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AWORD

The Hidden Third



The vetoing or blocking third in the Lebanese Cabinet is a flexible number and is open to many equations: $10+1+19$ or $14+16$ or $13+17$ or $15+15$ or $29+1$ or $30x1$ or $33/3$...etc.

Consequently, the "national accord Cabinet" is formed of different numbers symbolizing seemingly strange equations yet consistent with the Lebanese society. From support of "Lebanon as one electoral district based on the proportional system" or "Mohafaza based on the proportional system", we are talking now about "qada'a" or "districts smaller than qada'a"; and all for the sake of "national unity", the opposition tells us.

From a "quartet alliance" to a "majority rule", an "imaginary majority" to a "consensual rule" and an "illegitimate government", to resigned but acting ministers and not resigned but not acting ministers; all for the sake of "national unity", the opposition tells us.

From seeking to "know the truth" and who "planned, conspired, perpetrated...", to the "international tribunal" and Chapter VII, to $16+14$ or $11+19$ or $17+13$; all that because the "tribunal" is the essential priority, the pro-government forces tell us.

From "let the majority rule" to the rejection of popular presidential elections because the "majority" embraces the notion that Lebanon is based on consensus; all that because the "tribunal" is the essential priority, the pro-government forces tell us.

We are lost between a "vetoing third", a "blocking third" or a "sharing third" and monopolization of power; all for the sake of "national unity" and the "international tribunal".

In fact, "national unity" and the "international tribunal" are two sides of one currency in a society that is not truly a society, a state which is not truly a state and citizens who are not really citizens. Neither slogan achieves what it claims.

Out of all these numbers, equations and thirds, there is a hidden third which is beyond these banners, away from all confessions and their zu'ama.

This third of the Lebanese support civil marriage; this third wants non-confessional parliamentary elections; the same third calls for the prosecution of all warlords; this third wants true reconciliation and forgiveness. It wants a modern society free of confessional zu'ama and religious leaders⁽¹⁾.

It is the hidden third that would have had a major impact had the media been independent within an environment conducive to change.

It is the hidden third that has never surrendered to foreign forces or to religious leaders even when facing the hardest challenges. It is the resistant third, not because it is "Shia'a" or "Persian". It is a sovereign third, not because it is "Maronite" or "Phoenician". It is a justice-seeking third, not because it is "Sunni" or "pro-Hariri". It is a unifying third not because it is "Druze" or "Jumblati".

This third does not have absolute zu'ama and does not even want them.

This third has a memory, a heart and a mind. It is aware that the solution does not reside in the so-called national Cabinet, international tribunal or disarmament, but in building a State and forging citizenship.

It is a third that is truly attached to its roots and seeks to hold true dialogue. It does not swim with the current, be it Syrian, American or Iranian, but it flows like ideas without prejudice.

Neglected by both the government and the opposition, this hidden third, once discovered, would be recognized as the guardian and the cornerstone of this country.

⁽¹⁾ *The hidden third is an allegory of the third of Cabinet ministerial seats called for by the opposition. Since 1995, in all opinion polls conducted by Information International, respondents have shown opinions diverging from the political and social mainstream by a low of 20% and a high of 70%.*

_____ *Jawad N. Adra*