

Ex-speaker Hussein El Husseini in an interview with *The Monthly*

The Council of the South

The deputy in Lebanon: Representing the nation or the confession?

The legal and practical aspects of telephone tapping

Lebanon's Infrastructure



\$25 billion

and here we are...

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The Disastrous Ride

This article was previously published in The Monthly issue 65 of December 2007. It is republished in the wake of the current incidents in Lebanon.



A descendant of Mohammed Bin Shu'aib⁽¹⁾, having read the letter of Al-Saifa descendant, wished to clarify that A'arqa fortress was ruled by his grandfather Mohammed and not by Al-Saifa. He accused Al-Saifa of conspiring against Qurqumaz, the father of Fakhreddine II, adding that Mansour Assaf was responsible for killing his ancestor, Mohammed Shu'aib, the ruler of A'arqa.

Naturally, the descendant of Al-Shu'aib did not bother to mention the early history of A'arqa since the Bronze Age and long before the emergence of his family or their rivals and how his family acquired A'arqa.

Al-Shu'aib descendant says, and to his credit, that neither his ancestors nor Al-Saifa contributed to Trablous' (Tripoli) golden age; it was Shia'a Judge Abi Taleb of Bani A'ammur, who was praised by Ibn Khaldoun for establishing "Madrasat al-Ilm" (the school of science) and a library in 1069 A.D., before the crusaders took over the city.

Shu'aib hopes that a judge from "Ahlu al-Sunna" (the Sunni people) would be able someday to restore Trablous' glory.

Al-Shu'aib descendant recalls when Janbulad (Jumblat's ancestor) followed Youssef Saifa to Damascus: "The wise men of Damascus offered Al-Janbuladi 125,000 piastres. He accepted the offer and reconciled with Saifa". Janbulad said: "The soldiers of Damascus did not fight us but welcomed us peacefully"⁽²⁾.

The following are lessons that must be learned:

- 1- Alliances are not sacred: Jumblat family forged an alliance with the Tanukhs, who were close to the Persians, and with the Shehab family. Later on, Bashir ash-Shehabi and Bashir Jumblat had a feud with the Hamadeh family backing the Shehabs in destroying the Mukhtara castle (1824) and sending Jumblat to the guillotine.
- 2- Borders and identities are not timeless: The province of Trablous (or its jurisdiction) reached Latakia, sometimes old A'akkar and other times Kesrouan, depending on the circumstances. Moreover, the province of Damascus (or its jurisdiction) reaches Lebanon and its cities. So there is no harm in saying that Tartous was part of the province of Trablous or that Gibran Khalil Gibran was a "Syrian from Bsharri".
- 3- Confessions are not necessarily "religious" but "political": "When the Ottomans entered Lebanon, the Harfoushs, allies of the Sunni Hanash family, were ruling over the Beqa'a, the Christian Shehabs were controlling Wadi Haramoun and Wadi al-Taym, the Druze Ma'an were ruling over the Chouf and the Turkmen Assaf were protecting Kesrouan and A'akkar"⁽³⁾. It is said that the Shehabs (1697-1841) were either descendants of Bani Quraish, Kurds or Druze but what is sure is that they have succeeded the "Persian" Tanukhs and "converted" to Christianity.
- 4- History, in particular the history of Lebanon and this region, is replete with absurdities and fiction. Quoting Hamad Khaled as-Safadi and Kamal Salibi, Dr. Abdallah al-Mallah says:

"It is no longer possible to say that Fakhreddine I was the ruler of the Ma'an Emirate in 1516..."⁽⁴⁾ Then what about the story of Al-Shu'aib and Al-Saifa? Perhaps the whole thing was a fiction!

Those who do not see the relevance of these stories can just read the following: the "Shia'a" are imposing a siege on Riad as-Solh Square, the "Sunni" are blockading Qoreitem and the Protestant College and the "Druze" have quarantined Clemenceau and Trad Hospital. Furthermore, Kouchner is dancing the traditional Dabkeh in a "Shia'a" wedding and Bush reassuring "Sanioura's Cabinet", which is detained in the "Turkish Serail", where Sa'id Jumblat was once arrested for committing massacres against the Christians in 1860. Jumblat was asked by the British to say that Khorshid Pasha, the Ottoman High Commissioner, incited him to perpetrate the massacre, so they would hold an "international trial" against the Turks.

The Wahab family⁽⁵⁾, who are accused of killing Fouad Jumblat (1921), are visiting Franjeh family, the leaders of the Marada, (Aramaean, Syriac, Persians and Maronites) "in support of the Persian-Arabic front against the imperialist and Zionist front".

Under the slogan of "liberating Palestine", the Shia'a welcome the invasion of Iraq and "Ahlu al-Sunna" are asking for Bush's protection.

Having said that and after skimming through the results of a recent Information International poll, we should not be surprised that the Lebanese are prepared to hold a referendum on the identity of Lebanon, but reluctant to do the same on civil marriage, for example. Moreover, a significant percentage wishes that the Army takes temporary command of the country.

On a different note but still in the same context, why all this commotion on "Al-Ra'is al-'Atid", which figuratively means "the Prospective President" and literally means someone "ready to be ridden", according to Lisan Al-'Arab, the most important Arabic dictionary.

This is not the story of a president, but the story of a people's disastrous ride from the 16th century until today.

(1) Rulers of A'arqa and Trablous (1523-1528)

(2-3) "Banu Saifa, the Rulers of Trablous: 1579-1640", Joseph Alian, Beirut 1987

(4) "Fakhreddine al-Ma'ani I: A fact or a legend? – 1516", Abdallah Mallah, 2004

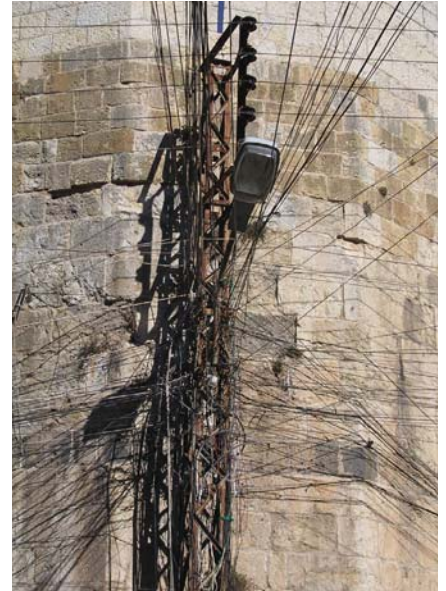
(5) Wahab family in this text does not refer to the family of former Deputy Wi'am Wahab.

Jawad N. Adra

Infrastructure Projects: USD 25 billion and here we are

Parliamentary elections took place in August-September 1992, for the first time since 1972. At the end of October, a thirty-minister government was formed headed by Rafic Hariri (1944 – 2005). It was this government which launched the national reconstruction and development program in different sectors. This program was accompanied by discussions that are still ongoing, regarding reconstruction priorities. Some considered that the program did not follow a prioritized projects schedule, others defend it as the only way out after the civil war.

Discussions covered the cost of the projects, the funding means and the process of tendering and arguments varied from blaming the public debt on the reconstruction program and the monetary and fiscal policies of the successive governments particularly the fixed exchange rate to the dollar and the high interest rate causing a surge in public debt. The fact remains that all successive governments and parliaments since the Ta'ef agreement share the responsibility. The so-called reconstruction program(s) had the blessing of all and all the parliaments gave vote of confidence to the successive governments responsible for its execution.



In this article, the cost of infrastructure projects will be investigated by sector and source of funding.

Cost of Infrastructure Projects

The cost of infrastructure projects between 1992 and 2008 reached around USD 11.5 billions (without the interest paid on foreign loans, estimated at around USD 1.5 to 2 billion add to this the interest on expenditures by the Lebanese government reaching 12 – 14 billion) thus bringing the cost of reconstruction to 25 billion). The funding included:

- ⦿ External loans and grants, amounting to USD 3.6 billion as shown in table no. 1
- ⦿ The Lebanese government's contribution of USD 7.9 billion through borrowing at high interest rate causing major deficits in annual budgets.

“approximately 50% of the public debt could be attributed to the reconstruction program mainly due to the high interest rate levied by Lebanese banks”

Reconstruction Authorities

Four governmental authorities were in charge of the management of the reconstruction program:

- ⦿ The Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) - (USD 8.5 billion).
- ⦿ The Ministries of Public Works, Transportation, Water and Electricity Resources, Housing and Cooperatives (before termination), the Council for Big Projects Execution of the City of Beirut and the Council for Construction Projects Execution (before termination) – (USD 1.2 billion), mostly funded by the Lebanese government.
- ⦿ The Central Fund for the Displaced People and the Ministry of the Displaced – (USD 860 million), mostly funded by the Lebanese government.
- ⦿ The Council of the South – (USD 940 million - excluding the support for war victims and released detainees,) mostly funded by the Lebanese government.

Public Debt and Infrastructure

According to these figures, the Lebanese government funded 68.7% of the reconstruction cost. This figure contradicts the general impression that external sources and soft loans have funded the reconstruction of Lebanon after the civil war. Therefore, approximately 50% of the public debt could be attributed to the reconstruction program mainly due to the high interest rate levied by Lebanese banks.

Reconstruction at the Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR)

The Council of Development and Reconstruction (CDR) established in 1977 was in charge of the major part of the reconstruction program. According to the report of the CDR issued in July 2008, the contracted projects from 1 January 1992 to 31 December 2007 reached USD 8,593.5 million, segmented as follows:

1- Projects

- ⊙ Electricity USD 1,420.2 million
- ⊙ Telecommunication and postal services USD 798.6 million
- ⊙ Roads and highways USD 1,665.8 million
- ⊙ Education USD 856 million
- ⊙ Health USD 282.1 million
- ⊙ Social, environment and development affairs USD 158.9 million
- ⊙ Drinking water USD 667.5 million
- ⊙ Waste water USD 497.2 million
- ⊙ Solid waste USD 1,077.5 million
- ⊙ Agriculture and irrigation USD 110.2 million
- ⊙ Airport and ports USD 701.4 million
- ⊙ Governmental buildings USD 196.3 million
- ⊙ The administration of projects execution and other sectors USD 161.8 million



2- External Funding

The report showed that the external funding, which was provided for the contracted projects, amounted to USD 3,640.8 million or 42.3% of the total cost (USD 8,593.5 million). However, the foreign funding provided or made available to the Lebanese government amounted to USD 8,076.9 million including USD 5,773.8 million as long term loans with low interest rates and around USD 2,303 million as grants. Therefore, ministries and governmental administrations, other than the CDR, have acquired part of the external funding and a good part of this funding has not been dispensed to date.

Table 1 shows grants obtained by Lebanon to fund infrastructure projects 1993-2008

Grants obtained by Lebanon to fund infrastructure projects 1993-2008						Table 1
Donor	Loan value	Interest %	Loan duration until	Authorization date through the approval of the Council of Ministers	Objective	
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	10.3 million KD	3	15-11-2012	4-1-1993	Modernization of local telephone networks including 171,600 phone lines	
Islamic Development Bank	10.5 million USD	2.5	May 2012	24-5-1993	Covering part of the cost of the construction of Beirut Governmental Hospital	
Islamic Development Bank	2.8 million USD	2.5	May 2012	24-5-1993	Modernization of local telephone networks including 60,000 phone lines	
Islamic Development Bank	8.5 million USD	3	2006	24-5-1993	Establishing 231,600 new phone lines to replace the lines damaged during the war with new lines	
OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	5 million USD	4.75	January 2009	23-10-1993	Development of the agricultural, fauna and flora sector	
International Fun for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	10 million USD	4	July 2012	23-10-1993	Development of the agricultural, fauna and flora sector	
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	5 million KD	2.5	May 2018	4-11-1993	Funding drinking water project in Beirut	

“The collection and treatment of solid wastes is a problem in itself and most Lebanese have to buy drinking water and domestic water especially in the summer”

Grants obtained by Lebanon to fund infrastructure projects 1993-2008

Table 1

Donor	Loan value	Interest %	Loan duration until	Authorization date through the approval of the Council of Ministers	Objective
Saudi Fund for Development	170 million USD	2	2029	24-3-1994	Reconstruction and rehabilitation of urgent program (reconstruction of the buildings of the Lebanese University- Governmental schools- the Governmental Hospital of Beirut- the Northern and Southern coastal road and entrance points to Beirut
Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development	25 million USD	2.5	April 2009	24-3-1994	The provision of loans to contribute to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of established houses or building new houses
French government	70 million Franc	1.53	2024	24-3-1994	Funding electricity rehabilitation projects
OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	10 million USD	4.75	June 2010	24-3-1994	Funding the establishment of Halba and Hermel hospitals
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	57.2 million USD	Estimated at around 4.5	September 2011	12-1-1995	Irrigation projects
European Investment Bank	16.3 million USD	2.5	End of 2009	8-12-1995	Funding part of the Beirut Airport Development Project
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	15 million KD	3	1-11-2014	8-12-1995	Funding part of the Beirut Airport Development Project
European Investment Bank	2 million USD	2.5	2010	8-12-1995	Purchase of equipments for air services at Beirut International Airport
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	20 million USD	Estimated at around 4.5	October 2012	8-12-1995	Administrative development works
Islamic Development Bank	31.2 million USD	7.5	2008	6-6-1996	Project of Electrical Energy Transfer Line with 220 kilovolt from Deir Nbouh in the North to A'aramoun through the Beqa'a
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	25 million USD	Estimated at around 4.5	August 2012	6-6-1996	Funding the Environment Solid Waste Management Project
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	10 million KD	4.5	2019	6-6-1996	Funding Sour, Saida and the suburbs water project
European Investment Bank	12.3 million USD	Estimated at around 4.5	2016	6-6-1996	Funding the rehabilitation of drinking water and waste water networks- second phase in the North of Lebanon
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	6 million KD	4.5	2019	22-6-1996	Funding the administrative rehabilitation project for public institutions and independent professions
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	15 million KD	4.5	2019	26-8-1996	Funding Vocational and Technical Schools Project
European Investment Bank	3.3 million USD	Estimated at around 2.5	2016	26-8-1996	Funding the electricity transfer project in Beirut

Grants obtained by Lebanon to fund infrastructure projects 1993-2008						Table 1
Donor	Loan value	Interest %	Loan duration until	Authorization date through the approval of the Council of Ministers	Objective	
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	42 million USD	Estimated at around 4.5	July 2013	28-2-1997	Funding the national project of roads for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the national road network with around 400 km length	
OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	5 million USD	4.75	December 2012	28-2-1997	Funding the establishment and equipment of Kesrouan-Ftough Hospital	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	13.5 million KD	3	2023	23-4-1997	The reconstruction of the infrastructure and damaged buildings after Israeli attacks	
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	31 million USD	Estimated at around 4.5	November 2013	23-4-1997	Development of the main agricultural structure	
U.S. government	6 million USD	-	-	2-6-1997	Funding the Lebanese-American Agricultural Cooperation Project including the distribution of 3,000 cows to junior farmers	
Foreign Cooperation Fund of Japan	Around 150 million USD	2.5	March 2022	29-12-1997	Funding the project to limit the coastal pollution and water piping	
European Investment Bank	10.2 million USD	Estimated at 2	2014	16-3-1998	Funding the project to limit the Lebanese coastal pollution	
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	10 million KD	2.5	May 2022	23-2-1999	Funding the drinking water project in Beirut (first phase)	
European Investment Bank	20.5 million USD	Estimated at 2	2021	23-2-1999	Building and operation of the waste water refining station in Tripoli	
European Investment Bank	5 million USD	Estimated at 2	2021	23-2-1999	Funding the northern coastal road	
Islamic Development Bank	17.4 million USD	LIBOR + 2.75	2006	23-2-1999	Project of Electricity energy transfer line with 220 kilovolt	
International Fun for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	8.7 million USD	N/A	July 2017	23-2-1999	Funding the agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation project	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	23 million KD	4.5	2022	23-2-1999	Funding the agricultural infrastructure rehabilitation project	
Islamic Development Bank	26.3 million USD	6.5	2011	23-2-1999	Funding the purchase of equipments for Beirut Governmental Hospital	
Saudi Fund for Development	1.6 million USD	2	2024	23-2-1999	Contributing to the establishment of 3 hospitals in Siblīne, Halba and Hermel	
Italian government	80 million USD	0.5	2034	23-2-1999	Funding water projects and agriculture and environment projects	
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	12 million KD	3	January 2018	23-2-1999	Funding Beirut southern entrance to Ouzaai, Khaldeh and Koukoudi	
Islamic Development Bank	18.2 million USD	6.5	2011	23-2-1999	Funding the purchase of supplies for both Zahleh and Saida governmental hospitals	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	6 million KD	4.5	2022	23-2-1999	Funding the road of Sir Donnieh-Hermel	
Italian government	60 million USD	0.5	2034	23-2-1999	Funding projects in both water and electricity sources sectors	
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	63 million USD	Estimated at 4.75	May 2015	31-3-1999	Funding projects to develop the vocational and technical education	
OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	4 million USD	3.5	October 2013	31-3-1999	Funding projects to establish vocational and technical schools	

“Public hospitals and schools are still below the required standards”



Grants obtained by Lebanon to fund infrastructure projects 1993-2008

Table 1

Donor	Loan value	Interest %	Loan duration until	Authorization date through the approval of the Council of Ministers	Objective
Islamic Development Bank	22.2 million USD	6.5	2011	31-3-1999	Funding projects to develop the vocational and technical education
Islamic Development Bank	5.6 million USD	2.5	June 2007	31-3-1999	Funding projects to develop the vocational and technical education
Islamic Development Bank	37 million USD	5.5	2008	25-10-1999	Funding water networks in A'akkar and the water project in Yamouneh and Ouyoun Orghosh
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	12 million KD	4.5	2021	25-10-1999	Funding the projects of the southern entrance to Beirut and the road of Ouzaaï- Koukoudi
U.S. government	15 million USD	NA	NA	7-8-2000	Agricultural cooperation project
Agence Francaise de Development (AFD)	2 million euro	3.5	April 2010	7-8-2000	Rehabilitation of the drinking water network in Jezzine
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	80 million USD	NA	January 2015	7-8-2000	The first municipal infrastructure project
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	56.5 million USD	Estimated at 2.5	February 2015	7-8-2000	Funding the public education project
Saudi Fund for Development	100 million USD	2	2025	30-12-2000	Funding infrastructure projects
OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	5 million USD	3.5	October 2016	30-12-2000	Drinking water projects in A'akkar
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	8 million KD	4.5	2019	3-4-2001	Funding the Lebanese part of the electrical connection project with 400 K.V. between Lebanon and Syria
Islamic Development Bank	22.4 million USD	5.5	2010	3-4-2001	Funding the establishment of networks to collect and discharge waste water within Ghadir project from Carlton to Na'ameh through the airport
Islamic Development Bank	100 million USD	NA	NA	3-4-2001	Reconstruction of the Lebanese southern regions which were damaged by the Israeli occupation
Islamic Development Bank	10 million euro	LIBOR + 1.5	2010	3-4-2001	Purchase scientific and educational equipments to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	35.2 million USD	3	2017	3-4-2001	Funding the project of the eastern entrance road to Beirut (Hazmieh-Sawfar)
Islamic Development Bank	35 million USD	5.5	2013	3-4-2001	Funding parts of the northern coastal roads to the Syrian borders
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	5 million KD	3	2018	3-4-2001	Funding the northern entrance to Beirut, Dbayeh-Antelias road with the connection to Naccash and Rabieh

Grants obtained by Lebanon to fund infrastructure projects 1993-2008						Table 1
Donor	Loan value	Interest %	Loan duration until	Authorization date through the approval of the Council of Ministers	Objective	
Saudi Fund for Development	11.7 million USD	2	August 2025	3-4-2001	Funding drinking projects in the rural areas of A'akkar	
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	10 million KD	2.5	2025	2-8-2001	Funding the drinking water project in Matn and rural A'aley and other regions	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	31 million KD	4.5	2024	5-6-2002	Project of Litani water transportation to South of Lebanon for irrigation and drinking purposes (800 m).	
Islamic Development Bank	9.4 million USD	6	2016	5-6-2002	Equipments for three governmental hospitals in Sibleine, Hermel and Hasbaya	
Islamic Development Bank	15 million USD	LIBOR + 2.75	2012	5-6-2002	The establishment of the new building of the Lebanese University	
Islamic Development Bank	5 million USD	LIBOR + 2.75	2012	5-6-2002	The establishment of the new university building of the Lebanese university	
Islamic Development Bank	27 million USD	6	2016	5-6-2002	Construction of the buildings of the faculties of medicine, dental medicine, law and political sciences in the Lebanese University	
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	20 million KD	2.5	2020	5-6-2002	The project of Litani water transportation to the South of Lebanon for irrigation and drinking purposes (800 m).	
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	20 million USD	LIBOR + fixed margin	15-5-2015	29-7-2002	The adoption of an efficient and sustainable mechanism to improve conditions of the local communities. The government contributes to the value of 5 million USD in this project. Beneficiaries contribute also to 5 million USD in contributions	
OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	10 million USD	5	15-9-2021	29-7-2002	Funding the project of the northern coastal road from Deir A'amar to A'abdeh	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	7 million KD	4.5	2024	29-8-2002	Funding part of the cost of the establishment of the control center in the Lebanese electricity network	
Agence Francaise de Development (AFD)	12 million euro	3.5	31-10-2002	12-12-2002	Transportation of water to South of Lebanon, Nabatieh and Habariya	
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	60.8 million USD	NA	15-5-2015	16-7-2003	Project fro the development of the civilized transportation	
European Investment Bank	45 million euro	NA	10-6-2022	16-7-2003	Expansion of Tripoli airport	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	17 million KD	4.5	2025	16-7-2003	Development of the infrastructure	
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	43.5 million USD	NA	15-5-2015	16-7-2003	Drinking water and waste water in Baalbek	
Islamic Development Bank	9.6 million USD	2.5	30-6-2023	20-10-2003	Funding the establishment of A'akkar roads	
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	15.4 million KD	2	2033	20-10-2003	Funding the educational buildings project	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	6 million KD	4.5	2025	20-10-2003	Funding the project for the construction of the new campus of the Lebanese University in Hadath	
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	31.5 million USD	NA	15-4-2017	30-1-2004	The project of cultural heritage and urban development in Tripoli- Saida- Sour- Ba'albeck and Jbeil	

“It is true that the reconstruction provided a network of highways and roads - but they are in a bad condition”

Grants obtained by Lebanon to fund infrastructure projects 1993-2008						Table 1
Donor	Loan value	Interest %	Loan duration until	Authorization date through the approval of the Council of Ministers	Objective	
Agence Francaise de Development (AFD)	12 million euro	3.5	30-4-2018	30-1-2004	Cultural Heritage Project	
Islamic Development Bank	37.5 million USD	6	2018	11-2-2004	Funding the establishment of networks to discharge waste water South West Beirut City	
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	5.3 million USD	1	February 2018	11-2-2004	Reinforce revenues and the financial management	
Saudi Fund for Development	30 million USD	-	-	20-11-2004	The reconstruction and development of the Lebanese Republic (roads of Tannourine - Nahr El-Mot - Eklim El-Kharoub)	
OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID)	15 million USD	5	15-12-2022	20-11-2004	The construction and rehabilitation of the Lebanese part of the Arab highway which extends from Beirut to Al-Masnaa	
Islamic Development Bank	32.3 million USD	6	2020	24-8-2005	The Southern coastal highway in Babiliya- Abu Al-Ousoud- Borj Rahal	
Islamic Development Bank	7 million USD	8	2013	24-8-2005	Bcharre road over 945 km	
Abu Dhabi Fund for Development	10 million USD	3	30-4-2021	24-8-2005	Project of the water of Nabatieh and the neighboring regions	
Abu Dhabi Fund for Development	10 million USD	3	30-4-2021	24-8-2005	Main crossroads inside Beirut	
Abu Dhabi Fund for Development	7.5 million USD	3	30-4-2021	24-8-2005	The rehabilitation and development of sewers in the northern area over 46 km and the construction of a refinery station	
Abu Dhabi Fund for Development	10 million USD	3	30-4-2021	24-8-2005	Waste water project in both Qada'a of Zgharta and Koura	
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	30 million KD	4.5	2024	9-12-2005	Development of the roads and main crossroads network	
European Investment Bank	45 million euro	NA	2025	15-5-2006	Waste water project in the South of Lebanon in Saida and Sour	
European Investment Bank	60 million euro	NA	2026	15-5-2006	Lebanese highways project	
European Investment Bank	60 million euro	NA	2025	11-11-2006	Waste water project in	
Islamic Development Bank	42 million USD	5.1	2024	3-9-2008	Purchase equipments for both the faculties of engineering and construction in the Lebanese University-Tripoli	
Agence Francaise de Development (AFD)	30 million euro	Between 2.56 and 3.44	End of 2020	5-9-2008	Funding the project to treat the waste water of the institutions of North Lebanon water	

Grants obtained by Lebanon to fund infrastructure projects 1993-2008

Table 1

Donor	Loan value	Interest %	Loan duration until	Authorization date through the approval of the Council of Ministers	Objective
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	5 million KD	2.5	November 2030	5-9-2008	Funding the project to provide drinking water in Matr and rural area of A'aley
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	9 million KD	4.5	2031	5-9-2008	Funding the administrative development project
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	30 million KD	3	2038	5-9-2008	Funding the reconstruction of the damaged infrastructure
Islamic Development Bank	43.2 million USD	-	2023	16-10-2008	Funding the project to improve and develop the infrastructure of the city of Tripoli
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)	25 million KD	4.5	2031	13-12-2008	Funding the project to develop water and waste water utilities in many Lebanese regions

Source: Official Gazette of the concerned years

Assessment of the Infrastructure Projects

The segmentation of the reconstruction program shows that industry and agriculture projects were not given priority (their share did not exceed 1%) and that the outcome or yield of the costly projects was not commensurate with the size of the disbursed funds. Electricity is a continuous calamity for the Lebanese people, rationed in the regions of Beirut and other regions and absent all day long in some. There are many reasons for the power cut such as theft, defected equipment, malfunctioning, misuse, and non-collection of invoices, and high production costs compared to the selling price. It has been suggested that Lebanon needs urgently new plants at the cost of no less than USD 1 billion.

It is true that the reconstruction provided a network of highways and roads – but they are in a bad condition. Public hospitals and schools are still below the required standards. The collection and treatment of solid wastes is a problem in itself and most Lebanese have to buy drinking water and domestic water especially in the summer (see The Monthly issue number 79 of February 2009 on “Lebanon’s Chronic Crises Without Remedies”).

It seems that administrative reforms and good governance is the only way out from this vicious cycle. Regulatory bodies ought to be active and not impeded by political meddling. Zua’ama should not dip into public money to further their power. Confessional and political nepotism, which is the bread and butter of the Lebanese system, will continue to breed waste and corruption. If it reforms itself, the Lebanese system as we know it, will cease to exist. An eventuality that many Lebanese perhaps dream of and few Zua’ama dread the thought. 🍷

Model of interest on loans: USD51.2 million loan + 18.2 million interest

The Lebanese government was granted many loans to develop Beirut International Airport. The loan by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development amounted KD15 million (USD51.2 million). Lebanon obtained this loan on June 30, 1995 and the parliament authorized the government to conclude such loan agreement as per Law no. 474 dated December 8, 1995. The agreement determined the interest rate at 2.5% per year for all drawn and outstanding funds. The interest rate would apply to each amount starting the date of its disbursement. In addition, a 0.5% fee per year shall apply on drawn funds to pay the costs of the management of the Fund and the services in execution of the loan agreement. Such interests and costs shall be settled every six months on May 1st and November 1st of each year. The settlement of the loan starts from May 1, 2000 to November 1, 2014 (semester installments to be paid on May 1st and November 1st of each year), with a value of KD500 thousand each (USD1.7 million).

The interests that were paid or will be paid on this loan (low interests of 3%) would reach USD18.2 million, end of 2014, at the date of the settlement of this loan.

After 39 years -The Council of the South: Is it a need or a pawn in the Zu'amas' feud

The war front waged last week between the coalitions of Amal Movement/ Hezbollah on one side and Fouad Sanioura and March 14 forces on the other. The reason behind this conflict was Sanioura's refusal to approve the budget of the Council of the South in the budget's draft bill of year 2009 in order to pave the way for closing the council and settling all the work. This issue has political and confessional dimensions determined by the current balance, which renders the amount of money set for the council's expenses irrelevant.



The Council's Foundation

In the beginning of 1970, and after the Israeli aggression in the South, the Lebanese government in its session on June 5th 1970 decided to form a special council named the Council of the South. "The role of this council was to meet the needs of the South as well as to provide a safe and peaceful environment. The council was given the full authority to fulfill the entrusted tasks knowing that it is related to the Prime Minister." All this was stipulated in the decree number 14649 on June 14th 1970 under which this council was established.

The Council before 1992

Before 1984, the council of the South did not get the adequate budget to fulfill its entitled tasks; the allocated amount of money did not exceed a few hundred million LBP since the council's foundation. However, after the Amal Movement took control over Beirut on February 6th 1984, after forming the national unity government chaired by Premier Rachid Karami and after Nabih Berri became a member in the government, and the Ministry of State for the South and Construction Affairs was created, the situation changed and the council's budget started to increase year after year in terms of value. The budget increased due to the inflation and deterioration of the LBP exchange rate against the dollar in the country.

The Council after 1992

After the parliamentary election took place in August and September 1992 for the first time since 1972, and the election of Nabih Berri as the Speaker of the Parliament, the council's budget increased dramatically to compensate for the victims of the Israeli attacks, as well as the infrastructure projects such as building roads and paving streets, sinking and setting up water networks, laying and transferring power plants and establishing schools, hospitals and other facilities. All this enabled Speaker Berri to enhance his role and position in the South.

Spending this immense amount of money (please refer to table 1) under the surveillance of the Court of Audit was associated with a talk about squandering and suing those who were compensated because of their political affiliation and were not affected knowing that the actual money spent was extremely high compared to the real cost. However, no administrative or judicial procedures were taken to curtail the extra expenses. Consequently, the Council has continued playing its role and spending money.

Eliminating the Council

In the draft budget of year 2005, elaborated by the Minister of Finance (at that time Fouad Sanioura) as well as that of 2008, a text on eliminating the Council of the South and the Central Fund for the Displaced was included. Knowing that Fouad Sanioura was seeking not to allocate budget for the Council of the South in the draft bill for 2009 is only a pre-requisite for eliminating the council. The excuse given behind this act is that the council is not needed after the Israeli military acts on the South stopped and that Lebanon cannot afford additional taxes and financing unnecessary expenses.

This care for public money hides a political crisis between Sanioura and Berri (including their allies); it is related to the past era when Berri considered Sanioura's government illegitimate (from November 2006 until July 2008 since the resignation of the Shia'a ministers and one Orthodox minister until forming the current government). Sanioura's attempt today is a way of applying pressure on Berri before the parliamentary elections knowing that Berri needs to provide services for the people in the South so as not to give the opportunity for his political opponents and even his allies (namely Hezbollah) to precede him in the elections or impose their candidates on him.

Sanioura's stance is tit-for-tat. Approval of the council's budget provided Berri opens a parliamentary session for the draft bills sent by the government during the break off period and to list them on the agenda for approval. Sanioura is also seeking to accept the allocation of the council's budget under the condition that the opposition (namely Speaker Berri) accepts to impose new tariffs and taxes, in particular increasing the rate on the added tax from the current 10% to 12% and consequently holding the opposition the responsibility.

Amid the fiery debate, the demand for allocating the Council's budget headed by the speaker could not defend for so long the council and its role; however, their positions became demanding to allocate the budgets and keeping the council against preserving the Central Fund for Displaced, the Higher Relief Committee, and the Development and Construction Council knowing that eliminating the council should be faced by eliminating all other councils in order to keep the confessional and regional balance.

The Management and Affiliation of the Council

The Council of the South is managed by a board composed of the chairperson, the deputy chairperson, the member of the board, and the general manager. The confession in control is the Shia'a since the basic authority is in the hand of the chairperson (Shia'a) and the general manager (Shia'a) knowing that the deputy (Maronite) and the member (Sunni) do not have essential authorities.

There are 260 employees in the council, most of whom are Shia'a. Their annual expenses reach to around 6 billion LBP. All the chairpersons who have succeeded this council since 1985 are members of the Amal Movement and supporters of speaker Nabih Berri.

Table 1 shows the expenses of the Council of the South (1992 – 2008)

The expenses of the Council of the South 1992 – 2008		Table 1
Year	Money (in LBP billion)	
1992	60	
1993	124	
1994	126	
1990	107	
1996	105	
1997	78	
1998	64	
1999	64	
2000	125	
2001	126	
2002	155	
2003-2006	266 (an average of 66 billion per year)	
2007	86 (only 10 billion were paid)	
2008	46	
Total	1,532	

Note: Law # 362 was issued in 2001 and provided to borrow USD500 million and allocate USD200 million thereof to the Council of the South. However, only USD60 million were transferred to the south. It is noteworthy that by mid February 2009, the budgets for the years 2006 - 2009 were not endorsed yet.

The Deputy in Lebanon

Representing the nation or the confession?

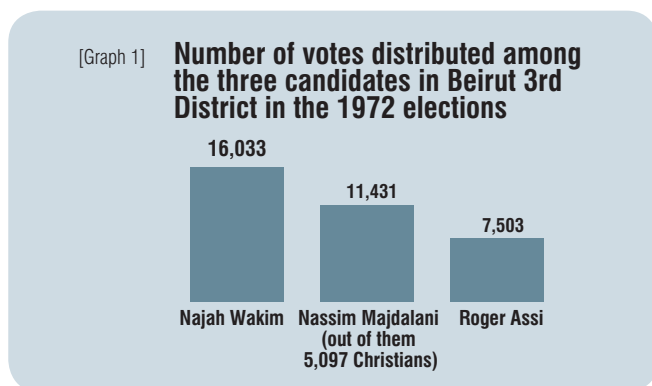
Deputy Najah Wakim in 1972 as a case study

Discussions are heard about the victory of some deputies in the elections with votes of electors from other confessions, or the failure of some deputies who received most of the votes from persons belonging to their confession, and so on. Examples of such cases are many in the current Lebanese parliament. In fact, in the Chouf district the Maronite candidate Mario Aoun received 21,990 votes, among them 15,401 Maronite votes. However, Aoun lost the elections, while the candidate Elie Marouni won with 52,075 votes, 6,893 of them Maronite.

In the past, similar cases occurred during the elections of 1972 when Najah Wakim (Partisan of Jamal Abdel Nasser) was an individual candidate for the Greek Orthodox seat in the Beirut 3rd District (Ras Beirut, Al Mazra'a and al Musaiybeh). He won with the support of the Sunni voters, while his rival Nassim Majdalani, who had the support of the Christian or Orthodox voters, lost.

Elections of 1972

The elections took place in April 1972; out of the 6 candidates who were nominated in the Beirut 3rd District for the Greek Orthodox seat, 3 dropped out of the elections (Gibran Akkaoui, Dib Falah and Hanna Janho) while 3 remained Roger Assi (joined the list of the president Abdullah el Baki), Nassim Majdalani (joined the list of the president Saeb Salam) and Najah Wakim who stayed alone as an individual candidate. The number of electors in this circumscription reached 71,994, and 38,763 voted. The results were as follows in Graph 1:



The winning candidate Najah Wakim won 195 Christian votes out of 7,863 Christian electors; the Orthodox voters protested against his victory. The result led to protests among the Orthodoxes in Beirut, and they were encouraged by the clergy and the rivals of Najah Wakim in the elections, especially deputy Nassim Majdalani.

Thousands gathered on April 19th outside the Saint Elias Batina Church and walked towards the Archbishopric of Beirut for the Greek Orthodox in the Al Sarasiqa neighborhood (Ashrafieh) chanting slogans:

“The retroactivity will not control us.

The first and the last word is for the Orthodox.

We refuse that he who did not get our votes represents us. We gained the voices of the noble Nasser partisans because our candidates were and still believe in Jamal Abdul Nasser.

We are in a conflict on dignity and we have to regain our stolen confession.

Take away the liars from their seats.

We want a Lebanese deputy and not a foreigner.

We want an Orthodox to represent us: Assi, Akkaoui and Majdalani.

Failure for Najah Wakim.”

The demonstrators were holding pictures of Assi, Majdalani and Akkaoui and a board on which they wrote: “We refuse that a non - Orthodox represents us”.

The demonstrators were received by the Archbishop Gebra'il Al Salibi, Majdalani, Assi, Akkaoui, and the members of the Orthodox council. Majdalani asked the demonstrators to calm down until the report of the council is ready. The report included the following points:

1 – The council condemns the victory of a candidate who did not get the votes of the Orthodox (less than 1% of the votes) for the Orthodox seat, noting that this does not reflect the will of the Orthodox in that region nor does it give them the right representation.

2 – The public position adopted by those representing the Orthodox confession in Beirut 3rd District, goes against the true concept of the parliamentary representation in Lebanon.

3 – The council affirmed its attachment to the traditions of the national union and the fraternity of one nation. Based upon this truth and upon the current applied Lebanese laws, the council requested to modify rapidly the electoral law and to divide the electoral districts in a way that represents the will of the confession and guaranties the true representation without any electoral custody on any of the Lebanese confessions.

4 – Establishing follow up committees from the members of the confessional council to reach this target. The council declares that if this request was not realized in a reasonable period of time, it will be obliged to invite the Orthodox confession to boycott all the upcoming parliamentary elections.

5 – Notifying the specialized references about these points and publishing them in the media.



“the member of parliament represents the whole nation and must not be conditioned by his electors”

Najah Wakim replies

The answer of the deputy Wakim was as follows:

“My victory frightened the confessional sectors in Lebanon. In fact, they have tried to wake up the sleeping confessional feeling of the Lebanese, but they ignore that the Lebanese people know that the Christian partisan of Jamal Abdel Nasser Najah Wakim is a true believer. He is proud to be Christian, more than the traders of confessions who are even disfiguring the sadness of the church bells. Our teacher says that a strong belief in God and in the fact that the core of the celestial messages does not go against the truths of this life.”

Who does the deputy represents?

Article 27 of the Lebanese constitution stipulates “the member of parliament represents the whole nation and must not be conditioned by his electors”. Nevertheless, the deputy must belong to a given confession because the distribution of the seats is on a confessional basis. There is no binding law which prevents the victory of a deputy, if he or she did not get the majority of the votes from electors of the same confession they are representing.

If a deputy won with votes other than those of their partisans from their own confession, this could be considered as a kind of hegemony according to the communication of the Orthodox council issued 36 years ago. This is the case again after Doha Accord where the parties decided to re-activate the electoral law of the sixties with adjustments mainly on Beirut. 🍇

The Legal and Practical Aspects of Telephone Tapping

During the last few weeks, Lebanese media have been busy covering news and allegations of telephone tapping. What are the facts about telephone tapping in Lebanon, and why is it being blown out of proportion?

Telephone Tapping in the Past

Lebanese have been subject to telephone tapping for many decades and it reached a paroxysm during the regime of the Al-Maktab Al-Thani (Deuxieme Bureau) between 1958 - 1970. The tapping continued during the war (1982 - 1990) but it was very limited. After the war and the restoration of security bodies, wiretapping picked up, especially during the era of the Syrian influence in Lebanon and until 2005.

Telephone Tapping Now

It was during Emile Lahoud's presidency, which was described by his opponents as a "security regime", that Law* no.140 dated October 27th 1999 was issued to ensure that privacy of individuals is protected. The preamble of this law states "...For many years, there has been serious concerns [in Lebanon] that phone tapping political and otherwise is ongoing. Considering that privacy and confidentiality of phone calls is an integral part of the human right, that should not be infringed on except in extraordinary circumstances and according to certain principles and specific cases, this law is being proposed." The law provides that the right of privacy in national and international calls is legally protected and that those calls shall not be subject to any type of tapping, except in the following specific cases and circumstances:

1- In extremely urgent and extra ordinary cases upon the request of the First Investigative Judge. It shall be a written justified and warranted decision. The telephone tapping shall not at the beginning exceed two months, subject to extension, and shall be handled by an officer in the judiciary. After the perusal of the recorded content of telephone tapping, it shall be destroyed by the prosecutor at the Court of Cessation after the elapse of the criminal prescription.

2- According to an administrative decision issued by the minister of national defense and the minister of interior, after the approval of the prime minister, in order to collect information aimed at combating terrorism, crimes against the state security and organized crimes. It should not exceed two months. The recorded telephone tapping shall be destroyed after three months provided that the log book listing numbers of telephones tapped is not destroyed.

The Law is not Applied

Telephone tapping continues and the law is not being implemented. What is even more precarious is telephone tapping by political parties and Zu'ama through their own private security apparatus. Furthermore, some private authorities and commercial have established their own private and independent communication networks.

Why Now?

The rallying for forthcoming parliamentary elections and the fear of the pro-government forces that the incumbent pro-opposition minister of telecommunications Gibran Bassil, might continue the practice of his predecessor Marwan Hamadeh has ignited this vague and explosive national debate. The fact remains however that telephone tapping, legal, illegal, governmental, private and foreign will continue but this is the least of the worries of the ordinary Lebanese. ●●

* 10 MPs presented an objection to this Law before the Constitutional Council which issued its decision on 24-11-1999 to annul articles 8, 15 and 16 of the said law.

Article 8: Any call made by a lawyer shall not be intercepted except under certain procedures.

Article 15: Any call made by any president, deputy or minister shall not be intercepted.

Article 16: A Judicial-Parliamentarian Authority shall be established to verify the lawful aspect of the administrative decisions authorizing call interception.

History of Lebanese Parliamentary Elections

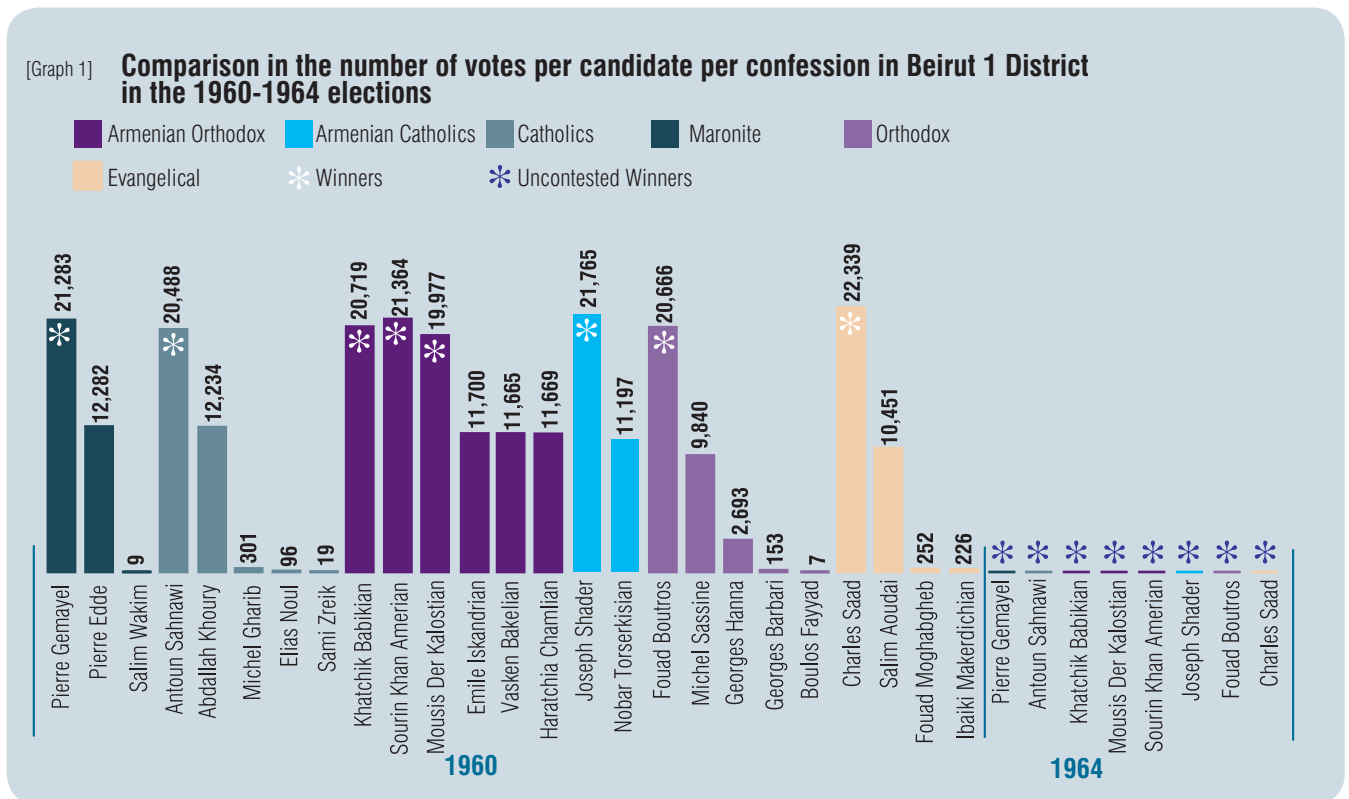
Part 4: Elections in Beirut 1 District

In the last three issues, The Monthly gave a briefing on the history of parliamentary elections in Batroun, Koura, Zahle, West Beqa'a, Rachaya, Keserouan and Jbeil. In this issue, the district of Beirut 1 will come under scrutiny.



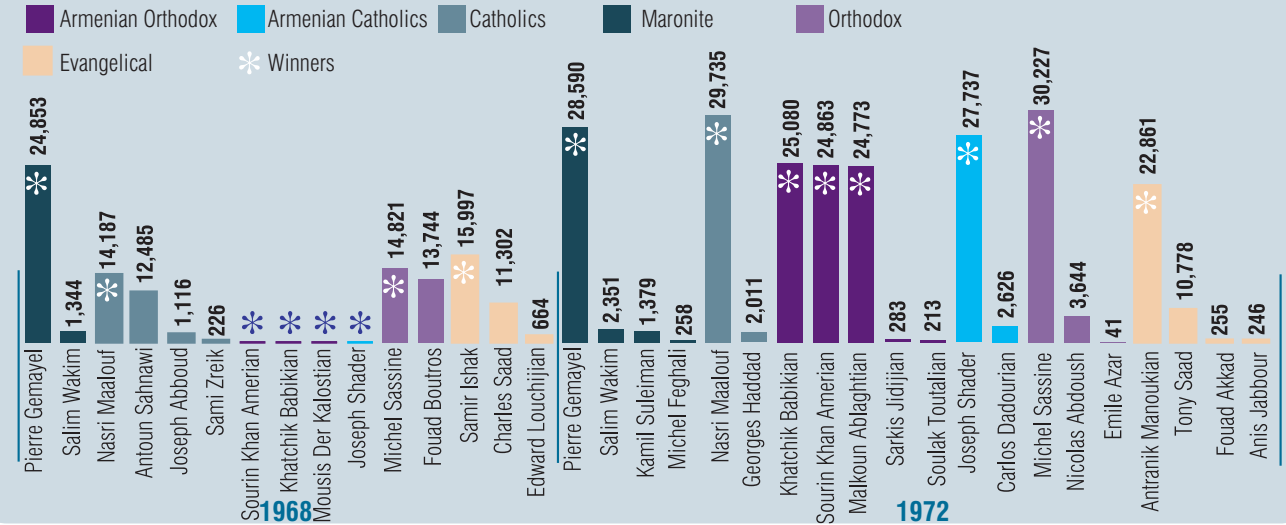
Parliamentary Elections between 1960 – 2005

Graphs 1 – 5 show the electoral facts in the district of Beirut 1 (1960 – 2005).

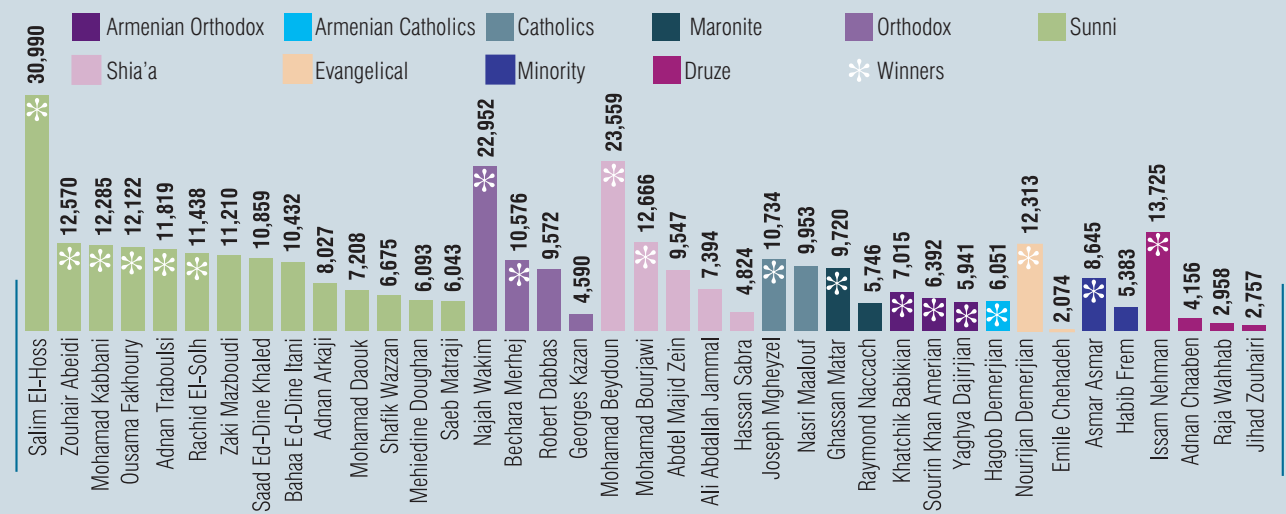


In the 1960 – 1972 elections, the list supported by the alliance of the Phalanges and Tachnak in all seats (except in 1968 when there was a break through by Michel Sassine and Nasri Khoury), won the elections

[Graph 2] **Comparison in the number of votes per candidate per confession in Beirut 1 District in the 1968-1972 elections**



[Graph 3] **Comparison in the number of votes per candidate per confession in the Beirut Mouhafaza in the 1992 elections**



Candidates from the Sunni confession who lost by less than 6,000 votes in the 1992 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Nader Jamal (5,976), Nabil Sinno (4,014), Wahaj Moussa (4,598), Habib Zeidan (2,115), Kamal Chatila (4,278), Samir Traboulsi (1,766), Imad Akkawi (1,736), Hussein Kawtali (891), Moustapha Baydoun (939), Mohamad Tal (2,712), Mohamad Rifai (2,023), Samir Al-Sabbah (1,676), Toufic Yammout (1,557), Mounir Sayyad (1,528), Sanan Barraj (1,115), Hamzah Chatila (1,744), Yassin Mousalli (1,145), Abdel Qader Qabbani (915), Omar Amran (732), Moustapha Hakim (621), Hisham Baba (862), Abdel Razzak Doughan (677), Ahmad Khodor (275), Khaireddine Tabbara (252), Ahmad Yassin (138), Jamil Kebbi (16), Othman Dana (5),

Aref Yafi (4), Farouk Jabr (3), Tamam Salam (1), Mohamad Mashnoug

Candidates from the Orthodox confession who lost by less than 4,500 votes in the 1992 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Nassim Khoury (384), Kamal Rbeiz (37), Asaad Shaftari (16)

Candidates from the Shia'a confession who lost by less than 4,800 votes in the 1992 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Hussein Yatim (2,487), Mohamad Roz (2,098), Fakhri Alameh (1,899), Ali Yatim (530), Ali Hassan (311), Maysar Hammouche (154), Kamal Mhanna (135), Mohamad Matar (5)

Candidates from the Maronite confession who lost by less than 5,700 votes in the 1992 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Maroun Fghali (17), Antoine Bchara (48), Sayed Franjieh

Candidates from the Christian Minorities who lost by less than 5,000 votes in the 1992 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

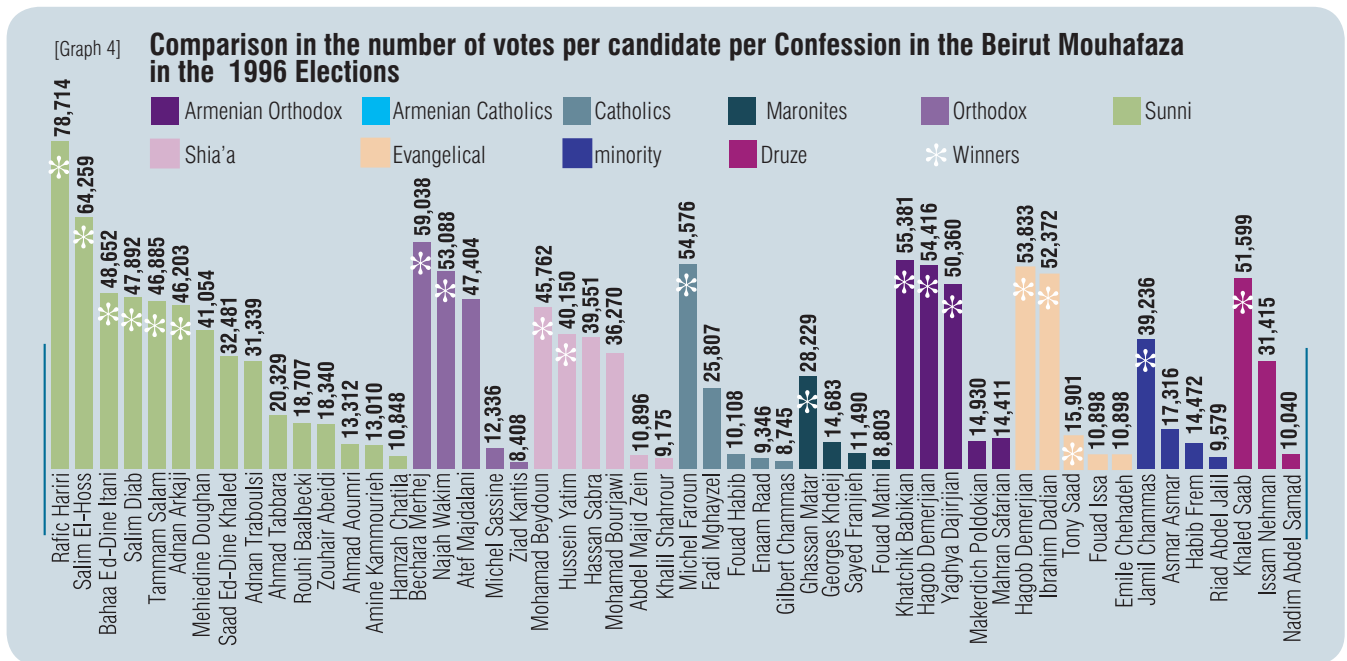
Farid Gebran (1,631), Riad Jalil (277), Badri Abdel Dayem (266)

Candidates from the Evangelical confession who lost by less than 2,000 votes in the 1992 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Fadi Dagher (1,088), Samir Makdassi (147)

Candidates from the Druze confession who lost by less than 5,000 votes in the 1992 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Akram Aoud (1,147), Asaad Zebian (1,072), Ghazi Mounzer (236), Asad Sharafeddine (93), Ibrahim Bou Ayyash (31), Rachid Qadi (26), Abbass Hamieh (12), Esmat Saab (7), Nabil Imad (1)



Candidates from the Sunni confession who lost by less than 10,800 votes in the 1996 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Ousama Fakhouri (8,151), Yassin Mousli (885), Mohamad Gharib (1,761), Anis Nsouli (1,339), Abdel Qader Qabbani (528), Khaled Itani (1,851), Mohamad Ardroumli (2,203), Abdel Halim Zaiim (157), Imad Turk (2,629), Ahmad Yassin, Mohamad Kardohi (136), Wahaj Sheikh Moussa (2,592), Ahmad Addam (478), Mohamad Baasiri (2,097), Abdallah Nir (169), Mohamad Tal (56), Mohamad Daouk (35), Kamal Chatila (74), Mounah Solh (9), Khaled Chehab (51), Abdel Razzak Doughan (7), Mohamad Sammak (8), Zaki Mazboudi (90), Issam Nakib (7), Mohamad Machnouk (90)

Candidates from the Orthodox confession who lost by less than 8,000 votes in the 1996 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Bchara Ghallam (1,550), Claude Abi Chahine (636), Michel Bashour (208)

Candidates from the Shia'a confession who lost by less than 9,000 votes in the 1996 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Mahmoud Ramadan (1,110), Ali Suleiman (276), Mohamad Saad (193)

Candidates from the Maronite confession who lost by less than 8,800 votes in the 1996 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Youssef Hachem (4,496), Simon Khazen (1,387), Fawzi Matni (803), Joseph Zeidan (668), Rami Chediak (229), Samir Abi Lameh (10), Salim Amatouri (4), Remond Roufayel (3)

Candidates from the Christian Minorities who lost by less than 9,500 votes in the 1996 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

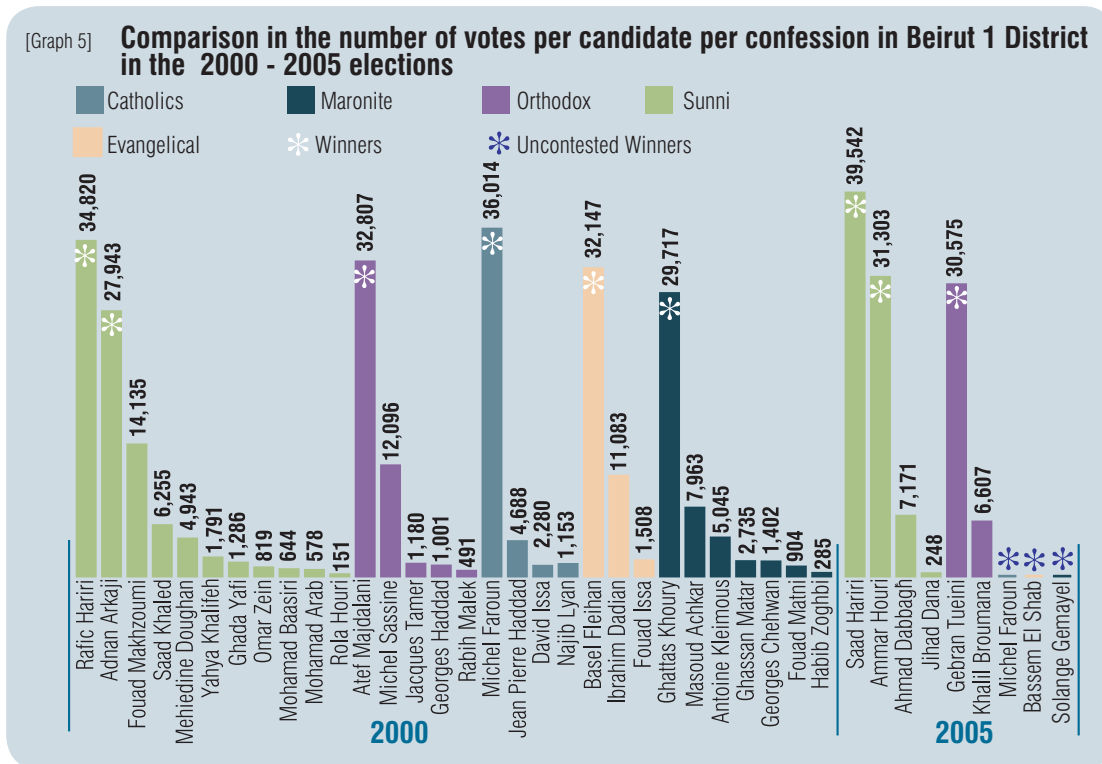
Antoine Maspirian (919), Elias Khoury (384), Albert Jamou (214), Badri Abdel Dayem (124), Yusef Jebran (85), Albert Melki (4), Antoine Karnabi (3), Alfred Toufic Saad

Candidates from the Evangelical confession who lost by less than 10,000 votes in the 1996 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

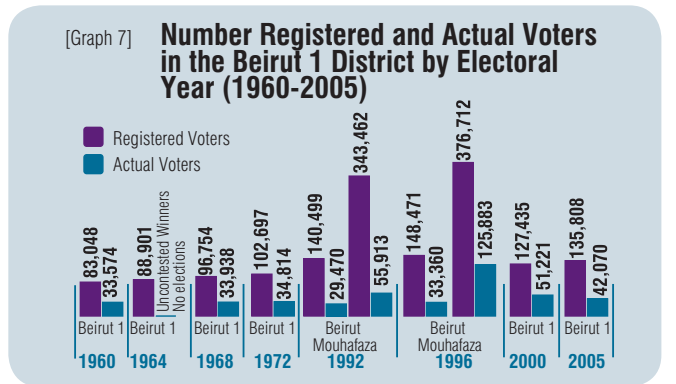
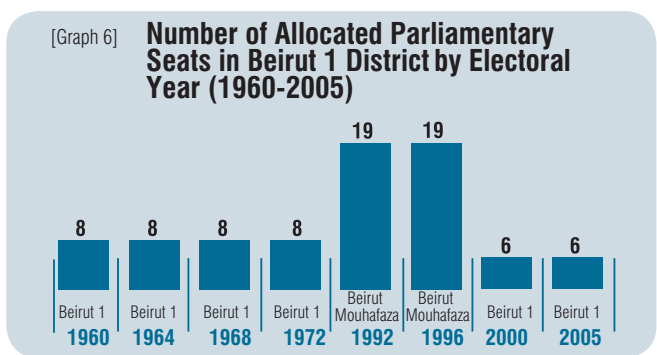
Georges Oueida (649)

Candidates from the Druze confession who lost by less than 10,000 votes in the 1996 elections in the Beirut Mouhafaza

Ghassan Zuhairi (485), Akram Salman (164), Ghazi Mouzer (72), Raja Wahab (70), Ismat Saab (20)



Graphs 6 and 7 show the number of allocated seats and the number of registered and actual voters per Qada'a by electoral year (1960 – 2005).



In the 1960 – 1972 elections, Beirut 1 District included: Achrafieh, Rmeil, Saifi, Al-Mdawar, Port and Mina Al-Hosn, and a total of 8 seats. In the 2000 – 2005 elections, Beirut 1 District included Achrafieh, Saifi and Mazra'a. However, in the new electoral law, Beirut 1 District includes Achrafieh, Rmeil and Saifi.

Abortion: Considered a crime if unjustified

Abortion is the loss of the fetus at any time of the pregnancy. Under certain circumstances it is performed to avoid shame (in the case of unwanted pregnancy out of marriage), or for medical reasons related to the woman's or the fetus' health. Abortion is punished by the penal code, except in some cases when the law authorizes abortion at certain periods of pregnancy.

The Lebanese penal code sentences any woman who aborts with her consent to six months to three years in prison; the person who performed the abortion can also be sentenced. If an intended act of abortion leads to the death of a woman, the person who performed it can be sentenced from four to seven years of forced labor. Anyone who forces a woman to abort without her consent may be sentenced to at least five years of forced labor¹.

In Jordan, the penal code stipulates the same principles as the Lebanese penal code.

In Egypt, anyone who leads a woman to abortion, with or without her consent, can be sentenced from 1 day to three years in prison. Anyone who makes a woman abort on purpose, with violent abuse, is sentenced to at least three years, with a maximum of fifteen years.

In the Emirates, anyone who leads a woman to abortion by giving her medicine or by using any other method is sentenced to maximum five years of prison. If the crime happens without the woman's consent, the sentence is raised to a maximum of seven years in prison.

The situation is different **in France** where a pregnant woman can ask her physician to perform an abortion before the end of the 12th week of pregnancy, if she feels unwell. The physician reserves the right to refuse, but should give the patient the names of other specialized doctors to do the operation. A woman can abort at anytime of her pregnancy if two doctors state that her pregnancy may threaten her life or the safety of the fetus.

Abortion is punished by two years of prison and a 130 thousand Euros fine in the following cases:

- ⊙ after the 12th week without medical reasons
- ⊙ if not performed by a physician
- ⊙ if not performed in specialized places according to the laws

The sentence is five years of prison plus a fine of 300 thousand Euros for anyone who has performed several illegal abortions. 🍀

1- *Art 251 of the penal code stipulates that "when extenuating circumstances are applied:*

If it is a crime punished by life forced labor or life detention or death, the penalty changes to minimum one year and maximum seven years of prison.

If it is any other crime, the sentence is from six months to five years of prison.

If it is an infraction, the sentence does not exceed six months of prison.

If it is a violation, the judge can lower the fine to half.

The preemptive measures may be canceled, except for the isolation, if the condemned is sentenced according to the law."

February 14: One Million Protestors or a Weak Christian Participation?

The fourth anniversary of the assassination of Rafic Hariri (February 14, 2005) was a milestone occasion for the March 14th forces, since it occurs two weeks before the beginning of the operations of the International Tribunal scheduled for March 1 and less than 4 months before the parliamentary elections scheduled for June 7.

The newspapers' headlines on Sunday 15th and Monday 16th of February 2009 covered differently the same event and focused on the crowd, especially the Christian participation.

An-Nahar Newspaper

An-Nahar linked both the celebration and the elections through the following headline: "June 7, Lebanon D-day for the March 14 Forces". According to An-Nahar, "The crowd which was estimated by global News agencies at hundreds of thousands, is close to the One Million figure suggested by the majority...". The Opposition acknowledged the popular protest but stressed the weak Christian participation while the organizing parties estimated "the Christian participation at more than 150 thousand, considering people flow from Zahle, South Matn, North Matn, Keserouan, Jbeil, Batroun, Zghorta, Bcharre and Achrafieh".

An-Nahar tried shyly to adopt the expression of "One Million Crowd".

Covering the event, An-Nahar confirmed the connection between the elections and the speeches of the leaders of the March 14 stressing on the participation in parliamentary elections since the establishment of the "International Tribunal is about to get completed on the beginning of March"...

The image shows the front page of the An-Nahar newspaper. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the newspaper's name 'النهار' and a date '14 فبراير 2009'. The main headline is '14 آذار تواعد لبنان في 7 حزيران'. Below this is a large photograph of a massive crowd gathered in a stadium. To the right of the photo is a portrait of a man in a suit. Below the photo are several columns of text in Arabic, including sub-headlines like 'تعديل حكومي واسع في السعودية' and 'بعد ما ربطه أولرت بالإفراج عن شاليت'.



الحريري يحيي قيام المحكمة ويعلن ٧ حزيران موعداً مع «القرار الحز»... وقادة ١٤ آذار يؤكّدون «مصيرية» الانتخابات بعد ٤ سنوات.. تظاهرة مليونية جديدة



نازك رفيق الحريري: ملتمسون الأمانة التي تركها الشهيد



عاصفة بشرية تجدد انتفاضة الاستقلال

Al-Mustaqbal Newspaper

Al-Mustaqbal underlined the event, linking it to the imminent elections. It considered it "A new One Million demonstration" although four years elapsed since the assassination of Hariri. "The crowd gathered to renew its loyalty to the principles that Rafic Hariri died for" and "the Freedom Square" witnessed again the "One Million scene of March 14th 2005 with the increasing number of loyal participants, even exceeding the expectations of the organizers".

As-Safir Newspaper

As-Safir did not mention the event in the front page because the newspaper is not issued on Sundays. This could be an attempt to overlook the event. It focused on the security situation after (Lutfi Zeineddine) died of injuries due to a knife attack in Ras al-Nabeh - Bchara al-Khoury as he headed home from the February 14 event in addition to the related position of Jumblat calling to serenity. However, As-Safir linked both the incident and the elections security.

In the following pages of the newspaper, As-Safir covered the event of February 14 under the following title: "The North and the Beqa'a made the commemoration scene in the capital... As if the Future Movement reserve of Bcharre headed to the Square". It seems that As-Safir recognizes the huge participation, but with no more than hundreds of thousands, far from the One Million Protestors".



ذكرى الحريري: عودة السجال إلى بدايته شهيد و22 جريحا من انصار 14 آذار [10 - 6]



الخارج إلى الضوء [5 - 2]

Al-Akhbar Newspaper

Al-Akhbar linked the Hariri anniversary to Bchara al-Khoury incident and the death of a citizen as if nothing changed. The headline stated "Hariri's anniversary, the return of the debate to its beginning", suggesting that the problem in Lebanon and the chaotic security situation started with the assassination of Hariri", with the concomitant political debates about the situation in Lebanon and relations with Syria.

In the following pages, Al-Akhbar estimated the crowd at hundreds of thousands (and not One Million), while praising the organization capacity and precision and the significant presence of the Progressive Socialist Party.



Myth #21

The Mountain, Druze Mountain and Druze Emirs

Myth

It is common to name the Chouf region the Druze Mountains or simply The Mountain (Al-Jabal), and to name the Emirs who ruled this region from 1516 to 1860 the Druze Emirs.


Fact

The Ma'an and Chehabi families ruled large regions in Lebanon since 1516. Over the years, the ruling families started to expand during the period of Emir Fakhreddine El Ma'ani El Kabir (1572 – 1635) in the Chouf and Hasbaya regions. The Emir sought on expanding his fear of influence which sometimes extended into Taurus, north of the Turkish borders, as well as A'akaba in the South, El Arich in Egypt, and Damascus in the East especially in 1623. Even in the era of Bachir El Chehabi the Second (1788 – 1840) - who expanded his Imara to Byblos and Beqa'a Valley- the Imara of those people was not limited to the Chouf and some territories in Mount Lebanon. Its borders and distances were related to the power of the ruling Emir and his relation with the Ottoman Empire.

The region under rule was not restricted to the Chouf or Mount Lebanon and its population was not just Druze; they were from various Islamic and Christian confessions.

The religious affiliation of the Emirs is uncertain. Even though there was a consensus that all the Ma'an Emirs were Druze, some people believe that Emir Fakhreddine the Second converted to Sunni and others even think that the Emir converted secretly to the Maronite confession.

As to the Chehabi family, it was divided into three confessions: Druze, Maronite and Sunni. History books mentioned that Emir Youssef El Chehabi who ruled the Imara from 1770 until 1788 converted to become a Maronite. The most prominent Emirs in Lebanon and in the Chehab family, namely Emir Bachir El Chehabi the Second (1761 - 1840) who ruled the Imara in 1788, have converted to the Maronite confession. However, two of his children, Amine and Massoud, converted to Islam during their exile in Turkey.

Chouf was populated by those of the Druze and Christian confessions. The rulers were not only Druze Emirs; some of them converted to Christianity and the word "Mountain" represented The Mount of Lebanon, encompassing A'aley, Ba'abda, Matn, Keserouan and Jbeil and not Chouf only. 

When they talk... Saudi Arabia

Saudi - Lebanese relations have matured over the years in spite of the verbal attacks by certain Lebanese media. Many Lebanese journalists have published articles criticizing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its rulers; some were even fined as a result.

Throughout the Lebanese war, communist and leftist forces and parties stood against Saudi Arabia because of doctrinal principles. Following the 1989 Ta'ef accord which ended the Lebanese war, most of the Lebanese political parties - all confessions combined - supported the Kingdom. Hezbollah however, expressed concern in particular circumstances. After the assassination of Rafic Hariri on February 14th 2005 and the dramatic events that followed specifically the July 2006 war and May 7th 2008 events and the stance adopted by the Kingdom on Lebanon, the politicians in Lebanon became divided with regards to the Saudi role in the country.

Below are some official statements:

Najib Miqati

He confirmed the substantiality, credibility, harmony, and closeness of the Saudi-Lebanese relations and valued the past and present Saudi stances in anchoring the Lebanese national identity and in hosting the Ta'ef conference. "Saudi Arabia plays the role of 'protector' on the Arab, Islamic and international arena due to the neutrality and the wisdom of its rulers".

(October 20th 2006)

(Miqati is stable in his stance towards Saudi Arabia.)

Walid Jumblat

He thanked Saudi Arabia for their support on the national peace process confirming that "[it] has done its utmost to help the Lebanese people regardless of their projects and affiliations... The Kingdom paid huge sums to reconstruct the South for the sake of the government and not for the sake of buying land."

(September 6th 2006)

(Occasionally, Jumblat criticized the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia without resorting to hostility.)

Saad Hariri

"Saudi Arabia has always expressed its unconditional support to Lebanon; it contributed to putting an end to the war, the creation of the Ta'ef agreement and to reconstruct the new Lebanon without asking for anything in return."

(March 29th 2006)

(Saad Hariri is stable in his stance towards Saudi Arabia. He had apologized to the Kingdom in the year 2006 when March 14 forces refused the Saudi initiative to solve the Lebanese crisis at that time.)

Nabih Berri

"I would like to thank the Saudi kingdom for always supporting Lebanon and for its help after the Israeli aggression. Lebanon is in desperate need now for political aid and particularly Saudi - Syrian coordination".

(October 11th 2006)

(Berri has always supported Saudi Arabia and its role in Lebanon; but after the Saudi refusal to receive him in 2008, he began to criticize the Kingdom by accusing it of hindering the national dialog he was coordinating at that time.)

Fouad Sanioura

"Saudi Arabia has always stood behind the Lebanese people and state."

(July 2005)

(Sanioura's position towards Saudi Arabia has always been steady.)

Michel Aoun

"What happened in 2005 was nothing but the security dimension was pulled out from the equation. The political subordination to the Saudi kingdom and the United States remained. That was the major mistake which undermined the Lebanese stability."

(May 2008)

(Aoun has always criticized the Saudi position and role in Lebanon whether during the ratification of the Ta'ef agreement in 1989 or throughout the period from 2005 to date.)

Families from Lebanon

The Douba Families

Christians originating from Jordan



Origins**

The first ancestor of the Douba family was known by the name of Dib and lived in Karak el Choubak in Jordan; he then moved to Houran and Damascus. The dates of these transitions cannot be traced back accurately, but it is thought that in 1600, Dib left Damascus to settle in Ras Ba'albeck where he worked in the silk business and married a woman from the ruling Al Haykal family. In 1620, Ras Ba'albeck was destroyed and Dib's children left the region. One of his sons became a monk at the Monastery of Balamand and the remaining six children moved to the following towns:

- ⊙ Elias went to Al-Nabak between Homs and Damascus, 90 kilometers away from Damascus. The Al Jabbour family members who currently live in that region are his descendants.
- ⊙ Moussa lived in Al-Karak near Zahle and the Al-Douba family members are his descendants.
- ⊙ Farah lived in Zahle and the Al-Maldouou family members are his descendants.
- ⊙ Youssef settled in Zahle and the Al-Nabki family members are his descendants.
- ⊙ Loutfi moved to A'aqoura and the Al-Loutfi family members are his descendants.
- ⊙ Suleiman had two boys, one of them went to Palmyra and his descendants were known by the name of Douba. The other one lived in Tripoli and his descendants were also known by the name of Douba.

Members and Numbers

The Douba family is considered small in terms of number and dissemination. In fact, the total number of Douba family members does not exceed fifty people distributed among the following Christian confessions:

- ⊙ Greek Catholics in Zahle, particularly in Al-Karak and Moulalaqa where the majority lives.
- ⊙ Latins in Rmeil, Beirut.
- ⊙ A few members of the Maronite confession in Tripoli.

Four Douba members are registered in the civil status records of Zqaq el-Blat and belong to the Sunni confession. However, no link whatsoever was found that relates them to the Douba family members living in Rmeil, Zahle or Tripoli.

None of them can be considered as prominent figures in politics and there is no reference to any Douba member registered in the Order of Physicians, the Bar Association, or the Order of Engineers and Architects in Beirut. 🍀

** Information on the origins of the family is derived from Dictionary of Family Names and People and Brief History of Families by Dr. Ahmad Abu Saad, Dar El Ilm Lilmalayin 1997 (title translated from Arabic)

Real Estate Index: January 2009

Land prices in Lebanon remained on the down slope in January 2009. In fact, a significant drop was registered in the high prices of lands, residential units and apartments. At the same time, stagnation continues to prevail over the real estate sector which means, if no positive development is to occur, a further drop in the upcoming months until the beginning of summer is expected.

Table no.1 and 2 show the average price of land and construction sold during January 2009.

Average price of land sold in January 2009 (selected areas)			Table 1
Location	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Ashrafieh	260	941,200	3,620
Hamra	322	1,529,500	4,750
Ba'abda			
Hazmieh	916	1,346,520	1,470
Hazmieh	1,250	1,625,000	1,300
Yarzeh	870	1,827,000	2,100
A'aley			
A'arayya	1,900	228,000	120
Keyfoun	1,650	214,500	130
Bhamdoun	950	161,500	170
Matn			
Beit Mery	2,350	1,715,500	730
Ain Saadeh	728	393,120	540
Ain Saadeh	975	351,000	360
Antellias	1,750	2,327,500	1,330
Zalka	715	1,294,150	1,810
Bekfaya	1,200	174,000	145
Keserouan			
Adonis	1,000	475,000	475
A'ashqout	1,200	162,000	135
Dbayeh (Marina)	1,800	3,834,000	2,130
Ballouneh	1,150	230,000	200
Kaslik	970	1,134,900	1,170
Adma	1,600	1,512,000	945

Source: Information International – January 2009

Average cost of residential apartments sold in January 2009			Table 2
Location	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Achrafieh	210	184,800	880
Achrafieh (Rmeil)	135	148,500	1,100
Msaitbeh	275	412,500	1,500
Ras El-Nabeh	145	224,750	1,550
Sanayeh	200	450,000	2,250
Mar Elias	220	310,200	1,410
Talet El-Khayyat	157	416,050	2,650
Ras Beirut	190	323,000	1,700
Batriarkieh	170	275,400	1,620
Riviera	460	1,449,000	3,150
Ba'abda			
Hazmieh	220	374,000	1,700
Hazmieh	300	543,000	1,810
Hadath	130	106,600	820
Hadath	145	116,000	800
Ba'abda	280	375,200	1,340
Yarzeh	350	528,500	1,510
Matn			
Dora	90	84,600	940
Awkar	110	121,000	1,100
Mansourieh	165	130,350	790
Mansourieh	220	242,000	1,100
Sin El-Fil	180	247,500	1,375
Fanar	145	134,850	930
Zalka	137	121,145	885
Antellias	120	92,400	770
Dekwaneh	165	128,700	780
A'aley			
Dawhet Aramoun	150	127,500	850
Dawhet Aramoun	205	166,050	810
Khaldeh	185	150,775	815
Dawhet El-Hoss	200	186,000	930
Keserouan			
Adonis	155	103,850	670
Sahel A'almah	220	160,600	730
Kafer Hbab	185	177,600	960
Kaslik	215	304,225	1,415
Zouk Mosbeh	137	97,270	710

Source: Information International – January 2009

Consumer Price Index: January 2009

The prices of the majority of goods and food products quoted in Information International's index remain on the "quiet" down slope that has prevailed over the last two months of 2008 following the significant "on the rise" tendency witnessed earlier. However, the drop is limited and the prices are still far higher than those registered in December 2008.

In January 2009, the prices of 40 products decreased while the prices of 20 others increased. 40 products maintained the same price.

Table no.1 shows the prices of goods and food products during January 2009.

The prices of goods and food products during January 2009.				Table 1
Item and brand		Prices beginning of January 2009	Prices beginning of February 2009	% of price change
Oil				
Afia corn oil	3.5 liters)	16,700	16,100	-3.6
Mazola corn oil	(3.5 liters)	17,100	16,050	-6.1
Mazola corn oil	(2 liters)	11,000	11,000	0
Slim corn oil	(2 liters)	9,500	9,250	-2.6
Wesson corn oil	(2 liters)	10,500	10,000	-4.7
Ghandour soya oil	(3.8 liters)	13,470	13,400	-0.5
Alfa corn oil	(4 liters)	16,750	14,220	-15.1
Al-Wadi olive oil	(1/2 liter)	7,900	8,600	+8.8
Ketchup and Sauces				
Libby's Ketchup	(567 g)	2,050	2,050	0
Extra Ketchup	(340 g)	1,325	1,325	0
Extra Ketchup	(2.2 kg)	6,600	6,500	-1.5
Dolly's Mayonnaise	(500 ml)	3,450	3,400	-1.4
Al-Wadi Mayonnaise	(500 ml)	3,800	3,650	-3.9
Al-Bsat Tahina	(900 g)	8,600	8,150	-5.2
Al-Bsat Tahina	(450 g)	4,450	4,350	-2.2
Taous tomato sauce	(70 g)	525	525	0
Taous tomato sauce	(425 g)	2,750	2,750	0
Tala tomato sauce	(675 g)	2,500	2,500	0

Cereals				
Khater white lentils	(1 kg)	2,750	2,600	-5.4
Khater chick-peas fahli	(1 kg)	2,350	2,350	0
Khater beans	(1 kg)	1,700	1,700	0
Peeled wheat	(1 kg)	1,350	1,100	-18.5
Pineal Lima Bean	(1 kg)	3,100	3,000	-3.2
Brown Fine Burgul	(1 kg)	1,980	1,780	-10.1
Egyptian rice	(1 kg)	2,570	2,840	+10.5
American rice	(1 kg)	2,300	2,780	+20.8
Italian rice	(1 kg)	2,300	2,640	+14.7
Al-Wadi Hommos Tahina	(380 g)	1,125	1,125	0
Chtaura Hommos Tahina	(380 g)	1,450	1,450	0
California Gardens beans	(450 g)	790	980	+24
Al-Wadi beans	(450 g)	1,150	1,150	0
Chtaura beans	(480 g)	1,250	1,250	0
Libby's corn	(340 g)	1,520	1,480	-2.6
Pasta				
Barilla spaghetti	(500 g)	2,050	2,050	0
Antonio Amato spaghetti	(500 g)	2,500	2,500	0
Monte spaghetti	(500 g)	2,250	2,250	0
Sugar and Salt				
Sugar		2,250	2,100	-6.6
Al-Ousra Sugar	(5 kg)	5,100	5,050	-0.9
Salt	(700 g)	525	500	-4.7
Box of salt	(738 g)	1,250	1,320	+5.6



Dairy Products				
Candia full cream milk	(1 liter)	2,200	2,400	+9
Candia full cream yoghurt	(2 kg)	5,250	5,250	0
Bonjus labneh	(1 kg)	3,750	3,750	0
Taanayel labneh	(500 g)	4,800	5,000	+4.1
Candia labneh	(500 g)	5,250	5,250	0
Taanayel yoghurt	(1 kg)	3,000	3,000	0
Smeds cheese	(400 g)	3,500	3,800	+8.5
Picon cheese	(400 g)	3,400	3,200	-5.8
Picon cheese	(170 g)	1,725	1,650	-4.3
Double-crème cheese	(1 kg)	7,750	8,000	+3.2
Fresh country cheese	(1 kg)	9,100	9,100	0
Khashkawan cheese	(1 kg)	15,500	14,750	-4.8
Lurpak butter	(200 g)	2,500	1,990	-20.4
Tatra butter	(200 g)	2,250	1,990	-11.5
Al-Maalaqtain margarine	(2 kg)	9,800	9,500	-3
Al-Baqara al-Haloub margarine	(2kg)	19,950	19,000	-4.7
Vegetaline margarine	(2 kg)	17,000	17,000	0
Nido full cream milk (bag)	(2,250 g)	23,250	19,000	-18.2
Nido full cream milk	(2,500 g)	29,000	23,150	-20
Tatra full cream milk	(1,800 g)	16,400	15,250	-7

Meat, Fish and Eggs				
Luncheon meat beef	(198 g)	1,500	1,500	0
Zwan chicken	(200 g)	2,500	2,450	-2
Zwan beef	(200 g)	2,300	2,300	0
Al-Mona chicken	(200 g)	1,850	1,850	0
Al-Taghzia beef	(200 g)	1,750	1,750	0
Al-Taghzia chicken	(200 g)	1,750	1,750	0
Geisha sardine	(125 g)	1,250	1,250	0
Deli sardine	(125 g)	990	990	0
Milo sardine	(125 g)	990	990	0
Geisha tuna	(200 g)	2,050	2,000	-2.4
White Bell tuna	(200 g)	2,100	2,000	-4.7
White Diamond tuna	(200 g)	1,950	1,950	0
Skipper tuna	(185 g)	1,830	1,750	-4.3
Eggs	(30 eggs)	7,500	6,000	-20
Beef	(1 kg)	13,000	15,500	+19.2
Sheep	(1 kg)	18,000	20,000	+11.1

Coffee and Tea				
Najjar coffee	(1kg)	12,500	12,250	-2
Brazil coffee	(1 kg)	11,100	11,100	0
Al-Hisan tea	(180 g)	2,250	2,470	-9.7
Nastle	(250g)	1,720	1,720	0

Halvah and Jam				
Al-Wadi halvah	(454 g)	5,630	5,000	-11.2
Al-Bsat halvah	(450 g)	5,540	4,100	-25.9
Chtaura apricot jam	(1 kg)	6,050	6,100	+0.8
Al-Wadi apricot jam	(1 kg)	6,620	5,630	-14.9

Tissues and detergents				
Mimosa tissues	(500 g)	2,400	2,550	+6.2
Fine tissues (tissues)	(200)	1,100	1,100	0
Primo tissues (tissues)	(200)	1,150	1,120	-2.6
Gipsy tissues (tissues)	(300)	2,250	2,275	+1.11
Mimosa toilet papers (4 rolls)		2,400	2,320	-3.3
Yes detergent	(900 g)	1,920	1,920	0
Clorox	(1 liter)	1,400	1,400	0
Persil	(4 kg)	18,000	18,000	0
Ariel	(4 kg)	18,000	18,000	0

Fruits and Vegetables				
Orange	(1 kg)	800	1,250	+56.2
Tomatoes	(1kg)	1,500	1,500	0
Cucumbers	(1kg)	1,500	2,000	+33.3
Bananas	(1kg)	1,000	1,000	0
Lemons	(1 kg)	500	650	+30
Apples	(1 kg)	2,000	2,500	+25
Potatoes	(1 kg)	700	700	0

“Before and After” & “The Lebanese Presidents, as I knew them”

“Before and After” (first published in 1953) and “The Lebanese Presidents, as I knew them” (first published in 1961), two books by Iskandar Riachi, were combined in a single work and republished in 2006.

Riachi was born in Khenchara in 1888. He studied in the Eastern College, Zahleh, and mastered the French language in Paris. In 1911 he founded the “Al Berdawni” newspaper, in Zahleh and then “Al Watan Al Jadeed” newspaper in New York. Riachi returned to Lebanon in 1914 to be later appointed by the French Mandate as acting deputy of the counselor of Beqa’a in 1920. The writer resigned from his office in 1947 and was elected as President of the Lebanese Press Union. Riachi was renowned for his sarcastic but amusing political writings targeted at politicians. He died in 1961, and was buried in Khenchara.

“Before and After”

In this book Riachi recounts a series of events which took place between Lebanese politicians and the French authority during the mandate of Lebanon: the “before” and “after” intervals, which represent the time extending from 1918 to 1941 and from 1942 to 1953 respectively. The writer describes the achievements of the politicians. He mentions that during the French mandate of Lebanon “the wealthy leaders were those who received money from the French subsequently to occupation, as the price of mandate”. He adds that he accompanied a number of politicians to the French commissariat to sign the act of consent, approving French protection. The mandatory resorted to “powerful people” known throughout Beirut, in order to back up the French occupation. Those eventually controlled the capital by wandering across the streets and alleyways carrying their weapons and imposing tributes. And the writer was amongst them!

Riachi reports that Émil Eddé was the first Maronite to revolt against the French. He refused to appoint a French President for the Lebanese Republic and accused the French of being colonists and dictators. Likewise, Bechara El Khoury avoided any settlement in this regard. The Muslim community in Lebanon and across the Arab countries felt reassured towards Sheikh Bechara El Khoury more than any other Maronite leader. The writer recounts

the period when the republic joined forces to forge the age of Emir Majeed Erslan, to grant him a seat in the parliament. During that epoch, Nazira Jumblat played an important role in keeping the dynasty alive, in a time when it was hard for women to play a political role. She strived to safeguard the glory of the Jumblat family, to convey it thereafter to her son Kamal Jumblat.

“The Lebanese Presidents, as I knew them”

Charles Debbas: According to the writer, Debbas followed Bechara El Khoury’s steps even before he was appointed as Member of Parliament, “then he made a complete mess in order to become Speaker of the House.”

Habib Pasha Es-Saad: Since the entry of the French, they were furious with him due to his assumption of Governor of Mount Lebanon prior to their arrival to that region. He was then detained in Sawfar Hotel. Riachi claimed to be a French agent and proposed 25 Egyptian pounds to Habib Pasha, tempting the latter to convince the members of the administrative board to accept the decisions of the French. Es-Saad consented to the request, but refused the bribe. The French, consequently, forgave and forgot what he had committed and subsequently, declared him the successor of president Charles Debbas.

Émil Eddé: He arrived on board a warship from France to Beirut. The writer indicates that it was the French Commissioner Comte Damien de Martel who made Émil Eddé president. However, as a result of many pressures, Eddé abandoned the Sérail of Bourj and moved to his house from where he exerted his functions as president of the Republic of Lebanon in name only.

The writer continues to talk about Alfred Naccach, Ayoub Tabet, Petro Trad who Riachi describes as the “number one” nightly man, who had never

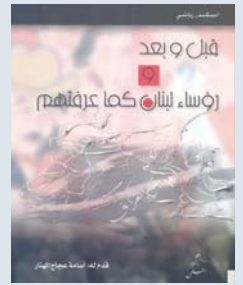
spent a night without playing cards, since the age of sixteen. President Trad took an oath to never get married due to the permanent presence of multiple housemaids in his house. Riachi, consequently, concluded that Petro Trad had spent his term making no achievements.

Bechara El Khoury: He was the first post-independence president of Lebanon. His office was marked by his refusal to act as secretary of the French High Commissioner. Bechara El Khoury constantly strived to hinder the Sunni-Shia’a cooperation, on the grounds that the rising of such a comprehensive Islamic bloc would threaten the existence of the Republic. President Bechara El Khoury resigned in 1952 and moved to his residence in Kaslik.

Camille Chamoun: Riachi pointed out in his second book that President Chamoun would have been a remarkable president if he had omitted to monopolize the power and the rule and to underestimate as well as ignore other political leaders. He further reported that some Iraqi politicians had supported the renewal of Chamoun’s second term, noting that the Americans publicly declared to have allocated ten million USD. This sum was lent to the pertinent authorities in Iraq, to be sent successively, as Arab money, to Chamoun, who was seeking a second term.

Fouad Chehab: During the crisis of 1958, Fouad Chehab attempted to protect the country from a civil war by preventing to take side with his army, the revolutionaries and the supporters (the Sérail group). The army, along with its commander, was able to save the country from a sectarian massacre.

Iskandar Riachi may be the first among the writers in Lebanon to report the cases of corruption among journalists and politicians.



My first scientific experiments*

This book aims at answering scientific questions, commonly asked by children, through experiments carried out with their parents or elders.

The book contains four chapters

The first one includes a number of natural experiments. The author poses questions to which children should find the right answer after performing a relevant experiment. This chapter covers a wide range of natural phenomena: how do plants get water and nutrients and how rocks turn to sand. Moreover, the author gives ecological advice and guidelines in order to protect nature, such as reducing waste and safeguarding natural resources.

The second chapter covers the five senses of the human body and poses relevant questions to the readers. Each is coupled with an experiment explaining the answer.

The third chapter gives definitions for the elements: weather, air, temperature, water, ice, snow, wind, lighting and thunder.

The last chapter, which is the most interesting, contains some experiments through which children and adolescents can create daily tools, such as cranes, pulleys and weight machines. 🛠️

A glossary for complex words mentioned throughout the book is enclosed at the end of the book.

* Author: Charles Leven and Leslie Johnson

Arabic translation: Mohamad Farhat

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International Media

Iran-US Relations

In this issue, The Monthly highlights on the Iran-US developments and publishes excerpts from several foreign newspapers on the issue.

Talking and Listening To Iran

By Andrew Lee Butters / Tehran

Time – Thursday February 12, 2009

... “The future of American-Iranian relations isn’t up to Ahmadinejad alone, of course. power in Iran is exercised by the elected presidency and parliament but overseen by less transparent clerical authorities headed by Khamenei. And with oil prices tumbling and the economy in poor shape, Ahmadinejad may face stiff competition in presidential elections this year. Yet even if more moderate politicians like former president Mohammed Khatami come to power, anti-Americanism is so much a part of public life in Iran that the question remains: Is détente with the U.S. compatible with the legacy of the Islamic Revolution?”

The screenshot shows the TIME World website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'LIVE AND WORK IN THE USA' and a 'Congratulations! You've Got 1 FREE YEAR!' banner. Below that, there are input fields for 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Birth Country', 'Email', and 'Telephone'. The main content area features the article title 'Talking and Listening to Iran' by Andrew Lee Butters / Tehran, dated Thursday, Feb. 12, 2009. A photo shows a girl holding the Iranian flag. Below the photo are social media sharing options (Print, Email, Share, Reprints, Related) and a quote: 'There's nothing like being surrounded by a crowd chanting "Death to America"'. The article text is partially visible: 'A girl holds the Iranian flag at a celebration in memory of the founder of the Islamic Republic. Newsline Television / Photos for TIME'.

Iran hints at US dialogue as it hails the revolution

Katherine Butler reports from Tehran

The Independent - Wednesday February 11, 2009

“After 30 years of hostility, enmity and poisoned rhetoric, Iran and the US moved a tentative step closer to rapprochement yesterday when President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced he would welcome dialogue, provided America agrees to talk to Iran on an equal footing...

... ‘The new US President has said that he wants to produce change; that he wants to talk to Iran. Obviously the Iranian nation is ready for real talks and real change,’ Mr Ahmadinejad told hundreds of thousands of supporters in Tehran. He was speaking at a rally marking the ‘Day of Victory’ in 1979, when the pro-American Shah was ousted. In the three decades since the revolution and the hostage crisis of the same year, Iran and the US have had no direct diplomatic contacts.

... But Mr. Ahmadinejad’s speech was shorter on anti-US rhetoric than usual, and appeared aimed at preparing his conservative supporters (some of whom attended the rally with effigies of Mr. Bush) for a change of tone in dealings with Washington. ‘Today the world is ready for many changes... we must start dialogue with other countries. We are not threatening any country in the world,’ he said.” ...

The screenshot shows the THE INDEPENDENT WORLD website. The main headline is 'Iran hints at US dialogue as it hails the revolution'. Below the headline is a sub-headline: 'After 30 years of hostility, the Iranian President says he is ready for 'real talks'. Katherine Butler reports from Tehran'. The article is dated Wednesday, 11 February 2009. A photo shows a large crowd of people waving Iranian flags. The article text is partially visible: 'After 30 years of hostility, enmity and poisoned rhetoric, Iran and the US moved a tentative step closer to rapprochement yesterday when President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced he would welcome dialogue, provided America agrees to talk to Iran on an equal footing. His remarks came a day after the US President, Barack Obama, said he was looking for opportunities to open direct talks with Iran. Indicating that he expects movement leading to face to face talks within months, he urged Iran to "send some signals that it wants to act differently". In what could be seen as a direct response to the new American overture, Mr Ahmadinejad – a hardline populist whose time in power has been marked by a sharp deterioration in relations with the West over Iran's nuclear ambitions – went some way towards sending those signals. In a speech marking the 30th anniversary of the Iranian'.

Iran declares readiness for US talks

Ian Black, Middle East editor

The Guardian, Wednesday February 11, 2009

“Iran gave a strong signal yesterday that it is prepared to start a mould-breaking dialogue with the United States in response to the dramatic call by Barack Obama for the Islamic Republic to ‘unclench its fist’...

...But the Iranian leader reinforced the impression that the Obama administration’s emollient signals are being taken seriously - even if the prospects for change remain highly uncertain...

... If disagreements persist over past relations between the US and Iran, dealing with present problems will be even more difficult, with the west locked in confrontation with Tehran over its nuclear programme, which the US claims is an attempt to develop nuclear weapons. Iran insists it is for peaceful purposes.” ...

The screenshot shows the Guardian website interface. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation links for News, Sport, Comment, Culture, Business, Money, Life & style, Travel, Environment, Blogs, Video, and Jobs. The main headline is "Iran declares readiness for US talks" with sub-headlines: "Ahmadinejad's comments echo fresh Obama vow" and "Thousands mark 30th anniversary of revolution". The author is listed as Ian Black, Middle East editor, with the date "The Guardian, Wednesday 11 February 2009". Below the text is a video player showing a crowd of people holding posters of Barack Obama and Ahmadinejad. On the right, there's a "Clue: A major cit" section with a grid of letters and a "Most viewed on guar" list with 5 items.

The Decline of the Petro-Czar

By Rana Foroohar

Newsweek - Saturday February 14, 2009

...“Vladimir Putin sent Russian tanks rolling into Georgia, laying bare his ambition to restore Russian dominion over the lands of the old Soviet empire. In Iran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was busy bashing the dollar, which he had declared ‘worthless,’ and transferring Iran’s reserve wealth into euros. Meanwhile, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez was in Russia meeting with Putin to negotiate arms deals...

...With the world economy collapsing in recession, and falling demand driving the price of oil down to \$37 per barrel, the trio of Putin, Chávez and Ahmadinejad are losing their strength. The empires that they built on oil are proving rickety, vulnerable to inflation and joblessness, and now mounting political unrest is jeopardizing their personal power...

...Barack Obama has invited America’s enemies to talk, and Putin, Chávez and Ahmadinejad are responding with surprising alacrity, in no small measure because the price of oil no longer supports their geopolitical ambitions. Suddenly, these bold challengers of U.S. ‘imperialism’ want to sit down and have a nice chat with the new administration. Chávez, who frequently referred to George W. Bush as ‘the Devil,’ has said that he is willing to talk ‘on equal and respectful terms’ with Obama. Last week, on the 30th anniversary of the Iranian revolution, Ahmadinejad declared his nation ‘ready for talks.’ Although Putin is still rattling regional sabers, his aides are starting to make friendly noises: ‘Relations between Russia and NATO,’ said Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, ‘should get back on track.’ ”...

The screenshot shows the Newsweek website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with "HOME", "THE MAGAZINE", "INTERNATIONAL EDITION", and "msnbc". The main headline is "The Decline of the Petro-Czar" with a sub-headline: "Plunging oil prices have created an unexpected diplomatic bright spot in the global recession by weakening unfriendly regimes." The author is Rana Foroohar, and the date is Feb 14, 2009. Below the text is a photo of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Vladimir Putin, and Hugo Chávez. On the right, there's a "WORLD CHALLENGE" section with the text "They can win a \$20".

Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) for Women and Men

by Dr. Hanna Saadah



*So cling to me, like I must cling to truth
Or like, when we are old, we cling to youth.*

When youth migrates, it takes with it some of our powers and passions leaving us weaknesses and longings instead. Intuitively, we deny age its dues, hold on to fleeing youth as if it were ours to keep, and refuse to learn the evident lessons of nature. During this stage of stubborn resistance, and before we capitulate to life's irrevocable verdicts, we search for youth-saving potions. Of the myriad purported remedies (spiritual, mythical, traditional, or medical) the only science-sanctioned treatment is Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).

When women's estrogen production declines, we call it Menopause and when men's testosterone production declines, we call it Andropause. Both conditions are treatable but to treat or not to treat remains the proverbial question. Fortunately, enough scientific evidence has been accrued to provide us with tangible answers.


By Menopause I mean the natural or the surgical decline of estrogen production because the two conditions are similarly treated. If a woman loses her ovaries to surgery or to age, she will become estrogen deficient. But estrogen deficiency in itself does not justify initiating HRT. The symptoms resulting from estrogen deficiency must disrupt life's quality to such a degree so as to justify such treatment.

The diagnosis of Menopause is entirely clinical and does not require supporting laboratory measurements. This is because treatment is only given to reduce symptoms and not to treat laboratory levels. A woman who has low hormone levels but no symptoms should not be treated. Similarly, a woman who has severe symptoms in the face of normal hormone levels should be given a therapeutic trial and, if she responds, should be maintained on HRT. Menopausal symptoms are well known: hot spells, sudden sweats, genital dryness, painful intercourse, reduced sexual desire, decreased sexual pleasure, mood swings, thinning of hair, nails, skin and bone, and weight gain around the waist. If these symptoms are uncomfortable enough to be life disruptive, then treatment is justifiable.

Treatment in a woman who still has her uterus is estrogen plus progesterone. The estrogen is what helps the symptoms but the progesterone prevents cancer of the uterus, which can be incited by unopposed estrogen. But if the woman no longer has a uterus, then estrogen alone is the choice treatment.

Side effects of HRT, though uncommon, are not benign and include breast cancers, strokes, heart attacks, and blood clots. Hence, the menopausal disruption to life's quality must be severe enough to justify these serious side effects.

The duration of HRT should not exceed the duration of uncomfortable symptoms. Consequently, it is wise to periodically taper the HRT to find out if it is still needed. HRT is not age dependant and the decisions on when to start and when to stop rest solely on good clinical judgment.

Unlike Menopause, where laboratory support is not needed for decision-making, measuring serum testosterone is essential for the diagnosis of Andropause because male symptoms, although quite similar to women's, are not as specific. Testosterone, which also has serious side effects, should not be used as an anti-aging drug. Like estrogen and progesterone, it is only justified when the benefits outweigh the harms. In men, this means that the symptoms are severe, that the testosterone level is low, and that treating with testosterone improves life's quality. 

“The diagnosis of Menopause is entirely clinical and does not require supporting laboratory measurements”

20 Questions Concerning Astrology and Horoscopes

by Antoine Boutros*



Now that we are well placed into the New Year and doors remain wide open to predictions, it is time to confront the myths surrounding astrology and horoscopes.

Q1: What is astrology? What is the authenticity of predictions based on of the analysis of the movement of celestial bodies and their direct influence on human fortunes? Is astrology a science?

A1: Astrology is a diversified field, starting by chiromancy and ending by geomancy. Astrology is an art, and maybe the most popular art, but it is absolutely not a science.

Q2: How come it is not a science and yet it relies on celestial constellations?

A2: The elements of astrology are historical, that is a relic of past science. Consequently it is not linked to astronomy. Science has not proven evidence to the influence of the movement of celestial bodies on the fate of human beings. The relationship between astrology and science is fictitious and false.

Q3: What is the reason behind such a misunderstanding?

A3: The astronomical expressions and terms commonly used by astrologers are misleading. Even the signs of the Zodiac used by astrologers are not the official Zodiacal signs. Hence, astrology is an art, nothing more.

Q4: Which one is older, astronomy or astrology?

A4: Astrology accompanied human beings since their early beginnings since the fear of natural phenomenon is basic and chronic. Current astrology is ancient, and is a mixture of Babylonian, Alexandrian and Arab astrology. It is worth mentioning that astrology and astronomy were considered as one subject, and then they went separate. Without astrology, astronomy would not have developed. But, astronomy developed into a science and astrology remained a hobby.

Q5: What are the Zodiacal signs used by astrologers?

A5: They only use 12 out of the 88 Zodiacal signs in the celestial constellations. The chosen signs represent the constellations that the sun apparently crosses in its annual rotation. Even with this respect they are wrong since they are 13 constellations rather than 12. In fact, astrologers do not focus on constellations nor stars, but on the planets in which they include the moon and the sun and their position in the Zodiacal signs. Imagine such a scientific error of considering the sun as similar to other planets.

Q6: What is the scientific basis that astrology allegedly assimilates with?

A6: The map of celestial sphere and that of constellations used by astrologers is an old map drawn by the Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy two thousand years ago.

Q7: And what has changed since then in astrology?

A7: This map is not valid anymore. The celestial map has changed but it still remains with astrologers as it was. In 2500 B.C., when the pyramids were constructed, the polar star was located in the Serpens constellation. However, it is located now in the Ursa Minor constellation and it will shortly move to another place, near star Vega. Astrologers, who claim they are astronomers, ignore this fact so how could their predictions be correct assuming you can use the position of the sun as a basis for predictions.

Q8: Is this the only difference, notwithstanding its importance?

A8: No, the time taken by the sun for its apparent passage through a constellation has changed. This is important in celestial measurements. According to the Babylonians, the sun used to rise in March with the stars of Aries so they considered Aries as the first astrological sign of the Zodiac, and hence agreed that this month is the beginning of every New Year because it is the fertility season. But with time, due to the precession of the equinoxes, the sun started to rise in the constellation of Aquarius. It is still slightly deviating towards the East to complete an orbit of 26,000 years, repeating it until the end of time.

Q9: Why did astrologers not take that into consideration?

A9: Ptolemy did not know about such phenomenon, and neither did Greek astronomers who preceded him. It is worth mentioning that the Arabs discovered this phenomenon and yet astrologers, amongst which were many Arabs and Moslems, did not care about its implications.

Q10: Is the changing position of the celestial sphere the only major difference between astrological and astronomical maps?

A10: As I mentioned before the Zodiac used in astrology consists of 12 signs or constellations. However, among the changes in the celestial sphere, a new constellation should be added to the route apparently taken by the sun and it is Ophiuchus (the Serpent Holder) which, due to precession, entered the apparent path of the sun. So if an astrologer tells you that the sun today lies in your constellation and so and so applies to your fortune, he is either joking or ignorant that the sun, at that definite date, is somewhere else. 🌌

To be continued in the next issue.

* Writer and Editor-in-chief, *AI Computer magazine*

The Syndicate of Private Hospitals in Lebanon

Spiraling costs and declining standards

The syndicate of the private hospitals owners' in Lebanon is based in Beirut and was founded by virtue of the labor minister's decision # 1/523 dated November 15th 1965. This non binding syndicate includes the private licensed hospitalization institutions which have met labor law conditions.

The syndicate was established to look after the affairs of hospitals and hospitalization institutions in Lebanon, especially the medical, scientific, disciplinary and economic issues. Also to propose and follow up bills, decrees and decisions pertaining to medical and hospitalization affairs, and participate in modernizing the hospitalization policy and work on partnering hospitals.

The syndicate membership

Private hospitals are established by a decree after the proposal of the public health minister and upon the request of the owner. The candidate should be of Lebanese nationality without a criminal record, should be a holder of a university degree, or a Baccalaureate II degree and should have five years of experience in hospital management.

The membership fee is five times the minimum wage (currently LBP300,000) totaling to LBP1,500,000. As for the annual membership fee, it is twice the minimum wage (LBP600,000) plus 10% of the minimum wage (LBP30,000). Because the syndicate groups hospitals and not individuals, it does not offer its members any services.

The syndicate's organization

The syndicate consists of a general assembly, the syndicate's council and the president.

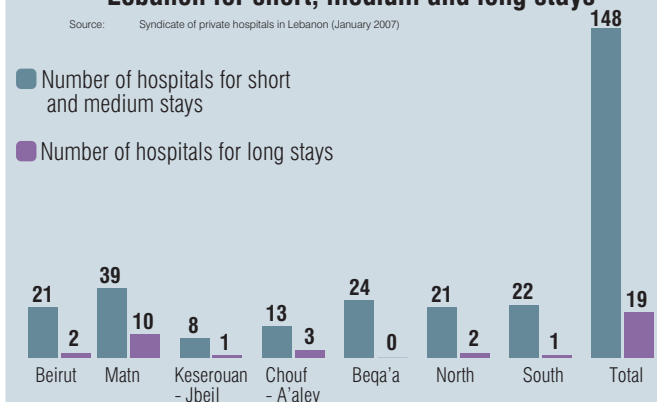
I- The general assembly

The general assembly groups all the members who paid their membership fees. It holds a normal assembly once a year at the request of the syndicate's council. Every member has one voice, and every hospital is represented by its owner, or by someone appointed by the latter. The general assembly has many prerogatives including the election of the syndicate council's members, the amendment of the rules and regulations, and the ratification and amendment of the budget.

In Lebanon, there are 188 hospitals of which 148 are members of the syndicate (short and medium stay) and 19 (long stay) which are spread over the Lebanese territories according to graphs 1 and 2:

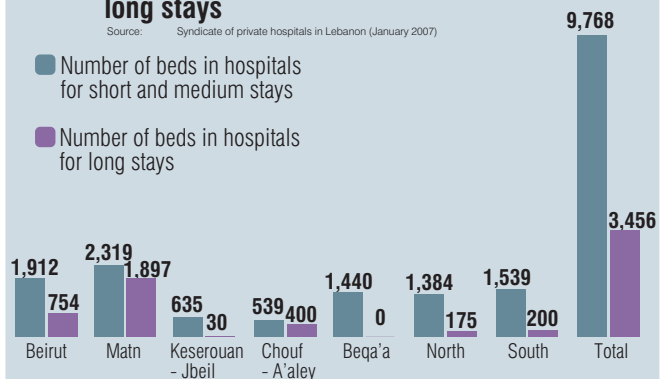
[Graph 1] Comparison in the number of hospitals in Lebanon for short, medium and long stays

Source: Syndicate of private hospitals in Lebanon (January 2007)



[Graph 2] Comparison in the number of beds available in hospitals in Lebanon for short, medium and long stays

Source: Syndicate of private hospitals in Lebanon (January 2007)



“The private hospitalization sector made up for the absence of the public sector during the civil war and the ensuing political and security crises.”

2- The syndicate's council

The council consists of 12 members whom the general assembly elects for four years; the membership of half of the members will end after two years to be replaced by other newly elected members. The A rated hospitals¹, or their equivalents, are represented by half of the members, the long stay hospitals by one member, and the other rated hospitals by five members. The current council consists of: Suleiman Haroun, president; Mohammad Al Abdallah, vice-president; Maher Jamal El Dine, secretary; Fadi Sa'adeh, treasurer. The members are Joseph Otayek, Ziad Munlah, Michel Elyan, Mohammad Hamandi, Sister Pauline Fares, Viviane Sfeir, and Mohammad Al Qaraawi.

The council establishes the budget, sets the membership and annual fee, appoints and licenses the syndicate's employees, and sets their missions and salaries.

3- The president

The president is elected by the council for two years and can be re-elected for a new term. The president represents the syndicate and signs on its behalf all decisions, letters and statements. He also supervises the activities of the council and follows the implementation of their decisions. Four presidents have headed the syndicate since 1966 as shown in Table 1.

Names and terms of the syndicate's presidents

Table 1

Term	President
1966-1970	Toufic Rizk
1970-1983	Adnan Haidar
1983-2003	Fawzi Adaimi
2003-2005 2005-2007 2007-present	Suleiman Haroun

Source: The syndicate of private hospitals in Lebanon

The importance of the hospital sector

President Haroun points out that the private hospitalization sector made up for the absence of the public sector during the civil war and the ensuing political and security crises. The private sector was able to do so thanks to individual initiatives which fueled the persistence in delivering first aid, health, medical and hospitalization services. Haroun also gives credit to the motivation of its human resources totaling 25,000. Haroun adds that this sector gave Lebanon the title “The Hospital of the East” and turned it into a privileged destination for foreigners seeking medical services.

Today, the sector suffers from the fact that the ministry of public health, the government institutions, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and even some private insurance companies are not paying their dues which totaled LBP900 billion by the end of 2007. Also, the insurance companies are doubtful about the invoices and the bills presented by the hospitals and are requesting auditing committees to verify the accuracy before setting the real dues.

The problem facing the private hospitals in Lebanon, and the health sector in general, is the rising costs and the decline in the standard of services offered thus making the patients the real victims. 🍷

1- The ministry of public health evaluates the hospitals on the basis of points which the hospitals should achieve and divides them into categories (A-B-C-D-E) according to the achieved points.

Schools in Lebanon

Melkite Catholic Schools

3.9% of private school students in Lebanon

The Greek Catholic Church (the patriarch, the archbishop, the parishes and friars) owns several schools that take in students from all confessions.

This can be explained through two factors: the Church's former desire to expand on non-Christian territories and the emigration of Christians from certain regions leaving behind schools with doors open to students regardless of their religious confession.

Catholic Schools

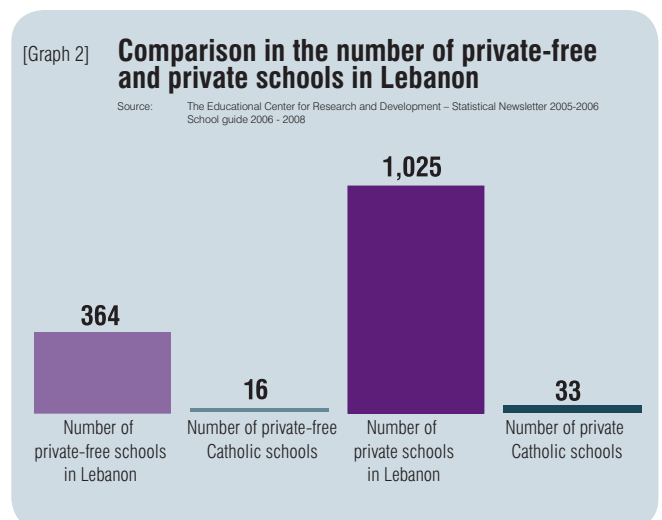
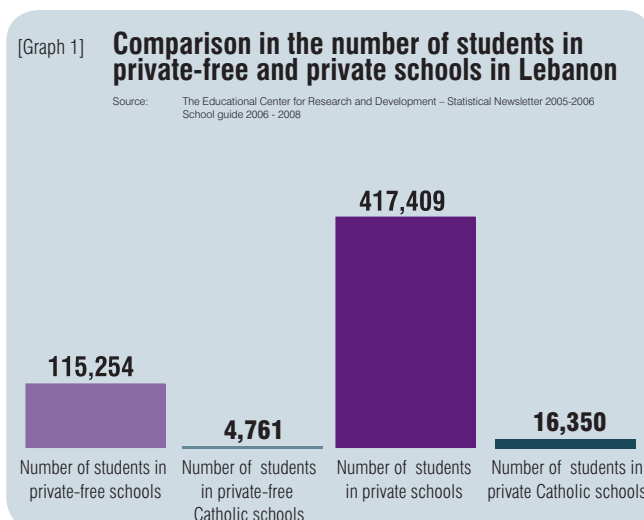
There are 49 Melkite Catholic schools in Lebanon making up 3.5% of the total number of private schools in Lebanon (1,390 schools). They take in 21,111 students; 3.96% of the total of Lebanese private school students (532,662) attends Melkite Catholic schools, which are divided into private-free (private schools with no fees) and private non-free schools (private schools with fees).



Dar Mkhales School - The oldest Catholic school in Lebanon (1824)
2009

1- Private-free Melkite Schools

There are currently 16 private-free Melkite schools that take in 4,761 students. Consequently, private-free Melkite schools make up 4.4% of Lebanon's private schools without fees (364 schools). The students make up 4.1% of the overall students in those schools (115,254). Graph 1 shows the comparison in the number of students in private-free schools in Lebanon, while Graph 2 shows the comparison in the number of private and private-free schools in Lebanon.



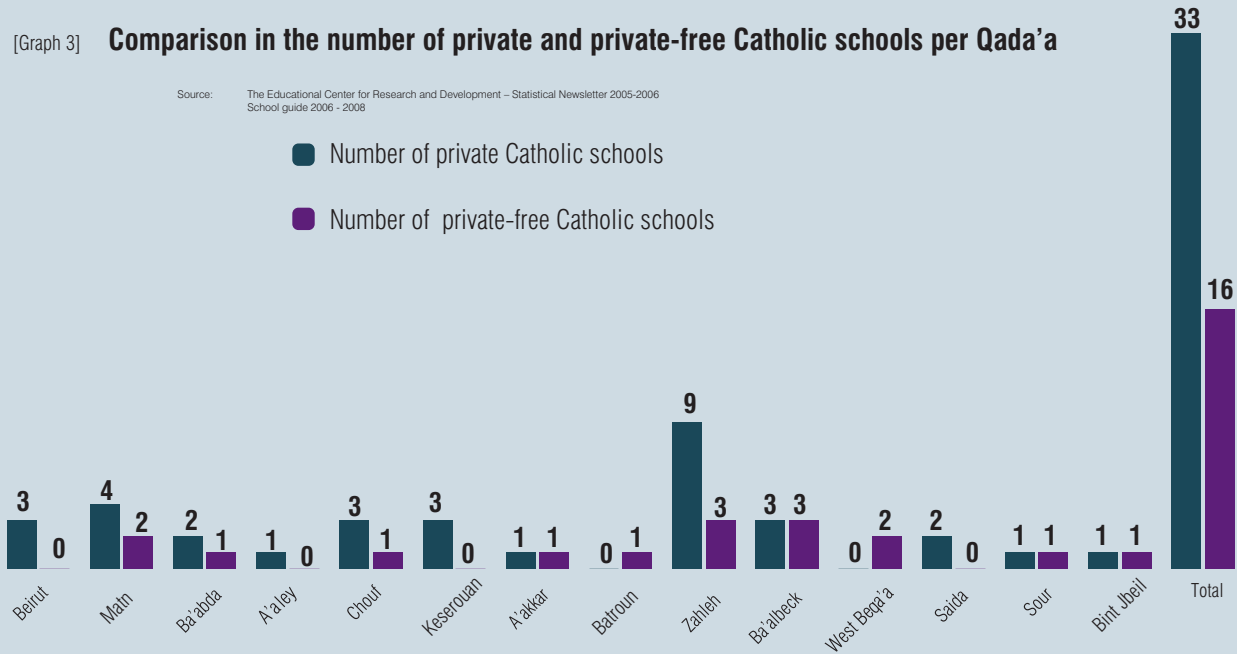
2- Private Melkite Schools

The number of private Melkite Catholic schools with fees in Lebanon is 33 schools with 16,350 students. Consequently, they make up 3.2% of Lebanon's total number of private schools with fees (1,025) and their students form 3.9% of the overall number students in those schools (417,409). Graphs 3 and 4 show the distribution of schools and students in private-free and private Melkite Catholic schools in Lebanon per Qada'a.



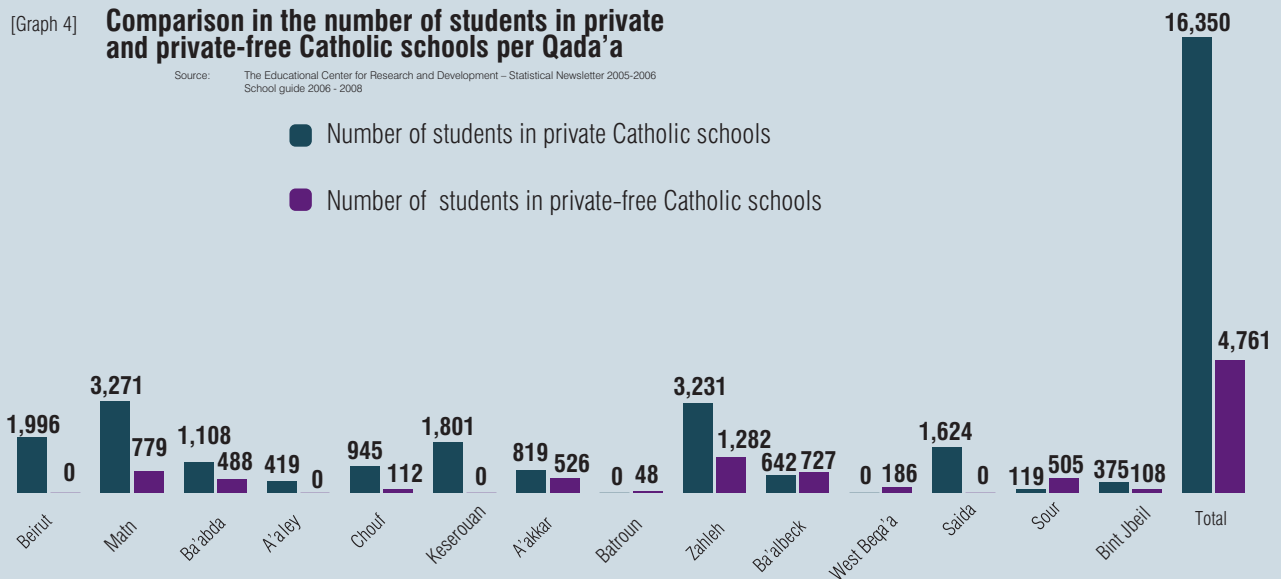
[Graph 3] Comparison in the number of private and private-free Catholic schools per Qada'a

Source: The Educational Center for Research and Development – Statistical Newsletter 2005-2006
School guide 2006 - 2008



[Graph 4] Comparison in the number of students in private and private-free Catholic schools per Qada'a

Source: The Educational Center for Research and Development – Statistical Newsletter 2005-2006
School guide 2006 - 2008



The University of Balamand

Orthodox in Origin and Location

The University of Balamand (UOB), affiliated to the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch and the East, was established to provide higher education to the Orthodox community and the rest of the Lebanese population.

Incorporation

The University of Balamand was established in 1883 by the decree of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and the East to establish a higher institution to teach theology. Decree no.9764 was issued on February 26th 1975 licensing the establishment of this institute in the Monastery of Balamand, near Tripoli.

In 1988, the institute was transformed into the University of Balamand pursuant to decree no.4885 dated June 4th 1988. It includes the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology, the Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences, as well as the Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA) established in 1937.

The following faculties were established: Music, Engineering, Law, Political and Economic Sciences, Literature and Decorative Arts. Since 1959, the academy also offers Fine Arts.

Table no. 1 shows all issued decrees related to the establishment of new faculties, departments and institutes in the University of Balamand.

Decree no.	Date of the decree	Subject of the decree
9278	5-10-1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊙ The establishment of the Faculty of Engineering, including civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and computer engineering. ⊙ The establishment of the Faculty of Science. ⊙ The establishment of the Faculty of Business Administration including business administration, economic science, tourism and hotel management. ⊙ The establishment of the Faculty of Health Sciences including nursing, public health, development sciences, laboratory sciences and improvement of health ⊙ The establishment of the School of Audiovisual and cinema directing and the Institute of Urban Planning at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA)
1946	21-12-1999	The establishment of the University Institute of Technology
1947	21-12-1999	The establishment of Saint George's Faculty of Post Graduate Medical Education
4112	17-12-2000	The establishment of the Faculty of Medicine and Medical Sciences

Source: the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

Today, the University of Balamand includes seven faculties, institutes and academies: Arts and Social Sciences, Business & Management, Sciences, Engineering, Medicine, Saint George's Faculty of Post Graduate Medical Education, Health Sciences, Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA) and St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology.

The UOB and the Educational System

The headquarters of the University of Balamand is located in the region of Balamand in the Qada'a of Koura, North Lebanon. It extends over an area of around 330,000m², surrounded by wide green areas. It includes the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology and other faculties except the Faculty of Health Sciences. The campus consists of 26 buildings with laboratories equipped with modern and developed supplies, conference and meeting rooms, cafeteria, and two libraries, in addition to dormitories, parking, indoor and outdoor playgrounds, as well as an indoor swimming pool.

The UOB owns two other campuses: the Campus of the Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA) in Sin El-Fil and the Campus of the Faculty of Health Sciences in Ashrafieh, Beirut. The UOB applies the American system of education based on three semesters per academic year and offering credits. The English language is the main teaching language in all the faculties,

except the Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA) and education specializations using the French Language, and the St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology using both the Arabic and Greek languages in addition to English as teaching languages. The UOB opened an English section for the Interior Design and Plastic Arts in the Campus of Balamand.

Table no. 2 shows the degrees offered at the University of Balamand.

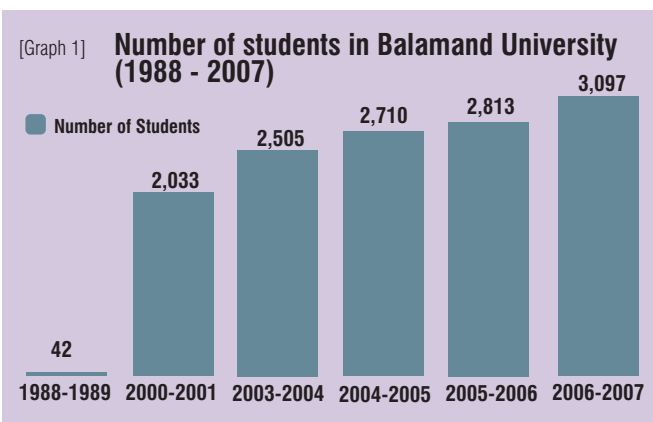


Degrees offered at the University of Balamand		Table 2
Faculty/Institute	Degree	
Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts (ALBA)	⊙ Bachelor degree in all majors - DESS in Engineering, Interior Design, Graphic Design, Advertising, Fine Arts, restoration of icons, Practical Arts, DESS specialized in Urban Planning	
St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology	⊙ Bachelor degree in Theology - Master degree in Theology	
Faculty of Literature and Human Sciences	⊙ Bachelor degree in all majors - Diploma and Master in Translation, Teaching Bachelor and Master in all Languages and Literature, Education, Physical Education, Diploma of Practitioner Psychiatrist, Master in Psychology, History, Philosophy and Public Media	
Faculty of Business & Management	⊙ Bachelor in all majors - Master in Business Administration (MBA)	
Faculty of Sciences	⊙ Bachelor in all majors - Master in Natural Sciences, Computer Sciences, Chemistry, Information Systems, Teaching Diploma in all majors (except Information System and Environment Sciences)	
Faculty of Engineering	⊙ Bachelor and Master degrees in all majors	
Faculty of Medicine	⊙ Bachelor degree in Medicine	
Faculty of Health Sciences	⊙ Bachelor degree in all majors - Master degree in laboratory clinic sciences	

Source: Information International according to the Administration of the University of Balamand.

Students and Alumni

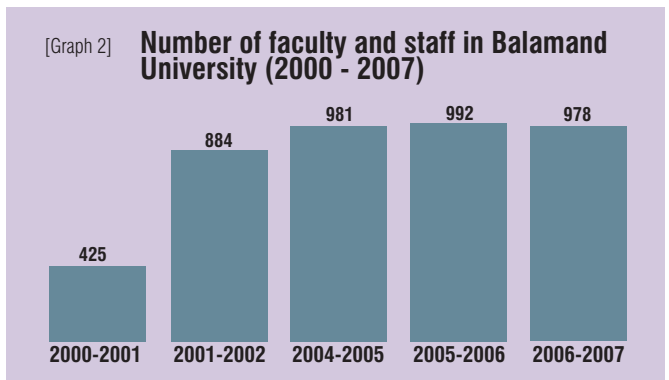
Graph 1 shows the number of students at the University of Balamand from 1988 – 2007.



To date, 4,001 students have graduated from the University of Balamand.

Educational and administrative bodies

The members of the Educational and Administrative bodies in the University of Balamand count 978 persons, distributed as follows: 814 teachers (417 part timers, 194 full timers, 129 full time physicians in the Faculty of Medicine, 74 physicians affiliated to the Faculty of Medicine), 111 administrative personnel and 53 staff members. The UOB responded to the increasing number of students by increasing the staff in both the educational and administrative bodies progressively as shown in Graph 2.



In the next issue, The Monthly covers “Academic fees”, “Characteristics of UOB” and “Students Talk.”

Hussein El Hussein, MP, former Speaker to the House, in an interview to *The Monthly Magazine*



Sayed Hussein El Hussein (72 yrs) is a pillar of national, political and parliamentary action in Lebanon. In spite of his resignation as deputy on August 12, 2008, he is still at the heart of political and constitutional life, working for the amendment of the electoral law that resulted from Doha. He is also a founder of the Civil Center for the National Initiative, and follows its activities closely.

Ta'ef clearly states the Mohafaza as the electoral district whereas the current electoral law adopts the Qada'a, on the argument of some that the Mohafaza was stated by Ta'ef only after administrative division is re-considered. What is, in your view, the essential meaning of the concept of the Mohafaza as stated by Ta'ef?

Ta'ef stipulates the Mohafaza, based on the premise that correct parliamentary representation requires the qualified candidate to be representative of his/her local constituency, the Qada'a, and also, representative on the level of Mohafaza according to the proportional electoral system with the preferential vote; the Mohafaza as a stepping stone for Lebanon to become one electoral circumscription, thus ensuring the transition into a real civil state. This was the case of the 1992 electoral law, without the exceptions that were made concerning Mount Lebanon and the Beka', adopted as "exception" measures and for one time only. Ta'ef underlines the five Mohafazas, making the addition of any new one, like Nabatieh, an administrative Mohafaza only, and not an electoral circumscription. An electoral law on the basis of the five stipulated Mohafazas reinforces life-in-common among Lebanese, in the same way that an electoral system based on proportionality ensures correct political representation of all segments of Lebanese population and its effectiveness.

Is it possible to hold the parliamentary elections if the Constitutional Council is not fulfilled and the five remaining members are not appointed?

Absolutely not. For according to the general constitutional rule of checks and balances, the work of every authoritative power should be monitored. Thus, a responsible legislative authority requires a constitutional council to ensure the constitutionality of the laws, and the role of the judicial authority is to monitor the executive, and all this within the framework of separation of powers. Without the constitutional council, who can ensure the constitutionality of the electoral law and rule on parliamentary motions? However, if elections take place without forming the council, the parliament would be legal but illegitimate, as is the case of the current one. A major gap was also overlooked in the formation of the constitutional council, for how can the subject of the monitoring create the authority that monitors it?! When the Constitutional Council was formed, there was an inclination to include a different method in the appointment of its members. My proposal at the inception of the Constitutional Council was to create a legal caucus made up of nine judges, three from each of the High Judicial Council, the State Consultative Court and the Accountancy Diwan, in addition to the five Deans of the Lebanese University law schools, where they would nominate the candidates to the Constitutional Council. When there is any valid reason for the parliament or the council of ministers to object to any proposed name, the caucus would be asked to reconsider the nomination, whereby if the caucus stands fast by its nomination after review, it becomes effective. The aim of this is to exclude any "clientelism".

The Ta'ef agreement stipulated 108 parliamentarian seats for equal division between Muslims and Christians, why did the number rise to 128?

We agreed in Ta'ef to 108 parliamentary seats to ensure equal representation. This required adding 9 seats for Muslims, and appointing new members to the seats vacated due to the death of parliamentarians, prior to holding new elections. Not everyone wanted 108 seats, some called for 128 and others for 198 according to the 1985 tripartite agreement; but we decided against such a large increase as even the French mandate could not appoint more than a third of parliament and did not dare appoint the majority of the deputies!! We rejected such large increase in order to circumvent any distrust of promulgated laws. So, in the end, only 40 deputies were appointed and the majority was made up of the deputies elected in 1972. The "128" was adopted with the aim of achieving the most inclusive representation of all parties. In my view, this number is not high relative to the number of voters according to international norms; although I am still inclined to favor a lesser number, allowing the deputy to exercise his legislative role and not the one of a Moukhtar or Head of municipality.

Last week, you rejected the amendment of the law for prosecuting Presidents and Ministers adopted by the parliamentary Administration and Justice Commission. Could you please explain this issue and its repercussions?

The Lebanese Constitution differentiates between the prosecution of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the ministers, and the

deputies, as each enjoys a different kind of immunity. According to the text, for example, the president cannot be held responsible when he is in office except for high treason and violation of the constitution. As for ordinary crimes, the President should be accused by two thirds of parliament and prosecuted before a High Council formed according to article no. 80 of the Constitution. The President enjoys “full immunity” (article 60), whereas article 70 of the Constitution stipulates that parliament can accuse the Prime Minister as well as the ministers: “Such an accusation should only be made by a two- third quorum of the parliament and a special law should outline the legal responsibilities of the Prime Minister and Ministers”. This was provided for by the 1926 constitution, and only the issuance of a new penal code that redefined the crimes committed by ministers such as abuse of power, squandering or embezzlement or stealing of public funds, rendered all these crimes punishable by law; and “immunity” as defined by article 70 became non applicable.

The judicial authorities can prosecute the perpetrator, whether an ordinary citizen or a minister, whereas a deputy enjoys full immunity for expressing his views and opinions but not for his actions. Moreover, a penal motion cannot be filed against a deputy throughout the duration of the ordinary parliamentary cycles, except in the case of flagrante delictum. Although the creation of the High Council and the adoption of the prosecution law did not see the light until after the 1990 Ta’ef accords (Law no. 13 issued on 18-8-1990 sets the rules of prosecutions before the High Council), work never ceased towards applying restrictions and constraints to the exercise of public responsibility. Corruption is wide spread in Lebanon for many reasons, including the absence of an independent judicial authority, and the inability of monitoring agencies to exercise their roles. Political accountability has also been made void by the adoption of this new heresy called “the consensual democracy” which literally means the absence of adherents or opposers in matters of accountability. Thus, whether you lose or win, you are a partner in governance which is tantamount to abolishing democracy and rotation of power. In presence of all these anomalies, the new amendment made by the Parliamentary Committee is an aggression on the constitution and reinforces corruption, “immunizing” ministers. When you can only accuse a minister before the High Council and a two third parliamentary quorum, this means, in practice, that you are giving him a free hand under the pretext of giving him “security” to do his work. This amendment precludes accountability before the law, albeit making it impossible before a high council.

In your opinion, why is this issue being raised now?

It has been an issue since 1999, when motions were filed against the former Ministers Shahe Barsomian and Ali Abdallah, and Prime Minister Siniora. Political pressure was then exerted on the judiciary to drop the cases under the pretext that as ministers, they could only be prosecuted before the High Council. The Higher Court of Cassation then issued a ruling stating that a minister can be prosecuted before judicial courts, but because of political pressure, jurisprudence was issued by a penal court stating the opposite. This left the judicial system in complete confusion. Many called for the adoption of an interpretative law to decide on this issue and circumvent any further manipulation. It was the council of ministers in 1999, and minister of justice then Joseph Shaoul, who submitted a draft bill to parliament outlining when is the minister to be prosecuted either by judicial courts or before the High Council. The bill was never discussed in parliament, and I have submitted many proposals asking that the matter be decided upon. In 1999, in the course of reviewing an appeal on the constitutionality of the law concerning the right of the

intelligence services to secrecy, the Constitutional Council reiterated the constitutional right to prosecute ministers before judicial courts. This decision was issued by the Constitutional Council, which is the highest constitutional authority.

What do you think of the “veto by a third” which apparently paralyses the government? Is it caused by an unforeseen gap in the Ta’ef agreement or in its implementation?

The Doha agreement was a deviation from the Ta’ef. It was an agreement between five political figures, originally four before they were joined by General Aoun. This alliance paralyzed the institutional work of the state and restricted power to the realm of four. When they agreed, the council of ministers and parliament turned into a perfunctory tool; When they disagreed and it was put before the Council of Ministers, some parties then claimed that the Doha agreement has been violated!!! What we see in Lebanon today is similar to a revolutionary council! There is an agreement to seize and control power with no mention of the objectives of such an exercise. This “quintessential” agreement in Doha diminished the prerogatives of the President who has been relegated from being the Head of all powers to a party in the executive, albeit the weakest, with the right to nominate only 3 out of 30 ministers. The Presidency has been undermined and the electoral law that was adopted is equivalent to an appointment before the elections. The Doha agreement has consecrated the rule of warlords in mini-states based on religious communities.

When the President election was elected, you called for the amendment of the constitution prior to the election. Do you think there would be a motion filed against this election in the future?

My position was based on the legitimate consensus that the President enjoyed on the national, Arab and international scenes, and which required a reinforcement of his position by amending the constitution. The election without amending article no.49 of the constitution was threatening, not only to the election process of the President and to the high degree of legitimacy that he enjoys, but also to becoming a precedent that could be applied to all acts of the constitution. If this gap can be circumvented, why leave it hanging?!

In your resignation speech, you reiterated that reform “from above” is difficult?

I am not for revolutions. I am with a Lebanese constitutional legitimacy based on the National Pact and Constitution, and a believer that no one party can win over another, and that every Lebanese citizen is a partner in this social contract, for which we have no alternative. This is why I call for the resumption of the workshop that was decided back in 1990 immediately after the Ta’ef. This workshop should include a discussion of twelve laws: the by-laws regulating the Presidency; the electoral law; the by-laws regulating the Executive Power including the re-structure of the ministries and administrations and redefining their prerogatives; the law governing an independent Judiciary; the national defense law; an administrative decentralization law; and various economic, social and development laws for all Lebanese regions. Without such measures, the state cannot be institutionalized, but will remain a state in suspension. What I want to say and affirm is that those in power are capable of instituting reforms if they are willing, but they are not. 🌍

Silk Production

According to a legend, in 2640 B.C. the Chinese princess Xi Ling Shi was the first to reel a cocoon of silk which had dropped into her cup of tea. The cocoon unraveled to form a long delicate and shiny thread. Eventually, with the help of her ladies of the court, she wove the thread into a beautiful ceremonial robe for the emperor, after which this cloth came to be known as the "Cloth of Kings". For the next 3000 years, the Chinese discovery of the life-cycle of the silk worm was kept as a secret. Many legends address the way the secret was revealed and how it spread. According to one legend, a Chinese princess married an Indian prince and smuggled out silkworm eggs and mulberry shoots in her headdress, thus spreading the culture of silk to India.



Silk Production in Lebanon
2009

The Silk Road

In the 3rd Century B.C., Chinese silk fabrics found their way through Asia, and were transported overland to the West and by sea to Japan along routes known as the silk roads. It is one of the oldest trade paths in the world. The best known segment of the Silk Road began in the Chinese Capital of Chang'an (Xian) and diverged into northern and southern routes that skirted the Central Asian Taklamakan Desert, and then converged to cross the Iranian plateau, ending on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. When Alexander the Great crossed the Indus River into Central Asia, Chinese silk had already found its way to the Mediterranean.

The Silk Road was not only used for silk trading; Gold and other precious metals as well as glass, and ivory went towards China. At the same time, gun powder, ceramics, jade, bronze objects, iron and other items made their way west.

Silk Production Process

☉ The Mulberry Tree

Mulberries are native to temperate and subtropical regions, mostly in Asia. Mulberries are the best food source for silk worms and are also grown for their edible fruit and ornamental use in landscapes.

☉ The Silk Worm

The life cycle of the silk worm (*Bombyx mori*) is the progression of four distinct stages of development to complete one generation of the species; ova, larva, pupa and imago. The larva is usually called the silk worm.

☉ Feeding silk worms on mulberry leaves

Immediately after hatching, the larva is provided with clean, fresh leaves cut into tiny pieces. As the larva grow, larger pieces or full leaves are provided. About 27 days after hatching, silkworms begin spinning cocoons, the source of silk threads.

☉ Worms turn into a pupa by spinning cocoon

Support structures from natural twigs are used to facilitate efficient construction of the cocoons. Cocoon completion takes about 3 days.

Silk cocoons serve as protection for the pupa. Cocoon colors range from white, cream or yellow depending on silkworm genetics.

☉ Reeling process where silk fiber is obtained from the cocoon.

☉ Raw silk threads

Cocoons are boiled to destroy the insect inside. Silk fiber is obtained from the cocoon. The filaments of multiple cocoons are joined and twisted to make a silk thread.

☉ Colored silk threads

Silk threads are boiled in huge vats during the dyeing process

Silk Production in Lebanon

Long ago, Lebanon's handicraft industry was renowned for its silk production. It contributed to the prosperity of the villages and secured work for the people of the countryside.

1848: The first silk factory was introduced to Lebanon by French entrepreneurs called Georges and Nicolas Portalis in the village of Btater in Chouf, Mount Lebanon.

In 1855: The cocoon production was around 240,000 kg.

In February 1930: The first silk industry conference was inaugurated. The conference studied the situation of the silk industry in Lebanon and methods to increase production.

In 1930 and 1965: Stamps commemorating sericulture activities were introduced.

In February 1956: The silk bureau was opened.

In April 1965: An international conference on sericulture was held in Lebanon.

In 1966: The first automatic silk factory opened in Kfarshema.

In 2003: The silk production in Lebanon disappeared mainly due to the increase in the cost of production in the country and its decrease in China, which makes it cheaper to export from there. 🍀



Jbel al Boutm

Qada'a of Sour

Etymology

The village's name is related to the numerous terebinth (known in Arabic as Boutm trees) trees which used to cover the region.

Location

Jbel al Boutm is located in the Qada'a of Sour, South Lebanon, at an altitude of 350 meters above sea level. It is 110 kilometers away from Beirut and 60 kilometers from Saida. It extends over 1,450 hectares. Jbel al Boutm can be reached via two different roads:

Sour – Qana – Sidikin - Jbal al Boutm
and Sour -al Hiniyeh – Zibqine - Jbel al boutm

Population

The number of residents registered in the village's civil status records is estimated at around 1,900 people, mostly of the Shia'a confession. The village has around 250 houses and 35 shops.

Voters

The number of registered voters reached 791 in the year 2000 among whom 514 participated in the elections. In 2005, the number of voters increased to 985 with 620 electors and is expected to reach 1,200 in 2009.

Voters are distributed among the following families

Mhanna	(518 voters)
Ideibi	(320 voters)
Khiami	(78 voters)
Tohme	(76 voters)
Khalil	(71 voters)
Yassin	(58 voters)
Barakat	(46 voters)
Taqi	(20 voters)

Local Authorities

The ministerial decree number 678 dated August 12th 2004 stipulated the establishment of an independent municipal council currently presided over by Oussama Mhanna. The village has a mukhtar, Hussein Ideibi, and a mayoral council of three members.

The municipality's share from the Independent Municipal Fund amounted to around LBP73.3 million for the year 2006 compared to LBP62 million in 2005.

The village also has an agricultural co-op established in 1988.



Educational Institutions

The village has one public school "Jbel al Boutm Intermediate School" that counted 214 students for the academic year 2005 - 2006 and 227 students for the academic year 2006 - 2007 with 18 teachers among who 14 are retired.

Economic Activities

Residents depend largely on agriculture in particular the culture of tobacco and olives.

Archeological Sites

Jbal al Boutm contains a number of rock-cut grottos as well as 50 archeological wells. Pottery and stone ruins are present in the village.

Challenges

The Israeli aggression on Lebanon in July 2006 destroyed a large number of houses in the village; the reconstruction process is still ongoing.

Jouret El Ballout

by Ramzi Salameh

In issue # 55 of January 2007, The Monthly published an article on the village of Jouret El Ballout. The below clarification on the village was received in Arabic from Mr. Ramzi Salameh (former Deputy Director of UNESCO Regional office in Lebanon) which The Monthly Team translated to English and publishes in full.

Beirut, February 2nd 2009

Dear Mr. Adra,

I would like to reiterate my congratulations to you for maintaining the quality of your magazine "The Monthly" as well as receiving the award of the UNESCO Bureau in Beirut (in December 2004).

I would like to draw your attention to an error you made in one of the previous issues. In "Discover Lebanon" you published an overview on Jouret El Ballout village in the North Matn in which you mentioned that the public school was established in 1948.

In fact the school was established in 1944 and the first teacher was my father Farid Salameh who taught there for four full years, from November 14th 1944 until December 9th 1948 when he was transferred to the Kfardebian public school in his village.

Jouret El Ballout School was established by the decision of the general manager of education at that time George Bek Haymri, who later became the Chief of Protocol in the Presidential Palace and stayed in that position for a long period of time. The mayor of the village at that time was the former Sheikh El Solh Majid Sawma Abou Jaoudeh and the parish priest Youhanna El Siqlawi from Kfarzina in Zgharta. They both supported the public school despite the opposition from the Archbishop of public schools. The latter changed his mind when he saw the success of the school.

Forty percent of the students in the school were girls and the number of students varied from 21 students at the beginning to 32 students in 1948, including a brilliant student George Abou Jaoudeh, the current Maronite Bishop in Tripoli. The students' register at that period is still with me; my father gave it to me before he died in order to preserve it since I was born in this village as he was teaching in its school.

There are several stories about this school and the cultural activities which my father used to organize. He wrote these memories in his diaries annexed with some documents such as Lebanese traditional poems, speeches, and theatre plays performed by the students at the end of the year.



This traditional poem was recited on June 28th 1948 in Jouret El Ballout in the theatre play "The Devil of The Tower" (Shaytan Al Borj) performed by the students in front of an audience.

The light of education in Lebanon shines all over the world,
The Phoenician was the one to invent the word,
The Phoenician was the one to create alphabet,
Spreading the character to the Western World,
Disarming mankind with a word not a sword.

The Cedar, the link between land and seas,
Lebanese be proud of your ancestors' bravery,
Lebanese be proud by your achievements,
Lebanese be proud, leave your descendents the good deeds,
Don't let hidden confessional emotions control you.

القصيدة كما أنشدت في جورة البلوط في العام 1948:

أشرق فوق المعموره	مشعال العلم بلبنان
طبعوا أول صوره	والفينيقي باتقان
	دور
لحروف الأبجديه	والفينيقي كان الأصل
بالبلدان الغربيه	بنشر بنودا فصل وفصل
دانتلو البشريه	بدون سيف وبدون نصل
لوصل الدنيا ببحورا	وسفينه أرزو همزة وصل
	دور
بمسالة أجدادك	لبناني الواجب تعترّ
بمأثر جهادك	وابقى موضع فخر وعزّ
أعمال المجد لأحفادك	واترك من عقلك الفدّ
بالنعرات المستوره	ولا تخلي راسك ينهرّ

With my best regards,
Ramzi Salameh

Newspapers in the World

Readers numbers decrease v/s newspapers numbers increase.

Statistics around the world demonstrate a decrease in the numbers of daily newspapers' readers who have shifted to electronic versions.

However, this shift has not affected the number of new newspapers which is on the rise. This is due to the availability of advertising and financing for commercial, personal, religious and political purposes.

The following tables 1 and 2 list the number of daily newspapers in selected countries compared to the population number.

List of daily newspapers in selected Arab countries in 2007			Table 1
Country	# of newspapers and magazines	Population # (million)	
Lebanon	11 (Newspapers only)	4.3	
Yemen	5	23	
Egypt	17	80	
Bahrain	7	0.7	
Syria	6	19.7	
Iraq	18	28.2	
Qatar	5	0.98	
Kuwait	15	3.3	
Saudi Arabia	9	27.6	
Oman	5	3.2	
Jordan	6	6.2	
Libya	7	6	
Morocco	28	32	
UAE	16	4.7	



List of daily newspapers in selected countries around the world in 2007

Table 2

Country	# of newspapers and magazines	Population # (million)
Turkey	64	72
Cyprus	18	0.8
Japan	92	127.3
Canada	83	32.5
China	45	1,133
India	189	1,148
Russia	98	140
Germany	30	82.3
Iran	24	74
France	19	62
United Kingdom	18	61
Israel	6	7.2

Note: The above figures are published with reservations due to the conflicting figures found in different sources. 

Facts and Statistics on Health issues around the world



- ⊙ **80%** of death can be prevented through healthy diet, regular physical activity, not smoking.
- ⊙ **33** is the number of countries with less than 1 hospital bed for every 1000 people.
- ⊙ Around **10 million** children under the age of five die each year
- ⊙ **Cardiovascular** diseases are the leading causes of death in the world
- ⊙ **HIV/AIDS** is the leading cause of adult death in Africa
- ⊙ **Lung cancer** is the most common cause of death from cancer in the world
- ⊙ Mental disorders such as depression are among the **20** leading causes of disability worldwide
- ⊙ Hearing loss, vision problems and mental disorders are the most common causes of **disability**
- ⊙ Road traffic injuries are projected to rise from the ninth leading cause of death globally in 2004, to the **fifth** in 2030
- ⊙ Under-nutrition is the underlying cause of death for at least **30%** of all children under age five
- ⊙ Complications of pregnancy account for almost **15%** of deaths in women of reproductive age worldwide

Source: World Health Organization 2009 (www.who.int)

Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport

26.7% decrease in passengers

Airport traffic at Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport dropped significantly during the first month of 2009. In fact, the total number of passengers registered a decrease of 26.7% compared to December 2008 and an increase of 9.5% compared to January 2008.

Table no.1 shows airport traffic at Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport in January 2009 compared to January and December 2008.

Airport traffic at Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport in January 2009 compared to January and December 2008

Table 1

	December 2008	January 2009	% of change Dec 2008-Jan 2009	January 2008	% of change Jan 2008-Jan 2009
Arriving airplanes	2,348	1,989	-15.3	1,625	+22.4
Departing airplanes	2,320	2,008	-13.4	1,624	+23.6
Total # of airplanes	4,668	3,997	-14.3	3,249	+23
Arriving crews	18,748	16,310	-13	13,320	+22.4
Departing crews	18,421	16,248	-11.8	13,318	+22
Total # of crews	37,169	32,558	-12.4	26,638	+22.2
Arriving passengers	238,005	125,009	-47.4	111,726	+11.8
Departing passengers	178,486	179,127	+0.35	163,402	+9.6
Transit passengers	2,838	2,991	+5.4	5,150	+42
Total # of passengers	419,329	307,127	-26.7	280,278	+9.5
Imported goods (per ton)	3,676	2,693	-26.7	2,484	+8.4
Exported goods (per ton)	2,736	2,374	-13.2	2,349	+1
Total size of goods (per ton)	6,412	5,067	-20.9	4,833	+4.8

Source: Directorate General of Civil Aviation – January 2009

Stats & Numbers

\$ 1 million is the amount of aid granted by the Lebanese government to the Palestinian people in Gaza. The credit was transferred to the Higher Relief Committee (HRC), in spite of the fact that the latter's jurisdiction is limited to Lebanon only.

LBP5 billion is the amount of the credit allocated by the Lebanese government to the Executive Committee of Beirut World Book Capital 2009. This board will be presided and formed by the Minister of Culture.

363 Lebanese civilians may be decorated with medals of various grades and orders in 2009 and 114 already decorated citizens may be upgraded to a higher order.

LBP103.3 billion is the amount of the 2009 budget requested by the Council of the South, including LBP11 billion for administrative expenses and LBP30 billion for the execution of projects. This budget shall be added to the amount of LBP45.3 billion for projects under construction and execution; LBP15.3 billion of those amounts are allocated for the construction of 7 public schools, knowing that the South has a major surplus of public schools compared to its number of students.



Photo by Waddah Jouma'a - 2009

Other publications by Information International and INMA (in Arabic):

- 1- Salaries and Remunerations in the Public Sector
- 2- Public Seaside Properties
- 3- Lebanon's Parliamentary History 1920-2000
- 4- Taxes and Fees
- 5- Lebanon in Figures 1992-2002
- 6- Lebanon in Figures 2003-2004
- 7- Lebanon in Figures 2005-2006
- 8- "I am Responsible, All of Us are Responsible"
- 9- "Our Environment is Our Home"
- 10- "My Society is My Responsibility"
- 11- "My Society is My Responsibility" Workbook
- 12- "I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building"
- 13- "I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building" Workbook
- 14- "Lebanon Wars, why?"
- 15- Discrimination in Lebanon

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A letter to the editor

Dear Jawad,

Your editorial regarding East and West [referring to "The City and the Cloud: 'Us and Them'" published in issue # 79 of february 2009] is most accurate and moral and the dilemmas you present are real and impenetrable to Cartesian logic. Having grown up in the East and lived in the West for the past 39 years, I have come to understand the behavior of the US and Israel through a more Nietzscheo-Hegelian logic.

Our intellectual errors stem from our romanticism, from our anachronistic beliefs in Wright and Wrong, from the ethical dictates of our conscience, from our very short cosmic lives that take away our foresights, and from the codes of honor that came down to us with our literature. Unfortunately, history has a different logic, which I shall summarize in a few codes:

1. There are no moral nations upon this planet, there has never been, and there never will be. Nations believe in national interests and justify anything that advances their cause. Immorality, the deadly disease that kills nations from within, is never noticed until it is too late.

2. Nations that attain power always use their power regardless of justice. Historically, no nation that has ever attained power has refrained from using it. The more powerful a nation becomes, the more eagerly and viciously it wields its powers upon those who oppose it. Everything is justifiable if you're powerful enough. The words of Friedrich Nietzsche resonate in this regard: "A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength; life itself is will to power."

3. The oppressor in history signs his own death sentence. There has never been an oppressive power that did not bite the dust. It is just a matter of time and most of them die from internal disease rather than from external causes. This little poem of mine says it all: "There is no just oppression or oppressor. The mere need for oppression is proof that injustice has taken place."

4. What do we do? Wait until the powers die of internal decay and, in the mean time, assert our dignity and insure that the future generations never forget the

injustices committed against us. In my poem, The Palestinian, I had this to say:

"I will not hate; I love; I will not hate
I am the noble son of earth and fate
Nor will I yield to justice of the bombs
I am the patient truth, and I can wait."

5. Moreover, no one ever gets away with oppressive injustice. Wait a century or two and see what befalls the powers of today. History will deal with them as severely as they have dealt with us and as Jesus said, the meek shall inherit the earth. My poem, The Anatomy of Nations, dissects all these national bodies and exposes their ugly entrails: "Nations possess human anatomy
But instead of bodily organs
They have institutions
And instead of brains
They have governments."

Aging affects nations
Much like it affects humans
Their organs begin to fail
Their brains begin to rot
They become infirm and fat
And when their time runs out
They are ceremonially interred;
It's just a matter of time."

6. And finally allow me one more foresight: "Before earth explodes And shatters us all
We should erase our borders
Replace our armies with global police
And use our war moneys
To make war on the violators of the environment."

I hope you can forgive my excogitations, the last of which I leave for you to ponder:

"Those who speak the truth
Offend so many
No wonder then
That hardly any
Dare speak it."

Respectfully,
Hanna Saadah
1.28.09