



**The Commander**

The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

The latest Council of Eastern Catholic Patriarchs said in its concluding statement: "...The deteriorating conditions in Lebanon are due to the failure so far of establishing good relations between Lebanon and Syria...and called for building strong brotherly relations between the two countries on the basis of mutual respect...and for close coordination between them in foreign affairs..."

Contrary to the opinion of many who have lauded this statement and saw in it a sound patriotic position that could rally all the Lebanese around it, we say in our customary candor that this language is far from acceptable to us, neither in form nor in substance, and for many reasons. Chief among these reasons:

**In form:** The language used in addressing the Syrian occupation is rife with equivocation, cajoling, and doublespeak, which confirms to us that such language is used to avoid the wrath of the occupation and do everything to appease it instead of denouncing and confronting it with straight, courageous and candid talk. Not to mention some of the phony and deceiving expressions used that reflect a state of fear and cowardice with respect to telling the truth as it is, beginning with calling the occupation by its name...

Of these expressions is the one about establishing "good relations" between the two countries without mentioning the need to eliminate the occupation before anything else, given that Bkerke unfortunately has never used the word "occupation" in describing the Syrian fact in Lebanon. Another such expression is that of "brotherly relations" that is constantly used in all statements issued by this great religious body, but which has no basis whatsoever in fact or history:

First, no two countries in the whole world have brotherly relations, for as is well known, only short-term and temporary interests exist between countries. Second, Lebanese-Syrian relations have throughout history been governed by a continuous state of confrontation on account of Syria's perennial ambitions to take Lebanon and eliminate its existence. Third, how can they speak of a brotherhood that has violated every norm and trampled on everything that is sacred? How can we call Syria a brother when it has no object but to sadistically enjoy the assassination of Lebanon in a manner unmatched in human history? Fourth, How can they ask the victim to establish strong relations with its executioner? And fifth, how can they ask for coordination with Syria on foreign affairs when Syria refuses in the first place to recognize the existence of Lebanon?

And we might as well add the following: Isn't it a shame that Security Council 1559, the Secretary General's report, and the Council President's letter are all more courageous and clear than the statement by the Bishops? How can we ask of others that which we do not ask of ourselves, expecting others to be more royalist than the king? And until when will we use ambiguous language and duplicitous expressions, hoping that others will read between the lines and behind the lines and understand what we want and what we mean?

**In substance:** To continue to use this pompous and ambiguous way of dealing with the Syrian occupation will certainly have several negative repercussions and dire consequences, of which:

- Outside public opinion, particularly in the West, will take these delusions seriously and accept this pseudo-brotherhood between Lebanon and Syria as fact with which to deal with us. This is especially true if the delusions are being expressed in this East by religious authorities that have a stronger influence on people than political authorities.
- To continue to engage the occupation with this apparent feebleness will lead to the emasculation of UN resolution 1559 and to a weakening of the resolve of Western countries to implement its demands and to their enthusiasm in supporting our cause.
- To continue repeating these fake slogans will habituate the Lebanese people to them over time, and they will start using them in their political language because, as Lenin said, "One of the strongest forces in life is the force of habit".
- Cowardice in telling the truth leads to defeatism, and defeatism to subservience, and subservience to resignation, and resignation to surrender, and surrender to acquiescence and the acceptance of the *fait accompli*... Ultimately, all of this leads to a serious disease that afflicts passive peoples called political masochism, and that is the real disaster.

Finally, it is sad to say that the destruction of Lebanon is not only due to the failure of establishing good relations between Lebanon and Syria, as claimed by the Patriarchs' statement, or even to the hostility of the Syrian regime, but

to the cowardice in dealing with the Syrian fact in Lebanon...And that responsibility is borne more by the custodians of Lebanon's welfare than by the Syrians themselves, since courage alone can bring an end to the occupation while cowardice gives it a longer lease on life.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz

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