



The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

At the 25th convention of the Kataeb Party held last week in Kesrouan there was a bizarre mix of political figures, parties, and Arab Nationalist, fundamentalist, and terrorist organizations that attended and participated in the convention activities. However, we were not surprised, like others, by this blatant deviation taken by the current leadership of the party. Neither were we stunned by the fact that this leadership is indeed the heir and stepchild of the leadership that founded the party. For the present deviation is no more than a continuation of previous deviations that led to the loss of the war and the re-enforcement of the occupation after the brilliant military victories that the Lebanese Resistance achieved on both the Syrian and the Palestinian fronts.

The first deviation was in the sectarian path taken by the original leadership, which distorted the truth about the war and changed its identity from a national Lebanese struggle against foreigners to a civil war among Lebanese. This also led to side battles, the last of which was the War of the Mountain which destroyed the historic unity of Lebanon and dealt a blow to the very heart of the principle of shared living between Lebanon's communities. We ought not to forget the crusader slogans that were raised in the Eastern regions and its symbols that were plastered on flags and military equipment, which fueled even further sectarian hostilities and drove the Western regions to raise in return similar religious slogans. All of this widened the gap between the Lebanese and secured a wide-open door for the Syrians to come in and take over the country.

The second deviation consisted in the departure from ethical standards and protocols of war into committing a range of criminal actions such as organized theft and robbery, which started at Beirut Harbor and expanded to include all areas and private property. Then the assassinations and the ID card-based killings, the arbitrary seizures and detentions, and a condescending manner of dealing with people, all of which separated and drove the people away from the Lebanese Resistance. As to the mad rush to power and money, it pushed the Kataeb Party leadership to physically liquidate its opponents, starting with the massacres of Ehden and Safra and ending with the massacres between the army and the Lebanese Forces, which brought about the loss of everything that had been achieved.

The third deviation was in the deal that allowed the Syrian forces to enter the Eastern regions in 1976 as soon as these regions were liberated from the Palestinian occupation. The Kataeb leadership had a lot to do in making this deal and we all know the destructive results that came out, and continue to come out, of that deal.

The fourth deviation was the loss of the historic opportunity that presented itself to Lebanon in 1982 to rid itself of its enemies and rise up from its crisis, when the Kataeb leadership insisted on turning its back on the rare chance by abrogating the May 17 Accord. This brought the war back to square one and opened the window wide open to the Syrians to return to Beirut with a vengeance after they were kicked out of the city. Which is why we said, and continue to say, that the Lebanese blood that was spilled on Lebanese soil after 1982 is blood on the hands and conscience of that leadership.

When we speak of leadership, we do not mean the rank and file whom we do not blame for the consequences of the mistakes that were made. We do not intend by this statement to rub salt in the wound or open old files. This is rather in a spirit of candor and a desire for the truth no matter how unbearable the truth may be, and so that the Lebanese know why they have arrived at the place they're at today, and why they lost the war after victory was within reach. More importantly, it is for the parents and families of the martyrs and heroes to know why their children have died!! And for what cause!!

As to the present Kataeb leadership we wish them a "happy" stay in the fold of Arabism.

Lebanon, at your service,

Abu Arz,  
December 13, 2003