

## الياس بطرس الحويك -- Elias Peter Hoayek



Patriarch Hoayek offering bread to people  
Batroun, WW I - 1916

**Elias Peter Hoayek** (1843–1931), (Arabic: الياس بطرس الحويك) was Patriarch of Antioch for the Maronites, the largest Christian community in the Middle East from 1898 to 1931 when he died.

He is hailed as the father of Lebanon and the founder of the modern Lebanese state. The Lebanese people of all sects hailed his patriotism, followed his example and maintain it to this day. Hoayek is considered one of the four founders of Lebanon: Fakhr el Din II, Bashir II, Youssef Beik Karam and Patriarch Hoayek.

The First World War saw a lot of persecution of the Christians in the Middle East. Some sources cite one and a half million of Armenians were killed by Ottoman forces in the war. The Ottoman Empire was allied to Germany. The Ottomans (upon German request) set up a blockage of the Lebanese and Syrian coast line. As a result, a third of the Lebanese population died of famine. Jamal Pasha, Ottoman military governor took steps to exile Hoayek because of his relations with France. In 1915, the blockade as well as a large locust infestation had resulted in depleted food supplies. This situation continued until 1919. The Patriarch received funds from Lebanese Diaspora and the French government. Again, Jamal Pasha attempted to exile the Patriarch.

The French General Gouraud announced a declaration by France of the independence of Lebanon on September 1, 1920. He outlined the nation's boundaries to include the area from Ras-al-Naquurah in the South to Nahr-el-Kabir (The Large River) in the North and from the summits of the Anti-Lebanon mountain in the East to the Mediterranean sea in the West. This was the first time Lebanon had these boundaries and was called The State of Greater Lebanon.