

- “ BANK LOANS
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- “ THE MONTHLY INTERVIEWS HADY BEYDOUN



77 MARONITE PATRIARCHS

FROM MAR MAROUN TO BECHARA AL RAI

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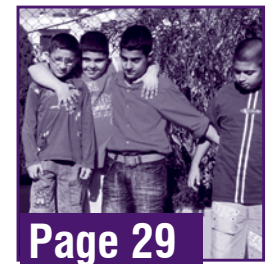
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“THE PEOPLE DEMAND...” BUT I BURIED MY HEART IN MAROUN AL-RAS



The youth of Laique Pride who demonstrated on the 15th of May 2011 “demanding the fall of the confessional regime” did not know what that date (15th of May) means to us. Some of Laique Pride demonstrators apparently have a selective memory that dates back to the day when they launched their call on Facebook, which sometimes is touted, not only as a tool for change, but as the ultimate goal of revolutions in this part of the world.

Have the youth asked themselves whether the American people will ever forget September 11 or more importantly 4th of July, their Day of Independence? 15th of May 1948 to us is more than a “Nakba” and larger than a land called Palestine. It is the date of our ongoing tragedy and shame, which we will never forget, and the date of our forthcoming independence, which we shall always work for.

The youth of Facebook and twitter do not know that our hearts were buried on the 15th of May 1948, and our memory is still sizzling with many dates, notably 5th of June 1967. Those youths perhaps don't know that Maroun Al-Ras has raised our heads high in 2006. And that the words of the White House about Israel's rights to defend itself, after shooting peaceful demonstrators on the other side of the borders, brings to memory what the settlers have done to the Apache under the leadership of Geronimo (or Goyaale) in 1829 and to the Miniconjou in 1890 and what they are doing to us in Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria today.

Our collective memory is still alive as evidenced by the demonstrations on the 15th of May. The youth will remember that we have buried our hearts, once again, in Maroun Al-Ras, Majdal Shams and Aisawia and that we held our heads high.

Jawad N. Adra



Maroun El-Ras, 2011



Wounded Knee, 1890

77 MARONITE PATRIARCHS

FROM MAR YOUHANNA MAROUN TO BECHARA AL RAI

On March 15, 2011, Jbeil archbishop Bechara Al Rai was elected Patriarch of the Maronites in succession to the resigning Mar Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, thus becoming the 77th Maronite Patriarch. 76 preceded him since the first Patriarch Mar Youhanna Maroun. Most of those patriarchs made an impact on their confession, nation and region. Herein follows a briefing on each.

1. St. Youhanna Maroun (St. John Maron) was the first Maronite Patriarch. Some say that he was elected in 702 and died in 710. During his mandate, Maronites moved from Syria to Lebanon and made Kfarhi the Patriarchal Seat until 938 when it moved to Yanouh. Patriarch Doueih objects to that and specified that the former was not the first patriarch, but the 63rd. However, he never proved that. The Patriarch was elected during a gathering of the people, the bishops and the senators and this is what made him the political, religious, and military leader of the Maronites.

2. Qorsh (Cyrrhus) is the nephew of the previous patriarch. He was elected in 710 and died in 725. He was succeeded by many patriarchs whose names are mentioned without any further information. Based on books that were written on that mysterious era, it was mentioned that most of these patriarchs disappeared in the wilderness due to the persecutions they were subjected to and moved from one cave to another.

3. Gebrayel (Gabriel)

4. Youhanna Maroun II (John Maron II)

5. Youhanna Al Demelsi (John of Demalsa, named after Demalsa in Jbeil)

6. Gregorius I

7. Stephanos

8. Marcus (Marc)

9. Eusebius

10. Youhanna IV (the Council of Constantinople was held during his mandate in 869)

11. Yeshua I (Joshua I)

12. Daoud (David)

13. Gregorius II

14. Tawafelix (Theophilactus)

15. Yeshua II Joshua II

16. Domitos (Domitius)

17. Ishaac (Isaac)

18. Youhanna V (John V)

19. Semaan (Simeon)

20. Ermea I (Jeremiah I)

21. Youhanna VI (John VI)

22. Shamoun I (Chamoun I)

23. Shamoun II (Chamoun II)

As it appears from the above, the information on the first 23 patriarchs is imprecise at times or unavailable.

24. Youssef Al-Jirjisi (Joseph Al Jirjisi) was patriarch in 1100 and the first Crusades took place during his mandate. He died in 1120 and was buried in Sayyidat Yanouh monastery. In his time, metal bells replaced wooden bells.

25. Boutros I (Peter I, 1120 – 1130). The Patriarchal Seat was transferred to Maifouq during his mandate.

26. Gregorius Al Halati (1130–1141) was from Halat. During his mandate, some of the Maronite Zua'ama (from the coast and with them were bishops and the Patriarch) swore to obey the Pope. The mountain inhabitants were against the Crusaders and Rome.

27. Yacoub Al-Ramati (Jacob of Ramate, 1141 – 1151) was from Ramat near Kfeefan in Batroun. He added the name Boutros (Peter) to his own as a way to show his sincerity and that of his people to Pope St. Boutros. The rest of the patriarchs followed in his footsteps. He died in 1151 and was buried in Maifouq monastery. The Bible was translated to Arabic by Pastor Abdallah Abou Faraj who was known by the name Ibn El-Tayeb during his mandate.

28. Youhanna Al-Lahfadi (John of Lehfed, 1151 – 1154). He moved the Patriarchal Seat to his town Lahfad in Jbeil.

29. Boutros II (Peter II): 1154

30. Boutros VI (Peter VI)

31. Boutros IV (Peter IV)

32. Boutros (Peter): ... - 1173

33. Boutros Al-Lahfadi (Peter of Lehfed, 1173 – 1199, from Lahfad in Jbeil)

Once again, information is unavailable on patriarchs 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

34. Ermea Al-Amchiti (Jeremiah of Amchit, 1199 - 1230) was from Amchit in Jbeil. He was the first patriarch to travel to Rome in 1215 following an invitation from Pope Inocentius or Zakhia III (Pope Innocent III, 1198 – 1216) to attend a meeting that decided to lead another Crusade to retrieve the Holy Lands and during which he was informed about the assistance he could offer to this campaign. During his presence in Rome and while he was leading a mass in the presence of the Pope, a miracle occurred: while lifting the Eucharist, he knelt down and the Eucharist stayed still above his head. At the end of his mandate, he moved the Patriarchal Seat to Yanouh and responded to an invitation to follow Rome.

35. Daniel Al-Shamati (Daniel of Shamat, 1230 – 1239) was from Shamat in Jbeil. He moved the Patriarchal Seat to several places, including Kfeefan in Kfarhi, due to internal strife.

36. Youhanna Al-Jaji (John of Jaj, 1239 – 1245, from Jaj in Jbeil)

37. Shamoun or Semaan II (Chamoun II, 1245 – 1277). Pope Iskandar IV (Alexander IV) sent him a letter asking him to take care of the defeated Crusaders and to include them in his parish so that they would not live without a patriarch.

38. Daniel Hadchiti (Daniel of Hadchit, 1278 – 1282) was from Hadchit. During his mandate in 1282, the Egyptian Mamluks advanced to Jebbeh and the Maronites managed to stop their advance under his leadership. However, the Mamluks managed to capture the Patriarch and execute him following a conspiracy by one of the Maronite Zua'ama known by the name Ibn Sabha, who later regretted his betrayal and built Sayyedat Houqa monastery in Wadi Qadisha.

39. Ermea Al Demelsi (Jeremiah of Demalsa, 1282 – 1297) was from Demalsa in the Qada'a of Jbeil. He took Halat as a base for him, visited Rome in 1282 and was honored by Pope Honorius IV. This patriarch offered his obedience to Rome, while Patriarch Luca Al Banharani objected to Rome and the Crusades and made Hadath the Patriarchal Seat. However, the Maronites and the Pope did not recognize the latter.

40. Semaan or Shamoun III (Simeon or Chamoun III, 1297 – 1339). During his mandate, the country was controlled by the Mamluks that supported the Jacobins. The Maronites were killed and persecuted because the

Crusaders failed to rescue them.

41. Youhanna Al-Akouri (John of Akoura, 1339 – 1357 from Akoura). He followed the Jacobins (after Bishop Yacoub Al-Barda'i split from the church following the Council of Nicaea) which caused a split between the Maronites. The Maronites of Jbeil and Batroun held on to the basic principles of the Maronite Church while the Maronites of Bcharri followed the Patriarch. Bloody conflicts occurred between them, which eventually ended with the dismissal of the Patriarch.

42. Gebrayel Hjouli (Gabriel of Hjoula, 1357 – 1367, from Hjoula). He was burnt by the Mamluks in Trablous in 1367.

43. Youhanna Daoud Al-Jaji (John or David of Jaj, 1367 – 1404). He transferred the Patriarchal Seat to Hardin and then to Maifouq.

44. Youhanna Al-Jaji III (John of Jaj III, 1404 – 1445, from Jaj in Jbeil). He assigned his representative in Rome to approve the unification of the Eastern and Western Churches. The Pope sent him gifts in 1439 through a messenger, which was the first event of its kind and had a considerable impact on the Maronites. This move angered the prince of Trablous. In 1440, he moved from Maifouq to Sayyidat Qanoubeen monastery in Wadi Qadisha, which remained the Patriarchal Seat until 1845. The patriarch was buried in the St. Marina grotto in Wadi Qanoubeen, which later became a cemetery for the patriarchs where 17 of them were buried.

45. Yacoub II Al-Hadathi (Jacob II of Hadath, 1445 – 1458)

46. Youssef Al-Hadathi (Joseph of Hadath, 1458 – 1492) was known by the name Ibn Hassaan. He was the first to be named Patriarch of Antioch instead of Patriarch of the Maronites.

47. Semaan IV Al-Hadathi (Simeon of Hadath, 1492 – 1524) was the nephew of the previous patriarch. Pope Leo X requested a statement from him regarding his Maronite beliefs before confirming him as patriarch, following which the former responded praising the Maronites comparing them to flowers among the thorns. During his mandate in 1515, Sultan Salim Othmani opened Syria and relieved him of the obligations he had set on the patriarchs. In the same year, 23 years after being elected, he received his confirmation from the Pope.

48. Mousa Al-Akari (Moses of Akar, 1524 – 1567)

49. Mikhael Al Rezi (Michael Al Rezi, 1567 – 1581). During his mandate, the Pope ordered the establishment of a religious school in Rome for the Maronites.

50. Sarkis Al Rezi (1581 – 1597, Michael’s brother). During his mandate, Prince Fakhreddine Al-Maani the Great appeared.

51. Youssef Al Rezi (Joseph Al Rezi, 1597 – 1608) was the nephew of the previous patriarch. The Pope asked him to follow the Gregorian calculation of the West, which made the Maronites celebrate the Apostle’s holiday with the Crusaders (10 days prior to the other eastern confessions).

52. Youhanna Makhlof Al-Ahdani (John Makhlof of Ehden, 1608 – 1633, from Ehden). He opened a school in Houqa as a preparatory school to the one in Rome. He had a considerable impact on Prince Fakhreddine and their relationship strengthened with time. It is said that he died of grief due to the arrest and exile of the prince. According to historians, the reign of Prince Fakhreddine was considered the golden era of the Maronites. Patriarchs, monks and the people received full protection and care from him in addition to high ranking positions.

53. Gerges Omeira Al-Ahdani (Georges Omeira of Ehden, 1633 – 1644, from Ehden). He was among the first Maronite students to attend the Maronite school in Rome. He played an active role in making Sultan Al-Othmani recognize the mandate of Prince Melhem Bin Younes, prince Fakhreddine’s nephew.

54. Youssef Halib Al-Akouri (Joseph Halib of Akoura, 1644 – 1648, from Akoura). He played a role in lobbying the Syriac confession to the Catholic confession.

55. Youhanna Al Bawab Al-Safrawi (John Al Bawab of Safra, from Safra, Ftouh-Keserouane). He was elected on November 13, 1648, and was confirmed by Pope Innocentius X (Innocent X) in 1649. That same year, he received a letter from the King of France, Louis XIV, vowing to protect the Maronites in Lebanon. He sought to publish Maronite religious books. He died on December 23, 1656.

56. Gerges Sabaali (Georges of Sabaal, from Sabaal). He was elected at the beginning of 1657 and was confirmed by Pope Iskandar VII (Alexander VII) in 1659 and he spoke several languages. He died in 1670 and was buried in Mar Shalita monastery.

57. Istiphan Al Doueihy (Estephan Al Doueihy of Hasroun, from Hasroun). He was famous for being one of the

smartest in the Maronite school in Rome and of the most important historians. He was elected on May 5, 1670, and was confirmed by Pope Eclemeodos X (Clement X) on August 8, 1672. He died on May 3, 1704, and left behind numerous books, the most important of which is “Tareekh Al-Azmina” or History of the Times.

58. Gebrayel Al Balouzani (Gabriel of Balouza, from Balouza in the Qada’a of Bcharri). His mandate was very short merely lasting a year (1704 – 1705).

59. Yacoub Awad (Jacob Awad) was elected in November 1705 and confirmed by Pope Eclemeodos XI (Clement XI). He was isolated and imprisoned in the Louiza monastery. However, the Pope ordered he be returned to his position, in which he remained until his death on February 9, 1733.

60. Youssef Dergham Al Khazen (Joseph Dergham Al Khazen) was elected on February 24, 1733, and confirmed by Pope Eclemeodos XII (Clement XII). During his mandate in 1736, the Lebanese Council was held in the Sayyidat Louiza monastery in the presence of Apostolic Nuncio (Ambassador) Youssef Semaan, during which the rules of the Maronite confession were adopted. He died on May 13, 1742.

61. Semaan Awad (Simeon Awad) was elected on May 13, 1742, but he rejected the position. The bishops met and were divided in the election. One group elected Bishop Toubia Al-Khazen (Tobias Al Khazen) and another elected Bishop Elias Qastawi. The Pope Benedictos XIV (Benedict XIV) rejected the result and insisted on the first election of Semaan who died on February 12, 1756, and was buried in the Mashmousha monastery.

62. Toubia Al-Khazen (1756 – 1766)

63. Youssef Istiphan (Joseph Estephan) was elected on June 9, 1766, and was one of the students of the Maronite school in Rome. Pope Eclemeodos XIII (Clement XIII) confirmed him on April 6, 1767. During his mandate, the story of nun Hanna, known as Hindiya, emerged. She established an order in Bkirki and the Patriarch was accused of supporting her. The Pope asked him to leave the Patriarchy and travel to Rome but he was too sick to do so. The Pope returned him to his position when he confirmed his obedience to him. In 1789, he established Ain Waraqa school. He died on April 22, 1793.

64. Mikhael Fadel (Michael Fadel, 1793 – 1795)

65. Philippus Gemayyel (1795 – 1796)

66. Youssef Al Tayyan (Joseph Al Tayyan) was also a student of the Maronite school in Rome. He played a role in resolving Patriarch Youssef Istiphan's row with the Pope. He was elected patriarch on May 16, 1796, and was confirmed by the Pope on July 24, 1797. In 1809, he resigned due to disagreements with Prince Bachir Al Chehabi II who cooperated with the Apostolic Nuncio, his friend Louis Ghandolfi, to get rid of the patriarch and force him to resign. The Pope accepted the resignation despite a memorandum that the archbishops had presented to refuse the resignation. He isolated himself in the Qanoubeen monastery until his death on February 20, 1820, and was buried in the Archbishop's cemetery in the monastery.

67. Youhanna Al Helou (John Helou) was elected on June 8, 1809, and confirmed by the Pope on December 16, 1809. He died on May 12, 1823.

68. Youssef Hobeich (Joseph Hobeich from Sahel Aalma) was elected on May 25, 1823. During his mandate, the Bkirki monastery was turned into the Patriarchal Seat for the winter and Diman for the summer. During his mandate, Egypt occupied Lebanon. He objected this occupation and refused the conscription imposed by the Egyptians. He also objected to the Othmani Sultanate and was close to France. The Qa'im Maqamatein (two administrative districts) system was established during his mandate. He died on May 13, 1845.

69. Youssef Raji Al-Khazen (Joseph Raji Al Khazen, from Ajaltoun) was elected on August 18, 1845, and died on November 3, 1854.

70. Boulos Masaad (Peter Masaad from Aachqout) was elected on November 12, 1854, and was among the students of the Maronite school in Rome. During his mandate, the 1860 events took place and the Mutasarrifiyya system was established. He travelled to Rome in 1867 to participate in the Vatican Council. He died on April 18, 1890, and was buried in Aachqout.

71. Youhanna El-Hajj (John El Hajj from Dabelta) was elected on April 28, 1890, and confirmed by Pope Leo XIII on June 23, 1890. He renovated the Maronite school in Rome through his Deputy Bishop Elias Howayek who succeeded him. He died on December 25, 1898, and was buried in Bkirki.

72. Elias Howayek, from Halta, was elected on January 6, 1899, and was confirmed by the Pope on August 14, 1899. He played a significant role in the establishment of the state of Greater Lebanon. He died on December 25, 1931, and was buried in Bkirki.

73. Antoine Aarida, from Bcharri, was elected on January 7, 1932, and confirmed by Pope Pius XI on March 19, 1933. On June 13, 1948, the Apostolic Nuncio (Ambassador) visited Bkirki and gave the patriarch a papal inscription appointing, in addition to the patriarch, an apostolic committee to assist the former in performing his duties once he becomes of old age. The committee included Bishop Boulos Al Ma'oushi (Peter Al Ma'oushi, Bishop of Sour) as president, Bishop Abdallah Al Khoury (Bishop of Arqa) as honorary member and Boutros Theeb (Peter Theeb, Bishop of Cairo) as member. He died on May 19, 1955.

74. Boulos Al Ma'oushi (Peter Al Ma'oushi, from Jezzine) was promoted to the position of patriarch upon the Pope's request on May 28, 1955, which he had transmitted to the Apostolic Nuncio of Jerusalem, Silvio Oddi. The patriarch was faced with several challenges especially following the events of 1958. He died in 1975.

75. Antonios Khreish, from Ain Ebl, was elected in February 1975. Two months after his election, war broke out in the country, which would last until 1990. The patriarch resigned following the Vatican's request in 1985 and Bishop Ibrahim Al Helou was appointed Apostolic Nuncio of the Maronite Patriarchy. He died on August 19, 1994, and was buried in Bkirki.

76. Nasrallah Sfeir, from Rayfoun, was elected in April 1986 and declared his resignation in February 2011.

77. Bechara Al Rai, from Himlaya, the current patriarch, was elected on March 15, 2011.

It is worth noting that during the 20th and 21st century, the patriarchs were concentrated geographically in Batroun (Halta), Bcharri, Jezzine, the South (Ain Ebl), Keserouane (Rayfoun) and Jbeil. Based on the information we were able to collect, it appears that none of the patriarchs were from A'akkar, the Beqa'a or Beirut, which nonetheless have significant Christian populations. ●●

During our research in history books we obtained contradictory information. Thus, the information in this article may not be unanimously agreed on by historians and researchers or members of the Maronite Church. The Monthly welcomes any documented information that could fill in the gaps or clarify the briefs concerning the patriarchs, especially those that are disputed.

CARS AND VEHICLES IN LEBANON: 1.8 MILLION AND 74% ARE OLD

A large number of Lebanese consider that owning a luxurious and new car is a must for their social status, and they buy them regardless of whether they can afford them or not. The absence of public transportation in Lebanon makes owning a car an important means of transportation and not just a luxury. This increases the number of cars and creates traffic jams.

Number of Vehicles

At the beginning of 2010, the number of cars and vehicles registered reached 1,836,685 compared to 1,646,307 at the beginning of 2009, an increase of 190,378 cars and vehicles (11.56%). The number of privately owned cars reached 1,489,124 and forms 81% of the number of registered vehicles compared to 1,324,005 in 2009, an increase of 165,119 cars in 2 years. Table 1 lists the number of vehicles by type.

Type	Number	%
Private/tourism	1,489,124	81.08
Private Truck	184,179	10.03
Motorcycle	93,578	5.09
Public/tourism	34,886	1.9
Public truck	13,125	0.71
Private bus	9,181	0.5
Public bus	6,171	0.34
Public works	5,883	0.32
Tractor	558	0.03
Total	1,836,685	100

Brands

Mercedes continues to take the lead in terms of its number in Lebanon and has reached 338,450 vehicles while in 2009 there were 309,836 Mercedes cars, an increase of 28,614 cars, or a 17.3% increase in 2 years. BMW comes next with 174,851 cars, Toyota ranks third with 153,288 cars, Honda ranks fourth with 143,928 cars and Renault comes in fifth with 120,794 cars. Table 2 lists the cars and vehicles by brand.

Brand	Number	%
Mercedes	338,450	18.4
BMW	174,851	9.5
Toyota	153,288	8.3
Honda	143,928	7.8
Renault	120,794	6.6
Nissan	96,804	5.3
Volkswagen	75,949	4.1
Peugeot	73,703	4
Yamaha	41,003	2.2
Opel	39,562	2.2
Datsun	38,901	2.1
Volvo	38,635	2.1
Mitsubishi	37,142	2
Suzuki	37,076	2
Chevrolet	36,301	2
Fiat	35,346	1.9
Hyundai	30,658	1.6
Jeep	28,129	1.5
Kia	27,801	1.5
Mazda	25,317	1.4
Audi	15,457	0.8
Range Rover	14,735	0.8
GMC	14,687	0.8
Buick	13,526	0.7
Daewoo	11,705	0.6
Ford	10,384	0.6
Dodge	9,712	0.5
Subaru	9,637	0.5
Infiniti	9,132	0.5
Citroen	8,424	0.4
Pontiac	7,899	0.4
Daihatsu	7,583	0.4

Cars and vehicles by brand		Table 2
Oldsmobile	7,476	0.4
Cadillac	5,602	0.3
Seat	4,845	0.2
Land Rover	4,619	0.2
Jaguar	4,528	0.2
Isuzu	4,234	0.2
Chrysler	3,499	0.2
Porsche	3,334	0.2
Hino	3,184	0.2
Simca	3,133	0.2
Alpha Romeo	2,843	0.1
Austin	2,345	0.1
Lada	2,284	0.1
CG	2,224	0.1
Plymouth	2,121	0.1
Maurice	2,047	0.1
Lexus	1,983	0.1
Dacia	1,791	0.1
Others	48,074	2.62
Total	1,836,685	100

Colors

Black is the most popular color for cars and vehicles with 233,560 black cars, followed by white (230,977), silver (201,938), navy blue (133,519), blue (95,921), led-gray (74,400), red (71,073) and olive (62,734). There are 61,997 cars with 2 colors, 13,498 with 3 colors and 9,155 with 4 colors.

Vehicles by manufacturing date

Around 73.4% of cars and vehicles (1,348,447) in Lebanon are more than 10 years old. Only 117,829 cars (6.4%) are less than 3 years old. Table 3 lists the number of vehicles according to their manufacturing date.

Cars entering Lebanon

The number of cars used for the first time in 2010 was 119,211 compared to 133,827 in 2009, which reflects a decrease in the number of cars coming into Lebanon. During 2009-2010 and early 2011, the number of cars and vans reached 253,541 making that a total of 1,875,522. However, the number of registered cars and vans reached 1,836,685, which indicates the withdrawal of 38,837 vehicles as a result of accidents or mechanical problems. Table 4 lists the number of cars and vehicles according to the first time they were used on the roads.

Vehicles according to manufacturing date			Table 3
Year	Number	%	
Before 1970	109,026	5.9	
1970 - 1979	254,517	13.8	
1980 - 1989	442,260	24	
1990 - 1999	441,469	24	
2000	43,766	2.4	
2001	57,409	3.1	
2002	63,196	3.4	
2003	53,786	2.9	
2004	44,581	2.4	
2005	42,684	2.3	
2006	31,526	1.7	
2007	21,385	1.1	
2008	31,678	1.7	
2009	45,661	2.5	
2010	27,999	1.5	
2011	12,491	0.7	
Unspecified	113,251	6.1	
Total	1,836,685	100	

Distribution of cars and vehicles according to the first time they were used on the roads			Table 4
Year	Number	%	
Before 1970	5,303	0.3	
1970 - 1979	32,978	1.8	
1980-1989	220,944	12	
1990-1999	573,892	31.2	
2000	40,074	2.2	
2001	44,752	2.4	
2002	43,302	2.3	
2003	42,909	2.3	
2004	52,688	2.8	
2005	52,704	2.8	
2006	54,267	2.9	
2007	67,874	3.7	
2008	105,299	5.7	
2009	133,827	7.3	
2010	119,211	6.5	
2011	503	0.03	
Unspecified	246,158	13.4	
Total	1,836,685	100	

Mortgaged cars and vehicles

Most of the Lebanese do not own their cars and vehicles. Indeed, 201,750 cars (11%) are mortgaged by banks or financial institutions. Private/tourism cars represent the majority with 93% amounting to 187,422 cars. Table 5 lists the number of mortgaged cars and vehicles.

Number of mortgaged cars and vehicles		Table 5
Type	Number	%
Private/Tourism	187,422	92.9
Private truck	6,947	3.4
Public/tourism	4,452	2.2
Public bus	1,257	0.6
Public truck	1,112	0.5
Private bus	256	0.1
Motorcycles	185	0.09
Public works	119	0.06
Total	201,750	100

Mortgaged cars by brand

Mercedes tops the list as the most commonly mortgaged car with 25,091 (12.4%) of the total number of mortgaged cars and vehicles, followed by Nissan (11.4%) and BMW (10.1%). Table 6 lists mortgaged cars and vehicles by brand.

Mortgaged cars and vehicles by brand		Table 6
Brand	Number	%
Mercedes	25,091	12.4
Nissan	23,001	11.4
BMW	20,366	10
Kia	15,457	7.6
Toyota	14,517	7.2
Honda	12,537	6.2
Hyundai	10,542	5.2
Peugeot	8,463	4.2
Jeep	7,267	2.6
Renault	7,070	3.5
Chevrolet	5,806	2.9
Mitsubishi	5,497	2.7
Volkswagen	5,312	2.6
GMC	3,742	1.8
Infinity	3,146	1.5
Suzuki	2,619	1.3
Audi	2,464	1.2
Mazda	2,333	1.2
Citroen	2,132	1
Others	24,388	12
Total	201,750	100

Mortgaged cars according to manufacturing date

Newly-manufactured cars (less than 4 years old) form the majority of mortgaged cars and vehicles and amount to 73,633 or 36.5% of mortgaged cars. Table 7 lists mortgaged cars and vehicles according to their manufacturing date.

Mortgaged cars and vehicles according to manufacturing date			Table 7
Year	Number	%	
Before 1970	1,122	0.5	
1970 - 1979	1,405	0.7	
1980-1989	2,497	1.2	
1990-1999	32,288	16	
2000	10,390	5.1	
2001	15,814	7.8	
2002	17,471	8.6	
2003	14,441	7.1	
2004	11,602	5.2	
2005	11,161	5.5	
2006	9,437	4.7	
2007	7,886	3.9	
2008	16,094	8	
2009	26,575	13.1	
2010	15,503	7.7	
2011	7,575	3.7	
Unspecified	489	0.2	
Total	201,750	100	

Mortgaged cars and vehicles according to the date they were first used

Cars that were used for the first time during 2007 – 2010 form 68% of mortgaged cars and they reach a total of 137,567. Table 8 lists the distribution of those cars.

Lenders

Car owners received loans from banks, financial institutions and car dealers themselves. BLOM bank came first in the list of lenders with 41,311 cars and vehicles, forming 20.5% of mortgaged deals. Byblos Bank came second with 8.3% of mortgaged deals, Bank of Beirut came third with 7.2% of mortgaged deals, followed by Crédit Libanais with 6.4% of mortgaged deals and BLC Bank with 5.8% of mortgaged deals. These five banks provide 48.2% of the mortgages. Table 9 lists the number of mortgaged cars by lender.

Mortgaged cars according to the date they were first used

Table 8

Year	Number	%
Before 1970	60	0.03
1970 - 1979	230	0.1
1980 - 1989	905	0.4
1990 - 1999	17,657	8.7
2000	3,343	1.6
2001	3,992	2
2002	4,051	2
2003	4,789	2.3
2004	7,548	3.7
2005	8,109	4
2006	11,001	5.5
2007	17,907	8.9
2008	38,773	19.2
2009	43,510	21.5
2010	37,377	18.5
2011	91	0.05
Unspecified	2,407	1.2
Total	201,750	100

Mortgaged cars by lender

Table 9

Lender	Number	%
BLOM	41,311	20.5
Byblos	16,816	8.3
Bank of Beirut	14,454	7.2
Crédit Libanais	12,864	6.4
BLC Bank	11,680	5.8
Fransabank	9,723	4.8
BankMed	8,143	4
Lebanese European Public Banking Company	7,957	3.4
HSBC	7,007	3.5
Al-Ahli International Bank	5,990	3
Bank Audi – Audi Saradar Group	5,613	2.8
Capital Finance Company	5,596	2.8
Bank of Beirut and the Arab Countries) BBAC(5,324	2.6
Rasamny Youness	4,647	2.3
Banque de Crédit National	4,486	2.2
Banque Libano-Française (BLF)	4,076	2
Standard Motor Company	2,881	1.4
Bassoul and Heneine	2,528	1.3
Lebanese Canadian Bank	2,146	1
Others	23,764	11.7
Unspecified	4,744	2.3
Total	201,750	100

BANK LOANS

THE MAJORITY ARE IN USD, CONCENTRATED IN BEIRUT AND GRANTED TO THE RICH

Along with deposits received by banks, the latter give out loans. The difference in interest rates allocated to deposits and loans allows banks to achieve financial profits. Lebanese banks are currently suffering from a liquidity surplus due to the large increase in deposits. The liquidity surplus is estimated at about \$ 20 billion.

Volume of loans

The volume of bank loans to the private sector reached LBP 5,130 billion at the end of 1992 while at the end of 2010 it had attained LBP 45,702 billion, an increase of LBP 40,572 billion or 791%. On the other hand, loans to the public sector increased from LBP 1,190 billion to LBP 44,192 billion, an increase of LBP 43,002 billion or 3,613%. During the same period, the volume of bank deposits increased from LBP 12,268 billion to LBP 163,717 billion, an increase of LBP 151,449 billion or 1,234%.

Thus, the total amount of loans (public + private) increased from LBP 6,320 billion to LBP 89,894 billion, an increase of 1,322%. Herein lies the problem:

the imbalance in the banking sector manifested by the liquidity surplus. Indeed, the difference (surplus) between deposits and loans has risen from LBP 5,948 billion to LBP 73,823 billion forcing banks to create new ways to increase loans to the private sector as well as purchase deposit certificates issued by the Bank of Lebanon to shrink the liquidity surplus.

N.B: the amount of LBP 73,823 billion is not considered a liquidity surplus in the banks because a part of it is allocated as mandatory reserve and reserve of loans and other commitments. The estimated cash surplus of this amount is about LBP 30,000 billion, or about \$20 billion.

Loans by sector

Loans are distributed to all sectors but are mainly concentrated in the trade sector, which obtained 43% of loans in 1994, a proportion that decreased to 39% by the end of 2010. The agriculture sector received 1.8% and this share decreased to 0.87% in 2010 while individuals' loans have doubled and risen from 10.2% to 20.3% between 1994 and 2010. In 1994, the industrial sector was granted 13.84% of loans and this decreased to 11.87% by 2010. The share of the contracting and construction sector decreased from 18.89% to 16.79% between 1994 and 2010. Table 1 lists the distribution of loans by sector.

Distribution of loans by sector (LBP billion)									Table 1
	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2009
Agriculture	138	206	288	373	346	292	328	426	429
Industry	1,060	1,703	2,436	2,921	3,113	3,836	4,058	5,403	5,558
Contracting and construction	1,447	2,813	4,229	5,176	4,767	4,620	4,317	6,502	7,857
Trade and services	3,760	5,907	8,671	10,120	11,166	11,867	12,387	17,266	17,892
• Hotels and restaurants	169	323	480	659	911	1,087	1,222	1,330	1,106
• Real estate services	213	402	1,000	1,303	1,360	1,296	1,510	3,309	3,332
Financial intermediation	260	432	581	677	781	934	1,384	3,105	4,036
Individuals	782	1,505	2,347	2,738	3,300	4,330	5,613	7,707	9,507
Miscellaneous	212	441	806	1,112	1,279	983	1,187	1,684	1,514
Total	7,659	13,007	19,356	23,117	24,752	26,862	29,274	42,093	46,793

Source: Central Bank of Lebanon

Concentration of Loans

Loans are concentrated in Beirut and its surroundings while the majority of loans go to senior traders and financiers who meet the banks' conditions.

Distribution of loans by region

As for the distribution of loans by region, Beirut and its suburbs have the highest proportion of 81.7%, and the Beqa'a has the lowest share of 2.87%, the rate in Mount Lebanon is 8.2%, in the South it is 3.35% while in the North it is 3.7%. Table 2 illustrates the distribution of loans by region

Distribution of loans by region							Table 2
Region	December 1998	December 2000	December 2003	December 2007	December 2008	December 2009	
Beirut and its suburbs	81.42%	82.18%	81.1%	82.46%	82.35%	81.13%	
Mount Lebanon	8.78%	8.55%	8.79%	7.49%	7.76%	8.11%	
Beqa'a	2.39%	2.41%	2.91%	3.37%	3.05%	3.12%	
South Lebanon and Nabatiyeh	3.44%	3.05%	3.34%	3.08%	3.38%	3.85%	
North	3.97%	3.81%	3.86%	3.6%	3.46%	3.79%	
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Source: Central Bank of Lebanon

Concentration of loans by borrower

Loans are concentrated with some borrowers who are senior financiers. This has not changed over the years, as shown in Table 3. At the end of 2009, 0.3% of borrowers (662 people or institutions) received loans of LBP 22,851 billion, i.e. 48.02% of the volume of loans, the size of each exceeding LBP 10 billion. Moreover, 1.96% of borrowers (4,373 people or institutions) received 73.6% of loans.

Distribution of loans by amount								Table 3
Amount	December 1993				December 2009			
	Borrowers	%	Value (LBP)	%	Borrowers	%	Value (LBP)	%
Below LBP 5 million	563	2.96	1.3	0.017	7,119	3.19	21	0.04
LBP 5-25 million	5,803	30.56	86.9	1.18	121,654	54.43	2,264	4.36
LBP 25-100 million	6,032	31.77	309.3	4.21	69,543	31.12	3,787	7.96
LBP 100-500 million	4,332	22.8	998.7	13.6	18,234	8.16	4,493	9.44
LBP 500 million 1 -billion	991	5.22	699.1	9.52	2569	1.15	2,021	4.25
LBP 5 -1 billion	1,031	5.43	2126.9	28.97	3110	1.39	7,554	15.88
LBP 5-10 billion	154	0.81	1,052	14.33	601	0.27	4,593	9.65
More than LBP 10 billion	78	0.41	2,066.9	28.1	662	0.30	22,851	48.02
Total	18,984	100	7341.1	100	281,513	100	47,584	100

Source: Central Bank of Lebanon

Loans in dollars

Given that the majority of deposits in the banks are in foreign currencies and especially in USD, the largest proportion of loans are also in foreign currencies. At the end of 2010, loans were distributed between 80.28% in foreign currency and 19.72% in Lebanese currency. Table 4 illustrates the distribution of loans by currency (1993-2010).

Bank loans are distributed to a handful of Lebanese people and concentrated in specific Lebanese regions. Thus, the banking sector seems to serve only a small category of individuals and this is why its laws and regulations should be revisited. Furthermore, the possibility of establishing banks or funds that would finance small-scale traders and investors and disseminate loans to rural areas should be considered.

Distribution of loans between foreign and Lebanese currencies (1993-2010)			Table 4
Year	Loans in foreign currencies	Loans in LBP	
1993	89.83%	10.17%	
1995	88.05%	11.95%	
1998	89.25%	10.75%	
2000	87.43%	12.57%	
2002	82.77%	17.23%	
2004	83.17%	16.83%	
2006	85.58%	14.42%	
2008	86.57%	13.43%	
2010	80.28%	19.72%	

Source: Central Bank of Lebanon

SAINT JOHN MONASTERY HIT BY AN EXPLOSION

AND WORKS INCREASE AT THE STATE'S EXPENSE TO REACH USD 3.5 MILLION

On May 6, 2005, in a tense atmosphere looming on Lebanon, the ancient monastery of Saint John in Jounieh witnessed a terrorist bombing, which damaged the monastery's building and the Voice of Charity Radio station, based in the monastery. The explosion was condemned by all political and religious forces and parties.

Superior General of the Lebanese Missionaries Assembly, Father Khalil Alwan held a press conference the day after the bombing, where he showed the damage to the radio station and urged the government to assign the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), and anyone else necessary, to rebuild what had been destroyed. He also announced the opening of a bank account for those wishing to make a donation.

The Cabinet designates the party responsible for repairing the damage

In its session held on May 18, 2005, the Council of Ministers took Decision No. 33 assigning the restoration of the Saint John monastery in Jounieh to the CDR. This decision was in accordance with Father Alwan's wishes.

Initial cost


Initially, the damage cost was estimated at around USD 1 million. By virtue of Decree No. 14677 dated June 20, 2005, this amount (LBP 1.5 billion) was transferred from the budget's reserve to the budget allocated to the Council of Ministers' presidency and then to the CDR's budget in order to enable it to undertake the works.

Additional cost

With the advancement of the works and the desire to modernize the monastery's building to cover more than the damage caused by the explosion, the cost began to increase. Thus, in order to secure this additional cost, Decree No. 17959 dated November 1, 2006, was promulgated stipulating that LBP 2.4 billion shall be transferred from the budget's reserve to the budget of the Council of Ministers' presidency and then to the CDR to cover the shortfall in the cost of financing the restoration of the monastery (the third and last phase). However, the works were not completed and additional funding of USD 440 million was requested by the CDR and was secured through a treasury loan given to the Higher Relief Commission by virtue of Decree No. 1044 dated November 24, 2007. Once again, the works were not completed and extra funding amounting to LBP 1.539 billion was requested by the CDR. It was granted by virtue of Decree No. 1376 dated February 17, 2009, to complete the restoration of the monastery and to settle the treasury loan of USD 440 million to the Higher Relief Commission.

Thus, the total amount received by the CDR reached LBP 5,439 million, equivalent to approximately USD 3.5 million, which is the amount stated in the estimated but not final disclosure of the cost of works according to the CDR and detailed as follows:

- ⦿ Urgent consolidation works: USD 57,475
- ⦿ Soil study cost: USD 2,860
- ⦿ Church restoration: USD 237,459
- ⦿ Monastery restoration: USD 2,659,104 US Dollars (estimated cost)
- ⦿ Import and installation of additional equipment and furniture: USD 436,472 (estimated cost)
- ⦿ Cost of preparation of the studies: USD 44,000
- ⦿ Supervision tasks estimated at 4% of the cost of implemented works: USD 135,734 (estimated cost)

The project began at a cost of LBP 1.5 billion and may end up costing more than LBP 5.5 billion, an increase of LBP 4 billion, an amount that may represent the value of additional works that were not caused by the explosion. Moreover, the monastery did not disclose the amount of donations it received. It is worth asking: is a catastrophe a way and a cause to raise funds in Lebanon? 

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND TRADE BUDGET: LBP 7 BILLION

The laws and regulations in place grant an important role to the Ministry of Economy and Trade covering various economic sectors and activities such as insurance companies, monitoring prices and consumer protection, and securing supply of basic foods, especially wheat. Despite this, it is not categorized as an important ministry undoubtedly due to its meager budget, which reached an estimated LBP 7 billion in 2010 (not including the budgets of the General Directorate of Cereals and Sugar Beets, the Rachid Karami International Fair and the UNDP) or 0.035% of the state's total budget.

The Ministry

The Ministry was initially named the Ministry of National Economy and Tourism. By virtue of Decree No. 8369 dated December 30, 1961, it became the Ministry of National Economy when the Tourism Commission was transferred to the Ministry of Guidance and News that became the Ministry of Guidance, News and Tourism. By virtue of Law No. 9/73 issued on January 31, 1973, the Ministry of Economy became the Ministry of Economy and Trade following the creation of the Ministry of Industry and Oil, which took over the industry, mines and fuel authorities. This is what led to a decline in the role and powers of the Ministry of Economy and Trade, which used to include various sectors (economy, tourism, industry and oil). In 1944, the Ministry was referred to as the Ministry of Supplies.

Establishment and duties

Based on Decree No. 6821 dated December 28, 1973, implementing the law transferred to parliament by Decree No. 5869 dated August 23, 1973, specifying the duties and personnel of the Ministries of Economy and Trade, and Industry and Oil, the former's duties are numerous:

- ⦿ Collaborate with other ministries to develop the country's economic sectors and national wealth
- ⦿ Take the necessary measures to enhance trade, secure supplies and ensure consumer protection through a policy that maintains economic balance by virtue of planning, coordination and implementation
- ⦿ Follow up on economic developments and take the necessary steps to benefit from them
- ⦿ Ensuring the country's basic consumer needs are met
- ⦿ Fight against monopolies and take the necessary measures to ensure fair competition and consumer protection

Structure

The Ministry of Economy and Trade is composed of:

- ⦿ The Higher Council for National Economy: it is an advisory committee that gives its opinion on issues related to the economy brought forward by the minister. It is composed of the minister as president, the director general as his deputy and 11 members representing trade organizations and Trade Chambers appointed by virtue of a Cabinet decree.
- ⦿ General Directorate of Cereals and Sugar Beets: it was established in 1942 under the name "Office of Wheat for Syria and Lebanon". It later became a part of the Ministry of National Economy under the name "Office of Wheat". By virtue of Law No. 20/67 dated February 25, 1967, its name was changed to "Office of Cereals and Sugar Beets", as a Category 1 administration linked to the Minister of National Economy and composed of 41 positions. The Office's tasks were specified as follows:
 - ⦿ Provide the stability of bread supply all the while ensuring its safety and quality
 - ⦿ Increase cereal production and distribution
 - ⦿ Import wheat to store for use when needed
 - ⦿ Import seeds to distribute to farmers or to sell
- ⦿ General Directorate of Economy and Trade: it is composed of:
 - ⦿ The Central Administration: the Diwan (Bureau) – Department of Trade – Directorate of Consumer Protection – Department of Intellectual Property (created in 1996) – Technical Office for Pricing Policies – Israel Boycott Office – Trade Information Center (created in 1994)
 - ⦿ Regional Offices

Staff

Decree No. 6821 dated December 28, 1973, and its amendments, provided for 321 positions in the Ministry distributed as follows:

- Category 1: 1 (Director General)
- Category 2: 12
- Category 3: 134
- Category 4: 146
- Category 5: 28

These positions are distributed among departments and offices as illustrated in Table 1.

Distribution of Staff by Category		Table 1			
Category	2	3	4	5	
Diwan	1	-	-		
•Office of Administrative and Employees Affairs	-	1	8		
•Office of Legal Studies	-	1	2	11	
•Office of Financial Affairs	-	1	3		
•Office of Complaints and Follow-up	-	1	3		
Department of Trade	1	-	-		
•Office of Foreign Trade	-	1	3		
•Office of Companies	-	1	4	2	
•Office of Exhibitions	-	1	4		
Department of Intellectual Property	1	-	-	-	
•Office of Intellectual Property	-	1	3		
Department of Insurance Companies	1	-	-		
•Office of Insurance Companies	-	1	6		
•Office of Insurance Companies Control	-	1	8	2	
Directorate of Consumer Protection	1	-	-		
•President of Studies and Awareness Authority	1	-	61		
•President of Control Authority	1	-	-	5	
•Supervisor	-	120	-		
Israel Boycott Office	1	-	6	2	
Regional Offices	4	4	35	6	
Total	12	134	146	28	

Budget

In the 2010 draft budget law, the Ministry of Economy and Trade's budget amounted to LBP 70.7 billion. However, the Ministry's budget is effectively limited to LBP 7 billion, which is a meager budget when compared with the size of its duties and powers.

The budget is distributed as follows:

- Consumer supplies (stationery, fuel, water, electricity, communication): LBP 389 million
- Consumer services (office rent and maintenance, cleaning services, advertisement and public relations): LBP 1,015 million
- Allowances, salaries and wages: LBP 5,087 million
- Maintenance of equipment: LBP 275 million
- Transportation, delegations and conferences: LBP 140 million
- Research: LBP 50 million

The large expenses (LBP 63.7 billion) that are included within the Ministry's budget are distributed as follows:

- General Directorate of Cereals and Sugar Beets: LBP 61.5 billion to help in purchasing wheat
- UNDP: LBP 1,350 million
- Rachid Karami International Fair: LBP 610 million

Ministers

Since Lebanon's independence in 1943 until the formation of the latest government (formed on November 9, 2009, and resigned on January 12, 2011), there have been 80 ministers.

Bechara El Khoury's mandate (1943-1952): Adel Osseiran – Mohammad Al Fadel – Riyadh Al Solh – Jamil Talhouq – Sami Al Solh – Phillip Takla – Nicolas Ghosn – Phillip Takla – Sa'adi Al Manla – Kamal Jumblatt – Suleiman Nawfal – Phillip Takla (2) – Jibrán Nahhas – Boulos Fayyad – Phillip Takla – Suleiman Al Ali – Bassil Trad (3).

Camille Chamoun's mandate (1952-1958): Georges Hakim – Rachid Karami (4) – Nazih Al Bizri – Georges Hakim – Nasri Al Maalouf – Kazem Al Khalil (2).

Fouad Chehab's mandate (1958-1964): Charles Helou – Rachid Karami – Phillip Takla (2) – Suleiman Al Ali – Phillip Boulos – Rafic Naja – Fouad A'amoun – Josepj Najjar.

Charles Helou's mandate (1964-1970): Joseph Najjar – Baheej Taqieddine – Rafic Naja – Sobhi Mahmasani – Said Hamadeh – Edouard Hnein – Suleiman Franjeh – Nasri Al Maalouf – Hussein Al O'eini – Nassim Majdalani – Suleiman Franjeh – Nassim Majdalani.

Suleiman Franjeh's mandate (1970-1976): Sa'ib Jaroudi – Anwar Al Sabah – Abbas Khalaf – Baheej Tabbarah – Nazih Al Bizri – Fawzi Al Khatib – Adel Osseiran – Georges Skaff.

Elias Sarkis's mandate (1976-1982): Salim Al Hoss – Talal Al Mar'abi – Khaled Jumblatt.

Amine Gemayyel's mandate (1982-1988): Ibrahim Halawi – Victor Qasir.

Government headed by Major General Michel Aoun (1988-1989): Issam Abou Hamra.

Elias Hrawi's mandate (1989-1998): Nazih Al Bizri – Marwan Hamadeh – Samir Al Maqdissi – Hagop Demerjian – Yassin Jaber (2).

Emile Lahoud's mandate (1998-2007): Nasser Al Sa'idi – Bassel Fleihan – Adnan Al Qassar – Dimianos Qattar – Sami Haddad – Marwan Hamadeh – Fouad Siniora.

Michel Suleiman's mandate (2008- presumably 2014): Mohammad Al Safadi (2).

INFORMATION INTERNATIONAL SURVEYS THE LEBANESE POPULATION ON SYRIA'S CRISIS

56% AGAINST REGIME CHANGE AND 17% FOR IT, 33% BELIEVE IT IS A FOREIGN CONSPIRACY

Information reveals that the Syrian security forces arrested a number of youth in the Southern city of Dara'a at the beginning of March for writing slogans opposing the regime.

This was the spark that initiated a number of protests that began in Dara'a and spread to a number of Syrian towns and villages where people called for "the fall of the regime", eventually leading to commitment by Assad for reform measures. For about two months now, the Syrian crisis has been attracting attention and has even become part of Lebanon's internal affairs. Between April 29 and May 3, 2011, Information International surveyed a sample of 500 Lebanese, distributed among various geographical locations, confessional and age categories, on their position and opinion regarding the events in Syria.

The most important topic: Lebanon

Despite the numerous events occurring in the region, be it in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Libya, Yemen or Syria, about half of the Lebanese respondents (49%) are primarily concerned with the situation in Lebanon. The Syrian crisis attracted the attention of 28% of respondents while 10% are interested in the situation in all the Arab states and 13% are not interested in any of these issues.

Description of what is happening in Syria: foreign conspiracy

A small majority of the respondents (33% or 1/3) consider that what is happening in Syria is the result of a conspiracy and foreign intervention while 22% consider it is a popular revolution and 20% believe it is a mixture of both. A

quarter (25%) of the respondents said they "do not know" how to describe the events.

This description varies according to confession. 61% of Shia'a respondents consider that what is occurring is a "foreign conspiracy" while merely 20% of Sunni respondents have that point of view and only 15% of Druze respondents hold this belief. The difference in opinion is similarly split among the Christian confession.

The best option: keep the regime

A majority of 56% of respondents prefers that the current Syrian regime remains in place so long as it adopts reform measures and stops the crackdown on protesters (3% said they are with keeping the regime without reforms) while 17% want the fall of the regime and the establishment of a new one and 27% said they "do not know" what the best option is. This is an important indicator. In the absence of a unified description of the situation, more than half of the respondents favor one option, that of keeping the regime, without forgetting that just over a quarter of respondents did not answer or give an opinion.

When looking at the distribution of the answers according to confession, as illustrated in Table 1, a majority of Shia'a (75%) and Orthodox (71%) are with keeping the regime and so are half of the Maronite respondents, 59% of the Druze respondents while only 39% of Sunni and 38% of Catholics are of the same opinion.

The best option for Syria according to confession

Table 1

What would you prefer happens in Syria?	Maronite (%)	Orthodox (%)	Catholic (%)	Armenian Orthodox/Armenian Catholic (%)	Sunni (%)	Shia'a (%)	Druze (%)
The current regime stays but adopts reform measures and stops the crackdown on protesters	48	69	38	42	39	68	56
I do not know/I do not care	32	15	58	52	31	17	22
The regime is replaced	18	13	4	0	30	8	19
The current regime stays without any reforms	2	2	0	6	0	7	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Lebanon is the primary concern of half the Lebanese, who are split on the description of what is happening in Syria, but more than half of them are with keeping the current regime along with the adoption of reform measures. However, the percentage of opponents to the regime drops to 17% and those who have no opinion rises to 27%.

ENGINEERS' IMMUNITY

An engineer in Lebanon does not enjoy the same immunity as that of lawyers or physicians. For example, before the prosecution of a lawyer, it is necessary to obtain the authorization of the Lawyers' Syndicate whereas the Physicians' Syndicate must give its scientific opinion on whether the alleged offense arose from the practice of his profession or not. However, upon his prosecution, an engineer enjoys what can be described as professional protection where the Syndicate or its president must be informed of the actions to be taken without requesting any kind of authorization.

Nature of the immunity

Article 54 of the Act regulating the engineering profession stipulates that any judicial decision ordering the seizure of maps or any documents from an engineer's office shall only be implemented after the expiration of a period of at least twenty-four hours as of the time of deposit of a copy of the decision to the Syndicate to which the office belongs. It is accompanied by an invitation addressed to the president of the Syndicate to attend the proceedings, whether personally or through his delegate.

Criminal prosecution

As for the engineer's prosecution, according to the second paragraph of Article 54, an engineer shall not be questioned about a crime attributed to him and resulting from the exercise of his profession until after the president of the Syndicate has been notified of the matter. The latter shall be entitled to attend the questioning, whether personally or through his delegate. These procedures shall not be applied in the event that the engineer committed a crime that was witnessed by someone. In some cases, the engineer is prosecuted without informing the president of the Syndicate and the engineer is questioned without the president's presence. On September 13, 1999, the President of the Engineers' Syndicate, Samir Doumit, addressed a letter to the Public Prosecutor in which he expressed his concern about the arrest of engineer Wadih Youssef Said in Jbeil police station and his questioning, given that this is contrary to the provisions of Article 54.

The majority of cases for which an engineer is prosecuted are cases involving the fall or collapse of a building.

Some cases of prosecution

- On October 11, 2000, the Muzheir Building in Al Na'ima region collapsed causing the death of 9 people and the injury of 30 others. Engineer Mahmoud Dandan was convicted and sentenced in absentia to 3 years in prison.

- On October 7, 2001, the investigating judge in Mount Lebanon issued a prima facie warrant to arrest engineer G.A. for causing the death of student Zeina Al Bustani and the injury of student Jean Tarifa following the collapse of the wall in the playground of the French Lycee in Maaysra – Keserwan.
- On June 14, 2004, the investigating judge referred engineer A.Q to trial. The latter was in charge of supervising the implementation of maintenance works in the building that collapsed in Corniche Al Mazra'a on March 23, 2002. An indictment was issued against him, with a sentence ranging between 3 months to 3 years imprisonment.
- On November 18, 2004, the Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation ordered the arrest of a computer engineer, who was being investigated, for copying computer programs and installing them on other computers without permission or authorization of the copyright owners. He was referred to the Appellate Public Prosecution in Beirut.
- On October 6, 2005, the judicial investigator in the case of Rafic Hariri's assassination issued a prima facie arrest warrant against engineer Majed Al Khatib working in MTC Touch for hiding information, misleading the investigation and falsifying special papers concerning the use and destruction of 8 mobile phone lines allegedly used in the crime.

Immunity of an employed engineer

Article 63 of the Act regulating the engineering profession stipulates that "an employed engineer shall be subject to the general disciplinary board of employees and shall be disciplinarily prosecuted only before this board. Moreover, legal and regulatory provisions related to the said board shall be applied to him. Criminal prosecution for acts arising from the post of engineer shall be subject to the procedures adopted to prosecute employees." ●●

COUPS IN THE ARAB WORLD

52 COUPS, THE FIRST IN SYRIA WITH HOSNI AL ZA'IM AND THE WORKS ARE NOW IN PROGRESS

The Tunisian people took to the streets demanding the fall of President Zein Al Abdeen Bin Ali. He was overthrown and fled to Saudi Arabia. Following the same pattern, the Egyptian people took to the streets demanding the fall of President Hosni Mubarak. He was toppled and re-located to Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt. Yemen is currently witnessing similar uprisings while Libya is facing the bloodiest protests, the results of which are still uncertain.

The fall of these presidents following popular uprisings, or military coups disguised as popular movements, takes us back to the various coups that have taken place in the Arab world since the middle of the 20th century.

Syria: 9 coups

Syria was the first Arab country to witness a military coup. It is also among the Arab countries that has witnessed the most uprisings, with a total of nine. Allegedly, the main reason behind this is the Arab and Syrian defeat by Israel and the occupation of Palestine in 1948. The first coup was led by army commander Hosni Al Za'im and occurred on March 30, 1949, following which the President of the Republic, Shukri Al Quwatli, was arrested. It has now been revealed that the US supported this coup in a bid to distance Syria from the Soviet regime all the while seeking the signature of the Tapline (Trans Arabian Pipeline) agreement as well as the conclusion of a peace deal with Israel. Al Za'im made several concessions in order to maintain his position, including the surrender of the founder and leader of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, Antoun Saadeh, to the Lebanese authorities who executed him. Al Za'im's rule ended by a coup led by Colonel Sami Al Hanaoui on August 14, 1949, following which he and his PM Mohsin Al Barazi were summarily executed.

The coups came one after the other. Colonel Adib Al Shishakli led a coup on December 19, 1949, and it is said he was supported by Saudi Arabia. The fourth coup was also led by Shishakli on January 2, 1951, overthrowing the President of the Republic, Hashem Al Atassi, his partner in the previous coup. In practice, Shishakli ruled the country without officially holding the post of president until April 10, 1953. On February 25, 1954, Mostapha Hamwi (supported by Akram Al Hourani) led the fifth coup. Shishakli left the presidency and Hashem Al Atassi returned to it.

On September 28, 1961, the sixth coup took place at the hands of a group of military officers refusing the unity with Egypt. It is referred to as the "Coup of Separation".

On March 8, 1963, the seventh coup occurred, led by a number of Ba'ath officers (6 officers including Hafez Al Assad, Salah Jdeed and Mohammad Omran) and Amine Al Hafez was chosen as president.

On February 23, 1966, the eighth coup that toppled Al Hafez, led by Colonel Salim Hatoum, took place.

On November 16, 1970, the ninth coup, known as the "Corrective Movement", took place. It was led by Hafez Al Assad who remained in power until his death in June 2000.

“Syria was the first Arab country to witness a military coup. It is also among the Arab countries that has witnessed the most uprisings, with a total of nine.”

Egypt: 1 coup

Egypt witnessed a single military coup on July 23, 1952, led by a group of military officers headed by Gamal Abdel Nasser. It did away with the monarchy, replaced it with a republic and expelled King Farouq. Abdel Nasser remained in power until his death in 1970. He was succeeded by Anwar Al Sadat, who was assassinated in 1981, following which Hosni Mubarak acceded to power until he was overthrown by a popular revolution supported by the army in January 2011.

Libya: 1 coup

Libya has only witnessed one coup that occurred on September 1, 1969, and was headed by Colonel Muammar Al Gaddafi leading a group of officers who called themselves the “Free Officers”. This coup toppled the monarchy along with King Idriss Al Sanoussi. Gaddafi is still holding on to power and is the longest serving ruler in the world. Libya is currently witnessing a series of armed battles opposing supporters and opponents of Gaddafi, who are calling for his departure.

Tunisia: 2 coups

On July 25, 1957, Habib Bourguiba toppled King Mohammad Al Amine Bay, abolished the monarchy and declared the establishment of a republic. Bourguiba was chosen as president but remained in power for 30 years until November 7, 1987, when then Prime Minister Zein Al Abdeen Bin Ali took over, given the former’s deteriorating health state, and declared himself president. Bin Ali remained in power until he was overthrown and left to Saudi Arabia on January 14, 2011, following a popular uprising supported by the army that refused Bin Ali’s orders to suppress the protesters.

Lebanon: 1 failed coup

Lebanon has only witnessed one military coup but it failed and did not achieve its goals. On Saturday December 30, 1961, a number of officers of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party planned a coup to remove President Fouad Chehab from power but the army managed to thwart the coup.

Iraq: 3 coups

The coups in Iraq were the bloodiest in the Arab world. The first took place on July 14, 1958, when a group of officers led by Abdel Karim Qassem and Abdel Salam A’aref toppled the monarchy, ruled by King Faisal II and Prime Minister Nouri Al Said, and declared the establishment of a republic. The second coup occurred on February 8, 1963, against President Qassem and was led by the Ba’ath Party. Abdel Salam A’aref became president and Major General Ahmad Hassan Al Bakr, a Ba’ath leader, was appointed prime minister and later acceded to the presidency. The third coup took place in 1966 and was led by Abdel Rahman A’aref who toppled Abdel Salam A’aref. In July 1979, then Vice President Saddam Hussein overthrew the president and took over. He remained president until the US invasion of Iraq in April 2003.

Algeria: 1 coup and the army holds power

On September 15, 1963, Ahmad Bin Balla, one of the leaders of the Algerian revolution, was elected president after Algeria’s independence from France (July 5, 1962). However, his partner in the revolution and Minister of

Defense, Houari Boumediene, led a coup against him on June 19, 1965, which was referred to as a “revolutionary correction” and Bin Balla was imprisoned until 1980.

After Boumediene’s death in 1978, Al Shathli Bin Jadeed was elected president and he remained in power until he resigned in 1992. The army intervened and chose a president, Mohammad Bou Diaf. But the latter was assassinated six months after acceding to power.

Gulf States: reforms or coups?

Gulf States are made up of monarchies where power passes in a hereditary manner from fathers to sons and brothers. However, some sons wanted rapid reforms so they removed their fathers from power, as occurred in Qatar when Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifah Al Thani acceded to power following a “white” coup against his father Sheikh Khalifah on June 27, 1970. In the Sultanate of Oman, Sultan Qaboos alienated his father Sultan Said on July 23, 1970. As for the UAE, Sheikh Zayed removed his brother Sheikh Shakhboot with the approval of the ruling majority (who happened to be his family) on August 6, 1966. In Saudi Arabia, King Faisal and his brothers toppled their brother King Saud on November 2, 1964. In Bahrain and Kuwait, there have been no coups.

Yemen: 6 coups

Colonel Abdallah Al Sallal (supported by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser) led a military coup on September 26, 1962, toppling the monarchy and Imam Mohammad Al Badr, declaring the establishment of a republic in Northern Yemen (Southern Yemen was under British occupation). Saudi Arabia opposed this coup, which triggered Egyptian military intervention and the “Northern Yemen civil war” between supporters of the monarchy supported by Saudi Arabia and supporters of the republic supported by Egypt.

On November 5, 1967, a coup took place that overthrew President Abdallah Al Sallal. Abdel Rahman Al Ariani acceded to power, with Egypt’s approval. On June 13, 1974, Lieutenant Ibrahim Hamdi headed a “white” coup overthrowing President Ariani. Hamdi and his brother were assassinated on October 11, 1977, on the eve of the former’s trip to the South to declare the country’s unity. Fingers pointed towards Lieutenant Ahmad Al Ghashmi who took power, along with then Lieutenant Ali Abdallah Saleh. Al Ghashmi was killed in 1977 and was temporarily replaced by Abdel Karim Al Arshi followed by Ali Abdallah Saleh, who came to power on July 17, 1978, with the approval of the presidential council.

As for the Southern part of the country, it witnessed several coups the first of which was against the second president following independence, Salim Rabi' Ali who was executed on June 26, 1978 (the first president was Qahtan Mohammad Al Sha'abi who was forced to cede power and imprisoned). Abdel Fattah Ismail took over with the support of the Yemeni Socialist Party but the Minister of Defense, Ali Nasser Antar, pushed him to resign and leave the country in 1980. Ali Nasser Mohammad took over the presidency in somewhat of a coup on January 13, 1986. Armed and bloody battles occurred between the various factions of the ruling party that ended with Ali Salem Al Baid acceding to power.

On May 22, 1990, the country was united and President Ali Abdallah Saleh became the unified nation's president.

Jordan: no coups

Despite the political and military circumstances that Jordan witnessed throughout its history as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it never witnessed any attempts of coups. One can say it has enjoyed political stability that has secured peaceful hereditary transitions of power, with the exception of King Talal, King Hussein's father, who was forced to step down in August 1952 to be replaced by his son who remained in power until he died in 1999. The latter was succeeded by his son Abdallah after Crown Prince Hassan, King Hussein's brother, was alienated from this position.

Sudan: 3 coups

Jaafar Al Numeiri assumed the presidency of the revolutionary council and then the republic following his coup of May 1969 during which he toppled President Ismail Al Azhari, who was arrested and imprisoned. During his mandate, other coup attempts in Sudan took place but failed, most notably the one led by the Communist party in July 1971. He remained in power until he was overthrown by a military coup in 1985 led by Al Fariq Taj Al Deen and Lieutenant Othman Abdallah. Abdal Rahman Siwar Al Thahab assumed the function of president. In June 1989, Omar Hassan Al Bashir led the third military coup, overthrowing President Ahmad Al Mirghi and assuming power. He remains head of state until today.

Comoros: 4 coups

Since its independence in 1975, Comoros has witnessed four military coups that have led to a state of instability.

Mauritania: 15 coups

Mauritania has witnessed 15 coups, the first of which occurred on July 10, 1978, and the last on August 6, 2008. It should be noted that the Chief of Staff, Colonel

Mu'awiyah Walad Taye' conducted a white coup with French support against his father on December 12, 1985. Walad Taye' had faced 8 attempted coups, all of which failed except that of August 3, 2005.

Djibouti: no coups

Djibouti gained its independence from France in July 1977 and Hassan Gouled was elected president. He remained in power until 1999. During his mandate, he witnessed several attempted coups that failed along with internal troubles that almost toppled him. He was succeeded by Ismail Hassan Guelleh who is still president until today.


Somalia: 2 coups

Somalia gained independence in 1960 under the name "Somali Republic". In 1965, it witnessed its first military coup led by Major General Mohammad Siad Barre and in 1971 a second coup was attempted but it failed. Barre remained president until 1991 when he was overthrown by a military coup led by Major General Mohammad Fareh A'idid. This was followed by the entry of the country into an everlasting civil war.

Morocco: no coups

During the reign of King Hassan II, Morocco witnessed a number of attempted coups that failed, most notably the attempt by General Mohammad Afqeer, Minister of Defense and the King's right hand, which was aborted and led to the imprisonment of Afqeer in August 1972.

There have been more than 50 coups or attempted coups in the Arab world in the past 60 years, all of which called for "the protection of the rights and interests of the people." Syria had the highest number of coups (9), all of which were successful and three of which occurred in 1949. Mauritania (7 successful coups out of 15). Yemen, with six coups, and Comoros, with four coups, come next followed by Iraq, with three coups, and Sudan, with three coups in addition to three failed coups. Finally, Egypt's one and only coup dates back to 1952 and change only happened with the recent uprising of January 2011. Thus, one can denote a certain state of stagnation, where coups mainly took place between 1949 and the 1970s following which the Arab World witnessed a state of stagnation that lasted until early 2011.

It is interesting how rapidly the people and their leaders grew apart following these coups. Throughout the last decades, the former have been secretly uttering the slogan "the people want the fall of the regime", and this has partly been achieved in the last few months. But the question remains: is it the people who have made the change happen or the military supported by the people? What are the goals of this change? Is it merely a cosmetic or a structural change? 

LEBANESE STANCES ON THE KILLING OF BIN LADEN

THE MAJORITY SUPPORTS IT; A MINORITY IS AGAINST IT WHILE HEZBOLLAH, THE LEBANESE FORCES AND AOUN ARE SILENT

“ I can report to the American people and to the world that the United States has conducted an operation that killed Osama Bin Laden, the leader of Al-Qa’eda, a terrorist who is responsible for the murder of thousands of innocent men, women and children.” This is how the American president Barack Obama announced the killing of Osama Bin Laden on the morning of Monday May 2, 2011, by members of the U.S. Navy in cooperation with the CIA in a home in Abbotabad in Pakistan. An official at the American Ministry of Defense said that prayers were held on Bin Laden’s corpse on board the USS Carl Vinson in the Oman Sea before it was buried in the sea based on Islamic traditions since no country agreed to bury his body.

The operation sparked several reactions and stances in the international arena. In Lebanon, most of the political forces welcomed the operation. The Islamic organizations were mainly against the operation and vocal about their stance. Hezbollah, the Lebanese Forces, Nabih Berri and Michel Aoun were silent about the operation perhaps due to confessional considerations. Besides the Islamic parties, the Phalange Party was the only political party that took a stance.

In favor

◉ **President Michel Suleiman:** “Fighting terrorism and holding its officials accountable is a joint international effort and Lebanon is involved in this effort on its territory based on the understanding of terrorism at the Arab League. Lebanon has paid a high price in terms of the lives of its youth and its soldiers killed by terrorist attacks. Through its cooperation with Arab countries and the United Nations, we hope that the elimination of the Za’im of Al-Qa’eda will constitute a new phase that involves serious work between the duty to wipe out injustice and achieve justice in the Middle East and the duty to fight terrorism...” (Presidency website May 3, 2011).

◉ **Saad Hariri:** “The damage caused by Osama Bin Laden on the image of Islam and the Arab issues is no less than the damage caused by enemies of Arabs and Islam everywhere... Not one state was spared acts of terrorism and bombings prepared by Bin Laden’s suicide bombers causing the death of thousands of innocent people in Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Yemen, Morocco and Somalia... Bin Laden’s fate is that of every murder and villain” (As-Safir, May 3, 2011).

◉ **Walid Jumblatt:** “The success of the United States to finally get rid of one of the most important symbols of a terrorist school that claimed fake Jihad to kill innocent people in America and the world is an important event that is expected to leave important political repercussions on more than one level” (Weekly stance in Al-Anba’ newspaper, May 2, 2011).

◉ **The Phalange Party:** “...The party supports the fight against terrorism in all its forms and considers that the operation against Osama Bin Laden falls within this framework...However, the absence of one individual does not mean that widespread terrorism has disappeared from the world especially from some countries in the Middle East and Asia...” (Press release of the Phalange Party headed by President Amine Gemayyel – Newspapers, May 4, 2011).

Stances denouncing and condemning

◉ **Sheikh Omar Bakri Fostoq:** “The sadness of Muslims over Bin Laden’s death comes from the fact that the US, along with other arrogant states, have been relieved from a fighter who, for decades, has been a source of worry and fear to them” (Newspapers, May 3, 2011).

◉ **Sheikh Ossama Bilal Shaaban:** “I feel deep sorrow for the assassination of Bin Laden. The Jihad’s resistance ideology is present across the one-billion nation and will not disappear until all the traitor regimes are uprooted” (Newspapers, May 3, 2011).

◉ **Al Jama’ah Al Islamiyah:** “The assassination of Bin Laden forms a new ethical low for the United States of America. Despite the fact that we do not hold the same stances as Bin Laden and Al-Qa’eda on the use of violence, we cannot accept what the United States did. They should have taken him to trial...” (Press prelease – Newspapers, May 4, 2011).

◉ **Sheikh Sobhi Tfeily:** “I consider Bin Laden a martyr and the burial of his body in the sea is a weakness from the United States of America.” (As-Safir, May 4, 2011)

◉ **Calls from independent Islamic and Salafi forces** in Trablous to perform “Salat Al-Gha’eb” (prayers) on Osama Bin Laden after the Friday prayers considering him a martyr. (Al-Tawhid Islamic Movement, Islamic Labor Front, Liqa’a Al-Oulama wa Al-Dou’aa, Salem Fathi Yakan, Omar Bakri, Mohammad Ali Danawi, Da’awat Al-Iman wa Al-Aadel).

BOOK PRODUCTION IN THE ARAB WORLD

The publishing industry in the Arab world faces a number of challenges impeding its development. Publishing companies often complain about the difficulty of international distribution due to censorship and failure to enforce copyright protection. This is also met with socio-economic factors such as illiteracy, lack of interest in reading and the high price of books.

Lack of up-to-date statistics and information on book production

The most recent and available statistic on book production in the Arab world comes from a 1991 UNESCO report that stated: “Arab countries’ output of books represents just 1.1% of the world’s total output.” This figure has been used by some politicians to explain the so-called ‘knowledge deficit’ currently permeating the Arab world. However, this figure has created a lot of controversy and overlooks a number of factors affecting the book production industry in the Arab world. To elaborate on the figures found in the 1991 UNESCO report, Table 1 shows the number of books produced in selected regions of the world in 1991 and Table 2 shows the amount of books produced in selected Arab countries in 1995.

Number of books produced in selected regions of the world in 1991

Table 1

Region	Number of Books Produced
North America	102,000
Latin America & The Caribbean	42,000
Middle East and North Africa	6,500

Source: UNESCO, 1991



Book Production in selected Arab Countries												Table 2
Country	Total	General	Philosophy	Religion	Social Sciences	Philology	Pure Sciences	Applied Sciences	Arts	Literature	Geography History	
Algeria	670 (1996)	39	21	112	96	34	71	157	30	77	33	
Bahrain	40 (1996)	6	-	-	7	-	-	1	-	14	12	
Egypt	2,215 (1995)	92	66	307	180	226	206	331	140	515	152	
Jordan	511 (1996)	25	8	60	122	16	39	45	21	116	59	
Kuwait	196 (1992)	17	5	17	18	-	102	6	15	13	3	
Morocco	918 (1996)	33	13	45	359	12	13	135	107	136	65	
Oman	7 (1996)	-	-	4	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	
Palestine	114 (1996)	3	2	8	47	3	12	21	-	10	8	
Qatar	209 (1996)	9	3	26	88	7	19	27	6	12	12	
Saudi Arabia	3,900 (1996)	209	154	1,042	620	250	404	363	128	421	309	
Syrian Arab Republic	598 (1992)	144	24	62	79	13	1	89	25	112	49	
UAE	293 (1993)	-	3	68	2	83	99	9	2	-	27	

Source: UNESCO

Egypt remains the largest book producer in the Arab world (excluding Saudi Arabia that mainly publishes religious books). On the other hand and contrary to UNESCO figures, the Arab Publishers' Union in Cairo estimates that there are approximately 1,000 publishing companies in the Arab countries bringing at least 20,000 titles to the market annually. Some other official documents state that the output of books in Egypt alone is over 7,000 titles per annum.

Despite the many shortcomings of the 2003 Arab Human Development Report (AHDR), it addressed the topic of book production, correctly pointing out that "there are no accurate statistics on the actual amount of book production in the Arab world." The report further explained that tracking the publication of books in Arabic is very difficult since many are published without registered numbers. The problem therefore starts with the fact that no comprehensive data is available in Arab countries.

Social Factors

Despite significant improvements in literacy over the years, one factor that hinders the growth of the book industry in the Arab world is the high illiteracy rates that still affect the region. The total population of Arab countries amounts to around 307 million and about 191 million are over 15 and assumed to be literate. However, with an average adult literacy rate of 66 % and youth (15-24) literacy rate of 76%, the Arabic book market and the number of potential readers are decreasing. In addition to this factor, people in the Arab world are simply not reading enough. For example, in 2003, Information International conducted an opinion poll, where 600 people in Lebanon

were surveyed about their reading habits. Roughly one third of the respondents said they did not read and almost half of them (49.3%) claimed this was due to lack of time. The majority who did read only did so from time to time and mostly read newspapers and magazines as opposed to books (see *The Monthly*, June 2003, Issue 12).

Another important factor is that books are too expensive when measured against the available income in the Arab world. People usually resort to photocopying, which has significantly affected the sale of books.

More importantly, censorship is one of the long-standing social and political difficulties that negates freedom of expression in the Arab world in general and cultural freedom in particular. Governments put far more effort into suppressing literary work than encouraging it and many writers complain that governments or religious institutions inhibit creativity and prevent books from moving freely into various Arab markets because of religious and/or national censorship. In fact, many authors have been imprisoned for political and social opinions expressed in their books, such as Egyptian novelist Sonallah Ibrahim. Compared to all the Arab countries, Lebanese censors are the most liberal, which is perhaps one of the reasons why Lebanon has become the leading printing center in the Arab world, while Egypt saw its activity decline.

Economic and Structural Factors

The lack of a publishing infrastructure and experts able to produce and market books has essentially hampered the establishment of an effective book industry. For example, many Arab publishing companies lack proper equipment and good quality paper, resulting in poor quality publications. Moreover, Arab publishing companies have come to resemble mere printing houses and booksellers.

The issue of translation also highlights many of the problems of the Arab publishing industry. The high costs of translation means authors resort to pirated translations that are often inaccurate and difficult to understand. In addition, local authors do not obtain royalties if their books are prevented from reaching Western markets, which has led some authors to write in languages other than Arabic to overcome this barrier.

According to the 2003 AHDR “the translation movement in the Arab world remains static and chaotic. On average, only 4.4 translated books per million people were published in the first five years of the 1980s (less than one book per million people per year), while the corresponding rate in Hungary was 519 books per one million people and in Spain 920 books.” The report further states that “the Arab world translates about 330 books annually, one fifth of the number that Greece translates... The cumulative total of translated books since the Caliph Ma’ moun’s [sic] time (the ninth century) is about 100,000, almost the average that Spain translates in one year.”

The topic of translation relates to the issue of copyright and intellectual property rights, which make translated books difficult to track and continue to hamper the development of the book industry in the Arab world. In view of this, when the AHDR claims that only 330 works are translated into Arabic each year, they are most likely quoting figures for books that acquired formal rights from a Western publisher. It is therefore not far fetched to assume that in fact a larger number of books are probably translated and published in Arabic, without having formally acquired the consent of the author or publisher. Moreover, because each Arab country has its own publishing industry, researchers encounter problems in trying to count the number of foreign works translated into Arabic. When it comes to publishing houses and copyright, many publishing companies print more copies of the book without informing the author, as do other people not authorized to print these books.

Other economic factors that affect the book industry in the Arab world are: the chronic currency difficulties that make intra-regional book trading difficult, import licenses, quota systems, foreign exchange restrictions and import duties that are sometimes imposed on books.

Another problem is the lack of libraries. In the West, they account for as much as 70% of a book’s total sale revenue. There are some public libraries in the Gulf, but few elsewhere. Lebanon’s libraries closed at the beginning of the civil war.

The accumulation of all these problems have compelled Arab countries to import more foreign books and even read in foreign languages. For example, books from Europe and North America account for two thirds of Egyptian imports in terms of value. According to a background note for the Frankfurt book fair, Arab countries import about


USD 40 million worth of books and magazines every year and most of these are textbooks and reference books.

Due to the structural weaknesses of publishing companies in the Arab world, book fairs are the most important means of selling and exposing books in the Arab region. In 2009, UNESCO nominated Beirut as the World Book Capital City, with the main objective of strengthening the book industry in Lebanon.

Types of Books and Some Best sellers

The 2003 AHDR also stated that “there are no accurate statistics on the types of books preferred by Arab readers but according to many publishers and observers, the bestsellers at the Cairo International Book Fair are religious books, followed by books categorised as educational.” The report further stated that “religious books account for 17% of the total number of books published in Arab countries, compared to 5% of the total number of books produced in other parts of the world.” This was confirmed by the survey conducted by Information International referred to above, where the majority of respondents said they mainly read books of a religious nature.

Print runs of books are usually low in the Arab world, ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 for the average novel. A book that sells 3,000 to 5,000 copies is considered a best seller. Many of the best sellers in the Arab world are usually supported by governments and religious institutions, and most are religious in nature and not critical of the government. For example, a book by Aaidh Ibn Abdullah Al-Qarni entitled “Don’t be Sad” gives practical advice on how to replace sadness with a pragmatic and ultimately satisfying Islamic outlook on life. This book sold over 50,000 copies around the Arab world. Other popular publications among the Arab public are those on horoscopes, the most popular being Maggie Farah’s horoscope book that sells over 30, 000 copies annually.

On the other hand, Arab books that become best sellers in the West are usually those that reaffirm Arab stereotypes such as Alaa Al-Aswany’s “The Yacoubian Building”, which sold out within four weeks and became the Arab world’s No. 1 bestseller for five successive years, selling more than 250,000 copies in the region. Rajaa Alsanea’s “Girls of Riyadh” also became a best seller and was translated into 23 languages. Books that are censored in the Arab world sometimes become best sellers abroad such as “Adama”, the 1998 novel by the Saudi writer Turki Al-Hamad (an eye-opening tale of sedition, sex and alcohol in the conservative Kingdom). The latter received four religious fatwas and became a bestseller within a month (Table 3). Regardless of how many books are actually published in the Arab world, the more pertinent question is how many of them are actually worth reading? 

“Religious books account for 17% of the total number of books published in Arab countries, compared to 5% of the total number of books produced in other parts of the world.”

Arabic best selling novels

Table 3

Best Selling Books	Author
The Yacoubian Building	Alaa Al-Aswany
Chicago	Alaa Al-Aswany
Taxi	Khalid Al Khamisi
Girls of Riyadh	Rajaa Al Sanea
Azazeel	Youssef Ziedan
Adama	Turki Al-Hamad

Source: Various

SYNDICATE OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND ITS DERIVATIVES IN BEIRUT AND MOUNT LEBANON

The Association of Construction Workers was established in 1937 and was re-established under the name of Syndicate of Construction Workers and its Derivatives in Beirut and Mount Lebanon in 1947 by virtue of Decision No. 3934 of the Minister of National Economy and Social Affairs. One of its objectives consisted of protecting the interests of construction workers and all workers in general as well as representing them internally and externally and defending the Syndicate's and the public's rights.

Along with 11 other syndicates, the Syndicate of Construction Workers forms the "Construction Workers' Union" that includes around 36 members, which means 3 members from each syndicate. Its Executive Council consists of 12 members, which means 1 member from each syndicate although a syndicate may have two members in the Executive Council. Moreover, the Union has 2 members in the Executive Council of the General Labor Union. Thus, this is not the only syndicate for these professions. As has occurred with syndicates in other sectors, the Union is part of a wider regional conglomeration of unions that includes a number of illusory syndicates such as the Jabal Amel Syndicate, the Loyalty to the Resistance Syndicate and others. However, the Union boycotts the works of the General Labor Union for reasons related to its demands rather than political ones.

Among the objectives of the Syndicate of Construction Workers and its agenda for this year, we mention:

- ⊙ Participation in the National Social Security Fund
- ⊙ Implementation of the general safety law
- ⊙ Organization of syndicate training sessions

Affiliation to the Syndicate

Whoever wishes to join the Syndicate should be Lebanese, enjoy his/her civil rights, be at least 21 years of age, involved in the construction profession or its derivatives and not be convicted of a disgraceful felony or misdemeanor. The membership fee amounts to LBP 6,000 and the monthly subscription fee is LBP 2,000. These funds are used to pay office fees and the salaries of three full-time employees who conduct the Syndicate's work.

The Syndicate's organization

The Syndicate consists of a General Assembly, an Executive Committee and a Delegates' Council.

The General Assembly includes more than 3,500 registered members.

The Executive Committee includes 12 members elected by the General Assembly for the first time every four years, and then, six members are elected every two years by ballot. This committee includes: a president, a vice-president, a secretary and a treasurer. The Executive Committee manages the Syndicate's affairs and plays the role of negotiator with the employers. Sometimes, the Syndicate resorts to a lawyer, who is paid a nominal fee, to file a claim against some employers for not paying salaries to their employees.

The Delegates' Council is composed of 44 members designated by the General Assembly, the Syndicate's activists and the Committees. This Council plays a legislative role for the General Assembly and approves the work of the Executive Committee during the year and prior to the elections. It also has a planning role with regards to the Executive Committee.


The Syndicate's activities

- ⊙ The Council of the National Social Security Fund adopted a decision on the inclusion of social security benefits for daily and seasonal laborers as well as those working in the agricultural and construction fields. However, work is currently being undertaken for the Council of Ministers to issue a decree to implement this decision, bearing in mind that the construction worker's income is a relatively good one, thus benefiting the National Social Security Fund in terms of revenue.
- ⊙ Concluding agreements with some clinics, doctors, pharmacies and hospitals to provide discounts to workers in this sector. The Syndicate also provides some social assistance within its means to workers who face difficult living conditions.
- ⊙ Organizing professional sessions for the workers within its capacities.

Problems faced by the Syndicate

Among the main problems faced by the Syndicate, we mention:

- ⊙ Non-implementation of the law that is still depriving workers in the construction sector and its derivatives of social security.
- ⊙ Arbitrary dismissal of workers and the absence of a law to protect them.
- ⊙ Inability of the Ministry of Labor to protect workers in this sector due to political interference and nepotism in the Ministry's work.
- ⊙ Lack of effective and rapid consideration of cases before boards of arbitration. Thus, the Syndicate is working with the Ministry to activate the role of these boards.
- ⊙ The problem of foreign workers and their large number. Although the construction sector in Lebanon is in urgent need of foreign labor, their illegal presence and the way they enter Lebanon cause a problem in itself. In this sector, there are two types of workers:
 - ⊙ Professional workers, the majority of whom are Lebanese
 - ⊙ Laborers, the majority of whom are Syrian, Palestinian, Kurdish and Egyptian. Most of them do not have a residence or work permit, which deprives the National Social Security Fund from collecting their subscription fees, despite the obligation to declare them to the Fund but without them receiving services in return.
- ⊙ Lebanese labor migration.

The current situation can only be amended once labor laws are properly implemented, especially with regards to workers' rights, duties and equality before the law. 



Construction site in downtown Beirut
Photo by: Mohamed Mashlab 2011

SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN LEBANON

CLASSES ORANGES

Objective

It is an educational non-curricular school for children suffering from learning difficulties that aims to ensure their reintegration into schools and the community or prepare them for professional life. Classes Oranges is specialized in addressing writing and oral expression difficulties that are due to nervous or neuropsychological reasons. It also ensures basic education to those who suffer from a simple mental retardation or psychological or behavioral disorder that does not require placement in a specialized institution.

Establishment

The school was established in 1997 by a group of specialists in children with learning difficulties. It obtained a license in 2002 under the title of “non-curricular school for strengthening in some courses and languages” due to the absence of any law or regulation within the Ministry of Education in this field.

The school’s idea dates back to the Lebanese civil war where it was impossible for a great number of children to go to school due to the security situation and their parents’ economic condition. Dar Al Tifl Al Loubnani (Institute of Lebanese Child) was one of the many associations concerned with the situation of these children among a group of specialists and volunteers. Thus, it offered educational assistance and a program to help students with their home work.

A very intelligent child who suffered from many important learning difficulties stood out. This kind of difficulty (dyslexia, difficulty to learn to read and write) was not known at that time. After noticing a great number of similar cases, the education officer, Ms. Eliane Zarifa, suggested to the administrative committee of Dar Al Tifl a program for “rehabilitation and educational preparation”.

The first class was launched in the Haddad School in Sin El Fil in 1987. In 1990, the program was developed to include different cases of learning difficulties such as:

- ⦿ Difficulties in basic neuropsychological functions (memory, attention, logical thinking and organization of space and time)
- ⦿ Neurological problems (epilepsy and loss of speech after a brain injury)
- ⦿ Behavioral disorders (emotional, hyperactive and autistic children)
- ⦿ Difficulties in writing (dysphasia)

With the increase in requests, the number of beneficiaries reached 74 pupils in 1996 distributed among 9 classes in 3 schools. With the transfer of Ms. Eliane Zarifa to the private sector in 1997, she established, along with her colleagues (specialized teachers and speech and language pathology specialists), the Classes Oranges School for children with learning difficulties in the town of Bsalim-Metn.



Children in the playground

Structure and staff

The school staff consists of 22 specialists including professionals specialized in education, rehabilitation and assisting children suffering from behavioral disorders or simple retardation. The team is divided according to the following:

- ⦿ Specialized educators directly taking care of students
- ⦿ Speech therapists
- ⦿ Psychomotor and sensory integration therapy specialists
- ⦿ Psychologists
- ⦿ Education officers
- ⦿ A principal responsible for coordinating the relationship between parents and specialists (neurologists, child psychologists and therapists)
- ⦿ Animators (handicrafts, music and miming)
- ⦿ Graduates in speech therapy, psychomotor therapy and special education.

Curriculum, education and activities

Classes Oranges School offers a program similar to the official educational curriculum and the teaching includes kindergarten and primary education. Moreover, the school teaches both Arabic and French.

In addition to the educational courses, the weekly program includes sessions of rehabilitation in speech therapy, psychomotor therapy, as well as sessions of psycho-educational follow-up conducted by a team composed of a specialized teacher, a speech therapist, a psychomotor therapy specialist and a psychologist.

In order for the student to be able to socially integrate and live within the community, Classes Oranges School offers trips, sports, entertainment and cultural activities as well as teaching students the school's moral values and social skills (giving, participating, receiving, communicating and sharing, criticizing newspapers and internal events, civil education and parties).

Criteria for selection

Classes Oranges School accepts children in the kindergarten and primary level of education, both male and female, between the ages of 3 and 12 suffering from one or more of the following difficulties:

- ⦿ Difficulties in writing or oral expression (dyslexia/dysphasia)
- ⦿ Difficulties in basic neuropsychological functions (memory, attention, logical thinking and organization of space and time)
- ⦿ Neurological problems (epilepsy and loss of speech after a brain injury)
- ⦿ Behavioral disorders (emotional, hyperactive and autistic children)

Number of students and their distribution according to their age and educational level

The school currently includes 73 students. In fact, this is a large number given the amount of care and follow-up required by students with special needs. The students are divided according to their ages as follows:

Age	Proportion of students
3-5	32%
6-8	23%
9-11	21%
12-15	24%

The following table lists the distribution of students by educational levels:

Educational level	Proportion of students
Specialized nursery	6%
Kindergarten	51%
Primary	29%
Practical training classes	14%



Student in Classes Orange



MOVEMENT DISORDERS

Dr. Hanna Saadah

The Shakes' are common, cumbersome, life-altering, and at times life-threatening. Diagnosing them is important and can usually be made by simple observation without the need for tests or formal examinations. They are mainly caused by degenerations of the Basal Ganglia, the parts of our brains that are responsible for the grace and music of motion and without which we would move like robots. The primary Basal Ganglia hormone is Dopamine and medicines that enhance Dopamine help most of these disorders. The following six types are important because they are common.

Familial Essential Tremor slowly grows on us as we age and is the most common. It is an inherited, fine action tremor, which means that our hands shake when they are trying to perform fine motor skills such as writing, holding a fork, threading a needle, or buttoning a shirt but not when we are waving our arms, driving, or shaking hands. The tremor, which may also cause the head to shake and the voice to rattle, disappears when we are at rest i.e. not moving or not sustaining a certain position or while sleeping. The condition advances very slowly as we get older but seldom leads to important disability. It responds to medications that block the effects of Adrenaline such as Beta Blockers or to medicines that diminish Adrenaline such as Barbiturates, but treatments do not halt disease progression and often lose their effects as the disease worsens.

Parkinson's Disease is a more devastating movement disorder where the tremor is only part of the syndrome. This disease attacks the elderly and its tremor, unlike the Familial Essential Tremor, is a resting tremor that gets better with motion. Initially, the hands tend to shake only when they sit in our laps but later they begin to shake even with motion. All motions are slowed and become uncertain with time. The faces lose their expressiveness, the gaits become stooped, and walking occurs with smaller steps. Progression hastens over a few years, rendering the patient stiff, drooling, immobile, and demented. Treatment is effective during the initial years but becomes less and less effective as the Dopamine cells of the Basal Ganglia die out. Medicines that replenish Basal Ganglia Dopamine are the main treatments. The disease shortens life and ruins its quality. It totally disappears during sleep.

Restless Leg Syndrome is a more benign disorder that begins at a younger age, may slowly progress with time, but seldom leads to severe disability. When one tries to rest or sleep, one is seized with an overwhelming urge to move the legs. Kicking and walking appease that urge but not for long; the urge returns over and over making it harder and harder to fall asleep. Once one falls asleep, however, the urge to move disappears only to return when one wakes up. Luckily, the disorder responds well to many treatments and seldom progresses beyond medical

control. However, when it does progress, it may involve the entire body and become resistant to all treatments leading to sleep deprivation with attendant exhaustion, depression, and despair.

Periodic Leg Movements of Sleep—in contrast to the Restless Leg Syndrome, which is only felt when one is awake—is not felt because it only occurs during sleep. It can affect all ages and one may never know that one has it unless one undergoes a sleep study. Its symptoms derive from poor quality sleep because, by frequently moving the legs, one does not reach the deeper, restitutive layers of sleep. This causes excessive morning fatigue and excessive daytime sleepiness. One wakes up feeling that one has not had enough sleep, yawns often, and catnaps whenever situations allow. Once diagnosed, it is treatable with medicines that enhance Dopamine and some others that promote deeper sleep. The two conditions, Restless Leg Syndrome and Periodic Leg Movements of Sleep frequently coexist and are made worse by low iron levels.

Facial Tics present with repetitive, uncontrolled spasms of the face muscles that control the eyelids, mouth, and expressions. They can affect any age, increase with stress, and disappear with sleep. Treatments are numerous but Botox is by far the most effective. Repeated injections every few months can keep the disorder under control.

Spasmodic Torticollis involves spasms of the neck muscles mainly, which cause the head to point up and out. It may affect any age, disappears during sleep, and is also best treated with Botox.

Other movement disorders are not common enough to dwell upon. But, as a rule, most of them have to do with diseases of Dopamine transmission and Basal Ganglia degeneration. They tend to disappear during sleep and reappear during wakefulness, are usually progressive and life altering, and their treatments provide less and less relief with time. ●●



BUDDHISTS, YOGIS AND THE TRIBE OF COGNITIVE AND BRAIN SCIENTISTS

Over coffee or over green tea, they all agree that the mind is the root of all things (Part I)

Dr. Samar Zebian & Aaed Ghanem¹ (guest columnist)

I (Samar) remember an incident years ago when I was at the computer doing something that was less than uplifting (data entry). In between re-coding and rechecking the data for the umpteenth time, I got sidetracked thinking about what might count as a genuine incommensurability—an enduring or permanent incompatibility between two entities/persons. In the midst of this, an email interceded. The subject line read, “14th Dalai Lama to keynote for the Neuroscience Society”. The nonsense about the permanent incommensurability between science and religion, which I really didn’t believe to begin with, faded instantaneously. Well of course!!!!, the Dalai Lama and his followers need to know what is going on inside the brain. It is a no brainer! In this three part series, Aaed and I wish to provide some basic knowledge about meditation and why mind & brain scientists are studying this ancient practice. In the second article, to be published next month, we explore the research on meditation and what has been discovered about consciousness, brain enhancement and well-being. The final article examines the controversial possibility of using technology to induce mediation-like mental states.

The history of meditation dates back 5,000 years. The oldest documented technique is The Glorious Light Meditation discovered by Dr. Muata Ashby on the walls of the Tomb of Seti in Egypt. Another indigenous form is Sufi meditation and its pillars are Muraqaba and Shahood (to keep an eye, observe and witness). India, however, remains the motherland of meditation and is a major force in its global propagation.

The word “mediation” is used to refer to a remarkably wide range of contemplative practices (e.g. Sufi Zikr, Tibetan tantric practices or ritual dances). For the purposes of this article we focus on the main pillars of Buddhist contemplative practices because these have been studied by mind researchers.

In the Buddhist tradition meditation is a highly evolved technique to alleviate suffering and support enlightenment. In its most basic form, it involves 4 main practices: mindfulness, mantra, yoga and breath control (pranayama). Mindfulness is both a state

of attentiveness/awareness and a state of interconnectedness to a higher purpose or being. Mantra is a subtle sound vibration commonly repeated as a poetic hymn during meditation. Yoga involves exercises and postures which cleanse the body and facilitate inward reflection. Breathing techniques are used to modulate attention and influence energy flow.

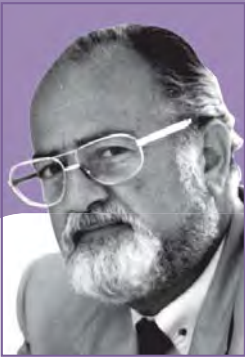
According to Aaed meditators remain peaceful (at least most of the time) even in difficult situations. Meditation also seems to support the initiation of new endeavors and the successful completion of old ones by clearing the mind, reducing stress, supporting creativity and alleviating physical ailments. For Aaed, meditation is an ornament of life that illuminates its beauty. This may sound poetic and optimistic, but meditators experience these tangible psychological states as they explore the vastness of the human mind and its relation to the body and world.

The Dalai Lama’s regard for science has been a major impetus for brain and psychological research on meditation and positive emotion. His neuroscience conference keynote was just one in a series of exchanges/meetings between Buddhist monks and brain scientists which began more than a decade ago. Additionally, the Dalai Lama published a book with Paul Ekman, the modern father of research on facial emotional expression.² More recently, the 14th Buddhist priest donated unsolicited personal funds to research centers that examine the brain basis of positive emotions. His interest in science seems genuine and decidedly utilitarian. He is on record stating his willingness to shatter religious teachings in the name of verifiable facts. How many religious leaders do you know that “talk the talk” and then “walk the walk”? I (Samar) find the Dalai Lama’s position very bold, very courageous. He must have some take on how scientific and Buddhist worldviews can inform each other in the “science-IS-religion” age.

On the surface Buddhist brain perspectives involve some eyebrow-raising formulations. For example, when the Dalai Lama speaks of a “luminous consciousness” that transcends death but may not have brain correlates, the tribes of neuro and cognitive scientists get a bit uneasy. When meditators claim they can literally shut off the brain. Isn’t that dangerous! Also, take for example the state of ‘samatha where the advanced meditator claims to mentally focus on only one thought for a theoretically unlimited period of time. According to mind scientists, this should be impossible. As outside observers, it is amazing to see that such a productive and mutually reciprocal exchange has endured. Next month we consider what discoveries have ensued. 🍷

² - Dalai Lama & Ekman, P. (2008). Emotional awareness. New York: Henry Holt.

¹ - Aaed has been practicing yoga and meditation 14 years and teaching for five. He has received training and guidance from Swamis in Sivananda Ashram, Kerala, India. He espouses the Sivananda motto: “Health is wealth, Peace of mind is Happiness, Yoga and Meditation show the way”.



REVIVING THE LIFE SAVING CODE

Antoine Boutros

Ninety-five million years ago, two flies were flying above the surface of a wide lake that later became the American State of New Jersey. They landed on the trunk of a tree most probably to rest or eat. Unfortunately, the tree's bark was full of fissures out of which sap was flowing, making its trunk a deadly trap to each insect unfortunately landing in that place.

Gradually, the sap flowed over the flies and covered them until it formed a transparent wall that completely isolated them from the outside world and soon solidified. Although the tree eroded over time, the fossilized sap has resisted the forces of nature and transformed over time to a yellow transparent semi-precious stone known as amber.

These two flies came to light again following the work of paleontologists and an exciting idea came to their minds: the idea of bringing them to life again.

Bacteria inside the two flies may still be intact though solid and chemically active. Remnants of their last meal, perhaps containing traces of the blood and skin of a dinosaur who was the lord of the land millions of years ago in the Jurassic period, may appear. This may provide scientists with the internal remains of this animal and specially DNA Cells belonging to dinosaurs, which can be extracted from the bowels of these two flies, may be a cornerstone in the process of reviving the complete dinosaur. What is required is to obtain the code, which contains all the information concerning the cell's transformation from a micro-organism to a complete organism with various functions, body parts and specifications. Fortunately, this code and information are stored within each cell, which makes the inside of every individual similar to a complex computer data base.

Living beings especially humans are the most complex information processing system. Whether conscious (like language and communication) or unconscious (hormonal systems), human activity amounts to processing up to 1024 bits per day. This staggeringly large figure exceeds, by a million times, the sum of all human knowledge accumulated during the evolution of human civilizations that lasted thousands of years.

The penetration of scientists into the depths of life led them to an important discovery: the laws of life and growth that seemed mysterious and incomprehensible are based on a mechanism founded on clear, well-defined and carefully gathered information and instructions. These instructions are inside each living cell and act as an action program dictating the work of each cell while at the same time ensuring the dissemination of these instructions in the offspring and dictating an individual's life in terms of health and development, disease and aging, the beginning and end. Perhaps the most important progress made in biology in the twentieth century was the discovery of the Genome, the human genetic code. Furthermore, some scientists, like Richard Dawkins, believe that all forms of life are in fact nothing but containers whose first and foremost goal is to secure the transmission of the DNA molecule that carries the secret of life, one generation after the other, and from century to century... until the end, therefore making the information not just a new capital or complementary resource to the natural one, but much more: a cornerstone of existence along with material and energy.

In March 1982, an exciting scientific discovery was made by two specialists in insects in Berkeley in the United States, Georges Poinar and Roberta Hess, who were studying insects preserved in amber using an electron microscope. They discovered cell elements stored in the amber such as the nucleus, ribosomes (centers for protein synthesis in the cell) and chromosomes.

The importance of this discovery is that the cell nucleus is not only a center of business and management control of all vital events in the cell, but also the key to heredity. Therefore, they store the genetic material and instructions, i.e. all information and programs needed to build a new organism as a whole.

A final word as to the importance of information in human evolution: Dawkins says that the DNA has an aim in life which is continuity, the continuity and transition from one generation to another. To ensure its survival, the DNA may move from humans as a container to another suitable container, in order to ensure its well being and evolution. The celebrated scientist Maynard Smith believes that DNA works within the framework of the so-called "evolutionary stable strategy."

The Monthly interviews

HADY BEYDOUN

In today's fast society, art starts to grow in several professions, sometimes taking controversial functions and forms. One of these controversies would be the world of Tattoo, that remains prone to both avid appreciation and social rejection. The Monthly interviews Hady Beydoun, tattoo artist, in an inquiry about his career.

How did your career start?

It all started when I was about 13 years old. I had this urge to stand out from my schoolmates. I identified with rock music while everybody was into FM music, and delved into its lyrics and its magazines such as “metal hammer” and “smash hits”. I was inspired by how rock stars look, so I adopted their clothing style from torn jeans to colorful T-shirts, which brought me the attention I was seeking, and that was rewarding.

During the Lebanese War, I visited a store that sold Bon Jovi T-shirts and I really wanted to buy one of them although they were quite expensive at that time. Unable to afford it, my mother offered me paint and some brushes instead so I could paint my own T-shirt. Since it was this offer or the highway, I reluctantly accepted and made my own first shirt. For the next three years, I painted more T-shirts for friends and friends of friends. The circle grew larger, so one of my “customers” had brought me a tattoo design magazine that I looked into. I was intrigued and thrilled by the idea of painting under the skin, because mistakes are not allowed.

I spent a whole year researching tattoos and I built a good background on the practice. I also built my visual education majoring in Graphic Design at the American University of Beirut. During my studentship, I traveled to London, purchased the tattoo equipment and started my tattoo experience in Lebanon. Tattooing was easy for me. I knew how to use my colors, highlights, shades and practiced rigorously.

I was painting since I was 14. I have been working in tattoos since 1995 and I have worked with airbrushing since 2002. Airbrushing to me is the magic tool, I could use it on a barrel, a motorcycle, a can, a wall, leather, anything. So this sums up my career.

What is a tattoo and why do people get it?

A tattoo is a visual representing a statement. It is nothing like a sticker, although sometimes I am forced to treat it as such upon the customer's request. It is a visual that follows the curves of the body so that when the body changes, the tattoo follows its course.

When it comes to its personal significance, the tattoo is similar to a person's selection of his/her style of clothes, jewelry or



car. It adds to the amount of things - some deliberate, some spontaneous- that say something about this individual. This method of expression can be specific when it comes to the term, design or statement that you select to paint on your skin. For example, some people choose to get a cartoon character as a tattoo, some choose a butterfly, others choose a laughing face, etc.

How do you describe your profession today?

A tattoo is a universal language at the end of the day just like a picture is a universal language. Each visual gives away an impression that reaches its viewer, regardless of age and culture. Of course, I realize that there are people who frown upon tattooing just like there are others who appreciate it.

As a practice, tattooing has a certain edge to me. Its thrill never changes. The danger of making a mistake remains intact despite how many times I paint. In the tattoo world, they say that “you are as good as your last tattoo”, which is why I face the challenge of giving my 100% every time.

On the other hand, every tattoo I paint on someone is like my signature or my business card. I can't afford to make it look any less than perfect.

Who are your clients?

Anybody who has something to say, from any age and any social class. I receive 16 year olds just like I receive 60 year olds. Today is different from the 80's when tattooed people were marginalized by society. With the era of development, technology and media, we can now rely on visuals for our daily communication.



Uncle Smith, a character designed by Hady Beydoun

Do you have taboo subjects?

Yes, of course. I do not go into politics in tattooing, in painting, or in design. I do not believe that art, an expression of freedom and truth can mix with politics, which revolves around hiding the truth and manipulating it.

I also do not address negative and spiteful statements towards religion.

In addition to tattooing, you also have a career in technical painting, brushing, sculpting, etc. Can you tell us about your other artistic endeavors?

It seems that I have a lot to say and a lot of questions. I use my art as a way to identify with my present state and answer questions. The variety of these endeavors is also a continuous challenge I find most exciting to take on, when the motive presents itself. For example, coming face to face with many ideas I took for granted made me question the existence of God, the mortality of those I cherish and of my own body, my perception of women, and even the way I perceived myself. When I couldn't answer these questions I made these can sculptures that expressed the way I felt, crumpled and empty, but still bearing a message of hope. I tried to depict the woman's body and its aesthetic difficulties, and also tried technical painting and expanded my airbrushing abilities.



Don't give up can airbrushed wood sculpture

Have you done any commissioned paintings?

Yes, I have done several paintings for restaurants such as Crepaway, Dunkin Doughnuts, Little Italy, Atlantis, and others. I have also been asked to paint house interiors. I have done a lot of advertising work for William Lawson's, Halls, and others.

Can you tell us about the characters you have created?

I served in the Army in 1999, and I was living 24/7 with the type of people I never run into in my life. To

Tattoos have become more accepted and are now judged by their quality not by their mere existence. They are now recognized as a form of art so people can differentiate between a good tattoo and a bad one.

me, training, sharing meals and living day in and day out in the same hangar with 300 other people was an entirely new experience. It made me realize that they have a completely different skin. I was inspired by their physical appearance, their behavior and perception, so I took a drawing pad with me and started sketching their appearances. I selected a few of them according to their difference of perception and placed them in a parallel world, each holding a strong trait and tried to imagine the conversation that they would have if they were in the same room. To me, the significance of this project was a way to seek an absolute definition of certain topics, such as happiness. The conversation that these characters would have is the series of questions that I would think of concerning this topic. When these questions are asked through their voice instead of mine, they gain a certain level of objectivity and render a different perspective from my own.

Do you ever think all the happiness you find in your profession might subside, forcing you to drop everything you have built?

You can never really predict what you may decide to do. Although I had always dreamt of being a musician, today my main day-to-day work is tattooing, which is actually very time-consuming. I sometimes find that the world we are living in has reached a point where our most perfect reality is shaped by the Western media. Everybody dreams of being a rock star a movie star, or a millionaire but not many of these people will turn out to be that, and so many do not find happiness.

Quoting the Bible: "What good does it do a man if he gains the world and loses himself?" Sometimes, this continuous strive to find such fake happiness tires me and I refer to my trip to countries of the East. Entering Nepal or India is penetrating a world that hasn't bought into what the West has sold us as "happiness". People are fulfilled and happy even if they have no wealth and fame and they just accept each other and merge into a harmonious picture of peace. If one day I can leave all the achievements I created and all the competition in this part of the world for a more harmonious world like Nepal, it would be a most beautiful day to me.



POPULAR CULTURE

Choking with every bite

There lived in my village a wise man called “Abu Youssef” and his words lived with the people for a long time after his death. They still quote them in all occasions.

In one of the public meetings, Abu Youssef volunteered some advice to a young man who was said to be visiting a suspicious woman. He told him “The curse of God on this woman... a suspicious woman is like garlic: it tastes good but smells bad.”

In his talk about women, he said: “We think that all women are better than our wives. But the truth is, all women are alike! They are like quince: a choke with every bite.”

If he found that people agreed to what he was saying about women, he would continue: “A woman, dear brothers, is just like what Sheikh Bou Ali Masoud said, bear her troubles... or bear without her.”

I heard him say once: “God help us from an aggressive woman... an apostate... who whispers to the pillow.”

I said: “Aggressive... we understand, an apostate... may God keep far, but who is the one who whispers to the pillow?” He said: “The one that doesn’t sleep and doesn’t let her husband sleep!”

You went off my mind

Mhanna is a coffee maker. He doesn’t care about compliments and doesn’t have time to chat and exchange compliments.

I once asked him for a cup of coffee. He went to get it and never came. An hour later, I saw him holding a cup of coffee for my colleague in a room next door so I called him: “Where is my coffee Mhanna? Did you forget me?”

He scratched his forehead and said: “No, I didn’t forget you, but you went off my mind.”



MYTH: Palestine was a land without people

FACT: Palestine was already populated

«A land without a people for a people without a land» is one of the slogans that Zionists repeatedly used to justify the establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Palestine. It constituted a major Israeli means of propaganda, which they tried to advertise and use against the Jews who supported the rights of indigenous Palestinian people.

From the early beginnings, Zionists referred to the land of Palestine as “our land or our country”. They ignored the fact that it was already inhabited by others. They looked at it as a deserted, non-cultivated wilderness that anyone could come and settle into and buy.

Thus, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) was established in 1901 to ensure the purchase of lands from their owners. They worked hard to obtain the Balfour Declaration (on the eve of which Jews represented 8% of the population owning 2% of the land) and put all their efforts and plans into confiscating the lands of Arab Palestinians.

In a letter to his son in 1937, Ben-Gurion wrote: “We must expel Arabs and take their place.” This statement clearly contradicts what they used to say that “Palestine is a land without nation.” Thus, to achieve their dream of an “Israeli homeland”, they had to resort to compulsory transfer and ethnic cleansing as well as terrorist acts to expel the inhabitants. The General Assembly of the UN voted a resolution on November 29, 1947, which partitioned Palestine into two states, a Palestinian state with 45% of the land and a Jewish state with 54% of the land, while the number of Palestinians was 2.1 million and the number of Jews only amounted to 650,000 most of who came to Palestine during the mandate period under British protection. Furthermore, the Jews merely owned 5.66% of the area of Palestine but following the Arab Israeli war the state of Israel controlled 77.4% of Palestine’s land.

According to Israeli historian Benny Morris: “from the start, the Zionists wished to make the area of Palestine a Jewish state, but unfortunately the country already contained a native Arab population, so the obvious most logical solution was moving or transferring all or most of the Arabs out of its prospective territory.”

In his book *Israeli Apartheid*, Ben White writes: “The vast majority of the Zionists’ leadership was prepared for the forced transfer they knew was necessary for the old propaganda slogan of a land without people to become a darkly self-fulfilling prophecy.”

Thus, the Israelis did not deny the reality that the land of Palestine was already inhabited by a nation and was the home of one of the oldest human civilizations. Rather, they chose to disregard the Palestinians and refused to admit that they already existed in the land.

The situation after Oslo

In September 1993, the Oslo agreement was signed and granted autonomous rule to Gaza and Areeha, the total area of which amounted to 423 km² or 1.5% of Palestine’s area. The Palestinian Authority also rules 27% of the West Bank or 1,582 km². Thus, the total area of land controlled by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas merely amounts to 7.3% of Palestine’s total area (27,500 km²), while according to the Oslo agreement the Palestinian Authority was to receive 22% of the land.

Sources:

Atlas of Palestine 1948, Salman H. Abu-Sitta. (2004), page: 11.

Quotes are taken from Ben White’s book, *The Israeli Apartheid: A Beginner’s Guide* (2009).

SIX DAYS BY HALIM BARAKAT

Six Days is a novel by Halim Barakat, published in its first edition in Arabic by the Poetry Magazine Publishing House in 1961 and translated into English by Bassam Frangieh and Scott McGehee in 1990. He wrote the Arabic version of the book six years prior to the 6 day war, which would occur in June 1967, in which he predicted the Arab defeat and was fully aware that they would face a major challenge they would be unable to withstand.

The author portrays the Arab community through an imaginative city he calls Dayr Albahr (Sea City), besieged by the enemy and threatened with “death or surrender”, and addresses a scathing critique to the impotent society. It is the story of a hero, Suhail, who spent his life traveling until he got bored and returned to his hometown, where he sought stability as a way to overcome his boredom. The city is like a “mosaic” and its people are under the yoke of “fear, ignorance, poverty, conflict, chaos and avidity.” Contradiction in it is apparent as you can find a woman who wears pants standing by a veiled woman wearing a thick black cloak. Each one of them ignores the other.

Through his hero Suhail, Halim Barakat criticizes the methods of struggle. The hero does not stop wondering about the ways to confront the enemy, he is always confused about the extent of Dayr Albahr’s capacity to struggle: is it really the land of resistance where “the inhabitants grew up with risks, got used to them and liked them to the extent that it became difficult for them to separate their presence from them” or are they only “traders, ignorant, primitives and slaves?” Suhail considers them people hiding from sunlight who prefer darkness to light. He cannot imagine them victorious: “I wonder if they will stand firm until the day of battle. What will they die for? Their only concern is to live, to reproduce and to subsist. (...) Enemies, from the bottom of their hearts, are eager to occupy this country.” Against this background of confusion and questioning of existence, we find another hero, Farid, an honest fighter and Suhail’s childhood friend, refusing the bitter reality that “Dayr Albahr is rootless (...)” But he was also a victim, he believed in victory and trusted his friend Abdel Jalil, who reported them to the enemy and fled with the money they had collected to buy arms from the sister state.

This novel raises the problem of Arabs, which started a long time ago: “You disagree over trivial things. You worship idols. A generation that eats, drinks, plays

backgammon, whose men sleep with their wives in the afternoon while the enemy prepares plots.” This is how the people of Egypt prepared themselves against Napoleon’s campaign in 1798 and this is how the Sykes-Picot agreement divided the Fertile Crescent in 1916 between Syria and Britain, while the Arabs didn’t say a word.

This was the absurd situation experienced by Suhail, who found salvation in the defeat of the internal enemy before the enemy lying on the hills.

Halim Barakat also describes the woman’s situation in the Arab community saying: “a woman runs away from her body. He remembered the woman who was sitting on the stairs of Farid’s house, when she saw him she covered her face and rushed inside. She was about to fall. Why is she running away from her body?”

Another topic he discusses is the sectarian and religious division corroding the Arab community in addition to criticizing the consecration of people. This is why Suhail refuses to belong to a society that imposes used templates upon him: “(...)I do not allow anyone to impose his beliefs on me. Is it not our right to choose our destiny? This is our life. We live it. Why should I subject to anything and to anyone? Especially not to a group I consider the outcome of decayed history?”

At times, Suhail sees the idea of the challenge as interesting. Other times, he thinks that this challenge will bear good news: “We must challenge death. Desperately challenge it. This generation is silly but the previous one worshiped Adonis. It didn’t worship him for his beauty. It worshiped the death in him to see the spring flourish.” But he comes back to his misery and boredom because “his country’s streets are full of rotteness and idols, faces are smiling with emptiness, paunchy, their heads full of superstition and delusions (...)” It is the end that reflects the true tragedy and absurdity experienced by the Arabs, since the hero is under the whips of torture and his lands fall in the hands of enemies: “there is no hope anymore to save Dayr Albahr. There is no hope to stop the enemy’s army (...)”



“THE PROMENADE WITH GRANNY”*

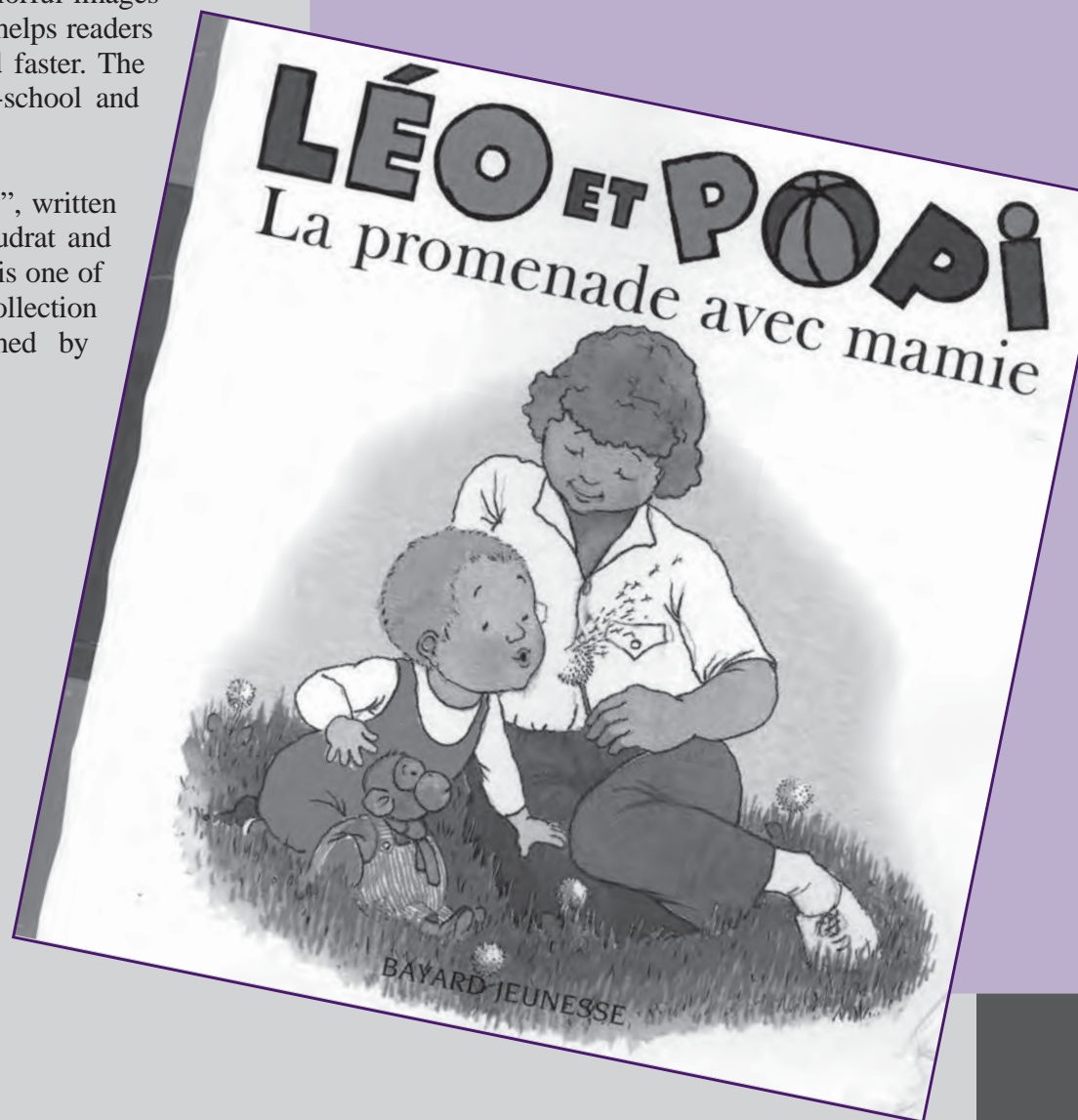
“The Promenade with Granny” narrates the story of a little boy named Léo who enjoys walking hand in hand with his grandmother while carrying his monkey-plush Popi.

The book is illustrated with colorful images and the sentences rhyme. This helps readers learn new vocabulary and read faster. The book is recommended for pre-school and elementary students.

*“The Promenade with Granny”, written in French by Marie-Agnès Gaudrat and illustrated by Helen Oxenbury, is one of many short stories from the collection “Léo et Popi”. It is published by “Bayard Jeunesse”.

The collection includes:

- À la Garderie
- Au Bord de la Mer
- À la Ferme
- Léo Est Malade
- Au Parc
- Le Manège
- La Promenade à Vélo.



GEAGEA FAMILIES

the majority are Maronites from Bcharri and the minority are Shia'a and Sunni

When the family name Geagea is mentioned, everyone thinks of Samir Geagea, leader of the Lebanese Forces. Many think that the family is Maronite, but the truth is there are Shia'a from Nabatieh and Sunni from Saïda who hold the same name. However, there is no proof that the families are related.

Origin

In his book "History of Oriental families", Issa Alexander Maalouf writes that the origin of the name Geagea is from Jaj in Jbeil from the Ma'eit family. Their grandfather was a "mkari" or the person who takes care of donkeys for Patriarch Youhanna Jaji (who was Patriarch from 1404 to 1445). He was probably called "Geagea" because the word in Arabic means "to control the donkeys."

Geagea in language

In the book "Lisan Al-Arab" by Ibn Manthour, it is stated that the word Geagea has several meanings:

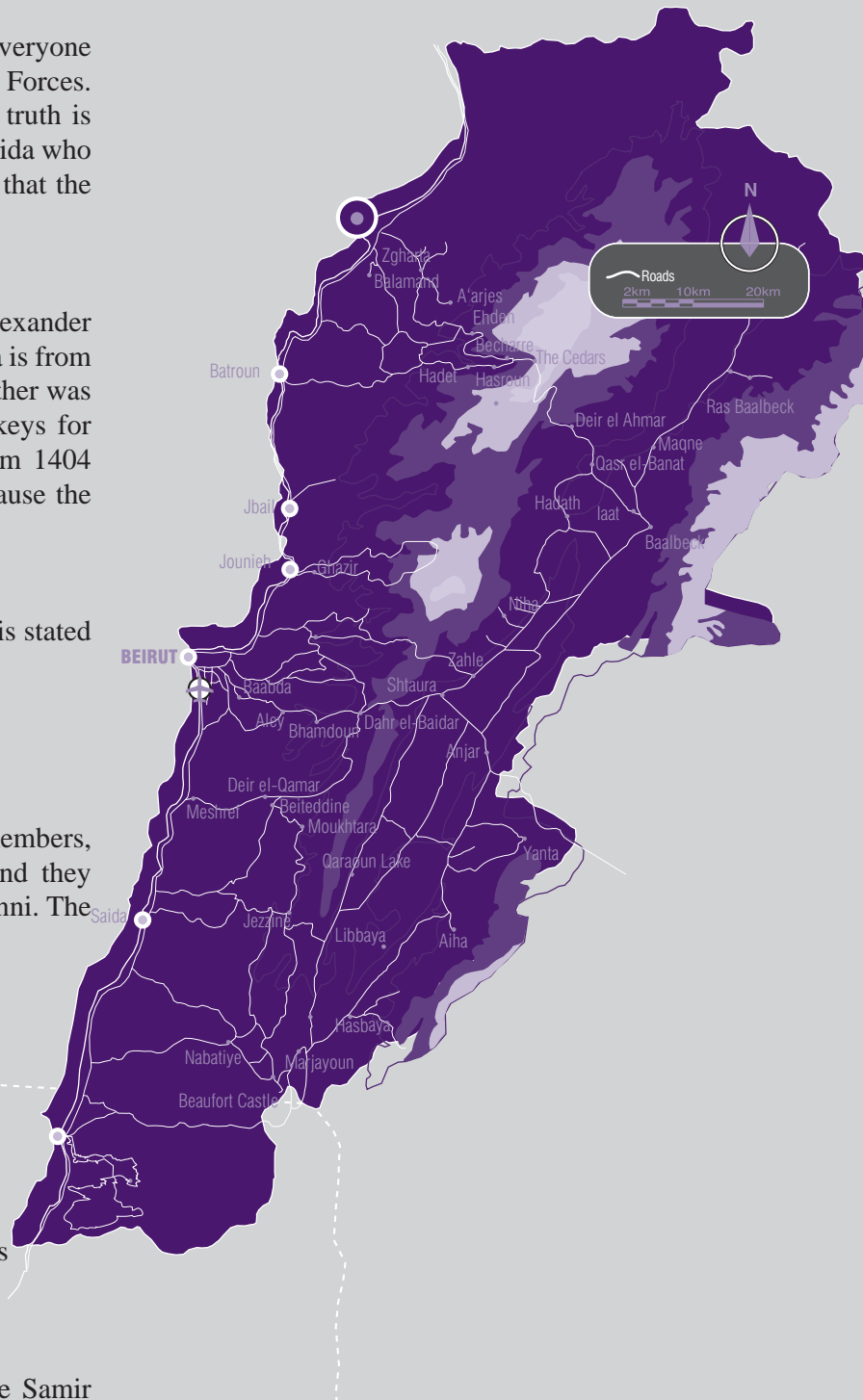
- ⦿ Tight place
- ⦿ Sound that camels make when they unite
- ⦿ To irritate someone

The Geagea family consists of around 3,000 members, mostly belonging to the Maronite confession and they are from Bcharri. The minority are Shia'a and Sunni. The family is distributed as follows:

- Bcharri: 1,600 members
- Barqa (Ba'albeck): 950 members
- Kdam (Ba'albeck): 580 members
- Bachaala (Batroun): 130 members
- Deir Al-Ahmar (Ba'albeck): 60 members
- Basloukeet (Zgharta): 11 members
- Beit Awkar (Zgharta): 12 members
- Safra (Keserouane): 15 members
- Hay Rijal Al-Arbæen (Saïda), Sunni: 14 members
- Hay Al-Bayyad (Nabatieh), Shia'a: 50 members

Personalities from the family

Of the family's most prominent personalities are Samir Geagea, Leader of the Lebanese Forces, and former MP Wahib Geagea (1943) and a number of judges.



DEEK AL-MEHDI

the majority from Al-Ashqar family

Etymology

In his book “Names of Lebanese villages and Cities”, Anis Freiha mentioned that the origin of the name Deek Al-Mehdi is from the Syriac word “duk mahde”, which means joyfulness. There is no clear reason why it bears this name, although some say that the beauty of the place makes it joyful.

Another explanation for the name is that there was a rooster (known in Arabic as “deek”) that would climb to a rooftop and wake the farmers at dawn. One of the farmers placed some iron (or “hadwa” in Arabic) in the rooster’s wings to prevent it from climbing to the rooftop. This is why the place was called Deek Al-Mehdi.

Location

Deek Al-Mehdi is located in the Qada’a of Matn in the Mount Lebanon Mohafaza and is 340m above sea level. It lies 15km away from Beirut, 10km from the center of the Qada’a and 20km from the center of the Mohafaza. It extends over 78 hectares of land and can be reached via Antellias - Beit Al-Shaar or Bekfaya - Beit Kakou.

Population

The number of registered inhabitants is estimated at 720, with the majority (around 90%) belonging to the Maronite confession. The rest are Orthodox (6%), Armenian and from other Christian denominations (4%). There are around 900 houses in the village and around 70 commercial shops. The number of residents, most of whom are not from the town, is estimated at 3,500.

Voters

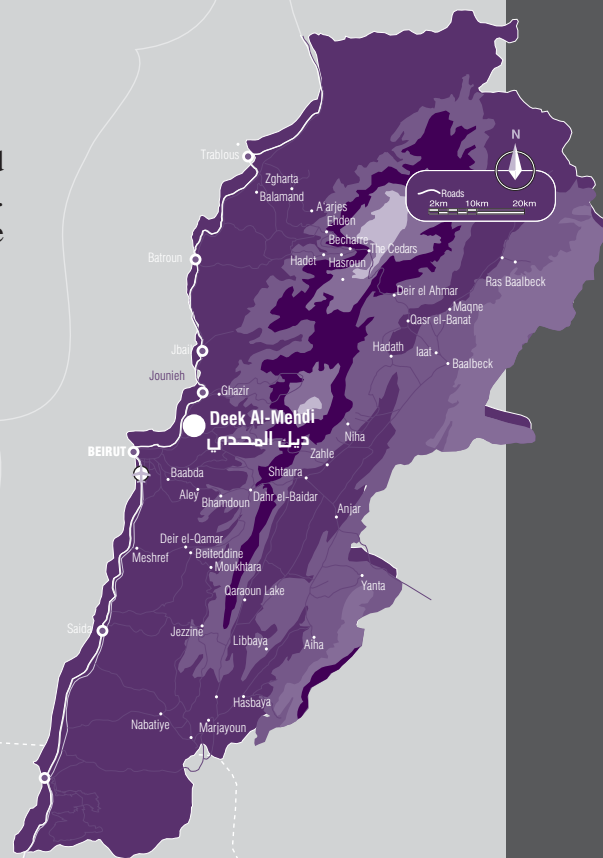
In the year 2000, the number of voters was 428 of whom 197 cast their ballots. This number increased to 441 in 2005 of whom 226 cast their

ballots. In 2009, the number reached 484 with 275 casting their ballots. They are distributed according to the following families:

- ⦿ Al-Ashqar: 161 voters
- ⦿ Zakhour: 42 voters
- ⦿ Farah: 36 voters
- ⦿ Sarkis: 28 voters
- ⦿ Fadoul: 20 voters
- ⦿ Nassar: 17 voters
- ⦿ Nasr: 17 voters
- ⦿ Fayad: 15 voters
- ⦿ Khoury: 11 voters
- ⦿ Shbeeb: 10 voters
- ⦿ Shaker: 8 voters
- ⦿ Boulos: 8 voters
- ⦿ Hassaan: 8 voters
- ⦿ Saroufim: 8 voters
- ⦿ Zeidan: 7 voters
- ⦿ Nehme: 6 voters
- ⦿ Youness: 4 voters
- ⦿ Yaacoub: 4 voters
- ⦿ Khoury (Orthodox): 18 voters
- ⦿ Braiqae (Orthodox): 9 voters
- ⦿ Koumihan (Armenian Catholics): 10 voters

Local authorities

Deek Al-Mehdi municipality was established by Decree No. 233 dated March 3, 2004. The municipality was combined with Deir Tamesh municipality by Decree No. 342 dated April 8, 2004, and its name changed to Deek Al-Mehdi - Deir Tamish. The municipal council is made up of 9 members headed by Amine Edmond Al-Ashqar. The municipality’s share in the independent municipal fund was LBP 17.272 million in 2005 and increased to LBP 46.8 million in 2006. In 2007, the amount reached LBP 66.5 million, while it rose to LBP 125 million in 2008 and LBP 169.6 million in 2009. The municipality has one mukhtar, Hanan Majid Al-Ashqar, and a 3 member ikhtiyariah body.



Archaeological sites

There is Deir Tamish (belonging to the Maronite Patriarchy) that dates back to around 1762.

Educational Institution

There are 2 private schools: Champville, which had 2,928 students in the academic year 2009-2010 and 187 faculty and staff members, and Montana International College, with 322 students and 40 faculty and staff members.

Economy

The people of Deek Al-Mehdi mostly rely on the revenues of the town’s emigrants. The residents that are not from the village mainly work outside the village.

Challenges

Like most village inhabitants in Lebanon, the people of Deek Al-Mehdi suffer from lack of electricity and water and other problems (inadequate sewage system and garbage).

ABOLISHING POLITICAL CONFESSIONS MUST COME FROM WITHIN BEFORE THE TEXTS...

CONFESSIONALISM AND FEDERALISM

At the end of 1992, parliamentary elections were held on the basis of equality between Muslims and Christians (64 MPs to each confession) but no measures were taken in the Chamber of Deputies to abolish political confessionism as stipulated in article 95 of the constitution, neither was the National Committee formed. However, this did not stop the issue from coming up in political and media dialogue from time to time. Political and religious opinions are divided on the topic as it appears from the following quotes.

Michel Şuleiman: “A National Committee must be formed to abolish political confessionism, amend the electoral law to ensure better representation and grant expatriates their rights, including the right to nationality and the right to vote” (November 2010).

Nabih Berri: “The call to form a National Committee to study and propose the appropriate means to abolish political confessionism was not an option. The President of the Chamber of Deputies may respond to it or choose not to, as it is provided for in article 95 of the constitution” (As Safir, January 14, 2010).

Patriarch Sfeir: “... We refuse to abolish political confessionism in the current circumstances [...] Abolishing political confessionism should come from within before the texts... Abolishing confessionism from the texts will not change anything” (As-Safir, January 15, 2010).

Patriarch Bechara Al Rai: “We are in favor of abolishing political confessionism but what do we mean by confessionism and what will substitute it once it is abolished?” (January 1, 2010, prior to his election as patriarch).

Abdel Amir Qabalan: “Speaker Berri’s request to form a National Committee is a good step towards clarifying things and moving towards new legislation” (As-Safir, January 15, 2010).

Omar Karami: “We support the proposition of Berri 100% and this is what we have always been saying, which is that our political system has proved its failure and there is no way out of our complaints but through establishing a lawful state and institutions. Whoever refuses the formation of a National Committee to abolish confessionism will regret it in the future” (As-Safir, January 15, 2010).

Saad Hariri: “(...) The most important issue is that this subject (abolishing political confessionism) needs consensus... This is the main concern and if there are other stances on the issue then there is no consensus” (As-Safir, January 15, 2010).

Suleiman Franjeh: “(...) Berri does not want to abolish any confession. The Committee’s objectives are governed by the constitution. They entail abolishing political

confessionism and then abolishing confessionism as a whole” (Al-Nashra, February 18, 2010).

Michel Aoun: “There are a lot of texts that need to be amended before getting to the abolition of confessionism, which is considered the culmination of change in the system” (January 15, 2010).

Najib Mikati: “We favor Berri’s proposal since it is based on a constitutional text but we must first find the appropriate circumstances for the proposal to be successful” (January 13, 2010, approximately 1 year prior to his designation as PM).

Boutros Harb: “The time is not right to abolish political confessionism, even though it is a constitutional text” (January 14, 2010).

Hezbollah: “Abolishing political confessionism is reached through national dialogue. So long as the political system is based on confessionism, consensual democracy will remain the basis in Lebanon” (Hezbollah political manifesto, 2009).


Fouad Siniora: “Working to abolish political confessionism is a noble, nationalistic and constitutional goal but I support the point of view that suggests waiting for a more appropriate time” (January 15, 2010).

Sami Gemayyel: “So long as we live in a centralized state we cannot abolish political confessionism. If we want to abolish the latter, we must become a federal state” (January 13, 2010).

George A’adwan: “We have the courage to say that we want to keep political confessionism and not abolish it in a bid to stop immigration” (January 16, 2010).

Samir Geagea: “The timing of proposing the abolition of political confessionism is nothing but a way to evade the defense strategy” (November 25, 2009).

Salim Hoss: “We would not need to abolish confessionism from the texts if the minds were innocent” (December 3, 2009).

Walid Jumblatt: “Confessionism is a disease that we must get rid of as soon as possible” (February 28, 2011) 

PRESIDENT MICHEL SULEIMAN: “WHAT IS REQUIRED IS CORRECTING THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE TA’IF”

Prisoners rebel in Roumieh; Lebanese flee Ivory Coast; Hariri: “My plan is to get rid of the weapons not to return to government. We do not want Lebanon to be an Iranian protégé”; Unlicensed buildings and trespass on public properties in the South and Ouza’i and police forces are helpless; Protests calling for the fall of the confessional system; Nasrallah: “Collusion did not work, the resistance remained and those in power left”; The Engineers’ Syndicate in Beirut goes to the March 8 forces while that of Trablous is won by March 14 forces; Syria: MPs of the Future Movement support the opponents of the regime; Maronite leaders meet and a Franjeh-Geagea handshake

April 2

⊙ Hariri before a crowd in Beit Al Wasat: “The other team took advantage of the absence of a government because the formation of a government hinders its role. We will keep on asking for the weapons to be under the state’s umbrella despite their refusal... There is an international project aimed at Lebanon and the Arab nation.”

⊙ Lebanese fleeing Abidjan as a result of the conflict continue to arrive.

April 4

⊙ New rebellion in Roumieh prison.

⊙ On the occasion of the International Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action Day: “898 martyrs and 3,000 injured in Lebanon since 1975.”

⊙ Presided by Mufti Sheikh Qabbani, the Higher Islamic Council meets in Dar Al Fatwa in the presence of PM designate Najib Mikati. A statement following the meeting refutes the criticism targeting Mikati in forming a government.

April 5

⊙ Maronite Patriarch Bechara Al Rai visits Muslim clergymen as well as Berri, Mikati and Hariri.

⊙ Youth in Saida through stones at a US embassy convoy.

⊙ Hariri travels to Ankara and meets with the Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

April 6

⊙ Riots in Roumieh prison and police forces intervene to put an end to them.

⊙ A meeting of the Higher Defense Council, headed by President Michel Suleiman, is held to discuss the means of protecting the Lebanese community in the Ivory Coast.

April 7

⊙ In a speech to engineers affiliated to the Future movement in Biel, Hariri attacks Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah saying: “We are working with our brothers in the Gulf and in Bahrain to get rid of the allegations of irresponsible and unjustified alignment, which have nothing to do with Lebanese patriotism or Arab nationalism but rather are a compliance with the Iranian project.” He also addressed other issues such as weapons, security and chaos resulting from the weapons, declaring that his plan is to get rid of the weapons, not to return to government.

⊙ Three youth are released in Saida after they had been arrested for throwing stones at a US embassy convoy.

⊙ Building and trespassing on public properties continues in the South.

⊙ Parents of Roumieh prisoners continue their demonstrations in front of the prison while security forces succeed in suppressing riots that resulted in one fatality and thirteen injuries.

⊙ Berri resumes his activity at the National Assembly after the completion of restoration and rehabilitation works.

April 8

⊙ Hariri: “We will not accept that Lebanon become an Iranian protégé.” This statement came after a Saudi-Lebanese meeting in Beirut.

⊙ Hezbollah in response to Hariri’s comments on Iran: “The provocative stances of the leader of the Future movement against the Islamic Republic are a translation of the stances of Robert Gates, the US Secretary of Defense, and the latter’s stances are provocative.”

⊙ Protests continue in Roumieh.

April 9

⊙ Hariri during a phone call with the King of Bahrain: “Do not consider any stance of any political party as that of the Lebanese state or the Lebanese people.” This comes in response to Hezbollah’s comments regarding the recent incidents in Bahrain.

⊙ Minister of Energy and Water Joubran Bassil: “The water shortage for 2010 reached 426 million cubic meters and will reach 718 million cubic meters by 2035.”

April 11

⊙ The March 8 forces win the Engineers’ Syndicate elections in Beirut and Engineer Elie Bsaibes from the Free Patriotic Movement is president. The March 14 forces take over the elections in Trablous with Bashir Zouq as president.

⊙ Minister of Environment Mohammad Rahal: “The weapons of the resistance are a confessional issue and Iran is a partner in global arrogance.”

⊙ In a speech broadcasted on Al Manar, Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah urges the quick formation of the government and addresses Hariri saying: “Collusion did not work, the resistance remained and those in power left.” He denies the allegations claiming that Hezbollah is liable for part of Al Akhbar newspaper.

⊙ A rally takes place in Beirut calling for the fall of the confessional system.

⊙ Sixteen Lebanese are expelled from Bahrain.

April 12

⊙ An ambush in Majdal A’anjjar kills ISF officer Rachid Sabri. The suspect, Darweesh Janjar, is also killed and it appears he was involved in several killings of Lebanese military men.

⊙ In a statement to Al Nahar, President Michel Suleiman:

“What is required is correcting the constitutionality of the Ta’if.”

⊙ Maronite Patriarch Bechara Al Rai begins his visit to Rome, the first since his election as patriarch.

April 13

⊙ The wave of unlicensed buildings and trespassing on public properties continues in the South and Beirut’s suburbs.

⊙ A statement of the Future bloc and MPs: “We ask Nasrallah to stop interfering in matters concerning Arab States. He is trying to justify the problems he created.”

⊙ A statement by the Amal Movement: “Our alliance with Hezbollah is strong.” This comes after Wikileaks published documents revealing that Berri opposes some of Hezbollah’s stances.

April 14

⊙ Syria accuses Future Movement MP Jamal Al Jarrah of financing armed forces to fight against the Syrian regime.

April 15

⊙ Iranian civil aircrafts repatriate Lebanese from Ivory Coast free of charge along with those sent by Middle East Airlines.

⊙ It is revealed that Frederick Hoff, the assistant to the US Middle East Envoy George Mitchell, visited Beirut to discuss the drawing of the maritime border and his other meetings were kept away from the media.

April 16

⊙ After welcoming Faisal Karami in Rabieh, Major General Michel Aoun states: “The conditions of government formation have not yet been met so the PM designate should take his time and we will not set him a deadline.”

April 18

⊙ MP Jamal Al Jarrah meets with Berri and Hariri and declares that the allegations accusing him of financing armed forces to fight against the Syrian regime are being followed up in parliament and judicially.

⊙ Hizb Al Tahrir (the Liberation Party) insists on holding a protest in Trablous against Syria. Security and governmental efforts are made to prevent the protest from going ahead.

April 19

⊙ Berri and a Hezbollah delegation take part in the funeral of businessman Nasser Al Khourafi in Kuwait.

⊙ Mikati at a seminar of the Civic Center for National Initiative: “Preventing strife, maintaining stability and respecting the constitution are the basis for every step.”

⊙ The Minister of Telecommunication Charbel Nahhas declares Alfa’s success in its first attempt at using the 3G network.

⊙ The sale of alcoholic beverages in the city of Nabatieh is prohibited.

⊙ An agreement is made between the Bakers’ Syndicate and the Minister of Economy and Trade, Mohammad Al Safadi, to increase subsidies to each ton of wheat by LBP 50,000.

⊙ A festival is held at the Commodore Hotel in Hamra in Beirut in solidarity with Syria.

April 20

⊙ A meeting in Bkirki hosted by Patriarch Bechara Al Ra’i is attended by Amine Gemayyel, Michel Aoun, MP Suleiman Franjeh and Samir Geagea. A handshake between Franjeh and Geagea is photographed.

⊙ The Future Movement: “There is no interest in interfering in Syria’s affairs.”

⊙ Estonia's Foreign Minister, Urmas Paet, returns to Lebanon to discuss the kidnapping of seven Estonians.

April 21

⊙ The 13th biannual report of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on the implementation of resolution 1559 states: "Hezbollah's arsenal creates an atmosphere of intimidation and represents a major challenge to the safety of Lebanese civilians. The leaders of the party must not delay their disarmament and transformation into an exclusively political party." He also called on the next government to better the state of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

⊙ A video showing the seven kidnapped Estonians is released in which they plead for the help of Hariri, Saudi Arabia and Jordan in order to return home.

⊙ MP Sami Gemayyel and Maria Joud Al Bayeh (Joud Al Bayeh was an official in the Phalange Party who was murdered in 1978 and the Marada Movement was accused of killing him) visit Suleiman Franjeh in Bencha'i.

April 22

⊙ Two people are killed in Sour following confrontations between residents and the ISF. The latter was working on curbing illegal construction in popular areas of the city. Information reveals there are 700 illegal housing units in Ouza'i that were allegedly built in 20 days. Amal and Hezbollah refuse to cover for the offenders.

⊙ In a speech before Unit Leaders, Lebanese Army Commander Jean Kahwaji states: "We must be careful not to turn Lebanon into a base to target the security of any brotherly Arab country. We must not allow anyone to exploit external events to lure strife into Lebanon."

⊙ A session of the Military Court to sentence General Fayez Karam, accused of collaborating with Israel, is held in the absence of the primary witness who is an officer of the Information Branch. The session is postponed until June 14, 2011.

April 23

⊙ Hizb Al Tahrir (the Liberation Party), along with members of the Salafi Party, hold a protest in Trablous in solidarity with the protesters in Syria during which they condemn the Syrian regime and call for the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate.

April 26

⊙ Following the Easter Mass in Bkirki, President Michel Suleiman states: "The constitution does not give shares to anyone rather it describes the means of government formation and assigns responsibilities. There are no governmental contracts but parliamentary demands."

April 27

⊙ Following its weekly meeting, the Future Movement MPs issue a statement: "March 8 forces are dragging Lebanon into Syria's internal conflicts."

⊙ Berri: "The delay in government formation is part of a conspiracy, not only aimed at Lebanon, but at Syria as well."

⊙ Building on public properties continues in Ouza'i and the South.

⊙ Wi'am Wahab reveals photocopies of checks issued by Prince Turki Bin Abdel Aziz to Lebanese political figures belonging to March 14 forces. He addresses the Saudi Prince saying: "Bin Abdel Aziz you are the princes of lying, debauchery and corruption and the reason behind the tragedies of this nation." (Wahab later apologizes as it appears that Amir Baydoun, who

had provided him with the checks, had forged the names on them).

April 28

⊙ Protests by public transport drivers take place in front of the Ministry of Energy and Water demanding the decrease of petrol prices and the reconsideration of the monopoly of a number of oil importing companies. Minister Bassil calls for alternatives to cars in a bid to reduce costs. Youth cut off roads in Sawfar and Bechara El Khoury contesting the high petrol prices.

⊙ In a statement to Al Nahar, Minister of Finance Rayya Al Hassan states: "The treasury's state is discussed on a daily basis in a bid to find funds to pay the salaries of the public sector and retirement funds that amount to approximately LBP 300 billion monthly."

April 29

⊙ Hundreds of families from the town of Telkakh in Syria arrive to neighboring Lebanese regions in Wadi Khaled.

⊙ Protests by public transport drivers demanding the decrease of the petrol tank price (they stopped their cars in the middle of the road and honked).

⊙ Protests in a number of villages in the North and Mount Lebanon against the municipalities' refusal to grant building licenses.

April 30

⊙ The security forces begin demolishing unlicensed buildings that were recently built in the area adjacent to Beirut International Airport. The Minister of Interior Ziad Baroud considers the fate of these buildings is destruction rather than settlement.

STOCK EXCHANGES IN THE MENA REGION

During the last three decades, Arab countries started creating stock exchanges and engaging in the trading of securities. Currently, almost every Arab country has a stock exchange.¹ However, these stock exchanges are not all alike. Using market capitalization as a measure, the Arabic stock markets exhibit wide variations. Table 1 lists information regarding the 17 stock exchanges of the Arab World.

Stock Exchanges in the MENA Region					Table 1
Country	Name of Stock Exchange	Date of establishment	Initial Activity	Listed Companies in 2011	Market Capitalization ² (\$ billion)
Egypt	The Egyptian Exchange (EGX) ³	1883	Cotton transactions	212	82
Lebanon	Beirut Stock Exchange (LSE)	1920	-Gold and foreign currencies -Established by a decree of the French Commissioner	11	12.7
Morocco	Casablanca Stock Exchange	1929	-Transferable Securities -Reformed gradually from 1967 onwards	74	72.4
Saudi Arabia	Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul)	1954	Informal market until the 1980s, Tadawul only formed in March 2007	146	353.4
Kuwait	Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE)	1962	1983 Amiri Decree organizing the KSE	215	102.1
Tunisia	Bourse de Tunis (BVMT)	1969	Initially a public institution, became a limited company in 1995	56	11
Oman	Muscat Securities Market (MSM)	1988	Established by Royal Decree, restructured in 1998: establishment of 2 separate entities (an exchange and a regulatory authority)	124	28.3
Bahrain	Bahrain Stock Exchange (BSE)	1989	Established by 1987 Bahrain Stock Exchange Law but started operating in 1989	47	20
Algeria	Bourse d' Alger	1993	Established by Legislative Decree in 1993, started operating in 1997	7	116.6
Sudan	Khartoum Stock Exchange (KSE)	1994	Opens 1 hour daily and governed by Shari'a Law	53	5-9
Qatar	Doha Securities Market (DSM)	1995	Established in 1995, started operating in 1997	43	123.6
Palestine	Palestine Securities Exchange (PSE)	1997	Became a public shareholding company in 2010	41	2.5
Jordan	Amman Stock Exchange (ASE)	1999	Non profit private institution with administrative and financial autonomy	276	30.8
United Arab of Emirates	Abu-Dhabi Securities Market (ADX)	2000	-	54	75
	Dubai Financial Market (DFM)	2000	Established as a public institution having its own independent corporate body by a Resolution from the Ministry of Economy	78	54.2
	NASDAQ Dubai (previously known as Dubai International Financial Exchange)	2005	-	35 (Members)	29.3
Iraq	Iraq Stock Exchange (ISX)	2004	Prior to the 2003 invasion, it was the Baghdad Stock Exchange, which operated under the Iraqi Ministry of Finance. Today, the ISX is self regulated, financially and administratively independent from the government. It is regulated by the Iraq Securities Commission.	85	3
Libya	Libyan Stock Exchange	2007	-	12	3.2
Syria	Damascus Stock Exchange (DSE)	2006	Established by decree in 2006, but started operating in March 2009	20	3

1 - There are no stock Exchanges in Yemen, Comoros, Somalia and Djibouti.

2 - On December 1, 2010.

3 - The Egyptian exchange comprises two exchanges, Cairo and Alexandria, both of which are governed by the same board of directors and share the same trading, clearing, and settlement systems. The Alexandria Stock Exchange was officially established in 1883, with Cairo following in 1903.



REAL ESTATE INDEX

APRIL 2011

For the first time in 3 years, the real estate market witnessed a decline in prices, even though it was limited. Indeed, in recent times prices have been on the rise, at times reaching 100% increases in Beirut and its surroundings. For more than a year, the market had gone into a state of stagnation with prices on the increase. Those working in the market noted that the situation changed in April 2011 with a limited decline in prices, which is expected to continue in the coming month. The absence of government formation and the recent uprising in Syria, which gained impact during the month of April, along with the unstable situation in a number of Arab states that have affected the businesses of Lebanese abroad, all play a role in the change in the market. This may eventually lead to it exiting the state of recession and stagnation that it has been in for a while.

On the other hand, the increase of oil prices (USD 100-120/barrel) should lead to an increase in surpluses in oil producing countries, which means the availability of funds to be invested in the Lebanese real estate market that may then lead to an increase in prices.

Tables 1 and 2 list the prices of a number of estates and apartments sold in April 2011.

Prices of some estates sold in April 2011			Table 1
Region	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Achrafieh	220	1,804,000	8,200
Baabda			
Baabda	1,400	1,540,000	1,100
Yarzeh	2,200	3,630,000	1,650
Matn			
Baabdat	980	539,000	550
Beit Meri	1,100	1,100,000	1,000
Bekfayya	1,500	300,000	200
A'aley			
Doha A'aramoun	780	975,000	1,250
A'aley	1,100	247,500	225
Keserouane			
A'ajaltoun	1,500	600,000	400
Faqra	1,000	1,000,000	1,000
Ma'ameltein	800	1,600,000	2,000

Source: Information International April 2011.

Prices of some apartments sold in April 2011			Table 2
Region	Area (m ²)	Price (USD)	USD/m ²
Beirut			
Badaro	300	795,000	2,650
Badaro (Sami Solh)	140	392,000	2,800
Clemenceau	170	544,000	3,200
Ras Al Nabee	200	400,000	2,000
Achrafieh	150	255,000	1,700
Achrafieh	100	300,000	3,000
Achrafieh (Monot)	130	455,000	3,500
Sodeco	200	600,000	3,000
Mar Elias	210	504,000	2,400
Bourj Abi Haidar	215	348,300	1,620
Tallet El-Khayat	300	900,000	3,000
Ras Beirut	180	648,000	3,600
Baabda			
Hazmieh	160	240,000	1,500
Yarzeh	200	400,000	2,000
Chiah	150	213,000	1,420
Furn Al Shubbak	180	279,000	1,550
Baabda	300	630,000	2,100
Baabda (Spanish Embassy)	160	304,000	1,900
Matn			
Ain Saadeh	200	370,000	1,850
Broumana	140	182,000	1,300
Antelias	137	171,250	1,250
Sin El Fil	220	418,000	1,900
Sin El Fil (Horsh Tabet)	150	322,500	2,150
Rabieh	160	320,000	2,000
A'aley			
A'aley	160	115,200	720
Doha A'aramoun	140	140,000	1,000
Bchamoun	200	230,000	1,150
Keserouane			
Ballouneh	230	230,000	1,000
Adonis	180	171,000	950
Sahel Alma	150	172,500	1,150
Haret Sakhr	130	130,000	1,000

Source: Information International April 2011.

FOOD PRICE INDEX OF 100 PRODUCTS: APRIL 2011

During the month of April, the price of three quarter of the products (73 products) we list every month remained stable. The price of 10 products limitedly decreased. Of the most important products that witnessed a decrease are eggs, meats and yogurts. The price of 17 products increased, including that of powder milk and coffee. Owners of supermarkets are complaining of a state of stagnation where the rush of customers is limited to the first week of every month, followed by a limited activity which limits the increase in prices locally fearing further stagnation. Shop owners also confirm that they sell most products at cost price, without making any profits and sometimes resulting in losses, while waiting for living conditions to get better.

Table 1 lists the price of products in April 2011.

Price of products during April 2011 (in LBP) Table 1			
Item and brand	Prices beginning of April 2011	Prices beginning of May 2011	% of price change
Oil			
Afia corn oil (3.5 liters)	13,900	13,900	0%
Mazola corn oil (3.5 liters)	13,750	13,750	0%
Mazola corn oil (1.8 liters)	7,250	7,450	2.7%+
Slim corn oil (2 liters)	7,250	7,250	0%
Wesson corn oil (2 liters)	7,500	7,500	0%
Ghandour soya oil (3.8 liters)	11,250	11,500	2.3%+
Alfa corn oil (4 liters)	12,250	13,000	6.1%+
Al-Wadi Olive Oil (1/2 liters)	6,450	6,750	4.6%+
Ketchup and Sauces			
Libby's Ketchup (567 g)	1,500	1,500	0%
Extra Ketchup (340 g)	980	980	0%
Extra Ketchup (2.2 kg)	5,500	5,500	0%
Dolly's Mayonnaise (500 ml)	3,950	3,950	0%
Al-Wadi Mayonnaise (500 ml)	4,250	4,300	1.8%+
Al-Bsat Tahina (900 g)	6,890	6,860	0%
Al-Bsat Tahina (450 g)	3,650	6,890	5.5%-
Taous tomato sauce (70 g)	770	770	0%
Taous tomato sauce (425 g)	3,400	3,425	0.7%+
Tala tomato sauce (675 g)	3,100	3,250	4.8%+

Price of products during April 2011 (in LBP) Table 1			
Item and brand	Prices beginning of April 2011	Prices beginning of May 2011	% of price change
Dairy Products			
Candia full cream milk (1 liter)	2,450	2,450	0%
Candia full cream yoghurt (2 kg)	2,500	2,500	0%
Bonjus labneh (1 kg)	3,990	3,990	0%
Taanayel labneh (500 g)	5,650	5,650	0%
Candia labneh (500 g)	4,500	3,600	20%-
Taanayel yoghurt (1 kg)	3,450	3,000	13%-
Smeds cheese (400 g)	4,450	4,450	0%
Picon cheese (360 g)	3,850	3,850	0%
Picon cheese (160 g)	1,950	1,950	0%
Double-crème cheese (1 kg)	5,750	5,750	0%
Fresh country cheese (1 kg)	7,000	7,700	10%+
Khashkawan cheese (1 kg)	11,000	11,000	0%
Lurpak butter (200 g)	2,750	2,750	0%
Tatra butter (200 g)	2,400	2,400	0%
Al-Maalaqtain margarine (2 kg)	7,950	7,950	0%
Al-Baqara al-Haloub margarine (2 kg)	31,850	31,850	0%
Vegetaline margarine (2 kg)	14,750	14,790	0%
Nido full cream milk (bag) (2,250 g)	19,890	21,850	9.8%+
Nido full cream milk (2,500 g)	24,750	26,250	6%+
Tatra full cream milk (1,800 g)	16,000	18,500	15.6%+
Fruits and Vegetables			
Orange (1 kg)	1,500	1,500	0%
Tomatoes (1kg)	700	700	0%
Cucumbers (1kg)	1,000	750	25%-
Bananas (1kg)	1,500	1,500	0%
Lemons (1 kg)	650	650	0%
Apples (1 kg)	2,000	2,000	0%
Potatoes (1 kg)	950	900	5.2%-

Price of products during April 2011 (in LBP) Table 1

Item and brand	Prices beginning of April 2011	Prices beginning of May 2011	% of price change
Cereals			
Khater white lentils (1 kg)	3,750	3,750	0%
Khater chick-peas fahli (1 kg)	3,750	3,500	6.7%-
Khater beans (1 kg)	1,950	1,950	0%
Peeled wheat (1 kg)	2,250	2,350	4.5%+
Pineal Lima Bean (1 kg)	3,250	3,250	0%
Brown Fine Burgul (1 kg)	1,750	1,800	2.8%+
Egyptian rice (1 kg)	1,950	1,950	0%
American rice (1 kg)	1,850	1,850	0%
Italian rice (1 kg)	2,700	2,700	0%
Al-Wadi Hommos Tahina (380 g)	1,340	1,340	0%
Chtaura Hommos Tahina (380 g)	1,100	1,100	0%
California Gardens beans (450 g)	1,100	1,100	0%
Al-Wadi beans (450 g)	950	950	0%
Chtaura beans (480 g)	1,150	1,150	0%
Libby's corn (340 g)	1,750	1,750	0%
Pasta			
Barilla spaghetti (500 g)	2,100	2,100	0%
Antonio Amato spaghetti (500 g)	2,200	2,200	0%
Monte spaghetti (500 g)	2,150	2,150	0%
Sugar and Salt			
Sugar (2 kg)	3,100	2,950	4.8%-
Al-Ousra Sugar (5 kg)	9,250	9,250	0%
Salt (700 g)	350	350	0%
Box of salt (738 g)	1,400	1,400	0%

Price of products during April 2011 (in LBP) Table 1

Item and brand	Prices beginning of April 2011	Prices beginning of May 2011	% of price change
Meat, Fish and Eggs			
Zwan chicken (200 g)	2,450	2,450	0%
Zwan beef (200 g)	2,450	2,450	0%
Luncheon meat beef (198 g)	1,800	1,800	0%
Al-Mona chicken (200 g)	2,100	2,100	0%
Al-Taghzia beef (200 g)	1,925	1,925	0%
Al-Taghzia chicken (200 g)	1,750	1,750	0%
Geisha sardine (125 g)	1,100	1,100	0%
Deli sardine (125 g)	1,100	1,100	0%
Milo sardine (125 g)	1,100	1,100	0%
Geisha tuna (200 g)	3,500	3,500	0%
White Bell tuna (200 g)	2,200	2,220	0%
White Diamond tuna (200 g)	2,250	2,250	0%
Skipper tuna (185 g)	1,750	1,750	0%
Eggs (30 eggs)	6,800	5,500	19.1%-
Beef (1 kg)	16,000	15,000	6.2%-
Sheep (1 kg)	28,000	25,000	10.7%-
Coffee and Tea			
Najjar coffee (1kg)	14,000	16,000	14.3%+
Brazil coffee (1 kg)	12,250	14,000	14.3%+
Al-Hisan tea (180 g)	2,750	2,750	0%
Nestle (250g)	2,350	2,350	0%
Halvah and Jam			
Al-Wadi halvah (454 g)	4,250	4,250	0%
Al-Bsat halvah (450 g)	3,150	3,150	0%
Chtaura apricot jam (1 kg)	5,500	5,500	0%
Al-Wadi apricot jam (1 kg)	4,500	4,500	0%
Tissues and Detergents			
Mimosa tissues (500 g)	2,750	2,750	0%
Fine tissues (200 tissues)	1,350	1,350	0%
Primo tissues (200 tissues)	1,100	1,200	9%+
Gipsy tissues (300 tissues)	2,750	2,750	0%
Mimosa toilet papers (4 rolls)	3,100	3,100	0%
Yes detergent (900 g)	2,200	2,200	0%
Clorox (1 liter)	1,500	1,500	0%
Persil (4 kg)	18,250	18,250	0%
Ariel (4 kg)	18,250	19,000	4.1%+



Statistics from around the World

Child Mortality

- ⊙ **8.1 million** was the number of deaths among children under age five in 2009.
- ⊙ **More than 22,000** children under age five die each day.
- ⊙ **142 per 1000** live births is the child mortality rate in the WHO African Region, which has the highest child mortality rate and accounts for half of all child deaths worldwide.
- ⊙ **78 per 1000** live births is the child mortality rate in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, which has the second highest child mortality rate.
- ⊙ **63 per 1000** live births is the child mortality rate in the WHO South East Asia Region.
- ⊙ **Child mortality rates in Sub-Saharan Africa** (125 per 1000) are almost **20 times higher** than those in developed regions (6 per 1000).
- ⊙ **Some 40%** of under-five deaths occur within the first month of life.
- ⊙ **Some 70%** of under-five deaths occur within the first year of life.
- ⊙ **18% of deaths** of children under age five are caused by pneumonia.
- ⊙ **15% of deaths** of children under age five are caused by diarrhoeal diseases.
- ⊙ **A 33% decline** in the global child mortality rate occurred between 1990 and 2009 from 90 deaths per 1000 live births to 60 deaths per 1000 live births.
- ⊙ **Child mortality declined** from 182 to 142 per 1000 live births between 1990 and 2008 in the WHO African Region.
- ⊙ **The rate of child mortality decline** was 0.9% per year during the 1990s and increased to 1.8% per year between 2000 and 2008 in the WHO African Region.

Beirut International Airport

Rafic Hariri International Airport – Traffic April 2011

Traffic increase by 34%

Airport traffic significantly increased during the month of April compared to March. Plane traffic increased by 17.2% while passenger traffic increased by 34.2%. The transportation of goods slightly decreased (1.1%). The passenger traffic registered last April compared to April 2010 increased by 28,311 passengers or 6.4%. The number of passengers that used the airport during the first 4 months of the current year reached 1,491,383 compared to 1,511,485 passengers during the same time of last year, a decrease of 20,102 passengers or 1.3% (Table1).

Airport traffic during April 2011 compared to March 2011 and April 2010.

Table 1

Traffic	Mar-11	Apr-11	Apr-10	% of change March and April 2011	% of change April 2010 / April 2011
Arriving airplanes	2,094	2,456	2,526	17.3+	2.8-
Departing airplanes	2,095	2,456	2,524	17.2+	2.7-
Total No. of airplanes	4,189	4,912	5,050	17.2+	2.7-
Arriving passengers	181,467	236,939	219,080	30.5+	8.2+
Departing passengers	162,557	224,851	215,342	38.3+	4.4+
Transit passengers	3,769	4,849	3,906	28.6+	24.1+
Total No. of passengers	347,793	466,639	438,328	34.2+	6.4+
Imported goods (per ton)	3,882	3,616	3,781	6.8-	4.3-
Exported goods (per ton)	2,244	2,440	2,392	8.7+	2+
Total amount of goods (per ton)	6,126	6,056	6,173	1.1-	1.9-

Source: Information International and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation

Stats & Numbers

- **19,005** was the number of government employees in 2010, 13,867 of whom worked in general administrations, 2,807 of whom worked in public institutions and 2,331 in municipalities. Among these employees, 11,528 are full timers while the rest are laborers and contractors.
- **1,842,189** was the number of taxpayers in Lebanon in 2009; 222,775 of whom were subject to income tax.
- **LBP 23,700 billion** is the value of Lebanese treasury bonds owed by the state in 2011, of which approximately 2,650 billion are in foreign currency and \$1 billion is owed in May 2011.
- **LBP 88 billion** is the amount of profit made by the Lebanese Canadian Bank in 2010, a 63% increase in comparison with 2009, while its deposits reached LBP 8,800 billion, a 19% increase in comparison with 2009, which made it one of the high ranking banks in Lebanon. This same bank was accused of money laundering and financing terrorism by the US Treasury at the outset of 2011, which led to its merger with Société Générale.
- **LBP 266 billion** is the financial reserve available to the Engineers' Syndicate in Beirut.



Photo by: Waddah Joma'a 2009

Publications

Publications by Information International (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-Lebanon's MPs and Lebanese Parliamentary Elections 1960 - 2009
- 9- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-North District
- 10- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beirut District
- 11- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Mount Lebanon District
- 12- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-Beqa'a District
- 13- 2009 Parliamentary Elections by ballot box, candidate and confession-South and Nabatiyeh District
- 14- Municipal Elections 2010

Publications by INMA (in Arabic):

- 1-"I am Responsible, All of Us are Responsible"
- 2-"Our Environment is Our Home"
- 3-"My Society is My Responsibility"
- 4-"My Society is My Responsibility" Workbook
- 5-"I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building"
- 6-"I am a Student, I am a Citizen: Ways Towards State Building" Workbook
- 7-"Lebanon Wars, why?"
- 8-Discrimination in Lebanon

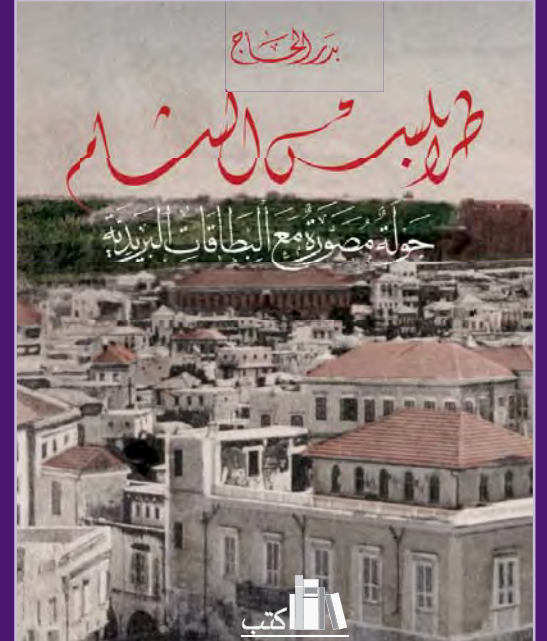
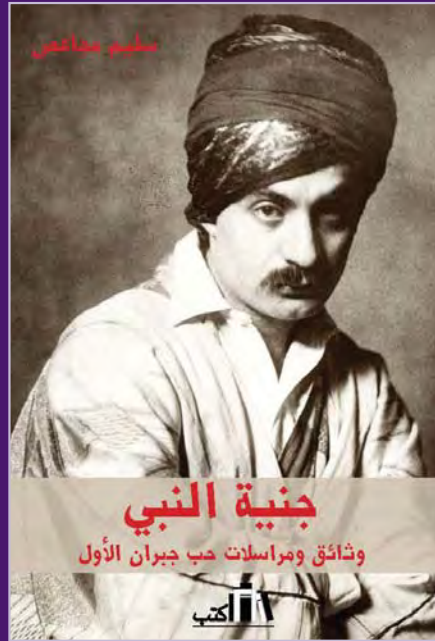
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Al-Borj Building, 4th Floor, Martyrs Square
Beirut Central District
Telephone: 961-1-983008/9 961-3-262376
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