



The Commander

The Guardians of the Cedars issued the following communiqué:

What has changed after liberation? That's one question the Lebanese people ask themselves every day. Is it Parliament that has regenerated itself into traditional blocks with a bit of variation in the faces and the names that are not likely to change much in the business-as-usual politics of Parliament? Is it the Speaker's post now re-occupied by a flagrant pro-Syrian figure as if a reminder of the painful period of Syrian tutelage? Or the dummy in Baabda who holds on to his out-of-place post until the end of his illegal term? Or is it the new government now in the making on the basis, yet again, of pleasing the princes of the religious sects and the bosses of the parliamentary blocks with inflated sizes?

What has changed? The Lebanese ask the question with anxiety in their eyes, especially when they see this new and improved old political folklore played out in acts on the political stage for so many decades with only a few superficial changes in the faces, the promises, and the embellished speeches?

What irks the Lebanese the most is the verbal diarrhea on reform and change coming out of the mouths of those who were in power for many long years, and under whose watch corruption became rampant, theft and illegitimate wealth became the norm, the middle class was crushed, the people became hungry, the institutions were destroyed, and Lebanon was sold on the cheap to the Governor of Damascus.

The speech by the Speaker of Parliament and his promises to open up the files and pursue the corrupt reminds us of the speech given by his colleague, the dummy in Baabda, the day he promised a "State of Law and Institutions" but ended up destroying the State, the laws and the institutions.

We still cannot believe – rather we refuse to believe – that this new-old Parliament is truly of the same grain as the people, or that it was born out of the Independence Uprising, or that the masses that marched in huge numbers at the March 14 demonstration went back and re-elected this same traditional political construct. Particularly that the phony slogans uttered by those extant politicians today, led by the head of the Legislative Power, have nothing to do with the demands voiced by the people during the Uprising. Which means that the chasm between the people and the political class remains enormous.

What we do believe, however, is that the sneaky politicians of Lebanon – and they are many – have used the people as a fuel in the ballot boxes, and that the majority of members of the parliamentary club made it there for no other reason but the converging personal interests of the electoral list bosses!!

We refuse to be pessimists and we hope to be mistaken in our assessments, but one can tell the news by the headlines, and the fruit does not fall far from the tree. The people have had it enough of empty promises and misplaced hopes. They believe nothing but concrete actions on the ground.

Unfortunately, we have to say that those who assassinated March 14 cannot promise a revolution of reforms.

Lebanon, at your service

Abu Arz
July 1, 2005