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Lebanese American University
Beirut – Lebanon

The Student Movement in Lebanon

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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Master of Art in International Affairs
to the Social and Education Division
of the Lebanese American University

Spring 2003

Lebanese American University

Graduate Studies

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Dedication

To my brothers Hisham and Omar your support has maintained my perseverance.

To Hanan, Tamara and Joulan: your presence around was inspiring.

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Acknowledgements

To Dr. Fawwaz Traboulsi my professor and advisor, I thank you for your guidance and invaluable comments. Thank you for always keeping me enthusiastic; you are without doubt a fantastic role model.

To Dr. Kamal Yazigi, the first reader of my thesis, I thank you for all your encouragements and constructive annotations.

To Maitre Mohammad Matter, the second reader of my thesis, I thank you for your valuable time and willingness to share a life long experience with me.

To Dina Abdel Samad, my friend and colleague, you have been a constant back up in this long endeavor. For that and for the wonderful editing of my thesis, I thank you.

To all those I have interviewed and who were willing to share precious time and information, I also thank you.

Abstract

Lebanon witnessed an active student movement with its peak from the mid - sixties till the eve of the civil war of 1975. During the war, students postponed their struggle for demands through trade unions and councils and became involved in the armed struggle.

This thesis is a contribution to writing the history of the Lebanese Student Movement. The events and developments of the student movement have been recorded through various means and gathered in bits and pieces. The methodology applied was reference books on the theoretical context, interviews with ex-activists from different political affiliations and the archives of the daily newspapers.

The thesis discusses the theoretical background of the student movement, a history of the Lebanese student movement from: pre-independence era, struggle for independence, and mid-sixties till the eve of the civil war, during the war and after the Taef Accord.

The conclusions draw on the valuable lessons and experiences of that rich history.

Introduction:

Social Science researchers have always been busy studying students from the educational, social and psychological dimensions. They have explored the characteristics of their age and the diversity of their backgrounds and affiliations as determining elements in shaping students mobility, personalities and socialization patterns.

However not much has been studied and documented about student political movements, although political awareness starts concurrently with the signs of maturity - both physical and mental - of the student during the last two or three years of high school, and becomes more advanced and complicated later. In the university, students are trained to join society and its elite. Some of the students become active and get involved more than others and contribute to political life. In this context several questions emerge: Why do students get involved in public issues? Why do they belong to groups, parties or cliques? Why do they advocate change? Why do they rebel against the traditions and norms? What is the reason behind their call for the modernization of society? Why do they consider themselves responsible for the intellectual life of society? Is there any difference among university students of the developed countries and those of underdeveloped countries? Which circumstances lead to the booming of the students' movement?

Reviewing the history of the student movement in Lebanon reflects some major events, which can be considered as milestones in its progress. This movement has played an active role in the Lebanese political life. The leaders of that movement have strived - motivated by their ideologies- towards achieving changes and introducing improvements to the public at large and not for their personal benefits. The Lebanese University (LU) was the core and the center from which most of the major movements have started. The scope of the student movement has touched the Labor unions and various syndicates, and the influence was reciprocal. It also reached the students of the private universities who moved to support and enlarge the pressure. Their pressure and protests were expressed through negotiations, demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, flyers and memos to the officials.

Students' public and political involvement has always been an area of interest to me ever since I, myself, was an activist started in high school. It was reinforced later throughout my work experiences with students at the Lebanese American University. Hence this thesis, which deals with the student movement in Lebanon. It is divided into three chapters and includes theoretical analysis, documentation and some conclusions.

The methodology applied was revision of books and articles for the theoretical background. However, material covering the Lebanese student

movement as such is largely unavailable. Some books exist, which dealt with specific topics, like *Al- Harakah Al- Tullabiyya Fie Lubnan* (The Student Movement In Lebanon) by Imad Zoghbi, which documented the decrees, and laws that established the Lebanese University. Shawakat Ashtay has tackled the Phalanges and Communist parties as examples of parties in political education- *Al- Tarbiya El- Hizbeyya*. These I found useful to a certain extent. Yet mostly I had to rely on interviews with the ex-activists and research in the newspapers' archives. This has motivated me to document any available material, hoping that this thesis will be the springboard towards further research and statistics as well.

Chapter One shall deal with the literature and concepts explaining the reasons and motivations underlying student political movements. Different theories that explain the psychosocial background of such movements are also included, in addition to a synthesis and conclusion.

Chapter Two details the history of the Lebanese student movement from the pre-independence era to the eve of the Lebanese Civil War of 1975-1990. This was documented as events and studied in the light of the theories surveyed in the previous chapter. Chapter Two also studies the characteristics of each period, the role of political parties, the impact of national events, the effect of revolutions and the coup de' tats and the

high school students were involved in war. The tasks, which they were involved in, were distributed as follows: 12% political activism, 14.5% civil defense and 44% in various military activities. Also the archives of newspapers do not carry much on this specific subject as well. However, there is a growing interest in this subject from researchers and non-governmental organizations, and many dimensions still need to be explored and studied.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

A- Introduction:

This chapter shall deal with the background and theories related to student activism by exploring different experiences and reviewing the different outlooks concerning this issue. It will deal with some surveys, which were conducted, in Lebanon and other underdeveloped countries as well. Such a theoretical framework helps in explaining the students' movement and its motivations.

B- Definition of university students:

They are the youth whose age ranges between 18 and 24. While some may be older - they are the exception rather than the rule. The university students are recruited after they finish successfully 11 years at school, earned a terminal degree and passed the entrance exams administered by the universities. In general, they are full timely enrolled and their fees are paid by their parents or sponsors, or through scholarships.

C- Rules of Admissions to Universities:

Selectivity is the first rule in admitting students to the university. The selectivity is demonstrated in exams, school grades and

accomplishment after a certain number of school years. Based on that the universities receive a big number of applicants from whom they choose their potential students by designing and applying a set of criteria. Selectivity is observed also in the fees, which the private universities charge, thus they become unaffordable to a group who might meet the admission criteria and not afford the financial possibility of paying them. The second rule in this process is the **equality of opportunities**, which is negated by the selectivity mentioned above. Hence equality becomes theoretical.

The third rule in the admissions process is **meritocracy**, which is the contrary to equality, in other words it is the most important characteristic in making the admissions decision.

In conclusion the above rules become mostly theoretical with the high fees of the private sector, the cultural ties and the whole social structure. Such factors generate inequality between the rich and the poor, the females and the males, and their concerns in general. Thus, social inequality among the citizens of the same country, defeats the application of educational equality. Such diversion and inequality among people reflect the variances in the standard of living, social life and political affiliations.

With this diversified population of students, the university plays a specific role during the educational process through the interaction of the

students with one another and with the administration (faculty and staff) as well as outside visitors. They “transmit in a more differentiated and specific way the cultural heritage- the history, the scientific knowledge, the literature of their society and the world’s culture.”¹ The end product of this process is the people, who are the members of society, carrying the new knowledge and skills, in addition to the ability to lead their countrymen in a responsible manner.

D- Universities in developing countries:

Universities in developing countries produce the elite, as “there is no class of indigenous enterprisers who, without university training, have taken or are likely to be allowed to take the main responsibility for economic development- as they did in Europe and America in the nineteenth century.”²

Moreover, while attending university, individuals form their opinions and outlooks concerning the various issues surrounding them, including their political affiliations. They reinforce their affiliations through the movements and pressure groups, which advocate for the various public issues. The peers’ impact is high and belonging to a group satisfies a need

¹ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Students Politics*, p.3

² *Ibid*, p. 4

in the youth. Such groups might develop and become powerful with the ability to make changes on and off campus.

Therefore students' activism lies in their involvement in "the affairs of their universities and their community and nation beyond the universities."³ However, the impact of activism varies from one country to another, as "it is more significant in the countries undergoing rapid and revolutionary political, economic and social modernization."⁴

Lipset refers to a study conducted by E. Wight Bakke on student activism for four years in six countries: Mexico, Colombia, Japan, India, Egypt and USA, he could identify five similarities and nine differences in the countries surveyed.

The similarities, which Bakke has listed, were:

- 1-The **age group** of the university students: which varies between 16 and 23. This age group has its own characteristics in examining the physical and hormonal changes, as well as the personality and most important of all the transition from the school to the university. This transition is from a state of dependency on the parents during the school years, to a state of independence, taking decisions in choosing the major and many other things related to this new stage as well as getting involved in university activities.

³ Lipset, *Student Politics*, p. 3

⁴ *Ibid*, p, 3

2- The tendency to institutionalize their movement: Students' activities take a certain form of organization according to Bakke. Students tend to institutionalize their movements, which might take the form of a club with membership and a plan of action aiming at lobbying among students. They may also form pressure groups to exert pressure to achieve demands or create a movement. The political party is another form by which students spread a certain ideology among their colleagues and recruit party members.

3-The shape of activity: Activities take the shape of mass demonstrations, sit-ins or speakers' corners. They usually do that to feel secure with the group specially if they were exposed to disciplinary measures. Having a big number of students is also numerical indicator of the importance of their demands or the issue they are demonstrating for, and to reflect the strength of the group or the party, which is organizing the activity.

4- The minorities lead the majorities: In student activities usually few leading people initiate activities and this by itself is another similarity. In other word the group doesn't start big; on the contrary very few people start the ignition and are followed by the numbers. It is similar to a snowball, which might grow beyond the expectations of the starters or might expand beyond the set boundaries.

5-The nature of students' issues: Students work on issues of public nature rather than personal. This is also a similarity in the various student movements on or off-campus. In reviewing student movements we find their protest were addressed to the administration or against an increase in tuition fees or against other measures or procedures. Their protest off-campus is for national demands or against oppressive measures or to support independence and revolutionary movements.

On the other hand, the differences are in:

1-The **characteristics:** Movements differ from one to another. They look alike in shape but they differ in nature, objectives and other details.

2-The **forms of organization:** They all organize themselves but the organizational forms differ from one movement to another.

3-The **forms of networking:** All the groups working on networking with other groups but they vary in their approaches. Some groups tend to work individually without collaboration with others, as their objectives might not appeal to other groups. However, students' groups tend to work collectively to reinforce their movement.

4- **Leadership:** Each movement has a leader. Yet they are different in the type of leadership and the procedures of assigning or choosing the leaders, in addition to the differences in the characteristics of the leaders.

- 5- **Goals:** The goals differ from one movement to another as a result of the various affiliations, priorities and objectives.
- 6- **Area of emphasis:** Each movement has an area of emphasis in its program and objectives, which is a priority. Nevertheless, they might support other movements in solidarity for the achievement of their demands. Yet they will continue to concentrate on their cause. They sometimes might abstain from participation in certain activities if they contradict or threaten their main goal.
- 7- **Activities:** As a result of the discrepancies in the goals and area of emphasis, activities also vary from one group to another, which result automatically from the differences in the area of emphasis. Thus activities match the causes and student movements also try to mobilize big numbers to support their cause as well as to demonstrate their presence in the student movement at large.
- 8- **The number of affiliates:** Student movements vary in the number of their affiliates. In fact it is a domain of competition among the various groups. Each group races to recruit and manipulate as much as possible, to secure a stronger position in the student movement and its activities.
- 9- **Ideology:** Differs from one group to another in accordance to its background and perspectives.

E- Theoretical perspectives:

Lipset refers again to E. Wight Bakke who has examined student activism comprehensively from the physiological, psychological, social and cultural factors involved.

The physiological changes, which the youth undergo, have an impact on their feelings and behaviors. They would like to translate the changes in the way they behave and the way they expect the others to treat them. This is explained through the progress in the youth's maturity as it is assumed that the age group of the youth undertakes many rapid changes. In each stage, the youth try to prove themselves as a separate entity, which has its own status. As a result they grab any opportunity to prove the fact that they have become grown ups and to express their own views and opinions. All these urges find their outlet in students' movements.

In doing this they reinforce the students' image and make it visible to the adults through the nature and level of the movement. They also demonstrate seriousness, perseverance and high level of participation to prove their maturity and partnership in the public issues. In addition to this they seek outlets off campus to exert pressure on the university's administration and achieve their goals. More precisely they tend to "the amplification of active attempts to remove these inadequacies and

inconsistencies, produced by both public opposition and permissiveness toward their efforts.”⁵

As a result, the students’ involvement outside the university generates an involvement in social issues, which has an impact on all the citizens. In doing this they realize the difference between their outlook and that of the older generation and “they seek to assert in action their conception of the harmonization between premises”⁶ thereby seeking new premises to attain successful results.

However, Bakke identified six reasons for the students’ involvement in such movements.

- 1- **Career orientation:** Some students hope to get a better future career when they get the exposure in the activities encountered in the students’ movement.
- 2- **Freedom and self-determination:** A second category of students gets involved in students movements to have a space of freedom beyond the authority of their families, schools and universities and to have the possibility of taking decisions independently.
- 3- **Prestige:** A good number seeks the prestige in dealing with such activities. Such prestige comes from their contacts with the

⁵ Lipset, p. 58

⁶ Ibid., p.58

university administrators, students and some times with public figures off-campus.

4- **Intellectual qualities:** This group aims at manipulating students ideologically. They would like to spread out their political thoughts to get more affiliates to their party. They also try to put their ideology into action among the pressure groups, which they form to achieve their demands.

5- **Idealism:** The intellectual affiliation generates role models among the students. Hence, they imitate them consciously and unconsciously. That is the case the Syrian Social Nationalist Party affiliates with Saadeh, the Nasserites with Nasser and the Marxists with Lenin or other figures like Guevara and Mao Tse Tong. In other words it is a case of idealism in their whole life style, which it is shown in their daily practice and in the activities of the student movement.

6- **Participation in public affairs:** A good number of students are involved in such activities to find their way to a wider spectrum on the national level at large. They would like to take part in the public affairs and all its related issues.

Such active movement leads the different groups towards networking to joint effort in order to pressure for their demands.

In brief, this theory tries to prove that students become active to prove their maturity, build a social status, participate in public issues, and interact with other groups and form cliques and coalitions.

F- Other theoretical interpretations:

However, there are other interpretations to students' activism like the **conservatives'** interpretation, which focuses on the inner psychology of the student as an individual and the feeling of dissatisfaction and frustrations. Lewis S. Feuer discussed the unrest and personal problems, which are demonstrated in the students' protest. He highlighted the "obscure unconscious workings of generational conflict."⁷ It also reflects the attitude towards the university's administration and the lack of confidence in it sometimes.

George Kennan asserted, "the decisive seat of evil in this world is not in social and political institutions, and not even, as a rule in the ill will or inequities of statesman, but simply in the weakness and imperfection of the human soul itself."⁸ Charles Malik warned that the students' movements which "have nothing to do with the justified complaints and demands of the student body, have infiltrated student activism."⁹ Such opinions subscribe also to the conspiracy theory in the end result and are

⁷ Halim Barakat, Lebanon in Strife, p.14

⁸ Ibid., p.14

⁹ Ibid., p.14

against such movements and believe that student movement is camouflage for other cause, which can be personal or of public nature.

The **liberals'** outlook goes beyond the personal interpretation to touch upon public life and the dissatisfaction with the government's system. In other words it opposes the government's policies intellectually and through political dialogue. Liberals focus on the "centers of power, overstress problems of emotionalism; call for reform within the prevailing systems; confuse the perspective with the descriptive or the ideal with the actual."¹⁰ According to the liberals, a clash between the students and the centers of power on and off-campus, is triggered with the changes, which the youth undergo. These changes are physical in appearance as well as hormonal which has an impact on their behaviors not to mention the psychological changes of the age. Students also start to form their own concepts and opinions, with an exposure to the different ideologies. Such changes are demonstrated in the different forms of movements and protests against any type of system or authority.

The **radicals** explain the students' rebellion in the context of socio-economic and political structure. More specifically, they strongly object against "the gap between the developed and underdeveloped societies, and between the privileged and deprived in the same society."¹¹

¹⁰ Barakat, p.16

¹¹ Ibid., p.16

It is the feeling of inequality of opportunities and the accumulation of wealth by a minority of people, which would later be called the savage capitalism where the majority is deprived. This dissatisfaction grows and accumulates to reach a peak, which is translated in a rebellion. This rebellion can become bloody and might be transferred into civil war or a military coup d'état against the regime. Hence it is “ the mechanism for maintaining the status quo and the conditions and situational factors allowing for consciousness of and sensitivity to human sufferings and injustice.”¹²

This explains the phenomenon of rejection and objection to anything and everything. The youth in general, and students in particular when exposed exposure to radical thinking, believe that nothing can work without changing the whole government system and consequently all the institutions of society. Thus objection and opposition might turn out to be a goal instead of being the means.

G- Studies in Lebanon:

In Lebanon we have noticed a lot of concerned researchers about the students' status. The Fall and Spring of 1997 have witnessed a lot of statistics published in the daily newspapers. The studies have explored –

¹² Barakat, p.16

on a limited scale – “the dialogue among the children of war”¹³ whereby they met and discussed several public issues of their concern. The studies also included “their opinions on public issues in general”¹⁴ and another studied “their opinions on politics and religion”¹⁵. Some studies focused on a specific subject such as “lowering the age of elections”¹⁶ and the “youth involvement in the municipalities’ elections”.¹⁷ Earlier to that Theodore Hanf, published in 1961, 1971, and the late 80’s a series of studies. Such studies were conducted in “four universities: Lebanese University, American University of Beirut, Saint Joseph University and the Arab University”¹⁸ since they represented the core of the institutions of higher education and represent the various categories of the Lebanese students. In Hanf’s studies-before the civil war- the youth identified with prominent figures like Camille Chamoun, Kamal Joumblat, Raymond Eddeh, Charles De Gaulle, John Kennedy, Mao Tse Tong, Fidel Castro and others. In the recent studies the above names have disappeared, either because they passed away without having left an institution to advocate for their political ideologies or due to the change in the public opinion

¹³ An-Nahar, 1995, Pierre Atallah, *Abna' Al-Harb Yahawaroun* (Dialogue Among the Children of War)

¹⁴ As-Safeer, 1997, Ara' 1000 *Shab Wa Shaba fe El-Kadaya al-Amamma* (The Opinions of 1000 Youth on Public Issues).

¹⁵ An-Nahar, 1997 Rola Bydoun, *Ara' 310 Menn Shabab Beirut Fee Assyasa Wadeen Walhayat Alamma* (The Opinion of 310 Youth in Politics, Religion, and Public Life)

¹⁶ Nahar Al-Shabab, 1998, Marlyne Khalifeh, *Khafed Sin Al-Intikhabat* (Lowering the Age of Elections)

¹⁷ Nahar Al-Shabab, 1998, Rola Mikhael, *Musharakat Al-Shabab fee Al-Intikhabat Al-Baladyya* (Participation of Youth in the Municipalities’ election)

¹⁸ Adnan Al-Amin and Mohammad Faour , *University Students In Lebanon and their Affiliations*, p. 10

after the collapse of the USSR. In addition to the impact of the civil war on the youth and the disappointing experience with political parties. On the other hand emerging religious groups became a major power in mobilizing the youth.

Al- Amin and Faour- in their case study among the university students- have observed that the students have started to mention the *status quo* and describe it with terms like corruption, irresponsibility, negligence, poverty, etc. This reveals that dreams of the ideal leader or ideology have collapsed in the consciousness of the youth and have stopped to identify with them. Instead they became more pragmatic and concerned about their daily life and future expectations. In the same study, the students expressed their attachment to Lebanon as a reaction to the presence of others like the Syrians and Palestinians. They also expressed their feeling of negligence because the “Lebanese government has blocked all the doors in the face of the youth and suppressed their motivations.”¹⁹

Thus the Lebanese students are the “heirs of the primitive groups and the scapegoats of the educational policies.”²⁰ The impact of the primitive groups became powerful during the civil war. This impact started from the nuclear family and generates to the extended family, sect

¹⁹ Al-Amin and Faour, p. 16

²⁰ Ibid, p. 19

and religion. Hence the youth affiliations tended to be primitive and traditional, rather than secular. Al- Amin and Faour have reached the above conclusion from the students' responses, which were like an electrical field around two poles: the Moslem's and Christian's. More explicitly their political opinions were clearly diversified according to the sect, which formed a stereotyped mode. They have also observed predominance in the religious affiliations of the students' population according to the geographical site of the university. In brief not a single university was observed with a real and effective mixture of different religious and political groups.

Al- Amine and Faour also observed that students were divided into socio-economic groups according to the university they attended. Thus, the prestigious and private universities are for the rich students. While the humble and public and almost free university like the Lebanese University for students who cannot afford private universities.

Hence, universities are contributing to the social discrimination among the students. Added to that are the political and ideological divisions among the students in the same university and from one university to the other. Their concerns at large are not even the same. Such divisions are obviously noticed whenever there is a controversial public issue, whether local, regional or international, and rarely if ever there is an issue around which all would assemble. However, an external

factor imported from the west like the language, as well as technology, the computer and the Internet might unify them. In addition to their unanimous bitterness about their career expectations as “91% of the students don’t advise the others with the career they have chosen,”²¹ they also resented correlating the sect with their political affiliations to demonstrate their willingness towards achieving the “social merge among the different classes through cultural and social interaction.”²²

This roots of the above mentioned merge is related to the minor impact of the ideologies and the preaching of the politicians of the Taef Accord as a base line to the national concession among the different religious sects. However, stereotyping is also observed such as: a Moslem in the Lebanese University who had graduated from a public school; or the Christian in the Universite Saint Esprit of Kaslik (USEK) who had graduated from a Catholic school.

H- Conclusion:

Thus the student movement has a unique shape and specific function, it is neither a fraternity or club or an extra-curricular activity. It is rather a group or a coalition with defined goals and ideology. It is a movement “generated by emotional feelings often associated with inter-

²¹ Al-Amin and Faour, p. 20

²² Ibid, p. 17

generational conflicts, although it may also be motivated by positive goals.”²³ It may also be an achievement to what the older generation failed to achieve. It is also important to differentiate between the spontaneous students groups and those formed by the administration, which are usually unpopular and have a minimal support but they can easily “develop into militant student movements, sometimes opposing their patrons”²⁴. Groups formed by students’ initiation are more popular and acceptable by the student body. It is also worth mentioning that a student movement does not have to be always political as it can have cultural objectives and launch activities only on campus. In Lebanon the student groups have always been involved in the off campus public issues.

In reviewing the different explanations and theories one finds valid views in each one of them and they complement each other. The common background is the growing interest in the students’ movement and its importance in the educational and political growth of the youth, taking into consideration the changes from one generation to another. In the past student protests have been described as indiscipline, and immature behavior, but the effective movements of the students have changed the attitude and it is now considered part of the educational and political

²³ Lipset, p. 82

²⁴ Ibid, p. 83

process of the country. In fact many student leaders have chosen their careers and headed towards political life while studying and getting involved in such movements.

To summarize, the psycho-social-physiological theory provides an interpretation to the personality of the youth vis a vis the behaviors and reactions towards a given situation. On the other hand the Conservative, Liberals and Radicals furnish different political explanations of the student movement each from its viewpoint. Yet the radical explanation seems to be more logical if we look at the students reactions and behaviors which tend to be very sharp and extremists. We used to grow our beards to imitate Guevara and Castro in appearance said Mohammad Mattar – a student activist. On the other hand students who are affiliated to religious parties act in a very conservative manner, which is the extreme in every thing. Hence, the above explanations provide some theoretical background to student activism and the mechanism, which motivates students towards taking part in any type of group mobilization. The following chapters shall explore the Lebanese student experience in light of the above explanations taking into consideration the assortment of beliefs, experiences and values as determining elements in examining any phenomena or incident in the history of the student movement.

Chapter Two

A Brief History of the Student Movement

A- Introduction:

The roots of rebellion among the Lebanese youth started during the Ottoman occupation and more precisely with the eruption of the first World War when Ottomans started to force the Lebanese to be the fuel of their war machines. There they discovered the enmity of the Ottomans against them and it was proven with the execution of a group of Lebanese youth from different sects accused of anti ottoman activism. This movement accelerated with the French Mandate and the different opposing groups.

The following chapter is a historical documentation of student activism in Lebanon from the pre-independence era till the early sixties. Its objective is to survey the development of the student movement and to establish a chronological link with the period of the sixties up till the mid-seventies, which is considered the peak of student activism. The chapter will also examine the events in light of the theories discussed in the previous chapter.

B- Pre-independence Era:

The first documented incident of the Lebanese student movement goes back to the year 1822, at the American University of Beirut – the Syrian Protestant College then. The spark was a speech delivered by Professor E.R.Lewis in the Commencement exercise, which advocated the Darwinian theory. The speech created an issue in the administration and as a result the Board of Trustees terminated his services. The students of the School of Medicine and the seniors of the School of Arts and Science protested. Their protest led them to organize themselves and invite their efforts. They “met and discussed their unity and continuity, after which each signed his name and pledged by God and honor to keep the promises which they have made...and to continue to the end...”²⁵

The repercussions of that incident had activated the students’ suppressed complaints about many issues. They formed a pressure group to discuss with the administration issues such as the non- recognition of their degree by the Ottoman Empire unless they pass a difficult exam administered by the Imperial School in Constantinople. Their curriculum lacked some of the material required by Constantinople. They also protested the oral exam at their college, which they had wanted, deleted.

²⁵ Barakat, p. 143

Thus things became more complicated and the administration issued a communiqué warning the students about their abstinence from classes. As a result the students' anger rose, they urged each other for more solidarity, prepared a petition and started to "contact the missionaries in all parts of Syria and the prominent elite in the country."²⁶ The administration continued to pressure the students to withdraw their signature from the petition, but they refused and were suspended as a result. The faculty of the School of Medicine resigned -except for one- and founded a private college to teach the suspended students. The board decided henceforth that any recruited faculty must sign a religious declaration to act in conformity with "the consensus of Protestant creeds."²⁷ Moreover, at the end of the academic year 1883-1884, the university terminated the services of the two Arab professors: Yaqoub Sarruf and Faris Nimr.

If we were to review the above-mentioned incident in a theoretical context we find it of ideological nature. The speech was discussing, advocating and defending of Darwin's theory of evolution, while the university's administration condemned the content of the speech and went as far as firing the faculty who has delivered it. Hence, it started as a minor incident and grew to involve more students as well as faculty when things reached to the peak. Another observation is the students' attitude in

²⁶ Barakat, p. 144

²⁷ Ibid, p. 146

supporting their professor in a mature way. They demonstrated how responsible they were in facing the administration that dealt with the issue in an authoritarian way and refused any negotiations. This way of handling the issue has pushed the students far towards a radical reaction, which ended with their suspension from the university that was the easiest way out for the administration.

The second incident took place in 1909 also in AUB. That year had witnessed the rebellion of the Moslem students against the regulations, which imposed their attendance of the Bible classes. The administration managed to end up the rebellion through contacts, disciplinary measures and reinforcement of the set rules and regulations without any change. Yet such incident is related to political – religious crises, which has been an issue before the Independence. The incident demonstrate the religious ideology being oppressed to impose other ideologies for the fact that AUB was a Protestant missionary college, which aimed at spreading the ideas and recruiting new believers to the Protestant church. Such acts cause on the long run accumulations, which explode at any convenient moment. Dr. Raef Abillama' - an AUB graduate of 1915- had an encounter which is classified as a repression against freedom of speech. Abillama' has written an article in *Al- Fajr* - the university's magazine then - which criticized the administration, the school fees and the food offered in the

canteen. As a result, President Howard Bliss exerted pressure on him to apologize in another article and in the same magazine. This was going to be an issue had it not been for the interference of the Dean of the School of Arts and Science, who discontinued publishing the magazine. This was another easy solution in avoiding the discussions and negotiations and the students' movement.

Thus, the first part of the twentieth century was, in general active, as it witnessed numerous protests, demonstrations and movements against the British and French colonial powers and the youth mainly the students were actively involved. Bayard Dodge (AUB President at that time) described the period of the thirties with "political agitation and propaganda leaders doing their best to stir up the youth."²⁸

However, in spite of the ideological differences there were many issues that unified the students' efforts when faced by major events. The following events were decisive in changing the map and situation of the region.

The year 1936 witnessed the beginning of the Palestinian Revolution, as the plans of the major powers started to be implemented and the Arabs

²⁸ Barakat. P. 149

started their protests. In Lebanon there was a popular movement and the youth from different ideologies volunteered to resist against the Zionist plans in Palestine. The students in Lebanon organized protests and demonstrated supporting the Palestinian people.

In 1937, students protests against Turkey's annexation of Cilicia and Alexandretta, which were taken from Syria. This event was a stage from the plan, which divided the region to become in the future in favor of the expected state of Israel as well as the major powers then: France and Britain.

The Iraqi struggle for Independence against Britain started in 1941 and the Lebanese also supported this struggle. The "propaganda agents instigated a large number of Iraqi students to march out from an assembly... and to parade down the main street of the town"²⁹ as described by Bayard Dodge President of AUB then.

A-The Lebanese struggle for Independence:

Some might not consider that the Lebanese has achieved their Independence with their struggle and resistance. However, the country has witnessed certain events, like demonstrations and arresting a group of political leaders who were active against the French Mandate, also some clashes with the popular resistance and Saeed Fakhreddine from a small

²⁹ Barakat, p. 152

village called Ain-Anoub was the martyr of the independence. Such events have agitated the feeling of the youth and moved their national feelings towards the events then. More so, because the struggle started against the French Mandate through some forms of organizations, which lobbied among the students and the youth to get them involved in those movements. Thus, the Nationalist Movement then called the “Youth for Revenge”- *Shabibat Al- Tha'er* - formed the society of *Al- Urwat al-wuthqa* led by Constantine Zurayk. The Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) was another organization founded by Antoun Saadeh who was a faculty member at AUB. National identity was their common concern but they differed in their interpretations. *Al- Urwat al-wuthqa* believed in the unity of the Arab countries from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arab Gulf as one nation. While the SSNP believed in an Arab World, which consists of different nations and advocated the unity of the Fertile Crescent and its star Cyprus. The SSNP “attracted the elite of the youth which molded the different currents in a secular context.”³⁰ The party had an impact on the life style of the youth “Dr. Fayez Sayegh –one of the party leaders- used to assemble us to listen to classical music accompanied with his explanations.”³¹

³⁰ Munir, Shmaa, *Iklaa'wa Houbot*, p. 33

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 33

On the other hand a good number of the young generation was attracted to Arab Nationalism and the idea of the Arab World's unity. Thus, their argument on the nation's concept was the basic issue: the Arab Nationalists believed that common language and history make a nation, whereas the SSNP believed that the geographic and socioeconomic unity is what makes it. However, both were against the French colonization and had resisted its presence till Independence was achieved.

The Arab and Syrian Nationalists have dominated the students' movement and representation at AUB for three decades. In addition to the above two groups there was a minority of Communists who felt themselves nearer to the Arab Nationalists, yet the latter resented them as they considered them their negation. They also considered them a source of hatred and fragmentation.

Nevertheless, fighting the French mandate and the demand for independence brought the different parties together. In 1943, the students felt the need for a certain form of representation. Thus, the administration appointed a student council that it later dissolved when it got involved in political issues against the French Mandate. Students were active in their political affiliations and in taking part in the demonstrations and speeches. Dodge – the president of the National Protestant College (now AUB) - confessed that the administration was successful in diverting “the attention of students from the pressing problem of independence of their

country by keeping them happy with movies, sports and other extra curricular activities.”³² Students continued to observe and follow the different events, which were going on at the eve of the Independence Day “eight hundred boarding students were interned on campus, classes were given up and an effort was made to keep the students happy.”³³

C- After Independence

In the years 1947-1948, Palestine became the issue after the establishment of the Israeli State and the expulsion of the Palestinians from their land. The Palestinian students constituted the second largest population after the Lebanese in the universities mainly AUB. Thus a new era was marked and it intensified the feeling of revolt against the foreign invading powers as well as the Arab regimes. The “feeling was a reflection of the general spread of discontent among the Arab people which produced a succession of coups d’etat and gave a new vigor to ideologies and parties calling for radical change”³⁴.

The impact of that period on the students reflected greater involvement in parties and political movements; their attitudes have changed against the West and started to realize the brutal acts of colonization. The Palestinians’ exposure to the massacres and displacement specially to Lebanon in 1948 has agitated the national

³² Shmaa, p. 33

³³ Barakat, p. 152

³⁴ Ibid – Ibid, p. 153

feeling and increased the enmity of the Lebanese students to any colonial power in any country in general and more specifically in the Arab world. Thus, they demonstrated in 1951 against the harsh measures of the French in Morocco disregarding any Arab national feeling and imposing the ugliest style of colonization.

In 1954 the Lebanese protested against the Baghdad Pact, which considered the alliance of some Arab countries with the United States of America, a betrayal to the national feeling and welfare. During that time Hassan Abu Ismail from Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) at AUB was the first martyr from students in one of the demonstrations then. The year 1956 witnessed a tripartite (France, England and Israel) invasion to Egypt after Naser's nationalization of the Suez Canal and also had its impact on the Lebanese in general, the students and youth in particular, thus they went out in demonstration and relief activities to support the Egyptian people under attack. In the late fifties, the students and political activists were involved for quite a long time in supporting the Algerian Revolution and in condemning the brutal acts of the French colonists; there were ongoing activities for this issue until the Independence of Algeria was achieved.

Beyond this the unresolved Palestinian problem continued to be on the agenda of the student's movement struggle and the Palestinian students became the core of the student movement. The American University of

Beirut was the center of activities as many of the active Palestinians were students there and became later the leaders of the armed resistance like Wadih Haddad, Tayseer Qubaa', Laila Khalid and others. George Habash who has founded the Palestinian Popular Front at AUB was also of the same generation. In the early fifties three of the AUB Palestinian students have formed later Fateh movement: Yasser Arafat, Hani Al- Hassan and Khalil Al- Wazir. Yet, in spite of that active movement the AUB continued to chase the politically active students with disciplinary measures. As a result, the friction grew between the university administration and the students and the "more the students showed concern with the political problems of the area, the more the university resorted to repressive measures"³⁵.

The above-mentioned period was characterized by having student organizations, active but not steady as it witnessed certain ups and downs. Students were diversified by ideologies yet unified when national crises arose along with the government's oppression to such acts.

If we were to apply the theories discussed in the first chapter, we find the above-mentioned activities have acquired the set-up of a movement. This was reflected in more than one aspect. Such as the organizations, whereby students started to institutionalize, advocate and lobby with their colleagues to join their movements. Students have started to act and

³⁵ Barakat, p. 154

organize activities that dealt with the ideologies, which they believed was the best for the country's salvation.

The clash with the government's authorities was another characteristic that has given the recognition of the movement. In addition to that we observe that the authorities whether on or off campus have resorted to oppression and violence to end the sit-ins, demonstration and any kind of group protest.

The students organized pressure groups whenever there was an emerging incident, whether on or off campus. Such pressure groups were the trigger, which have been the key that brought up suppressed dissatisfactions.

However this movement continued to grow and develop to become more sophisticated with the establishment of the Lebanese University by the government and the emergence of other private universities.

D- The Students' Movement from the Early 60's Till the Eve of 1975 Civil War

This part deals with the peak of the students' movement in Lebanon, a stage of active participation and many events. During that time students not only reacted to universities' internal affairs, but to local and international events as well. Then the Lebanese University (LU) became the main center and the place where student activities started to

spread out to the private universities. The LU and the government's secondary schools students and faculties were deeply involved and active. The content of this section comes mainly from interviews with the ex-student activists, whereby eleven interviews were conducted with both the left and right parties (a list is attached with the bibliography). In addition, information was collected from the archives of the daily newspapers and documents produced earlier by some researchers.

The social, political, cultural and economic situation of the above-mentioned period has its impact on the Lebanese students' activism. Generally speaking, the Lebanese population has always lacked to be cohesive and homogenous ever since the borders were drawn. In 1920 the French Mandate worked on Lebanon to be a Christian, and more specifically a Maronite state. However, while drawing the borders, the inclusion of the coastal cities like Akkar and the inner parts like the Biqaa' Valley and Jabal Amel shifted the balance towards a majority of Shiites and a minority of Sunnis and Maronites. As a result the Sunnis started to claim their inclusion to Syria and the Maronites became more threatened with a majority of Muslims surrounding them and wanted to stick to the small state of Lebanon (Dawlat Lubnan Al- Sagheer) i.e. Mount Lebanon.

Yet, greater Lebanon was declared and the state was weakened to strengthen confessionalism, which was reinforced by the National Pact of

1943 - the first ministerial statement of the independent state of Lebanon. Hence, Lebanon functioned as a state with limited power, and a larger share of power was given to the Christians to protect and guarantee their status, existence and profits. The Christian leaders shared the state with the other confessional leaders forming what Halim Barakat described "a mosaic, which consists of diverse groups, interacting within confines of a common structure without consensus by groups on fundamentals"³⁶. As a result "relationships were regulated by a system of checks and balances...characterized by a balanced distribution of rewards and powers."³⁷

Thus the issue was the undefined Lebanese identity, which was Arab for some, while some others wanted a detachment from Arab neighbors and more openness to the west. This issue was subject to hot discussions in the 60's and early 70's. Ghassan Tueini wrote: "the treatment of confessionalism should start with a confession of its existence. The Christians and Moslems say two things: one for themselves and one for the others."³⁸ As a result political parties reflected the Lebanese mosaic, which enhanced and enriched confessionalism. Save only for the Syrian Nationalist Social Party (SNSP) and the Lebanese Communist Party (LCP), all the Lebanese parties were groups

³⁶ Barakat, p. 23

³⁷ Ibid - Ibid

³⁸ An-Nahar, Nov. 30, 69

of individuals around a leader. The Christians were either around Camille Chamoun in the National Liberals Party, or Pierre Gemayel in the Phalange Party, or Raymond Eddeh in the National Bloc Party. The Druze, meanwhile, were either around Kamal Junblat in the Progressive Socialist Party or Emir Majeed Areslan who headed a political current and not a full-fledged party. The same thing applied to the Sunnis and Shiites who gathered around a Zaim.

This mosaic was reflected in the universities, and more specifically in the Lebanese University where the majority of the student population came from the lower middle and relatively poor classes, since the private universities were always for the upper middle and rich classes. While the LU incorporated all the political parties, the American University of Beirut was the citadel of the Lebanese Moslem bourgeois affiliated with Palestinian organizations, in addition to the SSNP affiliates, and the USJ was the citadel of the Lebanese-Christians bourgeois affiliated with Phalange, National Liberals and the National Bloc parties. While the *Waii* Movement (The Awakening) emerged as a liberal organization against the traditional Christian parties. *Al Waii* started strongly in the LU and was composed from the Christians and their parties. This movement was the organization through which the Christian students were assembled to struggle for the students' issues since their parties' structure didn't provide a space for trade union activities. They also didn't gather around

a traditional leader or a Zaim and they grew and became powerful enough to win the first elections of the Students' Union of the LU in the academic year 70-71 and Issam Khalifeh became the first president of the Union. However, the movement started to have internal conflicts that have caused it to split into two parts before the break of the Civil War. "One part sided by the traditional Christians while the second part was more liberal and later became more leftist and secular"³⁹

The mosaic structure of the students' body, which was without a national identity, was accompanied by dissatisfaction with the state and its structure. In 1969 Halim Barakat found "84% of the student body were dissatisfied with the political situation, 71% felt that Lebanon was not really democratic and an overwhelming 94% said there was a great deal of corruption and favoritism in the political administration."⁴⁰

The socio- economic structure was not any better, as the booming influence of the post World War II era has started to fizzle. This was due to many events:

The **crash** of the largest Lebanese bank then (INTRA), which caused a situation of shaky confidence in the Lebanese financial market. The **repercussions** of the shocking results of the Six-Day war of 1967 between the Arabs and Israel, which has led to the occupation of

³⁹ Issam, Khalifeh, Interview, January 15, 2002

⁴⁰ Barakat, p. 80

Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian lands. Lebanon became a transit rout of the **petro-dollar revenues** entering the Lebanese banks, which were either reinvested abroad or served foreign countries while the foreign investments in Lebanon were rare especially in agriculture and industry. The implications of the economical crises led to a high level of anxiety among the workers and they started to make some activities, which led them to the general strike in 1971. Yet the strike failed to achieve its objectives and demands of the workers; on the other hands the students were very disappointed with this failure because they failed to act as a homogenous team, which they thought was an important reason to this failure. As a result, there was a growing feeling among the students to be the agents of the socio-economic and political change. In November 1973, came the strike of the Ghandour Factory workers, two workers were killed and fourteen wounded by the security forces. Hence, more anger and dissatisfaction brewed among the students, not to mention their rejection of violence and oppression.

The **educational system** meanwhile, did not fare any better, as it was also a mirror of the political system - as described by Munir Bashour has - "overlapped with the existing sectarian divisions in the country and served to reinforce it."⁴¹

⁴¹ Bashour, Munir, *The Role of Two Western Universities in the National Life of Lebanon and the Middle East*. A Ph. D Dissertation in Education quoted by Gaille Le Pottier in her paper on student Activism on the Eve of the Lebanese Civil War, p.11

In Lebanon, the history of higher education schools of thought goes back as early as the middle of the 19th century, with the missionaries who came from Britain, France, Italy and America. In 1866 the Syrian Protestant College-later American University of Beirut (AUB)- was founded and in 1873 Saint Joseph University (USJ) was founded.

Since then arose the competition between the Anglo-Saxon and Francophone schools of thought, and each taught a different system, curriculum and approach. Hence, the cultural gap was widening between the Christians and the Muslims as well as the graduates of both schools; all of the above was accompanied with the absence of governmental policies and interventions.

Late in the 19th Century the schools of Al-Makassed and those affiliated to the different churches and brotherhoods also emerged at that time. While the public schools came at a very later stage to serve mainly the Muslims and the under privileged. In 1951 the LU was founded but started effectively in 1959. Therefore the end result was a diversified generation of schools' and universities' graduates, which implied an impact on their political views.

Student activism in Lebanon can thus be studied with respect to the above-mentioned background and factors with all their complexities. The interviews, which I have conducted with the ex-student activists, have reflected a difference in the concerns among the students of the private

universities and those of the Lebanese University. It also reflected that the students of the private universities have always moved to support the demands of the LU students, as their own demands were considered very nominal and incomparable. Yet before going into further details, we ought to observe that students moved in two parallel lines: the off-campus and the on-campus issues.

The off-campus issues were the events of public nature whether in Lebanon, the Arab world or international. Youth in general were motivated with the revolutions, struggle for Independence and foreign occupation.

The **Algerian revolution** against the French colonization and the war in Vietnam were among the events that had an impact on the political thinking of the Lebanese students. The popular struggle of the Algerians and Vietnamese had a great impact on the emotions and political practice among the university students and they organized many activities to express their support and anger against the colonial powers. In addition, figures like Fidel Castro in Cuba and Mao Zedong and his Cultural Revolution in China, as well as the 1968 students' movement in France became models for the Lebanese students to identify with.

One of the major traumas was the **defeat of June 1967**, an event noted by all the interviewees both left and right. " Abdel Nasser's defeat was a

disappointment for us”⁴² said Karim Pakradouni. While Hikmat El- Eid said it was “devastating and motivating to protect the Palestinian guerillas, so Lebanon became part of the struggle against Israel,”⁴³ All the interviewees of the leftist parties as well as Samir Abdel Malak from the National Bloc Party made similar statements. Nasser’s charisma and the promises he made to the people of the Arab world have created hopes of an optimistic future towards the restoration of the old Arab empire glories. Hence, the defeat and the occupation of the Arab lands by the Israelis have caused a frustrating situation to all the Arabs.

The second major event was the **Israeli air raid** on Beirut airport in 1969, after which students went on strike to protest against the Lebanese government, which was accused to be negligence and incapable. Yet, such incidents led to arguments among the students groups concerning armed Palestinian presence in Lebanon. While the leftists were enthusiastic supporters of the Palestinians. This enthusiasm was reinforced with the Cairo Agreement of 1969, which legalized their armed presence, by the Lebanese government after their first clash with the Lebanese Army. In 1970-1971 the Palestinian armed forces were expelled from Jordan to Lebanon as a result of the bloody clash called then the “Black September”. Thus, the “leftists ideologies grew with a

⁴² Interview March 8, 2002

⁴³ Interview December 12, 2001

revolutionary spirit toward supporting the Palestinians' struggle"⁴⁴ said Ghassan Ayash. Ayash added "the graduates of the students' movement became the cadre who helped in administering the Lebanese civil war, since they were well trained to organize and lobby."⁴⁵ On the other hand the rightists were very adamant about the Palestinian presence and interference in the Lebanese internal affairs. Ayyash concluded, "in this war the Christians' cause was the sovereignty of the state, while the Muslims stood up to protect the Palestinians and ally with them against the Christians."⁴⁶

It is worth mentioning in this context that president of the National Bloc Party Raymond Eddeh was the only deputy who voted against the Cairo Agreement. Yet able to "distinguish between the Palestinian rights and their interference in the Lebanese internal affairs the abuse of Fatteh Land in the South of Lebanon"⁴⁷ as noted by Samir Abdel Malak; "we were among the first who visited the South to observe the sufferings of the people there,"⁴⁸ he added. This attitude was unique among the traditional Christian parties, as the National Bloc neither formed a militia to fight the Palestinians nor did they agree on their behavior in Lebanon or they ally with the Israelis to get rid of them. Hence, they were able to look at the

⁴⁴ Interview January 7, 2002

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Interview February 4, 2002

⁴⁸ Interview February 4, 2002

events more objectively than the other war factions. However they had to pay the price of this attitude and Eddeh ended in exile, and the popular expansion of the party stayed limited.

In spite of all of this, “the students’ involvement in the public affairs was of a short-term nature, which kept them busy for one day or few days in protests, sit-ins and demonstrations. While the on-campus activities were their daily on going concern”.⁴⁹

Before going into the details of the students’-campus demands, it is worth reviewing the student representations across the universities. The private universities in general had autonomous student councils at that time. The AUB council had a majority of Palestinian organizations – mainly the Palestinian Liberation Organization- in its membership. Among its presidents we mention: Mohammad Mattar who is now a lawyer and an active member in NGO’s and Maher Masri who became a minister in the Palestinian state. Their internal demands were limited to protest every now and then against a raise in their tuition fees. Otherwise, most of their movement focused on the solidarity with the LU students. The same applies to the Beirut College for Women then (BCW)-Lebanese American University now (LAU). The student cabinet then protested internally against a raise in tuition fees or the termination of some faculty

⁴⁹ Hikmat El-Eid, interview

contracts. The latter constituted a major part in their activism as they went on strike for over a month protesting the termination of the contracts of Karim Azkol and Thurraya Malhas (72-73), AUB witnessed similar events when the contracts of Sadek Azm and Halim Barakat were terminated. Autonomous student councils also existed at USJ, Ecole des Lettres and the Arab University - which had to face major protest against the establishment of its School of Law. The LU's representation began in the form of students' committees in each faculty, and then in 1971 the general union of LU students was established following a referendum, which was planned, conducted and implemented by students. "This step was a milestone in the history of students' democratic representation. It laid down the basis of trade union representation (*Al- Tamtheel Al- Naqabi*), thus by 1974 there was more than 50 students' unions and leagues in the high schools".⁵⁰

The LU students had a list of comprehensive demands, which dealt with the different aspects related to their university life. Thus, they called for the **democracy of education**, which meant free education for all especially the poor. It is also a learning process that enriches the relationship of the students with their community, watching the individuality of each student: skills and needs. It also meant the experience drawn from the learning process as well as a defined role for

⁵⁰ Hikmat El-Eid, interview

the educator in facilitating the process. In addition, to the freedom of choice, expression and personal growth. In this context it meant to educate for participatory democracy, sharing the human needs and caring about the public concerns. They also strived to establish **faculties of applied science**, which were only in the private universities and unaffordable for all the students. The **unified campus** for all the faculties with its laboratories, dormitories and facilities was also among their demands as well as the recruitment of enough **full time faculty** members. They also opted to benefit from the **social security**, establish **consumers' cooperatives** for students and increase the allocations of **scholarships**. This agenda was the students' daily work, sometimes they tended to demand in an angry way through strikes and demonstrations, at other times they were involved in discussions and negotiations with the concerned officials.

“The progress of the students' movement in the early 70's was faster than the other popular sectors. As a result the students were able to raise the government's concern about educational institutions and to issue a series of decrees related to the government's schools and the LU”⁵¹. Even though, “the movement was exposed to oppression between 1971 and 1973, yet it was able to obtain the government decree for the

⁵¹ Mohammad Mattar – Interview, February 1, 2002

establishment of the Faculties of Engineering and Agriculture and to double the LU budget many times.”⁵²

This however, came after a series of events:

“In February 71, a strike supported by USJ was carried out and on March 10 the government oppressed the students’ demonstration.

In 1972, they applied the approach of hit and run demonstration (*Mozahara tayyara*) twenty demonstrations per day, followed by a strike for 5 days and the students occupied the buildings of various faculties”.⁵³

In 1973, when the late Dr. Albert Mokhaiber was the acting Minister of Education, the national conference of the Lebanese students was held and attended by student representatives from all the Lebanese regions. The conference was concluded with the following recommendations:

- 1- Support of the Government public education institutions: This was emphasized, as the tendency has been always to support the private sector, which was stronger in facilities and resources.
- 2- Protect the freedom of the Trade Union movement: They realized that strengthening the student trade union secures the freedom of speech and movement towards achieving their demands. The solidarity provided by such union empowers the impact of their movements and adds credit as well.

⁵² Mohammad Mattar

⁵³ Ibid

- 3- Establish the Faculties of Applied Science: Which has always been a demand to the LU students ever since they started their activities.
- 4- Lower the subscription fees of the Lawyers' Order: To suit all the subscribers from different classes and more specifically the graduates of the LU who come from a relatively poor economic class.
- 5- Reconsider the branches of the Lebanese Baccalaureate part II diploma: They suggested to add branches, in addition to the Math, Philosophy and Experimental Science branches. The conference recommended also a revision to the whole program inherited from the French Third Republic.

The recommendations were kept in the drawers without any plan of action or change. The students resumed their struggle “on March 21, 1973 they went on strike again upholding the motto: Students' Unity is a National Choice.”⁵⁴ On March 22, they organized a festival to evaluate the follow up of the conference recommendations mentioned above. The end of March witnessed a demonstration of 10,000 students from all the universities. On April 5, the security forces repressed the students involved in this movement from the Law School of USJ, AUB, Arab University and Sagess College; Students clashed with the security forces

⁵⁴ Michael Samaha, Interview, January 17, 2002

and some of them were injured and 81 were arrested. On April 6, AUB students were engaged for 6 hours in clashes with the security forces as recounted by Mohammad Matar.

As a result, students of the LU, the Arab University and the USJ protested through street sit-ins and 108 of them were arrested. On April 7 the students of the high schools participated in the demonstrations of Beirut and Tripoli.

In 1974, the famous AUB 37days strike against the raise in the tuition fees in which students occupied the campus buildings. The strike ended on April 16,1974 in a violent way where the security forces attacked the university with their tanks and 103 students were suspended as a result.

E- The achievements:

The product of the government's oppression and students' reaction against it was translated into a list of achievements below:

- Establishment of the LU Applied Sciences faculties.
- Decision was taken on a unified university campus
- The benefits of the social security included the university students.
- LU students were granted the right to share in the decision making in the issues related to them.

- Amendments in some of the programs and curricula were introduced, especially the deletion of oral exams in the Faculty of Sciences.
- Securing scholarships for distinguished and needy students.
- Implementing a referendum to evaluate the faculty objectively, which helped in avoiding disqualified faculty from becoming full timers.
- Acquiring the Students' Union card through which they got discounts from a number of commercial establishments.
- Initiation of active sports varsities in the LU.
- Production of publications, brochures and flyers covering the Union's activities.
- Changing the content of the Baccalaureate Part II program and more branches were included.

F- The theoretical Context:

In reviewing the theoretical framework of chapter one the following is observed:

- The students were very keen about organizing themselves into an institution with hierarchies and off campus affiliations, mainly with the

political parties. “We believed in the importance of the human being and that is why we stressed working with the youth generation.”⁵⁵

- Networking and coalitions were also among the characteristics of the students’ movement during the elections and other movements asking for their demands.

“We used to make our alliance according to what we decided and sometimes against the parties’ leadership decision.”⁵⁶

- Their on- campus and off-campus issues were of public nature, i.e. they served a whole community rather one individual. Example of the private universities protested for issues related to LU.
- Maturity and adult partnerships were characteristics of the students’ demands. One example was the LU students’ partnership in the universities decision-making council.
- Radicalism was another characteristic. “ We used to dress and look like Mao, and hear the Beatles music, identify with the Hippies, the Yuppies, the Woodstock festival and the sexual revolution.”⁵⁷
- Advocacy of ideologies was very obvious among the students and it ranged from peaceful debates to physical clashes, “the cafeterias of the universities became forums for debates.”⁵⁸ “The Ecole Des Lettres was

⁵⁵ Joseph Azzi, Interview, January 26, 2002

⁵⁶ Michael Samaha, Interview, January 17, 2002

⁵⁷ Matar’s Interview

⁵⁸ Abdallah Haidar, Interview, November 21, 2001

a center for the leftists among the French Universities which witnessed the Black Thursday led by Bacheer Gemayl from the Phalange party to discipline the leftists.”⁵⁹ While Karim Pakradouni said “ we needed a lot of toughness to resist the attraction of the leftists ideologies.”⁶⁰

- Conspiracy feelings against the university’s administration in on-campus matters and against the government in off- campus matters, was also a characteristic of that period.

G- Conclusion:

There was an active and ambitious movement growing and booming during that time. This movement “has played a distinguished role through its democratic agenda of demands and the ability to have the different political currents unified in one student trade union which might be the first experience in the Arab world.”⁶¹

It had its own characteristics even in the music they listened to and played. They were affected with musicians like George Mustaki who was politically oriented, and students were very much attracted to the music and songs that Makhoul Kassouf -a student at the USJ in the mid seventies – played in his concerts in the universities and among his colleagues.

⁵⁹ Samir Franjeh, Interview, January 23, 2002

⁶⁰ Karim Pakradoni, Interview, March 8, 2002

⁶¹ Saadallah Mazraani, Interview January 10, 2002

The students were alert and concerned with their surrounding issues on campus as well as off campus. They were active and organized with perseverance in pursuing the issues to the end. In addition to that in spite of their being affiliated to the political parties they were able to visualize things and take decisions and not dictated through the remote control. Instead they shared their opinions and observations around them with the leaders of their parties. That period was a rich period and the youth were full of high hopes, students had role models in their parties as well as international figures to identify with and struggle to achieve their ideologies. They were also ready to discuss ideological differences, however sometimes things turned into clashes using their hands and sticks. Yet, the above active student movement was unfortunately interrupted by the eruption of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975. This war has turned things up-side down, the rifle and cannon replaced the debates, people were divided and Beirut the capital became two cities with fighting militias on both sides. The students of the same university were also divided and the leaders of the above booming movement became the leaders of the war living apart antagonistically. The next chapter will study the situation of the student movement thoroughly during and after the war as well as the impact of the Lebanese civil war.

Chapter Three

Lebanese Student Activism during the Civil War and after the Taef Accord

A. Introduction

On April 13, 1975 the golden era of the student movement started to decline with the unusual event which took place on that day. Needless to say this conclusion couldn't be made on that day, but the aftermath of the event and its repercussions, which continued over fifteen years, have made the above statement true. This chapter deals with the students' role during the Civil War as well as after the Taef Accord. It discusses their involvements off and on campus involvement, the issues that concerned their movement, lobbies and demands. It portrays as well the student representation in the universities, their alliances and relations with the parties.

The Lebanese Civil War started on April 13, 1975, when a bus carrying Palestinian civilians was attacked while passing in front of a church in Ain Al- Roumaneh, a predominantly Christians suburb. The other side of the story was: that they were carrying arms and had a clash with the civilians in the church who had to defend themselves. However, the issue was not who did it, but the result, which was the start of rounds of violence. Thus the Palestinian issue which has always been controversial among the Lebanese in general and student body in

particular was again the trigger. As a result the Lebanese parties and political coalitions were divided: one group supporting the Palestinians and another against them. Soon the struggle turned out to be violent in one round after the other.

B- Students and war:

The scope, implications and future of the breaking events was not clear, thus the students did not comprehend at the beginning what was going on. However they were distracted from their academic life and their attendance was interrupted for security reasons and gradually they started to get involved in the new situation, especially those with political and party affiliations. As things started to escalate, students stopped to commute from one region to the other specially when Beirut became two regions fighting each other. Both the leftists and rightist parties got involved in the military training and transactions, meanwhile the shelling was expanding to cover more areas. To summarize, by April 13,1975 everything was set and the cycle started whirling.

The first incident among the students in 1976 when Najem Najem from the 103 - mentioned in chapter two - barged into AUB to kill the deans of Students and Engineering Robert Njaimi and Raymond Ghosn. He also was on "his way to kill President Samuel Kirkood, had it not been for the interference of the late Dr. Najeeb Abu Haidar who was liked and popular

among the students.”⁶² The act was revenge against the measures taken earlier. Hence, with the first sign of the state’s weakness Najem Najem took the opportunity to revenge from AUB administrators who took the measures against him. However, the police arrested him but with the acceleration of the civil war and the collapse of the government’s authority he was able to escape.

With the ongoing events and the growth of the civil strife the university and High school students got also involved and divided into two camps and the Palestinian issue was the subject around which the students split into anti and pro Palestinian. This division was according to their party affiliation. In general the leftists sided by the Palestinians and the rightist against, later it developed to Moslems against the Christians and the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

With the first round of violence the parties appeared prepared with weapons and ammunition and demonstrated their power openly, which attracted the youth and were attracted to join the parties to own the weapon and be powerful. They were also engaged in the training camps, which were launched then. As a result students who were politically active became very careful and took sides. This cautious atmosphere grew up and according to the geographical area gradually one group dominated the universities. Hence, the universities of the Eastern part of

⁶² Mattar’s Interview

Beirut accommodated mainly the Christians, while those of the Western part accommodated mainly the Muslims and leftists, with few exceptions on both sides. The LU's faculties were all located in the Western part of Beirut, which created a dilemma for the Christians of East Beirut along with the escalating tempo of the war. So the Christian leaders began to move. Charles Ghosteen of the National Liberals Party led a sophisticated movement to solve the problem of the students residing in East Beirut. In 1976, "I contacted the Christian deans of the LU and got their approval to establish branches in East Beirut and then contacted the LU President Edmond Naim who seemed to be hesitant."⁶³ Ghosteen added "that Naim was then living in Rabyieh protected by Ameen Gemayel –who then, was the main militia leader of the Maten area. But I reassured him that we are not threatening, since the division is going to happen with the deans on our side."⁶⁴ Naim's original proposal was to accommodate the students of LU in the USJ and AUB Out Campus Program but obviously it was not a feasible solution. So, "we were offered premises by one of the churches and we brought some furniture to start classes."⁶⁵ Ghosteen justified this for security reasons only without any political intentions in mind as "I was described as: a man whose feet are on the right, but his head on the left, since I was a

⁶³ Charles Ghosteen, Interview, February 4, 2002

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

liberal.”⁶⁶ Later “we developed this project with the new LU president, the late Dr. Butros Deeb who issued a legislative decree legalizing the LU’s division,” continued Ghosteen.

The end result was LU branches all over the governorates which questioned its efficiency as well as the justification made by Mr. Ghosteen. As the duplications and divisions were made according to regions and sects that added to the weakness of all the government’s departments and the LU was a main venue in this respect. The AUB closed its Out Campus Program soon after the closing of the 75-76 round. However the LU student body of the different faculties was never unified, it was politically divided and they were as strangers together and with their faculty members. The militias were the decision-makers in the university by virtue of the rifle; so, the academic atmosphere retreated as well as the students’ demands retreated and the students became occupied with the ongoing war in the streets. As a result, university students in general became the fuels of the war and their ex-leaders became the leaders of the war.

During those days, students were recruited or more correctly ordered by their parties to undergo military training. Later, they were sent to support the fronts, guard the checkpoints and cover sniping posts. The

⁶⁶ Ghosteen’s Interview

consequences were reflected on their academic performance some of them dropped out and others got their grades by threatening the faculty.

The universities were places for clashes among the students for off campus issues. Thus any conflict between the parties and the militias was reflected among the students. After the 1982 invasion and the eruption of the war in Mount Lebanon, the Phalanges and the Lebanese Forces behaved as winners and tried to oppress the leftist people. As a result, the leftists formed a front to face them and AUB, LAU and LU in West Beirut witnessed many clashes. After February 6, 1984 the regions were clearly divided.

“We used to have frontiers in the same dormitory building,” said an AUB student at that time. Another one from LAU said, “the Syrian Nationalist Social party (SSNP) with the Progressive Socialist Party and Amal Movement and all the pro Palestinians were in the same boat fighting against the Lebanese Forces and always ready to kick them out.” Thus, during the civil war we could observe the involvement of the SNSP in the students’ activities but not from the viewpoint of the Trade Unions it was rather a fight against the Phalanges – their traditional enemy- as well as a nationalist attitude in supporting the Palestinians. Yet, the above mentioned coalition did not sustain for a long time, as once they purified their regions of militants from rightist parties, they started their conflicts among themselves which most of the time led to clashes. Thus, the

clashes among the allies erupted every now and then, at one time the Murabetoun who were the Sunni militia with the Progressive Socialist Party and those with Amal movement in the decisive “Two Flags Battle” which brought back the Syrian Army to Beirut in 1987. So was the case between the Phalanges and the National Liberals who had bloody clashes between each other, which ended the military presence of the National Liberals in “Al Safra Battle.”

Those clashes started outside the universities then were transferred to the university or visa a versa and sometimes concurrently. “During that time the on-campus demands retreated, or almost disappeared and the off campus struggle was the students main concern.”⁶⁷

Many were killed in the war either on the checkpoints because of confessional identities or due to party affiliation. Others were killed in military operations or by mere chance without any cause. With the deterioration of the events, the militias started coercive measures in recruiting the youth and university students to be trained and involved in the military operations, and many families had to send their children abroad, but those who couldn't afford that had to abide by the measures. Certain social problems started to appear as a result of the civil strife. Drug addiction **appeared** among the students, as all the kinds were

⁶⁷ Wael Abu Faour, Interview, January 7, 2002

available without any legal restrictions and they needed an escape mechanism to get accommodated to the killing and bloodshed, thus drugs became the incentive for enrollment in the militia. Students and youth in general, became very vulnerable and easily managed as a result to their growing need for drugs. Their **aggression** grew as well as the tendency to kill and be criminals to get the drugs. Their involvement in the militia had also caused many to **drop out** from high school and university. The repercussion of this situation was the absence of any type of **authority**. The first in the row was the parental one as well as the school and university and the government's authority at large. Through the militia's power, the youth could do anything without any deterrence force. The individual could even break with the original leader of the militia and become himself the leader of a certain "territory." They were able to get money from any revenue: shops, individuals, check point and through all illegal acts. Even the values and vocabulary acquired new meanings, as doing all of the above was an achievement and not a shame, added to that people avoided them and abided by their rules to save themselves any trouble. This situation was featured in the plays and radio programs, which were produced at that time, by much prominent artists as Ziad Rahbani and others.

In brief students were the backbone of the war due to their age group and the characteristics of that age in addition to the orientation, which the

parties have done on the eve of the civil strife and during the series of events and various rounds.

Yet, as the war progressed, the youth started to watch the discrepancy between their parties' preaching and its practice, and many dropped out from the parties and a good number of them left the country. With the Israeli invasion and occupation to certain parts of Lebanon different parties were engaged in the resistance against it. Thus, students were involved for a long time in the operations against the Israelis and the alliances of the past became their deterrent force from doing these operations. Their resistance sometimes turned out into martyrdom operations. Some of them were arrested and taken to the Israeli prisons in Lebanon and in the occupied territories. This resistance gradually was transformed from a national one to an Islamic one with the rise of Hezbollah, who took over and all the others stopped their involvement for several reasons.

During the war, student representation in some private universities like AUB, LAU and USJ was almost liquidated by the administrations and at that time the students' concentration was on the ongoing events and those who were not involved concentrated on their lessons and some left the country. Yet the students managed through the clubs to manipulate and advocate for their parties and not ideologies. The LU students – like other students - also lost concentration on their demands and councils.

The chaos and confusion during the civil strife has helped many in getting forged grades and diplomas by paying a certain amount of money. Foreign faculty members and some Lebanese were threatened and kidnapped from the universities. In the eighties and after the Israeli invasion, the Lebanese American University witnessed an experience of this sort with the kidnapping of three of its faculty members. The president of the AUB, Dr. Malcolm Kerr was assassinated. Even high school students were able to earn their diplomas easily with the waving of the government exams due to security reasons. The whole picture was typical of the civil wars where nothing was in its place and the government's infrastructure demolished. Life in general was anomy in the absence of values; war had even its special terminology. Everything was in confusion and the political life was simplified to the rifle and the students lost the campus life spirit. Yet there were few who were still involved in ideological search and at that time the "political song" of Marcel Khalifeh, Ahmad Kaabour and Khaled Habre became popular among the youth, in addition to Ziad Rahbani's theater. However, it is worth mentioning that there were some attempts in getting the youth involved in the public life although limited. Such as the Education for Peace program of the UNICEF and the development camps of the Lebanese Family Planning Association. Although successful yet the

attempts involved a limited number of youth and students and the majority remained in the militia domain.

C-Students after the war:

The attempts to stop the Lebanese war were translated in a conference held in Taef Saudi Arabia in 1990 where all the fighting parties met to negotiate and reach a concession which was documented in what was known later as Taef Pact. The cease-fire was an immediate result of this pact, and the government started to pull out, rebuild its infrastructure and regain some of its authority. The militias were called to hand in their weapons and military equipment, hence it was a transitory period which the youth have witnessed and it was not easy for them to accommodate with the new situation. As the Taef Accord has ended the military transactions of the war and the violence of arms and battles but so many things were still missing. Things were much more complicated and the consequences of the civil war were to be checked at different times, whenever a certain phenomena was observed. The war left a major impact on the youth in general including the university and high school students. The civil war was the common denominator among them. They were either born during the war or were at school or in the university.

In examining the post war generation, one can observe many characteristics. In their field survey Al-Amine and Faour have made a

situational analysis about university students. They found out regarding the parents' occupation that "students who belong to lower classes are about equal in number to those who belong to upper classes around 16-17% more."⁶⁸ The authors also found out that the probability of the lower classes joining the LU rather than AUB is 11 times more. Knowing that during the war and the transitional period after the war there were private foundations, which provided loans and scholarships that allowed them to join the private universities otherwise the above percentage would have been higher. They also concluded that the "clan solidarity" became stronger during the war and more ethnic institutions were established for the financial support of the different clans. Among the findings also, 91% resented the major they were studying and advised their peers to choose a different major, which means that their choice was not based on full awareness with the absence of career guidance on one hand and on the other hand because it was the best available and affordable major which results a lot of frustration. Concerning the duality of language they found out that "a higher percentage of Muslims than Christians, lower class than upper class and LU students than in private universities (except for Beirut Arab University) favor Arabic as the language of instruction,"⁶⁹ i.e. a percentage of 30-57% versus 11%. The same applies to their reading

⁶⁸ Al- Amin and Faour, p.469

⁶⁹ As-Safeer daily Newspaper, May 8, 2002

habits as students from lower classes read more than the upper classes in general according to the researchers, since the rich people had different sorts of distractions to spend their leisure time.

D- Students' political Involvement:

As for their involvement in political life Al- Amine and Faour concluded that 45% of the sample didn't have any party affiliations and no party manipulated the affiliates, the maximum rate was only 14% for the National Liberal Current of Aoun' and the same for Hezbollah. It was observed that there is a close correlation between the party support and the university i.e. in USJ the tendency is more towards Aoun and Lebanese Forces. Even in the same university like the Lebanese American University and LU for example, the students' affiliations of Byblos Campus and the second branches are similar to that of the USJ, while the majority of Beirut Campus and the first branches students are leftists or affiliated to Islamic fundamentalist parties. Thus, 48% of the Druze students support the Progressive Socialist Party, 38% of the sheits support Hezbollah, 29% of the Maronites, Catholics and 31% of the Orthodox are with the National Liberal Current, while 12% of the Sunnites supported Arab Nationalism another 12% supported the Islamic fundamentalists currents.

As for the parliamentary elections of 1996, 37% of the sample studied by Al- Amine and Faour were under age, however only 23% voted of the eligible group, yet they didn't vote for a whole list instead they have chosen individuals and 61% of them didn't trust the impartiality and fairness of the elections. Some of them were involved in the activities of a private voluntary organization, which was following and watching the democracy and accuracy of the elections. However, it was observed that religious people have the tendency to be obedient to any authority including the government' authority.

The representation of the students in the universities was gradually resumed after the war was over, yet the administrations were careful and cautious in allowing and observing the process. In the branches of the Lebanese University the student councils were governed by a majority of the parties, which exist in each branch. Thus, the majority of the first branches were divided between Amal Movement, Hezbollah, Progressive Socialist Party and others, while in the second a majority of Phalange, Lebanese Forces and Aouni's. In other words the majority was according to the geographical area and the governing sect and party in the area. It is also observed that their agenda and demands became very simple and temporary with a low profile and full of the rivalry and secondary sensitivities between the parties. The councils of the branches were not able to form the body, which represent the university at large and continue

to be fragile and vulnerable. The rich heritage of the good old days of the seventies was not invested and the deterioration continues and the maximum that the students could do is organizing a sit in or distribute a flyer without follow up. The students' involvement in the public issues is confined to a demonstration or a short-term strike, which remains unnoticed, and sometimes oppressed by the police. This situation is reflected in the private universities like in AUB where they have elections and a student council but are monitored and supervised by assigned faculty members and doesn't leave any autonomy and presence. The same applies in the Notre Dame and Haigazian Universities. As for the USJ which doesn't have a unified campus like LU, the student movement is decentralized which has a negative impact on their contacts, organization and solidarity. The Lebanese American University (LAU) has a unique situation, as they don't have a student council yet, they have instead ten representatives elected to serve on the faculty councils related to the students Campus Life, Financial Aid, Library, Cafeteria and Yearbook. In addition, LAU students are not equal in running the elections, as there are conditions the most important is the student's average, which should be above 85 over 100. As a result, the priority for the elected students is maintaining their academic status and thus, they might miss following many of the students' issues. Therefore the representation in general is only a façade without a concrete content. The

students' contradictory affiliations has deviated the students' pressure from a consistent plan of action and weakened their pressure. In other words, they no more have a common cause; it is rather a competition to demonstrate their power and number of affiliates. They implement their activities on campus by "remote control" i.e. their alliances, activities and movements are dictated by their parties and they don't have their own view to look objectively at things and feed their parties, instead they are passive receivers and blind implementers. This situation is because this generation of university students suffers of many problems, which form a hindering force from being involved in their issues and demands as students.

E- Current problems of university students:

1- Rejection of authority: The present generation has a clash with all sorts of authority, starting with the parents at home. In case of any clash the youth is ready to punish his parents either by running out of home and disappearing or neglecting their studies. Thus, they might blackmail them to get away with anything they want. They can also be rebellious against their teachers and administration, even if they were going to face disciplinary measures. They also reject the symbols of the government's authority and might disrespect any measures taken by them. Such an attitude is not classified that they

are being resentful to the corruption in the government. It is rather a mere disobedience and behaving according to what suits them best. This might also be projected against religious figures again not out of ideological argument. They want things according to their standards and measurements refusing any limitations or borderlines.

2- **The academic achievement:** This is also facing troubles, they either register with bad performance or they pretend that to take the money and use them for other means. The peer impact is much stronger than the parents' or university faculty and staff. Thus the system rejects them and their university achievement is discontinued or delayed. This situation is the result of their attitude towards authority, their poor skills in time management and the leisure distractions around them. Even when they achieve the university degree, most of the time the educational process is immature and non-interactive and superficial and many things lack in their general knowledge, personality and career attitude, since they memorize to sit for the exams without acquiring the comprehensive knowledge. Hence it is a quick process, which touches the surface only.

3- **Drug addiction:** Which has been always a problem but it escalated during and after the war and continued to spread. However, during the war the accessibility of drugs and money were more, this accessibility became less but the demand was growing. Thus the

problem became very complicated and had a negative impact on the youth especially in the universities. Some of them became dropouts others deteriorated and reached suicide or attempted to do so. Added to this the rarity of specialists to handle such issues and when available they are very expensive. The **screen addiction** became another type of addiction that has also its negative impact on the youth, who spend hours on the Internet sites, which might not be appropriate. As a result they neglect their studies and abstain from doing other activities, which on the long run has its impact on their student activities.

- 4- **Psychological problems:** Which have increased and in many cases they represent an escape mechanism to the student when he/she fails in their academic life and later develops to become a real problem, while society still resists admitting the psychological sickness and considers it a taboo, which complicates the issue and contributes to the deterioration of the case. In this context, proper counseling services are very rare in the schools and universities.
- 5- **Family ties:** Were shaken after the war and a newly enriched class emerged with lots of money. Their children were left to the helpers while the parents neglected their role. On the other hand, some families had financial problems, which reflected badly on the relations among the parents thus affecting the children. Hence, the

current university students were born during the war and all the scars of the bad experience were reflected on them and the result were problems in their university life as well as bad relations with their parents.

- 6- **Apathy:** Is another characteristic among university students, they are neither concerned with their academic life nor with public issues. Their life is superficial, without interaction and involvement with campus issues. They even don't have the curiosity to know what is going on, even if the activity was next to them.
- 7- **National belonging:** Their apathy is drawn on their belonging to their country; some of them have acquired other nationalities to which they belong more. Their negative attitude and lack of confidence in the government's authority is reflected in their national belonging, some of them verbalize their resentment of being Lebanese. Such an attitude contributes negatively to their involvement in the public issues, be it on or off campus.
- 8- **Materialistic greediness:** University students want to finish as early as they can to earn their degrees and start earning plenty of money from the first job opportunity. Many of them slipped into illegal transactions, which ended unpleasantly. In other words they lack the right attitude towards their career as well as the professional spirit. Thus they lose the touch with any public issue and money

becomes their main concern. We are witnessing a generation who has lost the concern with any public or national issue and if they were involved they are part of the corruption game of the whole system.

- 9- **Political Experience:** The new generation has a bad political experience due to the parties' performance during the war and the people's disappointment in them. As a result the youth were divided in two extreme categories: The confessionalists who became religiously fanatic and refer everything to the religious books. Such case creates sensitivities among the Lebanese and makes the civil peace very vulnerable given the Lebanese societal set up. The second category is secular who were disappointed in their parties and the friction among the same party members was obvious and came out in the newspapers where they "described their leaders as non democratic who lead the party like in a military mentality."⁷⁰
- Hence, the new generation avoided party affiliation, as it was no more the dream and hope which is going to improve society. The experience of the civil war has left the youth with a negative attitude towards any affiliation with the political parties. In a survey conducted by As-Safeer newspaper in 1997, 29% were not interested

⁷⁰ As-Safeer, May 8, 2002

in the public and political life in Lebanon, 47% were concerned but don't participate and 11% participate sometimes, 7.27% participate always and 4.72 participate in non-governmental organizations. However, 94% considered that they don't have any role in decision making in matters that concerns them. The crises, which the secular parties have faced after the war, resulted in the fact that " 88% of the youth considered their experience a failures in the political life and lacking democracy in its internal affairs".⁷¹ Thus the youth withdrew with their affiliations to the religion and sometimes to a smaller entity, which is the sect.

With the division of the secular parties, a new wave in the Lebanese political life emerged. Instead of parties "currents" appeared like the Hariri's or the National Liberal. The "Movement" was another shape like the Democratic Renewal Movement or the People's Movement. A third type was the "Forum" like that of Kornat Shehwan. On the other hand, the religious groups like Hezboullah, and the Islamic fundamentalists groups as well as the Christian brother-hoods appealed to the youth and became active in them. As a result, religious fanaticism became stronger which contributed to the shredding of the student movement.

⁷¹ Nahar Al Shabab – August 1994

The main characteristic of these currents, movements and forums is that they did not impose the classical party rigid hierarchy and discipline except for Hezbollah party, which has a sophisticated classical structure. They don't have as well an established ideology as they only dealt with the current political issues; even Hezbollah concentrated only on the resistance before the Israeli withdrawals in the year 2000. Later the party didn't verbalize a clear political discourse, though their implicit agenda is an Islamic regime. All of the above had its impact on the university students who started to be active whenever the events necessitated. While the long-term plans disappeared, the agenda of the student body became without a concrete program of demands especially in the LU. The division in the LU campuses has created a contradictory situation between the branches and that was according to the political majority among the students' body. Thus in the same university in one campus the winners of the students' representatives are from the pro government parties and on the other campus from the opposition.

F- Conclusion: It looks like we are witnessing a new era of student activism where students are divided lacking the orientation and the decision. The partition and unstable position of the secular parties mainly the Lebanese Communist Party and to a lesser extent the Syrian Socialist

Nationalist Party and the absence of the Palestinian resistance and Arab nationalist movements have left the students' situation in a dilemma and without the dream of the generation of the sixties and mid seventies. New members did not replace the leaders of that era, and those who came after didn't assume the same role, responsibility, presence and attitude. Most of them are involved for personal interests. Politics for them is no more public service and welfare; it is rather achieving a position or financial benefit. The division of the parties had almost paralyzed the students' movement as well as the student representation. The National Union of the LU students has become forgotten given the current situation. The freedom of speech and democracy are in a dilemma and the oppression of the students either frustrates some or scares some and very few continue to express themselves but without enough pressure to change. The role of the student movement is to change and it is not possible in this given situation. The concession among the students is very limited and their movement in February 26,1999 towards Arnoun where a group of students from all affiliations removed the barbed wire represents a minute sign of coalition which remains limited. "The demands of the academic and daily life need more coordination and thus the National Union becomes very essential."⁷² Yet the real situation is a severe division among the students similar to that in the socio-political movements in the

⁷² Shawkat Ashti, An-Nahar, February 18, 2003

country at large. Confessionalism is growing to become a hindering force against any progress, change, development and reform and the Taef Accord has reinforced that. Thus there is a reciprocal impact of the public life on the students' life. Added to that the deterioration of the parties where the youth are deserting them and the population structure became old and lacking the new blood. In Lebanon there are 100,000 university students who can be a changing force if they were organized and institutionalized by the parties and the institutions of civil services, with their potentials, energy and education. The Lebanese students are facing challenges of globalization with its positive and negative impact and all its repercussions, in addition to the Palestinian and Iraqi issues and all the circumstances of the Arab world which all will be of an impact on their lives. Such a situation ought to be faced by creating awareness among them about society and its changes, the importance of their participation in the public issues. This participation must be independent and emerging from their perception and diagnosis of the situation around them instead of being dictated. The new generation ought to learn to be objective, accepts the others as well as constructive criticism thus to have an effective role in a changing society. The student movement needs a renaissance where all the concerned people sit around a table to discuss its reactivation and proceed to set an agenda of demands which includes "the rescue of the Lebanese University, refuse the academic violations,

defend the students' rights and change and develop the curriculum⁷³ and form the cohesive pressure groups towards implementing this agenda.

⁷³ Nahar Al-Shabab, December 2002

Conclusions:

On April 17, 2003, Karim Pakradoni and Michael Samaha were appointed ministers in the new cabinet formed by PM Rafiq Hariri. Both had been the presidents of the student section at the Phalanges Party. Before them, Nabih Birri (the House Speaker) was the president of the National Union of the Lebanese Students. We question whether activists like those mentioned above had preplanned and worked to achieve this result, or was it a mere coincidence or certain influential powers have brought them to such posts. Most probably, this end was reached due to the accumulations from high school to university until their graduation with the outbreak of the Civil War where they became major players. Student activists nowadays hope to achieve the same political result as people like Birri, Pakradouni and Samaha.

In Chapter One I have discussed what motivates the students to become politically involved from different theoretical perspectives. This theoretical framework was more specifically oriented in Chapter Two towards the Lebanese student movement, which was chronologically divided and studied. The stages were documented since the pre-Independence era until the eve of the Lebanese Civil War. The students' political behavior has come to reflect the Lebanese sociopolitical structure on one hand as well as the

regional and international events. However, the Palestinian issue continued to be the dominant one especially during the golden era of the students' movement, i.e. mid-sixties to mid-seventies. The booming at that time was connected to the active movement of the secular parties, as well as to the trade unions and the students' representation in the high schools and the universities.

Chapter Three started with the eruption of the Lebanese civil war where the parties were transformed into militias and the ideologies were frozen. The military transactions were their only emphasis.

The Taef Accord ended the war and the parties have reversed the process abruptly without any transitional preparations, and the military leaders became the political leaders. This situation was the beginning of the crises in the parties. The leftists shrank and lost their manipulative power and with the new social concerns of the youth, they became unable of attracting them. On the other hand Lebanon witnessed the powerful rise of the Islamic currents, which manipulated the youth in a sectarian address and motivated their instincts. Only Hezbollah have a unique situation due to its involvement in the "Resistance", which is also Islamic and attracting one group of youth. However, we can't predict its future after the resistance activities are ended.

This situation is the result of the Lebanese parties structure; in general they are rigid and resist change. Nevertheless the Syrian Social National Party, the Lebanese Communist Party and the Phalanges party have made attempts to review their status and attitudes, but they ended divided parties. Amal Movement is still holding its unity as long as they are in power and one can't predict the situation after they seize to be.

To sum up the Lebanese political system is a shadow to the Syrian regime and the Lebanese keep hearing clichés from the politicians who are in the Syrian camp. While the Christians who are against this camp feel they are eliminated, chased and repressed.

Thus the parties are unable to have a new address that appeals to the youth and touches their interests and needs. It is an address, which is out of the 21st century and the world's globalization.

The parties' population has become old and the youth minority is becoming more traditional in its affiliations and tends to be egocentric. Political affiliations have also become a vehicle for personal interests more than for ideological belief.

This situation is reinforced in the practices of the secular and religious parties. When reaching any position, they postponed their parties' objectives

and ideologies and get involved in the game they used to criticize before. Thus the parties are no more the youth's dream for a better future.

The present situation of the parties with its divisions and deviations has created a frustrating atmosphere among the youth and they became neither capable of attracting the youth nor mobilizing them.

The May 68 events of France, witnessed the student protest and a great general strike, which might be the greatest in the history of Europe. It was the students and workers protest in France. This movement has inspired the entire world including Lebanon to form similar junctions, since " France always led the way" as General De Gaulle used to say.

After more than a quarter of a century, can students and workers do the same? Does the remobilization of the student movement need new political thinkers like Costantine Zuriek and Antoun Saadeh? How can they regain leading figures like Anwar Fatayri, Issam Khalifeh, Mohammad Mattar, Hikmat El- Eid, Saadallah Mazraani and others? Why are the Palestinian cause and other events in the various parts of the world unable to mobilize the students any more? Was the Lebanese political structure, which represents all kinds of suppression and oppression, able to defeat the urge of resistance and change among the youth?

To answer these questions we need to launch seriously and objectively intensive discussions among the representatives of students, political parties (after reforming themselves), academicians and concerned people. Those discussions have to be translated into a practical plan of action to reactivate the students' role. Non-governmental and civil organizations must put more efforts to get the youth involved and regain their partnership in public affairs. The schools and universities can also play a crucial role through curricular and extra curricula activities. Last but not least the government can also contribute through legislations in getting the youth involved in public issues.

However, in my opinion Lebanon can't produce a movement similar to that of the seventies, due to the following reasons:

- 1- The impact of the Lebanese Civil war on its social, economic and political structure.
- 2- The disappointing experience of all the political parties without any exception. In addition to the growing confessional disagreements between the Lebanese.
- 3- The diminishing role of the trade and labor unions.
- 4- The partition of the Lebanese University and the weakening of its students' council.

5- The social, economic and political changes, which took place in Lebanon, the Middle East and the whole world.

6- The revolution in communications and technology has also its pros and cons.

Hence, the Lebanese political life needs a renaissance where the youth take a major part on all levels.

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Frangieh, Samir - Ex-member of the Organization for Communist Action

Ghosteen, Charles - National Liberal Party

Haidar, Abdullah - Syrian Nationalist Social Party

Khalifeh, Issam - Al Waii Movement.

Matar, Mohammad - Member of Fateh Organization, president of AUB
Student Council (1973-1974)

Mazraani, Saadallah – Lebanese Communist Party

Pakradoni, Karim - Phalanges Party

Samaha, Michael - Phalanges Party