

The Politics and Poetics of  
**AMEEN  
RIHANI**

The Humanist Ideology of an  
Arab-American Intellectual and Activist



NIJMEH HAJJAR

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for  
all the love and care!*



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# ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AAB</i>	<i>American Authors and Books</i>
<i>AAK</i>	<i>Al-A'mal al-'Arabiyya al-Kamila</i>
<i>ACA</i>	<i>Around the Coasts of Arabia</i>
<i>APD</i>	<i>Arabian Peak and Desert</i>
<i>Atlan</i>	<i>Atlantic Monthly</i>
<i>AUB</i>	American University of Beirut
<i>Bookm</i>	<i>Bookman</i>
<i>CCAS</i>	Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies
<i>CLP</i>	Le Comité Libanais de Paris
<i>CUP</i>	Committee of Union and Progress
<i>Cur Hist</i>	<i>Current History</i>
<i>DIM</i>	Dar al-'Ilm lil-Malayin
<i>E.I.2</i>	<i>The Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edition)</i>
<i>HUP</i>	Harvard University Press
<i>Hutaf</i>	<i>Hutaf al-Awdiya</i>
<i>IJMES</i>	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
<i>Int Studio</i>	<i>International Studio</i>
<i>ISA</i>	<i>Ibn Sa'oud of Arabia</i>
<i>Khalid</i>	<i>The Book of Khalid</i>
<i>LLP</i>	Lebanon League of Progress
<i>MADN</i>	al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya lil Dirasat w-al-Nashr
<i>MDWA</i>	Markaz Dirasat al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya
<i>MAJ</i>	<i>al-Majmu'a al-Kamila</i>
<i>MEJ</i>	<i>Middle East Journal</i>
<i>Muluk</i>	<i>Muluk al-'Arab</i>
<i>Nubdha</i>	<i>Nubdha fi al-Thawra al-Faransiyya</i>
<i>OUP</i>	Oxford University Press
<i>TNYTBRM</i>	<i>The New York Times Book Review and Magazine</i>

<i>PO</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>
PUL	Publications de l'Université Libanaise
PUP	Princeton University Press
<i>Rasā'il</i>	<i>Rasā'il Amin al-Rihani</i>
<i>RGPL</i>	<i>Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature</i>
SCC	Syrian Central Committee
<i>Shadharat</i>	<i>Shadharat Min 'Abd al-Siba</i>
SMLLL	The Syrian–Mount Lebanon League of Liberation
SMLRC	The Syrian–Mount Lebanon Relief Committee
<i>al-Tatarruf</i>	<i>al-Tatarruf w-al-Islah</i>
UCP	University of California Press
UTP	University of Texas Press
<i>WFAR</i>	<i>Where to Find Ameen Rihani</i>
<i>WTWANAA</i>	<i>Who is Who Among the North American Authors</i>
<i>WTWL</i>	<i>Who is Who in Literature</i>
<i>Wujuh</i>	<i>Wujuh Sharqiyya wa Gharbiyya</i>
<i>WWWA</i>	<i>Who Was Who in America</i>

## PREFACE

This is a study of the contribution of Arab–American writer and activist Ameen Rihani, a leading literary figure and a most engaging Arab humanist of the twentieth century. It is an examination of Rihani’s socio-political thought and activism and his role as an intellectual who sought to engage both East and West. It discusses his endeavour to generate change in the Arab world within the conceptual and practical framework of his understanding of progress, liberation and unity. With his dual Arab-American identity and his humanist outlook, the quest for Arab progress, democracy and liberation from foreign rule, remained at the heart of Rihani’s engagement of both East and West.

My analysis of the development of Rihani’s thought is anchored in my understanding of the dialectical link between his life experiences in the Arab world, the USA and Europe, and his literary creativity and activist commitment as a humanist intellectual. While viewing Rihani’s contribution in the wider context of contemporary Arabic thought and the changing conditions of the Arab East in his age, I give special attention to his efforts to engage his contemporary Arabs and Westerners alike.

The Introduction provides a general framework of Rihani’s contribution and sets out the aims and methodology of this book.

Chapter One outlines Rihani’s life and experiences in order to understand his ideas and activities. This biographical sketch focuses on important factors in Rihani’s childhood in Lebanon, his early youth in the USA and his subsequent travels and constant movement between the Arab world and the West. It is based on careful research into his books and articles, and his correspondence with literary and political figures and members of the general public, supplemented by further references in the writings of his brother and nephew. In tracing Rihani’s intellectual development, I highlight important influences, particularly his wide-range readings in Arabic and

Western literatures, on his formation and on the evolution of his thought and activism. His travels in Arabia in 1922–23, which were a turning point in his journey as an intellectual and activist, receive special attention here.

Chapter Two examines Rihani's importance as a writer and political activist. The first two sections focus on two crucial dimensions of his contribution as a major and prolific Arabic and English essayist, and as a critical yet accessible historian. In discussing his contributions to the press in the West and in the Arab world, I highlight his advocacy of avant-garde views on religious tolerance, political reform and East-West mutual understanding. The second section of this chapter analyses Rihani's historical methodology and his attitude to the past, highlighting his significance as a pioneer of critical historical writing in the modern Arab world. Rihani was no armchair writer but an intellectual activist interested in seeing social, cultural and political change in Arab societies. The third section of this chapter focuses on his efforts as a motivated, independent, and critical political activist. I discuss this against the background of the social and political transformation of Arab societies, and in the context of debates about the Middle East in the USA and Europe during his life time.

Chapters Three and Four, taken together, build up a general framework for Rihani's political and social thought. Chapter Three discusses his understanding of the idea of progress and means of reform, analysing his secular and anti-sectarian views, both conceptually and from a practical angle. Chapter Four treats the development in Rihani's thought of the four interconnected concepts of justice, freedom, democracy and socialism, and the related problem of tyranny and his campaign against it. I discuss these with attention to Rihani's concern with political, socio-economic and cultural reform; his interest in the working of democracy and social justice in the Western capitalist system; and his views on socialism and the Bolshevik Revolution.

Chapter Five examines the evolution of Rihani's political ideas and his attitude to Arab-Turkish relations in the context of the changing political circumstances in the Arab East between 1898 (the year he first started writing) and the end of the First World War in 1918. My discussion demonstrates a gradual transformation in Rihani's ideas and outlook from Ottoman 'reformism', to advocating political autonomy and decentralisation within the Ottoman State, to a call for, and support of Arab revolt and independence. This chapter also explores the connection between his ideas of revolution, freedom and independence and his appreciation of President Wilson's principles of self-determination, which strengthened Rihani's advocacy of Arab co-operation with the 'liberal' West.

Chapter Six analyses an important new stage in the development of Rihani's political concerns. It focuses on his views on the controversial identity of Lebanon, his criticism of the Christian political 'Lebanese idea', and his understanding of Lebanon's links with Syria and the wider Arab East. In this context, this chapter brings out the significance of Rihani's pioneering contribution to the ongoing debate on the perennial problems of sectarianism, Lebanese patriotism, Syrian nationalism and Pan-Arabism, which are still hotly contested today.

Chapter Seven examines Rihani's critical assessment of the Arab-French encounter and the problem of the League of Nations' mandates of Western powers in the Arab world, with particular attention to French rule in Lebanon and Syria. This problem preoccupied Rihani during the last twenty years of his life. This chapter highlights Rihani's attitude to the French Mandate, which he considered both as military occupation and imperial hegemony; his critiquing of the mandatory power; his unflattering assessment of the mandate-sponsored native governments; and his advocacy of 'peaceful' struggle and resistance.

Chapter Eight analyses the dynamics of Rihani's Arab nationalist thought and his conceptual and practical contribution to Pan-Arabism. It discusses his ideas and endeavours concerning the unity of Arabia, including his efforts during his travels and afterwards, to bring rulers of the Peninsula to talk to each other as a practical first step towards achieving some kind of union amongst them. My discussion highlights the importance which Rihani attached to economic, social, cultural and educational factors in his striving to see Pan-Arabia realised; and his remarkable insights into the domestic and international obstacles (especially British hegemony) facing Arab unity and possible means to overcome them, demonstrating both his practical approach and latent idealism. This chapter brings to light Rihani's broadening concept of Pan-Arabism beyond the Arabian Peninsula to include Iraq and greater Syria (with Lebanon and Palestine) in an Arab confederation. It highlights the emphasis he placed on the principles of human progress, freedom, equality, democracy and social justice as necessary conditions for the success of such union.

The dynamic relationship between Rihani's ideas and his pragmatic activism is a running theme throughout this study. In both his writings and his political activities, Rihani's career was characterised by a progressive secular humanist vision and an abiding interest in engaging both the Arab world and the West, particularly the USA, Great Britain and France. This book highlights Rihani's major concerns about the need for Arab societies to achieve progress, liberal democracy, social justice and mutual

respect between the Arabs and other nations and cultures, particularly the West. Such concerns define his significant contribution to a secular Arab humanist voice. Almost seventy years after Rihani's death, it is important for such voices to be heard amid the confusing obscurantism of both religious and ideological fanaticism and the 'clash of civilizations' paradigms.

This book attempts to present Rihani's intellectual contribution through a holistic approach. However, it doesn't claim to provide a comprehensive treatment of all aspects of his endeavour. While acknowledging Rihani's pioneering role in the Arab-American migrant literary movement both in Arabic and English, and in the Arab literary renaissance in general, this study does not pretend to investigate his purely literary creative writing. My main concern is with his social and political thought and activism and the dynamic link between his ideas and his life experiences in the political, social and cultural context of his times. Certain aspects, for example his metaphysical 'philosophy', his interest in the role and status of women in society, and his efforts at explaining the situation of Palestine in the 1930s to American audiences are only touched upon briefly. I highlight his efforts to defend Arab rights in Palestine, particularly in the West, in the context of my discussion of his political activities (Chapter Two). But his insights into the question of Palestine and his suggestions for a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Jewish conflict—which he incidentally saw in a secular democratic one-state solution—deserve a separate study. The same is true of his progressive 'pro-feminist' empowering discourse and advocacy of women's rights, particularly Arab women both in Western societies and the Arab world.

This study is based on a fresh and thorough reading of the whole range of Rihani's published works in Arabic and English including his creative writings, essays, correspondence, and historical and travel books. Although no attempt is made to present a full chronology of Rihani's works, special attention is given to establishing, whenever possible, the time, circumstances and context in which he expressed his ideas.

Reference to Rihani's books collected in the complete works (*Al-A'mal al-'Arabiyya al-Kamila*, AAK) is by book-title, the volume number in which it appears; the page number refers to the volume pagination. His articles collected in the complete works are cited individually followed by the original date of publication whenever known. To avoid confusion between Rihani himself and his brother Albert Rihani, and nephew Ameen Albert Rihani, when referring to Rihani the subject of this study only the titles of his works are cited; A. Rihani refers to his brother; and A. A. Rihani refers to his nephew.

This study is based on research in Arabic, English and French sources. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations into English are my own. As a rule, Arabic words are transliterated according to the system used in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES), but without the diacritical marks. The name of Ameen Fares Rihani himself, as well as Arabic place names, e.g. Beirut, Freike, Mecca, Riyadh, are given in the commonly accepted spelling. The names of Arabic authors, who wrote in English or French, appear in the spelling adopted by them in their own publications.

This book began as a Ph.D. 'idea'. Fully revised and updated with new Introduction and Epilogue, it would not have seen the light without the help of many people. I am indebted to Professor Ahmad Shboul who first suggested the idea and supervised my Thesis. I am most grateful for his invaluable comments, generous advice, help and support throughout this research project. As a supervisor and mentor, he has given so much of his time and effort to ensure the completion and publication of this study. His guidance and encouragement have sustained me in my research career from the very beginning and throughout. I owe a great deal to his rigorous scholarship and persistence. As a teacher and friend he has been a true inspiration.

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# INTRODUCTION

The career and the intellectual contribution of Arab–American writer and activist Ameen Rihani (1876–1940) deserve serious study for his thought and insights are still significant not only for understanding the Arab world and the Arab–Western encounter in his times but are equally relevant for our own times. Since at least the early nineteenth century Arab societies have struggled to meet the challenges of new times and achieve social, cultural and political change. This process of Arab awakening or rebirth, known as *al-nahda*, has been quite complex and the interpretation of its significance is problematic, with its success or lack of it still subjects of intense debate in contemporary Arab discourse.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Arab renaissance continues to be unfulfilled. More than ever before, Arab societies find themselves overwhelmed by helplessness and frustration in a world dominated by others. Some Arab intellectuals have even lamented the futility of struggle for change. The many current ‘Arab crises’, especially in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine, seem to have deepened the Arabs’ scepticism and lack of confidence about the possibility of overcoming their alienating conditions and their ability to remake their society.

‘Offers’ of the poisoned chalice of external assistance have not been exactly scarce. The latest was proffered in March 2003 when the Western Allied forces (primarily of the United States, Britain and Australia) invaded Iraq with a declared aim (among others) of bringing freedom to the Iraqi people, and establishing a ‘democratic model’ for the whole Middle East region.

The late Edward Said (1935–2003), in his criticism of the policies of the American political leadership and its allies before the invasion of Iraq, argued thus: ‘They are trivializing the notion of democracy by proclaiming that that is what they are trying to do in the Middle East. I don’t think it’s

ever happened in history that democracy is brought in by conquest and bombing ... What we export from this country, aside from consumer goods, is something very different from the democracy and freedom the United States talks about. I think we are headed for really bad times'.<sup>1</sup> Many Arabs today, including Arab intellectuals in the Diaspora, could easily relate to Edward Said's contention. The Western colonialist legacy of the past century is still fresh in their minds and in the Arab collective memory.

Over seventy years earlier another leading Arab–American thinker, writer and political activist, Ameen Rihani, had expressed similar concerns and evinced a similar message to his country of adoption and to Western powers in general. Although proud to be an 'adopted' citizen of the USA, Rihani warned, in a public lecture at New York in 1930, that 'the politicians of Europe and America can not right the wrongs of the world. They have done enough already to make this international task an official impossibility'.<sup>2</sup>

One of the fascinating traits of Rihani's thought and activism is that he was an 'unorthodox and unconventional' intellectual by his own definition, and an 'outsider, "amateur" disturber of the *status quo*', in the Saidian sense.<sup>3</sup> Rihani often warned that freedom and democracy in the Arab world could not be imposed by force, whether by a revolution from within, or occupation from without. A man who felt at home in both the Middle East and the West, and a 'grateful beneficiary' of American democracy, he wished to see a new Arab society established, with some kind of Western assistance. However, he insisted that this should be based on rational, universal principles of human progress, freedom, justice, equality and mutual respect. He actively and intellectually endeavoured to help his fellow Arabs build such a progressive and democratic society so they could contribute once again to world civilization. But he was adamant that this could not be forced on them from the outside. It had to be born from within.

Speaking as a public lecturer at a number of American institutions of higher education during the 1930s, Rihani cautioned Western nations against forcing their notions of liberty and democracy on the Arabs and Muslims. 'Not until their intellectual faculties are awakened and developed ... *nor is it altogether safe to force a change* [italics are mine]'. He argued that 'the only safeguard to peace and progress' is when all people, 'irrespective of class or creed or race or color', begin to understand and respect each other. In his own sophisticated English style, he told his Western audience that 'to force' a 'point of view and point of direction upon me by legislation or by religion, is to make of me a slave, or a hypocrite, or an ass—that is, if I obey your law or accept your creed. If I do not obey, however, and you resort to force, there will be trouble—a conflict, a revolution, a war'.<sup>4</sup>

In the light of Rihani's deep concern for the broad humanistic principles of justice, equality and freedom, his criticism of Western politicians or Western policies in the Arab world cannot be interpreted as 'anti-democratic', 'unpatriotic', or 'anti-American' as they might have been interpreted in the present mood. Rather, his firsthand experience of Western colonialism in the Arab world convinced him that those Western principles, with which he was fascinated, had not been extended by Western powers to apply to non-Western nations—an assessment which was later reiterated by, among others, Edward Said.<sup>5</sup>

Rihani lived during a time when Western imperialism in the Arab world was at its zenith, whether in the form of military occupation, protectorate or mandate. Today at least one Arab people, the Palestinians, still suffer the ramifications of the British Mandate, which incorporated the Balfour Declaration to establish a national home for the Jews in Palestine. Well before this eventually materialised in 1948 with the creation of the State of Israel and the mass expulsion of Palestinians and the destruction of Palestinian towns, villages and national life, Rihani had warned, in no uncertain terms, of a looming disaster (*nakba*) in Palestine. He protested that Western colonialist policies were not only violating the rights of the native Arabs in Palestine but also threatening world peace. Most Arabs today, rightly or wrongly, trace the roots of many of their problems, including the war in Iraq and the conflict in Lebanon, to the Western imperialist legacy. Rihani had tackled such a theme in his time, as a writer, a public lecturer and activist.

While Arab countries have experienced and struggled against Western interference and control since the early nineteenth century at least, Rihani himself exemplified in his life and work significant aspects of this 'collective' experience and struggle in a profound way. His experience led him to consider Western cultural and political domination of the Arab world as the greatest calamity in the Arabs' modern history.

The Arabs' struggle for independence (first from Ottoman rule, then from Western hegemony) stirred Rihani to political activism against foreign rule. But he never lost sight of the domestic battle for political liberty, socio-economic justice and cultural progress. He became a staunch critic both of Western imperialism and the conditions of underdevelopment and stagnation in Arab societies. Equipped with extensive knowledge and active experience in the affairs of the Arab and Western worlds in which he lived, Rihani hoped to effect some change in the thinking and mutual perceptions of both worlds. He remained convinced to the end of his life that change was inevitably coming. While consistently warning his fellow Arabs against any sense of resignation, he optimistically trusted that his Western brothers

and sisters in humanity would help realise the 'dream' of the 'Great City', 'where East and West meet', and 'must meet ... on the higher plain of mutual understanding and mutual esteem'.<sup>6</sup> Rihani was a true child of his time. He was convinced that world developments would take a positive course, particularly inter-Arab, Arab–British and Arab–French rapprochement, and what he saw as benign American economic and political 'positive intervention' in the Middle East, including oil exploration and recognition of the new kingdom of Saudi Arabia—developments to which he himself contributed in some sense. Ever the inveterate optimist, he predicted that the world was entering a new phase, not of 'clash of civilizations' as Samuel P. Huntington was to announce half a century later,<sup>7</sup> but of 'dialogue of cultures', in which he himself was already taking an active and significant part.

When Rihani died in 1940, he had become one of the most acknowledged figures in the Arabic literary and intellectual renaissance in more than one sense. He was an innovator and trail blazer in various ways and in more than one sphere. Certainly as a man of letters he marks many 'beginnings'. In addition to his leading role in the Arabic *Mahjar* literary movement generally, Rihani was in more specific terms the first modern Arab to venture into writing in English. His intellectual, autobiographical novel, *The Book of Khalid* (1911) marks the beginning of an original genre both in English literature and modern Arabic letters. Not only was it the first 'Arab narrative' authored in English by an Arab (as opposed to Western representations of Arabs), but also because of its novelistic form—itself a novelty in Arabic—and its progressive ideas from Eastern and Western perspectives. *The Book of Khalid* heralded a series of 'prophetic' books including two in English by his fellow Arab–Americans, Gibran's *The Prophet* (1923) and Mikhail Naimy's *The Book of Mirdad* (1948), and in Arabic Antoun Ghattas Karam's *Kitab 'Abdallah* (The Book of 'Abdallah, 1969; French translation *Le livre de Abdullah*, UNESCO, 1993). The latter shares Gibran's prophetic tone but Rihani's universal commitment to 'the wretched of the earth'.<sup>8</sup> Rihani's social and political discourse (as articulated in *The Book of Khalid*), his dual criticism of Western materialism and Eastern traditionalism, and his advocacy of East–West meeting in mutual respect initiated an increasingly growing trend in modern Arabic thought.

On another level, and apart from his well-known books on Arabia, Rihani's books on his penetrating journeys into the heart of Lebanon and in Iraq and Morocco may be considered as biographies of city and country, in the sense in which 'Abd al-Rahman Munif (1933–2004) talked of a 'biography of a city' in his work on Amman (1994). Munif complained that earlier modern Arabic authors did not talk about their experiences or

memories in the Arab city. In fact Rihani did just that in the 1920s and 1930s. And above all, half a century before Munif, Rihani was interested in the 'humanity' of the city.<sup>9</sup>

On another no less significant plane, Rihani was the first to compose 'free verse' or 'prose poetry' in Arabic, a practice inspired by his appreciation of the American Walt Whitman's poetic experimentation (and also his political views). Studies on modern Arabic poetry have acknowledged Rihani's contribution in this area, although this has often been done in passing and only with reference to poetic structure. But the significance of Rihani's prose poetry goes far beyond this. It also goes beyond his vision of 'peace and East–West reconciliation' in this poetry as has recently been acknowledged.<sup>10</sup> It is important to point out the strong connection which Rihani saw between freeing Arabic poetic creativity from the restrictions of old prosody, metre and rhyme on the one hand and liberating Arab societies and political practice from the shackles of the past and the tyranny of authoritarianism, on the other. For him advocacy of free verse went hand in hand with advocacy of democracy, individual liberty and social and political freedom.

Rihani embarked on another creative literary genre, the writing of fiction in both Arabic and English. His contribution to Arabic fiction is particularly evident in at least three areas. Following the style of eighth-century Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Kalila wa Dimna* and some Western writers, Rihani revived the allegorical Eastern story to articulate a socio-political message. His first Arabic fictional work, *The Tripartite Alliance in the Animal Kingdom* (New York, 1903) using animal characters to critique the orthodox ecclesiastic thinking and to debate the role of religion and reason in society, is the first of its kind in modern Arabic literature. One of the earliest Arabic writers who attempted the novel genre in the modern sense to represent his futuristic vision of a new Arab society, Rihani was also the first Arabic playwright to experiment with political drama in an original way. At least one of his plays with a clear political message was staged in Beirut shortly after the overthrow of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid in 1909. Apart from stylistic innovation, Rihani's fictional works embodied his avant-garde ideas, especially his vision of a just world free of all forms of discrimination on the basis of religion, race or gender.<sup>11</sup> His fictional narrative, for example in his Arabic novel *Out of the Harem* (1917) and English play *Wajdah* (written in 1908), may be counted the earliest literary Arab 'feminist' narratives and are still, in my opinion, among the most empowering of the Arab woman.

In acknowledgement of his encyclopaedic knowledge, wisdom and humanist concerns, Rihani became known in his own lifetime as 'the

philosopher of Freike' (his birth place), a title similar to that of Tolstoy, 'the sage of Yasnaya Poliana',<sup>12</sup> and—in the Arabic literary context—that of eleventh-century Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri, 'the philosopher of al-Ma'arra' (both of whom Rihani admired for their universal concerns). Rihani may not be a philosopher in the strict sense of the word. But he certainly was a profound thinker. In his holistic intellectual vision of a universal human society, and his fight, in words and deeds, to bring this vision to light, Rihani lived up to what he admired in Abu al-'Ala' and Tolstoy. Rihani's life motto was 'say your word and proceed' (*qul kalimatuk w-amshi*). He did not mince words. His own assessment of al-Ma'arri is aptly true of himself: 'an intransigent with the exquisite mind of a sage and scholar, his weapons were never idle'.<sup>13</sup>

In his intellectual and activist journey, Rihani saw his prime mission as one of engaging East and West. Now the nature and vicissitudes of the cultural encounter between the Arab-Islamic world and the West in modern times have continued to generate much debate both in the Arab and Western worlds. Rihani's pioneering intellectual project has not been adequately examined although it seems even more relevant in the light of the momentous world events and the search for global peace and cultural dialogue today. Dozens of articles on these issues are written weekly in the Arabic, European and American press by intellectuals and cultural commentators on recurring themes which Rihani had already raised in his time. A living illustration of his continuing relevance is that not long after the September attacks on the USA in 2001, the American University Centre for Global Peace, in association with the Ameen Rihani Institute, held an international symposium in Washington DC (April 2002) on Rihani's endeavour to bridge East and West.

Several early appreciations in Arabic of Rihani as a litterateur focused on his pioneering role in the Arabic *Mahjar* literary movement and his contribution to modern Arabic literature by such writers as Marun 'Abbud, Jamil Jabr, Sami al-Kayyali and Harith Taha al-Rawi. However, Rihani's contribution as a thinker and activist has not attracted modern critical analysis and assessment, as distinct from celebratory appreciation and collection of his works and the provision of information on his life and works. His nephew, Professor Ameen Albert Rihani, has dedicated much energy to Rihani's legacy and has made important contributions, mostly in Arabic, to make his uncle's work better known and appreciated. His *Faylasuf al-Freike: Sahib al-Madina al-'Uzma* (1987) focuses on his uncle's life story and educational background, and on his vision of the 'Great City' (*al-madina al-'uzma*). His book also includes much useful biographical information and detailed schedules of Rihani's American lecture tours in the 1930s.

A collection of essays on Rihani, *Amin al-Rihani: Ra'id Nahdawi Min Lubnan*, was published by the Union of Lebanese Writers in 1988. It contains the proceedings of a symposium organised in Beirut to mark the one hundred and tenth anniversary of Rihani's birth and to celebrate his role as a leading figure in the Arab renaissance. Muna Husayn al-Dusuqi's *al-Tatawwur w-al-Islah 'Ind Amin al-Rihani* (2004) deals with the concepts of evolution and reform in Rihani's writings in relation to the Western Evolution theory as expounded by Darwin and others. With the exception of *Faylasuf al-Freike*, the above works primarily restricted their attention to Rihani's Arabic writings.

There are fewer publications on Rihani in European languages. One chapter of Nadeem Naimy's *The Lebanese Prophets of New York* (1985) deals with Rihani's pioneering role in the rise of the *Mahjar* literature school and his impact on his younger fellow Lebanese migrants, especially Gibran. Based on Rihani's Arabic and English writings, Naimy discusses Rihani's legacy in the 'prophetic' and 'messianic' Lebanese migrant school of literature and thought in New York, considering *The Book of Khalid* as a 'forerunner' and an introduction to Gibran's *The Prophet* and Mikhail Naimy's *The Book of Mirdad*.

More recently, Geoffrey Nash in his *The Arab Writer in English* (1998) has examined Rihani's pioneering contribution among other Arab writers who wrote in the 'metropolitan language', particularly Gibran, George Antonius, and Edward Atiyah. He focuses on Rihani's English writings, including *The Book of Khalid*, as 'cross-cultural disclosures' and a 'hybrid' Anglo-Arab discourse (English in language and Arabic in thought and temperament).

The past decade has witnessed an increasing interest in Rihani's contributions to modern literature and thought, both in the Arab world and the West. This has manifested itself in the publication of a number of his English manuscripts, and the translation of some of his English writings into Arabic and some of his Arabic works into English and other European languages including French, German, and Spanish.<sup>14</sup> Apart from this, two important conferences addressed aspects of Rihani's work: one was hosted by Notre Dame University-Louaize, Lebanon on the topic of the legacy of both Rihani and Gibran (in 1998); and the other was organised by the American University Centre for Global Peace in Washington DC, in association with the Ameen Rihani Institute (in 2002). Proceedings of both conferences have been published, and I was privileged to be a contributor to both.<sup>15</sup> In my earlier contributions, I have focused on Rihani's leading place in the *Mahjar* literary movement and the modern Arab renaissance and touched upon aspects of his discourse on progress, democracy, and humanist nationalism.<sup>16</sup>



The present study goes beyond what has so far been a mostly piecemeal treatment of different aspects of Rihani's work. Here I examine Rihani's intellectual contribution as a writer and activist in a holistic and dynamic approach, focusing on his major concerns, in thought and action. I investigate key social and political issues in Rihani's writings and lectures, in Arabic and English, and explore the dialectical relationships in his discourse between: experience and expression, intention and method, theory and practice, identity and citizenship, self and other, and East and West.

This study discusses Rihani's intellectual and active efforts for social and political change in the Arab world within the conceptual and practical framework of his understanding of progress, liberation and unity. I argue that, regardless of Rihani's dual Arab–American identity and his humanist outlook, the Arab cause, especially the quest for progress, democracy and liberation from foreign rule, remained at the heart of his engagement with East and West. My analysis of the development of Rihani's thought is anchored in my understanding of the dialectical link between his life experiences in the Arab world, the USA and Europe, and his literary creativity and activist commitment as an intellectual. While viewing Rihani's contribution in the wider context of contemporary Arabic thought and the changing conditions of the Arab East in his age, I give special attention to his effort to engage his contemporary Arabs and Westerners alike.

I use the word 'engaging' to define Rihani's concern both with conditions and cultures of East and West and with promoting positive relations between them. In his writings, lectures, travels, and contacts with his contemporaries, Rihani perceived and demonstrated a dynamic connection between these two aspects of engagement. His living experiences of both cultures enabled him to appreciate their strengths and their claims for glory; but this did not blind him to their respective problems or weaknesses. His double fascination with the East and the West was thus coupled with a preoccupation with their contemporary affairs, problems and commonweal. As an Arab and an American at the same time, he felt strongly attached to both worlds and devoted his intellectual and practical endeavours to serve both worlds within an international context. In a way, Rihani became 'entangled' in the challenges and intricacies of the Arab world and the West, and obviously in their differences and contradictions. Thus he undertook the difficult task of bringing them closer to each other, urging, persuading and inducing readers, audiences and leaders of opinion to meet on 'a common measure' of 'mutual tolerance' and 'mutual respect'. With this lofty intention Rihani engaged in the promotion of a 'dialogue of cultures', not unlike that of his fellow Arab–American Edward Said half a century later, although by Said's time the geo-political and cultural landscape had changed considerably.

It must be said at this point that, despite the temptation to celebrate Rihani's search for East–West reconciliation, his reasoned Arab–West dialogue, and his humanist vision of universal peace, we should not lose sight of his moral courage and commitment to defend the human dignity and the rights of the oppressed and the weak. That these later happened to include his own Arab people does not make his concern less important. In his ever hopeful idealism, Rihani never tired of saying that he was an Arab nationalist who wholeheartedly believed, as he once put it to Imam Yahya of the Yemen, that ‘no matter how much we let ourselves go in the absolute love of Humanity, we can not forget ... the love of our own homeland’.<sup>17</sup> Being an optimistic visionary, however, he ‘looked’, in his own words, ‘to a day when all nationalities disappear or become incorporated in one nationality: the nationality of Humanity, the nationality of the World’.<sup>18</sup> But this was not to be, in his view, at the expense of the rights of ‘small nations’, including the Arab nation.

Far from being an ivory-towered thinker, Rihani was an engaged, committed, and realist intellectual and political activist. His writings and thought reveal both mystic affinities and pragmatic tendencies. The latter is reflected in his vision for democratic change in Arab society and his advocacy of East–West reciprocity, especially British–Arab and American–Arab bilateral relations. But his commitment to the cause of Arab rights and dignity never faltered. As Halim Barakat has recently observed ‘Rihani never wavered ... in the name of pragmatism, consensus, and reconciliation. He sought not resignation and compliance in the face of Western domination of the Arab world but confrontation and dissent’.<sup>19</sup>

In this study I use the term ‘humanist’ in two senses: ‘universal’ and ‘rational’. For Rihani envisioned a post-independence united Arab world, which would be an active contributor to human civilization and world peace, a society built on rational universal principles of human progress such as freedom, justice and equality. I argue that Rihani is the father of modern Arab humanism, as distinct from that of pre-modern Arab Muslim humanists of the classical Islamic age, such as al-Mas‘udi and Ibn Khaldun for example, not to speak of philosophers and scholastic humanists.<sup>20</sup> He also remains one of the very few bilingual Arab humanists who have distinguished themselves in both the Arab and Western worlds. What make Rihani particularly unique are the self-confidence, courage and vividness with which he negotiated his dialectical identity and advocated an Arab-humanist outlook in a world of peak imperialism and at a time when the Arabs were the subordinated ‘other’. Moreover, far from pure disinterested scholasticism or interested officialdom, Rihani was a writer and activist who

engaged two completely different, and at times hostile, audiences, each in its own language, without being a mere translator. In addition, he strove to have his two worlds engaged with each other in the broader world context.

Rihani was not simply 'a spell-binding orator',<sup>21</sup> or an author who mainly addressed a 'cultured avant-garde' Western, primarily American, audience.<sup>22</sup> As a prolific writer and communicator in both Arabic and English, he was equally able to communicate his ideas in Arabic to a wide range of audiences and interlocutors, including some rather traditional ones (as clearly demonstrated in his travels in the Arabian Peninsula). To do this, he had to master the culture of the 'master' language, and at the same time re-discover and re-acquire the culture of Arabic, his mother language. Moreover, he was the first modern Arab, and remains one of the very few, who could produce an engaging discourse and an 'Arab narrative', and in a real sense a 'counter-narrative'—to borrow another concept from Edward Said. He did so both in the leading language of the dominant West and in that of the dominated Arab East. Thus his counter-discourse also addressed the Arab political social, cultural, intellectual and literary context. This is seen in his critical attitude to the past and the problems of the present; in his diagnosis of Arab ineffectiveness in international relations and slackness in political reform; in his damning assault on social ills such as sectarianism, religious intolerance, hypocrisy and authoritarianism; and at another plane in his candid and scathing reproach of traditional poetic techniques and Arabic stylistics in general. Through his advocacy and his own example as a writer, he was able to engage in the challenging venture of breathing a new 'spirit' (*ruh*) into the venerable old body of classical Arabic.<sup>23</sup>

Rihani's sense of engagement is characterised by his success in employing the language of the human 'self' and of the 'other' in order to reach that other and to facilitate productive inter-cultural communication. He also did this through a creative 'integrated approach' based on striving for 'integrated knowledge'. In his manifold interests Rihani was a true humanist intellectual of Renaissance calibre. He contributed significantly to different creative literary genres in both languages: poetry, short story, novel, drama, essay and creative translation. As an intellectual, his fields of interest included the visual and performing arts as well as philosophy, literary and cultural criticism, history, politics, sociology, travel and so on. Influenced by early Arab thinkers who attempted to combine the various branches of human knowledge, and whom he read at a young age, and by his extensive readings in Western literature in English and French, Rihani's integrative approach succeeded in placing 'ethics, politics, and aesthetics ... together on the track of modernity'.<sup>24</sup> In a real sense he was the first to modernise (rather than simply revive) an old Arabic tradition of integrated knowledge, without demonstrating any of the hang-ups of most

other Arab intellectuals of the *nahda*. He remains one of a few modern Arabs who could express this universal creativity in equal measure and with the same ease in two world languages, Arabic and English.

It took Rihani many years of hardships, individual struggle and constant effort to achieve the position of a leading literary and intellectual figure. It is thus necessary to begin this study by providing a biographical sketch highlighting significant stations along his long journey from his early emigration from Mount Lebanon to New York and his extensive travels and activities in order to understand his life contribution as an engaged and committed intellectual. In this respect he deserves to be counted as another outstanding exemplar of Edward Said's 'representations of the intellectual'.

The question of identity—at the individual, group, national, or broader level—is a difficult and complex problem in the cultural, lingual, religious and political contexts. It has attracted much discussion and different interpretations. The question has particular existential dimensions for those who experience migration or exile, particularly creative individuals and intellectuals. Different intellectuals have responded to the challenges of migration and exile in different ways, as Edward Said outlined in his 1993 BBC Reith Lectures. It seems to me that Rihani represents a more positive and integrative example of Said's concept of the 'Arab' intellectual. For, he refused to be contained by any establishment and always maintained an intellectual independence and ability for dissent and non-conformity.

In one of his autobiographical statements Rihani admits that 'the language of Shakespeare' came before Arabic to his 'tongue and pen'.<sup>25</sup> His English writings (poems, essays, literary reviews and art critiques) principally reflect his concerns with acquainting the Western readership with cultural and political issues in the Arab world, particularly Arabic literature, the question of Palestine and Pan-Arab aspirations, at the same time advocating East–West reconciliation and mutual understanding. His contribution to the immigrant Arabic press in the USA (discussed in detail in Chapter Two) expressed his concern with cultural and socio-political change in the Arab homeland and in the Syrian–Lebanese Diaspora of his days, in particular cultural and political integration of the Arabic migrant community into American society.

Although not a professional journalist by training or vocation, Rihani's distinction from the beginning was that, like a 'master', his columns stood at a far higher level than the general run of material published in these papers. In his criticism of the Arabic press of New York he raised the important question of the independence of the press, financially and ideologically, and attacked the archaic style and standard of the general run of Arabic writers.

Both the issues he engaged in and his method of engagement earned Rihani the reputation of an 'energetic dissenter' in the Saidian sense.<sup>26</sup> Convinced that ignorance and religious fanaticism were the main causes behind the Arab decline in the East and the lack of cultural impact of the Arab immigrants in the West, he launched his relentless advocacy for secular rational humanism as early as 1900. In that year, he delivered his first known speech in Arabic at a Maronite Society's celebration of St Maroun's day (9 February) in the presence of religious and community leaders in New York. From then on, Rihani continued his consistent and systematic anti-clerical campaign against religious fanaticism, and he appealed for religious tolerance, mutual acceptance and rational thinking in all matters of social and political life (see Chapter Three). His pronouncements earned him the wrath of 'his' Maronite Church. He was excommunicated and one of his books, *The Tripartite Alliance in the Animal Kingdom*, was burnt. His allegorical fiction, the first of its kind in modern Arabic literature, and his evocative symbolism were well ahead of his time to be tolerated by the religious establishment. However, his defiance and his critical ideas and activities confirmed him as a celebrated intellectual dissenter and intrepid writer, both in the Arab world and the Diaspora.

Rihani's interest in Arab nationalism and his preoccupations with progress and liberation in the Arab world went hand in hand with his 'patriotic' anxieties about social justice and peace in America, and with his universal concerns, including East-West dialogue and the global impact of the West's materialism and cultural and political hegemony. It was partly due to this national-universal commitment or, in Said's expression, the 'interaction between universality and the local',<sup>27</sup> that Rihani earned the nickname of 'the philosopher of Freike'.

Despite his disappointment with certain aspects of Western culture, Rihani remained deeply involved with it through the wide-range of his reading in Western literature and his own writings in English. On the other hand, his knowledge of Arabic culture and literature deepened his appreciation of the Arabic heritage, and he felt exceptionally 'proud' of the philosopher poet from Syria, Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri, so he decided to become his translator into English. *The Quatrains of Abu'l-Ala* was not only his 'first extended exercise in cross-cultural disclosure', as Nash has put it.<sup>28</sup> It was also the debut of his career as a leading representative and interpreter of Eastern culture in the West. Perhaps the summing up of his humanist concerns in book form was *The Book of Khalid*, which was the first English book authored by an Arab-American, and Rihani's best expression of his aspirations to universal citizenship.

But this humanist universal outlook did not stop Rihani from fully embracing his Arab identity. This happened while he was in New York,

despite—or perhaps because of—his close interaction with Western literature and American culture. His rich but at times painful experience in the West seems to have contributed, in more than one way, to the transformation of his cultural identity from a Maronite in Mount Lebanon to an Arab nationalist in the heart of America. On the one hand, his readings of Western literature on the Arabs and Arabia opened his eyes for the first time to some of the Arabs' cultural glories and urged him to cross the Arabian frontiers. It was this rediscovery of his cultural Arab identity that caused the rift in his American relations at the personal and intellectual levels, especially with his American wife and the newly established Arab migrant literary association, *al-Rabita al-Qalamiyya*, led by his friends and associates Gibran and Naimy. The reclaiming of his Arab identity ultimately motivated Rihani to undertake his Arabian travels (1922–23), which proved to be the most important journey of his intellectual career (see Chapter One). This was so not only because his writings on Arabia established him as the leading authority on Arab affairs throughout the whole Arab world and in the West, but also because these journeys helped crystallise his Arab national identity and his pan-Arab concerns which remain, perhaps, the most enduring and influential in his Arabic discourse.

Rihani lived in an era when Arab national consciousness was on the rise and the Arab national movement was struggling for national reassertion, firstly vis-à-vis the Ottoman empire, then in relation to Western powers, and then when the Arabs were endeavouring to find their way and place in the modern world, politically and culturally. His interest in Arabia, as he originally put it in a letter to the American Under Secretary of State in 1921, was 'that of a friend who desires to see her [i.e. Arabia] go forward hand in hand with European Civilization', adding that he had 'no axe to grind except the axe of Civilization'.<sup>29</sup> In Arabia, despite difficulties (especially being a Christian Arab–American in those Arabian parts under British hegemony), Rihani delighted to be amongst his own people who likewise treated him as one of them. The trust created by his sincerely felt Arab identity and the cultural bonds proved stronger than any barriers, even in places like tribal Yemen and Najd.

His genuine interest in the Arab cause gained him the confidence of Arab rulers (including the two Hashimite Kings, Husayn and his son Faysal, 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud, and Imam Yahya of Yemen) and helped him play an important role in creating some common understanding among them. On the other hand, as the product of two civilizations, Eastern and Western, he nevertheless stood apart as an Arab–American traveller in a 'British-protected' traditional Arabia. Being an Arab coming from the West on a self-declared national mission afforded him enough confidence to criticise both the backward aspects in Arab life and the self-declared but insincere 'civilising mission' of the West.

And while he proudly described the glory of Arabia and her people, he was candid in his criticism of Arab conditions and he urged the Arabs to unite and modernise their institutions and way of thinking in collaboration with friendly Western nations (including America) in order to face the challenges of the modern world.

During the Hijazi War (1924–25), of all the ‘experts’ who travelled in Arabia to mediate between Ibn Sa‘ud and King Husayn, Rihani made the best ‘impression’. Even by Western criteria, Rihani was respected as an ‘inquisitive Arab–American whose disarming self-importance won the affection of Abdul Aziz’, and as an impressive peace negotiator who, as a contemporary British diplomat put it, ‘talks very reasonably’.<sup>30</sup>

While Rihani’s travels reinforced the Arab dimension of his identity, this was not in isolation from the other two dimensions: the Lebanese and the universal human. His belief that the ‘Arab homeland’ was ‘the heart of the world’<sup>31</sup> had by now been established, presumably mainly in the geographical, but perhaps also in the spiritual sense. The Arab cause, including the liberation of Lebanon and Syria and the question of Palestine, became the axis of his national–universal preoccupations. But it was from his position as a humanist that he became a prominent advocate of the Arab national movement and the first Arab ever to publicly defend Arab rights in Palestine in the international arena, a position that retains its relevance today. When between 1929 and 1939 Rihani undertook three separate lecture tours across America, his aim was to counter-balance Zionist claims and counteract Zionist propaganda and defend the cause of Arab Palestine. He did this as a true believer in justice and freedom as basic human rights, and as a humanist who firmly believed, ‘that the peace of the world depends in a measure upon peace in the Holy Land’.<sup>32</sup>

Rihani’s works evince a strong sense of hope and optimism without intellectually overlooking inherent practical difficulties, obstacles and the shortcomings of human efforts. Against this gloomy picture, Rihani maintained the hope that the justice of the Arab cause had the chance of being vindicated. Despite occasional pessimism of the intellect, his constant optimism of the will continued to inspire hope. The Palestinians asked him to mediate between them in an earlier version of their fraternal squabbles; and they later asked him to represent them in the Bludan Arab Congress in 1937. He declined the offer politely explaining that he couldn’t afford the expenses and did not want to do the representation as paid work. At the individual level, he remained a source of hope for many of his friends, including Mayy Ziadeh, the Palestinian–Lebanese writer, who found in him the only person who could understand her situation as an independent outspoken and single Arab female intellectual and creative writer.

In his 1993 Reith Lectures, Edward Said describes the intellectual as:

An individual with a specific public role in society ... endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public. And this role ... cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma ... to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose *raison d'être* is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug. The intellectual does so on the basis of universal principles: that all human beings are entitled to expect decent standards of behaviour concerning freedom and justice from worldly powers or nations, and that deliberate or inadvertent violations of these standards need to be testified and fought against courageously.<sup>33</sup>

I believe that Rihani represented such traits in no small measure as this study demonstrates.

Rihani's response to Western policies in the East, the sorry state of the Arab world and of the Syrian–Lebanese American Diaspora, was to intensify his engagement in activism. He wrote and lectured, convened literary and political societies, negotiated with politicians and activists, planned and organised days of action, and participated in peaceful disobedience activities such as strikes and boycotts. He was exiled and marginalised. The French mandate authorities in Lebanon expelled him from his home country. The Germans were infuriated with his criticism of their archaeological digs in Iraq. And some Arab countries put a ban on his books. Nevertheless, this 'amateur' 'outsider' political activist, who did not belong to any ideological party or political power, continued to express his freedom of mind, to question and to express 'a language that tries to speak the truth to power'.<sup>34</sup>

Rihani's activist campaign was not confined to the political arena, but extended to culture, literature and aesthetics. In one of his famous works of literary criticism, *Ye Poets*, Rihani attacked the 'sobbing' Arabic literature of his time, and he did not spare such prominent poets as Bishara al-Khuri (1885–1968) and Gibran, among others. He launched an earnest call for a new poetry of power so much needed for a strong national spirit. In Rihani's mind Arab writers and poets should stop being what Said once called 'humourless complainers'. This is why, as an 'organic intellectual' in the Gramscian sense,



Rihani became involved in a constant struggle to change minds and attitudes. He was always on the move, always trying to persuade leaders of opinion both in the West and in the Arab world. All this he did with 'self-irony' more than 'pomposity'.<sup>35</sup>

His blend of cultural interests and political commitment as an Arab-American is perhaps best exemplified in his description of his state of mind when in April 1917, while in Spain he heard that the USA had joined the First World War. In an open letter addressed to 'My dear Uncle Sam', he wrote:

For twenty years I ate of this man's bread and salt,—that is yours, Uncle—enjoyed the freedom of his commons, slept under his hospitable peaceful roof, shared in the bounties of his house, was treated like an equal by his people, without as much as paying a rap or contributing a song-and-dance to the entertainment ... I have been, in a word, an unpatriotic citizen, wanting in all the civic virtues, an egoist, a slacker. But now that your Uncle is at war, Rihani, what are you going to do about it? Will you continue to dawdle and dilly-dally among monuments of your brave ancestors, deciphering couplets on the walls of the Alhambra and lamenting the vanished glory of Beni Omayia and Beni Ahmar, while the country in which you were reared and schooled and entertained, is now preparing for battle? Will you for all the beauty and loveliness of Andalusia forego your right to join in the combat?<sup>36</sup>

When the US Army rejected his enlistment because of a physical ailment, Rihani volunteered his intellectual efforts to the Allied cause and tried to harness it to his nationalist and universal ambitions of liberation and peace. He realised his disillusionment only later. But for the time being his anti-German activism among the Lebanese-Syrian communities in Mexico led to his detention and deportation. His literary alternative took the form of witty, ironic, and imaginative public *Letters to Uncle Sam*, an approach which, as Miles Bradbury observed, was 'a deceptively simple form that subordinates medium to message'. At one level, the *Letters*' significance for us remains, in Bradbury's words, in their being 'the last of the realms to which Rihani was visitor—Truth'.<sup>37</sup> But the fact that these letters were finally published, and specifically in 2001, is a testament to the enduring and perhaps inspiring value of Rihani's sentiment, albeit in a completely different political and international environment, certainly as far as contemporary Arabs and Americans, especially Arab-Americans and Arabs in Western societies are concerned.

As a committed intellectual never tired of searching for alternatives, Rihani was convinced that the writer's responsibility was to strive for a better society and that at a certain level, understanding history was an important factor in achieving this. Arab social realities faced him with the challenging task of questioning Arab history and Arab attitude to the past. In his mind, any national renaissance had to start with examining the past. His early readings on the French Revolution developed his analytical and critical sense of history. For example, he criticised Thomas Carlyle's indifference, detachment and cynicism, and he wrote his own *Short History of the French Revolution* from a different perspective (see Chapter Two). On the other hand, Carlyle's *On Heroes*, particularly his positive assessment of the Prophet Muhammad, motivated Rihani to further explore Arab history, and to travel through Arabia doing exactly what Said called 'reviving forgotten (or abandoned) histories'.<sup>38</sup> He compared histories, old and new, native and foreign; he sighted secret documents; interviewed people and elites; he observed movements, witnessed actions and took part in historical events. Thus in his books on Arabia, which he wrote in both Arabic and English, Rihani produced an 'alternative' Arab 'narrative' that remains to the present perhaps the most compelling and impressive history of modern Arabia.

Rihani's most important contribution in this area remains his daring challenge of the prevalent glorification and romancing (among lay people and many experts) of the Arab past, and his fresh reading and critical attitude towards the writing of Arab history. In an age of heightened chauvinistic ideologies, both in the East and the West (for example Arab, German, Italian, Spanish, and Turkish nationalisms), and although he was a nationalist himself (but in a humanist sense), Rihani did not overestimate the Arabs' role in history. He was actually the first to advocate a dialectical approach to the Arab past, seeking to reject its negative influences while learning from its positives. Edward Said talks of the intellectual's activity that 'involves a sense of the dramatic and of the insurgent, making a great deal of one's rare opportunities to speak, catching the audience's attention, being better at wit and debate than one's opponents'.<sup>39</sup> Rihani never missed the opportunity to speak his mind and debate his opponents as well as his friends. The publication of Muhammad Kurd 'Ali's six-volume history of Syria, for example, led Rihani not only to appreciate the efforts of a close friend who was a leading literary figure (Kurd 'Ali was the founding president of the Arab Academy in Damascus of which Rihani became a corresponding member). In fact Rihani criticised his friend's approach and his reliance on traditional Arabic historians, who painted a shiny dynastic history inside the royal courts instead of revealing the peoples' 'oppression', which Rihani saw as the real cause of Arab political decline. This

was also a chance to set the ground for a new critical approach to writing and reading Arab history.

This is the context in which we must read Rihani's alternative short history of Syria, *al-Nakabat* (the Catastrophes), which he portrayed in his vivid, witty and ironic style, as a series of disasters. In a somewhat sarcastic and at times didactic tone, Rihani urged Arab historians to search, question and criticise, because failure to understand the catastrophes of the past was deadlier than the catastrophes themselves. Rihani's historical approach opened the way for later Arab historians to look critically into their past in order to learn from its lessons. Less than twenty years after Rihani's *al-Nakabat* (and his warning of an ominous *nakba* in Palestine), a series of books with similar titles were written in an attempt to understand why and how the '1948 Catastrophe' happened (the loss of most of Palestine and the Palestinian exodus after the creation of Israel is known in the Arab national memory as *al-nakba*). These included the celebrated historian Constantine Zurayq's *Ma'na al-Nakba* (the Meaning of the Catastrophe), Qadri Hafiz Tuqan's *Ba'd al-Nakba* (After the Catastrophe) and Walid al-Qamhawi's *al-Nakba w-al-Bina'* (The Catastrophe and Reconstruction). Again Zurayq would write *Ma'na al-Nakba Mujaddadan* (the Meaning of Catastrophe Reconsidered) after the 1967 Arab defeat in the war with Israel.<sup>40</sup>

In Rihani's opinion, a writer, particularly an historian, with the responsibility to shed some light on the present and to help people build a better future, should be a searcher for the 'truth', an objective 'critic' of the past and in a sense a 'teacher'. This conviction was at the base of his ideas (as explored and discussed in this study) concerning Arab progress, unity and liberation, and his resolute determination to effect the expected change in human society, both at the intellectual and practical levels. For someone who was not in power, it was just his sense of purpose and willpower which impelled him to reproach Ibn Sa'ud in person (politely of course) for his blind imitation of his ancestors in everything to the end (see Chapter Three). Seeing a descriptive and a prescriptive role for his writings (like Ibn Khaldun), Rihani's discussions of Ibn Sa'ud's achievements in the areas of justice, law and order and settlements of Bedouin tribes, for example, were an opportunity to draw the Sultan's attention to the complex issues of ignorance and manifestations of poverty surrounding his capital. He would even outline for him a practical blueprint for progress and modernisation, reminding the founder of the Sa'udi state that 'if strength and justice are the foundation of the state, education is its shield'.<sup>41</sup>

There is something fundamentally unique about Rihani whose dual identity and genuine interest in the welfare of the people and societies amongst whom he lived both in the East and the West, was combined with his confidence

and duty to be doubly critical of the societies and cultures of both. In the Arab world he consistently criticised all primordial affiliations, all forms of fundamentalism: sectarian, religious, tribal and regional. He criticised Phoenicianism and Pharoanism, political Maronitism, or what has been called the 'Lebanese idea', as well as the idea of Syrian Islamic nationalism, and pan-Islamism. He saw all these as isolationist and exclusivist ideologies, in the same manner as he criticised European supremacist and colonial propaganda. He criticised the divisions among the Arabs who have succumbed to Western cultural and political imperialism, as he criticised aspects of the Orientalist discourse and the foreign and missionary education systems 'invading' the Arab world. He criticised Western powers for their 'divide-and-rule' policies, double standards in upholding universal values and principles of self-determination, human rights and liberty, and the failure of the West's self-declared civilising mission in the East and Western imperialist ambitions in the Arab world (see Chapters Six, Seven and Eight).

Rihani was a champion of revolutionary change in society, a dissenter and a campaigner for people's rights to struggle (*jihad*) in order to attain liberty and self-government. But revolution had to come from within the people, men and women. It should begin at the individual level, at home, 'in the harem', at school, in the workplace, in the place of worship and the administration. It was profound change brought by 'modern education' that he advocated; an 'intellectual revolution' based on the principles of human rationalism, freedom and secular democracy in politics and culture. It was clear in his mind that Western 'armies and navies and air forces' could not liberate the Eastern nations. Nor was military action, national or confessional, enough to gain freedom. This was the responsibility of the intellectuals, who are, as Edward Said put it, 'the fathers and mothers' of revolutionary movements and, in Rihani's own words, 'the educators of us all, in the East and the West'.<sup>42</sup>



## CHAPTER ONE

# INTELLECTUAL FORMATION: MIGRATION, TRAVELS AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

### **From Mount Lebanon to New York and the Wider World**

Ameen Fares Rihani was born on 24 November 1876 in Freike, a little village in the Matn district in Mount Lebanon, eighteen kilometres north-east of Beirut. He was the eldest son of Fares (the great grandson of the Maronite Bishop Basilious al-Bajjani) and Anisa (the daughter of the Shaykh of the neighbouring village of Qurnat al-Hamra). The Rihanis seem to have adopted this name when the Bishop resided in al-Shawiya. By the mid-nineteenth century the family owned a raw silk factory which ensured a good standard of living compared with the then modest socio-economic conditions of Freike.<sup>1</sup>

Rihani's primary education was rudimentary and disrupted. In 1883, at seven years of age, he was sent to an 'open air' school in the neighbouring village of Bayt Shabab, where classes were conducted under a large walnut tree in the outside court of the church. In this school, as was common in Mount Lebanon in the late nineteenth century, Rihani's education was limited to learning the alphabet and Psalm I.<sup>2</sup> Two years later he moved to a modern elementary school where, in addition to Arabic reading, arithmetic and geography, he learnt elementary French. This was a private, secular school run by Na'um Mukarzil (1863–1932), who later became his companion to the USA, brother-in-law and the editor of *al-Huda*, the Arabic newspaper of Philadelphia on which Rihani eventually began his career as a writer. Mukarzil's school changed location three times within two years until it finally ended up in Freike itself. But it was later closed down leaving Rihani without regular schooling during the year before his emigration to New York in 1888.

Besides his disruptive schooling, Rihani's early life in Mount Lebanon allowed him an energetic and adventurous childhood. Even before reaching the age of ten, his personality showed clear signs of intelligence, love of adventure, dynamism and eagerness for an unusual life. Growing up in a pious, conservative and relatively wealthy family, Rihani did not abide by all social norms and religious obligations. Despite this environment, or perhaps because of it, he was of a rebellious nature. Very often, his adventurous character brought upon him the blame and punishment of his parents. Their prohibitive orders and stern attitude towards his behaviour created in him a certain anxiety to which he could only react with more rebelliousness and troublemaking.

Rihani was barely twelve years old when he had to start a new life as an immigrant in New York. Due to the economic and socio-political situation of Mount Lebanon under Ottoman rule, many Lebanese left their country seeking freedom and financial relief in America and Australia. Rihani was amongst the earliest of Syrian-Lebanese emigrants when he arrived in New York in 1888, with his uncle 'Abduh and his teacher Mukarzil. He was sent to a Catholic school in Newburg, a suburb of New York, where he experienced his first year of regular schooling. But his father, on joining him in New York a year later, needed an assistant who could read and write English, so Ameen had to leave school and for four years became a book-keeper in the family import-export business. It did not take long before Rihani started complaining of the type of work he was assigned. In spite of this, and against the will of his father who wanted him in the business, he kept on reading extensively. This in itself is significant, for it demonstrated how hard Rihani worked to force his own way in a new world of art, literature and science, contrary to the expectations of his father and the prevailing norms of his fellow emigrants.<sup>3</sup>

At the beginning of their time in New York, Rihani's family led a life of hardship and financial difficulties. Some of these difficulties, which his family suffered in common with 'every one of their compatriot-merchants', were reflected later in his semi-autobiographical novel, *The Book of Khalid* (written in English and published in 1911). It was at this early stage that Rihani discovered the huge gap between the rich and the poor, particularly in a democratic city like New York. This led him to wonder whether 'the inhabitants of this New World are better off than those of the Old?'<sup>4</sup>

In New York, he also felt the wide divide between the 'subterrestrial city guarded by the demons' and the 'City of Love' back home. He was shocked by the 'manifestations of industrial strength', and the 'monstrosities of wealth and power'. But the flagrant material superiority, the signs of progress and

the real grasp on life in New York, provided him with a new challenge for his latent intellectual rebelliousness. From the infernal world of materialism, which dominated every aspect of life, Rihani sought an escape in New York's cultural diversity. He also committed himself to an exceptionally rigorous self-education programme through readings in Western literature, which introduced him to Dante, Emerson, Hugo, Montaigne, Rousseau and Voltaire, among others.<sup>5</sup>

During this early period of his life in New York, Rihani was exposed to another aspect of Western life, namely theatre and nightlife. He began to frequent amusement centres, dancing halls and theatres and appears to have over-indulged himself. All this led to a period of tension with his father which caused Rihani to leave the family home for some time. After four years of work and individual struggle he decided, in 1895, to leave both his family and his father's shop and he joined the Henry Jewett Theatre Company, then playing Hamlet and Macbeth in Kansas City.<sup>6</sup>

Rihani's decision at the age of nineteen to shift from business to art has been rightly described as 'the first break on record with the traditions of Syrian emigrants in the USA and elsewhere'.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it proved a turning point in his life and perhaps an example for others. When the Jewett Theatre Company went bankrupt shortly afterwards and Rihani was obliged to return home, he seemed to have already resolved to devote himself to art and literature. Hence began his career as a writer, traveller and thinker.

Anxious to extend his education, Rihani attended classes at a night school for one year in 1896. This enabled him to be admitted to the New York Law School. But a year later he interrupted his studies, partly because of a lung infection, and partly because he found that, like business, law was incompatible with his temperament.<sup>8</sup> In a state of isolation and desperation, he found his refuge in writing. As early as 1898, he started to contribute articles to Na'um Mukarzil's Arabic newspaper *al-Huda*, then published in Philadelphia.<sup>9</sup> These early contributions which expressed his rebellion also reflected the conflict which he experienced between English, his adopted language, and Arabic, his native tongue. At this time, his Arabic was still weak and very often he resorted to English to express himself more clearly, leaving the editor of *al-Huda* to finalise his articles in Arabic. This conflict stimulated him to intensify and extend his programme of private study, to include not only readings in English but also books in Arabic covering grammar, literature, history, religion, philosophy and politics.<sup>10</sup>

In the rich intellectual and cultural environment of New York, Rihani was not completely isolated from the Syrian-Lebanese community. In the period between 1890 and 1898 he associated with a group of Syrian



emigrants who shared some of his intellectual interests and preoccupations. Amongst members of this group were Shibl Damus, 'Isa al-Khuri, Na'um Labaki, Jamil Ma'luf, Na'um Mukarzil and Salim Sarkis, with whom he had several intellectual debates in the Arabic press. Meanwhile, he succeeded in establishing contacts with a number of important American literary figures, such as the poets Edwin Markham (1852–1940) and Richard Le Gallienne (1866–1947), and the writer Michael Monahan (1865–1933). These close associations made him reasonably well recognised in American literary circles as early as 1898, and helped him later to achieve celebrity as a writer and poet in both the Arabic and English-speaking worlds.<sup>11</sup>

In 1898, after ten years in the USA, Rihani returned to Lebanon seeking a cure for his lung infection. He also joined a school in Qurnat Shahwan where he greatly improved his Arabic while working as a teacher of English.<sup>12</sup> This introduced him to the major Arabic linguistic and literary works, such as grammar books, the *Maqamat* of Hariri (d. 1122), the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), the poetry of both the mystic Ibn al-Farid (d. 1235) and the pessimist philosopher-poet Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri (d. 1058). He was especially impressed by Abu al-'Ala', in whom he found a kindred critical and rebellious spirit. In 1899 he returned to America carrying the *Luzumiyyat* of Abu al-'Ala' of which he became the translator.<sup>13</sup> It is clear that the period of ten years between his first migration from Lebanon to America and his return was crucial for Rihani's intellectual development. His keenness for self-education, particularly his wide-ranging readings in both Arabic and Western literatures, sharpened his innate tendency to seek philosophical and spiritual truth from both sources. It also confronted him with the question of coming to terms with the resulting cultural conflict between the new and old worlds. Rihani was, perhaps, the first Arab migrant to have to face this situation intellectually.

Rihani's activities during his second stay in America (between 1899 and 1904) were mainly concerned with two closely-related intellectual pursuits: an active commitment to the cause of his people in New York and back home, and an increasing openness towards, and participation in, Western literary life. This latter activity was reflected in Rihani's intensified readings in English and French literature and through his own publications in English.

Even while still in Lebanon, Rihani had become convinced that the decline of the Arab East as well as the backwardness and lack of cultural impact of the Arab immigrants in the West were due to two factors: ignorance and religious fanaticism. His intellectual response to this conviction was frequently expressed in a radical way through his writings in Arabic newspapers and his speeches before the Syrian community organisations in New York.

For example, on 9 February 1900, during a ceremony on the occasion of St Maroun's Day at the Maronite Society in New York, Rihani delivered his first Arabic speech, entitled '*al-Tasahul al-Dini*' (Religious Tolerance), in the presence of religious leaders. In this speech he called for tolerance and strongly attacked religious fanaticism and criticised some attitudes of the clergy. The speech created a strong reaction among the emigrants as well as in the Arab world, especially in Lebanon and Egypt and inaugurated a lively and long-lasting controversy in the Arabic press concerning his ideas.<sup>14</sup> As a consequence the Arabic community in New York witnessed the formation of a widening circle of friends in support of Rihani's views, so enhancing his standing in the community.<sup>15</sup>

The death of his father from tuberculosis in Lebanon, in 1902, seems to have intensified in Rihani the need to confront, at a personal and spiritual level, the questions of death and life after death—questions with which he had been intellectually familiar for some time. His reading of Ernest Renan's *The Life of Jesus*, and Louis Viardot's *Reasons for Unbelief* in this period strengthened his liberal intellectual tendencies. In this environment, he wrote his highly controversial book *al-Muhalafa al-Thulathiyya fi al-Mamlaka al-Hayawaniyya* (The Tripartite Alliance in the Animal Kingdom), an allegorical critique of the thinking of clergymen. In this book, first published in New York in 1903, Rihani used animal characters which engaged in debating religion, some supporting Rihani's pro-scientific views, others opposing science in the name of religion. Some of Rihani's ideas, which he elaborated in later writings, are found in this early allegorical novel, particularly as expressed by the fox which discussed and refuted many features of the traditional religious establishment. The novel created strong hostile reactions, both in New York and in Lebanon. Religious leaders, in particular, severely criticised Rihani and accused him of heresy. This led to the burning of the book and to Rihani's excommunication from the Maronite Church.<sup>16</sup> However, Rihani was undaunted and in a novel published in the next year, entitled *al-Mukari w-al-Kahin* (The Muleteer and the Priest), he reiterated similar views.

At the same time as Rihani was addressing such questions, which he considered hindered the progress of his people in the East, he continued his vigorous interaction with the Western literary tradition. Not only did he intensify his readings of Western literature, as reflected in his first book in Arabic on the French Revolution entitled *Nubdha fi al-Thawra al-Faransiyya* (New York, 1902), but he also decided to address his Western readership in English. His first work in English, *The Quatrains of Abu'l-Ala* (New York, 1903), was a translation of selections of al-Ma'arri's poetry and

was received enthusiastically. Not only was it launched in the presence of more than 100 American poets and authors, but it was also reviewed and noted in numerous newspapers and magazines in the USA, Canada and Britain as well as in the Arab world.<sup>17</sup> This further enhanced Rihani's status in American literary circles, and gave him an entrée to the membership of several literary and cultural clubs in New York, including the Pleiades Club (1903), the Poetry Society of America (1904), and the National Society of Theatrical Art (1904). He became accepted as a writer in English-language journals, thus improving his financial situation and enabling him to devote himself increasingly to literary work.

Rihani's intellectual activities during this period reflected his wide interests in various fields of knowledge. This is clearly illustrated in the range of his published articles up to 1904 which were later collected in *Shadharat min 'Abd al-Siba*. This period was of special importance in Rihani's intellectual and emotional development. His experiences and activities at both levels are reflected in his writings both in Arabic and English. At the personal level, in addition to the death of his father, he was going through a deep emotional experience. Almost simultaneously he fell in love with two Lebanese women in New York. Neither relationship seemed to have lasted long, for one was apparently an older, married woman, and the other, nearly his age, died in a drowning accident far away in the Amazon.<sup>18</sup> This period also revealed Rihani's disappointment with Western culture and its way of life as indicated by his articles in Arabic newspapers.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps it was a combination of these experiences, his ill-health, and the serious illness of his sister which finally prompted him to return to Lebanon for an extended stay.

In 1904 Rihani returned for the second time to Lebanon with the aim of 'seeking rest for his mind, soul and body'.<sup>20</sup> He attempted to lead a life of secluded meditation and writing. However this seclusion did not last long for he felt it a patriotic duty to try to assist his country and his people who were beginning to shake off the Ottoman yoke.<sup>21</sup> A number of Arab intellectuals had been active for some years in opposing Ottoman oppression and demanding Arab national rights, and the Arabic press was playing a significant role in this movement.<sup>22</sup> During this stay in Lebanon, Rihani's house in Freike was, and continued to be for a long time, a meeting place for Arab intellectuals many of whom were active in the Arab nationalist movement. These included Muhammad Kurd 'Ali (1876–1953), Mustafa al-Ghalayini (1886–1945), Muhammad Lutfi Jum'a (1886–1953), Khalil Mutran (1871–1949), Mustafa al-Rafi'i (1880–1937), Ma'ruf al-Rusafi (1875–1945), Constantine Yanni (1885–1947) and others who became life-long friends and associates.

On the other hand, it is clear that Rihani's stay in the Arab East convinced him of the importance of addressing Arab audiences and readers. In this context his activities between 1904 and 1910 were channelled into three areas: contributions to several Arabic newspapers; lecturing in cultural associations and schools in Syria and Lebanon on the theme of social and political reform;<sup>23</sup> and writing two creative works in Arabic, a novella and a play, both with a clear political message. These two works were inspired by the restoration of the Ottoman Constitution in 1908 and the overthrow of 'Abd al-Hamid in 1909. The novella, *Nabukhadh Nassar al-Shahhadh* (Nebuchadnezzar the Beggar), was published in Beirut in 1909 and illustrated the fate of the tyrant ruler. The play, *'Abd al-Hamid fi al-Asitana* ('Abd al-Hamid in Constantinople), was staged in Beirut in November 1909, six months after the overthrow of 'Abd al-Hamid.

Rihani's stay in the East did not completely distance him from the West. His writings during this period were not confined to the issue of liberation and progress in the Arab East. For he now began to address national as well as universal issues including problems of the West's material, spiritual and intellectual condition. Many of his essays in Arabic, reflecting this national-universal commitment, were written during this period.

It was in 1910, after the publication of these essays in the first volume of *al-Rihaniyyat*, that Rihani became known as *Faylasuf al-Freike* (the philosopher of Freike), a title which was to remain associated with his name all his life and after his death.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to his political activities and preoccupations, Rihani's stay in the East enhanced his contact with the contemporary Arab intellectual milieu. This, in turn, deepened his awareness of the importance of the Arab heritage and his concern for Arab material and cultural revival. When in 1905 he spent winter in Cairo with his sick sister, Sa'da, Rihani took the opportunity to meet leading Egyptian and other Arab intellectuals, acquainting himself with current debates on political, social and cultural issues. It was during this visit that he made lasting contacts with literary figures and journalists, including Shibli Shumayyil (1850–1917), Jurji Zaydan (1861–1914), Ya'qub Sarruf (1852–1927) and Khalil Mutran (1871–1949), all of them Syrian-Lebanese expatriates, as well as the two major Egyptian poets of the time, Ahmad Shawqi (1868–1932) and Hafiz Ibrahim (1871–1932). He also visited Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), the well-known reformist and the then Mufti of Egypt. His visits to Cairo in 1905 and the following year obviously put him face to face with the current trends of Arabic thought: the conservative trend of the Azhar *'ulama'*, the Islamic Reformist trends of al-Afghani (1838–97) and of Muhammad 'Abduh, and the materialist, secularist trend of Shibli Shumayyil and Farah Antun (1874–1922).<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, his stay for five years in Lebanon, in the heart of nature, far from the noisy and hectic life of New York, offered Rihani an ideal environment for writing. In 1905 there appeared in the magazine *al-Hilal* in Cairo, his first experiment in free verse, or prose poetry. Influenced by the American Walt Whitman (1819–92), Rihani was the first to introduce what he called ‘prose poetry’ (*al-shi‘r al-manthur*) or ‘free verse’ into Arabic.<sup>26</sup> During this period he also began to write in *al-Barq* newspaper, published in Beirut, a regular literary column under the heading *Budhur lil-Zari‘in* (Seeds for Cultivators, posthumously published in 1961). Between 1907 and 1910, while staying in Lebanon, he completed *The Book of Khalid*, the first book ever authored in English by an Arab. In a personal letter in 1907, he described it as ‘the soul-history of one, an Oriental, who has gone through the various mazes of the Civilization of the West, who has explored the Higher Things of the mind in a spirit not too sympathetic and not too inimical. It is what you call an ambitious work (...) a book with a purpose no less than that of the prophet’.<sup>27</sup> After the completion of this book, Rihani decided to return to New York. It may be that the oppression the Ottoman authorities started to exert on the Arab nationalists was behind his decision to leave Lebanon; but the desire to introduce his ‘Oriental prophet’ to his adopted country must also have had a significant impact on this decision.

On his way to New York in 1910 Rihani made his first visit to Paris. He met a number of important Syrian–Lebanese men of letters and political activists, including Khayrallah Khayrallah, Shukri Ghanim (1861–1929) and ‘Abbas Bajjani who were to play an important role in Syrian–French relations during and after the First World War. Rihani would meet Ghanim for the second time in Paris in 1916.

It was also during his first visit to Paris that Rihani met Gibran Khalil Gibran (1883–1931) who was then studying painting in Paris. This was, apparently, their first meeting although they had known each other by repute since before 1910.<sup>28</sup> The two men spent about a month together in London acquainting themselves with British cultural and political institutions. This was an opportunity for Rihani to approach a Western audience by giving poetry recitals to a number of literary circles, including the Authors’ Society, the Women’s Literary Association and the Poetry Society but he was unable to arrange a staging of his play, *Wajdah*, written in English in 1908–09. His experience in London and Paris seems to have produced the concept of an opera house in Beirut which he discussed with Gibran who drew a sketch for it. It was captioned by Rihani and signed by both men.<sup>29</sup>

Between 1910, the year he returned to New York, and 1922, the year he travelled in Arabia, Rihani published several books in English, which

established him as a leading representative and interpreter of Eastern culture in the West. In addition to *The Book of Khalid*, he published in 1918 a revised edition of his 1903 *The Quatrains of Abu'l-Ala* under the title *The Luzumiyat*, which was also the name of one of Abu al-'Ala's collections of verse. In 1920 he published *The Descent of Bolshevism* in which he tried to establish a parallel between the Bolshevik Revolution and a number of non-conformist movements in Islamic history. He also published *The Path of Vision* (1921), a collection of contemplative essays on East and West with mystic bearings. In poetry, he published *A Chant of Mystics and Other Poems* (1921), a collection of his pieces which had appeared from 1910 in a number of American periodicals. His activities at this stage also involved publication of literary and political articles and art critiques, including painting, ballet and theatre, in a number of English-language American periodicals.

In Arabic, he published the second volume of *al-Rihaniyyat* (1911), and a novel entitled *Zanbaqat al-Ghawr* (*The Lily of the Jordan Valley*, 1915) in which the heroine, having lived in both East and West represents the meeting of the two, but emerges in fact as the victim of both. In 1917 in New York he published *Kharij al-Harim* (*Out of the Harem*), a novel originally written (but never published) in English under the title of *Jahan* and translated into Arabic by 'Abd al-Masih Haddad. The heroine, a self-liberated Turkish social rebel, falls in love with a high ranking German officer and begets a child who is supposed to symbolise an ideal East-West union.

The publication of *The Book of Khalid*, illustrating Rihani's particular concern with the possible meeting between East and West, led also to the establishment of an intellectual and emotional relationship between Rihani and an American writer, Charlotte Teller, whom he had known through Gibran and his friend Mary Haskell. As a creative writer and intellectual 'who had been ... taking a hand in the social reform movement' in New York, Charlotte, a woman 'mighty of soul', as Rihani described her, appeared to be a living example of the culture with which Rihani was confronted in the West. Although he loved her and, as he put it, so much 'wanted to have a child from an American woman, particularly a strong intellectual woman' such as she, their relationship did not last long.<sup>30</sup>

A second particularly important relationship developed, in 1916, between Rihani and another Western woman, Bertha Case, an American painter who was to become his wife a few months later. It appears from his unpublished letters that, at the beginning of his marriage to Bertha, Rihani continued to lead the life of a writer and activist for, as he put it, he did not want marriage to be an obstacle for him or for his wife in their intellectual

and artistic pursuits.<sup>31</sup> The Rihani couple travelled in Spain, France and Italy where they visited Pope Benedict XV. While Bertha stayed in Spain to finish some paintings, Ameen returned to Paris to follow up his intellectual and political activities. It was in this period that he met Shukri Ghanim for the second time and discussed the possibility of the emigrant Syrians in the USA joining the Allied forces in the First World War. During this period, he travelled to Mexico for the same purpose.

Unfortunately, his relationship with Bertha became troubled when she insisted on settling in the USA or Europe where she could pursue her painting career, while he preferred to wait until the situation in Lebanon and Syria was settled so he could return and finally live in his country of birth. The situation between them worsened when Rihani decided to undertake travel in the Arab world. He tried in vain to convince Bertha to accompany him to the East and, when she refused, he went on his own. After a long period of estrangement, the marriage was finally dissolved in 1939, one year before Rihani's death. Meanwhile he travelled in Arabia and went back to Lebanon, to spend the years 1923 to 1940 moving between the Arab world, the USA, and other countries.

The choice between travelling in the Arab countries and staying with his wife not only showed that Rihani failed, at least at the personal level, to reconcile East and West, but also indicated how important the Arab cause had become for him. In fact, his Arab concerns during this period also began to affect his relationship with the *Mahjar* writers in New York, particularly with Gibran. Thus, it may be appropriate to discuss this relationship as an introduction to the issues which preoccupied him before his travels in Arabia and which subsequently opened a new era in Rihani's career as an intellectual and activist.

Through their common intellectual and political concerns a close friendship grew between Rihani and Gibran and continued for a long period. Rihani's presence in New York and his close connections with its American literary circles were important reasons for Gibran's relocation when, in 1911, he moved from Boston to New York. He could then count on Rihani to introduce him to his American and Syrian friends. It is also significant that, before embarking on his literary career in English, Gibran appears to have held Rihani as his ideal for combining a literary career not only in Arabic but also in the English-speaking world. He proudly recommended Rihani's poems to his American friends, and spoke of his own enchantment at reciting them himself to his circle of Boston poets.<sup>32</sup> Gibran drew the cover and illustrations for Rihani's *The Book of Khalid* and this work seems to have had a strong impact on his own literary work,

particularly on *The Prophet* (first published in 1923), the book upon which Gibran's fame largely rests.<sup>33</sup>

However, the cordial relationship between Rihani and Gibran later ran into difficulties due to reasons which remain indistinct. Jamil Jabr ascribed it to 'intriguing gossip' and it was probably aggravated by Rihani's disapproval of Gibran's 'sentimental' literature and, perhaps, by their divergent views on the directions of political change in the homeland. Certainly, Gibran is reported to have told Mary Haskell that he himself favoured revolution against the Ottomans while others, including Rihani, sought home rule through peaceful means.<sup>34</sup>

The two writers remained estranged until the death of Gibran when Rihani paid tribute to him on the arrival of his remains in Lebanon in 1931 and also on later occasions.<sup>35</sup>

It is against this background that we may understand Rihani's attitude towards the Pen Bond (*al-Rabita al-Qalamiyya*) which was founded in New York by Gibran, Mikhail Naimy (1889–1988) and other Syrian and Lebanese writers in 1920. Rihani did not join *al-Rabita*, in part, perhaps, because of his dispute with Gibran and his disagreement with other *Mahjar* writers in their literary preoccupations, and partly because his interests at that time had gone far beyond those of *al-Rabita*. For he was not only writing in English as well as in Arabic, but for some time he had been more concerned with the political future of the Arab countries where he wished to travel. Rihani reproached Gibran and Naimy for wasting their efforts on idealistic philosophies when the conditions in the homeland were in urgent need of their attention.<sup>36</sup>

It may be that Rihani saw himself far ahead of the founders of *al-Rabita*. For not only had he preceded them in his concern to free Arabic literature from the classical formulas by about fifteen years,<sup>37</sup> but his interests now extended to Arab society as a whole, in the literary as well as the social and political spheres.

It is also significant that by 1920, the year which witnessed the birth of *al-Rabita*, Rihani had already established his reputation as a writer in Arabic as well as in English. By 1920 he had published eight books in Arabic and five in English including his major creative work in that language, *The Book of Khalid*, and his collected poems, *Myrtle and Myrrh* (1905). Since 1910 Rihani had expanded his membership of American literary associations to include the Poetry Society of America (1911), the American Asiatic Society (1918), and the Authors' Club (1919) in New York in addition to other societies mentioned previously.<sup>38</sup> His reputation as a distinguished writer led in late 1921 to his election as a corresponding member of the Arab Academy of Damascus which was presided over by his friend Muhammad Kurd 'Ali.<sup>39</sup>



Between 1922 and his death in 1940, Rihani visited most of the Arab countries as well as India and several Western countries including Canada, England, France, Italy and Spain (he had also visited Austria and Germany between 1911 and 1914). His travels, of which the most important were those in Arabia in 1922–23, are discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

In January 1922, on his way to Arabia, Rihani passed through Egypt where several receptions were held in his honour and he was hailed as the modern Arab genius (*nabigha*). He took the opportunity to extend his contacts with leading Egyptian and Syrian figures and men of letters.<sup>40</sup> These included the Secretary of the Egyptian cabinet, Ahmad Zaki Pasha (1866–1934), a distinguished scholar, diplomat and bibliophile; and Prince Michel Lutfallah, an active leader of the Syrian community in Cairo. He also met Shaykh Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935), Muhammad 'Abduh's renowned disciple who devoted most of his career to propagating a revivalist interpretation of the Islamic faith and institutions. Both Lutfallah and Rida were active leaders and organisers of the movement for Syrian independence.

In other Arab countries Rihani met more important political and intellectual Arab figures with whom he maintained close contact for a long time. These included Ahmad Dayf (Egypt), Kazim al-Dujayli, Sati' al-Husri (1880–1968), 'Abd al-Rahman al-Naqib, 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Sa'dun and Muhammad Rida al-Shabibi (Iraq, 1886–1965), amongst others.<sup>41</sup> His travels in Arabia are discussed below but it is important to point out here that these travels gained him the friendship of most Arabian rulers who were to confide in him regarding their national plans and concerns. This enabled him to play an important advisory role in economic and political matters. Two examples demonstrate this. Firstly, he negotiated a number of times with British oil companies on behalf of Bahrain, Kuwait and Najd.<sup>42</sup> Then, in 1924, he went to the Hijaz on a mediation mission in the conflict between Ibn Sa'ud and King 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn, who had succeeded his father that year.<sup>43</sup>

After his travels in Arabia, Rihani's interests in the Arab cause consumed most of his political and intellectual activities and he became a prominent advocate of Arab rights in the international arena. His visit to Morocco in 1939 can be viewed within this framework when he met the 'Khalifa' al-Hasan b. al-Mahdi, ruler of Northern Morocco, then a Spanish protectorate. In the same year he visited General Franco in Bergos (Spain) to discuss the Far Maghrib question and Arab–Spanish relations.<sup>44</sup>

Rihani's preoccupations during this period were centred on three issues of which the Arab cause in general formed the central axis. The second related

issue was the future of Syria and Lebanon where the problem of the French Mandate incurred Rihani's hostility and resulted in his temporary expulsion from Lebanon in January 1934. During this time he spent three months in Iraq at the invitation of King Ghazi (r. 1933–39).<sup>45</sup> The third issue was the question of Palestine. He became actively involved in this cause, at least from 1927 when he visited Palestine and established connections with Palestinian political parties and leaders, particularly the president of the High Islamic Council, Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husayni, and members of the Christian Youth Association (*Jam'iyyat al-Shubban al-Masihiyin*) and members of the Islamic League (*al-Nadi al-Islami*).<sup>46</sup> Between 1929 and 1939, with the aim of finding a just solution to the Palestine question, he gave a series of lectures in American universities and to political associations in which he defended Arab rights in Palestine. This gave him the opportunity to discuss and debate the question in the West, not only at the intellectual level but also at the diplomatic and political levels, at the same time extending his Western connections to American and British diplomats, politicians and men of state.

Despite his perpetual movements and activities, or perhaps because of them, this period was rich in intellectual work and writing. Returning from his Arabian tour, he published *Muluk al-'Arab* (the Kings of Arabia, Beirut, 1924) in two volumes, based on his journey through the Arabian Peninsula. These volumes became an immediate and enduring success. After a second visit in 1926 to Ibn Sa'ud in Jeddah (the latter had vanquished the Hashimites in 1925) Rihani published *Tarikh Najd wa Mulhaqatihi* (The History of Najd and its Additional Territories, reprinted as *Tarikh Najd al-Hadith*), a good part of which is based on his findings and observations during his Arabian journeys and his association and lengthy conversations with Ibn Sa'ud. In 1928 he published, in English, *Ibn Sa'oud of Arabia: his People and his Land* (London, Boston and Toronto), an account of the rise of modern Arabia under Ibn Sa'ud. In 1930–31 he published, consecutively, *Around the Coasts of Arabia* and *Arabian Peak and Desert* based mainly on his Arabic work *Muluk al-'Arab*. And in 1934–35 he published both *Faysal al-Awwal* (Faysal the First), a history of King Faysal with emphasis on his role as a pioneer of pan-Arabism and as founder of modern Iraq and *Qalb al-'Iraq* (The Heart of Iraq), covering various aspects of modern development and life in Iraq under King Faysal.

These books ensured Rihani a prominent position as an authority on Arab politics and society. A number of Orientalists including H. A. R. Gibb, Henry Lammens, and Louis Massignon visited him in Freike to discuss social, economic and political issues of the Arab world. Arab amirs, notably Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Al Khalifa of Bahrain and 'Abd al-Karim Fadl, Sultan of Lahaj, and other leading Arabs also visited him to discuss Arab affairs.<sup>47</sup> At his

death Rihani left two major travel works almost ready for publication. These were *Qalb Lubnan* (The Heart of Lebanon), a book in which he recorded his reflections on, and journeying within Lebanon, and *al-Maghrib al-Aqsa* (The Far Maghrib) incorporating *Nur al-Andalus* (the Light of Andalusia), dealing with his visits to Morocco and Spain. Both works were published posthumously in 1947 and 1952 respectively.

In addition to his travel books, Rihani published two more volumes of *al-Rihaniyyat* (1924), containing some of his collected political essays and reflections that had appeared in the Arabic press since the publication of his first two volumes. In 1928 he published two further volumes, *al-Tatarruf w-al-Islah* (Extremism and Reform), a collection of essays on reform and revolution, and *al-Nakabat* (the Catastrophes), a short history of Syria viewed as a series of calamities.

In the field of literary criticism he published, in 1933, *Antum al-Shu'ara'* (Ye Poets), an attack on the nature of 'sobbing' literature, and an earnest call for what he saw as a much-needed 'poetry of power', so vital for the formation of a strong national spirit.<sup>48</sup> In 1934 he published *Wafa' al-Zaman* (The Loyalty of Time), a play written on the occasion of the millennium of the famous Persian poet, al-Firdawsi. For this Rihani was awarded the Iran Sach by Reza Shah Pahlavi. His English articles and lectures delivered in America were published posthumously in 1967 as *The Fate of Palestine*.

Ameen Rihani died in 1940 after a bicycle accident in Freike. By then he had become a true celebrity in the world of literature and politics in the East as well as in the West. He had maintained extensive personal contacts and correspondence with leading Arab literary and political figures as well as with prominent Orientalists. His association with some of these figures, such as the Arab monarchs 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud and Faysal I, had extended beyond the official sphere, and sometimes led to devoted friendship, as in the case of Mayy Ziadeh, the talented Palestinian-Lebanese writer who was active in Egypt and whom he helped out of her crisis in 1938.<sup>49</sup>

In 1937 he was granted an honorary Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in the USA and in 1939 he was elected an honorary president of the Academy of Moroccan Studies in Morocco. From 1921 his name started to appear in reference books such as the *Who's Who in America*, *Who is Who Among North American Authors*, and *Who's Who in Literature* (Britain) and, after his death, in *Who Was Who in America* and in *American Authors and Books 1640 to the Present Day*. By 1976, his centenary year, twenty-five books in Arabic and eleven in English had appeared under his name, in addition to a great amount of other material preserved in newspapers and unpublished manuscripts.

### **An Arab–American Traveller in Tribal Arabia**

There is no doubt that Rihani was an intrepid traveller and that his travels in Arabia, in particular, were of great importance. His journeys covered most Arab lands and he also visited other countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. In all these wanderings Rihani had the mind and the eye of a keen observer. This is reflected in his writings, notably his special books on his travels in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco as well as Spain. We shall concentrate on his travels in Arabia during the 1920s which provided the material for some of his most interesting works. These travels in Arabia are particularly significant as they allow us to understand his political ideals and describe how he sought to advance the cause of co-operation between Arab rulers of the time.

On 25 February 1922 Rihani first set foot in the Arabian Peninsula. This was in Jeddah in the Hijaz where he had several meetings with King Husayn who, upon learning his intention to visit the Yemen, responded positively to Rihani's suggestion to mediate between him and Imam Yahya Ibn Hamid al-Din. Despite some difficulties with the British authorities in Aden, he was allowed to continue to San'a where he and his companion, Constantine Yanni, were held captive for ten days by Imam Yahya who initially suspected Rihani's intentions. From the Yemen he moved to 'Asir and met its ruler al-Sayyid al-Idrisi. He then left for Iraq by way of Bombay where he attempted, without success, to visit Mahatma Gandhi in prison.<sup>50</sup> After meetings with King Faysal Ibn al-Husayn he negotiated with Sir Percy Cox, High Commissioner for Britain in Iraq, and his Oriental Secretary, Miss Gertrude Bell, to allow him to visit Najd.<sup>51</sup> He travelled there and became closely associated with the Sultan 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud and acted as his interpreter and personal adviser at the important Conference of Ojair ('Uqayr, 28 November–3 December 1922) between representatives of Iraq, Kuwait, Najd and the British.<sup>52</sup> He then travelled across the Nafud desert to Kuwait, escorted by Sa'udi companions and met Shaykh Ahmad Ibn Jabir al-Sabah. From Kuwait he continued to Bahrain and then back to Aden, Iraq and finally to Beirut where, in April 1923, he ended his Arab tour which had lasted over one year.

It is necessary to explore the possible motives behind Rihani's travels in Arabia and what distinguished him from other travellers. It is important also to indicate the value of his books based on his travels for modern scholarship.

Unlike most Western travellers in Arabia whose works he had read before setting out (for example, Burckhardt, Burton, Doughty, Palgrave), Rihani was not the son of a traveller, nor was he a professional explorer supported by a scientific society, nor a member of an official diplomatic mission.

Rihani tells us that the idea of travelling in Arabia came to him as early as 1910, when he discussed it with his friend Muhammad Kurd 'Ali who, persecuted by the Ottomans, spent some days at Rihani's home in Freike.<sup>53</sup> Doubtless the idea was fortified by the Arab call to resist the Turkifying process but it took another twelve years for it to be realised as Muhammad Kurd 'Ali had to flee to Europe and Rihani also felt it necessary to leave Lebanon and spend the years of the First World War moving between Europe and America.

The most important motive behind Rihani's decision to go to Arabia was an intellectual quest which he describes in the preface to his *Muluk al-'Arab*. In an autobiographical statement he indicates the stages of his cultural metamorphosis from a Maronite in the Lebanese Mountain to an Arab nationalist promoting the interests of the Pan-Arab movement. Several factors seem to have contributed to this development in his outlook and his desire to discover his Arab roots. These include his reading of Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* which introduced him to the great Arab Prophet, and *al-Hambra* by Washington Irving which introduced him to the glories of Arab Spain. The wealth of English travel literature on Arabia, on the other hand, introduced him to the lure of the unknown and the urge to cross the mystical Arabian frontiers.

This intellectual journey brought Rihani back to his Arab identity and he decided to search further for his roots in the land of his ancestors. The dream could not be realised during the 1910s because of the First World War. When the Arab revolt was declared against the Turks in 1916, Rihani identified strongly with this movement 'assuming', as he put it, 'some of the duties that I was bound to by my love and admiration of my people'. His first visit to Andalusia (1917) had a strong impact on him for 'I heard voices calling me, in the name of nationalism (*al-qawmiyya*) and the homeland (*al-watan*), to the cradle of revelation and prophecy'.<sup>54</sup>

Several times Rihani indicated that his travels in Arabia had a three-fold purpose: to see the country, to write a book about it, and to be of some service to its people and their cause. More ambitiously, he connected this with his hopes for Arab unity which 'can only be realised by the meeting of all the ruling amirs and their mutual acquaintance and common understanding'.<sup>55</sup> He believed that Arab rulers were isolated from each other, if not at war with each other, and none had a thorough knowledge of his contemporaries or their countries, not even through reliable reports. Thus, he thought that his travels in Arabia, and the book which he intended to write about it, would help the Arab rulers know more about each other, and about the affairs of other Arab countries. This, in his opinion, would assist the Arabs to know

each other and achieve mutual understanding based on sound knowledge. He also planned to publish a book in English on the basis of his travels to acquaint English readers with contemporary Arabia.

Rihani's motives were questioned by some of his contemporaries, including Western diplomats. Not only did the British authorities in Arabia suspect him of working for the American government and for certain American oil companies who desired concessions in Arabia, but some Arabs also accused him of being employed by the British.<sup>56</sup> Rihani insisted that what brought him to travel in Arabia was his love for the country and its people. His answer to doubts about his motives was that, although Lebanese and Syrian by birth and American by naturalisation, he was an Arab by origin (*wa ana aslan minhum*) and in his travels he wanted to be of service to the Arabs.

It is true that in Arabia Rihani had contacts with the American Consul in Aden, and with the British authorities in Aden and Iraq, but his contacts with both parties were in the framework of his attempts to obtain permission to visit certain areas in Arabia which were under British control, such as Aden, or their indirect influence, such as Najd. As far as we know, he had no official connections with either the American or the British governments. Rihani was interested in the progress of the Arabs. His interest in Arabia, as he originally declared in a letter to the American Under Secretary of State in 1921, was 'that of a friend who desires to see her [i.e. Arabia] go forward hand in hand with European Civilization', and he had 'no axe to grind except the Axe of Civilization'.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, Rihani did not hide his desire to be of some service to the interests of the American government. He assumed that America 'is no doubt interested in the development of conditions in the Near East, particularly in Mesopotamia and Arabia', and stated that he would 'be pleased to furnish it, from no other than a purely patriotic motive, with a report on the subject'.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, when trying to obtain a visa to the Yemen, Rihani assured the British authorities at Aden that if he saw the Arabs needed British assistance, he would advise them accordingly, and was prepared to act without payment on behalf of the British if it benefited the Arabs.<sup>59</sup> Does this mean that Rihani was serving both American and British interests in Arabia? There is no doubt, as Irfan Shahid indicates, that Rihani, who had participated for two decades in American cultural life, assimilating what he thought helpful for his people in the Arab homeland, would like to see American influence extended to the political sphere with himself as the apostle of the new relationship.<sup>60</sup> However, once in Arabia, the strong British presence obviously convinced him that American involvement was a long way off. Since he saw 'European' intervention as inevitable, he

recommended British assistance to the Arabs, without completely giving up his hopes of American involvement, as indicated by his efforts in the 1930s to bring about rapprochement between the American government and Ibn Sa'ud.<sup>61</sup>

As far as can be ascertained from available evidence, it cannot be said that Rihani was paid or employed by the British or the American governments. His travels, as he told his wife, would be funded from the family business in Mexico and from payment for his contributions to American newspapers.<sup>62</sup> Thus, while he would have liked to serve the interests of his adopted country, the USA, it was clear that this would not be against the interests of the Arabs. It was also clear that his advice to the Arabs to seek British assistance was defined within the context of Arab interests. This, in fact, made him different from other travellers, such as Philby, who was initially sent by the British government on an official mission.

Beside his Arab national motives, Rihani's travels in Arabia were undertaken for the purpose of book writing. While planning his trip, he formulated a list of vital questions which he thought could not be answered until he had gone over the territory thoroughly. The list demonstrated not only his awareness of the social and political issues which concerned the Arabs at the time, but also that he himself was concerned about the future and progress of the Arab nation.<sup>63</sup>

In terms of what they achieved Rihani's travels were quite different from those of earlier travellers. Being a native Arab with an innate knowledge of the Arabic language and culture certainly facilitated his mission and, together with his native intuition, gave him better opportunities of observation and experience. Throughout his travels in Arabia, Rihani enjoyed a special status of a 'dear' visitor amongst his own people. King Husayn treated him as a Hijazi and called him *al-'aziz* (dear) and Ibn Sa'ud considered him a Najdi.<sup>64</sup> Unlike many of his predecessors who came from the West, he did not change nor did he feel the need to change his identity to gain peoples' confidence. In all places that he visited he was known as the Arab-Lebanese writer, the '*ustadh*' (learned master), a title which followed him throughout Arabia. As he had already established his reputation as an intellectual in Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, Rihani did not need to change or hide his Christian religion, even in the most delicate of situations.<sup>65</sup>

His warm reception from the ordinary people and almost all the Arab rulers (the exception being the initial reaction of Imam Yahya who suspected his motives and kept him captive for several days),<sup>66</sup> the letters of introduction and welcome full of trust and respect,<sup>67</sup> and the friendly relationship with his escort facilitated Rihani's journey. On the whole, his travels were more

or less trouble-free except for illness and normal exhaustion, thus disproving the theory that it was not easy for a Christian to travel in Arabia. The trust engendered by Rihani's sincere Arab identity and commitment, and the bond of language, culture and common concerns were stronger than the barrier of religion and explain the attitude of King Husayn and Ibn Sa'ud who were happy to count him as one of their people. King Husayn actually granted him a piece of the curtain of the *Ka'ba* which is seldom presented to a Christian.<sup>68</sup>

All these factors enabled Rihani to see the life of the Arabs, Bedouin and urban, from inside and allowed him to share in it intimately. This in turn made it possible for him to draw a clear picture in his writings of Arab traits, strengths and weaknesses. His genuine interest in the Arab cause gained him the confidence of the Arab rulers who openly discussed their ambitions and concerns, as well as their conflict with each other or with foreign powers. This not only enabled him to draw interesting observations on Arabian political conditions,<sup>69</sup> but helped him to play an important role in creating some mutual understanding between Arabian rulers. Rihani was probably the first traveller to participate in the political events of Arabia either as an unofficial adviser, for example in the Conference of Ojair, or as a mediator for peace between Arab rulers as, for example, between Husayn, Imam Yahya, and the Idrisi of 'Asir and, at a later stage, between Ibn Sa'ud and King 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn in the Hijazi war of 1924–25.<sup>70</sup>

On the other hand, Rihani's interest in the Arab cultural movement and his participation during his travels in literary activities, especially in Bahrain and Iraq, gained him significant cultural knowledge coupled with social, economic and political insights. All this enabled him to draw a unique picture of Arab society and a vision for potential Arab unity.<sup>71</sup>

It is true that Rihani did not discover new places in Arabia and may not have witnessed more adventures than his predecessors. For instance, he did not care much about crossing the Empty Quarter (*al-Rub' al-Khali*) which challenged Philby, Bertrand Thomas and, later, Wilfred Thesiger.<sup>72</sup> Rihani was more concerned about the well-being of Arabia and its people than about the discovery of new places or even his own safety. Perhaps the genuine feeling of affection that he held for the people and land of his ancestors made him less interested in visiting disputed territories or wondrous places than in the social and political progress of Arabia. Unlike Philby who was 'jubilant' to cross the desert safely and arrive at water, Rihani was disappointed to see the poor condition of the water wells in al-Hafar which had always been the battle-ground of Arab tribes. This affection also explains his strong reaction against the remnants of the slave



trade in Arabia, a 'shameful business' which he saw as incompatible with the Arabs' love for freedom and dignity.<sup>73</sup>

Being an Arab from the West, on what he considered an Arab national mission, gave Rihani enough confidence to criticise certain aspects of underdevelopment and backwardness in Arab life. For instance, he did not hesitate to criticise Muslim fanatics, such as the Zaydis, the Sufis and the *Ikhwan*, in the heart of the Islamic land. He also criticised the poverty which surrounded the capital of Ibn Sa'ud, and advised the Sultan to take the necessary steps to end this misery.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, his knowledge of the Arab land and people and the fact that he was the product of two civilizations, Eastern and Western, made him a distinct traveller. While he proudly described the glory of Arabia and its people, he fairly and frankly criticised them and called upon the Arabs to adopt modern Western science and means of progress.

Although Rihani was not totally uninterested in geographical discoveries, his main focus was political and cultural. This explains his planned itinerary which, before leaving New York, included only the Hijaz, the Yemen and Najd where, he thought, the main tribal Arabs were represented. However, his early experiences caused him to extend the itinerary to include Aden, the Nine Protectorates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq.

Rihani was perhaps the first and only traveller who covered most of the Arabian Peninsula in a single journey. After covering thousands of miles, crossing dangerous deserts and mountain ranges on camels, horses and mules, he returned to Beirut, and crossed the Iraq-Syrian desert by car. Beside the difficulties in obtaining visas to different Arab sovereignties, he faced health problems and natural obstacles which prevented him from visiting other areas in Arabia such as Hadramawt, Oman, Qatar, and the six Trucial Shaykhdoms (later to become the United Arab Emirates).

Despite his close relationship with King Husayn, Rihani was denied the 'honour' of visiting Mecca because he was a Christian (unlike Burckhardt and Burton who both, temporarily, changed their name and religion and went in Muslim disguise to visit Mecca and Medina).<sup>75</sup> He did not go to Transjordan during his main journey because, as he noted at the time, 'this Emirate, created by the new post-war policy, was not a permanent solid Arab Emirate'. However, he did go to Transjordan in 1924-25 when he had the opportunity to meet Amir 'Abdullah Ibn al-Husayn who asked him to mediate in the Hijazi war.<sup>76</sup>

Rihani's travels in Arabia were a very significant experience in his life as a writer and a thinker. In addition to his Arabic *Muluk al-'Arab* which consists of biographies of eight Arab rulers and observations on their countries, he

published three books in English and several articles in Arab and English journals and newspapers.<sup>77</sup> A keen observer and intuitive writer, Rihani gives a vivid picture of life in Arabia, from the rulers' courts to humbler places. Important and interesting information on Muslims in general and the Arabs in particular emerge from his works. These books are treasures of detailed observations and learned footnotes on different fields of knowledge: religion, history, biography, geography, fauna, industry, commerce, and architecture.<sup>78</sup> Rihani was particularly interested in individual personalities and the narrative is enriched by many life-like portraits of which notable examples are his description of Musaffar and his drawing of Imam Yahya, the earliest known.<sup>79</sup> In addition to photographs, mostly taken by the author himself, the reader finds comparisons between the author's observations and those of earlier travellers.<sup>80</sup>

With a keen sense of humour and a lively style, Rihani's books provide accurate descriptions of the areas he visited. In this sense, they make a great contribution to the knowledge of Arabia. Interested in solid facts and in conveying impressions, Rihani tried to provide an accurate picture without, as he said, partisanship, partiality or offence. His occasionally grandiloquent style does not seriously distract from the scientific value of his books, as Rihani strove not to hide the truth regardless of how embarrassing it might be.<sup>81</sup>

Although his English books on Arabia were based mainly on his *Muluk al-Arab*, they cannot be considered merely as an English version. There are clear differences, both in style and in content between the Arabic and the English works. This demonstrates that Rihani was consciously writing for two different audiences. These differences can be noted on three levels. Firstly, some details not interesting to the Western reader were omitted from the English books, such as the details of treaties between Arab rulers.<sup>82</sup> Secondly, criticism of the Arabs does not appear as strong in the English works as if Rihani, although anxious to give the full truth and so confront Arab readers with reality, was careful not to add to the negative image of the Arabs in the eyes of Western readers.<sup>83</sup> Thirdly, criticism of the English colonialist policy was more moderate in his English works, as if he wanted to keep an amiable relationship with Western readers and the British authorities, particularly as he counted on their assistance to realise the pan-Arabian dream.<sup>84</sup>

Rihani's books on Arabia have been an essential and valuable source for the study of Arabian society and the modern history of the Arabian Peninsula. Based on first-hand experience, particularly in the Yemen, Rihani's books were considered more accurate than those of more recent writers. His *Muluk al-Arab* provided historians with useful information on, among other aspects, the commercial life of the Bedu, the expansion of the Wahhabi state and

the boundaries of its political dominance. His *Around the Coasts of Arabia* has been considered amongst the most important sources for the historical background of the Idrisis of 'Asir and their connections with the Sanusi of North Africa.<sup>85</sup> And his *Arabian Peak and Desert* is considered one of three 'fascinating' books dealing with politics and life under the Zaydi Imamate in the twentieth century.<sup>86</sup>

It is clear that Rihani's travels in Arabia were important for him as a writer and a thinker. This is so not only because he became known and widely read throughout the whole Arab world and in the West, but also because it was during and after these journeys that his Arab nationalist thought crystallised. His meetings with Arab kings, leaders and Shaykhs and with a number of ordinary people in the Peninsula provided him with an ideal opportunity to analyse different opinions and attitudes. This enabled him to form a balanced picture of the socio-political conditions in Arabia, which helped create the framework of his pan-Arab nationalist thought. This will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

# CHAPTER TWO

## WRITER AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST

### **Contributor to the Press: Advocate of Progress and East–West Understanding**

Rihani's career as a writer started with the press in 1898, when he began publishing articles in *al-Huda* in Philadelphia (between 1898 and 1904 he published about 80 articles in *al-Huda* alone). His relationship with newspapers continued long after he began publishing complete works in Arabic and English. Indeed, this relationship developed to include not only Arabic newspapers in the USA, but also Arabic papers in the Arab homeland and English papers in the USA and elsewhere.

The following section deals with the range, main concerns and characteristics of Rihani's work as a journalist in so far as this highlights his social and political thought. Special attention is given to his contributions to Arabic newspapers in America, since these reflect his earliest concern with political and social ideas.

Arabic newspapers in the USA were more limited than those in the homeland, in their range of topics and approach as well as audience, especially since the period during which Rihani wrote was a time of intellectual, cultural and political renaissance in the Arab East. While sharing certain characteristics with the Arabic press in the homeland, the immigrant Arabic newspapers were essentially concerned with the activities and social life of the local Syrian community. The same holds true of the differences between those two kinds of papers and the English language papers in the USA. This was reflected in the form and content of Rihani's different contributions to the three categories of papers.

Rihani contributed to most Arabic papers in the USA, particularly between 1898 and 1904. These included, in alphabetical order, *al-Ayyam* (published by Yusuf Ma'luf), *al-Da'ira* (by 'Isa al-Khuri), *al-Huda* (by Na'um Mukarzil), and *al-Islah* (by Shibl Damas), all published in New York.

He also wrote in *al-Afkar* (by Sa'īd Abu Jamra) and *al-Manazir* (by Na'um Labaki) both published in Sao Paolo, Brazil. His contribution to the Arabic newspapers in the Americas continued until the late 1930s, particularly in *al-Funun* (by Nasib 'Arida) and *Mir'at al-Gharb* (by Najib Dyab) both in New York, and *al-Sharq Magazine* in Sao Paolo.

During his stay in the Arab East between 1904 and 1910 and following his return from Arabia in 1923, Rihani was able to find a broader forum for his writings in a large number of contemporary Arabic papers. These included *al-Ahram* and *al-Hilal* in Cairo; *al-Barq* and *al-Bayraq* in Beirut; *al-Muqtabas* and *al-Qabas* in Syria; *Filastin* and *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* in Palestine; and *al-Aqlam* in Baghdad. He also contributed to some Arabic papers published in Europe such as *al-Mustaqbal* in Paris and *al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabi* in Rome.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1898, Rihani appears to have started contributing to English language papers in the USA.<sup>2</sup> In 1904 and 1905 he was published in the *Poet Lore*. After his return to New York in 1910, Rihani resumed and extended his contributions to English papers. These included *Asia* (*Journal of the American Asiatic Association*), the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Bookman*, the *Forum*, *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, the *International Studio*, and the *Print Connoisseur*. Particularly during and after his travels in Arabia in 1922–23, he contributed to a wider range of American and international journals and papers including the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, the *Nation* and the *Syrian World* in the USA; the *Manchester Guardian* in England; the *Natal Advertiser* and the *Natal Witness* in South Africa; and the *Tientsin Times* in China.

From the wide range of papers to which he contributed we can see that, throughout his career as a journalist, Rihani's interests ranged from the literary, through the artistic, to the intellectual and the political. His contributions to the Arabic papers in America reflected his concerns with the progress of the Arabic community and the cultural and political integration of this community into the American way of life. Through his articles demonstrating his intellectual reflections, he also expressed ideas of reform and his rebellion against ignorance and fanaticism amongst his people, whether in the old or the new country.

Better established since the nineteenth century, the Arabic press in the homeland provided him with a broader forum to disseminate these ideas. Not only did his contributions to these papers include literary and intellectual essays, but they also reflected his concerns with social and political reform, and subsequently with liberation from Ottoman rule. These papers, together with Arab cultural associations at the time, were, for him and for other Arab

intellectuals and activists, a means through which they sought to enlighten the people about their rights and call upon them to rise up against the Ottomans. When the First World War ended and new issues arose, his contributions to these papers dealt with issues of the Lebanese-Syrian unity, independence from the mandates, the Palestine question as well as Arab unity.<sup>3</sup>

At first, his contributions to the English language papers were more literary and artistic, but later included articles and reports on current affairs. These articles principally reflected his concern with reconciliation and mutual understanding between East and West. He contributed English poems as well as essays on modern social, political and religious tendencies, in the Orient and the Occident. He also wrote literary reviews and art critiques, as well as political articles. The latter included articles on his observations in the Arab world, and his advocacy for the Arab cause, particularly on Palestine and Pan-Arab nationalism.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, the immigrant Arabic newspapers, which started to appear in the USA, particularly in New York, and also in South America, were more amateur than professional. Although probably freer in form than Arabic papers in the homeland, their content projected a true image of the immigrants, their moral, economic and cultural values, as well as their ideological and social tensions. Growing in a more or less sectarian community, these papers, as Rihani himself was to complain, found no better way to prosper than to spread sectarian feelings amongst their readers.<sup>5</sup>

While not claiming to be a professional journalist himself, it is clear that Rihani's distinction from the beginning was to make contributions of a far higher intellectual level than the general run of material published in these papers. This is best seen in his special column, *Kashkul al-Khawatir* (Miscellany of Reflections), which he wrote under various pen names such as *Ibn Yaqzan al-Suri* and *Nur al-Din* meaning literally 'Son of the Awake Syrian' and 'The Light of Religion'. These pieces reflected his revolutionary spirit, his wide range of Eastern and Western readings as well as his early journalistic skills. It is in this context that he has rightly been described as 'a teacher descending to his people from a higher realm of knowledge and truth ... to raise his fellow Syrians, including journalists, stagnating in their inherited sectarian dogmatic ignorance'.<sup>6</sup>

The *Kashkul*, as he himself introduced it, was a column featuring 'small articles and short stories' having as its basis the author's personal reflections and thoughts (*khawatir*), and those of famous writers. They covered topics such as sociology, politics, art and literature, reflections on philosophical and religious matters as well as other pieces on the immigrant Arabic press itself.

Rihani's writings in the Arabic newspapers of America, however, cannot be classified as reports on recent and on-going events; what is popularly described as the 'handling of news' does not in any way apply to his work. In fact, what he wrote in this period included much that can be reasonably described as literary material including short stories, critiques of other writers' prose and poetry, reviews or critical assessment and analysis of musical and theatre performances. His writings also included historical articles, features where current events were used as the starting point. He also wrote a series of articles on the lives of prominent statesmen, thinkers, and literary and artistic figures, including W. E. Gladstone, Thomas Huxley and Sarah Bernhardt. Some of his contributions were in the form of comments on issues related to events reported elsewhere in the paper as news items. In other articles, he attempted to familiarise the Arabic community with aspects of the American way of life, or he debated issues affecting the Arabic community in New York.

At the political level, Rihani's writing in the immigrant Arabic press covered such topics as the political situation in the homeland under the Ottomans, national politics in the USA, the state of the Arabic community and its political activities in New York, and international politics.<sup>7</sup> In terms of Rihani's own concerns, it is obvious that the politics of his homeland predominated.

His articles dealing with religion were not of the type that exhorted or necessarily encouraged the reader in the practice of religion, but rather of the kind in which the author expressed his own critical opinion against traditional teachings and practices, and in which he preached a new religion of science and patriotism.<sup>8</sup>

Rihani was aware that he was dealing with an immigrant Arabic press that was extremely underdeveloped and that often seemed oblivious to the norms of the quality press in the USA or the Arab East. His criticism of the Arabic papers of New York reflected in several of his articles is particularly developed in a special essay entitled '*Nahnu wa Jar'iduna*' (We and Our Newspapers).<sup>9</sup>

Rihani saw the duty of the press as enlightening the public about their rights and duties, and as a watchdog over politicians, officials and influential people. He also raised the important question of the independence of the press, financially and ideologically, a question that he reiterated on several occasions in the 1920s and 1930s; and he criticised the archaic style and standard of certain writers in the Arabic New York press.<sup>10</sup>

From the start, Rihani set specific principles for his journalistic profession. He assured his readers that he could be neutral or controversial according

to the inherent nature of the topic, but that he would always be 'truthful', 'frank' and 'conscientious' in his writings.<sup>11</sup> Both in the introductory piece for his regular feature in *al-Huda*, and in subsequent articles, Rihani advocated and demonstrated a direct, lucid style of Arabic prose communicating his ideas to the reader without attempting to impress with rhetorical devices or archaic expressions.

With some exceptional and rare personal comments in response to an issue concerning the Syrian community in New York, Rihani's contributions to the Arabic press were generally serious discussions and far from 'gossipy' statements.<sup>12</sup> In these he tended to use a didactic style with more emphasis on appealing to the emotions of the Arabic readership. His English articles, on the other hand, were usually of an informative and analytical nature. This was, no doubt, due to the difference between Arabic and English expression in general, a difference more evident in Rihani's time. But it also occurred because the issues he addressed in Arabic were of more immediate concern to his Arab readership. However, almost all his contributions in both languages expressed his free views and advocated his convictions, as he himself puts it, within the limits of the prevailing regulations and political circumstances.<sup>13</sup>

It is perhaps significant to note that although Rihani was not affiliated to any political party, he was willing to contribute to papers which were either organs of political parties, or known for their particular ideological or political orientations. Thus, he contributed to such papers as *al-Dubur* and *al-Tali'a*, organs of the Lebanese and Syrian Communist parties, to *al-Muqtabas* of Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, an Arab nationalist, and to *al-Thabat* of Khalil Zayniyya who was suspected of being paid by France. Also, despite his well-known enmity to the clergy, he contributed to *al-Manar*, a religious magazine founded by Bishop Arsanious Haddad in 1903.

Undoubtedly Rihani was fully conscious of the importance of the mass media as a forum and vehicle for the dissemination of his ideas. Indeed, on the occasion of the Agricultural Fair held in Iraq on 7 April 1932, his speech was broadcast live.<sup>14</sup> He continued to write for the press long after he became an established author of books. He also contributed to a wide range of political and literary papers in Arabic as well as English. However, only on one or two occasions was he a correspondent, including work in Europe for the *Bookman* and the *Forum* in 1916–17, and for *Mir'at al-Gharb* at the Washington conference on the reduction of armaments in 1921. Even in this capacity, Rihani did not simply provide news coverage, for his reports were essentially commentary of the 'articles de fond' or 'leading article' type.



Modern specialists in the mass media might express the role of journalist differently, but Rihani was not concerned with journalism as news. At no stage did his work with the press have the function of 'surveillance' for example, and cannot be referred to as gathering and dissemination of information concerning events. His contribution to journalism was significantly more profound, and as a writer and fine communicator, Rihani certainly succeeded in meeting the criteria for an effective and learned journalist. Through the Arabic press, Rihani aimed at motivating the Arab people to achieve progress and liberation and saw his role as that of an educator and reformer. In the English language press, he viewed his role as an advocate for the Arab cause as well as an apostle of mutual understanding between East and West. I shall return to some of these ideas as expressed in the press in my subsequent discussion of his social and political thought.

### **Popularising Historian: Disasters of the Past, Lessons for the Future**

Rihani wrote three history books, *Tarikh Najd al-Hadith* (1927), *al-Nakabat* (1928) and *Faysal al-Awwal* (1934). He also wrote a short history of the French Revolution under the title of *Nubdha fi al-Thawra al-Faransiyya* (1902) in addition to his books based on his travels, particularly *Muluk al-'Arab*, which contain important historical discourses. It is necessary to indicate Rihani's skills, if not as a scholar, at least as an amateur historian, by highlighting the extent of his interest in historical writings, his background readings in history, his methodology, his understanding of the aim of historiography and the value of his works.

Rihani's interest in history started as early as 1898 when his reforming and revolutionary tendencies, influenced by the principles of the French Revolution, led him to read the history of this revolution in French and English literature. Three works on this subject appeared of importance to him: *History of the French Revolution* by Thomas Carlyle, *History of France* by de Tocqueville, and *Origin of Contemporary France* by H. A. Taine. While he appreciated the latter two historians for their 'eloquence, accuracy, sincerity and verification', he criticised Carlyle for his indifferent and cynical attitude towards the events of the revolution.<sup>15</sup>

Rihani's interest in the French Revolution widened the scope of his readings to include the general history of ancient and medieval Europe, the Near East and the history of the USA. His readings on ancient history included *La Resurrection d'Homère* by V. Berard, *The Tell Amarna Tablets* by C. R. Conder, *Ancient Fragments* by Preston Cory, *Phoenicia, Ancient History* by George Rawlinson, and *The Sumerians* by C. L. Woolley. On modern history, he read histories and documents relevant to the Arab East and the

Ottoman Empire written by Westerners including *Cinq Ans en Turquie* by Liman von Sanders, Arnold Toynbee's *Survey of International Affairs* (1930), the *Letters of Gertrude Bell*, and *The Times History of the War*. On Iraq, he read Arnold Wilson's *A Clash of Loyalties*; on Syria, he read *Comment La France s'est installée en Syrie* by de R. Gontaut-Biron; and on Egypt, he read *L'Égypte au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* by Edouard Gouin, and *Histoire de l'Égypte sous le Gouvernement de Mohammad Ali* by Felix Mengin. In addition, he read books on Arabia written by Western travellers including *Wanderings in Arabia* by Charles Doughty, *The Penetration of Arabia* by D. G. Hogarth, *The Kings of Arabia* by H. F. Jacob, *Arabia Deserta* by Alois Musil, and *The Heart of Arabia* by John Philby.<sup>16</sup>

He also read works by native Arab authors, both early and contemporary. These included *Khitat al-Sham* on the history of Syria by Muhammad Kurd 'Ali; *Tarikh al-Bahrain* by Shaykh Khalifa b. Muhammad al-Nabhan; and on Najd, *Rawdat al-Afkar* by Ibn Ghannam, '*Unwan al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd* by Ibn Bishr, and Ibrahim b. Salih b. 'Isa's *Tarikh*. In addition to the *Muqaddima* and *Tarikh Ibn Khaldun*, he read other historical and literary sources which enriched his historical background including *Muruj al-Dhahab* by al-Mas'udi, *al-Aghani* of al-Isfahani, *Rihlat Ibn Jubayr*, and *Alf Layla wa Layla (The Thousand and One Nights)*.

Above all, Rihani's own travels, interviews and discussions with Arab leaders including King Husayn of the Hijaz, Ibn Sa'ud of Najd, King Faysal of Iraq, Amir 'Abdullah of Jordan, Imam Yahya of the Yemen, and others were essential for his historical knowledge. Together with his access to official documents, these supplemented his wide readings for his history and travel books. Even after he returned from his journeys in Arabia, Rihani remained in contact with authorities in the Arab countries, and through correspondence sought further details to fill in the gaps and update his information on certain areas of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>17</sup>

Rihani was aware that the inclusion of an extensive list of sources was necessary for 'exacting scholars' and 'meticulous historians'. In his own books, however, his bibliographical lists were not intended to be comprehensive, although he uses a wide range of sources in three languages: Arabic, English and French. What was more important for him was how available sources were used.<sup>18</sup>

A good example of Rihani's methodology is clearly demonstrated in *Tarikh Najd al-Hadith* which started as a 'biography of the Sultan Ibn Sa'ud'. Rihani's first source was Ibn Sa'ud himself. He found Ibn Sa'ud's personal accounts of the recent history of Najd and the Sa'udi family 'interestingly compelling (*jadhdhaba*)', and described him as 'fair to his

opponent'. Rihani was not alone in considering Ibn Sa'ud as a valuable source. Philby, for example, a chronicler of Arabian affairs who equally had long association with Ibn Sa'ud, regarded him as 'a living and inexhaustible mine of information on the exploits of his ancestors and his people'.<sup>19</sup>

Rihani's methodology in recording the Sultan's narration (*riwaya*) enhanced the value and authenticity of this source. Two people took notes at the same time to ensure accuracy. While recording, Rihani sought clarification of certain words or local expressions and, at the end, Ibn Sa'ud read with him what had been recorded, correcting the narrative whenever necessary. Moreover, Rihani incorporated details and insights based on other sources published outside Najd, such as books by Western travellers and orientalists, and other sources written about the Arab world during the preceding fifty years. Together with Rihani's own travels in Arabia and what he heard from other 'knowledgeable people', these were used to confirm or complete the narrative of Ibn Sa'ud. To ensure accuracy in Arabic pronunciation or spelling of place-names, he sought the assistance of a number of scholars (*'ulama'*) of Najd, and for accurate transliteration, he sought help from Western Arabists at British and American universities.<sup>20</sup>

Although Rihani criticised native historians, such as Ibn Ghannam and Ibn Bishr, for their 'artificial rhymed style', he found their information 'generally accurate and reliable'. In his desire for a more complete picture, he compared native and foreign historians on the same subject. His attitude towards Orientalist authors on Arabia was not uncritical, but reflects a mixture of healthy scepticism and guarded trust. He was aware that some Orientalists travelled in Arabia with hidden political intentions. For example, Badia Y Lebllich was a spy for Napoleon the First, and Burckhardt had a close link to Muhammad 'Ali Pasha of Egypt. The fact that some travelled as disguised Muslims (e.g. Burckhardt, Burton, Palgrave) must have given him further reason to examine their information and attempt to unravel European attitudes towards Muslims and the people of Arabia in the nineteenth century. Not only did his use of European writers provide a different perspective, but also helped him fill in the gaps in the native histories.<sup>21</sup>

Rihani was not trained as an academic historian, but he certainly reflects characteristics of a modern scholarly methodology which can be found, for example, in his history of Najd, as indicated above.<sup>22</sup> It is true that in *Faysal al-Awwal*, for instance, Rihani himself modestly says that his book 'cannot be considered a history in the scholarly meaning of the word' as it contained 'nothing but what the author saw and heard, and what he knew and himself investigated'.<sup>23</sup> His only sources were lengthy conversations with the king himself and the official documents which the king allowed him to consult.

Due to this, Rihani's book on Faysal provides original first-hand information and insights on this subject, as well as historical analysis. For the author gives an unusual picture of the king in his struggle to establish the new kingdom of Iraq, and his endeavour to maintain a balance between the demands of the national Iraqi opposition and the pressures of British interests. In this book, Rihani reveals the keys to many social and political events, which sometime passed unnoticed by other writers on Iraq.

When discussing Rihani's writings on Arabia, Irfan Shahid rightly observes that 'Rihani was not a professional historian; he was a visionary and acute observer of men and events'. Concerned with the Yemen, Sayyid M. Salim pointed out that because Rihani as a traveller was particularly interested in the social and cultural scene for only a year or so, his books based on his travels in Arabia, could not be considered history in the proper sense. And in his study of state and society in modern Arabia, Khaldun al-Naqib named Rihani among the 'traditional historians' of the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula. Such historians, according to al-Naqib, concentrated on the succession of the rulers and the development of their family rule, and on the monotonous sequence of events such as tribal raids, fighting, and tribal alliances.<sup>24</sup>

Al-Naqib's view may be correct of that part of *Tarikh Najd al-Hadith*, which was originally intended as a background to the biography of Ibn Sa'ud, presenting detailed information about the Sa'udi family and the political development of the Sa'udi state. It is true that, as subject-matter of history, a biography may be considered by historians as 'non-historical' or even 'anti-historical',<sup>25</sup> but Rihani did not limit his history of Najd to the biography of the Sa'udi family. His history reflected important insights into motives and purposes as well as reflections on politics, warfare and morals,<sup>26</sup> thus making *Tarikh Najd al-Hadith* a truly important historical work. His travel books also contain first hand material and a wealth of information on the society of the Arabian Peninsula with attention to diversity, continuity and change. Indeed this awareness of changes and shifts in modern Arab history is reflected in several instances in *Muluk al-Arab*.<sup>27</sup> These books also contain literary portraits of almost every aspect of Arab life, and are useful for the study and understanding of Arabian society. If history is to be viewed from a socio-economic angle and if historical writing is to provide 'conceptual means to unravel the mysteries of events', as al-Naqib put it,<sup>28</sup> then Rihani's books on his travels, particularly *Muluk al-Arab*, are no less historical than his history of Najd.

The prominent Arab historian, Constantine Zurayq (1909–2000), wrote in 1936 that traditional Arab historians of the period, like Western medieval

historians, concentrated only on the political side of history and neglected socio-economic factors, which are deeply rooted in human life. 'An Arab historian may give details of causes of the fall of Arab dynasties, of foreign invasions, political facts and military events which accompanied the fall, but he seldom penetrates into the heart of Arab life in the past to describe the conflicting economic powers and social tendencies which have weakened the nation'.<sup>29</sup> Something of this socio-economic approach as advocated by Zurayq can be traced in Rihani's works, particularly *Muluk al-'Arab* and *al-Nakabat*. In *Muluk al-'Arab*, he does not concentrate on the military and political events, but is more concerned with socio-economic factors in Arab life. Without neglecting accounts of wars and disputes, he describes the life of the ordinary people. In *Muluk al-'Arab*, for example, there are pictures of the ordinary Arabs in the very intimate aspects of their life, in their prayer and fanaticism, food and clothing, education and learning, wars and travels, customs and traditions.<sup>30</sup> Thus, within the chronological setting and geographical scope defined in his works, and without claiming to be a professional historian, Rihani can be said to fulfil some of the requirements of a modern, as opposed to traditional, Arab historian as defined by Constantine Zurayq.

This also applies to *al-Nakabat*, a short history of Syria, which Rihani appears to have written as a counterbalance to his friend Muhammad Kurd 'Ali's *Khitat al-Sham*. Rihani described the latter as 'a history for the elite or the specialists (*tarikh lil-khassa*)', and criticised the author, not only for the length of his history, but also for limiting his concerns to 'the powerful and the rich' in the nation. In his own history, Rihani's concern was not to write about the lives of kings and caliphs, but to show that the history of Syria was a struggle of the ordinary people against injustice and oppression. Syria's history becomes for him a series of catastrophes—hence the title—whose victims were the ordinary people who paid the price for the greed and caprice of the rulers. As for the rulers, they did not deserve from him more than a 'word or two which summarised their injustice and tyranny'. Even those caliphs who were considered by other Arab historians as 'first-class' rulers, were in his view nothing but autocratic tyrants.<sup>31</sup>

In *al-Nakabat* Rihani strongly reacted to the style and approach of other Arab historians who painted Arab history as a shining picture of life inside the walls of the royal court, or the mansions of the upper classes. Instead, he drew a picture of the poor classes and the ordinary people who formed the vast majority of the nation, and whose lot was, as he put it, to 'pay taxes, suffer the whip and then carry arms for the *jihad*'.

Rihani offered his own view of the causes for the fall of the Arab empire. According to him, this was due not only to political or military causes, but

essentially to socio-economic and moral factors. 'Oppression (*al-zulm*) was the first and most important cause of the decline of the Arab states'. Although he did not go into much detail in explaining the social and economic factors which weakened the Arab states, he pointed out that the fall of the Umayyad state, for example, was due to the oppression of the subjects, to maltreatment of tax payers and soldiers, and to poor administration and a general lack of organisation.<sup>32</sup>

The value of Rihani's historical writings can be demonstrated, in part, by the extent to which they have been used by other historians, often as a primary source, not only as information but also for their insights. *Tarikh Najd al-Hadith*, for example, has been considered as 'the first source for the history of the second Wahhabi state' (Ibn Bishr being the first source for the first Wahhabi state). Being a contemporary and close associate of Ibn Sa'ud, Rihani was considered a first hand historian.<sup>33</sup> Philby himself, in his *Arabia*, referred frequently to *Tarikh Najd al-Hadith* which he described as 'admirable' but unfairly added that it was a 'popular summary of Arabian history'.<sup>34</sup>

Rihani's books based on his travels are also a valuable source for the modern history of the Arabian Peninsula. Their importance lay in the fact that Rihani was a writer with first hand experience, as in the Yemen for instance. His *Muluk al-Arab* is rightly seen as 'one of the most important Arabic sources which dealt with the history of the Arabian Peninsula in the 1920s'.<sup>35</sup> Rihani's meetings with Arab kings, leaders and sheikhs, and with a number of ordinary people in the Peninsula, allowed him to take account of different opinions and attitudes concerning actual political events. He demonstrated both critical and analytical ability as well as remarkable impartiality, thus making the book a specially reliable and valuable source for modern historians. His spirit of criticism, particularly of historical evidence, and his ability to discern and distil extensive details into succinct and incisive conclusions are best reflected in the chapters on the history of Bahrain.<sup>36</sup>

There is no doubt that Rihani demonstrates a keen sense of history in the way he wrote about contemporary events, developments and personalities. For instance, to understand the social and political contemporary developments in Bahrain, he analyses these developments in the light of the history of the Arab/Persian Gulf from the sixteenth century. The national movement in Bahrain and its problems could not be understood in isolation from British policy and presence in the Gulf. He traces this policy back to the time when the British, in order to secure their interest in the Gulf, helped expel the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean and later replaced the Turks in the Gulf

region. This awareness enabled him to understand the British divide-and-rule policy in the Arab lands, and aspects of the Arab movement during the First World War. It also helped him to form a picture of how Anglo-Arab relations should be conducted in the future, and led him to give advice to Ibn Sa'ud on the policy which he should adopt with the British.<sup>37</sup>

Rihani's acute sense of history enhanced his ability as a far-sighted observer of the contemporary political scene who anticipated the repercussions of certain events and developments on the basis of his keen understanding of the circumstances. For example, in 1922 he indicated to Imam Yahya of the Yemen that it would be unwise to put the Idrisi out of 'Asir. What occurred in subsequent years justified his point of view, for after the Idrisi lost Hudaidah to the Imam, he signed a treaty of protection with Ibn Sa'ud. As a consequence of the treaty the two strong men of Arabia, the Imam and Ibn Sa'ud, came face to face in potential, and then actual conflict.<sup>38</sup>

One of Rihani's characteristics as a historian is his concern with Arab genealogy and his appreciation of its importance in understanding Arab history. His books contain genealogical details which illuminate historical events. Equally important is his awareness of historical geography and his reference to geographical factors in explaining historical events. In this respect he is concerned not so much with the effect of geography on people's actions, but rather with the effect of people's perception of geography on their actions.<sup>39</sup>

As an historian, Rihani was also conscious of the role of ideology in historical movements. For instance he linked the victory of Ibn Sa'ud's army and the spirit of conquest with which Ibn Sa'ud had imbued his militant Wahhabis. He explained that by making the *Ikhwan* (the Wahhabi Brothers) his religious and national army, Ibn Sa'ud was able to utilise their inextinguishable enthusiasm for *Allah* and Najd, and he not only led them to battle but also taught them sacrifice. Rihani identified the secret of this militant spirit, and its link with the *hijar*, the new settlements, which Ibn Sa'ud built for the Bedu of Najd where the *Ikhwan* were recruited.<sup>40</sup>

He provided an analytical study of the Bedu of Najd and of Ibn Sa'ud's original manner in dealing with this difficult problem. He noted that the Bedu were uncontrollable, inconstant, superstitious and susceptible to religious influence. He explained that to keep the Bedu under control, Ibn Sa'ud conquered them, made them good Wahhabis and tied them to the soil. Thus, the work of 'domestication', as he put it in his *Ibn Sa'oud of Arabia*, started with the building of new towns, the *hijar*, whose inhabitants not only transferred from nomadism to settled agricultural life, but also in the religious sense abandoned the world to seek the pleasure of God.

Rihani noted that the means used by Ibn Sa'ud were religious as well as worldly. Movement of the Bedu from nomadism to settled life made it possible to teach them religion and to control them. The Bedu had been persuaded, or forced, to the *hijar* and to God by the Wahhabi missionaries (*al-mutawwi'a*). They were saturated with the doctrine of the Oneness of God and fired with the militancy of it, but they were also converted to law and order. Once the Bedu converts were settled in new towns, Ibn Sa'ud began the second stage of urbanisation. By using the '*ulama*', he persuaded his followers to hold on to their lawful wealth and urged upon them the necessity of work to conform to Muslim traditions.

Despite the flourishing settlement programme, the Arabs of the new towns, Rihani noted, were still warlike and fanatical. 'Indeed, the *ghazu* instinct is still very strong even in "the emigrants of *Allah*" – the *hijrah* Arabs. It takes more than a settled population to eradicate it'. It also required education. But Rihani correctly foresaw that the unification of Arab authority would naturally put an end to the *ghazu*, because the Arabs would not then find Arab enemies or Arab *mushrikin* (those who associate others with *Allah*) against whom to declare the *jihad*.<sup>41</sup>

The influence of Ibn Khaldun's '*ilm al-'umran* (science of culture) as expounded in the *Muqaddima*, is evident in Rihani's treatment of this subject. This can also be seen in some of the more important terms and phrases that constituted Rihani's dominant vocabulary in both the Arabic and English versions of his works on Arabia. This included the terms allegiance, authority, desert, nomadism and urbanisation, state, tribal life, agriculture, industry, trade, and wealth. The influence of Ibn Khaldun can also be seen in Rihani's emphasis on the role of religion as a new spirit used to mobilise the Bedu and prepare them for transformation into sedentary society. Such mobilisation led to the establishment of the *hijar* as a new type of political society where the Bedu became accustomed to law and order as well as obedience to the ruler. Thus the life of necessities became a life of lawful wealth, and primitive society became a flourishing centre of trade with the Bedu becoming regular army soldiers. However, while Ibn Khaldun saw that life in the city weakened the old bond of '*asabiyya*', Rihani saw that life in the new towns could not by itself eradicate the *ghazu* instinct which required education and a central Arab authority to end it.<sup>42</sup>

Rihani was, obviously, not an armchair historian or a disinterested observer. For he took the opportunity to tell Ibn Sa'ud that 'the next emigration for the people of the *hijar* will be from ignorance to education'.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps, even more than Ibn Khaldun, Rihani believed his analysis had a practical purpose. It was not only 'descriptive' but also 'prescriptive'.<sup>44</sup> It was



not to prescribe political methods and maxims, but rather to indicate to Ibn Sa'ud what needed to be carried out in practical terms in order to speed up the process of progress for his people. His history, therefore, exceeds the description of past events to the study of politics and social change in the present and planning for, or at least projecting into the future.

Thus the writing of history for Rihani had a practical purpose in addition to its intellectual interest. Although his *Tarikh Najd al-Hadith* started in his mind as 'a story' (*qissa*), this traditional meaning of history carried in its essence a message and a commitment which, in his view, the historian should assign to her/himself. 'The story which she/he records for the people is all new, most of it is attractive, enjoyable (*ladhidh*) and instructive (*mufid*)'. Rihani required from historians a positive attitude towards the issues which they discussed. The historian, in his opinion, should not just be an observer, or a mechanical recorder without involvement in the history, which she/he writes. For him, 'a book devoid of opinion is not history'.<sup>45</sup> This attitude was reflected in his short history of the French Revolution as well as in his books on Arab history. The French Revolution was for him an historical manifestation of the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity for which the philosophers and historians strove. Thus, he claimed, historians must commit themselves to these principles when writing about the revolution, and there should be no excuse for indifference or cynicism about these issues as he considered there was in Carlyle's approach.<sup>46</sup> The same applied to Arab nationalism. When writing the history of the Arab national movement or the biography of Arab national leaders, an historian, in Rihani's opinion, need not detach her/himself from the concerns of Arab nationalism or from commitment to the social and political progress of the Arabs.<sup>47</sup>

Rihani's commitment as an historian stemmed from his belief in the strong interrelationship between literature, in its broad sense, and life.<sup>48</sup> Because the responsible writer strove for a better society, history became a means for achieving this aim. Thus, history for Rihani had an objective that goes beyond the science of history itself.

But does this attitude not contradict the required objectivity (*al-mawdu'iyya*) and impartiality (*al-tajarrud*) which Rihani himself expected from historians? Considering history as a means rather than an objective would put it in the service of another aim outside history itself and above 'pure truth' as the ultimate goal of history as a science.<sup>49</sup> How could Rihani, particularly with his dominant nationalist orientation, observe the duty of objectivity upon which historical truth depended?

Rihani's rich travel experiences and his movement between East and West,<sup>50</sup> his self-education in a wide range of humanities, and his mastering of

at least three languages, equipped him to be a good historian. His universal vision of evolution and the progress of human societies broadened his outlook and helped him to better understand the past and put the subjects in question in their proper context. It may be argued, however, that Rihani's nationalist orientation could place history in the service of a political idea. Nevertheless, Rihani did not subject the writing of history to a dogmatic ideology or to the service of a political power. In his historical writings, he was fair and endeavoured to be objective as well as critical. Indeed, the Arab rulers themselves were not quite satisfied with what he wrote about them and their countries. *Muluk al-Arab* was banned in Iraq and Lahaj, and was not well appreciated in the Yemen.<sup>51</sup> It is true that one may discern certain admiration for, and appreciation of Ibn Sa'ud or Faysal for example, but this is most probably based on Rihani's assessment of the political role and statesmanship of the two Arab monarchs. He does not, however, refrain from criticising certain aspects of Faysal's early career.<sup>52</sup>

Although a nationalist, Rihani did not have a romantic attitude towards the past, nor did he over-estimate the Arab national past in relation to that of humanity as a whole. On the contrary, Rihani was quite critical in looking at Arab history, with the aim of rejecting the negative influences of that past, and learning from positive aspects. He demonstrated a rational spirit of criticism in his appeal for a revision of history and a re-evaluation of the past. In *al-Nakabat* he wrote: 'how often we read and hear that our history is glorious ... Let's review what is most important in history ... People are used to accept the judgements of history without reviewing them. Writers and historians are used to copying and borrowing from each other without the arbitration of reason in what they copy or borrow ... I will try to choose reason and truth as arbitrator'. He called upon his Arab readers to 'read history free from bias or inclinations ... to understand its essence and forget its rhymes and poetry ..., to understand its spirit ..., but not dwell on the past as such'.<sup>53</sup>

Arab reality put Rihani face to face with history. He saw that any national renaissance or reform movement should start with the past, and it should be a balanced and conscious introspection. The 'catastrophes' that Syria knew throughout its history led him to wonder about the causes, and therefore to look back at history in both its positive and negative aspects. He was conscious that, in looking towards the future, even if they wished to ignore the past or revolt against it, people needed to understand the past so as not to repeat its mistakes and not indiscriminately reject its positive aspects. Rihani (before Zurayq) found that the need for the proper study of history during the times of catastrophes became greater because failure to understand catastrophes is even deadlier to a nation than the catastrophes themselves.<sup>54</sup>

In his introduction to *al-Nakabat* (the Catastrophes), Rihani summarised the reasons why he wrote this short history of Syria. 'If history has any use, it is in its lessons ... It is wrong to transfer to our children the evils, which we inherited ... We should not remain paralysed or drugged (*mukhaddarin*) by the illusions of history ... We should know the whole truth to be enlightened by it'. The historian, in Rihani's view, is a searcher for the truth, an objective critic of the past and a teacher. Unlike those historians whom he criticised, the past for him was not an example to be followed blindly. History for him was no longer a static subject but a dynamic process of analysis used in the understanding of actual issues of the present and the future.

Rihani emphasised the need for rationalism in the process of re-evaluating history in order to be able to use it in the reformation of the present. He explained certain conditions of his time in the light of historical parallels. For example, throughout the history of Syria, 'it was always a foreigner who saved us from a foreigner', and 'as Romans and Persians made kings of our Arab ancestors, foreign powers still make kings these days'.<sup>55</sup> This is how he explained the colonialist policy of Britain and France in the Arab East in the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Because of his commitment, Rihani could not study the past in a spirit of complete detachment. This may attract criticism from those historians who think of 'the past as the proper field for a dispassionate and therefore truly scientific study, from which partisan spirit, praise and blame, should be banished'.<sup>56</sup> Although he mastered an objectively scientific critical method in the use of sources and evidence, Rihani, because of his commitment, may not be considered a professional historian in the strict sense. He was possibly aware of this. Just as he himself preferred to be 'first-grade in patriotism even if this would make him medium-grade in poetry',<sup>57</sup> he would perhaps choose to be a first-class nationalist even if this would make him appear as a medium weight historian.

### **Independent and Critical Political Activist**

Throughout his life Rihani worked for a cause. Even the periods of seclusion spent in Mount Lebanon were for him an opportunity to reflect and write on the major social and political issues that concerned him. It was characteristic that he did not limit himself to literary and intellectual pursuits, but participated in the arena of social and political reform at a more practical level. Thus, not only did he write and lecture on such issues but he discussed them with both Arab and non-Arab politicians and thinkers.

An important aspect of Rihani's activities can be seen through his close contacts with other Arab activists in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and

Egypt as well as in the USA, Latin America and Europe. Furthermore, he convened, or co-ordinated a number of social and political associations, particularly in America. Perhaps the most important part of his political activities was his endeavour to achieve rapprochement among Arab rulers, many of whom he met, particularly on the Arabian Peninsula. Rihani's contacts were not limited to Arab personalities, for he also met with a number of Western statesmen and politicians, especially when advocating the Arab cause, including the question of Palestine.

The evolution of Rihani's political concerns and activities can be seen against the background of the changing political circumstances of his time. These can be divided into three major periods. The first was the pre-First World War period during which his work was mainly concerned with social and political reform and Arab demands for decentralisation within the Ottoman Empire. The second occurred during the First World War when his work became more concerned with the liberation of Syria and Lebanon from Ottoman rule. And the third was the inter-war period when his activities broadened to embrace three major concerns: Pan-Arab, Lebano-Syrian and Palestinian. It is along these lines that his activities, at both the intellectual and practical levels, are outlined in this section, while the substance of his political thought will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

During the pre-war period, Rihani's political activities were expressed through the two available channels at the time, namely Arabic newspapers and cultural associations. From an early stage, Rihani was conscious of the role of literature in social and political reform. It is in this respect that he has been rightly considered a committed writer who saw his works as serving his land and people.<sup>58</sup> Later in his career Rihani urged other writers to do the same and he strongly attacked those who saw literature as only a work of art for art's sake.<sup>59</sup> His contributions to the Arabic press in Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, as well as his public speeches and lectures, reflected his commitment to the cause of his people who were beginning to shake off the Ottoman yoke. This activity of writing and lecturing by Rihani, and other like-minded Arab intellectuals of the period, was so effective that the Ottoman authorities directed their censorship at both the newspapers in which Rihani wrote and the cultural associations at which he lectured.<sup>60</sup> The activities of the Arab nationalists, with whom Rihani had close contacts, increased through secret societies and reached a particular high watermark in the First Arab Congress held in Paris in 1913.

There is some uncertainty as to whether Rihani himself took part in that Congress. While his name does not appear on the documents of the Congress, at least three studies agree that Rihani participated but they disagree on his

status. According to his brother, Albert, and to Jean and Kahlil Gibran in their detailed biography of Gibran, Rihani was present at the Congress as a representative of the Syrian immigrants in the USA. His nephew, Ameen Albert Rihani, states that Rihani most probably attended the Congress in his personal capacity rather than as an official representative.<sup>61</sup> In any case, there is no doubt that Rihani maintained close contacts, before and after 1913, with participants in the Congress, such as Shukri Ghanim its secretary, 'Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi (1871–1916), its president, as well as others. Moreover, his ideas during the same period, for example on political reform and decentralisation, indicate strongly that he shared the ideas and aspirations that were expressed at the Paris Congress.<sup>62</sup>

During the period of the First World War, while staying most of the time in America with visits to Europe, Rihani's political activities were mostly concerned with the question of the national liberation of Syria and Lebanon from the Ottomans. When the USA entered the war with the Allies, as he considered himself both American and Syrian, Rihani volunteered to join the American Army. Upon his rejection because of chronic neuritis in his right arm, deeming he had 'some power left ... and a conscience to guide it', he determined to continue, as he put it, 'doing his bit' in his own way.<sup>63</sup>

His contribution can be seen in two areas: first, his efforts in countering German propaganda through writing and lecturing among his fellow Syrians in the Diaspora; and secondly, his work in the organisation of Syrian committees in the USA and Mexico, and linking with other Syrian nationalists in France and Egypt. The main theme in his articles, pamphlets and lectures during this period was that, by helping the Allies in their war for the cause of freedom, the Syrians in the Diaspora would also be helping their own people in Syria and Lebanon gain their liberty from the Ottomans.

On top of this, his work with Syrian nationalists in America and Europe was to ensure that the Syrians would gain political benefit from their collaboration with the Allies. When he was in Paris in 1916 as a correspondent for the *Bookman* and the *Forum*, he met Shukri Ghanim for the second time (the first being in 1910), president of the Syrian Central Committee (SCC) (*al-Lajna al-Markaziyya al-Suriyya*) which had been formed in Paris to co-operate with the Syrians and the French government in expelling the Turks from Syria. He discussed with Ghanim the possibility that Syrian emigrants in America might join the *Légion d'Orient*, formed by the French Ministry of Defence to attack the Turks in Syria. For this purpose, in 1917, Rihani urged the Syrians to create in New York an affiliate of the SCC. The affiliate, for which he devised the strategy, was founded in

his absence in May 1917, under the name of 'The Syrian-Mount Lebanon League of Liberation' (SMLLL) of which he later became the vice-president.<sup>64</sup> For the same purpose, Rihani went to Mexico in 1917–18, where he held several meetings with the leaders of the Syrian community and succeeded in organising the Syrian-Mount-Lebanon Society, as another affiliate of the SCC of Paris. This activity and his lectures urging the Syrian community to join the Allies attracted the attention of the Mexican government which, under German pressure, considered Rihani *persona non grata* and arrested him. He was released only after the interference of the US Consul in Merida, but was expelled from Mexico.<sup>65</sup>

As an active member of the SMLLL of New York, Rihani met a number of diplomats, politicians and statesmen to discuss the Syrian question. In 1917 he wrote to his wife telling her that, together with a delegation from the SMLLL, he was going to Washington to meet the US Secretary of Defence, the British Colonial Secretary, the French Ambassador in Washington and members of the US Congress to urge them not to make political concessions to the Ottomans at the expense of the Arabs.<sup>66</sup> We do not know whether these meetings materialised or not. Similarly, in November 1918, together with Ayyub Tabit and Na'um Mukarzil, president of the New York's Lebanon League of Progress (LLP) (*Jam'iyyat al-Nahda al-Lubnaniyya*, known in French as *La Ligue Libanaise*, New York 1911), which worked for an enlarged independent Lebanon under French protection,<sup>67</sup> Rihani met the French Consul in New York to discuss Syro-French relations. Rihani had his 'personal' and ideological differences with Mukarzil. And he and the SMLLL in general disagreed with Mukarzil and his League's programme.<sup>68</sup> Thus, taking such differences into consideration, this meeting with the French Consul indicates to what extent Rihani was determined to play an active role in Syrian politics from within the SMLLL.

However, after the end of the war, Rihani's membership of the SMLLL ceased, perhaps because of political disagreement with the other members of this group concerning the future of Lebanon and Syria. This can be deduced from the fact that in a petition sent in February 1919 to the Peace Conference in Versailles in which the SMLLL sought French protection over Syria and Lebanon and opposed any link with the Arabs of the Hijaz, Rihani's name does not appear among the signatories, although he was at that time in New York.<sup>69</sup>

One of Rihani's important activities on behalf of Lebanon and Syria during the war was his participation in the humanitarian campaign to reduce the sufferings caused by the famine of 1915–16. Together with other prominent Syrian-Lebanese men of letters and activists, including Gibran

Khalil Gibran and Ayyub Tabit, he participated in the work of the Syrian-Mount Lebanon Relief Committee (SMLRC) established in New York in June 1916, and of which Rihani was also the vice-president.<sup>70</sup>

It was natural that Rihani's political activities should take a new turn during the French Mandate in Lebanon and Syria which officially began on 5 May 1920. Although in the early years of the Mandate Rihani was preoccupied with his Arabian travels and his 'mission' to unite the Arabian rulers, as discussed below, the question of national rule for Lebanon and Syria was certainly of no less concern to him. For him the Arab cause had become one large single cause whether events were stirring in Syria and Lebanon or elsewhere in the Arab world.<sup>71</sup>

In February 1922, en route to the Arabian Peninsula, Rihani met in Cairo with Prince Michel Lutfallah, both the leading organiser of the Syro-Palestinian Congress held in Geneva in the late summer of 1921 to protest against the French and British mandates at the League of Nations, and also the president of the Syrian Union League (*Hizb al-Ittihad al-Suri*) which worked for the unity of Syria, including Lebanon, as a first step towards an Arab Confederation.<sup>72</sup> This meeting was attended by other members of the Syrian Union League, including Rashid Rida and Salim Sarkis. Although this happened in the context of a party in Rihani's honour at Lutfallah's palace, it indicated that Rihani's travels in Arabia were a part of his concern with the Arab cause as a whole. After his return to Lebanon from his Arabian tour, although he was occupied with a peace mission in the Hijaz and with writing his books on Arabia, the question of the mandate in Syria and Lebanon was a major issue for him. This can be seen from his writings and public speeches, especially during the Syrian Revolt of 1925–27.

Rihani's political activities, particularly his campaign against the mandate, became stronger and more committed after the Syrian Revolt. Between 1928 and 1935, after this revolt died down, the national struggle against the mandate in Lebanon and Syria took on a more peaceful aspect in the form of strikes, demonstrations and other kinds of public protest. In his contributions to the Arabic press and his speeches during this period, Rihani strongly attacked the French Mandate, supported the unarmed uprising and advocated the boycott of the economic and political institutions of the Mandate.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, in a letter sent from Beirut and dated 3 June 1933, on behalf of the Lebanese Arab Youth (*al-Shabab al-Lubnani al-'Arabi*), Rihani asked Faysal, King of Iraq, on the occasion of the latter's visit to Europe, to endeavour to end French colonialism (*isti'mar*) in Lebanon, in order to enable the recovery of its natural and legitimate rights.<sup>74</sup>

The campaign against the mandate brought upon Rihani the anger of the French authorities who expelled him from the country, particularly after his speech entitled '*Bayn 'Abdayn*' (Between two Epochs, 1933).<sup>75</sup> He spent three months in Iraq after which he returned to Lebanon to continue his anti-mandate campaign through writing and lecturing.

At the time when preparations for the Lebanese and Syrian constitutions and negotiations with France were underway to conclude treaties replacing the mandate, and when efforts were made to reunite Lebanon and Syria, Rihani was active in discussing these issues through correspondence and meetings with members of the Syrian and Lebanese political leadership. In 1933, the year which witnessed intensified efforts to conclude the Syro-French treaty, Rihani met on several occasions with members of the Syrian National Block (*al-Kuila al-Wataniyya*), the then leading party in Syrian politics, to discuss the Lebanese-Syrian question. These members included Hashim al-Atasi, Fakhri al-Barudi, Ibrahim Hananu, Sa'dallah al-Jabiri, Faris al-Khuri, Jamil Mardam and Shukri al-Quwwatli who were all among the regular visitors to Rihani's home in Freike, individually or in groups.<sup>76</sup>

In 1936 in Lebanon Rihani had an important meeting with the Maronite Patriarch, Antoine 'Arida, who, at Rihani's invitation, visited him in Freike. The Patriarch had protested in 1935 against the decision of the French High Commissioner to grant the monopoly of tobacco to a French company, and was known for his frequent attacks against the mandate. During this visit, Rihani praised the Patriarch's attitude as an important step in establishing a Muslim-Christian and a Lebanese-Syrian rapprochement.<sup>77</sup>

In addition to his involvement in Lebanese and Syrian political affairs and those of the Arabian Peninsula, Rihani was also active in the Palestine question. He was well aware of the background to the problem of Palestine, particularly the dangers of the Balfour Declaration of November 1917. His commitment to the service of the Arabs made it natural for him to become involved in the question of Palestine, which he considered as part of geographical Syria and of the wider Arab world.

As usual, Rihani used his skills, as a writer and public speaker in both Arabic and English, in the service of the Palestinian cause.<sup>78</sup> His most important activities in this context were his tours of several cities in the USA and Canada, particularly during 1929–31, 1937, 1938 and 1939, when he lectured in universities and various cultural and political associations and clubs to counteract Zionist propaganda and to encourage American public opinion to take a stand in favour of the Arabs in Palestine.<sup>79</sup> These tours were organised and sponsored by three American associations specialising in foreign affairs and international relations: the Foreign Policy Association



which had several branches in the USA; the Institute of International Education in New York; and the Institute of Foreign Affairs in Indiana State. Through his lectures, one of which was broadcast from New York Radio, Rihani not only sought to expound the question of Palestine to the Western public opinion but also to convince the British Government, which was then the champion of the Zionist National Home, not to proceed with the unfair establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine at the expense of the indigenous Arabs.

During these tours Rihani was able to debate the Palestinian question not only with specialists in political science and international affairs, but also with Zionist spokespersons. Indeed Rihani was the first Arab to publicly defend Arab rights in Palestine before American and other Western audiences.<sup>80</sup> As the head of a delegation of representative Arabs, he was also able to lay the Arab case before American and British politicians and statesmen. On behalf of the national committees in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, he discussed the Palestine question in two separate meetings held in September 1929 in Washington: one was with the American President, Herbert Hoover and the other with the Secretary of State, H. L. Stimson. He also met with other American politicians in 1931, such as William Adams, Undersecretary of State, and Senator Royal Copland. In the same year, he discussed the role of the British Government in the settlement of the Palestinian problem with the British Prime Minister, Sir Ramsay MacDonald, during the latter's visit to New York.<sup>81</sup>

In the Arab countries, Rihani's activities concerning the Palestine question included writing to Arab rulers explaining Arab rights in Palestine and asking them to press the British Government to solve the problem in favour of the Arabs.<sup>82</sup> He also lectured in several cities in Palestine, and mediated between conflicting Palestinian parties and groups, a conflict which he saw as between two families exploited by their common enemies. The solution which he proposed was to form a new national party from the two existing parties which would have a new national programme. This he felt would not be achieved without the union of the two major leaderships in the country, especially given that a political party formed of the people did not exist yet, and that the traditional leadership was difficult to replace.<sup>83</sup> As a result of his efforts for the cause, the High Islamic Council in Jerusalem, headed by al-Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husayni, nominated him in 1930 as a member of the Palestinian delegation to negotiate with the British Government. However, he declined the mission on the ground that he was unable to pay for his journey to London and would not accept payment for his services.<sup>84</sup> This did not mean the end of his work for the Palestinian

cause, for he continued on other occasions to help both Palestinian leaders and to defend Arab rights in Palestine until his last days.

A particularly important aspect of Rihani's political activities was his Pan-Arab mission in the Arabian Peninsula. In 1922, when Rihani embarked on this mission, the Arab movement had suffered a decline after the division of the Arab lands of the Fertile Crescent into spheres of influence between Britain and France. This was particularly so following the fall of the Arab government in Damascus and the departure of Faysal from Syria to Iraq. On the eve of Rihani's visit, the Arabian Peninsula had four independent rulers: Sharif Husayn of the Hijaz; 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud of Najd; Imam Yahya of the Yemen and the Idrisi of 'Asir. In addition, there were the small principalities on the seaboard of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean under British influence or direct control (Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar, the Trucial States, Muscat and Oman, and the Protectorates of South Arabia and the Port of Aden).

Apart from the ties which some had formed with Great Britain, there were serious problems dividing the four independent sovereigns and affecting their relations with each other. Husayn, recognised only as king of the Hijaz by the Allies, continued to style himself as King of the Arabs, a title that was unacknowledged by Ibn Sa'ud and the Idrisi. The dissension between Husayn and Ibn Sa'ud over disputed territory ended later in serious battle leading to the Hijazi war and the downfall of Husayn in 1924. Ibn Sa'ud's termination of the dynasty of Ibn al-Rashid in 1921 and the annexation of the whole territory of Shammar had already brought Ibn Sa'ud's frontier to the borders of Iraq, then ruled by the Hashimite Faysal under British influence. Imam Yahya of the Yemen was in conflict with the Idrisi of 'Asir over the port of Hudaidah on the Red Sea, claimed by the Imam to be in his own domain.<sup>85</sup>

It was against this background that Rihani began his Pan-Arab mission advocating unity among the Arabian rulers through 'acquainting them with each other', and by drawing up treaties of friendship between them in order to facilitate rapprochement.<sup>86</sup> Through his close contacts with the Arabian rulers, Rihani gained political influence which allowed him to play the role of an adviser and a mediator. Thus he acted on behalf of King Husayn in drawing up treaties between him and Imam Yahya and the Idrisi respectively. He also tried to mediate between the latter two over the Hudaidah problem, and he acted as Ibn Sa'ud's unofficial interpreter and adviser in the conference of Ojair (28 November–3 December 1922). It was during this conference that the northern and north-eastern boundaries of Najd were established in a treaty between the governments of Najd, Iraq,

Kuwait and Great Britain. Following his efforts during his travels in 1922, Rihani was asked, upon the suggestion of Amir 'Abdullah of Jordan, and agreed upon by both Ibn Sa'ud and King 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn, to mediate between them in the Hijazi war in 1924. Three reasons made him accept the mission of mediation, and all were related to his former efforts: he was in close contact with Ibn Sa'ud, then Sultan of Najd, and knew his Arab politics; from the outset he was a messenger of peace and co-operation between the Arab rulers; and, thirdly, he had suggested to Ibn Sa'ud a peaceful solution to the problem of the Hijaz, to which the Sultan had responded positively. In addition, Muslim leaders in Syria and Lebanon had demonstrated an interest. Rihani's negotiations with Ibn Sa'ud which he conducted through a Lebanese Muslim nationalist and businessman, Husayn al-'Uwayni, (Ibn Sa'ud was then in Mecca and Rihani as a Christian was unable to meet him there) went far in the interest of both rulers. Ibn Sa'ud's positive response to Rihani is evident in his correspondence during these negotiations. But due to opposing political interferences, negotiations failed and Ibn Sa'ud continued the war and eventually occupied the rest of the Hijaz.<sup>87</sup>

It is true that Rihani had not become involved in the Arab revolt of 1916 or even in the post-war events in the Peninsula, but he certainly played a role of some importance, during and after his visit, in the improvement of the relations between the Arabian rulers themselves and between them and the Western powers, particularly Britain and the USA.<sup>88</sup> For example, in his concern to 'pave the way' for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USA and Ibn Sa'ud (king since 1926), he wrote in 1930 to Yusuf Yasin, Ibn Sa'ud's adviser, asking if the king would appreciate Rihani's mediation between him and the US Government. In another letter he explained to the king the benefit of such relations with America with all its resources of scientific and material progress. Rihani's efforts eventually led to the US recognition of the government of Ibn Sa'ud in the Hijaz and Najd.<sup>89</sup>

Rihani's political activities in the service of the Arab cause cannot be considered in isolation from his writings. A large portion of his writings, in English and Arabic, was dedicated to this cause. Whether in the Arab countries or in the West, his writings and lectures, based on his experiences in Arabia, were instrumental in establishing strong contacts among the Arabs themselves and between them and the West and, perhaps, this is the most important of his achievements. Despite the extent of his political activities, Rihani's writings remain the best testimony to his dedication to a cause which he served for almost a quarter of a century.

In discussing Rihani as a political activist, it is important to note that his activities did not seek to realise the programme of an ideological party

or the aims of a political power. Rihani was not affiliated with any political party, nor was he a government agent or even a politician in the usual sense of the word. Even during the war he was able to retain his independence. His efforts to establish pro-Allies leagues of liberation in America were 'private' rather than 'commissioned' initiatives.<sup>90</sup> And his collaboration with groups with ties to a foreign power (e.g. Shukri Ghanim and the Syrian Central Committee) was not without reservation. It is perhaps important to remember that Rihani at that stage was like almost all Arabs, especially the Christians, who felt the need of foreign assistance to free themselves of the Ottomans. Even Sharif Husayn did not declare the Arab Revolt before he secured the assistance of the Allies in money, arms and ammunitions.

It was Rihani's own conviction, rather than any external influence that motivated his activities. Throughout, he succeeded to detach himself from the belligerent parties, whether internal or external. In Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, he had connections with different political groups and, as indicated above, he contributed to different political organs ranging from religious (*al-Manar*) to national (*al-Qabas*) and communist (*al-Tali'a*). On the other hand, Rihani did not officially serve a government or a ruler. Thus he wrote to Ibn Sa'ud in 1939, in connection with the impending arrival of the US ambassador in Jeddah: 'I am still, as you well know me, independent from governments and unconnected with officialdom'.<sup>91</sup> In his Pan-Arab mission, despite his willingness to present the standpoint of one Arab ruler or another in negotiations, he made it clear that his service was free from any official obligation.<sup>92</sup>

Rihani clearly expressed his genuine interest in seeing an Arab-American co-operation, especially on the cultural and economic levels, and he worked towards this aim. But, as Irfan Shahid rightly stated, 'in spite of his American and his apparently British connections, he (Rihani) remained a sincere Arab nationalist working for the people he discovered to be his own people'.<sup>93</sup> This sincerity is particularly demonstrated in serving his people without remuneration, refusing to accept money from any state or political party in return for his services to the Arabs.

Rihani was not a professional politician. From an early stage, he was aware that politicians (he certainly had in mind the politicians in Western democracies) seek agreement of their supporters before committing themselves to any decision, and that they are responsible for their actions before the party they represent.<sup>94</sup> Being detached from any political party gave Rihani complete freedom in his political activities. What he said and did came from his own convictions and beliefs. Even when he was negotiating treaties with the Arabian rulers on behalf of Husayn, for example, he

retained his freedom in acting according to his assessment of the situation. Although he tried to serve the King's interest, he did not hesitate to take certain initiatives and make concessions for what he believed was beneficial to the essential cause, namely unity of the Arabs.

Throughout his career, Rihani insisted on having complete independence and free opinion. He believed that joining the 'diplomatic corps', or becoming a professional politician would tie him to the will of others, and he would lose his freedom of action and consequently his freedom of opinion.<sup>95</sup> There is no doubt that Rihani as an intellectual was always anxious to remain free from any political partisanship in order to maintain his own opinion on any issue. Indeed he specifically made the point of refusing to join or be a partisan of any political party or newspaper whether in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine or Iraq.<sup>96</sup>

Despite certain slanderous rumours around his activities, especially after his travels in Arabia (for example Na'um Mukarzil accused him of seeking a position in the service of Faysal),<sup>97</sup> it can be said that Rihani was not after a career in politics, let alone a job as a functionary. Notwithstanding development of his ideas or changes in his perspective during different periods, his ideas did not show any flagrant contradiction which may have betrayed a willingness to compromise his integrity for the purpose of being rewarded by either money or position. His sincerity in word and deed to the cause in which he believed distinguished him as a political activist. Thus, using his own distinction between the reformer and the politician, 'a politician considers first his interest and that of his party before exposing his opinion; the reformer does not swerve ... in order to gain the support of the people',<sup>98</sup> it is certainly more appropriate to consider Rihani as a political activist and political reformer rather than a professional politician.

# CHAPTER THREE

## PROGRESS, REFORM AND REVOLUTION

### **Conceptual Vision and Practical Means of Progress**

Of Rihani's diverse ideas those concerning progress and reform were especially persistent themes in his writings and speeches. He saw progress (*al-irtiqā'*, *al-ruqī*, *al-taraqqī*, *al-taqaddum*), and reform (*al-islah*), as aspects of the process of change which he considered as inevitable in human life in general and as essential for Arab society in particular. Rihani saw certain specific ways of achieving reform and progress at the practical level. While not entirely excluding revolution, he emphasised the importance of structural and economic development as a mechanism for progress. In particular, he consistently insisted on the need for national secular education and a non-sectarian political system as essential prerequisites for ultimate progress in Arab society. Indeed, anti-sectarianism and the secular outlook are predominant throughout Rihani's writings.

Although Rihani did not formulate his thinking on the idea of progress in an extended treatise, it is possible to extract from his writings and lectures some cohesive views on this important concept. Progress is one of the most important ideas which preoccupy modern Arabic thinkers.<sup>1</sup> Closely connected with modernity, the idea of progress in Rihani's thought can be traced back to three sources: his own experience of life in the West; the impact of Western (both American and European) thinkers and philosophers; and the influence of certain earlier Arab thinkers, particularly Ibn Khaldun.

In the USA Rihani was impressed by the Western sense of order and material superiority. This was reflected in his awareness of the huge gap between East and West—an awareness which was first manifested in amazement and questioning accompanied by awe. This intellectual response

to modern Western civilization is illustrated in Rihani's early work, *The Book of Khalid*. In it Rihani asks and exclaims: 'is this the gate of paradise ... or the port of some subterrestrial city guarded by the demons? ... what manifestations of industrial strength, what monstrosities of wealth and power are here!'<sup>2</sup>

Although Rihani condemned certain aspects of the American way of life, particularly its merciless materialism,<sup>3</sup> he could not help but be influenced by the discourse of Western intellectuals on the ideals of progress, liberty and human dignity. It is important to remember that by the time Rihani began his contacts with American intellectual life in New York, the philosophies of progress, developed by European thinkers, had long become familiar in America. The idea of progress in particular was explicit in the writings of American thinkers such as Emerson (1803–82) and Thoreau (1817–62) whom Rihani read at an early stage of his career. The material environment and intellectual atmosphere in the USA were favourable to a philosophy of progress which, with the concrete evidence of material advancement on every side, became the faith not only of the philosopher but also of the common people.

In the USA Rihani also had the opportunity to be introduced to European philosophies of progress, particularly the philosophers of the enlightenment and the French Revolution, which exerted as great an influence on him as they did on his American contemporaries. Furthermore, the philosophies of Darwin, Hegel, Marx and Spencer, all of whom influenced the idea of progress in the USA, were familiar to him.<sup>4</sup>

Another source on the idea of progress may be found in his reading of the *Muqaddima* of Ibn Khaldun—a major source for the concept of progress in the thought of several Arab thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He appears to have read Ibn Khaldun at an early stage, perhaps after his first return to Lebanon in 1898, before he became familiar with the concepts of late nineteenth century Arab thinkers such as Butrus al-Bustani (1819–83) and al-Kawakibi (1849–1902). Moreover, unlike some other Arab intellectuals of this period who read Ibn Khaldun first, Rihani's reading of the *Muqaddima* came after he was already conversant with Voltaire and Rousseau and had become familiar with other Western philosophers.

Progress in Rihani's thought, at the conceptual level, was based on the idea of evolution as developed in nineteenth-century European thought. He saw progress as involving two basic assumptions: that social life obeys the same general laws as nature, and that this process involves an increase of happiness. Rihani's starting point was the assertion that everything in life is changeable, and nothing is permanent except the law of change itself,

and that development or evolution (*al-tatawwur*) is a universal law that applies to nature as well as to society. Evolution, for him, 'is the law of the particular and general aspects of life, the law of science and religion, of nature and people (*al-nas*), of politics and nations (*al-umam*)'. Evolution as such, signifies a process of progress, since comparison between the past and the present shows 'degrees of improvement and progress'.<sup>5</sup>

Rihani's idea of evolution was always progressive. 'I believe in evolution and progress', he said, 'and I support evolution and progress in every thing that I know or don't know in existence, in life and in the universe'.<sup>6</sup> Although his views on the evolution of the universe may seem materialistic at first glance, he does leave scope for divine providence, sometimes expressed as the unknowable existing behind all phenomena.<sup>7</sup> But the role of the Divine Mover was simply to set in motion immutable forces to realise His design. God, in his view, was the force inherent in nature, which puts nature itself in motion. God was the eternal spirit or essence of the universe the progress of which produces the evolution of all beings. Darwin's theory of evolution and progress which, he said, related human life's origin to an accidental and spontaneous progress, was in his opinion, superficial or 'mere bubbles', because it underestimated the great role of Divine Providence.

Rihani's concept of evolution and progress was thus not strictly Darwinian, or materialist in its outlook and the spiritual dimension is important for him since he saw God's 'hand' reflected in all aspects of life. Everything in nature he saw as the divine essence of which the principal source was 'God or the Creator'. The more humans developed the study and understanding of nature, the closer they came to the principal law, which governed each of its particulars. He called this 'the human being's union with the Creator'. Rihani's spirituality, however, was different from that of religion. So was his God. 'I am this rebellious sinful unbeliever (*kafir*)', he says, 'and I have many brothers/sisters on earth ... Our aim is to keep people away from the idle talk of theology (both Christian and Islamic, *'ilm allahut*, and *'ilm al-kalam*) and get them closer to the divine truth ... Our aim is to transform their selfish spiritualism to a spirituality full of good for Humanity'.<sup>8</sup> This spirituality was the basis of his advocacy for tolerance that was at the root of his concept of secularism, as will be discussed later.

Since Rihani saw progress as inevitable and all things as subject to it, human society, in his view, was not static but subject to the law of evolution, the greatest law that governs the order of the universe. On this premise he based his philosophy of revolutionary change in history, which is partly reflected in his *Nubdha fi al-Thawra al-Faransiyya* and his article '*Ruh al-Thawra*' (The Spirit of Revolution).



Rihani, as indicated above, criticised Thomas Carlyle's cynical approach in writing about the French Revolution. He also criticised his views on the history of this revolution, for Carlyle appeared to view it as an unexpected event or phenomenon with neither deep causes in the past nor profound consequences in the future. Carlyle's view, according to Rihani, would mean that the past did not teach any lessons, that the present was no longer certain and the future no longer attractive. Thus, time would lose its meaning and we would become subject to despair (*qunūt*), doubt (*shakk*), resignation (*yāʿ*) and fear (*khawf*). Rihani emphasised the link of continuous progress between the past and the future, and the role of the positive historian in highlighting the process of progress and continuous ascendancy in human society. This he contrasts with the negative philosophy of decline and nihilism which was associated with the static or disconnected view of history.<sup>9</sup>

The law of evolution which affects all things in the universe is particularly reflected in society as the spirit of social change (*al-taḥaddul*). Rihani called this revolution (*al-thawra*). Since every natural or social event was not isolated in its causes or results, revolution became the result of hidden factors working together. In an article entitled '*Ruh al-Thawra*' (the Spirit of Revolution, 1913), he wrote, 'Revolution is a series of hidden events which are manifested in one aspect of social and political life'. Since evolution involved progress, revolution, as an 'historical necessity', was that event, not an element of destruction but rather an instrument of life that 'carries the seeds of life ... and transmits the principles of progress from one generation to another'.

Rihani's optimism is quite evident. He considered the new revolution, in East and West, as a peaceful one, and as the result of science and reason (*al-ilm* and *al-aql*). Although he was aware that these results may not be entirely good, for 'they may include means of progress and happiness as much as means of misery and distress', he warned against any sense of resignation because the scientific revolution was still recent.

Revolution, for Rihani, starts at the intellectual and spiritual levels. It is not one imposed by force of weapons but rather born of 'sound teachings and high principles'. It was on this theory of the peaceful revolution that Rihani based his ideas of reform and progress. However, he added that force might be beneficial as a revolutionary means only as long as it came from those who honestly understood the spirit of revolution and had respect for its law.<sup>10</sup>

The practical aspect of Rihani's concept of evolution and progress is clear. The law of evolution and progress is not detached from reality. It is a law that we experience in our behaviour and embody in our daily life

in society. It is in this way that Rihani viewed politics as inseparable from society, hence his political commitment as a thinker. Although Rihani was concerned with the progress of humanity and not only of a particular society or nation, in a real sense he was responding to the decline of the Ottoman State which, until the outbreak of the First World War, he considered his nation. Even then, although he had in mind the progress of the Ottomans and the East (*al-sharq*) in general, he was more concerned about the Arabs in particular.<sup>11</sup>

The social and political decay of the Ottoman State, as Rihani saw it, was particularly caused by two major problems: ignorance and religious fanaticism. Unlike certain Arab thinkers who at this early stage were attracted to the idea of revolution, the solution suggested by Rihani was reform by means of education. He viewed reform as a complicated process consisting of several stages leading to the establishment of a new system which approaches, as much as possible, what he idealistically called the 'philosophy of perfectibility' (*al-falsafa al-kamaliyya*). The first stage in such process was to detect the decay in society and identify its causes which should then be exposed to the people so they would comprehend and seek removal of corruption. Only then could a new political and social system be established. These stages are connected to each other in such a way that the people cannot be called upon to revolt against the system before they understand the meaning and aims of revolution.

Rihani was obviously sceptical as to the possibility of the revival of the aged and decaying Ottoman State. Echoing Ibn Khaldun's well-known concept of the life of dynasties, Rihani was convinced that 'states grow and get old like individuals, and when their power declines reform can not spare them from death'. Thus, having no realistic hope in reforming the Ottoman State, he believed that an essential radical change in the political situation should take place. Nevertheless, he believed that, at this stage (in 1901), revolution was still premature and should not be hurried. The people were not intellectually prepared for it, and if they were called upon to revolt, their revolution may result in negative consequences.<sup>12</sup>

Rihani elaborated the idea of revolution as a means of progress in several articles, particularly after the proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution in 1908. He saw genuine revolution as more spiritual and educational than political. He was convinced that people could not rid themselves of ignorance, apathy and stagnation except by education. 'I believe', he stated, 'in the slow but constant (*thabit*) method of reform in the lives of nations'.<sup>13</sup> Revolution in the political sense was, as he put it, only 'a minor lesson' in relation to spiritual and moral education. The genuine revolution is the

'peaceful revolution' in 'ideas and morals, in literature and in religion'. Such revolution starts with the education of the individual in home, school and institution.

For him constitutional or administrative reform would not eliminate ignorance, tyranny and corruption in society without education. What the nation (i.e. the Ottoman State) needed was genuine moral liberty protected by the people's cultural values against the exploitation of political parties. 'True liberty is the one which emanates from the people not the one which is given by the ruler'. Thus what the nation needed was a spiritual revolution which would help to achieve real progress in all aspects of life. Such revolution would improve the lot of both Turks and Arabs, and the East and Easterners.<sup>14</sup>

Progress, in Rihani's view, was not limited to the material; nor did reform mean for him only the improvement of public service facilities, such as electricity, roads, railways, and the like. Real reform came as a result of science and the acquisition of the arts which can develop only in secular public schools which teach patriotism as well as comprehensive knowledge.<sup>15</sup>

This does not mean that Rihani excluded active political reform as a means of progress. Rather, he considered that, without educational and spiritual revolution, any political revolution could not survive. Although the opposite is not necessarily correct, military revolution might, however, sometimes be necessary. For although change through education may bring about solid reform; it needed change in the political system to guarantee its survival.

On the eve of the First World War, Rihani maintained that revolution would inevitably achieve change and progress in the East. However, revolution could not be 'hurried or delayed' by any external forces. It is true that Easterners had not yet found the appropriate means of revolution, that is, through science, arts, ethics and inherent strength. For the time being politicians used their coercive and constitutional powers to prevent revolutionary change but he believed that politicians were unable to halt its march. In this respect he placed particular emphasis on the role and responsibility of intellectuals to achieve progress in society.<sup>16</sup>

In the period after the First World War, the changing situation of the Arab East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire undoubtedly led Rihani to concentrate on the affairs of Arab society and the concept of progress continued to be of special importance for him. While he had advocated reform and revolution as the means of progress and liberation during the Ottoman era, he now emphasised the role of modern science and technology in addition to intellectual revolution in the desired development of the Arab world. Liberation from the Ottomans had been achieved and his main

concern now was to see the reconstruction of a new Arab society on solid foundations, particularly as the new challenge now facing the Arabs was that of Western colonialism, both political and cultural.

Rihani saw that the Arabs could not face such challenge without Pan-Arab unity which needed to be fostered by a spirit of nationalism, namely Arabism.<sup>17</sup> Particularly after his travels in Arabia, he saw that the most serious impediment to Arab progress was the state of fragmentation and stagnation in Arab society at the political, intellectual and cultural levels. He saw that Arabism, as the national spirit uniting the Arabs, could only survive and develop if the Arabs were ready to face the modern world by actively responding to the ideas of progress and science.

The decline in the East in general, including Arab society, was in Rihani's view due mainly to three causes: ignorance (*al-jahl*), indolence (*al-kasal*) and arrogance (*al-iddi'a*). He considered that ignorance resulted in tyranny and blind obedience, while indolence would lead to apathy and poverty. He saw arrogance as an almost purely Eastern trait, manifesting itself in showiness and vainglory.<sup>18</sup>

Rihani observed the danger of misunderstanding progress in the Arab world. He made a distinction between some manifestations of material progress, such as the mere building of schools, printing presses, cinemas, businesses, industry and the importation of cars, and real progress which is essentially moral and intellectual.<sup>19</sup> Thus he found that despite some aspects of political and social awakening, the Arab nation was still in the transition phase where nationalism and new political tendencies on the one hand, and religious fanaticism, sectarianism, tribalism, and all kinds of old factionalism on the other, were in conflict. The processes of both material and moral progress were still tied by the shackles of certain traditions and beliefs, which were inconsistent with the spirit of the present age. If this was the situation, how could it be corrected? 'How can we reform the nation?' he asked.

While recognising common problems and obstacles to progress in Arab society in general, Rihani saw some specific differences in this regard between the northern parts, that is Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq, on the one hand, and the Arabian Peninsula on the other. In a series of articles and speeches during the late 1920s, Rihani outlined both the problems and the recommended solutions. Since he believed in the natural law of evolution and progress as a basis of social reform, he saw the inevitability of the progress of the Arab world as part of the progress of Humanity. He considered progress as combining material strength (*al-quwwa al-maddiyya*) with social development (*al-tatawwur al-ijtima'i*) and moral improvement (*al-irtiqā' al-khuluqī*).<sup>20</sup>

Although Rihani may generally appear to advocate revolutionary ideas, he believed in active reform as a means for change and progress particularly through education and moral refinement in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. Rihani pointed out that in this part of the Arab world which had come under foreign mandates, a genuine nationalist feeling among the people was not permitted to develop because of the multitude of sectarian loyalties which were encouraged by the mandatory powers and sectarian and missionary schools. He therefore saw secular national public education as the most important vehicle for such active reform and progress.

Rihani considered that true education, combining the study of science and arts as well as physical, intellectual training, including moral and spiritual refinement, should be based on ten principles. These he enumerated as self-reliance, individual dignity, trust in people, free will, moral courage, abandonment of antiquated old beliefs and traditions, frankness and sincerity in speech, uprightness in opinion and practice, love of justice and fairness, and finally, and most importantly in his view, non-sectarianism (*la-ta'ifiyya*) in politics as well as in literature and culture.<sup>21</sup>

In the Arabian Peninsula the obstacles to progress were more complex. Here stagnation of the Arabs, as Rihani saw it, was due not just to external political problems created by Western colonialism. He identified four closely connected internal problems, which impeded the progress of Arabia. These were ignorance, fanaticism, poverty and oppression. Again, Rihani viewed education as the main weapon in the fight against these ills in Arabian society. Addressing Imam Yahya of the Yemen, he said, 'Arabia, free and independent, yes. But we want to see schools and printing presses and hospitals in the country'.<sup>22</sup>

At the level of the general public, Rihani lamented the fact that ignorance and illiteracy were particularly rampant in different areas of Arabia. This was not limited to ignorance of places and ideas outside the narrow world of their neighbourhood, but extended to the lack of understanding of the true teachings of their religion. In the case of the Yemen, for example, Rihani was shocked to see the people so ignorant of the rudiments of health care and so fatalistic in their attitude towards sickness and diseases, relying blindly on the addictive qat (*al-ghat*).<sup>23</sup>

Even the so-called scholars (*'ulama'*) in traditional Arabia, particularly in the Yemen, were ignorant not only of the modern sciences but also of the very field of knowledge, religion, in which they were supposed to be specialists, as they misinterpreted religion to the public in a narrow, fanatical manner. At the level of political leaders, the rulers of different parts of Arabia were, Rihani pointed out, ignorant of each other, and of

their social condition, and some deprived their subjects of opportunities in education.

Rihani perceived fanaticism in certain parts of Arabia, such as the Yemen, as perpetuating a state of stagnation in the minds of the people. Not only were there 'impediments born of dogma, religious formulae, and theological imbecilities', but fanaticism created an obstacle making the people, even the learned among them, see nothing beyond what they were taught to understand from their sacred books. Ignorance as such becomes identical with fanaticism and both were tools of power in the hands of the upper class to secure its privileges.<sup>24</sup>

Rihani also blamed the stagnation and lack of progress of the Arabs on religious misunderstanding and the misuse of certain Islamic teachings. Like many modern Muslim reformers, from Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703–91) onwards, who had criticised the negative influence of popular Sufism and superstitions, Rihani criticised the kind of Sufism prevalent in certain parts of Arabia, for example in 'Asir where a philosophy of idleness treated working for a living as sacrilege.<sup>25</sup> While at the intellectual level he showed appreciation for mysticism and spirituality, he considered the kind of Sufism he witnessed in 'Asir as dangerous, particularly at the level of the uneducated public. Such teachings, in his view, were the cause of poverty in Islam because they contradicted the natural laws which viewed working for a living as a means for the salvation and happiness of the human kind. On this occasion, Rihani held the misunderstood *Qur'an* and *Hadith* responsible for this spirit of apathy among ignorant Muslims who formed, in his view, the majority of Muslims. Although this led to some reproachful responses from certain learned Muslims, such as his friend 'Abd al-Qadir al-Maghribi (1867–1956), member of the Arab Academy in Damascus, Rihani continued to raise and elaborate on this question. In this, Rihani was not the only critic for, as he himself reminded al-Maghribi, such issues had already been raised by al-Kawakibi in even greater detail.<sup>26</sup>

Both ignorance and fanaticism, according to Rihani, kept the people of Arabia blindly obedient to their tribal and religious leaders, and such obedience was the cause of the prevailing state of disorder as well as the continuing agitation and strife in Arabia. Ignorance, in his opinion, destroyed patriotism and explained the lack of a true national feeling among the Arabs and their tendency to rush to arms to uphold a private cause or right a personal or a tribal wrong.

The third obstacle to progress in Arabia was poverty. Even though it existed only in parts of Arabia, poverty in Rihani's view, contradicted the spirit of Arab dignity, hindered the progress of the Arabs and consequently

prevented their complete independence. While criticising the Sufi 'chemistry of belief' which taught the needlessness of working for a living, Rihani identified other causes for poverty in Arabia. Apart from the barren desert, the Bedu who found themselves living in Ibn Sa'ud's capital, for example, depended on 'begging' for living. Others received an allowance and lived on the generous donations of the ruler. In this context, Rihani blamed the attitude of the ruler who willingly kept his subjects dependent on him in order to use them in war at any time. For example, many recruits to Ibn Sa'ud's standing army had no meaningful employment in times of peace, and as such were a drain on his resources since he had to feed and clothe them and keep them contented. Rihani also warned against the continuity of internal strife and the state of war which aggravated the state of poverty, prevented stability, and hindered political and economic progress in various parts of Arabia.<sup>27</sup>

Oppression or injustice (*al-zulm*) was another serious problem perceived by Rihani as hindering the progress of Arabia.<sup>28</sup> We can identify three aspects of oppression to which Rihani draws attention. The ruler's oppression of his subjects in general; the ruler's tyranny towards his high officials, for example in the Yemen and 'Asir, where Imam Yahya and the Idrisi were in the habit of keeping hostages from the families of their officials to guarantee loyalty; and, thirdly, social oppression as represented in its most shocking aspect, slavery. Rihani was particularly concerned with the slave-trade in Arabia, which he discovered was encouraged by European as well as native authorities. Not only did it indicate how significantly Arab civilization had declined but also how it tarnished the Arabs' pride and dignity and their struggle for freedom and political independence. He took up the matter with the chief officials at the British Residency in Aden and he also criticised the Europeans for their hypocrisy in claiming to uphold civilization while failing to successfully eradicate slavery in the East.<sup>29</sup>

The backward state of Arab society both in Arabia and the Fertile Crescent did not lead Rihani to despair. In all his writings on the Arabs he stressed that the problems of the Arab nation should not lead to despondency because progress would undoubtedly come. Despite the gloomy picture, Rihani's optimism impelled him to believe that Arab society could be reformed and a new future for the Arab nation could be rebuilt.

To each of the major problems indicated above, Rihani offered a straightforward and practical solution which would lead the Arabs to modernity without contradicting their moral values. Ignorance and fanaticism, for instance, could be tempered by education, through the opening of modern public schools and developing young minds 'like

hidden treasures'. Oppression and tyranny of the rulers could be treated by establishing democratic and just rule. Slavery could be abolished by inspiring both the moral values of Islam which preach justice and freedom and the learning of Western moral values which preach respect for the human being. Moreover, he was 'in favour of a radical measure' which did not even exclude the use of force by Western authorities to put an end to slavery in the East.<sup>30</sup> The solution for poverty was work. The Arabs, as he suggested to Ibn Sa'ud, should work to earn their living and to fight the nature of the barren desert. The Arabs, in his opinion, could not remain nomadic and should not depend for their living on *ghazu*. The desert was not as barren as it appeared, but had hidden treasures; and the Arabs needed to explore these treasures by hard work.

Rihani was probably the first Arab thinker to draw attention to the importance of oil in achieving economic progress and independence for the Arabs. In 1935 he pointed out the importance of oil for the future progress of Iraq. Similarly, in an article published in *Asia* in 1938, he emphasised that it was in both the economic and political interests of the Western countries to help the Arabs achieve progress and political unity. He stressed the importance of the recognition, by the Western oil companies and their governments, of the Arabs' political and economic aspirations.<sup>31</sup>

To solve the totality of their problems and recover former glory, Rihani saw clearly that the Arabs could not do without modern science and technology. Thus, 'if we first recognise and understand the causes of Arab economic weakness and cultural decadence, namely the nature of the barren desert and ignorance, we must remember that the greatest and first conqueror today is science'. The Arabs, in his view, could achieve progress only if they opened the doors of Arabia to Western science and civilization, and traded with Europe through treaties of commerce. They could not remain isolated in the heart of Arabia in the age of the telegraph and the aeroplane.<sup>32</sup>

Occasionally Rihani would outline a practical blueprint for progress and modernisation for Arab rulers who would listen to him. For example, in a memorandum written in January 1923 while he was in Najd, Rihani enumerated to Ibn Sa'ud ten specific features of civilization and progress without which his kingdom could not be established as a modern state. These were: the opening of schools with modern curricula; inviting Arab doctors from Syria and Egypt and opening hospitals and pharmacies in the major cities of Najd; construction of water wells and drilling of oil and mining of other minerals under the control of Arab engineers (Egyptians and Syrians); installing telegraph facilities between the cities of Najd; establishing at least one newspaper; sending intelligent students to the American University of



Beirut; minting coinage in his name; opening Najd to maritime commerce through a port in al-Qatif with British assistance; employing trade agents to facilitate commerce with other Arab countries; and enacting a law of succession to the kingship (*qanun wiratha lil-mulk*) to protect it against ambitious enemies. Moreover, he emphasised to Ibn Sa'ud the importance of justice and education in addition to strength, stating 'if strength and justice are the foundation of the state, education is its shield'.<sup>33</sup>

For Rihani it was important not only to find solutions for the problems facing the Arabs, but also to adopt such solutions in a way that ensured the continuity of the process of change and progress. To achieve this, the Arabs needed a radical transformation in their mental attitude so that they could dynamically adopt what was being borrowed from the West to suit their own society. On the other hand, Rihani did not support the call for a return to the old Arab and Islamic traditions as a means of reform.<sup>34</sup> 'Islam would continue in its apathy (*jumud*) ... unless it was, to some extent, imbued (*yulaqqah*) with the psycho-social philosophy (*al-falsafa al-nafsiyya al-ijtima'iyya*) that was known to, and practised by the philosophers of the Arabs in the past. This was defined in three words: evolution (*al-tatawwur*), life (*al-haya*), and growth (*al-numuwu*)'.<sup>35</sup>

Reform, for Rihani, meant a revolt against the prevalent system, against such inherited traditions which were either inherently unsuitable or which had become outdated and inappropriate. It is interesting to note that from an early period (1911) Rihani had argued, for example in *The Book of Khalid*, that 'the so-called Reformation of which ... al-Afghani and ... Abdu are the protagonists, is false', because 'it is based on theological juggling and traditional sophisms'. At that period, he understood that reform required modernisation of the existing institutions and, if necessary, the complete rejection and change of these institutions if found inadequate. Thus progress, for him, could not be achieved by going back to the static inheritance, but rather by adopting scientific and modern techniques to deal with the problems of modern society, even if this required the adoption of some modern Western concepts.<sup>36</sup>

Progress as understood by Rihani was a dialectical process. He did not attack the whole Arab past but only those traditions and customs which he considered harmful and degenerate. 'When one revolts against oneself first, and against what is rotten in the legacy of one's ancestors, and when one reforms the corrupt and rejects the incurable, this is true reform and true revolution'.<sup>37</sup> While he called for a radical rejection of unworkable and ineffective older methods and institutions (because a provisional reform would not last), he did not advocate the rejection of the entire past, but

rather an understanding of the past in order to make it relevant to the future. If past methods were to be used in the new age they had to be adjusted and adapted to the times.

Rejuvenation of the Arab nation required, in his opinion, shaking off the thinking which had shackled the Arabs to their past. Thus, commenting on two lines of traditional Arabic verse inscribed on the wall outside the court of Ibn Sa'ud:

Although we are of a noble line,  
We do not on our line depend;  
We build as our ancestors built  
And do as they did, to the end.<sup>38</sup>

Rihani recognised a 'mixture of wisdom and folly' in this. He felt that the Arabs, like most Muslims, accepted such aphorisms as an ideal, and continued to believe in them with increasing force to produce fatal effects: sterilising the mind, the soul, and the heart of the people. The wisdom and sound principle in Arab conduct, according to him, lay in singing their noble line but not depending on it. But the folly remained in imitating their ancestors to the end. Here is, he claimed, 'the swamp from which issue all the germs of our social, political and religious diseases'. In his opinion, the Arabs could not and should not entirely and absolutely renounce their past. For this past was necessary and could be of benefit. There was no harm, therefore, in building as their ancestors had built but they should not stop where their ancestors stopped. 'The reverence for our ancestors is not complete unless it is coupled with a striving to surpass them—to prove ourselves worthy descendants. For consider what they achieved in an age deprived of the scientific instrumentalities of progress which distinguish our own; and consider what they would have achieved if they were in our time'.<sup>39</sup>

In his early writings Rihani had asserted his pride in the Arab contribution to world civilization. In his view, the Arabs had been one of the most civilised of people, and shared with Europeans all the greatness and the glory that Humanity is now experiencing. While possessing their own sciences and philosophy, hundreds of years of oppression and decline in education had led eventually to decay.<sup>40</sup> He continued to stress this point in his later writings, but he made it clear that 'nations today can achieve progress with the science of today, and it does not matter if the new science is accompanied by some of the good science of the past ... If we go back to the past we would rather go to compete with it not to imitate it or repeat what the ancestors

did'. Returning to the past for inspiration from its science, although it may provide the Arabs with a remedy to some of their problems, is not enough to solve all those problems. The old science and philosophy were adequate in the past because they were inspired by certain circumstances, which differed from the changed conditions of modern times. Today's new problems need new sciences and technology. This leads to Rihani's discourse on the question of borrowing from the West.<sup>41</sup>

Rihani found no objection in principle to borrowing from the West. Using the same argument employed by other Arab thinkers he stated that earlier Europeans, when in need, borrowed from the East and from the Arabs in particular and as a result their culture progressed. So logically the Arabs today should borrow from the Europeans what in the past was theirs. He saw no harm in the Arabs recovering at least part of the science they had given to the West when it was living in complete darkness.<sup>42</sup> But Rihani pointed out that the Arabs did not have to borrow everything, only what was appropriate for their society. He saw clearly that not every change in Arab life was necessarily good, and not all European values were suitable for the Arabs, especially if this adoption meant only the external imitation of certain forms of European progress. He rejected borrowing if it brought feigned knowledge and showiness or servitude to the foreigners. He warned against what he called 'Westernisation' (*al-tagharrib*), 'Frankicisation' (*al-tafarnuj*), or imitation of Europeans only in superficialities, which he considered a general weakness in the East.<sup>43</sup>

From an early period Rihani considered that particular aspects of European civilization were suitable for Arab culture and he continued to reiterate this in his later writings.<sup>44</sup> At one level he considered European civilization was based on materialism and mercantilism and on exploitation, wars and colonisation. And this helped to convince him that Western political institutions, not least the American model of a democratic republic, were inappropriate for Arabian society. What the Arabs should accept from the West, he stressed, was mainly science and technical assistance. By science he did not only mean adoption of modern sciences in the schools, but also adoption of the example of European liberal institutions and skills, devoid of Western political ambitions. He particularly advocated learning from the example of the application of technical knowledge, and from discipline and the skills of organisation and co-ordination. Such skills he considered necessary to enable the Arabs to participate in the conquest of their natural environment. For as the desert had been crossed in the past by the armies of conquest, pillage and slaughter, today, the desert, in his opinion, needed another conquering army from the West, the conquering army of science

and invention and enterprise. 'And it must conquer the desert, must triumph over its simooms, its dust storms, its lava regions, its sand-barricades, its parched wastes and wadis, before it can make it the bearer of the life-blood of our modern civilization'.<sup>45</sup>

Rihani was convinced that by combining the worthy values from their past with the upright values of the West, the Arabs could advance. The process of borrowing, therefore, was not separated from that of seeking inspiration from the past. The two processes were rather inter-connected in a dynamic relationship, which would create a new society, a nation capable of keeping up with other modern nations and capable of a renaissance (*nahda*), of progress and happiness. Optimistically, Rihani anticipated that this new nation would be a blend of the spiritual East, with its passion, sense of honour and generosity, and the material West; of eastern philosophy and western science and technology. Indeed, at a more utopian or visionary level, Rihani dreamed of what he called 'the Great City' (*al-Madina al-'Uzma*) in which the high values of East and West could live together.<sup>46</sup>

### **Religion, Sectarianism and Politics: Secularism as a Condition of Progress**

One of the important concepts associated with progress in Rihani's thought was that of secularism. Modern Arab thinkers have been concerned with the idea of secularism since the middle of the nineteenth century and the concept continues to be raised in contemporary Arabic and Islamic thought. This concern has ranged from calls for religious tolerance, to separation of religion from politics, to the rejection of the political and social role of religion and to limiting its realm to individual spirituality.<sup>47</sup>

Rihani's secular outlook is particularly seen in his relentless fight against sectarianism, which he considered a major problem hindering the progress of the Arabs. This was a persistent theme in his writings and speeches from his earliest output and throughout his career. As early as about 1898 his call for reform of the Ottoman State contained expression of anti-sectarian ideas. Although not amounting to a clear vision of a secular state, these early ideas were the first signs of a political attitude, which was later to become increasingly manifest in his thought. This secular trend evolved particularly after his travels in Arabia and his political involvement in the affairs of Syria and Lebanon.

Rihani considered secularism as the antithesis of, and indeed the antidote for, sectarianism. He saw the latter as a serious disease in its two manifestations: *al-ta'ifiyya* which divided Christians and Muslims in Lebanon and Syria, and *al-madhbabiyya* which created dissension among Muslims

of different sects in the Arabian Peninsula and also among Christians of different communities in Lebanon, Syria and the *Mahjar*. Thus, his remedy for Arab decline was to call for the elimination of sectarianism in both its manifestations and to replace it with a concept of secular nationalism as a first step towards progress and unity.

The first clear articulation of secularism and anti-sectarianism in Rihani's thought is reflected in his call for religious tolerance in his controversial speech, delivered as early as 1900 in New York and entitled '*al-Tasabul al-Dini*' (Religious Tolerance). In this speech Rihani called for mutual tolerance to terminate sectarian fanaticism, and he declared the motto: 'if religion separated us, let's then be united in patriotism (*al-wataniyya*), for God does not like us to separate'.

In this context Rihani used the word *tasabul* in the sense of mutual acceptance and respect on equal terms between the various religious communities regardless of the differences between religions. For him, fanaticism was unjustifiable since no one can identify the only true religion. He therefore asserted the equal right of all religions to exist. Rihani's scepticism about human ability to understand the divine truths is an important dimension in his secular discourse.<sup>48</sup> In his opinion God did not prefer any one nation or religious community over another. Those who followed the natural laws (*al-sharā'i' al-tabi'iyya*), by doing good and avoiding the bad, would not perish, even if they did not know the 'true religion' (*al-din al-haqiqi*). Unlike scientific facts, a religion could not be accepted by all and if one wanted to keep one's religion, one should tolerate others and respect their religion, since 'in the end, we all are unified by God, and all of us worship the same God'.<sup>49</sup> The oneness of God was expressed in his later writings as 'oneness of religions', for even if they differed in name, all religions in his view were, in the end, similar. The principle of oneness of religions (also espoused by the other leading *Mahjar* writers, Gibran and Naimy) not only became the basis of Rihani's humanism and his belief in the religion of 'all humanity' (*al-insaniyya 'ala al-itlaq*), but continued to be the justification for his call for religious tolerance as a necessity for social harmony.<sup>50</sup>

Rihani's call for tolerance was in itself a call for establishing society on the principles of reason, and not allowing religion to interfere in all aspects of daily life. 'Mutual tolerance', he said, 'is the basis of modern civilization and the cornerstone of civic community (*al-jami'a al-madaniyya*) ... it brings about progress and improvement in all fields of science, religion and philosophy'. He then concluded that mutual tolerance in itself imposes the separation of what belongs to religion from what belongs to humans. As

he put it, tolerance recognises both the church (*al-kanisa*) and the human (*al-insan*) as having their separate domains of authority. 'Both have limits, and wherever limits exist, rights exist; and any matter outside those limits is injustice'.<sup>51</sup>

Rihani posed the rhetorical question as to whether the role of religion was to provide worldly happiness, pleasure, and infinite temporal (*zamaniyya*) desires. In answer to this he argued that religion is either 'revealed or not revealed, sacred or not sacred'. If not revealed, then only the sound teachings should be kept and respected. But, since 'religion is sacred' no one is entitled to use it for frivolous or personal purposes. 'By taking religion out of the church for a worldly or secular end (*'alamiyya*) we would disdain it and blaspheme against it'. Rihani made a clear distinction between the temporal and the spiritual, or the civil (secular) and sacred realms, concluding that, for the benefit of both, the two realms must be completely separated.<sup>52</sup>

Rather than *'almaniyya* or *'almana* (both used in contemporary Arabic writings), Rihani uses the Arabic term *'alamiyya* (secular) correctly as an adjective to refer to the concerns or aims of the temporal world (*'alam*). He uses the terms *'almani* / *'ilmani*, *'almaniyya* / *'ilmaniyya* (secular), also as adjectives, specifically in connection with education and schools.<sup>53</sup> Secularism as separation of the temporal from spiritual, and separation of religion from politics, was connected, in his thought, with the more general and clearer concepts of progress and unity.

In relation to these two latter concepts, Rihani's secular outlook developed from a concern with social and administrative reform in Mount Lebanon within the Ottoman State, to a concern with the progress and unity of Lebanon and Syria and of the Arab nation following the fall of the Ottoman Empire. In the first instance, Rihani's secularist ideas manifested themselves in his proposal to separate religion from worldly affairs in Ottoman Mount Lebanon in three areas: education, politics and employment. Subsequently, Rihani was concerned with the need to foster a secular Arab feeling to effectively face European colonialism and to achieve social progress, political independence and Arab unity. As regards the latter, he suggested that the separation of religion from politics was the only way out of the prevalent sectarian thinking, which was strangling any progress towards the national concept. In such separation he found, among other results, the solution to a major impediment to Arab progress, namely the problem of identity that confronts the Arab individual in a multi-confessional society.

Concerned with the phenomenon of Ottoman decline and the backwardness of the East, Rihani considered religious fanaticism (*al-ta'assub al-dini*) as the main cause of that decline. In his view the school was the first

place to remove fanaticism. For it would be there that a new sentiment, love of the motherland (*hubb al-watan*), should be nurtured to replace religious fanaticism. The proclamation of constitution and administrative reforms by the Ottoman government in 1908 were considered by Rihani as insufficient to eliminate corruption. In his opinion they did not deeply penetrate the way of thinking and the morals of the people.<sup>54</sup>

Rihani was aware of the state of education in Ottoman society. Despite the educational reform and the introduction of modern secular schools from 1838, the Ottomans left traditional religious schools untouched, thus dividing Ottoman education into two systems, a situation that affected Ottoman society for a long period of time. In Lebanon and Syria the situation was even more complicated. Government schools, mostly primary, were limited in number and attracted only poor children, mostly Muslims. On the other hand, the numerous private schools were, with few exceptions, either run by foreign missionaries or by native institutions and individuals with religious and sectarian inclinations. Both kinds of schools, government and private, not only had distinct curricula, so providing unequal opportunities of education, but each perpetuated a different sense of culture, loyalty, and patriotic feeling.<sup>55</sup>

Rihani's solution was to advocate the establishment of national (*wataniyya*) public (*'umumiyya*) schools that would be compulsory, free of charge, modern and liberal in their curriculum. He saw the need for 'schools that were neither foreign nor sectarian (*madaris la ajnabiyya wa la ta'ifiyya*)', and open for 'girls and boys from different confessions and sects'. In such schools, the curriculum should not be limited to language, philosophy and religious sciences, but should especially include the principles of sound science, pure freedom, sacred patriotism and true fraternity/sisterhood (*al-ikha*). The kind of schools advocated by Rihani would ensure equal opportunities for all the children. For under the old system, not only was education unavailable for the majority of the population, but the system perpetuated disparity between people from different religious groups. In this regard Rihani placed special obligation on Muslims, as the majority, to encourage the idea of liberal public national education, otherwise there would be no real hope of reviving the nation.<sup>56</sup>

Rihani's ideas on education reflected a concern that was shared by other Arab thinkers of his time who, under the Hamidian regime, saw education and modern sciences as the first means of liberation and progress.<sup>57</sup> Clearly, Rihani was influenced by his experience of the culture of the USA where free public education had been available for almost everyone since the early nineteenth century, and where the secular educational program was

almost universally accepted as a means of progress. Thus his ideas on public education, self-education and moral progress, on the improvement of society by the diffusion of knowledge, and on the role of the educated elite in taking up the cause of progress, all reflect some of the concepts which had evolved in the USA by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup>

Rihani did not attempt to graft Western ideas of education on to Eastern societies without discrimination. Where these ideas had influenced his early writings, particularly on reform in the Ottoman State, he probably found them insufficient in the context of his call for Arab progress in the post-Ottoman age. His intimate experience of Arab society, particularly after his Arabian travels, convinced him of the real problems and needs of that society.

Politics was another important area where Rihani's secular attitude was strongly reflected in his ideas on social change and progress. In the framework of his campaign for reform between 1907 and 1913,<sup>59</sup> Rihani blamed the stagnant and backward situation in Mount Lebanon on the alliance existing between the traditional groups of leaders in the country. He accused the 'clergymen' (*al-iklirus*), the 'notables' (*shuyukh al-qura*) and the 'feudal lords' (*al-iqta'iyyun*), of conspiring together to obstruct any social change and progress, in order to secure their own authority and selfish interests. He saw the exploitation of religious sentiments for the promotion of individual political aims as a serious disease in Lebanese politics. Thus he advocated the 'purification' (*tanqiya*) and the freeing (*takhlis*) of religion from politics' as 'an essential condition for true reform'.<sup>60</sup>

Rihani's call for the separation of religion from politics began as early as 1902. Concerned with the administrative reform of Mount Lebanon, he insisted on the non-interference of the church (*al-kanisa*) or the clergy in the affairs of the government (*al-hukuma*) or the Administrative Council of Mount Lebanon. Since both 'church' and 'state' (*al-dawla*) had specific aims, he saw the need to separate them in order to safeguard and permit each to sufficiently assume their respective duties. He explained the church as an organisation led by its clergy and serving the spiritual needs of a particular group, while the government should be led by politicians and be concerned with the worldly needs of 'all people' (*al-sha'b 'ala al-itlaq*). If the government were left to the clergy to manage its affairs, it would face fanaticism and selfish sectarian ambitions, so undermining both the church and government.<sup>61</sup>

Using the same argument, Rihani rejected the notion, then advanced by some of his contemporaries, which considered the confessional community (*al-milla al-diniyya*) as a political party. A religious or confessional party (*al-hizb al-dini*), in his opinion, normally stands on religious beliefs and



works for unworldly aims, while a political party (*al-hizb al-siyasi*) should be based on national (*wataniyya*) and social (*ijtima'iyya*) principles without interfering in spiritual matters. Thus he warned against the confessional party taking over the government, not only because the two had different aims, but also because this potentially created jealousy and hatred among various groups and caused turmoil. On this basis he advocated the founding in Mount Lebanon of national political parties, and a change of the sectarian system, which would allow the confessional communities to interfere in the affairs of the government.<sup>62</sup>

Employment was the third area where Rihani insisted that a secular policy needed to be implemented to help achieve social reform and progress in Mount Lebanon. As a response to the proposals of reform by the *Mutasarrif*, Muzaffar Pasha (1902–07), Rihani in 1902 wrote a series of articles in which he contrasted the inadequate 'promised reform' with the 'reform hoped for'.<sup>63</sup> In these articles, Rihani criticised the appointment of public officials and soldiers according to their confessional denomination, because he saw this resulting in a clash of interests between loyalty to the confessional community and loyalty to the whole nation. Officials appointed because they belonged to a particular religious group or sect would, in Rihani's opinion, use the authority given to them to protect the interests of that sect against others.

For the benefit of all people as a 'nation united in patriotism', Rihani said that the very mention of sect in government departments should disappear. Practically, this could be achieved by implementing a secular policy on appointments, where only competence would be considered as a selection criterion. Accordingly, candidates for a position in government should not be asked about their religion or sect, but should be subjected to a strict examination of the expertise required for the position. Impartiality, in his view, would ensure the recruitment of competent officials and secure equal opportunities for all. In this, Rihani aimed at ending the domination of one religious group over the others in order to eliminate the serious factor of distrust and fear in political life.<sup>64</sup>

In the post-Ottoman period, Rihani's secular thinking was linked to his concern for the progress, independence, and national unity of the Arabs. During this period Rihani saw a close and dialectical relationship between the achievement of social reform and progress on one hand and independence from European colonialism and the realisation of national unity on the other.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout his career Rihani relentlessly fought against sectarian attitudes in politics, literature, and thinking, and he saw that unless sectarianism

were removed, the Arab nation could not achieve true and solid reform. In speeches delivered to different audiences in Palestine and Lebanon in 1927 and 1928, Rihani asserted that the most serious impediment to Arab progress was sectarianism. This he saw as an obstacle created by religious leaders and exploited by those who feared the outcome of science, freedom, and civil progress, and by those who refused national unity based on fraternity and equality. Sectarianism, he insisted, divided the people, dismembered the nation, and destroyed the foundations of the homeland. Thus, it remained a serious impediment, which the Arabs needed to overcome if they wanted to achieve progress and national unity.

Rihani clearly distinguished between religion and sectarianism. His criticism was not aimed at religion itself, but at the 'sect' (*al-ta'ifa*) as a social system. He considered the sect, the millet (*al-milla*), and the clan (*al-'ashira*) as equally hindering social and political progress. Narrow group identity isolated its followers from the greater circle of Humanity to the extent that it seldom sees the good except in its own selfish terms'.<sup>66</sup>

After the end of the First World War, when Rihani advocated Syrian unity, including Lebanon and Palestine, as a step towards greater Arab unity, he was aware that sectarianism was the main problem confronting such unity. He lamented the fact that Syrians, including the Lebanese, were raised to think that they belonged in the first place to their religion (*al-din*), secondly to their place of birth (*masqat al-ra's*) and then to their local area (*al-mintaqa*). Even in national matters they thought as Muslims, Christians, Druze or Jews. They possessed different attitudes and aims because they could not put the country above all confessions and religions.

Throughout the period of the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon he maintained that the main problem in Syria was sectarianism. 'Oh brothers/sisters', he stated, 'our main distress is in this national degeneration (*al-tafassukh al-qawmi*) caused by our sectarian attitudes ... the most serious enemy of the motherland (*al-watan*) and of nationalism (*al-qawmiyya*)'. Discord existed between sectarian interests and the public national welfare, because 'sectarianism is another word for selfishness ... a kind of national treason'.<sup>67</sup>

In criticising sectarianism, Rihani, by implication, criticised any political idea based upon it. Thus, after the end of the First World War, he warned against the concept of Lebanon's separation from Syria as advocated by the Maronite clergy and a number of Maronite intellectuals and politicians. He saw this approach as sectarian because its advocates recalled the experience of the Mardaites who, as he pointed out, fought the Arabs only because they were Muslim. Not only was the situation completely different from the late

seventh century but such a 'reactionary' idea also contradicted the natural law of progress which itself imposes separation of religion from politics. In the same spirit, in 1927, he criticised the call for establishing a 'Christian' Lebanese government, and an Arab 'Islamic' government in Syria. He considered both ideas as incompatible with the spirit of modernity and progress.<sup>68</sup>

Throughout his career, Rihani was optimistic about a change in the fanatical sectarian mentality which had impeded national unity and progress. In order for such change to occur, he believed in the necessity of separating religion from politics. In his opinion this should replace the various forms of religious fanaticism by one patriotic solidarity (*al-'asabiyya al-wataniyya*). For the sectarian factions (*al-tahazzubat al-ta'ifiyya*), which fragmented Syria would not disappear unless a new patriotic sentiment uniting all people was permitted to flourish. He emphasised the importance of secular education in the process of 'moving away from the sectarian thinking (*al-fikra al-ta'ifiyya*) to the national idea (*al-fikra al-qawmiyya*)'.<sup>69</sup>

Rihani disagreed with those who maintained that agreement between the leaders of the various religious communities was sufficient to unite these communities. Such a union, in his opinion, would not last because it was unable to create from the religious groups one patriotic nationality (*qawmiyya wataniyya wahida*). For, 'the Muslim in the administration would remain identified as a Muslim, and the Maronite as a Maronite, and so on'. As an alternative, he advocated the establishment of a constitutional government under which everybody, regardless of religion, would be treated equally in rights and duties. He continued to believe that a 'national civil rule' (*hukm madani qawmi*), an Arab Syrian Lebanese civil government that was neither Muslim nor Christian', was the only way to guarantee both progress and eventual unity. For, a government based on sectarianism would be tied to the wishes of religious leaders, and would be incompetent and oppressive.<sup>70</sup>

Convinced that progress was impossible without national unity and that sectarianism ran counter to the spirit of progress, Rihani believed that the people should hold civil matters above religion and leave their religious beliefs at their place of worship. Sects, in his opinion, 'should be dismembered to allow the homeland', the 'greatest sect' as he called it, 'to form'. This, he termed the 'deconstruction of sectarianism' (*al-tafakkuk al-ta'ifi*) which does not necessarily mean the complete disappearance of sects (*al-idmihlal al-ta'ifi*), but rather the 'deconstruction inside the sect' (*al-tafakkuk fi al-ta'ifa*). By the separation of the members of each sect each could then unite with members of other sects for the purpose of the higher national political

aims. Different groups, he argued, cannot form a genuine unity unless they initially split. One could not be a citizen unless, in public matters, one renounced allegiance to one's religious leader or clan chief. 'A member of a sect cannot, culturally and politically, belong to the largest community, to the homeland (*al-watan*), unless she/he wholeheartedly strives for patriotic unity and rejects from her/his mind and heritage (*irth*) all the sectarian traditions which obstruct such aim'.<sup>71</sup>

In the context of his concern with the progress of all the Arabs, Rihani perceived that this would be best realised within the broad concept of the 'Greater Arab Homeland' (*al-watan al-'arabi al-akbar*).<sup>72</sup> Again, he viewed sectarianism as the main obstacle. He saw that true progress of the fragmented Arab nation would begin only when the Arabs placed their national feeling before and above their religious beliefs. 'The truth of the great country can only be realised as a result of the civil national outlook which overrides all the narrow religious mentalities'. Rihani saw that each sect or group in the Arab world thought of itself as a 'country of its own'. National renaissance and progress would thus remain impossible unless this narrow sectarian identity was replaced with a broader national one. Nationalism and sectarian sentiments were, in his view, contradictory: 'when one gains strength, the other weakens'. Thus, renouncing the sectarian for the sake of the national was, in his view, the first necessary condition for national progress and eventual unity. 'The Maronite, Druze, Shi'ite and Sunnite, would not truly be Arabs unless they forget their respective Maronite, Druze, Shi'ite, or Sunnite identity for the sake of their greater national homeland. And the same is true of the Wahhabi in Najd and the Zaydi in the Yemen'.<sup>73</sup>

In the late 1920s, Rihani who advocated secular Pan-Arab nationalism (*al-qawmiyya al-'arabiyya*) and Arabism (*al-uruba*) against all the narrow sectarian and regional nationalism, saw Arabism as a secular spirit which could be fostered by secular public national education. He felt that this was the only spirit which would unite the Arabs and assist them to become a developed, strong nation capable of competing with European nations.<sup>74</sup>

In secular nationalism, whether Syrian or Pan-Arab, Rihani found a solution to the problem of religious minorities, and a shield against European interference in the Arab world. He asserted that, in Arab nationalism, Christians and Muslims would be equal. He argued that when the government was established on 'solid civil bases', all citizens would be treated as equal in rights and duties. The fear of minorities would be unjustifiable and Europeans would have no pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of the nation. Rihani's secularism expressed in terms of 'civil principles' and

'separation of religion from politics', assumed the establishment of the state on a rational democratic basis rather than on religious hegemony.<sup>75</sup>

In secular nationalism, Rihani also found a solution to his dilemma as a Christian Arab. He obviously felt that a narrow Christian Lebanese patriotism would encircle the Christians in a small country, hostile to its Arab Muslim environment and neither economically nor culturally viable. As he expressed it on several occasions after 1920, this would limit the aspirations and progress of the Lebanese and leave them in a state of permanent anxiety and need of foreign protection. On the other hand, he feared that as Christians in a Muslim environment, the Lebanese would feel outside a specifically Muslim political order. Thus, he saw secular nationalism as the only solution giving Christians and other religious minorities an identity with which they could exercise their rights as citizens. This explains his confidence in the unity of Lebanon with Syria, and later in Lebanon's place in Arab unity. For if the state were based on secular national principles, it would, he asserted, provide everyone an equal opportunity. The Christians, he argued, were 'talented' and 'intelligent', and should not fear the Muslim majority: because reason, not religion, would be the basis of the state and reason 'is the majority'.<sup>76</sup> One would feel that Rihani was trying to assure the Christians that competence, not numbers, would be the criterion.

In addition to separating religion from civil matters in education, employment and politics, Rihani suggested such separation in other areas of human relations, such as inter-marriage. In a letter to the editor of a prominent Beirut newspaper, Rihani advocated mixed marriages as the best condition for religious and social tolerance and for eventual national unity. People who marry regardless of religious identity were, in his opinion, able to abandon many of their ancestors' attitudes, and could easily accept the differences between their respective religions. To further the cause of mutual acceptance, he suggested that parents in such mixed marriages could teach their children both religions and leave them with freedom of worship.<sup>77</sup> In this Rihani appeared to be addressing at least two issues often raised in relation to civil marriage in contemporary Lebanon:<sup>78</sup> disagreement of the married couple on essential religious beliefs; and the ensuring of a tolerant environment where children could develop their personalities without any religious or social barriers or complexes.

Although Rihani regarded this kind of marriage as extremely important in the improvement of inter-community relations, he did not elaborate on this issue; nor did he discuss it at the level of personal statute. In general terms, Rihani did not simply call for the introduction of secular laws, but he always stressed the need to rely on scientific rather than religious

considerations in dealing with the problems of modern society. Religious laws, in his opinion, were inappropriate because religions were no longer able to meet present needs. He rejected the idea of a universal revelation (*al-wahi*) for all generations and all times, and argued that every age has its 'book', and that the book of today was science. He particularly addressed Muslims and urged them to interpret the *Qur'an* by saying: 'every people has its wisdom, and every age has its policy ... what was revealed to the Prophet to reform the Arabs is no longer adequate, if taken literally, to treat the problems of today and to reform modern societies'.<sup>79</sup> Thus the concept of secularism in Rihani's thought also takes a dimension of '*asrana* derived from '*asr*, 'equivalent to era or age'.

Rihani did not simply place religion in opposition to science. It is true that at an early stage (1911) he emphasised the contrast between divine and scientific truth at the philosophical level, but later on he tried to reconcile science with faith and religion.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, secularism in Rihani's thought was, as in the contemporary Arabic secular discourse, closely connected to democracy and rationalism.<sup>81</sup> Such connection was manifested in his call to reduce the role of religion in many aspects of life. Laws and judgements, for example, should be inspired by reason, not by 'religious superstitions and imaginary notions', and all religious beliefs and knowledge should be tested by reason, without fear of falling into blasphemy or atheism. It is reason, he claimed, which decides the suitability of laws and beliefs to meet human needs. Thus he insisted that every religious, philosophical and political belief ('*aqida*'), and every law (*shari'a*) that reason does not find suitable for human happiness and progress should be eliminated. For, humans were not created to be 'led by the reins' but to be enlightened by science and freedom so they themselves could force their own way. In order for reason to develop, it remained essential to have complete freedom from 'the shackles of imitation (*taqlid*), conservatism (*al-muhafaza*), hegemony (*al-siyada*), interest (*al-maslaha*), need (*al-haja*) and poverty (*al-takaddud*)'.<sup>82</sup> Reason, for him, was inseparable from freedom, and 'rational' human beings would never risk their independence nor subject their mind to the dominance of any sect.

Secularism in Rihani's thought assumes the equality of all citizens regardless of creed. This equality is based on freedom and aims at the separation of religion from politics, but not at atheism. In this respect, the words of George Atiyeh about secularism in the Middle East are equally applicable to Rihani's: 'secularism, although it may seem anticlerical, does not deny or affirm the basic principles of religion; it is simply concerned with the affirmation of the principles of freedom and human rights'.<sup>83</sup>

Unlike the Marxist school, Rihani's secularism does not abolish religion, nor does it aim, like Comte's, at establishing a technocratic society built only upon the precepts of science while being indifferent vis-à-vis religion. Rihani preached a society in which science and religion, materialism and spiritualism are reconciled.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, his secularism fitted better with the school that considered secularism as an emancipation of certain fields of human thought and action from any religious or metaphysical control. Religion is not banished from the secular world but it is reduced to being one of the many activities in this world, rather than controlling everything.

It is clear that Rihani was not concerned with proving the compatibility or incompatibility of secularism with religion, whether Islam or Christianity. But like other Arab thinkers of the time, wishing to lay down the principles of a secular state in which Muslims and Christians could participate on equal footing, he endeavoured to prove this equality within religion itself. For this he distinguished between what is essential in all religions and what is inessential.<sup>85</sup> This being the basis of true tolerance, with the separation of religion from the civil life, was the condition for Rihani's secularism.

As Kamal el-Hage put it, Rihani was not 'antireligious' but 'anticlerical'.<sup>86</sup> His attack on sectarianism was a rejection, not of religion, but rather of the sect as a social political system and of religious leaders who exploited religion to achieve their own aims. Religious leaders and the clergy, for him, included both Christians and Muslims, for the 'Patriarch and the Imam are twins; the sheikh and the priest are two brothers'.<sup>87</sup> Like Butrus al-Bustani before him, Rihani's anti-sectarianism and anti-clericalism need to be understood against the background of the historical and social reality of Lebanon, especially in the sectarian conflict of 1860 which left its marks on politics and society in Lebanon for a considerable period of time. Rihani appeared to hold the clergy responsible for the tensions leading to this conflict.<sup>88</sup>

Although he endeavoured to assert his belief in the message of all religions, Rihani's secular ideas were viewed with disfavour by many, of both Muslim and Christian denomination. While Christians, particularly clergymen, accused him of heresy and atheism,<sup>89</sup> Muslims, who otherwise admired his reformist ideas, disagreed with his secular attitudes which distinguished between religion and science. Some friendly critics described his views on religious fanaticism as 'exaggerated'.<sup>90</sup> These attitudes towards Rihani's ideas not only reflect the hostile response to any attack on religious leaders but, more importantly, they show that the conditions of his days were still unfavourable for his liberal ideas. This is despite any assumptions concerning the intellectual milieu being prepared for such ideas to flourish at the time.

Rihani, who reflected in his views certain Western values and ideas, did not perceive how huge the cultural gap between East and West was. Furthermore, he was addressing the complex issue of secularism in a traditional rural and feudal society where religion was still a strong factor in defining the identity of individuals and groups. Although he was fully aware that sectarianism took on the form of old tribalism, he did not refrain from advocating secularism and rationalism in a society where human and political relations were still defined on the basis of religious or sectarian identity. This is significant, for it shows not only Rihani's radicalism but also his idealism. For, although as a reformer and political activist he started from reality, in his call for tolerance and secularism, he appeared less realistic and, in retrospect, far too optimistic.



# CHAPTER FOUR

## JUSTICE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM

### Justice, Despotism and Freedom

A concept closely associated with progress and modernity, and equally important in Rihani's thought, is that of justice in both its social and political connotations. Rihani's early concerns with justice, as reflected in his writings, deal with the major issue of reform in the Ottoman State. Initially, his idea of justice was expressed in more or less traditional terms: emphasising the obligation of the ruler, the 'possessor of authority' (*dhū al-sultān*) to treat his subjects justly and benevolently. If the sultan was 'good' (*salih*), magnanimous (*halim*) and just (*adil*) he would effectively eradicate corruption in 'his people' (*qawm*) and succeed in reforming 'his nation' (*umma*). Justice (*adl*) as the opposite of oppression (*zulm*) placed a requirement on the ruler to set the right example for 'his subjects' (*ra'iyya*). For, as Rihani stated, 'if the sultan acted justly his subjects would not dare oppress each other'.<sup>1</sup>

Rihani used the terms *ra'iyya*, *qawm* and *umma* as interchangeable to denote the subjects or the people of an autocratic ruler. His idea of the justice of the ruler appears to be conceived as the latter's duty rather than his subjects' rights. This concept of justice was well within the framework of traditional Arab Islamic political thought, and Rihani found its justification in the example of the first Caliph, Abu Bakr. However, in an earlier essay entitled '*Haqq al-I'tirād*' (the Right of Opposition), Rihani spoke of the right of the subjects to claim just treatment, a notion that was incorporated, or perhaps revived, in modern Arabic political thought from the mid-nineteenth century, particularly by Rifa'ā al-Tahtawi (1801–73).<sup>2</sup>

In the same context, Rihani spoke of the equal rights of all people to express opposition. 'Every human being, small or great, poor or rich, has the sacred right to lodge a complaint or an opposition before the ruler (*hakim*) to claim reform and justice', he stated. 'The right of opposition' (*haqq al-*

*i'tirad*), which in this context also signifies freedom of expression, should belong equally to all people regardless of 'rank' or 'social class'.<sup>3</sup>

Rihani used the word 'freedom' (*hurriyya*) both in its social and individual sense denoting the opposite to slavery for instance, and in its political connotation meaning the right of the people to political expression, for example the right to vote (*haqq al-taswiit*). The right to participate in government was expressed in the principle of democracy (*al-dimuqratiyya*) for which he also drew justification from the traditional concept of consultation (*al-shura*), as expressed in the *Qur'an* and the tradition of the Prophet, as well as from the Christian idea of the 'divine paternity' (*al-abawiyya al-ilahiyya*) and 'human fraternity/sisterhood' (*al-akhawiyya al-bashariyya*).<sup>4</sup>

In two essays entitled '*al-Hukuma al-Dimukratiyya*' (The Democratic Government), published in New York in 1900, Rihani discussed the previous concepts, and spoke with admiration for the American form of democratic government and representation where the ruling power (*al-sulta al-hakima*) emanates from the people (*al-sha'b*). On the other hand, he attacked the absolute monarchy which concentrated power in the hands of one person or in a small number of individuals controlling people's affairs according to their own ambitious interests. On this basis, and in his own subtle way, Rihani was able to criticise the 'absolute rule' (*al-hukm al-mutlaq*) of 'Abd al-Hamid arguing that if the Sultan was really '*Amir al-Mu'minin*' as he claimed to be, he should be ruling according to the *Qur'an* which teaches that only God possesses absolute power.<sup>5</sup>

This first stage of Rihani's political consciousness was characterised by his attempts at definitions, an indication of his awareness that the concepts he discussed were not familiar to most of his Arabic readers. This is best exemplified in his explanation of various political systems in world history in terms both of formal structures and of concrete political reality. Alluding to the *Politics* of Aristotle, Rihani explained the three types of government: the monarchical government (*al-hukuma al-malakiyya*) in which the ruling power is confined to one person under the pretence of divine right (*al-haqq al-ilahi*); the oligarchy (*al-hukuma al-amiriyya* or *al-uligariyya*), in which a small number of notable families hold all the power; and the democratic government (*al-hukuma al-dimukratiyya*, spelt at this stage with '*kaf*' and '*ta'*' another indication of the novelty of the word in Arabic). (He also referred to the mixed government (*al-hukuma al-mukhtalata*), which was a combination of the monarchy, oligarchy and democracy). In the democratic government, which he saw as the antithesis of tyrannical monarchy, there were no special privileges for any one; everybody was free and a general system applied to all. Thus, he concluded 'democracy is another word for freedom'.<sup>6</sup>

It may appear that Rihani responded to intellectual curiosity rather than an immediate concern. In fact, his guiding interest was not wholly abstract or simply a desire to define ideas somewhat independently from the concrete situation. The fine thread between the abstract and the concrete is best illustrated in the contrast Rihani made between the US democratic government and the absolute rule of the monarchies of Russia, Italy and, particularly, Turkey (i.e. the Ottoman State). He rejected the second type of government insisting that there was no absolute right for anyone to rule millions of people against their will. Absolute monarchs were, in his opinion, a burden (*himl thaqil*) on society (*al-hay'a al-ijtima'iyya*) because they humiliate the people, 'as 'Abd al-Hamid does', by treating them like animals. Since he was convinced that, under democracy, power emanating from the people (*al-sha'b*) was in the service of the people, and although he admitted that the times were not times of revolution, he proclaimed the slogan: 'long live the people and down with the monarch, long live democracy and down with monarchy'.

Rihani attacked absolute autocratic rule, which he saw as enslaving the people and resulting in tyranny or despotism. With 'Abd al-Hamid himself in mind, he argued that under the pretence of divine right, the absolute ruler, often a weak or a mad person, disdained his people and treated them like his own chattel (*mata*). The absolute ruler 'kills, rules tyrannically and exploits the resources of the nation and throws it into perilous situations'.<sup>7</sup>

Rihani did not present an elaborate treatise on despotism or tyranny as did al-Kawakibi, for example in his *Taba'i' al-Istibdad*. However, we can identify in Rihani's writings the development of this important concept, which in his thought is contrasting with justice and freedom. Rihani's usage of the term tyranny (*istibdad*) was almost inseparable from injustice or oppression (*zulm* or *jawr*). Almost identical, both terms are used as the opposite to justice ('*adl* and '*adala*').<sup>8</sup>

Rihani remained critical of the various forms of tyranny, oppression and injustice. These included economic injustice as inflicted upon the workers and the poor classes in society; social injustice, whereby people are denied natural human rights (*huquq al-insan al-tabi'iyya*) and individual freedom (he saw this exercised at its worst against slaves, women, and against workers who are denied freedom of choice in work or wages); and also all political tyranny.<sup>9</sup> Rihani continued to be seriously preoccupied with political oppression and tyranny, whether during the Ottoman rule in the Arab East, or in the political practices of the monarchs of Arabia, as discussed in the previous chapter, or in Syria and Lebanon under the oppressive French Mandate. This does not mean, however, that tyranny and injustice

were limited to the East in his thought. For Rihani saw other examples of tyranny and injustice in world history including those of the British and the French.<sup>10</sup>

In Rihani's pre-First World War writings, political tyranny and injustice were characteristics of the Ottoman State, 'the most oppressive and unjust state in the world', and particularly of the absolute rule of 'Abd al-Hamid whose name was 'synonymous with injustice'.<sup>11</sup> While political tyranny was the outcome of absolute autocracy, Rihani warned that such tyranny would not flourish without the ignorance (*al-jahl*) of the subjects, their blind obedience, and without the flattery, hypocrisy (*al-tadlis* and *al-mudahana*) and connivance of the self-proclaimed leaders of the people when dealing with the tyrannical ruler.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, he warned that political tyranny not only possessed its own protective tools, but it also found its best ally in the abuse of religion and in religious leaders. For example, not only did the Ottoman State use official censorship (*al-maktubji*), 'an ignorant, fanatic, stupid, tyrannical and arrogant enemy of truth', to secure its continuity and consolidate its tyranny, but it also found a useful ally in the Jesuit Clergy in Syria. The Jesuits, in his opinion, connived (*tawata'*) with the *maktubji*, to serve tyranny by impeding any progress of knowledge and enlightenment among the people.

Political tyranny, for Rihani, had no religious identity. In Syria, the Muslim Ottoman State and the Christian Jesuit Clergy were in his opinion, 'brothers in evil, injustice and tyranny ... In Syria, the Crescent and the Cross have united in evil and corruption not in good and right'.<sup>13</sup> Rihani points out that the *Qur'an* itself contains many verses aimed at curbing the oppressors and tyrants; while true Christianity teaches passion (*al-rahma*), love (*al-mahabba*) and justice (*al-'adl*).<sup>14</sup> Thus his attack was strongly against using religion in the service of tyranny. What he termed 'religious tyranny' (*al-istibdad al-dini*) is somewhat reminiscent of al-Kawakibi, or rather the 'sophistic tyranny' (*al-istibdad al-safsati*) which, in Rihani's opinion, was worse than political tyranny itself. For even if the latter were removed, religious tyranny would remain a threat to the nation.<sup>15</sup>

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Rihani's attack on tyranny took new significance. Tyranny now signified selfishness (*athara*) and hegemony in politics, and inequity (*la musawa*) in civil matters. He also used the term *istibdad* during this period in connection with the 'national' governments of Syria and Lebanon under foreign control and with the practices of the French Mandate authorities in particular. Tyranny now had a new attribute: 'the constitutional tyranny' (*al-istibdad al-dusturi*) in relation to the supposed constitutional governments supported by the colonialist

power.<sup>16</sup> Such tyranny was particularly manifested in the arbitrariness of judgements, and in the oppression of freedom of expression.

Rihani saw this new form of tyranny as a continuation of the old Turkish tyranny. For the spirit of the national rulers was still autocratic and as such was inherited from the old Turkish imperial '*Shahaniyya*' school and the '*Bab-'Aliyya*' environment (in relation to the Sublime Porte). Rihani was seriously concerned that tyranny had become endemic in the East, that it was not confined to the absolute ruler, but reached the whole nation. For 'tyranny is at several levels (*al-istibdad darajat*): my foot is over your head ... and his foot, may God curse him, is over my head'. He described this form of tyranny as an old 'Oriental' tradition that was, he claimed, the major threat to the new democratic constitutional governments in Syria and Lebanon.<sup>17</sup>

With the French Mandate, tyranny and injustice acquired a new face and new attributes. Mindful of the experience of 'Abd al-Hamid, Rihani now compared the Hamidian and the colonial brands of tyranny. 'From the era of 'Abd al-Hamid ..., a familiar and open tyranny, to a masked and sophisticated tyranny. From a tyranny in the name of the *Padishah* to a tyranny in the name of the League of Nations ... From a tyranny which divides and rules for the glory of the state to a tyranny which divides and rules for the benefit of colonialism'.<sup>18</sup>

While Rihani devoted a good part of his writings to expose and attack political tyranny, his proposed means of eradicating such tyranny varied according to circumstances, from gradual reform through education and the introduction of democratic rule, to revolutionary methods involving civil disobedience and even armed revolt.<sup>19</sup> However, democracy through constitutional parliamentary rule remained for him the best means to remove tyranny and implement justice. Thus, during the Ottoman era he was convinced that constitutional rule would be the end of tyranny, and the best safeguard against the return to despotism was full commitment to constitutional principles.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, during the period of the French Mandate, Rihani proclaimed that justice could not be secured without democratic constitutional government, and respect for the freedom of the whole nation. In his opinion, only true democracy would strip political leaders of their tyrannical and autocratic mentality. He thus warned that if 'the constitution was mere ink on paper' and 'democracy was a disguised lie' the danger of falling back into the dark ages would be greater.<sup>21</sup>

### **Democracy and Social Justice: Ideals and Reality**

From the beginning Rihani warned against the abuse of democracy. His early admiration of democracy and freedom, particularly in the United States,

did not mean that he was uncritical of certain aspects of American politics and society, and of the danger of democracy being abused by politicians. Although living in America for at least eighteen years, he remained strongly critical of certain aspects of American society, which he saw as subject to all manner of distorted freedom and false democracy. In a series of articles written in about 1906, he lamented that, under the pretext of democracy, the vast majority of the American people were severely exploited by a minority possessing money and political power. He wrote: 'one hundred and thirty years have passed since American independence, but America is still far away from true freedom. America was liberated from a crowned king to fall into the hands of kings without crowns'.<sup>22</sup> 'We have not progressed in civilization and modernity as some pretend. We have liberated ... the slaves and given freedom ... to every individual, rich or poor. But slavery today is dressed in new clothes ... Shackles have changed ... and the slave traders have been replaced by new ones'.<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, Rihani criticised the English historian, Edward Gibbon, for considering modern civilization as secure against a barbarous cataclysm. Having described and then questioned the bases of modern society, Rihani concluded that 'the threat against our so-called civilization is not from the outside but rather from the inside; it is not from the barbarians but from ourselves'.<sup>24</sup>

It is possible that Rihani found Gibbon's conclusion too optimistic when compared to concrete reality. His belief that modern civilization (*al-tamaddun al-hadith*), as it appeared to him at the time, was self-destructive was based partially on what he perceived as discriminatory laws, corrupt judicial and educational systems, greedy monopolies, ignorance, delusion, and excessive emphasis on materialism and capitalism. Rihani asked: 'what are the virtues of such civilization whose laws are enacted by the capitalists (*arbab al-mal*), executed by the stock-brokers (*samasirat al-burs*) and industrialists (*ashab al-ma'amil*) and are spread by the ministers of defence through cannons and armoured cars'.<sup>25</sup> Rihani deplored the negative spirit of commercialism which he saw as extending to social, religious and intellectual spheres in Western life, in which 'modernity' meant 'the accumulation of wealth (*al-tamawwul*)'.

Rihani found that a society subject to all kinds of corruption, crime and immorality, could not be a true democratic society, and that such obstacles were no less threatening in a free democratic political system than in an autocratic tyrannical one. Rihani is rightly regarded as the first Arab thinker to attack American political democracy,<sup>26</sup> which seemed to him to be disguised behind the appearance of free democratic election. 'They say

election in the republic corrects corruption, but we say every vote, small or big, is bought and sold with the dollar. The majority of Americans vote only for the candidate who pays more'.<sup>27</sup> This idea was further illustrated in *The Book of Khalid* (1911), where Rihani described the corruption of political leaders and their subservience to selfish materialistic interests at the expense of the values and principles that brought them to power.

In the same book Rihani attempted to give the exact meaning of such mysterious terms as 'political canvasser' and 'manipulations of vote' in a democratic country like the United States. Such activities were 'essentially a trade honestly conducted on the known principle of supply and demand'. Khalid's (i.e. Rihani's own) experience with American democratic leaders convinced him that 'instead of canvassing and orating for Democracy's illustrious Candidate, ... one ought to do canvassing for Honesty and Truth among Democracy's leaders', whom he described as 'tuft-hunters' and 'stock-jobbers'.

With a somewhat sad, ironical tone, Rihani explained through Khalid's 'Histoire Intime', how in 'the land of democracy', men holding power were able to manipulate justice to secure their interests and position. After describing an arrogant democratic 'boss', in his 'costly-furnished office' purchased with the money obtained from the poor, Rihani expressed amazement at how such a 'bad small man could lead by the nose so many good people'. Having experienced the contradiction between the ideal and the reality, he pointed out that under a liberal constitution and a free government system 'you can not with immunity give free and honest expression to your thoughts', but 'you are at liberty to sell your soul, to open a bank account for your conscience'. 'Popular suffrage', he said, 'helps not the suffering individual; nor does it conduce to a better and higher morality. Why, it cannot as much as purge its own channels. For what is the ballot box ... but a modern vehicle of corruption and debasement? The ballot box, believe me, cannot ... shed a little light on the deeper problems of life. Of course, it is the exponent of the will of the majority, that is to say, the will of the Party that has most money at its disposal'.<sup>28</sup>

During the period between 1906 and 1911, Rihani criticised not only the political side of American democracy, but also its social and economic aspects. Above all, he was censorious of American capitalism. Such criticism was not only descriptive and analytical, but also reflected Rihani's humanistic commitment, and to a lesser extent, ideological tendencies. For there is no doubt that he placed great emphasis on humaneness in society.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps due to his rationalist orientation, his openness to Western thought and his own individual turn of mind and idealism, Rihani started

from an early period to raise questions concerning economic and political issues. Unable to provide a scientific or specialised answer, his concerns with such issues remained mostly in the form of questioning. In 1898 he wrote: 'the resources of the earth suffice all its people. They are rather abundant ... I truly believe the resources which the people harvest in one year would satisfy their needs for thirty years or more. Why then do we not have satisfaction? Why do people die of hunger? ... Why are there millions of homeless people? Is it the mismanagement of the administration that distributes the resources among the people? Or is it the economic misuse in all the branches of government and private institutions? Is this what they call the unfair distribution of wealth?'<sup>30</sup>

At this early stage, Rihani showed an interest in the science of 'political economy' (*al-iqtisad al-siyasi*). Criticising some Arab writers (without identifying them) for discussing the subject in a literary style, he insisted that political economy was 'a philosophical science' which 'required much accuracy in the search for facts'. He was aware that political economy while encompassing its essential and universal principles needed to be understood within the context of the political system and the country concerned. This led him to question the role of government. He identified six areas of responsibility for governments: to ensure consensus and unity; to enforce justice; to establish peace and security; to defend the nation and its rights; to guarantee its citizens' happiness and comfort; and to ensure enjoyment of the blessings of freedom and political economy in the present and the future.<sup>31</sup>

The socio-economic dimension of Rihani's interest in American politics, and his concern with social justice was reflected in his stand during the US elections of 1900. Still an admirer of American democracy (and contrary to the majority of his fellow Syrian emigrants), he supported the Democratic candidate against the Republican. He saw the former as 'a friend of the poor, defender of the worker and a leader of the people'. He expected a democratic leader to stand for 'equality (*al-musawa*)', to respect people because of what they are, not because of what they possess. A democratic leader, in his opinion, was one who cared less about 'millionaires' than about 'defending the rights of the weak and the poor'; he was the 'enemy of the monopolist companies (*al-sharikat al-ihikariyya*)' and the 'defender of the suppressed rights of the people (*huquq al-sha'b al-mahduma*)' against the 'power of capital (*quwwat al-mal*)'.<sup>32</sup>

Issues of fair distribution of wealth and of government responsibility for welfare and social justice were Rihani's main criticisms of the American system. In 1906, in a frank and forthright manner, he exposed the supposed



'virtues' of modern civilization under democratic governments, whether republican or monarchist, which legalise and perpetuate the discrimination of one section of the population against the other: 'between the strong and the weak, the poor and the rich'.<sup>33</sup> In the picture he draws, American society appears as a class society in which a certain class was in a position to exploit the others. In a society of oppressors and oppressed, slavery may be eliminated, but it could take a new form of exploitation. Although all citizens were supposedly equal and the old division into slave owners and slaves had disappeared, the law in fact still discriminated between those who have and those who do not, namely the masses.

During this period, particularly in and around 1906, Rihani demonstrated a high degree of commitment to the workers' cause and poor people in general. He devoted a series of descriptive and analytical articles to discussing the social and economic problems of the poor and working class in an industrial city like New York. Not only did he describe the sufferings of the vast majority of the people—with poverty, disease and injustice—but he also deplored the appalling condition of work in the mines, oil fields, textile factories, and in industrial work places in general.<sup>34</sup>

Rihani wrote at length about 'the slavery of miners', their ten-hour working day spent underground with no fresh air, no light or water, in addition to the inherent risks in mining. He considered mining as 'the symbol of the gradual slow death' and considered the society that was built 'only upon the misery of one group of its people' as 'an unjust, unbalanced and corrupt society'. What struck him most was the inequality between different groups. 'In the Stock Exchange', he wrote in '*Fawq Sutih New York*' (On New York's Rooftops), 'you win fifty million dollars in a little while, and thousands of miners work ten hours and risk their life ... for one or two dollars a day. What a strange world! What a wonderful civilization!'

Rihani attributed social injustice and economic inequality to the monopolist, and to the exploiting economic system characteristic of capitalism. In '*al-Tamaddun al-Hadith*' (Modern Civilization), he pointed out that in such so-called civilised society, 'the monopolist companies exploit the resources of the earth only to store them in order to double their prices'; while control of certain necessary commodities was used by the capitalists as means of pressuring the labouring class. For example, in '*Fi Mithl Hadha al-Yawm Tabat Jahannam*' (In a Day like This Hell was Pleasant), he explained that in cold winters industrialists withheld coal to force striking miners back to work. 'Thousands of loads of accumulated coal are withheld from the people, and in the city thousands of families are dying of cold ... This is

how the capitalists (*arbab al-mal*) fight the workers, how the monopolies kill children for the sake of their selfish interests ..., and how the strong oppress the weak everywhere'.

Echoing certain socialist ideas on the alliance of wealth and political power, Rihani emphasised the corruption of officials and institutions in a supposedly democratic modern 'civilised' society (*'al-Tamaddun al-Hadith'*). He indicated that in such society judges were corrupted by wealth and professors of philosophy were subordinated to the will of the capitalists who would not permit the teaching of new social sciences as this might harm the schemes of those who have the wealth and power. He also condemned the alliance between capital and political power: 'what misery do capitalists, in connivance with the law and the government, impose on the people in order to serve their own ambitious aims!' (*'Fi Mithl Hadha al-Yawm Tabat Jahannam'*).

For Rihani, democracy in the capitalist system was not the rule of the majority but the rule of the capitalists: those who have the wealth have the power. In a liberal, independent republic, where equality and justice supposedly prevailed, the capitalist class still disdained the people and their representatives, and disregarded the press and the politicians. 'Is this the democratic government which was founded to spread equality among the people? What laws allowed those capitalists to monopolise the necessities of life and enslave the people?'

At a more elevated, intellectual level, Rihani touched upon the essence of the state and its significance and role in ensuring social justice, equity and genuine democracy. If in a democratic republic liberty was the domain of capitalists, the democratic state, therefore, could not be an expression of the popular will, but rather a tool that enabled the capitalists to maintain their power over the working class and the poor. Popular suffrage and parliament were merely a formality. On several occasions, Rihani asserted that since power remained essentially in the hands of capital, the latter dominated the state. The fair struggle of the 'poor workers' against the 'arrogant' employers and the capitalists, as he put it in *'al-Tamaddun al-Hadith'*, further convinced him that the power of a handful of capitalists over the whole of a society was blatant and openly corrupt.

Rihani drew attention to the 'democratic' laws which permitted the capitalists to exploit the masses, while the latter possessing nothing, grew impoverished and finally converted to revolutionary workers. A clear manifestation of this was the exploitation of child labour. In *'Abna' al-Bu3'* (The Children of Misery), he condemned 'civilization which compels its young children to work in the factories and deprives them of education'.

Such civilizations were 'corrupt and incomplete', because they secured the interest of the wealthy and ignored the rights of the masses (*al-jamahir*).

Rihani insisted that 'the state which condones child labour is a crooked state'. While he did not condemn parents for sending their children to work, he blamed the state which allowed poverty to prevail. He accused the state of lack of control over industry, labour and welfare services (i.e. provision of public housing and schools for the poor), and condemned state support for monopolies, so depriving the poor of the necessities of life. He insisted that poverty was caused by the 'greed' and 'cheating' of the wealthy, as a result of the encouragement of the state which turned a blind eye and allowed itself to be dominated by the power and will of capital.

Rihani assigned the task of correcting society's injustices to the state. He believed above all that the impoverishment of the masses would lead them to revolution. 'Poverty', he explained in '*Abna' al-Bu's*', 'generates ignorance, disease and crime ... It kills hope and dignity'. He warned that young children who were compelled to work would grow unconfident and ignorant, while oppression and frustration would turn them into rebellious adults. Because he believed the government should 'fear those oppressed youth and revolutionary adults', he suggested that the government should ensure a decent life for the parents, and build public housing and schools for the poor people in order to save the children from the slavery of hardship.

However, Rihani was certain that redress of injustice would not be possible without reform of the state system itself. He was convinced that the problem of poverty would remain as long as those who could find a solution for it were kept away from legislative power. He did not expect the workers to seize political power, but he thought the intellectuals could help enact non-discriminatory laws to ensure justice and equality. He was not optimistic about this either. He doubted that in a democratic system, thinkers such as Tolstoy, although admired by statesmen, would be allowed effective legislative participation for fear that they would defend the rights of the poor. One of the fallacies of democracy, in his opinion, was that candidates would proclaim the principles of justice and equality but would often renounce these principles once elected.

Rihani warned against the danger of possible abuse of freedom in the capitalist political system, because such freedom could become 'a means to assist its 'enemies' against the country's citizens'. In such a system, he argued in '*Fi Mithl Hadba al-Yawm Tabat Jahannam*', that the government 'becomes in the end incapable of controlling the capitalists or curbing their defiance'. Rihani, in fact, attributes the possible fall of the democratic republic to socio-economic agents. 'Just as the monarchy in the past had

helped statesmen to oppress with their power, the republic today seems to help the capitalists to oppress with their money'.

Rihani predicted the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism from within. However, at this stage (in 1906) he did not identify the following phase in a post-capitalist society. For example, although he attributed the anticipated fall of capitalism under the Western system of democracy to economic agents, he did not clearly deduce, from the economic law of motion in contemporary society, an inevitable transformation of capitalism into socialism. He understood that the greed of capitalists was self-destructive. 'Have a glance at the world of commerce and business', he wrote in *'Fawq Sutih New York'*, 'can you see this buffalo in the Stock Exchange thrusting and killing those small lambs? He kills his creator and then kills himself'. He also foresaw revolution caused by poverty and oppression. In *'Abna' al-Buṣ'*, he warned that the exploited workers and the poor would not bear the oppression forever. 'The Stock Exchange is standing as a dam between the monopolies and the stores, between the merchants and the consumer. But when the deluge comes the dam would not stop it ... Could the stockbroker or the wheat monopoliser calm the agitation when the cyclone bursts?' But he failed to specify who would hold power after this revolutionary cyclone.

Despite the obvious influence of socialist thought on his ideas, Rihani's 'socialism' was not of a purely materialist type, it possessed a dimension of welfare and social justice. It is clear also that Rihani's concern at this stage was not that of private or public ownership of the means of production. But in criticising American democracy, he was much more concerned with the fair and equitable redistribution of wealth. In 1906 (especially in *'Abna' al-Buṣ'*) he reiterated the idea that the resources of the earth would be sufficient if they were fairly and justly distributed among all the people of the world. 'The wheat grown in the USA every year can feed all the people of the earth, why then are there people dying of hunger while others are dying from over-eating?' His aim was not to see a change of power within the class society where the oppressed assume power and oppress their former oppressors, but to witness a fine equilibrium where there is no longer a situation in which some over-eat while others starve. In his idealism Rihani was confident that a day would come when happiness and contentment would prevail among all the people. 'When the minority rids itself of over-eating and the masses are secured from hunger, when all members of society become equal, only then would equilibrium prevail and the signs of beauty and perfection appear in society. I do not believe that day will see you or me, but I am sure it is coming anyway'.<sup>35</sup>

Even though in his discussion of the ills of the American system, Rihani did not specifically use the words capitalism (*al-raʾsmaliyya*) or socialism (*al-ishtirakiyya*), the influence of socialist thinking on his ideas is quite obvious. His socio-economic lexicon contains many words, which are found in socialist literature. Indeed, he, along with Farah Antun and Nicola Haddad (1870–1954) has been considered among the first pioneers of socialism in modern Arabic thought.<sup>36</sup>

The term (*ishtirakiyya*) had been current in Arabic since 1890. Reference to it can be found in *al-Muqtataf* of 1890 and 1894, and al-Afghani used the term with respect to social reform in 1895. By the end of the nineteenth century many Arab intellectuals, influenced by certain socialist ideas current in Europe, started to reflect these ideas in their novels and writings. A number of Arab intellectuals of that period provided a systematic commentary on the doctrines of socialism. With the writings of Shibli Shumayyil and Farah Antun, socialism in the Arab world made its strongest impact. Not only did it receive its most comprehensive analysis but through them socialism reached a level of political and ideological commitment. Shumayyil, whose writings were fairly widely read in the Arab world, was the first to spread the concept of socialism in Arabic. By 1913 socialism was already a subject for Arab idealists and intellectuals concerned with social reform.<sup>37</sup>

Rihani used the Arabic term *ishtirakiyya* for the first time in 1900 in conjunction with civilization (*al-tamaddun*) and enlightenment (*al-nur*). He placed socialist principles (*al-mabadi' al-ishtirakiyya*) on equal terms with democratic principles (*al-mabadi' al-dimuqratiyya*) and Christian charity (*al-rahma al-masihiyya*) in the context of civilization and enlightenment, all characteristic tenets of the period around 1900.<sup>38</sup> In 1903, he described contemporary American and European humanist poets (*shu'ara' al-insaniyya*) as 'the poets of social progress (*shu'ara' al-ruqi al-ijtima'i*), the apostles of socialism (*rusul al-ishtirakiyya*), all-embracing love (*al-mahabba al-shamila*) and universal compassion (*al-shafaqa al-'umumiyya*).<sup>39</sup> In an article written in 1910 in response to the *Sarkis Magazine's* question 'What would Christ say if he returned to the world on this Christmas day?' Rihani reiterated his conviction concerning certain resemblances between socialist principles and the teachings of true Christianity.<sup>40</sup> Thus, both in this context and in his analysis of the problems of industrial society in the USA, Rihani's socialist outlook cannot be mistaken. Nevertheless, in his discussion of the social and economic problems of American democracy, Rihani avoided the use of the term *ishtirakiyya*. It is possible that Rihani, who was writing for an Arab readership, chose to be careful in the use of the word *ishtirakiyya* so that he could get his message across. Yet, the socialist trend of his thought at this stage remained quite clear.

### Rihani and the Socialists

Rihani was familiar with European socialist thought long before the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Before the Revolution, Rihani did not try to provide a comprehensive analysis of socialism or of Marxism. Nor did he try to look at the practicality of those doctrines to decipher whether they were tenable in their philosophical validity or social feasibility. Although he appeared to predict the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism and the inescapability of revolution, he did not indicate who he thought would take control of society. It is not clear whether the 'balanced society' which he foresaw was the 'socialist society' as predicted by socialist thinkers. Nor is it obvious whether, at this stage, Rihani saw socialism as realisable.

How Rihani's thought responded to and developed after the Bolshevik Revolution, and how he himself saw this movement, can be deduced from a number of articles which he wrote following the Revolution, and particularly in his monograph, *The Descent of Bolshevism* published in English in 1920.

Until 1917 Rihani seemed more concerned with the problems of industrial capitalist society. His position concerning all groups of the propertyless classes everywhere was very clear. While his main concern in the Arab homeland was political and national liberation from external domination, both Ottoman and European, socio-economic problems were not less important to him. As early as 1909 he emphasised the contrast between the wealthy (*al-mutamawwilun*) and the poor (*al-fuqarā*), between the notables (*al-wujaha*), aristocrats (*al-dhawāt*) and officials (*al-māmūrun*) on the one hand, and the peasants (*al-fallahun*), sowers (*al-zari'un*) and other workers in general, whom he addressed as 'his fellow poor compatriots'.<sup>41</sup> His preference and respect for the latter class was obvious. Similarly, his struggle for economic emancipation as an inherent part of political liberation during the French Mandate in Lebanon and Syria (discussed in Chapter Seven) should be viewed in the same light. Not only did it indicate Rihani's concern with the social and economic problems of his people, but it also indicated the influence on his thought of socialist, including Marxist, ideas concerning imperialism and its connection with capitalist exploitation.

Some four years before the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, Rihani had asserted that the decline of all the Eastern countries (i.e. the countries of the Near East and Asia) could not be halted except by revolution which would bring fresh blood and regenerate the spiritual and moral powers of the nations. At this time he was convinced that the coming revolution in the Ottoman Sultanate, particularly in the Arab East, would be caused by hunger. He could not imagine 'the people starving while the rulers of the Sultanate were safe and secure in their seats'.<sup>42</sup>

In 1920 Rihani appeared not wholly optimistic about the outcome of the Bolshevik Revolution. In *'Sanat 1950'*, an article written in 1920 as some kind of prediction for the 'Year 1950', Rihani imagined Bolshevism would fail because of the policies of 'the Allied Powers'. Conversely, he predicted a rise of the proletariat to power in the USA some 30 years after the end of the First World War or by mid-century. The rule of the proletariat, in the picture he portrayed, was the phase before the last which would be the rule of 'constitutional socialism' that would complete all the preceding phases. The question of transition, for him, seemed to be established by the universal theory of development. After setting the preceding phases as the 'patriarchal rule' of wise men, the 'autocratic rule' of absolute monarchies, and the 'constitutional rule' of the notables and the bourgeoisie, he indicated that 'all the phases seem to follow each other in this manner according to the law of History and the law of Evolution and Progress'.

The 'democratic socialist rule' of the proletariat, as presented by Rihani, would be established upon several foundations. The seizure by the government of all public institutions and the fixing of the income of individuals and institutions was essential. The establishment in each state of an agency with its capital collected from the surplus of income of individuals and private institutions would be used for public works and for scientific, cultural and medical institutions. At the international level, under the rule of the proletariat, Wilson's principles of self-determination for small and big nations would be put into practice; European imperialists would evacuate their colonies; and the League of Nations would be established as an international army after the seizure of the armies of all the member nations.

In *'Sanat 1950'*, Rihani attributed the predicted revolution of the proletariat to the seeds of peace, which after the First World War had grown inside the working and poor classes around the world, the only classes, in his view, which paid the blood levy of the devastating war. He imagined that the rise of the proletariat to the position of the ruling class in the USA would happen after the workers and the poor classes, unarmed men and women, united with the armed forces and disobeyed orders to go to war. After the collapse of the 'governments of war' in Washington and London he saw, for the first time in the world, the sun of fraternity/sisterhood and freedom rising, and the revolution spreading in the whole of Europe and America. He saw 'Bolshevism resurrected and purified by failure and time'. The difference was that this was an unarmed peaceful revolution which would seize power in the civilised world, and in which women would be a strong element in a resounding victory.

Rihani seems to be reflecting upon the bitterness of the betrayed peoples following the First World War and the failure of Wilson's principles of self-determination in the face of the imperialist ambitions of European powers. He foresaw that in thirty years the salvation of betrayed nations would be in the hands of a true democratic rule, not of capitalists but, of the proletariat. 'Thirty years have passed', he wrote, 'and the peoples (*al-shu'ub*) who have had enough of war have accepted what happened. They have been silent over old and new tyrannies ... Yes we have accepted laws that were enacted in the Peace Conference, and contracts concluded between the nations. The world has accepted the Versailles Treaty like a sick person accepts the medicine'.<sup>43</sup>

Rihani explained the relation between the forthcoming rule of the proletariat and the outcome of the war in terms of class struggle. He noted that while the war had ended the monarchies, it had established in power those politicians who spoke of freedom and equality, but in reality served only the interest of the capitalists. The 'bourgeois class' that has come after the collapse of monarchs had not done away with class antagonisms. The 'War of Nations', he wrote, 'ended ... but did not end the war of classes (*harb al-tabaqat*) whose causes were deep-rooted in human society and nature'.<sup>44</sup> 'The Versailles Treaty divided the civilised world into two principal parts: the rulers (*al-hukkam*) and their supporters, the financial and commercial interest groups, on the one side, and the workers who, from time to time, protested by means of strikes or by means of useless local revolutionary movements on the other'.<sup>45</sup> This indicated that the rule of the proletariat, as foreseen by Rihani, would be the outcome not only of a national proletarian revolution against the government of capitalists in one country, but also an international revolution which would unite the workers and the poor classes of all the countries against exploiting governments which used them for war in order to protect the interests of the capitalists of the world.

At this stage, the influence of Marx's theories of class struggle and the development of future communism on Rihani's ideas is evident, particularly in his prediction of development of the rule of the proletariat into 'constitutional socialism'. This is also apparent in his discourse, which is quite similar to the modern 'socialist-Marxist' Arabic discourse. For example, Rihani used the terms *harb al-tabaqat* or *nidal al-tabaqat*, rather than *al-nidal al-tabaqi* commonly used in Arabic for class struggle, and *al-mujtama' al-ishtiraki al-'amili* (the socialist workers society), or *ishtirakiyyat al-umam* (the socialism of nations), rather than *al-umamiyya* commonly used for International.<sup>46</sup> But, although Rihani admired Marx's theory of international peace in particular,<sup>47</sup> he was not wholly convinced by his materialistic concept of history and his exclusion of religion and his



underestimation of the arts. In 1921 he wrote: 'the conception that the fundamental factor in the development of any nation is the economic factor, that is the way in which a nation produces and exchanges commodities, is the narrowest, shallowest, most sordid, and most pernicious that ever was conceived by a man with any pretension to learning and wisdom. It is a shallow well, indeed that of Marx and its water withal is brackish. I turn away from it, thinking how well it could be filtered, if it were allowed to pass through the channels of religion, at least, and the arts'.<sup>48</sup>

Rihani's first direct discussion of the socialist movement was *The Descent of Bolshevism*, a 'little book' of approximately seventy pages, which he published in 1920 and dedicated to his American friend Michael Monahan. In the introduction, under the heading 'Seeds for the Sower', Rihani considered the rule of the proletariat in Russia as a transitional phase of history, 'another swing of the pendulum of Time'. Bolshevism or the dictatorship of the proletariat was, for him, like autocracy, an absolute rule of a minority. The difference between them was the ruling class. While 'autocracy is a government of the few from above, Bolshevism is a government of the few from below'.

In his introduction Rihani also raised the question of the relationship of dictatorship to democracy. True democracy, in his opinion, remained the cure for most social and political ills, but such democracy was still an ideal to be attained. Society, for him, was a rod, which only a just government could balance properly, but no one yet, even through Bolshevism, had discovered the balancing point. For 'Bolshevism is the other end of Czarism'.

For Rihani, the Russian Revolution was one of those movements in History where people revolted against the inequalities of life and refused to submit to the restraints of laws, and often experienced a period of terror in the hope of realising ultimately the perfect state. In such movements, he explained, the leaders, sincere at first, espoused a utopian dream. But with the material for revolt at hand, and unable to resist the seductions of the nascent power, they soon transformed into demagogues with failure, or autocrats with success.

This explained the reason why Bolshevism had not attained the stage of true democracy, in his opinion. By utilising 'the elements of negation in society', the leaders of such movements only succeeded in setting up another government which, no matter how just its foundations in theory, became in practice more despotic and corrupt. Despite some optimism, Rihani remained sceptical about the future of Bolshevism. He was optimistic because he saw the 'vision of the Perfect State' potentially awaken people and lead them to martyrdom and 'continue to leaven the aspirations of

succeeding nations'. And no matter how ruthless the leaders, the nation would eventually discover its balance again, and re-establish, through law and order, the principles of justice and progress. He remained sceptical though of such 'utopian' state. As a rule, a nation would emerge 'stronger, morally and spiritually, from a revolutionary upheaval'. But, he still believed that all the movements of the world, which sought to establish, by force or peace, a utopia on earth 'have been doomed to failure'.

Rihani viewed Bolshevism as an 'Oriental' movement. 'Bolshevism', he said, 'may be Marxian in theory, but it is Hulagoesque in practice. It may be of European descent, but it is Oriental in tradition, Oriental in mood, Oriental in temperament'.<sup>49</sup> He saw Bolshevism in such movements as Mazdakism in fifth century Persia, the Khawarij in early Islamic Arabia, the Karmathians in the ninth century Iraq and the Assassins of Neishapur. He also viewed it in the movement of the 'Illuminati', the 'intellectual Bolshevism' which first appeared in Germany in the eighteenth century under Adam Weishaupt, and which Rihani likens to the Isma'ilis of Islam and the Mazdakites of Persia.<sup>50</sup>

It should not be understood that by comparing Bolshevism to such Arab and Islamic movements Rihani 'traced back the roots of the socialist thought in the world to Oriental, Arab and Islamic sources', as has been claimed.<sup>51</sup> Rihani was not concerned to prove whether socialism was compatible or not with Arab society and culture, nor was he concerned with proving the originality of Arab socialism. In fact, unlike some Arab intellectuals of his generation, Rihani did not provide a socialist-Marxist interpretation of such movements.<sup>52</sup> For, he did not emphasise the ideological link between their doctrines and those of socialism, except perhaps by a small reference to Mazdak's 'communism' and his law of the 'community of women'. It is true that he viewed Bolshevism as 'Oriental' but in the sense of extremism; because, in his opinion, 'the Orientals are the extremists of the world'.<sup>53</sup> He likened Bolshevism to mystic and religious movements in the East and to the Illuminati in the West because he felt that these were the most prominent movements in history against the existing order. The common element is that all were a 'revolt against the inequalities of life', and a 'refusal to submit to the restraints of laws and creeds'. They were similar in the sense that all were against organised society. 'Concealed by the apostles of violence, under the cloak of religion' or 'under the mask of philosophy', those movements 'sought to undermine all existing authority in the state and all creeds and moral codes in the nation'. The difference between them and the Bolshevik Revolution was 'in the background and the surroundings which give the movement distinct local colours and strange sounding

names'. In the foreword to *The Descent of Bolshevism*, Rihani wrote: 'as a rule, however, the tyranny of inequality has been at the bottom of all revolts and revolutions. In the past it was embodied in religions and autocracies; today it is embodied in industrialism. The masters in the past were the kings and priests, while in our times they are the captains of industry and the labour leaders. Under either condition, however, a long-suffering and downtrodden people will be driven ultimately to extremes of materialism expressed in universal negations'.

A more favourable attitude towards the Bolshevik Revolution and socialist doctrines was reflected in a series of Arabic articles and lectures, which Rihani published in 1928 in a book entitled *al-Tatarruf w-al-Islah* (Extremism and Reform). The theme of the first essay, '*al-Sullam*' (the Ladder), was the struggle of the exploited peasants against the oppressive exploiting landowners, in an unspecified society. Was he then aware that the big landowners in the Arab countries had increasingly begun to play the role of agents of Western imperialism, particularly of British power in Palestine?<sup>54</sup> And was he responding to any particular problem? The answer is not clear. But it is clear that he viewed the peasants' peaceful attempts to achieve a rise in wages or to demand a minimum share of profit as 'justifiable' because they represented the legitimate rights of the peasants to a decent life. On the other hand, he saw the landowners' arrogant rejection of these demands as unjustifiable and 'extremist'. The landowners' oppressive measures consisting of expulsion of workers led, in his view, to the revolt of the peasants who, under the leadership of an intelligent, energetic and capable peasant, rejected the whole system and demanded the appropriation of land. The peasants' slogan, 'the land is the property of the peasants, the profit to be equally shared among them', was just and fair not only because it responded to the needs and rights of the peasants, but also because it was a natural and inevitable outcome of the oppression and exploitation by the landowners.<sup>55</sup>

In this essay, Rihani tried to prove that when the means of reform failed, revolution became necessary to rid society of injustice. This is well expressed in the second essay, '*al-Tatarruf*' (Extremism), where Rihani made clear that revolution becomes inevitable when the voice of wisdom and reason is no longer heard and people become accustomed to enslavement. People's enslavement to social, political and religious traditions could not be ended except by a revolution similar to Bolshevism as a revolt against ignorance, cowardice and oppression. Those who 'cheat', 'crawl' and 'enslave' others angrily fear Bolshevism because this will reveal their falsehood.<sup>56</sup>

At this stage, Rihani believed that revolution, as a purifier of the human individual and nations, begets all that is good and true. He was optimistic

that the Bolshevik Revolution, having sown the seeds of reform, was going to cleanse the heart of the East. Violence, at this stage, became necessary because it rids society of slavery; and a revolution, even if it introduced anarchy and disorder, was better than permanent oppression because revolution would re-establish a new and just order. Thus, the Red Revolution at this stage was, for him, the 'catastrophe' that bears the seeds of the ultimate social reform. In its apparent evil there is an inherent good which cannot manifest itself except by violence.<sup>57</sup>

The difference in tone between *The Descent of Bolshevism* (1920) and *al-Tatarruf w-al-Islah* (1928) is quite clear and can be understood in the light of the circumstances in which Rihani wrote each work. When the first was written, the Russian revolution itself was still too young to be judged by its achievements, but also the political situation and Western imperialism in the Arab East had not yet crystallised. By 1928 Western imperialism had asserted itself in the form of the French Mandate in Lebanon and Syria, the British Mandate in Iraq and Palestine—the latter incorporating the Balfour Declaration on a homeland for the Jews—and various forms of British protection in other regions of Arabia. Particularly significant in this respect was the nature of the alliance between Anglo-French imperialism and Zionism.

As an Arab nationalist, Rihani's main concern during this period (1920–28), was the liberation of Arab land from foreign imperialism (as discussed in other parts of this study). By 1928 he had already visited Arabia (1922–23) and closely scrutinised the workings of British imperialism in the Arab world. He had begun his campaign against the French Mandate in Lebanon and Syria, and against Zionism in Palestine. In his struggle for national liberation, Rihani emphasised not only the role of political uprising but also that of revolt against all social and political ills in order to rid the Arab world of political slavery. It was thus natural for him to support the idea of revolution in general and the Bolshevik revolution in particular after ten years of rule in Russia. Perhaps communist support during this period for the Arab nationalists in their struggle for independence from French and English imperialism was also an important factor in Rihani's favourable attitude towards the Russian communist revolution.<sup>58</sup> The main contradiction for Rihani remained, at this stage, between the oppressed world and Western imperialism; and he was well aware that the new communist state stood potentially in the former camp.

Supporting Bolshevism as a revolutionary spirit did not mean that Rihani believed Bolshevism attained the perfect state as a system. But, in the 1930s, he certainly saw Bolshevism as 'the greatest political and

economic experiment in the history of the world, and as such, it deserved to be taken into consideration'.<sup>59</sup> At the time Rihani was still convinced that a fair and just distribution of wealth, according to laws enacted by 'sincere humanists', was the principal blessing, while the accumulation or inflation (*tadakhkhum*) and concentration (*takattul*) of wealth were the cause of all misfortunes. Comparing his own days to those of the 'ancients' in an article published in 1930, '*Nahnu w-al-Aqdamun*' (We and the Ancients), he saw that the condition of the poor had greatly improved. But, he admitted, this was still below the state of perfection. 'It seems to me', he said, 'that the ultimate goal of the liberated peoples is in the middle between the Marxist Bolshevism of Russia and the Democratic Socialism of America. In both countries there are today serious attempts which, in their aim at justice, are more ambitious than any preceding reforms in ancient and modern history'.

Rihani saw some improvement in the increasing number of the well-to-do in the world and the disintegration of capital concentration. However, he claimed that progress should not stop at limits. Poverty still existed and injustice and oppression in certain large financial activities necessitated an essential change in the economic system. 'The poor in the world should decrease until poverty withers away'. This, he felt, was not the goal only of the socialist thinkers and politicians, but also of every 'progressive, humanist and universal thinker'. 'Such is the ultimate goal that all the civilised nations will one day reach'.<sup>60</sup>

Does this mean that Rihani aimed at a complete equality among all people? His early writings certainly reflect a hope and indeed concern for a socio-economic equilibrium, and even some hostility towards capitalism. In a later period (1937) he appeared to take a moderate, or rather moderating position between the rich and the poor, the capitalists and the working classes.

At this time Rihani considered 'just equality (*al-taswiya al-'adila*) as based on three of the natural laws governing all creatures and beings: specialisation (*al-ikhhtisas*), co-operation (*al-ta'awun*), and reward (*al-mukaf'ā'a*)'. While he criticised the workers' unions in their warfare against the capitalists and the employers, he saw the rich as entitled to gain from their own initiative and mental efforts, as much as the workers gain from their physical work. The 'absolute power' in the hands of the leaders of the working class was, in his opinion, equally oppressive because it limited the individual freedom of the workers in their choice of work or wages. He acknowledged that the workers still suffered from poverty and misery. But he also recognised the efforts of a number of capitalists who, indirectly, helped the workers attain

a better condition of life through financing cultural and social activities such as universities, museums, and hospitals, which could benefit the rich as well as the poor.<sup>61</sup>

There does not seem to be real justification for Hanna Batatu's assertion that Rihani 'explicitly rejected the principle of equality'.<sup>62</sup> Rihani's ideas need to be understood in the context in which they were expressed. It is important to remember that Rihani used the above argument to encourage the Syrian and Lebanese capitalists in the USA to invest their money in a Syrian national university in Damascus or Beirut.<sup>63</sup> This, however, raises an important question. Did he truly believe that ending poverty was a charitable deed on the part of the rich rather than a duty? Is the concept of social justice in his thought based on a benevolent and charitable act or on the concept of 'right and duty' in a society?

Rihani saw social injustice and economic inequality as the product of conflict within society, directly related to the monopolist and exploiting economic system characteristic of capitalism. At one stage, through his analysis of the ills of the American political and social system, he criticised the Western democratic government as being a tool in the hands of capitalists and monopolies, and he assigned to the state the task of correcting society's injustice as we have seen. In all this, one could see that Rihani had been influenced by the socialist doctrines, which he himself saw as similar to the principles of social reform and liberalism. However, his socialism did not reach the stage of ideological commitment.

It was clear that Rihani demanded a just and fair distribution of wealth, and he aimed at an equitable and just order. But he did not concern himself with bringing about a political socialist order (as Shumayyil and Antun did for example). Rihani did not form, or belong to, any political socialist party or any other party, nor did he present a programme for one. While he was in the Arab East from 1904 to 1910 and from 1922 onward, Rihani was not far from the intellectual atmosphere, particularly in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, in which socialist ideas were being spread through leading journals including *al-Muqtataf*, *al-Hilal*, and *al-Jami'a* (Cairo), and *al-Haqiqa*, *al-Ma'rad*, *al-Sibafi al-Ta'ih*, *al-Tali'a* and *al-Dubur* (Lebanon), for which he had written many articles. While in Lebanon he must have witnessed the first initiative marking the birth of the Lebanese 'socialist movement', a celebration of the first of May in 1907, which was organised by a number of intellectuals including Jurji Niquila Baz, Felix Faris, Mustafa al-Ghalayini, Khayrallah Khayrallah, and Dawud Muja'is,<sup>64</sup> all associates of Rihani.

While he was in Mexico in 1918 Rihani also had contact with the socialists, the 'true friends of Social-Democracy', in that country.<sup>65</sup> But he

was not actively involved in any political socialist movement or party, nor did he appreciate the multitude of socialist doctrines. He even criticised detailed discussions of the various socialist doctrines, as he saw such knowledge as 'confusing and annoying' and 'is of no practical use'.<sup>66</sup> This probably explains why, unlike other Arab writers, Rihani did not write detailed analyses of socialist doctrines. 'There are many doctrines but the aim is the same. To abolish poverty and accumulated wealth in human society, this is what I understand of socialism', he said. He preferred to spare his readers the 'Babel of socialism' and instead introduced to them the biographies of the most prominent socialists. He had in mind some Western social thinkers, the 'Humanists' as he called them, such as Robert Owen, Rodbertus, Saint Simon and Kropotkin who, although they were 'rich and aristocrat', deserved to be considered, not for what they taught but for what they did. For 'the life of those reformers who fought for their teachings' was, in his view, 'more important than their teachings'.<sup>67</sup>

Socialism, for Rihani, remained a practice rather than an ideology. Being a socialist meant commitment not only in words but also and more importantly in deeds. 'The poor person who calls her/himself a reformer and advocates socialism, impertinently against the rich, but stands astonished when s/he sees a rich person in her/his car, deserves flogging not respect because such a poor reformist would disregard the socialist teachings when s/he becomes rich'. Tolstoy for example, was in his opinion, a great socialist and a real reformer, not because of what he preached but also because, like Jesus, of what he said and did. 'His greatness stands on his good work, good example and right thinking'.<sup>68</sup> For Rihani, 'false socialism like false religion' is short-lived and 'the hypocrisy of socialists like the greed of capitalists' does not last.<sup>69</sup>

It is true that Rihani was concerned about an equitable society in economic terms but he refused to limit his socialist theory to 'the stomach of the people, to their pocket or to the glory of authority'. Ideologies concerned only with 'satisfying the hungry people', 'equality between the poor and the rich' and 'destruction of the monopolist companies', are as bad as those concerned with 'enhancing the national trade', 'supporting the authority of the government' or 'enlarging the colonies'. All are, he stated, 'a mercantile philosophy which has no sign of spiritual perfection or moral progress ... An animal philosophy which has no food for a progressive sublime life. This does not flourish without strong elements from the heart and consciousness'.<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps the phrasing of Fried and Sanders in their *Socialist Thought* could well describe Rihani's socialism: 'European Socialism was an attempt not

only to redistribute wealth more equitably, but to rediscover the way to freedom in a world governed by the industrial system ... Socialism should not be taken as mainly an economic theory or a tradition of theories. It is rather, in a sense, anti-economic; it aims, in an era in which men have become burdened, and as often as much victimised as served by a vast economic structure, to put the economic forces in their place, to subordinate them to human life, and place them in the service of man ... The socialist seeks to transform more than the material organisation of society. He seeks above all a change of consciousness'.<sup>71</sup>

The direction of the progressive socialist trend in Rihani's thought is now clear. It stood, not on readily established theories, but on a complex effort of search, analysis and discussion, and on a dynamic relation between reality and reason. Such intellectual development reflected his vision of the 'Great City' (*al-Madina al-'Uzma*), a vision that Rihani formed through his direct contact with the cultures and problems of both the East and the West.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# ARABS AND OTTOMANS: REFORM, DECENTRALISATION AND INDEPENDENCE

### **Ottoman Reform: Impact on Syria and Mount Lebanon**

Rihani's early career as a writer and public speaker corresponds with the last twenty years of the Ottoman Empire. His political ideas during the period between 1898 and 1918 when the Arab East was still under Ottoman rule were reflected in articles and speeches later published in a number of his collected works.<sup>1</sup> A survey of these writings indicates that Rihani was concerned with the main issues of the period. Apart from his contributions on the ideas of progress, justice and democracy (discussed in chapters Three and Four), his concerns included more specific issues such as reform of the Ottoman State and constitutional rule; administrative and political reform in Mount Lebanon; Lebanese privileges and autonomy at the political, administrative, economic, and cultural levels; the position and role of the Arabic language and culture in the Ottoman Empire; whether revolt against the Turks to liberate Lebanon and Syria was the correct path to follow; and the fate of Lebanon and Syria at the end of the First World War.

Between 1898 and 1910 Rihani, like other Arab writers of his generation, considered the Ottoman '*umma*' as his own,<sup>2</sup> but, at the same time, he emphasised his Syrian identity within the Ottoman State, using such expressions as 'We Syrians' and 'the Syrian nation' in his writings and speeches.<sup>3</sup> With 'its diverse peoples and languages', Rihani considered 'the Ottoman State' as his own state and did not, at this stage, advocate breaking away. Like many Arab reformers during this period, Rihani was concerned with the reform of the State complaining of 'our state's unsound system (*nizam dawlatina al-mukhtall*)' and 'our nation's crooked and corrupt way of life (*tariq hayat ummatina al-mu'wajj al-fasid*)'.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to note that when Rihani began his call for reform in 1898 in the United States, the policy of oppression adopted by Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid in the Arab provinces, together with the Sultan's call for Pan-Islamism, had resulted in paralysing the reform movement and the drowning of any voices calling for Arab autonomy in Syria. Although Rihani in the USA was naturally safe from persecution, the reticence of opposition back home may have convinced him that revolution was still premature, because neither the people nor the leaders were prepared to undertake such a radical step. Thus, despite his complaints against Turkish misgovernment, he was contented with the call for political reform, including autonomy or decentralisation, which until 1913 remained the dominant mood in the Arab provinces.<sup>5</sup>

Rihani was aware during this period that there were some voices in Syria calling for revolution against the Ottoman State. Mainly coming from Christians who sought independence from the Turks, they would have preferred the replacement of Ottoman rule by some European protection or even control. He was also aware of this feeling among Syrian emigrants in America (as it is said that the first open call for complete independence from Turkish rule was launched by the Party of Young Syria (*Hizb Suriyya al-Fata*) established in New York in 1898 by Yusuf Abi al-Lama', Shibl Damus, 'Isa al-Khuri and Jamil Ma'luf, all well-known to Rihani).<sup>6</sup> In 1901 he criticised his friend Shibl Damus for encouraging the idea of revolution, arguing that a revolution at this stage was too early, not only because both the Ottoman people and leaders were not ready, but also because Ottoman rule had not yet reached a stage to be overthrown.<sup>7</sup>

However, despite his preference for reform instead of revolution, Rihani was sceptical about the revival of the decaying Ottoman State. This indicated that reform for him, at this stage, was only a transitional step towards achieving more radical changes in due course. It also suggested that his rejection of revolution was not the result of his belief in the Ottoman State system as it stood then, but derived from his conviction that, in order to succeed, revolution could not be hurried.

Rihani's ideas for the reform of the Ottoman State were based on the concepts of justice, equality and freedom, discussed in earlier chapters. By the time Rihani started writing, these ideas had begun to influence the political consciousness of intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire, Arab lands included, and had become incorporated in the programmes of Ottoman revolutionary organisations in which Arabs played a significant role.<sup>8</sup>

A particularly important concept in Rihani's thought during this period, and throughout, was that of patriotism. He saw patriotism (*wataniyya*) or 'love of the country' (*hubb al-watan*) as a sentiment that should be spread

amongst Ottoman subjects through public, non-sectarian, education. By advocating this, Rihani's aim was not only to counter the decline in Ottoman society but also to fight against the political tyranny of 'Abd al-Hamid.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of patriotism was not unfamiliar in the Ottoman Empire during this period. The principle of broad patriotism or loyalty to the Ottoman State was adopted by the Tanzimat reformers and statesmen as the basis for the new institutions envisaged to modernise the state. The Tanzimat statesmen also emphasised the importance of educational reform, and they endeavoured to develop a secular programme in the public education system. Similarly, as early as 1868, the Young Ottomans adopted Ottoman patriotism as one of the two main points for their programme (the other was consultative government).<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile notions of love of one's own country (*al-watan*), as distinct from the larger and universal Ottoman Empire, was already being introduced into Arab thinking by such nineteenth century reformers as the Egyptian Rifa'a al-Tahtawi and the Syrian-Lebanese Butrus al-Bustani.<sup>11</sup> While Rihani, from the time he started writing in 1898, advocated patriotism which signified loyalty to the Ottoman State he, like most Arab thinkers at the time, appeared to adopt the principle of Ottomanism coupled with an emphasis on his loyalty to his native Arab land, particularly Lebanon and Syria.<sup>12</sup>

### **On Constitutional Reform, Autonomy and Decentralisation**

After the Young Turk coup of July 1908, and the restoration of the constitution which was greeted by the Arabs with enthusiasm, Rihani, in common with other Arab intellectuals, expressed cautious joy over the victory of this 'peaceful revolution'. In a speech delivered on this occasion, he praised 'Abd al-Hamid for restoring the constitution and for 'inaugurating a new era of freedom, tolerance, equality and fraternity'.<sup>13</sup> This attitude should not be understood as toadying to 'Abd al-Hamid. For while Rihani saluted the Sultan for granting freedom to the nation, he warned that political freedom was useless if stripped of its spiritual dimension, and that constitutional government was meaningless if the people did not understand the real significance of liberty or if the 'ambitious' leaders exploited it for their own interests.

It did not take long before Rihani realised that his fears were justified. In April 1909 a counter-revolution broke out in Istanbul in favour of 'Abd al-Hamid who believed that with the aid of reactionaries he could restore absolute government.<sup>14</sup> It was natural for Rihani, who from the beginning perceived that reform of the state required the curbing of the Sultan's absolute rule (and was a leading advocate for constitutional reform among Syrian thinkers in the nineteenth century),<sup>15</sup> to offer support to the anti-Hamidian movement and

army which crushed the counter-revolution. In an article published on 30 April 1909 he praised the 'great Arab' Mahmud Shawkat (Sevket) Pasha, the general commander of the 'Army of Deliverance'.<sup>16</sup> In his opinion, Shawkat played an important role in establishing freedom, for if Niyazi and Enver had dug the foundations of liberty, Shawkat had placed the cornerstone of the building by defending the constitution. The fact that an Arab upheld the constitution (Shawkat was from an Iraqi family), gave Rihani hope of ending Arab-Turkish disunity and beginning a new era of peace and co-operation. In this context Rihani criticised those members of parliament who supported 'Abd al-Hamid, and he called upon them to depose the Sultan for breaking his constitutional oath and because he 'was already deposed by the force of justice'. He argued that if the parliament failed to do so, the people should dismiss it because it would no longer represent their will.

Rihani's aspirations for the constitutional government under the Committee of Union and Progress ended in bitterness and disappointment. Between 1909 and 1910 he asserted the futility of political revolution unless it was accompanied by a moral revolt. He was now convinced that the constitutional government was not the solution to all the nation's problems. 'If the army destroyed the stronghold of the despotic government, it did not destroy the bases of tyranny ... there is no difference between an autocratic despotic government and parliamentary despotism as long as ignorant fanaticism continued to prevail amidst the nation'.<sup>17</sup>

The repressive and centralist policies of the Young Turks, between 1909 and 1914, no doubt resulted in a change in Rihani's political tendency, in common with other Arab thinkers and activists of the period. The harmonious Arab-Turkish relationship, which he thought would be secured with Arab participation and the presence of Shawkat in power, suffered greatly because of the centralist policy and the imposition of the Turkish language and culture on the Arabs. The breach between the Young Turk regime and the Arab nationalists resulted in the proliferation of nationalist societies in Syria and Istanbul, as well as in Cairo and Paris, the principal centres of Arab exiles. They ranged from public associations that called openly for Arab autonomy within the Ottoman state, to secret conspiratorial groups, which had concrete revolutionary programmes and a definite idea of Arab independence. In Lebanon, Rihani participated in some of these activities through speeches and contributions to newspapers.

The activities of Arab nationalists culminated in the holding of the first Arab Congress, held in June 1913 in Paris, when the necessity of reform on the basis of decentralisation and the assertion of Arab rights within the Ottoman State were emphasised.<sup>18</sup>

Rihani also maintained personal contact and correspondence with prominent Arab nationalist figures including some of the organisers of the Paris Congress. But there is no evidence that he was a member of any of these associations; and whether he attended the Congress of Paris is, as discussed earlier, still disputed. However, Rihani's ideas during this period reflect a clear disapproval of the Unionist policies and a growing tendency towards autonomy (or independence) for the Arab provinces. For example, in 1910, he deplored the Unionist attempts to abolish the privileges of Lebanon in order to end its autonomy and restore Ottoman authority. Furthermore, in 1911, for the first time he declared his Arab identity as distinct from his Ottoman identity. This important development in his politics will be discussed later in the chapter. Meanwhile he continued to seek reform, his main object being autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. In 1912 he called for political autonomy of all provinces and all the peoples of the Ottoman Empire, including the political autonomy of Lebanon.<sup>19</sup> After the defeat of the Ottomans in the First Balkan War (August 1912–May 1913), Rihani predicted the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The change of government after the coup d'état launched against Kamil's cabinet would not, he claimed, stop the spirit of the anti-Ottoman revolutionary movement. More importantly, he now found it possible to assert the inevitability of revolution against the Turks and the necessity of establishing a new 'Arab–Muslim–Christian–Syrian union (*al-Jami'a al-Suriyya al-Arabiyya al-Islamiyya al-Masihyya*)', based on Pan-Arab national unity (*al-wahda al-qawmiyya*).<sup>20</sup>

Rihani's passage from 'Ottomanism' to 'Arabism' thus did not happen suddenly. While asserting his loyalty to the Ottoman State and calling for its reform, Rihani was concerned with administrative and political reform for Lebanon and with restoring Arab glory. In fact, these two issues were at the centre of his general concern for Ottoman reform. Thus, a discussion of these two issues is necessary, not only as an introduction to his anti-Turkish campaign for liberation but also his campaign for Syrian and Arab unity at a later stage.

Rihani's early writings reflect a particular concern for the reform of the administrative and political system of the *Mutasarrifiyya* of Mount Lebanon within the Ottoman Empire. Established to end the 1860 sectarian disturbances, the *Mutasarrifiyya* organised the political life in Mount Lebanon from 1861 to 1915 that is until shortly after the outbreak of the First World War. A detailed discussion of this period will not be attempted here so a summary of the arrangements brought by the new regime must suffice. In 1861 a new statute, known as the *Règlement et protocole relatif à la réorganisation du Mont Liban*, constituted Mount Lebanon as an

autonomous Ottoman province under a plenipotentiary governor general designated by the Porte and approved by the signatory powers. The governor, or *Mutasarrif*, had to be an Ottoman subject of the Christian faith but not of Lebanese origin. The *Règlement* was signed in Istanbul on 9 June 1861 by Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, Russia and Turkey and, in 1867, by Italy.

The *Règlement* provided Mount Lebanon with an entirely new and distinctive status within the Ottoman Empire. Mount Lebanon's autonomy was internationally recognised and guaranteed by the signatory powers. The *Règlement* stipulated also the formation of an elective Administrative Council (*Majlis Idara*) of twelve representatives from the different religious communities to advise the *Mutasarrif* (four Maronites and a Maronite deputy-chairman that was introduced later, three Druze, two Greek Orthodox, one Greek Catholic, one Sunnite and one Shi'ite).

Geographically, the *Mutasarrifiyya* of Mount Lebanon did not include the Biqā', Wadi al-Taym, Beirut and Sidon, all of which had belonged at different times to the Lebanon of the Ma'ni and the Shihabi amirs. The ports of Beirut, Sidon and Tripoli remained under direct Ottoman rule. The territory of the Mutasarrifate was treated as a privileged Sanjak, and was divided into seven administrative districts (*qada*), each under a *Qa'immaqam* appointed by the *Mutasarrif* from the dominant sect. The districts were, in turn, divided into more or less homogenous sectarian sub-districts (*nahiya*) where special administrative officials were appointed. Finally, in every village, the headman, or sheikh, nominally elected by the local people, received formal appointment from the *Mutasarrif*. These village sheikhs elected the members of the Administrative Council.

By the terms of the *Règlement*, the government of the mountain maintained its own judiciary and preserved order by a special corps of Lebanese gendarmerie. No Turkish troops were quartered in the land, no military service was incumbent on its citizens and no tribute was due to the Porte. The new constitution abolished all feudal privileges, declared equal rights to all Lebanese citizens and provided for a census of the population and a survey of the land. With modifications, the *Règlement* remained the basic constitution of Mount Lebanon for the next fifty years. However, in the summer of 1915, after entering the war on the side of Germany, the Ottoman authorities abolished the *Mutasarrifiyya* and placed the whole Arab East, including Mount Lebanon, under military rule.<sup>21</sup>

Rihani's first concern with the *Mutasarrifiyya* regime was over the full executive power given to the governor under the terms of the *Règlement*. He expressed his concerns in an article in 1902, in which he strongly criticised the appointment of Muzaffar Pasha (1902–07), an Ottoman

General, as *Mutasarrif*. This was the first time Rihani expressed an opinion on such an appointment. He saw the appointment of a military man to the Mutasarrifate as a contradiction of the principle of 'civil government' (*al-hukuma al-madaniyya*) as declared by the *Règlement*. Moreover, he argued that a military man was not fit for the governorship, not only because such a man would have limited knowledge of political, economic, and cultural sciences (*al-'ulum al-'umraniyya*), but also because a military ruler 'is often tyrannical (*mustabidd*)'.<sup>22</sup>

The military background and career of the new *Mutasarrif* did not appear to impress Rihani who stressed that a good governor should be a distinguished and intelligent diplomat, a civil law expert, and an honest executive legislator. He should stand against favouritism in the government and against the influence of foreign Consuls in the internal affairs of the Mountain. He should be prepared to respect the representatives of the people, and share the executive power with the Administrative Council.

Rihani's strong reservations about the new *Mutasarrif* raised a number of issues in the Mountain's politics. Firstly, Rihani was concerned about the distinctive autonomy of the Mountain within the Ottoman State. Thus he warned against the signs of hypocrisy and blind obedience shown by the public in welcoming the *Mutasarrif*. He feared that such subservience could turn the 'military' governor into an absolute autocratic ruler (*hakim mufrad mutlaq*). This, in his opinion, would not only be 'contrary to the terms of the *Protocole* which granted distinctive autonomy (*istiqlal naw'i*) to the Mountain', but also contradict the interest of the Lebanese people who should be the only absolute masters of their country (*al-watan*). Similarly, Rihani argued that, with absolute power, the new *Mutasarrif* would undermine the 'civil government', particularly as in his inaugural speech the *Mutasarrif* showed little intention to consult the Administrative Council or increase its executive power.<sup>23</sup> This illustrated Rihani's awareness of and concern with the consultative function and the increasing power of the Administrative Council which was encouraged by the successive governors to increase participation in the government of the Mountain.<sup>24</sup>

It is important to note that during this period Rihani's anti-sectarian ideas began to evolve and take a hostile approach towards political sectarianism which had become the official basis of the Lebanese political system since the *Mutasarrif*yya.<sup>25</sup> In his criticism of Muzaffar Pasha's appointment, Rihani expressed indifference to 'whether the *Mutasarrif* was a Maronite or an atheist as long as he was honest and above corruption'. This in itself is significant, for it indicates that Rihani suggested a radical change in the terms of the *Règlement* according to which the *Mutasarrif* had to be a Christian.

During the controversy over the selection of a new Governor as a successor to Na'um Pasha (1892–1902), the Russian Ambassador had considered putting forward a Greek-Orthodox candidate for *Mutasarrif* against the name of Yusuf Bey, the candidate supported by both the French Ambassador and the Maronite Church. Without contradicting the letter of the *Règlement*, the selection of a non-Catholic governor would have been a radical departure from its spirit.<sup>26</sup> By considering the religious affiliation of the *Mutasarrif* as irrelevant, and in criticising the interference of foreign consuls, Rihani was obviously expressing his opposition to the sectarian nature of the system and the role of foreign powers.

Although he was from a Maronite family himself, Rihani's criticism of the Maronite hegemony over the government, his call for the separation of the state from the church,<sup>27</sup> and his defence of the rights of the Administrative Council, all clearly demonstrated not only his opposition to the Maronite Church, but also his strong leaning towards the liberal opposition line. This opposition had begun to form among young public figures since 1883 as a consequence of the enhanced importance of the Council and in opposition to the rapprochement and collaboration between the Maronite Church and the traditionally influential families of Kisrawan. Rihani's ideas of administrative reform in Mount Lebanon during this period reflect this line of opposition.

In 1902 Rihani criticised Muzaffar Pasha's promises to eliminate corrupt officials in the administration. He considered the *Mutasarrif's* supposed programme of reform as quite impractical since it ignored important issues for the improvement of Lebanese life and government. His own view of administrative reform consisted of establishing national public schools, prohibiting the interference of notables (*al-wujaha'*) in administrative and political affairs, and appointing officials and police, not on sectarian basis or favouritism, but according to qualifications. He saw that such reforms should be implemented only by effective legislation put forward by the Administrative Council. Significantly, this implied an increase of the power of the Council which Rihani was keen to support as the 'representative of the people'.<sup>28</sup>

These demands reflected Rihani's awareness of many problems then affecting the political and social life of Mount Lebanon and his concern for genuine reform. The call for national public education demonstrated his awareness of the political importance which foreign and private educational institutions assumed as vehicles of influence for the power sponsoring them, and of the negative impact of these institutions in widening the gap between the Christians of Mount Lebanon and their Muslim compatriots as well as



their Muslim neighbours in other Arab provinces. This issue of national public education, as discussed above, concerned Rihani throughout his career and put him under severe attack particularly from the Maronite clergy.<sup>29</sup>

His campaign against the notables, on the other hand, reflected his position towards an essential problem in Lebanese politics, namely, political 'feudalism' (*iqta*). Although the *iqta* system was officially abolished by the *Règlement*, Lebanese 'feudal' (*muqati'ji*) families retained their influence in the Mutasarrifate through holding leading government positions, and through their direct interference in the appointment of the members of the administrative and judicial councils. By terms of the *Règlement*, all members of these councils were to be nominated by the leaders of the respective communities and appointed by the government after agreement with the notables. This method of appointment, carried over from the earlier period of the *Qa'immaqamiyya*, ensured the continued influence of the traditional leaderships during the *Mutasarrifiyya* and throughout Lebanon's most recent history.

Similarly, Rihani's insistence on secular appointment of officials and members of the police force reflected not only his concern for individual freedom and equality of all people before the law, as stipulated by the *Règlement*, but also his opposition to Maronite hegemony and the Church's influence on the government. He refuted the claim that members of the Lebanese gendarmerie must be recruited in proportion to the various sectarian communities. This, in his opinion, would not only consolidate sectarianism, but would also contradict the principle of justice, which should be the basis of the government. For, 'a just government does not support the strong to the detriment of the weak, but maintains a complete equilibrium between all communities'. In this Rihani was critical of the Maronites who, as the largest community, dominated the police force and, with the support of the Maronite Church, were the most politically organised community in Mount Lebanon.<sup>30</sup>

In order to diminish the Church's influence on Lebanese politics, Rihani advocated a separation between the two. For this purpose he called for a change in the Lebanese regime which would allow the election of councillors from political parties rather than from different religious communities in the Mountain.<sup>31</sup> His idea of political parties may have been influenced by the Western political system. However, his distinction between the religious and political parties (*al-ahzab al-diniyya w-al-ahzab al-siyasiyya*), seemed to reflect a particular political conflict which, since 1873, had started to become visible in Mount Lebanon between the Maronite Church and the government.

In order to weaken the influence of the Maronite clergy in government offices, the third governor, Rustum Pasha (1873–83), started to replace high-ranking officials, who were known for their affinity to the Maronite Church and the French Consulate, with a cadre whom he held to be professionally better qualified. Despite great opposition from the French Consul and the Maronite clergy, Wasa Pasha (1883–92) pursued a similar policy and strengthened the position of the newly appointed officials. The conflict between the group, which constituted the core of Wasa's 'government party', and the *protégés* of the Church openly manifested itself in intense competition during successive elections for the Administrative Council.

While Rihani had not started writing during these early years, his ideas, expressed since 1902, on the appointment of qualified officials and the election of councillors from political parties, as opposed to sectarian considerations, reflected the conflict between the Maronite Church and other emerging political parties; a conflict in which he obviously did not support the Maronite Church.

Rihani's opposition to the clergy and the Church's policy in Mount Lebanon culminated in 1904 with the publication of his *al-Muhalafa al-Thulathiyya*, which was banned by the clergy and led to his excommunication. The opposition continued significantly during his stay in Lebanon between the years 1905 and 1910. The most important aspect of this opposition was his forceful attack on the confessional regime of Mount Lebanon, which allowed the Maronite Church and the notables to exercise a powerful influence on the government. In 1909 he reasserted the need for prohibiting the 'sheikhs of the villages', the 'clergy' and the 'wealthy' (*aghniya' al-bilad*) from interfering in government affairs because such interference pressured officials and hindered the progress of the people.<sup>32</sup> This not only showed Rihani's critical assessment of the Church-notables alliance in this period, but also that he aligned himself with a newly emerging anti-clerical current developing among the Maronites of Kisrawan and the Matn districts since 1902.<sup>33</sup>

To outweigh the sectarian alliance of the Church-notables, Rihani suggested the formation of a non-sectarian union (*ittihad*) between all groups in the country, with one patriotic (*watani*) aim and under an honest and courageous leader. He stressed the need for a strong independent leader capable of carrying out the difficult task of reform and uniting the people under the patriotic banner. Such a leader, in his opinion, would be capable of opposing European Consuls and leading the country to progress in order to face European powers on equal footing.

An independent leader, in Rihani's view, should be free from any connections with, and consequently from, the influence of the Maronite Church, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the European Consuls, the Freemasons, the Reformists (those politicians working closely with the CUP and the Freemasons), and the Lebanese notables and merchants. Such a leader may be an ordinary man, not necessarily from a noble line, who had a 'divine enlightenment' (*nur ilahi*) to lead his people.<sup>34</sup> Thus, Rihani indicated the need to replace the Ottoman Governor by an indigenous leader, an idea which became more explicit in his later writings when he openly claimed the right of the Lebanese people to elect a Lebanese Governor.

These ideas were expressed by the Young Turks in 1909 and complicated the politics of the *Mutasarrifiyya* by drawing the Mountain into the political tensions and military uncertainties which rippled throughout the empire. After one year of constitutional government, Rihani complained that the 'promised Lebanese freedom was only a lie', and that the political situation in Lebanon had not improved. He was highly critical of the coalition between officials of the CUP, the Freemasons, the Reformists, and the Maronite Church. He equally criticised European interference in the Mountain under the excuse of protecting its people, and corrupt Lebanese councillors who, concerned only about their interests and positions, were prepared to make concessions to the central government to the detriment of their own people and the rights and privileges of their own country.<sup>35</sup>

These ideas reflect, in general, the changing circumstances in Mount Lebanon after the coup of July 1908. By then, the *Mutasarrif* Yusuf Pasha (1907–12), had restored to office many of the 'conservatives' who had been dismissed by Muzaffar Pasha. A coalition of Druze and Maronites, with the support of the European powers and the Hamidian court, stood behind Yusuf's government, largely undermining the importance of the Administrative Council whose members were afraid of dissolution and benefited from the salary increases that the *Mutasarrif* had introduced. Early in July 1908, with the 'liberal' opposition in disarray, Yusuf had succeeded in exercising direct authority over the *Mutasarrifiyya*, thus implicitly recognising Lebanon's subordination to the Ottoman Empire.

The restoration of constitutional government sparked off the latent opposition to Yusuf Pasha. Under pressure from the CUP, and the threat of a unified Druze and 'liberal' Christian opposition, the *Mutasarrif* made some concessions. However, many critical questions, related to the policy which the CUP adopted in order to strengthen the central government and the empire, stirred the Mountain. This policy included an attempt to impose

Lebanese participation in the revived Ottoman parliament; the closure of Lebanese ports to international shipping; and the imposition of an identity card on Lebanese citizens. This policy was viewed by the Lebanese leadership as a threat to Lebanon's special autonomy, and to the privileged status of Lebanese amongst other citizens of the empire.

Reflecting such developments in Lebanese politics, Rihani's ideas underwent some change. As seen above, Rihani in 1909 was highly critical of the Lebanese regime, which reinforced European interference (under the disguise of protection) in the internal affairs of the Mountain. European protection, in his opinion, was no longer needed because the Lebanese people had recovered from their calamity. The regime created to protect them should be completely abolished, since it was founded on confessional basis, and had become outmoded.<sup>36</sup>

However, as a response to the Unionist attempts to restore the authority of the central Ottoman government over Lebanon, Rihani defended Lebanon's privileges and called, instead, for the amendment of its regime. In 1909 he asserted that he did not 'venerate' the regime of Lebanon, nor did he consider it 'natural'. For 'its terms of reference are too narrow for the Lebanese people, and our deputies do not have the courage to work according to its spirit (*ruh al-nass*)'. Thus while he called upon the Lebanese people to protest outside the European consulates in Beirut against the government's attempts to abolish the privileges of Lebanon, he also urged the Lebanese to seek amendment of the regime which was no longer suitable for their aspirations. He argued that 'the narrow (*dayyiq*) regime is no longer beneficial to us because of our growth (*numuw*)'.<sup>37</sup> He did not, however, explain whether this growth was an increase in the number of the population or a result of political and social progress. Thus, it is difficult to assume that his demand for reform and amendment to the regime also included territorial adjustments.

In another article, '*Nida' al-Watan*' (the Homeland's Call), written in 1910 in New York, Rihani called upon the Lebanese emigrants to form a 'Lebanese society' (*jam'iyya lubnaniyya*) and seek the amendment (*ta'dil*) of the regime hand in hand with the Lebanese in the homeland. He reiterated similar ideas on the 'too limited (*mahdud*) and narrow (*dayyiq*) regime to suit the Lebanese condition today'. However, unlike some other Lebanese Maronite Christians (e.g. the lawyer Bulus Nujaym in Paris),<sup>38</sup> Rihani did not explicitly call for extending Lebanese territory. He in fact contended with the demand for an increase in the autonomy of the Mountain by introducing in the *Règlement* additional articles allowing the people 'at least to directly elect the councillors to the Administrative Council'. 'These

limited and reasonable demands' were, in his opinion, 'all that the people should claim at this stage to be favourably received'. He placed much reliance on the assistance of the guaranteeing powers to ensure the necessary amendments and to defend the autonomy against the coalition of Lebanese politicians and the Young Turks.<sup>39</sup>

While in Lebanon Rihani enjoyed, as a naturalised American, the protection of the United States and was thus able to be more vocal in demanding reforms. However, his ideas on autonomy were still within the framework of the Ottoman Empire. With the Ottoman authorities tightening their policy of centralisation, applying their authority even to naturalised emigrants,<sup>40</sup> Rihani limited his campaign only to these 'reasonable' reforms.

A note of discontent with the Unionist policy began to appear in 1910 when Rihani complained about anarchy and degeneration under the rule of the CUP. In an article written that year he deplored the politicians' attack on the Lebanese press, sarcastically accusing them of attempting to secure their 'own noble ambitions'.<sup>41</sup> Like the identity card, although rejected by many Lebanese as contrary to their privileges, the Lebanese press was reluctant to recognise the applicability of the new Ottoman press law that the *Mutasarrif* and government officials sought to impose on the Mountain. Apart from supporting the press's contention, Rihani's article reflected his suspicion of Unionist policies in Lebanon as new aspects of Ottoman hegemony.

An important aspect of Rihani's attack against Lebanese politicians was that he pointed to the relationship between the CUP and the Masonic movement. He described the 'Reformists' who exploited their position 'in the name of the constitution' as 'Freemasons'. Rihani was not the only one to question this relationship at the time. The Jesuit Father Louis Cheikho who, interestingly, accused Rihani himself of being a Freemason, showed in a series of articles in 1911 a close relationship between the CUP and the Masonic movement. Cheikho also argued that the overthrow of 'Abd al-Hamid was a Masonic plot with a clear Zionist influence.<sup>42</sup> Recent studies which appear to confirm this relationship have sought to link the overthrow of 'Abd al-Hamid and his refusal of the Zionist demands in Palestine. The same sources point out that a number of newspapers, including *Lisan al-Hal* in Beirut and *al-Muqattam* and *al-Muqtataf* in Egypt, which had an anti-Ottoman line of thought, openly supported the Zionist movement.<sup>43</sup>

The question remains whether Rihani was aware of the Zionist movement at this period? And, knowing his contribution to the above-mentioned newspapers, what was his attitude towards this anti-Ottoman Zionist relationship? If Rihani seemed to be aware of the relationship between the

'Reformist Unionists' and the 'Freemasons', he did not seem to be aware of a Zionist involvement in the CUP movement or of the anti-Ottoman trend which supported Zionism. Nothing in his early writings indicated that he was aware of Zionist ambitions at this stage. His later writings about the Palestinian question, in which he took an Arab nationalist stand, did not mention any connection between the Zionist demands in Palestine and the overthrow of 'Abd al-Hamid.

By 1912 Rihani had begun to assert that decentralisation and political autonomy (*al-istiqlal al-siyasi*) were now inevitable. In an article entitled '*al-Lamarkaziyya wa Lubnan*' (Decentralisation and Lebanon, 1912) he warned that for the Ottoman State to survive it must secure individual freedom (*al-hurriyya al-shakhsiyya*) and political autonomy (*al-istiqlal al-siyasi*) for its 'small peoples (*al-shu'ub al-saghira*), regardless of religion or race'. Political autonomy, in his opinion, was the basis of sound patriotism and progress of any nation and, being multi-national, the Ottoman Empire could no longer ignore that its survival necessitated autonomy of the various nations within it.<sup>44</sup>

At the same time Rihani was aware of other voices calling for decentralisation and autonomy in the Arab provinces within the Ottoman State and he saw that Lebanon should have a place in the new order. The Mountain, accordingly, should be granted its political autonomy and correct means for its agricultural, commercial and cultural progress should be ensured. Again he did not explain whether this included the enlargement of Lebanon to include Beirut and the Biqa', as other Lebanese were advocating, but he certainly stressed the need to open Lebanese ports to international traffic in order to allow the Mountain to become economically viable, an issue also discussed at the time by many other Lebanese. As Rihani considered Beirut a vital political, cultural and economic centre in Lebanon's life,<sup>45</sup> we could assume that he considered Beirut a legitimate and vital part of the Mountain.

At the administrative level, he saw that safeguarding Lebanon's privileges, and making the political and administrative system broader, more relaxed and more representative, could achieve the political autonomy of Lebanon. This required direct election of councillors by universal suffrage and, more importantly, the replacement of the foreign *Mutasarrif* by a Lebanese governor (*hakim*) to be elected for two or three years.

These ideas were not quite unfamiliar in Lebanon at that time. Similar demands for the revision of the political order in the Mountain were put forward by a number of organisations with significant influence, especially amongst the Christian Lebanese, both at the popular and intellectual

levels. Two of these organisations are of interest here: Mukarzil's Lebanon League of Progress (LLP) (*Jam'iyat al-Nahda al-Lubnaniyya*, New York, 1911) and *Le Comité Libanais de Paris* (CLP) (*al-Rabita al-Lubnaniyya fi Paris*), founded in 1912 by a group of Lebanese journalists and men of letters including Khayrallah Khayrallah, 'Abbas Bajjani and Shukri Ghanim. When first established, the LLP aimed at safeguarding Lebanese privileges, the opening of a seaport and improving Lebanon's means of progress. The CLP proposed election of the Administrative Council by universal suffrage with greater administrative and legislative powers, the opening of Lebanese ports to heavy tonnage, and the annexation of the Biqa' and either the two ports of Sidon and Tripoli, or that of Beirut. Both organisations played a significant role, before and after the First World War, in the campaign for the independence of Lebanon and were particularly active in opposing the idea of Lebanese unity with Syria in the Peace Conference between 1919 and 1920.<sup>46</sup>

There can be no doubt that Rihani was aware of the existence and programmes of these two organisations. It is also possible that he was not too distant from their establishment. Rihani had just left New York (in late July 1911) while Mukarzil's LLP was established in August 1911. And earlier in 1910, during a visit to Paris, he had discussed the political situation in Lebanon with Ghanim, Khayrallah and Bajjani, the organisers of the CLP. However, and despite the similarity between his ideas and some of the aims of both organisations, there was no evidence of an official involvement on Rihani's part in the activities of either the LLP or the CLP.

Rihani probably shared some of the views of the two organisations, particularly in their early days, but during and after the First World War, his ideas took a different direction. While the LLP and the CLP sought an enlarged Lebanon and worked for its independence (the LLP advocated independence under French protection) Rihani adopted a broader perspective of an independent and united Syria, including Lebanon. During the war, as will be discussed later, he collaborated with Shukri Ghanim who abandoned the CLP and formed the Syrian Central Committee (*Comité Central Syrien*) which aimed at the liberation and unity of all Syria under French protection.

On Rihani's call for decentralisation and political autonomy during the pre-war period, two points need to be emphasised. Firstly, while advocating political autonomy Rihani endeavoured to assert his Ottoman loyalty. Loyalty to the Ottoman State, the 'broader country' (*al-watan al-kabir*), should not, he stated, contradict Lebanese patriotism and loyalty to Lebanon, the 'small country' (*al-watan al-saghir*). Indeed, political

autonomy permitted the Lebanese people to become genuine Ottomans in spirit, word and deed, and administrative reform eliminated hatred and strengthened Lebanese–Turkish loyalty and brother/sisterhood. And while he advocated peaceful means to achieve autonomy, he anticipated other options such as revolution.<sup>47</sup> Secondly, Rihani's idea of political autonomy was, at this stage, centred on Lebanon. In fact, until 1912, Rihani was more specifically concerned about Mount Lebanon. In his pre-1914 writings, Syria appears more as a homeland rather than a potential political entity. And although he considered himself a Syrian in the cultural, regional sense, he spoke as a Lebanese and his concerns were those of the Lebanese people when it came to political and administrative affairs. 'Syria' as a political entity and 'Syrians' as a distinguished people are reflected more in his post-1914 writings, which demonstrated the development of Rihani's thought from the narrow idea of Lebanese autonomy to the broader one of complete independence and Syrian unity and later to Arab unity.

Rihani's concept of decentralisation and political autonomy reflected the general trend of reform and decentralisation, which dominated the Arab East before the war and was expressed in the Arab Congress of 1913. It is well known that different tendencies were present at the Congress, including Arab nationalists who sought independence for the Arab countries from the Ottoman State, Christian regionalists who sought the independence of Lebanon under French protection, and the decentralisation reformists who tried to channel all these varied stances.<sup>48</sup>

Unlike the Christian separatist demand, by political autonomy Rihani meant the right to a Lebanese elected government, which would enable the Lebanese people to exercise their national rights within the Ottoman State. In asserting his loyalty to the Ottoman State, Rihani insinuated other possibilities. For example his assertion of loyalty carried a hint of resistance if the Ottoman State stood hostile and ignored Lebanese demands. In this, he travelled with the Arab nationalists who, while working for reform and decentralisation, also considered the possibility of resistance and separation if the Ottoman State did not respond to Arab aspirations.

### **From Ottomanism to Arabism**

Despite the distinction between his 'Ottoman' and 'Arab' identity, and his nationalist leanings, Rihani did not at this stage share, at least not openly, the separatist ideas of the Arab extremists who demanded complete independence. Nor did he, as a Christian Lebanese, share the claim of the regionalist separatists for a Lebanese entity under European protection. Thus, until 1914 Rihani appeared to concur with the Arab reformist trend



which, through the Paris Congress, aimed at rallying the reformists around a common Arab action to face the Unionist policy and Turkish dominance.

Rihani's writings prior to the war reflect his dual Ottoman–Arab identity. This dualism reflected a conflict between two ideologies which, at the beginning of the twentieth century, competed for the loyalty of the Arab subjects of the Ottoman State—Ottomanism—which defended the unity of the empire, and Arabism which proclaimed that the Arabs were a distinct people with their own particular characteristics and rights. Both ideologies aimed at restoring the greatness of the East. Having this same goal, Arabism had to wait until the declaration of the war to gather strength and momentum. Ottomanism appeared ineffectual in the face of Europe, and the Turkification policy provided the Arabs' objectives with a great stimulus.<sup>49</sup>

While Rihani considered the 'Ottoman *umma*' as his nation, he showed pride in his Arab identity which was expressed in the first instance in his love of the 'noble' Arabic language which, like the earlier generation of Butrus al-Bustani and Ibrahim al-Yaziji (1847–1906), he identified with his motherland (*al-watan*). Love of Arabic was expressed at an early stage in his determined effort to learn the language of the ancestors, which competed with English, the language of his adopted country.<sup>50</sup>

Rihani assigned to the Arabic language an important role in the life of the Ottoman peoples. In '*Tawhid al-Lugha al-Arabiyya*' (Unification of the Arabic Language), written in 1898, he suggested that Arabic should be the universal language of the Ottoman nation (*al-umma al-uthmaniyya*), because diversity of languages caused disintegration of the bond of brother/sisterhood and difference in inclinations. It also weakened the patriotic feeling which united the people (*al-qawm*) as 'one nation' (*umma wahida*). Language, according to Rihani, was the means of mutual acquaintance (*wasitat al-ta'aruf*) and understanding (*al-tafahum*) between the people of the nation. He argued that, in both ancient and modern civilizations, the unification and refinement of a language, and the spread of its literature were the most important means of progress. Accordingly, he saw that progress of the Ottoman State depended on two conditions: the unification of its languages and the recognition of Arabic as its universal language. Speaking as a 'Syrian', he urged his fellow Syrians to endeavour to protect, modernise and unify the Arabic language throughout the Ottoman State in order to preserve their identity. He drew the attention of linguists, politicians and journalists, in the Arab world in general and in Syria and Egypt in particular, to uphold Arabic as the language of the Ottoman State because Arabic was the language of the glorious noble Arabs, and particularly the language of the Prophet.<sup>51</sup>

This belief was later re-affirmed in 1908, the last year of 'Abd al-Hamid's rule, when Rihani declared that loyalty to his motherland urged him to reconsider writing in Arabic, because he loved his 'noble language' and his motherland—a love that originated from his 'self-love'.<sup>52</sup> At this time Rihani became conscious of the glorious Arab past and contribution to modern civilization. This past was a source from which the strength could be drawn for Arab awakening and liberation. Reflecting a theme that has been popular in modern Arab nationalist discourse, Rihani proclaims that 'the sun which rises from the West today is in fact our sun, it is the sun of our literature and religions. It is the sun of our past glory'. This cultural awareness of his Arabhood was accompanied by a geo-political definition of his Arab motherland as early as 1909. 'Three countries occupy the heart of the world map. These are Syria (and Palestine), Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula. These countries are our motherland (*watan*) and the heart of the world where the Prophets appeared and religions rose. From this heart the sun of science, philosophy and literature shined upon Europeans and brought them out of ignorance and barbarity to progress and civilization'.<sup>53</sup>

His awareness of Arab identity and Arab consciousness evolved with the deterioration of the Ottoman State and the failure of constitutional reforms. In *The Book of Khalid* (1911), he discussed with sarcasm Ottoman corruption and the sterility of Turkish culture. And he spoke with pride about the 'great Arab race' that had fallen on evil days, a race that 'gave Europe a civilization and gave the world a religion'. In this work Khalid dreams of reviving this glory and rebuilding the 'great Arab empire'. This necessitated an Arab revolution which would overthrow the Turkish Empire and he looked upon Arabia to start this revolution, 'not against Christianity or Muhammedanism, but against those Tataric usurpers who are now toadying to both'. The Turks, in his own words, 'were given a last chance to rise; they tried and failed. They can not rise. They are demoralised; ... high-sounding inanities about fraternity and equality can not regenerate an Empire. They must go: they will go'.<sup>54</sup>

Rihani quite distinctly proclaimed his Arab identity as distinct from the Ottoman identity in an article published in New York in March 1911 under the title, '*al-Thawra al-Haqiqiyya*' (the Genuine Revolution). In it he wrote, 'I am a revolutionary Oriental Arab ... I am an Arab who does not hate the Turks, an Oriental who does not disdain the West and a revolutionary who is interested in the *Ka'ba* for example, more than in the constitution ... I am an Arab who dreams of reviving the Arab glory whether under the constitution or under its enemies. I am a free Arab and

my freedom is neither from the grace of the constitution nor from the generosity of my Turkish brothers. My freedom is from God (*Allah*).<sup>55</sup>

### **Advocacy for Syrian–Lebanese Independence and Arab Federation**

On the outbreak of the First World War, Rihani, like other Arab intellectuals, expressed much discontent with the Young Turk regime. But his Arab consciousness and enmity to the Turks culminated with the execution of the Arab nationalists and the declaration of the Arab Revolt by Sharif Husayn who, in 1916, proclaimed the Arab break with the Ottomans because the Turks had ceased to execute the *Shari'a* and failed to fulfil the conditions of the Caliphate.<sup>56</sup> Two of Rihani's contributions during this period are particularly significant: '*al-Haqq w-al-Quwwa*' (Right and Force), and '*al-Haya w-al-Hurriyya w-al-Sayf*' (Life, Freedom and the Sword). In the first, written in Paris in 1917, he compared the French war in defence of freedom against the Germans with the Arab revolt to liberate Islam from Turkish evil. Both wars were just because both Islam and the French Revolution shared a message of truth and perfection. As German absolute military authority and expansionism threatened freedom in Europe, so Turkish ignorance, stagnation and expansionism destroyed the basis of Islam. He then justified the Arab revolt because, like their 'ancestors, the companions of the Prophet (*ansar al-Nabi*)', the Arabs aimed to rescue Islam from Turkish corruption and tyranny, and to renew past glory.

In addition to this, and perhaps more importantly, Rihani viewed the Arab revolt as a struggle for basic human rights: namely social, political and religious freedom; freedom of thought, of speech and work, which he believed were the fundamentals of progress. For this 'divine and essential eternal truth' he supported the Allies and the Arabs in their war against the Turks and Germans. And because he viewed the Turks as 'the enemies of freedom and human rights', he urged the Syrians to fight them and liberate Syria.

Rihani argued that, in the name of the constitution, the Turks committed the most horrible crimes in their history: the massacres of Armenians, and the execution of Syrians in 1916. 'In the name of the constitution, the Turks looted our country, famished our people, and killed thousands of innocent Christians and Muslims'. He also warned against the policy of the 'Constitutionalist rule' of transplanting Kurds and Turks to Syria with the intention of wiping out the Syrians and making Syria a province (*wilaya*) of Anatolia. He maintained that those crimes perpetrated by the Turks in the name of the constitution and the Islamic community (*al-milla*), were sufficient to awaken the Syrians and stir up their 'nationalist' and 'patriotic zeal' (*al-hamiyya al-qawmiyya*, and *al-na'ra al-wataniyya*).

Reflecting the sentiments and the anti-Turkish propaganda of his time, Rihani claimed that ‘Turkish enmity for freedom is in their own nature. Their history is a chain of atrocities and injustice from Hulagu to ‘Abd al-Hamid to Jamal Pasha ... But the Syrians shall not become their slaves’. He urged the Syrians to learn from the ‘Arabs of the Hijaz’ and other small nations, which revolted against their oppressors to break the shackles of enslavement. In unmistakable support for the US–French alliance in the war, Rihani appealed to the Syrians to accept the offer of help by a ‘great power’ (France), and benefit from the US involvement in the war, as this was ‘the greatest republic defending freedom and humanity’.<sup>57</sup>

In particular, Rihani urged Syrian emigrants in the USA to join the US Army, not only because it was their duty as Americans to express their loyalty and gratitude to their country of naturalisation, but more importantly to liberate their afflicted country of birth. He argued that if Syrians fought with the US Army, America, ‘the greatest defender of the small oppressed peoples’, would speak on their behalf in the Peace Conference and support their independence. He also argued that if Syrians volunteered in the US Army, they could ask the government to send them to fight in Syria, as this would help them claim their national rights after liberation. But if foreigners liberated Syria it would come under foreign sovereignty. He wrote from Spain to the editors of the Arabic newspapers in New York urging them to establish a Syrian committee and to organise a Syrian–American battalion to be sent to Syria under American command or under the *Légion d’Orient* that France was sending to occupy Syria.<sup>58</sup> With this aim in mind, Rihani discussed the matter in Paris 1917 with officials in France’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with Shukri Ghanim who was working closely with the French authorities to expel the Turks from Syria.

As a result of his and other Syrian emigrants’ efforts, the Syrian–Mount Lebanon League of Liberation (SMLLL), an affiliation of the Syrian Central Committee (SCC) presided over by Ghanim, was established in New York in 1917. In ‘*al-Haya w-al-Hurriyya w-al-Sayf*’, the speech he delivered on the occasion of its founding, Rihani urged the Syro-Lebanese community in the USA to join the *Légion d’Orient*, which was formed in 1917 by the French Government to fight the Ottomans in the Arab East. He was aware that the SCC was formed in Paris at the instigation of France to facilitate communication between Syrians in the Diaspora and the French government. Because he was convinced that the first aim of this Committee was to liberate Syria and Lebanon from Turkish rule with the help of France, and because ‘the next most important thing’ was ‘to rescue the country from the Turks’, he supported the SCC and worked for the establishment of its affiliations in New York, Mexico and Merida (discussed

in Chapter Two). It is not clear whether Rihani was aware at this stage of the real aim of the SCC, namely to achieve Syrian unity under French protection or whether he knew about the role of the French colonialist associations and chambers of commerce which supported these aims.<sup>59</sup>

At this point Rihani appeared to have no reason for doubting France's intentions in the war. On the contrary, he was convinced that France wanted to help the Syrians if they themselves fought for their own cause. After his discussions with Shukri Ghanim and French officials, he found the French promises reassuring. France, he explained in the same speech, promised to liberate Syria from Turkish rule, and to establish a just and civilised government (*hukuma 'adila raqiya*), which would ensure security and pave the way for progress. He assured the Syrians that the French government promised to grant all Syrian provinces (*wilayat*), including Lebanon, a special autonomy (*istiqlal naw'i*); all provinces would have an administrative council (*majlis idari*) similar to the one Lebanon had before the war, and local administrations (*nizamat mahalliyya*) to suit their people and conditions; qualified Syrians would be appointed to the high positions by the governor general (*al-hakim al-'amm*). Other promises such as the establishment of secular public schools—a matter which always had a special place in Rihani's thought—convinced him that siding with the Allies, France in particular, was the only way out of the crisis, and if Syrians did not contribute to the liberation of their own country, they would miss this unique opportunity to save their people.<sup>60</sup>

In his speech Rihani did not clarify whether the governor general would be French or whether the autonomy of the provinces would be under direct control of the French government. Both stipulations were agreed upon in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the Arab territories between France and Britain in May 1916. An 'amir from a French origin' was also considered essential for the independence of Syria under French protection, by the Colonial and Maritime Studies Association (*Jam'iyyat al-Dirasat al-Isti'mariyya w-al-Bahriyya*), one of the French associations that supported the claims of the SCC.<sup>61</sup> Rihani was unaware, at this stage, of the Sykes-Picot Agreement which remained secret at least until December 1917. It is also difficult to ascertain whether he was aware of the reports of the colonial associations and the chambers of commerce which supported the SCC.

However, when the war ended Rihani realised that the French promises had been 'nothing but glittering war promises which misled him and many others', as he footnoted when he re-published his SMLL speech, '*al-Haya w-al-Hurriyya w-al-Sayf*', in 1924.<sup>62</sup> The question remains whether Rihani was truly unaware of European ambitions in the Arab lands, before the

end of the war. In fact, when calling upon the Syrians to collaborate with the Allies in the war, Rihani was aware that 'nothing was for free'. He had his suspicions that the great powers would not help the Syrians obtain their freedom gratis or as a 'gift for the sake of humanity and democratic principles'. The price of freedom was to fight in the *Légion d'Orient*, because 'every thing is mutual between people and nations'. And if the Syrians did not contribute to the liberation of their country they would no longer have a right in it, nor would they have the right to protest against those who orchestrated liberation and rebuilding. Their freedom would be incomplete and tied to the will and political interests of those who liberated them.<sup>63</sup>

Even at this stage, Rihani suspected European ambitions, but between Turkish oppression and European threat he opted for European assistance. He warned that in helping the Syrians, France had in mind its own strategic, political and economic interests. But at that time, liberation from the Turks was his first priority, because liberation would bring about political independence. It was nonsense, in his view, to claim political independence under the auspices of death, famine, humiliation and disgrace, and the Syrians had to save the nation first even if they had to collaborate with the 'devil'. The 'free sons of the nation', in his view, 'were only those who would fight in their land, with the army of freedom, for the sake of their nation'.<sup>64</sup> By the army of freedom he obviously meant the French Army. (It is difficult not to draw similarities between these arguments and the current debates in the Arab world today, particularly in Lebanon and Iraq.)

Rihani endeavoured to convince the Syrians that if they did not all collaborate in the war they would only win 'an incomplete, weak and vulnerable independence'. He argued that religious differences were used to prevent the Syrians, particularly Muslims, from fighting the Turks. The Lebanese in the past enjoyed certain privileges which the 'people of the provinces' (*abna' al-wilayat*) did not have, but at the present they all became one in heart and soul. Turkish policy and disasters united them and all differences between Muslims and Christians, between Lebanese and Syrians, were no longer justified. He attacked 'those who still call upon religious or sectarian fanaticism to try to spread the seeds of disunion (*al-shiqaaq*) between us for personal ambitions or political purposes'. At this stage, unity of Syria was Rihani's goal. He insisted that Lebanese and Syrians must fight together to liberate all Syria. Syrians, he argued, were one, and 'Syria is a unity which we will not allow to be divided'.<sup>65</sup>

A month after the war ended, Rihani showed great happiness that the country had removed the Turkish yoke and the world had been liberated from the horrors of war. Politically, however, a great deal had occurred to fill

him with great anxiety about the future of the homeland.<sup>66</sup> Since hostilities with the Turks ceased, the status of the Arab lands in the East was that of an Occupied Enemy Territory. On 23 October 1918, the whole of Syria had been divided into three zones, each placed under a separate administration: Occupied Enemy Territory Administration (OETA) South or Palestine was British; OETA West including Lebanon and the Syrian seacoasts was French; and OETA East or the interior of Syria was Arab.

Even before the Armistice with Turkey was signed on 30 October 1918, plans to inherit the possessions of the 'Sick Man' of Europe were fixed. Preparations for the Peace Conference were then under way and the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the Arab territories into zones of influence between France and Britain, was one of the topics of the day. Anglo-French discussions were held in order to have the Agreement modified thus meeting the interests of Great Britain in the Middle East, and the 'rights of France in Syria and Cilicia'. America, although exiting the war in more prestigious manner than France and Britain, was now part of the secret discussions for the new 'arrangement'. After British-American talks, a British Peace Plan (October–November 1918) outlined the division of the Near East into three zones of influence: Great Britain in Mesopotamia; America in Palestine, Constantinople and the Straits; and France 'probably' in Syria. In addition to recognising the principle of self-determination in 1917–18, President Wilson had in mind a project for a Confederation of Arab states under the guidance and protection of the United States. The 'Intelligence Section' of the American Delegation to the Peace Conference later recommended this project to Wilson and to the Conference.

Meanwhile, Faysal had entered Syria at the beginning of October 1918 and started to press the case for Arab unity and independence. He was faced in Lebanon and Syria with different reactions of support and opposition. His Arab government, whose authority in Lebanon lasted only one week, not only aroused French distrust but also Christian misgivings, particularly among the Maronites, with regard to his intention of uniting Lebanon and Syria.<sup>67</sup>

In the light of these new circumstances, it was natural for Rihani, who had closely followed the campaign of liberation, to express concern over the future of Syria. He was then in New York and no doubt familiar with Wilson's principles on liberty of oppressed peoples and their right to self-determination. His political involvement with the SCC and the SMLLL must have provided him with information about the various peace plans for Syria and the reactions of Lebanese and Syrians to these plans. Also his presence in New York put him in close contact with the various political trends among the Syrian–Lebanese emigrants, such as the trend seeking Lebanese independence under French

protection advocated by the LLP of Na'um Mukarzil, the trend of Syrian unity under French protection advocated by the SMLLL, and that of Syrian unity under US protection which was advocated by a group of Lebanese and Syrians in Syria, Egypt and America (particularly South America).<sup>68</sup>

In a letter written to 'a friend' (addressee unknown) on 26 November 1918, Rihani reflected the suspicion of many Syrians about the real intentions of France and Britain and the anxiety about the future of Syria on the eve of the Peace Conference. In this letter—clearly a reply to a friend's letter carrying information about the situation in Syria, and thus significantly relevant to this discussion—Rihani expressed pessimism about the future of the 'country if divided into Islamic and Christian regions, or into European 'spheres of influence', as England today, it seems, intends to do'. Rihani proclaimed in his letter: 'I am an Arab Lebanese first and a Maronite after that ... Political unity of the different religious elements is soon achievable. If European powers, particularly France and England, really cared about our well being, they would not prolong by their policy a division created among us by the Turks'.

In this same letter, and as if responding to a particular statement, he wrote, 'it is unjust to give our opinion of the Arabs today before we know them in their new conditions created by the war'. His 'dream' opinion was that, the solution to the 'Eastern Question' consisted of 'political unity of the religious elements in order to pave the way for a federation (*ittihad*) of the Arab provinces including Syria, Lebanon and Palestine'. The best form of government for the federation would be the 'republican government like the one in Switzerland'. To ensure the equality of all the provinces, 'the president of the federation should be alternatively elected from the high executive council once every year. This way every member of the council would have a share in the presidency, a solution which would satisfy all the elements and provinces'. 'A European protection (*bimaya*) for a limited time would be necessary at the beginning'. He preferred to call it '*wisaya* (supervisory custody) where the supervising state would acknowledge the government established on solid basis'. By solid basis, he presumably meant the separation in government between religious and civil authorities, as he explained in another letter to Gibran Khalil Gibran.<sup>69</sup>

Rihani believed that if the country were divided into 'separate regions where France, Britain and Italy have so-called 'spheres of influence', old divisions amongst the citizens, and rivalries between representatives of the protecting states, would soon re-appear. Thus, remaining as we were in the dark past, the Maronites among us are French, the Druze are British, the Protestants are American, the Muslims are Ottoman and the Orthodox are Russian, none of us is Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Arab. Do you see the truth in what I say? I am an Arab Lebanese first and a Maronite after that', he wrote to his 'friend'.



Several important points can be found in his letter. Firstly, it demonstrated that Rihani's suspicion of the real intentions of European powers was now justified. Even though he only mentioned Britain's plan, when he talked of European policies of division he accused both Britain and France. Although his concept of a 'federation of the Arab provinces under European supervision' appeared to concur with President Wilson's plan he did not specify the identity of this supervising power. In terms of civilization, modernity and progress, Rihani (especially in *The Book of Khalid*) counted the USA as part of the Western European powers, thus allowing the presumption that he did not rule out the possibility of American supervision.

The letter raises another question, what happened to Rihani's involvement with the SMLLL, which he had convened as vice-president, and for which he drew up a strategy in 1917? In a letter to the Peace Conference dated 1 February 1919, the SMLLL urged the General Secretary of the Conference to solve the Syrian question on the basis of confederation in geographical Syria under French protection. In this letter, the SMLLL strongly rejected Faysal's claims to Syria and Palestine on the basis of their counter claims that: the Syrians were not Arab; that the Arabic language was imposed on the Christians who were the indigenous inhabitants of Syria; that Arab occupation of the Syrian land has caused considerable damage to peace in Syria and that any sovereignty of the Hijazi tribes over 'civilised' Syria would be a serious setback to the progress of Syria in the future. Because of the common historical, economic, and educational interests with France, the signatory members requested French protection, which they claimed had a legitimate right in Syria.<sup>70</sup>

However (and most importantly), Rihani's name does not appear among the signatory members of the SMLLL to this letter, although at that time he was in New York. This indicates that either at this time he was still a member, but did not approve of this particular letter, or he had resigned from the SMLLL over political disagreement with other members, which is most probably the case.

In placing his Arab identity above his religious identity, and in defending the Arabs against any misjudgement, Rihani was clearly taking a different stance from the political line of the SCC and the SMLLL. There can be no justification for assuming that he favoured such a political line which was so blatantly pro-French and anti-Arab. Thus his Syrian national tendency took a wider Arab aspect in opposition to the narrower Christian Lebanese nationalism, and against the strain of pan-Syrian nationalism isolated from the Arab environment. This is clearly demonstrated, above all, in his support for Faysal's claim to Syrian unity with French assistance, and his campaign against the French Mandate, as discussed in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER SIX

# LEBANON AND SYRIA: BETWEEN PATRIOTISM AND NATIONALISM

### On the 'Lebanese Idea' and Syrian Unity

As an activist and writer, Rihani called upon his fellow Syrians during the war to fight with the Allies in order to ensure their independence. When discussions about the political future of Syria began, he found it his national duty to defend the unity of Syrian land. Not only did he use a scholarly argument to justify the geographical and national unity of Syria, but he also endeavoured to support his argument in political and economic terms and provide practical solutions for the complex Syrian–Lebanese question. He gently reminded Jurji Zaydan that 'scholarly study (*al-bahth al-'ilmi*) of the affairs of nations is not enough. If explanation of the problem is good, the removal of the causes is even better'.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter discusses Rihani's call for Lebanon's unity with Syria, what kind of Syrian unity he preached, how he thought it could be achieved, his explanation of why it was aborted, and the elements of Syrian patriotism or nationalism in his thought.

Rihani was a persistent campaigner for the liberation of the whole Syrian land, an advocate of Syrian unity and an opponent of the idea of an isolated, independent Lebanon under the protection of France. In an article entitled '*Lana wa Lakum*' (Ours and Yours) written about 1918, he expressed what was probably the earliest known criticism by a Lebanese of the then current 'Lebanese idea (*al-fikra al-lubnaniyya*)' and the 'Lebanese [political] renaissance (*al-nahda al-lubnaniyya*)'. In his view, such notions were based on archaic sectarianism (*ta'ifiyya*) and isolationism (*i'tizal*), and thus contradicted the correct social idea of union (*al-ittihad*) among oppressed peoples (*al-shu'ub al-mustad'afa*) which was, in his opinion, an important

basis for Syrian unity.<sup>2</sup> Although he did not name the party supporting the idea of 'Lebanese renaissance', it is clear that this refers to the Lebanon League of Progress (LLP) of Na'um Mukarzil in New York. The Arabic name of the League was *Jam'iyyat al-Nahda al-Lubnaniyya*, literally translated as 'Lebanese renaissance', and its main objective was the independence of an enlarged Lebanon under the protection of France. As president of the LLP, Mukarzil worked incessantly, particularly before and during the Paris Peace Conference (1919), towards this aim, often using, among other methods, religious mobilisation and his influence on the French and Lebanese clergy to achieve his goals.<sup>3</sup>

Rihani considered the 'Lebanese idea' to be based on a 'delusion' that France would grant Lebanon its independence gratis to please the Lebanese Christians, 'simply because they are the descendants of the Crusaders, as the pretenders claim'. He endeavoured to explain that Lebanon's independence under French protection involved a high degree of risk for, as a rule, a country offered its protection to a people, 'whoever this people may be', only because of natural resources and trade markets. He saw the principles of protection (*al-himaya*), occupation (*al-ihtilal*) and colonisation (*al-isti'mar*) as closely connected, and warned his fellow Lebanese that 'incapable as we are to win our freedom by ourselves, we will have to pay the price in return'. Since Lebanon, as he explained, did not possess any means of prosperity or essential resources, it followed that the Lebanese could not expect France to give them 'freedom without any blemishes or a completely pure independence for the sake of God ... The independence, which imposes unrealistic illusory political or commercial limits on a nation, will vanish as soon as the power and resources of this nation dry up'. Thus, he saw the promised independence of Lebanon would not eventuate because French protection would sooner or later become an occupation.

The only way to counter potential French occupation of Lebanon under the above circumstances was, in Rihani's view, unity between Lebanon and Syria. 'Co-operation (*al-ta'awun*), mutual benefit (*al-tabadul*) and union (*al-ittihad*)', not only conformed to the law of progress among independent and powerful countries but also among the oppressed peoples, particularly 'those of the same blood, the same country (*qutr*), and the same language'. According to him, the Lebanese of all creeds must unite with all Syrians, because their fragmentation into separate parties (*ahzab*), sects (*tawā'if*) and narrow loyalties (*'asabiyyat*) would 'kill patriotism in the cradle' and open the door for unlimited foreign occupation. In this, Rihani raised the question of 'isolation' of the Christians of Lebanon and its harmful ramifications not

only for them but also for Lebanon itself. For him, the independence of Lebanon, isolated from other parts of Syria, would be the beginning of its end, whereas internal regional autonomy (*istiqlal dakhili mahalli*) within the Syrian unity would guarantee Lebanon's organic strength and viability. He understood Syria to include Palestine as well: 'If Syrians win their freedom and independence, this will include the Lebanese and the Palestinians, Christians, Muslims and Druze as well. Those who fear such equality are weak, incapable and not confident in themselves, and consequently unfit for freedom and independence'.<sup>4</sup>

Rihani's strong advocacy of Syrian unity was in a real sense a response to the vehement Maronite campaign for Lebanon's separate independence under French protection. In addition to the Lebanese delegation, headed by the Maronite Patriarch Ilyas Huwayyik, to the Peace Conference (1919) there were other influential organisations including the Lebanese Union Party (*Hizb al-Ittihad al-Lubnani*) of Yusuf al-Sawda, and Antun al-Jumayyil, and the LLP of Na'um Mukarzil.<sup>5</sup> He perceived the ideas of Syrian unity and Lebanese separatism as diametrically opposed. While the former was evolutionist and progressive, the latter was regressive. Based on sectarianism, the 'Lebanese idea', or rather the 'sectarian national idea' (*al-fikra al-qawmiyya al-ta'ifiyya*), as he described it, was too dependent on the past and drawn from an old imaginary relationship between the Christians of Europe and those of Lebanon. Such an idea, in his opinion, was the cause of 'our decline (*taqabqur*) and calamity in the past, and if dominated it would be also the cause of calamity in the future'.

Rihani criticised those Maronites, perhaps including Mukarzil, who extolled their past as Mardaites and Crusaders, and claimed that the Lebanese descended culturally and racially from the Phoenicians.<sup>6</sup> In his view, the Mardaites and the Maronites in the past fought against the Arabs, not to safeguard their own civil political independence, but from religious antagonism, because they saw the Arabs as Muslims. Similarly today, the Maronites, in his view, seemed less keen to win their independence, than to ensure their isolation from, and rejection of co-existence with the Arabs, 'their neighbouring brothers/sisters', simply because they saw the Arabs as Muslims. In this regard, he considered such Maronite attitude 'reactionary (*raj'iyya*) because it was still as sectarian' as it was 'a thousand years ago'.

Rihani opposed the separation of Lebanon from Syria because he saw that 'patriotic unity (*al-wahda al-wataniyya*) and national unity (*al-wahda al-qawmiyya*)' both required progressive thinking. He argued that while the Phoenicians, Mardaites and Maronites may have played their role in the past, today the interests of both Lebanese and Syrians required another kind

of commitment, namely a broad national commitment. Therefore they both must consider their common national interest first, and must look ahead for a better future in unity and co-operation.

Rihani was convinced that the first obstacle to national Syrian unity was the problem of sectarianism and sectarian identity, since 'most Syrians would first identify themselves with their religion, then with their place of birth and then with their region ... thus one would say I am Maronite, Shababi (from Bayt Shabab), Lebanese; the other would say I am Muslim, Damascene, Syrian'. It was because their sectarian fanaticism overrode their patriotism and was chief among their interests, that Rihani saw the necessity of separating religion from politics, and the need to replace sectarian partisanship (*al-tahazzub al-dini*) with patriotic solidarity (*al-'asabiyya al-wataniyya*). He also considered the separation of religion from politics as the only way to secure equality and justice amongst all people of the country. Rihani argued quite bluntly that the Christians sought independence under foreign protection because they were less patriotic than Muslims. To strengthen their patriotism, they must feel secure amongst the Muslims; therefore they should be treated equally in civil and political life.<sup>7</sup>

Rihani was aware of the sensitive question of religious minorities, which he considered, was the first and most important cause of calamities throughout the history of Syria, and he warned against the French policy which exploited this problem to dominate Lebanon.<sup>8</sup> He understood that the Maronites refused unity with Syria because, thinking of themselves simply as Maronite instead of Lebanese or Syrian, they feared the Muslim majority and sought French protection. Although he comprehended their fear, he still believed that unity with the Syrians, not French protection, would ensure the Christians security and independence.

On several occasions Rihani argued that independence under foreign protection would be no more than paper independence, because protection would gradually deprive the Lebanese of their identity. Even if France withdrew from Lebanon, the latter's independence would still be not viable. Weak as it was, Lebanon would, eventually, be annexed to Syria, the 'dominant power' in the region. His solution for this dilemma was to accept Lebanon's unity with Syria, not by force but by agreement and mutual understanding. He believed that all the obstacles could be removed, if Syrians and Lebanese agreed on a 'civil government based on the principle of patriotism and national sovereignty (*hukuma madaniyya 'ala mabda' al-wataniyya w-al-siyada al-qawmiyya*)'.<sup>9</sup>

To further alleviate the fears of the Christians of Lebanon, and safeguard the whole of Syria against permanent foreign threat, Rihani believed that

a form of 'European supervision (*musharafa*)' was necessary. This would allow Syria and Lebanon to become capable of self-government, and would encourage the Christians to trust their 'Muslim brothers/sisters', and live in harmony within the unity. Thus, he disagreed with the 'Damascenes' (*al-dimashqiyyun*) who demanded the complete independence of Syria while they were still in urgent need of European financial and scientific assistance. He maintained that Syrians should accept a limited French supervision for five or ten years, during which period they should prove to France that they considered themselves with the Lebanese people as 'one nation' (*umma wahida*) with equal rights and duties.<sup>10</sup>

Rihani himself acknowledged in 1920 that his opinion in support of some kind of protection was a departure from his earlier view (1918) when he was against such protection. Under new circumstances he now believed it necessary to be realistic, for 'obsession is often misleading and stubbornness other than for what is right is killing'. He now realised that independence was impossible without European 'supervision' (using the term *musharafa* rather than *himaya*, which means protection). It is important to note that between 1918 and 1920 several developments had occurred. These included the Faysal–Clemenceau agreement which affirmed the occupation by France of Lebanon and the coastal regions of Syria, and the establishment of an Arab state in the interior. The agreement also stipulated that the Arab state should turn to France for any assistance it might require.

The change in Rihani's attitude could also be seen in the light of his awareness of the complexity of the problem, in which the fear of the Christian minority had played a major part. In his opinion, intolerance on both sides, the apprehensive Christian minority and the Syrian 'extremists', provided France with a unique opportunity to enhance its domination over Syria by exploiting the existing religious disparities and encouraging the Lebanese to seek French protection. Therefore, he believed that concessions should be made on both sides: the Christian minority accepting unity, and the Muslim majority softening its attitude and accepting a moderate government under Faysal's leadership. Faysal, he believed, was a wise national leader able to lead the 'extremists' in Damascus in the 'proper rational moderate way'.

It is clear that while Rihani disagreed with the Maronites who insisted on Lebanon's independence, he equally disagreed with those Syrians who, while insisting on complete unity between Lebanon and Syria, were unrealistic in their demands for complete independence from foreign influence.<sup>11</sup> The intransigence of the Syrian nationalists became even more vehement after the Faysal–Clemenceau agreement which they viewed as the dismemberment of Syria. Despite Faysal's insistence that the agreement was only an inevitable

temporary measure, it was condemned by the vast majority of Syrians who asserted their desire for unity and complete independence.<sup>12</sup> It was this position that Rihani criticised because insistence on complete independence gave France the justification to enhance its presence in Lebanon and Syria, and he hoped that Faysal would succeed in convincing the 'extremists' to accept French 'supervision'. (Faysal eventually was unsuccessful, as is well known).

Rihani was in favour of Arab rule in Syria, including an internal independence (or autonomy) for Lebanon, under Faysal's leadership and French supervision. He argued that if unity of Lebanon and Syria was achieved under solid constitutional government acting according to the principles of justice and equality, European supervision would not be required for long. Such government would be capable of ensuring internal security and order as well as protecting the rights of minorities. In five or ten years at the most, the Lebanese and Syrians together would be able to manage without foreign assistance. This was, in his opinion, the only solution to achieve complete national Syrian unity which would bring the minorities under its banner and bring about complete independence.<sup>13</sup>

As further reassurance to the minorities, and 'to prove their good will', Rihani suggested that Muslim Syrians could give the Christians more than they got for themselves, because of the 'Lebanese traditions (*taqalid*) and the nature (*tabi'a*) of their country'. He did not explain this, but probably referred to the traditional autonomy of Mount Lebanon, to its demographic state where the Christians formed a majority, and perhaps to its strategic position as a vital access of Syria to the sea. Perhaps also because he was supportive of the view of Faysal who was quoted as saying that 'the minorities should be given more than they have right to'.<sup>14</sup>

The idea of Muslim concession was more clearly expressed by Rihani later in 1928. By then, the French presence in Lebanon and Syria had been officially settled by the Mandate Contract; the Lebanese Republic had been established with its own constitution in 1926, and the Syrian parliament had begun negotiations establishing the Syrian constitution and replacing the mandate by a treaty with France.<sup>15</sup> Within his campaign against French colonisation (*isti'mar*) (discussed below), and in order to ensure the independent Syrian-Lebanese unity and assure the minorities, Rihani insisted that Muslims must initiate a change in their mentality and political attitude if they really wanted to establish the cornerstone of the new national edifice. As he put it, 'Muslims must be tolerant in regard to what they consider their traditional inherited rights'. Rihani warned that while he was not against a republican system for Lebanon, because 'a republic was the best form of government for the Lebanese-Syrian country', a multitude

of 'small republics' would be harmful. Thus, he advocated that 'one republic named the Syrian–Lebanese Republic' should be established.<sup>16</sup>

Before the newly elected Syrian Legislative Council had begun the discussions of the new constitution (June–August 1928), Rihani sent a letter, on 30 May 1928, to the Syrian leaders and members of parliament urging them to solve the problem of minorities, which he saw as Syria's biggest issue. His solution consisted of establishing the Syrian republic with a Christian as its first president. Moreover, he nominated Faris al-Khuri, a prominent Christian Syrian nationalist figure to be this first Syrian president. (Eventually the draft constitution of August 1928 declared that the Syrian president must be Muslim.) Rihani insisted that 'if the first president of the republic was a Christian, during the days of the second or third president at the most, whether this was Muslim or Christian, the great Syrian unity would be completed and the two republics would become one Syrian–Lebanese republic'.<sup>17</sup>

Rihani was well aware of the Lebanese Christian attachment to their republic once it became a reality, and of the minority question remaining at the root of their intransigence concerning their independence. His proposition that the first president be a Christian not only reflected his awareness of the actual political situation, but also his belief that it would provide a solution which he thought could please both Christians and Muslims. In giving up the presidency of the Syrian republic to a nationalist Christian, he thought the Muslims in Syria would prove to the Christians of Lebanon and to the Europeans that they respected Christians' rights. This, he thought, would assist the Christians of Lebanon to trust the Syrians and to feel as secure in Syria as they were in Lebanon. Thus their patriotism would expand and 'Great Lebanon' (*Lubnan al-Kabir*) would become 'Greater Lebanon' (*Lubnan al-Akbar*) and would join the Syrian republic in a 'Great Syrian Unity', as the Muslims desired.

In the proposed Syrian–Lebanese republic under a just civil government, as advocated by Rihani, the Christians would have equal opportunities in Lebanon as well as in Syria, and Syrian unity would be achieved. This was the only solution he saw for the two republics to rid themselves of the French Mandate. For 'the Syrian Lebanese nation could not completely get rid of foreign ambitions and occupation unless fraternity/sisterhood and national loyalty (*al-ikha'* and *al-wala' al-qawmi*) became the foundations of the Syrian–Lebanese Republic'.<sup>18</sup>

Rihani did not believe the Lebanese and Syrian republics were viable as two separate states. He was convinced that if Syria achieved independence without Lebanon, foreign domination in Lebanon would complicate the



Syrians' problems and hinder their national aspirations. On the other hand, if Lebanon obtained independence while remaining separate from Syria, the latter, as the dominant power in the region, would aggravate Lebanon's political situation and obstruct its national progress. Thus, even when the Lebanese Republic became a *fait accompli*, Rihani still believed that Syrian unity was possible. Indeed, such unity assumed more urgency, because only the complete economic and political unity of Lebanon and Syria could remove the French occupation. Such unity, in his opinion, would not be possible without a revolutionary change in the political and religious traditions of the two countries. This change would allow the establishment of justice on a civil secular, rather than religious basis, an objective that could not be achieved unless religious loyalty was replaced by national and patriotic loyalty. This is the link in Rihani's thought connecting secularism with patriotism and nationalism both of which form the basis of his argument for Syrian unity.<sup>19</sup>

The discussion of Rihani's ideas on Syrian unity raises the question of the place of Palestine in such unity. While concentrating on the unity between Lebanon and Syria, Rihani, even before the capitalisation of his perception of the Palestine question and of the Zionist threat, was clear about the place of Palestine as part of the Syrian Unity.<sup>20</sup>

In 1934 Rihani published his book *Faysal al-Awwal*, which he wrote during his compulsory residence in Iraq consequence to his campaign against the French Mandate. Although this is not a political essay, Rihani's history not being devoid of opinion, one can still follow through this work the change and continuity in his ideas on Syrian unity. The importance of the book resides in the fact that when Rihani wrote it Faysal, who was considered the symbol of unity, had died (September 1933), the Lebanese Republic had been declared (1926), and the hopes for unity were weakened, particularly as France was negotiating a peace treaty with Syria without mention of unity with Lebanon. By that time Rihani had long started his campaign to liberate Lebanon and Syria from the French Mandate within a framework of unity between the two countries and a greater Pan-Arab unity.

Rihani still believed, in 1934, that Faysal's efforts and moderation could have succeeded if the 'international politics' and the 'extremist' nationalists had not impeded his mission. He acknowledged that the difficulties which faced Faysal when he was in Syria were both internal and external. In addition to the French and British secret political designs and the violation of the Allies' promises concerning Arab rights, he emphasised the differences between the various religious communities in the country and lack of patriotism and national unity among the people of Syria and Lebanon.

Rihani now blamed Faysal, partly, for ignoring the different reactions of support and opposition, which appeared in Lebanon and the Syrian coast when he entered Syria in October 1918. He accused him of committing a blunder in sending an Arab force to establish an Arab Hashimite Government in Beirut. Rihani considered this a short-sighted policy because Faysal did not take into consideration the sharp differences between the desires of the Muslims and the Maronites for the future of Lebanon.<sup>21</sup>

Nevertheless, Rihani still believed that Faysal had honourable intentions towards the future of Lebanon. He insisted that Faysal intended to enlarge Lebanon and grant it an internal administrative autonomy; that Lebanese–Syrian unity was ‘not to be compulsory but out of the people’s choice’; that ‘for Faysal, there was no difference between a Lebanese and a Damascene, or between a Muslim and a Druze’. He asserted that this was the principle which Faysal sincerely believed in and sought to bring about, but he had been defeated by the circumstances and by some who frustrated his efforts.

Rihani’s attitude towards the Maronite claim for the independence of Lebanon did not change. He still believed that this claim was unjustifiably sectarian. He explained that while Faysal was calling for a national and non-religious unity between Syrians and Lebanese, the Lebanese, that is the Maronites, provoked by the clergy and in collaboration with Picot, the French High Commissioner, sent a Lebanese delegation to the Peace Conference to claim a Lebanese entity under French protection. He argued that by entrusting the Maronite Patriarch, Ilyas Huwayyik, to head the exclusively Christian delegation, and by refusing to have any relations with the Muslims, the Lebanese turned the question of Lebanese independence into a religious and sectarian one.

Rihani also blamed the Muslims of Syria who persisted in their claim to unity and complete independence. ‘Some of them even became more fanatical’, and it was this fanaticism, in his opinion, that was partly behind the disturbances of 1919–20 (the ‘massacre’ of the Armenians in Aleppo, February 1919, and bloody attacks against the Christians in Marj’yun, South Lebanon, in 1919–20), which discredited the Arabs and weakened their cause. Not only did he accuse the Arab leaders of ignoring European political ways and international politics, but he also held the Arab government of Damascus partly responsible for the unrest because it was unable to control the Muslim Arabs of Syria. The ‘gangs’ who were responsible for the incidents, he indicated, had an excellent relationship with the Arab Government in Damascus. But while he blamed Faysal for failing to control the government, he accused the French authorities of deliberate negligence, insinuating that they did not stop the riots so that the gap between the Muslims and the Christians would be widened thus justifying

French occupation of the whole of Syria.<sup>22</sup> Thus, his view that France would always exploit the religious disparities and the question of minorities to justify its occupation of Syria did not in fact change.

Rihani considered Faysal's acceptance of foreign assistance in Syria, and foreign mandate in Palestine and Iraq, as a wise attempt by the King to strike a compromise between the interests of the Arabs, particularly the Kingdom of the Hijaz, the policies of Britain, and those of France, which claimed (as in Pichon's declarations) 'historical, legal and cultural rights in Syria'. But Rihani saw that the work of the American King-Crane Commission together with Wilson's famous principle of 'the right of peoples to self-determination' had sadly misled Faysal who had hoped that the American government would help him remove Britain and France, when he eventually rejected the proposed agreement with Clemenceau.<sup>23</sup>

This change in Faysal's attitude was, in Rihani's view, a sign of weakness. If inconstancy in politics was acceptable amongst the great powers because they could consolidate their position with force, the weak, in his opinion, should hold firm to one position. Those who knew Faysal well thought that he had been 'easily impressed by everyone who had a touch of patriotism', and he took different positions on the same matter. Likewise, Rihani saw that 'because of his people and his own personality', Faysal lacked sufficient strength to play the political games of the great powers. Unlike those who accused Faysal of weakness because of his compromise with Clemenceau, Rihani, saw that Faysal was weak because he succumbed to the influence of his 'extremist' advisers. In his view, Faysal was aware of French ambitions in Syria. He knew that Britain would not support him against France nor would the American government interfere in the internal affairs of Syria. He also knew that he was incapable of changing British policy, or opposing France militarily. Thus, Rihani felt Faysal was left to choose between two options, both requiring 'honesty, wisdom and patriotism': to lead the Syrian people to moderation to secure the common interest of Syria and France, or to resign'. Like other contemporary Arab nationalists, Rihani appeared to have ruled out as 'impractical', the third option taken by Yusuf al-Azma and his comrades (i.e. fight the French).<sup>24</sup>

Does this mean that in criticising Faysal, Rihani was defending French policy in Syria against Syrian interest? The moderate stance which Rihani thought Faysal should have adopted was a tactical rather than ideological one. Through moderation, Rihani saw an opportunity to win independence, albeit incomplete, by making necessary concessions according to a given political situation. Thus, moderation should not be seen as denial of the Arab national rights but as a temporary diplomatic stance. Rihani's opinions on the situation in Syria under Faysal's rule, as expressed in *Faysal al-Awwal*,

supported the Arab cause in principle. For example, the resolutions of the General Syrian Congress which proclaimed the independence of Syria (including Palestine, and Lebanon) as a sovereign constitutional monarchy (8 March 1920),<sup>25</sup> reflected in his opinion, 'an undeniable proud nationalism'. He considered that neither France, nor any European or foreign state had any right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Arabs, and that the election of King Faysal was purely an Arab affair: 'An Arab king, elected by an Arab Congress for an Arab country; what does Europe, or rather France or Britain have to do with this?'<sup>26</sup>

Rihani appeared to favour the French proposal which granted Faysal the rule of Syria with French assistance and granted Lebanon its independence. This, however, did not mean giving up the aim of Syrian unity. He understood the 'internal' independence of Lebanon as autonomy within unity and co-operation with regard to economic affairs and international politics. This was his interpretation of the decision of the Administrative Council of Mount Lebanon (10 July 1920) which, after indirect negotiations with Faysal, declared the complete unrestricted independence of Lebanon, its neutrality and the enlargement of its frontiers whilst, at the same time ensuring the rights and interests of Lebanon and Syria, and the endurance of their good relations in the future. And, contrary to the French presumptions which accused members of the Council of national betrayal, Rihani saw that the 'legitimate representatives of the nation' were only 'inspired by the common interest of Lebanon and Syria'.<sup>27</sup>

In conclusion, despite the political developments at both the international and domestic levels, Rihani's position regarding Syrian unity and the independence of Lebanon did not, in principle, show great changes from 1918, the year which witnessed the beginning of the Syrian question, until 1934, the year he published his book, *Faysal al-Awwal*. In his writings between 1918 and 1920, he had supported Faysal's moderate policy regarding Syrian unity, which included Lebanon, Palestine and Syria, with the respect of Lebanon's internal autonomy and limited French assistance. And in 1934, even after the death of Faysal, he was still convinced that moderation would have led to success, had the Allies respected their promises and the extremists not pushed Faysal to adopt an extreme policy, thus causing the fall of his Arab rule in Syria and the failure of Syrian unity.

### **On Syrian Patriotism and Arab Nationalism**

Rihani's call for Syrian unity was first based on a firm belief in his Syrian identity. In his pre-1918 speeches and writings, the words 'Syrians' (*al-suriyyun*) and 'Syrian nation' (*al-umma al-suriyya*) designate Lebanese and

Syrians alike. The 'Syrian nation', in his view, was formed of all fellow Syrians inside and outside geographical Syria. In New York he tackled the issues concerning the 'Syrian community' (*al-jaliya al-suriyya*) as a 'Syrian' addressing his fellow 'Syrians' from all religious sects. As for the word 'Lebanese', he used it to designate the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon, that is the *Mutasarrifiyya*.<sup>28</sup> After 1926, when the Lebanese Republic was constitutionally established with its present borders, he started to refer to 'both nations, the Syrian and the Lebanese'. To this extent the nation (*al-umma*) was the people: 'individuals, political and intellectual leaders'.<sup>29</sup>

Despite his love for Lebanon, as his place of birth, and his pride of being Lebanese, Rihani's broader national loyalty was to Greater Syria; 'the big country', and 'the real country' as he calls it. 'Contrary to most Syrians and Lebanese', his loyalty to Syria came before loyalty to his place of birth and above his religion. 'I am Syrian first, Lebanese second and Maronite after that. I am a Syrian seeking the national, geographical and political unity of Syria. I am Syrian; Lebanon is my place of birth; I respect (*ahrtarim*) the Arabs, who are the source of my language, and for my religion I trust in God only'.<sup>30</sup> He did not precisely define the geographical borders of Syria. But speaking of the Syrians, he included the inhabitants of Lebanon, as well as the regions of 'al-Sham' (Damascus), Aleppo and Palestine, all of which correspond to the Ottoman divisions of geographical Syria before 1914.<sup>31</sup>

Rihani's loyalty to Syria, therefore, does not negate his loyalty to Lebanon. He admitted that he cared for the future of Lebanon as much as, and probably more than, any Lebanese. But the difference between him and others is that he perceived the welfare of Lebanon and Syria together in their unity. His two loyalties, therefore, do not contradict but complement each other because, for him, the two countries themselves complement each other. Moreover, his Syro-Lebanese loyalty complements his loyalty to the whole Arab world (*al-bilad al-arabiyya jam'a*). He said 'no doubt every one prefers one's place of birth, and from this first love begins love of the country (*hubb al-watan*). My love for Lebanon is based on my love for al-Freike, and similarly, my love for Syria is based on my love for Lebanon. Also my love for Syria is the basis of my love for the northern Arab regions, Palestine, Iraq and East Jordan, and my love for these regions is a part of my love for the whole Arab countries. And this is the greatest patriotism (*al-hubb al-watani al-akbar*)'.<sup>32</sup>

Rihani distinguishes between the 'small country' (*al-watan al-saghir*), and the 'big country' (*al-watan al-kabir*) which included all the small countries created by the colonialist power. In about 1918, answering the advocates of Lebanon's separation from Syria, perhaps in response to *Jam'iyyat al-Nahda al-Lubnaniyya* (LLP) of Mukarzil, he said: 'there are among us two

groups or two parties: a party which draws a small circle and says 'this is our country ... whoever is not of our religion is out of the circle', the other party draws a big circle around the small one and says 'this is our country, and our circle includes yours and protects it ... The first circle is Lebanon; the second is Syria. The first is the symbol of Lebanese renaissance (*al-nahda al-lubnaniyya*); the second is the symbol of Syrian unity'. He did not blame those who had their loyalty to the small country, because he himself was one of the most loyal, but he differed from them in that he extended the scope of the circle of his national loyalty.<sup>33</sup>

Throughout the 1920s, even after the Syrian revolution of 1925–27 had failed,<sup>34</sup> and the Lebanese Republic had been established (1926), the concept of the greater country in Rihani's thought, far from narrowing, actually continued to include the entire Arab world 'from Aleppo to Aden and from Jerusalem to Baghdad', as he put it in an article written in 1928. Rihani did not mean to be precise in his geographical definitions, for he was not drawing a political map but merely indicating the general extent of the Arab homeland. And while, in 1922–23, he had embarked on his mission for Pan-Arabian unity, he continued to stress that the benefit for Lebanon and Syria was in their unity.<sup>35</sup>

Rihani's belief in his Syro-Lebanese identity was grounded in a strong belief in the natural unity of Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. This unity was, for him, an historical fact, because it emanated from objective elements forming the components of Syrian patriotism or nationalism in his discourse. At this stage he still used *qawmiyya* and *wataniyya* in the context of nationalism. It should be emphasised, however, that Rihani did not elaborate a theoretical concept of Syrian nationalism (or of Arab nationalism), but his ideas gleaned from his speeches and writings, particularly during the late 1920s, clearly indicate those elements of Syrian unity, namely: geography, history, culture, language, blood relationship (*rabitat al-damm*) or nationality (*al-qawmiyya*, that is belonging to one people) and common interest (*al-maslaha al-mushtaraka*). Although he appeared to concentrate on nationality, language and common interest, a careful reading of his works would indicate that geography and history are no less important.

### Geography

Although Rihani did not originally define the borders of geographical Syria, some different geographical definitions can be found in his writings. Some of these definitions may seem of a 'poetic' rather than geopolitical nature, and Rihani probably did not mean to draw a precise political map of Syria. For example, he speaks of the 'great Syrian unity' from 'Aleppo

to al-Naqura and from al-Suwayda' to al-Suwaydiyya'. However, his first clear definition of geographical Syria can be found in *al-Nakabat* (1928), where he commenced his short history of Syria by defining its 'frontiers, the first characteristics that nature itself helped to draw'. *Surriyya*, as he prefers to call it rather than *Bilad al-Sham*, was formed naturally, not artificially. So geographical features define the country's borders, such as deserts, mountains, rivers and the seas, which surround it. According to Rihani, the Syrian frontiers are: the Mediterranean Sea which meets the Red Sea at 'Aqaba from the West, the Mountains (the Taurus mountains) from the North, The Euphrates from the East and the (Arabian) desert from the South. With a slight difference in poetic style, Rihani's definition of Syria's boundaries corresponded to those declared by the General Syrian Congress in its meeting in Damascus on 2 July 1919.<sup>36</sup>

In his view Lebanon remained geographically an integral part of Syria. Geography not only imposed unity on the land but also provided it with its aspects of strength, security and economic survival. Even as late as 1939 he wrote that 'Lebanon and Syria form one country at least geographically and economically: plains can not exist without sea-coasts, and mountains can not survive without plains', he wrote with an almost Khaldunian turn of phrase. Between Lebanon and Syria there was no real boundary and the actual frontiers were, in his view, only artificial. These were 'discovered, invented and imposed' by the 'foreign colonialist enemies, and their friends in the interior' to divide the country and facilitate its occupation.<sup>37</sup>

To those who rejected the unity with Syria, claiming that Lebanon was not Arab but Phoenician, Rihani resorted to geography to refute their claims. He argued that the borderline between 'Phoenician Lebanon' and 'Arab Syria' is an imaginary one, a simple length of wood, not with Phoenician script, but with a French inscription, which is the symbol of occupation and intellectual colonisation. This artificial line, in his view, could not hide the natural unity of the land. 'How excellent the mandate and the Mountain's politicians are, to see the benefit of the Eastern and Western nations in this piece of wood which tells the great distance between the Phoenician and the Arab Country, a distance (from Beirut to Damascus) that can be covered by car in only one hour'.<sup>38</sup> Geography remained an important basis on which Rihani built his argument for Lebanon's unity and integrity with Syria at the national, cultural, historical, economic, and political levels.

### Nationality and Kinship

Rihani identified three essential cornerstones (*arkan jawhariyya*): language (*al-lugha*), national identity (*al-qawmiyya*) and the common interest (*al-*

*maslaha*), without which nationalism or patriotism (*al-wataniyya*) could not stand. Starting from the controversy over whether the Lebanese people were Phoenicians or Arabs, he asserted that both opinions were equally incorrect, exaggerated and historically unjustified.<sup>39</sup> His own view was based on the common origins of the Lebanese and Syrians, and on the similarity of their characteristics.

Rihani saw that, given the mixture of the people who lived in Lebanon, it would be difficult to prove that the Lebanese have pure Phoenician blood. Even if they were of Phoenician origin they wouldn't be non-Arab; because both Arabs and Phoenicians descended from Aram, the son of Sam. 'Aram was the Arabs' ancestor, and the Arabs are the Phoenicians' ancestors'. He based his argument on the ancient histories of Herodotus and Strabo, and on archaeological evidence found in Eastern Arabia (Bahrain). Accordingly, the Phoenicians possibly originated in the Gulf area and migrated from Eastern Arabia to the Mediterranean Syrian coast. If this was open to question, one thing was certain in his opinion: 'either the Phoenicians, who are Semites, are descendants of the Arabs, or the Arabs are descendants of the Phoenicians'. What was important for him remained the essential and undeniable bond (*sila*), which existed between the Phoenicians and the Arabs. This bond was reflected in the evident similar characteristics of the two peoples. For example, the Arabs, particularly along the coasts of the Gulf and the Red Sea, inherited the skill and the daring of the ancient Phoenician navigators, as well as their passion for trade.<sup>40</sup>

He traced this similarity in the Lebanese and Syrian peoples who have a mixture of Phoenician and Arab characteristics. Both peoples have the Phoenician boldness and love of adventure and the Arab pride and love of glory. 'What are the first characteristics of Lebanese and Syrians?' he asks. 'Aren't we in daring and adventure and in our love for travelling and trade like the Phoenicians? Aren't we in pride, dignified manner and fondness for culture, in love of glory and nobility like the Arabs, sons of 'Adnan and Qahtan? The Arabs and the Phoenicians are therefore our ancestors. Above all, nations are not measured by their origins but by their virtues. And if we look at the national, spiritual, intellectual or social inheritance of the Lebanese and Syrians, we find that both peoples have the same characteristics, good and bad, of the two Semitic origins, Phoenician and Arab'.<sup>41</sup>

In the similarity of characteristics, Rihani found a substitute for the theory of origin because he did not believe in the pure race argument, particularly as far as the Lebanese and Syrians were concerned. He stated that the waves of migration and occupation, from different places and different races, left



their marks on the racial and characteristic composition of the original people and subsequent settlers in geographical Syria. Without denying either Phoenician or Arab blood, he did not perceive the Syrians as a pure race. In *al-Nakabat*, he pondered whether all who lived in geographical Syria (*suriyya al-tabi'iyya*) were from the Aramaean race which had blended with that of the Hittite, Can'anite, Phoenician and Hebrew. Whatever the truth may be, Rihani had no doubt that 'in the Syrian people today there remained some of the characters and blood of all the ancient peoples who lived in the country, from the Can'anite to the Arabs passing through the Israeli, Egyptian, Assyrian, Hittite, Phoenician, Aramaean, Chaldean, Greek, Roman and Tatar'.<sup>42</sup> All this supported his claim that between Lebanon and Syria there was, not only geographical unity, but also a blood relationship which bonded the two brotherly peoples together and warranted their co-operation and unity.

### Culture and Language

Rihani argued in *al-Nakabat* that, since the days of the first settlers, there had been a cultural continuity in the language, traditions and religion of the peoples who had lived in geographical Syria. In his view, throughout the history of Syria, local culture blended with those of the conquerors to form one culture that was unmistakably Syrian. For example, under their occupation, the Greeks had spread their culture among the higher classes of the people. Greek myths replaced and sometimes blended with Assyrian and Phoenician myths, and although Aramaic remained the language of ordinary people, the elite classes spoke the language of the conquerors as well. In his opinion, it was easier for the Syrian people to change their language than their customs and morals. Hence the variety of languages that Syria knew in the course of centuries, until finally Arabic flourished following the Arab Islamic conquest and the gradual Arabisation of the Syrian people.<sup>43</sup>

Culture, he says, was proof of identity and thus of nationalism. It is so indispensable that its loss meant the loss of the people's existence as a distinguished nation. For example, in 1920, Rihani warned the Lebanese against the French protection 'which is incompatible with Lebanese patriotism', because protection 'will gradually deprive the Lebanese of their nationality, their language and traditions and, like the Algerians and Tunisians, they will become neither Lebanese nor French'.<sup>44</sup> In a speech delivered in 1927 to the Syrian immigrants in New York, he reasserted the Arab identity of Lebanon and its unity with Syria on the basis of their cultural unity as well as the common heritage with other Arab lands. 'Despite the political divisions and international ambitions, the old country is one.

Our language in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine is the same, the language of Mudar and Rabi'a (the two major confederations of the northern Arab tribes), the language of the Arabs. Our literature, traditions and customs, and our spiritual character (*nafsiyya*) are the same whether in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq or in Najd and the Yemen'.<sup>45</sup>

Within culture, language for Rihani comes before traditions and religion. Language, together with nationality (*qawmiyya*) and common interest, was one of the essential elements of patriotism and national unity. Language, he wrote, remained a means of communication and mutual acquaintance and understanding among individuals. It was the instrument of thought and the means of transmission of ideas and principles and, as such, language for him always had a special importance. As early as 1898, and long before Sati' al-Husri saw language as the most important element of nationhood, Rihani had assigned to language a crucial role in the life of a nation.<sup>46</sup> Again, in an article published in 1909, he expressed his love of the 'noble' Arabic language as the first manifestation of his Arab identity, and in 1920, he insisted that the Lebanese and Syrians were bound together not only by blood relationship and geography but also by language. Language for Rihani was not only a means of communication but it fostered a feeling of closeness among people of the same origin.<sup>47</sup>

Arabic as the common language of both Syria and Lebanon was one of Rihani's arguments for the unity of the two countries. Responding to those, particularly Christians, who argued that the Lebanese people were Phoenicians, he insisted that 'despite every thing Lebanon is Arabic at least in its language'. When he embarked on his call for Arab unity in its broader sense, language was again one of his fundamental arguments.<sup>48</sup> However, while Rihani viewed 'unity of language as necessary to protect the independence of a country', language alone in his opinion, could not achieve national unity, because 'language may not be enough to unite two different and separate nationalities'. Language alone 'can not unite racial elements, and can not overcome tribalism'. For example in the past, Arabic could not unite the Arabs in Syria. Although Arabic united the Lakhmi and Azdi Arabs, their tribal fanaticism (*al-'asabiyya*) remained dominant.<sup>49</sup>

Culture in Rihani's discourse encompasses religion. However, religion was less important and, unlike language, potentially divisive. In *al-Nakabat*, Rihani blamed religious fanaticism for most of the calamities that Syria had experienced throughout its ancient and modern history. This explains why he excluded religion from the essential elements of Syrian nationalism.

Although Rihani recognised that the Syrians in the past had similar gods, rites and customs, and that Islam was a great Arab achievement which

Arabised the Syrian peoples and their language, he did not think that religion would help achieve national unity. He attempted to prove that, in the past, even Islam which professed the unity of God could not unite the Syrians, because Islam was unable to overcome tribalism and personal and political interests. This explained why some Arabs fought on the side of foreigners and why non-Arabs fought against Arabs although they all were Muslims. This also explained why Arab tribes, such as the Qaysi and the Yamani clans, fought each other although they were united in Islam. If tribalism was 'the first and most important factor in the decline of many Islamic states' it proved that religion alone was unable to unite different nationalities and racial groups.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, even if 'tribalism at present had begun to disappear', Rihani was still convinced that religion would be unable to achieve Syrian unity because of the remaining problem of religious and sectarian fanaticism which divided the Syrians into different groups according to their creed. This division was the cause of the problem of minorities and remained an enigma that had not been truly solved since the Umayyad era. Throughout history he believed that minorities were exploited by tyrant rulers and the various conquerors.<sup>51</sup> But if the minorities had always created problems for themselves and for the majority, the latter remained equally responsible because Muslims tended to view civilization, progress and happiness as achievable only under a strong Islamic state, and because they relegated justice, equality and economic development to second place, which was, in Rihani's view, their greatest mistake. Consequently Rihani did not agree with Muslims on a government formed between the various sects (*al-tawā'if*) in Lebanon and Syria, and did not believe in the pan-Islamic unity.<sup>52</sup> Instead he saw secularism as the only way to achieve national unity because it replaced fanaticism and religious loyalty with patriotism and national loyalty.

### History and Nationalism

History, for Rihani, was a very important element of Syrian nationalism. In *al-Nakabat*, he demonstrated that, throughout their history, Lebanon and Syria had experienced the same disasters and that their present situation was a continuation of this disastrous past. In this short history of geographical Syria, Rihani evoked common memories of bygone events and past misfortunes and he urged Syrians, including the Lebanese, to re-examine their history with a new critical spirit in order to draw a lesson for the future, to forget the negative aspects of their past without regret and to reject false glory. Rihani did not want to forget the history of the nation, but he viewed history as a factor, which should be evoked to enlighten the

present and not paralyse it by the heavy burden of illusions. Thus, the whole truth about the past should be known and the nation should not be content with remembering the achievements of its ancestors but should rely on its present abilities to build a future. In this Rihani disagreed with Sati' al-Husri's contention that, in the study of history, selection should be carried out so as to deepen the spirit of nationalism in the souls of students. This for al-Husri means that the black pages of the past should be ignored lest they negate the spiritual vitality which history is capable of inspiring and weaken the student's faith in the future.<sup>53</sup>

Rihani viewed the ancient and modern history of Syria as a chain of catastrophes and successive invasions some of which were commemorated in inscriptions still existing in Lebanon. Syria, he pointed out, was 'the captive of nations, the mother nation of the East and the West ... and the bearer of the foreigner's yoke'. Since the days of the Hittites, Hebrews and Phoenicians, Syria had been a route for conquerors and a destination for all nations.<sup>54</sup>

In evoking common memories, Rihani attempted to prove, to Lebanese and Syrians alike, not only that they shared the misfortunes of the past but also those of the present, and that instead of avoiding their ancestors' mistakes, they were repeating them under the yoke of new conquerors. He claimed that the conquerors' policy was always invariable. In the past conquerors supported one Syrian king against another to achieve victory; Alexander drove the Persians out and occupied the whole of Syria, and in his time the 'Allies' had kicked out the Turks and then replaced them. Even when the indigenous people ruled, their national sovereignty remained tied to the foreign policy of the dominant power. Such was the Arab Nabataean rule, centred in Petra, but ended by the Romans who established total rule over Syria. Furthermore, he drew a parallel between ancient and contemporary times: for just as many Arabs, for their own selfish interests, helped the Romans achieve their colonialist aims, so today some Syrians collaborated with foreigners, so as 'the yoke on Syria's neck is not put by foreign hands but by its devoted children themselves'. The Romans and the Persians consolidated their respective rule in Syria and Iraq by the use of certain Arab tribes. The Lakhm and Ghassan brothers, though both Arab, fought each other to help foreigners. And 'as Romans and Persians made kings of our Arab ancestors, foreigners make the kings nowadays'.<sup>55</sup>

The main factors contributing to foreign occupation of Syria were, in Rihani's opinion, racial and religious fanaticism—deep-rooted since the days of the Assyrians who used these contradictions to consolidate their domination. Syria's greatest calamity, according to him, happened at the

hands of the Crusaders who exploited the existing religious differences to achieve their aims. In his opinion, the Crusaders' success was not because the Maronites and the Isma'ilis assisted them but because the Arabs were divided. And 'today the hatred continues and the artificial and non-artificial divisions embrace the whole of the old Syrian country, and nothing is new ... Oh my home country (*baladi*), Lebanon! The Crusaders have left but you remain, will you not learn?!' In this, Rihani perceived that the Muslims also committed fatal mistakes for they always looked for a strong Muslim state whatever this state might be. For example, the Ottomans who had none of the attributes of true Islam were accepted as rulers, simply because they were powerful Muslims. Christian and Muslim Syrians did not learn from their history how to avoid such tendencies because their leaders were only concerned with their own interests.

To consolidate their rule, the Ottomans also, according to Rihani, revived the tribal and clannish loyalties to keep the Syrians divided. Their rule lasted long in Syria because the rebels were not united against the state. Revolts such as 'Ali Pasha Janbulad's in Aleppo and that of Fakhr al-Din in Lebanon, failed because of the revived tribalism amongst the feudal lords and the pashas (Walis) of the provinces, who fought each other to defend the Ottoman Empire. During the Ottoman era, Syria's calamity was not only caused by the tyranny of the pashas, Janissaries and amirs, as Muhammad Kurd 'Ali suggests but, according to Rihani, by prevailing ignorance at all levels of the nation, which caused tyranny, division and submission without which 'the criminal empire would not have ruled its multi-religious and multi-racial flocks with the horses' tails [i.e. with whips]'.

Rihani divided the hundred years of Syrian history between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries into two groupings: war of sects (*harb al-tawa'if*) and the privileges of sects (*imtiyazat al-tawa'if*) in Lebanon. He argued that these privileges 'were in their results worse than wars because they enhanced religious fanaticism, the biggest enemy of human kind'. Three parties were, in his view, responsible for the events of the 1860s: the conqueror Ibrahim Pasha who fought the Druze by other fellow Lebanese which exacerbated hatred among them; the civil and religious leaders who rallied the inhabitants of the Mountain against Ibrahim Pasha to defend their own selfish interests; and France which first provoked Ibrahim Pasha against the Ottoman State and then, like England, allied itself with the state to defend its imperialist interests.

By his own time, nothing had changed and new parallels could be drawn: France, 'as usual', was the perpetrator of 'nice Christian massacres'; the Mandatory State, the new conqueror, fought Syrians with other Syrians;

the Lebanese leaders allied themselves with France, not to defend their national rights, but to recover their feudal rights; and Europeans who came to protect the Christians were, in fact, protecting only their political and economic interests.

In conclusion, Rihani saw the Lebanon of his day as the victim of its leaders and their collaboration with the foreigners. Maronite collaboration with Ibrahim Pasha led to the events of 1845, and these led to the tragedies of 1860. Under the pretext of defending their rights, Lebanese leaders refused Lebanon's participation in the Ottoman parliament and this led to Jamal Pasha's martial law. To protect their privileges, the Lebanese leaders refused the constitution and in Rihani's time they gave up these privileges to France in return for a bankrupt 'great republic'.

From this chain of catastrophes, Rihani concluded that history's usefulness always lies essentially in its lessons. He said 'Today the one country is two: Lebanon and Syria. Here we are repeating our ancestors' mistakes. History is repeating itself and a foreign state is using us, as the Ottomans did, for its aims. Let us sincerely and wholeheartedly forget our ancestors, and our historical states and use our strength for our welfare ... O brothers/sisters, fellows of this country, plain, mountain and coast, do we remain shackled in fear, ignorance, fanaticism and illusions? Do we always serve the interest of the turbaned and capped leaders and that of the foreigners against that of the country? Let us agree to say: we all are fellows of one country with equal rights and duties. Let us reject every old hatred and ugly religious rancour? O Lebanon, my home (*baladi*)! O Syria my country (*biladi*), your people today are submissive, content and hopeless, your people are the descendants of those who in the past paid the taxes and suffered the whip'.

In his conclusion to Syria's history, Rihani suggested that, as in the dark eras, all Syrians were subject to the same humiliation; today, they have one destiny and share a common interest. To overcome their painful past and remove the new occupation, all Syrians must look ahead for a better future in unity and co-operation, based not on factionalism and fanaticism, but on nationalism, justice and equality. The welfare of Syria is not in its past, but rather in a future based on a new vision of its history.<sup>56</sup>

### Common Interest

Common interest (*al-maslaha al-mushtaraka*), in Rihani's thought, remained an essential basis for nationalism or patriotism. In 1921, Rihani asserted that 'genuine patriotism is based on the unity of race (*wahdat al-jins*), unity of language (*wahdat al-lugha*) and unity of interest (*wahdat al-maslaha*).<sup>57</sup> In 1928, he wrote that 'the most important and the strongest of the patriotic

bonds ... is the economic, commercial and material bond. Let us freely and frankly say that the common interest is before every thing and above every thing'.<sup>58</sup> In 1939, calling for Lebanese–Syrian unity within a greater Arab unity, he pointed out that every Arab country (*qutr*) had at least one problem caused by foreigners and such a problem could not be solved without co-operation with other Arab countries. In one of his speeches that year, he averred that: 'Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians are brothers/sisters and neighbours united by the same interest. They are united at least by one fundamental national interest'. He emphatically added, 'I said interest, not language, nationality or traditions, because all these consolidate the fraternity/sisterhood ... means of peace, co-operation, progress and national welfare'.<sup>59</sup> National interest in this context, is the common interest of liberation from foreign occupation. Thus, common interest was understood by Rihani in both economic and political terms.

Amongst the elements of Syrian nationalism in Rihani's discourse, common interest is clearly the most practical one and inherent in the actual political, social and economic life of Lebanon and Syria. In 1920 Rihani proclaimed that it was in the interest of the 'Mountain and of its people' to form a unity with their 'brothers/sisters in the interior (*al-dakhiliyya*)'. In an article entitled '*Isbrun Hujja*' (Twenty Proofs), he enumerated, in point form, the proofs which justified his call for unity. These can be divided generally into two major categories: economic and political.

Geography remained Rihani's first proof of the common interest in economic terms. Separation of Lebanon from Syria was, in his view, abnormal, 'a mistake against geography', because economically the two countries complemented each other and needed each other. Lebanon, for example, did not need all its exits to the sea, while land transport centred mainly in Damascus, were vital for Lebanon's economic survival. In his opinion, an independent Lebanon (separate from Syria) was not economically viable because its separation from the interior would close these routes and cut off its means of subsistence, such as Hawran wheat. Beirut, which had half of its commerce with the interior, would also lose its important trade resources. The industry which needed Lebanon's silk would be gradually strangulated, thus seriously harming the entire economic life of both countries, which in turn would potentially end in the hands of stockbrokers and creditors. Separation of Lebanon and Syria would also adversely affect other means of communication such as post, telegraph and railways which would be tied by destructive and resentful competition, and the customs posts on the artificial borders would have a negative impact on industry, commerce and tourism.<sup>60</sup>

A detailed discussion of the general development in population, education, agriculture, transport, industry, foreign trade and financial system of Syria and Lebanon is beyond the scope of this study. However, it suffices here to emphasise the extent to which Rihani was aware of the danger in economic terms of Lebanon's separation from Syria, particularly as geographical Syria had started to witness discernible progress before the outbreak of the First World War, and continued to do so in the post-war period.

In terms of communication, Beirut during this period was already playing an important role in Syria's economy, particularly as the leading seaport for Syria and the chief point of communication with Europe since 1849. Of nine ports in geographical Syria, four, including that of Beirut, were in Lebanon as constituted under the French Mandate in 1920. The only exit from Lebanon by road was, until 1883, the carriage road between Beirut and Damascus, the only modern line of transport in Syria at the time. Since 1861 Beirut had been linked to the outside world by the Beirut–Damascus telegraph line which was highly profitable for the government and the commercial interests of Syria. Railways, although suffering many defects because of duplication and lack of coordination between the various lines, were equally vital to the economic life of Syria, since all exports from Beirut and Tripoli were carried by rail as was a large proportion of imports. In agriculture, silk was of the most economic importance in the mountain, and although the whole of geographical Syria suffered severe handicaps in its industrialisation, the silk industry was also among the most important. Banks, most of them foreign, were already making important profit compared to agriculture and industry.<sup>61</sup>

Rihani warned of the difficulties which the two countries would be facing in case of separation. He was aware of the danger of favouring the third sector of banking and trade in Lebanon, at the expense of industry which in fact had serious social and political ramifications.<sup>62</sup> In considering economic factors as an important basis for patriotism and nationalism, and more specifically for Lebanese–Syrian unity, Rihani was one of the rare Arab thinkers of his time who considered economic common interest a significant factor in achieving national unity. Sati' al-Husri, for example, would not agree that economic interests provided a sufficient basis for national unity. For him, economic interests played an important role in the lives of the individuals but they could not form the 'cornerstone of the lofty edifice of nationalism'.<sup>63</sup>

In '*Isbrun Hujja*', Rihani argued that in the case of separation, Lebanon and Syria would each have its own army protecting it from its neighbour.



However, Lebanon would be under permanent threat because the Lebanese would remain the smaller neighbour. Unable to afford the costs of its own civil government, how could it then finance a big army? This situation would affect the investment of Lebanon's resources because insecurity would lead to the immigration of labour and capital to safer places. Lebanon also could not count on France to help it financially and economically because, in his view, French policy in the colonies was based on spending from local resources. And since Lebanon's resources were poor, it would miss the opportunities of reconstruction and economic development.

At a political level, division of geographical Syria into small states, completely independent from each other, would put an end to its unity and independence and facilitate colonisation. This was a major concern for Rihani. For Lebanon and Syria, in his view, shared the political aim of achieving independence and freedom, and of establishing national sovereignty. Division of Syria into European 'spheres of influence' would, he claimed, revive the Eastern question, 'the first cause of misery and backwardness', not to mention the interference of European consuls in the internal affairs of the Mountain. As he saw it, the whole country had been the scene of European ambitions, and the victim of European foreign policy and commercial interests.

Rihani argued that although small modern nations may have replaced the old great monarchies in the world, the materialistic spirit of the time was still that of exploitation and monopolisation. This materialism was the enemy of the small nations, like Syria, which had witnessed the struggle of so many people in the past and was still the target of European colonialist ambitions. He warned that the economic war in the world at the time imposed unity, solidarity and mutual support (*wahda, tadamun* and *takatuff*) between nations in order to protect their interests and secure their existence. Thus, if as neighbours and brothers/sisters, Lebanese and Syrians were subject to the same threats, they also in his opinion shared the same national interests. 'Our neighbour, regardless of religion, is closer than the foreigners, especially if we are bound together not only by common interest but also by blood, geography and language'.

Separation of the Lebanese from their 'brothers/sisters in the interior (*al-dakhiliyya*)', was in his opinion, a sign of religious and political fanaticism. It showed that the Lebanese placed their own narrow interests above those of their country and that they cowardly feared the majority. This, he believed, would mean that they were not fit to have a free, developed and independent nation. Being Lebanese himself, he disagreed with those who justified their call for separation by fear of the majority, and he argued that

the Lebanese were active, intelligent and rational. This should lead them to success wherever they were, and ensure their interests and equal rights even as a minority.

It was on the basis of such arguments that Rihani advocated Syrian unity under French supervision. Such a moderate unity would, in his opinion, prevent the separation of Lebanon, which, if allowed to happen, would destroy any hopes of independence and freedom. Syrian–Lebanese unity would also prevent the French occupation of Syria, which the Syrian nationalists feared. At the same time it would secure the rights of the Christian minority and reassure them. Moreover, he thought, without French assistance, Syria with no capable army to ensure even internal stability, would be unable to keep the threats of Turkey and Bolshevism at bay.<sup>64</sup>

When the Lebanese Republic was declared and hopes for Syrian unity dwindled, Rihani started to call for Lebanese–Syrian co-operation at the economic level and unity only at the level of national policy. At the same time, he saw complete unity between Syria and Lebanon would come at a later stage as a first step towards a complete Pan-Arab unity, as shall be discussed in the following two chapters.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# ARAB–FRENCH ENCOUNTER: THE FRENCH MANDATE IN LEBANON AND SYRIA

### Mandate or Colonisation?

‘The mandate (*al-intidab*) as defined by Woodrow Wilson, the immortal American, is reasonable and acceptable. But in practice it is reprehensible and despicable. It is more wicked (*akhbath*) than colonialism (*al-isti‘mar*).<sup>1</sup> I urge you to struggle against it to the end. The spiritual struggle (*al-jihad al-ruhi*) is more honourable and useful than the material one (*al-jihad al-maddi*). Passive and peaceful resistance (*al-muqawama al-salbiyya al-silmiyya*) is more appropriate for oppressed, destitute people (*al-shu‘ub al-mustad‘afa al-saghira*) than other forms of resistance. I urge you to struggle, peacefully and spiritually, against the mandatory governments and all the oppressive governments. Revolt, boycott, go on strike, do not pay taxes and fees, welcome imprisonment and punishment for the sake of right and freedom’.<sup>2</sup> It was with these words in his political will (*Wasiiyyati*, written in 1931), that Rihani outlined his views on the mandate and the means to struggle against it. This chapter deals with these views, and the manner in which Rihani saw how Lebanon and Syria could terminate French colonialism and build a new society.

Soon after the end of the Ottoman Empire, it became clear to Rihani, as discussed above, that independence of both Lebanon and Syria was unrealistic without some degree of foreign assistance. But between ‘custody’ (*al-wisaya*) or ‘protection’ (*al-himaya*), which could lead to permanent occupation, and ‘supervision’ (*al-musharafa*), which would have had a specific role for a limited time, Rihani certainly preferred supervision. This, as he perceived, would consist only of neutral assistance without interference in the internal affairs of government, and without support for one community against the others.<sup>3</sup>

After the French Mandate was established in Syria and Lebanon, Rihani no longer considered France as a 'supervising power' (*al-dawla al-musharifa*), but a 'mandatory' and a 'colonial power' (*al-dawla al-muntadaba* and *al-musta'mira*). Under supervision, Rihani expected Lebanon and Syria together to enjoy partial independence, while he had hoped that France, as the supervising power, would ensure that the rights and security of the indigenous people, particularly the minorities, were respected. This role, he thought, should end when Syrians and Lebanese proved able to live in harmony and co-operation. On the other hand, he saw that a mandate would negate independence. Tied to the interests of the mandatory power, independence would be 'mere ink on paper'.

The mandate, in Rihani's view, was a new name for foreign domination and colonisation, and a renewed form of European interference in the internal affairs of the Lebanese and Syrian people, under the pretext of protecting religious minorities. He saw this as a trivial excuse arguing that there were no Christian minorities in places such as Algeria and Tunisia, India and the Sudan which were under French or British occupation.<sup>4</sup>

Rihani was well aware of the distinction made, in principle, between the mandate and colonisation. Quite familiar with the principles of President Wilson on self-determination and the latter's ideas on the mandate, Rihani was willing to acknowledge that the 'mandate itself was not pure evil'. In his *Faysal al-Awwal*, he argued that Wilson invented the principle of the mandate to curb European imperialist ambitions in the territories formerly within the Ottoman Empire. Rihani was convinced that, in such 'political invention', Wilson perceived the salvation of the peoples who had been under the Turkish yoke, and expected that those peoples would sooner or later win independence and freedom. However, Rihani did not fail to note how colonialist politicians laughed at Wilson's 'democratic naivety'.

With a touch of scepticism, Rihani stated that Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, later incorporated into the Treaty of Versailles which underpinned the Mandate System, was 'a model of justice and nobleness. But it was unique in having too high expectations of the honour of the Great Powers, and of the capability of peoples aspiring to independent self-government'. However, Rihani also realised the huge gap between principle and practice, as was clearly demonstrated in the French and British Mandates in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and East Jordan.<sup>5</sup>

Rihani had a clear idea that the mandate, in principle, was not the same as colonisation, and was meant to assist the mandated country which was not deemed capable of self-government.<sup>6</sup> He was equally aware that European supremacy (*siyada*) and presence in the Arab world, whether British, French

or Italian, served only the interests of the European powers and not the governed people. To that extent, European presence in the Arab lands was 'colonisation' (*isti'mar*).<sup>7</sup> Mandate, in Rihani's writings, was almost always associated with foreign domination and colonisation. A republic under a mandatory power, in his opinion, had no sovereignty. 'Could the mandate be considered independence?' he asked. Particularly in his writings in the late 1920s and 1930s, both '*intidab*' and '*isti'mar*' were used interchangeably to describe foreign tyrannical rule, exploitation and domination. He accused the 'mandatory power' in Lebanon and Syria of colonialist practices, and all European mandates of acting as 'colonising' powers in the Arab countries.<sup>8</sup>

Rihani accused the European powers of injustice, for they did not treat the people of the Middle East, Asia and Africa, in the same manner as they treated Europeans. This was because they carried 'two different scales for justice and two different criteria for social and patriotic qualifications'. He argued that while Europeans in general believed in freedom and independence in their own countries, in the Arab world, they suppressed the indigenous peoples who aspired to freedom and independence, and favoured those who supported them for their own selfish interests.

French policy in Lebanon and Syria was a clear example of such contradiction in European values. Rihani pointed out that while the French in their own country 'hated to combine religion with politics', in Syria and Lebanon, they followed a policy based on the exploitation of religious disparities in order to achieve their colonialist aims. For example, their promise to assist the Christians achieve the independence of Lebanon was, in his opinion, given out of 'courtesy' (*mujamala*) and was inconsistent with the French liberal principles. 'The liberal Clemenceau', he pointedly said, 'was reactionary in his Lebanese policy'.<sup>9</sup>

Rihani warned that European colonialism used several means to establish itself. Amongst the most invidious were the foreign educational institutions, which he accused of spreading hatred and disunity amongst the people of the same country. He argued that when the Lebanese were the subjects of a state (the Ottomans) which they feared and hated, 'foreign schools appealed to their fear and charged them a high price', that is division, and loyalty to the new foreigners. And under the mandate, foreign schools continued their divisive culture. 'Every foreign school tinted a portion amongst us with its own colour', he said, 'so there were the French, the English, the American, the Russian and the Italian, and amongst those thus educated there were no genuine Lebanese or Syrian'.<sup>10</sup>

Rihani argued that under the mandate, foreign schools were particularly harmful because of the mandate's colonialist policy. In Lebanon for example,

with their sectarian tendency, foreign schools promoted an anti-Arab propaganda in order to turn the Lebanese away from the Arab renaissance (*al-nahda al-'arabiyya*). He accused the 'masters' of foreign schools, who were concerned primarily with their 'commercial' interests, of educating the Lebanese only to make them 'permanent servants of the foreigners'. For this purpose, he claimed that foreign schools propagated amongst their students the notion that the Arab renaissance was harmful to the Christians, and that they, therefore, should not trust it nor take part in it.<sup>11</sup> This is how, for example, he explained the revival of Pharaonism in Egypt and Phoenicianism in Lebanon. Such 'so-called cultural movements' were, in his opinion, 'encouraged and supported by foreign educational institutions and imperialist politicians for the purpose of overcoming and obliterating in these two countries, pro-Arab sentiment and activity'.<sup>12</sup>

Division of loyalty separated the Lebanese from their Syrian and Arab neighbours. And this, in Rihani's view, was deepened by a political division imposed by Europeans before and after the First World War. Rihani insisted that the policy of 'divide and rule' was the foundation of European colonialism in the Arab East. He was adamant that the 'masters of colonialist policy' (*asatin al-siyasa al-isti'mariyya*) divided the Arab land, created artificial countries, and gave them power and legitimacy in order to facilitate European domination over the Arab world.<sup>13</sup>

Critical of French economic policies in Lebanon and Syria, Rihani drew attention to an important aspect of European colonialism, namely 'economic colonialism', which he saw just as dangerous as 'political colonialism'. He warned against any colonial policy which resorted to economic measures to oppress the indigenous people. In Lebanon, for example, the French policy included introducing the people to luxury and wasteful consumption habits. On several occasions Rihani insisted that through foreign schools the colonialist French taught not only their language but also the French culture and the 'Parisian' way of life. He criticised Lebanese who imitated the French in their language, food and clothing, observing that 'those who used to be satisfied with their simple life have now become accustomed to cars, French *'gâteau'*, and all the European luxuries'.<sup>14</sup>

Giving special attention to the economic situation in Lebanon under the French Mandate, Rihani expounded upon the effects which the mandate, together with the First World War, had on Lebanese industry and crafts, especially textiles, the chief Lebanese manufacturing industry. Thus, he explained that the competition of European textiles which flooded Lebanese markets, not only adversely affected local textile factories which came to a complete standstill, but also had a cultural impact on Lebanese society.

The loom, for example, was not only subjected to unfavourable foreign competition but also to 'moral decline', where 'Lebanese women looked down upon it' and were now accustomed to imported goods for all their needs.<sup>15</sup>

Beside unemployment, apathy and despair which severely affected Lebanese society, Rihani pointed out that the increase in demand resulting from the newly adopted 'Parisian' style of life, and the economic dependence on the colonial power contributed to Lebanon's impoverishment. Under the mandate, he argued, Lebanon's dignity and national wealth, particularly the revenue from raw materials and local crafts, were ruined. While buying raw materials from Lebanon at cheap prices, Europeans deprived local manufacturers of raw material, and sold their manufactured goods to the Lebanese people at high prices. Moreover, the increase in consumption corrupted the Lebanese people who, he warned, would do 'anything' to satisfy their new 'foreign-inspired needs'. It was thus, with 'golden shackles' and a 'silk yoke' that European colonialism tightened the noose around Lebanon's neck.<sup>16</sup>

While strongly attacking the French Mandate in Lebanon and Syria, Rihani bitterly criticised the political, financial and economic abuses of successive governments under French mandatory control. In 1933, in his famous speech '*Bayn 'Abdayn*' (Between two Epochs), after which the mandatory authorities expelled him from Lebanon, Rihani publicly accused the French Mandate of establishing in Lebanon and Syria a new domination, which caused the old Turkish regime, despite its tyranny and corruption, to be remembered with regret. Under the mandate, he claimed, Lebanon gained nothing except a transition from moral to economic and material tyranny. Hypocrisy, corruption, humiliation, ignorance and fanaticism, all increased and the nation was still torn by divisions and hatred. Worst of all abuses was the division of 'the one country', namely geographical Syria, into what Rihani called with bitter irony, four 'great' 'independent' countries, all miserably bankrupt.<sup>17</sup>

In 1939 he reiterated similar ideas saying 'in the days of the Turks the country was one at least with no customs barriers between the *vilayets* to shackle trade and add to the depression of the country; no passports, frontier police or intelligence officers at the end of every fifty or a hundred miles to make travel an abomination to its people; no paper money to remind them always of the gold that was their stable currency; no top-heavy double governments, native and mandatory, to raise taxation and customs duties to the point of desperation and ruin'.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, Rihani accused France of exploiting the privileges given to it by international treaties to increase

its fortune and impoverish Lebanon by destroying its national wealth and moving its antiquities to the Louvre in Paris. Obviously, he did not fail to note that the mandate could not have been so harmful without the co-operation of Lebanese political and religious leaders, both Muslims and Christians.<sup>19</sup>

### **Independence and Means of Resistance to the Mandate**

Rihani's campaign against the French Mandate started as soon as the mandatory authorities officially declared 'Greater Lebanon' in 1920. Between then and 1936, the year of the Franco–Syrian and Franco–Lebanese treaties, his ideas of liberation evolved significantly, with independence becoming a universal national Arab goal, rather than just a Lebanese Syrian goal.

We discussed above Rihani's disagreement with the idea of Lebanon's independence from Syria under French protection, whether within a small circle, as the 'Small Lebanon' or a wider one as the 'Greater Lebanon'. Both ideas had supporters among Christian writers and politicians.<sup>20</sup> Both entities, in Rihani's opinion, would restrict the Lebanese talent to the 'rocks of Lebanon, and this in itself was an insult to the Lebanese people, to their individual ability and intelligence'. Rihani was aware of the double meaning of 'independence' as used in the Lebanese political discourse of his times. He therefore pointed out that 'independence (*al-istiqlal*) does not mean to be independent from each other ... or that we should close our door in the face of our neighbour and brother/sister ... Such independence would only tighten the foreigners' yoke around our necks. And this is real slavery. True independence means complete independence (*istiqlal tamm*) for all of us from the foreigners (*al-ajanib*)'.<sup>21</sup>

During the early years of the mandate, Rihani's opposition took the form of a continuous call for Lebanon's unity with Syria. But, after 1927, his opposition took a different course. With the failure of the Syrian armed revolution (1925–27), and the declaration of the Lebanese Republic (1926), Rihani realised that political unity with Syria had become difficult. He became convinced that the struggle against the mandate should be from within the Lebanese entity itself, without in any way renouncing the idea of future unity and co-operation with Syria.

In his speech '*Bayn Ahdayn*' (Between two Epochs, 1933), Rihani said: 'before I say God be with you [that is, good-bye], let me tell you three words. Firstly, people's salvation is in their own hands. Rise! – and God will rise with you. Secondly, a nation with many parasites can not survive for long, we must be productive ... think of productivity before consumption destroys you. Thirdly, your close neighbour is better than your far away brother, even



better than your far away affectionate mother (*al-umm al-hanun*, that is, France).<sup>22</sup> In these 'three words', Rihani summarised three types of struggle against the French Mandate in Lebanon: national liberation, productivity and economic independence, and co-operation with Lebanon's neighbours, particularly Syria. All were recurrent themes throughout his writings and speeches.

Rihani doubted that France would grant Lebanon its independence freely and he was convinced that the Lebanese people should not rely on foreign assistance because this would be tied to the interests of the foreign power. Therefore, he believed the liberation of Lebanon from the French Mandate was exclusively the task of its people and depended only on their national uprising.

From his writings, speeches and activities, we can deduce two forms of uprising which Rihani believed could lead to national liberation: active resistance, attack and the use of intellectual force in particular; and passive resistance in the form of boycotts and retreat from political life.<sup>23</sup>

Rihani always preferred the spiritual and moral revolution because it penetrated deeper in society, but in critical moments he did not exclude political and armed revolution. Following the Syrian Revolution of 1925–27 he expressed himself more in favour of armed action to achieve independence and freedom. By this time he realised that for European powers 'might is right'. He suggested that Lebanon should follow the example of Syria which by its armed struggle had taken significant steps on the way to independence and political progress. He conceded that the Syrian Revolution failed militarily, but still believed that such failure was nothing compared with its political achievements. He did not explain what these achievements were, but he probably had in mind the popular mobilisation and intensified national awareness, and at a more practical level, the Treaty of Alliance, which France envisaged to conclude with Syria after the revolution had died down.

After the revolution, costly in human lives and material devastation, the French adopted a more flexible policy in Syria. Realising the fruitlessness of their violent policy, the French felt it necessary to conclude a Treaty of Alliance with Syria to replace the mandate. Rihani was obviously aware of these political developments when he criticised the Lebanese subservience to France saying that 'in two years of military struggle Syria had achieved more than the Lebanese Republic would achieve in twenty years of obedience and subservience'.<sup>24</sup>

In his campaign against the French Mandate, Rihani attacked the political institutions created under mandate auspices and controlled by the French authorities. Among such institutions were the Lebanese and

Syrian governments both of which he criticised on several occasions. He was convinced that a government under French tutelage 'was not from or for the mandated people except in name'. It is true that after his '*Bayn 'Abdayn*' speech and his consequent expulsion from Lebanon (in 1933), and under family pressure (particularly from his mother), Rihani had agreed to commit himself to keep away from 'politics and religion' for a while. Yet in every public speech he found himself attacking the government and the French authorities that stood behind it. Unable to heed his family's wishes, he justified his continuing interest in politics by asserting that 'politics and religion' were 'like bread and water at every meal', and 'what is the use of a topic which has a safe ending and an ineffective result?'<sup>25</sup>

The press was the most important means for Rihani to express his criticism of the mandate authorities and the governments of Syria and Lebanon, and he considered the press 'the stronghold and the watchdog of the nation'. He contributed to a number of Syrian and Lebanese newspapers which carried out the campaign against the mandate, some of which, such as *al-Qabas*, *al-Duhur* and *al-Tali'a*, were banned by the French authorities for their vehement anti-mandate stance. A journalist and contributor to the press from the very beginning of his career as a writer (see Chapter Two), Rihani assigned the press a special duty to stand up for truth and oppose any attempt to violate freedom of expression.<sup>26</sup>

Consistent with his early concern for justice, human rights and liberties, Rihani criticised the Lebanese and Syrian governments under French rule. Protecting liberties, particularly freedom of the press, was for him an essential element of constitutional democratic governments, which he saw was lacking under the mandate control. Between 1928 and 1933 a number of Syrian newspapers were banned, some several times, for attacking both the French and the Syrian government for its submissiveness on the question of national sovereignty. *Al-Qabas*, organ of the Syrian National Bloc, criticised the circumstances which brought the Syrian government to power and attacked the oppressive measures against the press and the interference of the French authorities in Syrian elections.<sup>27</sup>

Defending Najib al-Rayyis, the owner of *al-Qabas*, in an article entitled '*al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla*' (The Press and the State, 1931), Rihani accused the new 'independent' governments in Lebanon and Syria of autocracy and tyranny. He warned that a national government which would not accept criticism and considered itself above the law, was more dangerous than foreign colonialism itself. Under such government, the nation would be oppressed by the foreigners as well as by its own people who were supposed to liberate their nation from foreign interference. Rihani believed that 'the

ruler was the servant of the nation'. Failing to assume such responsibility the ruler should be duly dismissed. This, in his opinion, was the principle of constitutional democracy, which the French and the governments under their control pretended to uphold. But he insisted that by violating the freedom of the press, the new tyrant rulers had forgotten this basic element of democracy.

In '*al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla*', Rihani emphasised the role of the press in the struggle against the mandate. Since he believed that the duty of the press was to monitor the government and disclose the truth in order to ensure the rights of the people, he urged the national press to stand up against oppression and suspension. He was optimistic that such opposition would end tyranny. For 'no matter how oppressive the rulers were they could not silence criticism or drown the voices of opposition and protest'. On this particular issue Rihani placed some hope in the judicial system which he expected to curb the injustices of the mandate and government.<sup>28</sup>

When, in 1931, the government in Beirut suspended a number of newspapers and imprisoned some journalists, Rihani congratulated the journalists for attacking tyranny and exposing the government's 'incorrect' and 'unreasonable' action. He argued that the government was illegitimate, and the fact that it resorted to violence and the banning of papers not only proved its weakness but also its illegitimacy. The government claimed that the journalists had conspired against the security of the state, but in his opinion, 'nothing was unusual about this'. 'If this was true', he says, 'where is the sin in that, especially if the targeted party was alien to the country?'<sup>29</sup>

On several occasions Rihani asserted that Lebanon's greatest problem resided in its religious and political leaders, both Muslim and Christian, whom he accused of mercenary co-operation with foreign colonialism. He considered Lebanon's politicians and leaders as new autocratic tyrants. In order to secure their selfish interest and safeguard their positions, they spread disunity and hatred among the people and contributed to the division of the country. This convinced him that all politicians were selfish, and that politics manipulated the people and prevented them carrying out useful work for themselves and their country. While acknowledging that 'a country could not do without politicians' he warned that Lebanon had too many politicians, and was thus turning into a land with too many 'prickly bushes'. He ironically observes: 'unlike any other country in the world, Lebanon is small in its surface and population but large in its politics and politicians'; 'in Lebanon, politicians are the majority of the population, and each politician pretends to be conducting world affairs with sagacity and sound opinion'.<sup>30</sup>

Rihani saw that the real interest of Lebanon was neither in politics nor in working with the government, but in productive work, not least agriculture. Politics, in his view, was Lebanon's greatest enemy because it impoverished and demoralised the Lebanese people. For this reason he called upon them to remain out of politics and return to their land to ensure economic satisfaction and dignity. 'There is no dignity or self-sufficiency in politics. Every Lebanese has something good until he/she becomes a politician, and every Lebanese loves Lebanon until he/she holds a position in the government (*al-hukuma*)'.<sup>31</sup>

Such views may reflect an attitude current among a small number of Lebanese intellectuals who, for many years, refused to take part in the government or hold positions in the public service, as they considered such co-operation to be recognition of the Mandate status and the Lebanese entity.<sup>32</sup> But Rihani's views indicated the extent of his awareness of the importance of economic production in the fight against French colonialism. In encouraging agricultural and industrial production against the third sector (the public service and political activities), Rihani demonstrated special awareness of the nature of Lebanese economy which, under the French Mandate, was becoming more and more dependent on the trade and services sector as a direct result of French colonial policy.<sup>33</sup>

In April 1932, in a speech delivered in Iraq on the occasion of the Agricultural and Industrial Fair, shortly before Iraq was declared independent, Rihani emphasised the role of economic progress in the achievement of political independence. After he closely observed Iraq's efforts at encouraging economic growth as an urgent requirement for independence, Rihani emphasised that 'economic independence would ensure the nation's freedom, strengthen its rights and safeguard its dignity amongst other nations ... Political independence rests upon economic independence, which no nation could do without'.<sup>34</sup>

Economic struggle against the French Mandate as advocated by Rihani, could be conducted in two inter-connected ways: encouragement of local industry and agriculture, and boycott of foreign economic institutions. Rihani's visit to India no doubt drew his attention to the role which the Indian people played in their economic and political independence, particularly under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi. In a speech delivered at a public function held in Beirut encouraging Lebanese national crafts, Rihani insisted that any national renaissance (*al-nahda al-wataniyya*) could not survive without economic independence, nor without national industry and agriculture. All this, he warned, required money, time and sacrifice of artificial luxury on behalf the people. 'Every progressing nation

(*umma raqia*), small or big, strives nowadays to rid itself of economic enslavement. There are many ways for salvation, but all require sacrifice'.

In his speech, Rihani recalled how Gandhi had shaken the Indian people and awoken a genuine national spirit based on sacrifice and economic development. He emphasised that the economic and political circles of Britain were stirred when the Indians started knitting and wearing their own fabrics. He urged the Lebanese people to follow the Indian example, to produce and consume their own products, if they wanted to become independent. He was certain that productivity, not the natural beauty of Lebanon, would guarantee its independence. 'True independence is unattainable without economic independence. This would not happen without productivity, which in turn could not happen without taking interest in, and encouraging, the national crafts. A nation that does not produce eventually dies, even if it has silver mountains and golden meadows'.<sup>35</sup>

In his campaign to encourage national products, Rihani drew upon both sentimental and socio-economic arguments. Touching first on the people's patriotic feelings, he expounded the notion that buying national products would teach people love of their country and sacrifice for it. More importantly, by encouraging national crafts, people would provide work for a higher number of men and women in the community. By this Rihani drew attention to an important aspect in Lebanon's socio-economic development, namely the increasing role of women in the work force and their contribution to industrial production, particularly of textiles. 'The concern of women in the country's economy', he said, 'is in itself a good sign of national renaissance'.<sup>36</sup>

An equally important arena of Rihani's campaign against the mandate was his support of and participation in the passive resistance, which Lebanon and Syria witnessed between 1928 and 1935. Particularly after the Syrian revolution died down, the struggle against the French Mandate in both countries took a peaceful course by way of unarmed struggle, which was carried out through strikes, demonstrations and other forms of public protest. These protests culminated in the summer of 1931, when the French Electricity Company was boycotted in order to bring about reduction of electricity costs and tramway fares. In Beirut, the boycott was universal and lasted for three months during which time mass demonstrations were organised and Lebanese opinion was united, perhaps for the first time since the beginning of the French Mandate.<sup>37</sup>

Rihani supported this unarmed uprising and praised the boycott as 'a new spirit of co-operation and mutual support among the oppressed people against tyranny (*al-tughyan*)'. He saw in the unity of the Beirutis

who, for the first time, men and women, stood up against the company and the government, the first sign of a popular movement of liberation from the 'power and arrogance' of the mandate and its economic and political institutions. He compared this movement with Gandhi's peaceful spiritual revolution, and hoped that 'such peaceful uprising would soon embrace the whole of the Near East (*al-sharq al-adna*)'. Strikes in Baghdad against government taxes, the protest in Palestine against Zionism and the British Mandate,<sup>38</sup> and the unity of the Syrians and the Lebanese against French violence, further convinced him that if oppression was the first cause of revolution, an idea which he best expressed as early as 1906, the peaceful means of a popular uprising was the best weapon against oppression. For him, 'there was no better weapon than that drawn by the voices coming from the depth of prisons, and from the heights of right and peace'.<sup>39</sup>

It is important to note that in Lebanon and Syria in the 1930s a group of Arab intellectuals, including Salim Khayyata, Michel 'Aflaq, 'Ali Nasir, Ra'if Khuri, Kamil 'Ayyad and Ihsan al-Jabiri, linked social and economic emancipation with national liberation from foreign colonialism. Influenced in varying degrees by Marxist ideas, these intellectuals expressed their views in a number of newspapers and magazines including *al-Duhur*, *al-Tali'a*, *al-Sihafi al-Ta'ih*, and *al-Makshuf*, echoing the sufferings and social struggle of the poor classes.<sup>40</sup> Rihani had been committed to the cause of the poor from an early period of his career. His participation in certain workers' activities (for example his participation as a special guest speaker at the cultural festival organised by the Union of Zahleh's Workers, June 1923),<sup>41</sup> his contributions to some of the above-mentioned newspapers, and his support of the strike movement all demonstrate Rihani's certain and strong affinity with those 'revolutionary democratic' intellectuals who linked the struggle for social justice with national sovereignty, and independence from French colonialism.

In an article written in support of the taxi drivers in 1933, Rihani explained the 'logic' of supporting the strikers. He argued that by reducing the use of cars, the people would prevent national income from deserting the country and aggravating its economic dependence on the colonialist power. 'Millions of pounds leave the country every year benefiting only a small number of merchants and enslaving ten thousand drivers'. By reducing the use of cars, he explained, saving in national income would result in less expenditure on the import of cars and petrol from France. Given the world economic crisis, business in a small city like Beirut did not need fast means of transport. Thus he suggested that in 'the black days of the mandate and poverty', instead of cars, people could use horses and carriages. This he saw

was the only way to prove their patriotism and solidarity without affecting their dignity. For not only would this encourage the local industry of carriages and the production of barleycorn, so providing work and income for a large number of citizens, but with 'the use of horses', the people would 'free themselves of the slavery of French petrol'.<sup>42</sup>

The idea of boycott was reiterated in another article supporting the general strike of workers and merchants in 1931. In that year Rihani expressed his fury because he saw that the Lebanese had reached the apex of obedience. Despite oppression and suffering they were incapable even of hatred. He was convinced that the people were not prepared, for lack of financial means or want of 'heroism', to oppose the mandate and defend their rights by force. Thus, he urged the Lebanese to, at least, support the workers and small merchants on strike, by boycotting foreign goods and products, so denying themselves some new luxuries. In such conditions he claimed that the boycott remained the sole weapon with which the oppressed could claim their denied legitimate rights and save their remaining dignity and means of subsistence. 'Boycott', he insists, 'is the most honourable, peaceful and strongest means to stir the people from their sleep and to awaken the feelings of those in power'.

Rihani's call for a peaceful boycott, however, could not hide his anger at the oppressive French policy and his frustration with the people's passive reaction to oppression. Thus, while he urged the people to show some kind of support (*munasara*), solidarity and unity in the struggle (*wahdat al-nidal*) by boycotting foreign products, he insinuated a threat to the French. Convinced that oppression would eventually result in revolution, he warned the French authorities against violence and arrogant monopoly, which he saw as equally harmful to the Lebanese people as well as to the French. He maintained that, if the French were keen to have good political and economic relations with Lebanon in the future, they should not impoverish or humiliate its people, otherwise the colonists would be pushing them to revolt, and he stressed that history provided many examples of this. 'If those in power continue in their policy of 'today is for us and tomorrow is for the devil', we do not think that, well educated as they are, they would ignore the changes and surprises of history and life which allow another motto to be justified: 'today is for the devil and tomorrow is for us'.<sup>43</sup>

### **Unity as a Means and Guarantee of Liberation**

In his call to support the workers movement, Rihani emphasised the role of solidarity and unity amongst the whole nation to enable the movement to succeed. In all his writings dealing with the Arab problems, Rihani invariably

emphasised the importance of unity to achieve political liberation and social progress. In Lebanon and Syria, he considered unity as a very important means of struggle against the French Mandate. He advocated unity at two levels: at the level of religious and sectarian communities, and at the level of political and economic relations between Lebanon and Syria and their neighbouring Arab countries. He was certain that Lebanon and Syria could not get rid of French colonialism without unity and co-operation between them and with other Arab countries as well as with other Eastern countries (including Persia and India), which all faced the same challenge to attain social progress and liberation from Western domination.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, unity at the internal level and the Lebanese-Syrian-Arab unity continued to occupy the first place in his concerns.

Rihani considered French colonialism in Lebanon and Syria as a divisive factor in its very nature, since the French exploited disparities between the religious sectarian communities to enhance their domination. He understood from the beginning that unity could not be achieved without a national patriotic feeling replacing all religious sectarian sentiments. He expressed this idea initially under Ottoman rule and continued to expand the concept under the mandate. True freedom, dignity and common interest of the Lebanese and Syrian people could not be secured except through patriotic unity. Religious tolerance, which he always championed, was the key to patriotism.<sup>45</sup>

In 1936 Rihani continued to insist that if the Lebanese and Syrians did not replace loyalty to their religious community with loyalty to their country (*al-watan*), and if they failed to put the country above all the sects and religions, all their work and struggle would be in vain. 'We have no salvation, freedom, sovereignty or dignity, except in our union (*al-ittihad*) in heart and soul ... mind and deed ... Such union is impossible so long as we continue to think of our national affairs as Muslims, Christians, Druze, Alawites or Jews ... There is no hope to become one nation ... unless we forget our religious communities in our patriotic struggle, and replace in our heart the narrow idea with the universal patriotic one. Only then would our voice be heard, and we would become strong enough to save the country from all internal and external threats'.<sup>46</sup>

If unity at the community level was so important for the removal of the French Mandate, so was the political unity between Lebanon and Syria. Rihani saw such unity as a safeguard for both Lebanon and Syria against foreign domination. But after the declaration of the Lebanese Republic in 1926, and while he continued to believe that Lebanon and Syria must be united in their 'national policy' (*al-siyasa al-qawmiyya*), that is, in their



foreign policy, and must have economic co-operation, in the 1930s, Rihani called upon the advocates of Syrian unity not to insist on the complete political unification or merger between the two countries.<sup>47</sup> This subtle emphasis must be understood in the light of the political developments in Syria and Lebanon which, between 1933 and 1936, witnessed a Muslim–Christian as well as a Lebanese–Syrian rapprochement around the campaign for independence of the two countries from the French Mandate.

In the 1930s Lebanon and Syria witnessed many developments in their domestic, economic, social and political affairs, as well as at regional and international levels. While the world economic crisis of 1929–32 created some national co-operation between the various communities of the two countries, at the political level the practices of the mandate authorities, especially manifested in the frequent suspension of the constitution, made the Lebanese as well as the Syrians realise the true nature of ‘democracy’ under the mandate. A Lebanese opposition movement began to appear, not only the Muslims—who were naturally discontented with the discriminatory policy of the mandate authorities and continued to claim unity with Syria—but also among the Christians. This opposition included the Lebanese Christian bourgeoisie whose interest suffered from the monopoly of French capital, as well as other groups, Christian and Muslim, who were hostile to the mandate and demanded real independence for Lebanon on the basis of unity with Syria. Such was the National Congress (*al-Muʿtamar al-Watani*), held in 1933 at Rashid Nakhle’s home, including Christians and Muslims who asserted the necessity of replacing the mandate with a treaty between France on the one hand and Syria and Lebanon on the other, on the basis of respect for the independence of Lebanon within its union with Syria.<sup>48</sup>

The Lebanese opposition also included factions within the Maronites, the traditional friends of the mandate, who feared that under pressure the French would consider the reintegration into Syria of those districts annexed to Lebanon in 1920. The Christian Maronite opposition took a constitutional form with the formation in 1934 of Bishara al-Khuri’s Constitutional Bloc (*al-Kutla al-Dusturiyya*). Although mainly Christian Maronite, this included members of parliament from different religious communities, thus attracting the Muslims and paving the way for a joint Christian–Muslim resistance to the mandate. The Christian–Muslim rapprochement was also manifested through social workers’ movements (1929–35), such as the boycott of the Electricity Company and the strikes of workers, taxi drivers, solicitors and merchants, and, most importantly, the boycott of the French Tobacco Company. The leading figure of the

latter movement was the Maronite Patriarch Antoine 'Arida who attacked the mandate and accused the monopoly of creating a state within and above the state.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile a growing number of Lebanese Sunni Muslim leaders and their supporters in the Muslim bourgeoisie had come to accept the division of Lebanon and Syria as a *fait accompli*. Reintegration of the annexed districts into Syria was becoming increasingly untenable. Lebanese Sunni leaders had begun to accept the Lebanese entity and to actively compete with the Lebanese Christians for political and commercial power on the Lebanese stage. Eventually, it was the alliance of the Muslim and Christian commercial *bourgeoisie* which brought, in 1943, the two major advocates of an independent Arab Lebanon to power with Bishara al-Khuri elected as President and Riyadh al-Sulh as Prime Minister.

In Syria, most nationalists had started to move along a parallel line to the Lebanese nationalists on the issue of future relations. By 1936 the Syrian National Bloc (*al-Kutla al-Wataniyya al-Suriyya*) had virtually renounced its long-standing demand that the districts annexed to Lebanon in 1920 be returned to Syria and had begun to support the Lebanese movement led by Riyadh al-Sulh to promote better relations between Lebanese Christians and Muslims. In this direction, the leader of the National Bloc of Syria supported the Lebanese Constitutional Bloc which was presided over by Bishara al-Khuri, and they endeavoured to win the friendship of the Maronite Patriarch Antoine 'Arida. They declared that the national interest required the preservation of Lebanon's Arabhood and the integrity of its territories on the one hand, and the ending of the mandate and recognition of the independence of Lebanon on the other. As for the issue of frontiers, they accepted that it could be considered later, if necessary, on the basis of Arab brotherhood and the common interest of the two countries.

Between the movements for Lebanese-Syrian unity on the one side and for a 'Small Lebanon' as a 'Christian national home' on the other, there evolved in the 1930s a new faction. Its supporters asserted the frontiers of Lebanon as declared in 1920 and demanded complete independence of Lebanon in close alliance, but not unity, with Syria. Accordingly, Lebanon should be closely related to the Arab homeland without cutting all the cultural economic and political ties with the West, especially with France. With the support of the Patriarch 'Arida and the National Bloc leaders in Syria, the two major representatives of this movement, Bishara al-Khuri and Riyadh al-Sulh, led the campaign for an independent Arab Lebanon. They were strongly opposed by Emile Eddé's Lebanese National Bloc (*al-Kutla al-Wataniyya*), which supported the continuation of French military presence.<sup>50</sup>

It is within this context that we should understand Rihani's call for the independence of Lebanon and Lebanese–Syrian co-operation during the 1930s. The rapprochement which the Maronite Patriarch's attitude created between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon, and between the Lebanese and the Syrians, was probably the first of its kind in the history of the two countries under the French Mandate. The Patriarch's stance must have also triggered some positive change in Rihani's attitude towards the clergy. As a gesture of acknowledgement, he addressed an invitation to the Patriarch 'Arida to visit al-Freike (Rihani's hometown), to which the Patriarch responded positively (1936). In the speech he delivered on the occasion, Rihani greeted the Patriarch's approach with joy, as he considered it an excellent sign of unity and understanding between the two major communities in Lebanon and between the Lebanese and the Syrians.<sup>51</sup> The Patriarch's gesture represented for him 'a unique national renaissance (*nahda wataniyya farida*)' in the 'ancient and modern history', because for the first time religions, usually divisive factors, were factors of unity and patriotism.<sup>52</sup>

Interestingly, Rihani explained this development not only in political but also in socio-economic terms which indicated his awareness of the impact of socio-economic factors on the political situation. The 'union' of all Lebanese people with the Syrians was, in his opinion, caused by the same problems which the people of the two countries were facing, regardless of their religion. He saw the people were united under one banner, because 'oppression, poverty, humiliation and all the misfortunes were the same whether in Damascus or in Beirut, in the North or in the South'. He was optimistic that the new national renaissance which stemmed from resistance to oppression and poverty would unite the Lebanese and Syrians, Muslims and Christians alike, around a new religion which he called patriotism, or the religion of the country (*din al-watan*).<sup>53</sup>

Conscious of the developments during this decisive period of the history of the two countries, Rihani considered the rapprochement between the Lebanese, particularly the Maronites, and the Syrians as the key solution to their problems. He saw such rapprochement as the most important step towards establishing the future relations of the two countries on solid bases of co-operation (*al-ta'awun*) and mutual understanding (*al-tafahum*). He greeted and lauded the Patriarch warmly, not only for defending the rights and well-being of the Lebanese people against the French monopoly, but particularly for 'setting the solid bases of Lebanon's relations with its neighbours as friendship to suit the spirit of the time, and the economic, political and social development'. Defending the welfare of the Lebanese

people was important, but paving the way for their future was, for Rihani, more urgent because only when 'the citizens of the same country' co-exist in solidarity (*al-tadamun*) and harmony (*al-ta'aliyf*), could 'the means of freedom, dignity and security be ensured to all the Lebanese and the Syrians, including Palestinians'.<sup>54</sup>

It is clear that Rihani here emphasised Lebanese-Syrian co-operation and mutual understanding, rather than the complete unity of the two countries. In fact, at this stage, preferring not to insist on complete political unity, Rihani called upon the Syrian National Bloc not to insist on solving the borders issue with Lebanon until Syria and Lebanon achieved independence and terminated the mandate. (Eventually the Syrian National Bloc decided to adjourn the discussion of the issue). In '*al-Hudud*' (The Borders), he insisted that only when independence was achieved, would all the artificial borders created by the foreigners between the two countries disappear. He argued that 'it would be unwise and short-sighted policy to claim a part of Lebanon without the other parts. In doing so, the Syrian National Bloc would be contradicting its political pact'. Not only this would make the Lebanese more attached to their 'Greater Lebanon', but would also make the French more intolerant towards the Syrian struggle for national independence.

In '*al-Hudud*', Rihani expressed his suspicions and concern that, with the divide-and-rule policy and their political power, the French would obstruct any understanding that could be reached between the Lebanese and the Syrians. So it would be unwise, and useless, to claim a part of Lebanon while the French had ambitious plans for the whole of Lebanon as well as other coastal parts of Syria. He was obviously aware of the newly-formed opposition to the mandate among the Christians, which encompassed a new dimension of the Syro-Lebanese relations, and he saw that this factor should be taken into consideration to achieve independence. He drew attention to this group of Lebanese who, 'daring and honest in their broad patriotism', started to oppose the colonialists, and suggested that the Syrians must co-operate with such Lebanese and take care not to fall into the trap of the foreign occupiers which aimed at separating the two peoples. After all, if the Syrians accepted only a part of Lebanon, he argued, they would be implicitly renouncing their political principle of general unification (*al-tawhid al-'amm*) and this, the 'nationalist unionists' (*al-wataniyyun al-ittihadiyyun*), neither in Lebanon nor in Syria, would accept.

Above all Rihani justified his attitude by insisting on the right of both peoples to self-determination. The same right which would allow the Syrians to demand unity should allow the Lebanese to seek separation. In his view,

this clash of interests could be solved by mutual understanding and by putting an end to the contradiction between political wishes and sectarian traditions. Indirectly alluding to the historical experiences under Ottoman and pre-Ottoman rules, Rihani argued that the Christians and the Muslims inherited two different political traditions. Since 'the legacy of the subject' could not be 'reconciled with that of the master, particularly if the latter's sovereignty was based on injustice and inequality', the Syrians in particular, should comprehend the fear of the Christians and prove to them, by word and deed, that they were brothers/sisters.

Because they were aware of this past history, and perhaps because they were the majority, the Syrians in Rihani's opinion, should be the first to eliminate all traces of political and religious prejudice inherited from the past. Therefore, they should go beyond the principle of equality and be willing to give the Lebanese more, in order to prove to them that the time of exploiting minorities had gone forever. This remained the best way to prove their flexibility for the sake of unity, which is the 'greatest national cause'. But before unity, Rihani considered achieving independence from the French Mandate as the first priority. For 'what is the meaning of unity or separation if the country as a whole (*al-bilad*) was still under foreign domination?'

While he repeatedly warned the Christians against the 'caricature' independence under French protection, urging them to reject the French Mandate, he equally asked the Syrians not to push for unification but to let the Lebanese follow their road until the time was ripe to achieve unity. In this context, Rihani emphasised the role of freedom, justice and equity, which should prevail in order to create mutual trust between Syrians and Lebanese. For, 'one year of independent national rule, based on justice and equality would be better for the big country and for the achievement of its complete unity than twenty years of speaking and writing'.<sup>55</sup>

The idea of adjourning the debate on Syrian unity, while asserting its inevitability in the distant future, was reiterated in a letter dated 11 September 1936 which Rihani sent to Shukri al-Quwwatli, then vice-president of the Syrian National Bloc (he presided over Syria, 1954–58, and joined Syria to Egypt in the United Arab Republic, 1958–61). The letter was apparently written to congratulate the Syrians for initiating the treaty with France (9 September 1936). Apart from reminding the Syrians that this was only the first victory in their Arab national struggle and that Syria would not enjoy its independence as long as Lebanon and Palestine were under foreign domination, Rihani praised the Syrian leadership for its political wisdom asserting that the unity of Syria depended on proceeding

slowly but surely. ‘The unity of the two countries is inevitably happening sooner or later ...’, he wrote, ‘do not rush it, and do not fall into the traps which are set for both countries’.<sup>56</sup>

There is no doubt that Rihani saw the accomplishment of independence for Lebanon and Syria from French domination as an immediate goal, after which both countries could work freely and slowly for complete unity. Thus, he saw their co-operation and mutual understanding to be highly crucial at this stage of their national struggle for liberation. Furthermore, co-operation and understanding were, for him, not only ‘the solid basis’ and ‘proper means’ to achieve ‘political national unity (*al-wahda al-qawmiyya al-siyasiyya*) of Syria and Lebanon and Palestine, ‘the northern part of the Arab homeland’, but also to achieve ‘the complete greater Arab alliance (*al-hilf al-‘arabi al-akbar al-atamm*)’.<sup>57</sup> This is how Rihani saw the independence of Lebanon and Syria, and how their future unity could be the first step toward the ‘greater Arab unity (*al-wahda al-‘arabiyya al-kubra*)’. In this respect Rihani was not a lone voice for other intellectuals, and also indeed political leaders (including the Hashimite monarchs Faysal and ‘Abdullah), viewed the unity of geographical Syria in the same light, though not necessarily always with the same emphasis on freedom and understanding which Rihani constantly asserted.

### **Dynamics of Dialogue and Conflict in French–Lebanese–Syrian Relations**

Liberation of Lebanon and Syria depended in the first place on the effort, awareness and unity of their peoples. However, France as ‘the effective ruling power’ should play an important role in the process of liberation. That was the opinion of Rihani who throughout the period of the mandate charged the French authorities with the responsibility for their practices, warning them that they were not only harming dominated people but also French interests in the East. He also charged them with the ultimate responsibility of granting complete independence to Lebanon and Syria.

Using a classical Arabic maxim, ‘justice is the foundation of the state’, Rihani pointed out that the French policy of divide-and-rule in Lebanon and Syria was threatening the interests of France in the East as well as its dignity and glory. To support his argument, he referred to the principles of the French Revolution—liberty, equality, and fraternity—upon which, as he sincerely believed, French glory rested. It seemed that in doing this, Rihani not only intended to remind the French authorities of the foundations of their own state so they would implement them in the East, but also to expose their hypocrisy in supporting democracy and human rights in their own country and violating these same principles in their colonies.<sup>58</sup> By

attacking the mandate, he did not attack the French people, but the tyranny, exploitation and corruption of the mandate authorities. Addressing these authorities after they expelled him from Lebanon, he said: 'I am only the enemy of practices, not the enemy of men (*la 'aduw rijal*)'.<sup>59</sup>

Rihani's attitude towards France underwent some changes according to the political circumstances and to the attitude of France itself vis-à-vis the Arabs in general and the Lebanese-Syrian question in particular. Like many Arab intellectuals and politicians who between the two world wars advocated step-by-step politics, Rihani was somehow conciliatory. When he noticed some elasticity and softness in the French policy he viewed this as a positive sign of a new era of Franco-Arab relations, and he optimistically looked forward to a better future of understanding and mutual respect. But each time France deceived and frustrated Arab aspirations and contradicted its promises, he realised his mistaken opinion and decisively attacked the vacillating policy of the French. However, a constant line persisted in his writings throughout the period of the mandate: his concern for the well-being, unity and independence of his own people.

Because he had been supportive of France during the First World War, Rihani hoped that when the war ended and negotiations for settlement began, France would be in favour of the Arab cause and the unity of Syria. But he soon realised that the 'liberal' French were 'reactionary' in their Lebanese policy. France's double standards vis-à-vis the Syrian question, and its contradictory promises to Faysal and to the Lebanese Maronites concerning the unity of Syria and Lebanon's independence, led to Rihani's sense of betrayal and frustration.<sup>60</sup>

In 1936, after many years of hostile opposition to the French policy in Lebanon and Syria, Rihani expressed some optimism in France's positive intention towards the future of the two countries. It is to be remembered that by then a left-wing Popular Front government had come to power in France, an Anglo-Iraqi treaty of independence and a similar Anglo-Egyptian treaty had been signed in 1932 and 1936 respectively, and that the expanding Fascist threat and the outbreak of the Italo-Abyssinian War had raised tension throughout the Mediterranean. These factors contributed to a new French effort at conciliation in Lebanon and Syria so that a French-Syrian treaty was signed in September 1936, and negotiations were under way to conclude a similar treaty with Lebanon.<sup>61</sup>

Responding to a question concerning the French attitude to the Arab renaissance and to the future of Lebanon, Rihani considered the new French policy as a sign of better Franco-Arab relations for the future. He wrote in 1936, 'it is not possible to say about France today, after the French-

Syrian treaty, what we said in the past, and I don't think in its new policy after the Syrian revolution, France is hostile to the Arabs all the time, as I have been aware of the development of its Arab policy in the last ten years'. He explained that France's hostility towards the Arabs in the first years of occupation was due mainly to its rivalry with Britain over Syria, but once this rivalry was settled and France became aware of the harm inflicted on the Arabs because of this rivalry, it started to improve its Arab policy.<sup>62</sup>

Rihani's optimism was due to several other reasons: rapprochement between France and Ibn Sa'ud, to which he particularly contributed;<sup>63</sup> improvement in the French–Syrian relations after the treaty of 1936; the good relations of France with independent Iraq; and, more importantly, the signs of progress and unity which began to appear in the Arab nation particularly after the Iraqi–Sa'udi Arab Alliance (April 1936) in which he saw a symbol of Arab strength and unity.<sup>64</sup> Because of these developments, Rihani was certain that any European power with vital interests in the Near East would be ignoring the simplest political principle of international relations if it remained hostile towards the Arab nation. And this applied to France in particular. Thus, he was convinced that, in the future, France would be friendly to the newly-independent Arab states, whether in the Peninsula or in the northern part of the Arab land, and would concur that Lebanon was a complementary part of the Arab land and would join the Arab Alliance. Consequently, he believed that 'Lebanon in the future should be sovereign and independent in its internal politics and its administrative and economic affairs, united with Syria in its national politics (*al-siyasa al-qawmiyya*), and ... a contracting ally (*muta'ahid* and *mutahalif*) in the Arab Alliance, as an independent Arab country like all other independent Arab countries'.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, Rihani remained sceptical about France's policy and did not believe that it was prepared to grant Lebanon true independence. In an article published in 1936, probably while the Franco–Lebanese talks were under way to conclude a treaty, Rihani doubted that the independence as envisaged in the treaty would satisfy the wishes of the Lebanese. He argued that while Europeans might understand independence as freedom of opinion and the spirit of democratic constitutional national rule, they were not prepared to acknowledge these concepts in their foreign policy. In an article displaying his familiar sense of irony, Rihani expressed suspicion that with the help of 'the Orientalists and their colonialist advisers', the French were hardly ready to renounce their 'rights' in Lebanon, and all they were prepared to give was a formal independence which would give them more freedom and arbitrariness in the destiny of that country.<sup>66</sup>



Perhaps the oppressive French practices during the mandate explained some of Rihani's scepticism concerning French intentions. But the initialisation of the French–Syrian treaty in September 1936, preceding negotiations of the treaty with Lebanon, no doubt helped to strengthen his attitude. It is to be remembered that by the time the Lebanese–French talks began, much of the provisions of the French–Syrian treaty had become known. It seemed that Rihani was aware that the Lebanese treaty was to be modelled on the Syrian treaty, according to which French cultural, economic and military supremacy in the Levant would be preserved. This may have been enough reason for his doubt and misgivings. Eventually, the Lebanese treaty which was concluded in 13 November 1936 proved some of Rihani's fears, for it stipulated a French guarantee of Lebanon as a separate entity, and the French military existence was to be even stronger and for a longer period than it was in the case of Syria.<sup>67</sup>

In 1939, on the eve of the Second World War, Rihani was again optimistic that the mandatory power would submit to the wishes of the Lebanese and Syrian peoples. The attitude of the French authorities was not only dictated by the will of the peoples themselves but also beneficial to the French mutual interests with the Arabs in general. That year, Rihani optimistically predicted the 'success of an Arab confederation, following the pattern, more or less, of the United States of America'. He was certain that the people in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine would join such a confederation, if the two powers in control (France and Britain) were to withdraw from the region to make such confederation possible. Although he doubted France and Britain would sincerely welcome this development, he was almost sure that, pushed by their interests with the Arabs, the two powers would begin to look with favour upon it. He linked this with the role of Ibn Sa'ud. The rivalry between Britain and France to win the friendship of Ibn Sa'ud, who in Rihani's opinion was destined to lead the Pan-Arab movement, convinced him that both powers had begun to soften their policy due to their fear of Ibn Sa'ud and to save their interests in the region.<sup>68</sup>

While in 1920 Rihani had supported Faysal's claim to Syrian unity, including Lebanon's autonomy and French assistance, at the end of the First World War he looked forward to a federation of Arab provinces which would include Lebanon, Syria and Palestine under limited European protection. However, after the French Mandate on Syria and Lebanon was officially established, he resented the division of both countries and continued to call for their unity without foreign assistance. During the first seven years of the mandate the unity which he advocated was to be a political unity where 'the Syrian homeland' (*al-bilad al-suriyya*), including Lebanon, would be ruled

by one constitutional civil government. Nevertheless, after the declaration of the two republics of Lebanon and Syria, his concept of Syrian unity was modified. This was no longer the ultimate goal for him, but a stepping-stone towards a wider Pan-Arab unity. Instead of a complete political unity between Lebanon and Syria, he now saw that the two countries could be separate but co-operate on the economic level, and be united only in their national policy. As for their complete unity, it could be achieved after they became independent.

With the Second World War approaching, Rihani realised that the French promises of independence were more remote than ever, and he began to look for salvation in the Arab direction. He had been working for Arab unity in the Peninsula since 1922. Now, in the late 1930s, many factors made him believe that if the complete success of Pan-Arabism, the unity of the Arab world under one ruler, was not expected in the near future, at least an Arab confederation was not far off. He had no doubt that the people of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine would welcome it. How did the idea of Arab unity evolve in Rihani's discourse and what were the obstacles facing it? What was this Arab confederation, which he predicted, what were its chances of coming to fruition, and what was the place of Lebanon and Syria in it? These are some of the questions, which are discussed in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## ARAB NATIONALISM: IDEALS AND ENDEAVOURS

### **Pan-Arab Mission in the Peninsula**

It is true that, unlike some other Arab nationalist thinkers of the interwar period, including Sati' al-Husri and Constantine Zurayq, Rihani did not develop an elaborate theory of the Arab nation or of Arab nationalism.<sup>1</sup> His ideas were, however, drawn from his experiences and his perception of the reality of Arab societies in his time. Although these are scattered throughout his various books, articles and speeches, it is possible to form a clear picture of his position. Since Rihani was both an activist and a thinker his contribution needs to be viewed at both the practical and theoretical levels. Among questions that should be addressed are the kind of Arab unity he advocated, its future prospects, the obstacles which he saw facing its realisation, and the essential elements of Pan-Arab nationalism in his thought.

This chapter takes up Rihani's political ideas in the post-First World War years. During this period he called for a cultural, geographical and political Arab unity based on mutual understanding and co-operation (among Arab ruling elites first), regardless of religion or creed. We have already seen how Rihani's ideas evolved from Ottomanism to Arabism and how, as early as 1911, he expressed his sense of Arabhood, and the contribution of the Arab nation to world civilization (Chapter Five). In *The Book of Khalid* (commenced in 1907, published in 1911), Rihani dreamt of a revival of the great 'Arab empire'. For this purpose, he raised three essential and interrelated points: the existence of a distinct Arab people (or race) with a glorious past and looking for a substantially better future; the need for a leader with heroic characteristics; and the capacity of the people to produce such a hero. This romantic ideological vision continued to haunt Rihani for

years, and was a factor in his decision to undertake his journey to Arabia in 1922. Apart from emotional and intellectual motives, his travels aimed at serving the Arab cause, namely Pan-Arabia (*al-wahda al-'arabiyya*),<sup>2</sup> which he believed could be realised by the meeting of all the ruling amirs and the building of trust and common understanding among them.<sup>3</sup>

When Sharif Husayn of Mecca declared the Arab revolt against the Turks in 1916, Rihani identified strongly with it. In his writings and speeches, he called upon his fellow Syrians to contribute to the war of liberation, and he was in favour of Faysal's efforts towards a moderate Arab Syrian unity under a civil democratic government. With the collapse of the first modern Arab rule in Damascus, Rihani looked towards the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq, where Husayn and more particularly his son Faysal continued their efforts, and where he envisioned a strong Arab state which would unite the Arab nation in a modern and civilised political entity. He was also concerned to meet other Arab rulers, particularly the Imam of the Yemen and Ibn Sa'ud of Najd.

When Rihani proceeded to Arabia in 1922, the political fortunes of the Arab countries were far from promising. French and British mandates had been established in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, East Jordan and Palestine; and Jewish settlement was proceeding in the latter. Two Hashimite monarchies already existed under King Faysal in Iraq and Amir 'Abdullah in East Jordan. Instead of fulfilling pledges made to the Arabs in the Husayn-McMahon correspondence (1915-16), the British Government unsuccessfully sought to conclude a treaty with Husayn in which he had to recognise the mandates and divisions in the northern provinces which he and other Arabs considered as integral parts of the future Arab state. Meanwhile, the long-standing dispute between Husayn and Ibn Sa'ud of Najd over border territory and the leadership of Arabia, was coming to a head. Ibn Sa'ud, an ally of Britain who had succeeded in bringing an end to the rule of the Rashids in central Arabia (1921), was pursuing his course of conquest in the heart of the Peninsula. In the Yemen, Imam Yahya refused to recognise the rule of the Idrisi, another ally of the British, whose presence in 'Asir he regarded as an encroachment on his own domain.<sup>4</sup>

Before he embarked on his trip, Rihani was aware of the obstacles in the way of a possible united Arabia. These he set out as a series of questions which have survived in his personal notes.<sup>5</sup> Who was to achieve such unity, King Husayn, Faysal or 'Abdullah? What about the attitude of other Arab rulers towards Husayn's Pan-Islamism and Faysal's Pan-Arabism; the educational, economic and military conditions of the Arabs; and the attitude of Britain and America towards a united Arabia? These questions indicated that Rihani

was aware of the complex problems facing the Pan-Arab movement because of rivalries among Arab rulers, especially Husayn and Ibn Sa'ud; the tension between Husayn and Faysal; and the rivalry between Faysal and 'Abdullah. When Rihani met Husayn in February 1922, the latter's attitude towards his son Faysal seemed uncompromising.<sup>6</sup>

Engaging in secret diplomacy with a foreign power made Husayn's dream of an extended Hashimite Arab kingdom a mere illusion. Husayn was not prepared to yield to British pressure to sign a treaty which would suggest recognition of the special position of Britain in Iraq and Palestine, including the Balfour Declaration. He instead persisted in demanding the fulfilment of all the articles of the Anglo-Arab agreement, as stated in McMahon's letters to him; otherwise he would resign and retire from public life. Husayn's persistence impressed Rihani. 'I do not desire it (the leadership)', he said to Rihani, 'let the Ameers agree upon a leader and I will resign. Let them all agree to work for a united Arabia, an Arab empire, and I will withdraw, if they wish. I will even co-operate with them, whether I am to follow or to be followed'. These words 'gave the impetus' that day to one of the purposes of Rihani's travels and 'attracted' him to the service of King Husayn and, as he himself put it, 'I proceeded, therefore, in my national mission, seeking to pave the way for an understanding between His Majesty and the other ruling princes of Arabia'.<sup>7</sup>

Rihani was aware that Husayn had a deep contempt for all the other ruling amirs of Arabia. If he insisted on the fulfilment of the Anglo-Arab agreement in total, this implied that the British should help him crush the resistance of any amir, particularly Ibn Sa'ud and the Idrisi. Rihani was critical of Husayn not only for being naive to think that Britain would help him against its two other allies, but also for his failure to lay the solid foundation of his 'Arab empire'. He thought that Husayn underestimated the mandates in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, and continued to mistakenly hope to build a united Arab state / kingdom that would include those countries. Especially after his travels in Arabia (in 1922), Rihani came to the conclusion that Arab unity required reconciliation between the hostile amirs and ending the revolt of the tribes in the Peninsula. Thus, in his 'mission' he started from the Peninsula where he endeavoured to bring about rapprochement between Husayn and the other Arab rulers as an essential condition to achieve Pan-Arabia.

As an initial practical step towards this goal, Rihani embarked upon negotiating a draft treaty between Imam Yahya of the Yemen and Sharif Husayn. This treaty, he argued, would solve the Hudaidah problem to the Imam's satisfaction, and would facilitate an understanding between him

and Great Britain. 'You will get better terms from the English', he said to Imam Yahya, 'when they know that you and King Husein are united in a common cause'. He hoped that an understanding with the English would lead to an Anglo-Yemeni treaty of friendship and commerce which, he saw, was so vital for the progress of the Yemen and its need to be open to the outside world. At the same time, a Hijazi-Yemeni treaty would give the Yemen enough strength to maintain its integrity and independence, as well as peace and security. 'You are dissipating the strength of your nation and all its resources in wars', he said to the Imam. 'I do not want to see any wars between the East and the West; it is a part of my life-task, in fact, to endeavour to bring about better relations, based upon sympathy and understanding, between Europe and Arabia, at least. Of course I want to see Arabia mistress in her own house, which is only possible if the rulers and chiefs stop fighting against each other and unite in a common cause—the cause of national integrity and international peace and good will'.<sup>8</sup>

Rihani believed that once the Hijazi-Yemeni treaty was concluded, the Idrisi of 'Asir, adversary of both Yahya and Husayn, would join the union because he could 'not stand between two powerful neighbours and be hostile to them'. Thus, the second stage of his mission was to negotiate peace and a treaty between Yahya and the Idrisi. After negotiations, he found that the three principal parties in question, the Idrisi, the British, as a wedge between the Idrisi and the Imam, and the Shafi'i Muslims, the traditional enemies of the Zaydis in the Yemen, were ready for discussions. He therefore advised the Imam that the most practical way to peace was a conference to be held either in Hudaidah or in Aden. He held that such step would establish peace and close relationships of friendship and commerce between the Yemen and 'Asir.<sup>9</sup>

Long before any bilateral unity or federation in the modern Arab system, such as the unity between Egypt and Syria (1958–1961) or the Arab Union between Jordan and Iraq (1958), Rihani had proposed the bipartite treaties as a preliminary step to Pan-Arabia. During negotiations he endeavoured to ensure a balance between national unity of the Arabs and the regional sovereignty of contracting countries.<sup>10</sup> As a 'plan for action' (*dustur lil-'amal*), each of the proposed treaties emphasised the unity of the Arab countries (*al-bilad al-'arabiyya*, that is, the Peninsula proper), in religion, nationalism (*al-qawmiyya*) and language (*al-lisan*). The kingship of Husayn would be recognised and in return he would recognise the Imamate of each of Yahya and the Idrisi. The actual rulers, Husayn, the Idrisi and the Imam, would continue to administer the internal and external political affairs of their respective countries. However, they would unite their national views

and adopt a united foreign policy to ensure progress 'without any foreign interference which may affect the integrity and independence of Arabia'. This meant that none of the signatory parties would interfere in the internal affairs of another party, or conclude a treaty with a foreign power concerning the rule of another party, 'except after consultation and agreement between them'. By introducing this clause, Rihani aimed at binding the Arabian rulers and paving the way for Pan-Arabia.<sup>11</sup>

It is important to note Rihani's emphasis on the economy in the negotiated bipartite treaties among Arabian rulers. He suggested the founding of a savings account out of the alms tax (*mal al-zaka*), to be expended in the future on developing the infrastructure of Arabia. Recent studies on the problems and prospects of Arab unity have naturally emphasised the importance of economic development and co-operation in consolidating the desired political unity.<sup>12</sup> Rihani's idea, albeit a somewhat conservative one, may be considered as avant-garde for his time, since the pre-1940 Arab nationalist thought generally gave little attention to economic issues, and did not consider economic and social change as important factors in the attainment of independence and unity. It is true that some intellectuals discussed the condition of the masses, class relationships and socialist principles, but they failed to link these ideas with Arab nationalism.<sup>13</sup>

Unlike the prevalent Arab thought of the time, and before any inter-Arab economic co-operative body was established, Rihani had considered the economic independence of Arab countries a priority without which political independence would be impossible. He perceived that Arab economic co-operation was the beginning of independence and unity. 'I am the apostle of this idea, I spread it in the court of every Arab amir and sultan. A savings account out of the alms tax is the key to Arab independence if they can understand it. A common Arab monetary fund could be used, ten years hence, for example, to build a railway between the Hijaz and 'Asir and the Yemen'. Clearly reminiscent of Faysal's statement after his return to Syria from the Peace Conference (1919), Rihani counselled Arabian leaders that if they 'needed foreign technicians they could hire them and pay them from Arab money'. He was convinced that even if the 'bipartite treaties were limited only to this article and to defence and mutual help (*munasara*) that would, for now, be good enough for all the Arabs'.<sup>14</sup>

Aware that bipartite treaties were not sufficient to achieve Pan-Arabia, Rihani's real aim was to conclude a quadripartite treaty between Husayn, Yahya, the Idrisi and Ibn Sa'ud, as a corner stone of Pan-Arabia. In a covering letter which he sent to Husayn with the draft of the negotiated treaty with the Imam, he explained that the treaty contained some

concessions, but only in detail not in essence. Other steps should follow when good relations had been established between the two countries. He insisted that bipartite treaties, while not final, were the first important step towards unity. For, 'great national movements proceed only in modest steps towards completion'.<sup>15</sup>

Rihani saw that, since the Arab rulers were at war with each other, the first step to unite them was to establish friendship, mutual trust, and peace between them as equals. Towards this he endeavoured to convince the rulers to accept the treaties in order to pave the way for the quadripartite treaty. While noting that the conditions were favourable at the time, since Britain was not opposed to the treaties, Rihani emphasised that any subsequent national pacts (*'uhud*) between the Arabs should be their own concern alone, and that they should not miss this opportunity to bring about complete political Pan-Arabia.

An agreement between the Arab rulers was, in Rihani's view, a *sine qua non* for political unity, and such agreement required concessions from every Arab ruler. He realised that all rulers spoke of Pan-Arabia, but each was concerned about his own independence and feared the others' dominance and Husayn's ambitions. He advised the latter, through his Foreign Minister, not to insist on the unity of 'flag', military system and foreign policy and, in particular, not to insist, at least at this stage, on his claim to be 'King of the Arabs'. Such a claim was, in his opinion, premature and would harm the unity of Arabia as the highest priority.

Through the treaties, Rihani hoped to render a service to Imam Yahya by bringing his cause to the attention of the British, and by mediating for rapprochement between him and the Idrisi. He also hoped to render a service to King Husayn, whom he believed 'represented a noble Arab national idea', by facilitating two treaties which would bind, 'at least with a thread of silk', the Hijaz with the Yemen and 'Asir. Ultimately Rihani's efforts failed. The Imam rejected the idea of a peace conference, insisted on claiming the Hudaidah and refused to recognise the suzerainty of the Idrisi in 'Asir. The Imam, he noted, harboured the ambition to be the 'King of the Arabs', while denying Husayn the same title. Husayn did not sign the treaties because the Imam and the Idrisi, while offering him friendship and co-operation, refused to recognise his kingship. Husayn wanted 'everything or nothing' and he got nothing, Rihani remarked. He later observed that had Husayn signed the treaties he would not have been defeated by Ibn Sa'ud in the autumn of 1924.<sup>16</sup>

While Rihani at first advocated mutual recognition of the sovereignty of each of the rulers, he did not see that their territories should permanently



remain separate Arab states. Indeed, he criticised the senseless settlement of boundaries and neutral zones between Iraq, Najd and Kuwait, in the Conference of Ojair (November–December 1922) and he expected these boundaries to disappear soon. He saw that the rapprochement between Faysal and Ibn Sa‘ud was the only positive outcome of the conference.<sup>17</sup>

Rihani was first concerned with bringing about peace between the Arab rulers. In addition to the treaties, he negotiated peace between Husayn and Ibn Sa‘ud and, after his departure from Arabia, he continued to work for settlement of the dispute between the two rulers. In a letter to his friend Constantine Yanni, an official of the Hashimite Government, he advised that the dispute between Husayn and Ibn Sa‘ud over Tarabah could be settled by a referendum. He also wrote to Faysal expressing his conviction that mutual agreement and alliance between him and Ibn Sa‘ud would also pave the way for peace and alliance between Najd and the Hijaz which remained the cornerstone of Pan-Arabia. He warned Faysal that it would be unwise and useless to try to achieve a Pan-Arabia through a ‘Hashimite unity’ between the Hijaz, East Jordan and Iraq, as Faysal was advised to do. Such unity, he believed, would widen the gap between Faysal and Ibn Sa‘ud, thus threatening any hope of unity. He pointed out to Faysal that ‘there would be no hope at least of an Arab alliance (*hilm‘arabi*) except through the efforts of Faysal and Ibn Sa‘ud’.<sup>18</sup>

Rihani’s conviction that only peace would settle the disputes between the Arab rulers and pave the way for an Arab alliance and unity was best expressed in his mediation between king ‘Ali, Husayn’s son and successor as king of the Hijaz, and Ibn Sa‘ud during the Hijazi war in 1924–1925. He then insisted that the Arab nation desperately needed peace and he tried to convince Ibn Sa‘ud to avoid war between the ‘Arabs’ ‘for the sake of Arab alliance and the interest of the whole Arab nation’. He was extremely disappointed when his mission failed.<sup>19</sup>

Rihani’s approach was pragmatic, and was based on reality so as to have the best chance of achieving change. His recognition of regional sovereignties was purely strategic, an organisational phase on the way to complete unity. He believed that the achievement of Pan-Arabia (and later wider Arab unity) should be gradual. He accepted a limited aim which could broaden over time rather than waiting endlessly with an uncompromising all-or-nothing attitude.<sup>20</sup> He realised that if the Arab rulers remained at war among themselves it would be impossible to unite them, particularly with the interference of external agents. On the other hand, peace would lead to their co-operation and union around common interests, which could then evolve into complete unity. It is in this sense that his recognition of regional

sovereignties and existing rulers should be understood. Hence his advice 'not to insist immediately on the unity of the flag, military and foreign policy', to build the economic and communication infrastructures, and to spread national schools in the whole of Arabia. It is in this sense too that we should understand his suggestion of two temporary unities in the Peninsula, and the Lebanese–Syrian unity, as integral parts of the broader Arab unity.

### **Pan-Arabia: Obstacles and Needs**

On the basis of his direct contacts with Arab rulers, and his keen observation of political and social conditions in Arabia, Rihani summed up in his conclusion to *Muluk al-'Arab* the requirements, difficulties, and future prospects of Pan-Arabia. In this he clearly sought to engage the Arab rulers and readers in a realistic, rational and open-minded dialogue. Such obstacles and challenges facing Arab unity have become a constant theme in subsequent Arab intellectual discussions.<sup>21</sup> The importance of Rihani rests not only in the fact that he was a pioneer but also because his own conclusions continue to be valid today.

First of all, Rihani asserted that Pan-Arabia would be a 'fact' in the Peninsula 'if geography had authority on politics, if religion could moderate the ambitions of the amirs, and if Arab nationalism (*al-qawmiyya al-'arabiyya*) was a real force to lead the hearts towards the same goal'. His territorial definition of Pan-Arabia embraced the whole geographical Arabian Peninsula, including Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf emirates, as well as the Yemen, Iraq and Jordan.

In his concluding summary, Rihani identified two types of obstacle, which hindered the political achievement of Pan-Arabia. Internally, he pointed to sectarianism (*al-madhhabiyya*) with the religious sect (*al-madhhab al-dini*) appearing to override common religious identity, and to tribalism, the tribal *'asabiyya*, which predominated the Arab national spirit. However, he perceived that even if sectarianism and tribalism were removed and Pan-Arabia was achieved, it could not survive without three conditions lacking in Arabia. These were: an organised and just government; national public schools; and modern means of transportation and communication. He anticipated that only after twenty-five years from the establishment of such institutions would Pan-Arabia become possible. The new institutions would replace tribalism and sectarianism with the greater spirit of Arab nationalism; rationalism, justice and mutual tolerance would overcome political authoritarianism; and the new Arab mentality would eventually elevate common Arab interests above any other interest and any narrow politics.

In 1924 Rihani wrote, 'there is no hope the Arabs could achieve complete Pan-Arabia today'. But he suggested that, as a preparatory step, Arab rulers could achieve mutual understanding and could realise 'two preliminary unities' in the two geo-political parts of the Arabian Peninsula: the eastern part under Ibn Sa'ud, and the western part under Imam Yahya. And he insisted that this was possible, especially after the termination of the Ottoman Caliphate (*al-Khilafa*).

Nevertheless, Rihani warned that two interrelated obstacles might hinder such preliminary unities. First, the Arab rulers who were each strongly attached to their own dominion, might not easily cede their authority to the proposed 'Great Sultan' (Ibn Sa'ud in the east or Yahya in the west). Secondly, Britain, which preferred to deal with each ruler separately, would continue to follow the principle of divide-and-rule to guarantee its domination over Arabia. Thus, he was realistic enough to recognise the need to maintain the internal autonomy of each of the existing Arab rulers. In return, he proposed that they recognise the suzerainty of the 'Great Sultan' and join with him under one leadership, in national defence and foreign policy, and in a unified system of economic and public affairs.

Reflecting on the debate among Arab political and religious experts over the resurrection of the Caliphate and Husayn's bid for it in 1924,<sup>22</sup> Rihani thought that the Arabs should be able to reclaim the Caliphate after the Turks' 'abdication'. But he believed that the Caliphate should be separate from the civil authority. A Caliph from Quraysh could be appointed and given the oath of allegiance (*al-bay'a*) by all Muslims of the world. Husayn, in his opinion, was the most suitable for the *Khilafa*, and Mecca should be his residence. The first practical step which he suggested for this process was to hold an Arab conference in Mecca attended by all Arab rulers, and where the oath of allegiance would be given to Husayn as Caliph, and to the two kings: Imam Yahya in the west and Ibn Sa'ud in the east. A treaty of friendship and economic co-operation (*mu'ahada wala'iyya iqtisadiyya*) should be concluded between the two kings. Acknowledging the reality of British presence in Arabia, he also expected an agreement, in principle, or a joint treaty, between both of them and Britain.<sup>23</sup>

### **Impediments to Unity: Sectarianism, Tribalism, and the British Presence**

Two dimensions of sectarianism can be identified in Rihani's discourse: *al-ta'ifiyya*, fanaticism of one religious group against another, which he recognised as hindering unity in Lebanon and Syria (discussed in Chapters

Three and Six); and *al-madhhabiyya*, fanaticism of one sect against another within the same religion. He found the latter a major obstacle to unity in Arabia.

The Arabian tour enabled Rihani to formulate a clear assessment of the 'sectarian' issue in the Peninsula. Of the Muslim majority, he identified: Sunnis of the four persuasions (Shafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali); Wahhabis (followers of *al-Wahhabiyya* or *Din al-Tawhid*, the Unitarian faith or Oneness of God, named after Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, d. 1791 CE); and Shi'a Ja'faris, Isma'ilis, and Zaydis (followers of Zayd b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn. Zayd took up arms against the Umayyads in the eighth century CE and was persecuted and crucified). There was also a minority of Christians, Jews, Hindus, Parsis, Baha'is and Sabi'a in Aden, Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, the Yemen and 'Asir (Jews in the latter two places). Based on his observations in Arabia, Rihani found that although Islam was the main religion there, the various Islamic sects were very often in conflict. And he was convinced that sectarianism (*madhhabiyya*) remained at the root of hostilities between people in many parts of Arabia.<sup>24</sup>

The most serious manifestations of sectarianism in Arabia were Wahhabism in Najd and Zaydism in the Yemen, which formed two ruling sectarian 'political' parties that divided Arabia into two antagonist parts. While maintaining strong 'solidarity' (*asabiyya*) and 'politics' among their respective followers, Rihani observed that neither of the two sects was accepted by the other, nor by other Muslims in other parts of Arabia. Outside Najd and the Yemen, Muslims would refuse to join any unity attempted by either the Wahhabis or the Zaydis. Both Ibn Sa'ud and Imam Yahya who ruled 'by and in the name of the sect, if not for it', were the most powerful of the Arab rulers. But, if Ibn Sa'ud proceeded to unite Arabia under his rule, Imam Yahya would resist him in the Yemen and vice-versa.

Sectarianism was extremely divisive in the Peninsula because of the identification of politics with religious faith. In the Yemen, for example, identification of the Imam's politics with Zaydism empowered Imam Yahya because he could use sectarian solidarity in the service of his political purposes. But this betrayed his weakness which lurked in that strength. Analysing the elements of strength and weakness in the Zaydi rule, Rihani found three basic elements, Zaydism, patriotism (*al-wataniyya*) and isolation (*al-uzla*). These were at once factors of cohesion but also obstacles to progress. While the Yemeni idea of patriotism was narrow, almost bordering on racial identity, their isolation made for their backward social and political conditions, and sectarian Zaydism was responsible for the permanent state of war in the Yemen.

Especially in his books on the Yemen (*Muluk al-'Arab* and *Arabian Peak and Desert*) Rihani analysed the relationship between Zaydism as a faith and a method to attain and maintain political power in a country and in an age where religious faith was the most obvious expression of identity. People were treated as citizens of first or second class according to whether they were Zaydi or not. Religious feeling was evoked to ensure conservatism and prevent change in the political system. The almost complete identification between the Imam and the application of Zaydi Islamic law struck Rihani as a manifestation of his total control.

This sect-political relationship ensured the supremacy of the Imam as the religious-Zaydi as well as military leader. This 'rule which puts the sword in place of the electorate' was, in Rihani's opinion, responsible for the many conspiracies and civil wars in the Yemen. He saw this method of maintaining power manifested in two evil aspects of the Imam's rule: the hostage-taking as a guarantee of loyalty, and the invocation of the creed of the Imam's ancestors against other Arab Muslims (such as the Shafi'is of Tihama and 'Asir), to serve his political ambitions. 'One should feel sorry', Rihani commented, 'for this glorious Arab nation which upholds the sect above *al-Kitab* and *al-Sunna*, and uses the sect as a method of attaining power'.<sup>25</sup>

Long before modern sociological analyses of religion and social change in Arab and Islamic societies,<sup>26</sup> first-hand experience in Arabia enabled Rihani to provide an important analysis of the effect of religion on people's thinking and social behaviour. In the Yemen, for example, religion had a great role in impeding social change because Zaydi fanaticism interfered in the small details of social life. The Zaydis, he observed, 'pray ... to the Merciful, the Compassionate, the God of all Creation', but treated with disgust and hatred non-Zaydi Muslims, and other religious groups, particularly Christians and Jews. He blamed Zaydi fanaticism and cruelty on the *Sayyids*, the noble and privileged class in the Yemen who, claiming descent from Husayn, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, were concerned with maintaining the *status quo*, keeping the common people in ignorance, or influencing them by their fanaticism.

Combination of Zaydi intolerance and fanaticism was, in Rihani's view, the main reason for ignorance and backwardness in the Yemen. It impeded progress and social and political change, threatened the peace among the Arabs and thus went against Pan-Arabia. More specifically, Rihani believed that if the Imam's rule were not Zaydi, his traditional adversaries within the Yemen would have no grievance against him, and would, in fact, have become his greatest supporters.

Rihani was equally critical of Wahhabism and he maintained that, like Zaydi fanaticism, Wahhabism (as the revival of Hanbalism) was also an impediment to the unity of Arabia. He was especially critical of the excesses of Wahhabi ideology, which taught its followers to enjoy nothing in life but preaching and *jihad*. Perhaps the first to liken the Wahhabis to the first Protestants and Ibn Sa'ud to Cromwell,<sup>27</sup> Rihani observed that excessive Puritanism of the *Ikhwan* (the Wahhabi Brothers, not to be confused with the Muslim Brothers, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* in Egypt) surpassed the fanaticism of Zaydi warriors. The *Ikhwan*, the 'frantically fanatical Unitarians', considered other Muslims not of their creed as polytheists (*mushrikun*) who did not deserve to be greeted by them. Like the Zaydis, the *Ikhwan* were blind in their faith and saw the truth only in their own beliefs; and this blindness affected their thinking and social behaviour.

However, Rihani realised that Wahhabism was a strong factor in maintaining Ibn Sa'ud's rule, because of the close interdependence of Wahhabism as an ideology with the politics of the Sa'udi House. He observed that the Wahhabi-Sa'udi alliance (in 1157 AH / 1744 CE) had been based upon the sword of Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud and the faith of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. 'It was based in its inception upon a living, fiery faith which could find adequate expression only in the sword'. As he explained it, by using the *Qur'an*, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab infused the people of Najd with a spirit, giving them the power to expand, and to express their superiority with the austerity and confidence of the followers of the Prophet. Rihani identified the militant spirit of the Wahhabis with their 'national' Sa'udi spirit (*al-ruh al-qawmiyya*). He considered Wahhabism in its outcome a political as well as a religious movement. It was this Wahhabi-Sa'udi 'dualism' that was, in his view, at the basis of Sa'udi strength. According to his analysis (which became a reference point to the study of the foundations of the Sa'udi state), the *Ikhwan*, the militant Wahhabis, were strong not only because of their strong belief in the *Qur'an*, but also because Ibn Sa'ud fired them with inextinguishable enthusiasm for *Allah* and for the Sa'udi House.<sup>28</sup> But Rihani insisted that only because Ibn Sa'ud kept the central power in his own hands, he was able to direct and control the *Ikhwan* as their commander. And as the head of the state, he was able to keep the religious '*ulama*' under firm control.

In spite of his admiration for Ibn Sa'ud, whom he believed was the best ruler to assume Arab leadership, Rihani still maintained sectarianism in Arabia was standing in the way of its unity. He realised that both Ibn Sa'ud and the Imam, the two powerful rulers who could unite the Arabs, drew their strength from two conflicting fundamental Islamic sects. Both used religion

to justify their political ambitions, spread their influence by the sword, and used the religious elites to establish their rule. This made reconciliation impossible, not only between the Zaydi and Wahhabi followers, but also between each of the two groups and other more liberal Muslims. Therefore, he believed any Arab ruler would not achieve unity except after establishing a civil (*madani*) rule and separating religion from politics.

This 'secular' idea, central to Rihani's discourse, was developed throughout his career as an intellectual and political activist and, as discussed above, is the focal point of his advocacy of patriotism and nationalism in the entire Arab world. Because of the sectarian divisions, Rihani believed Islam was unable to unite the Arabs. Pan-Islamic unity, as Imam Yahya proposed, could not be an alternative to a secular Pan-Arab nationalism. He argued that 'the Kings of Arabia will never progress, will never achieve a lasting success in anything, so long as they use religion as a means to political ends or even a force for racial [national] solidarity'. Failure of the Arab movement led by Husayn who used religion as a means of establishing his supremacy and achieving his own political aims was, in Rihani's eyes, living proof of this. 'The exploitation of a religious emotion, even if it benefits a religion, which is, let us suppose, all truth and all beauty and all good, is nevertheless a regrettable thing ... How can a *Jehad* [*sic*], therefore, by one Muslim [*sic*] political party against another ever succeed, especially these days? It is indeed regrettable'.<sup>29</sup>

### Tribalism

The second internal obstacle facing Pan-Arabia was the intensity of tribal *esprit de corps* (*ruh al-qaba'il* and *al-'asabiyya*) at the expense of national sentiment. Tribal *'asabiyya* is a familiar theme in the Arab nationalist thought, and Rihani shared his contemporaries' views that division along tribal lines led to pre-Islamic warfare and subjected the ancient Arabs to Roman and Persian influences. In his *al-Nakabat* (1928), he even considered the Arab division in recent history as a continuation of the old rivalries but under new foreign influence.<sup>30</sup> His most important discussion of the harmful effects of tribal rivalries on the unity and progress of the Arabs remains his *Muluk al-'Arab* where he warned the Arabs that unless they forgot their tribal *'asabiyya* in favour of the broad Arab solidarity (*'asabiyya*), Pan-Arabia would remain impossible.

Past and recent experience proved to Rihani that the Arab tribes sought independence at every opportunity and that, instead of being a factor of unity amongst the Arabs who were basically from the same origin, tribal *'asabiyya* was a divisive factor. It limited loyalty to the narrow circle of the tribe or even the clan and, therefore, was used as a motive for separation.

This tendency was behind the prevailing anarchy in Arabia, since every tribe resorted to arms and alliances in order to secure its narrow independence. This, he claimed, was 'the first and principal calamity of the Arabs ... this is a crime in the name of nationalism (*al-qawmiyya*) and a piracy in the name of independence'. And he warned against arms in the hands of ignorant tribes as a serious impediment to Arab progress and unity.<sup>31</sup>

Rihani was, perhaps, the first to warn against British exploitation of the tribal *'asabiyya* in Arabia. In order to make the rulers yield to the will of the British government, the British paid stipends to the chiefs of the rebellious tribes in order to accept or reject agreement with this ruler or that. Such was the situation, for example, in the Hijaz, 'Asir and the Yemen, particularly in Aden and the nine Protectorates. He found that most of the rebellious tribes were warlike, slave-dealers, gun-runners and pirates. Conflicting rulers used them to serve their political purposes, and some of them played two or even three roles at once, and in the end they belonged only to whoever paid most. These conflicting loyalties not only affected Arab mutual understanding, but most importantly allowed British interference in the national affairs of the Arab rulers. In Aden, for example, by precipitating fights between neighbouring tribes and by suspending or paying stipends, the British authorities forced the tribes and the Sultan of Aden to enter into individual treaties of friendship and protection which gradually tied the Arabs with Britain 'exclusively and forever'.<sup>32</sup>

The tribal conflict represented a serious concern for Rihani. In the nine Protectorates, he found that eleven tribes with varying degrees of primitiveness and strength were loyal to the British who made of them 'independent' sultanates and emirates. By providing 'protection' and paying the tribes to fight each other, the British were in fact protecting Aden. It was the 'English gold' not the British army, he noted, which secured the city from tribal raids and kept the Arabs under the English thumb.<sup>33</sup> The Arab rulers themselves used the tribes in the same way. For instance, Imam Yahya offered the tribes in the protectorates money, friendship and protection, and thus kept them away from other Arab rulers.

Historically, the most serious aspect of tribalism which Rihani witnessed among the Arabs was the old enmity between the two major tribal divisions in Arabia, Qahtan and 'Adnan, and the rivalry for supremacy and power between Rabi'a and Mudar, two branches of 'Adnan. He explained that through Quraysh, Mudar, to which the Prophet belonged, attained supremacy in Mecca, while Rabi'a, the tribe of most of the poets and warriors of Arabia, occupied central Arabia. In the person of Ibn Sa'ud, Rabi'a was fast attaining hegemony in all Arabia and was refusing the authority not



only of Qahtan (Imam Yahya's ancestry) but also of Mudar (Sharif Husayn's ancestry) centred in the Hijaz. Rihani saw that tribal rivalry was so tense that if a strong ruler, like Ibn Sa'ud or Imam Yahya, called for Pan-Arabia in the name of nationalism, their call would not be welcome because of their strong tribal commitment which would stir up the old enmity between Qahtan and 'Adnan, and between Rabi'a and Mudar.

After thoroughly examining the situation in Arabia, Rihani came to the conviction that Pan-Arabia was impossible unless sectarianism and tribalism were replaced with secularism and Arabism. These were associated in an interdependent relationship to the extent that the Arabs could not be national without being secular, and could not be secular without putting Arabism before and above any religious or tribal feeling. When both obstacles were removed, unity would become possible because natural factors, the land and the population, would lead to a natural geographical unity. In such unity the national identity, characteristics, customs and traditions, are similar, and the people and their leaders, 'the advanced among them', have a common interest.<sup>34</sup> But would the English permit such unity?

### **The British Presence**

Western power has preoccupied Arab nationalist and Islamic intellectuals since the nineteenth century at least. Arnold Hottinger rightly said that by himself Rihani had experienced and shaped into his life and work, what was to become, later on, 'a collective experience to nearly all Arab societies and communities, namely the presence and domination of the foreigner and his civilization'.<sup>35</sup> Western presence in Lebanon and Syria, in Palestine or in Arabia, shaped Rihani's view to the extent that such presence became in his discourse the greatest calamity for the Arabs.

Both Rihani's historical background and travel experiences alerted him to the British impact in Arabia. He was aware that the British policy in the Peninsula was guided by British interests in the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Arab/Persian Gulf. In securing those interests, the British exploited the troubled relations between the Arab rulers and made their mutual understanding and co-operation more remote. He contended that during the First World War the British promised in separate treaties to support and protect every Arab ruler if he would assist them against the Turks. When the war ended, and the English no longer had an adversary in Arabia, they continued to supply the Arab rulers, 'their new political adversaries', with arms and ammunition but only to fight each other'.<sup>36</sup> Thus, Ibn Sa'ud waged war against Ibn al-Rashid, Husayn fought Ibn Sa'ud and the Idrisi continued to fight the Imam, all using English guns and gold.

On this basis, Rihani considered the Anglo–Arab alliance as an unbalanced relationship, which consisted of the strong ally violating the rights of the weak. But while he blamed the British for pursuing the ‘same ill-fated policy that has the tendency to widen the breach between the various rulers of Arabia’, he equally blamed the Arab rulers for their mutual ill faith. He accused them of accepting the separate treaties with Britain, because ‘every one of them had an enemy of his race—a neighbouring ruler—whom he would first annihilate’.<sup>37</sup>

Rihani pointed out that the British ‘divide-and-rule’ policy used different instruments. Offering monthly stipends, presents and ‘salute of cannons’ to the sultans, the sayyids and the chiefs of the tribes was the cheapest and the easiest means to control Arabia. He was shocked to observe that ‘all the Arabs of the Peninsula were subject to foreign influence and their hands were tainted with foreign English gold’. This not only made the Arabs lazier, poorer, and more dependent, but it enabled the British authorities to control Arab politics. Another instrument was the amazing elasticity of the British in dealing with their foreign problems. Their motto, ‘be not too hard to bend, and bend not to the breaking point’ was, in his opinion, most successfully used in Arabia, because of its geo-political and religious conditions, as well as the conflicting ambitions of its rulers.

Such elasticity, which the Arabs did not seem to understand, consisted of the English exploiting every Arab ruler’s aspiration to independence by concluding with him a pact of ‘friendship and protection’. In such pacts, which involved payments of money, there was generally a clause which stated that Arab rulers should not enter into any treaty with any ‘foreign power’ ‘except with the knowledge and sanction of the British government’. This clause, in his view, was the noose which strangled the Arabs, since it meant that all Arab rulers were considered ‘foreign powers’ to each other, and thus could not conclude mutual treaties without the sanction of the English. Just as Rihani viewed the French Mandate in Syria–Lebanon as colonialism (*isti‘mar*), in the light of this, he considered the British ‘protection’ in Arabia as becoming, in fact, ‘possession’ (*istila*) and ‘monopoly’ (*isti‘thar*).<sup>38</sup>

Beside ‘protection’, the British could, when necessary, resort to violence to make their elastic formula more effective. The case of Bahrain was clear evidence, where a series of attacks led to an administrative partnership with the British political agent. Rihani pointed out that to secure a direct route to India and absolute control over the Gulf, the British perpetrated a series of incidents and attacked Bahrain. They divided the ruling House and concluded with the Amir an agreement of protection, which later

'developed into a title-deed in the hand of the British Government'. Thus, he came to the conclusion that British protection and friendship were only a step towards occupation and colonisation.<sup>39</sup>

Rihani was particularly critical of British political agents who were sent through the India Office rather than the British Government itself. 'Unqualified' and 'suitable only for military service', and having neither knowledge of nor sympathy for the Arabs, those officers often concealed the truth about Arabia in order to secure their positions. Thus, he explained, orders from the British Government 'came with little wisdom or justice', and very often did not consider any new developments in Arabia.

More broadly, Rihani examined British policy in the light of Western rivalry in Arabia. He observed that the diplomats of all foreign governments with colonial ambitions in the East had a kind of 'Jekyll-and-Hyde' dual personality. Western rivalry (French, British and Italian) was most fatal in Arabia where patriotic education and civil authority were still old-fashioned, defective, or subject to periodical upheavals. In such circumstances, the diplomatic representatives in any Arab ruler's court would create two or three political 'parties' from among the ruler's subjects to work against him and against each other, in order to serve the interests of the diplomats of foreign nations. He acknowledged that all Western powers had their secret ambitions, but since the Arabs could not do without commercial and scientific relations with the West, he was in favour of a single foreign influence to avoid rivalry and conspiracy. Thus, he recommended that the Yemen should seek the support of the British, not because he was their working agent in Arabia (as some had accused him), but because he thought the British were in favour of mutual peace between the Idrisi and the Imam. More importantly, he feared that, through stipends, the British were capable of, and would be using the Imam's enemies against him if he rejected their 'support'.<sup>40</sup>

While Rihani warned the Arabs against sectarian and tribal divisions, he warned the British against policies which harmed the Arabs as well as the long-term British interests in Arabia and in the East in general. Moreover, he stressed that British interference in the internal political affairs of the Arabs damaged Britain's reputation as a symbol of scientific achievement, morality and civilization. Rihani no doubt admired the West for its scientific superiority but, once in Arabia, he found that the West sacrificed its concern for civilization for the sake of political imperialist ambitions and interests. 'O my European brothers ... I want for you and the children of the East a common, mutual and equal benefit in their country', he wrote. 'Your colonialist spirit does not impress the fair-minded in both nations ... It degrades in the eyes of Orientals the most important of the Western values, namely administration and order'.

Rihani sensed the need for Anglo–Arab co-operation on both the political and cultural levels. He noted that during their presence in Arabia, the British carried out nothing for the social or intellectual progress of the country outside their own political and commercial interests. It is for this reason that he warned, ‘the East sees nothing in European civilization except evil, greed and selfishness’. ‘Before the East awakes, I want the European to become just and the Easterner to become reasonable, so they can reach mutual understanding, trust, and co-operation’.<sup>41</sup>

Despite his criticism of the British colonialist policies in Arabia, Rihani still believed that Anglo–Arab co-operation was vital for the achievement of Arab political unity. A keen observer of politics and events, he realised that the nearest approach to Pan-Arabia was impossible without securing the British interests, particularly in the Arab/Persian Gulf. The British were capable of doing anything to keep other Europeans out of Arabia. He identified two, admittedly idealistic, conditions that must be fulfilled: the British should change their colonialist policy; and the Arabs should unite under one banner and secure British interests in the Gulf, the key to British policy in Arabia. Practically, he advised Ibn Sa‘ud to firmly tell the British to ‘either help the Arab rulers to get together or let them do so directly’. His opinion was that Ibn Sa‘ud could enter into treaties with the sheikhs of Oman to keep peace on the Gulf. In a treaty with Britain, Ibn Sa‘ud could pledge himself to maintain peace and safeguard British interests on the Arab side of the Gulf. With more power in the Gulf, Ibn Sa‘ud could motivate the British to compel the governments of Iraq and East-Jordan to respect his rights in the north and the north-west. This would allow him to unite eastern Arabia, from Muscat to the southern boundary of Iraq, including Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait.

Rihani was certain that Britain would not refuse to co-operate with Ibn Sa‘ud due to his influence in eastern Arabia. Moreover, in allowing the unity of Arabia, Britain would be creating an Arab block with which it could counter the combined influence of the Turks and the Bolsheviks. It is important to note that while Rihani believed in 1924 that Anglo–Arab co-operation based on mutual trust and interests could lead to Pan-Arabia, he could still count on Anglo–Arab friendship to solve the major problems facing the achievement of complete Arab unity in 1938.<sup>42</sup>

### **Prerequisites to a Lasting Pan-Arabia: Political Justice, National Education, and Modernisation**

Throughout his writings Rihani insisted that the Arabs could not achieve a solid lasting unity without modern political institutions and without developing their own human resources and infrastructure. This is best

illustrated in the three conditions which he saw as necessary for Pan-Arabia to survive: a just and organised government; national public education; and modern means of communication and transportation.<sup>43</sup>

### Just and Organised Government

The concept of justice (*'adl* and *'adala*) which figured prominently in Rihani's early writings appeared as an integral part of the practical and realistic framework of his perception of a modern and lasting Pan-Arabia. Having closely witnessed many aspects of tyranny and the old-fashioned government systems in Arabia, he highlighted the urgent need for just and organised government. In 1898 he had rejected autocratic rule (*al-hukm al-mutlaq*) in the context of the Ottoman political system, because he found it incompatible with justice. In the Arab East of the 1920s, he found that, with the exception of Faysal in Iraq who was a constitutional monarch, all Arabian rulers were autocratic. Justice was relative to the personality of the ruler not to his system of government; and some rulers, such as Husayn, seemed to him to compete with the old despotism of 'Abd al-Hamid.

Two rulers, however, Imam Yahya and Ibn Sa'ud, made a particularly strong impression in two different ways. Both were autocratic in rule but not so in manner. While the former was a 'humble and noble ruler', the latter was 'autocratic-democratic and paternal'. The Imam consulted his learned men. He 'patiently, cheerfully, compassionately' heard and judged in his open-air tribunal where 'no one shall stand between him and his people'. He was autocratic with 'a passion for justice', and 'one who swerves not in the course of justice. He can be clement (*samh*), forbearing (*halim*) and paternal with his subjects.<sup>44</sup> In this instance, justice was seen as the fair treatment of the subjects with pity and mercy. But was this form of justice efficient? And was it sufficient?

In another context, Rihani saw justice as giving everybody his/her rights and summarily enforcing the law without favour or discrimination. He saw both the appealing and the repellent forms of such justice. Both seemed necessary to him. Hence his admiration of Ibn Sa'ud's rule which was based on both forms. He noted for example that Najd was the only place in Arabia where the old maxim, 'justice is the foundation of the state', was best honoured in theory and in practice. Security, the first manifestation of justice, reigned in the Arabian desert as it enforced Islamic law (*al-shar'*) with stern impartiality, Rihani observed.

Nevertheless, Rihani criticised Ibn Sa'ud's system of government as it was paternal, free from clerkship and bureaucracy, but also innocent of any modern administrative method. On the other hand, he found Imam

Yahya had some system in conducting the affairs of state. He was 'practical and energetic, resolute and persistent, sagacious and far-sighted'. Although he was everything in the Yemen, teacher, doctor and judge, his 'one-man government' was run more efficiently than 'an American corporation'. Rihani especially admired the Imam's rule, rigorously observed, of disposing each day of the business that came to hand.<sup>45</sup>

In discussing the form of government in Arabia, Rihani associated the idea of justice with the Islamic tradition of *shura* (consultation). In the Yemen, for example, he saw the rule would have been close to a democratic one, if the Imam were appointed through election or selection (*intikhab*) following the example of the Orthodox Caliphs, instead of the Imamate being a 'spoil of victory' according to Zaydi doctrine. Rihani accepted the idea of a government for Arabia, religious in inspiration, so long as the administration was secular and civil in practice. This explained how he could tolerate such rule as that of Imam Yahya and Ibn Sa'ud. The government of the Yemen was 'theocratic in root and secular in branch', and Ibn Sa'ud was Imam of the Wahhabis and had a strong sectarian feeling, but he knew when and where to relax and be tolerant in the interest of his country and his people. Ibn Sa'ud, Rihani observed, was 'not in politics and religion the same man'. His rule in the provinces, based upon certain recognition of native customs and beliefs, was 'a kind of decentralisation which only an extraordinary personality makes possible in such a widely flung country'.<sup>46</sup>

In general, Rihani was impressed with the personalities of the Arab rulers and the signs of 'Arab democracy' in their dress and manner of living. He was particularly captivated by the 'charming personality' of King Husayn whom he found 'the most kingly, if not also the most spiritual and the least clannish' of all Arab kings. It is true that Rihani was somewhat taken aback by the Hamidian style in which Husayn accepted urban greeting in his court. But he was impressed with his liberal democratic attitude towards the Bedu Arabs. Similarly, Rihani appreciated the democratic manner of living as manifested in the common dressing and 'tenue' of both kings, Husayn and Faysal. He was also pleased with the 'usual' simple decor and furniture of Husayn's palace, and Faysal's 'symbolic' throne. Because of the latter's natural and humble manners, he considered him 'the closest to democracy' among all kings of the world.<sup>47</sup>

Beside his 'generosity' and 'noble democratic spirit', Rihani highlighted Faysal's endeavour to establish the Iraqi state on solid foundations. He observed that the King often worked more than twelve hours a day, meeting all kinds of native and European people, examining their views, so as not to miss anything which might be beneficial to his nation. He admired

Faysal's endeavour to establish an Iraqi independent state on modern bases of development and progress, particularly education and technology.<sup>48</sup> However, when considering the practical political unity of Arabia in 1924, he opted for the strong leadership of both Ibn Sa'ud and Imam Yahya, as we have seen above.

It is evident that Rihani concentrated on the personality of the Arabian rulers more than on their administrative system. He himself acknowledged that he shared neither the Imam's faith nor his basis of government, but he admired the latter which was 'based, not on a principle, but on a personality'.<sup>49</sup> Rihani's interest in the 'man' rather than the principle stemmed from his conviction that the monarchy would be the best suited method of government for Pan-Arabia. This was reflected in his *Muluk al-'Arab*, completed in 1924, and strongly affirmed in his *Faysal al-Awwal* nine years later.

This support for the Arab monarchies may be elucidated by two points: Rihani's disappointment with Western freedom and democracy, and his conviction of the incompatibility of these Western concepts with Arabian society and culture. It is true that his stay in the USA strengthened his love for freedom and democratic principles, but it also taught him that Western political methods do not always conform to a country's constitution. His American experience showed him that, in reality, democracy was tied to the interests of a minority group which possessed wealth, and social and political influence and that the political right of election was nothing but a masquerade to distract the people from their genuine rights to equality and social justice.<sup>50</sup>

For Rihani, democracy was not a mere political concept isolated from the social environment. This argument leads to the second point, namely, the question of 'legitimacy' of the existing Arab leadership and regimes, which Rihani regarded as compatible with the Arab society's values and interests. His contention was that 'there was no universal government yet, which in form and essence, would suit all the people of the world'. 'Any government, republican or monarchist, would not stand unless it has its justifications and foundations in the mentality of the people, and in the traditions and culture of the nation'.

'The mentality (*'aqliyya*) of the Arab nation is monarchist', Rihani insisted. By nature, the Arabs were democratic in their private life, but throughout their history the Arab masses had developed a passion for monarchy and glory as well as a respect for the ruler's paternal authority. Moreover, he believed that at the time of writing 'the Arab nation lacked the cultural or educational means to cause a sudden change in its political culture or traditions'.

'If such is the Arab mentality', Rihani asked, 'would the republican government suit Arabia (*al-bilad al-'arabiyya*)?' Writing exactly twenty years before the Yemen became a republic and twenty five years before the end of the monarchy in Iraq, Rihani was 'certain that [republican rule] would be impossible ... and any of the Arab countries (*al-aqtar al-'arabiyya*) would not try it by choice before twenty or thirty years'. He thus perceived a possible change in the future, but until that time came he recognised that the ruling monarchs would remain in place and deserving of support. Although they had archaic mentalities, and had failed to adapt their countries to modern civilization, most of them ruled with justice and passion. Rihani expressed such views during the early 1930s, the period of rising dictatorships in Europe. In this respect, he saw the Arab kings as, in some ways, more progressive than certain Western rulers. But, in claiming both legislative and executive powers, they were simply like other dictators in the world. 'In a word they are the best example of the observed dictatorship. If the advanced European people accepted this system as the best for their countries, should not the Arabs hold to it?' Rihani asked. 'A republican government in Arabia is impossible. Indeed, at present, it would be harmful'.<sup>51</sup>

It is clear that Rihani distinguished between the conditions in the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, on the one hand, and those in Syria and Lebanon, the northern part of the Arab world, on the other. For as early as 1928, he argued that the republican form of government was most suited for Syria and Lebanon.<sup>52</sup>

Rihani perceived the existing regimes and leaders in Arabia as compatible with the circumstances of the Arabian society. 'You would be wrong if you assessed them outside their environment and political condition. I say they are worthy of great merit despite the stagnant environment and the elements of destruction in the political condition'. He also found them worthy of support due to their commitment to certain issues of Arab concern. Thus, he supported King Husayn for his services to the Arabs and his leadership of the Arab revolt; Ibn Sa'ud for achieving settlement, security and unity of a great part of the Peninsula; Imam Yahya for defending the Yemen from tribal strife and external ambitions; and Faysal for leading the Arab nationalist movement and achieving the independence of Iraq.<sup>53</sup>

No doubt Rihani saw that a strong leadership was needed to achieve a solid and lasting Pan-Arabia, and that at the time the social and political conditions of Arabia would not allow an essential change in the existing order. It is interesting to note that some Arab nationalists of his generation were even in favour of a strong ruler like Mussolini who could overthrow the establishment.<sup>54</sup> Rihani's perception of the future Arab system was a



mixture of modern and traditional forms. He saw that the monarchical system would satisfy the Arab mentality and the need for a leading figure: a wise, just and especially paternal leader. This explained why in the end he favoured the 'big' personality of Ibn Sa'ud to lead Pan-Arabia and the larger Arab unity.

Ibn Sa'ud was, according to Rihani, the only Arabian ruler who was 'loved and obeyed by his people'. Ibn Sa'ud appeared to him as a ruler who was confident, knew all the Arabs, their bad traits and their fine qualities and one who sincerely believed in Pan-Arabism and was prepared to work for unity. Above all, Rihani saw Ibn Sa'ud as what in modern terms can be described as a 'charismatic leader'. After his visit to Ibn Sa'ud, Rihani wrote: 'I have now met all the kings of Arabia and I find no one amongst them bigger than this man. He is big in word and gesture and smile, as well as in purpose and self-confidence. His personality is complex ... The man in him is certainly bigger than the Sultan, for he dominates his people with his personality, not his title ... I came to Ibn Sa'ud ... with a hard heart and a critical mind, and I can say that he captured my heart at the first meeting'.<sup>55</sup>

On the other hand, Rihani sensed the need for a civil government, elected democratically or by consultation, a government based on equality of all citizens regardless of religion, on the principles of political freedom and human rights, and on economic and social justice. From the above discussion, it can be deduced that the system of government which Rihani perceived for Pan-Arabia was a constitutional democratic monarchy that would limit the absolute authority of the ruler with democratic legislation and principles. It is clear that Rihani took into consideration the nature of Arab society, which has a tradition of religious autocracy and culture. Thus, unlike that of some other Arab intellectuals concerned with democracy in the inter-war years,<sup>56</sup> Rihani's concept of a 'just and organised government' was not a complete imitation of the Western concepts of justice and democracy.

### **National Public Education**

Education had preoccupied modern Arabic thinkers since the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> For Rihani it was a major concern for he considered education to be an essential condition for the achievement of Arab unity as well as for the achievement of progress in Arab societies. He saw that the unity of Arabia, for example, was hindered by ignorance and fanaticism among the Arab masses, and even when achieved, it could not survive without developing the Arab peoples. In spite of centuries of neglect, he observed, the Arab mind was still keen and bright. The minds of the children, the

hidden treasures of Arabia, could not be discovered and developed without schools to teach modern sciences and technology.<sup>58</sup>

Rihani recognised a number of obstacles, or inhibiting factors, in the way of educational progress for the Arabs. He emphasised the need for national public education because in Arabia there was no public system, except the mosque-schools. Similarly, modern schools in Iraq were either in the hands of missionaries or under the control of the British colonialists. He attributed the lack of public schools to the religious and social traditionalism of the Arab authorities. In the Hijaz, for instance, Husayn would not encourage a modern system of education because of his profound respect for tradition and the Quranic law. As Rihani observed, Husayn opened a military college but not one public school to teach new sciences and sound knowledge. Thus the Arab monarch could allow the use of aeroplanes against other Arabs, but could not tolerate at all such aspects of knowledge 'as would confuse the mind and corrupt the heart'.

Witnessing how in some parts of Arabia education was a monopoly and a means in the hands of the ruling class to consolidate power, Rihani pointed out that in the Yemen, for example, the preoccupation of Imam Yahya with war, and his desire to keep his people under control, had left the country without schools since the days of the Turks. The Imam was very learned, Rihani observed, but he did not seem interested in the promulgation of knowledge among his people. In the Yemen, only the ruler, his children, the Sayyids and those who might be eligible for the royal couch, received education. With such conditions, education in the Yemen was left to the mosque-schools, where the Sayyids would teach the common people (*al-'amma*) submission. Thus they enhanced their own authority in the country.

The presence of the British authorities in Arabia represented another problem for education. Rihani noted that the British cultural policy in Arabia ranged from complete neglect to the encouragement of anti-national education. In parts of Arabia, the British authorities had no interest in introducing public schools, since Arab land was only essential to them politically and militarily. In other parts, such as Iraq, they objected to the establishment of national public schools and supported instead foreign sectarian and ethnic schools. He highlighted and praised the efforts of Sati' al-Husri, the then director of education in Iraq (1923), in establishing modern secular schools. But he warned against the British who would jeopardise such efforts for fear that education would be used as a factor of unity against them.

Rihani detected two other inhibiting elements for educational progress in Arabia: foreign missionary schools and a shortage of qualified teachers. In

principle, Rihani did not appreciate religious schools, and he saw missionary schools, particularly in Lebanon and Syria, as a divisive factor. And in Arabia, the missionaries kept the Arabs away from education by insisting on evangelising. Speaking specifically of the Arabian Mission under the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church of America, which had branches in Bahrain, Basra and Kuwait, he commented that if the missionaries taught the Arabs health, hygiene and a correct way of thinking, they would achieve a better result and would encourage education among the Arabs. As for the shortage of qualified teachers, Rihani believed it was due to the narrow concept of nationalism which made Arab governments, such as those in the Hijaz and Iraq, consider other Arabs, Syrians or Egyptians, as foreigners and refuse their expert educational assistance. He saw that unless this narrow *'asabiyya* was replaced with Pan-Arab nationalism, progress and unity would remain remote.

National education, in Rihani's view, was the cornerstone of sound and solid progress, the basis of true patriotism and the way to complete independence and unity. In a letter to Ibn Sa'ud in 1927, he wrote: 'the first emigration (*hijra*) of the Bedu was from idolatry to the belief in the Oneness of God, and from nomadism to civilization. The next *hijra* will be from illiteracy to the alphabet, from ignorance to education ... The achievement of your aspirations rests on schools. These complement the sword and pave the way for the achievement of a universal, solid and sovereign Arab unity'.<sup>59</sup>

### **Modern Means of Communication and Transportation**

During his travels Rihani found that Arabia lacked any modern roads, and that the accessible routes were only used by camels. Carriage roads, originally for military use, not for peace and commerce, had succumbed to the agencies of destruction. Railways and trains were also relics of war, areas in the Gulf were not accessible to steam, and the only modern means of communication, the telegraph, was in the hands of the British. Concerned with progress as well as the unity of Arabia, Rihani tried to convince the Arab rulers that in the days of the telegraph and aviation, the isolation of Arabia was no longer justifiable. For a better exploitation of its economic, natural and intellectual resources, Arabia needed to be more receptive to commerce and travel and opened to the outside world. This was not possible without contact along modern lines of communication and transportation, and without technology, printing presses, education and a new way of thinking.<sup>60</sup>

Modern methods of communication and transportation were equally essential to establishing economic and commercial relations and, more importantly, mutual understanding between the Arab 'states' themselves.

Rihani found that psychological as well as physical barriers separated the Arabs. Not only were rulers not interested in communicating with each other, but lack of communication prevented knowledge and mutual understanding at the people's level. Ordinary Arabs knew little about life beyond the frontiers of their small world.

Rihani believed that the path to the Arabs' unity passed through mutual understanding and co-operation, and once unity was achieved it could not progress and survive without a network of modern communications and transportation. Such a network was required to traverse the long distances of desert and to link distant Arab countries. No doubt Rihani saw that in a 'vast country' like Arabia, continuously threatened by rebellious tribes and ambitious dissidents, 'a government would need an efficient network of modern communication'.<sup>61</sup>

To be sovereign and independent, economically and politically, Rihani believed that the Arabs needed to liberate the strategic areas in Arabia from foreign control. Aden for example, 'a very important station on the highway of world traffic and navigation', was controlled by the British who, when dividing the Arabs, ensured order and security. He noted that 'the most important telegraph office in the world' was in Aden, which received and distributed messages from and to the five continents. Through Aden 'the East keeps in touch with the West', 'the distances are bridged' with telegraph for business and intelligence, and the progress of the world is maintained.

It is clear that Rihani placed special emphasis on Aden in order to awaken the Arabs to understand British colonialist policy, to be aware of the assets of their country, and to attract their attention to the importance of controlling modern means of communication for their own political and economic progress. He stressed the need for knowledge and a firm hand to maintain security and order, which such centres of materialism required. He saw that, in their condition, the Arabs could not fulfil those requirements for two main reasons: because of their internal strife; and because these stations needed finance and science, which the Arabs lacked.<sup>62</sup> Modern means of communication and transportation depended on materialism and required new technology and science. This needed to be borrowed from the West, and Rihani had no objection to borrowing. Science for him was the key and the door, hence the relationship between Pan-Arabism and scientific progress in his vision.

### **The Pan-Arab Dream**

Just as he identified obstacles and recommended the means for Arab unity, Rihani could see signs for optimism, particularly during the 1930s. In 1938–

39, fifteen years after he left Arabia, Rihani was convinced that the dream of Arab unity had started to come to fruition. In two articles published in English in *Asia* magazine in 1938 and 1939, he summed up the prospects of an Arab confederation in the near future.<sup>63</sup> By then, King Husayn and his son 'Ali had been expelled from the Hijaz (in 1925), and the Idrisis removed from 'Asir. After the conquest of the Hijaz, Ibn Sa'ud succeeded to unite most of the Arabian Peninsula under his rule. His kingdom extended to the Red Sea including the Hijaz, Upper and Lower 'Asir down to the Yemen border. In 1934, after he had invaded the Yemen, Ibn Sa'ud withdrew his forces from Hudaidah and concluded with the Imam a treaty of friendship and defence (the Treaty of Ta'if of 1934), thus making the two rulers allies. And in April 1936, a treaty of brotherhood and alliance was concluded between Saudi Arabia and independent Iraq, to which Imam Yahya subscribed a year later.

In the light of such developments, Rihani asserted that since, as he had advocated earlier, the Arabian Peninsula was now more or less united in two parts under the two strong men of Arabia, Ibn Sa'ud and the Imam, the chances of wider Arab unity were greater, despite British and French control over their 'protectorates' in the Peninsula (in Aden and the Arab/Persian Gulf) and in the north (Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, East Jordan and Palestine). Rihani was convinced that Arab unity had become a certainty. If not total, it would, at the least, be in the form of a 'confederation' of Arab states. This was 'obviously the first goal' of the 'independent Arab states', he wrote, and it is 'within sight'.

Twenty-three years after the Arab revolt, Rihani was able to assert that Pan-Arabism had become an all-Arab movement, which swept through the Arab world and penetrated into the heart of the people as never before in Arab history. He detected in the Arab world a passionate desire and striving for unity. The factors of its progress (as distinct from the early obstacles in 1924) were, in his view, internal and external. Internally, tribalism was declining. The illiterate Bedouins had become a united people engaged in trade and agriculture. Those in the northern desert whose land was divided by the mandatory powers between Syria and Iraq, had begun to realise the evil of foreign rule, and they were becoming militant apostles of a free and united Arabia.

Externally, he saw that the colonial policy, Turkish in Alexandretta, French in Syria and Lebanon, British and Jewish in Palestine, had raised Arab resentment. This had broadened the scope of Arab consciousness to include the Arabs of the Peninsula who, until a short time before, were torn between their sectarian and tribal loyalties. The division of the northern territories into small 'independent' states, and the abuses of the mandate

authorities, made the people of those countries look for salvation in unity with other Arabs. The people of the north, particularly in Syria and Lebanon, might think their standard of culture was higher than that of the Peninsula; they might suppose that a government, which suited Central Arabia, may not be suitable for them; they may not even be ethnologically pure Arabs; but he was convinced that they embraced the Arab cause with unwavering conviction. Even the Christians, despite attempts to isolate them from the Arab movement, were ready to join the unity. The Greek Orthodox Church, together with the intelligentsia of the Christian Arab countries were, in his opinion, wholeheartedly Arab in creed and deed, and this was 'a potent factor ... in the Pan-Arab movement'.<sup>64</sup> Internationally, he saw that the aggressions of Hitler and Mussolini had aroused suspicions and spurred the Arabs on to more practical efforts for solidarity and unification.

With those factors speeding the Arab movement, Rihani saw that, if the complete unification of the Arab world under one ruler was not expected in the near future, the success of an 'Arab confederation', following the pattern, more or less, of the United States, was possible. The first sign of its success was the Iraqi-Saudi treaty (1936). This welcomed union with every independent Arab state, and its protocol had set an example for economic and political Arab relations. Thus it represented, in his view, an organic instrument for the development within its frame of the foundations of an Arab confederation. A potential democratic government in the newly established Syrian Republic with the highest goal of Arab unity, and the abolishment of visas between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, represented for him another two signs for the success of Arab confederation.

Of course, Rihani was aware that the British and the French would not welcome such confederation. But he realised that because of their interests in the Arab world the two powers would look with favour upon it. He counted upon the Anglo-Saudi friendship to solve the problem of Palestine and to encourage the establishment of the confederation. Moreover, he was hoping that the Arabs, especially Ibn Sa'ud and the Imam who were aware of the implications of the colonial policy, would have realistic foreign relations and sincerely work for the Arab confederation.

Again Rihani found in Ibn Sa'ud, now 'King of Saudi Arabia', a title which reflected his 'Pan-Arab mind', a new source of hope, inspiration and unifying power. Not only had he succeeded in making himself the 'Lord of the Holy City', but also the Pan-Arab national leader. In Ibn Sa'ud, Rihani found most of the conditions required for the leader of Arab unity. His personality, his justice, and the way he dealt with every situation made him, in Rihani's view, the best leader for the Pan-Arab movement.

Rihani also emphasised Ibn Sa'ud's dynamism, which contributed to his success. Ibn Sa'ud, he observed, had given the Arabs military triumph, security and freedom, and he had introduced them to modern technology and science. By seeking scientific assistance from the West and human resources from Egypt and Syria, Ibn Sa'ud proved to have a flexible mind, which was essential for Arab progress and unity. Moreover, Rihani emphasised Ibn Sa'ud's success in putting an end to tribal rapacity and warfare, in establishing among all the tribes a real and workable brotherhood, and in shifting them from the insecurities of nomadism to settlement and rural life. In a word, Rihani expected Ibn Sa'ud to play a great role in realising the Pan-Arab dream, because of his astuteness and diplomacy and his ability to deal successfully with the various obstacles in the path of the regeneration of Arabia.

### **Pan-Arab Nationalism: A Realist Vision**

Rihani was the first to give an unambiguous political (as distinct from cultural or linguistic) definition of the idea of Arab nationalism,<sup>65</sup> a cherished idea in the modern Arab world since the beginning of the twentieth century. As early as 1909, he had provided the first territorial definition of the 'Arab homeland' (*al-watan*) as encompassing geographical Syria, Mesopotamia, and the Arabian Peninsula. In 1939 he reasserted his definition of Pan-Arabism. The Arab homeland, he said, consisted of a well-defined area comprising two distinct geographical divisions: the Peninsula and 'the Green Zone' in the north. These two divisions were, in his view, 'one, but not the same'. He saw them as complementary. For if the Peninsula was 'the brawn' of the Arab world, the north was 'its brain'. The two divisions, he argued, depended upon each other in more than one sense. Without the desert, 'the cradle of the Arab race', which supplied the north with new blood and power, the principal centres, Iraq and Syria (including Lebanon and Palestine) would deteriorate socially, morally and materially. 'And without the northern zone the people of the desert cannot long survive'.<sup>66</sup>

It is thus evident that Rihani excluded both Egypt and North Africa (*al-Maghrib*) from this political map for Pan-Arab unity. Two points need to be made here. First, Rihani was not alone in this. The Arabs' meeting at the First Conference in Paris 1913, excluded these countries. Although later on, Arab nationalist thinkers included Egypt, many Egyptian intellectuals in the 1930s still thought of their country, at least in the political sense, outside the framework of a Pan-Arab world.<sup>67</sup> The Maghrib, then still under French rule, perceived itself more in terms of an Islamic rather than Arab identity, although the Arabic language was considered as important. Secondly, despite

his awareness of the Arab cultural identity of both Egypt and the Maghrib, as seen in many instances in his writings (especially his *al-Maghrib al-Aqsa*), Rihani did not extend this to the realm of politics.

Rihani viewed both geography and history as the basis for unity of the Arab world. In his vision, the Arabs as a race originated from the Peninsula, a geographical area known by their name, *al-diyar al-'arabiyya*, thousands of years ago. Thus Arab history for him did not start with the beginning of Arab Islamic expansion, nor did he confine himself to the nomadic life of the Arabs mainly in the Peninsula. In his writings, succinct reference is made to the Arab states in pre-Islamic times, including the kingdoms of the Nabataeans, Qedar and Ghassan in the north, and the kingdoms of Saba' and Himyar in south-west Arabia.<sup>68</sup>

Although Rihani did not provide a study of Arab history in the strict sense, in his writings he attempted to emphasise the long history of the Arabs and their struggle against their harsh environment. Reflecting a perception of the pattern of Arab history that was familiar to both early Western Orientalists and Westernising Arab authors, Rihani highlighted the movements of the Arabs from the barren desert into the fertile zone and urban centres. According to this perception, when the sources of interest and subsistence diminished, the Arabs of the Peninsula migrated eastward and northward, to the cities on the Gulf, to Iraq, to Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. This continuous movement in times of peace, particularly to the fertile zone, became a mass-migration during and after a social or tribal upheaval. He also noted that when the Arabs migrated, they did not all remain nomadic. 'Many of them settle in the big cities and establish themselves in business, while their children, receiving a modern education, become influential in the social, political and intellectual life of their communities'.<sup>69</sup>

The history of the Arab nation is thus characterised by continuous movement towards settlement and civilization. And according to Rihani this was how the Arab nation survived the barren desert and triumphed over death. Moreover, it was a conquering and a civilised nation. In fact, this survival gave it victory and a physical power to spread and flourish.<sup>70</sup>

Beside geography and history, Rihani regarded culture, common interest, and the Arab characteristics to be just as important for Arab unity. He firmly believed that the Arabs were a civilised nation, which contributed to the history of humankind in science, literature, language and religion. Highlighting a theme which was to become constant in the Arab nationalist discourse, Rihani asserted that the Arab nation had carried civilization to the four corners of the world at a time when Europe was still submerged in darkness and savagery. Despite the artificial divisions created by foreign



powers, the Arab nation preserved the same culture in the whole Arab world. Its language is Arabic, and the customs are the same. Rihani acknowledged that the Arabs in the north may have a standard of culture higher than that of the Arabs of the Peninsula. But he insisted that, except for religion, the Arabs in Najd and in the Yemen, in their manner and social customs, and in their noble characteristics were very similar to the Arabs in Syria, in Palestine or in Lebanon.<sup>71</sup>

Rihani's deep appreciation of and pride in the Arabic cultural heritage led him to view it, religion aside, as a binding force for the whole Arab world. In this vision, language takes priority over religion. Naturally, Arabic was the first expression of his Arab identity. Of course, Rihani acknowledged the Islamic dimension in Arabic culture, which, he insisted, was upheld by Muslims as well as Christians. Islam was a power that gave the Arabs a surplus of strength enabling them to spread and flourish. But Islam was one of several factors which helped the spread of Arabic culture. He insisted that Arabic language in Syria, for example, was spread by the Pagan and Christian Arabs before Islam. And he highlighted in particular the role of the Christians in the modern Arab awakening.<sup>72</sup>

Rihani distinguished between Arabism and Islam and asserted the primacy of Arabism. This was best manifested in his famous expression in 1938: 'the Arabs were before Islam and before Christianity and they will remain after Islam and after Christianity. The Christians as well as the Muslims should know that Arabism (*al-uruba*) is before everything and above everything'.<sup>73</sup> Thus while not completely rejecting the relation between Islam and Arabness, he always insisted that Arabism was distinct and went beyond Islam to embrace all Arabs, Muslims and non-Muslims, even those who live outside the geographical borders of the Arab homeland, as he did.

In common with other Arab nationalists of the interwar years,<sup>74</sup> Rihani highlighted the Arab ethos, the 'noble characteristics', which permitted the ancient Arabs to create civilised life, aided their success after the coming of Islam, and contributed to their nation's glory. He considered such noble qualities of pride, dignity, self-respect, faithfulness, sincerity, courage, generosity, hospitality, valour, love of glory and, above all, love of freedom, as distinctive traits of the Arab nation. These intrinsic traits survived the harsh environment of the desert and centuries without education, and remained as characteristics of the Arab personality, particularly in the desert away from urbanism and civilization. 'This glorious courageous people have wisdom, dignity and noble-mindedness, which is unusual to find in similar peoples'. It was these 'immortal' qualities that brought him back from America and attracted him to the life in the desert. With his usual

romantic turn of phrase, Rihani admitted that 'they tied [his] heart to that of the Arabs in a thread of hair stronger than any other tie'.<sup>75</sup>

However, Rihani did not fail to observe that the noble traits might not be found in the soul of every Arab everywhere. In certain parts of Arabia, those qualities had become only a 'tradition', and in some Arabs you would not find even a trace of pride and valour. He also noted that the Arabs possessed their own failings too. Whether Bedouin or urban, the Arabs have 'mixed traits'. The Arab, in his opinion, can be 'fickle and impetuous, swift and violent in his reactions, jealous of his freedom; he is self-centered, self-sufficient; he is an individual with clannish absurdities of exclusiveness; and a respecter, as such, of authority only when authority has something to give besides orders'. While he saw such individualism was at the bottom of inter-tribal warfare and was, to a certain extent, responsible for the slow progress of the Pan-Arab movement, 'it became nevertheless, on several occasions, a racial or a religious jingoism of power and conquest'.<sup>76</sup> His comments, on the face of it, suggest influences of the Western Orientalist tradition, particularly as reflected in earlier Western travellers. But it is more likely that Rihani was presenting his own frank and candid observations and analysis, in the manner of earlier loyal Arab scholars such as Ibn Khaldun.

But who are the Arabs? Rihani had good understanding of Arab genealogy. While ethnologically the Arabs originated from Qahtan and 'Adnan, both from Sam (Shem), he said the people of the Arab world were not necessarily all Semitic. In the north for example, the people in Syria are a mixture of Semitic and other elements. Arab blood was mixed with Phoenician, Hebrew, Assyrian, Greek and other people who lived in geographical Syria from ancient times. Even in the Peninsula, Rihani found areas where Arab blood was not pure. In 'Asir, the people were originally from Qahtan but the prevailing type was not only Semitic. Besides 'Asir was subject to many foreign invasions, including Persian and Abyssinian, and the original type was subject to the modifying influences of these different invasions.<sup>77</sup>

Rihani was proud of his Arab blood. He also seems to have disliked the result of the mixture of blood as exemplified in Hudaidah, and in Tihama, in general. However, writing in a period when purity of blood was still considered important in both Eastern and Western thought, Rihani did not see pure Arab blood, race or ethnicity as essential elements of Arab identity. He claimed that an individual could be an Arab if he/she had Arab blood, but also if he/she spoke Arabic, if he/she had the Arab noble characteristics, and if he/she wholeheartedly embraced the Arab cause (all reminiscent concepts of the idea of 'Arabness' as expressed at the Arab Congress of 1913). Writing in *Muluk al-Arab* about the rulers of Arabia, Rihani observed that the

Idrisi was 'a negro sovereign who ruled a million Arabs, among them many thousand descendants of the Prophet', but 'he spoke Arabic perfectly and without accent', which Rihani found 'a compensation'.<sup>78</sup> As for the people in the northern zone of the Arab world, in Lebanon and Syria, they spoke Arabic, and had Arab characteristics, but their ethnological roots were not well defined. Their ethnological ties with the Arabs of the Peninsula may not be strong enough, but 'whether they are of pure Arab blood or not', Rihani says, 'they are today Arabs by choice and preference. They embrace the Arab cause with a stout heart and an unwavering conviction'.<sup>79</sup>

Rather than ethnicity, Rihani identified the commonweal (*al-maslaha al-mushtaraka*), and common interest, political and economic, as the most important and perhaps the strongest of all national bonds. Liberation from foreign occupation and domination was for him the highest political national interest which, more than any blood or cultural ties, would determine the people's will and desire to live together as one nation.<sup>80</sup> He argued, for example, that the tribes of Iraq and Syria were enemies of Ibn Sa'ud, but because they were disgusted with the British and French mandates, they were willing to welcome Pan-Arab unity even under Ibn Sa'ud's rule. The same was true of the people of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine, who were dismayed at the 'blessings' of the mandatory regimes. He contended that the Lebanese and Syrians shared a common interest in getting rid of the mandate and joining Arab unity, whether they were of Arab blood or not. Because they were Arabs by choice and preference, they were willing to unite with the Arabs of the Peninsula under one rule.<sup>81</sup>

With geography, history, language, culture, and common interest, Rihani found a place for ethnic minorities in Arab unity (ethnic and religious minorities being a major concern for Arab nationalist thinkers since the mid-nineteenth century). In Rihani's view, if Arab nationalism was limited to ethnicity, unity would then exclude parts of the Arab world, particularly the north, where the original blood identity was lost following the different invasions. Also, in excluding religion, he found a place for religious minorities to feel secure and comfortable in a society where they could exercise their rights on equal footing with other citizens.

Dwelling on such centripetal factors, Rihani saw the Arabs as a nation that must become a state. In 1939, on the eve of World War II, he realised that the establishment of one Arab state under one ruler, that is Pan-Arab unity, was impossible. But, as discussed above, he anticipated the establishment of an 'Arab confederation' comprising the existing regional entities in the north and in the Peninsula, as a first step towards that unity. He was optimistic that the people in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine would welcome the union

with Arabia if the two powers (France and Britain) that were in control were to withdraw from the region to make such a confederation possible. He doubted, however, that France and Britain would sincerely welcome such a development. But he was almost sure that because of their fear of Ibn Sa'ud who, in Rihani's opinion, was destined to lead the Pan-Arab movement, and because of their substantial regional interests, the two powers would begin to look with favour upon such move.

Commenting on Rihani's essay, 'Pan-Arab Nationalism: is it a Myth' (*Asia* 1939), B. Akzin suggested that Rihani was the best known of the educated Arabs 'who quite sincerely strove to apply to the essentially particularistic Arab world the European doctrine of national unity'. It is true that Rihani read European nationalist thought (such as Rousseau's *The Social Contract* and Hans Kohan's *A History of Nationalism in the East*, and *Nationalism and Imperialism in the Hither East*), and his concept of Arab unity may have had traces of influence from the political nationalist European ideologies. But, unlike some Arab nationalists (particularly al-Husri) who drew their inspiration from German romantic nationalism,<sup>82</sup> it is not possible to say that Rihani was influenced by one European doctrine rather than another. Where some Arab nationalists seem to have searched for a metaphysical nation, Rihani was not concerned with proving the existence of the Arab nation. This, he believed, had existed for a long time in a specific geographical land where the people spoke one language, and had the same culture and similar characteristics. He was more specifically concerned with the need for the Arab nation to unite as a political and sovereign entity, and organise itself within a new society based on the universal principles of human progress, social justice, equality, liberty, human dignity and democracy.

Rihani was concerned about foreign occupation and its divisive impact on the Arab nation. To overcome its state of fragmentation, he believed the Arab nation needed a national spirit that would integrate all its fragmented elements into one unit. The national spirit (*al-ruh al-qawmiyya*) would also nourish the nation to grow stronger and more confident. 'The ultimate goal' of the Pan-Arab movement, he insisted, was 'national (*qawmi*), moral, social and political'. 'A divided nation in the phase of formation and unification (*dawr al-takwin w-al-tawhid*), like the Arab nation, needs in the first place a national spirit, which emanates from the greatest historical reality (*al-haqiqa al-tarikhiyya al-kubra*), and is the first basis of the Pan-Arab movement'. This national, dynamic, regenerative and unifying national spirit is Arabism (*al-uruba*), which is primarily the consciousness of the essential qualities of the Arab nation. Arabism, of course, is not identical with any religion or ethnicity because as he put it, 'Arabism is before everything and above everything'.<sup>83</sup>

The Arab national spirit or consciousness would make those sharing the national elements (history, language, culture, noble qualities and common interest) proud of being Arab. This spirit would unite the Arab nation because the elements of nationalism belonged to all the Arabs. Rihani was highly optimistic for the future of Arab unity, which he considered as 'undoubtedly coming in a year or fifty years because it was an aspect of regeneration and progress'. Such optimism (characteristic of his thought in general) stemmed from his strong belief in nationalism as the spirit which provides the nation with strength to encounter any obstacles, including sectarianism, the main obstacle to unity. Hence his assertion, 'I believe we should get out of the sectarian idea (*al-fikra al-ta'ifiyya*) to the national idea (*al-fikra al-qawmiyya*)'. The practical outcome of the national idea remained unity, and to this end Rihani dedicated a great part of his life and works whether with Arab rulers, politicians, intellectuals or ordinary people. He always insisted the Arabs had 'no solution' to their problems and to their present condition of fragmentation and foreign domination 'except in co-operation and unity based on the national principle'.

His contention was that as a spirit above and beyond religion and ethnicity, Arabism could be nourished through education in national and secular schools across the Arab countries. "These institutions must have one curriculum in order to spread only one nationalism, rather than different nationalisms and loyalties to many different countries". 'All the national and patriotic movements in the Arab world ought to have one spirit, that of Arabism', he repeatedly said. 'Arabism unites us. It evokes our inherent strengths and enhances them. It establishes the belief, and strengthens the intentions; it kindles the valour and re-establishes the dignity, evokes the pride and inspires the glorious works and hopes'.<sup>84</sup>

Arabism, Rihani argued, was not simply an intellectual or a political ideology. It was 'an all-embracing spirit which induces one to co-operate and unite with one's brothers/sisters in order to have a strong sovereign country which provides them all with security and happiness'. In its highest meaning and farthest aim, Arabism sought to transcend the small and lost nationalisms, the sectarian and regional nationalisms, in one big nationalism that would subsume and overcome the fragmentation and differentiation between majorities and minorities. In Rihani's Arabism, 'the Christian and the Muslim, Druze and Alawite, are one and equal'.<sup>85</sup> 'Nationalism (*al-qawmiyya*) unites and religion separates', he said to Imam Yahya. 'The Christian of Syria is an Arab like the Muslim, and this nationality is destined to firmly unite the two and keep them united ... Religion separates the Syrian Christians from you, but the feeling of nationalism will bring them back to you'.<sup>86</sup>

Pan-Arabism, in Rihani's vision, extends beyond all the narrow fanaticisms and regional nationalisms because it is based on Arabism, this all-embracing non-religious national solidarity (*asabiyya*). This concept of Arab nationalism has two main characteristics: capability to overcome sectarianism in both forms (*al-madhhabiyya* and *al-ta'ifiyya*); and deep understanding of the delicate problem of religious, ethnic and political minorities in the Arab world. He saw such a 'secular' and broad idea of Arab nationalism as the only way to give Christians and other minorities an identity as citizens in a polity that accords equal rights and opportunities to all. And he sincerely believed that this form of nationalism would lead the Arab nation in the battle of civilization and liberation from Western domination, because 'Arabism is the greatest patriotic power, the unbeatable power which Europeans will respect'.<sup>87</sup>

### **The Arab Nation: Realities and Challenges**

Rihani did not write a separate treatise on the Arab nation, but a coherent outlook on this subject can be inferred from his various writings. Two complementary pictures can be drawn: the first draws upon the past achievements and challenges, especially during the struggle for liberation and independence; the second takes its distinct characteristics from the current conditions and the effective responses to internal and external challenges. In this sense, the latter is more idealistic because it looks towards the future and draws more upon the aspirations of the Arab people to build a new nation. In Rihani's vision, the Arab nation is one that survived a harsh natural environment and centuries of ignorance and oppression, and was still striving for freedom, independence, national sovereignty, and unity like every civilised nation. It may be a 'small' nation, that is, not a great power, but its rich cultural heritage, its great contribution to world civilization, and its sacrifice for the sake of right and freedom, especially during World War I, place it on equal terms with the greatest nations of the world.

In a speech entitled '*Ruh al-'Uruba*' (The Spirit of Arabism) Rihani said: 'the Arab nation succeeded in safeguarding its existence (*kiyan*) in the barren desert, for more than two thousands years ... It triumphed over death, moreover, it was a conquering and a civilised nation ... Despite five hundred years without education [under the Ottoman rule], it preserved most of its fine characteristics ... It is amazing how a nation sits in its rags on the floor, eats dates and drinks brackish water, yet talks about pride and haughtiness, faithfulness and sincerity, courage, generosity and freedom, its greatest treasure'.<sup>88</sup>

Rihani had a hopeful vision for the Arab future. But he believed that to meet the looming challenges the Arab nation should adhere to progressive aims and methods. With modern science and technology, it would recover its past glory and success. Continuous modernisation would go hand in hand with unity, which would replace divisions at all levels. However, for this to happen, national secular education should expand to embrace the modern sciences and philosophy because only such a broadened pedagogy would develop the 'new Arab nationalism' into 'universal' nationalism. In this active and dynamic vision, Rihani expected the Arab nation to borrow certain Western values, in particular modern sciences, discipline, and the skills of organization (but not to blindly imitate the West). In return, he expected it to offer the West certain Eastern values such as Eastern philosophy and spirituality, passion, sense of honour and generosity. With modernisation, the Arab nation would not only survive, but its progress would counterbalance Western expansionism.<sup>89</sup>

At the international level, Rihani insisted that the Arab nation should have a positive relationship with both Eastern and Western nations, a relationship between equals without any superiority or inferiority complexes. He was adamant in his contention that the Arab nation is a peaceful nation but would not accept foreign domination over any of its countries on the Mediterranean, the Arab Sea, the Arab/Persian Gulf or the Red Sea. In a paper written originally as an introduction for the Bludan Congress on Palestine (September 1937), he argued that 'the southern coast of the Mediterranean from Alexandretta to the Egyptian borders is Arab, and it will remain Arab despite what happened in Alexandretta, in Lebanon, and in Palestine. The Arab nation protests against every injustice done against its rights and as a united nation in the future, it will seek to terminate this injustice', not through expansionism but by maintaining friendly relations with other nations in order to establish peace and fraternity. Its foreign relations would be based on co-operation and common understanding, and strengthened with multilateral treaties of commerce and friendship.<sup>90</sup>

Facing the internal and external challenges (ignorance, sectarian fanaticism, tribal divisions and western imperialism) Rihani still defined the Arab renaissance (*al-nahda al-'arabiyya*) in three words: unity, peace and education. These concepts were interdependent: one could not be achieved without the other and without inter-Arab as well as Arab–West co-operation. Rihani argued that the world should aim at universal fraternity and cooperation. To be able to contribute to this movement, the Arab nation should first unite and continuously work towards this aim through education and by instilling the spirit of universalism among the people.

But he insisted that the success of this project depended on co-operation of other nations, especially Western, which he hoped would give the Arab nation the chance for peace and progress.

Clearly, Rihani's nationalism did not take refuge in the past; nor did it succumb to the facile temptations of xenophobia (like the German-style nationalism of the 1930s, for example). Rihani did not hesitate to criticise the Arabs in order to stimulate their progress and unity. And while proud of his Arabness, he did not express fear or hatred of other nationalities. More than a mere idea or ideology, Rihani's concept of Arab unity was a realistic program for a real society. His works may contain 'rhetorical speeches and fiery statements demanding independence and unity'.<sup>91</sup> But this was not devoid of social or political content. Even in his speeches, Rihani did not fail to remind the Arabs that independence required unity and this was not possible without education, science, democracy, freedom, justice and equality, and without replacing the narrow loyalties with loyalty to the 'Greater Arab Homeland'.

Rihani's project of the 'Greater Arab Homeland' was not merely a geopolitical framework for the reconstitution of lost Arab grandeur and it was not conceived in terms of physical or military power but in terms of civilization. Based upon a system of political and social values, his perception of Arab society differed from that of, say, Sati' al-Husri, who saw 'nationalism before and above every thing, even before and above freedom'.<sup>92</sup> Rihani's society was meant to be a democratic, just society, but not necessarily a complete imitation of Western democracies. Although he admired Western values of freedom and equality, he did not propose a system modelled on Euro-American institutions, as some other Arab nationalists (such as Edmond Rabbath and Constantine Zurayq) did.<sup>93</sup> Rihani envisioned a system that did not emulate the West but rather sought to tap values drawn from the Arab reality. Considering his experience of life in the West, this stance is remarkable.

Rihani aimed at building a modern Arab society in harmony with the world society. He was confident that the progressive spirit of modern Arabism portended an opening to modern scientific inquiry and democratic forms of government; he insisted that only when Arabism replaced the archaic loyalties would the new Arab, individually and collectively, fight against the colonisers and only then would Arab unity become possible; and he believed that with self-confidence in its inherent moral values, the Arab nation would reach the 'patriotic national' and the 'universal human' summits.



## EPILOGUE

*I am a Lebanese, volunteering in the service of the Arab homeland, and we all belong to it. I am an Arab volunteering in the service of humanity, and we all belong to it.*<sup>1</sup>

It was with such vividness, pride, and unwavering courage that Ameen Rihani pronounced what I call his 'tri-centric' belonging, and he repeatedly called upon his compatriots to follow his example. Summarising a life commitment to the Arab homeland and culture and to world society, to 'universal humanity', Rihani commended his humanism and 'dialectical identity' to his Arab contemporaries. Rather than excluding the 'other', this kind of identity is dynamically related to something larger than itself. It is, like humanism—in the Hegelian sense—not an 'exclusionary game', but, 'as a dialectical process, it is an inherently inclusionary project'.<sup>2</sup> It may be that Rihani insisted on embracing this identity to counter a sense of insecurity felt by Christian Lebanese—like himself—in the heart of the Arab world and to avoid the loss of distinctiveness as an Arab citizen of the world. Rihani's loyalty to the smaller circle, born of love of Lebanon, his country of birth, in no way contradicted his loyalty to the greater Arab homeland and his dedication to serve his people and all humankind.

I say 'unwavering courage' because Rihani lived in a world and a time not unlike ours: one divided between dominant and dominated, powerful and weak. And, as in today's world, some saw the divide as demarcating polarities of 'civilised' and 'uncivilised', and perhaps even 'good' and 'evil'. Like many of us Arabs in the West today, Rihani happened to belong to the Arab world and the West at the same time, never wavering in his sense of belonging to either. His pride in his Lebano-Arabness did not weaken during times of crisis. Rather, because of the many crises facing his people, his tri-centrism became more assertive, and his determination to serve the Arab cause as a humanist (from his position as an Arab-American) grew even stronger. He believed that one could not be a humanist without being oneself first. For 'no matter how much we let ourselves go in the absolute

love of humanity, we cannot forget, if we are fair, the love of our own homeland (*al-watan*).<sup>3</sup>

Rihani adopted this humanist outlook as a positive response to his trans-cultural and often painful formation in two different worlds: East and West. His life and intellectual career, both as writer and activist, reflect his tireless endeavour to balance his East–West belonging in a dynamic association that aimed at engaging both worlds and bringing them together for the sake of both and for the sake of humanity.

## I

Rihani had a clearly discernible vision of a realist and a humanist Arab nationalism. His vision was the intellectual framework of his endeavour to engage the Arabs in an active ‘dialogue of cultures’, among themselves first and with others, especially Western societies. Rihani wished to see a new Arab society established on rational, universal principles of human progress, freedom, justice, and equality, so that the Arabs could contribute to human civilization and play a role on the world stage.

Rihani was not an armchair scholar or an ivory-tower intellectual. It was his political activism that helped crystallise his humanist version of Pan-Arabism. As early as 1909 he had defined the territory of the Arab homeland (*al-watan al-‘Arabi*) encompassing geographical Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia, thus providing the first explicit political expression of Arab nationalism well before the Paris Conference of 1913. By the year he died (in 1940), Rihani had become convinced that Arab nationalism, in its humanist sense, would be the salvation of the Arabs and that unity would be their means of redressing the injustices of colonialism and persistent Western expansionism. As a realist, his concept of unity evolved with changing social and political circumstances, developing from Arab patriotism based on Syrian/Lebanese unity (including Palestine) and unity of Arabia into a ‘pan-Arabist’ nationalism calling for a broader cultural, geographical, and political unity among all Arabs.

It was from his position as a humanist that Rihani became a prominent advocate of the Arab national movement of independence and a champion of the Arab cause in the international arena. When Rihani undertook his American lecture tours (in 1929 and 1939) to counteract Zionist propaganda and defend the Arab rights in Palestine, he did this as a true believer in justice and freedom as basic human rights and as a humanist who believed, ‘that the peace of the world depends, in a measure, upon peace in the Holy Land’.<sup>4</sup> It was also as a staunch defender of people’s right to self-determination, which he considered a universal human right,

that Rihani endeavoured to help Lebanon and Syria achieve unity and independence from French colonialist rule.

Although born Maronite, Rihani refused to be identified simply as such (and recent attempts to define him as a 'Maronite thinker and philosopher' are unwarranted).<sup>5</sup> He certainly rejected the 'Lebanese idea' as advocated by certain Maronite intellectuals and leaders in Lebanon, because he viewed the concept of Lebanon as a political entity for the Christians under French protection as an 'isolationist' idea. Instead he worked for the unity of independent Lebanon and Syria as a first step towards achieving the greater Arab unity. As a Lebanese patriot, he saw no contradiction between such unity and the interest of Lebanon, which could not be safeguarded outside a powerful unity of the Arabs. Conversely Lebanon could not be independent and sovereign without maintaining good political and economic co-operation with other Arab countries.

Clearly the Lebanon Rihani wanted to see was not the country of an isolated minority. He sincerely believed that the Christians in Lebanon, and in the Arab world at large, should not consider themselves, nor should be considered, as a minority within an ocean of a Muslim majority. The question of religious and ethnic minorities in the Arab world is an issue which Western powers have for so long used as a pretext to justify their interference in Arab affairs. Rihani saw no solution for this except in a secular democratic system based upon freedom of belief, and on political as well as social justice.

As a loyal Arab nationalist, Rihani saw it was natural for Lebanon to join Arab unity as he always believed Lebanon was Arab. In all his writings, he expressed great pride in the Lebanese contribution to the Arab cultural heritage. His *Qalb Lubnan*, which he wrote based on his journeying in the 'heart' of Lebanon, is a strong assertion of Lebanon's Arab cultural identity, including its people's characteristics, customs and even ethnic origins.

As a realist thinker and activist not affiliated with any perceived political party or ideology, Rihani envisioned two conditions to realise Arab unity: that unity is achieved gradually, and that it is based on freedom. He insisted that national feeling must be universal and must reach the people's hearts before reaching the rulers themselves. Political change could not be imposed on people by force; hence the important role of national education, for true change in politics and government should be preceded by a change in ideas. Rihani's belief in freedom as a universal human right is distinctive of his vision of the new Arab society. Thus came his confidence that in a unity or confederation based on the principles of freedom, justice and equality, Lebanon would be on equal footing with other parts of the Arab nation.

In his campaign for Lebanese–Syrian–Arab unity, Rihani was driven by his strong feeling of love and sincere loyalty (patriotism) to the ‘small country’, Lebanon, and to the ‘greater country’, Syria and the wider Arab land (nationalism). Thus, patriotism and nationalism were two dynamic and interconnected concepts in his discourse, both denoting loyalty and love, in a concentric perspective of loyalty. At all times, both concepts clearly implied secular commitment rather than religious allegiance. Because of this Rihani saw no contradiction in his Lebanese–Arab identity, and was certain that his broad Arab nationalism didn’t in any way deny his specific Lebanese patriotism.

Rihani was concerned to see the growth in the Arab East of genuine patriotism and nationalism to counteract and overcome the prevailing tribalism, religious fanaticism and sectarian attitudes, which he saw as seriously hindering Arab progress and unity. It was this progressive secular perspective that distinguished his ideas of Lebanese patriotism and Syrian nationalism, and his version of the broader idea of Arab nationalism.

Naturally, Rihani shared many ideas with his contemporary Arab nationalists. He, like most of them, considered geography, history, language and culture, and the Arab ethos, as essential elements of Arab nationalism. He differed, however, in the degree of emphasis, and in his awareness of other equally important elements that other nationalists underestimated or entirely overlooked, most notably his pragmatism, concern for shared interests, and distinctive humanism.

It is unfortunate that most Arab nationalists have, until recently, underestimated economic development as a significant factor. This is a highly important dimension in Rihani’s thought and endeavour. Rather than ethnicity or religion, he considered the commonweal (*al-maslaha al-mushtaraka*) as the strongest of all the national bonds. This included economic and political common interest. In his discussions with Arabian rulers, and in his campaign for unity and independence of Lebanon and Syria, he constantly highlighted issues of economic development, independence, and co-operation. But liberation from European colonialist rule, particularly in the case of Lebanon and Syria, remained for him the main national interest that would ultimately determine the people’s desire to live with other Arabs as one nation. Rihani’s special emphasis on the people’s will and aspiration in consolidating Arab identity and deciding to join unity is a remarkable novelty in the Arab nationalist discourse.<sup>6</sup>

Rihani was, in his own way, a historian with a dialectical understanding of Arab history. Although a loyal nationalist, he did not have a romantic attitude towards the past, nor did he overestimate the Arab national

contribution in relation to that of humanity as a whole. On the contrary, Rihani was the first modern Arab intellectual to deal critically with the Arab past, seeking to reject its negative influences while learning from its positive aspects. Arab progress, a persistent idea that preoccupied him as a thinker and activist, was strongly connected in his discourse with profound change and transformation aiming to enhance happiness in human society. It required shaking off unreflective fealty to tradition but not a complete rejection of the past. Rihani always asserted his pride in the Arab contribution to world civilization, and he stressed that the Arabs were entitled to their share of the glory of this civilization just as the Europeans were. But he believed that nations should be able to achieve progress with today's science and that only by combining the positive values of their cultural heritage with the positive values of Western civilization could the Arabs advance. Spiritual inspiration from the past and material advancement in a scientifically enlightened future were the two key elements of a cultural dynamism that would create a new society, a nation that could compete with the powers of the West and play an effective role on the world stage.

## II

In his concern for Arab unity, Rihani highlighted the significance of democracy and human rights. He saw the Arabs as a nation with an ultimate right to have one political state. This was an important concern that consumed a great part of his intellectual endeavour and political activities. To the end of his life, he remained optimistic about the fulfilment of the Pan-Arab dream. He perceived this in concrete terms, with a deep understanding of both the historical depth and cultural factors that potentially unite the Arabs, as well as the real obstacles hindering their unity.

Because his concept of Arab unity was not isolated from his notions of social, intellectual, and political development, he offered a practical plan to establish and organise such a unified entity. In Arabia, he urged the development of political institutions, a solid infrastructure and productive human resources. And in the north (Lebanon and Syria), he insisted on democratic civil government, economic development, and liberation from the colonialist French mandates and foreign cultural domination. These conditions were essentially related to his ideas of progress, democracy, justice, and freedom, which Rihani emphasised as basic human rights that were indispensable for the building of the new Arab nation. It is such emphasis that made Rihani a pioneer of democracy and human rights in the modern Arab nationalist discourse.

Rihani was a spontaneous writer with a great deal of poetic flair in his style. He may speak with romanticism about the Arabs and the Arab nation, but in his thought he tended to be more realistic and rational than other more abstract Arab nationalists. Despite his criticism of the abuse of democracy in the West, Rihani still believed that constitutional parliamentary civil rule, based on people's freedom and participation regardless of religious differences, remained the best means of building the new Arab society. Nevertheless, his advocacy of democracy was a cautious one. For example, because of the special circumstances in the Arabian Peninsula of his time (dynastic traditions, tribal ethos, and lack of national education), he believed that a monarch—a wise, just, and paternal leader—suited Arabia more than a republican government modelled on Western democracies. Thus we find a distinctly pragmatic accent in Rihani's rationalist humanist project: it was not only a form of reflection upon Arab unity and the reform of Arab society, but it was also an active endeavour towards the realisation of those goals, a practical concept based on universal principles of human progress.

Sectarianism, as one of the major obstacles to Arab unity and progress, had to be addressed. Unity, in Rihani's mind, would remain impossible unless the narrow sectarian identity was replaced with a broader national one. So he argued in favour of secular pan-Arabism to counteract all the sectarian and regional nationalisms. He insisted that in a secular Arab national state under a government established on solid rational civil bases, not on religious hegemony, all citizens would be equal in rights and duties. The fear of minorities would be unjustifiable, and Europeans would no longer have a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of the nation.

Herein was Rihani's solution to the dilemma faced by Christian Arabs like himself. A narrow Christian Lebanese patriotism, for example, would encircle the Christians in a small country hostile to its Muslim surroundings. On the other hand, as Christians in an Islamic state, the Lebanese would feel estranged from an expressly Islamic political order. Consequently, he saw secular Arab nationalism as the only way to give Christians and other minorities in the Arab world an identity as citizens in a polity that accords equal rights and opportunities to all. This kind of emphasis on freedom and equality as basic human rights, as the foundation of unity, is the distinctive note in his vision of a humanist Arab nationalism. Arabism, in his vision, an all-embracing non-religious national solidarity (*'asabiyya*), would lead the Arabs in the battle of civilization and liberation.

Rihani's ideas showed considerable foresight for their time. This is evidenced by the fact that many of the issues raised by him are still relevant today, and continue to generate much discussion and debate. Indeed, the phenomenon

of sectarianism against which he constantly warned, is certainly a main cause of the tragic recent history of Lebanon. Similarly, the ongoing appalling sectarian conflict ravaging Iraq since the US invasion in 2003 is a living proof that sectarianism remains the Arabs' most serious predicament, and one of the potentially dangerous issues facing the Middle East today. The way in which Rihani linked the anti-sectarian national identity to democracy, equality, freedom and human rights is now a question often raised in current debate, particularly in the context of finding solutions to the many crises in the Arab world.

### III

In his futuristic Arab vision, Rihani viewed the Arabs as a potential political force in the world; not a great power, but a 'small, united nation' striving for freedom, justice and world peace. He optimistically hoped that the Western powers, especially Britain and France as the then leading world powers (but also the USA), would give the Arabs the chance to be such a peaceful nation, and to contribute to human progress and play a role on the world stage. But the Arab nation had to do its bit too.

Being such a humanist, optimistic visionary, Rihani urged the Arabs to struggle against Western colonialism, but at the same time endeavoured to help them establish a positive relationship with Western nations (beside good relationships among themselves and other Eastern nations). Especially after his Arabian travels, he became firmly convinced that in their encounter with the West, the Arabs lacked a minimum sense of engagement in debate or dialogue. The absence of a cultural policy, let alone a political one, on their part contributed to the Arabs' cultural and political isolation and inferiority. Therefore, he persisted in his writings and activities, in commending the Arabs to start a real engagement in a dialogue with Western cultures; and he appealed to Western nations to initiate a constructive interaction with the Arabs based on genuine friendship, co-operation and mutual understanding.

Undoubtedly, his rich and diverse experiences in two different worlds during a period of rapid cultural and political change enabled Rihani to form a well-developed and sophisticated picture of the Arab–West encounter. Several points of such encounter, which he felt very strongly, deserve to be highlighted here, notably the contradiction between theory and practice in the Western powers' attitude towards the Arabs. Let's recall that, although always suspicious of Western ambitions, at some stage Rihani believed the Arabs needed some form of Western assistance (especially scientific) in their struggle for freedom from the Ottomans and their striving for development. But his experience of the mandates, imposed on the Arabs by the League of

Nations after WWI, and of the 'protection and friendship' associated with the British treaties in Arabia, confronted him with a different reality. In theory, especially as an Arab–American fascinated by America's championing of people's rights to self-determination, he acknowledged President Wilson's perception of the mandate as a means to prepare the mandated peoples for self-government, freedom and democracy. Thus the mandate appeared to him as a 'reasonable political invention'. But he soon realised, with considerable disillusionment, that the colonialist practices of the British and French governments as mandatory authorities in the Arab East conflicted with the mandate principles. As Rihani himself put it, Western imperialist powers ridiculed Wilson's 'democratic naivety', and used the mandate to legitimise their domination over the Arab lands and peoples.

An obvious example of the dichotomy between theory and practice was the British Mandate in Palestine, which Rihani warned would have serious implications for peace in the region and in the entire world, a warning that retains its relevance in today's war-torn Palestine. Rihani argued that the British mandate incorporating the Balfour pledge was in flagrant breach of the Covenant of the League of Nations itself, according to which the mandate should be administered to the benefit of the mandated people (that is the Arabs of Palestine). But bound by its Zionist promise in the Balfour Declaration, the British mandatory government facilitated Jewish immigration and colonisation in Palestine. Such policy breached the mandate and let down the Arabs of Palestine in at least two ways. It not only failed to protect them as the mandated people, but it also undermined their legitimate rights, by assisting the Jews of the world, who were not the mandated people, to immigrate to Palestine and establish a Jewish national home in a country that had been the national home of the Arabs for the past 1300 years.<sup>7</sup>

Both in his writings and activities, including meetings with British and American politicians and diplomats, Rihani argued that peace in Palestine depended on the moral courage of the British government to revoke its pledge to the Jews, in the same way that it had torn up its previous agreements with the Arabs, and let the Arabs and Jews settle their differences among themselves in a peacefully and friendly manner as they had always done in the past. But would the British allow this? He was doubtful, because the British colonialist policy in Palestine, as he experienced it first-hand, was based on 'cowardice and hypocrisy'. Under Zionist pressure in Palestine and at home, the British government could not, and did not want to, uphold the Arab rights in Palestine, thus violating the spirit and principle of the mandate.



Commenting on the British policy in Palestine in the 1930s, Rihani wrote, 'The Balfour Declaration is having the effect upon the British as the eighteenth Amendment had upon the American people: it is sowing the seeds of cowardice and hypocrisy in the highest official circles, it is making straddlers and equivocators of the British Officials in the Palestine Government, as well as in the Colonial Office. No interested Englishman today dares speak his mind, dares to be honest about the triangular policy of the Holy Land'. He also challenged the USA, which by then was increasingly coming under pressure from American Zionists, 'to be just and consistent' and apply its own principle of rule by majority to the Arabs of Palestine whose number then was more than double that of the Jews.<sup>8</sup> This takes us to the second point.

As a keen observer actively engaging East and West, Rihani had a deep understanding of Western political culture and a first-hand experience of the European presence (especially British and French) in the Arab world. This was the basis of his argument that Western European powers did not treat the peoples in the East in the same manner as they treated Europeans, because they had 'two different scales for justice and different criteria for patriotism'. He was very critical of this inconsistency in the behaviour of European powers, arguing that while Europeans upheld freedom in their own countries, they ruled the Arabs with a 'tyranny' that knew 'little wisdom or justice'.

The idea that there should be different sets of principles for the behaviour of nations and peoples toward each other struck Rihani as one of the most difficult concepts to accept. He saw it in Syria and Lebanon, where the French, the apostles of liberty, equality and secularism, pursued a discriminate sectarian policy in order to control and dominate both countries. They exploited the existing religious differences and encouraged sectarian separatist ideologies. And to further their colonialist agenda, they used their Orientalist missionaries and schools, not to teach liberty and fraternity—the very ideals of the French Revolution which he always admired—but to 'de-Arabise' and de-nationalise the religious minorities (particularly Christians) to keep them dependent, at least politically, upon France.

It was such 'divide-and-rule' policy, which Rihani exposed as the foundation of European colonialism in the Arab East, that permitted the European powers, 'pillars of colonialist policy' (*asatir al-siyasa al-isti'mariyya*), as he described them, to divide the Arab land. It was such policy that created artificial countries and gave them legitimacy in order to facilitate European domination over the Arab world. Nowhere was such policy more damaging

than in Arabia where, Rihani warned, the British authorities profited from the troubled relations between the Arab rulers and concluded with them separate treaties of protection, and continued to supply them with money and arms to fight each other. He condemned this 'ill-fated' policy, which widened the breach between the Arabs, and enabled the British authorities to control Arabia's politics. Besides, it was making the Arabs fall prey to more apathy, poverty and dependence on a foreign power.

Ridiculing the West's civilising mission was perhaps the most important point in Rihani's criticism of the Arab–West encounter as it touches on the rationale and self-declared mission of Western imperialism in the East—a criticism that finds echo in the works of later Arab intellectuals, including but not limited to Abdallah Laroui's *L'Histoire du Maghreb*, and surely Edward Said's *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*. Imperialists of all times speak of a mission. The Western alliance in Iraq today talks of 'war on terrorism', 'war of liberation' and 'war for freedom', a fight of 'good against evil', and a war to spread democratic values all over the 'New Middle East'. In Rihani's time, imperialists spoke of bringing enlightenment and civilization, peace and progress to 'other' peoples. But his careful observation and actual experience confirmed his suspicions that outside their political and commercial interests, Western authorities did nothing, or very little, for the social or intellectual progress of their Arab 'protectorates'. In Iraq, for example, the British encouraged the divisive sectarian and ethnic schools at the expense of the national public education system. While in Arabia they had no interest at all in opening schools despite the rampant illiteracy there, and they treated the Arabs as lesser people who deserved neither understanding nor sympathy. Worse still, they stood watching, and did nothing to stop the slave trade in which the Djibouti French government was involved, a 'shameful business', which tarnished both Arab dignity and the reputation of Western civilization.<sup>9</sup>

Especially after his journeying in the heart of the Arab lands, and more concerned about the negative experience of colonialism than about the modernity, which it pretended to bring to the Arabs, this is what Rihani had to say of the West's civilising mission: 'The East sees nothing in European civilization except evil, greed and selfishness'. As an intellectual with an urge to 'speak truth to power', and a dream to bridge East and West, he hastened to add, 'before the East awakes, I want the European to become just and the Oriental to become reasonable, so they can reach mutual understanding, trust, and co-operation'.<sup>10</sup>

Above all, Rihani was concerned about what he called the 'Jekyll-and-Hyde' fatal dualism of Western presence and behaviour in the Arab East. He relentlessly warned against the serious implications of the Western

powers exploiting rivalries among the Arab ruling elites, and exacerbating the sectarian and tribal divisions among the ordinary people. He further accused Western military governments (for example, the French in Lebanon and Syria and the British in Iraq) of suppressing the national aspirations for freedom, while creating in the name of the international mandates, indigenous rubber stamp undemocratic parliaments and governments, and appointing to them those Arabs who were willing to collaborate with foreign occupation.

Rihani's insightful analysis of the Arab–West encounter, as I have so far discussed it in this and in the preceding chapters, is extraordinarily useful to understand many of the social and political problems facing Arab societies and peoples, and Arab–Western relations today. This is particularly true of the many crises currently crippling the Arab world, especially the state of affairs in today's Lebanon and Iraq, where many perceptive Arabs trace the calamities of both countries back to French imperialism in Lebanon and Syria, and British interference in Iraq and Arabia in the twentieth century (for example, the Iraq–Kuwait border issue). Rihani's careful examination of Western colonialist policies in the Arab East continues to be valid to our comprehension of Western interests and current interventions in the Arab world, and the question of Western imperialism in the Middle East region in general.

Rihani expressed a pioneering concept of the dialectics of imperialism and *jihad*. As he himself once put it, he was 'by nature a man of peace'. Perhaps also being American when America was 'at peace with the world' helped his outlook. But Rihani did not hesitate to advocate fighting for freedom, both from his position as an Arab–American and a world pacifist. During the First World War, he 'volunteered' his services to the American army and government because of his 'gratitude' and conviction that his 'country of adoption' entered the war to secure 'a lasting and honorable peace in the world'.<sup>11</sup> He continued to have faith in the American principles of democracy, freedom and independence, especially the principle of self-determination as sponsored by President Wilson, whom he admired as one of America's 'great men'.

Because he sincerely believed that the right to self-determination was a universal human right, Rihani, as a writer and speaker, fought relentlessly against political oppression and injustice inflicted by the Western powers upon the Arabs, particularly in Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine. The ultimate expression of his commitment to this cause is captured in distilled form in his political will and testament, which he personally penned in 1931 and addressed to his 'people' and to his 'companions and brothers and sisters in

humanity'. In the first article he declared, 'People's right to self-determination is sacred. I enjoin you to engage in a struggle for its sake (*usikum bil-jihad fi sabilih*) wherever it is'. He warned that 'a powerful free nation does not deserve its freedom and power as long as there are still destitute, oppressed nations in the world'. Not out of hatred for the West, or the peoples of the West, but because of their tyrannical practices he commended, 'fight against mandatory governments and all oppressive governments'.<sup>12</sup>

More than fifteen years before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Rihani had thus declared freedom as a sacred universal human right and he urged the Arabs to struggle for its sake. By urging *jihad* upon his people, Rihani certainly didn't mean declaring a 'Holy War' against the West, the sense in which some Muslim extremists and some so-called 'Middle East experts' interpret the word *jihad* today. Although he urged everybody to fight for freedom 'everywhere and by every means', he certainly favoured the peaceful resistance (*al-muqawama al-silmiyya*), including 'civil disobedience, boycott, and going on strike'. He even welcomed imprisonment and punishment for the sake of right and freedom. But above all, he commended the spiritual struggle (*al-jihad al-ruhi*), that should come with education.

#### IV

Rihani's own beginning as an intellectual was through this kind of spiritual struggle. Let's recall that he himself was 'preeminently an autodidact', to borrow Edward Said's description of Giambattista Vico, 'everything he learned, he learned for and by himself'.<sup>13</sup> Rihani's intellectual journey began with an exceptionally rigorous self-imposed program of reading in Arab and Western cultures, covering history, religion, philosophy, politics, language and literature. This wide-range self-learning was coupled with active engagement with the subject matter, through raising questions, reflection, and often through entering into intellectual debates with his contemporary writers both in the East and the West. Together with his active involvement in the affairs of the Arab and Western worlds in which he lived, Rihani's unusual learning experience equipped him with the tools to excel in his educational 'vocation'. I do not mean that he opened a school or he was a conventional educator. But in his writings and lectures, Rihani stood out as a sophisticated, learned 'teacher' (or philosopher as he was known) who dedicated his knowledge and endeavour to free his Arab people from their stifling ignorance, to enlighten his Western brothers and sisters, and fellow citizens of the world, and to encourage them to engage in better communication.

Such extraordinarily extensive experiences in two different worlds and cultures, not only marked Rihani's own life, making him, against all the odds, the first Arab–American intellectual and writer, but also transformed him into an educational institution in his own right, a leading authority on Arab affairs and a staunch advocate of education as the primary force for change in the Arab world. He insisted that not conventional revolution from within, nor from without, but education will bring progress and real change in Arab social and political life.

The beginning of his commitment to such change was from the earliest years of his career, which coincided with mounting calls to overthrow the Ottoman regime. He then contended that people's ignorance allowed the rulers to get away with corruption and tyranny, and only education would liberate the people because it would awaken them to their rights, and develop their national sentiments and sense of civic responsibility. Rather than through political revolution, true change would be effected primarily through education that would lead to a 'genuine revolution', a peaceful, spiritual and intellectual revolution in 'ideas and morals, in literature and religion'. Thus, even when Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II agreed to grant the people some political liberties (after the 1908 coup), Rihani remained sceptical. For, if liberty did not emanate from the people as a moral and cultural value, it would always be a false short-lived freedom.<sup>14</sup>

In *the Book of Khalid*, Rihani's Arab–American hero insisted that 'the soul must be free and the mind, before one has a right to be a member of a free government, before one can justly enjoy his rights and perform his duties as a subject'. He stressed that, 'a political revolution must always be preceded by a spiritual one, that it might have some enduring effect'.<sup>15</sup> This is why, when Rihani realised that change was impossible within the decaying Ottoman political order, he called upon the 'literati', writers and journalists, to prepare for the political liberation process. To succeed, revolution had to come from the people themselves, and the people couldn't embrace it, nor defend it, unless they reached a certain 'level of knowledge and education' (*daraja min al-'ilm w-al-tahdhib*).<sup>16</sup> That was, in Rihani's mind, the responsibility of the intellectuals.

For education to affect this kind of revolutionary progressive change, Rihani insisted it had to begin with the individual at all levels, at home, in the schools, in the workplace, in the places of worship, and in the civic and political administration. Education should aim to reform the 'self' first, before reforming the 'other' or the public, an idea that Rihani seems to have embraced from Thomas Carlyle with whose writings he intellectually engaged at an early age. This kind of education—not unlike his own—

which he termed ‘modern education’ (*al-tarbiya al-‘asriyya*), should exert a profound change in the spirit, mind and morals, and should be based on the principles of human rationalism.<sup>17</sup> Of these he constantly emphasised non-conventional thinking, freedom of will and opinion, love of justice and equity, and secular democracy in politics as well as in culture and literature. It is possible to view his innovation as the first Arabic author of ‘prose poetry’ or ‘free verse’ as an expression of his embracing of these principles and his own commitment to democracy and freedom in life as well as in literature.

Secularism, as the antidote against political sectarianism and religious fanaticism, is a persistent theme, and always associated with progressive change in Rihani’s discourse. As I discussed above, ushering in what has become a familiar debate in modern Arabic thought, Rihani pleaded for religious tolerance as early as 1900. He continued to press the point that the Arabs should put an end to the interference of religion in all matters of their daily life; and that they should establish their society on the principles of human reason, and infuse new patriotic/nationalist spirit in the hearts and minds of the youth. For this, he insisted on the crucial role of modern national public schools (neither foreign nor religious, sectarian indigenous schools), where education would be compulsory, free of charge, and available for girls and boys from different confessions. Here the ‘new liberal curriculum’ should be based on the principles of sound science, secular patriotism/nationalism, and ‘genuine liberty, equality and fraternity’—values of the French Revolution, which he argued foreign and missionary schools dishonoured (including the French schools in Lebanon and Syria). He told his fellow Arabs over and over again in his meetings with rulers, and in his writings and speeches in Arabic and English, that ‘if strength and justice are the foundation of the state, education is its shield’, as he once put it to Ibn Sa‘ud.<sup>18</sup>

## V

I should like to end this concluding chapter by highlighting a number of points I see as Rihanian signposts in the ‘intellectual revolution’, which he himself engaged in at the individual and public, as well as philosophical and practical levels.

First, Rihani was committed to see in Arab society a genuine intellectual revolution based on ‘sound teachings and lofty principles’ (*ta‘alim sadida wa-mabadi’ samiya*), which he summarised as: victory of the truth and right over wrong; the enhancement of personal freedom everywhere; and the right to enjoy equality before the law by all human beings.<sup>19</sup> In this

context, equality must be understood as both equality between the sects and the sexes. By emphasizing the educational role of 'mothers', and stressing the need for schools to teach boys and girls from different religious groups and social classes,<sup>20</sup> Rihani proclaimed democratic egalitarianism not only as equality of opportunity regardless of religion or class, but also in terms of gender equality.

For over forty years of an industrious and productive career as a writer and activist, Rihani never tired of telling the Arabs and their Western 'benefactors', that only Education—in its broad sense—was the cure for their poverty and diseases, and the means for positive progressive change, which would bring about national liberation for the Arab world. It was this kind of revolution, not extremism nor military action, which he encouraged in the struggle against Western imperialism and the oppressive governments and mandatory regimes.

More than a hundred years before the Western powers decided again to 'help' bring democracy and human rights to the Arab Middle East, and while equally criticising Arab apathy and Western imperialist practices, Rihani insisted that any change in Arab society and politics had to be based first and foremost on the teaching and adoption of universal principles of human freedom and equality. His life conviction and dual criticism have now become running themes in the contemporary Arab nationalist thought, and the Western–Arab political discourse.<sup>21</sup> Rihani's pioneering campaign for the provision of national education to help establish a democratic Arab society has now grown into a strong Arab nationalist movement. Many Arab intellectuals, analysts and politicians, within the Arab world and in the Diaspora, have argued, some since the beginning of the independence movement, that the provision of relevant and readily accessible national education is an essential condition and crucial strategy to achieve social integration and political liberation.

Secondly, to accomplish such an intellectual revolution, Rihani understood Education in the broadest sense of the word as combining the acquisition of general knowledge (*al-ma'rifa*) and science (*al-'ilm*), as well as physical and intellectual training, and moral and spiritual refinement (*al-tahdhib*). He favoured what he called 'pure sciences' (*al-'ulum al-sahiha*) over religious and language sciences, and he equated refinement with Literature and the Humanities in the broad meaning, including philosophy and fine arts (*al-hikma, al-adab w-al-funun*). Nevertheless, he emphasised the importance and role of the Arabic language and history in national education (that is to say the Arab humanities), condemning all foreign and missionary schools, and their indigenous agents, as the embodiment of Western colonialism

because they forced their culture, history and language on Arab societies in order to de-Arabise them and keep them under foreign cultural domination and political hegemony.<sup>22</sup>

Writing in 1999 about his own experience in Victoria College in Egypt of 1949, Edward Said expressed similar thoughts, 'we all felt that we were inferiors pitted against a wounded colonial power that was dangerous and capable of inflicting harm on us, even as we seemed compelled to study its language and its culture as the dominant one in Egypt'.<sup>23</sup> Rihani didn't study in foreign schools in his home country—nor did he endure the *signal* punishment as many of us in Lebanon and Syria experienced it, even after political independence! But as a keen observer of history and events, Rihani ably detected the damaging effects of foreign education in the Arab world. Thus he insisted on the teaching of Arab history in schools, and the use of Arabic as a medium of teaching as well as the language of everyday life. This has become an essential requirement for independence and development in the contemporary Arab discourse. However, Rihani's main contribution to this question remains his original and pioneering call upon both historians and educators to teach Arab history in a 'critical way' in order to learn from the lessons and 'the catastrophes' of the past.

The third point I should like to emphasise here is the influence of Western ideals on Rihani's thought and activism. No doubt Rihani's concept of the intellectual spiritual revolution and ideas on free, secular and compulsory education reflect Western cultural influences, particularly the American democratic culture and the principles of the French Revolution, more specifically the cultural policy of the Third Republic in which culture and education functioned as a form of social integration. Nonetheless, Rihani didn't adopt the Western model out of a tendency for imitation, but as a result of his desire to meet the Arab needs for independence and development. Indeed, in his active and dynamic vision of progress, Rihani encouraged the Arabs to learn from modern Western principles of freedom, equality, modern sciences and the spirit of organisation, but not to blindly imitate the West. He welcomed what he described as 'what the better mind and cleaner hands of Europe are transmitting to us', but he rejected 'the false and unspeakable divinities' of the West,<sup>24</sup> including its merciless materialism and imperialist values of expansionism, occupation, and domination.

Finally, some of Rihani's ideas may be shared by some of his contemporaries, more so by Arab thinkers in the present time. Rihani differed, however, in the far-reaching aims he hoped to achieve by means of rational, democratic intellectual revolution. It is true that Rihani hoped to see a strong Arab nation, but certainly not in isolation from, or hostile to the international community.



Certainly, his 'optimistic' project of Arab unity was conceived in terms of civilization not in terms of physical or military power. His dream was to see a peaceful democratic Arab nation that would not accept foreign domination, but would be capable of playing a significant role on the world stage and contributing to world civilization. This humanist dream was essentially realisable by means of an intellectual revolution and a broadened pedagogy that embraced Eastern and Western sciences and philosophies. The essence of Rihani's ideology was that this kind of revolution was a drive for a free, united, secular and democratic Arab world, which would ultimately become an active part of a global society sharing the same universal human ideals.

# NOTES

## Notes to Introduction

- 1 E. W. Said, *Culture and Resistance. Conversations with Edward W. Said. Interviews by David Barsamian*, p.144. (The interview was broadcast on KGNU, Boulder, Colorado, 15 August 2002).
- 2 *The White Way and the Desert*, p.31.
- 3 E. W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectuals*, p.x.
- 4 *The White Way and the Desert*, p.21.
- 5 E. W. Said, *Power, Politics and Culture. Interviews with Edward W. Said*. Edited and with an introduction by Gauri Viswanathan, p.174.
- 6 See in particular, *The White Way and the Desert*, p.18; 'al-Madina al-'Uzma', in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.182.
- 7 S. P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*.
- 8 A. G. Karam, *Kitab 'Abdallah*. See also my forthcoming study on Antoun Ghattas Karam.
- 9 On this theme, see N. Hajjar, 'The Humanity of a Modern Arab City: A Novelist's Biography of Amman', in *Literature & Aesthetics*, vol. 15, no. 2 (December 2005), pp.75-89.
- 10 T. DeYoung, 'The Search for Peace and East-West Reconciliation in Rihani's Prose Poetry', in Funk & Sitka (eds), *Ameen Rihani: Bridging East and West*, pp.25-34.
- 11 In the novel genre, he wrote four in Arabic (*al-Muhalafa al-Thulathiyya*, *al-Mukari w-al-Kahin*, *Kharij al-Harim*, and *Zanbaqat al-Ghaur*) and four in English (*The Book of Khalid* and three manuscripts: *The Lily of al-Ghaur*, *Jahan! Out of the Harem*, and *Dr. Della Valle*); in drama, he wrote two plays in Arabic (*Abd al-Hamid fi al-Asitana*, and *Wafa' al-Zaman*) and one in English (*Wajdah*); and in short stories, he wrote four in Arabic later collected and published with his Arabic play *Abd al-Hamid* in *Sijill al-Tawba* (Cairo, 1951), and eight in English (in the manuscript *The Green Flag and Other Short Stories*).
- 12 M. Rodionov, 'Leo Tolstoy and Ameen Rihani: The Interaction Between Two Creative Worlds', in Funk & Sitka (eds), *Ameen Rihani: Bridging East and West*, p.75.

- 13 *The Luzumiyat of Abul-'Ala*, p.21.
- 14 See for example, *Critiques in Art; Excerpts from Ar-Rihaniyat; Hymns of the Valleys; Letters to Uncle Sam; The Lore of the Arabian Nights; The White Way and the Desert; Wajdah: A Play in Four Acts*; see also N. Oueijan, 'Introduction', in *Excerpts from Ar-Rihaniyat*.
- 15 Hajjar, 'Ameen Rihani's Discourse on Progress, Justice and Democracy: Dynamics of Theory and Practice', in Oueijan, Eid, Kfoury & Salameh (eds), *Kablil Gibran & Ameen Rihani: Prophets of Lebanese-American Literature*, pp.133-173; Idem, 'Ameen Rihani's Humanist Vision of Arab Nationalism', in Funk & Sitka (eds), *Ameen Rihani: Bridging East and West*, pp.134-147.
- 16 See also Hajjar, 'Immigrant Arabic Poets and Writers and the Modern Arab Renaissance', in *Voices*, Winter 1993, pp.44-50.
- 17 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.130.
- 18 See 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.257.
- 19 H. Barakat, 'Ameen Rihani: Daring to Dream', in Funk & Sitka (eds), *Ameen Rihani: Bridging East and West*, p.103.
- 20 See in particular A. Shboul, *al-Mas'udi and His World: A Muslim Humanist and His Interest in Non-Muslims*; T. Khalidi, *Classical Arab Islam: The Culture and Heritage of the Golden Age*.
- 21 I. Shahid, 'Amin al-Rihani and King 'Abdul-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud', in Atiyeh & Oweiss (eds), *Arab Civilization: Challenges and Responses*, p.231.
- 22 G. Nash, *The Arab Writer in English: Arab Themes in a Metropolitan Language, 1908-1958*, p.21.
- 23 See in particular his article 'Ruh al-Lugha' (c. 1919), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.581ff.
- 24 Adonis, 'Preface: A Cultural Symbol', in Funk & Sitka (eds), *Ameen Rihani: Bridging East and West*, p.xiii.
- 25 *Al-Maghrrib al-Aqsa*, AAK-2, p.8; Letter to 'Isa al-Khuri, 23 May 1901, in *Rasa'il*, pp.29-31.
- 26 Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p.xv.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p.xii.
- 28 Nash, *The Arab Writer in English*, p.21.
- 29 Letter cited in Shahid, *op. cit.*, p.238.
- 30 See comments by Robert Lacy and Sir Reader Bullard in E. C. Hodgkin (ed.), *Two Kings in Arabia*, pp.70-71.
- 31 See in particular 'al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya' (c.1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.65.
- 32 *The Fate of Palestine*, p.30.
- 33 Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p.9.
- 34 *Ibid.*, pp.xiii-xiv.
- 35 *Ibid.*, pp.xv, 3-4.
- 36 *Letters to Uncle Sam*, pp.11-12.
- 37 M. L. Bradbury, 'Foreword', in *Letters to Uncle Sam*, p.10.
- 38 Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p.xv.

- 39 *Ibid.*, p.xv.  
 40 A. Sayigh (ed.), *Constantine Zurayq: 65 'Aman min al-'Ata'*, pp.10-11. The author discusses Zurayq's influence on other historians, but he overlooks Rihani's.  
 41 Memorandum to Ibn Sa'ud from Riyadh, 9 Jan. 1923, in *Rasa'il*, pp.201-203.  
 42 *The White Way and the Desert*, p.31; Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p.8.

### Notes to Chapter One

- 1 *Qalb Lubnan*, AAK-3, p.391.  
 2 For further comments on this type of school, see M. 'Abbud, *Abadith al-Qarya*, MAJ-7, pp.93-100.  
 3 On Lebanese and Syrian emigration, see A. K. al-Ashtar, 'Al-Mahdjar', in *E.I.2*, vol. 5, 1986, pp.1253-1254; C. Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent*, pp.71-72; K. H. Karpat, 'The Ottoman Emigration to America', in *IJMES*, 17 (1985), pp.176-180; A. Naff, *Becoming American*, pp.76-88; M. Berger, 'Americans from the Arab World', in Kritzeck and Winder (eds), *The World of Islam*, pp.351-357; L. H. Miller, *Our Syrian Population*, pp.7-8; M. Naimy, *Sab'un I*, MAJ-1, pp.96-104.  
 4 *Khalid*, p.62.  
 5 See numerous references in his early writings, e.g., *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.282, 287-290, 332, 357, 413, 483-484, 487; *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.166, 180, 280, 218, 288.  
 6 A. Rihani, *WFAR*, p.24; letter to his father, 4 June 1896, in *Rasa'il*, pp.9-11.  
 7 N. Naimy, *The Lebanese Prophets of New York*, p.14.  
 8 *WWWA*, vol. 1, p.1035; A. Rihani, *WFAR*, p.24; J. Jabr, *Amin al-Rihani*, *Siratuhu wa-Adabuhu*, p.28.  
 9 For these, see *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.250-264.  
 10 See for example, *Rasa'il*, pp.71, 76, 93, 94, 98, 101, 105; see further 'I. al-Na'uri, *Adab al-Mahjar*, p.335; A. A. Rihani, *Faylasuf al-Freike*, pp.14-21.  
 11 See Rihani's contributions to these debates in *Shadharat*, AAK-6; *Rasa'il*, pp.14-44; A. Rihani, *WFAR*, p.24; A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, pp.32-33.  
 12 This was either the Maronite St. Joseph School, or *al-Madrasa al-Lubnaniyya* (The Lebanese School). See A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, p.23; Jabr, *op. cit.*, p.32.  
 13 His translation was first published in New York, 1903, under the title *The Quatrains of Abu'l-Ala*. See also his poem 'Ila Abi al-'Ala', in *Hutaf*, AAK-9, pp.120-122; 'al-Alam al-Shakhsi w-al-Alam al-Qawmi', in *Antum al-Shu'ara'*, AAK-9, pp.202-209; *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.3.  
 14 See the speech in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.55-63. See the article of P. Louis Cheikho in *al-Mashriq*, 1 (1901), pp.373-377; Cf. a letter (13 March 1900) to Rihani from the Maronite Patriarch, Ilyas al-Huwayyik, gently reproaching him, in A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.11-12; a letter from Iskandar al-'Azar, Feb. 1911 (sic), in *Ibid.*, p.135. For further reactions, see A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.233-234; 'Abbud, *Amin al-Rihani*, p.53.  
 15 See for example letters to Rihani from Shibl Damus, 11 Nov. 1900; from 'Isa al-Khuri, 23 May 1901, in A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.21-22, 29-33.

- 16 *Qalb Lubnan*, AAK-3, pp.103-104.
- 17 160 articles in newspapers and journals as listed in A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.485-493.
- 18 See a letter from New York during 1898, addressee unknown, in *Rasa'il*, pp.12-14; *Qalb Lubnan*, AAK-3, pp.416-417; 'al-Zanbaqa al-Dhawiya' (1915), in *Hutaf*, AAK-9, pp.87-89; also an unpublished English letter dated 1902, partially quoted in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, pp.34-35.
- 19 See for example, his articles reprinted in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.83, 128, 133, 139, 144.
- 20 'Fi al-'Uzla' (1908), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.171.
- 21 See *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.9, 17, 21, 27, 31, 33; a letter to Jurji Baz, 7 Oct. 1906, in *Rasa'il*, pp.102-104.
- 22 On this see G. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*; E. C. Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*; A. A. al-Duri, *al-Takwin al-Tarikhi lil-Umma al-'Arabiyya*; Z. N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*.
- 23 For his contribution to the press, see Ch. 2. For his lectures, see *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.21-26, 33-39.
- 24 The first to give him this title was Salim Sarkis, editor of *Sarkis Magazine* in Cairo. See several letters addressed to him in A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.144, 152, 165, 182, 193, 207, 293, 322, 330, 349; A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.191-193, 428; A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*; see also articles by Cheikho & Anonymous, in *al-Mashriq*, 13 (1910), pp.389-392, 703-710, where this title was criticised.
- 25 On these trends, see H. Barakat, *al-Mujtama' al-'Arabi fi al-Qarn al-'Ishrin*; Idem., *al-Mujtama' al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir*; Duri, *op. cit.*; A. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*; M. Khadduri, *Political Trends in the Arab World*; H. Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West*.
- 26 See 'Ta'rif bi al-Shi'r al-Manthur' (1910); the first poem entitled 'al-Haya w-al-Mawt' (1905), in *Hutaf*, AAK-9, pp.16-26; S. K. Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements in Modern Arabic Poetry*, vol. 1, p.86; A. al-Maqdisi, *al-Ittijabat al-Adabiyya*, p.420; see also J. Berque, *Cultural Expression in Arab Society*, pp.270-271; C. Pellat, *Langue et Littérature Arabes*, p.202.
- 27 In an unpublished letter to a woman named Florence, December 1907, partially quoted in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, p.46.
- 28 See Rihani's letter to his mother and sister, 13 July 1910, in *Rasa'il*, pp.155-157.
- 29 See the sketch and the comments in *Rasa'il*, p.158. On Rihani and Gibran in Paris, see A. G. Karam, *La vie et l'œuvre littéraire de Gibran Khalil Gibran*, pp.58-59; K. Hawi, *Gibran Khalil Gibran*, pp.102-103.
- 30 See J. & K. Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran*, pp.209, 228-229; two unpublished letters, in English, to his brother Yusuf, 3 Feb. 1912, and 20 Feb. 1912, partially quoted in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, pp.77, 80.
- 31 A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, pp.82-85.
- 32 Letters from Gibran to Rihani, 17 Oct. 1910; 11 Nov. 1910; Jan. 1911; 5 Apr. 1911, in A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.128, 129, 135-136, 138.
- 33 See Naimy, *op. cit.*, pp.25-26.

- 34 See Jabr, *op. cit.*, p.96. For Rihani's criticism of Gibran's 'sobbing' literature, see 'al-Ahlam' (1926), in *Adab wa Fann*, AAK-9, p.263. See Gibran, *op. cit.*, p.289.
- 35 See his poem 'Ila Gibran' (1931), in *Hutaf*, AAK-9, pp.141-149; 'Gibran' (1931), in *Wujub*, AAK-9, pp.568-569; Rihani's open letter to M. Naimy, 6 Jan. 1934, in *Rasa'il*, pp.439-443. For a detailed discussion of the relationship between Rihani and Gibran, see in particular, A. A. Rihani, 'Gibran w-al-Rihani', in Bushrui and Mutlak (eds), *Fi Dhikra Gibran*, pp.75-100.
- 36 See Jayyusi, *Trends and Movements*, vol. 1, f.n. 170, p.320; see also M. Naimy's open letter to Rihani, 11 Jan. 1935, in *MAJ*-1, p.721; and in A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.309-310.
- 37 Unpublished letter to Mrs Porter, 1905, partially quoted in N. Naimy, *op. cit.*, pp.17-18.
- 38 See A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.43-45, 185; A. A. Rihani, *Faylasuf al-Freike*, pp.59, 69.
- 39 'A. al-Khatib, *al-Majma' al-'Ilmi al-'Arabi fi Khamsin 'Aman*, p.29.
- 40 See S. S. Sarkis, 'Cairo Honors a Poet', in *TNYTBRM*, 28 May 1922, Sec. III, p.14; A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.46, 342; A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.195, 200-201, 209; also M. M. Husayn, *al-Ittijahat al-Wataniyya fi al-Adab al-Mu'asir*, vol. 2, pp.129, 281.
- 41 See his correspondence with some of these personalities in *Rasa'il*, pp.189-254; A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.285-286, 324; *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.851-920.
- 42 *ISA*, pp.81-86; letter to 'Abd al-Rahman al-Naqib, 30 Dhu al-Hijja 1341 A.H., July 1923 (sic), in *Rasa'il*, pp.209-210; also A. Rihani, *WFAR*, p.49.
- 43 See *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.355.
- 44 See *al-Maghrib al-Aqsa*, and *Nur al-Andalus*, AAK-2.
- 45 He also received an invitation to go to Palestine; see a letter from Muhammad Amin al-Husayni, 5 Jan. 1934, in A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, p.300. On his stay in Iraq during this period, see 'A. Arslan, *Mudhakkirat al-Amir 'Adil Arslan*, vol. 1, p.7.
- 46 See his correspondence with some of the Palestinian leaders in *Rasa'il*, pp.309-310, 316-322; A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.246-250, 264-267, 317, 322-323.
- 47 See A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.52-62; letter to Ibrahim b. Muhammad Al Khalifa, 16 Aug. 1927, in *Rasa'il*, pp.326-327.
- 48 For the reactions which the book raised among concerned poets, see E. Hunayn, 'Buka' wa Shi'r wa Naqd', in *al-Mashriq*, 32 (1934), pp.235-260.
- 49 See *Qisati Ma' Mayy*, AAK-9; S. Haffar al-Kuzbari, *Mayy Ziadeh aw Ma'sat al-Nubugh*, vol. 1, pp.461ff, vol. 2, pp.257ff.
- 50 See 'Ghandi' (1922), in *Wujub*, AAK-9, p.539.
- 51 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.501-507; *ISA*, pp.7-13; also H. V. F. Winstone, *Gertrude Bell*, pp.243-244.
- 52 On the conference, see *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.551-559; *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.308-315; *ISA*, pp.69-89; see also J. Philby, *Arabia*, pp.292-293; Idem., *Arabian Jubilee*,

- p.69; *Idem.*, *Sa'udi Arabia*, pp.284-285; K. D. al-Zirikli, *al-Wajiz fi Sirat al-Malik 'Abd al-'Aziz*, pp.76-77.
- 53 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.6.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p.6.
- 55 *Ibid.*, pp.115, 527; see also *APD*, pp.94-95; *ISA*, p.39.
- 56 See his conversations with the British Resident at Aden, and with Ibn Sa'ud in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.82, 526, and *passim*. See also A. Sa'adé, *al-Islam fi Risalatayh*, p.224; and A. Rihani, *WFAR*, p.50 where reference is made to Cheikho, Mukarzil, Na'imy and others. Rihani himself was aware of such rumours. See also *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.505; *ISA*, p.11.
- 57 Letter cited in I. Shahid, 'Amin al-Rihani and King 'Abdul-'Aziz Ibn Sa'ud', in A. A. Rihani and Oweiss (eds), *Arab Civilization*, p.238.
- 58 *Ibid.*, p.238.
- 59 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.81; and *APD*, p.5. See also his conversations with Sir Percy Cox in Baghdad, in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.503-504; *ISA*, p.10.
- 60 Shahid, *op. cit.*, pp.236-237.
- 61 See a letter to Ibn Sa'ud, 25 Nov. 1930, in *Rasa'il*, pp.360-361; other correspondence with Ibn Sa'ud in A. A. Rihani, *Faylasuf al-Freike*, pp.120-121.
- 62 Letter to his wife, 20 Sep., probably 1921, partially quoted in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, p.97; also Rihani's correspondence with Constantine Yanni explaining, among other things, how much the trip would cost him, in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.7-8.
- 63 For further discussion of these questions and Rihani's efforts for Arab unity, see Ch. 8.
- 64 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.43, 559.
- 65 See for example, a particular incident in the Yemen, in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.100-101; *APD*, pp.40-42.
- 66 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.126-139; *APD*, pp.100-101.
- 67 See examples of these letters in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.89, 514; also letter from Ibn Sa'ud in *ISA*, p.21.
- 68 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.43; *ACA*, p.31.
- 69 See for example his conversations with King Husayn and with Ibn Sa'ud respectively in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.55, 68-72, 545-550, 588-591.
- 70 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.218ff, 353ff, 556; *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.308ff, 355-356; *ISA*, pp.69ff.
- 71 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.52ff, 162ff, 704ff, 879-927. See Ch. 8.
- 72 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.559; R. Bidwell, *Travellers in Arabia*, p.109.
- 73 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.377-385; *ACA*, pp.225-231
- 74 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.187ff, 304ff, 569ff, 584. See also his criticism of the *qat* (*Catha edulis*) consumption in the Yemen, in *Ibid.*, pp.180-186; and *APD*, pp.30-42.
- 75 See Bidwell, *op. cit.*, pp.57, 62.
- 76 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.18; *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.355.
- 77 For a full bibliography of his contributions to Arabic and English papers, see A. Rihani, *WFAR*.
- 78 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, on religion pp.284ff, 303ff; history, pp.731ff; biography,

- pp.58ff; industry, pp.404ff; commerce, pp.402, 519, 615; geography, pp.603ff; architecture, pp.124, 612, and passim.
- 79 *Ibid.*, pp.73, 626-629; *APD*, frontispiece.
- 80 *Muluk*, *AAK-1*, pp.147-148, 204, 399, 406, 428.
- 81 See *Muluk*, *AAK-1*, pp.18ff, 111ff; see a letter to the Sultan of Lahaj, in *Rasa'il*, p.267.
- 82 See *Muluk*, *AAK-1*, pp.218-224, 386.
- 83 See, for example, the difference between *Muluk*, *AAK-1*, p.149 and *APD*, p.115, *Muluk*, *AAK-1*, p.111, and *APD*, p.63, when talking about prostitution in the Yemen, how the story differed from one version to the other, in a way to tell the truth without too many embarrassing details.
- 84 See the difference between *Muluk*, *AAK-1*, p.399 and *ACA*, p.309; *Muluk*, *AAK-1*, pp.406-408.
- 85 M. W. Wenner, *Modern Yemen*, pp.73, 143; W. Sharara, *al-Ahl w-al-Ghanima*, pp.41ff.
- 86 The other two were by H. Scotte and H. Ingrams; see R. D. Burrowes, *The Yemen Arab Republic*, p.161.

### Notes to Chapter Two

- 1 See *Shadharat*, *AAK-6*; *al-Rihaniyyat*, *AAK-7*, pp.195, 401, 409, 614; *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK-8*, pp.17, 31, 89, 250, 272, 295, 299; *Hutaf*, *AAK-9*, pp.17, 96, 106; *Qisati Ma' Mayy*, *AAK-9*, p.585; articles in *Filastin*; D. al-Akkari, *al-Sihafa al-Thawriyya fi Lubnan*, pp.14, 165; 'U. Fakhuri, *al-Haqiqa al-Lubnaniyya*, pp.57-58; A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.74, 91ff; A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.108, 116, 125, 131ff, 176, 182, 232.
- 2 Letter to 'Isa al-Khuri, 23 May 1901, in *Rasa'il*, pp.29-31.
- 3 See several articles in *al-Rihaniyyat*, *AAK-7*, pp.95, 68; *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK-8*, pp.250, 272, 294, 299.
- 4 See for example, his articles in *TNYTBRM*, *Asia* and *Cur Hist* listed in the Bibliography. His contributions in *Atlan*, *Bookm*, *Forum*, *Poet Lore*, *International Studio* are listed in *RGPL*, 1890-99, 2, p.837; 3, p.2173; 4, p.1652; 5, p.1392.
- 5 See 'Nahnu wa Jara'iduna' (1902), in *Shadharat*, *AAK-6*, pp.365-378; Naimy, *The Lebanese Prophets*, pp.14-15; also Naff, *Becoming American*, pp.224ff, 319ff.
- 6 Naimy, *op. cit.*, p.15.
- 7 Several articles in *Shadharat*, *AAK-6*, pp.268, 272, 390, 426, 430, 433, 440, 442, 453, 455-471.
- 8 Several articles in *Shadharat*, *AAK-6*, pp.544, 548, 549, 553.
- 9 See *Shadharat*, *AAK-6*, pp.365-378.
- 10 'Nahnu wa Jara'iduna' (1902), in *Shadharat*, *AAK-6*, pp.367ff; 'al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, *AAK-8*, pp.297ff.
- 11 'Madkhal' (1898), *al-Huda*, in *Shadharat*, *AAK-6*, pp.239-240.
- 12 See *Shadharat*, *AAK-6*, pp.365-379.
- 13 'Ma' Mudir Jarida' (n.d.), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, *AAK-7*, p.123.
- 14 See *Qalb al-'Iraq*, *AAK-4*, pp.192-193.



- 15 *Nubdha*, AAK-6, pp.8, 17, 122; 'Carlyle fi "al-Thawra al-Faransiyya"', in *Wujub*, AAK-9, p.485.
- 16 For his readings, see *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.147, 710, 723; *Qalb Lubnan*, AAK-3, p.609; *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.310, 315, 365, 370, 469; *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.494; *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.155; *Adab wa Fann*, AAK-9, p.370.
- 17 He met 'Abdullah of Jordan in 1925 and asked him about certain historical details; see *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.246; also his letters in *Rasa'il*, pp.197ff, 204, 213, 238ff.
- 18 See for instance the bibliography in *Qalb Lubnan*, AAK-3, pp.608ff; *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, p.583; *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.493ff; *Nubdha*, AAK-6, p.8.
- 19 *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.10; Philby, *Arabia*, preface, IX.
- 20 *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.10ff, 361ff; *ISA*, pp.xi-xii.
- 21 *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.12-14, 77-81; Cf. Bidwell, *Travellers in Arabia*, pp.29, 53.
- 22 For an eloquent discussion of a 'positive' academic method in writing history from a modern Arab perspective, see C. Zurayq, *Nahnu w-al-Tarikh*, pp.69-102.
- 23 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.582-583.
- 24 Kh. al-Naqib, *al-Mujtama' w-al-Dawla fi al-Khalij*, pp.17, 20; Shahid, 'Amin al-Rihani and King 'Abdul-'Aziz', in Atiyeh and Oweiss (eds), *Arab Civilization*, p.235; S. M. Salim, *Takwin al-Yaman*, p.590.
- 25 See R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, p.304.
- 26 See for example Ch. 28 on the Bedu and the *bijar*; Ch. 30 on the war between Kuwait and Najd; and Ch. 35 on the Conference of Ojair, pp.258ff, 270ff, 308ff.
- 27 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.143, 145, 660-661, 773-774.
- 28 al-Naqib, *op. cit.*, p.20.
- 29 Zurayq as cited in al-Akkari, *op. cit.*, p.400.
- 30 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.99, 187ff, 250ff, 265, 571, 601, 611, 626ff, and passim.
- 31 See *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, pp.177ff, 197; also his letter to Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, 27 Sept. 1927, in *Rasa'il*, pp.329-330. Kurd 'Ali's work was published in Damascus, 1925-1928, in 6 volumes.
- 32 *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, pp.177-184; see also H. Mruwwah, *Anawin Jadida Liwujub Qadima*, p.202.
- 33 Sharara, *al-Ahl w-al-Ghanima*, pp.40ff, 50, 111ff, 121ff, 133, 158, 200; 'A. K. Gharaybeh, *Muqaddimat Tarikh al-Arab al-Hadith*, pp.342ff, 351ff; also 'A. Abu 'Aliyya, *al-Dawla al-Sa'udiyya al-Thaniya*, pp.24ff, 72, 157ff, 229.
- 34 Philby, *op. cit.*, preface, IX.
- 35 Wenner, *Modern Yemen*, p.73; see articles in *E.I.2* on "Abd Al-'Aziz', 'Faysal I' and 'Djazirat Al-'Arab'; Salim, *op. cit.*, p.591; M. A. al-Tajir, *Bahrain*, p.11; Zeine, *The Struggle for Arab Independence*, pp.16, 36, 133, 166, 194.
- 36 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.731-772.
- 37 See *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.229ff; *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.548ff; also Ch. 8.
- 38 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.217; *APD*, p.241; 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, Aug. 1939, p.453; see also Gharaybeh, *op. cit.*, p.425; Salim, *op. cit.*, pp.282ff.
- 39 See *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.223, 249ff; *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.659; *ACA*, p.245; also a letter to Muhammad Rida al-Shabibi, April 1923, in which he enquires about

- Bani Lu'ayy who were the cause of controversy between the Hijaz and Najd, in *Rasa'il*, p.204.
- 40 See *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.258ff; *ISA*, pp.188ff, 208ff; see A. H. Kamal, 'al-Hidjar', in *E.I.2*, vol. 3, 1971, pp.361ff where the author relies heavily on Rihani.
- 41 *ISA*, pp.191, 193; *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.263.
- 42 Cf. Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, 1, Ch. 2, pp.101ff.
- 43 *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.263; see also the dedication of this book in a form of a letter addressed to Ibn Sa'ud, p.9; *ISA*, p.193.
- 44 For a discussion of Ibn Khaldun, see T. Khalidi, *Classical Arab Islam*, p.126.
- 45 *Nubdha*, AAK-6, p.122; also *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.10; letter to his brother Albert, 12 Aug. 1926, in *Rasa'il*, pp.274-275.
- 46 *Nubdha*, AAK-6, pp.118, 122ff. Interestingly, Rihani was not unaware of certain negative consequences of the French Revolution, see *Khalid*, p.341.
- 47 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, p.570.
- 48 See *Antum al-Shu'ara'*, AAK-9, pp.170-231; 'al-Kuttab', in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.87-94.
- 49 See *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.184; Cf. Collingwood, *op. cit.*, pp.134ff.
- 50 On the significance of travel for the historian's task, see in particular Ibn Khaldun, *op. cit.*, 1, p.27; A. Shboul, *al-Mas'udi and his World*, Introduction and Ch. 1.
- 51 Letters to Ahmad Zaki Pasha, 1925; Rufa'il Biti, 7 Sept. 1925, in *Rasa'il*, pp.247ff, 264ff.
- 52 See for example, *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.326ff, 340ff, 351, 360.
- 53 *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, pp.149-150, 177; see also his idea of progress, Ch. 3.
- 54 See Zurayq, *Nahnu w-al-Tarikh*, pp.17ff.
- 55 *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, pp.164, 173, 177.
- 56 See Collingwood, *op. cit.*, p.146; Idem., *An Autobiography*, pp.97ff, in which the author relates his own conversion from an attitude of complete detachment.
- 57 'Huna wa Hunak' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.41-42.
- 58 On Rihani's commitment, see R. Khuri, *al-Adab al-Mas'ul*, pp.221ff; and works by M. 'Awn, J. Jabr, S. al-Kayyali, M. 'A. Musa, H. T. al-Rawi, A. A. Rihani listed in the bibliography.
- 59 See *Antum al-Shu'ara'*, AAK-9, pp.170-231; for reactions on this attack, see in particular, E. Hunayn, 'Buka' wa Shi'r wa Naqd', in *al-Mashriq*, 32 (1934), pp.235ff.
- 60 See 'Huna wa Hunak' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.40-45; letter to Constantine Yanni, 20 Jan. 1906, in *Rasa'il*, pp.76-77.
- 61 See A. A. Rihani, *Faylasuf al-Freike*, p.88; A. Rihani, *WFAR*, p.39; J. and K. Gibran, *Kahlil Gibran*, p.289.
- 62 On the Arab Congress of Paris, see Duri, *al-Takwin al-Tarikhii*; H. Hallaq, *Dirasat fi Tarikh Lubnan al-Mu'asir*; S. al-Husri, *Muhadarat fi Nushu' al-Fikra al-Qawmiyya*; W. Kawtharani, *al-Sulta w-al-Mujtama'*.
- 63 *Letters to Uncle Sam*, p.24; also a letter to the American Undersecretary of State, 24 June 1918, partially quoted in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, p.94.
- 64 The Committee comprised: Ayyub Thabet (Tabit, president), Rihani (vice-

- president), Gibran Khalil Gibran (secretary for English correspondence), Mikhail Naimy (secretary for Arabic correspondence), and the editors of several leading Arabic papers in the USA.
- 65 See *Letters to Uncle Sam*, pp.44-46; A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.41-43.
- 66 From a letter to his wife, 17 Aug. 1917, partially quoted in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, pp.91ff.
- 67 For this, see 'I. Khalifé, *Abhath fi Tarikh Lubnan al-Mu'asir*, p.111; Naff, *op. cit.*, pp.88, 307.
- 68 For further discussion, see Chs. 5, and 6; also J. Dayeh, *Aqidat Gibran*, pp.86ff, 162ff, 402ff.
- 69 See Khalifé, *op. cit.*, p.85; see Rihani's movements in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, p.355.
- 70 For more details, see Dayeh, *op. cit.*, pp.69ff; Naimy, *Sab'un II*, pp.40ff. The SMLL and the SMLRC were two distinct committees, not one as stated in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, p.90.
- 71 See some of his letters, in *Rasa'il*, pp.204, 222, 242ff, 247ff.
- 72 On Lutfallah's role, see W. Cleveland, *Islam Against the West*, pp.49ff; P. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, pp.223ff.
- 73 See *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.278, 309, 313, 332, and passim; see further Ch. 7.
- 74 Cited in Hallaq, *al-Tayyarat al-Siyasiyya fi Lubnan*, p.79.
- 75 See the speech in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.319-328.
- 76 See his correspondence with members of the Syrian Parliament, in *Rasa'il*, pp.348-349; A. Rihani (ed.) *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.254-255; A. Rihani, *WFAR*, p.57.
- 77 Letter to the Patriarch 'Arida (1936), in *Rasa'il*, pp.488-489; A. 'Arida, *Lubnan wa Faransa*.
- 78 See for example, his articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.399, 403; articles in *NYTBRM*, 13 Oct. 1929, sec. X, p.2, 19 Jan. 1930, sec. II, p.6, and in *Cur Hist*, 31 (Nov. 1929), pp.272-279; and his English lectures published posthumously in *The Fate of Palestine*.
- 79 Letter to his brother Albert, 14 Feb. 1937, in which he explains one of his lecturing tours, in *Rasa'il*, pp.514-516. For more details see A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.234ff, 408ff; A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, pp.365ff.
- 80 al-Kayyali, *Amin al-Rihani*, p.34.
- 81 See 'The Arab-Jewish Conflict in Palestine', in *Cur Hist*, 31 (Nov. 1929), p.272.
- 82 See his appeal to Ibn Sa'ud, Ghazi al-Awwal (Iraq), Imam Yahya (the Yemen), and Faruq al-Awwal (Egypt), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.395ff, and in *Rasa'il*, pp.525ff.
- 83 See 'Ra'i al-Rihani fi Halatina al-Hadira', in *Filastin*, 5 May 1927, p.1; his article 'Inni Mutahazzib' 1927), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.250; letter to 'Isa al-'Isa, 27 Apr. 1927, in *Rasa'il*, pp.317-320; letter from al-Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husayni, 15 June 1927, in which he told him of the result of his mediation, in A. Rihani (ed.) *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.246-248.
- 84 Jabr, *Amin al-Rihani*, p.124.
- 85 See *Muluk*, AAK-1; *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5; *ACA*; *APD*; *ISA*; Antonius, *op. cit.*, pp.325ff, 358ff; R. Baker, *King Husain*, pp.154-189; Philby, *op. cit.*, pp.265-287;

- Salim, *op. cit.*, pp.244-275.
- 86 See his ideas and endeavours concerning this particular issue in Ch. 8.
- 87 *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.381-426.
- 88 See his advice to Imam Yahya and Ibn Sa'ud, in *Muluk*, AAK-1, 169ff, 215, 548ff.
- 89 See his correspondence with Ibn Sa'ud and Yusuf Yasin in *Rasa'il*, pp.360ff, 550ff; The USA recognised Ibn Sa'ud's kingship in 1931. See 'A. D. Hilal, *Amrika w-al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya*, p.43.
- 90 See *Letters to Uncle Sam*, pp.24-26.
- 91 Letter to Ibn Sa'ud, 1939, in *Rasa'il*, pp.550-551.
- 92 See for example his conversation with Imam Yahya, in *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.169.
- 93 Shahid, 'Amin al-Rihani and King 'Abdul-'Aziz', in Atiyeh and Oweiss (eds), *op. cit.*, p.236.
- 94 'McKinley al-Rajul al-Siyasi' (1900), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.434.
- 95 See 'Shibl Damus' (1939), in *Wujub*, AAK-9, p.581.
- 96 See 'Inni Mutahazzib' (1927), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.250; 'Hadafi wa Wasilati' (1935), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.559.
- 97 See a letter from Najib Dyab, 5 Feb. 1922, in A. Rihani (ed.) *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, p.195.
- 98 'McKinley al-Rajul al-Siyasi' (1900), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.434.

### Notes to Chapter Three

- 1 See F. Jadaane, *Usus al-Taqaaddum 'Inda Mufakkiri al-Islam*; Hourani, *Arabic Thought*; A. Laroui, *L'idéologie arabe contemporaine*; 'A. Mahafza, *al-Ittijahat al-Fikriyya 'Inda al-'Arab fi 'Asr al-Nahda*; A. Merad, 'Islah', in *E.I.2*, vol. 4, 1978; Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals*; B. Ghalyun, *Ighthiyal al-'Aql*, pp.5-18, 177-205; M. 'A. al-Jabiri, *al-Khitab al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir*, pp.17-57; Sharara, *Hawla Ba'd Mushkilat al-Dawla fi al-Thaqafa w-al-Mujtama' al-'Arabiyyayn*, pp.61-96.
- 2 *Khalid*, pp.54-55.
- 3 See his articles in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.128, 133, 139, 144; and *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.66.
- 4 For Rihani's familiarity with these thinkers see in particular *Khalid*, pp.83, 212; and several articles in *Shadharat*, AAK-6; and *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7.
- 5 'Ruh al-Thawra' (1913), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.97.
- 6 'Qimat al-Haya' (1910), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.212.
- 7 See 'Anwar al-Afkar' (1905); 'Bayn Allahut w-al-'Ilm' (n.d.), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.97, 236-237; *The Path of Vision*, pp.73-77.
- 8 See 'al-Hikma al-Muthallatha' (1924), and other articles in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.395, 212, 328, 399, 407, 502.
- 9 *Nubdha*, AAK-6, pp.121-130; Cf. Collingwood, *An Autobiography*, pp.97ff; Idem., *The Idea of History*, pp.1-7.
- 10 'Ruh al-Thawra' (1913), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.97, 101.
- 11 'Hal Yumkin Islah al-Sharq' (1901), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.449; 'al-Hurriyya w-al-Tahdhib' (c. 1908), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.33. Cf. the idea of progress as reflected in the works of other Arab thinkers, in Jadaane, *op. cit.*, pp.260ff.

- 12 'Hal Yumkin Islah al-Sharq' (1901), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.451ff.
- 13 'al-Hurriyya Wahdaha la Tuwahhiduna' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.60.
- 14 'al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya' (c. 1909); 'al-Thawra al-Haqiqiyya' (1911), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.68, 86, 88.
- 15 'Wasiyyat Fu'ad Pasha' (n.d. c. 1908), (former Ottoman minister and reformer d. 1869); 'al-Hurriyya Wahdaha la Tuwahhiduna' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.48, 60.
- 16 'Ruh al-Thawra' (1913), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.103, 105.
- 17 See Ch. 8 on Arab unity.
- 18 'Islah al-Umma' (1927), in *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, pp.456ff.
- 19 This has become a current theme in contemporary Arabic thought, see Zurayq, *Matalib al-Mustaqbal al-Arabi*, pp.13-15.
- 20 'Islah al-Umma' (1927), in *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, p.456.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp.460, 467.
- 22 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.172; *APD*, p.142.
- 23 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.99, 167, 189; *APD*, pp.35-39, 192-196; also letters to Ahmad Dayf, Feb. 1922 (sic); Dawud Barakat, Mar. 1922 (sic), in *Rasa'il*, pp.190ff.
- 24 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.9-11, 52-53, 161-163, 167, 189; *ACA* p.87; *APD*, pp.131, 137, 192-196.
- 25 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.304-306; *ACA*, pp.157-159.
- 26 See his correspondence with al-Maghribi, June 1924, in A. Rihani (ed.), *al-Rihani wa Mu'asiruh*, pp.213-221; *Rasa'il*, pp.221-222.
- 27 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.125ff, 170; 305ff, 584, 779; *APD*, pp.87ff, 140; *ISA*, pp.124ff, 158ff.
- 28 See Ch. 4.
- 29 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.51ff, 62, 143, 267, 377-385; *ACA*, pp.87ff, 109, 225ff; *APD*, pp.109ff, 275.
- 30 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.52, 161-162, 379; *ACA*, p.227; 'Hayya 'Ala al-'Ilm' (1922); 'Ghayati wa Thawrati' (1922), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.212-214, 215-217. See also Ch. 8.
- 31 'Conquest of the Desert', in *Asia*, March, 1938, p.196; *Qalb al-Iraq*, AAK-4, p.93.
- 32 'Ruh al-'Uruba' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.261-262; *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.166ff; *APD*, pp.136-137.
- 33 Memorandum to Ibn Sa'ud from Riyadh, 9 Jan. 1923, in *Rasa'il*, pp.201-203.
- 34 For these ideas see Hourani, *op. cit.*, pp.103ff; Barakat, *al-Mujtama' al-Arabi al-Mu'asir*, pp.400ff.
- 35 From his letter to 'Abd al-Hamid al-Bakri, 23 March 1922, in *Rasa'il*, pp.191-192.
- 36 See *Khalid*, p.342; 'Manabit al-Atfal' (1938), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.656-661; 'al-Tarqi' fi al-'Amal' (1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.24.
- 37 'Ghayati wa-Thawrati' (1922), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.216-217.
- 38 The lines are by the early Umayyad poet al-Mutawakkil al-Laythi, translated by Rihani himself.
- 39 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.585-587; *ISA*, pp.232-233.
- 40 'Min Ghanim ila al-Bustani' (1908), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.18.

- 41 See several articles in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.657-659, 674; *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.417ff; a letter to 'Abd al-Qadir al-Maghribi during 1924, in *Rasa'il*, pp.221ff.
- 42 See 'al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.65; *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.189; letter to 'Abdullah b. 'Ali, 7 Jan. 1924, in *Rasa'il*, pp.226-228.
- 43 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.791-792; several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.218-222, 227, 311, 314ff, 331ff. On the question of borrowing in modern Arabic thought, see Sharara, *Hawla Ba'd Mushkilat al-Dawla*, pp.97-153; I. Boullata, 'Adonis: Towards a New Arab Culture', in *IJMES*, 20 (1988), pp.109-112.
- 44 See in particular 'Fi Qulub al-Nawabigh' (c. 1926, this is dated 1936, but it was most likely written in 1926 during the Syrian Revolution of 1925-27), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.608-613.
- 45 Letter to 'Abdullah b. 'Ali, 7 Jan. 1924, in *Rasa'il*, pp.226-227; 'Conquest of the Desert', in *Asia*, March, 1938, p.192; *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.570-571; *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.140-141; *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.66.
- 46 See 'al-Madina al-'Uzma' (1909); 'al-Akhlaq' (1912); 'al-Rihaniyyat' (1923), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.182-190, 292, 389; 'al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.65ff; *The Path of Vision*, pp.102-107.
- 47 On the secular trends in Modern Arabic thought, in addition to Barakat, Hourani, Sharabi, al-Jabiri, see M. J. al-Ansari, *Tahawwulat al-Fikr w-al-Siyasa*; Kh. al-Husry, *Three Reformers*; N. Nassar, *Nahwa Mujtama' Jadid*; T. Tizzini, *Ala Tariq al-Wuduh al-Manhaji*. On secularism in the writings of modern Muslim thinkers, see M. Arkoun, *Tarikhbiyyat al-Fikr al-'Arabi al-Islami*; Idem., *al-'Almana w-al-Din*; A. Dahir, 'al-Islam w-al-'Almaniyya' in Adonis et al. (eds), *al-Islam w-al-Hadatha*, pp.71-102; Jadaane, 'Notions of the State in Contemporary Arab-Islamic Writings', in G. Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, pp.274-283.
- 48 For a discussion of Rihani's scepticism, see K. el-Hage, *Ma'alim al-Fikr al-Insani*, pp.554-582.
- 49 'al-Tasahul al-Dini' (1900), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.48, 52-54.
- 50 'Manahij al-Haya' (1910), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.204.
- 51 'al-Tasahul al-Dini' (1900), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.61.
- 52 *Ibid.*, pp.57-59.
- 53 On the usage of terminology, see B. el-Hashem, *Introduction à l'étude de la religion et de la sécularisation*, particularly, pp.16-17.
- 54 'Tariq al-Islah' (1898), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.386; 'Wasiyyat Fu'ad Pasha' (c. 1908); also 'al-Hurriyya w-al-Tahdhib' (c. 1908); 'al-Hurriyya Wahdaha la Tuwahhiduna' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.48, 37, 60.
- 55 See S. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2, pp.47ff; M. Dahir, *Tarikh Lubnan al-Ijtima'i*, pp.161-165.
- 56 'Ruh al-Thawra' (1913); 'al-Hurriyya Wahdaha la Tuwahhiduna' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.61-62, 96.
- 57 Cf. for example, the ideas of 'Abduh, M. Kurd 'Ali, Antun, Shumayyil, in Adonis and Sa'id (eds), *al-Imam Muhammad 'Abduh*; D. Commins, *Islamic Reform*; Idem., 'Religious Reformers and Arabists in Damascus', in *IJMES*, 18 (1986),

- pp.405-425; Hourani, *op. cit.*; Nassar, *op. cit.*; S. Sayqali, 'al-Haya al-Fikriyya al-Dimashqiyya', in Buheiry (ed.), *al-Haya al-Fikriyya*.
- 58 See A. Ekrich, *The Idea of Progress in America*, pp.195-224.
- 59 For his ideas of reform and decentralisation, see Ch. 5.
- 60 'al-Tarqi' fi al-'Amal' (1909); 'Huna wa Hunak' (c. 1909); 'al-Thawra al-Haqiqiyya' (1911); 'al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.25, 42-43, 86, 70; also letter to 'Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi, (c. 1913) in *Rasa'il*, p.150.
- 61 'al-Ahzab al-Siyasiyya' (1902), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.469-471.
- 62 *Ibid.*, pp.470-471.
- 63 See 'al-Islah al-Maw'ud' (1902); 'al-Ta'ifiyya w-al-'Askar al-Lubnani' (1902); 'al-Ahliyya la al-Ahl' (1902), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.460-465; see also his ideas of political reform in Ch. 5.
- 64 'al-Ahliyya la al-Ahl' (1902); also 'al-Islah al-Maw'ud' (1902), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.465, 461.
- 65 See for example, 'al-Ittihad' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.286.
- 66 'Islah al-Umma' (1927), in *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, p.470.
- 67 See several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.197, 384, 385.
- 68 'Islah al-Umma' (1927), in *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, p.472; 'al-Marada w-al-Salibiyyun' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.203-204.
- 69 'al-Mawdu' al-Ma'luf' (c. 1927); 'al-Ittihad' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.226-229, 286-287.
- 70 See 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920); 'Madhhabi Watani' (1927); 'Taht al-Silah' (1928), 'La Ta'ifiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.198, 247, 267, 385; 'Islah al-Umma' (1927), in *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, p.473. See a recent criticism of the idea of 'union between the sects' in M. 'Amil, *Fi al-Dawla al-Ta'ifiyya*, pp.90ff.
- 71 See *al-Qawmiyyat* and *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, pp.386-387, 470-473.
- 72 'Tajzi' at al-Bilad al-'Arabiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.365.
- 73 'al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.421-422.
- 74 See 'al-Watan al-Wahid' (1939); 'al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.422, 426, and *passim*.
- 75 See several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.267, 380-381, 405.
- 76 See several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.164, 197, 202, 204, 205, 358, 385.
- 77 Letter to Bishara al-Khuri, the editor of *al-Barq*, (c. 1910), in *Rasa'il*, pp.147-148.
- 78 See for example, M. M. Shams al-Din, *al-'Almaniyya*, pp.214-215; Mu'assasat al-Dirasat w-al-Abhath al-Lubnaniyya, *Lubnan al-Akhar*, p.107.
- 79 'al-Akhlaq' (1912); 'Manabit al-Atfal' (1938); 'al-Madi w-al-Mustaqbal' (1938), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.284, 657-659, 674; letter to 'Abd al-Qadir al-Maghribi, c. 1924, in *Rasa'il*, pp.221-222; Article 13, in *Was'iyyati*, AAK-8, p.504.
- 80 See *Khalid* (1911), p.342; *The Path of Vision* (1921), esp. pp.73-77.
- 81 See for example, Nassar, *op. cit.*, pp.181ff; and al-Jabiri, 'Badal al-'Almaniyya, al-Dimuqratiyya', in *al-Nahar* (Sydney), 1 Sept. 1988, p.30.
- 82 See 'Iza la Diniyya' (1931); 'Manahij al-Haya' (1910); 'al-Khiyana wa-Iblis' (n.d.); 'Hikmat al-Khaliq' (n.d.); 'al-Akhlaq' (1912); 'Budhur lil-Mu'allimin' (n.d.), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.447, 203, 165-167, 108-109, 289, 598-599.

- 83 G. Atiyeh, 'Humanism and Secularism', in Atiyeh and Oweiss (eds), *Arab Civilization*, p.44.
- 84 See in particular *The Path of Vision*; 'al-Madina al-'Uzma' (1909), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.182-190, and passim.
- 85 'al-Insan w-al-Din' (1926); 'Fi Rabi' al-Ya's' (1928); 'al-Haqiqa al-Kubra' (n.d.), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.399-400, 429-430, 502-503.
- 86 el-Hage, *op. cit.*, p.571.
- 87 'Wasiyyat Fu'ad Pasha' (n.d. c. 1908), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.50; 'al-Hikma al-Muthallatha' (1924), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.395.
- 88 See *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, pp.216-218. On al-Bustani, see Nassar, *op. cit.*
- 89 See for example, Louis Cheikho's criticism in *al-Mashriq*.
- 90 See for example, M. al-Shabibi's 'Introduction' to Rihani's *Qalb al-Iraq*, AAK-4, p.14; for full bibliographical details on these reactions, see A. Rihani, *WFAR*, pp.233ff.

### Notes to Chapter Four

- 1 "Adl al-Sultan' (1902), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.326.
- 2 See A. Ayalon, *Language and Change in the Arab Middle East*, pp.43-53; B. Lewis, 'Hurriya' in *E.I.2*, vol. 3, pp.589-593.
- 3 'Haqq al-I'tirad' (c. 1898), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.385.
- 4 'al-Hukuma al-Dimukratiyya' (1900); 'Fi al-Hurriyya' (1898), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.428ff, 247ff.
- 5 'al-Quwwa al-Haqiqiyya' (1902); 'al-Hukuma al-Dimukratiyya' (1900), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.327-328, 426-429.
- 6 'al-Hukuma al-Dimukratiyya' (1900), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.422-423.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp.427-429.
- 8 See articles in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.277, 280, 282, 284, 309, 482; *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.19, 22, 34, 38, 46, 54-55, 89, 104, 148, 295.
- 9 On oppressed classes, see in particular 'Fi Mithl Hadha al-Yawm' (1906); 'Abna' al-Bu's' (c. 1906); 'Nahnu w-al-Aqdamun' (1930), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.133, 144, 431-441; 'al-Sullam' (c. 1928), in *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, pp.443-445; on slaves *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.362-385; *ACA*, pp.216-231; also Ch. 3; on women 'Habl al-Tafa'ul' (1932), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.461; on workers 'Jami'a Wataniyya' (1937), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.414.
- 10 See 'al-Maktubji' (1900); 'Ingiltra w-al-Rahma al-Masihyya' (1900), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.276-284, 398-411; *Nubha*, pp.13ff; *Khalid*, pp.340-341.
- 11 'al-Maktubji' (1900); 'al-Alqab fi al-Dawla al-'Uthmaniyya' (1901); 'Da' al-Alqab' (1901), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.280-282, 306, 309, and passim; 'Wasiyyat Fu'ad Pasha' (c. 1908), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.47-48, and passim; letter to the editor of *al-Haqiqa* magazine, 30 Jul. 1906, in *Rasa'il*, p.96.
- 12 'al-Lubnaniyyun w-al-Mutasarrif al-Jadid' (1902) and other articles in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.212, 276-277, 386-387, 422-429, 454-456; 'al-Hurriyya w-al-Tahdhib' (c. 1908); 'Ruh al-Thawra' (1913) and other articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.22, 38, 47-48, 55, 62, 104.
- 13 'al-Maktubji' (1900), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.284.



- 14 'al-Quwwa al-Haqiqiyya' (1902); 'Ingiltra w-al-Rahma al-Masihiiyya' (1899), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.327-328, 398-411.
- 15 'al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.68.
- 16 'Madhhabi Watani' (1927); 'al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.245, 295.
- 17 'al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.295.
- 18 'Bayn 'Ahdayn' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.323.
- 19 On education as a means of eradicating tyranny, see 'Tariq al-Islah' (c. 1898), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.387; 'Ruh Hadha al-Zaman' (c. 1906), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.155-161; on democratic rule, see 'al-Hukuma al-Dimukratiyya', in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.428; 'al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.294-298, and passim; on civil disobedience, see "Indama Yakun al-Tamarrud Wajiban' (1931); 'Habbat Mantiq' (1933); 'al-Tamarrud Ala al-Zulm' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.278-282, 309-312, 313-318, and passim; on armed revolt, see 'al-Haya w-al-Hurriyya w-al-Sayf' (c. 1917), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.148.
- 20 'Min Ghanim Ila al-Bustani' (1908); 'al-Hurriyya w-al-Tahdhib' (c. 1908), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.18, 33-34, 38.
- 21 'al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.298.
- 22 'al-Tamaddun al-Hadith' (c. 1906), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.141.
- 23 'Fawq Sutuh New York' (1906), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.131.
- 24 'al-Tamaddun al-Hadith' (c. 1906), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.143.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp.139-141.
- 26 See H. Mruwwah, 'Anawin Jadida li-Wujub Qadima, pp.195-202.
- 27 'al-Tamaddun al-Hadith' (c. 1906), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.142.
- 28 *Khalid*, pp.123-135.
- 29 See in particular, 'al-Hikma al-Muthallatha' (1924); 'Nahnu w-al-Aqdamun' (1930); 'Inni Mutaf'il' (1932); 'Hadafi wa Wasilati' (1935), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.392ff, 441, 459ff, 559, and passim.
- 30 'Su' Tawzi' al-Tharawat' (c. 1898), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.388.
- 31 'al-Iqtisad al-Siyasi' (c. 1898), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.389.
- 32 'Bryan al-Muslih' (1900), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.430ff. On the Syrian emigrants' voting, see Berger, 'Americans from the Arab World', in Kritzeck and Winder (eds), *The World of Islam*, p.363.
- 33 'al-Tamaddun al-Hadith' (c. 1906), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.139.
- 34 'Fawq Sutuh New York' (1906); 'Fi Mithl Hadha al-Yawm' (1906); 'al-Tamaddun al-Hadith' (c. 1906); 'Abna' al-Bu's' (c. 1906), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.128ff.
- 35 For the foregoing discussion, see articles in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.129, 132, 135ff.
- 36 B. al-Kabisi, *Harakat al-Qawmiyyin al-'Arab*, p.59.
- 37 On the notions of socialism in modern Arabic thought, see S. Hanna and G. Gardner, *Arab Socialism*; also Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals*, pp.79-86; Barakat, *al-Mujtama' al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir*, pp.410-417; Jadaane, *Usus al-Ta'addun*, pp.494-546.
- 38 'al-Tasahul al-Dini' (1900), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.49.
- 39 'Shu'ara' al-'Asr' (1903), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.513.

- 40 'Khitab al-Masih' (1910), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.196.
- 41 'Ila al-Sha'b al-Lubnani' (1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.27-28.
- 42 'Sadiqi al-A'azz' (1913), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.306-307.
- 43 For the foregoing discussion see 'Sanat 1950' (1920), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.343-354.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p.345.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p.349.
- 46 See in particular 'al-Ishtirakiyya al-'Amaliyya' (n.d.), an open letter to Ibrahim Haddad on his *al-Ishtirakiyya al-'Amaliyya*, in *Adab wa Fann*, AAK-9, p.403.
- 47 See his article 'Juyush al-Mustaqbal' (n.d.), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.404-406.
- 48 *The Path of Vision* (1921), pp.76-77.
- 49 *The Descent of Bolshevism*, p.viii. For the foregoing discussion, see the introduction, esp. pp.vii-xi.
- 50 *Ibid.*, pp.47-52.
- 51 See A. A. Rihani, *Faylasuf al-Freike*, p.313.
- 52 See for this, T. Sonn, 'Bandali al-Jawzi's Min Tarikh al-Harakat al-Fikriyya fi al-Islam: The First Marxist Interpretation of Islam', in *IJMES*, 17 (1985), pp.98-107.
- 53 *The Descent of Bolshevism*, pp.viii-xii, 5, 7, 9-10, 47.
- 54 On this phenomenon, see M. Rodinson, *Marxism and the Muslim World*, p.80.
- 55 'al-Sullam' (c. 1928), in *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, pp.443-445.
- 56 'al-Tatarruf' (c. 1928), in *al-Tatarruf*, AAK-8, p.449.
- 57 *Ibid.*, pp.446-447.
- 58 On the communist stand in the Arab countries, see Rodinson, *op. cit.*, pp.84-119; on the impact of such stand on Arab and Muslim intellectuals, see Dahir, *Tarikh Lubnan*, p.289.
- 59 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, p.520.
- 60 'Nahn u-al-Aqdamun' (1930), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.431-441.
- 61 'Jami'a Wataniyya' (1937), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.413-415.
- 62 H. Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*, p.372.
- 63 'Jami'a Wataniyya' (1937), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.416.
- 64 See I. al-Bwari, *Tarikh al-Haraka al-'Ummaliyya w-al-Niqabiyya fi Lubnan*, p.111; Dahir, *op. cit.*, p.287.
- 65 From an unpublished letter, partially quoted in A. A. Rihani, *op. cit.*, pp.92-93.
- 66 'al-Ishtirakiyya al-'Amaliyya' (n.d.), in *Adab wa Fann*, AAK-9, pp.402-403.
- 67 *Ibid.*, pp.402-403.
- 68 'Tolstoy' (n.d.), in *Wujub*, AAK-9, p.466-467.
- 69 'Ala al-Ard al-Salam' (1916), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.333.
- 70 'Ruh Hadha al-Zaman' (c. 1906), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.156.
- 71 A. Fried and R. Sanders, *Socialist Thought*, pp.3-4.

### Notes to Chapter Five

- 1 These are to be found mainly in *Shadharat*, AAK-6; *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7; and *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8.
- 2 e.g., 'Tariq al-Islah' (c. 1898); 'Tawhid al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya' (1898); 'al-Maktubij'

- (1900); 'Da' al-Alqab' (1901); 'Hal Yumkin Islah al-Sharq' (1901), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6.
- 3 See in particular *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.245, 269-271, 273, 450, 484; *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.50; *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.72-78; *Rasa'il*, pp.15, 26-27, 37, 93.
- 4 'Hal Yumkin Islah al-Sharq' (1901); 'Tariq al-Islah' (c. 1898), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.450-451, 387.
- 5 See Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism*, pp.148ff.
- 6 See Dahir, *Tarikh Lubnan*, pp.166-167; S. Murad, *al-Haraka al-Wahdawiiyya*, pp.55-56; J. Dayeh, *Aqidat Gibnan*, pp.21-25.
- 7 'Hal Yumkin Islah al-Sharq' (1901), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.449.
- 8 See B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, pp.126-170; Duri, *al-Takwin al-Tarikhi*, pp.140-143.
- 9 See several articles in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.387, 449, 463, 465, 469; and *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.43, 53, 62-63, 82-84.
- 10 See Y. Choueiri, 'Ottoman Reform and Lebanese Patriotism', in Shehadi and Haffar Mills (eds), *Lebanon: a History of Conflict and Consensus*, p.69; Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp.151ff.
- 11 See Duri, *op. cit.*, p.143; A. L. Tibawi, *Arabic and Islamic Themes*, pp.106-107.
- 12 Expressions of both loyalties are reflected in 'al-Tasahul al-Dini' (1900), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.50, 52-53.
- 13 'al-Hurriyya w-al-Tahdhib' (c. 1908), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.33-39. For other Arab writings of the time, see al-Maqdisi, *al-Ittijahat al-Adabiyya*, pp.44-51.
- 14 See F. Ahmad, *The Young Turks*; Lewis, *op. cit.*
- 15 See N. Ziadeh, *Shamiyyat*, p.249.
- 16 'w-al-Nuwwab' (1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.31-32.
- 17 'al-Hurriyya Wahdaha la Tuwahhiduna' (c. 1909); also 'al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.62, 64-73; *Khalid*, pp.340-342.
- 18 See Dawn, *op. cit.*; Duri, *op. cit.*; al-Husri, *Muhadarat*, pp.208-225.
- 19 'al-Sha'b w-al-Siyasiyyun' (1910); 'Lubnan' (1910); 'Nida' al-Watan' (1910); 'al-Thawra al-Haqiqiyya' (1911); 'al-Lamarkaziyya wa Lubnan' (1912), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.74ff, 77ff, 82ff, 85ff, 89ff.
- 20 'Ruh al-Thawra' (1913), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.94-106.
- 21 For the *Règlement*, see Kawtharani, *al-Ittijahat*, pp.341-347; M. Tahrini, *al-Usus al-Tarikhiiyya Li-Nizam Lubnan al-Ta'ifi*, pp.426-439; J. Spagnolo, *France & Ottoman Lebanon*, pp.41-47.
- 22 See 'Muzaffar Pasha' (1902), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.458-459.
- 23 'al-Lubnaniyyun w-al-Mutasarrif al-Jadid' (1902); 'Muzaffar Pasha' (1902), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.455-456, 459.
- 24 See E. D. Akarli, 'The Administrative Council of Mount Lebanon', in Shehadi and Haffar Mills (eds), *Lebanon: a History*, pp.79-100.
- 25 See Dahir, *al-Intifadat al-Lubnaniyya Didd al-Nizam al-Muqata'ji*, p.188; K. Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions*, pp.165-166.

- 26 See Spagnolo, *op. cit.*, p.221.
- 27 'al-Ta'ifiyya w-al-'Askar al-Lubnani' (1902); 'al-Ahliyya la al-Ahl' (1902); 'al-Mabda' Fawq al-Rajul' (1902); 'al-Ahzab al-Siyasiyya' (1902), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.462-471; see also Ch. 3.
- 28 *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.459-461.
- 29 See in particular Cheikho's articles, in *al-Mashriq*; also Ch. 3.
- 30 *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.462-467; on the increasing influence of the Maronite Church in the Mutasarrifate, see Kawtharani, *al-Ittijahat*, pp.70-82; Spagnolo, *op. cit.*, pp.53-56.
- 31 'al-Ahzab al-Siyasiyya' (1902), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.468-469; see also Ch. 3.
- 32 'al-Tarqi' fi al-'Amal' (1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.24-25.
- 33 On this faction see Spagnolo, *op. cit.*, p.230; Akarli, *op. cit.*, p.91.
- 34 'Rajul al-Sha'b' (c. 1909); 'al-Tarqi' fi al-'Amal' (1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.9-15, 26.
- 35 'Rajul al-Sha'b' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.9-15.
- 36 'Tashih Rajul al-Sha'b' (c. 1909); 'al-Tarqi' fi al-'Amal' (1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.16, 21-26.
- 37 'Ila al-Sha'b al-Lubnani' (1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.27-30.
- 38 On Nujaym, see Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life*, pp.62-83.
- 39 'Ila al-Sha'b al-Lubnani' (1909); 'Nida' al-Watan' (1910), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.28-30, 83-84.
- 40 See Karpat, 'The Ottoman Emigration to America', in *IJMES*, 17 (1985), pp.175ff.
- 41 'al-Sha'b w-al-Siyasiyyun' (1910), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.74-76.
- 42 'Lubnan' (1910), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.78-79; see Cheikho, 'al-Sirr al-Masun fi Shi'at al-Freemason', in *al-Mashriq*, 14 (1911), pp.526-539, 606-620.
- 43 See V. Sahhab, 'An al-Qawmiyya w-al-Maddiyya w-al-Din', pp.152-153; M. Kemal Oke, 'The Ottoman Empire, Zionism, and the Question of Palestine', in *IJMES*, 14 (1982), pp.329-341.
- 44 'al-Lamarkaziyya wa Lubnan' (1912), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.89-91.
- 45 See 'Min Ghanim Ila al-Bustani' (1908); 'Ila al-Sha'b al-Lubnani' (1909); 'al-Lamarkaziyya wa Lubnan' (1912), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.17-20, 28, 92.
- 46 On these organisations, see Khalifé, *Abhath*, pp.109-120; Mahafza, *al-Fikr al-Siyasi fi al-Urdun*, vol. 1, pp.34-35; Spagnolo, *op. cit.*, pp.275-279; see also Ch. 2.
- 47 'al-Lamarkaziyya wa Lubnan' (1912), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.90-92.
- 48 See Duri, *op. cit.*, pp.244-257; al-Husri, *op. cit.*, pp.208ff; Kawtharani, *al-Sulta w-al-Mujtama'*, pp.179-188.
- 49 Dawn, *op. cit.*, pp.148-150; Duri, *op. cit.*, p.189.
- 50 See *Rasa'il*, pp.71, 76, 79, 105; *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.41; a passage of his biography by his brother Albert quoted in al-Kayyali, *Amin al-Ribani*, pp.11-12.
- 51 'Tawhid al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya' (1898), in *Shadharat*, AAK-6, pp.481-485.
- 52 'Huna wa Hunak' (c. 1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.42-43.
- 53 *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.65, 18; *Khalid*, p.340.
- 54 *Khalid*, pp.37, 45, 323-326.

- 55 'al-Thawra al-Haqiqiyya' (1911), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.85-86.
- 56 On Sharif Husayn's proclamations of war, see Mahafza, *al-Fikr al-Siyasi fi al-Urdun*, vol. 2, pp.5-13.
- 57 'al-Haya w-al-Hurriyya w-al-Sayf' (c. 1917), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.145ff.
- 58 See his letters to Shukri Bakhash, 18 April 1917, and to 'Abd al-Masih Haddad, 19 April 1917, in *Rasa'il*, pp.168-174.
- 59 On the SCC, see D. Chevallier, 'Lyon et la Syrie en 1919', in *Revue Historique*, 224 (1960), pp.314ff; Khalifé, *Abhath*, pp.74-95; Murad, *al-Haraka al-Wahdawiiyya*, pp.96-97.
- 60 'al-Haya w-al-Hurriyya w-al-Sayf' (c. 1917), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.150.
- 61 On this and the Sykes-Picot Agreement, see Khalifé, *op. cit.*, p.76; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, Appendix B, pp.252-253, 429.
- 62 See the note in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.150.
- 63 'La Shay' Bila Shay" (1917), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.161-162.
- 64 'al-Salib' (1917), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.140-141.
- 65 'al-Haya w-al-Hurriyya w-al-Sayf' (c. 1917), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.151-152. Cf. Gibran's speech, 'Baytuna al-Jadid', delivered on the occasion of the founding of the SMLL, extract in Dayeh, *Aqidat Gibran*, pp.304-306.
- 66 See a letter, addressee unknown, 26 Nov. 1918, in *Rasa'il*, pp.178-180.
- 67 See Antonius, *op. cit.*, pp.243-279; Murad, *op. cit.*, pp.110-113; Kh. Qasimiyya, *al-Hukuma al-'Arabiyya*, pp.56-58.
- 68 On these trends see Khalifé, *op. cit.*, pp.84-115; a large group of intellectuals in Syria was reported to have favoured an American mandate, see Y. al-Hakim, *Suriyya w-al-'Ahd al-Faysali*, p.108; Cf. Gibran, 'Mustaqbal Suriyya', extract in Dayeh, *op. cit.*, pp.369-370.
- 69 See his letter, addressee unknown, 26 Nov. 1918; and letter to Gibran, New York, Monday morning (sic), 1918, in *Rasa'il*, pp.175-176, 178-180.
- 70 See the letter in Khalifé, *op. cit.*, pp.85-86.

### Notes to Chapter Six

- 1 'Bayn Sha'ir wa 'Alim' (c. 1919), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.169.
- 2 'Lana wa Lakum' (c. 1918), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.164-165. For a critical assessment of the Lebanese idea in the writings of some Maronite thinkers, particularly Yusuf al-Sawda, Michel Chiha, and their more recent followers, see for example, W. Nwayhid, *Naqd al-Fikra al-Lubnaniyya*; S. Taqi al-Din, *al-Mas'ala al-Ta'ifiyya fi Lubnan*, pp.12-30.
- 3 See Ch. 2.
- 4 'Lana wa Lakum' (c. 1918), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.164-167.
- 5 See Dahir, *Tarikh Lubnan*, pp.261ff; Hallaq, *Dinasat fi Tarikh Lubnan al-Mu'asir*, pp.83ff; Kawtharani, *al-Ittijabat*, pp.280ff; 'A. Sh'ayb, *Tarikh Lubnan Min al-Ihtilal Ila al-Jala'*, pp.22-23.
- 6 'al-Marada w-al-Salibiyyun' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.202-204. On Phoenicianism and the ideas of Lebanese nationalism, see in particular Y. al-Sawda, *Tarikh Lubnan al-Hadari*.

- 7 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920); 'Madhhabi Watani' (1927), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.189-200, 245; see also his anti-sectarian and secular ideas in Ch. 3.
- 8 See *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.147; *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.227, 267. On the problem of minorities, see G. Corm, *Fragmentation of the Middle East*, pp.25, 149-157; B. Ghalyun, *al-Mas'ala al-Ta'ifiyya wa Mushkilat al-Aqalliyat*; Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World*; G. Salamé, *al-Mujtama' w-al-Dawla fi al-Mashriq al-'Arabi*, pp.71-114; M. al-Sammak, *al-Aqalliyat Bayn al-'Uruba w-al-Islam*, pp.68-88.
- 9 'Madhhabi Watani' (1927); also 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.246ff, 200.
- 10 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.198.
- 11 See in particular, *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.199, 208. On the various tendencies during this period, see al-Hakim, *Suriyya w-al-'Abd al-Faysali*, pp.54-55; Hallaq, *al-Tayyarat al-Siyasiyya*, pp.48ff; Kawtharani, *al-Ittijahat*, pp.275ff; M. Zamir, *al-Kiyan al-Masihi al-Lubnani*, pp.77ff.
- 12 See Faysal-Clemenceau Agreement (Nov. 1919–Dec. 1920) and Syrian reactions to it, in Dh. Qarqut, *al-Mashriq al-'Arabi fi Muwajahat al-Isti'mar*, pp.81-83; Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, pp.301-304; Sharabi, *Governments and Politics of the Middle East*, pp.116ff.
- 13 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920); 'Ishrun Hujja' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.199ff, 208.
- 14 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.198-199. On Faysal's view, see Qarqut, *op. cit.*, p.28; al-Hakim, *op. cit.*, pp.72-74.
- 15 For the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon, see Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, pp.163ff, 308ff; P. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, pp.331ff.
- 16 'Taht al-Silah' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.267.
- 17 See the letter in *Rasa'il*, pp.346-351; also 'Taht al-Silah' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.267. See Art. 3, of the Syrian Constitution (14 May 1930) in A. al-Khatib, *al-Dawla w-al-Nuzum al-Siyasiyya: al-Duwal al-'Arabiyya Min Khilal Dasatiriha*, vol. 3:2, p.96.
- 18 'Taht al-Silah' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.266-269; *Rasa'il*, pp.350-351.
- 19 See *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.246, 261, 264; also Ch. 3 and Ch. 7.
- 20 See in particular *The Fate of Palestine*; 'al-'Amal Min Ajl Filastin' (1936); 'Filastin' (1937), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.395, 408; 'Palestine Arabs Claim to be Fighting for National Existence', in *Cur Hist*, 31 (Nov. 1929), pp.272-279.
- 21 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.325-326, 340-346. Cf. Zeine, *The Struggle*, p.36; Hallaq, *al-Tayyarat al-Siyasiyya*, p.46.
- 22 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.334-336, 343-352. Mas'ud Dahir states that Rihani's explanation of the French delay in stopping the riots was the 'best explanation' for the French policy in Syria and Lebanon, see Dahir, *Tarikh Lubnan*, p.39.
- 23 Interestingly, Rihani did not accuse the American President of any conspiracy against Faysal, because Wilson, in his opinion, was true to his own beliefs in 'the rights of self-determination', *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.337-340. For Faysal's submission to the Peace Conference, see J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and the Middle East*, vol. 2, pp.38-39.

- 24 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.345, 347. For an assessment of Faysal's rule in Syria, see Qasimiyya, *al-Hukuma al-'Arabiyya*, p.264; 'A. al-'Azma, *Mir'at al-Sham*, pp.241ff.
- 25 See Mahafza, *al-Fikr al-Siyasi fi al-Urdun*, vol. 2, pp.29-33; Qarqut, *op. cit.*, pp.93ff.
- 26 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.353, 359.
- 27 French authorities arrested the Administrative Council members and sentenced them to exile, see *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.345-355.
- 28 See several articles in *Shadbarat*, AAK-6, pp.245ff, 250, 269ff, 272ff, 435-465; *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.50ff; *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.108, 148ff, 197-209; *Rasa'il*, pp.15, 21, 26, 166-180.
- 29 See in particular 'Taht al-Silah' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.265.
- 30 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.197.
- 31 See al-Hakim, *op. cit.*, pp.32-33; Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria*, pp.180-181.
- 32 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928); also 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920); 'al-Marada w-al-Salibiyyun' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.254-256, 197, 204.
- 33 'Lana wa Lakum' (c. 1918); 'al-Mawdu' al-Ma'luf' (c. 1927); 'Risalat al-Mughtaribin' (1927); 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.165, 223-229, 242, 254-255.
- 34 See R. B. Betts, *The Druze*, pp.86ff; al-Hakim, *Suriyya w-al-Intidab al-Faransi*, pp.111ff.
- 35 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928); 'Ruh al-'Uruba' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.255, 262-263; on his ideas of Arab unity, see Ch. 8.
- 36 'al-Mawdu' al-Ma'luf' (c. 1927), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.154, 226; *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.154. For the resolutions of the Syrian Congress, see Antonius, *op. cit.*, pp.293, 440.
- 37 'al-Watan al-Wahid' (1939); 'al-Hudud' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.378, 425.
- 38 'Ruh al-'Uruba' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.262-263.
- 39 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.257.
- 40 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.710ff; *ACA*, pp.271ff; *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.156. Cf. Edmond Rabbath's views in E. Rabbath, 'al-Masihyyun fi al-Sharq Qabl al-Islam', in I. Khuri (ed.), *al-Masihyyun al-'Arab*, pp.21ff.
- 41 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.258.
- 42 *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.157.
- 43 *Ibid.*, pp.174-175.
- 44 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920); 'Madhhabi Watani' (1927), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.200, 247.
- 45 'Risalat al-Mughtaribin' (1927), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.242.
- 46 'Tawhid al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya' (1898), in *Shadbarat*, AAK-6, pp.481-485. Cf. al-Husri, *Abhath Mukhtara*, pp.42-43.
- 47 'Huna wa Hunak' (c. 1909); 'Ishrun Huija' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.42, 208; also Ch. 5.
- 48 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920); 'Ghayati wa Thawrati' (1922); 'Takallamu bi-al-'Arabi' (1922), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.197, 215, 220; also Ch. 8.
- 49 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.257; *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.176.
- 50 *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.176; on tribalism, see also Ch. 8.

- 51 From a letter, 30 May 1928, which Rihani sent to various Syrian leaders and members of parliament on the occasion of *al-Nakabat*'s publication, in *Rasa'il*, pp.346-351; see also *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.147.
- 52 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.197-198; *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.202.
- 53 See al-Husri, *Abhath Mukhtara*, p.104; W. Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist*, pp.141ff.
- 54 'Tarikh Suriyya' (n.d.), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.210-211; *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.154.
- 55 For this and following discussion, see *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, pp.164-173, 190-193, 209, 212, 216-221.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p.149.
- 57 Letter to a friend (most likely Muhammad Kurd 'Ali), 15 Oct. 1921, in *Rasa'il*, pp.187-188.
- 58 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.258.
- 59 'al-Watan al-Wahid' (1939), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.424.
- 60 'Ishrun Hujja' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.205-209.
- 61 On the economic development of Syria and Lebanon from 1800-1914, see Issawi, *The Fertile Crescent*; Idem., 'Economic Development and Liberalism in Lebanon', in *MEJ*, 18 (1964), pp.279-284; Buheiry, 'The Rise of the City of Beirut'; and 'Beirut's Role in the Political Economy of the French Mandate', in L. Conrad (ed.), *The Formation and Perception of the Modern Arab World*, pp.483-487, 537-559.
- 62 See Issawi, 'Economic Development and Liberalism in Lebanon', in *MEJ*, 18 (1964), pp.288-292; Dahir, *Lubnan al-Istiqlal*.
- 63 See Cleveland, *op. cit.*, p.108.
- 64 'Ishrun Hujja' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.206-209.

### Notes to Chapter Seven

- 1 For *isti'mar*, Rihani used both 'imperialism' and 'colonialism' in English, see 'The Pan-Arab Dream': 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, January 1938, p.46; *Ibid.*, August 1939, p.455. Both terms are used in this study.
- 2 Par. 5 and 6 in *Wasiyyati*, AAK-8, p.500.
- 3 See *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.198-200, 208-209; *Rasa'il*, p.179.
- 4 'Taht al-Silah' (1928); 'Bayn 'Ahdayn' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.267, 319-328; 'Fi Rabi' al-Yas' (1928), in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.426; *Wasiyyati*, AAK-8, p.500.
- 5 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.483-484; also *Wasiyyati*, AAK-8, p.500.
- 6 'Madhhabi Watani' (1927), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.247. Paragraph 4 of article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, and the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon as conferred on France stated that the duty of the Mandatory was that of 'rendering of administrative advice and assistance', see Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, pp.61-62.
- 7 'Miqyas Wahid' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.300.
- 8 See articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.225, 231, 246, 263, 266, 270, 277, 297, 299-300, 309, 317, 323, 326, 369; *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, p.426; *Antum*



- al-Shu'ara'*, AAK-9, pp.222-229.
- 9 *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.201, 202, 299-300, 367.
  - 10 'al-Mawdu' al-Ma'luf' (c. 1927); 'Lubnan w-al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.226-227, 356-357, and passim.
  - 11 'Lubnan w-al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.356-357.
  - 12 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, August 1939, p.455.
  - 13 'Tajzi'at al-Bilad al-'Arabiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.364-365; *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.200-201, 407-408; see also his discussion of British policy in Arabia in Ch. 8.
  - 14 'al-Hurma fi al-Hirman' (1933); also 'Takallamu bi-al-'Arabi' (1922); 'al-Mawdu' al-Ma'luf' (c. 1927); in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.331-333, 218-219, 227.
  - 15 *Qalb Lubnan*, AAK-3, pp.95-99.
  - 16 'al-Masnu'at al-Wataniyya' (c. 1926), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.234.
  - 17 'Bayn 'Ahdayn' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.319-326.
  - 18 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, August 1939, pp.454-455.
  - 19 'Bayn 'Ahdayn' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.323-325.
  - 20 See for example George Samné's idea of 'Small Lebanon', in Dahir, *Lubnan al-Istiqlal*, pp.207-208; the Maronite perception and Bulus Nujaym's idea of 'Greater Lebanon', in Buheiry (ed.), *al-Haya al-Fikriyya*, pp.79-98; F. Kiwan, 'La perception du Grand-Liban chez les maronites', in Shehadi and Haffar Mills (eds), *Lebanon: A History*, pp.124-148.
  - 21 See articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.202-204; 245-246.
  - 22 'Bayn 'Ahdayn' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.326. Some Christians still say 'our affectionate mother' (*ummna al-hanun*) to describe France, particularly during crises.
  - 23 For the following discussion, see in particular 'al-Mawdu' al-Ma'luf' (c. 1927); 'Indama Yakun al-Tamarrud Wajiban' (1931); 'Kutla Sharqiyya' (1935), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.224-225, 279, 344.
  - 24 On the treaty with Syria, see Khoury, *Syria*, pp.241ff; S. H. Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon Under French Mandate*, pp.173-181.
  - 25 'al-Siyasa w-al-Din' (1935); also 'al-Mawdu' al-Ma'luf' (c. 1927); 'Indama Yakun al-Tamarrud Wajiban' (1931); 'Lana Amir' (1934), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.340-341, 223, 279, 335.
  - 26 "Indama Yakun al-Tamarrud Wajiban' (1931); 'al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.278-279, 294-298.
  - 27 On the Lebanese and Syrian press during the French Mandate, see al-Akkari, *al-Sihafa al-Thawriyya fi Lubnan*; J. Ilyas, *Tatawwur al-Sihafa al-Suriyya fi Ma'at Am*, vol. 2; S. D. al-Rifa'i, *Tarikh al-Sihafa al-Suriyya*, vol. 2.
  - 28 'al-Sihafa w-al-Dawla' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.294-298; Rihani's article seems to have some positive impact, see his letter to Najib al-Rayyis, 13 Nov. 1931, in *Rasa'il*, pp.369-373.
  - 29 "Indama Yakun al-Tamarrud Wajiban' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.279-280.
  - 30 'Fi Bilad al-Zuhur' (1936); also other articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.350, 285, 295, 325. Cf. the observations of Iskandar al-Riyashi and the report of

- the British Delegation in Beirut, cited in Dahir, 'Indama Taghdab Bkirki', the introduction to 'Arida, *Lubnan wa Faransa*, p.21.
- 31 'Fi Bilad al-Zuhur' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.350-351.
- 32 See Hallaq, *Dirasat*, p.111; Murad, *al-Haraka al-Wahdawiyya*, pp.156-158, 252.
- 33 On Lebanon's economy under French Mandate, see Dahir, *Lubnan al-Istiqlal*; Buheiry, 'Beirut's Role', in Conrad (ed.), *The Formation and Perception*, pp.537ff.
- 34 'Risalat al-'Iraq' (1932), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.302; *Qalb al-'Iraq*, AAK-4, pp.188-195; on Faysal's economic reforms, see M. Khadduri, *Independent Iraq*, pp.34-35.
- 35 'al-Masnu'at al-Wataniyya' (c. 1926), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.232-234.
- 36 *Ibid.*, pp.232, 236; *Qalb Lubnan*, AAK-3, p.95. On Lebanese women in the work force, see S. Nasr and C. Dubar, *al-Tabaqat al-Ijtima'iyya fi Lubnan*, pp.105ff.
- 37 See al-Bwari, *Tarikh al-Haraka al-'Ummaliyya*, vol. 1, pp.143ff; J. Couland, *al-Haraka al-Niqabiyya fi Lubnan*, pp.165ff, 212ff; 'A. Hanna, *al-Haraka al-'Ummaliyya*, pp.233ff.
- 38 See 'al-Buraq Revolt' in B. Abu Gharbiyya, 'Safahat Min Tarikh al-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya Hatta Sanat 1949', in A. S. Nawfal et al., *al-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya fi Arba'in 'Aman*, pp.30ff.
- 39 'Indama Yakun al-Tamarrud Wajiban' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.278ff.
- 40 On this movement, see Hanna, *Min al-Ittijabat al-Fikriyya fi Suriyya wa Lubnan*, pp.108-122.
- 41 See Couland, *op. cit.*, pp.106-108; see Rihani's speech 'al-Sha'ir w-al-Faylasuf', in *Antum al-Shu'ara'*, AAK-9, pp.197-201.
- 42 'Habbat Mantiq' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.309-312.
- 43 'al-Hurma fi al-Hirman' (1931), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.331-333.
- 44 'Kutla Sharqiyya' (1935), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.343-346.
- 45 Several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.197, 205-209, 223, 245-248, 254-259; also Ch. 3.
- 46 See in particular, 'Ma'bad al-Watan' (1936); also 'Ila Ikhwan al-Tasahul' (1936); 'La Ta'ifiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.383-384, 362-363, 386-387.
- 47 'Lubnan w-al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1936); 'al-Hudud' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.360, 377-382.
- 48 See Hallaq, *al-Tayyarat al-Siyasiyya*, pp.78-79; *Idem.*, *Dirasat*, pp.141ff; Murad, *op. cit.*, pp.228; Sh'ayb, *Tarikh Lubnan*, pp.50ff.
- 49 See the letter of the Maronite Patriarch to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 'Arida, *Lubnan wa Faransa*, pp.79-85; al-Bwari, *op. cit.*, pp.141-190; Hanna, *al-Haraka al-'Ummaliyya*, pp.382-416.
- 50 See Dahir, *Lubnan al-Istiqlal*, pp.201ff; Khoury, *Syria*, pp.451ff, 613-614; Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, pp.180ff; N. Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, pp.58-61, 191ff.
- 51 'Lubnan al-Jadid' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.393-394; see his invitation letter to the Patriarch, June 1936, in *Rasa'il*, pp.488-489.
- 52 'al-'Alaman' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.370.
- 53 *Ibid.*, pp.370-371.
- 54 'Lubnan al-Jadid' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.393-394.

- 55 'al-Hudud' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.377-382.
- 56 Letter to Shukri al-Quwwatli, 11 Sep. 1936, in *Rasa'il*, pp.499-501.
- 57 'al-Hudud' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.379.
- 58 'al-Hurma fi al-Hirman' (1933); also 'Bayn 'Ahdayn' (1933), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.333, 327ff.
- 59 See his response in *al-Nida'* newspaper to the decision of his expulsion, in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.326.
- 60 'al-Tatawwur w-al-Istiqlal' (c. 1920), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.199-201. On Clemenceau's assurances, see Zeine, *The Struggle*, pp.120-122.
- 61 See Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, pp.199ff; Ziadeh, *Syria and Lebanon*, pp.53ff.
- 62 'Lubnan w-al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.358.
- 63 In 1924-25, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked Rihani to acquaint the High Commissioner, General Serrail in Syria with some information about the Arab countries and rulers, particularly Ibn Sa'ud. His contribution led to the Sa'udi-French rapprochement. See *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.359.
- 64 *Ibid.*, p.359. On the Alliance, see A. Tarabayn, *al-Tajzi'a al-'Arabiyya Kayf Tahaqqaqat Tarikhiyyan*, p.172; Salim, *Takwin al-Yaman*, pp.576-581.
- 65 'Lubnan w-al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.360.
- 66 'Durus Min al-Qamus' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.366-369.
- 67 For both treaties, see Longrigg, *op. cit.* pp.221ff; Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, pp.211ff; Qarqut, *al-Mashriq al-'Arabi*, pp.428ff.
- 68 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, August 1939, pp.454-455; also Ch. 8.

### Notes to Chapter Eight

- 1 Both in his *Arabic Thought* and *A History of the Arab Peoples*, Albert Hourani does not mention Rihani. In his *al-Mujtama' al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir* (p.424), Halim Barakat considers the nationalist trend in Rihani's thought as 'an expression of his nationalist feelings rather than a methodological theory'.
- 2 I use the term 'Pan-Arabia' as Rihani himself used it in the sense of unity of Arabia, and 'Arab unity' for his wider concept of unity of the Arab countries as he perceived it in the 1930s.
- 3 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.527; *APD*, pp.94-95; *ISA*, p.39; see also his travels, Ch. 1.
- 4 See *Muluk*, AAK-1; *ACA*; *APD*; *ISA*; Baker, *King Husain*; Gharaybeh, *Muqaddima*; Philby, *Arabia*; Salim, *Takwin al-Yaman*; Wenner, *Modern Yemen*.
- 5 See the Arabic translation of the questions in A. A. Rihani, *Faylasuf al-Freike*, pp.98-101.
- 6 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.55-56; *ACA*, p.102.
- 7 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.72; *ACA*, p.118.
- 8 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.169-170; *APD*, pp.139-141.
- 9 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.171, 217; *APD*, pp.141, 238-239.
- 10 Cf. Tarabayn, 'al-Mashari' al-Wahdawiyya fi al-Nizam al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir', in Duri et al., *al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya*, pp.411-420.
- 11 See the texts of the proposed treaties in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.219, 357-359.
- 12 See for example various papers and discussions in Duri et al., *al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya*.

- 13 See Salamé (ed.), *The Foundations of the Arab State*, pp.230ff; Dawn, 'The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology in the Interwar Years', in *IJMES*, 20 (1988), pp.72ff.
- 14 Letter to King Husayn's Foreign Minister, Fu'ad al-Khatib (n.d.), in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.389-391; see also his speech 'Filastin' (1937), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.412.
- 15 From a covering letter (n.d.), and another letter to King Husayn, 24 Shawwal 1340 AH (c. 20 June 1922), in *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.223-224, 389.
- 16 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.388-392.
- 17 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.551-559; *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.308-315; *ISA*, pp.73-88.
- 18 Letter to King Faysal, 12 June 1923; letter to Constantine Yanni, 9 July 1923, in *Rasa'il*, pp.202-208, 212-213; *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.527-529, 545-550; *ISA*, pp.39-41, 60-63.
- 19 See in particular a letter to Ibn Sa'ud from Jeddah, 20 Jumada al-Thaniya 1343 AH (the Christian date is noted as January 1924, but it is most likely January 1925 during Rihani's mediation for peace), in *Rasa'il*, pp.231-233. For his peace negotiations, see *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.381-396.
- 20 Cf. contemporary views in Salamé, "Awa'i'q al-Waqi' al-'Arabi al-Qutri", in Duri et al., *al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya*, pp.469ff; al-Jabiri, *Ishkaliyyat al-Fikr al-'Arabi al-Mu'asir*, pp.91ff.
- 21 See for example, Zurayq, *Matalib al-Mustaqbal al-'Arabi*, pp.204-227.
- 22 On this debate, see Khoury, 'Factionalism Among Syrian Nationalists During the French Mandate', in *IJMES*, 13 (1981), pp.450-452.
- 23 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.921-927.
- 24 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.22, 76, 228, 396, 494, 652, 694, 785.
- 25 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.107, 142-143, 148-149; *APD*, pp.49, 109-110, 115-116.
- 26 Cf. 'A. B. al-Hirmasi et al., *al-Din fi al-Mujtama' al-'Arabi*; M. Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam*.
- 27 See *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, pp.31-57; *ISA*, pp.209, 237-250; *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.177, 570. Cf. 'A. Hanna, 'Mizan al-Quwa al-Ijtima'iyya', in al-Hirmasi et al., *op. cit.*, p.331.
- 28 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.576, 587; *ISA*, pp.214, 233-234. For references to Rihani, see Salamé, "Strong' and 'Weak' States", in Salamé (ed.), *The Foundations of the Arab State*, pp.212ff.
- 29 *ACA*, pp.108-109; *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.61-62.
- 30 See *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.173; for other intellectuals, see Dawn, 'The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology', in *IJMES*, 20 (1988), p.72.
- 31 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.275, 277-278.
- 32 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.275-278, 445-447; *APD*, p.275; *ACA*, pp.353-355.
- 33 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.411, 447-457.
- 34 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.659, 922; *ACA*, p.245.
- 35 A. Hottinger, 'Amin Ar-Rihani the Self View of A Modern Arab', in Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life*, p.107.
- 36 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.353-354.
- 37 *Ibid.*, pp.200-201; *APD*, p.229.

- 38 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.399; *ACA*, p.309.
- 39 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.764-776; *ACA*, pp.300-304. Cf. al-Tajir, *Bahrain*.
- 40 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.212ff; *APD*, pp.236ff. Cf. E. Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East*.
- 41 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.407-408.
- 42 'The Pan-Arab Dream', in *Asia*, January, 1938, p.46.
- 43 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.921-922.
- 44 *Ibid.*, pp.136, 159-161, 579; *APD*, pp.101, 128-130; *ISA*, p.228.
- 45 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.579, 179-182, 560ff; *ISA*, pp.215ff, 229; *APD*, p.221.
- 46 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.588-589, 140; *ISA*, p.235; *APD*, p.107.
- 47 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.26, 28, 819; *ACA*, pp.17-19; *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.493ff.
- 48 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.493ff; 'Risalat al-'Iraq' (1932), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.301; *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.919ff.
- 49 *APD*, p.221.
- 50 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.570ff; also his criticism of the abuse of democracy, Ch. 4.
- 51 For the above discussion, see *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.572-573.
- 52 'Taht al-Silah' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.266.
- 53 *Faysal al-Awwal*, AAK-4, pp.573-575.
- 54 See Dawn, 'The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology', in *IJMES*, 20 (1988), p.79.
- 55 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.528ff, 927; *ISA*, pp.40ff; on the charisma of Ibn Sa'ud and Arab leadership in general, see A. al-Yasini, *al-Din w-al-Dawla fi al-Mamlaka al-'Arabiyya al-Sa'udiyya*, pp.49ff; 'A. 'Udaybat, 'al-Din w-al-Taghyir al-Ijtima'i', in al-Hirmasi et al., *op. cit.*, pp.157ff; M. Hudson, *Arab Politics*, p.98.
- 56 See A. Dajjani, 'Tatawwur Mafahim al-Dimuqratiyya', in S. D. Ibrahim et al., *Azmat al-Dimuqratiyya fi al-Watan al-'Arabi*, p.132.
- 57 See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*; Commins, 'Religious Reformers and Arabists in Damascus', in *IJMES*, 18 (1986), pp.405-425.
- 58 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, 162; 'Hayya 'Ala al-'Ilm' (1922); 'Ghayati wa Thawrati' (1922), two speeches delivered respectively in Kuwait and Baghdad during his travels in Arabia and published later in his *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.212-214, 215-217; see also his letters between 1922 and 1925, in *Rasa'il*, pp.193, 201-206, 227-228, 253-254.
- 59 *Tarikh Najd*, AAK-5, p.9; for the above discussion, see also *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.52, 162, 441, 699ff, 909ff; *ACA*, pp.88-81, 260-261; *APD*, pp.130-131.
- 60 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.166-169, 234-235, 404-405, 516-517, 792; *ACA*, pp.310-312; *ISA*, p.23.
- 61 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.923, 9ff, 150, 166ff; letter to Ibn Sa'ud, 9 January 1923, in *Rasa'il*, p.201.
- 62 *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.405-406; *ACA*, pp.309-310, 312.
- 63 'The Pan-Arab Dream'; 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, Jan. 1938, pp.44ff; Aug. 1939, pp.452ff.
- 64 'The Pan-Arab Dream', in *Asia*, January, 1938, p.46; on the sense of Arab identity of the Greek Orthodox community, see R. Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society*; al-Husri, *Muhadarat*.

- 65 See 'al-Thawra al-Khuluqiyya' (c.1909), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.65; see also Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals*, pp.118-119.
- 66 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, August, 1939, p.453.
- 67 See al-Husri, *Abhath Mukhtara*, pp.199ff; Dawn, 'The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology', in *IJMES*, 20 (1988), p.69; T. Hussein, *The Future of Culture in Egypt*; R. Coury, 'Who 'Invented' Egyptian Arab Nationalism', in *IJMES*, 14 (1982), pp.249-281, 459-479. See also Y. M. Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History*.
- 68 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.235, 709-714; *ACA*, pp.271-274; *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, pp.156, 160, 167-173.
- 69 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, August, 1939, p.453.
- 70 'Ruh al-'Uruba' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.260.
- 71 Several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.242, 260, 336.
- 72 See *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, p.176.
- 73 'al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.421; on the relation between Arab nationalism and Islam, see M. A. Khalafallah et al., *al-Qawmiyya al-'Arabiyya w-al-Islam*.
- 74 See Duri, 'al-Islam wa Intishar al-Lugha al-'Arabiyya', in Khalafallah et al., *op. cit.*, pp.69, 89; M. 'Amara, *Dirasat fi al-Wa'i bi-al-Tarikh*, pp.138ff.
- 75 'Ruh al-'Uruba' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.260ff; also *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.268.
- 76 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, August, 1939, p.453; *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.578; *ISA*, p.228.
- 77 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.659; *al-Nakabat*, AAK-6, pp.156-157; *ACA*, p.203.
- 78 On al-Idrisi and the people of Hudaidah, see *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.338ff, 280ff; *ACA*, pp.185, 136ff.
- 79 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, August, 1939, p.454; see also 'Lubnan w-al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1936), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.356-358.
- 80 See 'al-Sharak al-Jamil' (1928), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.258; also Ch. 6.
- 81 'Pan-Arab Nationalism', in *Asia*, August, 1939, p.454.
- 82 See Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist*; B. Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Enquiry*.
- 83 'al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.420-421.
- 84 'al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1938); 'al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya' (1934), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.421ff, 338ff.
- 85 'al-'Arab w-al-'Alaqa al-Dawliyya' (1937); 'al-Watan al-Wahid' (1939), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.405, 424.
- 86 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.132; *APD*, p.96.
- 87 'al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya' (1938), in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.422.
- 88 'Ruh al-'Uruba' (1928), and several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.260ff, 65, 144ff, 213ff.
- 89 *The Path of Vision*, pp.102ff; 'Conquest of the Desert', in *Asia*, March, 1938, p.192; and several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.65, 304ff; and *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.292, 389.
- 90 'al-'Arab w-al-'Alaqa al-Dawliyya', in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, p.404. Rihani declined an invitation to the congress because of 'personal reasons', see a letter to

- the President and members of the Congress, 9 September 1937, in *Rasa'il*, p.521.
- 91 Khadduri, *Political Trends*, p.176.
- 92 Cited in Rizk, *Entre l'Islam et l'arabisme*, p.300.
- 93 See Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, p.311; H. Nur al-Din, 'Mafhum al-Sulta al-Siyasiyya', in M. Ziadeh (ed.), *Buhuth fi al-Fikr al-Qawmi al-'Arabi*, pp.180-181.

### Notes to Epilogue

- 1 *al-Tatarruf w-al-Islah*, AAK-8, p.477. Some of the ideas in this Epilogue are developed from my contribution, 'Ameen Rihani's Humanist Vision of Arab Nationalism', in Funk & Sitka (eds), *Ameen Rihani: Bridging East and West*, pp.134ff.
- 2 See J. McCumber, 'Dialectical Identity in a 'Post-Critical' Era: A Hegelian Reading', in V. Y. Mudimbe (ed.), *Nations, Identities, Cultures*, pp.165-180.
- 3 *Muluk*, AAK-1, p.130.
- 4 *The Fate of Palestine*, p.30.
- 5 See in particular Y. S. Sa'ade, *al-Fikr al-Maruni fi al-Tarikh*.
- 6 Compare al-Husri's *Abhath Mukhtara*, p.53.
- 7 *The Fate of Palestine*, pp.145-146.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp.27, 40, 41, 148, 152.
- 9 See *Muluk*, AAK-1, pp.377ff.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp.407-408.
- 11 *Letters to Uncle Sam*, pp.11ff.
- 12 See *Wasiyyati*, AAK-8, pp.498ff.
- 13 E. W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, p.358.
- 14 Several articles in *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.46ff, 68, 86ff.
- 15 *Khalid*, p.312.
- 16 See *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.80, 103ff; also *Shadharat*, AAK-6, p.224.
- 17 See *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.60, 80.
- 18 Memorandum to Ibn Sa'ud from Riyadh, 9 Jan. 1923, in *Rasa'il*, pp.201-203.
- 19 See *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.100-105.
- 20 See his notes in *The White Way and the Desert*, pp.159ff.
- 21 The long list of names includes Edward Said, Hisham Sharabi, Halim Barakat (USA), Adonis, Mohammed Arkoun (France), and Ahmad Shboul (Australia).
- 22 See several articles in *al-Rihaniyyat*, AAK-7, pp.464ff, 611; *al-Qawmiyyat*, AAK-8, pp.60, 72, 226ff, 356ff; *al-Tatarruf w-al-Islah*, AAK-8, pp.464ff; *The White Way and the Desert*, p.159.
- 23 Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir*, p.186.
- 24 *Khalid*, p.310.

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