

interested in adhering to the agreement -- an Israeli letter dated the same day as the agreement attached conditions that Lebanon found impossible to fulfil, such as the withdrawal of Syrian troops and the restitution of the bodies of Israeli soldiers killed in Syria.¹⁹

The second set of reconciliation meetings, the Lausanne talks, focussed on reforms, and in particular on the question of identity and the "Arabness" of Lebanon: the nature of its heritage, its place in the region, and the character of its political orientation with respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the importance of liberating South Lebanon from Israeli occupation. The talks resulted in the formation of a government of National Unity, which incorporated such militia leaders as Nabih Berri and Walid Joumblatt.

As in all such dialogue, however, there was a gap between rhetoric and practice. The Muslim and left-wing leaders, for example, preached deconfessionalization, but really wanted to turn the system to their advantage. They engaged in "sectarian killings" and the creation of sectarian enclaves. In practice, these "secular" groups were as sectarian as the Christians. The Phalange saw no contradiction between its professed respect for the Arab nature of Lebanon and its maintenance of a military and political relationship with Israel. With the withdrawal of American forces, the Lausanne conference reflected the military ascendancy of Syria, and the growing strength of the Shi'ite community. Gemayel's government however, maintained ties to the SLA and Israel. Notwithstanding the professed concern for the situation in South Lebanon, both the Druze and the Shi'ites emerged empty-handed from the negotiations.

In February 1985, Christian Lebanese Forces clashed with the Druze PSP, and with Palestinian and Shi'ite militias in Sidon. Later in 1985, tensions between Amal and the PSP erupted into prolonged and intermittent fighting, and regional tensions between Yasser Arafat and Syria resulted in the "War of the Camps." The Amal-PSP fighting finally ended with the intervention of Syria and the signing of the Damascus Tripartite

¹⁹Khatchig Babikian, "La crise libanaise de 1982 à 1989," prepared for CIIPS workshop.