By the mid-twentieth century, youth movements around the globe ruled the streets. In Lebanon, young people in these groups attended lectures, sang songs, and participated in sporting events; their music tastes, clothing choices, and routine activities shaped their identities. Yet scholars of modern Lebanon often focus exclusively on the sectarian makeup and violent behaviors of these sociopolitical groupings, obscuring the youth cultures that they forged. Using unique sources to highlight the daily lives of the young men and women of Lebanon’s youth politics, Dylan Baun traces the political and cultural history of a diverse set of youth-centric organizations, from the 1920s to 1950s, to reveal how these youth movements played significant roles in the making of the modern Middle East.

Outlining how youth movements established a distinct type of politics and populism, Winning Lebanon reveals that these groups both encouraged the political socialization of different types of youth, and, through their attempts to “win” Lebanon – physically and metaphorically – around the 1958 War, helped produce sectarian violence.

Dylan Baun is Assistant Professor of Modern Middle East and Islamic World History at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. He is the author of numerous articles on the history of youth and young people in the modern Middle East in journals including the Arab Studies Journal and International Journal for the History of Sport.
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Winning Lebanon

Youth Politics, Populism, and the Production of Sectarian Violence, 1920–1958

Dylan Baun

University of Alabama in Huntsville
To my love, Nicole
And the Youth of a Nation are the trustees of Posterity.

—Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil (1845)

He alone, who owns the youth, gains the Future!

—Adolf Hitler, speech (1935)

You young people, full of vigor and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning. Our hope is placed on you. The world belongs to you. China’s future belongs to you.

—Mao Zedong, meeting with students (1957)

Oh youth, blossom in life and search for vigor. I did not lax in your radiant coat as a coward!

—The Arab Nationalist Youth, poem titled “Youth” (1952)
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A Note on Conventions

This book largely uses the transliteration guide of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. “Al-,” the Arabic definite article, is used at first mention of an individual’s full name that includes the definite article (Muhyi al-Din al-Nasuli) or a proper noun (al-futuwwa, al-Talaʾiʾ). The article is omitted thereafter (futuwwa or Talaʾiʾ) or when only noting the last name of an individual (Nasuli, not al-Nasuli, Shamali, not al-Shamali). In cases where an Arabic noun has a common English spelling, the latter is used (Sidon, not Saida, Saadeh not Saʿadeh). With Arab newspaper titles, the article is always included for uniformity when mentioned, as some newspaper titles necessitate it for correct translation (al-Bashir, “the Omen,” not Bashir, “Omen”). Arabic terms are glossed where they first appear (al-shabab, “the youth”), whether in text or notes.

This book chooses not to use acronyms for organizational names for the sake of clarity and to mirror, as best possible, the way these groups are discussed in Arabic (not PSP, but in Arabic, Progressive Socialist Party). When discussing organizational actions, I use the singular form (the Kataʾib was), unless discussing the actions of members (Kataʾib youth were). At first mention of major leaders of these organizations, I include their range of life and activity as such: Kamal Jumblatt (1917–1977).

In terms of notes, at first mention of a source I include the full citation followed by a short citation thereafter. At first mention in a new chapter, I include the publication year – Baun, *Winning Lebanon* (2021) – followed by a shorter citation at subsequent mentions in that chapter (Baun, *Winning Lebanon*). Only the first mention of an archival source will include where the source is located (*Records at the Lebanese National Archives*). For newspaper citations, I only note the newspaper name and date (al-Nahda, November 13, 1937), not the issue number or location of the cited material in that issue. The very few websites that are included were last accessed in late 2019; these sources are only mentioned in the notes, not the bibliography.
Map 0.1 Map of Lebanon. Courtesy of The World Factbook.