

Lebanon in the World

Future Prospects

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When we speak of prospects, in a figurative sense, we speak of what seems likely to happen at some point in the future time.

Clear-sightedness and foresight both presuppose prospects, and it is the proper function of man not to separate the present from the future.

Looking ahead and seeing ahead thus imply a combination of intelligence and imagination in thinking and looking- a reasonable amount of imagination (for imagination and intuition often meet) and with it the intelligence that is needed to *discern the possibilities and realities of tomorrow* amidst the mass of images and ideas that come our way.

The future prospects of a country go beyond the horizon uncovered by the naked eye. They are not distinct from that country's situation *with regard to the world, nor from its relations with the world*. These relations may not always be the same, but they are always on the increase and are inevitable, *because the general trend of the discoveries being made is to make everything universal*.

It takes *just one event* to change everything in the world, and *this has often been observed in the past*. The greatest civilizations spring from religions and philosophies that were born from the enlightenment of the mind, from a flash of light. Whole centuries can be dominated by an accident of history.

This foreword will have meaning only in so far as it creates an atmosphere and a frame of mind and in so far as it predisposes us for the logical search for a future towards which our curiosity is directed. We shall look at our little country in much the same way as we look at a film in which narrative and scenery are found together, or at a property *on which experiment and imagination are added to the work of nature*.

We shall not consider ourselves bound by rigid order or by some already established plan "ne varietur" so as to feel tied down by it. *A study and an assessment of the present of which the ultimate object is in the future must leave room for a large amount of freedom. I could not tell you immediately what I am going to tell you later on* (this was true at the time of writing; I knew nothing about it, I did not yet know it; but at least I knew in a vague sort of way that it would have something to do with the conditions for the continued existence of this little Lebanese country, with its active presence in the world *and with what is to become of it*, which is, properly speaking, its future as it unfolds- its future *in action*).

We shall discover our subject together as we go further with our observations and reflections. It may be that a certain disorder will soon become apparent, because I thought I ought to write just as if I were speaking to you extempore without having too much recourse to references and sources.

So I shall speak to you first of all about certain teachings concerning freedom in theory and concerning economics before considering relations with other countries. In spite of *all the movement in the other direction, the political future of our country depends upon a liberal economy.*

I think I have had living experience of this country for as long as half a century since the age of reason rather as one has living experience of a novel or a chapter from history. I shall speak to you about it in accordance with that with what I know of it from my own observation, as well, I think, as with what I have learned about it from others.

For its own children, a country is an old acquaintance: it is a part of the earth to which one belongs through longstanding and permanent connections. It can also happen that these connections be quite recent, too. How many citizens of the United States today are descended from parents or grandparents born in the United State? How many people who are Lebanese by birth have been Americans for only thirty or twenty years? How many of our fellowcitizens have been Lebanese for less than thirty years? However, the trend has grown, the connection has been established by choice, by option, by habit and by a whole range of unpredictable events, actions, reminiscences, promises, sentiments and, lastly, love in various forms.

Nationalism is a great thing so long as it can be set aside when mankind, and the fate of the world along with it, is at stake. The legitimate rights of an assembly of nations would in principle be enough to subordinate the interests of a particular nation to the demands of an international duty. There must be no more fooling about with things like this.

Our country is our home, or, better, the home of our fathers. But the age in which we are living requires us to take an interest in the home of other people also. It requires a common *stock, not only of principles and sentiments, but also of services and contacts.* There no longer exists the kind of righteous egoism that lets people limit the world to a frontier or dividing wall.

The Lebanese must have learned this better than the others have since they have been ranging over the world.

Geography and history provide the background for the future of Lebanon. There it is at the nub of continents and in the heart of the Ancient World, abounding in high places, clear skies, fruit trees, sweet water, fresh air and beautiful scenery next to that inner sea which saw the birth, growth, decline and death of dominations and empires. *It has heard everything, seen everything and known everything. It is still moved by the confidences made to it by the Ancient World.*

Among the men of early times, its inhabitants set out on the first available boat and looked for adventure far off. One attempt after another- one initiative after another-drove them on to the open sea. They took the risks that came their way, passed through the storm, after shipwreck landed on unknown shores and met other men as we would discover another inhabited planet; with a view to making commercial exchanges, they took with them merchandise of their own fashioning or, according to their taste, objects they had wrought and decorated in beautiful colors; they brought back metals and raw material. They spread the knowledge of languages and news a from afar. They were multilingual right from the beginning, and they have never ceased to be so. *They will be so to an ever-increasing extent.*

From this there were born relations, trade, entrepots, services and later on the maritime city and the colony. Once incorporated into a new world which offered no outlet to the ocean, the Phoenicia of ancient times had no air to breathe, and the men from these shores, lest they be walled up, often departed *never to come back again*.

The Lebanese will go on travelling more and more. Perhaps it was for them that the aeroplane, after the ship, was invented. Their enterprises will spread out more and more in time and space. It will be necessary, nevertheless, that they return to the country and that permanent departures from it do not increase in number. *We would not be able to live without emigration, but if emigration became too vast, it could be the end of us.* Again, is it enough to emigrate for emigration to look like conquest? "A certain power to expand and a certain material civilization [must] be added" to the settlement in another country. Everything connected with the thousand things of beauty, finery and art which Phoenicia made or sold in the course of trade shows that what Phoenicia offered distant lands was an education in taste and was imbued with the sense of progress and even refinement within civilization. All this could be seriously affected by sumptuary laws.

When we speak of Lebanese trade, today as much as yesterday and tomorrow, we speak mostly of quality and luxury articles; the luxury article which is condemned in certain periods and by certain regimes; but it is the luxury article in its nobility that fills museums and marks the great eras of history.

On the map, Lebanon occupies the place of a predestined country. The main content of its inheritance is made up of humane qualities and of the resources of the intellect.

These qualities appear for what they are only in the form of surprising results which discourage statisticians; so far there are no statistics that are valid for journeys made in spirit and migrations of thought. In daily life, on the other hand, our faults are obvious and people talk about us. No nation is without its faults. This is perhaps the opportunity, *with an eye to the future*, briefly to analyze some aspects of what makes us strong and what makes us weak.

Strength in this country means first of all being quick to understand, quick to act and to come to terms with the obstacles, while waiting to overcome it. It means possessing enough freedom to enable us not to discourage action; it means not stupidly subordinating the value of things to the fickle value of paper money; finally, it means seeking wealth *in order to spread it and to make it bring happiness.*

In two different orders there are two things in particular, apart from wars or in post-war periods, which have ruined Europe and what depends upon it: *firstly the abuse of laws and the abuse of devaluations.* Europe does not yet fully realize that by making its legal system so complicated it has given people headaches and that by so often ruining its money it has demoralized the citizen and destroyed social life. *False money has put an end to confidence, and crushing legislation has put an end to initiative there.* A kind of inquisition in matters of taxation has created what are in fact monopolies there in favor of the cleverest and craftiest. *They who had the greatest civic sense have gone under as at Thermopylae: "passer-by, go tell Sparta that we died here to obey her laws;"* while those people prospered whose fortune took the supple, secret and shifting form of riving wealth.

Contemporary forms of legislation are nowadays too often just the mask of morals and not their reflection.

One can sometimes think about present-day laws the way La Rochefoucauld thinks about hypocrisy: it is the homage paid by vice to virtue.

In the struggles for life, law has become the foe, just as the cruel play of devaluations has periodically ruined the efforts of the most deserving and virtuous of men.

Setting aside some northern countries, no executive power will ever manage seriously to apply laws that do violence to nature and laws that are too exacting without making the disorder worse. The history of the maximum price has been known at least since the time of Diocletian's famous Edict. But does anyone go back to history any more?

In this country, fortunately, the value of money, land and enterprises is not exposed to the shortcomings of the state. People do not readily lend money to the state because they fear the state's prodigality and insolvency. Besides, it is better that, as far as possible, the State should not become a debtor. It is the state that threatens society with collapse when it spends too much. When the state cannot pay any more, it devaluates and parts with the very substance of its budget, stupidly, indiscriminately and pitilessly ruining its citizens' savings, patrimonies and social structures.

Moreover, we must be on our guard against confusing, in this delicate matter, the legislation of a *de facto state* with the cause that brought it about.

We want no inhuman laws in Lebanon, and we want stable currency. We must take a firm stand with regard to this intention and desire. It is mainly for this reason that, taking the amenities of nature into account, foreigners think that we are a happy country. The more moderate our laws are, the more we make psychology the basis of our legislation (that is to say, the knowledge of men and manners), the more we abide by contracts and the more we become the refuge for persons and property, the better will we defend the moral, social, administrative and political order. *We shall remember that a lawgiver has no right to pass a law to which he knows that he will not submit.*

It is well known that foreigners visiting us think that we are a land blessed by the gods. *They see peace and plenty here, whereas we import almost everything and we export practically nothing, which seems a sort of miracle.* Work is more easily done (I am not saying there is more of it) here than elsewhere, because the state has not yet got to the stage at which, in the name of would-be economic principles and rigid, harassing social theories, *the public authorities make it impossible to breathe.* Excess in this matter must be abolished forever.

In order to live and last, Lebanon must raise a dissenting voice against the craze for making laws and imposing taxes in the West. It makes a plea for freedom to the utmost extent to which people can be free without harming their neighbor and, of course, their country. It is apprehensive of the mistakes that technicians from the West might, in all good faith, suggest to those who govern us. It is also apprehensive of the restless ideologies of the East. This is because people can also be led astray by good faith.

The West is superior to us in the exact sciences, in things mechanical and in statistics, and it will remain so indefinitely. It is not superior to us in political philosophy, in knowledge of human nature and in economic and financial science. Its scientific philosophy is not as good as our empirical psychology. We investigate man and the depths of his soul better than they do; we do the same for freedom and forces that do not yield to pressure, and again, better than they do. It is this that in practical life has made Beirut, for instance, one of the world's last open markets. It is up to us to place Lebanon on still more solid foundations and increase its prosperity by deliberately going against prejudice. We shall not do violence to human nature under the plea of governing ourselves better. There are some deadly illusions to which we shall not conform.

As regards the economic, budgetary and ruling of the West, we must not be slavish imitators, but only attentive observers. If the legislation in force in England or in a Scandinavian country were applied here to the letter, this country's trade, which is responsible for its standard of living, would not withstand it for one year. At the end of the exercise there would be bankruptcy lead a wretched existence under the thrall of people grown rich off a dreadful black market.

Lebanon's future is basically subordinated to freedom. Freedom in belief, freedom in enterprise. Breadth of outlook in the political system and in the social system. Rectification of morality out of respect for legitimate freedom in all domains.

The widest possible abolition of constraint and hindrance. *There are many things a small country can afford which bigger countries must forgo. Small countries have advantages which they will learn to understand better and which are as yet unknown to them.* In practical matters, one of the vital sectors of our general policy will be more and more the economic and fiscal question.

It must be remembered that a fiscal law is firstly a psychological and a moral problem. Laws must not be made just for a quarter or half of the population. People cannot be forced to pay too heavy taxes if the majority of those concerned do not consent and if they rebel against them. Otherwise there will be widespread tax-evasion and corruption which will finally leave the state powerless and gasping. It will also be the end of morality in business, and the end of scrupulous citizens weighed down with a cost price heavier than that borne by competitors who are less bothered by civic sense and virtue.

Chancellors of the Exchequer in all countries should understand that in this situation there is a real case of legitimate self-defense.

A golden rule could be stated as follows: *It is not enough to make laws; lawgivers must legislate for themselves before legislating for others. In Lebanon this is the very standard of measurement for laws of the future.*

But if our strength lies in freedom and tolerance taken together in various forms, *our weakness lies in an individualism which makes discipline useless and collective enterprises so laborious and easily spoiled.* This is the other side of the picture.

Yet, we obey a kind of law of necessity within us.

The need we feel to act swiftly in deciding and to be bold in undertaking things—which we consider the first element in success—makes the formality and corporate nature of deliberation distasteful to us. In the course of our commercial activity everything has to be done telegraphically, one may say. A journey has to be decided upon between evening and morning; a risk has to be taken without delay, and chances have to be taken as soon as they offer themselves. Excessive formality and too rigid control do not permit any of this. In this way, we see the extent to which the West's strict and complicated methods are at variance with truly Mediterranean genius. The ingenuity of the Near Easterner is a basic element in his assets—an integral part of his stock-in-trade; and this ingenuity becomes effective only outside or above regulations and restraint.

Lebanon will destroy itself to the extent to which it encroaches upon the liberty of its citizens; contrariwise, it will prosper to the extent to which it makes it full and effective. A budget for the Lebanese state, which really allows for the future, will always have to be of an original and personal character. It is sheer madness to set up

our rules here in accordance with those of other countries, whether western or eastern. A rational Lebanese budget will first of all make life comfortable for those who have to perform incredible feats of acrobatics to finance it.

These cursory remarks do not exhaust the subject. *In the material life of the Lebanon of tomorrow as in that of today, they show the importance of freedom—that vital freedom which is already playing so great a part in our spiritual life and in our intellectual life.*

Once again, everything in this country is based on freedom and the future depends on it. Side by side with freedom, Lebanon's chances will increase and this little land will maintain and develop in an orderly way a prosperity for which the complementary conditions are stability and intelligent thinking.

Either we are to export *ideas and services freely*, in visible or invisible form; or else we shall stop exporting anything, and then it will be Job's dunghill.

It is perhaps fortunate for us that large-scale industry is ruled out for us by nature herself, because the social problem is inevitably complicated by industry. *But what industry not possessing at least 10 million customers can still withstand competition from industrial powers that produce goods for whole continents?* Who these days can hold out against the world's best laboratories and techniques serving an unlimited number of costumers?

Our role as distributors of services and merchandise certainly has its value also. It provides us with the whole world as our field of action. The device we are working on is an intellectual instrument. It does not get out of date, and nothing competes with it in the field of purely mechanical objects.

Commercial possibilities open to the Lebanese will in the future grow to the exact extent to which industry becomes centralized in the bigger countries; and they will be so by force of circumstances. Our age is one of centralization; the fabulous economic power of the United States is the result of natural and almost inevitable centralization.

Being ten years ahead in industry betokens henceforth a superiority that is almost decisive. How can you outdistance the country you are competing with in these conditions? How are you going to make up the time lost?

Lebanon's opportunities lie much more in distribution than in manufacture on our own territory and abroad. This seems perfectly obvious to us. If the foreigner is to receive us, we must receive him as well, and distribution must be not confined to material goods; *but also and specially it must include services*, that is to say knowledge and experience.

We shall remain purveyors of ideas. In this domain we must possess, just as others have their factories, everything which, as far as quality is concerned, stems from intelligence and art. The teacher is our man, the doctor is our man, the artist is our man, the hotel-keeper is our man, and so is the qualified craftsman, just like the merchant, the commission-agent, the commercial broker and the commercial traveler — just like, if you will, the Phoenician of old.

All these professions make freedom the prime necessity and the first rule. Our nature, our heritage and our geographical position point out the way we must take and impose it on us. *The widest eclecticism, knowledge, curiosity and, lastly, movement, thus provide the background for the future of the Lebanese.* We will never mass-produce anything, and we will plant practically nothing on a massive scale, but we must make ourselves capable of expending every effort to produce what is out of the ordinary and which outclasses it, and all this in the most abundant variety.

As we have been saying in writing for a long time, Lebanon's future lies primarily in the things of the mind and in things to be gauged by their quality.

This is equally true of our trade, our agriculture and our minor industries. It was to give proof of fertility of mind and to show originality in everything that we were created. Men and nations have not all the same mission on this earth. *They were not created to accomplish the same tasks.*

Diversity is part of our destiny. It presupposes only a few laws and an administration which confines itself to the essentials: the minimum of formality and the broadest horizons.

Setting forth the prospects for a country means placing oneself before the widest horizon. What I propose to do now is to talk to you about Lebanon in the Arab world, as regards the future— about Lebanon, Israel's neighbor, about Lebanon in the Mediterranean world and finally about Lebanon as she stands on the world's highroad. This is an ambitious train of thought, and it may be disappointing. I must warn you that we shall talk about this in a rambling way without bothering too much about literary form.

We shall say as much as the hand of the clock and your patience permit.

Lebanon in the Arab World

In order that the Arabs may be able to achieve their destiny harmoniously, people must recognize the existence of different kinds of sensitivity, ambitions, make-up and appearances among them. The west seems to know nothing of these differences, and it must be made aware of them so that there may be an end to widespread confusion.

To ensure its own future and that of neighbors linked with it by ties of brotherhood, it is Lebanon's duty to clarify the situation. It is no secret of politics that the dreams of the four dynasties and the five monarchies of the Arab League, to say nothing of the republics, are often contradictory; and that tangible realities are hidden behind illusory words. It is not fanciful to state that between one climate and another, between one latitude and another, the Arab world has a different understanding both of democracy and of how to govern.

This is based on the most venerable tradition and the most distant past.

The Arab world of the Mediterranean does not react in social, intellectual and political matters in the same way as the Arab world of the Shatt-al-Arab and the Hadhramaut. If Damascus itself were governed from Cairo, or Cairo from Damascus itself, or both of them from Baghdad, it is to be feared that the same terrible events that occurred during the great age of Arabs would happen again. One of the best-authenticated facts of history is that the Umayyad, the Abbasid and the Fatimids, whose feats are interwoven with their misfortunes, sought

each other's death in their times. Their reigns form a chain of dramatic events resulting from a great variety of ambitions and inclinations.

It is our heartfelt wish that the Hashimitis and the Sau'di Arabians carry on in the recently-established amicable relations between them; but our anxiety about the future is still great. The Arab League is a noble and beautiful thing. It is one of the most legitimate marks of the Ancient world, but lest it be one day broken up by the wrath of sedition-mongers and rabble-rousers, it must not be subjected to a trial too heavy for it to bear. You have Arabs just as, in many ways, you have Europeans. Attempts will be made to do for the Arabs what is being done to unite Europe ; But despite certain indications, this will be more difficult.

Lebanon's task is to use all her efforts to bring about equilibrium among the Arabs to further their collective wellbeing. The opportunity open to the Arabs lies in equilibrium and not in a merger that would result in clashes of temperament and disorder.

What Lebanon is doing for the Arabic language, the Arab community and Arab politics is clearly of the greatest importance. But it is also Lebanon's duty to take no part in the confusion of continents and races, and to save the Arabs from the decadence that would be their lot if they were to let themselves be drowned in the Indian Ocean. The southern Mediterranean belongs mainly to Arabic-speaking people from Morocco to the gulf of Alexandretta. This shore of the mother-sea is long enough for the Arabs to revel in breathing the oxygen and iodine of this sea and for them not to disown it. *Whereas if they took upon themselves the weight of the Asian masses, they would thenceforth only have the rank of underlings in an enslaved civilization.*

We find the symbol of a rational and fervent brotherliness in the common struggle for Palestine and Jerusalem. *But let it be asked: What effective help have Palestine and Jerusalem found throughout Asia and from the one end of the Indian Ocean to the other? If the whole Near East trembled in the face of this difficulty and at this gaping wound, almost the whole Middle East remained motionless when it did not show itself hostile.* It is in keeping with Lebanon's character for it to clarify this obscure and worrying situation, a situation which certain people, lured on by the generosity of their souls as far afield as Indonesia, perhaps do not see properly.

If the Arab world wants to live, it must consider its "territorial" attachments before its "ideological" attachments. It must first of all know the shores on which its homes are fixed. For Arabs, this is a rule of life and salvation. If elementary, middle and higher education in Lebanon does not do this, it has done nothing; it has made all its lessons in geography and history serve the purposes of an illusion and an error. Finally, if a regrouping has to be made in order to escape from the explosion of the hellish devices of our age, it will have to be made around the Mediterranean—that sea which has people living on its northern and southern shores who may be rightly compared to the Americans of the North and South.

The prospects for Lebanon in the Arab world are exciting because they rise more out of the spiritual, intellectual, linguistic, political and social order and out of brotherliness in the spirit than from the purely material and utilitarian order.

All around us we have an enormous part to play, the most honorable there is; and if we can escape from vanity as well as from turgid rhetoric and the verbiage of the demagogues, if we can show proof of modesty and disinterestedness, we shall worthily fulfill this role which is so noble and human.

Our immediate neighbors are Syria and Israel.

Syria stretches along our frontiers to the north and east. It has its personality just as we have ours. However, it is threatened more than we are; and so it has to defend itself against a very great variety of ventures, and we can say what these ventures are if we make the round of its frontiers. No danger, however, is as great as the one to which it is exposed by a false conception of the Arab world. On the pretext of making it greater, it is sometimes called upon to give up its distinctive character. Yet it is enough for it to refer back to its history to carry on along the lines of its own destiny.

If Syria ever lets itself be tempted by seas other than the inner sea, it will be disfigured and will be lost. *The people governing it would then no longer have their main concentration of population between the coast and, so to speak, the coastal towns: Damascus, Homs, Hamah and Aleppo are all four of them a hundred or a hundred and fifty kilometers from the Mediterranean, no more. Another majority would then govern Syria—it would then be another world.* Whereas Syria and ourselves, since the earliest times and the earliest days of Phoenicia, owe our origin to the same geological shake-up which, had it gone a bit deeper, would have made Lebanon an island; while Syria, as it is at present, remained split between the Mediterranean climate and the continental climate. The population of Syria, at least three quarters of it, is Mediterranean. Nomadism in all its forms— all the tribes evidently—is to be found in the remaining quarter.

To the north and east, then, Syria runs along our frontier and between it and us understanding must grow and co-operation must increase. This presupposes that Syria policy in general be guided along lines which more or less meet up with our own conception of the world. This presupposes that she must keep her doors and windows open. Please God, this will come about.

Lebanon, Israel's Neighbour

To the south there is Israel; here you have something new on the earth, one of the strangest adventures of this century and one of the most far-reaching in its consequences.

Israel is in fact not like any other country. Having Israel on one's frontier means having a power that is worldwide in its own way—that is the very school of racialism, in which the standing of citizens is determined by religion which is exclusive at least in fact; it is a human workshop constantly on the move, where ill-regulated ambitions are always bubbling up; it is, a paradoxical combination of realism, materialism, intellectualism and illuminism. *To the south of Lebanon, at our very door, the most extraordinary political experiment is being carried out.* By becoming a state, Israel is becoming the capital of worldwide Judaism—a people who have representatives of the first rank in all nationalities and in the principal governments and which plays a very great role in the political life of the United States, the United Kingdom and many countries; it has immense resources also, and contacts, well-known or in secret, right throughout the world. It is enough to state this, and it is enough to consider the particular character of this anachronistic—and at the same time revolutionary—power to bring out the political, economic and social causes of concern which it creates for Lebanon and which no Lebanese citizen with his wits about him may overlook.

For my part, I have said and written a hundred times what I believe to be the evident truth about Israel. Vigilance as regards our new neighbor to the south is more important than any other. According as Israel, without encountering new obstacles, makes progress on the path of her ambitions, or as life will be more

difficult for her, we shall have to face dangers of various kinds; *but whatever we do, we shall no longer enjoy tranquility, at least lasting tranquility.* This must be boldly said to the Lebanese people because it is the truth.

Israel's presence a couple of steps from here has enormous political, social and economic repercussions on our future, as well as repercussions of an international nature. All the nations, in which Israel possesses influence, starting with the United States, look towards this part of the world in another way. The misfortunes undergone by the holy places and the vicissitudes of Jerusalem ought to draw people's attention and keep it at least as much as Israel; but scientific propaganda and clever intrigue have benumbed people's vigilance. Yet it must be hoped that they will wake up with a start, one day.

Whether there be question of national defense, industry, trade, agriculture, finance or what have you, whether the frontiers be open or whether they be closed—these are, given Israel's presence, so many new problems which arise for us. *Israel makes systematic immigration and accelerated program of settlement the basis of a policy of conquest and room to live in.* The more its population grows, the more its weight will make itself felt along the frontiers and the more these frontiers will have to be defended in order to resist the pressure.

The recruiting of Israel's population is by definition *international*, like Israel (despite the uniqueness of its stock), and racialist, like Israel. It finds its expression simultaneously in world-wide military recruitment. The descendants of Jewish generations settled in the West even before Augustus, or since Vespasian and Titus, contribute to it. *Whether we like it or not it is an army of foreign Jews that is defending Israel;* they are Germans, Russians, Poles, Englishmen, Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians and many others, whose covetousness is much more dangerous than that of the West in former times. And the population of Israel, both present and future, is and will remain for the greater part an incredible mixture of Westerners who after centuries of trying have not been assimilated and who have left the West, considering themselves stateless persons.

On the one hand, on the economic plane, Israel cannot live without powerful industries; and if it becomes industrialized with the technical and financial means at its disposal, it is invading the whole neighborhood, and is crushing everything. On the other, Israel cannot breathe without intensive trade; but its trade benefits from relations, contacts, influences, entrepôts, credits and facilities of all kind throughout the world. You can guess the priorities and advantages that flow, and will flow from being such a solidly-built commonwealth of race, ambitions and interests. Under the impulse given it by the state, Israel's trade will constitute in the Eastern Mediterranean an inevitable challenge to all enterprises, to all ports, to all trade, to all agencies and to all professions *which presuppose some service to be provided.*

Finally, at the gates of Asia, Israel acts as a ferment for discord with a faint odor and taste of revolution to it. *People do not imagine how favorable revolution is to Israel and how it serves its ultimate goals.* Socially speaking, the whole of Israel is a laboratory and a field for experiment for those whose Jewish intellectual activity and sociology, taking their stand on the past and the future, make them formidable specialists.

Some people cynically think that Israel's second generation will not be as good as the first and that degeneration will set in from the third on. *We do not share this unhealthy frame of mind.* In any case the diaspora, the "dispersal" throughout the world, can supply Israel with population indefinitely. No one can state without being rash what in the long run will be the effects of the physical, social and moral climate in Israel; but, having stated it in writing twenty times, I want to emphasize here that in defending Lebanon and Israel's other neighbors against Israel's ventures, it is certainly not because I wish the Israelis and, in a more general

way, the Jews failure and misfortune. God preserve us all from such a perverse and base attitude! On the contrary, we would like them all to be happy and live in prosperity, *provided only that this happiness be not at our expense, and that they themselves be not the cause of our unhappiness. Therein lies the whole tragedy of the situation.* In this we show ourselves more generous and just than many other nations.

Throughout the whole of history, since the rule of Byzantium and since Islam, the part of the Ancient World in which the Jews were best received and the less persecuted is certainly the one occupied by the Arabs today; there it was that the greatest spirit of brotherliness and the greatest respect for human dignity were shown to the Jews.

There is no anti-Semitism in Lebanon, nor can there be. Our Jewish fellow-citizens would be the first to bear witness to this. We are not defending ourselves against Judaism but against Zionism. *Otherwise we would be going against the very reason for Lebanon's existence, against its fundamental principles, against its abiding intellectual and religious tradition and against the best-established of its political traditions.*

Actually, the clear-cut example given by Lebanon would have prevented the birth of the state of Israel—an anachronism in this century; it is the showing forth of the basic qualities of a government in which religious communities and minorities are well-balanced because they receive their rights.

No one tries to be more objective than we do in passing judgment on Israel; but in spite of appearances there are many anti-Zionists among the most serious-minded Jews; there are many who think that it is an anomaly fraught with danger to have *at one and the same time* a Jewish government to itself and so many Jews in the government of the world and in international organizations—to have a state of its own while still wielding power in other countries along with the ambiguous situations and suspicions that such a false and bold position quite rightly provoke.

But the facts are there staring us in the face, and the dangers that we run are as obvious as they are formidable. If we did not take fright at them we would be regarded as naïve and credulous.

As it is at present, Lebanon finds it hard to keep her children on her land, and Lebanese emigration, which has been on a large scale since the Phoenicians but was kept within bounds for a while, is again becoming a source of worry. Meanwhile, Israel, though less favored by nature than Lebanon is, Israel, with so much arid and desert land, announces for 1953 and starting from coming year the *settlement of 600,000 new immigrants on its soil.* We draw our information about this from Israeli publicity now in circulation in the United States of which the purpose is to obtain the loan of five hundred million dollars. The government of the United States on its part makes a gift of tens of millions of dollars (fifty million is, I think, the latest figure) precisely *to favor immigration to it.* This, no doubt, is in order that rations may get shorter and that the pot may boil a bit more.

But in so doing, do not people in Washington and in the state of New York in particular see *that what is being prepared is explosion and war?*

As a result of this, the prospects for Lebanon and for the other neighbors of Israel are very dark. Everyone should know this: Israel, where there is hardly enough to eat one's fill, where rationing is stricter than in England and prices much higher, and where, in spite of the flood of dollars that are granted by America, money is in a grave state of deterioration, *Israel with its policy of immigration is leaving itself open to the worst,*

voluntarily and cheerfully, in order at all costs to have a large population. It thereby discloses the extent of its purposes and makes new acts of aggression inevitable.

Where is Balfour's national home, subordinated to respect for the rights of others? Where are the peaceful scenes of the family around the fireside of which the Bible speaks?

It is now a country at arms that is holding us in suspense, a country whose armaments get bigger every day. The women are mobilized there. They have plans for the future that breathe the spirit of violence and conquest; ambitions there are being unleashed which are linked with the far-off days of David and Salomon. There are fifteen million men who are among the most powerful in politics and finance and who keep this sacred fire—or blaze—going in most of the countries of the world; there are already two million Jews in Soviet Russia; there are four million in the state of New York, which is the most powerful state under the star-spangled banner and in which, when it comes to elections, success depends on them.

Immigration into Israel, encouraged by the blind indulgence of the nations, is the highroad to catastrophe; here we have one of the least known but most formidable factors, among so many others, which may lead to world war.

Now that it has been launched, Israel would resign itself to the cataclysm in order to be sure of its own salvation. We would not go so far as to say that it is calculating on it, but the thought gives us cause for the deepest concern. At any rate, this is how its way of acting can be interpreted. Among numerous passages, it is enough to read carefully, in order to be sure of all this, the first fifty or sixty pages of the Government Year Book of Israel for 1950, which is an official document, and to confront them with the facts. It is not the least apocalyptic aspect of Israel's venture. Here is a sample:

"The Jewish nation is not only a political and national unit—it had been the embodiment of moral will and historical vision right from the time it appeared on the stage of history.

"It is not possible to understand the history of the Jews, their struggle for existence or the attitude they have adopted at all times and in all countries, both when they were a nation with roots in their own territory and more or less autonomous as well as when they were a wandering race dispersed in exile, *unless we perceive the ideological unity of the people in its persistent struggle.* The struggle is not merely an economic, political and military one. It is also spiritual, moral and intellectual. *The Jewish people have been fighting this battle since the most remote time, without ceasing, and it will so continue until the end of time, until the vision is fulfilled.*"

This passage, which gives only a poor idea of the whole, is taken from a lecture by Mr. Ben Gurion on education in the army and among the people to the General Staff and superior officers of the "Israel Defense Army." The extracts from this lecture, which cover 35 tightly-packed pages, come at the beginning of the Government Year Book. Every Lebanese politician, not to say all Lebanese, should know them.

Hence as regards Israel, Lebanon's future is dark and all fears are well-founded, in peace as in war. Unless we here and those who guide the world's destiny acquire a deeper knowledge of the problem, everyone's fears, even the most serious, may prove correct. There is an unknown factor here of which prophets perhaps possess the secret.

We must now widen our vistas to take in the Mediterranean scene.

Lebanon in the Mediterranean World

Lebanon, a small maritime republic with a coastline of two hundred kilometers and an average width of only fifty, is in its element under the heading "Mediterranean."

But according as Westerners locate it in the Near East or the Middle East, they consider it Mediterranean or on the contrary, by a kind of violent twist to things, they cut it off intellectually and socially from that sea. For the incorrect definition of the Middle East now current implicitly destroys the balance of the Mediterranean world. It arbitrarily removes Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the other countries of Eastern Mediterranean from the climate of their mother-sea so as to incorporate them, against the nature of things, into that of the Indian Ocean. There is grievous error here, the result of which directly concern politics and civilization, seeing that it stupidly subordinates Mediterranean politics and civilization to the altogether relative convenience of a strategy which has other duties and, no doubt, other outlets.

Along with the Near East as a whole, Lebanon belongs first and foremost to the Mediterranean, whereas the Middle East, in the proper sense of the term, belongs primarily to the world of the Indian Ocean. We now have the seas delimiting continental regions.

To illustrate our point, let us here repeat something which we put forward so often elsewhere: *in a general way, the Near East takes its bearings at the windows it has on the Mediterranean; the Middle East, at the windows it has on the Indian Ocean; the Far East, at the windows on the Pacific.* These are openings whose dimensions are always growing, but which disclose landscapes and customs differing from each other.

The Near East has the peculiarity of being African, Asian and European together; geographically and historically it goes from Egypt to Greece, whereas the Middle East and the Far East are exclusively Asian. Putting the problem in this way clarifies it sufficiently.

Arabs are to be found from the Atlantic to the Shatt-al-Arab; *there are no more after this*, just as there are Europeans to be found as far as Turkey. The Turks are part of the parliament of Europe at Strasbourg. How would they feel at ease if they were confined solely to the Middle East? The Persians, whose territory also reaches the Caucasus, have hardly seen the Mediterranean again since the time of Darius.

To come back to ourselves, the Lebanese, our future in the Mediterranean sphere is primarily a result of the past. In the first days of history the Mediterranean belonged to the sea-going Phoenicians, and, as to the more recent text, we can refer in this matter to the impressive preface written by Mr. Ibrahim Abdul-AI to the important book by Fathers Poidebard and Mouterde and Mr. Lauffray on the port of Sidon and on the ancient ports of the Eastern Mediterranean.

At the present moment, the future of which we speak can be inferred from Mediterranean solidarity since speed has reduced the dimensions of that sea to so little. It is no longer possible to divide up the Mediterranean into compartments, as they used to do in the past, without the people who live around its shores being the losers. It is no longer possible to do this without brutality. There are whole civilizations which owe their origins to their Mediterranean climate and which are at this moment seen to be exposed to the same dangers.

Egypt, Syria and ourselves must, *within the framework of the Arab League*, together defend our Mediterranean character; if not, we shall be plunged into chaos and pushed back into darkness. These resounding words are not an exaggerated way of describing the impoverishment that would overtake us and the political downgrading which we would come in for. *In the Near East we represent half of the area that bears this name, and whose ancient history is the most memorable in the world.* In the Middle East, we no longer count for anything and our defense is now only the defense of occasional interests. We invite everyone to study this matter carefully.

From this point on, Lebanon's future becomes broader and clearer. Our mission in the historical world meets up with our mission in the geographical setting. It becomes a question of self-realization and of duty in the spiritual and intellectual order—of preserving and defending a heritage several thousand years old against the forces of disintegration and death.

Our calling to universalism begins with the Mediterranean, from the time that the Mediterranean was the world. Now that it is no longer but a lake and that one can go from Europe to Africa in an hour, there is a decisive reason for not tearing it in two, either from north to south or from East to West. *Without this vital link neither greatness nor life are possible for the Arab countries. We cannot place it in jeopardy without becoming the slaves of other slaves.* For the world is shrinking at a giddy pace. A day and a half would at the moment be enough to go round the world at the latitude of the Mediterranean.

Rather than looking in the direction of Indonesia (which, for Lebanon, would be like looking towards the Philippines, for some strange reason, rather than looking in the direction of Spain), let us find in the Mediterranean those complementary forces which, with the co-operation of the great Western powers, will save the civilizations founded by the monotheistic religions. Lebanon would appear to be the ideal meeting-place for this purpose, *provided that we give mind every chance to develop there.*

In our Mediterranean setting and in our service of Mediterranean civilizations, the future offers us almost unlimited possibilities if we get organized and persevere in the effort.

The time is coming when we will go to the big cities of Europe and people will come from them, as we go to the cities of Syria when Syria is so kind as to welcome us.

Lebanon in the World

There remains our presence in the world.

It is our profession to be constantly on the move, to finish going round the world only to start again and finally to settle in some distant land.

Travelling and emigration give rise to, or maintain, Lebanese activity in all climes. There is no country in which a Lebanese person has not settled; and this is as old as history. But the future is going to commit us to travel even more. We could not limit our undertaking to our territory which is so small and narrow without suffocating.

If the Phoenicians used to travel for months on end to find an entrepot that had lost, or to reach a hospitable shore, their present-day descendants are admirably provided for by the speed-up in means of transport. When

people think of limiting the number of cars in Lebanon, it is like slowing down the circulation of the blood here. A people which, without raw materials and industry, succeeds in such a marvelous way in keeping up and raising its standard of living must not be thwarted, in spite of the occasional bottleneck, by the would-be foresight of governments. Without cars, ships and planes this nation would be like a legless cripple still moving around on his hands over incredible distances.

More than ever, the future for the Lebanese will involve much travel. Without being stupid, we cannot forcibly prevent our people from leaving. If we did, we would thereby cause misery and give rise to disorder; but our duty, given their prodigious eclecticism and the elusive changes which they undergo, is to facilitate *work in all its forms* in this country. This is elementary logic. *The state must accept the inevitable. It will have to give up a conformist economic and financial policy, and courageously go to the utmost limits of liberalism; or else, out of predilection for what it calls principles, it will itself become responsible for increasing emigration and all its tragic consequences. The ideal would be to let the Lebanese travel as they wish, while at the same time making a country suited to their nature, a country that would encourage them not to leave, and, at all events, to come back.*

A people which draws seven eighths of its resources from abroad can by no means be committed to a closed economic policy—to a protectionist and inquisitorial policy—without being suffocated. *Restrictive laws* must be reduced to practically nothing in this country. The size of this country makes this possible, as does the favorable fact that it is industrialized only to such a small extent. *The Lebanese are not made for working at mass-production; it is not in their temperament, nor does their genius lie in it. What we have here is diversity, helped out by ingenuity—the redeeming feature.*

It is to be recommended that our apples be always of the same quality, and that this quality be fine; less recommendable is it that the Lebanese finish up in a factory and become stultified by repeating the same movements behind machines. *That is the work of a robot;* it is not our task and there will never be any future for us in that line.

So just as every person has his bent or his calling, all peoples have their own path to follow. For us, a mediocre and unvaried life would always lack light and attraction. *The best educational method for us would be to discover individual aptitudes and gifts and to get them to develop as fully as possible. It would be a serious mistake to think that there are such things as uniform economic or social laws throughout the whole world.* Every brain has its ideas, and the bodily life of every person is determined by whether he can remain fixed or can move around. The indefinite repetition of the same movement may be all right for the western worker employed in mechanical industry; an element of risk, together with novelty, adventure and travel is unavoidably necessary for the Lebanese. Statistics would be the most unpleasant of the sciences in this country. I say this with most sincere esteem for statisticians and their rules, and I know some astonishingly gifted and learned ones in the republic. But someone may ask: how would one start taking a serious census here, in this country where people with one occupation only are becoming scarce, where variety and ubiquity are the rule, and where perhaps all the Lebanese present in this hall have, as I myself have, three or four regular occupations quite different from each other?

We must exercise all our ingenuity in tracking down individual vocations instead of thwarting and bullying them; we then have to find scope for them; lastly, and at all events, we have to raise the morale of the Lebanese to a certain level of enthusiasm. The worst possible government we could have in this country

would be one that would make pessimists out of this people. That is the basic guidance to give people—the one which, from the point of view of statistics, justifies the first and most enthusiastic efforts.

Shall I recall the definition of Lebanon which, as a humorist of sorts, I once gave: *a country of generals without any troops, I said. What kind of response would you get if you asked a bunch of generals to do fatigues?*

Lebanon's future is only opening up. The important thing, the urgent thing, is to give this people, as circumstances require, a wide range of practical knowledge together with general ideas—an education, a philosophy and an ethic of the highest degree, and to let them move around almost as the whim takes them, *precisely in order that they may make their own way in life.*

The policy that suits us, and the economic system we need are based upon freedom—freedom in all its legitimate and orderly forms. Because of this, we are inevitably in conflict with totalitarianism of whatever kind it may be. We are the very homeland of free enterprise, and we are the friends of those who support it wherever they may be. In these terms, Lebanon will fulfill its mission (because it has got one), either with regard to itself, the countries of the Arab League, the peoples of the Mediterranean, or finally with regard to what, with and without the United Nations, international duty makes possible in the world.

A small country, to be sure; a very small country; a small nation, perhaps, but certainly not a small people.