ARAMCO WORLD
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1994

LEBANON
UP FROM *the* ASHES

Published by
Aramco Services Company,
9009 West Loop South,
Houston, Texas 77096

ISSN 1044-1891

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DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
The Hill Group

PRINTED IN THE USA
Judd's, Incorporated

Saudi Aramco, the oil company born as a bold international enterprise more than half a century ago, distributes *Aramco World* to increase cross-cultural understanding. The magazine's goal is to broaden knowledge of the culture of the Arab and Muslim worlds and the history, geography and economy of Saudi Arabia. *Aramco World* is distributed without charge, upon request, to a limited number of interested readers.

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Aramco World
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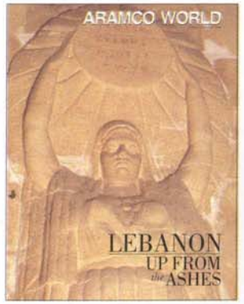

Front Cover: Patiently offering the alphabet to the world, a personification of Lebanon stands in the main stairway of the National Museum in Beirut. With the return of peace, the country still has much to offer the world, Lebanese believe, and—with energy and cautious optimism—they are beginning the daunting tasks of repair, reconstruction and reform. Photo by George Azar.
Back Cover: Art and artlessness interact in Asilah's painted walls and doorways. Photo by Dannielle B. Hayes.

◄ Detail from *Women on a River Bank* by Baya Mahieddine of Algeria.

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VOL. 45 NO. 1 PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1994

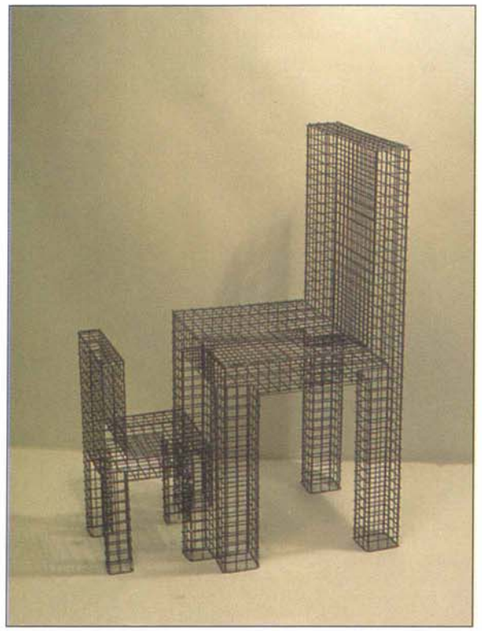
Above: Laila Shawa (Palestine): Wall of Gaza, 1992, installation detail. Silkscreen, 96.5 x 150 cm. (38 x 59"). Top right: Wasma' Chorbachi (Iraq): Profession of Faith, 1991-1992. Ceramic, green glazes, 43 cm. diameter (17").

Photographs courtesy of International Council for Women in the Arts and National Museum of Women in the Arts

REFLECTIONS IN WOMEN'S EYES

WRITTEN BY ANNE MULLIN BURNHAM

Like a poem that pushes the boundaries of language to say what is somehow beyond saying, art can both express an esthetic vision and articulate previously silent or unheard voices. It can profoundly change the way we view and think about our world and reflect afresh what we have seen too often or too closely to be aware of.



Mona Hatoum (Palestine): Untitled, 1992. Wire mesh. 98 x 44.5 x 71 cm. (38.5 x 17.5 x 28").

For five years Salwa Mikdadi Nashashibi has sought out the art of women from across the Arab world. From North Africa through the Middle East and into the Gulf states she has interviewed museum curators and gallery owners, art critics and art historians. She has talked with artists in cities and countryside, reviewed countless thousands of slides and visited innumerable private art collections.

The fruits of her long research, juried by a distinguished advisory committee, will be on view in February, when the most comprehensive exhibition of contemporary Arab women artists yet assembled in the United States will open at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. Showcasing 160 works by 70 artists from 15 countries in the Arab world—sculptors, painters, photographers, ceramists and computer, video and installations artists—it will break new ground by providing an extraordinary overview of the work Arab women artists are producing both in their own countries and abroad.

Nashashibi is exhibition director and president of the sponsoring organization, the International Council for Women in the Arts, a non-profit organization based in California and dedicated to promoting in the United States the work of women artists from the Third World. By presenting a wide variety of contemporary Arab women artists interpreting their own cultures, experiences and concerns, Nashashibi says, this exhibition will correct the still-pervasive romantic image of the passive Arab woman promulgated in the West through 19th-century Orientalist painters such as Delacroix and Gérôme (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1984). It will give the work of professional Arab women artists greater exposure in the art world and art market of the United States, and it will increase international understanding of Arab societies through the extensive educational and interpretative programs planned in conjunction with the exhibition.

Many of the artists in *Forces of Change*, as the exhibition is titled, are familiar to museum- and gallery-goers in Europe and throughout the Arab world. Some have been featured in shows in New York, on the West Coast and at the Alif Gallery in Washington, D.C., but the majority will be new to American audiences. That this is so should not be surprising. Woman artists in general have not always had equal access to the art-viewing public. A survey of major art galleries in New York in the 1970's showed that less than 10 percent of the featured artists were women. Until very recently, the most widely used art-history surveys were devoid of references to women artists.

It took the landmark exhibition *Women Artists 1500-1950* at the Los Angeles Museum of Art in 1976 to focus academic and public attention on the achievements of woman artists since the Renaissance. While that particular exhibition dealt with women artists in the Western tradition, co-curators Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin expressed the hope that it would stimulate interest in researching and presenting the work of women artists from the Orient, Africa, Latin America and the Near East.

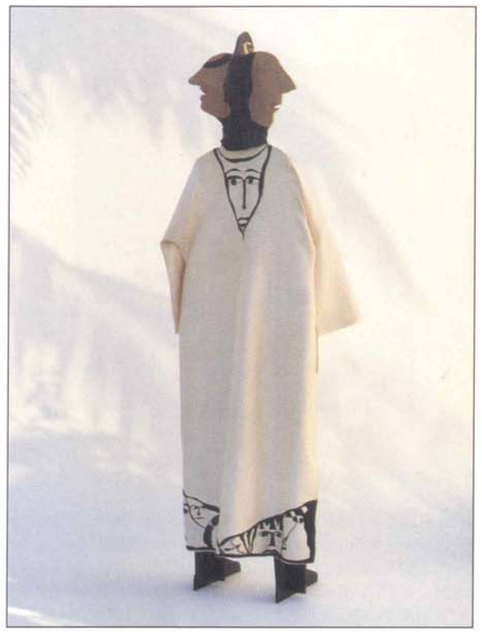
The founding of the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. in 1987 accelerated the scholarly and public interest in the work women artists have produced and are producing today. Although shunned by many women artists and feminists who believe that the concept of segregating women in a separate museum continues the marginalization of their art, the museum is based on the premise that women's art needs a special forum now to make up for past neglect. Recent exhibitions at the museum include the work of contemporary Greek, Korean, Mexican and Polish women.

Gender bias by gallery owners and museum curators may be becoming less prevalent today, but the Arab woman artist in the United States still faces the hurdle of broad ignorance of her culture and history. Lacking a large and long-assimilated Arab-American population to counter many Americans' stereotypical views, the United States still tends to see the Arab world as an exotic and primitive monolith. Media focus is more often on political upheaval, war or terrorism than on cultural and artistic achievements.

Considering this vacuum, the exhibition is organized around three major themes that emerge from the art that Arab women have been producing in the last 10 to 15 years. The first is "Forces of Change," focusing on contemporary life and society, with its problems of conflict and war, human rights and environmental degradation; the second is "Present Reflections on Rhythms of the Past," an exploration of traditional artistic expressions and their influence on present art forms; and the third is "Image and Word," interpretations of Arabic calligraphy and the use of the word as a mode of visual expression.

After generations of colonialism and warfare, occupation and cultural imperialism that touched every Arab country, many Arab artists would identify with Jordanian sculptor Mona Saudi's belief that "we belong to countries that have to be made, and we have the responsibility to make them...." In the introductory essay to the exhibition catalogue, Nashashibi, Lebanese artist Etel Adnan and anthropologist Laura Nader discuss the role women played in the nationalist movements in Arab countries, and their search for a language of artistic forms to express national and cultural identity.

Although Arabs are heirs to a legacy of more than 30 centuries of artistic endeavor, their studio art tradition is young—a product of the Arab



Huguette Caland (Lebanon): Foule, 1970. Silk.

world's encounter with European colonial influences of the 19th century. Arab studio artists, trained in Western artistic idioms, sought—and still seek—ways to recreate the reality of their lives and their esthetic vision in a non-derivative manner.

This cultural split has been, for many of them, a cause of anguish and inner conflict. Iraqi artist Wasma' Khalid Chorbachi, writing about a series of abstract expressionist paintings she executed in the 1960's in response to war in the Middle East, wrote, "I ... felt that these paintings were not me: 'the Arab and the Muslim'.... I had not been trained in an artistic language that would enable me to express the inner identity I so strongly felt.... I was speaking [in] a foreign artistic language."

Mounirah Mosly (Saudi Arabia): May You One Day Hear the Cry of a Window Being Born Into the World 1,2,3 and 4, 1991-1992. Mixed media on tent fabric with collage. 139.7 x 147.3 cm., 119.3 x 78.7 cm., 158.7 x 152.4 cm. and 111.2 x 97.8 cm. (55 x 58", 47 x 31", 62.5 x 60" and 44 x 38.5")

Etel Adnan recalls the frustration she felt studying in America, when her English was not adequate to express her ideas and she was unwilling to use French in political protest against the war in Algeria. Her solution was, "I will paint in Arabic." Lebanese artist Saloua Rouda Choucair's life-long study of Islamic art was triggered by a philosophy professor who relegated traditional Arabic art to a lower level than European art because it was not inspired by the human body.

Many Arab women artists have sought inspiration instead in the symbols and iconography of the ancient civilizations of Arab North Africa and the Near East. Iraqi Suad al-Attar fuses Sumerian, Mesopotamian or Assyrian motifs into dream-like poetic fantasies full of "the weight of tradition" but also characterized by deep introspection on the difficulties that modern women face in being taken seriously in male-dominated—that is, all—societies.

Traditional folk art in the form of embroidery, rug weaving or decorative painting has been a continuous artistic outlet for Arab women. Many use the patterning elements of folk art as starting points for an exploration of color and form. Some, like self-taught Algerian artist Baya Mahieddine, have transformed such naive or folkloric art into individual artistic styles that remain rooted in tradition but transcend the limitations of repetition and a strict alphabet of icons.

One of the first Arab women artists to be recognized with a solo exhibition in Europe—at the Galérie Maeght in Paris in 1947—Mahieddine's art has been characterized variously over the years as surrealist, primitive, *art brut*, or naive. But in the end it is less important to pigeonhole it than to appreciate its synthesis of Islamic ornamentation and natural motifs such as flowers, birds, grapes, fish or peacocks' feathers, dancing women and abundant gardens in a personal vision of a colorful and harmonious world. Egyptian artist Sawsan Amer, painting on glass or creating mixed-media collages, combines Coptic icons with real and imaginary birds.

While Mahieddine was lionized by the art world in Paris in the 1940's—she was interviewed by the famous surrealist André Breton and introduced to the world of high Parisian culture—contemporary Arab artists, regardless of gender, face a different situation. As Shehira Doss Davezac points out in her catalogue essay "Arab Women Artists in Transition," "patrons not schooled in Western art provide a demand for traditional motifs and local themes.... Their taste often runs to the familiar rather than to the innovative and they invest in works that have strong resonances of Arab life and culture.... On the other hand, to have access to international artistic tribunals, artists often feel they must shun local styles in favor of an internationally recognized language of forms for which there is little demand or understanding in the Arab world."

The tension between these positions brings up the question addressed in the exhibition's introduction: "Is This Arab Art?" Should contemporary Arab art have a common denominator to be considered Arab? As Nashashibi and her co-authors point out, some critics confuse Arab art with Islamic art and jettison anything that does not fall within that definition. Others would criticize as an American copyist, say, a Kuwaiti artist who depicted skyscrapers, though "no major Arab city presents nowadays a landscape dominated by minarets and domes." The existence of a body of work that can be described as Arab, they contend, is not simply because artists from the 21 countries of the Arab world—despite diverse ethnic groups and culture patterns—share history, culture and language, but because the art world is no longer dominated by a single, Western-defined viewpoint of what constitutes contemporary art. The multiplicity of art styles and art centers nowadays creates what is a truly global art scene, and Arab artists contribute to it what is uniquely Arab by the simple fact of their art being a genuine and authentic expression of themselves and their culture.

Many, if not most, artists, however, would resist a qualifying ethnic adjective. British or American artists are not hyphenated with their ethnicity, and artist Sari Khoury says, "Identity and uniqueness are developed through interaction rather than through isolation.... Art thrives through exchange and interaction.... Our responsibility as Arab artists in the international community lies in our ability to interpret our culture to the world...."

The artists in *Forces of Change* interpret their societies and cultures in multiple views that capture the wide variety of experience of modern Arab women. Not surprisingly, given the recent history of the region, their reactions to revolution, war and occupation are frequent themes.

Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum creates powerful performance and installation art pieces combining both personal discomfort and danger as metaphors for the experiences of her family and all others caught in the terrors of the civil war in Lebanon. In her most recent work she explores the theme of the encounter between architectural structures and the human body. *Untitled* (1992) is an installation piece consisting of two wire mesh chairs, one significantly larger than the other. Innocuous at first, the rigid forms and uncompromising blackness of the wire at longer inspection evoke a foreboding institutional power, while the relative sizes of the chairs suggest domination and subjugation. On a purely esthetic level, however, the simple geometric forms give a visual clarity and repose to the piece. Together, these reactions cause viewers to question their normal experience of a commonplace household object.

Laila Shawa photographs the graffiti on the walls of her native Gaza before they are painted over by occupying army personnel. Then she superimposes geometric designs and silkscreens the results in an attempt to accentuate the messages and impose a sense of order on a chaotic situation. Seeing herself as a chronicler of her times, she says, "I recorded a method of communication and punishments which has been sanctified by the civilized world."

The venerable Egyptian artist Inji Efflatoun spent four years in prison for her part in the social changes of the 1950's. There she continued to paint, producing such works such as *Prison 126* (1960), where the rhythmically draped

forms of the women crowded together, hardly limited by the boundaries of the canvas, suggest that their purpose and energy are undiminished by their confinement.

Inner turmoil, whatever its cause, is eloquently expressed by Sudanese artist Kamala Ibrahim, whose female figures, with their distorted features and exaggerated shapes, make a Munch-like cry for release, both literal and metaphoric. Syrian Laila Muraywid's constructions of painted hand-made paper, with their dark, brooding colors, ragged edges and suggestion of undecipherable stories, speak of her concern for human and animal rights.

Absence from the homeland has been a recurring fact of life for many Arab women artists. Yet, as art historian Lucy Lippard points out, artists working outside their own countries "have often compensated... by plunging the culture they have left behind ever more deeply into their works... The sense of and need for national identity is often more potent" than it would have been in the country of origin. Jumana El Husseini, working in Paris (See *Aramco World*, July-August 1990), or Samia Halaby in New York, have equal access to the store of memorized visual images from their homelands that continues to inform their work. And just as the language of an expatriate remains free of latter-day colloquialisms and idioms, artists who live abroad can be living time capsules of societies that have continued to evolve.

Despite the often weighty subjects of their art, Arab women artists can be whimsical, decorative, or simply concerned with esthetic problems and solutions. Jordanian Hind Nasser is an abstract artist whose painted forms give the illusion and energy of three-dimensional sculpture. Lebanese Huguette Caland's *Foule* (1970) is a painted silk robe on the back of which faces are depicted peeping out from under the hem, while on the front they appear full-face and smiling.

Saudi artist Mounirah Ahmad Mosly is represented in the exhibition by a four-panel installation work called *May You One Day Hear the Cry of a Window Being Born Into the World*. Writer Ghassan al-Khunaizi explains that the work grew out of the idea for a mural, and its four sections are interrelated like the chapters of a book or the movements of a sonata. The panels are meant, he says, "to reflect a woman's world, memories and visions," and are titled "The City," "The Window," "The Doll" and "The Net." However this work is interpreted, its vibrant colors, suggested imagery and broken borders allow the viewer to respond uniquely, unfettered by any didactic program. Using materials such as leather and fur and multiple layers of linen background, combined with painting, Mosly has created a symphony of texture and color tied—or, literally, stitched—to the material of which a traditional icon, a Bedouin tent, is made.

Perhaps it is the Arab woman artist's relationship with an oral tradition and its expression in calligraphy that provides her with one of her most powerful artistic forms. As Kamal Boullata says in his essay "Modern Arab Art: The Quest and the Ordeal," "Traditionally, Arab creativity revolved around The Word: the word as spoken revelation and as visible image.... Arabs never ceased to be haunted by The Word...."

As a child, Iraqi artist Madiha Umar "marveled at the beautiful and intricate forms of Arabic calligraphy that border the gates of mosques [and] encircle their domes and minarets, and they enchanted me...." That enchantment led to a sustained interest in the form and expressive potential of individual Arabic letters that have been the cornerstone of her painting for more than 40 years. "I wanted to free the Arabic letter from its old bondage so that it could stand out with its own expression and individuality," she says.

Calligraphic forms honed down to their clean, geometric essence provide sculptor Mona Saudi also with inspiration for some of her monumental stone sculptures, while painter Wijdan Ali of Jordan incorporates calligraphic elements in works that place her in the forefront of the contemporary school of Arabic calligraphic painting. Khairat al-Saleh of Syria creates highly decorative and beautifully colored etchings of calligraphy framed in the style of old Arabic and Islamic manuscripts, while Etel Adnan's watercolor and ink manuscripts fuse her interests in painting and poetry.

Inji Efflatoun (Egypt): Prison 126, 1960. Oil on canvas. 29.8 x 89.5 cm. (11.75 x 35.25"). Collection of Gulperi Ismael Sabry Abdallah

Whatever the medium or the inspiration of this art, the impact of *Forces of Change* on American ideas of what constitutes contemporary Arab women's art will be profound. The irony of an exhibition such as this is that good art, regardless of where or when or by whom it is produced, transcends boundaries of gender, country or ethnicity. What we demand of a work of art is that—although it may irritate, disturb, or baffle us, or simply please our eye—it should be like a good poem that, as poet Sam Hazo says, "we don't simply remember, but can't forget." Each time we return to it, we see something new, something that resonates on a deeper level. As a result, art challenges us to re-examine the world it creates and, in turn, the world around us.

Anne Mullin Burnham is director of education planning and programs at the World Affairs Council in Pittsburgh, and a free-lance writer specializing in the arts, travel and food.

Forces of Change will be on view at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, 13th Street and New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., from February 7 to May 15, 1994. From there it moves to Dudley House, Lehman Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts from May 27 to June 30. From January 13 to February 25, 1995 it will be seen at Wolfson Galleries, Miami-Dade Community College, Miami, Florida, and from March 14 to May 7, 1995 at Gwinnett Art Center, Atlanta, Georgia. Other possible venues are New York in 1994 and Seattle in 1995.

Asilah

COMMON GROUND

ASILAH CLINGS LIKE A STUBBORN WHITE BARNACLE TO THE CLIFFS OF MOROCCO. IT IS A TOWN OF SOUNDS AND OF COLORS: OF POETRY, OF STACCATO FINGERS BEATING ON CLAY DRUMS, OF BLINDING SUN-WASHED WHITENESS, OF WOMEN'S SHRILL TONGUES TALKING AND SINGING. IT IS THE SWEET CHANTING OF CHILDREN, THE LESSONS OF THE QUR'AN ECHOING DOWN BLUE, PINK AND OCHER PASSAGEWAYS. AND IT IS THE SITE OF A CONFLUENCE OF CULTURES, WHERE A YEASTY UNION OF MUSIC AND ART RAISES EVERYDAY LIFE TO A HIGHER PITCH.

A detail from the author's Self-portrait With Henna, at left, shows Moroccan handicrafts in one transitory and one more permanent medium. Above, a doorway in Asilah.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY DANNIELLE B. HAYES

History began in this small fishing town more than 3600 years ago. Located just 42 kilometers (26 miles) south of Tangier, Asilah was a commercial center at the crossroads of East and West. Strabo and Ptolemy mentioned it; so did Ibn Hawqal and al-Bakri. Its ramparts were battered by Phoenicians, Romans, Norman, Arabs, Portuguese and Spaniards, yet it remained a bastion of Arab-Islamic thought, a stronghold of Moroccan culture.

Today, a different kind of invasion takes place on these Atlantic shores. Every summer since 1978, musicians, theater groups, singers and visual artists from around the world gather in Asilah to perform, to teach and to learn from each other. The event is called the Cultural Moussem of Asilah, taking its name from the French form of the Arabic word *mawsim*, or festive season. What was merely a small boy's dream some 50 years ago is now a prominent arts festival, attracting artists and spectators from all parts of the world.

Mohamed Benaïssa, former culture minister and now Morocco's ambassador to the United States, was the boy who had a dream for Asilah, the town of his birth. Benaïssa's studies in journalism and communications took him to the University of Cairo and the University of Minnesota. In the mid-1960's, with the aid of a Rockefeller Foundation grant, he studied filmmaking in New York and worked for the Moroccan Permanent Mission to the United Nations. Soon after, he was appointed head of the UN Office of Public Information, and was later posted in Addis Ababa. He honed his communication skills further in Ghana and in Rome, as information director for the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization. Always, however, Mohamed Benaïssa's hopes and dreams remained with Asilah.

Benaïssa returned home after an absence of 20 years and documented with black-and-white photographs what he calls "the autobiography of the town where I was born, Asilah." The stark, beautiful images, together with poems by Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun, were bound in a volume titled *Grains de Peau* — Grains (or Textures) of Skin. In the introduction, Benaïssa writes of his return to Asilah: "I saw the men. I saw the stones. I saw the heart of the town. I saw the light. I saw also the shadows, forms and dimensions. And I saw myself, returning as myself and into myself."

Together with his longtime friend Mohamed Melehi, a prominent Moroccan artist, Mohamed Benaïssa began to realize his dream. The two men observed that "there is no common ground where the Arab Muslim intellectual — artist, writer or poet of the Third World — can meet his counterparts from the 'other world.' This limits their communication through dialogue and an exchange of experiences that should be open, intimate and direct. There needs to be a common ground ... for much-needed horizontal and vertical communication within a human framework that includes students, teachers, workers, farmers, craftsmen, civil servants, and housewives...."

Benaïssa and Melehi selected Asilah as their common ground because it "retains the authentic look of an urban center" and because of "the simplicity of its natural surroundings," they wrote. "We wanted to establish Asilah as a ... stronghold for the protection of man's dignity [and] the values of his civilization.... We also wanted to establish it as a symbol of the movement of cultural functions from capital cities to small towns ... which otherwise ... would remain marginal and undeveloped and would eventually decline."

Thus came about the first Cultural Moussem of Asilah, set up in July and August 1978 amid the remnants of the town's historical past. Morocco's Ministry of Culture restored a section of the city ramparts, and the luxurious Raissouni Palace was transformed into a "palace of culture," with art studios and a hall for cultural gatherings. An open-air theater was created in the old section of town within the Portuguese walls, and a gallery space spiraled inside the Portuguese keep. The entire town was scrubbed and white-washed in preparation for the event.

Eleven artists were invited to that first moussem, coming from Italy, Iraq, Japan, Latin America, Morocco, Palestine, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sudan and the United States. "In the course of the cultural events, these artists and scholars contributed alongside [local] people from every social background: apprentices, fishermen, workers, tradesmen, students, children, housewives or casual passersby."

The crown prince of Morocco, government officials, university professors and journalists from Morocco and Europe also attended the first moussem. Benaïssa and Melehi succeeded in establishing what they described as "a permanent center for cultural diffusion, rich in

Artists at the Cultural Moussem created on and from their surroundings. At right, painting on the whitewashed walls of the town; above, a collage of hand-colored photos taken in the Raissouni Palace.

authenticity and steeped in heritage ... where people will be able to define their distinctive features, their fundamental characteristics and their values."

Five years later, and for two years following, I was one of the artists invited to Asilah. I was told to bring with me everything I might possibly need, and more. I didn't realize that the experience I would return with was far richer than any paper, film or ink I might have taken with me. During my visits I rebuilt a darkroom, taught photography, and created a series of photo-lithographs as well as photo-collages. But it was in that first year that all my basic senses came alive, as if I were seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching for the very first time.

The elegant but crumbling Raissouni Palace was the artists' home during the festival. Sharif Raissouni himself, pasha of Asilah from the turn of the century until 1924, never lived in the palace; he was killed just after it was completed. It was rumored that the ghosts of the workmen roamed the tiled hallways at night, but I felt quite safe in "my" room, the smallest and tallest in the palace, with space only for a bed and a small table. I had only to open the narrow green shutters, and the pounding surf of the Atlantic was mine to behold. And there was the night watchman, a man who had survived eight wars; surely he would stop any ghosts in their tracks. Before daybreak, as a cock crowed in the distance, I could hear the watchman clearing his throat before intoning the call to prayer.

Work began early in the palace atelier. After a light awakening with fresh mint tea or thick black Moroccan coffee, and talk of dreams and ghosts in several different languages, the artists began working in earnest to finish their projects before the end of the moussem. Some of the Moroccan artists used the walls of Asilah as their canvas, creating large colorful works with the help of children or the occasional passerby, who stopped to hold a ladder or toss in a word of encouragement. Other artists were accomplished printmakers, etching, inking, and wiping their copper plates while waiting for their turn on the press. I preferred photo-lithographs, exposing the thin aluminum plates to the sun, and using the colors I found in the *medina*, or old town: a rich cobalt blue, the deep yellows of saffron and turmeric, and the oranges, browns and greens of henna. I also used an ink made from burned sheep's wool that gave dense blacks, browns and blues.

Palace housekeepers and foreign artists found connections through their work. Photo-collages of two of the housekeepers, on this page, are among the author's treasures from Morocco. Opposite, the sweet, strong colors of a shuttered window in the town.

Asilah itself was my palette.

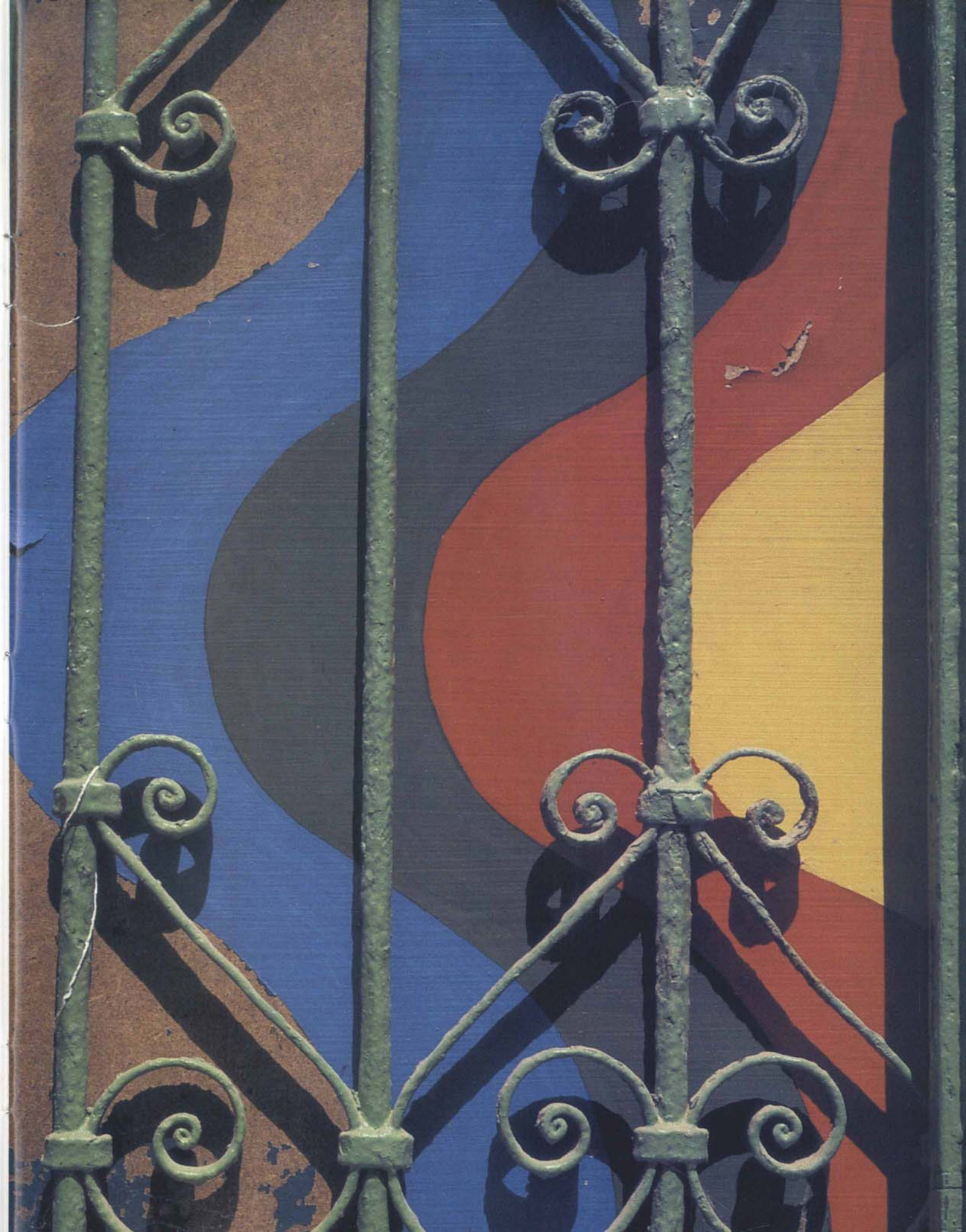
Every morning too, the palace housekeepers arrived. I would watch them in their gold bangles and bare feet, bent double, scrubbing the intricate blue, yellow and white mosaic to greater brilliance. One afternoon, they took their tea break just outside my room. As I heard the steady beat of their plastic water-bottle drums, and the chanting and laughing became louder, I decided to join the fun. One of the women, the darkest of them all — the one the other artists feared because one of her eyes appeared to look right through you — was doing a traditional dance. She spotted me and, gently tying a scarf around me, gave me my first lesson in her art. When the other women whooped and clapped, I knew that we had become friends — and that they would be willing subjects for my camera a few days later.

Sadia, the head housekeeper, was my first subject, a large woman with full lips and sad, soft eyes. When she saw her photo hanging by a clothespin in the darkroom, she let out a scream and pounded her chest. I thought she was going to kill me. Instead, she wrapped her ample arms around me, thanking me over and over in Arabic and Spanish. The next day she brought her small son to be photographed. Dressed in thick gray-flannel shorts and a black shirt, he was as frail as the swallows in the fig trees and certainly not as happy. With his mother hovering above him, however, he gave in to the camera just for an instant.

The end of the moussem came all too soon. The flood of tourists receded back to Fez, Rabat, Casablanca. The artists returned to their homes in Paris, New York, Cairo, Madrid. I decided to take a short trip to Barcelona, but returned to Asilah a few days later to thank Mohamed Benaïssa in person.

He had written in his book that, on his own return to Asilah, "I rediscovered my being, which had almost been carried off by foreign winds." As I walked up the almost-deserted main street of the town, the shoemaker from whom I'd bought my blue *babouche* slippers waved a hello, the baker shouted a greeting, and Sadia gave me a big hug of recognition. I had a strange feeling that I too was coming home to Asilah.

Dannielle B. Hayes is a free-lance photographer, writer, artist and publisher based in New York City.



LEBANON

UP FROM *the* ASHES

As Lebanon marked its 50th birthday last November 22, the mood in the country was soberly optimistic. The Lebanese were profoundly aware that they stood at a historic crossroads. Behind them lay two decades of violence that claimed tens of thousands of lives, injured or rendered homeless many more, and brought the country's economy, its shattered capital, suburbs and towns, and even its people to the edge of anarchy. Civil war and military invasion had robbed Lebanon of its prized reputation as the Middle East's international marketplace and premier financial center, as the region's educational hotbed and quintessential vacation spot, and—perhaps most painfully—as an inspiring example of the peaceful coexistence of differing religions and nationalities (See *Aramco World*, September-October 1982). Ahead lay a herculean 10-year task of rebuilding.

WRITTEN BY
IAN MEADOWS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
GEORGE BARAMKI AZAR

But something else was also evident as 1993 ended: There was a new spirit of national unity in the land. The spirit was a little timid perhaps, but a sense of realism was evident at all levels, showing how well the grim lessons of the past two decades have been taken to heart.

Lebanese businessman Rafic Hariri's nomination as prime minister in September 1992 marked a distinct watershed, as Lebanon's disparate factions seemed to turn away from violent solutions and begin to work together to rebuild their fragmented country. In a series of interviews with Lebanon's leaders, bankers, planners, merchants and ordinary citizens, a clear understanding emerged of what Lebanon needs in order to prosper in tomorrow's Middle East—a region now poised for profound change.

Lebanon's recovery will require a drastic and rapid restructuring of many of the country's key institutions to eliminate the remaining social, economic, political and financial anomalies that fueled the country's long civil war.

The physical blueprint for rebuilding Lebanon—originally dubbed Plan 2000, but now more commonly called Horizon 2002—is a consensual 10-year development plan. Important input for the plan was provided by the World Bank, whose November 1992 two-volume study on Lebanon constitutes a basic building-block for many of the programs currently underway.

The rebuilding program, characterized by its flexibility, consists of three phases: rehabilitation, recovery and development. The heart of the mega-project lies in a crash program that went into first gear this past autumn, parallel to efforts to implement basic reforms in Lebanon's economy and body politic.

The crucial first three years of Lebanon's planned rebirth are neatly summarized between the staid blue covers of a document entitled "The National Emergency Reconstruction Program" (NERP). This emergency program will cost some $2.8 billion, about half in the form of grants, soft loans and commercial loans already in the bank and available for allocation and disbursement.

When the NERP has run its three-year course, a recovery phase begins that will last another three years and

Previous spread: left, the Martyrs' Square statue at sunset; right, freshly washed laundry on the line shows that life goes on in a bullet-riddled Beirut apartment building. Above: Beirutis enjoy the public beach at Ramlat al-Baidah.

The newly repaired Beirut Hippodrome, against a backdrop of war-damaged buildings, once again hosts Sunday-afternoon horse racing.

A portable café operates in devastated Martyrs' Square, now a symbol of the people's yearning to return their capital and their country to normal.

ensure that "economic and social distortions induced by the war are progressively addressed."

Next comes the development phase proper, when Lebanon will have "regained its ability to develop and modernize its economy without extraordinary external assistance." If all goes as planned, the 10-year program will reach completion in the year 2002, at a total cost of some $13 billion, with the private sector financing further projects that are expected to cost an additional $16 billion.

Official documents spell out precisely what needs to be achieved in the coming decade. Among other things, Lebanon needs to tame its inflation—bringing it down from a raging 140 percent in 1992 to a controllable 10 percent in 1996—to enable the country to manage the expected large inflow of capital.

In the short run, officials will focus on measures that give quick results: abolition of the so-called "customs dollar" in favor of the Lebanese pound, increasing electricity and other utility prices to "at least their economic cost," taxing real estate transactions on the basis of actual value, and so on.

Policies now being kneaded into final form include introduction of a value-added tax around 1994-95 and a gasoline tax, elimination of subsidies on wheat and other grains, increased duties on luxury items, higher car-registration fees, tighter tax collection and reform of the civil service.

A revitalized civil service, able to collect taxes, customs revenues and utility payments, is crucial to Lebanon's future. The water, electric-power and telephone systems, for example, have been hamstrung for years by illegal connections, payment evasions and outdated rates. Improved tax and utility collection efforts—although difficult, given existing administrative and social frameworks—are needed to help generate additional revenue for reconstruction and development. Progress on this front was already visible last autumn, as customs receipts for the third quarter of 1993 jumped more than 42 percent over the same period the previous year, a clear sign of improved rates of collection.

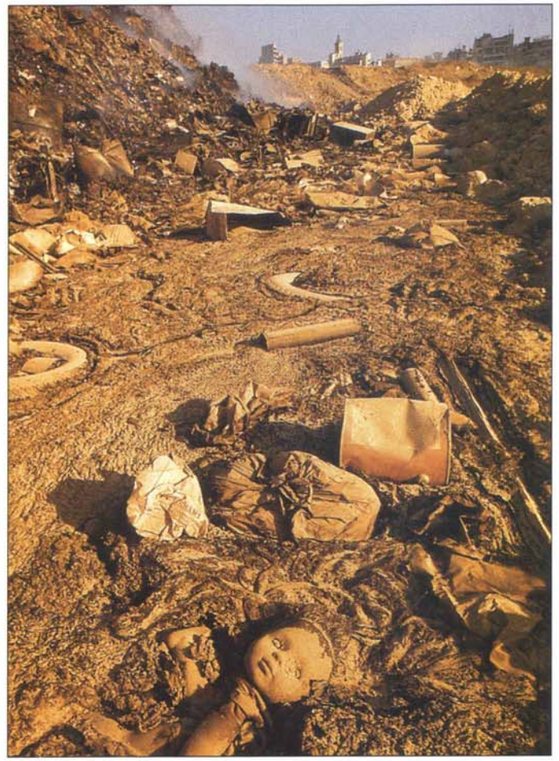
Officials are also scrutinizing the entire social sector, and will consider creation of a "social safety net," including a comprehensive social-service and human-resources strategy that would be implemented two years from now. Interim measures could include such measures as offering "lifeline" utility rates for the less fortunate.

The reconstruction game plan itself involves two main players. The first is the state's Council for Reconstruction and Development (CDR), set up originally in 1977 and then powerfully revived by Hariri. CDR, working with the World Bank, commissioned the NERP blueprint, authored by International Bechtel and the Beirut-based international consulting firm Dar al-Handasah.

Player number two has been given the daunting task of restoring the heart of the nation, the devastated area that was once downtown Beirut. The company set up to handle this purely commercial operation is called Solidere, a private-sector firm that has been granted a 25-year concession to rebuild and develop 1.6 million square meters (more than 395 acres) of the city's central district. When completed, the new downtown area will house 40,000 citizens and provide offices and work sites for 100,000 daytime employees. Initial cost projections come to a total of $3.25 billion, committed at an annual rate of $310 million—including an infrastructure bill of about $400 million in the first four years.

Sensitive to local and scholarly concerns, Solidere will carefully conserve the city's 3000-year heritage of antiquities. Handsome old buildings, archeological finds and other national treasures will be rescued from the present jungle of smashed and twisted rubble, creating what planners describe as a vibrant, bustling metropolis that blends the best of old and new. This "mega-agora," or giant marketplace, will run right down to the Mediterranean shoreline, near the first basin of Beirut Port.

In the process, thousands of tons of rubble will be cleared from the downtown area and trucked to the nearby Normandy landfill, a dump created in the civil-war years just a few hundred meters from the celebrated—and still closed—St. Georges Hotel. The dump will be transformed into a man-made, 22-hectare (54-acre) island, linked to the mainland by a short causeway. The full development plan for the island is still open-ended, but it will include an international business center, a park, a central library and various administrative buildings.



A child's doll lies abandoned amid the garbage of the Normandy dump, a landfill that will become a new quarter of a revitalized Beirut.

The island will be linked with another reclaimed land area and enhance what promises to be an attractive waterfront, framed by Beirut's legendary sea and mountain vistas. The master plan calls for downtown reconstruction to blend harmoniously with development of the rest of Beirut. Meanwhile, the French government's Île de France Urban Planning Institute is readying a master plan for reconstruction of the area between the city of Beirut and the suburbs.

Lebanon's entrepreneurial private sector will of course be deeply involved, directly and indirectly, in the rebuilding enterprise, as well as in private construction, industrial or agro-industrial projects throughout the country.

By mid-summer 1993, as first disbursements flowed out, contractors began moving on the first of the 132 infrastructure projects, grouped in 15 sectors, provided for by the plan. The war-ravaged remains of the once-popular Khalde Stadium were bulldozed to make way for a new sports facility for the 1996 Pan Arab Games. Roads were being patched up and repair teams were visible in many areas of the city. Lebanon was on the move again.

These first infrastructure projects cover telecommunications, power and water, as well as Beirut International Airport, Beirut Port and school repairs. Returning utilities and public services to normal will not only make daily life easier, but will also act as a powerful morale-booster, rescuing the populace

from years of telecommunications chaos, daily power rationing and defective water systems.

With costs inching close to the $2.9 billion first-phase target, tenders were going out last autumn to pre-qualified bidders worldwide for the next batch of projects, including more water systems, sewage and solid-waste disposal, state schools and additional work at Beirut Airport.

Thus far financing has flowed generously from the major Arab funds (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1979), notably from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD). Non-Arab contributors have included the World Bank, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Community (EC) and some

of its member-states, as well as various other multilateral organizations, providing either soft loans—some with what amounts to a grant component—outright grants or straight commercial loans.

Dr. Boutros Labaki, the CDR's secretary-general, stabs at rows of figures with an eloquent finger as he explains that the remaining funding requirements should present no great problems, with fresh Arab inputs expected along with funds from France, Germany and other EC member states. Notable non-contributors so far include the United States and cautious Japan, although both may get involved now that the Middle East peace process has moved forward.

Looking ahead, the CDR chief listed a tentative program for the first six months of 1994 which included Beirut Port work, more airport development, schools and hospitals—the latter

thanks to a timely Saudi loan in midsummer. Most importantly, the program would address a central problem: providing affordable housing for persons displaced or made homeless by the violence of the past two decades. The displaced and homeless number from 300,000 to 500,000, depending on whether you count those who have found temporary shelter with relatives and those who have become squatters, eking out a living in Beirut's numerous shattered buildings. The housing problem is given high priority because many feel that, unsolved, it could harbor the germs of renewed future discord.

About 180,000 household units were completely destroyed during the civil war and related violence, and as many were badly damaged. Projections now call for some 500,000 new units to be built at an annual rate of 37,500 and a yearly cost of $550 million.

Funding construction of these units is no real problem; the difficulty is providing affordable financing for prospective owners. Nor has any clear rental solution yet emerged. The Housing Bank, in the process of being restructured, may come up with viable solutions. For the present, however, home loans in Lebanon just don't offer private lenders a very good return when compared with other available investment vehicles.

Other proposals getting priority treatment include electric- power price subsidies, the social safety net, freeing rent controls and levying a special housing tax to finance or subsidize low-cost housing.

Lebanon's population of 3.5 million is fairly evenly spread over Beirut (581,000), Beirut's suburbs (681,000), Mount Lebanon (635,000), North Lebanon (690,000), South Lebanon (598,000) and the Bekaa Valley (410,000). The World Bank notes how events in South Lebanon have caused the perennial flight of mostly poorer people from that troubled area to Beirut and other urban centers, with all the socio-economic pressures that result.

Lebanese birth rates showed a notable decline between 1982 and 1987. Yet the largest segment of Lebanon's population is in the 10-to-20 age group; a corresponding shrinkage in the 20-to-30 group is due largely to emigration, said to have been in excess of 300,000 people.

Some 700,000 children were enrolled in state schools in 1992, over 90 percent of the 5-to-20 age group. In the coming 18 months, some 1100 state schools will be repaired and a few new units built. Ten new technical schools will be constructed as well, and a human-resources utilization program is being prepared.

Higher education will remain focused on such institutions as the American University of Beirut (See *Aramco World*, January-February 1991), St. Joseph University, Beirut Arab University and the national Lebanese University. This last institution, due for expansion, is being viewed as a powerful engine of development and unity: an apolitical, classless center of learning.

Lebanese University rector Dr. Assaad Diab, an eminent jurist, will preside over an anticipated 1993-94 student body of 43,000 young men and women. University facilities are spread far and wide; a plan to bring them together in one campus at Choueifat, 15 kilometers (nine miles) outside the capital, is still far from being realized.

Arabic and French are the languages of instruction at the Lebanese University, which Diab believes fills a big social gap. "Sixty to 70 percent of our students come from the less-favored classes," he pointed out, commenting on the effects of 17 years of strife and what he called "three totally lost years."

A $15-million Saudi Arabian loan will enable the university to continue operations, make repairs and acquire vital equipment. "Our aim is to make a solid and durable contribution to overall regional educational advancement," says Diab. "Our teachers are dedicated. They understand the need for national unity, free thinking and free speech."

Horizon 2002 allocates a total of $1.14 billion to the education sector, with the bulk of the spending in years four through 10. In the early recovery years, education and teacher recruitment will have to step aside for what are seen as more pressing priorities.

Opposite: Boaters from the Hotel St. Georges Yacht Club pass the Normandy landfill, far left. At nearby Ain al-Mraisseh, a youth swan-dives into the Mediterranean, center, while on the adjacent Corniche, right, vendors sell cotton candy and other treats to passersby.

Government planners are well aware of the urgent need to reconstitute the national work force, which was crippled by a mass exodus of professional and skilled labor between 1975 and 1982. The country has an immediate need for an estimated 200,000 technicians, foremen, skilled and unskilled workers.

The human-resource program now being prepared will define just how the Lebanese work force is to be enlarged to the numbers the country needs, taking into account wage levels, current housing constraints and social security.

Dr. Nasser Saidi, first vice governor of the Bank of Lebanon, the country's central bank, is a member of a new top-talent team charged with helping the bank restructure itself from top to bottom, so it can play a lead role in building tomorrow's Lebanon. The team also includes Governor Riad Salameh, Fadhi Mohdad, Mohammed Shatta and Haroutine Samoutin. All are banking experts with impressive credentials, most of them have wide foreign experience, and all are in their early 40's.

Saidi explains how the central bank will be modernized and restructured internally—once again with World Bank help. He stresses that the Bank of Lebanon must itself be rock-solid "before we can cast our nets" and start the three-fold task of participating in reconstruction programs, charting the role of Lebanon's entire banking system in this process and, last but not least, helping Lebanon position itself in the region.

The American- and British-trained banking specialist believes the non-political nature of the new team enhances the central bank's credibility, not just for Lebanon's financially powerful diaspora—some $10 billion held by Lebanese abroad could be at stake—but for international backers as well. "We are now preparing our programs ready for action," he says. "We insist on top people. We need managers to help shape tomorrow's Lebanon ... and we will find them."

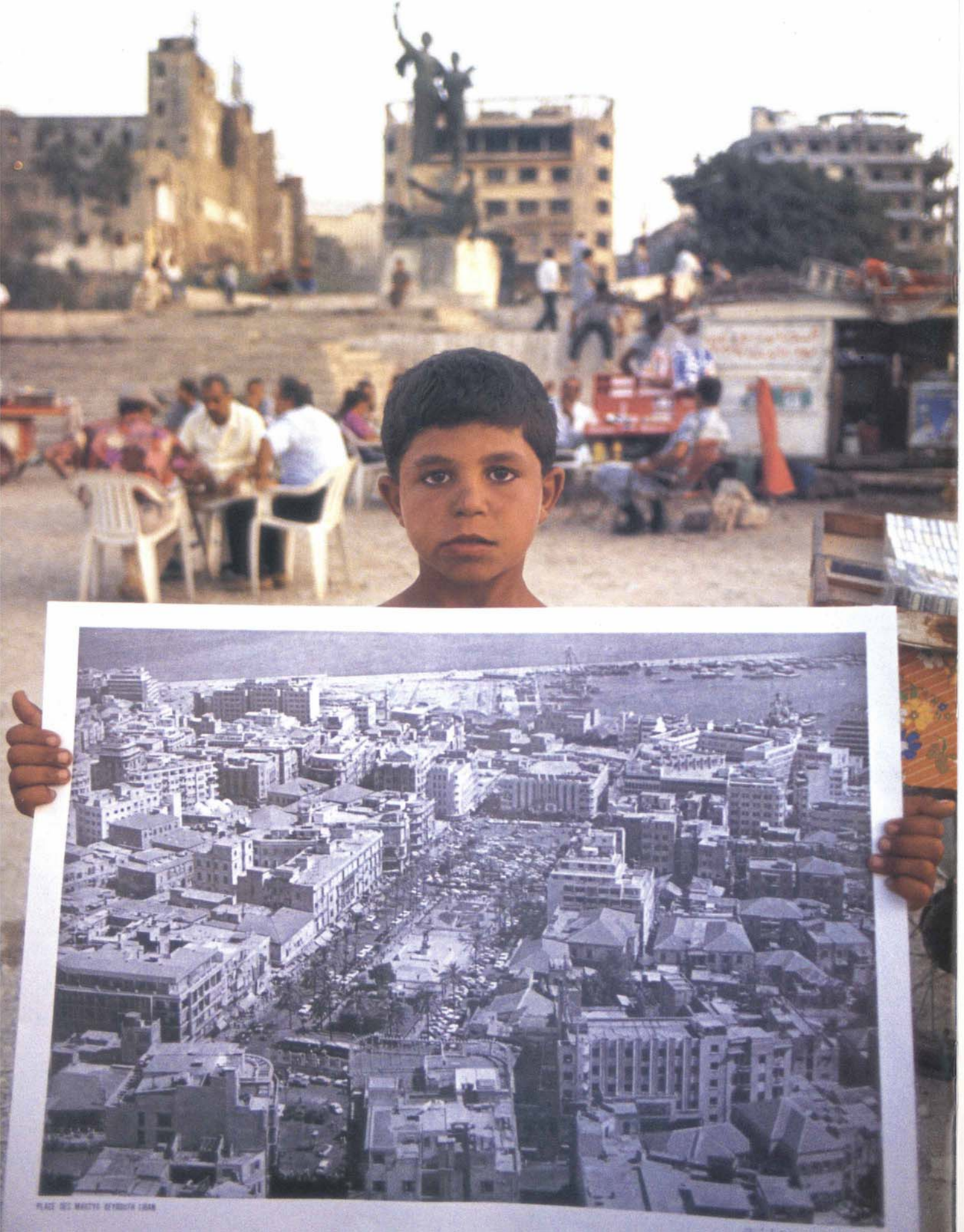
The banker also calls for economic reconstruction, with the roles of public and private sectors clearly defined, and a consistent set of economic policies laid down and adhered to.

In equally instructive meetings with Finance Minister Dr. Fouad Siniora and Lebanese Bankers Association President Dr. George Asshi, Siniora radiated optimism but acknowledged that rebuilding Lebanon is "a hell of a task ... a real challenge."

Looking back over the past few years, however, he saw the emergence of much greater national unity. "There are differences of opinion," he remarked, wryly listing a few of Lebanon's 150 radio stations, 50 television channels and countless publications, "but there's dialogue."

"One of our main preoccupations—something we're looking at very closely right now—is improving living conditions. It's a priority, and solutions will not be long in coming." He hinted that a German economic and financial protocol might be a prime vehicle

"A returning visitor finds it strange and wonderful to be walking the familiar streets of the city once again, absorbing the incredible energy, color and vitality of Beirut."



to help overcome existing barriers to low-cost and affordable housing.

Siniora observed that "Lebanon's real role is beyond its borders. The outside world is now taking us seriously ... as a people who mean business"—an oblique reference to ongoing reforms across Lebanon's financial and socio-economic structures.

Asshi went a step further down the road of far-reaching structural reform. "We're at a threshold. We had a very serious fracture, social and confessional, and we are at long last beginning to pull together."

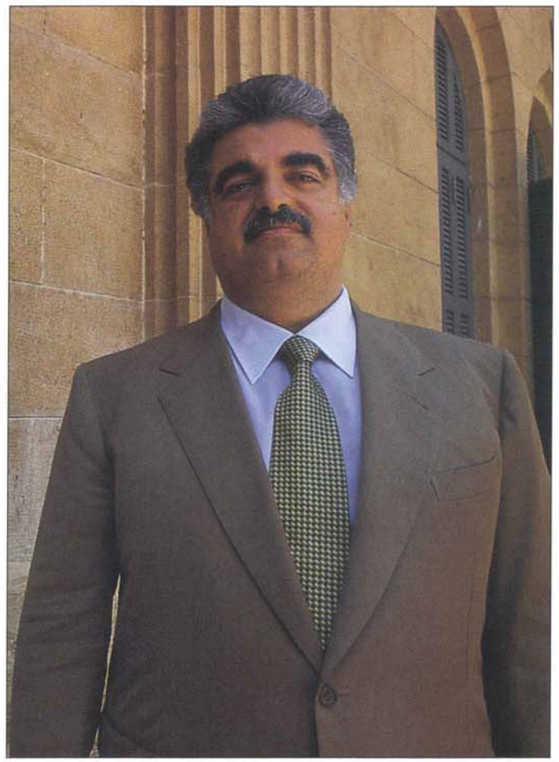
Lebanon now has 73 banks, he said, all of them potential signatories to the new banking reform law, which will put them in professional harmony with their international kin, including alignment on the Basel Convention and its eight-percent minimum liquidity requirement.

The new legislation will also encourage a number of smaller banks to amalgamate and regroup. Said Asshi, "We shall shortly see between 40 and 50 banks in Lebanon, banks operating at the highest standards," their ranks bolstered by three important newcomers: The Housing Bank, planned to be 20 percent public and 80 percent privately owned; the partially privatized Industrial and Tourist Development Bank, its capital augmented; and the Agricultural Credit Bank, also 20 percent public and 80 private, with commercial credits offered according to private-sector guidelines.

Asshi confidently predicted that "with a lot of hard work, frankness, a little good luck and, above all, progress in the Middle East peace negotiations, Lebanon, come the year 2000, will be back in business as a full partner, providing a durable bridge between East and West."

A $45 million loan by the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a World Bank subsidiary, to five Lebanese banks this past summer was aimed at helping several small and medium-sized Lebanese enterprises modernize or re-equip, creating 8000 jobs. The loan is an example of growing international confidence in Lebanon, Asshi contends. He predicts the IFC facility will trigger similar agreements between Lebanese banks and regional or international lenders.

> "I do not want to see my country as a place of passage but as a center of liberty—cultural and financial—and a model for international cooperation."



Prime mover Rafic Hariri, above, looks ahead. At left, a boy in Martyrs' Square sells poster prints of the square as it used to be.

The human resource theme came up again in discussions with National Economy and Commerce Minister Hagop Djemerdjian, a Stanford-trained engineer who joined the Hariri government after a highly successful business career. He points to the large number of professionals in the year-old government, saying this emphasis on promoting "high investment in brain capital" must be one of the country's chief objectives.

"We now have high social mobility," continued the minister, "and can record important, positive changes in community relations. Our structures are solid but in no way top-heavy. That's a hallmark of this government. We're highly aware of the need to communicate openly with all the people, all the time."

Like other leaders, Djemerdjian cites the importance of the ongoing Middle East peace process, and notes that Lebanon and Syria have been "talking—engaged in dialogue" with a view to defining "areas of tangible mutual interest." He nods and adds, "Hopefully we'll go on recording progress, although it's a step-by-step process." Both Syria and Lebanon need to identify common goals in the context of a larger Arab economic system in which "sterile competition, overlapping and duplication would be avoided," he said. "We need plain talk. It can work wonders."

Pre-war industrial exports represented between 10 and 15 percent of Lebanon's gross domestic product, but the civil war damaged some 200 plants and led to wholesale emigration of workers, leaving this sector of the country's economy functioning at barely 25 percent of capacity.

Naturally, as industry recovers, it is going to get a lot of attention, and joint ventures are being discussed more and more in Beirut business circles.

Dr. Assad Rizk brings a physician's analytical mind, warmth and perceptiveness to his new job as industry and petroleum minister. "I've been doing the rounds," he laughs, "and can promise you that I've visited every ward of our industrial hospital."

Rizk notes that the CDR plan is constantly being reviewed and, where necessary, modified. Industrial and petroleum policies are now being incorporated into it. Ironically, "construction actually got a boost from the conflict—part of the strange logic of war, I guess," the minister says. "The point is that we have good logistical structures and readily available equipment."

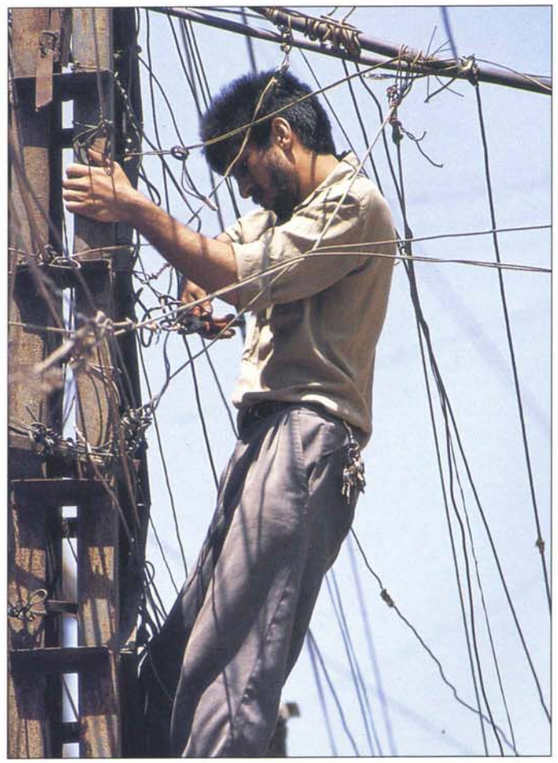
He adds: "Our development potential is significant, but right now we need technology partners, a return of skilled workers and a clear idea of exactly where we want to go both at home and in export terms."

The minister described plans to set up strategic regional industrial zones and a bank for industrial development, capitalized at 200 billion Lebanese pounds. Rizk notes with satisfaction that the World Bank's IFC and "at least one other major international financial organization will help seed-fund the related agricultural and housing banks."

Rizk highlights the importance of ongoing talks between Beirut and Damascus on rationalizing Lebanese-Syrian relations. He hints that a blueprint for a common market is being readied. A trailblazing project that would allow finishing in Lebanon of ready-made garments begun in Syrian plants is imminent, the minister suggests: Syria produces 700,000 tons of cotton and cotton thread a year. The two countries' combined population of 15 million would be a substantial economic force in the region, Rizk adds.

Syria's oil and gas wealth could also prove useful to Lebanon, the minister says. For example, gas- or oil-fired power plants could be built in North Lebanon as part of a Lebanese-Syrian-Jordanian grid, he explains.

> "In all this we must act quickly and honestly. We became mediocre after a very good start. We have to win back that place and then do even better in every way."



As part of efforts to restore normal city services, a utility worker repairs power lines near the American University Hospital in Ras Beirut.

Saidi at the Bank of Lebanon also notes the complementarity of the Lebanese and Syrian economies, underlining prospects for increased specialization in each. Syria's agricultural production, in his view, could be an input for agro-industrial and food-processing facilities in the Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon. Saidi also sees scope for Syrian crude oil in Lebanon's refineries, and for Syrian natural gas in power stations feeding both countries. In addition, Lebanon's tourist-industry experience could prove of value to Syria in its efforts to build up its own, still underdeveloped, tourism potential.

Saidi predicts that "under the appropriate conditions," Beirut could develop once again into a regional capital market, providing market-related services, channeling funds, and functioning as a trading link for emerging stock markets in Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, as well as Syria.

As Middle East peace prospects improve, Saidi believes, so do chances for multinational trade, aid and development packages, to help the countries of the region retool their economies for peace and to fund regional projects in such key sectors as water, transport, communications and power. Lebanon, he adds, "can and should play a pivotal role in designing and identifying the objectives of such a regional plan."

Lebanon's export potential, including agriculture, was badly damaged during the war, with losses put at $600 million; 50 percent of the country's cold-storage capacity was knocked out, 15,000 hectares (37,000 acres) of forest gutted by shellfire, animal stocks were depleted, and irrigation systems were put out of action.

Agriculture gets a combined $435 million in Horizon 2002, but only $18.5 million is being disbursed in year one, mostly for irrigation projects, with an eye on nearby export markets where Turkey and other competing countries have made some inroads.

In light of the unique historical importance of Beirut, it was reassuring to hear from Dr. Helga Seeden, archeologist at the American University of Beirut (AUB) that she is convinced the city's architectural and archeological treasures will be well cared for during the 20-year restoration period. "If we can save 50 percent, it'll be fine," says Seeden.

Solidere Director-General Nasr Riad Shama'a says his firm might do even better than that, thanks to an updated inventory of historic buildings which boosts the number to almost 300 in the city's historic core. Everyone is determined not only to respect the past but also, if possible, to enhance it, he asserts. "What we uncover here during reconstruction could be an even greater revelation of the true wealth of Beirut's long past."

AUB, with powerful support from the British Museum and other institutions, and a team of two British and three French archeologists, has identified seven areas for digging, starting this spring. "We'll follow the bulldozers," Seeden vows.

A new model of the reconstructed downtown area has been prepared, taking all these factors into account. Wandering today through the ruined suqs, squares and streets that everyone who has lived in Beirut knew and loved, it is hard not to catch the excitement of what might be uncovered, and of a splendid new agora about to rise from the ashes of the old.

Quality and beauty are the accents, as Shama'a reveals details of an international competition to design Beirut's future suqs and waterfront areas in the $2.3-to-$3 billion program.

Solidere's own status was finally settled in late summer of 1993, and with the basic square-meter cost of reconstruction now determined, a work start-up is imminent. Under the company's statutes, property-rights holders in the downtown area—owners, tenants or leaseholders—can convert the value of their assets into Solidere shares. Understandably, not all potential shareholders are happy with the value assigned to their assets in the central district, but letters of intent for share purchases worth close to $700 million are in hand. So far the split between Lebanese and non-Lebanese shareholders—the latter predominantly Arab—is said to be about 50-50; no one person or group is permitted to acquire more than a 10-percent stake in Solidere.

The government's role is to ensure fairness in the land transactions and evaluations and see to the smooth running of the project, which will build 35 kilometers (22 miles) of roads, install 56,000 direct phone lines, and use 800,000 tons of reinforcing steel and 2.2 million cubic meters (2.9 million cubic yards) of concrete to build 4.4 million square meters (47 million square feet) of mixed office, residential and administrative space, including a 40-story World Trade Center. Also planned are a national library, exhibition center and opera house.

Naturally, the CDR's 10-year plan and Solidere's huge program require certain guarantees for investors, something that the Hariri government has dealt with through a completely revamped and enlarged national guarantee organization.

Lebanon's National Investments Guarantee Corporation (NIGC) was set up in the late 1970's, but never really got off the ground, due to the civil war. But today it's back on track, and its president is the energetic and affable Dr. Samir Nasr, a French-trained economist. He took time from a busy schedule to explain that "NIGC guarantees, like an A-1 insurance policy, cover both foreign and local investors. They will be absolutely ironclad."

Nasr's institute has working arrangements with the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation. "You've probably heard, too, that France's Coface and other European export credit guarantee agencies are again providing cover for Lebanon."

NIGC is about to publish a comprehensive investment guide for Lebanon. Nasr voices confidence in ongoing government moves to remove bottlenecks, overhaul the country's financial and monetary systems and tame budget deficits.

He is encouraged by signs that Lebanese expatriates are returning dollars to the country. He cited the "enormous advantage" of these human and

Below, a recent photograph of a war-ravaged section of Rue Allenby in downtown Beirut.

SOLIDERE (2)

Above, a computer-generated image of the same scene after Solidere's planned reconstruction.

financial resources for the country, stressing opportunities for industrial and other joint ventures, including tripartite projects grouping Lebanese, Arab Gulf and Western partners, especially in high-tech industries.

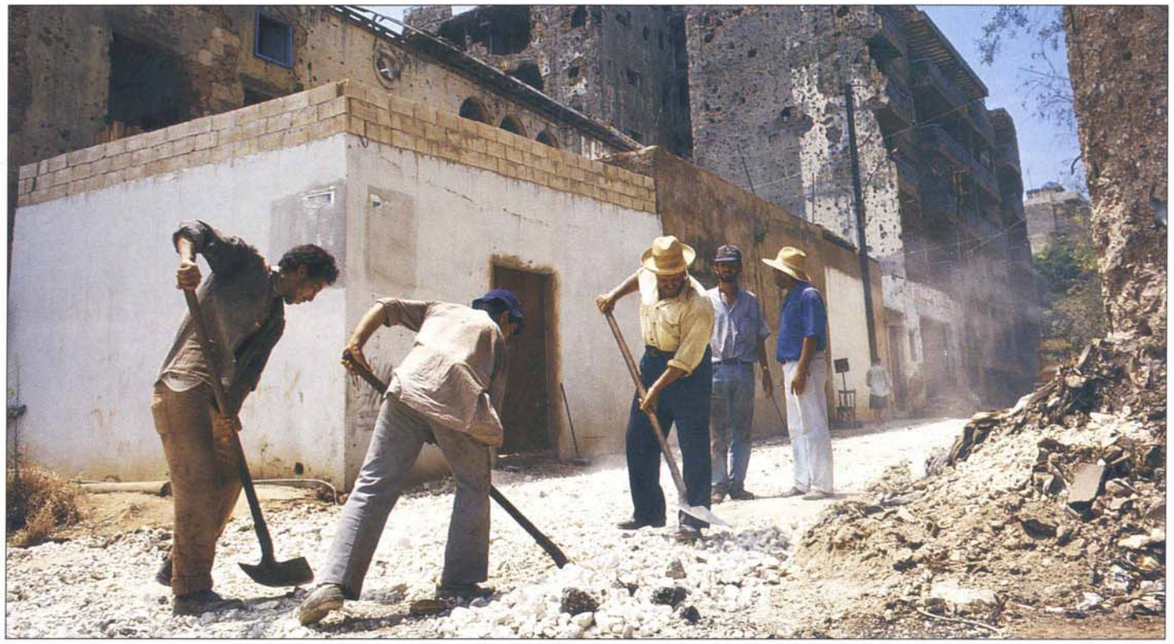
Banking Association Director General Dr. Makram Sader, whose close links with Arab banking circles give him particular insight into regional trends, offered a breakdown of the sources of financing needed for Lebanon's rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Roughly 30 percent of overall budget requirements will be met from foreign loans, he explains, about six percent from direct overseas grants and the balance from Lebanese government savings and domestic sources, including loans from foreign equity banks.

Reaffirming national priorities, such as infrastructure repair and maintenance, and housing for homeless or displaced persons, Sader lauds the "family fabric," which he feels was the factor that prevented Lebanon from breaking down completely.

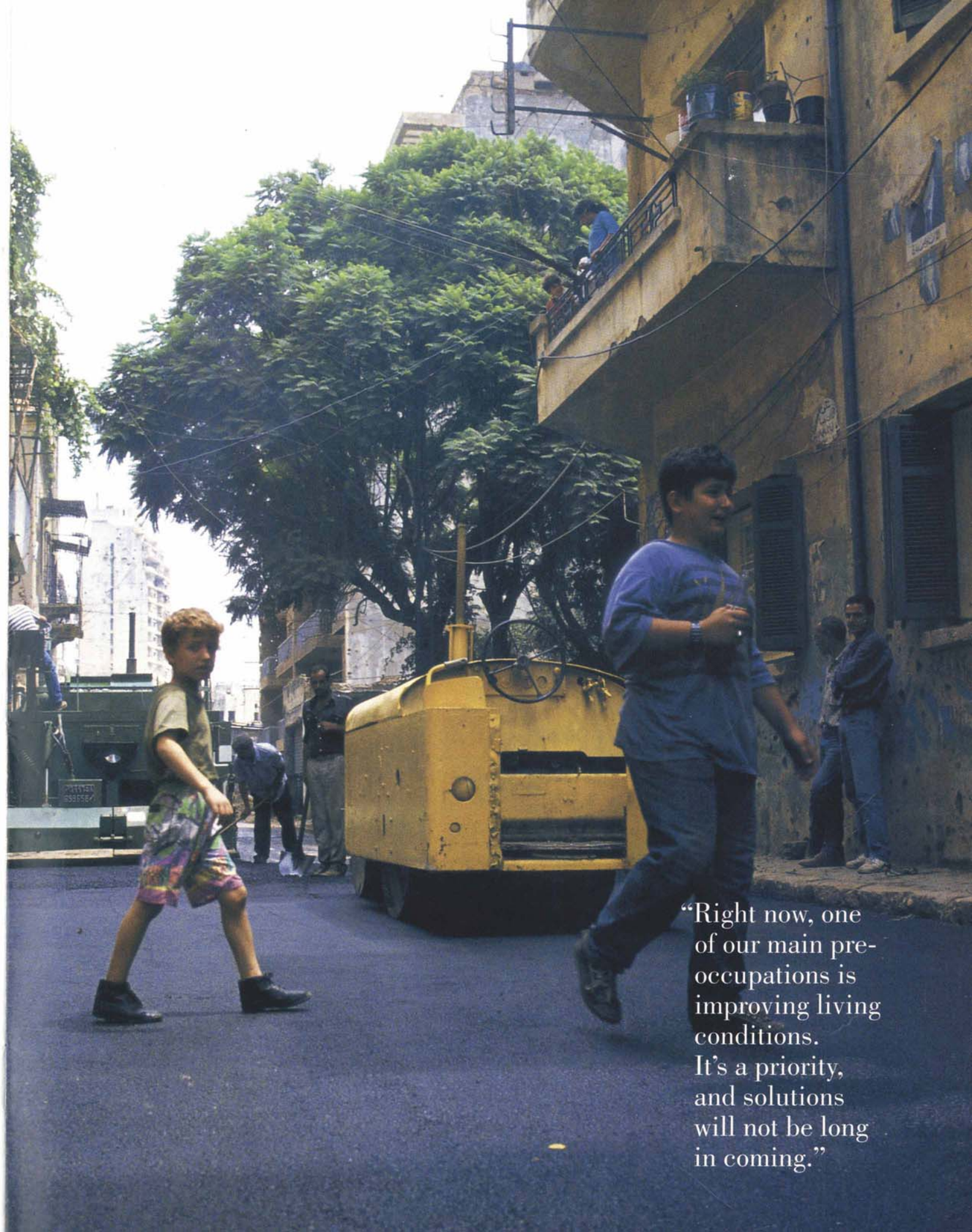
The role of Lebanon's banks in the 10-year plan is a determining one, Sader says. The country needs a "qualified, restructured, properly legislated banking system," not just as a viable partner with foreign lenders in the reconstruction process but also as a source of complementary financing for short-term needs—that is, working capital.

Sader defined two crucial tasks in the months and years ahead. The first is to rehabilitate, recycle and correctly employ human resource capital. The second: to bring back to the country, each year for five years, at least 200 first-quality Lebanese-born executives who have been working in the international banking system, industry or world bodies. Thousands of skilled workers left Lebanon as industries and job opportunities went up in smoke, he explains. "Their return is vital," he says, noting that Lebanon must restore productivity to at least 1974 levels.

He postulates a third theme, too: restructuring the country's entire educational sector, to secularize it and prepare it for the 21st century. "It's difficult but not impossible," he acknowledges. "We have the skills but we need self-honesty, discipline and rigorous controls, not just for ourselves but in respect of the world around us, which tends to look at us as a troublesome chunk of a complicated jigsaw puzzle. So let the world



Workers clear rubble from a downtown street, above. Opposite: Children cross a street being paved in Ras al-Nabah, along Beirut's old "Green Line."



"Right now, one of our main preoccupations is improving living conditions. It's a priority, and solutions will not be long in coming."

"Our development potential is significant, but right now we need technology partners, a return of skilled workers and a clear idea of where we want to go."

tell us precisely what it wants and we will react accordingly."

Turning to the Arab world, Sader notes that, even after 17 years of civil war, Lebanon is still viewed as "viable" and "of excellent value."

"We can and must play a key role in regional development," he goes on, "be a relay for channeling short-term Arab funds. The Beirut market can help channel Arab resources into our reconstruction, worth $30 billion over 10 years and double that sum once the country is rebuilt and embarked on a growth curve. In return, we offer state-of-the-art computer technology and can help

Students relax near the main gate of the American University of Beirut on a summer night. Lebanese universities have an important long-term role to play, providing educated manpower for rebuilding the country.

Arab states with industries tailored to their own requirements, including semi-finished inputs—for example, pharmaceuticals, textiles and cosmetics. Arab investors are most welcome in our industries and they know full well that ours is a truly liberal economy."

Sader says thoughtfully: "In all this we must act quickly and honestly. We became mediocre after a very good start. We have to win back that place and then do even better in every way."

The transportation sector is seen as crucial to the reconstruction of Lebanon, in terms of logistics and enhanced revenues. A Bank Audi analysis records 800 ships discharging almost 1.5 million cargo tons in Lebanon in the second quarter of 1993, a trend continuing into the second half of that year. That represents a 16-percent improvement over 1992.

Lebanon's ports, particularly Beirut, are allocated $200 million in the 10-year plan. Beirut Port sustained relatively little damage during the civil war, as all the combatants, even in the worst fighting, spared this entry point for their own vital supplies.

Beirut International Airport gets an immediate allocation of $350 million. Work there, including upgrading of hotel and duty-free areas, will proceed quickly because of the airport's importance for business and tourism, as well as its revenue-earning potential.

The stepped-up pace of arrivals and activity at the airport bodes well for the future of national carrier Middle East Airlines. MEA's equity is split among Lebanese shareholders, Arab Gulf investors and Air France, with five percent held by MEA staff. Chairman Abdul Hamid Fakhoury quietly concedes that the airline suffered enormous losses right up to late 1992, including a 50-percent fleet loss. "Our own resources kept us going," says Fakhoury, "enabling us to operate a 14-ship fleet—mostly on lease, of course."

He characterizes 1993 as "a transitional year for us," and adds that "new acquisitions planned for 1994-1998 should get us back to profitability by next year." MEA, stresses Fakhoury, has taken special pains to maintain very high technical and passenger-service standards. "Our crews and engineering staff are rated highly."

Loss of American and Australian destinations, because of bans on travel to Lebanon by those countries, is a problem that should disappear by early 1994, says Fakhoury. With Lebanon returning to prosperity and with a significant rise in tourist and business travel, "we should be back in the major league within five years," he predicts.

On the road to Jounieh, we passed a touchingly dilapidated train struggling along the coastal strip—a reminder that planners very much want to see a good railroad system back in action, linking Lebanon to Syrian terminals, Jordan and even Saudi Arabia.

Two leading Lebanese businessmen, Robert Debbas and Roger Nasnas, agree that Lebanon has emerged from its ordeals battered but unbowed and in surprisingly good shape, despite the terrible human and material losses.

Nasnas, a luminary in the Federation of Lebanese Business Associations, is equally optimistic and points to the "increasingly creedless character of today's economic structures."

He too is confident of Lebanon's ability to survive, of the strength of its private sector—given appropriate government backing—and the strength of the country's social fabric. But he adds, "We must pursue our stated aim of creating 20,000 new jobs yearly, and get that figure up to 100,000 by century's end."

Raymond Audi, general manager of the 150-year-old Bank Audi, notes that Premier Hariri has shown himself to be a powerful "pole of attraction, a major pivot ... very much the right man at the right time."

Audi never held back on investments, even at the darkest point of the civil war. He has strong faith in the country's resilience and skills, and believes Lebanon has great undeveloped tourist potential, with a vast amount of history, cultural diversity and geographic variety packed into its 10,452 square kilometers (4036 square miles) of plain, valley and mountain. This fact underscores the need to get ports, airports, roads and even trains back to normal operations, in anticipation of returning tourists, Lebanese expatriates and Arab residents.

Audi's bank, in its third-quarter 1993 economic report, cited a clear improvement in Lebanon's monetary and financial positions, with exports rising sufficiently to produce a $260 million balance of payments surplus—a big step forward, considering the $692 million deficit registered in the same period the previous year. Looking ahead, Bank Audi took note of a *Euromoney* prediction that Lebanon's economic growth in 1994 would be the highest in the Middle East, with a projected rate of 7.1 percent.

It is a warm autumn morning in Ras Beirut. A returning visitor finds it strange and wonderful to be walking the familiar streets of the city once again, free and unchallenged, absorbing the incredible energy, color and vitality of Beirut—from the American University, down Rue Bliss, up into the Hamra shopping district, catching a glimpse of the old Manara lighthouse before arriving at Premier Rafic Hariri's office.

The impressively built prime minister projects the quiet confidence of a leader who knows what he wants and how to get things done. As we talk of last summer's violence in south Lebanon, which, at the time, posed a serious threat to reconstruction efforts, Hariri remarks quietly: "Force won't work. This whole sad affair has made us stronger and more unified, believe me."

In a wide scan of Lebanon's immediate priorities, Hariri says social problems are getting his personal attention, and that discussions with various financial sources should result in low-cost, affordable housing loans for the less fortunate.

Looking at a future Middle East context, the prime minister forecasts that "competition will come after peace," and that Lebanon will be a vital economic component in future connections that will encompasses the whole Mediterranean basin.

"Let me tell you that Lebanon is back in business and we welcome its return. I do not want to see my country as a place of passage but rather as a center of liberty—cultural and financial—and a model for international cooperation."

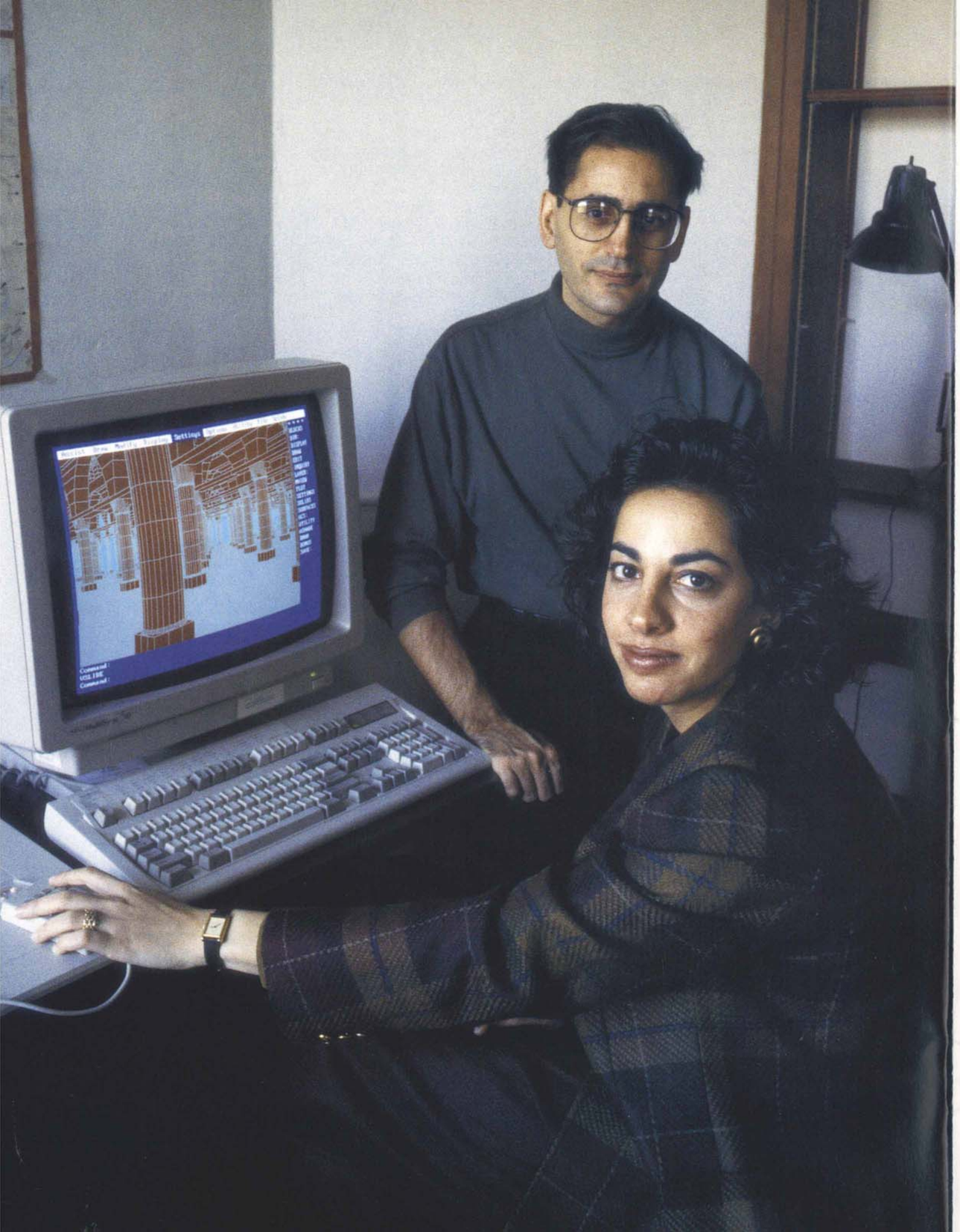
As we depart, Hariri sits down to a further round of official consultations, another 16-hour day in 1993, Lebanon's year of destiny. Outside, a bulldozer springs back into noisy action clearing rubble from a side street, as we drive up to the cliffs of Raouche with the Mediterranean sparkling clear along the coast.

Lebanon indeed has an enormous task ahead, particularly in these first three years of reconstruction. But given the country's frank commitment to tackling its problems, and the adaptability of its highly competent people, it is hard to disagree with predictions that Lebanon will in fact prevail, and will re-emerge 10 years from now in a new version of its traditional role, as a diverse, interesting and valuable meeting-place of East and West.

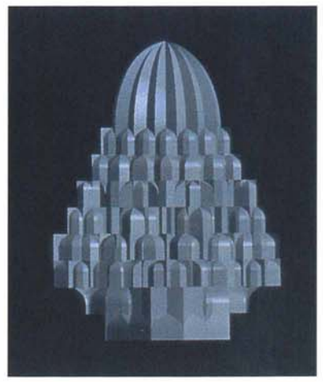
Ian Meadows, veteran journalist and author, lives in Languedoc, France, where he is at work on a historical novel set in Palestine and Occitania during the crusades.

SOLIDERE (2)

Beirut's Place Riad Solh (above) and Rue Weygand with the Municipality Building (top), as Solidere's planners envision them after reconstruction.



JERUSALEM ON-SCREEN



Architects Abeer Audeh and Mohammed Al-Asad peer at their glowing computer screen, and find themselves among the noble columns of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock, one of the sites most revered by Muslims. The two never tire of watching the monitor blossom into detailed architectural plans of the historic city as it existed under Muslim rule.

Using computer-assisted design at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, the Jerusalem-born Audeh and Al-Asad, a Jordanian, have produced the first-ever computerized architectural drawings of an entire city. From them, Princeton University's Interactive Computer Graphics Lab produced a video "walking tour" of some of Jerusalem's historic sites as they were between the seventh and 10th centuries.

The drawings are destined for a book about Muslim Jerusalem by Oleg Grabar, a distinguished scholar of Islamic art and architecture. Grabar, who taught Al-Asad art history as Harvard University's first Aga Khan Professor of Islamic Art, urged him to help with the illustrations for the book, due in 1995.

Recognizing the possibilities of using CAD for the architectural reconstructions, Al-Asad and Audeh began to push the frontiers of computer technology in completing the project. "So far as we know, no one's done this before," says Al-Asad. "It's been challenging, especially when problems came up: We were on our own."

He and Audeh spent more than a year mastering the CAD program and feeding reams of architectural data about the historic city into computer memory—facts culled from manuscripts and scrolls, old books and historic maps.

"The computer makes it much easier to manage a large-scale project such as this," Audeh notes, "and it takes much less time to produce the drawings." The drawings are particularly exciting because they permit a three-dimensional view of buildings and sites that no longer exist. "This new technology makes visible what was once left to the imagination," Grabar says.

Al-Asad, who now lives in Amman, decided in high school to become an architect. After earning degrees at the University of Illinois, he went on to Harvard, completing his Ph.D. in Islamic architecture in 1990. He enjoys teaching architecture and was recently tapped to start a graduate institute in Islamic art and architecture at Jordan's new Al al-Bayt University. Yet Al-Asad also wants to practice his profession and dreams of making contributions to society like the day-care center he designed for a refugee camp in Amman.

With the completion of the Jerusalem project, Audeh has returned to Cambridge and her master's studies, but she is eager to design her own buildings someday. Perhaps it is in her genes, she says with a smile. "My whole family is in civil engineering; we're practical people. I like theory so long as it guides actual architectural design." She is glad to have worked with Grabar and Al-Asad, she says: "I feel the project is very important, especially today. This will remind the world how far back the Muslim presence in Jerusalem goes."

Susan T. Rivers publishes Maghreb Report, *a newsletter about North Africa, and is also a free-lance photojournalist with a special focus on the Arab world.*

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY SUSAN T. RIVERS

Transports of Delight

RICKSHA ART OF BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is a delta country formed by the confluence of three mighty rivers — the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna — as they wind their way into the Bay of Bengal east of the Indian subcontinent. A little larger than Greece, almost the size of Wisconsin, it is one of the world's most densely populated nations; its people are predominantly Muslim. In modern times, this land was first part of India, and known as East Bengal; it then became East Pakistan after the subcontinent was partitioned in 1947; and became Bangladesh — "Land of Bengal" — after a bloody war of secession from Pakistan in 1971 and 1972.

Vast numbers of the inhabitants, originally Hindu and Buddhist, converted to Islam from about the 12th century onward, as various kingdoms of the subcontinent came under the sway of Muslim rulers from the north (See *Aramco World*, November-December 1991). When the area fell under the control of the British East India Company in the 18th century, it was famous for its agricultural wealth and its cloth manufactures. The local weavers were especially known for their gossamer-fine silk and cotton "muslin," a bolt of which, it was said, could be pulled through a finger ring.

Today, Bangladesh is still a predominantly agricultural country: Some 80 percent of its people live in farming villages and the country's few industries are jute mills, small manufacturing concerns and clothing factories owned by multinational corporations. The ordinary people of Bangladesh — about 90 percent of the population — live below what even they consider to be the poverty line. Every year, growing numbers abandon the farming life and leave their villages to seek jobs in the cities. Dhaka, the nation's capital, is one such magnet.

For foreigners, most visits to Dhaka begin at the international airport, about 16 kilometers (10 miles) outside the city. The taxi ride into town starts off on exceedingly wide, empty streets that grow progressively narrower and more crowded as they near Dhaka's outskirts. Here autos and trucks become enmeshed in the coils of meta-traffic: herds of goats on leashes, lines of cattle being driven to slaughter, jam-packed buses, trucks, autos, man- or ox-drawn carts, and pedestrians filtering across and through this flow without regard to traffic signs or police. Most embroiling of all, cycle rickshas by the hundreds close in as one nears the city center. These three-wheeled pedal-powered vehicles have collapsible plastic baby-buggy hoods that shade the passenger seat, and can carry up to four people, or even cargoes of coconuts, jute, oil drums and the like.

The visitor marvels at them — not only at their density, but at the sight of the world's largest moving art gallery: the multiple painted pictures and other decorations which adorn most of the cycle rickshas as well as the motorized three-wheeler "baby taxis." Wanting a closer look, the traveler begins to resent the speed of her own dodge-'em taxi and calls out to the driver: "Slow down: I want to see this!"

In amazement, the visitor scans ricksha after ricksha, arranged in ragged lines on either side of the avenue, each one brightly decorated to within inches of the large, heavy wheels. The driver who pedals the ricksha is dressed in the typical work outfit of Bangladesh: a shirt, sleeveless or otherwise; a *lungi*, or plaid cotton sarong, which reaches his ankles; a cotton towel around his head or neck; and perhaps a pair of lime-green plastic sandals. Riding behind the driver on the ricksha seat, often semi-covered by the hood, the customer sits, patiently waiting out the traffic jam, usually resigned to arriving late at his or her destination.

Most rickshas are colorfully decorated, though many show signs of age and deterioration. The newest, shiniest models are, as one Bengali put it, "as gorgeous as a bride going forth for the first time to her in-laws." The ribs of the hood are covered with a sheet of fitted plastic appliquéd with cutouts of colored, gold or silver plastic in traditional Dhaka design medallions, some of which contain at the center a red or blue rose, a peacock or a burning candle. Golden butterflies or stars and crescents may surround each medallion. A new ricksha hood may also wear a crown (*mukut*) at the top, on which is painted an emblematic image of the Ka'bah and the name of God, or a blessing written in Arabic across its base.

WRITTEN BY JOANNA KIRKPATRICK AND KEVIN BUBRISKI PHOTOGRAPHED BY KEVIN BUBRISKI

The aluminum sheeting on the back of the ricksha boasts multiple decorations of various kinds, such as circular or heart-shaped outlines of ornamental nailheads surrounding painted roses or peacocks, or a painted emblem with the ricksha maker's name; below this is the backboard painting, a separate rectangular piece of metal painted with the ricksha owner's choice of imagery. Favorite themes may be religious or secular, and include mosques, Taj Mahals, popular movie stars, animal fables, farm animals, jungle animals, bird scenes and many others. The larger, motorized baby taxis often have an entire side painted with a Bengal village scene of little thatched houses near a pond, or huge animals in combat, such as an elephant and a tiger wrapped in lethal embrace.

Previous spread: Bedizened rickshas fill a Dhaka street with color and clangor. Inset photos: Ricksha drivers peer through the rear curtains of their "disco" vehicles.

Looking at the ricksha from the front, one sees the passenger on his seat, framed by a fancy hood with tinsel and dangling doodads on its edge, under which a thin nylon curtain is discreetly drawn back on either side. One never sees this little "veil" unfolded: It is pure decoration. If a woman observing strict purdah wishes to hire a ricksha, someone from her house will pull a black cloth entirely around the upper part of the vehicle, completely obscuring seat, hood and rider and leaving only the driver visible.

The ricksha seat has a wooden frame, contains coconut-husk fiber padding and perhaps some springs, and is upholstered with a plastic material painted with characteristic designs. The seat-back shows images similar to those of the backboard; the seat itself is always painted with a lotus design. The edge strip of the seat, behind the rider's legs, is emblazoned with the ricksha maker's name framed by birds or flowers. Makers decorate the shiny tin-covered footboard — often made of flattened biscuit tins — with additional shiny nailhead designs, often in the shape of a heart pierced by an arrow, or of geometric patterns inlaid with colored plastic. Needless to say, the colored plastic does not last long under the scuffing of riders' feet. The ricksha also features a decorated plastic bicycle seat for the driver, plastic strips on the handlebars which fly in the breeze, and a bouquet of plastic flowers between the handlebars.

Since the early 1970's, when makers first began to decorate their vehicles in earnest, trendiness has been the controlling esthetic ideal. By the early 1980's, the English word "disco" began appearing in the Bengali language, spurred by the circulation of videotapes featuring American television dance programs. By this time, some ricksha makers had already begun installing transistor radios just above the footboard; rickshas so equipped became known as "disco" rickshas. Indeed, when I visited Dhaka in 1981, anything that was a trendy Western fashion — including the Mickey Mouse watch that one shopkeeper proudly displayed on his wrist — was immediately labeled in the bazaars as "disco."

Ricksha arts flow with the times, and what one sees on many of the vehicles often reflects current political passions or conflicts. Widespread decoration of rickshas began during the separation from Pakistan, when the doyen of ricksha artists in Dhaka, R.K. Das, began portraying battle scenes. Many rickshas of that era bore paintings of Mukti Bahini fighters in action. Others simply showed scenes of air or sea combat, the new Bangladeshi flag, or animals in combat.

Ricksha decoration continued, with one fad following another: first movie scenes, then birds on every panel, then fantastic Himalayan landscapes, animal fables, and futuristic city scenes with crisscrossing aerial roadways, complete with rushing trains, buses, minivans and stretch limousines, usually colored bright red. (Lately, compact cars have begun replacing the limousines in such scenes.) While much of the subject matter of ricksha art changes with the times, three classic images remain perennially interesting to both makers and owners: jungle combat, peaceful farm animals and birds.

Roughly one-fourth of the rickshas are decorated with Islamic themes. A favorite religious image for the backboard is the mosque with its ablution pool, or the Taj Mahal floating on a lotus or water lily, an image created originally by Das. Another favorite is a little boy praying before a Qur'an stand; above him are representations of the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah and renderings of other religious themes, borrowed from ever-popular calendar scenes. Hoods and seat-backs are sometimes decorated with plastic appliqué cutouts showing a vase of flowers, often with a bright gold or silver Islamic crescent and star in their midst.

Nationally, ricksha artists stand at the pinnacle of the entire ricksha manufacturing industry. Some are famous in their field, their works favored by many ricksha owners, who are usually the final arbiters of what types of decorations go on their vehicles. These painters or artists do backboards and seat-backs on commission. Some also paint upholstery for sale to ricksha-furnishing shops or vehicle manufacturers.

The three best-known ricksha artists in Dhaka are Das; Alauddin, whose usual signature is "Naj"; and Ahmed Hussain, who signs himself "Ahmed Art." These artists create many other kinds of commercial art as well, including movie posters, calendars and advertising signs. Das enjoys painting movie-star scenes, Naj prefers animals and animal fables, and Ahmed Art does a wide variety of themes — whatever the purchaser demands. Naj has his own vigorous style of doing animals, and shows a marvelous sense of humor in his animal fable scenes: tigers and lions watching television, or carrying a bride in a palanquin to her new husband's village, or a turbaned lion VIP in an open car receiving garlands and homage from elephants and deer.

Over the years, ricksha artists have drawn inspiration and images from such printed media as wall calendars, high-tech advertisements and children's books sold in the bazaar. I once found a ricksha seat-back painting that could only have been copied from a "Birds of North America" calendar; the birds shown are certainly not found in Bangladesh. In addition to copying images, ricksha artists create their own compositions out of borrowed elements. Since about 1986, some artists have enjoyed painting the faces of movie stars in surrealistic colors: garish blues or greens or, currently, lurid shades of purplish pink.

From time to time, municipal governments decide that enough is enough, and crack down on the more vulgar expressions of ricksha art; but the campaigns do not last, because ricksha art is truly popular in the broadest sense of the term. In Dhaka, the government — and many automobile owners — would like to ban rickshas from the streets entirely, because they slow down motor traffic. But experts, both foreign and Bangladeshi, point out that these rickshas provide thousands of jobs for landless workers who move to the cities every year, as well as thousands of other jobs in the small manufactories that serve the ricksha trade. Rickshas may be slow, but they do not pollute the air and they are, as it were, recycled.

Mosques and other religious subjects, above, are popular decorations in Muslim Bangladesh; so are scenes with animals and birds, opposite, often accurately portrayed.

Members of Bangladesh's social elite often disdain popular art as vulgar and lacking true worth: Art, for them, is the same as "high art" in Europe or the Americas. Indeed, Bangladesh has its share of fine artists, some of whom, such as the late Zainul Abedin, have achieved international reputations.

But in the streets of Dhaka, popular art reigns. Ricksha owners, who may possess only three vehicles or operate fleets of as many as 500, compete with one another for renown through the flamboyance and innovation of their ricksha decorations. Their audiences — drivers, passengers and bystanders alike — find their dreams of love, wealth and power, their delight in animals, their nostalgia for the rural countryside or their love of religion all expressed in the colorful art of the ricksha.

Ricksha artist Ahmed Hussain, at work in his home, puts the finishing touches to a pair of doves.

Joanna Kirkpatrick teaches cultural anthropology at Bennington College and has been doing research in South Asia since 1965. She is finishing a book on ricksha arts in Bangladesh and gathering material for another on vehicle arts around the world. Kevin Bubriski has lived and photographed in South Asia for more than eight years; his photographs have been extensively exhibited in the United States.

Inside back cover: Swans, lovebirds and movie stars enrich a ricksha waiting at the Bayt al-Nur mosque in Dhaka.

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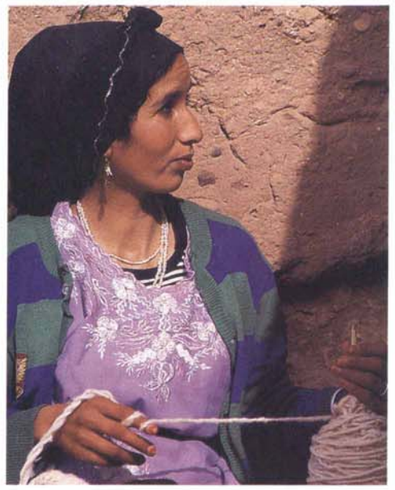

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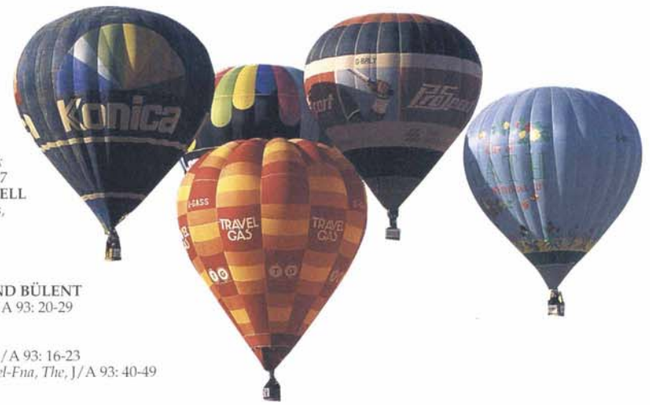

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Events & Exhibitions

Dreaming of Paradise: *Islamic Art From the Collection of the Museum of Ethnology Rotterdam.* This important exhibition offers Western audiences a fresh perspective on Islam by examining the religion's optimistic view of life. Islam draws its optimism from the Qur'anic teaching that life on earth is a gateway to paradise, with the good things of this world offering believers a taste of what is in store in the next. The artworks in this show — the most wide-ranging of its kind in the Netherlands since 1927 — are full of warmth, vitality and a zest for living. The exhibition also portrays the unity and diversity of Islamic culture. The first part, set in a replica of a *madrasah* or school, looks at external features of art through coins, tiles, garments, textiles and miniatures. The second part emphasizes perception of religion, using functional and illustrative art. Towering palace doors open onto the third and last section, focusing on court culture, particularly furniture from Syria and lacquerwork from Iran. Museum voor Volkenkunde **Rotterdam, The Netherlands,** through January 7, 1996.

The Musical World of Islam. This festival in New York City seeks to dispel misconceptions about the role of music in Islamic culture. Partial schedule: Gnawa and Berber Music With Hassan Hakmoun (Morocco), January 15, 1994; Cinucen Tanrıkorur (Turkey), January 22; Ali Jihad Racy and Mansour Ajami (Lebanon), February 25; Hamza El Din (Sudan), March 4; and Alem Kassimov Trio (Azerbaijan), March 11. World Music Institute, **New York.** For information, call (212) 545-7536.

A Treasury of Indian Miniatures. Forty recently acquired works, including Moghul, Rajasthani, Pahari and Company paintings, will go on display to inaugurate a new museum wing. Museum of Arts and Sciences, **Daytona Beach, Florida,** January 22 through May 30, 1994.

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of teacher workshops cosponsored by the Middle East Policy Council in Washington, D.C., and conducted by AWAIR, Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services in Berkeley, California. Confirmed sites and dates include: **New Braunfels [Texas]** School District, January 29; **Philadelphia** Museum of Art, February 5; Indiana University, **Bloomington**, February 9; Lakeview Elementary School, **Madison, Wisconsin**, February 11; University of Wisconsin, **Madison**, February 12; **Salinas [California]** High School, February 21; California State University, **Chico**, February 23; National Museum of Women in the Arts, **Washington, D.C.,** February 26; Miami-Dade Community College - North Campus, **Miami,** March 5; Ayala High School, **Chino Hills, California,** March 12; Ottawa University, **San Francisco,** March 15 and 29; Arcadia Unified School District, **Glendora, California,** March 19; Lenoir-Rhyne College, **Hickory, North Carolina,** March 23; West Virginia University, **Morgantown,** March 26; Coppin State College, **Baltimore,** April 13; Belmont Abbey College, **Belmont, North Carolina,** April 16. For details, call (202) 296-6767 or (510) 704-0517.

Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images: *Persian Painting of the 1330's and 1340's.* A vibrant style of miniature painting is demonstrated in some 45 images drawn from rare Persian manuscripts. Hagop Kevorkian Fund Gallery, Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York,** February 1 through May 1, 1994.

Forces of Change: *Artists of the Arab World.* This major exhibition of contemporary works by Arab women artists seeks to de-mystify the region and its women. National Museum of Women in the Arts, **Washington, D.C.,** February 7 through May 15, 1994; Dudley House, Lehman Hall, Harvard University, **Cambridge, Massachusetts,** May 27 through June 30, 1994; other venues.

The Islamic Architecture of Spain: *Form, Function and Symbolism.* This study tour of al-Andalus is conducted by Dr. Yasser Tabbaa of the University of Michigan. Lectures are open to persons not traveling with the group. **Seville, Granada, Cordoba** and **Toledo,** February 17 through 27 and May 12 through 22, 1994. For information, call Paul Melton at (800) 826-8165.

Current Archeology of the Ancient World. This ongoing series of talks on current research and discoveries will feature the following Middle Eastern or Islamic topics: Eastern Andalusia: Landscapes and Settlements of the 11th to 15th Centuries, February 18; Egyptian Collections of the Hermitage Museum, March 7; Excavations at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, March 11; History of Assur, March 18; Temple of el-Qal'ah, March 25; French Activities in Sumer, May 27; Current Coptic Archeology in Egypt, June 10; New Excavations on the Turkish Euphrates, June 17; Occupation of the Syrian Euphrates and Khabur Valleys to the Uruk Period, Fourth Millennium BC, June 20; Monastery of Baouit (Middle Egypt), June 24. Musée du Louvre, **Paris.**

Syria: *Remembrance and Civilization* is a major exhibition featuring more than 400 artworks from Syrian and European museums, from the third millennium BC through the Islamic and Ottoman eras. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris,** through February 28, 1994.

The Art of Medieval Spain: *AD 500-1200.* Visigothic, Islamic, Mozarabic-Asturian and Romanesque artworks are featured in an exhibition complementing last year's show on al-Andalus. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York,** through March 13, 1994.

The Gold of Meroe. Some of the finest jewelry created in antiquity is on display in this show. The collection was recovered in the 19th century from the Pyramid of Nubian Queen Amanishakheto at Meroe. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York,** through April 3, 1994.

Focus on Egypt's Past: *The Excavations of George Reisner, 1899-1905.* A two-part display of artifacts and photos from the renowned archeologist's work in Egypt. Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California at **Berkeley,** Part I: through April 4, 1994; Part II: through May 2, 1994.

The Glass Gallery. This new home for the celebrated British national glass collection includes pieces from the Middle East, Europe and the Western Hemisphere, spanning the entire 4000-year history of glass. Victoria and Albert Museum, **London,** from April 27, 1994, indefinitely.

Photo: Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam

What Is an Oriental Carpet? An exposition of the weaving process, with an actual loom, and discussion of a number of masterpieces provide visitors with basic information and encourage further exploration of Oriental carpets. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.,** through May 1, 1994.

The Arts of Islam. Persian manuscripts, miniatures and ceramics stand out in this survey of Islamic art. Works from Mamluk Egypt, Moghul India and Ottoman Turkey are also featured. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, June 18 through December 4, 1994.

Granada: *Art, Architecture, Literature and History of Islamic Spain.* The Granada International Summer School is sponsored by the Center for Medieval Studies at England's Leeds University. Students will study medieval Islamic Spain at a Moorish mansion near the Alhambra. Escuela de Estudios Arabes, **Granada, Spain**, July 10 through 30, 1994. For details, phone the Center in England at (532) 333-614.

Resist-Dyed Textiles From India, Indonesia and Cambodia. These richly patterned textiles were created between the 15th and 19th centuries using selective dyeing techniques for threads or woven cloth. **Cleveland [Ohio]** Museum of Art, through December 31, 1994.

Ancient Egypt: *The Eternal Voice.* The elaborately decorated sarcophagus and mummy of Djed-Khons-Iwef-Ankh of the XXVIth dynasty are featured among more than 200 artifacts in this new permanent exhibition. University of Tennessee's Frank H. McClung Museum, **Knoxville,** indefinitely.

Galleries of Ancient and Islamic Art. The new installations are augmented by impressive gold and silver vessels from a royal necropolis at Marlik, on loan from Japan. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, **Los Angeles,** indefinitely.

Stamp Collecting. The Petroleum Philatelic Society International is looking for collectors interested in stamps, cancels, covers and postcards depicting the oil, gas or petrochemical industries. Founded in 1974, the group has members in 31 countries. For information, write: Victor Copeland, 615 Orion Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80906.

The Saudi Aramco Exhibit. Centered on the Arab-Islamic technical heritage, this permanent interactive, "learn-by-doing" scientific exhibit relates the historical background to today's petroleum exploration, production and transportation. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.**

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.

Aramco World (ISSN 1044-1891) is published bimonthly by Aramco Services Company, 9009 West Loop South, Houston, Texas 77096-1799. Copyright © 1994 by Aramco Services Company. Volume 45, Number 1. Second-class postage paid at Houston, Texas and at additional offices.

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Aramco World, Box 469008, Escondido, CA 92046