



Between the Past and the Present

Nancy Faour

Nothing happens in this world without a reason, even wars. Wars are built slowly, quietly, almost invisibly. Every day, little things pile up, tension increases, words become harder, and trust is broken until suddenly you reach a point where there is no turning back. This is the threshold point at which you wake up and find yourself in the middle of the war. A war between people you love and whose motives you do not know. What seemed like minor disagreements or small acts of mistrust now burn like fire. And you wonder how something so ordinary ever turned into war. I did not live through the Lebanese Civil War, but somehow I grew up feeling its weight. That war shaped everything around me, from the way people talk to the way they look at each other.

Although the echoes of gunfire may have faded, a deeper presence remains, one that continues to shape our lives long after the battle has ended. I remember watching the

Lebanese film “West Beirut” for the first time in high school. I was struck not just by the gunshots and checkpoints, but by the way life kept moving around them; children still played, friends still fought, and people still laughed. Another time, in school, a teacher played a Fairouz song “Li Beirut” and I did not understand why it made my chest tighten. I had not experienced the destruction she sang about, but somehow, I felt it.

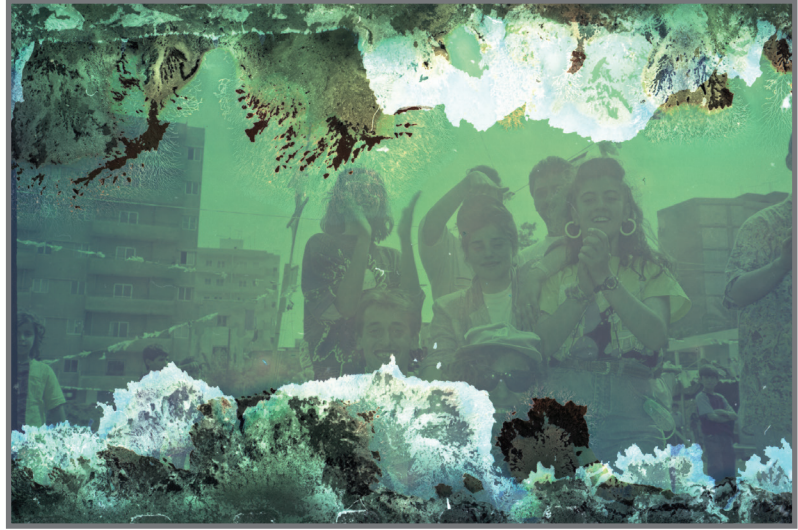
Moments like these allow the war to feel so near to me in a way that no history book has permitted. They revealed how the past continues to breathe through culture, emotion, and silence. Therefore, I want to explore how the scars of war continue to affect us today, scars formed by an invisible violence. These scars manifest in our thoughts, our treatment of one another, and the systems in which we live. Additionally, war leaves behind psychological wounds and economic hardships that affect us every single day.

Invisible violence is not about what we see; it is about what





we carry but often cannot explain. During the Lebanese Civil War, many who were not hurt physically were wounded in quieter, deeper ways. People turned on each other not because of personal conflict, but because of religion, sect, or simply the group they were told to follow. I believe many did not truly want the war; they were just following orders, pulled into something bigger than themselves. Some young men, maybe for the first time in their lives, held guns and felt powerful, but they did not understand the cost. What happens when that feeling fades, and all that is left is grief? When you lose someone you love, you are left with questions that haunt you. Was it worth it? Why did this happen? Think of the woman who lost her son or the daughter who lost her father, her only source of strength. How did she continue? She would have lived with pain, bitterness, and anger toward people she never truly knew. That anger becomes inherited, passed down not because of truth, but because of silence and lack of understanding. And that is one of



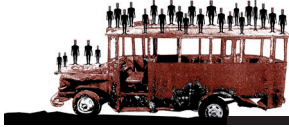
من أرشيف «أمم»

the most painful legacies of war, the way it keeps living in us, even when it is over.

What about the children who grew up hearing gunfire, witnessing death, and losing their right to a normal childhood? Do you think they grew up without scars, without pain or trauma? These children became adults, but many still carry the weight of their past. Every time they hear the sound of a gunshot, fear grips them once again. The invisible violence is a part of our daily existence. It shaped the way we interact and the way we raise the next generation. It is not just about the past; it affects our present and our future too.

The trauma of war does not only affect those who fought in it; it affects all of us, even those who were not born yet. It shows





up in how we treat each other. That is why it is so important to acknowledge the invisible violence, to understand the scars we carry. The first step to heal something is identifying the problem. Because only then can we begin to heal, not just as individuals, but as a community. Only then can we break the cycle of silence and pass down a legacy of understanding, empathy, and peace.

Wars do not just kill or physically harm people; they also destroy the very foundation people depend on to live. During and after the conflict, many people were financially broken, their jobs disappeared, the country's economy collapsed, and the prices rose. A large group of citizens found themselves homeless without any shelter or money. All their hard work throughout the years was gone. They lost the ability to think of a brighter future. Many families had to start over with nothing. Factories closed, businesses were destroyed, and food essentials were cut off. Until this moment, Lebanon had not fully recovered from that crisis. A destroyed economy does not only mean poverty; it means desperation, inequality, and a generation forced to survive instead of thrive. Wars interrupt education and

put the future on hold. Talented people leave, the brain drain grows, and those remaining have fewer resources to handle the load.

It is not about some numbers and economic statistics; it is about the people. It is about the man who cannot afford a living to support his children; it is about the farmer who cannot afford to buy new seeds; it is about the shop owner who never reopened; it is about the man who left his family behind and left his country just to be able to work and get his family what they needed. The war's weight is still in our job market. This is a kind of violence that continues long after the ceasefire.

We were born after the war, yet we still carry it in ways we cannot explain. My generation inherited its silence, its fear, and its division without really knowing its reasons. We grew up with names of neighborhoods that we were told not to enter, people we were warned not to trust, and deep wounds we did not cause but were still expected to carry. Without even realizing it, we were born into a system where hatred is passed down through generations, often without context, just stories told by elders who also heard them from someone else, without knowing their origin or truth. We learned





to be cautious of people we have never met, to inherit weight that was never ours to begin with.

Forget everything that came before; on this momentous 50th anniversary of the war's end, I choose to believe. I believe that,

little by little, day by day, we will move toward a Lebanon where all its people truly love their country and long for peace. A Lebanon where its citizens do not just coexist but care for one another deeply, genuinely, and without fear.

