

Middle East Christians: The Captive Nations

WALID PHARES

Introduction

Writing about the Middle East Christians in a political context is a risky intellectual mission. In contrast to researching other ethno-religious groups, investigating the history, the present and future of the native peoples of the Middle East is unique. This is largely due to the fact that in the 'Arab Middle East', and invariably in the wider Middle East, ranging from Turkey to Iran, the majority-minority formula has a reductionist influence on minorities. Globally, majorities tend to assimilate and integrate minorities, whether at the national, ethnic or religious levels. These tendencies are adopted by the traditional state system of the regions as well as by its ideological elites.¹

In the circle of Arab states, reductionism has an additional dimension: the negation of the cultural identity of the targeted minority.² For example, Arab governments do not recognize the existence of the Coptic people in Egypt, the Kurdish and the Assyrian peoples in Iraq, the Berber identity in Algeria, the African ethnicity of southern Sudan, or the Lebanese Christians.³ Moreover, the native Christian ethnicities are under a constant state of oppression.

In Lebanon, where Christians enjoyed constitutionally guaranteed parity until a few years ago, hundreds of Christians are being arrested, tortured and jailed by pro-Syrian forces. In the south of Lebanon, Christian villages are bombarded constantly by Hizbullah. In the event of an Israeli withdrawal, the Christian community will be threatened by fundamentalist militias.⁴ Similarly, dozens of Christian villages in Egypt are routinely attacked by the Islamists. As an example, the village of Manshiet Nassr in Upper Egypt has been repeatedly attacked by Islamic fundamentalists. Dozens of people have been killed or injured.⁵

Today, south Sudanese Christians are targeted by the Islamist forces of Khartoum. Entire villages are being destroyed by the northern regime. Yet these tragedies, like others in the Muslim world, go unreported by the Western media and unchallenged by Western leaders.⁶

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These examples do not represent isolated events. Nor is the neglect they receive from the media and world governments unpredictable. Thus the public in the United States is largely unaware of the Middle East that non-Muslims of the region know only too well. Christians are targeted by Islamic fundamentalists. The latter are tacitly encouraged by many governments of the region who, at best, do nothing to stop them and, at worst, actively aid and abet those responsible for the pogroms.⁷

Middle East Christian populations and their locations

Middle East Christians suffer collectively. Yet few people in the West are aware of the size of these communities. The common image of Middle Eastern Christianity is that it is limited to a few groups or individuals among the Palestinian population. In reality, the Palestinian Christians are only a fragment of the millions of Christians to be found from Sudan to Armenia.

Egypt

The Copts of Egypt – Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants – are estimated at between ten to eleven million, dispersed across the country. They claim descent from the ancient Egyptians living under the Pharaohs. Their numbers shrank after the Arab invasion in AD 640. Much later, they enjoyed a temporary flowering under the British in the nineteenth century. One million Copts live in the diaspora, principally in the United States.

Sudan

Seven million black Africans live in the south. Many of these tribes are Christians – Anglicans, other Protestants and Catholics. Following the Islamic conquest, the Africans of Nubia were displaced to the south. As a result of the recent civil war, more than one million south Sudanese were exiled.

Lebanon

There are about 1.5 million Christians in the Land of the Cedars – Maronites, Orthodox, and other communities including Protestants. As a result of the 1975 war, hundreds of thousands were displaced and exiled. There are around seven million Lebanese Christians in the diaspora and more than 1.5 million Americans are of Lebanese descent.

Iraq

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Syria

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Others

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Syria

One million Syrian citizens are Christians, including Aramaean-Syriacs, Armenians, Orthodox and Melkites.

Others

In Iran, the Christian population, native Persians belonging to Evangelical or Catholic denominations, or Assyrians and Armenians, reached half a million before the Islamic revolution. No accurate figures are available today. In Turkey, Christian Assyro-Syriacs, Greeks, Armenians and others do not exceed 20,000 persons living in Istanbul or in the south-east of the country.⁸

Middle East Christians: the dividing line

Before assessing the various attitudes of the Middle East Christian minorities, some distinctions are necessary. Due to the nature of the governing systems in the region, few accurate figures are available about the Christian communities. The main difficulty lies, on the one hand, in the tendency of governments to reduce the official numbers of their minorities, such as in Egypt and Iraq, and, on the other, the trend of the targeted groups to exaggerate their demographic realities.⁹

This is particularly pronounced as far as Egypt's Copts and Lebanon's Christians are concerned. Regarding the former, Cairo's official estimates are between three and four million. In the Lebanese case, demographic estimates are about 50 per cent each for Muslims and Christians (based on the last census held in 1936 in which 54 per cent of the country's citizens were counted as Christians). Recent figures put Muslims at 65 per cent of the population (after calculations made for Christian migration).¹⁰

Despite the paucity of studies, the sum total of the available numbers of each group, based on parish records, puts the Christians in the Middle East between a low of fourteen million and a high of twenty million.¹¹ In terms of ethnic identification, the dividing line runs between Arab Christians and non-Arab Christians. The former, including a large section of the Palestinian Christians, the bulk of the Jordanian Christians and many among Syria's

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Melkite and Orthodox elements, constitute no more than 10 per cent of Middle East Christianity.¹² These true 'Arab Christians' are clearly attached to the Arab language, culture and sensibilities. However, most Christians in the Middle East are historically non-Arab.¹³ They comprise the Assyro-Chaldeans of Iraq, the Copts of Egypt, the south Sudanese and the Aramaeans (Maronites, Syriacs and others) of Lebanon and Syria.¹⁴

Although ethnic Arabs are a minority among the Christians of the Middle East, Christian Arabists formed a majority among the intelligentsia throughout the twentieth century. Their compatibility with mainstream Arab-Muslim currents and regimes facilitated the ascension of Christian Arabists in the socio-political pyramid.¹⁵

Everywhere in the Levant, prominent Christian figures have become leading figures in Arab governments, such as Tarek Hanna Aziz, Foreign Minister of Iraq; Butros Butros Ghali, former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Egypt; George Kuriye, Director of the Presidential Office of Syria; and Hanan Ashrawi, former Spokesperson of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks. In contrast, Christian nationalists have been kept out of public life and, in certain cases, even outlawed.¹⁶

The assimilationist trend, however, has suffered two major setbacks. One is the ascendancy of Islamic fundamentalism, which is an intellectual and political threat to the secular dream. The second is the re-emergence of ethnonationalism among the majority of the Christian peoples of the Middle East. Influenced by the worldwide explosion of religious ethnicities, these minority 'nationalities' refer to historical legitimacy and, in most cases, also make territorial claims.¹⁷

Historical background

Prior to the Islamic era, the region of the Fertile Crescent was inhabited by native populations such as the Copts of Egypt, the Assyro-Chaldeans of Mesopotamia, the Aramaeans of Syria and Lebanon, the Hebrews of the Land of Israel, the Armenians of Asia Minor, and other less numerous groups. In AD 636, Arab Muslim invaders crushed the Byzantine army at Yarmouk¹⁸ and invaded the Middle East. From that vantage point they marched through North Africa into Spain, reaching the borders of India through Persia.

The Arab-Islamic conquest had a major impact on the region's destiny and identity.¹⁹ The conqueror imposed a new religion on the autochthonous people, implementing a fast and irreversible Islamization of the mainly Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Middle East. Initially in the cities, then throughout the rural areas, millions of people among the conquered populations had three options open to them:

First, adherence to Islam, which granted them the same rights as that granted to Arabs, but deprived of their religious beliefs, but deprived of the option, known as the *dhimmi* status, called the *Jizya*. The tax was supplied by Christians and Jews living under Muslim rule.

The third option was confrontation. If the conquered people were thereby forced to convert, they were either eliminated or forced to

Within a few decades, formidable indigenous masses, from the Caucasus to Islam.²²

In addition to religious coercion, the ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences accompanied the spread of Islam, far more than the total Islamic world.²³

The Arab conquerors used their own cultures and languages, such as Arabic, Aramaic and Hebrew peoples. The process took decades in some areas and centuries in others, creating a sphere of predominance.

The Ottomans took over the form of the Mameluke dynasty. The new administration, but left Arabic as the official language in the Eastern provinces.²⁴ For four centuries, Christians – found themselves under the Arab socio-cultural assimilation, domination, and the caliphate Mu-

The vanishing

In the aftermath of the Arab-Muslim conquest, Christian presence lost out to the Arab-Muslim. From Asia Minor to the Nubian Nile, the major cities constituted important centers of power. However, the Christian presence, as well as in its socio-political dimensions, such as Assyro-Chaldeans, Copts and others, first century. Yet by the seventh century, the region and sought to dominate the region.

The Christian resistance to the Islamic conquest. Those who had

First, adherence to Islam, which would guarantee them the same citizens rights as that granted to Arabs. Second, the right to maintain their own religious beliefs, but deprived of their political, social and cultural rights. This option, known as the *dhimmi* status, required the payment of a special tax called the *Jizya*. The tax was supposed to guarantee the 'protection' of Christians and Jews living under Muslim rule.²⁰

The third option was confrontational: conversion to Islam by the sword. The conquered people were thereby forced to accept the new religion. If not, they were either eliminated or forced to leave the area.²¹

Within a few decades, formidable pressures forced the majority of the indigenous masses, from the Caspian to the Mediterranean, to accept Islam.²²

In addition to religious coercion, Islamization included the imposition of the ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity of the Arabs. Thus 'Arabization' accompanied the spread of Islam, albeit within a smaller geographical region than the total Islamic world.²³

The Arab conquerors used their bureaucratic power to replace local cultures and languages, such as those of the Coptic, Assyro-Chaldean, Aramaic and Hebrew peoples. The process of assimilation, which took decades in some areas and centuries in others, succeeded in creating an Arab sphere of predominance.

The Ottomans took over the former provinces of the Arab caliphate from the Mameluke dynasty. The new empire imposed the Turkish tongue on the administration, but left Arabic as the dominant popular language in its Near Eastern provinces.²⁴ For four centuries the *dhimmi* peoples – particularly Christians – found themselves under multi-layers of socio-political pressure: the Arab socio-cultural assimilation, the Ottoman political and colonial domination, and the caliphate Muslim-Sunni rule.²⁵

The vanishing Christian Middle East

In the aftermath of the Arab-Muslim conquest of the Middle East, the Christian presence lost out to the conqueror. From Armenia in the north of Asia Minor to the Nubian Nile, early Christianity had flourished and its major cities constituted important centres of the Roman world. Since the conquest, however, the Christian East has shrunk both demographically as well as in its socio-political dimension. Pre-Muslim peoples of the Near East, such as Assyro-Chaldeans, Copts and Aramaeans, were Christianized in the first century. Yet by the seventh century, Arab-Muslim culture flooded the region and sought to dominate the existing identities.²⁶

The Christian resistance to the invaders varied, as did their initial reaction to the conquest. Those who had been oppressed by the Byzantine empire

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frequently chose neutrality. Some Christians even helped the Arabs in their battles against Constantinople.²⁷ With time, however, even the latter suffered the imposition of the *dhimmi* status legislated in the Covenant of Umar.²⁸ This imposed insecurity on Christian life for centuries. From the seventh century on, four major groups attempted to resist: the Copts of Egypt, the Assyrians of Iraq, the Armenians of Anatolia and the Maronites of Lebanon. Much later, in the nineteenth century, the south Sudanese joined the Christian resistance when the Arab-Muslim power of north Sudan tried to force the African south to assimilate.²⁹

Syro-Mesopotamians

Inherited from the Assyro-Chaldean and Aramaic cultures of antiquity, Christian nationalism in Iraq and Syria can be defined as the pre-Arab, Syro-Mesopotamian ethnicity.

According to their historians, the Assyro-Aramaics experienced a continuous struggle against Arab domination and oppression throughout the centuries.³⁰ However, it was not until the 1920s that an organized movement with a defined claim emerged as a reaction to the collapsing Ottoman empire.³¹ Like their neighbours the Kurds, the Assyrians revendicated an independent territory in northern Mesopotamia. Despite their pleas, the British created an Arab-dominated state called Iraq, in which both Kurds and Assyrians became minorities.³²

Since the birth of modern Iraq, Christians have been frequently repressed by Baghdad's governments. During the 1930s, led by their patriarch Mar Shimun, the Assyrians revolted against the Arab authorities several times. In the summer of 1933, major massacres were perpetrated against the Christian Assyrians.³³ Oppression against Christians increased with the Ba'ath takeover of power in Baghdad.

By the mid-1960s and early 1970s, the central government even denied the Christians the use of any reference to their cultural identity. Instead of recognizing them as Assyrians and Chaldeans, the Ba'athist authorities imposed the denomination 'Arab Christians' on their identity documents.³⁴ As a result, by the early 1970s, massive emigration of Assyro-Chaldeans to the West had taken place. From the diaspora, the Assyrians have organized a nationalist movement which maintains contact with the national homeland in northern Iraq. In the aftermath of the Gulf War in 1991, the Assyrian aspirations for an autonomous entity received a boost when the West established a protected area in the north of the country. Nevertheless, with the surge of Islamic fundamentalism, Christians in Iraq frequently come under attack.³⁵

Like the Assyrians, the Coptic people suffered the consequences of the conquest of Egypt by the Muslim army. Between 725 and 729, the population was forced to convert to Islam. The Copts became a minority under the *dhimmi* status. '[t]he Coptic language of the ancient Egyptians was extinguished as the Arab occupation changed the cultural assimilation, although it survived at a low level.'

In the early twentieth century, when Egypt gained independence, the Copts were offered political recognition. Yet the majority of the Arab nationalists, in deference to the Muslim majority, did not support the Coptic group called for the establishment of a separate Coptic state. The Coptic Congress held in Assiut in 1921, with delegates, who presented a list of Coptic demands for national unity won the battle by a narrow margin.⁴⁰

Despite this loss, the nationalist Coptic movement continued under the leadership of a young lawyer, Ibrahim Badran Maslaha, who founded the party called The Coptic Nation. The party was dissolved, its leaders were repressed, many activists emigrated, and the party's expatriate network was dismantled.

In Egypt, the constitution and laws guarantee the rights of this community. One example is the 1971 constitution. Indeed, although the Copts are a minority in the Egyptian population, it has only six seats in the parliament. Moreover, the six Coptic members are appointed by decree, i.e. they are hand-picked by the government.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Coptic movement in Egypt led to anti-Coptic pogroms in the Sinai and the Nile delta. In 1981, President Anwar Sadat's factions upset over the Camp David Accords, targeted the Coptic Pope Shenouda III and denigrated his activities, alleging there was a Coptic conspiracy to overthrow the Egyptian government.⁴³

Sadat's repression led to an increase in the number of exiled groups operating from Christian communities in Canada, but mainly from the United States. The *New York Times* reported that the Coptic community in the United States has become a major center for the Coptic diaspora.

Coptic ordeal

Like the Assyrians, the Coptic people have pre-Arab roots. Following the conquest of Egypt by the Muslim armies in AD 640, Coptic uprisings spread all over the country between 725 and 830.³⁶ A considerable proportion of the population was forced to convert to Islam and the remaining Christians became a minority under the *dhimmi* burden. According to Peter Mansfield, '[t]he Coptic language of the ancient Egyptians was progressively extinguished as the Arab occupation changed into full-scale colonization and assimilation, although it survived at least until the 17th century'.³⁷

In the early twentieth century, while Egypt was under British rule, the Copts were offered political recognition as a separate identity within the country. Yet the majority of the Arabized elite accepted an 'Egyptian identity' in deference to the Muslim majority among whom they lived.³⁸ Another group called for the establishment of a distinct and separate Coptic state. A Coptic Congress held in Assiut in March 1910 was attended by 1158 delegates, who presented a list of Coptic claims.³⁹ The first group advocating national unity won the battle by allying itself with the Muslim political elite.⁴⁰

Despite this loss, the nationalist Copts did not relent.⁴¹ In 1953, under the leadership of a young lawyer, Ibrahim Hilal, the group launched a political party called The Coptic Nation. Two weeks later, Gamal Abdul Nasser dissolved the party, jailed its leadership and forbade its activities.⁴² After this repression, many activists emigrated to the West, where they founded an expatriate network.

In Egypt, the constitution and laws have never recognized the existence of this community. One example is their political under-representation in government. Indeed, although the community represents one-fifth of the Egyptian population, it has only six seats in a parliament comprised of 420 seats. Moreover, the six Coptic members are nominated by presidential decree, i.e. they are hand-picked by the Muslim majority.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt led to anti-Coptic pogroms in Cairo and various parts of the countryside. In 1981, President Anwar Sadat, in an attempt to appease radical factions upset over the Camp David Accords, ordered the incarceration of the Coptic Pope Shenouda III and denounced him for anti-governmental activities, alleging there was a Coptic plan to establish a separate entity in Egypt.⁴³

Sadat's repression led to an increase in Coptic nationalist activities among exiled groups operating from Christian East Beirut, Australia, Europe and Canada, but mainly from the United States.⁴⁴ In 1992, Chris Hedges wrote in the *New York Times*

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in the last four months more than thirty people have been killed in Assiut Province, which embraces this town, including 13 Christians massacred by militants one morning in May. Assaults on Christians and the burning of their houses and shops are a daily occurrence.⁴⁵

Currently, large-scale Islamist attacks on Coptic quarters and villages are increasing despite the denials of Cairo's authorities.⁴⁶ The Coptic opposition denounces the government and the Islamic groups, accusing the 'Muslim-controlled Egyptian state of a conspiracy against the Coptic nation'.⁴⁷ Yet the Coptic associations do not openly call for a separate entity. Instead, they focus on human rights issues. One reason they have not called for self-determination is because of demographic reality. Although they constitute the largest Christian population in the Middle East, the Coptic people do not possess the strategic advantage of other less numerically strong minorities in the region: a geographically homogeneous area of residence. Scattered all over the country, they can hardly claim, as the Kurds do, an enclave for a safe haven.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the ongoing persecution of the Coptic community does not seem to end.⁴⁹

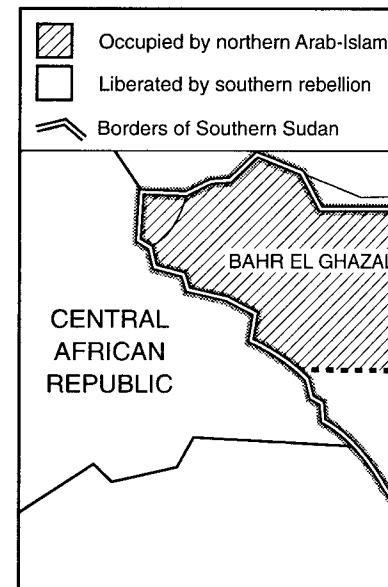
South Sudanese saga

Seven million African Christians and non-Muslims live in the southern and equatorial provinces of Sudan. The north has been Islamized and Arabized by successive waves of tribes marching from Egypt and Arabia. The advance of the Arabs into Sudan was facilitated after the Muslim victory over the African Christian kingdoms in 1504.⁵⁰ The attempts to assimilate the south have created resistance among its population and ignited many revolts against Khartoum's governments. Since the creation of the Sudanese entity in the late nineteenth century, a number of these uprisings were led by the Nilotic tribes, mainly the Dinka and Nuer.⁵¹

In recent history, two revolutions were led by the south. The first one started in 1956; it was organized by the *Anyanya* movement and quickly spread in most equatorial and southern districts. In 1972, an agreement was reached with the central government to freeze the confrontation and discuss autonomy for the African and non-Arab zones.⁵²

In 1983, as a reaction to a massive campaign of Islamization initiated by Khartoum, a second southern uprising was led by the Sudanese Popular Liberation Army (SPLA), achieving significant success in the field. Most of the southern provinces of the country came under the control of the SPLA;⁵³ but a split within the SPLA and the SPLF led to internal clashes. The civil war in the south gave an opportunity for the Arab north to renew its offensive. With support from Iran,⁵⁴ as well as from Libya and Syria, the new Islamist Khartoum government recaptured many strategic strongholds and marched

into the southern hinterland.⁵⁵ placed or massacred.⁵⁶ Currently



Map 2.1

threat, but since January 1997, by the SPLA.⁵⁷ Two million sou conflict.

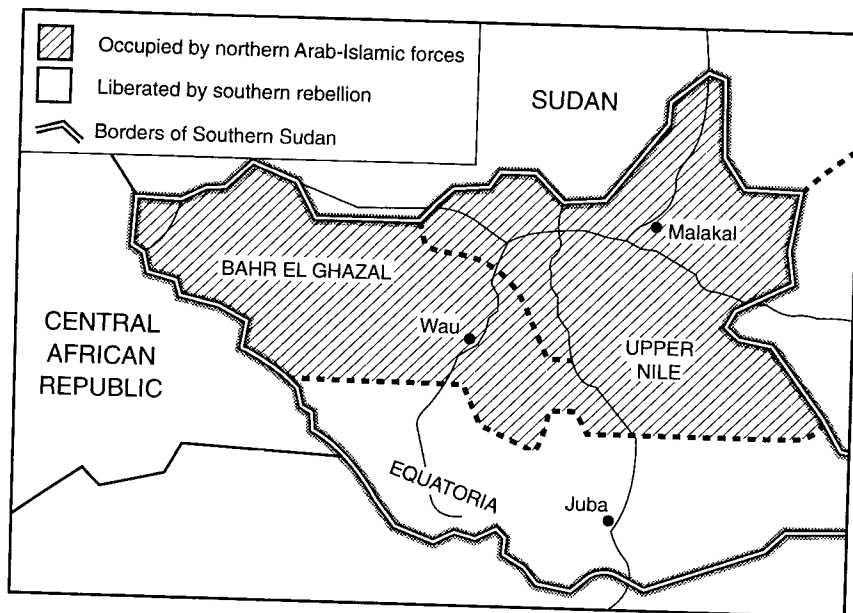
Lebanon

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Map 2.1 Southern Sudan

threat, but since January 1997, many Christian towns have been liberated by the SPLA.⁵⁷ Two million southerners were killed in the course of the conflict.

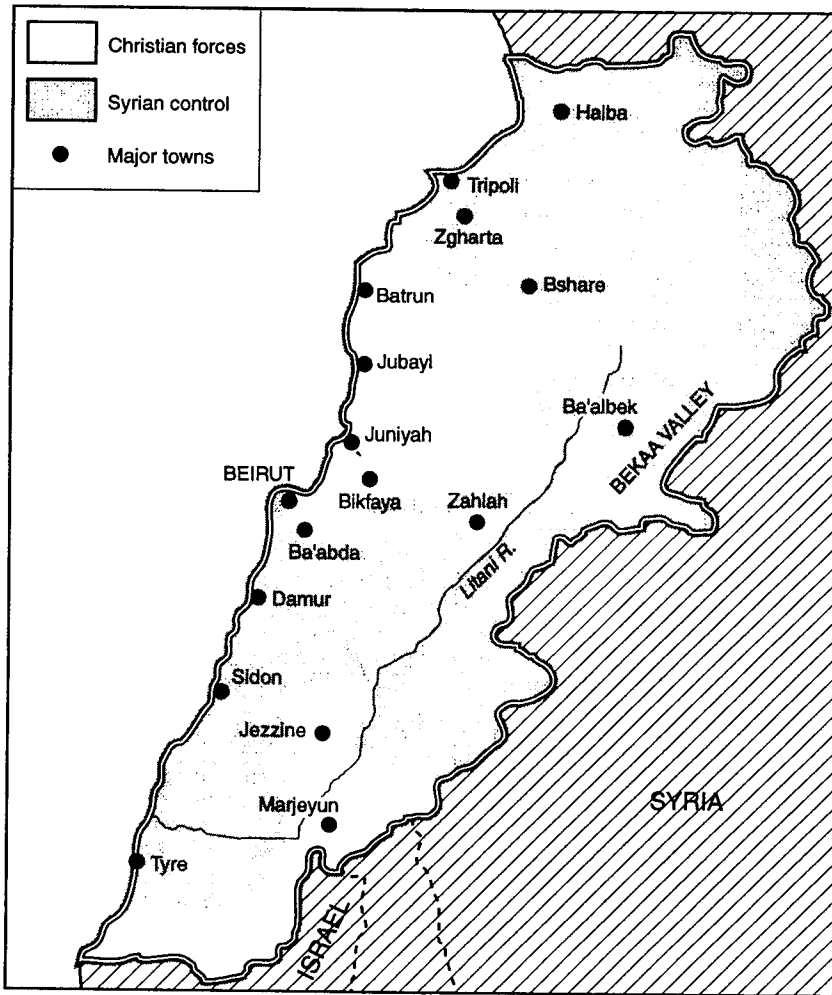
Lebanese Christians

By the beginning of the seventh century, the Lebanese population had a distinct identity: they were predominantly Aramaic in their ethnicity and of the Christian faith. The latter included various communities such as the Maronites, Melkites and other oriental sects.⁵⁸

Between AD 676 and 677, a general revolt against the occupier was led by the Christian forces, known also as Marada (rebels). In less than two years, the resistance succeeded in establishing an independent entity in Lebanon at a time when the Arab empire stretched from Persia to Spain. The first Maradite state, which had frontiers that reached coastal Syria and the Galilee in northern Israel, held its ground from AD 676 to 1305.⁵⁹

For 600 years, the Lebanese Christians lived under Arab and Ottoman occupation. During the Arab Mameluk domination, Lebanon's populations

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Map 2.2 Lebanon's War 1978-90

experienced harsh repression and their demographic presence shrank towards the northern part of Mount Lebanon.

In 1975, war erupted, pitting the Christian community against a Muslim-PLO-Syrian alliance. After fifteen years of confrontation, more than 150,000 Christians were massacred and dozens of towns and villages destroyed. The Syrian army invaded the last stronghold in 1990 and eliminated the Christian resistance. With the collapse of the central free area of Lebanon, the Christian resistance lost its ability to fight for its goals.⁶⁰

The 'new order' in Lebanon is politically Syrian. Embodied in the government and reinforced by a US-backed Christian community which will dissolve or to a slow, massive Lebanon, extensive human rights Christians are targeted by Hizbullah.

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The 'new order' in Lebanon is ideologically Arab, spiritually Muslim and politically Syrian. Embodied in the (Saudi-sponsored) Taef umbrella agreement and reinforced by a US endorsement, a new era dawned for the Christian community which will inevitably lead either to its long-term dissolution or to a slow, massive emigration of those who can leave.⁶¹ In Lebanon, extensive human rights abuses are taking place.⁶² In the south, the Christians are targeted by Hizbullah.⁶³

Barring no major developments in the next decade, the changes occurring in Lebanon *vis-à-vis* the Christians will no doubt produce a chain reaction in Lebanon and perhaps also in other parts of the Middle East. First, there will be an implacable Arabization followed by the Islamization of Lebanon because of the absence of a credible Christian political opposition.⁶⁴

In addition, the suppression of the Christians in Lebanon caused repercussions among the other Christian minorities of the region, such as the Copts of Egypt and the Assyrians of Iraq, whose hopes were fuelled for a long time by the fate and the success of their Lebanese brethren, whose fall will undoubtedly weaken their historic will to survive.

It is perhaps pertinent to mention here that, symbolically, as far as the 'peace process' is concerned, the Mideast Christians are noticeable by their absence! Neither individual Christians nor representatives of the region's national Christian communities have been invited to participate. While an organization such as the PLO has been welcomed to the negotiating table, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), the SPLA and other non-governmental groups have been kept at bay.

While Palestinian community leaders and Islamists are constantly solicited by international media, representatives of Christian movements are marginalized. The 'peace process' clearly excludes Mideast Christians.⁶⁵

Palestinian and Jordanian Christians

Palestinian and Jordanian Christians include ethnic Arabs and other minorities such as Armenians, Maronites and other Aramaeans. The Arab group, with a majority of Orthodox, Melkites, Roman Catholics and Protestants, traditionally supported Arab nationalism.⁶⁶ Leaders such as George Habash, Nayef Hawatmeh, Hanan Ashrawi, Bishop Capucci and Bishop Kaf'eety emerged as historic spokespersons for the Palestinian struggle directed against Israel and the West. Until the Intifada of 1987, Palestinian Christians sided with the PLO. But this secular elite was not able to cope with the surge of Islamic radicalism following the launching in Oslo of the 'peace process'. The fact is that Hamas and Islamic Jihad – whose aim is the creation of an all-Islamic Palestine – do not present a viable alternative to the Christians.⁶⁷ In the last few months even while these lines were being written, under the

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Western-supported Palestinian authority of Yasser Arafat, Christians feel insecure. On the West Bank, evangelicals have been arrested and jailed because of their faith.⁶⁸ In Jerusalem, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was desecrated by Arafat's religious authority.⁶⁹ Worse, in June 1997, anti-Christian activities reached within Israel's pre-1967 borders. The Christian population of the town of Tur'an was attacked by mobs who burned houses and cars and killed a university student. In Jordan, Christians are under the King's protection, but events across the Jordan River have already elevated tensions in that small and vulnerable kingdom.⁷⁰

Iranian Christians

Under the westernized Shah regime, the nearly 500,000 Christian Iranians lived in relative peace. With the onset of the Islamic revolution, the community fell under the wrath of Khomeinism. In the course of two decades, their numbers shrank dramatically to about 50,000 souls. In the early 1990s the evangelical groups were particularly targeted.⁷¹ Between 1994 and 1997 three successive leaders were assassinated or executed by government agents. There is no Iranian-Christian agenda beyond the hope of mere physical survival coupled with a minimum of human rights. In the diaspora, particularly in the United States, Iranian Christians are active and vocal.⁷²

Christians in Saudi Arabia

There is no Christian presence in Saudi Arabia since, by law, only a Muslim can be a Saudi citizen. Churches and religious centres are not allowed. Though there once were thriving Christian communities in Arabia, today that country is ruled by an extremist anti-Christian regime.⁷³ Reports from the Saudi kingdom constantly reveal the capital punishments, torture and imprisonment inflicted on Christian residents of all nationalities. However, neither European nor American foreign policy-makers interfere with Christian persecution in that oil-rich country.⁷⁴

Western abandonment

Despite the large-scale oppression of Middle East Christians and the large numbers of victims, both as communities and as individuals, Western powers have rarely considered intervening to help them. Although minority protection systems were provided for the Muslims of Bosnia, the Turks of northern Cyprus, the Kurds of northern Iraq and the Palestinians, the Mideast Christians, including Copts of Egypt, Africans of southern Sudan, Maronites of Lebanon and Assyro-Chaldeans of Iraq, to name a few, were never considered an endangered species deserving similar attention.⁷⁵

This Western abandonment of minorities is systematic and clearly political. This policy. One is economic. Western administrations acquiesced in the issue of minorities for fear of a second was the Cold War and the regimes involved in ethnic supremacy of the Cold War, the 'peace process' Christian communities to suffer in the Camp David agreements (1979–) shook the Coptic community. Populations in Cairo were under siege, and by the authorities or killed by Islamist agreements, Islamist attacks on the region, the 'peace process' was not concerned. In Lebanon, Syria was the Christians as a way of inducing Israel. For years the last free enclave security zone was denied its right to upsetting President Assad. In Sudan forthcoming to prevent Western However, the fundamental reason minorities is ideological: it is the A

Arabists and

Since the middle of this century, Arab nationalism has developed both in the Later, Arabists became predominant conceptualizers and field operators rejected the existence of non-Arab minorities in the Middle East. Good relations with the rights of the minorities in the region. However, a recent surge of interest some support for the cause of Middle

1. On majority-minority relations, minority in the Middle East', in *Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State* (Press), pp. 25–31. On the attitude

This Western abandonment of the Christian nationalities was general, systematic and clearly political. There are many factors which contributed to this policy. One is economic. Western governments and the various US administrations acquiesced in the pressures of Arab governments not to raise the issue of minorities for fear of economic – principally oil – retaliation. A second was the Cold War and the necessity of maintaining those Arab regimes involved in ethnic supremacy in the anti-Soviet camp. With the end of the Cold War, the 'peace process' became another factor causing the Christian communities to suffer international indifference. In the wake of the Camp David agreements (1979–80), a wave of governmental repression shook the Coptic community. Pope Shenouda was imprisoned, Coptic quarters in Cairo were under siege, and numbers of Christians were either jailed by the authorities or killed by Islamists. After the signing of the Oslo I and II agreements, Islamist attacks on Copts increased at an alarming rate. In the region, the 'peace process' was totally negative as far as the Christians were concerned. In Lebanon, Syria was granted a dominant role at the expense of the Christians as a way of inducing Damascus to sign a peace treaty with Israel. For years the last free enclave of Lebanon's Christians in the southern security zone was denied its right to resist and liberate its country for fear of upsetting President Assad. In Sudan and northern Iraq, similar reasons were forthcoming to prevent Western support for the Africans or Assyrians. However, the fundamental reason behind Western betrayal of the Christian minorities is ideological: it is the Arabists.⁷⁶

Arabists and Arab lobbies

Since the middle of this century, a pro-Arab lobby sympathizing with Arab nationalism has developed both in academia and in government circles. Later, Arabists became predominant in journalism. For decades, senior conceptualizers and field operatives of the US State Department simply rejected the existence of non-Arab, particularly non-Muslim, ethnic groups in the Middle East. Good relations with the 'Arab majority' meant neglect of the rights of the minorities in the region, concluded essayist Robert Kaplan.⁷⁷ However, a recent surge of interest created in the West may yet mobilize some support for the cause of Mideast Christians.⁷⁸

Notes

1. On majority-minority relations, see Elie Kedourie, 'Ethnicity, majority and minority in the Middle East', in Milton Esman and Itamar Rabinovitch (eds), *Ethnicity, Pluralism and the State of the Middle East* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press), pp. 25–31. On the attitude of Muslim intellectuals vis-à-vis the issue of

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- non-Muslims in the Middle East, see P. J. Vatikiotis, *Non-Moslems in Moslem Society: A Preliminary Consideration of the Problem on the Basis of Recent Published Works by Muslim Authors* (New York, Praeger, 1981), pp. 54–71.
2. On this topic see CEMAM reports, *Religion, State and Ideology* (Beirut, Center for the Study of the Modern Arab World, St Joseph University, 1976).
 3. On regional powers and minority issues see Mordechai Nisan, *Minorities in the Middle East: A History of Self-Expression* (London, McFarland, 1991), pp. 16–20.
 4. See *Lebanon Bulletin*, No. 37, 15 August 1997.
 5. See *Copts Magazine*, New Jersey, June–July 1997.
 6. See *Sudan Gazette*, London, Spring 1997.
 7. These fears are based on perceptions by Mideast Christians that they are targeted for ethnic cleansing. See the article 'No more Christians in the Middle East: the secret decisions taken at Lahore in 1980', *Mashrek International*, p. 33. The author wrote: 'by the year 2000 the Middle East will be Islamic and the Christians of the Orient and the Jews of Israel will be eliminated' (*Mashrek International*, December 1984).
 8. On the subject see the comprehensive book by Jean Pierre Valognes, *Vie et Mort des Chrétiens d'Orient* (Paris, Fayard, 1994).
 9. For a global approach to the subject see Albert Hourani, *The Minorities in the Arab World* (London, Oxford University Press, 1947).
 10. On the current demographic debate in Lebanon see statements by various Christian political forces, particularly the Maronite patriarch and the Union of Christian Leagues in *Al-Nahar*, *Al-Anwar*, *Al-Diyar* in June–July 1994. On the conflict over the concept of majority–minority in Lebanon see David MacDowall, *Lebanon: A Conflict of Minorities* (London, Minority Rights Group, 1982).
 11. On the issues related to comparative figures see Robert Betts, *Christians in the Arab East: A Political Study* (Atlanta, John Knox Press, 1978); for a historical approach see Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York, Holmes and Meier, 1982).
 12. Interview with Lebanese historian Fuad Afram al-Bustany, Beirut, 22 February 1983.
 13. Interview with Monsignor Dr Elias Hayek, President of the Aramaic Studies Association, Montreal, 22 February 1994.
 14. On the location of churches and ethnic groups, see the comprehensive book by Valognes, p. 8, n. 8.
 15. On the subject see Pierre Arbanieh's series of articles in *Al-Imperialiya al-Arabiya fil Mashrek* [Arab Imperialism in the Orient] (Beirut, Manshurat al-Tagammoh, 1982).
 16. In the case of Lebanon, see Michel Riquet, *Une Minorité Chrétienne: Les Maronites au Liban* [A Christian Minority: The Maronites of Lebanon] (Geneva, Centre d'Information et de Documentation sur le Moyen-Orient, 1978).
 17. On the subject see Walid Phares, 'There is no Christian Arab heritage, but a Christian participation in the Muslim Arab heritage' (*Mashrek International*, Beirut, October 1984), p. 29.
 18. A river between today's Syria and Jordan.
 19. On the Arab-Muslim conquest of the Arab lands, see *The Arab Conquest of the Arab Lands* (New York, St Martins Press, 1991).
 20. See Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, *The Byzantine East: The Functioning of a Plural Society*. See also C. E. Bosworth, 'The conquest of the Arab lands', in George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (New York, Putman, 1946), p. 1. See also *Christians under Islam* (London, F. & J. Warriner, 1970).
 21. Bat Ye'or, *Les Chrétiens d'Orient sous l'Islam* [The Dhimmi: Profile of the Oppressed Arab Conquest] (Paris, Anthropos, 1984).
 22. For more on Islamization of the Middle East, see 'From pre-modern to modern: introduction', in *A History of the Middle East* (Paris, 1991), pp. 14–16.
 23. See Ibn Warraq, 'Arab imperialism and the Muslim world', in *The Muslim World* (New York, Prometheus Books, 1991).
 24. On this period see David Fromkin, *The Middle East and the Creation of the Modern World* (New York, 1989).
 25. On this issue see Walid Phares, *The Arab Conquest of the Arab Lands* (Kasleek, Lebanon, Holy Spirit University, 1991).
 26. On this period see Bat Ye'or, *Les Chrétiens d'Orient sous l'Islam*.
 27. For a broad presentation of the situation, see Betts, n. 11.
 28. On the Covenant of Umar and the Dhimmi, see *Le Dhimmi*, n. 20.
 29. On historical resistance to the conquest, see *Nationalism: The Rise and Fall of an Idea* (New York, 1995). See also Manfred Lehmann, 'The Arab Conquest of the Arab Lands', *Allgemeiner*, 24 February 1994.
 30. See Joseph Naayem, *Shall this Nation be a Nation?* (Beirut, 1920).
 31. *Al-Mas'ala al-Ashuriya* [The Assyrian Question], 1983, p. 3. Also *Al-Qawmiyya*, series by the Aramaic Front (Beirut, 1982).
 32. On the subject see Valognes, op. cit., pp. 406–50, n. 8.
 33. See Albert Hourani, 'Iraq', in *The Middle East*, p. 2.
 34. *Al-Mas'ala al-Ashuriya*, op. cit., p. 2.
 35. See Valognes, op. cit., 'Iraq', pp. 406–50. See also 'Human rights', *Assyrian Star*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 12 February 1997.

19. On the Arab-Muslim conquest of the Middle East, see Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (New York, St Martins Press, 10th edn, 1974), pp. 139, 147.
20. See Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* (New York, Holmes and Meier, 1982). See also C. E. Bosworth, 'The concept of Dhimma in early Islam', pp. 37-51; George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (New York, Putman, 1946), p. 15. See also Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam* (London, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985); *Le Dhimmi: Profil de l'Opprimé en Orient et en Afrique du Nord depuis la Conquête Arabe* [The Dhimmi, Profile of the Oppressed in the Orient and North Africa from the Arab Conquest] (Paris, Anthropos, 1980).
21. Bat Ye'or, *Les Chrétientés d'Orient entre Jihad et Dhimmitude, 7ème-20ème siècle* [Christianities of the Orient between Jihad and Dhimmitude, 7th-20th Century] (Paris, Les Editions du Cerf, 1991).
22. For more on Islamization of the Middle East, see Peter Mansfield, 'From ancient to modern: introduction', in *A History of the Middle East* (New York, Viking, 1991), pp. 14-16.
23. See Ibn Warraq, 'Arab imperialism, Islamic colonialism', in his *Why I'm Not a Muslim* (New York, Prometheus Books, 1995), pp. 198-214.
24. On this period see David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York, Avon Books, 1989).
25. On this issue see Walid Phares, *Al-Taadudya fi Lubnan* [Pluralism in Lebanon] (Kasleek, Lebanon, Holy Spirit University Press, 1979, Vol. 2).
26. On this period see Bat Ye'or, *Les Chrétientés*, n. 21.
27. For a broad presentation of the situation of the Christians of the Middle East, see Betts, n. 11.
28. On the Covenant of Umar and the concept of Jiziya see Bat Ye'or, *Le Dhimmi*, n. 20.
29. On historical resistance to the conquest, see Walid Phares, *Lebanese Christian Nationalism: The Rise and Fall of an Ethnic Resistance* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 1995). See also Manfred Lehmann, 'Oppression of Christians in Moslem countries', *Allgemeiner*, 24 February 1995.
30. See Joseph Naayem, *Shall this Nation Die?* (Chicago, Chaldean Revue House, 1920).
31. *Al-Mas'ala al-Ashuriya* [The Assyrian Question] (Beirut, Beit Nahrain Publications, 1983), p. 3. Also *Al-Qawmiya al-Aramiya* [Aramaic Nationalism], lecture series by the Aramaic Front (Beirut, ACF, 1996).
32. On the subject see Valogones, op. cit., 'Syriaques', pp. 336-68 and 'Chaldéens', pp. 406-50, n. 8.
33. See Albert Hourani, 'Iraq', in *Minorities in the Arab World*, op. cit., pp. 99-103.
34. *Al-Mas'ala al-Ashuriya*, op. cit., p. 24.
35. See Valogones, op. cit., 'Irak', pp. 735-67. See also Walid Phares, 'Assyrian human rights', *Assyrian Star*, Vol. 49, No. 1, April 1997; 'Two Assyrian Christians killed in Northern Iraq', *Assyrian International News Agency*, 12 February 1997.

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36. In *Tarikh al-Muqawama al-Qubtiya* [The History of the Coptic Resistance], prepared by the Coptic Studies Committee, *Lajnat Al-Dirassat al-Qubtiya* (Beirut, Markaz al-Dirassat Al-Qubtiya, 1984), pp. 1–16.
37. In Mansfield, op. cit., pp. 16, 22 n. 20.
38. See *The Copts of Egypt: A Christian Minority* (Geneva, Yahya al Masrya, 1984).
39. See Shawki F. Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in Their Lands* (Jersey City, NJ, American, Canadian and Australian Christian Coptic Associations, 1985), ch. 1.
40. For a detailed account of Coptic trends see Valognes, op. cit., 'L'Egypte', pp. 527–66.
41. On this period and on the Coptic Congress and the various options see Doris Behrens-Abuseif, 'The political situation of the Copts: 1798–1923', in Braude and Lewis, op. cit., pp. 185–202.
42. In *Tarikh al-Muqawama al-Qubtiya*, op. cit., p. 30.
43. On Sadat's relations with the Coptic community see the series of articles on the 'Coptic question' by Walid Phares in *Al-Ahrrar* (May–June 1980); and a series of articles on 'Egypt's Copts' in *Al-Maruni* (March–June 1980).
44. On the Coptic opposition movement see publications of the World Coptic Association (Jersey City) and publications of the American Coptic Association, 1991.
45. See 'Heaviest cross for Egypt's Copts: March of Islam', *New York Times*, 27 July 1992.
46. See 'Fanatic journalist demands that Coptic Church leadership deny existence of persecution', *Mideast Newswire*, 16 July 1997.
47. See 'Egypt Briefing Report', report on fact-finding trip to Egypt. British MP David Alton, *The Copts*, Vol. 22, No. 1, January 1995. See also John Eibner, *Church Under Siege* (London, Washington, DC: Institute for Religious Minorities in the Islamic World, 1993), pp. 36–41.
48. See Salim Naguib, 'Ila mata' [Until when], *The Copts*, Vol. 23, No. 4, October 1996.
49. See 'Islamist gunmen massacre Christians in an Egyptian monastery', *New York Times*, 12 March 1994. See also 'Two Copts killed in Upper Egypt', *Reuter*, 6 September 1997; 'World Coptic Association calls on world opinion to intervene', *Mideast Newswire*, 12 September 1997; 'Christians attacked in Egypt after Virgin Mary sighting', *Reuter*, *AFP*, *Mideast Newswire*, 14 September 1997.
50. See Francis Mading Deng, 'The identity factor in the Sudanese factor', in Joseph V. Montville, ed., *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multi-ethnic Societies* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990).
51. In 'Mas'alat Janoub al-Sudan' [The Question of South Sudan] in the research reports of the *Lajna Mashriqiya* [Mashrek Committee] (Beirut, 1986), p. 3.
52. See Nelson Kasfir, 'Peacemaking and social cleavages in Sudan', in Joseph V. Montville, op. cit., pp. 370–71.
53. For a historical review of the south Sudan conflict see Riek Machar, 'The Sudan conflict: The SPLM/SPLA-United calls on America to support the people of South Sudan in their struggle for self-determination, national liberation and independence in the Sudan' (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, 12 April 1994).

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55. See report on refugees in pan-Arab d 'Church burning part of Holy War in ington', *Mideast Newswire*, 3 August 1997.
57. See 'Report on South Sudan' (Macon, GA: *East Concern*, 20 August 1993); see Popular Liberation Movement (SPLA) the SPLA in January–March 1997, agencies. More recently, 'The SPLA c *Newswire*, 2 August 1997.
58. See Valognes, op. cit., 'Maronites', p. 104.
59. On this period see Butros Daou, *The Copts* (Nahar, 1976, 1979).
60. See Habib Malik, 'The future of Christianity in the Middle East', *Spring* 1991, pp. 78–79.
61. On the Syrian domination of Lebanon see Ronald McLaurin, 'Lebanon into a new era', *Lebanon* No. 561 (January 1992), p. 32; on Security and Cooperation between Lebanon and Syria of Taef accord, see 'Le Liban Indépendant', in *Tribune d'Orient*, Vol. 104, 1997.
62. See 'Syrian security services arrest Coptic leaders', *Compass News Service*, 13 September 1997.
63. See 'Hizbollah massacre Christians in Lebanon', 18 August 1997.
64. See the statement by Maronite Bishop of Beirut on freedom and sovereignty' (Los Angeles, 1994). See also 'Beirut government demands freedom in *Al-Hayat*, *Al-Nahar*, *Al-Anwar*, 1–10 August 1997.
65. Walid Phares, 'The Mideast under the microscope: Lebanese Christian Resistance', see op. cit., pp. 179–211.
66. See Valognes, op. cit., 'Israël', pp. 5–10.
67. See 'Middle East Christian Committee calls for Palestinian autonomy', *Mideast Newswire*, 10 September 1997.
68. See 'PLO persecute a Christian Palestinian', *Mideast Newswire*, 10 September 1997.
69. See Kamal Salameh, 'Middle East Christian Sepulchre in Jerusalem from Israel', *Mideast Newswire*, 1997.
70. See Haim Shapiro, 'Christian-Middle East', 14 February 1997. See also an interview on 'Turan's incidents in the Galilee', *Mideast Newswire*, 14 February 1997.
71. 'Evangelical leaders assassinated in Lebanon', *Mideast Newswire*, 14 February 1997.
72. See 'Christians detained in Iran', 20 February 1997, national, 74521. 230@compuserve.com.

54. See 'Government captures major cities', *New York Times*, 19 July 1992.
55. See *Mideast Newswire*, 15 December 1993.
56. See report on refugees in pan-Arab daily *Al-Hayat*, 14 December 1993. See also 'Church burning part of Holy War in Sudan says anti-slavery group in Washington', *Mideast Newswire*, 3 August 1997.
57. See 'Report on South Sudan' (Macomb, Illinois, and Loughborough, UK: *Middle East Concern*, 20 August 1993); see also various documents of the Sudanese Popular Liberation Movement (SPLM)/United (Nairobi, 1994), and bulletins of the SPLA in January-March 1997, confirmed by Reuter, AFP, and AP news agencies. More recently, 'The SPLA claims two towns over the Islamists', *Mideast Newswire*, 2 August 1997.
58. See Valognes, op. cit., 'Maronites', pp. 336-68, n. 8.
59. On this period see Butros Daou, *The History of the Maronites* (Beirut, Dar el-Nahar, 1976, 1979).
60. See Habib Malik, 'The future of Christian Arabs', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 2, Spring 1991, pp. 78-79.
61. On the Syrian domination of Lebanon's institutions after Taef implementation, see Ronald McLaurin, 'Lebanon into or out of oblivion?', *Current History*, Vol. 91, No. 561 (January 1992), p. 32; on the signature of a 'Brotherhood Treaty of Security and Cooperation between Lebanon and Syria' and the implementation of Taef accord, see 'Le Liban Indépendant n'est plus' [Independent Lebanon is gone], in *Tribune d'Orient*, Vol. 104, 1-7 June 1991, p. 1.
62. See 'Syrian security services arrest Christian opposition members in the Bekaa', *Compass News Service*, 13 September 1996.
63. See 'Hizbollah massacre Christian children in Jezzine', *Lebanon Bulletin*, 18 August 1997.
64. See the statement by Maronite Bishop Beshara al-Rahi, 'Lebanon has lost its freedom and sovereignty' (Los Angeles: Kamal Shamas, *Al-Hayat*, 25 June 1994). See also 'Beirut government censures the Maronite Patriarch speeches', in *Al-Hayat*, *Al-Nahar*, *Al-Anwar*, 1-10 February 1994.
65. Walid Phares, 'The Mideast underdogs', *Jerusalem Post*, 23 June 1992. On the Lebanese Christian Resistance, see Walid Phares, *Lebanese Christian Resistance*, op. cit., pp. 179-211.
66. See Valognes, op. cit., 'Israël', pp. 566-614, 'Jordanie', pp. 614-36, n. 8.
67. See 'Middle East Christian Committee seeks autonomy within Palestinian Muslim autonomy', *Mideast Newswire*, 19 August 1994.
68. See 'PLO persecute a Christian Palestinian', *Mideast Newswire*, 18 July 1997.
69. See Kamal Salameh, 'Middle East Christians to world Christians: Defend the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem from Islamist assault', *Mideast Newswire*, 14 April 1997.
70. See Haim Shapiro, 'Christian-Moslem dispute escalates', *Jerusalem Post*, 14 February 1997. See also an interesting investigation by the *Jerusalem Report* on 'Turan's incidents in the Galilee', 24 June 1997.
71. 'Evangelical leaders assassinated in Iran', *Mideast Newswire*, 5 July 1994.
72. See 'Christians detained in Iran', 24 February 1997 (Iranian Christians International, 74521.230@compuserve.com).

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73. See hearings on persecution of Mideast Christians by the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee of the US Senate: Congressman Wolf, Bat Ye'or, Nina Shea, Walid Phares, *Congressional Records*, 29 April 1997.
74. See 'Two Philippino Christians beheaded in Saudi Arabia, Catholic League of the Middle East calls on Pope to declare them Saints', *Mideast Newswire*, 18 July 1997. See also A. M. Rosenthal editorials in the *New York Times*, in particular 'The City and the Kingdom', 17 June 1997.
75. On Turkey, see Valognes, op. cit., pp. 796-832.
76. This fear was raised by Mideast Christians in the 1980s. See 'Towards the establishment of an international Secretariat for the Christians of the Near East', *Mashrek International*, December 1984.
77. Interview with State Department official, Alberto Fernandez, in Robert D. Kaplan, 'Tales from the bazaar', in *Atlantic Monthly* (August 1992); also in Kaplan's *The Arabists* (New York, Free Press, 1995), p. 306. See also Roger Dufour, 'International campaign to destroy the Christian cause', *Mashrek International*, January 1985.
78. See Ralph Kinney Bennet, 'The global war on Christians', *Reader's Digest*, August 1997; also Peter Steinfels, 'Evangelicals lobby for oppressed Christians', *New York Times*, 15 September 1996; Larry Witham, 'Christians press to end persecution', *Washington Times*, 17 January 1997. See also State Department briefing on US policies in support of religious freedom overseas, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, John Shattuck (State Department, 22 July 1997).

The Dhimmi Factor Arab

B.

The *dhimmi* condition can only be understood if it originates from this ideology. For centuries, theologians and jurists had endeavored to (re)quest a religious and legal structure for the Arab-Muslim expansion on mainland Europe, on the Koran and the *hadith* (the teachings of Muhammad). Thus they elaborated a doctrine that established the relationship between the Muslim and the *dhimmi* (non-Muslim) in a state of belligerency, hostility or submission. The *dhimmi* were defined, as well as the rules governing their conditions for treaties, the treatment of their property, the booty. This conceptualization constituted the classical doctrine of the Islamic world from the eighth century onward, in comp

According to this doctrine, the *umma* (the Islamic community of Muslims) is defined (Koran III, 106: 'You are the best nation that has been allowed what is good, forbids what is evil, and proclaims what is transmitted by Muhammad. This is the religion of Allah'). Islam is Allah's religion (Koran II, 177). *Jihad* is a collective, religious obligation of the community and each individual (Koran II, 190) to situations and circumstances.

Here are two definitions of *jihad* from the Muslim scholar Abdallah Ibn Abi Zayd al-Hafsi (d. 1406).

Jihad is a precept of Divine institution which may dispense others from it. We [the Muslim jurists] maintain that it is not a precept of the enemy before having invited the enemy to where the enemy attacks first. The