



Archives and Special Collections Department,  
American University of Beirut  
Beirut, Lebanon  
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## **AUB Students' Activism Collection, 1970-1979**

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the University Libraries, AUB  
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## **Descriptive Summary**

**Call No:** AA:4.3.9

**Bib record:** b14622221

**Record Creator:** Mainly AUB student council.

**Collection Title:** AUB Students' Activism Collection, 1970-1979.

**Collection Dates:** 1970-1978

**Physical Description:** 1.3 linear foot (4 boxes)

**Language(s):** Arabic and English

## **Administrative Information**

**Source:** AUB Archives

**Access Restrictions:** The collection can be used within the premises of the Archives and Special Collections Department, Jafet Memorial Library, American University of Beirut

**Photocopying Restriction:** No photocopying restriction except for fragile material.

**Preferred Citation:** AUB Students' Activism, 1970-1979, AA: 4.3.9 Box no.-, File no.-, American University of Beirut/Library Archives.

## **Scope and Content**

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw a global wave of student activism and protests throughout the world: the protests of May 1968 in France inspired an entire generation to try to “change the world”, get their voices heard, and work towards justice, love and peace, and a better world. Lebanon was not immune to these waves of protests: specific socio-political realities in Lebanon and the region gave the student movement, across its variants, its contextual mission, goals, and hopes (across divisions and variants), and this zeitgeist was transferred to the AUB campus in the early 70s, in all its complexities and nuances. To cite just a few regional and local factors that fed the student movements across the spectrum of beliefs, goals and attitudes: social and economic inequality was rising; the region had just emerged from the 1968 Naksa with Israel; workers were increasingly getting unionized and demanding their rights; international pressure and the cold war were also taking their toll on Lebanon. Many students saw the need to protest against some of the policies of the Lebanese government and the University administration; most called for the need to unionize and be represented through a student Council; others called for the need to establish better working conditions for the blue-collar workers, and cried out against the increasing University tuition fees. These social, and economic demands were also compounded by deep political divisions that were rocking the country: bipartisanship between left and right politics quickly escalated, and the campus became the battle grounds for students' increasingly politicized demands and worldviews. Such sharp divisions would later play an integral part in the outburst of the civil war in May of 1975.

This sub-collection of documents traces the unfolding of various confrontations (including a big strike that rocked the university for a 100 days in 1971), and the university's response to the crisis, press releases, letters exchanged between the university administration, professors and the student body representatives, and memoranda. The collection includes

statements issued by the AUB administration and different student bodies, press clippings, students, and administrative documents.

This collection is an important source of information for scholars and researchers interested in the history of AUB, student activism on campus, political movements, Middle Eastern studies, and History of Lebanon and the region.

## Arrangement

This Collection is arranged in five series:

**Series I:** Several documents related to the AUB student council and its activities on campus, including statements, press clippings, and copies of elections-related questionnaires.

**Series II:** Statements issued by the AUB student council and other student groups from AUB and other universities voicing their concerns regarding the increase in tuition fees, and supporting other social and economic causes, including the Palestinian issue.

**Series III:** حركة السناء وحركة وجهة نظر

**Series IV:** Administration's response to contain the escalating crisis of the student movement on campus: President Kirkwood's statements, suggestion from Office of Information, Faculty meetings.

**Series V:** Press Clippings

## Historical Sketch

“The number of truly activist students leading the protests represented only a minority on campus at any one time in the twentieth century. Nonetheless, these leaders garnered increasing support throughout the century, with the climax coming in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when most students supported the actions taken or at least recognized that they represented the dominant trend on campus. In the early 1950s, demonstrations typically involved up to five hundred students at a time; by the late 1960s, actions like protests against the Israeli attack on the Beirut airport in 1968 and the occupation of campus buildings in spring 1971 attracted almost all of AUB's students. [...] [I]ndividual faculty and administration members certainly supported the actions of the students during these years, but the overall trend was of opposition to the student movements.”

*Anderson, B. S. (2008). Voices of Protest: Arab Nationalism and the Palestinian Revolution at the American University of Beirut. Comparative Studies of South Asia.*

## Subject Headings

Student movements -- Lebanon.  
American University of Beirut -- Students.  
College students -- Political Activity -- Lebanon.  
Student strikes -- Lebanon -- Beirut -- History.  
Student government -- Lebanon.

Student movements -- Lebanon -- Beirut, 1960-1970.  
Demonstrations -- Lebanon -- Beirut, 1960-1970.  
Activists -- Lebanon -- Beirut, 1960-1970.

## Container List

**Series I:** Several documents related to the AUB student council and its activities on campus, including statements, press clippings, and copies of elections-related questionnaires.

### Box 2:

File 1: Student Council: General 1970-1974  
File 2 Reinstatement of the Student Council, Press Clippings 1972  
File 3. AUB Student Council seizes issue of Outlook; Statement, Press Clippings  
File 4: Student Council, Elections 1970-1972  
File 5: Student Council Bulletin

**Series II:** Statements issued by the AUB student council and other student groups from AUB and other universities voicing their concerns regarding the increase in tuition fees, and supporting other social and economic causes, including the Palestinian issue.

### Box 3:

File 1: Press conference on the strike and occupation of the AUB Buildings  
File 2: Political Affiliations: Statement and Student Council Statements, 1970-1971  
File 3: Political Affiliations: Statement and Student Council Statements, 1972-1973  
File 4: Statement and Student Council Statements, 1974  
File 5: Statement and student Council statements, 1975-1979  
File 6: Statements and Student Council Statements, undated.

**Series III:** حركة السناء وحركة وجهة نظر

### Box 3:

File 7:

حركة السناء: تعرف " السناء" عن نفسها ببيان انها:  
" حركة طلابية نقابية تعمل على توحيد الصف الطلابي وتحريره من العزلة والتبعية لكي يلعب دورا قياديا وفعالا في تطوير مجتمعه"

File 8:

" وجهة نظر " حركة طلابية، غايتها العمل في صفوف الطلاب، من شتى حقول الاختصاصات، لتحقيق نهضة اجتماعية – ثقافية- نفسية-اخلاقية، ولتوعيتهم على حاجات الوطن والمجتمع، مما يكفل توجيه اهتمامهم في طرق سليمة بحسب كفاءاتهم"

حركة وجهة نظر؛ مشروع دستور نص البيان الصحفي حول الوضع التربوي في لبنان ١٩٧٥؛ تقرير حول برنامج العمل لسنة ١٩٧٦-١٩٧٧

**Box 6:**

Files 1-7: حركة وجهة نظر: طلبات للعضوية واعداد مجلة وجهة نظر

**Series IV:** Administration's response to contain the escalating crisis of the student movement on campus: President Kirkwood's statements, suggestion from Office of Information, Faculty meetings.

**Box 1:**

File 1: General, 1971-1969

File 5: Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences 1970-74

File 3: Letters and statements by AUB President Samuel Kirkwood; Letters to AUB President Samuel Kirkwood 1971-1975

File 4: various suggestions, drafts, etc. from Mr. Nabil Ashkar to President Kirkwood and from Director of Information Hilmi Malouf and From Director of Publications Zahi Khoury.

File 5: Minutes of the Meetings of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences 1970-74

**Box 2:**

File 2: Interview with AUB President Samuel Kirkwood; AUB President Outlines financial Crisis; AUB President Comments on Student Strike, 1971-1974

**Series V:** Printed material issued by AUB including student handbooks, bulletins, and press summary

**Box 1:**

File 6: Student Handbook

File 8: Information Bulletin 1971

File 10: Press Summary 1974

**Series IV:** Press Clippings

**Box 1:**

File 7: Press Clippings: Speaker's corner

**Box 4:**

Files 1-5: AUB Student Activism in Local Press, Press Clippings, 1970-1971.

## Related Material at AUB

### Thesis

- Simpson, M. J., American University of Beirut. Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, & American University of Beirut. (2007). *Alienation among a sample of students at the American university of Beirut*. [T:2652](#)

### Books

- Rabah, M. G. (2009). *A campus at war: Student politics at the American university of Beirut, 1967-1975*. Beirut: Dar Nelson. [CA 378.5692:R112c:c.1](#)
- Ghusayni, R. S. (1974). *Student activism at Lebanon's universities, 1951-1971*. [CA 378.198:G427s:c.1](#)

### Articles

- Anderson, B. S. (2008). Voices of Protest: Arab Nationalism and the Palestinian Revolution at the American University of Beirut. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 28(3), 390-403. Duke University Press. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/255563/pdf>

### Archives

- Minutes of the Board of Trustees [AA:2.1.0](#)  
Book 13: 1969-1970; Book 14: 1970-1972; Book 15: 1972-1974; Book 16: 1974-1975.

### Audio

- Press Conference by Howard W. Page: AUB Students' Strike 1974  
[Sd:AUB:1974/04/04](#)

### Photos

- Students Sit-in, 1970s [SC Ph:AUB:1970s\(74\):1:53](#)
- Students' demonstration, 1970s [SC Ph:AUB:1970/05/23:01:52](#)
- Students' demonstration, 1971 [SC Ph:AUB:1971/06\(01\):1-3:53](#)

### Posters

- A collection of 35 handwritten posters by AUB students campaign facing political events [1970s] is also available under subject: College students -- Political activity -- Lebanon

## Serials

- [الرابطة. رابطة الطلاب اللبنانية في الجامعة الأميركية، \(١٩٦٣\).](#)
- [Our struggle: an independent militant student publication at A.U.B.](#)
- American University of Beirut President's Report (1970-1980):  
1970-1971, 1971-1972, 1977-1978 (Nov.-Mar.), 1979 (Nov.), 1979-1980 (Nov.-March)
- American University of Beirut Bulletin (1971-1975):  
1971-1972 (v.15), 1972-1973 (v.16), 1973-1974 (v.17), 1974-1975 (v.18)
- Al Kulliyah Magazine (1971-1974): 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974
- AUB Newsletter (1971-1972)
- Campus yearbook (1970-1975): 1970 (v.8), 1971 (v.9), 1972 (v.10), 1973 (v.11), 1975 (v.12)
- Outlook (1969-1974): 1969-1970 (Nov.-Mar.), 1970-1971 (Oct.-May), 1971-1972 (Oct.-Dec.), 1972-1973 (Oct.-Jun.), 1973-1974 (Oct.-Apr.)