

Lebanon in my mind. The civil war and the centrality of the Lebanese-Armenian community in the making of the Armenian Diaspora nationalism

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Introduction

Once it became clear that the Lebanese-Armenian community was not immune from the damages and the long-lasting impact of the civil war that broke out on April 13, 1975, the Armenian Diaspora (here after referred to as the Diaspora) mobilized to help the Lebanese-Armenians in their survival effort. By November of the first year of the war, religious authorities, political parties, compatriotic unions and other social organizations joined their efforts to provide all the means necessary to assure the continuity of community life despite the war.

The mobilization of the Diaspora in the first two years of the civil war to help the Lebanese-Armenian community was different from any previous mobilization at least in two senses. First, the year the Lebanese civil war started the Armenians commemorated the 60th anniversary of the Genocide, which was hailed as an event marking a new national unity with the common ideal of seeking international recognition and reparation of the crime. The "spirit of the 60th anniversary," as coined in the Diaspora press, was reflected also in the mobilization to help the Lebanese-Armenians. Second, helping the needy Armenians in Lebanon did not mean offering them refuge in other, safer communities. Quite the opposite, the aim of the aid efforts was to provide the necessary means to discourage emigration from Lebanon through ensuring a possible normalcy for community life.

By 1975, hence, the Lebanese-Armenian community had gained a central importance for the Diaspora. The "centrality" of Lebanon makes sense only in the wider context of the national self-awareness of the Diaspora and the social construction of the Armenian Diaspora nationalism. It becomes visible through a dominant discourse in the Diaspora press as reflected in the news, leading articles, opinion columns, interviews and editorials during the civil war, or at least during the first years when the Diaspora was mobilized to help the Lebanese-Armenian community.

This essay shows how the centrality of Lebanon appears in the Armenian Argentine community as reported in *ARMENIA* and *Sardarabad*, the Dashnagsutun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation - ARF) and Ramgavar (Armenian Democratic Liberal Party - ADL) newspapers, respectively, from the beginning of the civil war until the end of 1976, when the so-called Pax Syriana marked an end to the first episode of the conflict commonly known as the "Two Years' War" – *harb ul-sanatayn*.¹ I first discuss the concept of "Diaspora" from a theoretical perspective using Foucault's discourse theory, and highlight the meaning of the center-periphery approach. Next, I explain the center-periphery perspective of the Armenian Diaspora nationalism. Then, I argue about the centrality of Lebanon in the context of the Armenian Diaspora nationalism. In the third section I show how this centrality appears in the manner that the civil war and Diaspora mobilization to help the Lebanese-Armenians, are reported in two Argentine Armenian leading newspapers. The conclusion offers some critical appraisal of the centrality vision in the making of the Armenian Diaspora nationalism.

Discourse theory and the social construction of the Diaspora from a center-periphery perspective

Though biblical in its origins, the modern concept of Diaspora is closely related to the emergence of the nation-state and, by extension, to nationalism, the most structured and efficient organization of identity politics in the 19th and 20th centuries. Accordingly, the consolidation of the nation-state from the 17th century on in Western Europe provided a strong basis for the central nationalist idea that only the homeland could ensure the preservation and development of a collective identity labeled "nation." It is this status of "guarantor" for the development of the nation that gives the homeland its centrality, which lies both in its real or idealized ability to offer physical protection against foreign threats, as well as provide the higher proof of an identity linked with historical ties to the given geographical extension. Nationalism is, in fact, the ideology of a historically existential relationship between a group identity –the nation- and a geographical extension –the homeland. A Diaspora, defined as an ethnic-national community forced to live outside a real or idealized homeland, could, therefore, make no sense in terms of self-awareness without a reference to the homeland where lies the certainty of its perpetuation.

¹ Initially, the research aimed at including the periodical *Sharjum*, the Hentchakian newspaper, to cover all the three so-called "traditional" Armenian national political parties' newspapers. Unfortunately, however, back issues of *Sharjum* were not available because, as the last editor of the newspaper explained, the archives were lost.

Traditionally, the debate about nationhood opposed two schools of thought in social sciences. On the one hand, ethno-symbolists² attempt to explain the nationalist phenomenon in universalist terms; on the other, Marxists,³ structuralists⁴ and modernists⁵ sustain that the formation of nations is a historical phenomenon linked to the expansion of capitalism (the Marxist view), concentration of coercive power in the hands of the state (the structuralist approach), or the particular social-political organization, the process of industrialization in the late XVIII and XIX centuries (modernization theorists). The path-breaking notion of nations as "imagined communities"⁶ opened the way to the social constructivist approaches to the phenomenon. The structure-agency dynamics proper to the social constructivist theory break with the dichotomy of the traditional debate by incorporating conceptual elements from different perspectives. They thus offer a convincing explanation about the paradox of the continuity of the nation, a modern phenomenon, in the context of the current process of globalization. Only through "perpetual imagining,"⁷ can one understand the persistence of nationhood throughout the ages.

As shown by Debrix,⁸ language is crucial for social constructivism. Based on Foucault's theory of discourse, and further elaborated by Mouffe and Laclau, the "linguistic turn" in social sciences in general and the study of nationhood and nationalist ideology in particular lend "a central role to words and meanings as indicators of power relations."⁹ Of particular interest for Diaspora studies is Mouffe and Laclau's argument that *all societies are constructed according to contingent principles, which temporarily fix the identity of their constitutive elements*. Discourse, thus, is defined "as the means used to organize a society into a structured totality, in order to give it stability and meaning."¹⁰ Within the discourse theory guideline, *ideas and*

² Anthony D. Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986; idem *National identity*, London, Penguin Books, 1991; Walter Connor, *Etnonacionalismo*, Spanish translation María Corniero, Madrid, Trama Editorial, S.L., 1998.

³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780*, Second edit., New York, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

⁴ Charles Tilly, ed., *The formation of national states in Western Europe*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1975.

⁵ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1983.

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities*, New York, Verno, 1991.

⁷ Sheila Croucher, "Perpetual imagining: nationhood in the global era" in *International studies review*, 2003, 5, pp. 1-24.

⁸ François Debrix, *Language, agency, and politics in a constructed world*, Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe, 2003.

⁹ Claire Sutherland, "Nation-building through discourse theory", p. 186, in *Nations and nationalism*, 2005, 11, (2), pp. 185-202.

¹⁰ Ibid., 2005, p. 191.

*their linguistic expression [are] one aspect of the complex web of institutions, customs and practices, which together constitute a society.*¹¹

Following the conceptual guideline of social constructivism, modern Diasporas can be explained using two frameworks that analyze the emergence of "new nations" such as the United States, Canada, South Africa and Australia.¹² Louis Hartz's theory of "the fragment"¹³ and Seymour Martin Lipset's concept of "the formative event"¹⁴ in comparing the formation and political culture of "new nations," are particularly useful to study Diasporas. Closely related to both is Lipset's emphasis upon the role of the founding fathers. Diasporas, thus, are a detached part of a nation –the whole. They conserve the initial ideology of the nation, which fully makes sense only linked to the historical homeland; however, Diasporas also develop their own understanding of nationalism and identity, both in reference to the homeland. Hence, the first idea of centrality –the fragment detached from the whole.

As for the "formative event," it is usually a non-natural disaster that provoked the detachment of the fragment from the whole. The disaster aimed at the extinction of the whole, and the fragment is but a part of the whole that survived away from the natural habitat –the homeland. The disaster as a "formative event," thus, marks the fragment for generations; each generation becomes self-conscious about its identity through the ever-present danger of extinction if remaining separate from the whole.

Lastly, in the case of Diaspora formation, the "founding fathers" notion refers to the intellectual and political legacy of Diasporic charismatic leaders. The evolution of that legacy lies somewhere between the traditional and the rational-legal authority, in a state of permanent tension that shows the level of institutionalization of the Diasporas.

The analysis of the discourse that articulated the reasons for an all-Armenian mobilization to help the Lebanese-Armenian community precisely reveals the self-awareness of a Diasporan national identity constructed upon the centrality notion and its variants.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 197.

¹² I follow and expand an argument already developed in two previous studies, Khatchik Der Ghoukassian: "Diaspora and political integration: Armenians in the Peronist movement" (in Arm.), in *Haigazian armenological review*, 2002, Vol. 22, pp. 9-57, and "Diaspora politics: towards a framework of analysis". Paper presented at the 2005 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA (February 25).

¹³ Louis Hartz, *The founding of new societies*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1964.

¹⁴ Seymour Martin Lipset, *The first new nation*, New York, Basic Books, 1963.

The arguments about the "Centrality" of the Lebanese-Armenian community in the 1970s

The discourse of the all-national mobilization to help the Lebanese-Armenians during the civil war shows the central importance for the Diaspora that the community had gained by 1975. In different press reports, declarations and interviews, the Lebanese-Armenian community was referred to as the "heart of the Diaspora," "the central fortress,"¹⁵ "the most organized and numerous community," and so forth. This importance became even more relevant in the nationalist discourse of the seventies, when political activism for international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, already in place at least since 1965, reached the stage of the armed struggle. It might be a pure coincidence that this phase of the Armenian Cause, characterized by an organized campaign of armed attacks against Turkish diplomats, diplomatic representations, and sometimes non-official and non-Turkish targets, had started precisely in 1975. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that Lebanon had become one of the main operating bases, if not the headquarters, of the secret Armenian organizations that orchestrated the armed campaign. There are, hence, two main reasons for which Lebanon gained a central importance for the whole Diaspora. The first one is cultural, and it refers to the particular conditions of Lebanon that made the efforts of preserving the Armenian identity, the well-known *hayababhanum*, much more possible and long lasting than in any other country. The second is the political reason according to which the Middle East in general and Lebanon in particular are of special importance for the evolution of the Diaspora and the national destiny. The ultimate aim of Diaspora was foreseen as the return of the Armenians to their homeland sometime in the future, and the geographical proximity of the Middle Eastern communities to the homeland seemed to make this supreme goal closer to its realization. Both arguments reinforced each other in the critical context of the seventies. On the one hand, the cultural life of the Lebanese-Armenian community had reached a climax, especially with Armenian schools hosting students from communities around the world. On the other hand, a new generation of young Armenians, frustrated with sixty years of waiting for justice for the Genocide, looked at the example of other people, particularly the Palestinians, for pursuit of the national cause.

"Centrality" in this sense refers to a center-periphery vision of the national identity proper to all modern Diasporas, including the Armenian, wherein the "center" is the homeland and the "periphery" consists of the ethnic-national communities outside the homeland. In fact, the modernity of

¹⁵ *Michnapert* in Armenian.

Diasporas consists of structuring a community organization based on the idea that links national identity to a real or imaginary homeland, which becomes the only guarantor of national survival and development. Hence, Diasporas aim at returning someday to the homeland; and the closer they live to it, the more important the geographical location of the community becomes; hence, the importance of Middle Eastern communities for the Diaspora. Of them, the Lebanese-Armenian community, though not the most populous,¹⁶ gained special attention because of the cultural and political reasons mentioned above. Also, in a context where the lack of an independent state did not allow the homeland to fully assume the central role proper to the homeland of a Diaspora in the center-periphery vision, the Lebanese-Armenian community gained a special "centrality" for the Diaspora.

"Naturally (...) our first concern."¹⁷ The civil war and helping the Lebanese-Armenians in ARMENIA and *Sardarabad* in 1975-1976

The news about fighting broke out in Lebanon on April 13, 1975, and appeared on the front-page of *ARMENIA* for the first time three days later. Until April 23, the newspaper kept informing its readers about continuing "internal fights" based on the United Press (UP) and Agence France Presse (AFP) news agencies' cables from Beirut on the front page, while the preparations in Diaspora for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Genocide were the main topic of the front pages. April 23 marked the first time that news about Lebanon included information about damages that Armenians and Armenian institutions suffered during the first ten days of fighting. "We did not receive newspapers or information for the last three weeks," says a footnote of the editor, "now we have learned," about a bomb fallen on the church of *Surp Kevork* in *Hadjen*, five Armenian victims, as well as damages and a number of deaths and injured people in other Armenian neighborhoods. On May 2nd, the front page information about the

¹⁶ The Iranian Armenian community in 1975 outnumbered by far the Lebanese-Armenians. Nonetheless, Iranian Armenians are not part of the Diaspora in the sense that the term refers to a special national self-awareness that is born as an immediate consequence of the 1915 Genocide. The Iranian Armenians, as well as Turkish Armenians especially in Istanbul, were a community long before the Disaster, and their collective self-awareness does not have the Genocide as the formative event of their identity. This, of course, does not deny the importance of the Genocide for Iranian Armenians, nor suggests any normative use of the concept of Diaspora when referring to national identity, or nationalism. The argument is put forward for the sake of a better understanding of the phenomenon of Diaspora, and is subject to an open debate.

¹⁷ Original in Armenian, author's translation. Same for the other remaining non-English texts and quotes.

commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Genocide in different communities does not include information about public acts in Lebanon, because, as the article goes, no information was received. Three days later, on May 5, *ARMENIA*, based upon information from Turkish press, published the news about a bomb thrown at the car of the Turkish Embassy's counselor in Lebanon. On May 7, more commentaries on the same event in the Turkish press make yet another front page news in *ARMENIA*.

For the remaining months of the first year of the war and the one that followed, these three topics –the civil war and its impact on Lebanese-Armenians, the 60th anniversary of the Genocide and the attacks on Turkish officials- will appear interconnected in making the centrality of the Lebanese-Armenian community the dominant discourse of Diaspora nationalism. The information about the events per se says little about the social construction of this centrality, except when an editor's note is added, usually to comment about the events. Yet, the way the information is presented (usually as front page news) and the consistency with which it appears, are some of the empirical bases upon which the argument about the socially constructed notion of the Lebanese-Armenian community's centrality lies. The argument appears in almost direct form in interviews, editorials and leading opinion articles. Interestingly, for instance, the information about the march for the 60th anniversary to which 30,000 people participated in Lebanon appears earlier in *ARMENIA* – on May 8- than the information about commemoration acts in Cordoba (on May 10) and Montevideo (May 12). It is not clear whether the reason for publishing the march in Lebanon is the delay of the press reports from Cordoba and Montevideo, or the priority given to Lebanon. However, the phenomenon is already suggestive of a dominant discursive pattern.

In May and June, *ARMENIA* continues reporting on "bloody fights" in Beirut as informed by UP and other news agencies. On June 21, 23 and 24, a long interview of Hovhannes (Juan) Racubian, an ARF leader and long-time member of the Administrative Institution of the Armenian Church (*Institución Administrativa de la Iglesia Armenia – IAIA*), mostly known as the Armenian Center (*Centro Armenio – CA*), the body that claimed to represent the community and did it in *de facto* terms without any official or consensual legitimacy, contains the first empirical elements of the discourse that made the centrality of the Lebanese-Armenian community. After a visit to then Soviet Armenia, where he headed a community delegation, which invited His Holiness Vazken I to visit Argentina, Racubian stopped in a number of countries, including Lebanon and Iran, where he met with party, community and church representatives. When talking about his impressions in the first part of the interview, Racubian finds "natural" to have as "first concern" the

Lebanese-Armenians' situation. He focuses on *Djemaran* (Nishan Palandjian Secondary School), which in 1975 had 1,025 students, and underlines the importance of the terrain bought to build an even bigger institution. Racubian's insistence on the importance of *Djemaran* is not a coincidence; by then, more than a dozen Argentine Armenian students, mostly from *Khrimian* and *Surp Krikor Lusavorich* schools under ARF control, had spent a year or two in *Djemaran* to learn Armenian. The centrality of Lebanon for *Diaspora* appears again in the second part of the interview, where Racubian says, "After Beirut, Teheran's Armenian community is the most important one in *Diaspora*." Finally, the last part of the interview is dedicated to the 60th anniversary. After expressing his enthusiasm for the national unity created by the 60th anniversary, as well as assessing that the conditions for political work were far better than in the past, Racubian continues:

It would have been different, of course, if we had a legal state that would have assumed official responsibility for the Armenian Cause. What was realized in Armenia is very important, of course, but it has solely a publicity nature. The Diaspora is spread worldwide. Our struggle would have been much more efficient, of course, if we all lived in our homeland, pursued our ideal uniting all our means and had a legal state to represent us. Nevertheless, we noticed that the dream of a united homeland is alive not only in Diaspora, but also in Armenia. This spirit is our greatest strength that will empower our struggle.

What is expressed in Racubian's words was the dominant nationalist vision of the ARF in the 1970s: confirming the irreplaceable space the homeland occupies for the nation, yet still waiting for an independent state to take charge of the Armenian Cause. This discourse is also suggestive of the party's ideological and political lines to pursue *Diaspora* leadership in the struggle for the Armenian Cause, with the ultimate goal of gathering the whole nation on a free and united homeland.

The long hot Lebanese summer of the civil conflict's first year, including the successive "bloody Sundays," "cease-fires," "kidnappings," "Army interventions" and other events making the news is echoed in the July-August issues of *ARMENIA*. The information is mostly from news agencies and, when available, from the Armenian press. Analytical or opinion articles are rare, almost non-existent except for some comments on the news. September issues (12, 13, 20 and 24) include as leading front page news the 40 years of poetic creation of Mushegh Ishkhan, while continuing reporting about the war. In October, *ARMENIA* starts to analyze the political position of the

Lebanese-Armenian community, mostly reproducing articles and interviews from *Aztag*. Thus, following the news about the ARF leaders' meeting with Imam Mussa Sadr (*ARMENIA*, September 12), the translation to Armenian of an interview in Arabic with Melkon Eblighatian, one of the Armenian deputies in the Lebanese Parliament, is published on October 8, and 9, with the title "What was the position of the Armenians during the last events?" The virtues of the neutrality position of the Armenians during the civil war start to show in the discourse on the front page news about the situation in Lebanon on October 22. The news ends with a paragraph about the "situation of Armenians" where the editor maintains *despite the situation and the clashes, the collective existence of the Armenians is secure in Lebanon thanks to the neutral position.*

October issues of *ARMENIA* include three other important events related to the making of Diaspora nationalism and the centrality of the Lebanese-Armenian community. These events are the killing of the first two Turkish diplomats in Vienna (reported in the October 24 issue with information from Reuters), and Paris (October 27), and a long interview with Ana Marí Mahseredjian about her impressions upon her return from Lebanon where she went to perfect her knowledge of Armenian in *Djemaran* (October 24). *Lebanon is a beautiful country, as for the Lebanese-Armenians, as any other community or people, they also have their weaknesses. Nevertheless, compared to other communities I think they are the best organized, progressive and, of course, from the national [identity] perspective, the most preserved one* Mahseredjian opines. Once again, the special place that Lebanon then occupied for other communities of the Diaspora is underlined. A special front line article about the situation of Lebanese-Armenians appears in the October 28, issue. After informing that no newspaper has been received from Lebanon for a month, the article goes on describing the situation in the Armenian neighborhood of *Bourj Hammoud*, which is *calm and people there have the opportunity to come out to the streets and buy the goods they need*. It also praises the permanent contact the three Armenian political parties have established with each other,* and ends up wishing Lebanon to recover its normalcy, *a country that has been exemplary for peaceful coexistence, yet where according to news agencies 4,000 people died during the fighting. Since the beginning of the conflict, sixty Armenians have perished.*

From October on, analytical articles and editorials about Lebanon and the policy of the Lebanese-Armenian community start to appear with major frequency. The reason might well be the overall feeling that the conflict will not be over soon. Another reason might be the involvement of the ARF in the

* Editor's note: read Shoghig Ashegian's chapter in Part 6 for this development.

political process of looking for a possible solution starting with the presentation of a proposal of political reforms, information that *ARMENIA* reproduces in the November 12, issue from *Aztag's* October 10th issue. A show of solidarity with Lebanon is the participation of a delegation from the IAIA to a gathering for peace organized by the Lebanese Cultural Union of Argentina (*ARMENIA*, November 21, front page). A leading editorial opinion, on the other hand, is published on the front page of *ARMENIA* on November 26, signed "A.", about the first communication of the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide, the secret organization that claimed responsibility for shooting two Turkish diplomats in Vienna and Paris. Entitled "Between the olive branch and the rifle," the leading column ends by making a political commitment. *We still prefer the olive branch. It is up to Turkey to make its choice. And if it is just the language of arms that Ankara understands, then our people know how to stand by the "Justice Commandos".*

The first joint appeal of the Armenian Apostolic, Armenian Catholic and Armenian Evangelical Church leaders to the Diaspora is the front page article of *ARMENIA's* November 27th issue. *It is time for sister communities, as well as less affected Lebanese-Armenians to help the recovery efforts of a populous Armenian community, making the preservation of the national, cultural, educational and economic lives of their kin their major responsibility.* This need for collective responsibility is justified in terms of the threat to the "physical existence of our most lively and biggest community." The idea of the Lebanese-Armenian community's centrality for the Diaspora formulated in this joint declaration is echoed in a November 29, *ARMENIA* editorial. *Our Armenian community in Lebanon, which truly is regarded as the center of the Diaspora's weight thanks to its high organizational level, religious leadership, and educational, cultural, informational and intellectual network, is also in a state of shock.* This first editorial is the starting point of the formulation of the argument to help the Lebanese-Armenians, in which "our community has a role to play," as ends a second editorial three days later. The argument is based on the joint declaration of the spiritual leaders to Diaspora *"to help the humble sectors of the Lebanese-Armenians.*

Parallel to these first formulations for an all-Diaspora mobilization to help the Lebanese-Armenians, *ARMENIA* continues reproducing the editorials of *Aztag Weekly-Droshag*, the central organ of the ARF Bureau, concerning the debut of the armed struggle for the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. On the December 2nd issue, the *Droshag* editorial "People should not be pushed to desperation" and the first press release of the Justice Commandos organization are together on the front page. On

December 8, the editorial, "The conflict of uncertainty," praises the responsibility for the physical protection of the Armenian community that "ARF youth have assumed," yet warns about the long-lasting impacts of the economic destruction of the community, echoing a new joint declaration signed by the three Lebanese-Armenian religious leaders and His Holiness Vazken I. The illustration of the virtues of the neutrality position that the Armenian political parties adopted in Lebanon is highlighted by two front page parallel news on the issue of December 9: one of the titles, "Horror in the streets of Beirut," refers to the fighting, whereas the other, "Complete calm in *Bourj Hammoud*," to the situation in the Armenian neighborhood. The economic damage of the war has reached 6 billion dollars informs *ARMENIA* on December 19th, whereas the next day along with the news "The calm makes a slow come back to Lebanon," an article signed by Hrand Samuel and originally published in *Haratch* of Paris bears the suggestive title "Let us help our fellow Armenians in Lebanon." On December 26, *ARMENIA* publishes the Armenian Relief Society's (ARS) Central Commission's appeal in Boston, to all ARS chapters to start helping Lebanon.

On January 2, 1976, the front page news from Lebanon is three rockets fired on the Turkish Embassy and the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) claiming responsibility for the attack. From January 10 on, the Argentine Armenian community is mobilized to help the Lebanese-Armenians. The IAIA makes public a call to participate to the all-national efforts to help the Lebanese-Armenians, and on January 14, invites the whole organization to a deliberative meeting next day. On the eve of that first meeting, on January 15, *ARMENIA*'s editorial underlines the importance of the initiative characterizing the Lebanese-Armenian community as *the center of Diaspora from the perspective of its organizational level and quality, and as such it had become the main impulse for the national existence and persistence*. The editorial, moreover, finds comforting the national awareness of the entire nation about the need to help the Lebanese-Armenians. "The aid to a threatened community is organized with the proper level of concern and seriousness."

One of the central texts where the argument of the Lebanese-Armenian community's centrality is solidly constructed is Mushegh Ishkhan's "Lebanon: the central fortress of the culture in Diaspora," which *ARMENIA* reproduces on page 2 of the January 2, issue. Because the article is the most eloquent in terms of arguing the importance of Lebanon from a cultural perspective, and because the logic and the poetics of the text reflect the dominant discourse of Diaspora nationalism, it is worth quoting long parts of it.

No body can ever deny that Lebanon is the cultural and educational center of the Diaspora. It has become a kind of modern-era "Yerkir" –homeland- from where was heard the familiar voice of the Armenian spirit and language. Lebanon has become the center of Diaspora's light and hope, especially after the destruction of our other Middle Eastern communities.

Indeed, it is only there that the Armenian culture could flourish, the Armenian language keep pure, that new literature could be born. When the older generation in other communities vanishes, the conditions do not allow newcomers to take the place of those who had gone.

...

[In Lebanon] both literature exists, and a new generation that reads in Armenian, writes in Armenian and looks for Armenian books comes into age.

...

It is this central fortress of Armenian culture that is endangered. For now, every harmonious voice born from the spirit is silenced under the noise of guns. It is silenced, yet not dead.

...

What most matters about Lebanon are our national and cultural wealth accumulated there. We cannot move them to any other place, nor can we create all that once again in a new environment.

...

A call has been made public. It goes beyond the pure benefactor aspect. It is not a call to a piece of bread, a handful flour or sugar, but a call to save values for the future. Because helping the Lebanese-Armenians nowadays means not only feeding hungry masses, but also supporting the central fortress of our culture in Diaspora and preventing it from falling down. This case is an irreplaceable value for our common national struggle, continued existence and Cause.

...

Losing Lebanon means to lose the central fortress of our struggle and defense.

In the same issue where Mushegh Ishkhan's article is reproduced, the joint call of the three religious leaders, as well as the call of His Holiness Vazken I issued on November 4, to help Lebanon are published again. An editorial on January 16, "Centered labor," considers an all-national concern to support "our brightest community in its difficult days." A special commission

to coordinate the fund raising and the aid is formed, as told on the front page of *ARMENIA*'s January 17 issue, and the IAIA receives the visit of the then Ambassador of Lebanon in Argentina, Fuad Turk.

In the following months, the newspaper will reproduce every article, editorial or column published in other organs concerning the importance of helping the Lebanese-Armenians. A dominant discourse that makes a "small Armenia" of the Lebanese-Armenian community is found throughout all these texts. A leading article in *Azad or* (Athens) reprinted in *ARMENIA*'s January 17th issue even directly characterizes it as such. Moreover, the call not to let the community "die" in the same article ends with a warning: "[The death of the Lebanese-Armenian community] is the death of the Diaspora, the Armenian Culture and the Armenian Cause." Another editorial (*Asbarez* of Los Angeles reprinted in *ARMENIA* on January 22), "Why help the Lebanese-Armenians?" explains:

The issue is not only saving and preserving the Lebanese-Armenian community, but preserving the organizational structure of all the Diaspora. In other words, the conflict of the Lebanese-Armenians is also the conflict of every other Armenian community. It is not a question of making a donation to the needy ones, but to be aware of the importance of maintaining the most important community alive, which demands the highest sacrifice from us all.

Ads of the fund raising campaign start to appear in *ARMENIA* on January 30. *The Argentine Armenian community is called upon to join the efforts of all the Armenians and mobilize all its material means to help the Lebanese-Armenians*, says the text of the big front page ad. Following its 32nd Regional Meeting near the end of January, the ARS South American organization (Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil) issues its own call to its members and the community to help the Lebanese-Armenians. Published on January 31, the argument articulated in that call follows the logic that links the Lebanese-Armenians' preservation to the preservation of the Diaspora, because if "the beating heart of the Diaspora" stops then all cultural life will be reduced to its minimum expression, if not stop outright, "which would be equal to a double national disaster." The "irreplaceable" Lebanese-Armenian community "has truly the right to hope this much from us and we should not deceive them."

With the first photos of armed Armenian youth guarding institutions and Armenian neighborhoods, the discourse is shifted from helping a needy community to the pride that inspires the determination of the Lebanese-Armenians to hold on and not abandon the country. A leading editorial of

Droshag in ARMENIA on February 2nd stigmatizes those Armenians who start to emigrate. *Every Armenian individual or family that leaves the country weakens not only the community but the whole Diaspora ... Lebanon and the Lebanese-Armenian community have crucial importance for the Diaspora. It is from this perspective that we should think and act about all the issues not only in Lebanon, but also in all the Armenian communities of the Diaspora. Lebanon and the Lebanese people should be able to perceive the moral and material help of all the Armenians.* The pride element that appears in the discourse is seen also in the self-confidence of the Diaspora. On February 6, ARMENIA publishes an article signed by K. Chobanian. Lebanon, writes the author is "after Armenia the next shining center for us, Armenians; it is a healthy and fruitful root." It is in Lebanon that those who from North and South America and other parts of the world go to Armenia and make a stop there see "the progress of a people that from "leftovers" was able to build a "nation." The two million Armenians living in the world *today do not need foreign aid. Conditions were different sixty years ago. It has been ten months now that the Lebanese-Armenians did everything possible and impossible to hold on, and they still do ... The Diaspora today is strong of about two million, 180-200 thousand of whom live in Lebanon ... Let us not betray our Armenian character, let us not forget that many of us went through pain, hunger and homelessness. Let us not forget that we are the children of a persecuted generation. The freedom and wealth of the Americas should not endanger our essence ... We are one nation, one people in America, Australia or the wounded Lebanon.*

By the time a temporary cease-fire was established in Lebanon in February 1976, and schools and other institutions re-opened their doors, the Argentine Armenians had collected 218,685,000 pesos. To compensate for the weak national currency, the coordinating commission decided to concentrate on medicine and food. The Armenian community in Sao Paolo had meanwhile raised US \$ 30,000. While the formation of a tripartite commission of the three Armenian political parties – Social Democrat Hentchakian Party, ARF and the ADL - in Lebanon raises renewed hopes in handling the situation, editorials continue to stress the need of helping Lebanon to avoid massive emigration of the Armenians. *"If we think that abandoning Lebanon is harmful for the entire nation because those who go out face the obvious danger of assimilation,"* writes an ARMENIA editorial on March 6, *"then it is our national duty to react quickly to that danger, which is the deepest wound of Diaspora."* Therefore, the editorial calls on continuing the fund raising efforts to provide immediate help to the needy Armenians in Lebanon, but above all to be aware that *the preservation of the Lebanese-Armenian community and the reactivation of its intellectual and educational*

life has a transcendental meaning for all the Diaspora. Because of its institutional infrastructure, the youth and the Armenian profile, the Lebanese-Armenian community is the vanguard of Diaspora's existential struggle.

Despite the military take-over in Argentina on March 24, 1976, and the state of siege declared by the *de facto* government, news about Lebanon as well as editorials about the special place Lebanon occupies in the Diaspora do not disappear. Moreover, partly because the Armenian press in Diaspora never had a strong tradition of reporting local news or getting involved in local politics, and partly by prudence, the Lebanese-Armenian situation continues to run as front page stories and editorial topics. Thus, while after two months of a fragile cease-fire the fighting breaks out again and the threat of the country's division becomes more real, the "irreplaceable" character of the Armenian community continues to enjoy a consensus in the Diaspora's nationalist discourse. *ARMENIA* reproduces an *Asbarez* editorial in the April 2 issue where the possible change of the Lebanese political system is envisioned. Even if the confessional system is abolished, maintains the editorial, the Lebanese-Armenian community will still keep its political weight. Also, because of the special conditions offered by Lebanon, "the potential to persist and develop as Armenians outside Armenia is far greater in Lebanon than in any other country." Moreover, the solution to the Armenian Cause makes the massive presence of the Armenians in the Middle East necessary. *The more numerous are Armenians living close to the occupied homeland [referring to Western Armenia], the greater is the probability of re-conquering these territories ... As is Armenia's existence an irreplaceable factor for the persistence of the Armenian nation and the solution of the Armenian Cause, so is the preservation of the Lebanese-Armenian community for the Diaspora. From this perspective it becomes easy to understand why the conflict affecting the Lebanese-Armenians should be a concern for all the Diaspora.*

On April 13, another *ARMENIA* editorial calls to support *Djemaran* and help keep its doors open. By May, the total funds raised in Argentina reach 2,495,000 pesos, and on June, 1, the ARS declares having raised 88,860,000 pesos. The military government in Argentina forbids any political activity in the country, but the fund-raising efforts to help Lebanon are not affected. An editorial on June 12, continues the call for more donations to a community characterized as "the heart of Diaspora's organic structure." Abandoning Lebanon becomes synonymous to assimilation. *The emigration is terrible, mortal. Outside the Middle East, the Armenian nation faces the danger of rapid assimilation*, is Hagop Pakradouni's judgment in *ARMENIA* ("As it is not too late yet..." June 15). *Let us be clear: all institutions working in our*

reality are against any massive displacement out of the Middle East because they are aware about the grave consequences of the dissolution of a whole community ... The greatest danger for the Lebanese-Armenians is emigration against which we need to struggle with all our means. The style becomes much more aggressive and stigmatizing within the next months when *ARMENIA* continues reporting about the fighting, simultaneously with the news about the formation of the National Council in Lebanon and the efforts of preserving the integrity of the community during the second summer of the civil war. *The struggle to preserve the Lebanese-Armenian community today is crucial for the preservation of the basis for the struggle for the Armenian Cause. Any position that disregards this imperative is nothing less than national betrayal,* is written in a leading front page article on September 16.

On October, 19, 30 tons of food were sent to Lebanon as a donation from the Argentine Armenian community. By the end of 1976, the first round of the civil war came to an end and the so-called Pax Syriana was established. On December, 18, *ARMENIA* reproduces the press release of the Lebanese-Armenian Coordinating Organ, which expresses hope that with security conditions assured, those Lebanese-Armenians who left the country would come back.

This hopeful note, unfortunately, will be premature. Yet, it leaves the impression that the all-national mobilization to help the Lebanese-Armenians during the first year and a half of the civil war made sense.

Compared to the coverage *ARMENIA* has given to the Lebanese civil war, *Sardarabad's* chronicles are almost non-existent. One of the reasons is that by then a biweekly, the first issue of *Sardarabad* came out on September 6, 1975, when the civil war had long started. The first mention of Lebanon, though not the war, appears in the second issue (September 20) with a poem about Lebanon by Mushegh Ishkhan, probably honoring his visit to Argentina. The first editorial of *Sardarabad*, in the same issue, maintains that the main objective of Diaspora is *hayabahbanum* in a practically similar discourse found in *ARMENIA*: *We do not deny that our generation, which grew up on these Armenian-absorbing (hayagul) lands, lives in a climate where neither the spiritual, nor the way of life (guentsagh) are its own, or have any relation with our national traditions and culture.* The editorial, moreover, underlines the need of unity within the community. The October 4, issue covers the visit of poet Mushegh Ishkhan and writer Garo Poladian to Argentina. However, it does not mention the war. The Armenian editorial of the same issue is dedicated to the praise of the Armenian culture, which is

considered the only factor that can preserve the national identity of "communities living tens of thousand miles away from the homeland."

The Lebanese war is first mentioned in the December 27th issue with the decision of the Armenian General Benevolent Union's (AGBU) leadership to start a worldwide campaign to raise US \$ 600,000 to help the Lebanese-Armenian community. AGBU President Alex Manookian's call and an editorial in Armenian dedicated to the same topic are in the same issue. *The fundraising for the Lebanese-Armenians should be considered a matter of honor for the Armenians of South America, because in this case the quality as well as patriotism of each community would be valued as much as the number of its members. Indifference would mean to cut off from the noble feelings of hayababhanum, and, moreover, to head toward assimilation.* On January 3, 1976, *Sardarabad* starts publishing the first reactions to the fundraising campaign. Of the US \$ 30,000 goal set by the AGBU for all South America, 75,000,000 Argentine pesos are donated by benefactor Miurekian (US \$ 10,000 from Buenos Aires, US \$ 2,000 Cordoba, US \$8,000 Montevideo and US \$ 10,000 Sao Paulo). In the same issue, the initiative of the IAIA is also published. Reacting to both fundraising campaigns, an editorial note refers to the importance of the Lebanese-Armenian community: *For decades the Armenians living outside the homeland received unrestricted economic and cultural aid from the Lebanese-Armenians. Faced with a national tragedy, it is up to us now to help them with the same fraternal sentiments to try to relieve their material, cultural and economic loss; a loss which is our own.*

By March 27, *Sardarabad* starts to publish the list of donations to the AGBU fundraising campaign. In the same issue, and for the first time, there is an interview (no source, no author mentioned, no name revealed) with "the military leader of ADL" in Lebanon. The second part of the interview is published in the April 10, issue, which also has an editorial praising the unity and cooperation of the three Armenian political parties in Lebanon. The editorial invites the organizations of the Argentine Armenian community to follow this example. On May 5, the newspaper also publishes the joint communication of the three parties' leadership in the U.S. and Canada, inviting Armenians all over the world to unite. The July 3, issue reports on the AGBU leadership's fundraising campaign, specifying that Buenos Aires had contributed with US \$ 12,000, Cordoba US \$ 2,000, and Montevideo US \$ 12,674. The last note about the Lebanese-Armenians in *Sardarabad* in that crucial year of 1976 is an opinion column by a "correspondent" about the "Lebanese conflict and the unity of the Armenian people."

Conclusion

In 1975, *ARMENIA* was the only Armenian daily newspaper for the South American Armenian communities in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. As such, it is a rich source of information for the analysis of the Argentine Armenians' attempts to help their fellow nationals in Lebanon. True, since 1931, the year it was founded, and despite its initial aim of becoming a community newspaper, *ARMENIA* is publicly known as the organ of the Central Committee of the ARF in South America. Yet, the partisan character of *ARMENIA* is not a handicap to use its discourse as an empirical argument for the hypothesis of this paper. First, the ARF is one of the main architects of Diaspora nationalism; its discourse, hence, is a rich empirical source to study the making of Diaspora nationalism. Secondly, as Minassian¹⁸ argues, the leadership of the party was concentrated in the hands of militants from Middle Eastern communities from the sixties on, and Beirut became the ARF headquarters.¹⁹ This is yet another reason to consider the discourse of the ARF a rich source to look at for the empirical arguments of this research.

Empirical evidence of the engagement of Argentine Armenians with all-Diasporan efforts to help the Lebanese-Armenian community's survival is found also in *Sardarabad*, the ADL local leadership organ. The lack of intensive war coverage and the Lebanese-Armenians' fate is probably because of the size and the publishing frequency (biweekly until 1987) of the newspaper. It was much more narrowly dedicated to community matters and activities of the AGBU chapters in South America. However, when it comes to the understanding of Diaspora and the role of community organizations, the ADL discourse in 1975, was hardly much different from the ARF discourse. True, *Sardarabad* completely ignored the armed struggle for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, did not report the events, nor dedicate any editorial note to the phenomenon; but it also avoided any reporting about the local situation in Argentina, not even the Coup d'Etat of March 1976.

¹⁸ Gaïdz Minassian, *Guerre et terrorisme Arméniens*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2002.

¹⁹ Officially the ARF never claimed to have a "headquarter" for the Bureau, the highest stance of the party leadership. Since its foundation in 1890, the party adopted the operational principal of "decentralization" providing to each party organizational body –Central Committees and Committees– the autonomy of decision as long as it remained within the ideological and strategic guidelines of party's General Assembly. Nevertheless, in exile conditions, especially from the 1960s on, the Bureau gained major control and centralization of decisions, at least for ideological issues and the politics of the Armenian Cause. "Headquarter," thus, in this chapter will refer to the place where the Bureau, essentially the President and some of the most influential members, its main offices and the central organ of the party were located.

This may lead one to think the conservative ADL ideology was behind the extreme prudence of not seeing or hearing evil. Prudence derived directly from their ideology. Yet, the main reason for the lack of coverage of any hot topic was most probably the size and frequency of the newspaper, and the priority it gave to reporting about the local community and AGBU activities.

The discourse analysis of reporting in *ARMENIA* on the civil war and its threat to the Lebanese-Armenians makes the dominant narrative of Diaspora nationalism in the seventies clear. From a different ideological perspective, the discourse in *Sardarabad*, even when more narrowly concentrated on AGBU activities, follows the same logic of *hayabahbanum*. Several aspects of this discourse, however, need more specification. Thus, it is not clear to what extent the dominant discourse reflects the self-awareness of a national identity and to what extent it is more specific to a partisan power struggle in the Diaspora with each organization using it as a tool for the strengthening of its own position, self-attributed or real, of leadership. Most importantly, it says very little about how successful it is in creating a true engagement with its terms. Finally, though the evaluation of the efficiency of the discourse in mobilizing people is highly debatable, its limitations to fulfill the promises are very obvious.

How much the all-Diaspora mobilization did help the preservation of the Lebanese-Armenian community is a topic for a wider research project with much more complicated variables. For the Argentine Armenian community at least, and most probably for other communities, too, it became very difficult in the end to maintain a permanent mobilization and help the Lebanese-Armenians. Naturally local concerns end up dominating the priorities. For the Argentine Armenians, this included the project of a new center for the ARF and the affiliate organizations that needed several fund raising campaigns. The local AGBU chapter was similarly engaged with a construction project, for the Mary Manookian high school and center.

The prolongation and deepening of the conflict, on the other hand, did not inspire much confidence about the capacity of the Diaspora to maintain the integrity of the Lebanese-Armenian institutions. Hence, at some point the sacrifice for it is inevitably questioned, though almost always not publicly. Yet, within the logic of the dominant discourse as the making of Diaspora nationalism, the decline of Lebanon's centrality by 1987-88, could be explained by another factor. This was the massive mobilization in Armenia, first, for *Karabagh* and, then the independence. It provided a new vitality to the main "center" – the homeland – for Diaspora nationalism, making other centralities outside the homeland secondary if not superficial.

Résumé

Le Liban de mes souvenirs. La guerre civile et le rôle central de la communauté arménienne du Liban dans le développement du nationalisme diasporique arménien

Quand la guerre du Liban éclata en 1975, la communauté arménienne d'Argentine s'est mobilisée, pour venir en aide aux Arméniens-libanais. À la suite d'appels publics, des collectes et des donations individuelles furent organisées et les Arméniens-argentins ont envoyé de l'aide humanitaire et matérielle au Liban, et accueillirent les rares Arméniens qui avaient décidé d'émigrer en Argentine.

Ce n'était pas la première fois que les Arméniens de l'Argentine venaient en aide à ceux d'un pays tiers ; cependant le sort des Arméniens du Liban semble avoir été particulièrement important en Argentine, et pendant longtemps la source d'une grande inquiétude, à en croire les nouvelles, les articles et les éditoriaux parus dans le quotidien arménien local, *ARMENIA*, de la Fédération Révolutionnaire Arménienne (Dachnagtsoutioun) et dans une moindre mesure, dans *Sardarabad*, publication du Parti Libéral Démocratique (le parti Ramgavar).

À travers le dépouillement des journaux *ARMENIA* et *Sardarabad*, ce chapitre s'intéresse à la mobilisation de la communauté arménienne d'Argentine durant la guerre civile du Liban. L'auteur veut montrer plus particulièrement que la centralité de la communauté arménienne du Liban pour les Arméniens d'Argentine, spécialement pour les sympathisants du parti FRA-Dachnagtsoutioun, est étroitement liée aux particularités sociologiques de l'identité arménienne en diaspora, particularités selon lesquelles les communautés du Moyen-Orient auraient un rôle et une importance stratégiques dans l'auto-préservation identitaire diasporique, dont l'objectif final est le retour à la patrie historique. Et cette importance stratégique est allée en croissant, surtout durant la décennie 1975-1985, la décennie de la lutte armée pour la reconnaissance internationale du génocide des Arméniens.

APPENDIX

Document A

**Lebanese-Armenians
in the Lebanese parliaments**

	Period	No. of Seats	No. of Armenians	%	Names of Lebanese-Armenian Deputies
1st	Nov. 18, 1927-May 13, 1929	46	0	0.0%	N/A
2nd	Jul. 15, 1929-May 10, 1932	45	0	0.0%	N/A
3rd	Nov. 30, 1934-June 05, 1937	25	1 Arm. Orth.	4.0%	Vahram Leylekian
4th	Oct. 29, 1937-Sep. 21, 1939	63	1 Arm. Orth.	1.6%	Vahram Leylekian
5th	Sep. 21, 1943-Apr. 07, 1947	55	2 Arm. Orth.	3.6%	Hrachia Shamlan Movses Der-Kaloustian
6th	May 25, 1945-Mar. 20, 1951	55	2 Arm. Orth.	3.6%	Movses Der-Kaloustian Melkon Hayrabadian
7th	Jun. 05, 1951-May 03, 1953	77	3 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.*	5.2%	Movses Der-Kaloustian Melkon Hayrabadian Dickran Tosbat Joseph Chader*
8th	Aug. 13, 1953-Aug. 20, 1957	44	2 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.*	6.8%	Movses Der-Kaloustian Dickran Tosbat Joseph Chader*
9th	Aug. 20, 1957-Jul. 18, 1960	66	3 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.*	6.1%	Movses Der-Kaloustian Dickran Tosbat Khatchik Babikian Joseph Chader*

10th	Jul. 18, 1960-May 08, 1964	99	4 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.*	5.1%	Movses Der-Kaloustian Khatchig Babikian Souren Khanamirian Sarkis Shamlian Joseph Chader*
11th	May 08, 1964-May 09, 1968	99	4 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.*	5.1%	Movses Der-Kaloustian Khatchik Babikian Souren Khanamirian Andre Tabourian Joseph Chader*
12th	May 09, 1968-May 03, 1972	99	4 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.*	5.1%	Movses Der-kaloustian Khatchik Babikian Souren Khanamirian Andre Tabourian Joseph Chader*
13th	May 13, 1972-Jun. 7, 1991	99	4 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.* 1 Protestant**	6.1%	Khatchik Babikian Souren Khanamirian Melkon Eblighatian Ara Yerevanian Joseph Chader* ^[1] Antranik Manougian**
14th	Jun 7, 1991-Aug. 23, 1992	108	5 Arm. Orth. 1 Protestant**	5.5%	Khatchik Babikian Souren Khanamirian Melkon Eblighatian Ara Yerevanian Shahe Barsoumian Antranik Manoukian**

^[1] Joseph Chader died in 1977 and no one was elected to replace him.

15th	Aug 23, 1992-Sep. 1996	128	5 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.* 1 Protestant**	5.5%	Khatchik Babikian Souren Khanamirian Shabe Barsoumian Yeghia Jerejian George Kassarji Hagop Choukhadarian* Nourijian Demirdjian**
16th	1996-2000	128	5 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.* 1 Protestant**	5.5%	Khatchik Babikian Yeghia Jerejian George Kassarji Hagop Demirdjian Sebouh Hovnanian Hagop Choukhadarian* Abraham Dedeyan**
17th	2000-2005	128	5 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.*	4.6%	Yeghia Jerejian George Kassarji Sebouh Hovnanian Hagop Kassardjian Jean Oghassapian Serge TourSarkissian*
18th	2005-2009	128	5 Arm. Orth. 1 Arm. Cath.*	4.6%	Yeghia Jerejian George Kassarji Hagop Kassardjian Jean Oghassapian Hagop Paktadounian Serge TourSarkissian*

Document B (1)
Lebanese-Armenian ministers
in the Lebanese governments
before the *Ta'ef* Agreement

Cabinet	Year	Prime Minister	Cabinet members	Lebanese-Armenian Ministers	Portfolio
26th	1958	Sami El-Sulh	14	Joseph Chader	Public Planning
30th	1960	Sa'eb Salam	18	Khatchik Babikian	Administrative Reform
42nd	1969	Rashid Karameh	16	Khatchik Babikian	Health
43rd	1969	Rashid Karameh	16	Khatchik Babikian	Tourism
46th	1973	Ameen El-Hafez	16	Khatchik Babikian	Public Works
47th	1973	Taqiddin El-Sulh	22	Joseph Chader Souren Khanamirian	State Tourism
48th	1974	Rashid El-Sulh	18	Souren Khanamirian	Tourism
53rd	1980	Shafiq El-Wazzan	22	Khatchik Babikian	Justice

Document B (2)

Lebanese-Armenian ministers in the Lebanese governments after the *Ta'ef* Agreement

Cabinet	Year	Prime Minister	Cabinet Member	Lebanese-Armenian Ministers	Portfolio
1st	1989	Salim El-Hoss	14	Souren Khanamirian	Industry & Oil
2nd	1990	Omar Karamah	30	Khatchik Babikian Hagop Choukhadarian	Justice Environment
3rd	1992	Rashid El-Sulh	24	Shahe Barsoumian	Industry & Oil
4th	1992	Rafik El-Hariri	30	Shahe Barsoumian Hagop Demirdjian	Minister of State Economy
5th	1995	Rafik El-Hariri	30	Shahe Barsoumian Hagop Demirdjian	Industry & Oil Municipalities
6th	1996	Rafik El-Hariri	30	Shahe Barsoumian Hagop Demirdjian	Industry & Oil Municipalities
7th	1998	Salim El-Hoss	16	Arthur Nazarian	Tourism & Environ
8th	2000	Rafik El-Hariri	30	Sebough Hovnanian	Youth & Sports
9th	2003	Rafik El-Hariri	30	Sebough Hovnanian Kareem Pakradouni	Youth & Sports Administrative Reform
10th	2004	Omar Karamah	30	Sebough Hovnanian Alain Tabourian	Youth & Sports Minister of State
11th	2005	Najeeb Mikati	14	Alain Tabourian	Telecommunications
12th	2005	Fouad El-Siniora	24	Jean Oghassapian	Administrative Reform
13th	2008	Fouad El-Siniora	30	Jean Oghassapian Alain Tabourian	Minister of State Energy

Document C

Joint Resolution of the Lebanese-Armenian denominations

The Bloc of Armenian Denominations held a meeting on Friday, October 7, 1983 at the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias. The meeting was attended by the heads of the three Armenian churches – Apostolic, Catholic and Protestant – the Armenian members of parliament, and representatives of the Armenian organizations and parties, Tashnak, Hentchak and Ramgavar. The following is the text of the resolutions taken at this meeting:

1. We thank God the almighty that Lebanon has resisted and remained faithful of its future in spite of the consecutive events that have shaken its existence since 1975. This was due to the people's willpower and their attachment to their land and liberty.
2. Our nation is Lebanon where we have shaped our lives and planted our faith and traditions in its land, and gave all our experience and skills for its construction and development.
3. Lebanon was and still is the center of vivacity not only for the Armenians in Lebanon, but also for the Armenians in the whole world who have always considered this country the source of faith and hope.
4. During the past 9 years of distress, the Armenian denominations declared their belief in the principle of dialogue and understanding in order to alleviate the tension and solve the conflict. And today, it is becoming clearer that dialogue and understanding is the only way for salvation and achievement of national unity. The Armenian denominations are willing, as in the past, to present all their capabilities to salvage Lebanon and help in its rebuilding whether by bearing responsibilities or taking a suitable stand.
5. In these fateful and difficult days, the Armenian denominations believe that it is not enough for them to consider only Lebanon's national unity, sovereignty and legitimacy. They demand that they participate actively with the rest of the Lebanese denominations in their effort to build Lebanon on sound bases.
6. It is distressing to witness the tragic circumstances of the refugees. Therefore, we call upon the Lebanese in general, the Armenian benevolent organizations, and the Armenians in general to provide their assistance to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees and, when the situation allows, help them to return to their homes.

7. We declare that each citizen has the duty to contribute in making the country stronger and able to spread its authority throughout the country; this cannot be realized unless all foreign forces are removed, and the Lebanese army is deployed in order to support the nation's unity, which is a fundamental principle that should not be meddled with by schemes to divide the country.
8. We believe that peaceful co-existence among the Lebanese, and their agreement and brotherly treatment of one another is the basis to ensure the freedom of individual and the rights of the denominations; and therefore, it is the basis that should be provided to build a society where equality and justice exist in one unified nation.

Translation from Arabic by Katia M. Peltekian (2004).

Source: George Bashir, Phillip Abi Aql & Fawzi Moubarak, *Oumara' el tawa'if: min Geneva ila Lausanne*, (in Arabic for *Princes of sects: from Geneva to Lausanne*) Beirut, Lebanon, Wakala' Al-Anba' El-Markaziyyeh, 1986, p. 334.

Document D

The Lebanese-Armenian proposal at the Geneva Conference (1983)

The Reform Project of the Armenian Parliamentarian Group proposals for political, administrative, economic and social reforms to the National Dialogue Committee held in Lausanne, on March 12, 1984

1. The Armenian Parliamentarian Group's work is based on its conviction that Lebanon has a self-distinguishing feature in its structure and constituency. It is the country of peaceful coexistence between all religious confessions and sects that were constituted throughout the centuries by groups seeking refuge and shelter from oppression and all sorts of deprivation (religious – political – social – racial).

Despite our conviction that secularism is one of the main traits and most distinguished characteristics of developed countries, nevertheless we discover that the Lebanese are committed to stay under the influence of their past and be bound to it, until Lebanon may have the opportunity to achieve the status of true secular society, apart from confessional or religious ties. However, the truth is that every segment of Lebanese society is closely attached to its specific idiosyncrasy and identity, with a careful, discreet and fearful attitude from the experience and attempts of integration in social groups larger than them. Therefore, based on such assumption, it is mandatory to preserve a balanced confessional framework.

Any project in political reform, or in simple terms, any political system that does not take into account such a fact as well as the prevailing Lebanese situation shall be currently considered by the Lebanese as a rogue intervention affecting their basic liberties, such liberties being at the very root of Lebanon itself and making evident its right to exist, and without them, its existence as an entity is deemed meaningless.

With the aforementioned, we can emphasize that the Lebanese society is a plural society and as such, no current political regime can fully join and merge such society unless it is based on the precepts and principles of the modern pluralistic society as well as the society of coexistence.

2. Despite the bloody events that took place in the past few years, contradictions have increased between several Lebanese parties and widened the existing gap between them. However, there is no doubt that

the crisis has also actually and explicitly consolidated a union and consensus of opinion among the majority of Lebanese, thereby emphasizing in a nutshell on the necessity of maintaining a single unified Lebanon as well as a homeland for all its citizens.

Any reform project ought to have a starting point from such basis and from fundamental principle, and to be committed to indicate clearly and explicitly such willingness for peaceful coexistence.

3. The social situation is neither separate nor dissociated from the political situation. In fact, the Lebanese society is characterized by a significant number of inequalities, and the manifestations of the prevailing gap are evident and deep-rooted in this society, being incompatible with the principles and rules of equality that are convened in modern societies, and even in transgression of them. The gap separating the Lebanese from each other is getting wider and deeper, when its framework sometimes extends to affect and include the confessional limits. Hence, starting from such assumption, any project of political reform is not deemed as full and complete if its main proposals are not based on granting equal rights to everyone without exception or discrimination, and if opportunities and the possibilities of development and prosperity are not made available to everybody on an equal basis, especially in view of the fact that taking advantage of the creed of freedom and the principles of democracy in the Lebanese society often lead to the subjection and oppression of the weak by the strong and powerful.
4. Any political reform aiming at the establishment of social justice ought to target, in the first place, the establishment of a strong authority with firm pillars and foundations, so that this authority may be able to defend the full liberties of the Lebanese whether it is freedom of intellect with all means of expression or defending their lives and properties by imposing the law on everybody. Such a law ought to be the fruit of the will of the Lebanese people being expressed through the appropriate democratic institutions.

Lebanon ought to be strong with the competency and potentials of its citizens in the homeland and the Diaspora. The Armenian denomination happens to be one of the pillars of Lebanon, not only with its institutions and bodies along with the capability of its members for creativity and innovation in Lebanon, but also in the entire world when considering their potentials and capabilities as well as their prestigious situation in the world of innovation and genius. The Armenian community in Lebanon has its close relationships and ties with several eastern and western countries and most frequently, it has a direct influence through its political parties or through sports, cultural and

welfare associations, as well as due to its two international religious centers denominated as follows:

- a. The Catholic Armenian Patriarchate, established and operating in Lebanon since 1949.
- b. The Catholicosate of the See of Cilicia for the Armenian Orthodox with its headquarters in Antelias since 1923.

The Lebanon of tomorrow ought to mobilize all its citizens as well as all its resources and capabilities for the sake of peace, prosperity and progress. Undoubtedly, the Armenian confession, one of the seven large confessions, shall be granted an effective role and a special position in the structure of the modern Lebanese state and its institutions.

Henceforth, starting from such principles, conceptions and considerations, we propose the following reform project:

Political and Administrative Reforms

1. The preservation of the distinguished proper identity of Lebanon and its consolidation, as well as the preservation of its international relations and their consolidation, namely its close and harmonious ties with the Arab countries on the basis of full respect without undermining its independence, sovereignty and regime, and within the framework of the UN Charter as well as the Arab League Charter.
2. The preservation of the sectarian form which still has its vital role at this stage. However, it has to be based on mutual respect and recognition among all religious sects, and the relationships and dealings between them ought to be solid, deep, stable and loyal. Furthermore, there should be equality of rights and obligations in a fair and balanced distribution.
3. The preservation of the Parliamentary democratic regime and the creation of the Senate institution representing all religious sects so that the participation of the Lebanese sects in the government may be at the highest level in order to preserve an equilibrium between them.
4. At the level of the legislative authority: the increase in the number of deputies and the adoption of the principle of equality in the distribution of seats between Muslims and Christians.
5. In view of the fact that the sectarian form is still prevailing and effective, we propose, by virtue of an explicit constitutional article, to constitutionally set apart confessional affiliation to the Presidency of the

Republic, the Presidency of the Cabinet, the Vice-Presidency of the Cabinet, the Presidency of the Parliament and the Vice-Presidency of the Parliament, as well as the Presidency of the Senate and his Vice-President.

6. The election of the President of the Cabinet at the Parliament and taking into consideration the representation of the seven large confessions during the establishment of ministerial formations.
7. The rehabilitation of the Superior Council and granting it competencies and role as laid out in the constitution.
8. The rehabilitation of the mode of nomination of the Secretary Generals in some ministries for the sake of programming and coordination.
9. The elimination of the confessional criteria for employment currently adopted in job opportunities for government offices except for the first degree occupations, provided that nominations are made on the basis of confessional equilibrium.
10. The decentralizing of administration related to a higher centralization of large projects and prosperity, is an urgent, indispensable matter non-susceptible of postponement. Granting more power to the administrative authorities and municipalities that shall be able - by means of its permanent connections and contacts with administrations and central committees - to put in order, plan, coordinate, direct, observe and achieve.
11. The reform and organization for all the departments and institutions of the state in a fundamental and essential way by employing qualified individuals who are specialized in modern management skills and who are fully prepared for hard work and sacrifice.
12. The establishment of a social and economic council.
13. The adoption of the naturalization law and its fair implementation.
14. Guaranteeing and respecting the principle of cultural plurality for the Lebanese confessions and the guaranteeing of their right of freedom of action for the revival and prosperity of their cultural heritage for the sake of preserving Lebanon, the homeland of civilized plurality.
15. The organization of the army because a strong and capable Lebanon eventually implies a strong, national army. The army ought to be constituted in its majority by elements performing military service and

they must be allowed to get experience in social services during their performance of compulsory military service. As for the reserve, action should be undertaken through experimental sessions for safekeeping and increasing the expertise, capability and resources of the participants.

On Economic And Social Reforms

- 1- Preserving the economic form based on individual initiatives provided that it is programmed and monitored by the state as well as combating all forms of economic monopolies.
- 2- Achieving the distribution of taxes in a fair manner and seeking their collection.
- 3- Studying a general plan for the national economy, executing and showing interest particularly in the miscellaneous regions for their development and prosperity as well as taking into account the local and regional situations and capabilities.
- 4- Approving the mode of procuring work for the workers, and approving insurance against unemployment as well as pension and retirement insurance.
- 5- Procuring compulsory and free education at the elementary stage at least through public and private institutions.
- 6- Developing of a network of cooperatives and its expansion.
- 7- Consolidating established syndicates that should aim to procure work and defend the rights of the working classes.
- 8- Combating emigration by creating new domains for work as well as new work opportunities for the specialized youth, establishing professional institutions and higher education institutions along with the procurement of facilities for affiliation to said institutions.
- 9- Periodical reviewing of the minimum wage and its determination in accordance with the evolution of livelihood necessities.
- 10- Monitoring of consumer prices for first necessity items, and in cases of extreme necessity, procurement of such essential items through the government.

- 11- Creating and insuring the success of a special housing policy for the procurement of adequate housing to all segments of the population, namely the working class, the employees and the payroll nominees.
- 12- Expanding the network of public hospitals and medical centers in a special geographical setting.
- 13- Encouraging the effective participation of Lebanese women in all the domains of public life with equal rights and obligations.

Translation from Arabic by Katia M. Peltekian (2004).

Source: George Bashir, Phillip Abi Aqel & Fawzi Moubarak, *ibid.*, p. 338.

Document E

The Lebanese Peace Initiative March 6, 1986

Reform paper prepared by the following political parties and organizations:

- 1) Independent Maronite Bloc
- 2) Lebanese Armenian Deputies Bloc
- 3) Al-Kataeb Lebanese Party
- 4) Liberal Nationalists Party
- 5) Lebanese Forces
- 6) Members of Drafting Committee

Introduction

Due to our belief in the absurdity of this war and the invalidity of military solutions and the necessity of adoption of dialog, negotiation and agreement to settle disputes among Lebanese people for achieving just and sustainable peace,

And for getting out of the present crisis which has extended and complicated due to the intervention of various factors, local and foreign, regional and international, religious and political, economic and social, historical and civic whereby the Lebanese crisis has become compound and consequently needs urgent, comprehensive and effective solutions. The best solution which we look forward to is the foundation of a complete secular regime if the historical reality permits the achievement of total secularism, particularly in this situation which witnesses a radical religious setback that necessitates the adoption of a sectional consistent system that provides practical participation and permits each group to exercise their natural right and embody their free and unique character,

And for the solution to handle this deep crisis through the provision of complete equality among Lebanese people, individuals as well as groups, and achievement of social justice and equal opportunities and complete participation by all sects and motivation of the spirit of development in the state institutions of different levels and tasks and approval of innovation and change to fulfill the Lebanese people wishes and future expectations,

And for the solution to be objective, it should stem out from the human specifics of Lebanon and its societal structure distinguished with diversification as well as its historical specifics that make it the home of freedom and human beings as well as a sovereign, independent, free, democratic state with institutions that guarantee the rights and features of all groups as well as the mutual admission and interaction and eliminate the causes of suppression, hegemony and deprivation and the possibilities thereof,

And for the foundation of a national solution that takes into consideration the will of the Lebanese people, Muslims as well as Christians, to cohabitate together and to

achieve internal unity and the Lebanese interest for reaching and understanding that ensures equality and balance on the internal level as well as neutrality and elimination of alliance policy on the foreign level,

And for taking a practical step towards peace and for saving the time which exhausts man, country, territory, economy and society, the state of war should be declared as ended immediately and forever and a national conference should be held where different parties, organizations, forces and characters should be represented to acknowledge the Lebanese principles that constitute a written national charter and political reforms would be agreed to draft a new constitution provided that all this would be done through the legitimate and constitutional institutions. In view of this aim and content, our peace initiative arises. We consider it as a debatable issue.

Chapter One

General Principles

1. Lebanon is an absolute, free, sovereign and independent country within its borders stipulated in the constitution and internationally recognized.
2. Lebanon is an Arab country and a full and founder member of the Arab League as well as the United Nations and is committed to the charters thereof.
3. Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on the respect of public freedoms, particularly the freedom of opinion and belief as well as on the principle of separation of powers and equality of rights and duties and social justice between all citizens.
4. Lebanon is the convergence point of civilizations and religions. It is committed to the freedom of human beings and believes within the frame work of the unity of country based on solidarity and balance rather than on a religious or ethnical racism that would divide the people and the territory. In Lebanon, sects exist, vary and have the right to be different from each other, qualifying them to interact within the frame work of balanced, just and humanitarian cohabitation.
5. Insistence on the unity of Lebanon and refusal of all plans for division and settlement.
6. Liberation of the Lebanese territories in full and restoration of Lebanese sovereignty on all its territories and ensuring the integrity thereof and execution of the UN resolutions, particularly resolution no. 425 and revocation of Cairo Agreement.
7. Comprehensive national commitment to draft the agreement of ending the state of war in Lebanon and final enforcement thereof and re-extending the state sovereignty and the law power by means of the Lebanese legitimate security tools and the return of homeless Lebanese and the release of the kidnapped immediately.
8. As Lebanon is a country of minorities and interaction of civilizations whose composition is based on fair balance between sects and as any change in conflict with the historical standards and facts endangers its

entity, unity, borders, democratic regime as well as the state structure, this reality necessitates the development of the present political formula for promotion of participation and elimination of any feeling of injustice, fear and deprivation by means of serious controls that prevent the elimination of any sect or deprivation of their roles and rights by another sect. Such development should be made through the legitimate institutions according to the constitution provisions.

9. The true solution of the Lebanese crisis is the deep foundation of constant and permanent national harmony based on free and direct dialogue among the Lebanese.
10. Approval of the broad administrative decentralization and modernization of institutions and promotion of control on departments and adoption of reward and penalty policy.
11. Adoption of the liberal economic system based on individual initiative while emphasizing the state role of organization and control and the necessary approval of the total development planning for Lebanon reconstruction, upgrading its production capacity and developing its economic and social structure.
12. Maintenance of the liberal educational system open to all civilizations and cultures all over the world and support of the public education which should be free and comprehensive and promotion of professional occupational education and development of educational programs and courses for increasing the national spirit and citizenship among the future generations.
13. Promotion and development of relations between the resident and expatriate Lebanese in view of the Lebanese spreads importance and efficiency in terms of national, humanitarian, economic and social aspects.
14. Keeping Lebanon away from the axes policy and its openness to all countries all over the world on the basis of cooperation and friendship for maintenance of its sovereignty and declaration of its neutrality together with its commitment to the charter of Arab League and the Arab issues and the United Nations Charter.
15. As there are close relations between Lebanon and Syria as well as common interest, these should be organized and developed between the two countries in accordance with their applicable rules subject to compliance with the rules of sovereignty, independence and mutual recognition and the specificity of each country.

Chapter Two

Termination of the State of War

The state of war termination stage in Lebanon is fixed to be six months. It shall start with the formation of a national unity government. During this period, the war termination mechanism shall be applied according to the following rules and principles:

- 1 Immediate comprehensive ceasefire and termination of combat on the Lebanese territories by all parties forever.
- 2 Unconditional release of all kidnapped persons.
- 3 Formation of a new security committee comprising all concerned active parties and forces. Its powers shall cover all the Lebanese territories for enforcement of the security plan approved by the government.
- 4 Fortification of the army as well as the internal security and public security forces and opening the door for recruitment and assignment of the task of security maintenance at all Lebanese regions to the army and internal security forces to extend the state power thereon without any exception.
- 5 Military and paramilitary Lebanese organizations and militias of different types shall be observed within the state institutions after rehabilitation of their elements in accordance with legal conditions subsequently set. Before this could be done, all non-Lebanese military and paramilitary organizations and militias of different types shall be dissolved.
- 6 All arms shall be collected from the Lebanese and non-Lebanese factions without exception in accordance with time schedule prepared by the Lebanese army command.
- 7 Provision for Lebanese free movement, employment and residence in all Lebanese areas.
- 8 The return of homeless Lebanese and acknowledgement of the right of each Lebanese expatriate to return to his land and home as owner or tenant and preparation of necessary legislations that promote and guarantee this right and provision of security conditions appropriate for their return as well as the necessary means for village reconstruction and house renovation. The execution stage shall start immediately and shall be gradually completed within six months.

Chapter Three

Political Reform

For the deep establishment of national affiliation and democratic movement and the realization of freedom, equality, social justice, equal opportunities, development and security, the Lebanese formula should be developed through more effective participation and broader representation to reflect the people aspirations and expectations based on the following principles.

- 1 Establishment of customs related to the allocation of three presidencies: the republic presidency for a Maronite, the parliament presidency for a Shiite and the Prime Minister a Sunni.
- 2 Equal allocation of parliamentary and ministerial seats between Muslims and Christians and proportionately within each group.
- 3 Adoption of half division of public positions, public institutions, the army and security forces and application of the rule of efficiency and scientific rules for selection of employees.

A - The Executive Branch

The Presidency of the Republic

The executive power shall be headed by the President of the Republic. He shall exercise the same with the participation of the Prime Minister and ministers in accordance with the approved constitutional provisions. He shall be liable for the exercise of his powers only in the cases provided in the Constitution.

1 Election of the President:

a. Election of the President:

The President of the Republic shall be elected by two thirds majority in the first session and 55% majority of the quorum of the Parliament in a subsequent session.

b. The President's Powers:

The following amendments are made to the powers of the President of Republic as specified in the Constitution:

i. The President of Republic is considered the head of the State and symbol of the country's unity. He shall respect the Constitution and maintain Lebanon's independence, national unity and territorial integrity. The President of Republic shall administer the constitutional oath and chair the Cabinet. He shall be vested with the executive powers in collaboration with the Cabinet.

ii. The President of the Republic is considered as the Supreme Commander of the army as well as the Head of the Higher Defense Council.

iii. The President of the Republic shall sign the decrees and promulgate the laws and refer the bills within the specified time periods after signature thereof by the Prime Minister and the relevant Minister.

iv. The President of the Republic shall issue a decree to commission the Prime Minister who will be elected by the Parliament, to form the Cabinet and will accept his resignation. The President shall issue a decree before acceptance of the Cabinet resignation, and before accepting the resignation of any Minister, the Prime Minister shall give his approval of the Prime Minister.

Vice Presidency of the Republic

1. For more comprehensive participation in the governance, there shall be introduced the position of Vice President to be filled by six persons who represent the major sects in Lebanon except for the President's sect.
2. The Vice Presidents shall form a consultative board for the President of the Republic and shall carry out representation tasks inside and outside Lebanon as assigned to them by the President of the Republic.
3. The Vice Presidents shall collectively replace the President in case of his absence. They will be collectively vested with the executive powers if the Presidency is vacant for whatever reason.

The Prime Minister

a Election of Prime Minister:

The Prime Minister shall be elected by the parliament by the majority of 55% at least of the members of such parliament.

b Powers of the Prime Minister:

The Prime Minister shall carry out the following:

- i.* The elected Prime Minister shall form the Cabinet according to the Fourth Article below.
- ii.* He shall chair the Ministerial Council.
- iii.* He shall accept the resignation of one or more ministers and shall present the decree to the President of the Republic.

iv. He shall together with the President of the Republic sign the decree of minister's resignation and dismissal.

v. He shall together with the President of the Republic sign the decrees and bills except for the decree of appointment of the Prime Minister and acceptance of his resignation as well as the cabinet resignation.

vi. He shall be the Deputy Head of Higher Defense Council.

vii. He shall supervise the execution of the Cabinet decisions and follow the works of ministries and departments.

The Cabinet

a Formation of the Cabinet:

i. The elected Prime Minister shall carry out parliamentary consultations in view of which the Cabinet shall be formed in agreement with the President of the Republic and then the necessary decrees shall be issued.

ii. In case of non-agreement between the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister regarding the list of ministers and the President of the Republic refuses to sign the Cabinet Formation Decree within two weeks from the presentation of list to him, the elected Prime Minister shall present the list to the Parliament for vote. If his point of view is approved by 55% of the members of Parliament, the President of the Republic should sign the Decree. If the Cabinet formation does not receive the above mentioned parliamentary majority, the Prime Minister shall be deemed as resigned for non-ability to form a Cabinet, and a new Prime Minister shall be elected.

iii. If the Prime Minister does not present the list of his Cabinet to the President of the Republic within one month from the date of his election, such act would be considered as apology for non formation of the cabinet and a new Prime Minister shall be elected.

iv. After the issuance of the decree of Cabinet formation, the Parliament shall hold a special session for vote for confidence.

v. The Cabinet submits its resignation immediately upon the election of a new President of the Republic.

b The Powers of the Cabinet:

The cabinet shall exercise executive and administrative powers including:

i. Drafting the state's public policy in political, economic, defense, financial, development, educational, social and other fields.

ii. Drafting bills of laws and decrees, making necessary decisions for executing the state policy and giving the bills the character of urgency and repeated urgency, when necessary.

iii. Control of the execution of laws and regulations as well as control of the state bodies and institutions.

iv. Approval and revocation of state of emergency, declaration of war and public mobilization, conclusion of international treaties and agreements subject to the legislative power's authorities.

v. Direction of the acts of ministries and public departments and institutions affiliated with the state and coordination among them.

vi. Preparation of the public budget project and the comprehensive long term development plans.

vii. Dissolution of the Parliament upon the proposal of the President of the Republic under a justified decision.

viii. Appointment of the employees of the first degree or their equivalent and dismissal or acceptance of their resignation according to the legal rules.

ix. A 30 days period shall be set for signing the bills of decrees as well as the decrees of referral of laws approved in the Cabinet by the President of the Republic or dismissal of the same within the same period for acceptable reasons. This period shall start on the date of lodging the bills at the General Directorate of the Republic Presidency. If this period expires without signing or justify reply, the decree shall be deemed as valid and effective. If it is dismissed, it shall be presented to the

Cabinet once again. If the Cabinet insists on its decision once again, the President of the Republic shall sign the decree.

This period shall also apply to the ordinary decrees. In case of disagreement between the Prime Minister and the relevant Minister and if both of them insist on their position, such disagreement shall be referred to the Cabinet for decision. The Prime Minister shall be granted the same period for signing with effect from the date of lodging of bills at his General Secretariat. Regarding the laws approved by the Parliament, the respective period of publishing thereof shall be subject to Article no. 56 of the current Constitution.

c The Cabinet resignation:

The cabinet shall be considered as resigned in the following cases:

- i.* If the Prime Minister resigns.
- ii.* If the Parliament votes for non-confidence.
- iii.* If half of its members resign. The decree of acceptance of resignation shall bear the signature of President of the Republic only.

B - The Legislature

In addition to the rules and powers stated in the Constitution related to the legislative powers, the following rules shall apply:

- 1 The members of the legislature shall be elected on the basis of a new election laws that ensure the correct and just popular representation within the framework of equal shares of Christians and Muslims.
- 2 The number of Parliament members shall be increased to 108 for broader representation within the framework of equality between Christians and Muslims.
- 3 The Speaker of the Parliament, his Deputy and the members of the Parliament Office shall be elected for two years, renewable.
- 4 The Parliament's powers shall be specified according to the provisions of the current Constitution.

C - The Judicial Branch

1. Necessary procedures shall be taken to achieve the rule of the independence of the Judiciary Branch.
2. A Constitutional Court shall be formed to control the constitutionality of laws and settle all disputes and objections arising from the Presidency and Parliamentary elections as well as the disputes that may arise between the central administration and decentralized departments.
3. A Higher Council shall be formed for trial of the Presidents and Vice Presidents and the ministers as provided in the Constitution.
4. An optional legislation shall be drafted for the civil personal status for the interested Lebanese.

D - Administrative Decentralization

There must be a revision to the administration as stipulated in the Legislative Decree No. 116 dated 12/6/1959. To promote administrative decentralization, the following rules must be followed:

- 1 Increase and redistribution of governorates to secure the country interests.
- 2 Promotion of local councils, municipal unions and governorates and extension of their financial, administrative, organizational and development powers.
- 3 Approval of public representation in the governorate councils for more effective participation by the citizens.
- 4 Transfer of more tasks and administrative responsibilities from the central power to the decentralized power.

E - Defense and Security Policy

- 1 Drafting a defense policy compatible with the Lebanese national security requirements whereby the army would be responsible for the country security and protection of borders. The internal security forces shall be responsible for maintenance of the order and the citizen security with the possible assistance of the army for handling the big security events.
- 2 Consolidation of the army and internal security forces and public security and national security in terms of human resources and equipment and

reorganization of their central bodies and regional branches to make them more effective.

- 3 Updating the laws and regulations related to these institutions.
- 4 Enforcement of the social and development science service law.

F - Economic and Social Policy

- 1 Lebanon's liberal economic system guarantees individual initiatives and maintains private ownership and fulfills economic efficiency conditions and social justice requirements. The state plays the role of coordinator in this regard. This is reflected in the monetary, fiscal, production, housing and social protection fields including the broad application of social security, old age security, free medication and treatment and handling of unemployment.
- 2 Preparation of comprehensive development and reconstruction plan for Lebanon as a whole, in particular the areas inflicted with the work and deprivation together with the foundation of central and regional departments and institutions, as necessary.
- 3 Formation of a socio-economic council that represents economic, social, union and scientific bodies. Its powers shall be specified under a special law.

G - Educational Policy

- 1 Emphasis on free education as well as private education system, educational diversity and support of official education to meet the expectation of all Lebanese within the framework of the country unity and development of its human wealth and promotion of the spirit of initiatives and innovation.
- 2 Development of education to be extensive, free of charge, compulsory and comprehensive, updating educational programs and promotion of civil and national education.
- 3 Emphasis on the role of occupational and technical education by giving it the priority and connecting it to the total development plan.
- 4 Support of higher education and permitting the Lebanese university and private universities to play their role within the scope of development plan,

in particular giving special attention to the Lebanese university and its applied colleges.

- 5 Promotion of scientific research and evaluation studies through the provision of support to the public and private institution in this field.
- 6 Foundation of higher culture council and supporting culture councils in all areas to enrich the public culture among the citizens and emphasize and protect the national heritage and materialize the creative powers in different fields.

Signatories:

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Translated from Arabic (2005).

Source: George Saadeh, *ibid.*, p. 345.

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