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Les Phalanges Libanaises: Identity Construction and Perception of Self and Other

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study the identity construction of the Lebanese Phalange Party, postulating that its view of the Other is deeply entrenched within its own development. Strongly regarded as a model of Fascist thought and action, the Phalange, as a popular manifestation of Maronite nationalist thought, Lebanonism, seems to be destined for eternal clash with a similarly endless Other, but this latter is not formulated on religious basis only: the conceptual idea behind the other remains the same throughout the Kataeb’s history of conflict, but its face changes as the nature of the threat to the Phalange’s political and economic interest changes. The Myth of the one, static Muslim Other, is thus challenged and deconstructed; and taking into consideration the traditional political and economic features of Lebanese society, their interplay with the state’s institutions, and the Phalange’s role as a tool of mobilisation, a more complex interpretation of the construction of the self and Other is presented.

Introduction

Of the parties to the Lebanese Civil War, the Phalanges Libanaises have been labelled the most organised, disciplined and effective element of the Christian preservative Front, if not both fronts
of the War. They have similarly gained a controversial fascist reputation for their espoused ideology. Indeed the party’s identity is one closely linked with a reactionary notion of preservation, and as the manifestation of Maronite National discourse possessing a minority complex the Phalange has the tendency to define itself in opposition to the Other. By that I mean to stress that it espouses an ideology that is itself more conscious of the other compared to similar nationalist thought: certainly any nationalist notion, by setting out its own characteristic excludes that of Others, but the ratio of emphasis is in favour of expressing the basis on which it (nationalist thought/notion) has a legitimate right to an independent nation: common language, common land, historical incident or narrative, literature, military greatness etc. That, for instance, is the case with French or Arab Nationalism. By contrast, the greater part of Maronite Nationalist discourse (Lebanonism), on which the Phalange is based, is far more concerned with the ‘Other’. In many ways in fact, it could be argued that the Phalange was created as a reaction to one or more Other.

But this Other is not, as I wish to argue, a static one based on the traditional religious discourse, but rather one that is more dynamic, and viewed with the lens of political and economic interests and objectives. As a party, the Phalange does not espouse a different or innovative ideology: it
rather plays and intermediary role between intellectual nationalist thought promoting Lebanonism, and the popular masses. As a tool of mobilisation it is therefore targeted by its leaders against the Other, who varies with the variation to the threat imposed on Lebanonism, be that its religious, economic or political features.

**Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

The research relies both on primary and secondary sources, with more weight awarded to the latter. The academic writing about the Phalange’s history, Maronite identity construction and the civil war, serve as a pool of knowledge and material that allows an interdisciplinary reading into the Phalange’s perception of its self, and more importantly, the Other. It is important to note that the research is not based on a philosophical framework, nor will it go about explaining events through different philosophical theories about the Other. The Philosophical concepts are only used in as much as they further clarify and explain the position the Phalange takes when it thinks, writes about, or interacts with the Other. The philosophers referred to are Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, with particular emphasis on the theory of Phenomenology.

The final part of the paper presents both content and discourse analysis of firstly the writings of
Pierre Gemayel, founder and Chief Advisor of the Phalanges Party, and secondly his son Bashir’s speeches and interviews in the build up to his election as president (1 January 1982 – 23 July 1982), which should provide corroborating support to the interpretation presented. Reference to other primary sources such as Kataeb and LF anthems, and posters circulated during the civil war, will be embedded within the text to further show how the Kataeb viewed and interacted with the Other.

**Phalange Identity Creation**

The beginning of Maronite Nationalist imaginary may be traced back to clergy writing of the 17th and 18th century, which was further developed during the following century, now by both clergy and laity (Entelis 75). The basic tenets to this thought is Lebanon's iconic image as a "place of refuge" particularly for Christian minorities from the Muslim majority of the Muslim, and particularly Ottoman empire (Entelis 32). With such a "persecutionist mentality" (Entelis 32), it is perfectly rational to expect that Maronite nationalism would espouse the maintenance and preservation of the Maronite community and define the nation (a conventionally secular notion) along such religious lines. Indeed since the 1840s, the Maronite clergy "taught that the idea of Lebanonism was tied to Christianity" (Suleiman 180). According to Istifan Duwayhi
"community's history is a continuous struggle to maintain national and religious identity in a dominant Muslim environment". It was also during the 1800s when intellectual nationalist discourse began to develop from a strictly "Mountain" theory to one that saw the nation in terms of living "within a broader political framework established and maintained by elite families" (Hourani 36). Certainly one cannot say that the Maronite community was not particularly unified and espoused only one view of life, but there was a certain "homogeneity" (Aulas 1) particular to it. The fact that the entre Maronite community was positioned in one place has allowed them to become more self conscious. The compact living has seen them share land, history, and obviously religion which is the basis to their identity (Entelis 34).

Eventually however, the idea was remodeled around populist leadership, and eventually, from 1920 and the Establishment of L' État du Grand Liban, it as the "expression of the interests of the commercial cities where men must meet in peace to do business" that tuned political development to an interconfessional dynamic (Hourani 36). It is this complex notion that the Kataeb has adopted ever since its inception: an inherent contradiction strongly present in its nascent formulation. The party promotes what is referred to as a "secular interconfessional Lebanonism, albeit with strongly Maronite roots" (Entelis 34).
It is the populist representation of the ideologies of the mountain, of a minority and its view of the state, its motto is God, Fatherland and the family (a strong religious proclamation if ever there was), its chief ideologue has elaborated six similarities between the Phalange and religion in terms of their principles and teachings and it harbours strong relations albeit "personal" with Maronite Clergy" (Hottinger 138). And yet there is a constant attempt to emphasise the secular element. In fact the six similarities were explained to show little the party was basing its belief-system on religion, and rather on secular notions of citizenship. Despite this "supranational" discourse of Lebanonism, it is "apparent that Maronite nationalism was their prime motive and concern" (Kaufmann 181).

The absence of the party's (or the youth movement when it was first created) idiosyncratic ideology is not a sign of precariousness: through its creation the Kataeb "reaffirms the political aspirations of the Maronite community" in terms of pursuing independence from France and rejecting attempts to intensify the "Arab character" of Lebanon (Aulas 16). One would not be exaggerating in saying that the youth movement was in fact created as a reaction to the threat of the Other, the latter being two in the 1930s: the French colonial power, Syrian nationalism as expressed by Antun Sa'adeh's SSNP and Arab nationalism that was
"manifesting itself in the late 1930s and early 1940s" (Entelis 21). Though once useful to the Maronite community, French presence had long outlasted its appeal and utility and through this first interaction we begin to see the pragmatic and politically expedient conditions upon which the Phalange views and constructs the Other i.e. its use to the preservation of the state with its confessional politics and current power relations that favour Maronite hegemony, and the state's independence from colonial power or threats of accession or incorporation into a bigger entity. Once French colonialism was hampering the elite's political interest, France became the other, and the Phalange was one of the principal actors calling for independence and the creation of the 1943 National pact. In this latter it had conceded to Lebanon having an "Arab Face" but rejected that Lebanese national interest be subordinated to greater Arab interests (Suleiman 246). The threat of being absorbed into the predominantly Muslim Syria was a recurrent fear of the Maronite community. Though both Syrian and Arab nationalist are secular notions, they threatened the "Lebanese homeland as a sovereign and independent state", an idea that they self-appointed to "foster and safeguard". The extent of the danger they felt to be presented by the Other was also expressed during the events of the 1958 civil war, which they called "a war of survival" that could determine "whether or not
Lebanon would cease to exist as a separate entity" (Suleiman 235).

This secular view of the Other does not diminish the fact that Arabism for instance was connected to Islam, at least in Phalangist world view (Entelis 80). Karim Pakradouni, an experienced and intellectual Kataeb leader, has professed that in many ways "Lebanese interests coincide with Maronites: one might say that Christians are more Lebanese and Muslims are more Arabs" (Pakradouni qtd. in Entelis 80). It is the same man that also once said that the Phalange, as a populist party, had a "well determined mass", hinting perhaps to a religiously based Maronite following.

In creating the Phalange first as a youth movement as a defender of the state against the threat of the Others, the Phalange declared its intent to help strengthen the state. What is perhaps unusual is its self appointed duties and objectives which see it act almost like the state and the government, a strong emphasis on identity as a "super vigilante" (Stoakes), that, would "take action, meet all the demonstrations with bigger demonstrations, strikes with more extensive strikes, toughness with toughness, and force with force" should the state fail to do so (Pierre Gemayel quoted in Stoakes 222). The Kataeb, in its own identity construction, sees itself as a state tool of propaganda and
indoctrination when it comes to "fostering public devotion to [the state]" (Stoakes 223), and at times, the state's replacement. The important implication of this is that it allows itself unconditioned responsibility, and more importantly, the right, to confront the Other.

**Political Entrance**

With the French Mandate era, the Phalange's own mandate as a force of liberation expire, and yet the Other is still present in the two competing forms of nationalism. Considering itself, as abovementioned, to be entitled to challenge the Other and keep him in check was of the reasons behind the transformation of the youth movement into a fully operating political party. Other reasons included of course greater outlets for mass indoctrination and mobilisation, as well as to gain more political power *vis-à-vis* other national political forces (Entelis 61). The emphasis however is on how even the country's own ideology and identity is transformed as a result of the activities of the other. The move to stress the individual in its ideological writing was to oppose the socialist notions of SSNP and other Leftist parties that evaluated a person's worth on the group or society to which it belongs (Entelis 72).

The realities of the political process allowed the Phalange's inherent contradictions to rise to the
surface, as the seemingly espoused secular notion came to clash with the incompatible "traditional and entrenched values of society, such as communal belongings" which rendered the party, a product of both "Christian and Maronite" thought (Jean Sharaf, Kataeb Official quoted in Lebanese Forces Documentary).

Phoenicianism

As a product of Maronite elite thought, Phoenicianism certainly found its way into Phalangist popular discourse, albeit much diluted to accommodate the complex thought of Michel Chiha and others associated with the party. The effect of the Phoenician notion and the extent of its dissemination to the masses are difficult to measure, though one can see how it can be used as a tool of indoctrination of identity and opposition to the Other. Espousing that Lebanon had both an irreducible geographic reality whose "true" borders were restored in the 1920, as well as a historical reality in terms of civilising mission, serve to legitimize Maronite nationalism (for they are the people of that geographic land), and distance it from the Arab world by presenting a continuity of Non-Arab heritage.

A Levantine Model of Fascism

That the Phalange holds some fascist elements to its identity is undeniable: the name is one clear
manifestation. Following the precedence of other youth movements created in the Arab world in the 1930s and 1940s, the Phalange was created by Pierre Gemayel and four other Christians after Gemayel’s return from the 1932 World Cup held in Germany. From this experience he was inspired to model his youth movement around the Nazi party, whose discipline, strength, organisation and “self confidence” were amongst its many attributes (Entelis 44). Yet the Phalange cannot be considered an identical replica of the Nazi, or even of the Spanish Phalanges and the Italian Fascist Party. Its leaders exhibited no absorption of extreme and xenophobic Nazi ideology, and seem to have concerned themselves with the physical characteristics rather than racial supremacist notion. The Phalange was thus a "nationalist youth movement devoted more to athletic training for the purpose of combat than to political power per se", the Kataeb's early organizational structure, like the Nazi, was based on the militia, and a women's auxiliary constituted a separate although closely affiliated thirteenth department of the Maslahah (Entelis 22). It seems then that the only possible similarities were one of a superficial nation (Entelis 44): the Phalange modeled the form but not the substantive thought. Its substantive element was instead the product of local conditions and local Others.

The Other in the Eyes of the Phalange
This distinction made above between the Phalange and Nazi Party for instance, is important if we are to understand the extremity to which the Phalange denotes its view and interaction with the Other. Although in constant and endless confrontation with it, the Phalange never took a pledge to exterminate the Other, not only for their sheer numbers, but the lack of political and economic wisdom that would mean.

**Philosophical Interpretation**

The Concept of the Other and the act of "Othering" are essentially sociological and anthropological notions that are based to a large extent on perception. Their importance lies in their consequences, what an individual or a group's view of the other may entail in terms of hierarchy and power relations. Foucault finds a strong connection between othering, and "power and knowledge", for when we “other” another group, we point out their perceived weaknesses to make ourselves look stronger or better (Engelund). It implies a hierarchy, and it serves to keep power where it already lies. Anthropologically, the Phalange may view its Other as a fossil or savage other (Sarukkai 1406), albeit in a diluted way to that of colonialism for instance. The Other, be it a Syrian or Arab Nationalist, belongs more to the East and is less advanced than the Western-oriented, Lebanon of.
the Phoenician civilisation. The Other also carries with him the remnants of a decaying political and social system, namely the Ottoman Empire. But the Phalange is not entirely dismissive and reductionist in its view of the Other. Similarly a Sartrean master-slave conflict also presupposes that something exists which in scarcity must be shared. In Phalange interaction with the Other we do not see domination or modeling of this master-slave conflict. But the contradiction herein again lies in the dual concepts the Phalange tries to espouse, one of difference and equality. The Maronite is clearly different from if not in certain ways superior to the non-Maronites, particularly Arab. The Current political system allows for their hegemony. To preach secularization and equality of sects is impossible, seeing that the act of distinguishing between the self and the other establishes a hierarchy and a form of legitimacy for the status quo.

The theory of phenomenology stipulates that whatever we experience or understand is bound by our subjective presence and perception, which takes away any agency from the other. By Contrast, Emmanuel Levinas, and later Derrida, claim that the Other is in and of itself a reality which can never be fully comprehended and provokes the subject’s thought (Reynolds 65). The Phalange’s perception lies somewhere in between: the Party certainly views the other in
terms of its effect on itself, and defines it as that which may threaten its own identity, but as Merleau-Ponty says in defense of Phenomenology, when one creates the Other from one’s own thought, the process is reversible, meaning that “the other must similarly borrow themselves from me, create me with their thoughts” (Reynolds 65), and we certainly see the Phalange transforming certain ideologies or its form in order to adapt to the Other. The Other is not deprived of agency, but on the other hand it is tangible and known. More importantly the Phalange recognises this existence and its integral role in society, and for the most part chooses to accommodate, within limits, this Other, and accept a political solution that sees them working together for the state cycle to turn.

The Other to whom this perception applies is the Sunni Muslim Other of the Lebanese state. Certainly the Phalange seems to “tolerate him; but in fact [it] did not tolerate him as much as ignored him. And he could ignore him as long as this Muslim did not threaten to challenge” Maronite hegemony (Khalaf 46). In light of what Merleau-Ponty said about the Other creating the self, it is possible that the non-threatening existence of the Muslim

Within and without Lebanon was important for the Maronite/Phalangist self-identification at a religious, cultural and social level: the rival
The minaret emphasized the importance of the belfry; the bells answered the Allah Akbar; the defeat of the Arab armies at the hand of Israel strengthened his identification with the West; the mediocrity of governmental and Makassed schools enhanced the superiority of his own religious educational system; the Muslim slum areas contrasted against his neat and comfortable petit bourgeois world.” (Tewfik 46).

**Characteristics of Perception**

In times of peace the Phalange continues to promote its interconfessional notions of unity and cooperation and has expanded its party work across the country and throughout various regions. Perhaps one such evidence for this is the fact that it is not entirely Maronite exclusionary: there are around 6% Shiites, 2% Jew, 1% Druze and 1% Sunni Muslims and 10% (Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Protestant, Armenian Catholic, etc.) among 80% Maronite domination (Entelis 21). This recognition of Lebanese plurality and the need to work with the Other is an economic and political decision, suggesting that there is more to the Phalange's formulation of the other than simply religious lines.

The other is neither dehumanised nor demonised, particularly throughout the Party’s mobilisation tools, such as its anthems. Analysing 22 anthems of the Phalanges Libanaises, the preponderance of the content is more interested in highlighting the members’ identity, particularly that of the
Mountain, with strong lyrical descriptions of the mountain villages. It reaffirms its connection to the notions of duty, work and hope. The Kataeb proudly site the Lebanese anthem at the top of the Party’s list (although not written by a party member) which again serves to highlight the unbreakable link between the State and the Phalanges’ raison d’être. The Christian element is also visible with references to the Virgin Mary and metaphors of wine. Yet in all of it, little reference is made to the other: only once were each of the following words found in the 22 anthems lyrics (foreigner, enemy, treachery, thief, and intruder) and those were only included during the anthems pronounced during the more extreme events of the civil war. The enemy is never defined nor named, and the anthems are genuinely non-vocal of the enemy or even the Other at large (see Appendix 2).

As much as its ideological discourse is based on Maronite national thought (to a significant extent viewing the Muslim as the Other), and as much as its Fascist basis sees the Other in terms of Anti-Lebanese Nationalism (Arab and Syrian Nationalism), the Other is also sometimes the Left, as a force of reform threatening the political institutions of the state that have preserved the Maronite economic interests. The Phalange is also a political tool of the elite and the state and is finely embedded into the establishment: government ministers post 1958 have almost
always included a Phalangist, the party's militia are acting as parallels to state apparatus - they were sent along with the police to disperse a strike held in the AUB in 1972 (Traboulsi 170-172), and its leaders are "occupationally strictly bourgeois men of the establishment the majority of whom are over the age of 50" (Entelis 121). In fact during the Civil War, the "Phalange, opposed to any kind of reform, was repeating, in a situation of crisis, its function as defender of narrow sectarian privileges in the service of the big class interest" (Traboulsi 176). An amalgam of these conditions comes together when the Muslim is himself the Arab and the force of Leftist reform. Even without such a situation unfolding, the Phalange already views the Other through such complex construction: Arab Nationalism they consider to be deeply attached to Islam, and the Left to be, not "simple symptom of social injustice but represents a conspiracy and a fifth column, particularly on the part of Lebanon's Arab enemies (Stoakes 218). The substance of the Other is thus static, for it does not go out of these described borders, but its face and form are dynamic, changing with the nature of the threat to the Phalange identity and self.

The view of the Other is sometimes not a whole community's, but nuanced with the perception of one man in power. Such leaders seeking political ambition, can alter the view of the Other to include competition even of the same sect and
eliminate them, perhaps even more cruelly than the communal Other, as was the case with Bashir's elimination of leaders of militias who could have competed with him for the support and loyalty of the Christian and particularly Maronite community: in late 1976, those of Raymond Edde, in Jubayl; in 1978, those of Sulayman Franjiyah, in Zgharta; and in 1980, those of Camille Chamoun, in Safra (Aulas 21).

**Civil War Episode**

Although still conscious of the Other and follow the same dynamics mentioned above, the civil war events introduce certain factors that result in great contradictions: at some points the Phalange's perception and interaction with the other is radicalised to its extremes, at others it seems to be rendered to complete breakdown of what we expect the Phalange to view the other as, albeit only temporarily. These factors are briefly the need to prioritise, the various degrees of threat (proximal and distant, eminent and far removed), which leads to the third: desperate times that call for desperate measures.

The Phalange found itself, as the voice and protector of the Maronite community, the force of preservation of the and the establishment to which it is had become strongly a part of, surrounded by several Others, growing in danger and threat, and likely inviting more Others to interfere in the status quo. There was the "spectre
of the secular state that would suppress Maronite supremacy" (Aulas 18) as espoused by the Progressive Party and others calling for reform; there was the evidently increasing number of Palestinian population and Rogue PLO commandos with little respect for Lebanese sovereignty and state decisions, and further threatening of a potential Israeli invasion to eliminate them; and there was thus the combined the fear that these progressives "might make [use] of Palestinian Armed militias (Aulas 18). Coupled with such were the signs of beginnings in the breakdown of communal structure amongst the young Christian students (Aulas 18). The heightened sense of threat and radicalisation of the Other is certainly clear: the Other becomes almost always the enemy, and was identified in the early stages as the Palestinians and Communism. That enemy was "the source of all evil, be it political, economic, social or otherwise (Aulas 19). The minority complex also reappears, intensified, the Al'Amal newspaper of the Phalange once saying in an issue on August 20th 1975, that "the political domination of the Maronite was the only guarantee for a minority condemned to oppression by a majority that was oppressive by its very nature as a majority" (quoted in Traboulsi 189).

But despite this radicalisation we still see traces of the view of the Other from the times of peace: the Phalange, at least in the earlier stages of the
war, were careful to maintain that the struggle was essentially between Lebanon and the PLO, which would allow the army to confront and eliminate the threat (Sirriyyeh 86). The understanding was still that the Lebanese Muslim Other was still an integral part of the state system, and to ostracize him, or categories him along with the PLO, was to contribute to the disintegration of the state. A scale of Othering thus begins to unfold, with the PLO being quite at the top, followed by communism, and again the Muslim Other is at least not publicly labelled as a threat. The Logic behind this hierarchy of Others is very compelling: it takes into consideration proximity and the extent of eminent danger. The PLO and the camps they use as their bases are within the state itself, and are consistently showing signs of indifference towards the state and aggressive behaviour towards Israel that does not make considerations for the consequences that may have on the Lebanese state. The extent of the threat the PLO imposed is reflected in words and actions of the Phalange, and by extension the LF. Palestinian presence was referred to as a "historical and dangerous turn of events"1 (Lebanese Parties Documentary) and the events of Sabra and Shatila that see the LF reach its extreme radicalisation and exterminator mentality, emphasize the extent to which the PLO were

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1 منططف تاريخي و خطر
considered an existential threat (Zisser 69). But always the Phalange viewed its behaviour as reactionary. The fault was not theirs, for they were only acting in reciprocity to protect their state: it was the Palestinians that were elaborately creating a state within a state, it was the "bus' provocative entrance" into Ein Rummaneh that justified the incident, even if there were children. (Amin Gemayel, quoted in *Lebanese Parties* Documentary).

It is therefore this huge imbalance between the various Others, and the their eminent defeat to the forces of reform coalescing with the PLO, that sees the Phalange forego its long Othering of Syria, and request, through president Sarkis (Rabil 23), that they intervene to their salvation, despite the awareness of Syria's continued interest in Lebanon. It seemed that the priority was to the survival of the Christian front, the elimination of the closer Palestinian threat, and began a precarious trend of overlooking the long-term threat of the Other for the sake of the now and here and to "help safeguard the community’s privileges and secure its political survival" (Rabil 32), and a few years later breaking with that Other and seeing it then as the main threat. The contradiction is evident in the way the Christian villages welcomed the Syrian Army with rice, and how a year later in 1977 the Phalange was to turn entirely against their presence as forces of occupation (Pakradouni quoted in *Lebanese*...
Parties Documentary). Similarly, in its relationship with Israel, the Phalange (and by now LF) leadership shows that it was political expediency, pragmatism and ambition that determined their decision to ask for Israeli intervention. The Phalange may have had few links with Israel, but it certainly did not look to Israel as a strong ally that parallels its own dilemma, but a state that was not interested in occupying and acceding Lebanon to its territories, but interested in a chance to eliminate the PLO and install a friendly regime, that of Bashir Gemayel. This myth of a special relationship is weakened when again Bashir acts in his own self interest and refuses to return the favour by signing a peace treaty with Israel (Zisser 68), for fear of the repercussions that would have on his newly installed presidency and whatever ambitions he may still have harboured.

Selected Political Posters of the Civil War

If the civil war was widely considered to be “the war of the Others”, then posters circulated during the war should prove instrumental in analysing the representation of the various Others by the Phalange. A selection of 12 such posters support the hereto explained national and patriotic identity of the phalange, the hierarchic scale of Others it has created, as well as its prudence in not demonizing or dehumanising particularly the Muslim Other.
Azab: Phalanges Libanaises

(Images from Zaina Maasri’s *Off the Wall, Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War*)

Figure 1

Figure 2

The image of Lebanon within the 1920 borders features heavily throughout the posters, as well as
the cedar icon, emblematic of both the Lebanese state and the Phalange and highlighting the inseparability of both. In a specific poster (figure 6) the Lebanese Flag and that of the Phalange are fused together, with the Phalange anthem shedding blood in a scene that reaffirms the Phalange’s self appointed role as defender and vigilante of the state. In another poster (figure 2), Martyrdom is presented through the image of a bleeding soldier defending the Lebanon as seen within the 1920s border. The Christian element appears as well, where figure 1 presents an image of a serene and peaceful Christian village where the farmers goes about with his livelihood while the white dove symbolises peace, and is associated with the church bells visible in the background. In another image, the subtlety of the Arabic language stresses the difference between the Phalangist combatant, and the Druze killer (by removing the Arabic equivalent of the letter M). The combatant is a devout and God fearing individual kneeling at the crucifix before he goes to fulfil his patriotic duty, where as the Druze killer wears traditional clothes that denote a barbaric connotation. It is also notably the only one that negatively portrays the other.
On the other hand, representation of the PLO is much more violently vocal and uncompromising. The massacre of Ein El Rummaneh, a violent
incident, is boldly portrayed as “the dawn of freedom” and the beginning of the expulsion of the enemy and the restoration of the state (Figures 9 and 12).

The presence of the Syrian Other high up the scale of Othering is similarly poignantly
portrayed. In figure 11 a Trojan horse, representing treachery and feigned friendship, enters the Lebanese state from the Syrian border. The Trojan horse lets through hoards of tribes on horses, implying barbarity and inferiority, while the label is of the ADF, condemning Arab conspiracy with the Syrian. The only regions or villages labelled are those of Phalange strong holds (Zahleh, Ein Rummaneh, and Ashraffiyyeh) and reaffirm the Phalange perception of the self as the only defendant and saviour of the state. Figure three similarly portrays a Kataeb-led Lebanon expel a tank (presumably Syrian) from Lebanon. Perhaps the most symbolic poster representation is that of a Phalange body carrying on its back the “Lebanese Case” shaped in the borders of 1920 Grand Liban and racing with a torch titled “liberation”, crushing as it does so hoards of retarded enemy Arabic tribes and camels. The Phalange body has one eye (a pun on the name of Ein El Rummaneh where the war erupted and which the Phalange perceive as the beginning of their patriotic struggle), an eye which a caption describes to be always awake when all others are sleeping, conveying a notion of an ever vigilant eye protecting the nation (see figure 4).
Figure 11

Figure 4
Phalango-Israeli Relations: The Myth of the Favoured Other

It is a common misconception that Israel and the Phalange have been favourite allies, particularly during the civil war. Due to their identical predicament - representing minorities surrounded by the threat of Muslim majorities and Western support- the two political representatives of the community were bound to cooperate closely, particularly on issues of security. There is a consensus that in the nascent stages after the breakdown of the Ottoman empire and the creation of the Lebanese state, there were flirtations between the Jewish Yishuv and Maronite community as to potential relations (Zisser 890). There is also strong archival evidence that that Zionist movement "for its part, for many years nursed the dream of a Zionist–
Maronite alliance (there were even those who went so far as to speak of a Canaanite–Phoenician alliance)" (Zisser 400). A discovered set of email correspondence between David Ben-Gurion and Sharrett during the former's voluntary exile, in which he expressed how were captivated [he was] by the dream of establishing a Western and pro-Israeli regime in Lebanon" (Zisser 400). There was also at the same time, some Israeli leaders entertained the idea of promoting a political reversal in Lebanon that would lead to the establishment of an Israeli–Maronite alliance. The events unfolded differently however: Ben Gurion never advanced his dream, probably for reasons of political pragmatism, and the "Israeli leadership refrained from becoming involved in Lebanon’s affairs" (Zisser 400). There is many a reason for such a position. Firstly, the correspondence was always with individuals from the Maronite community whose power base was gradually weakening and who had no longer expressed the majority's views (Zisser 891). Secondly, the Israeli leadership always considered the Maronites to be "were too small and weak a community for this fellow-feeling to have much consequence", and that although "the Israelis were not averse to a Phalangist takeover in Lebanon; they were, however, dubious as to its Prospects" (Rabinovic, quoted in Khashan 322). The same notion was expressed a few decades later when during a meeting between Franjieh, Phalange and the Israelis the latter expressed
their unwillingness to be involved in the ongoing turmoil (Traboulsi 196). Finally, there was never any formal "orderly and binding pattern of negotiations between Israelis and Maronites in the early years after the establishment of the State of Israel" (Zisser 800) that could be used for a narrative where the Maronites considered the Israelis the Other closest to their self.

There is in fact very little evidence that the Phalange even saw their identity to parallel that of Israel or that the latter had any claim of legitimacy for Palestine. The party has consistently argued that [Palestine was an indivisible Arab country, and denounced the related UN resolution (Entelis 249). Similarly, they point out to having lived in Lebanon since time immemorial and own the land where as the Jewish state was created out of a Diaspora (Entelis 249). Maronite politicians, including Pierre Gemayel, "adopted an anti-Israeli stand, at least for public consumption" (Zisser 897). The Myth that Phalango-Israeli relations were not just based on practical politics and restricted to money, arming and training only during the civil war, but that the relation is built on a strong sense of similarity and mutual security needs, therefore does not logically follow.

The only documented encounters between Israeli officials and the Phalange have been devaluated for their lack of significance and corroborating
evidence. Studying Archival material from the Israeli Foreign Ministry, both Benny Morris and Elias Zisser discover that the only two correspondences linking the Phalange were through indirect channels and it is highly likely that the representatives were acting on their own, without orders from Phalange leadership. The first was a report about an envoy of Archbishop Mubarak of Beirut in the 1940s who claimed that he spoke on behalf of the Phalange in addition to the Archbishop when he expressed Maronite interest in taking over the state. Not only were the envoy's links to the Phalange verified, but neither was his link to the Archbishop. The second report was on Elias Rababi, the writer of the Phalange AlAmal party. Again he strongly espoused certain requests and demands which, according to him were Gemayel's, but which were never verified, and more importantly, Rababi's narrative was in contradiction to the events on the ground in Lebanon, of Phalange statements and publications, and it is likely that he communicated on his own endeavour, and similarly also benefit solely from the limited funs he'd demand from the Israeli Officials (Zisser/Morris).

The Party as a Za’im: Economic Interpretation

If the extremity of the situation and the ostracization of the Other had reached such
levels, then a legitimate question would be as to why the Phalange, as the leader of the Christian Front, did not pursue secession and the creation of a small isolated Maronite state. The answer again lies in the understanding of the economic role the Phalange played, not truly as a party, but as a Za’im, a representative of Maronite commercial elites, and serving as a tool of the establishment.

Hottinger's definition of a Za’im is one who,

in peacetime is the recognized leader of a community who has the power to speak for his clients as a group or as individuals, who is expected to take action in their and in his interest whenever necessary. In peacetime he is the man to whom an individual, of a certain traditional outlook in life, will go if he has business to transact with somebody stronger than himself, and above all, with the government (Hottinger 128).

These features are certainly visible in the Phalange’s regular activities. It has played a “great role in establishing patronage client and offering services” in such a way that while they “replaced many regional and clanic notables” they nevertheless “fulfilled the same traditional function” (Khalaf 45, 47). Where they did not replace them, the Phalange “supplanted” them but on a much larger scale of organisation and efficiency suitable for its enlarged role and importance within the state establishment. Carrying out such an elaborate system was to a
large extent fuelled by the financing provided by Maronite elites in the Commerce and Finance sectors who had dominated the economic scene (Traboulsi 157) and whose interest the Phalange represented (Alami).

The Phalange, as a rather unusual model of a Za’im, therefore had many economic interests to protect, not only that of the Maronite community but particularly their Finance elites. In a report presented to the Political Bureau on July 1 1977 and published in “Beirut Evening” magazine, it was expressed that the Phalange sees detrimental economic losses if a secessionist stance should be taken for two specific reasons: the Maronite finance elites were heavily dependent on petrodollars and open market relations with the Arab and particularly Gulf countries, and funding the “petit Liban” could not rely on emigrants remittances, would still be “[in] need [of] the Arab hinterland” (Khalaf 54) and thus would be unfeasible. The report therefore concludes that instead of allowing the clash with the Other to reach its natural conclusion, the solution was elaborated in 3 steps that should (1) sustain and consolidate Phalange control over existent areas (2) sees further expansion into other regions, in order to finally (3) create a real state to weaken progressive forces (LNM) and expel the PLO. The Other, for reasons of economic interest and pragmatism, was not to be blocked out.
The Family as the Party: Qualitative Analysis

In this final section I wish to present content and discourse analysis of writing and speeches belonging to Pierre Gemayel and his son Bashir, as representative of the Phalanges (and its LF offshoot) identity and view of the other, at the risk of the analysis being prima facie considered reductionist. I believe that the nature and dynamics of the Phalanges allows the analysis of their main iconic leaders’ discourse to be a sufficiently accurate representation of the Phalanges as a whole. Firstly, a particular figure is essential for any fascist party, where the lines between the party and the man are usually blurred. The leader is the embodiment of the party's doctrines and a deep sense of loyalty and hero-worship, if not idolatry, are felt towards the leader by all the members. That certainly seems to be the case of both Pierre and Bashir, whose wisdom and strength are reiterated throughout the Phalange and LF anthems (Appendix 1). Figures 7 and 8 also reflect the strong association the LF had made between Bashir and the salvation of the state, and how particularly after his death, any hope for a reconciled and saved Lebanon was lost. Secondly, the party decision making process is based on a meticulously hierarchical structure (Stoakes 223) in which freedom of expression is allowed in the lower Aqams, but there is a recognition and acceptance of the fact that the final say is that of the Chef at the top of the
pyramid. The party exercises strict disciplinary and subordinating actions in a greater framework of "autocratic centralism" (Entelis 26).

Figure 7

Figure 8

_Pierre Gemayel: Aradna Lubnan Watanan La Kanisatan Wala Gami’an and Connaissances_
Des Kataeb: Leur Doctrines et Leur Politique Nationales

In both writings there is a strong and highly repetitive emphasis of the independence and sovereignty of Lebanon, its particular mission and its incompatibility with the Arab and Syrian Other. The extent to which the Other is important is sensed throughout the writings, which take a defensive position and does not fail to point out as much as it can the idiosyncrasy and difference of Lebanon. References to Phoenicianism are clearly made for the same effect. Pierre also states that the protection of the existence of the state is their utmost important duty, and that

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2 Le liban a servi au cours des siècles, d'asile et de refuge aux minorités étniques et religieuses persécutées.

3 Liban est une mission. Cette mission est antinomique à celle que les Arabes aspirent généralement à réaliser. Le liban est une entité irréductible.

4 Réalité historique, le Liban moderne, reprenant la succession de l’antique Phénicie, s’est constamment imposé, depuis six siècles, à l’attention du monde. Qu’on veille bien se rappeler le rôle décisif qu’il joua politiquement et militairement, dans l’Histoire de l’Orient, sous Fakhreddine le Grand, sous l’émir Youssef, sous Béchir le Grand et dans la crise internationale de 1840 - all what follows Christian figures. No Muslims.

5 L’existence de la Nation libanaise – ayant une vocation historique de culture et de tolérance – est un fait que nous
they take it upon themselves to indoctrinate the youth with Lebanese nationalism. The inherent contradiction between the claimed secular position and the strong Christian roots of the Phalange ideology are abundantly clear: on one occasion Pierre Gemayel says he is proud to be a Christian and honoured to be the voice of this group. Although the ambiance is defiant of Arab and Syrian other, the Lebanese Muslim is rarely

nous sommes donnés pour mission de maintenir, de défendre et de renforcer.

L’enseignement, libre et officiel, doit être dirigé dans un sens national. La neutralité à l’égard du Liban est inadmissible.

Les Phalanges Libanaises sont donc heureuses d'assumer la mission de mettre en garde contre les dangers des mouvements d'ordre confessionnel qu'agite une fraction des habitants du pays.

En un mot, nous rejetons vigoureusement toute idéologie théocratique qui, dans d'autres pays, est le fondement de la constitution : nous sommes pour une législation civile, laïque, respectueuse des religions, mais excluant toute sujétion à un droit canon déterminé, fût-il chrétien ou coranique.

Je suis heureux, moi Pierre Gemayel, Chrétien, fier de mon Christianisme et attaché à ses préceptes et à ses commandements par toutes les forces puissantes dans la foi et la fidélité.

Nous rejetons la théorie d’une Syrie géographique en tant qu’elle dénierait la réalité physique du Liban. Cette théorie
mentioned, and Gemayel is keen to show respect to Islam throughout his discourse. In an interesting instant, Gemayel accuses the Other of something to avert the same accusation from his self: he says that he insists to a new census but that the emigrants should be included, not because the Maronites would certainly benefit from the increased numbers, but because, according to him, the Other does not wish to find himself in a weakened position.

_Bashir Gemayel: Speeches_

Seven years into the civil war, the speeches analysed represent a moment deeply imbued in the turmoil and are reflected in the more vocal and extreme discourse of the Other. Across these speeches and interviews, reference to the Palestinian and Syrian Other are strongly apparent and dominate the content. It is highly negative, associating the Syrian with occupation and the Palestinian with settlement. They are both written as The Palestinian/Syrian, an individuation of the enemy in such a way that

---

9 Nous réclamons avec insistance un recensement général à condition de ne pas continuer a considérer les émigrés comme des parias qu'il faut scinder et éliminer de la collective libanaise.
any Palestinian and any Syrian is an occupier, a traitor, and as twice mentioned, a parasite.

The Lebanese Other by contrast, is rebuked, reprehended perhaps for his inconsistency, his lag in finally realising that it is the Syrian and Palestinian that are his enemy and not his Christian Lebanese Brother, but never portrayed by Bashir to be malevolent or to harbour malicious and anti-Lebanese intents. If anything he is delayed by his attachment to the decayed remnants of the Ottoman “occupation” and is easily manipulated and brainwashed by the Arabs, he is deluded, and languid: if one is to wait for him one will have to wait, according to Bashir, for 200 years. Interestingly, Bashir resembles his father in both men’s pointing of a specific accusation to the Other which just as much could be pointed to them: it is only the Lebanese (Muslim) Other who can take a decision different to or opposing the Christians; the latter on the other hand, regardless of what decision they take, cannot be considered to oppose him. To oppose, to create conflict, is a characteristic denoted only to the Other; it is inconceivable for the Christian to take a decision that can be interpreted as distancing or dismissing the Other.

There is certainly a sense of detachment from this Lebanese Other who, regardless of whether he sees the light or not, the Christians will go ahead
with their plans for liberating Lebanon from the Other who in more aggressive terms is also labeled the foreigner and the enemy. Israel is one other that Bashir rarely mentions, for reasons of political pragmatism, and when it is mentioned, it is referred to as an independent actor with his specific objectives targeting the PLO, who is not interested in Lebanon and is therefore neither a threat nor an ally of the Christians. In fact in the communiqué he released after the Israeli invasion, was calm and collected, his words expressed no anger or a call for unity against the invaders. Israel was only mentioned once and only on a passing notice. It is interesting to note that the Lebanese Muslim is also referred to, in a much moderate sense, as the Sunni, and surprisingly, the Lebanese Other, which serves as Bashir’s blatant view of the Muslim of Lebanon as the Other, rather than a part of a large Lebanese Self. Along such sectarian lines Christian supremacy appears quite frequently, not in the sense of a superior race, but as the community that has taken the vanguard in protecting the state and has presented martyrs to the cause where as the Muslim Other has not recognised who the true enemy is. The connection between the Christian community and the state of Lebanon is undeniable, with strong emphasis on Mountain’s position as the core and centre of the Lebanese state, emphasis on the borders that create a Lebanon of 10452 Km² and that extends back to a 6000 years old civilization,
giving the Christian community at least legitimacy to its claim in this struggle as opposed to the less decorated Other.

There was one particular speech which embodied the whole spirit and the dynamics behind Bashir’s discourse: that being the speech he made in Ein Rummaneh for the 7th anniversary of the beginning of the war (13/4/1982). It emphasised all of the abovementioned views of the various dangerous Syrian, Palestinian, and more languid and hesitant Lebanese Other; the supremacy of the Christians and their avant-garde role, while refuting any plans of secession and isolationism; all in a more intense and elaborate presentation.

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نقول للاحجى الفلسطيني أن يبحث عن صحراة أخره ينقل اليها خيامه وتدكره للنجل، وان خمس فلسطينيين في البوسطة ليسوا قادرين على رمينا في البحر.

اللبناني الآخر الذي بدأ يفهم لماذا اضطرنا الى ازالة تل الزعتر و لماذا قاومنا وحاربنا سبع سنوات واليوم شريكنا اللبناني يعاني المعاناة التي عانينا ونعاني منذ 7 سنوات. نحن نحبهم ونهنتهم ولو تأخرنا في التصرف.

نقول له أيضا: ان مصيره يقضي أن يشارك أخاه اللبناني لا أن يشارك الغريب فلسطينيا كان أم سوريا.

عين الرمانة، زحلة، عبنطور، ترشيش، الدامور: هذا المجتمع هو الأكثر ثباتا في لبنان.

إن مقاومتنا هي التي جعلت الشيعي ينفض في وجه الفلسطيني وجعلت السني ينفض في وجه السوري.
Table 1: Content Analysis of 76 Arabic sources:

(64) Speeches and (12) Articles.

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<td>Foreign Other Associated with Barbarism and dirt</td>
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<td>يبحث عن مكان يخربه</td>
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<td>الفاسطيين هنه اللي عم يحرقوا الأرض و الأسواق, مش LASER</td>
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<td>The Lebanese</td>
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<td>اللبناني المسلم</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>not an enemy but a</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>partner of the Nation/State</td>
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<td>10 referred to, not as enemy but brethren (إخوان)</td>
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<td><strong>Druze</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Israel</strong></td>
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<td>4 *never referred to as the enemy, rarely mentioned and context fearful of an invasion to fight the PLO.</td>
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<td>التعدي</td>
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<td>(Palestinian) Settlement</td>
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<td>المؤامرة</td>
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<tr>
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<td>الإرهاب</td>
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<td>التضحية / الاستشهاد</td>
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<td>Resistance</td>
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<td>المجتمع المسيحي</td>
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<td>Christian Community</td>
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<td>Maronite</td>
<td>الماروني</td>
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also referred to as war of existential defense (حرب الدفاع عن الوجود)
related to failed and decaying state norms and institutions
associated with the nation
Associated with Christian villages
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<td>Violated</td>
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<td>Civilization</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>الحضارة</td>
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<td>6000 years (Phoenician reference)</td>
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<td>Sectarianism within context of peaceful cooperation</td>
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<td>Lebanon the Farm/ Lebanon of the Brokers</td>
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<td>لبنان المزرعة و السماسرة</td>
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### Table 2: Analysis of Bashir Gemayel’s Speech
made in Ein El Rummaneh for the 7th anniversary of the beginning of the war (13/4/1982)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>Tally</th>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Palestinian) Settlement</td>
<td>التوطين (اللبنانى)</td>
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<td>Conspiracy</td>
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<td>Terrorism</td>
<td>الإرهاب</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Nationalist Notion</td>
<td>Christian Community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Collusion</td>
<td>التواطؤ</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Treachery</td>
<td>غدر</td>
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</table>
Conclusion

The identity construction of the Phalange was a complex process that, being based on Maronite nationalist ideology, is strongly conscious of the Other. By examining the ways the Phalange identifies itself and its role, and the extent to which it complies with true fascist ideologies, one can understand the ways by which they identify the Other and the extent to which they will go in their daily interaction. The Other is, however, not a static one, nor formulated through religious differences, but entails a more diverse combination of factors. One of the important ones are the economic consideration that the Phalange must bear as a consequence of its unusual role as a Zaim representing the elite of Finance and Commerce as well as the Maronite community as a whole. Indeed the "family" is referred to as one of the three basic tenets to the Phalange's belief system in its anthem, strongly
indicating an association with and preservation of this traditional role, albeit in a modern guise. Similarly, the myth of a favoured and friendly Israeli Other, who is closer to the Phalange self is just that, a myth.

The primary sources analysed are ideological writing by Pierre Gemayel and speeches by his son Bashir. I chose this succession of primary sources across a few decades so that the similarities and differences may highlight particularly important points pertaining to the question of the Other. The similarities between the writing reflect the great place the Other takes in Phalange ideology and action, in addition to showing how pure and predominantly fascist and reductionist perceptions of the Other are circumscribed and held in check in by the Phalange’s need to provide for its political and economic interests and those of the community and elites it represents. The differences on the other hand, highlight the intensification and radicalisation of their perception as threats seem more eminent, the Other more terrorising, proximal and thus a scale of Others is created where the less threatening Other is temporarily sought for help. According to AlAmal in October 1980 "said the partition of the country had taken place in west Beirut which has fallen under the control of Syrian Baathists, Palestinians, communists and Arab nationalists invasion that sought to change Lebanon’s identity in order to
Arabise and Islamise the country. "real Lebanon" has been reduced to what is pejoratively is known as the Christian ghetto" (Traboulsi 211). That, in essence, sums up Phalange's perception of itself, identifies the various Others, the difference between them being mainly the different ways with which they identified the Lebanese state.
Appendix 1 – List of Anthems

- هيا فتى الكتائب
- النشيد الوطني اللبناني
- الشيخ بيار بتبقي معن
- اشرفية البداية
- حزب الكتائب عالرااس
- ذكرى الـ70
- عالصخر منحرف كتائب
- عريس الحلم الأخضر
- عسكر نحنما مننهاب
- كتائب ام القضية كلها
- لبيار التحية
- مثل الشمس
- من زمان
- من هاك الملعب
- منهتف كتائب
- نادتلي اليمامة
- نقول لا
- وينك يا هل واقف
• هزّت منازلنا
• يا رئّسنا القائد
• يا ليلة الليالي
• يا موسع السحات
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