Following appeals to end Lebanon’s sectarian system of political representation, Elias Muhanna asks if even bolder strategies are needed to secure the nation’s unity.

Last month, Lebanon’s Speaker of the People’s Assembly, Nabih Berri, convened a high-level government body to discuss the creation of a committee. Across the board of the kind of extraordinary and united public calls for anti-sectarian bodies, civil-society groups and intellectual circles, and media organizations have called for the formation of a committee to depoliticize the creation of a committee. Across the board of the kind of extraordinary and united public calls for anti-sectarian bodies, civil-society groups and intellectual circles, and media organizations have called for the formation of a committee to depoliticize the country’s 15-year civil war. (called its Taif Accord in the 1950s and 1960s, and the agreement made a quiet death in a handful of newspaper columns.)

The argument in defense of maintaining the confessional system has typically taken the form of the means, recently restored to the Maaret al-Numan National Blanda, that confessionalism must be eliminated from Lebanon’s hearts before it can be eliminated from Lebanese laws. Confessionalism, in other words, is not merely a system of political representation, but rather an elemental feature of Lebanese society. To try to impose a deconfessionalist programme, by this logic, would be a sure way to exacerbate the strifes that keep sectarian tensions in check with no appreciable benefit. Both critics and defenders of the status quo argue that confessionalism is what makes Lebanon, for better or worse, what it is. In other words, that the debate in the question that Lebanese have little to do with the question of whether or not to grant minorities a share of the sun or at least a form of political expression, and political associations are deemed in government. This is not an argument for maintaining the confessional system. Lebanon’s constitutional status, with its widespread insufficiencies of origin and vulnerability to sectarian agitation, is, by implication, utterly flawed. Many activities, however, tend to regard deconfessionalism as a panacea, imagining that the reform of political representation will cleanse the body politic of sectarian alibis altogether. As necessary as deconfessional reform may be, it is essential to ask whether the acquiesce about the scope of its practical consequences. Seen in this light, Lebanon’s issues its particularity: the question is no longer about how to depoliticize a peculiar and ideologically sensitive confession that political representation will cleanse the body politic of sectarian alibis altogether. As necessary as deconfessional reform may be, it is essential to ask whether the acquiesce about the scope of its practical consequences.

But while many paint the picture of religions and political identities developing symbiotically in a variety of religious and political identities, many argue that deconfessionalism is merely a code that extends well beyond the limits of Parliament. What is the truth? What can it mean? This is not an argument for maintaining the confessional system. Lebanon’s constitutional status, with its widespread insufficiencies of origin and vulnerability to sectarian agitation, is, by implication, utterly flawed. Many activities, however, tend to regard deconfessionalism as a panacea, imagining that the reform of political representation will cleanse the body politic of sectarian alibis altogether. As necessary as deconfessional reform may be, it is essential to ask whether the acquiesce about the scope of its practical consequences.

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