is, improving the status of the Shi'ites. This also led him to discuss the three objectives of al-Sadr as one objective, causing more confusion particularly when he did not provide accurate dates of establishment of al-Sadr's institutions. Consequently, he intermingled the three issues to the extent that it has become difficult to draw distinctions between them. Nasr's confusion can best be illustrated by the following:

> The movement was called different names: the Movement of Imam Musa al-Sadr, the Movement of the Dispossessed ... whatever the name, it was a mass movement in the Lebanese Shi'a community ....[2]

He carries on:

> The movement used moral and religious language and themes based on the Shi'ite tradition of protest.[3]

As for the date of establishing the movement he mentioned:

> It is difficult to pinpoint the birth of the movement, but two dates in particular stand out. On May 22, 1969, Imam Musa al-Sadr was elected to head the Supreme Shi'ite Council ... The second date, June 6, 1973, was that of the special joint session of the *Shar'ai* committee and the executive committee of the SSC ...[4]

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[1] Salim Nasr, 'Roots of the Shi'ite Movements', ***MERIP Reports***, Vol. 15, 1985, pp. 10-16.
[2] Ibid., p. 12.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

Nasr's interpretation drove him to overlook al-Sadr's systematic approach. In fact, the dates of establishment and the names of al-Sadr's institutions were, 1967 for the Shi'ite Council, 1974 for Harakat al-Mahrumin, and 1975 for Amal. More confusion was caused by the definition of Norton,[1] Salibi,[2] and Halawi,[3] who believed that Amal was the military arm of Harakat al-Mahrumin although al-Sadr never claimed any link between the two apart from the fact that he was the founder of both.

In general Nasr, Norton, Halawi and Salibi dealt with the main issues. The concern of this chapter is not to criticise their work as such, but it is rather to draw sharp lines between these three issues, that is, the Shi'ite Council, Harakat al-Mahrumin and Amal, as each one represented an objective by itself. After having done so, we shall try to assess their effects on the political transformation of the Shi'ites in Lebanon, which undermined the authority of the *zu'ama*, in particular the authority of Kamil al-As'ad.

1. The Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council

The Shi'ite Council was established by Act 72/67 of the Lebanese Parliament in May 1967 and the bill became law in December. Since then the Shi'ite community has maintained its independence in its religious affairs according to the Shar'ai and the jurisprudence of the Ja'fari

[1] Norton, 'Harakat Amal', in *The Emergence of New Lebanon*, Praeger Publisher, USA, 1984, p. 171.

[2] Salibi, *Cross Road to Civil War*: Lebanon 1958-1976, Dalmar, New York, 1976, p. 119.

[3] Halawi, op.cit., p. 155.

doctrine.[1] The official name of the council, al-Majlis al-Islami al-Shi'i al-A'ala (Supreme Islamic Shi'ite Council, SISC) will be used.

al-Sadr attempted to recruit a wide and representative coalition of Shi'ites to the Council. Deputies, clerics, former regime elements and men with wealth were all welcomed if they were willing to help and clever enough to realise that their own interests were better served by a body that served the Shi'ites of Lebanon. The Council had 43 seats on its executive committee, 19 seats for Shi'ite parliamentary deputies, 12 seats for clerics and 12 for laymen. al-Sadr saw in the formation of the SISC an opportunity to endow the Shi'ite community with an official voice in social and political issues, and to end discrimination.

Prior to 1967, the Shi'ite community did not have a religious council representing its interests ***vis-à-vis*** the state and other communities. The creation of Shi'ite identity required the establishment of a Shi'ite body with the objective of protecting the interests of the community. Such a council was not a new phenomenon in Lebanon, although the Shi'ites were the last community to establish one. As far as the Muslims were concerned the Sunnis were the first to establish their own council, ***al-Majlis al-Islami al-Shar'ai al-A'ala*** on 13 January 1959; according to this declaration the Sunni mufti was to be the representative of all Muslims, Sunni and Shi'ite alike, and since have had the title ***Mufti al-Jamhuriyya***, Mufti of the Republic. In July 1962, a similar initiative was taken by the Druzes who established their

[1] Sicking & Khairallah, op.cit., p. 98.

own council. Two attempts were made in the middle and late 1950s to establish a Shi'ite body, the first by a deputy from Ba'lbek, Shafiq Murtada, in 1956 and the second by Shaikh Muhammad Taqi Sadiq. Both attempts failed due to opposition from the Shi'ite *zu'ama*.[1]

It was important for the Shi'ites to have their own council especially as, in broad terms, political power in Lebanon was largely divided between the Maronite and the Sunni communities, and without a council , the Shi'ites had no political weight. The council's first objective was to create self-awareness amongst the Shi'ites in order to force them to demand and obtain their rights in Lebanese society. An official Shi'ite identity could not be created as long as the Mufti-ship of Lebanon remained in Sunni hands. However, al-Sadr was willing to abandon the creation of a Shi'ite identity if he could succeed in creating a wider Muslim one. To achieve a wider Muslim identity meant that Sunni identity must also be abandoned, and as this identity was already well established it would seem unlikely that the Sunnis would abandon it.[2] Eventually, al-Sadr opted to create a Shi'ite council to achieve his aim, but by implication, the creation of the SISC symbolized his failure to establish a wider Muslim body.

In 1967 the final decision to go ahead and establish the SISC came about when the Sunnis rejected the Shi'ite request to amend Decree No. 18 which designated them as representatives of all the Muslims in Lebanon.[3] The Shi'ites wanted a say in administering their own affairs

[1] This is in contradiction to what Ajami said that Shaikh M.T. Sadiq was a strict conservative without political ambitions and who was against any reform within the Shi'ite community on the level of official institutions. Ajami, ***The Vanished*** ..., p. 74.

[2] Interview, Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan, a Shi'ite Mufti and was elected deputy chairman of SISC in 1994, Beirut, summer,1987. This interview was conducted for the purpose of MA dissertation.

[3] Interview, Shaikh Mahmud Farahat, London, winter, 1992.

and demanded a joint presidency alternating between Shi'ites and Sunnis. Shaikh Mahmud Farahat[1] has given some details on Sunni-Shi'ite relations before and after the establishment of the SISC. According to him, it was inconceivable for the Sunnis to meet Shi'ite demands, particularly the issue of joint presidency. The Sunni rejection was motivated by the power invested in the Sunni Mufti, who had the official title of Mufti of the Republic, and who was considered the head of all Muslims.

When the SISC was established in 1967, it continued unsuccessfully to ask for Sunni cooperation on various issues, such as participating in the special programmes in Ramadan and the Friday sermons which were transmitted on television and radio. These programmes were Sunni-dominated and supported by Charles Rizq, the Maronite director-general of the Ministry of Information. This continuous rejection of Shi'ite requests by the Sunnis forced the SISC to establish their own programmes, and in order to do so they had to seek the support of the Shi'ite *zu'ama*, particularly Sabri Hamadeh who forced this issue through the Ministry of Information. The SISC thus succeeded in organizing a programme of its own during Ramadan.

The success of the programme encouraged the Sunnis to ask the SISC if they could participate in its Ramadan programme. Their request was welcomed on one condition that the Sunnis mention from time to time in the *azan*, call for prayer, that *'Ali is wali Allah'*.[2] Not

[1] Interview, Shaikh Mahmud Farahat, London, winter, 1992.

[2] The Shi'ites use this phrase in the azan to assert their claim that 'Ali was the rightful successor of Prophet Muhammad.

surprisingly, this condition was rejected and each community continued to have its own programmes.

In October 1969 al-Sadr, as president of SISC, invited the Mufti, Shaikh Hasan Khalid, to cooperate in the unification of Islamic fiqh.[1] In his letter, al-Sadr cited previous attempts at cooperation which had taken place between prominent scholars from al-Azhar and Shi'ite scholars in order to urge Khalid to accept.[2] But Khalid *replied very politely that the matter* had been referred to a special committee for discussion and that the issue had since been closed.[3]

al-Sadr's meteoric rise in Lebanon had clearly made many leading Lebanese personalities wary of him. Khalid's hesitation was shared by many Sunnis and Shi'ites alike. They might have thought that al-Sadr would overshadow them if they cooperated with him. Consequently, many avoided doing so, while others realized that such cooperation would actually preserve some of their influence. Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan mentioned that al-Sadr went to Egypt in order to assure President Nasser that the establishment of SISC was not directed against the Sunnis but rather to achieve justice for the Shi'ites.[4] His awareness of the importance of

[1] ***al-Muharrir***, 9 October, 1969.

[2] At the start of the century, the call for unity of Islamic Fiqh reached its height during the time of Shaikh al-Azhar 'Abd al-Majid Salim, Shaikh Mahmud Shaltut, and the Dean of Shar'ai College at al-Azhar Shaikh Muhammad Madani. From the Shi'ite side were Shi'ite Marja'a Sayyid Husain Brujurdi, Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din, and Shaikh Muhammad Taqi Qummi.

[3] al-Sadr, ***Manbar*** ..., p. 218.

[4] Interview, Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan, Beirut, summer, 1987.

gaining Nasser's consent was essential, particularly since Khalid was directly supported by Nasser in his efforts to counter increasing Communist activity in Lebanon.[1]

However, such negative attitudes towards al-Sadr changed as he began working for reform in society in general. This brought him enormous support from well known people from various communities. Even members of the Sunni and Shi'ite communities who had not cooperated in the beginning changed their position and lent him their support, particularly when he formed Harakat al-Mahrumin. It was his efforts to achieve social justice that won al-Sadr the enormous popularity which reached its peak in 1974.

1.1 Social reforms of al-Sadr: consistency or contradiction?

The establishment of the SISC was a major step towards enhancing al-Sadr's influence in Lebanese politics. He used it to further his activities especially when he was elected president of the Council on 22 May 1969 and acquired the title of imam. After this he became the leader of the Shi'ite community in Lebanon and could represent the community before the authorities.

The council quickly made itself heard with demands in the military, social, economic and political realms. For instance, it demanded strong measures for the defence of the south through the establishment of an adequate Lebanese army, increasing the provision of

[1] Interview, Basim al-Jisr, son of the first Sunni prime minister in Lebanon Shaikh Muhammad al-Jisr, Oxford, summer, 1994.

development funds, constructing and improving schools and hospitals, and increasing the number of Shi'ites appointed to senior government positions.

1.1.1 al-Sadr's moderate trend

Although al-Sadr presided over a sectarian institution, that is SISC, his talk was of national integration and moderation. The year 1969 was particularly eventful, when tensions began to surface between two groups, the representatives of sectarianism and secularism, to which both internal and external factors contributed. He vehemently rejected estrangement between communities and constantly called for dialogue to eliminate tensions.

On 20 July 1969 the well known journalist 'Adil Malik interviewed al-Sadr and asked him about the aims of the SISC. al-Sadr advocated a moderate approach and said that the major trends that dominated Lebanese society were either sectarian or secular which left no room for moderation. With the SISC al-Sadr wanted to use his official position to establish a moderate trend which would compromise between sectarian and secular ideas.[1]

al-Sadr explained this moderate trend in a lecture in St. Joseph's University. He rejected secularism because, he claimed, a society without a religion would become a society

[1] *Al-Jaridah*, 21 June, 1969

without morality. He rejected sectarianism because it discriminated between individuals and prevented the creation of a sense of national identity. When he was asked what kind of system he preferred, al-Sadr replied:

> the Lebanese sectarian system would disappear only with the abolition of the various personal status laws and their unification under a single law.

This answer was unexpected because the only way to abolish the existing personal status laws would be to create a civil law which al-Sadr had always opposed. Secondly, if he meant by a single law the Islamic one, this means that he would be *ruling out the* Christians whom al-Sadr always assured of their status in Lebanon. Unfortunately, he was not questioned further about this.[1]

What was clear however is that al-Sadr believed that Lebanon could present a unique example to the world as proof of the oneness of God despite its plurality of religion. For him all religions have different ways of reaching God; he recognised that each way has its own characteristics, but in their essence all are alike because they lead to the same end.

al Sadr's positive attitudes towards the coexistence of the various Lebanese communities was part of his new moderate interpretation of Islam. As another instance, he gave a new interpretation regarding Muslim women during an interview with Hanan Ma'luf of al-Nahar. Asked about polygamy, and his opinion of the Tunisian government's recent

[1] *Lisan al-Hal*, 24 December, 1970.

prohibition, al-Sadr stated that he disagreed with the Tunisian authorities, but he also made it clear that polygamy should not be left uncontrolled. "It is important that the religious courts should play a part". al-Sadr's opinion was different from conventional Islamic practice which left marriage and divorce totally subject to men's wishes. He suggested that religious courts should have a wider authority to evaluate whether more than one marriage is necessary.[1]

Among interpretations attributed to al-Sadr, Ajami mentioned al-Sadr's belief that Muslim women should be able to marry Christian men.[2] This was an exaggeration. al-Sadr clearly stated that only those who believe in Allah and the Prophet Muhammad are allowed to marry Muslim women. He also clearly said that marriage conditions are stated in Islamic fiqh, according to which Muslim women are only allowed to marry Muslims.[3] al-Sadr also touched an another issue, that of, Muslims eating food offered by Christians. This new interpretation was intended to enhance coexistence between the Muslims and Christians in Tyre. Early signs of this began when he bought ice cream from a shop owned by a Christian at a time when Shi'ites were wary of food offered by Christians in general.

[1] al-Sadr, ***Manbar*** ..., p. 185.
[2] Ajami, ***The Vanished*** ..., p. 94.
[3] al-Sadr, ***Manbar*** ..., p. 185.

1.1.2 Political upheaval

The establishment of the SISC coincided with the Six Day War in 1967 between the Arab states and Israel, in which the Arabs suffered a tremendous defeat. This war caused mass emigration from Palestine to neighbouring countries, and Lebanon was a major recipient as the refugees found shelter in the south of Lebanon. One year later Israel turned its attention to Lebanon and a new era of conflict began.

The major confrontation between Lebanon and Israel started almost immediately after 1967, although it was not as dramatic as the confrontation between Israel and other neighbouring countries in 1956 and 1967. Until Israel achieved its objectives in 1967, the south had enjoyed a stable existence, that is to say that there were no confrontations between Israel and Lebanon. After 1967, Lebanon became a major Israeli target. In June 1968 this new interest became clear when Israel shelled the village of Mays al-Jabal, leaving many casualties.[1]

Israel's excuse for its aggression in Lebanon was its need to stop Palestinian attacks. Confrontations after 1967 between Israeli and Palestinian forces had dramatic effects on the Shi'ites of the south. This period was one of great disorder in the country and provided al-Sadr with the opportunity he needed to take political action particularly when the traditional ***zu'ama*** were passive. He found a direct route to the aspirations and

[1] Halawi, op.cit., p. 143.

resentments of the Shi'ite masses and also increased his popularity in the country as a whole. With his new platform, the SISC, he began his full political involvement in Lebanese society. This increased involvement brought him a lot of support but at the same time many enemies, particularly from well established Shi'ite *zu'ama*. The involvement of al-Sadr in the major political issues drew him a wide support from Shi'ites and non-Shi'ites, while the immobility of the Shi'ite *zu'ama*, mainly al-As'ad, caused a dramatic decline in their popularity and, as a result, hastened the transfer of leadership from al-As'ad to al-Sadr.

Because of the increased Israeli aggression, Lebanon was torn between two extremes: the Rightist on one side, and the Leftist and their Palestinian resistance supporters on the other. al-Sadr tried to avoid direct involvement in this tension and to adopt a moderate line, hoping to reduce tensions between them through dialogue. He gave the Palestinian resistance his full support, but advised it not to get involved in the existing tension. al-Sadr thought that the best way to reduce tensions was to press the government to pursue reform at all levels in society. By such reforms the Lebanese would feel more secure, and this in turn would increase allegiance to the state.

1.1.3 al-Sadr's criticism of the state

Since his arrival in Lebanon al-Sadr's approach had been heavily influenced by the misery of the Shi'ite community and its neglect in comparison with others; therefore, his main concern was to achieve social justice. This drove him to demand social and political

change, but on the condition that such change would be brought about by peaceful, moral and non-violent means.

After 1967 there was an added motivation for his efforts, namely the security of the south after the continuous military escalation between the Palestinians and Israel. From this date al-Sadr's co-operation with others was increasingly motivated less by general principle and more by his concern for the welfare and security of the south.

al-Sadr's political agenda emerged from the way he interpreted the faith. For him faith was not just about rituals, but about social concerns and social needs. He repeatedly stated 'for us Lebanon is a single homeland', not to appease the government but as a sincere belief which became a major slogan of Harakat al-Mahrumin. Moreover, and in order to protect the unity of Lebanon, "al-Sadr recognised the insecurity of the Maronites and he acknowledged their need to maintain their monopoly of the presidency".[1] However, he was critical of them for their arrogant stance towards Muslims in general and Shi'ites in particular. He argued that Lebanon's Maronite-dominated governments had neglected the south and the Shi'ites since independence.

al-Sadr's belief in the Lebanese system encouraged him to advocate coexistence and harmony among the various sects.[2] This attitude would certainly benefit the Shi'ite

[1] Norton, 'Shi'ism and Social Protest in Lebanon', in J.R. Cole and N. Keddie (ed.), ***Shi'ism and Social Protest***, Yale University Press, 1986. p. 164.

[2] **al-'Asr**, Saida, 5 December, 1969. Norton, 'Changing actors and leadership among the Shiites of Lebanon', ***AAPSS***, 482, November, 1985, p. 113.

community as the Shi'ites were a minority in the Arab world. The best way for them to prosper would be to adhere to Lebanon and to preserve its traditional coexistence, despite the fact that the demographic shift in Lebanon would continue to favour the Shi'ite side. al-Sadr's efforts to improve coexistence in Lebanon was faced by the growing tension between the Palestinians and Israel which was mainly taking place in the south. This reality was an added burden on one side, with the Maronites on the other. While the tension was growing between the two, the south had to bear the brunt of Israeli aggression. The situation prompted al-Sadr to work relentlessly to avoid further disaster in the south of Lebanon.

On 26 December 1968, clashes between the Palestinians and Israel increased dramatically as Israel attacked the south and Beirut in retaliation for a Palestinian attack on an El Al airliner in Athens. Israel targeted Beirut International Airport where 13 aeroplanes were destroyed.[1] In April 1969, the escalation in the fighting between the two sides prompted the Lebanese authorities to re-establish their control over the south. This action by the Lebanese authorities was resisted by the Palestinians and their Lebanese sympathisers. Tensions grew between them until clashes occurred at Dayr Mimas.[2] From there, the situation went from bad to worse. On 18 October 1969 clashes between them increased to the point that the Lebanese authorities had to seek Egyptian advice about reaching an understanding with the PLO under Egyptian auspices; this

[1] Wade Goria, *Sovereignty and Leadership in Lebanon 1943-1976*, Ithaca Press, London, 1985 p. 95.

[2] Ibid., p. 104.

resulted in an agreement between the Lebanese state and the PLO known as the Cairo Agreement.

Under this agreement Palestinian commandos were not allowed to launch operations across the border with Israel, to wear military uniforms in public or to adopt positions on Lebanese internal affairs. On the Lebanese side, the army would allow the commandos free access to Syrian supply lines, and give their cause formal recognition. The agreement was ratified by Parliament in December 1969. Ironically, the deputies did not know the specific terms of the agreement when they ratified it. Three years later Prime Minister Karami said "... the nature of the agreement compels us to keep it secret at this stage ... we will expose its contents to parliament at the right time".[1] On the ground nothing changed, and attacks and counter attacks between the Palestinians and Israel continued.

Due to these political developments, the period from 1967 to 1969 witnessed political confrontation between a number of Lebanese leaders. The main confrontation had three aspects: pro-Palestinian armed struggle represented by Kamal Junblat; pro-Western policies represented by Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel; and a compromise position represented by the Lebanese President Charles Helu.[2] Despite the fact that the main Israeli reprisals were taking place in the south, none of the traditional Shi'ite leaders had

[1] *Daily Star*, 18 January, 1972.
[2] Goria, op.cit, pp. 95-100.

sufficient political presence to advance the concerns of their areas. This absence left the door wide open for al-Sadr to manoeuvre.

al-Sadr's political activities were in harmony with his aim of enhancing coexistence in Lebanese society. The participation of other Lebanese communities in sharing responsibility for what was happening in the south would most certainly consolidate political allegiance to the state. He always reiterated the importance of complete devotion to national sovereignty and the integration of the national territory.[1]

As president of the SISC, al-Sadr began discussing political issues. In a gathering with a group of Lebanese emigrants from Africa al-Sadr stressed among other things the importance of improving defence in the south, training and arming the people, and improving the Lebanese army's ability to defend the southern border.[2] On 30 May 1969, the same demands were stressed in the SISC in the presence of the Lebanese president.[3] The more the tension and danger grew in the south the stronger al-Sadr's tone became.

During 1969 al-Sadr tirelessly addressed the need to protect the south but he could not change the situation and his demands were largely ignored. The Lebanese authorities were hesitant to carry out major social or political projects for fear of displeasing an important minority in the country i.e. the Maronites, and policy decisions were often

[1] Harakat al-Mahrumin's charter, principle 5.
[2] ***Lisan al-Hal***, 17 September, 1968.
[3] Ibid., 23 & 30 May, 1969. ***al-Raqib*** newspaper, 2 June, 1969.

only taken as a result of riots, strikes and demonstrations. The Lebanese governments, therefore, 'reacts about as often as it acts'.[1]

Eventually al-Sadr had to resort to new measures to advance his demands. This happened on 12 May 1970 when Israel launched a series of attacks on various southern villages, leaving many people dead and wounded.[2] On 22 May the situation worsened as Israel sent 100 tanks and 2,000 troops into the border villages, causing much death and destruction and leading to the migration of nearly 50,000 people.[3] Israeli reprisals became fiercer when more Palestinian fighters entered Lebanon after the Jordanian-Palestinian crisis in Black September 1970. The Palestinians then had no other place but Lebanon from which to continue their struggle. The transfer of the PLO leadership to Lebanon caused an entirely new relationship between the Palestinians and the Lebanese, especially in the south.

These events were a major concern for al-Sadr because of the huge migration from the south which he viewed as extremely dangerous for the stability of the country. He strongly believed that unpopulated land would be easy for Israel to occupy, and felt he had to do something to compel the government to act quickly. He began by forming ***Haya't Nusrat al-Janub***, the Committee for the Aid of the South, in co-operation with

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[1] Suleiman, 'Crisis and Revolution in Lebanon', ***MES***, Vol. 26, 1972, p. 22.

[2] Israel attacked Tyre and the surrounding villages, Bint Jubail, Marj'ayun, Hasbaiyya, 'Aitarun, Kafr Shuba, and Rashaiyya al-Fakhar. In some villages the migration was 100 per cent. ***al-Nahar***, 21 May, 1970.

[3] Halawi, op.cit, pp. 144-145.

some religious leaders.[1] His aim was to arouse national concern for the south and he felt that the best way to achieve this would be through co-operating with other communities.

On 25 May al-Sadr issued a manifesto appealing for a collective consciousness, and calling for a one day general strike to protest against the state's inaction. This was the beginning of al-Sadr's defiance of the government:

> For two years ... we have been calling for the necessity of attending to the situation in the south ... then the crisis began to advance .... killing, destroying, dispersing and threatening the entire country.... After this, what do the rulers expect? Do they want the southerners to keep silent about this neglect? The strike is the minimum ... first step which we hope will awaken in the rulers the spirit of responsibility and a sound national conscience.[2]

The following day during the strike, al-Sadr addressed nearly 50,000 demonstrators who gathered in front of the SISC. This was Lebanon's first strike for two decades and it was the first major public act of al-Sadr. Demonstrators showed support for the Palestinians and chanted slogans against the political *zu'ama*. They chanted; 'where is Sabri Hamadeh? Where are the deputies of the south? Why does the parliament not convene? They get paid and do not work.'[3] These slogans although showing anger against the

[1] The committee was headed by Musa al-Sadr. The Christian member were Archbishop Antonios Khuraysh, Gorgius Haddad, Ithnasius al-Sha'ir, Bulus al-Khuri and priest Ibrahim Daghir. The Muslim members are, the Mufti of Saida Shaikh Muhammad Salim Hammud, Saida's Chief Judge Shaikh Ahmad al-Zain, the Druze judge of Hasbaiyya Shaikh Najib Qays, Shaikh Salim Jalal al-Din, Shaikh 'Ali al-Faquih and Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan. *al-Nahar*, 21 May, 1970.

[2] *al-Nahar*, 26 May, 1970

[3] Ibid., 27 June, 1970.

authorities clearly projected the beginning of a transfer of popularity from the traditional Shi'ite *zu'ama* to al-Sadr.

In this gathering the tone of his speech clearly showed a threat directed against the government:

> If our demands are not met, we who built the palaces of Beirut, shall occupy them. The palaces should be the present homes of the children of the south, and not Red Cross tents. Some are wondering what is intended by this strike. I hope they listen well; we are demanding that the state take responsibility for protecting the south, and that we co-operate with the Arab armies. We are not military experts but we have given the state the chance to exercise such responsibilities, and it has not done so.

The threat to occupy "palaces" was not merely to scare the authorities. al-Sadr was stopped from doing so only when the Syrians advised him not to carry out the threat.[1] The outcome of this strike was important as al-Sadr tested his popularity in the country in general. He appeared as a national leader rather than merely a Shi'ite leader. In addition, this strike and the threats forced Parliament to convene in order to draft a law to establish a public office through which to address the specific economic, defence and political concerns of the south. On 6 June ***Majlis Lubnan al-Janubi*** (Council of Southern Lebanon) was created with a budget of LL30 million.[2]

During the years that followed, the south became a battle ground between Israel and the Palestinians where Israeli might was intensely felt. Israeli forces carried out many

[1] 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, *Al-Shira'a*, issue 666, 6 February, 1995.
[2] *al-Hayat*, 2,4 June, 1970.

"search-and-destroy" missions into Lebanese territory. On 25 February 1972, the Israeli forces carried out a three-day armoured incursion into many villages. The second invasion, on 16 September 1972, ended in a 36-hour occupation, extending over about one-third of the south's territory.[1] During this second invasion the Lebanese Army responded to the Israeli incursion and 18 Lebanese soldiers were killed and 46 wounded.[2]

The army's defensive role in the south did not last long and there were soon clashes between the army and the Palestinians. These developments forced the Palestinians to regroup in the south to the extent that they announced cancellation of all military operations from Lebanese territory. This announcement aimed to ease the growing frustration of the southerners in face of their inability to face up to Israeli aggression.

Despite Palestinian concessions, tensions with the Lebanese state escalated. In April 1973 Israeli commandos assassinated three PLO leaders Kamal 'Adwan, Yusuf Najjar and Kamal Nasir. Pro-Palestinian members in the Lebanese government such as the Prime Minister Sa'ib Salam, Kamal Junblat and Rashid Karami, accused the Lebanese army of being incapable of defending Lebanese territory. On the other hand some Palestinian commandos were arrested for causing explosions in various parts of Lebanon.

[1] E. Hagopian & S. Farsoun, (ed.), ***South Lebanon***, special report, No. 2, Association of Arab-American University Graduates, august, 1978, p. 17.

[2] ***al-Hayat***, 21 September, 1972.

In May, the tensions between the two sides led to military conflict between them, which stopped only when Syria intervened. The two sides signed the Melkart Protocol which reaffirmed the principles of the Cairo Agreement.[1] The 1973 October War, in which Arab sentiments and strength were high, signalled even stronger Palestinian military operations from Lebanese territory. This in turn led to massive and frequent Israeli retaliation in the south. At this stage the Palestinians received tremendous support from the leftist political parties.

However, it was not long before both the Palestinians and the Lebanese authorities began to violate the Cairo Agreement. The Lebanese authorities tried to regain full control over Lebanon while the Palestinians began to display their military presence openly and to erect check-points. The Palestinians had nowhere except Lebanon from which to pursue their struggle, so that it was vital for them to hold on to it. Their behaviour and attitudes towards Lebanon was due to their perception of Lebanon as "a garden without a fence" as explained by one of their leaders Shafiq al-Hut.[2]

As a result of all these developments al-Sadr was in no position to give full support to either side. Had he supported the authorities, it would have put him in an awkward position with his people amongst whom the support of the Palestinians and the progressive parties was high. On the other hand he could not and would not fully support

[1] Hagopian, op.cit, p.17.

[2] Mary A. Bateson, book review of the Vanished Imam, *The New York Times Book Review*, 25 May, 1986, p. 6. Halawi, op.cit, p. 146.

the other side. al-Sadr had to be very careful in tackling this problem. He blamed the state for its inadequate social, economic and security policies in the south. As for the Palestinians and the Leftist parties, al-Sadr was careful to distinguish between the Palestinian cause and Leftist ideology. He always supported the Palestinian resistance and its right to liberate its land and always encouraged them to reach an understanding with the Lebanese authorities. On the other hand he was a cleric and therefore at odds with Leftist ideology because of its incompatibility with Islam. For a few years he managed to keep a balance between all three: the state, the Palestinian resistance and the Leftists.

al-Sadr was convinced that the only way to maintain control of his momentum was by continuing his social programme in order to widen his national popularity. Therefore, he concentrated his efforts at this stage on reiterating his demands for social reform and justice, but because of the sectarian nature of the Lebanese system, al-Sadr had to maintain two approaches. As president of the SISC, he had to keep pressing the government to secure the rights of the Shi'ite community. On the other hand, his co-operation with intellectuals from other communities was as strong as before to achieve social reform in the country by rejecting confessionalism.

Sicking and Khairallah believe that al-Sadr pursued a contradictory policy, asserting that he was not sincere in his rejection of confessionalism because he demanded special rights for the Shi'ites. This has always been a common misunderstanding of Lebanese politics as every political action is usually viewed from a sectarian stand point.

However, it would have been utopian if al-Sadr had worked in one direction, that is, rejecting confessionalism at a time when tensions between the secular Muslim and Christian leaders was increasing. In addition, tensions between the state and the Palestinians were going from bad to worse, and more importantly Israeli incursions and bombing of the south were intensifying. At this time, rational dialogue rarely took place between the conflicting parties. Each party was clearly trying to maintain power and control over others.

Leading Maronite figures, such as Camille Chamoun and Pierre Gemayel, worked to maintain Maronite supremacy. Kamal Junblat adamantly supported the Palestinians and used leftist ideology to undermine Maronite dominance. The Palestinians had no alternative to Lebanon to carry on their resistance and hence, always worked to establish their own authority in Lebanese territory. The Sunni leaders were more compromising as they maintained good relations with their various rivals and always called for a wider participation of Muslims in Lebanese affairs. As for the Shi'ites, they were fragmented, without a dominant voice to present their demands in such a hostile environment, especially as it was Shi'ite territory which was suffering Israeli reprisal attacks. The combination of these factors forced al-Sadr to work simultaneously on two fronts: securing the rights of the Shi'ite community, and co-operating with intellectuals to abolish confessionalism. Over the next two years al-Sadr's popularity reached its height within

the Shi'ite community and among intellectuals from other communities. This popularity lasted until the start of the civil war in 1975.

1.1.4 Shi'ite demands

Shi'ite demands were forcefully triggered after the Lebanese army clashed with the Palestinians in May 1973. On 22 June al-Sadr gathered the Shi'ite deputies for a meeting in order to make them pledge to work for the full rights of the community and to withdraw support from the government if these demands were not met within four months.[1] Only 13 deputies[2] out of 19 signed the pact, the remaining six being al-As'ad's bloc who refused to co-operate with al-Sadr. He warned the government about the chaotic security situation in the south, and the deprivation suffered by certain religious communities and certain regions in the country. He also spoke of the rights of peasants and the uncertain future for students.

At this meeting al-Sadr detailed to the members of the executive and legislative committees of the SISC some instances of the deprivation being suffered by the Shi'ite community. For instance, the Shi'ites held only 40 percent of the first category of official posts in the civil service designated for them, only 37 percent of the second category and

[1] al-Sadr declared three possible sanctions. Shi'ite members of the new government of Taqi al-Din al-Sulh would resign after four months if Shi'ite demands were not met. If they resign, these deputies would undertake not to join any future government, and would refrain from giving it a vote of confidence.

[2] The 13 were Sabri Hamadeh, Adil 'Usayran, Kazim al-Khalil, Abd al-Latif al-Zain, Ali al-Khalil, Husain Mansur, Mahmud 'Ammar, Husain al-Husaini, Muhammad Yusuf Baydun, Ahmad Asber, Yusuf Hammud, Subhi Yaghi, Abd al-Mawla Amhaz. ***al-Jarida***, 11 December, 1973.

18 percent of the third category. As for the budget, al-Sadr stated that between 1970 and 1972 the government spent nearly LL.946 million and, out of this amount, the south received only LL.25 million through the council of the south (itself LL 5 million less than its original budget). This money had not been spent to improve the infrastructure of the south but rather as compensation to families who had lost their homes.[1]

In the event al-Sadr was unable to carry out his threat of urging the Shi'ite ministers not to participate in the government if Shi'ite demands were not met, due to the opposition of some Shi'ite deputies led by Kamil al-As'ad. The four month ultimatum given to the government lapsed without result. Therefore, on 12 December 1973, the SISC met to discuss the matter and ended up extending the threat for two more months. Five days later in another meeting at the SISC al-Sadr admitted that his demands had not been answered.[2] In Yater during 'Ashura al-Sadr announced that he would use a new approach for his demands,[3] promising that they would be supported by mass rallies, sit-ins, and civil disobedience.

al-Sadr was criticised for attacking the government while receiving a salary from it. This criticism prompted him to ask for his salary to be transferred to the budget of the SISC. However, his request was rejected on the ground that all religious councils have equal budgets so that with the addition of his salary the SISC's budget would be more than the

[1] al-Sadr, Micro-film, the American University of Beirut.
[2] SISC report, 17 December, 1973.
[3] *al-Nahar*, 3 February, 1974.

rest. Consequently, al-Sadr refused to take any salary from the government in order to be free from criticism, and to enable him to carry on his attacks.[1] The continuation of al-Sadr's efforts needed to be organised in a social and political frame and to broaden the Lebanese involvement in such effort. This was to be achieved by a new movement called Harakat al-Mahrumin.

2. Harakat al-Mahrumin

al-Sadr would not have been able to embark on his reform or to achieve his demands if he had not been part of the Lebanese system. To call for reform without actually being in the system and without the agreement of the ***zu'ama*** would be a waste of time. Therefore, it was essential for al-Sadr first to build himself a place in the system, which he did by creating the SISC. Once in the system, the ability to manoeuvre towards a wider objective would become more feasible.

In 1974 al-Sadr's demands formed part of the programme of a social movement which he was seeking to establish with the help of intellectuals from the various communities. As it was his habit to prepare public opinion in advance, al-Sadr gradually talked about the need for a non-sectarian movement to represent the demands of deprived Lebanese. He accompanied his words with action. His call for reform in Lebanon attracted a wide circle of intellectuals who found that his demands summarised their aspirations.

[1] Interview, Shaikh Mahmud Farahat, London, winter, 1992.

This policy would appear contradictory only to those who were totally committed either to sectarianism or to secularism. It was difficult in times of crisis to understand the possibility of reaching a compromise between the two concepts. In a society such as Lebanon where a sense of national consensus is virtually non-existent, favouring one concept would further aggravate tensions between the different communities.

His approach could be characterised as "step-by-step" policy to achieve his objectives. The Soviet Union's policy towards the Egyptian Communist Party is an example of this kind of approach. Despite the oppression the Communist Party had faced under Nasser, the Soviet Union never ceased to support him. This was not a policy of double-standard but rather a profound understanding of the nature of Egyptian society which Soviet Union judged was not yet ready for radical change.

Hence al-Sadr considered that the first vital step was to establish a Shi'ite body to enable the Shi'ite community to be considered on a par with the others. His call to abolish sectarianism reached its height in 1974 when he formed and presided over a committee composed of seven well known members belonging to different communities.[1] As a member of this committee, Basim al-Jisr[2] described why its members were encouraged to join al-Sadr in his efforts. They believed that al-Sadr was seeking a reform movement working for social and economic justice without throwing the country into revolution,

[1] The members were Patriarch Yuwakim Mubarak, Michele Asmar, Fuad Bustani, Marwan Hamadeh, Pierre Hilu, Jubran Haik, and Basim al-Jisr.

[2] Interview, Basim al-Jisr, Oxford, summer,1994.

based on national rather than sectarian objectives. For this reason, as al-Jisr explained, al-Sadr was viewed as a national leader rather than the leader of the Shi'ite community. al-Jisr also described al-Sadr as being open to all communities and ready to engage in dialogue with whoever could help him achieve an acceptable political formula. He indicated that al-Sadr in fact supported coexistence, as he never hesitated to preach and pray in churches and monasteries, an activity which had previously been unheard of. When asked to elaborate on this issue, al-Jisr stated that he had visited France in 1974 along with al-Sadr and Patriarch Mubarak. While they were visiting Jouras Monastery in Yvelines, the time for prayer arrived and al-Sadr prepared himself and conducted a prayer within the monastery itself.

al-Sadr used to meet with this committee twice a month in order to formulate its demands. On 17 March 1974 his demands received their widest level of support when he announced the establishment of the Harakat al-Mahrumin during a mass rally in Ba'lbek. The charter of the movement contained seven principles.[1] Although the movement was almost entirely composed of Shi'ites, it was not a confessional one in that it did not seek to promote the ideology or interests of a religious confession as such. Leading Christian Maronite intellectuals such as Michael Asmar and Albert Mansur also joined the movement.[2]

[1] The movement's principles are stated in Norton, ***Amal and The*** ..., pp. 144-166.
[2] Interview, Shaikh Mahmud Farahat, London, winter, 1992.

As the Shi'ites were the majority in the movement, al-Sadr was accused of enhancing sectarian divisions. However, on 19 November, 190 intellectuals from various religious communities signed a proclamation of support for the movement which was described as "a movement that reaches beyond the Shi'ite community".[1] Patriarch Khuraysh considered al-Sadr the bearer of the banner of defending the south and considered the SISC a haven for all Lebanese.[2]

The direct reasons behind the calling of the mass rally in Ba'lbek varied The occasion was not only to announce the establishment of Harakat al-Mahrumin, but also because of the rejection by the regime of the demands for full Shi'ite rights which al-Sadr had put forward on 11 February. However, Shaikh Mahmud Farahat[3] gave a different reason for al-Sadr's having organised the rally: al-Sadr met with President Sulaiman Franjiyya and discussed the position of Director-General at the Ministry of Justice which was left vacant by the retirement of the Sunni Director-General Hisham Qabalan. al-Sadr asked Franjiyya to fill this vacancy with a Shi'ite but Franjiyya refused until he had consulted Kamil al-As'ad. This deeply angered al-Sadr, who then called for the mass rally. However, the real reasons were that on the one hand the regime had totally ignored all the Shi'ite demands advocated by SISC, and on the other hand that it continued to support the traditional Shi'ite *zu'ama* represented by al-As'ad, identifying the interests of the entire community with al-As'ad's own interests, apart from the fact that relations

[1] Sicking and Khairallah, op.cit, p. 102.
[2] *al-Nahar*, 30 March 1975.
[3] Interview, Shaikh Mahmud Farahat, London, winter, 1992.

between al-Sadr and al-As'ad were rapidly deteriorating. The reasons why Franjiyya and al-As'ad co-operated to such an extent are obvious, going back to their efforts to undermine Shihabism between 1958 and Franjiyya's election to the Presidency in 1970.

The rally at Ba'lbek which coincided with the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husain was unprecedented in the history of Lebanon, as it was the first time that 75,000 people gathered. In addition, al-Sadr appeared stronger than ever as nearly 10,000 of them were armed. At this rally he declared:

> I shall fight until there remains not one of you oppressed, whether Shi'ite or not, and until every inch of lands is fully exploited.[1]

Ghassan Twaini[2] described the rally of Ba'lbek as:

> ... a revolution on the part of a sect, but it was not a sectarian revolution ... the Shi'ite community was not interested in governing the country, but it did not want to be ruled by unjust government. The Shi'ite revolution is not sectarian because it is not directed against another community but against the government.[3]

Nearly two weeks later on 5 April al-Sadr continued to put pressure on the government when he was invited by Ma'ruf Sa'd[4] to preach in the 'Umari mosque in Sidon on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday. Sidon at that time was experiencing strained relations with the state which made al-Sadr's call for unity against the government more easily acceptable. He made it clear to his audience that men of religion are on the right path when they face the wrath of the rulers. He asked them to stand on the side of the

[1] *al-Nahar*, 18 March 1974.
[2] a Christian editor of *al-Nahar* and a former ambassador.
[3] *al-Nahar*, 18 March, 1974.
[4] Ma'ruf Sa'd was a deputy and a prominent leaders in Saida.

wretched of the earth. He also made his famous remark "Weapons are the adornments of men". This was interpreted by his opponents as meaning that al-Sadr was advocating the use of weapons against the state. In fact, he meant using weapons to deter Israeli attacks in the south rather than against Lebanese people. His attitude was shown clearly during the civil war in 1975. After he finished his speech the Sunni clerics expressed their support and emphasised the essential unity of Muslims. Shaikh Fahim Abu 'Ubayh the representative of al-Azhar in Lebanon expressed this best when he said:

> The black turban of Sayyid al-Sadr and my white turban are but like the black and the white of the eye, the one integrated with the other, the one complementing the other. We are all the followers of Muhammad; there is no difference between one doctrine and another.[1]

This was the first time that a Shi'ite cleric in Lebanon was received with such enthusiasm by a Sunni crowd. The rally in Sidon represented a triumph for al-Sadr's efforts to strike a balance between the need for an independent Shi'ite voice in the country and the importance of overall Lebanese solidarity. Patriarch Khuraysh's support for Harakat al-Mahrumin was completed by Sunni recognition. On 10 September, support for al-Sadr was even further enhanced when the Executive Committee of the Islamic Association, together with a group of six major Sunni organisations in the country, presented the government with a list of Muslim demands that included the Shi'ite demands as formulated by the SISC.[2]

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[1] *al-Nahar*, 4 April, 1994.
[2] Halawi, op.cit, p. 190.

A month later, at a celebration for the Prophet's daughter Fatima, al-Sadr called for another mass rally in Tyre. Nearly 100,000 people attended and the presence of weapons was evident. During this rally al-Sadr threatened to hold the next rally in Beirut itself if the demands were not met.

These activities came to a head in late 1974. A political programme was on its way to fruition but, due to the worsening of events in the country it never materialised. Basim al-Jisr says that al-Sadr continued meeting with the committee members and all agreed on the programme which they were hoping to announce in Damascus.[1] The reason for choosing Damascus was that a Lebanese activity week was to be held there in 1975. al-Jisr himself was to read out the programme that the committee believed would suit Lebanon, in which political and social reforms were the major issues. However, the assassination of Ma'ruf Sa'd in Sidon on 26 February 1975 meant that the activity week was cancelled.

The assassination of Ma'ruf Sa'd was one of the major sparks igniting the Lebanese civil war which began on 13 April. The civil war put an end to al-Sadr's efforts to achieve reform as the voice of reason was no match to the sound of cannons. Due to the civil war, his main concern became to preserve the integrity of Lebanon and the coexistence of its communities.

[1] Interview , Basim al-Jisr, Oxford, summer, 1994.

3. Beginning of the decline

Although al-Sadr's fame reached its height in late 1974 when he received support from various communities for his social reform programme presented under the Harakat al-Mahrumin, two main factors caused his reputation to decline rapidly: the outbreak of the civil war and the creation of Amal. As we have seen al-Sadr's popularity was based on the peaceful transformation of the Lebanese political community. But with the beginning of the civil war, such an approach did not stand a chance. Hence, a new approach was needed in order to cope with the warring factions.

3.1 The civil war

The dominant forces in the civil war were those of the Right which wanted to maintain Maronite supremacy over Lebanon, and those of the Left which wanted to secularise the political system. al-Sadr was not sympathetic to either. It was essential for him not to side with any faction as this would undermine and perhaps even terminate his reform programme.

In the circumstances all he could do was to condemn fighting between Lebanese, and instead advocate fighting against Israel. He engaged in strenuous efforts to convince the conflicting parties to control the situation and he started this process with the leftists and the Palestinians. On 16 April 1975 he called intellectuals from various communities to a meeting in the SISC to maintain bridges between them, including Hani al-Hasan from the

Palestinian side. As a result, the Committee of National Reconciliation was founded. Its main objective was to maintain good relations between the Palestinians and the Lebanese authorities, and between the various Lebanese communities.

But on 26 April these efforts were disrupted when Kamal Junblat announced that Kata'ib Party, the largest Maronite party, should be isolated politically, a call which escalated the tension rather than controlling it. These two contradictory stands of Junblat and al-Sadr aggravated the relationship between them, as we shall see in the next chapter.

On 27 June while the situation was worsening, al-Sadr took sanctuary in al-Safa Mosque of al-'Amiliyya College in Beirut. He began a fast as a gesture of protest against the increasing violence in the country.[1] His fast lasted for nearly a week where he constantly stated:

> Non-violence is our way and our answer. Let anyone who comes to us with arms depart from us. I will not wield a sword. Our weapons are the words of God.[2]

During his fast in al-Safa mosque a stream of visitors came to show support. Among the visitors were the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, PLO, leader Yasir 'Arafat and the Syrian Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam. The latter promised that a National Unity Cabinet would be established in order to restore security in the country. As a result, al-Sadr ended his fast. However, the tension did not cease but spread to various parts of the country. al-Sadr set out for the Biqa' Valley in order to end a Muslim-Progressive

[1] *al-Anwar*, 28 June, 1975.
[2] Ibid.

siege of some Christian villages. He excoriated the besiegers and reminded his followers that "every bullet fired at al-Qa'a, Dayr al-Ahmar or Shelifa [all are Christian populated areas] is fired at my house and my pulpit".[1] He also visited the church in al-Qa'a accompanied by the Roman Catholic archbishop Ilias al-Zughbi, Father Fransis Thamina, Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan and Shaikh Muhammad Ya'qub. Later, this gesture was criticised by the Left who said "the turban and the pulpit have nothing to offer the revolution".[2]

His peaceful approach was not considered relevant for Muslim-progressive factions, and the south remained exposed to Israeli aggression. al-Sadr's major concern was the south which eventually dictated his relations with the progressives. He was eventually left with no other alternative but to create a militia to take on the responsibility of defending the south. In 1975 the Amal militia was founded.

3.2 Amal and mobilisation of the Shi'ites

The existence of Amal came to light on 6 July 1975 when an anti-personnel land mine at a secret training camp at 'Ayn Bunaya in the Biqa' exploded killing 26 commandos along with their PLO instructor, and wounding 43 others. al-Sadr had no choice but to announce somewhat prematurely the birth of Lebanon's newest militia: Amal.[3] It seems

[1] *al-Nahar*, 5 July 1975.
[2] Adil Rida, *Ma' al-'Itizar lil Imam Musa al-Sadr*, Dar al-Hawra, Beirut, p. 135.
[3] *al-Nahar*, 7 July 1975.

ironic that at the time, he was in the midst of a hunger strike at al-Safa mosque protesting against the proliferation of armed militias in the country.

This declaration resulted in the Shi'ite community once again being exposed to manipulation. The leader of the Kata'ib Party, Pierre Gemayel regarded Amal's links with the Palestinians as a challenge and a provocation. Gemayel's attitude towards Amal contributed to al-Sadr's decreasing popularity among the Christians. On the other hand, Kamal Junblat found in the dispute between Gemayel and Amal an opportunity to drive a wedge between the Maronite and the Shi'ite communities.

Regardless of the immediate and long term factors which paved the way for Amal, its formation lost al-Sadr much credibility among his non-Shi'ite supporters. With Amal he laid down the basis for mobilisation of the Shi'ite community. At first, Amal sided with the forces of the Lebanese National Movement, LNM, which was headed by Kamal Junblat, but later it departed and adopted a distinctive political trend apart from that of the LNM. al-Sadr departure caused antagonism between the two (al-Sadr's political involvement during the war will be discussed in the next chapter).What concerns us here is to discuss the reasons why al-Sadr established Amal rather than its activities during the civil war.

Amal was established simply to defend the south against Israeli attacks and to gather the Shi'ites under one leadership rather than being left to others to mobilise. Consequently,

Amal represented the end of Harakat al-Mahrumin, because its social programme had to be abandoned when the civil war began. However, as the war progressed people referred to them as a single entity and both names were used interchangeably, probably because they were established by the same person. In addition, the social programme outlined in the charter of Harakat al-Mahrumin became essential part of Amal.

As shown above, the fundamental reasons for the creation of Amal were the collapse of the authority of the state when the civil war started, the continuous Israeli attacks, and increasing demands from within the Shi'ite community. Prior to the civil war it was easy to refer to the authorities and demand protection of the southern frontiers with Israel. But the situation changed entirely when an opposition faction which was part of the progressive forces eliminated all signs of the state's authority particularly when the Palestinians joined it.

Basim al-Jisr confirmed that Shi'ites urged al-Sadr to do something to stop the leftist and the Palestinians from conscripting their sons, and also urged him to do something to prevent the Israeli attacks.[1] These demands were enhanced by al-Sadr's Iranian associate Mustafa Chamran.[2] A group of Iranian opponents of the Shah's regime found refuge in Lebanon where they co-operated with al-Sadr. Chamran was working in the south of Lebanon setting up a polytechnic near Tyre. He was disturbed by the increased

[1] Interview, Basim al-Jisr, Oxford, summer, 1994.

[2] Mustafa Chamran was an American trained engineer and an Iranian by birth. He became the director of the Burj al-Shamali Technical Institute in the south until 1979, when he departed for Iran to become chairman of the Supreme Defence Council in the new Islamic Republic.

Palestinian influence in the south as the Palestinians began to abuse Shi'ite hospitality and to seize private property.

In the mid-1970s Chamran reported to al-Sadr the growing resentment over the Palestinian presence in the south. He informed al-Sadr about the need to arm the Shi'ites, "We'll have to arm. If we don't fight the Palestinians we'll certainly have to fight the Israelis. It's inevitable". al-Sadr reply was straight forward "You know I don't want it to come to that. It's not the way."[1] Chamran was influenced by Imam Khumaini's teachings which were out of harmony with al-Sadr's non-violence. On 21 March 1975 al-Sadr's opinion was to change, after Israel had struck hard and destroyed Kafr Shuba village in the south. In the village he laid down the foundation of a new house and then declared: "This is the land of your fathers and grandfathers and here you must remain. Migrating to Beirut is extremely dangerous."[2] It was then that he began advocating the use of arms: "military training has become a duty."[3] Amal was founded straight after this Israeli attack but it remained secret for several months until the explosion. This is because al-Sadr knew that announcing the formation of Amal would certainly undermine his popularity in the country.

In order to assure his commitment to non-violence he declared:

> ... weapons are things to be used against the enemy, not against civilians, friends and brothers. As we see, the Israeli enemy roams freely, doing as it

[1] Carole Jerome, ***The Man in the Mirror,*** Biddles ltd, London, 1987, p. 81.
[2] ***Daily Star***, 22 March 1975.
[3] ***al-Nahar***, 26 March 1975.

> pleases in the south .... The enemy kills, blows up, and takes prisoners; and no one responds. For years we have demanded that the south be defended. When the Lebanese government abandoned its duty to defend the south, we said, Why are we waiting for the Israelis to occupy our land? we formed resistance groups to retake the occupied land in southern Lebanon. It is better to prepare now, to bear arms and fight off the Israeli invader before dangers come to a head.[1]

He issued this statement when he left for the Christian village of al-Qa'a in order to end the siege. However, he considered that relations with the Palestinians should always remain strong, and ensured this by co-operating with 'Arafat and the moderate factions within the PLO which offered arms and training to Amal. Good relations between the two lasted for a while and as a sign of this the PLO considered Amal's martyrs as its own.[2] However, the deterioration of the war situation and the changing interests and alliances of the warring factions caused the termination of these relations, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

As we have seen, the Shi'ite community had no choice but act to protect its own interests. This happened despite continuous efforts on al-Sadr's part to promote co-operation with other communities through SISC and Harakat l-Mahrumin. The beginning of the civil war made al-Sadr's peaceful approach redundant. Sectarian allegiance intensified. In such an atmosphere, and with the absence of any Shi'ite political movement they could turn to, the Shi'ites were drawn into the war by joining various

[1] *al-Nahar,* 7 July 1975.
[2] Ibid.

existing militias. This amounted to mobilisation by the Left, and in the circumstances could only be prevented by forming a Shi'ite militia.

Eventually, al-Sadr's peaceful approach could not survive the civil war as each community had its own objectives which differed from the other. Each one was concerned how to advance its priorities. The civil war proved to be too difficult for one person to tackle particularly when non-Lebanese forces intervened. Under such circumstances al-Sadr had to depart from his pursuit of broad national objectives to concentrate on the interest of the Shi'ite community. Amal signalled the real mobilisation of the Shi'ites and this progress increased dramatically in the late 1970s and 1980s.

The following chapter will discuss al-Sadr's political involvement during the civil war which began in 1975. During the war Lebanese integrity was at stake which prompted al-Sadr to challenge almost every attempt to coexistence between the various communities, and also to challenge those who used violence as a means of change. His political involvement was vigorously challenged by traditional *zu'ama* who feared loss of power to al-Sadr and also by leftist groups and their Palestinian allies.

Setting Priorities:

al-Sadr's Attitudes Towards Lebanese Nationalism and Palestinian Aspirations

In 1975 the Lebanese civil war developed to a point at which Lebanon's integrity became endangered. This al-Sadr could not accept, since he was aware that the Shi'ite community would not be able to establish an identity without preserving the Lebanese political system. There were two principal opposing political view points during the war. One sought the maintenance of Lebanon's existing political system and of Maronite supremacy in the hand of the Kata'ib Party and its allies. The other sought to change the Lebanese system to a socialist-secular one, a viewpoint held by Kamal Junblat and his allies including the Palestinians.

In this situation al-Sadr was forced to become heavily involved in politics particularly because the traditional Shi'ite *zu'ama* played very little part in these events. However, the adoption of either one of these two political positions would dramatically undermine his credibility in the country. His political line was two-fold: both to preserve the Lebanese system, and to advocate social reform at all levels. In addition, he tried to reach an acceptable solution for the Palestinian issue in Lebanon without throwing the country into revolution.

This chapter will deal with two main issues: first al-Sadr's attitude towards the traditional Shi'ite *zu'ama* to show how he came to reflect the interests of the Shi'ite community. The case of Kamil al-As'ad will be discussed because his family was the most influential in the south. Secondly, being in the camp dominated by Junblat and the Palestinians, al-Sadr's changing relations with them will be accounted for particularly when Lebanon's integrity was at stake. In addition, a new group of Shi'ite *'ulama* emerged and rejected al-Sadr's peaceful approach. They allied with the Left, from which they received support in order to counter al-Sadr. The case of Sayyid Hani Fahas will be discussed.

1. Fading power of the zu'ama

What concerns us here is the south, where the real suffering of the Shi'ite community was increasing due to the military escalation. In the south it was al-As'ad who had supremacy among the *zu'ama*. The strength of this family was apparent during parliamentary elections. They used to organise the electoral lists for the constituencies in the south: Nabatiyya, Tyre, Bint Jubail and Marj'ayun. al-Zahrani was the only constituency which was not under their control because it was 'Usayran's domain and only one Shi'ite candidate could be elected there. In the late 1950s and 1960s the al-As'ads' capacity to impose their candidates in Nabatiyya could only be done through compromise either with al-Zain of Nabatiyya or 'Usayran who had considerable influence in the town. Overall, the strength and weaknesses of these families were affected by their allegiance to the various Lebanese presidents. This was apparent during the 1957 parliamentary elections, when Chamoun made sure that Ahmad al-As'ad was not elected to the parliament and

that the al-Khalil and 'Usayran families gained more power. During the 1970s, due to the activities of al-Sadr, Kamil al-As'ad's authority was seriously challenged.

1.1 al-Sadr and al-As'ad's struggle over the south

The al-As'ad family lost its supremacy gradually, over a number of years, and more rapidly whenever the Shi'ite community was facing crisis. During his initial four years in Lebanon, al-Sadr did not become directly involved in politics but was engaged in promoting social welfare institutions. Whereas initially, almost all the traditional *zu'ama* had welcomed his arrival in Lebanon, later things began to change. Signs of tension began first with the *'ulama* rather than the *zu'ama*, as has been shown in the case of Shaikh Mughniyya in Chapter Five. However, al-Sadr attributed the misery of the Shi'ite community first and foremost to negligence of their own *zu'ama*, and concluded that if things were to improve the existing leadership must be changed. Tension with the *zu'ama* began in 1964. al-Sadr challenged the supremacy of the most influential *za'im*, Kamil al-As'ad, by refusing to vote for his candidates in that year's parliamentary elections in Tyre. Although this was little more than a token gesture, and all al-As'ad's candidates won the elections, al-Sadr's action nevertheless signalled the beginning of a strained relationship between the two. [1]

The popularity that al-Sadr achieved in his early residence in Lebanon helped him to a great extent when he initiated the SISC. He was also helped by the power struggle

[1] Muhammad Safiy al-Din, *al-Shira'a*, 12 October, 1987, p.34. The electoral list for Tyre was composed of Muhammad Safiy al-Din, Ja'far Sharaf al-Din and 'Ali 'Arab.

between the Shi'ite *zu'ama*. Originally, al-As'ad was in favour of establishing a Shi'ite Council, unlike Sabri Hamadeh. According to al-As'ad,[1] Hamadeh did not want clerics to become involved in politics because one day they might compete with the *zu'ama*. In the 1970s attitudes changed as Hamadeh became a supporter of al-Sadr while al-As'ad became his main opponent.

al-Sadr and al-As'ad tried to undermine each other's authority whenever the opportunity arose. In 1970, al-Sadr supported Mahmud 'Ammar against al-As'ad for the position of Speaker of Parliament, although this did not succeed and al-As'ad was elected. The successful strike that al-Sadr called for, also in 1970, after the migration of nearly 50,000 people from the south led the government to establish Majlis al-Janub. Although the demonstrators showed their contempt for the Shi'ite *zu'ama* al-Sadr's success was not complete, largely because Majlis al-Janub was directly linked with the Prime Minister's office, which appointed officials from within the existing bureaucracy. The presidency of the council was given to the Minister of Planning, Maurice al-Gemayel, who was partly to blame for the inefficiency in the south.[2] This was despite al-Sadr's continuous demands that "honest people" should run Majlis al-Janub.[3] To satisfy him one of his supporters,

[1] Kamil al-As'ad, *al-Shira'a*, 9 September 1991, Beirut, p. 20.

[2] The Council of the South was composed of Maurice al-Gemayel, President; Sulaiman al-Zain, Deputy President; Khalid Junblat, representative of the Ministry of Defence; Labib Ghelmiyya, member; Robert Karam, member; Ghassan Qansu, member; John Debbanah, member; and Muhammad Shi'aitu, Director General. *al-Hayat*, 3,4 June, 1975.

[3] *al-Hayat*, 2 June 1970. *al-Jamhur* Magazine, 4 June 1970.

Muhammad Shi'aitu, was appointed director general of the Majlis, but he was removed from office four years later and an As'adi, Hasan Farahat, was appointed to replace him.[1]

It was natural that a state organisation such as Majlis al-Janub should become an instrument of those who collaborated closely with the government, particularly al-As'ad. The more the tensions grew between al-Sadr and the government, the more al-As'ad tightened his grip on Majlis al-Janub, and he tried to undermine al-Sadr's popularity within the community by offering services and favours.

In turn, al-As'ad tried to undermine al-Sadr's increasing popularity in the SISC. On 11 November 1969, some Shi'ite deputies met with al-As'ad to discuss a draft law in order to oppose changes in the regulations of SISC, most notably the extension of the tenure of President of SISC from six years to life or until the age of 65. On 14 December 1973, al-Sadr demanded that al-As'ad should withdraw the draft law because it was invalid as the SISC was not consulted when it was presented.[2]

On 9 March 1974, Shaikh 'Abd al-Hamid al-Hur, President of the Ja'fari Tribunal, led 35 dissatisfied ***'ulama*** who opposed al-Sadr, and called upon al-As'ad to maintain the clause referring to the six-year term for the president of SISC. To counter this, al-Sadr offered his resignation as President of the SISC, but it was rejected by the assembly. In fact, he was given a vote of confidence which was consolidated when the Executive

[1] Interview, Mahmud Farahat, London, winter, 1992.
[2] Sicking & Khairallah, op.cit, p.99.

Committee of the SISC decided that its regulations could only be changed by a vote of the General Assembly without recourse to Parliament.[1]

On 29 March 1974, al-Sadr strengthened his position as the General Assembly extended his presidency of the SISC until he was 65 years old. By then, many of the traditional Shi'ite ***zu'ama*** who had been wary of him in the beginning had changed position and became supportive. This was apparent with Hamadeh who called for an immediate vote on the issue. al-Sadr was also supported by al-Husaini, 'Usayran, and al-Zain. On the other side, al-As'ad proved, as al-Sadr predicted, to be the strongest of those who opposed him all the way. al-As'ad and his bloc did not attend this meeting as a sign of their rejection of the change.[2]

The differences between the two were beyond reconciliation especially when al-As'ad began to launch a stream of accusations at al-Sadr through the media.

> Sayyid Musa's strength does not come from his position as a man of religion; it is unimportant whether he wears the turban or not. His strength comes from the contributions by expatriates and the money that the state accords the SISC, which he spends to buy men's support. There is more than one question mark concerning the plan being executed by al-Sadr and the persons behind him here and abroad, and the dimensions of this plan, both in Lebanon and abroad.[3]

[1] Ibid., p. 102.
[2] ***al-Nahar***, 30 March 1975.
[3] Kamil al-As'ad, ***al-Hawadith***, issue 947, 3 January 1975.

One of al-As'ad's closest friends Riyad Taha[1] criticised him for these accusations and stated that he could not prove any of his charges. Re-stating the reasons for the increase in al-Sadr's popularity within the Shi'ite community while al-As'ad's was in decline, Taha advised al-As'ad to stop his unnecessary and one sided enmity and to follow al-Sadr because the people had already done so.[2]

al-As'ad and his bloc attempted to use the situation in the south to advance their opposition against al-Sadr. When the government did not comply with al-Sadr's demands of 22 June 1973,[3] al-As'ad's spokesman Hamid Dakrub formulated the bloc's demands *vis-à-vis* al-Sadr's, demanding that the government should hasten to give the necessary funds to the Litani Project,[4] to allocate at least five percent of the national budget to projects of economic and social improvement in the south, and should give due recognition to Shi'ites in the distribution of public posts. Dakrub threatened that if these demands were not met al-As'ad's bloc would withdraw their representatives from the government. This attempt was premature and ineffective in comparison with al-Sadr's demands and was widely criticised:

> it was a question of 'catching the train'. Speaker al-As'ad felt his loss of speed, after the campaign launched by Imam al-Sadr more than four

[1] Riyad Taha was Head of Lebanese Journalists.
[2] Riyad Taha, ***al-Hawadith***, issue 950, 24 January 1975.
[3] ***al-Jarida***, 11 December, 1973.
[4] The Litani project was supposed to improve irrigation, electricity and drinking water in the south. In 1947 Ahmad al-As'ad stressed the importance of the project to Bishara al-Khuri, but the president's view was that it did not entail improvements in services but would "upset" the sectarian formula of the country. This comment by President Khuri made the Litani project a political rather than a social issue. ***al-Hayat***, 22 May 1965.

> months before for the defence of Shi'a rights, a campaign which the al-As'adists refused to answer.[1]

al-As'ad desperation to regain his lost popularity became apparent when his followers physically attacked the deputy Husain al-Husaini and Shaikh 'Abd al-Amir Qabalan for their public support of al-Sadr.

On 12 December 1974, al-Sadr managed to defeat al-As'ad's candidate in the Parliamentary by-election in Nabatiyya for the first time. As usual al-As'ad nominated his candidate, Kamil 'Ali Ahmad, to replace the deceased deputy Fahmi Shahin. al-Sadr did not directly nominate a candidate but organised a political and social programme and asked candidates to adopt it. He urged people not to base their decision when choosing a candidate on kinship ties, patronage or personal likes and dislikes but to what they can offer to their people. One of the candidates, Rafiq Shahin, adopted al-Sadr's programme and as a result won the by-election by a two-to-one majority.

This tense but peaceful transfer of power from al-As'ad to al-Sadr was disrupted by the start of the civil war, which Left al-Sadr in a position where he was unable to demand anything but preservation of the unity of the country.

[1] Sicking & Khairallah, op.cit. pp. 113-114.

2. al-Sadr's political stands during the civil war

al-Sadr's political stands concentrated on three levels: the Palestinian issue, the integrity of Lebanon, and countering leftist activities. The Palestinian issue was a major concern for him during the civil war, especially as the military base of the Palestinian resistance was in the Shi'ite-dominated south of Lebanon. This made him very wary of how to approach the issue, mainly because both the Palestinians and the Shi'ites felt some sort of allegiance to one another, and began to unite their organisations together with those of the leftists in order to advocate social and political equality. Moreover, until the mid 1970s the Shi'ites lacked a movement which would lead them and to translate their numerical strength into community power, and hence appeared susceptible to Palestinian influence. This lack of focus forced al-Sadr to organize them under the auspices of Amal.

With the beginning of the Israeli attacks and the transfer of the Palestinian leadership to Lebanon, the south had entered a new era, and the military escalation had subjected the Shi'ites to tremendous suffering. For a while, the close Palestinian-Shi'ite relationship and the threats of Israel were sufficient to make al-Sadr a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause, although this relationship underwent considerable strains for a variety of reasons. In particular, the Shi'ites gradually became disillusioned with the Palestinians' continuing disregard of Shi'ite's welfare affairs. al-Sadr's relations with them suffered due to Palestinian support for Junblat and the leftist parties, contrary to his advice not to become involved in Lebanese politics. Further, al-Sadr's support for the Syrian effort to

end the civil war and to preserve the Lebanese system was naturally rejected by the leftists. Other factors contributed to increasing antagonism between the two, such as the Libyan support for the progressive parties, and the challenge to al-Sadr by some Shi'ite *'ulama* who supported the activities of the Left in general.

2.1 The integrity of Lebanon and al-Sadr's support for the Palestinians

al-Sadr's efforts to promote his community to a status equal to that of the other main Lebanese communities would not have become feasible without complete allegiance to the state. That is to say, that he believed that national solidarity should come first. When he first arrived in Lebanon in 1960 he found his community very much drawn towards pan-Arab nationalism rather than to Lebanese nationalism. This increased after the 1967 war as the Shi'ites joined Palestinian organisations in great numbers. Shi'ite support for the Palestinians went through four different stages. The first stage was characterised by full support from the Shi'ite grass-roots, especially when Fatah was established. Subsequently, this support began to decline after 1970 because the Shi'ites felt the heavy burden they had to put up with, being caught in the cross fire between the Palestinians and Israel. Thirdly, there was a serious decline in 1975 when the civil war began, particularly because of the increasing intensity of Israeli reprisals and the increasing Palestinian disregard of the welfare of the Shi'ites. The final break with the Palestinians came in 1976 when al-Sadr sided with the Syrian initiatives which aimed at preserving the unity of Lebanon and its system; his commitment to preserving the unity of Lebanon

was strengthened further when the leftist forces failed to face up to the Israeli invasion in 1978.[1]

To begin with, the Arabs needed sometime to raise their morale after the defeat and humiliation they had suffered in 1967. The establishment of the PLO was therefore received with great enthusiasm in the Arab world. Pro-Palestinian sentiment among the Shi'ites was high, and al-Sadr never tried to oppose it. On the contrary, as a spiritual leader of the community, he lent unconditional support to the Palestinians, and considered their cause morally binding on all Arabs and Muslims.

His attitudes towards the Palestinians were affected not only by the general feeling of the community but also by the feeling of the Shi'ite religious leadership in the world, as represented by Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim in Najaf. In 1968 Sayyid al-Hakim issued a fatwa in support of Fatah stating that it was ***wajib***, a duty, incumbent upon all Muslims, to join them in their struggle as long as this support did not cause more damage than benefit to the Muslims in general.[2]

On 17 December 1968, during Ramadan, al-Sadr organised a gathering in support of Fatah at the Beirut International Hotel.[3] He advocated the need to work collectively in order to support the legitimate Palestinian resistance in their struggle to liberate their

[1] David Owen, 'Lebanon Inflame', in J. Pimlott, (ed.), ***Middle East Conflict from 1945 to the present***, Orbis Publishing, London, 1983, p. 115.
[2] Fatwa al- Imam al-Hakim fi da'm Fatah, ***al-Mawsim***, issue 18, 1994, p. 193.
[3] ***al-Hayat***, 17 December 1968.

land. In this party he managed to collect LL. 90,000[1] in donations for the resistance. He considered that the main danger came from Israel and that it was important to face up to it by all means available. This attitude towards Israel became even more firmly established when Israel began to look at Lebanon as its next target. On 14 June 1968, Israel shelled the southern Lebanese village of Mays al-Jabal and nine days after al-Sadr's gathering, Israeli commandos attacked Beirut airport and destroyed thirteen MEA aeroplanes on the ground.

The Shi'ites continued to give strong support to the Palestinians throughout 1968, although this was disrupted when clashes between the Palestinians and the Lebanese army began. In April 1969 a series of armed conflicts occurred, first near the village of Kafar Kila in the south, and subsequently in other parts of the country. As a result, a wave of pro-Palestinian sentiment triggered off a number of demonstrations in the cities of Lebanon. Therefore, the Palestinian issue became a major element in Lebanese politics, causing friction among the main political figures. Supporters of the Palestinians were led by Kamal Junblat who did not hesitate to attack the government on every possible occasion. He emerged as the champion of the Palestinians which gained him great popularity among them, and among the Shi'ites and the pan-Arabists in general. The faction against establishing a strong Palestinian presence in the country was led by Pierre Gemayel and Camille Chamoun.

[1] One US Dollar was then equal to three Lebanese pounds.

On 3 November 1969, the tension between the Palestinians and the Lebanese authorities was halted temporarily by the Cairo Agreement. While the conflicting parties concentrated either on re-establishing the authority of the state in the country as a whole, or on lending unconditional support to the Palestinians, the real danger facing the people of the south was never mentioned.

Politically, al-Sadr was in no position to play a major part in these events and all he could do was to adopt a moderate line. 'Adil Malik interviewed him after a series of serious clashes between the Lebanese army and the Palestinians, which had led to great friction between Lebanese Muslims and Christians. He explained that the feeling of the Muslims of being second class citizens was a major factor that increased Muslim's antagonism towards the Christians. al-Sadr also added that the formula of "No vanquished, no victor" between Muslims and Christians which had dominated Lebanese politics was no longer appropriate.[1] He explained that this formula might work between two enemies that each pose a threat to the other. He continued: "in order to build a nation, trust between the citizens should be the major element, not winning or losing".

It was not only that al-Sadr could not ease the increasing tension between the leftist and the rightist but also had to confront the champion of the Palestinians and the leaders of the Progressive parties, Kamal Junblat, over mobilisation of the Shi'ites.

[1] *al-Jarida*, 21 June 1969.

2.2 al-Sadr-Junblat relationships and the integrity of Lebanon

The Israeli attack on south Lebanon on 12 May 1970 caused heavy destruction and led to the migration of 50,000 people. Despite this tragedy, al-Sadr did not point to a single cause for these events. On 26 May, he was invited to the American University where he attacked the authorities for their indifference towards the south, and at the same time he condemned the Palestinians for launching rockets across the border.[1] For the first time al-Sadr mentioned Palestinian misconduct, but, as he noted "Palestinian misconduct does not require capital punishment".[2] He also called for co-ordination between the Palestinians and the Lebanese government in order to spare the south the disastrous results of their misunderstandings.

Alienation of the Shi'ites continued due to neglect of their affairs by radical Palestinian groups, and from 1970 onward because of the Palestinians' continued refusal to accept that it was legitimate for the Lebanese to be concerned about their security *vis-à-vis* Israel. In order to ease the situation in the south, negotiations took place on 30 May 1972 between the Prime Minister, Sa'ib Salam, and Yasir 'Arafat, in which they agreed that the Palestinians would freeze all operations against Israel from Lebanon. However, the more radical leaders such as Jibril and Habash failed to give Salam the same commitment.[3]

[1] *al-Nahar*, 27 May 1970.
[2] *al-Muharrir*, 20 April 1971.
[3] Goria, op.cit, p. 137.

Radical Lebanese groups played a major role in deepening the rift between al-Sadr and the Palestinians. They were dissatisfied with the Lebanese system and they anticipated that the time had come to change it. Their point of view coincided with that of Junblat who continued to demand change to a secular system. In addition, the mobilisation of the Shi'ites contributed to deepening the antagonism between Junblat and al-Sadr. Junblat assured the Shi'ites that justice in the country could only come about by changing the sectarian system, while al-Sadr warned that changing the system would divide the country and produce a situation where there would be no winners but only losers. Therefore, he advocated dialogue and called for preservation of the unity of the country. Later on, various issues increased the enmity between the two men, such as their attitudes towards religion and towards Syrian involvement in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Israel continued its aggression and launched a series of attacks in the south, notably on 16 September 1972. Israeli forces stayed on Lebanese soil for two days in revenge for the Palestinian attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games. This time the Lebanese army attempted to stand firm against the advancing Israeli forces but was no match for them. However, al-Sadr praised the Lebanese army as he saw that the authorities were at last taking responsibility for the frontiers. He appealed to both the authorities and the Palestinians to reach an understanding and offered to mediate between them.[1] Unfortunately, al-Sadr's attempt was unsuccessful due to Junblat's anti-

[1] *al-Hayat*, 21 September 1972.

government attitudes, and because of the support the latter received from leftist groups in general.

2.2.1 Junblat's path to revolution

Since 1969 Junblat had had his own particular view towards the Palestinian Resistance and the Lebanese role in the struggle against Israel:

> We deplore the repressive and savage measures of the Lebanese authorities against the heroes of the Resistance and we affirm that this was a plot against Lebanon's independence, its pan-Arabism and against the Progressive Movement ... We unanimously agree to resist this criminal scheme being designed by the government ... which continues to submit to imperial pressures aiming at liquidating the Palestinian question ... and isolating Lebanon's people from the Arab struggle.[1]

It is important to show how Junblat's political ideas had changed and eventually led him to become the strongest opponent of the Lebanese system. He started as a defender of the extreme right wing Emile Edde's National Bloc, but by the time of the Palestine war of 1948 he was beginning to identify himself as an Arab nationalist, believing that secularism was the only viable future for Lebanon. Despite this, he refused to relinquish the prestige and influence which the title Lord of the Druzes gave him within his community, as he did not see any paradox in a Druze lord advancing the cause of secularism.

[1] *al-Anwar*, 23 October 1969.

In 1949 Junblat established the Progressive Socialist Party, PSP, to promote his ideas in the Lebanese cultural renaissance. In the 1960s, when a number of revolutionary movements had seized power in different parts of the world, Junblat believed that secular revolutionary change in Lebanon was feasible. In order to achieve this he allied with the Ba'thists, Arab Nationalists, Communists and Socialist, and also with members of the radical Palestinian parties. In 1975 he presided over the LNM which contained all these radical groups. Junblat's views benefited the Palestinians who needed a champion for their cause, particularly after their resistance was confined to Lebanon.

Secularism was Junblat's main aim, possibly because that would be the best way for him to reach high office. Junblat's approach to national issues generally can be described as rigid.[1] He had a tendency to impose preconditions, and to boycott or isolate other parties if they had different views from his own. In January 1969 this was shown when he refused to participate in a government that included Chamoun or a representative of his party, the National Liberal Party, NLP.[2] During the civil war he also called for the isolation of the Kataib Party. Eventually, he rejected the Syrian initiative which aimed to end the civil war and persisted in carrying on the war until the defeat of the Kataib and its allies.

> Junblat's unreserved support for the PLO stemmed not only from ideological motives but also from practical considerations; he was well aware that without their military strength he had little prospect of changing the existing regime.[3]

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[1] Harik, 'Voting participation and political integration in Lebanon 1943-1974,' ***MES***, Vol. 16, 1980, p. 34.

[2] Goria, op.cit, p. 97.

[3] Zamir, 'Politics and Violence in Lebanon', ***Jerusalem Quarterly***, Vol. 25, 1982, p. 22.

During the civil war Junblat waged a campaign against al-Sadr particularly when they differed on the issue of ***al-Wathiqa al-Dusturiyya***, the Constitutional Document, which was initiated under the auspices of Damascus, to maintain the integrity of the Lebanese government and to stop the civil war. Junblat's strong political views were challenged by al-Sadr who had a different set of ideas.

Mobilising the Shi'ite was another major issue that caused friction between Junblat and al-Sadr. The former possessed another advantage which helped him to challenge al-Sadr in this respect, that is, outside support. In 1976, for example, Libya offered to buy tobacco from the Shi'ite peasants[1] but only through the radical groups and the Lebanese Arab Army, LAA, through whom they were closely linked with Junblat. The Latter also made considerable use of student scholarships. He received nearly 600 scholarships[2] a year from the Soviet Union and many Shi'ites gained access to them through their involvement in the radical groups.

al-Sadr's resentment began to increase slowly with each major events which took place. However, his resentment and anger was not directed towards the Palestinian resistance as such, but against the radical groups. On 29 June 1973, in a press conference, he did not conceal what he thought of these groups when he announced that some of their ideologies contradicted the Lebanese system. This announcement came after the clashes

[1] *al-Nahar*, 28 May 1976.
[2] Interview, Basim al-Jisr, Oxford, summer, 1994.

between the Lebanese army and the Palestinian resistance in May. He defended the state against Junblat's point of view, stating that the Lebanese authorities did not intend to liquidate the Resistance, but at the same time he chastised the government for failing to defend the south from Israeli aggression. Simultaneously, he maintained good relations with 'Arafat and stressed that the Palestinians had no wish to interfere in Lebanese affairs, although this did not stop him from criticising them:

> The problem was not one of fida'iyin infiltration but of launching rockets and grenades against Israel across the south. This is something that is totally impermissible. The launching of rockets and grenades is not at all a revolutionary fida'iyin action. This also means that Lebanon is in a state of war with Israel. Who is opening fire is not important. The gist of the matter is that Lebanese territory has become a base for launching missiles and grenades.[1]

al-Sadr directed this speech towards a representative from the General Command of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, PFLP, who was present, saying: "you have the right to adopt whatever ideologies you like, but you do not have the right to implement them in Lebanon".[2] This was the beginning of a serious clash with these ideological groups and with their main champion Kamal Junblat.

What also separated the two men was their perception of religion and the role of the *'ulama* in society. al-Sadr opposed communism and socialism because they meant a single party, repression of freedom, and negation of God. For him the role of the *'ulama* was "defined by God". From the beginning al-Sadr launched a campaign to increase

[1] Norton, ***Amal and the Shi'a*** ..., p. 43.
[2] ***Kul Shai***, 30 June 1973.

religious teaching in schools, mainly in the south. This was apparent when he established *Jam'aiyat al-Ta'lim al-Dini* (Committee for Religious Education) in 1966. The main task of this committee was to send teachers to schools in the south in order to teach the Islamic religion. This was contrary to Junblat's policy of marginalizing religious teaching which he had put forward as Minister of Education in 1961. Critics called upon him to implement at least a minimum of religious teaching to preserve morality in the society.[1]

2.2.2 The position of al-Sadr and Junblat towards the Syrian initiative in Lebanon

Keeping abreast of the situation in Lebanon has always been an essential part of Syria's policy and in time of crisis this interest has tended to increase. Syria took a keen interest in what was happening in Lebanon in the 1970s and senior Syrian civilians and military leaders paid frequent visits to Beirut to discuss the differences between the warring factions. For their part, almost all Lebanese leaders made regular visits to Damascus in order to consult President Asad. Despite Syrian support for the leftist groups, President Asad did not believe in nor want a military solution in Lebanon. Instead, Syria wanted a compromise which would be acceptable to a majority of the Lebanese factions, and one which would not over-antagonise Israel.

Syria's efforts came to fruition on 14 February 1976 when President Franjiyya announced the Constitutional Document. This Syrian-backed compromise maintained the top three

[1] Mashakil al-ta'lim al-ibtidai', (The problems of Primary Education), *al-Hayat*, 21 January 1961.

positions in the Lebanese system as before, but called for parity of Muslim and Christian representation in Parliament and a reduction in the President's powers. It also enhanced the position of the prime minister, who was to be elected by Parliament instead of being chosen by the president.[1]

By the beginning of 1976 the balance of power during the war had shifted in favour of the leftists, and Junblat was looking for a military solution. This occurred in June when Syria sent in the Palestinian Liberation Army, PLA, and Sa'iqa to assist Junblat and his allies against the advancing Christian militias who stormed the two Muslim slum districts of Beirut, Maslakh and Karantina.[2]

Junblat's rejection of the Syrian initiative was a turning point in the leftists' relations with Syria. In contrast to the Constitutional Document he issued a ten-point declaration urging secularism as the most desirable political system.[3]

To maintain or to change the Lebanese system became the major issue which dictated the actions of al-Sadr and Junblat. The latter had the support of the Lebanese radical groups and, later on, of Fatah, and also of Libya which gave him increased determination to oppose Syria, and contributed to the prolongation of the civil war. In turn, Fatah support for Junblat damaged their relations with al-Sadr.

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[1] Salibi, ***Cross Roads to Civil War***, New York, 1976, pp. 163-4.
[2] Adeed Dawisha, ***Syria and the Lebanese Crisis***, Macmillan Press, 1980, p. 99-100.
[3] Hanf, op.cit., pp. 135-6.

In January 1976 Junblat supported Lieutenant Ahmad al-Khatib, who split from the Lebanese army and announced the founding of the LAA.[1] Junblat commented that a "kind of military and social democracy was emerging and the movement steadily grew".[2] On 14 March Junblat intensified his hostile attitude when he called for an emergency meeting of progressive and Palestinian leaders including Ahmad al-Khatib, and warned that President Franjiyya should step down or the "Progressive-Palestinian forces would take over power and change the Lebanese system within the framework of total revolution".[3]

The Palestinian groups were a major target for Junblat as he tried to utilise them to achieve his aim of secularism. He later wrote:

> Our idealism, our loyalty towards the young people and the Palestinians, forced us to continue the struggle until we had won a decisive victory. The evidence of large-scale destruction forced us to seek the most rapid conclusion to hostilities, as did an ever-present concern at the mass-murders perpetrated by the isolationists upon the civilian population.[4]

One explanation of the steadfastness of Junblat's stand was that the only way that a Druze could assume leadership of the country would be through full secularism.[5]

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[1] The Lebanese Arab Army was headed by Ahmad al-Khatib, who rebelled against the established leadership of the Lebanese army in March 1976 straight after the Constitutional Document had been initiated. He argued that the Document failed to address the question of reform of the army, which had lost its neutrality during the war.

[2] Kamal Junblat, ***I Speak for Lebanon***, London, Zed Press, 1982, p. 95.

[3] Goria, op.cit, p. 223.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., p. 220. Hanf, op.cit, p. 213.

On 15 March 1976 Junblat ordered Palestinian and LAA units to advance on the presidential palace in Ba'bda from three directions, Hammana, Sidon and the Biqa'. As a result, fighting between the warring factions increased but this time the Syrian-backed forces such as Sa'iqa and the PLA intervened to counter Junblat's attack. The Syrian change of position regarding the warring factors reflected its view that a balance of power should be maintained between the Lebanese communities in which none should be allowed to overrun the other.[1] Syria was wary of a decisive military action by one faction against another because the losers might attract international support and as a consequence the most likely result would be partition of Lebanon. Moreover, the victory of one faction over another would be detrimental not only to Lebanon's internal cohesion but also to stability in Syria itself.[2] This could be attributed to the fact that Syrian and other regimes in the region could not afford a new secular system in Lebanon.

In response, Junblat described the Syrian forces as foreign, protested against "meddling in Lebanon's internal affairs"[3] and demanded their withdrawal. On an administrative level, he presided over a newly-established politburo which consisted of the Lebanese Left and various Palestinian parties. The politburo established local administrative committees, as well as popular army and various local security forces in order to replace the legal Lebanese ones.

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[1] Dawisha, *Syria and Lebanese* ..., p. 8.
[2] Ibid., p. 104.
[3] *al-Nahar*, 17 March 1976.

Junblat's actions were totally rejected by al-Sadr. He supported the Syrian initiatives and called for reconciliation between the Lebanese factions on one side, and between the Palestinians and the Lebanese authorities on the other. This increased Junblat's resentment towards him, especially as Junblat had opposed clerical intervention in politics.

For al-Sadr the time had come to choose his ally. This was Syria. In an open letter, al-Sadr called on Asad to intervene to put an end to the war in Beirut.[1] He split with the national progressive groups, as a result of which the Arab Socialist Union, the pro-Junblat Regional Committee and Junblat all attacked him. The strongest attacks came from the PLO on 8 August and Junblat on 11 August. The former declared:

> The CIA inflicted Musa al-Sadr on Lebanon. He is the servant of a sectarian conspiracy to split Muslim ranks. The masses of Lebanon and the south, however, know how he came to Lebanon. Every move of al-Sadr's will be struck at with an iron hand, for we well know the goals of the conspiracy.[2]

Junblat denounced al-Sadr's relationship with Syria:

> Co-operation with the Syrian occupation is a crime ... the policy of some persons in the Biqa' [where al-Sadr was then residing] is not in the interest of steadfastness, and blemishes the honour of patriotism. Let those voices trying to partition Lebanon in the name of religious sectarianism be silent.[3]

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[1] *al-Nahar*, 9 June 1976.
[2] 'Adil Rida, *Ma' al-I'atizar lil Imam Musa al-Sadr,* al-Hawra Press, Beirut, p. 153.
[3] Ibid. p. 154.

Junblat's attacks came as a response to al-Sadr's speech in Ba'lbek on 10 August 1976 when al-Sadr blamed the radical Palestinian factions for prolonging the war:

> Some of the parties forced the Palestinian Resistance to become a movement more interested in toppling the Arab regimes than in liberating Palestine.[1]

He also stated:

> Social and political reform in Lebanon will not occur by military action. On the contrary, militancy will jeopardise the course of reform which we should pursue peacefully.[2]

Concerning the integrity of Lebanon, al-Sadr rejected anything that would lead to the dismantling of the Lebanese state. Thus he rejected the Local Administration Committees which Junblat had worked to establish. "it is the beginning of the disintegration of Lebanon and the establishment of a new and unacceptable authority". He even declared that he was against decentralisation:

> decentralisation is the most proper way to administer the country but this will happen only when the country is politically stable and not in a divided country which Lebanon is today.[3]

From the mid-1970s onward Libyan involvement in Lebanon increased in support of Junblat and the progressive faction. The Libyan role will be shown later as it played an

[1] *al-Anwar*, 12 August 1976. *al-Qabas*, Kuwait, 25 December 1976.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

essential role in increasing the level of tension between al-Sadr and Junblat on one side and between the progressive faction and Syria on the other.

On 11 May 1977, contrary to Junblat's policy, the SISC issued a working paper which stated unequivocally the position of the Shi'ite community with regard to Lebanon. Observing that "Lebanon is the definitive homeland within its present boundaries, and is sovereign, free and independent",[1] the community was committed to "renew its faith in a unified Lebanon".

As shown above, the understanding between the PLO in general and Fatah in particular and al-Sadr did not last long. This was due to the attitude of Fatah towards the Constitutional Document. It supported Junblat's call to go all the way for a full victory.[2] As a result of this co-operation the Joint Forces were established.[3] Salah Khalaf announced that:

> the road to Palestine should pass through 'Uyun al-Siman, 'Aintura and even Juniya, [all are Christian dominated areas], itself to prevent any further threat to the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.[4]

They believed that it was worthwhile to "sacrifice" Lebanon for the Palestinian struggle because it was a corrupt society.[5]

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[1] *al-Nahar*, 12 May 1977.

[2] James A. Reilly, 'Israel in Lebanon', 1975-82, ***MERIP Report***, September / October, 1982, p. 16.

[3] Hanf, op.cit, p. 215.

[4] Deeb, ***The Lebanese Civil War***, Praeger, New York, 1980, p. 111.

[5] Nurit Kliot, ***The Territorial Disintegration of a State: the case of Lebanon***, University of Durham, CMEIS, 1986, p. 26.

The participation of Fatah in the assault on the presidential palace in Ba'bda was totally unacceptable to al-Sadr. On 23 May, he warned 'Arafat against sliding into the Lebanese civil war and stressed that "the honour of Jerusalem refuses to be liberated by the unbelievers",[1] implying that 'Arafat should be aware that Junblat was using the Palestinian Resistance to achieve his own objectives. He suggested to 'Arafat that Amal should go to the front line to be the first to face the Israelis while the Palestinian forces pulled back. The aim of this plan was to activate a Lebanese defence of the south and also not to give Israel the excuse to attack the south on the grounds that it was simply preserving its security against terrorists. However, this plan was rejected by Palestinian hard-liners such as Abu Musa.[2] This continued rejection by the progressive and radical groups was strengthened even more by Libya, which itself opposed Syria's role in Lebanon.

2.3 Libya's involvement in Lebanese civil war

Junblat and the radical groups managed to draw Libya to their side.[3] Libya's interest was first shown by the long visit of its prime minister 'Abd al-Salam Jallud in Lebanon from 5 June until 29 July 1976. He acted as an observer for Qaddafi who had a different attitude toward the progressive and radical groups in Lebanon from that of Syria. Qaddafi rejected the Syrian intervention and its policy of balancing the Lebanese factions,

[1] *al-Nahar*, 24 May 1976.

[2] Interview, Hani Fahas, Beirut, spring, 1992. Fahas is a close associate of Arafat and Hani al-Hasan.

[3] A. Kelidar & M. Burrell, 'Lebanon: The collapse of a state', *Conflict Studies*, No. 74, August, 1976, p.4.

announcing on several occasions that he would support the progressive groups and the LAA until they achieved a full victory.[1]

Qaddafi's announcement of 11 April 1976 that he would not allow the Syrians to stop the Left and the PLO might have been one of the main factors which drove the PLO to become heavily involved in the Lebanese civil war. In October Qaddafi stepped up his opposition to reconciliation between the Lebanese particularly when he terminated diplomatic relations with Syria one day prior to the Riyadh Summit of 21 October 1976.

It was al-Sadr and his movement Amal who remained the only opposing faction in the Joint Forces' domain. As a result, they were targeted and al-Sadr became the object of assassination attempts. Initially, al-Sadr's attitude towards Qaddafi was free of antagonism. In a press conference in September 1975 he praised Qaddafi's concern for Lebanon:

> I saw with my own eyes the clear conscience of President Qaddafi and the pain and suffering he is going through for what Lebanon is experiencing. President Qaddafi offered any assistance that might be needed to salvage Lebanon.[2]

This attitude changed quickly as the civil war progressed and Libya supported the Left and the Palestinians against the Syrian initiative. al-Sadr then clearly stated that Libya did not have any political or military weight in Lebanon.[3] He condemned Qaddafi

[1] *al-Nahar*, 13 April 1976. *al-Safir*, 5 June 1976. *al-Nida*, 12 June 1976.
[2] *al-Safir*, 11 September 1975.
[3] Rida, op.cit, 112.

particularly for his support for the Communists, since they recruited many Shi'ites and it was al-Sadr's mission to alter this situation.[1]

> The Communists had a prominent role in kindling the Lebanese war and pushing the Palestinian resistance to keep fighting. They used dirty methods such as the seizure of shops and houses, considering them the spoils of war. The Communists also tried to exploit sectarianism. Actually their number is very small. The Lebanese know them for what they are, and no longer trust them. They were given the chance to become active by the negative role played by Colonel Mu'ammar Qaddafi.[2]

The Israeli occupation of the south on 14 March 1978 was the final stroke that broke al-Sadr's relations with the Left and the Palestinians alike. In a Friday sermon he attributed the fall of the south to an international conspiracy and Arab incompetence. He then asked the Shi'ites to go back to their villages:

> It is our responsibility to liberate our land. We do not need our Arab brothers nor the Palestinian resistance to participate in this, we are capable of doing so alone.[3]

Consequently, more Shi'ites began to enrol in Amal to take part in the civil war and to support the Syrians in Lebanon. This was considered to be the only effective policy that would keep Lebanon and the coexistence of its communities intact. al-Sadr maintained this policy until he disappeared in Libya on 31 August 1978.

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[1] Norton, 'Lebanon', *Year book on International Communist Affairs*, 1987, p. 450. Reilly, op.cit, p. 15.

[2] Rida., op.cit., p. 113.

[3] *al-Nahar*, 31 March 1978.

In retrospect, al-Sadr had to break relations with any faction that disregarded the interests of the Shi'ites, mainly those of the south, and the integrity and the coexistence of Lebanon. al-Sadr's determination to improve the Shi'ite position in Lebanon and to preserve Lebanon itself forced him to confront Kamil al-As'ad and the progressive groups. He did not stop at that but continued to face any element which might stand between him achieving his objective. This was apparent when he had to stand against Shi'ite '*ulama* who supported the progressive groups.

Some Shi'ite *'ulama* were attracted to Pan-Arabism and thus found some common ground with the leftists. In addition, the liberation of Palestine was their ultimate goal. However, they became confused because of the rapid development during the civil war. Their enthusiasm for Pan-Arabism went through different stages. It changed from complete support to neutrality and, eventually, to abandoning it particularly after the Israeli invasion in 1978. This group of *'ulama* then preferred to concentrate on communal activities to counter the Israeli occupation, while other *'ulama* remained inactive until they changed to Pan-Islamism as a result of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. What concerns us here is to concentrate on the '*ulama* who were identified with Pan-Arabism in order to explain their relationship with al-Sadr.

2.4 Leftist oriented Shi'ite 'ulama

The main leftist oriented *'ulama* were Sayyid Hani Fahas, Shaikh Hasan Malak, Sayyid Muhammad Hasan al-Amin[1] and Shaikh Muhammad Farahat.[2] I shall concentrate on Sayyid Hani Fahas as he entered into direct confrontation with al-Sadr on two major issues, the tobacco planters, and the parliamentary by-election at Nabatiyya in 1974.

Fahas was born in 1946 in the village of Jibshit in the south and began his education in Nabatiyya school. In 1963 he went to Najaf to continue his religious education. His interest in politics began to develop as early as 1958, the year of unity between Syria and Egypt, so that his orientation was with pan-Arabism rather than being confined to Lebanon.[3] While in Najaf he began to develop a special interest in the Palestinian cause and he reflected this interest in ***Majallat al-Najaf***. His feeling was strengthened more when Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim issued a fatwa in support of Fatah. In 1972 he had to leave Najaf for two reasons. First, he was targeted by ***Hizb al-Da'wa*** whose policies were more concentrated on Iraq's affairs rather than on wider Arab causes. Secondly, he had to leave because of continuous demand from the Iraqi government that he should participate in some of their ceremonies.[4]

[1] Sayyid Muhammad H. al-Amin became chief Shar'ai Judge of Sidon.
[2] Interview, Shaikh Mahmud Farahat, London, winter, 1992.
[3] Interview, Sayyid Hani Fahas, Beirut, spring, 1992.
[4] Ibid.

When Fahas returned to Lebanon in 1972 the country was going through a dramatic period and it was natural then that he should develop his pan-Arabism by associating himself with the Palestinian issue rather than confining himself to Lebanese politics. One year later he found himself in the midst of one of the most contentious issues against the Lebanese government, that is, the tobacco planters issue.

The problem of the tobacco planters was part of the decline of agriculture in general in Lebanon *vis-á-vis* other economic activities. However, because of the insecurity of tobacco cultivation in the south the problem was particularly heavily felt.

Over the years tobacco had grown to play a distinctive role in the economy of the south, as it employed 72 percent of its peasantry by the mid 1970s.[1] The original tobacco monopoly had developed since 1883 when the Ottoman government granted control of that industry to the ***Régie Co-intéressée des Tabacs de l'Empire Ottoman***.[2] The concession was renewed over and over again until the planters' grievances against the ***Régie's*** policies in the buying and selling of tobacco came to a head in the early 1970s.

When the ***Régie*** became a mixed state-private controlled company after independence in 1943, its relationship with the peasants was one of exploitation. Through its absolute control over every aspect of the tobacco industry, from the auctioning of licenses for the

[1] Halawi, op.cit, p. 57.

[2] Ibid. Ali Zain al-Din, 'Zira'at al-Tibgh fi Lubnan 1881-1873', ***al-Manabir***, Beirut, February 1987, p.47.

cultivation of the plant to the processing and marketing of the final product, the company wielded immense power and influence over the peasants.

> The ***Régie*** perpetuated the classic forms of political patronage in the south by promoting the dependency of the peasants on their ***zu'ama***, traditionally also the major landowners, both for granting licenses and pricing the crop. Favoured and well-connected absentee growers received the bulk of the auctioned licenses and in turn sold them to their constituents and political supporters at a substantial profit which was compounded by the ***Régie***'s pricing policy. [1]

> The price per kilo of tobacco the ***Régie*** offered its clients who were recommended by ***zu'ama*** in 1973 was more than three times the price paid to the non-preferred majority, thus enabling the former to buy the latter's crop at little more than the official price and in turn sell it to the company at a higher rate.[2]

This blatantly unfair and exploitative pricing and other practices by the ***Régie*** prompted the peasants to stage mass demonstrations in Nabatiyya on 24 January 1973.[3] Prime minister Sa'ib Salam ordered the security forces to end the demonstration by force and as a result, two peasants were killed.

In the midst of the decline in relations between the Lebanese authorities and the leftists, the peasants' anger was easy to exploit, particularly by Kamal Junblat. He led 1,500

[1] Nasr, 'The Crisis ..., pp. 8-9. Halawi, op.cit., p. 58.
[2] Ibid.
[3] For detailed information of prior and after the demonstration, see . A. Zain al-Din, 'Zira'at al-Tibgh ..., pp. 47-58.

demonstrators in Nabatiyya to the funeral of the two men killed and declared that Salam's resignation was a "national duty".[1]

After his return from Najaf, Fahas found fertile ground for his political ambitions. Unlike al-Sadr, he became close to Fatah and adopted general pan-Arabist ideas rather than a more limited Lebanese nationalism.[2] His role in the tobacco issue brought him into direct confrontation, however mild, with al-Sadr. The attitudes of the leftist parties and al-Sadr towards the issue of tobacco varied. In the beginning the Communist Party was against the demonstrations, unlike the Syrian and Iraqi Ba'th parties. For al-Sadr the peasant movement came at an awkward moment especially as he was working for broader Shi'ite demands.[3] This difference between the two men did not stop al-Sadr from joining the sit-in at the husainiyya of Nabatiyya to protest against the government.

Fahas was well connected and played a major role in helping the tobacco planters to sell their products. To this effect he managed to bring LL.10,000,000[4] from Libya to purchase the tobacco. This achievement was supported initially by 'Arafat and Hani al-Hasan who paved the way with the Libyans.[5] In another attempt, Fahas met with the Libyan ambassador in Cairo, but his efforts to bring more money failed as the Libyans

[1] Goria, op.cit, p. 140.
[2] Interview, Sayyid Hani Fahas, Beirut, spring, 1992.
[3] Ibid.
[4] One Dollar was then equal to 3 Lebanese pounds.
[5] Interview, Sayyid Hani Fahas, Beirut, spring, 1992.

favoured the leftists, and the LAA, who were given LL.10,000,000. Therefore, he turned to the Iraqis and managed to obtain LL.6,000,000.

In 1973 Fahas needed a platform through which to enhance his political activities. He achieved this by establishing ***al-Tanzim al-Sha'bi al-Lubnani*** (the Lebanese Popular Organisation). This organisation gained special support also from 'Arafat and Hani al-Hasan.[1]

The more Fahas allied with the Left the more distant he became from al-Sadr. In 1974 another issue brought the two men into confront, this time far more seriously. As mentioned before, the parliamentary by-elections in Nabatiyya represented a struggle between al-As'ad and al-Sadr. al-Sadr also had to counter the leftists who were becoming prominent with Fahas's support. Some leading leftists such as Hasib 'Abd al-Jawad, 'Ali al-'Abd and Muhsin Ibrahim nominated Fahas for the vacant seat. This nomination was supported by Junblat but rejected by the Communist party which had its own candidate, 'Adil al-Sabbah. The nomination was also rejected by the Iraqi Ba'th party which had Musa Shu'aib as its candidate.[2] Junblat gave his support to Fahas in order to counter al-Sadr's activity, despite his criticisms of ***'ulama*** involvement in politics.

[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.

al-Sadr perceived this nomination as a challenge to him personally and warned Fahas that if he went along with the election he would fight him with his "turban".[1] This threat was taken seriously by Fahas as it would place him in conflict with the main representative of the Shi'ite community whose popularity was rocketing and against whom Fahas would not be able to sustain his opposition, especially in view of the fragmentation and indecisiveness of the leftists as to which candidate they should support. Unsure of winning, Fahas withdraw from the elections.

In 1975 relations between Fahas and the Palestinians began to deteriorate when the latter agreed to support Fahas's organisation materially but on condition that the Palestinians imposed total control. This condition was rejected and consequently he disbanded the organisation. In Fahas's view Palestinian hegemony was a common factor in all leftist organisations. After the disappearance of al-Sadr, Fahas reviewed his thoughts and presented them in a book where he recognised the success and tolerance of al-Sadr's approach in Lebanon.[2]

Although Fahas's ideas contradicted and conflicted with those of al-Sadr, it was not a major issue to reckon with in comparison to the hostility of Kamil al-As'ad within the community. However, Fahas's case reflected the political orientation of some younger

[1] Ibid.

[2] Hani Fahas, ***Mashru'at As'ila Qabla Iran Kanat Kha'ifa***, al-Tawjih al-Islami Press, Beirut, 1980, p. 46-47.

'ulama who affiliated themselves with leftist ideology and a wider pan-Arabism, rejecting the sectarian formula of the Lebanese policy which al-Sadr was working to maintain.

As we have seen, al-Sadr's moderate policy towards the various factions in Lebanon could not be carried out when the interests of the Shi'ite community were at stake. These interests were intertwined with the integrity of the Lebanese system which he adamantly defended. Eventually, he had to ally himself with whoever supported his beliefs and had to distance himself from those who jeopardised them.

Conclusion

Socio-economic changes played an essential role in transforming the Shi'ite community from being almost an irrelevant entity in Lebanese politics to being a major player. This transformation occurred within the space of a century. However, although socio-economic factors were the background for this transformation, it was the individual personalities - Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din and Sayyid Musa al-Sadr - who utilised whatever means were at hand to create a sense of identity among the Shi'ites.

Each of these two individuals played specific role in transforming the Shi'ite community and if it had not been for them, things would have been different. Nevertheless, each had his own approach as to how to tackle changes in society for the benefit of the community. Both realised the need for social services which prompted them to establish various benevolent institutions. In addition, the position of spiritual leader of the community entailed serious responsibilities whenever the Arab cause was at stake. Shi'ite spiritual leadership was at the forefront of support for the Arab cause, and the relationship of the Shi'ite leadership with the Arab world rendered the community unable to come to terms with foreign influences and be above suspicion. In the case of Sayyid Sharaf al-Din and Sayyid al-Sadr, although both were working to improve the position of the Shi'ites through national allegiance rather than sectarian allegiance, they had different approaches as how to achieve their objective. This was due to the changing nature of each man's circumstances.

Sayyid 'Abd al-Husain Sharaf al-Din

In the early twentieth century the rural Shi'ites were dominated politically by a handful of *zu'ama* who represented them in government. This domination was accompanied by an internal power struggle amongst Shi'ite *zu'ama* strong enough to hinder their progress *vis-á-vis* other communities. At that time the Shi'ite *'ulama* were financially dependant on the *zu'ama*, and as a result, could not influence the power struggle in a direction which would benefit the community. Due to financial dependence the 'ulama's hands were tied and they could not succeed in any initiative to improve the position of the Shi'ites.

This situation was the principal factor that forced Sharaf al-Din to isolate himself financially in order to establish different welfare-orientated institutions to improve the status of the Shi'ites in Jabal 'Amil in general and Tyre in particular. However, at the same time he was considered an As'adi, i.e., supporter of al-As'ad. As explained above, his backing of al-As'ad was a matter of principle rather than a matter of personal choice, based on his goal of creating a sense of Shi'ite identity, and as a spiritual leader of the Shi'ites he had to take a political stand in the rivalry between al-Sulh, who was backed by some Shi'ite *'ulama* and intellectuals, and al-As'ad. Unlike the Sulhi *'ulama*, it was not possible for Sharaf al-Din to hand over the political leadership of the Shi'ites to a Sunni and therefore he opted for al-As'ad.

Maintaining the leadership of al-As'ad was a primary objective of Sharaf al-Din, a task which he successfully achieved. He then concentrated his activities upon social issues as his second target. He believed that modern education was the key for change and therefore established the al-Ja'fariyya school. He succeeded in doing so with the financial assistance of Shi'ite emigrants in West Africa. It has been shown how al-Ja'fariyya contributed greatly to the political awareness of Shi'ites and by 1955 had become a base for opposition to the regime's anti-Arab policies as well as a base for guerrilla groups who launched attacks on northern Israel.

Despite Sharaf al-Din's social and political activities, as a mujtahid, he remained dedicated to teaching and learning and his books are widely used in ***hawzat***, Shi'ite religious schools, among the Shi'ites throughout the world. His political involvement reached its peak in the first two decades of the twentieth century as his loyalty to independent Syria was demonstrated. From the 1930s onwards he chose to give his blessing to pro-Arab-cause movements as they happened, rather than become directly involved. This shift in political involvement was totally based on his ***ijtihad*** as he evaluated circumstances and then decided whether it was appropriate to be politically active. This is unlike the common understanding that there is a division in Shi'ism between the activist and the quietist.

Rapid socio-economic development in the 1960s caused a massive migration towards the urban centres. Shi'ites from the Biqa' and the south abandoned their villages trying to find

a better living in the cities. However, being rural and largely illiterate, it was difficult for them to find decent jobs. Eventually they were left occupying the worst paid jobs while living in the suburbs where public services were almost non-existent.

Migration had an immense effect upon the social structure of the community. The old family-*za'im* tie disintegrated and the *zu'ama* could no longer expect to have the same influence. Being far from their villages and not under any direct control from their *zu'ama*, the Shi'ites in the suburbs of Beirut began forming new ties based on religion which was very much apparent in the southern suburb of Beirut al-Shiyah and al-Ghobairi. Paradoxically, mixing with other communities began to create a sense of Shi'ite identity.

Political developments in the Middle East and the influx of Palestinians into Lebanon as well as the spread of new ideologies were of some attraction to the Shi'ites. In addition, their low standard of living, compared with other Lebanese communities, proved to be a major factor in alienating the community from the system and made them a fruitful ground for leftist ideologies which voiced their ordeal and under-representation. The ordeal of the community continued as it was torn between various ideologies in the cities and local *zu'ama* in rural areas. This situation lasted until long after the arrival of Musa al-Sadr from Iran.

Sayyid Musa al-Sadr

Like his predecessor al-Sadr established a number of benevolent institutions to provide services, which subsequently proved beneficial to the people and to himself. Through such institutions, al-Sadr began building his own power base within the community. This took place in conjunction with the successful building of bridges with other communities. He displayed great energy and a capacity to achieve his social and political objectives, whereas most Shi'ite *'ulama* had been content to dwell exclusively on spiritual matters. He began by combating illiteracy, improving the status of women, and building schools, recreational centres and hospitals. Many of his speeches contained emotive reference to the need for Shi'ites to unite collectively in order to improve their social and economic status. However, he was very much concerned to prevent these activities from becoming an exclusively Shi'ite affair. A case in point is his close co-operation as early as 1960 with bishop Gregoire Haddad, and he continued to build on this through co-operation with other leading individuals, all of which culminated in 1974 with his establishment of Harakat al-Mahrumin.

He was a pragmatist in the sense that as long as other factions did not clash with his own objectives, he found no problem in co-operating with them, regardless of the religious or political orientation. His attitude was based on a belief that Lebanon's integrity and coexistence should be preserved and promoted, and any attempt to undermine the Lebanese state should be fought off. Lebanon was for him the ideal place for the Shi'ite

community to prosper. But still, preserving Lebanon's integrity could not be properly achieved unless the Shi'ites were properly represented. He therefore established a Shi'ite council in 1967. His power was founded on the base of these benevolent institutions as well as on his being the official head of the Shi'ite council.

Being head of a religious council provided al-Sadr with a platform to demand reform in Lebanon in general and the rights of the Shi'ites in particular. In practice he began gradually to do what was supposed to be the zu'ama's role. This began to increase straight after the 1967 war as Israel diverted its attentions to Lebanon. As a result, the Shi'ite community was caught in cross-fire which caused massive destruction of property and loss of lives as attacks and counter-attacks increased between the Palestinians and Israel. Shi'ite support for the Palestinians began to falter as Palestinian organisations failed to pay attention to the plight of the Shi'ites. In addition, during the bitter conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, the Lebanese government offered only minimal support to the Shi'ites. Huge migration, this time compulsory, from the south to Beirut began as early as 1970 and tens of thousands were forced out of their homes. This situation required urgent action by the Shi'ite leaders to deal with what was a growing problem. The *zu'ama* in general were passive and could not respond, and as for political parties, they could not ease the pressure simply because they were also part of the problem which caused the Shi'ite ordeal. In this stalemate the ground was almost free for al-Sadr to manoeuvre. He succeeded in becoming the voice of the Shi'ites, and his continuous pressure on the government forced it to establish a Council of the South.

Lebanese integrity began to disintegrate by 1975 when the civil war started. al-Sadr's support for the Palestinians decreased. Their involvement in the civil war on the Leftist sides under the leadership of Kamal Junblat, who was aiming at changing the Lebanese system in favour of a socialist oriented secular system, was enough reason for al-Sadr to oppose Junblat's plan and consequently the Palestinians. The Syrian involvement in Lebanon, which produced the Constitutional Document in 1976, was welcomed by al-Sadr but rejected by Junblat and the Palestinians. This Syrian initiative coincided with al-Sadr's belief of preserving Lebanon's integrity and formed the basis of a new alliance with the Syrians. In such disarray al-Sadr envisaged the need for a movement which could mobilise the Shi'ites. This was Harakat al-Mahrumin, followed by Amal. al-Sadr's disappearance in 1978 did not weaken the community; rather it gave the community stronger a motivation to work collectively under the Amal leadership.

Various factors such as migration, socio-economic conditions, the Palestinian presence, Israeli reprisals and government neglect were enough to give al-Sadr the opportunity to lead the community. Unlike his predecessor Sayyid Sharaf al-Din, al-Sadr had no need to support a ***za'im*** in order to maintain Shi'ite leadership for the community. In fact he became part of the power struggle and succeeded in becoming the community leader as he depended on their mass popular support.

To sum up, the Shi'ite leadership today has managed to capitalise on the different organisations that al-Sadr founded, mainly through Amal. In brief, unlike the Sunnis or the Maronites who had external patrons to advance their interests in Lebanon, the Shi'ites managed to build up their leading status in Lebanon by depending on socio-economic and political development within the country, as well as on the past initiatives of Sharaf al-Din and al-Sadr in establishing various benevolent, official and political organisations.

Had not been for these two individuals, Shi'ite awareness would not have occurred perhaps until the late 1990s. A number of issues can be raised as to what would have happened to the Shi'ites if Sayyid Sharaf al-Din and Sayyid al-Sadr were not there. These issues are the position of the Shi'ite ***zu'ama***, particularly al-As'ad, the effects of ideological parties among the Shi'ites, and the effects of the Iranian revolution.

Sharaf al-Din was a precedent for al-Sadr to work independently in order to improve the status of the Shi'ites. However, the real challenge to the ***zu'ama*** in general and al-As'ad in particular occurred due to al-Sadr's activities. They would have maintained their control over Shi'ite affair because they had access, through government, to favours and assistance for their followers. The strength of the ***zu'ama*** was evident even in the 1970s, although the ideological parties managed to recruit a great number of Shi'ites. The strength of the ***zu'ama*** was shown, particularly, during parliamentary elections in 1972 and the by-elections in 1974. It was always al-As'ad's list, and the co-ordination between various ***zu'ama*** and the government that won most seats. In 1974, although al-As'ad's

candidates lost the election to al-Sadr's candidate, the number of voters in favour of al-As'ad was much higher than those in favour of the ideological parties.

The zu'ama's strength would have increased even more during the major crisis which the south went through, mainly during the Israeli invasions in 1978 and 1982. The Shi'ites support for these ideological parties would have decreased due to their ineffectiveness in confronting the Israelis. Certainly the Shi'ite ***zu'ama*** would have capitalised on the situation to increase their control over the affairs of the Shi'ites. This was apparent in 1982 when the Lebanese President Amin Gemayel co-operated with the ***zu'ama***, mainly al-As'ad, in order to build his new system. This new system in Beirut was challenged only by Amal, which undermined the authority of the Lebanese government and its supporters in February 1984 when it took over control of West Beirut.

In 1979 the Iranian revolution would have definitely changed the life of the Shi'ites, but how effectively, and how long this change would have taken? Certainly, this change would have taken a long time to happen because the main concern of the Iranian authorities after the revolution was to establish stability in Iran. Therefore, it was unlikely that Iran would sponsor Lebanese groups to advance its interests for a number of years at least. Rather Iran herself needed support and what others could offer her. In addition, the Iran-Iraq war was another major problem for Iran to solve, as most of her resources were directed towards this war.

When Iran thought of sponsoring a Lebanese Shi'ite faction, this was not to improve the status of the Shi'ites as such *vis-á-vis* other Lebanese communities, but rather to advance its own interests regionally, particularly when Iran-Iraq war was intensifying, and Iran was increasingly isolated. As has always been the case, Lebanon has been a place where foreign intervention finds fertile ground for its objectives. In the first few years of the revolution, the majority of the Shi'ites whole-heartedly supported Iran in its war with Iraq. Some Amal members also participated in the war against Iraq knowing that Mustafa Shamran, Minister of Defence in revolutionary Iran, had been in charge of the military training of Amal. However, this harmony between Iran and Amal changed. The Amal leadership refused to be completely drawn into Iran's affairs, for fear this might affect its status in Lebanon. By 1982 Iran realised that Amal was of no use to it and a new organisation was needed to carry out Iran's regional objectives in Lebanon and the region.

Iran succeeded in establishing a new party named ***Hizbullah***, Party of God, whose leadership and members were committed to follow wilayat al-Faqih as represented by Imam Khumaini. Establishing ***Hizbullah*** was relatively easy because the back bone of its members were Amal's. Amal faced a problem of keeping its Lebanese identity particularly when some of its members believed that their religious duty was to side with the Shi'ite state of Iran. Iran did not make a big effort to recruit members for the new party, but rather it was a simple shift of loyalty from Amal to ***Hizbullah***. The main question here is how long it would have taken Iran to establish ***Hizbullah*** and how long it would have

taken to be influential in Lebanon if Amal had not been there? Certainly establishing ***Hizbullah*** would have faced enormous difficulties because there had not been any Iranian social or economic roots or support for the Shi'ites in Lebanon. Even if Iran had succeeded in establishing ***Hizbullah***, the party would have been considered a foreign party similar, for instance, to the Communist, and consequently, its activities would have been hindered by the Lebanese authorities and the Shi'ite ***zu'ama***.

Today, the identity of ***Hizbullah***, whether Lebanese or Iranian, is still going through tremendous change in Lebanon. It is this identity which the party leadership is trying to settle, and consequently, the political tone of ***Hizbullah*** has been changing from extremism to moderation, that is to say, to what al-Sadr had always advocated: maintaining coexistence among the Lebanese communities and loyalty to Lebanon. But how far ***Hizbullah*** can change is a different matter because the reason for its creation was not the concern of the Shi'ites of Lebanon but rather to advance Iran's interests in the region.

The early efforts of Sayyid Sharaf al-Din and Sayyid al-Sadr were essential for the revival of the Shi'ite community. Without this revival the community would still be developing today, and its position ***vis-à-vis*** the other Lebanese communities would be far behind.

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