

POSTCARDS FROM AMMAN

by *Rami Daher*

Consciousness and Resistance

I strongly believe that The Arab Spring was definitely a positive way forward, but it lacked a 100-year overdue. It should have been supported by a serious evaluation of movements of change and transformation that took place in Europe since the Enlightenment, through the Industrial Revolution, and into periods of Modernity. In addition, The Arab Spring lacked an ideological and visionary project that could have provided an ideological support. In fact, we notice today a gap between Arab intellectuals and the masses (and especially the young crowds that spear headed the uprisings). I strongly believe that the practice of any form of resistance should be coupled with a certain level of consciousness.

ETH Zurich, 18 April 2012

I would like to share with you one particular project that I envisioned on the City. The Project was entitled Postcards, Stamps, and Steps, and its objective was to provoke the dormant and one-dimensional society to critically think about events, transformations, and challenges vis-à-vis their own City.

Nr. 11 - Messages of Neo-Liberalism to the One-Dimensional Society

Citizens all over the Middle East are bombarded and overwhelmed daily by the boom in real-estate development. Local newspapers, new emerging property magazines, TV advertisements, and City billboards all promote real-estate development in the form of exclusive business towers and high-end gated residential communities. It is very obvious that "property" is the new consumer good par-excellence in the Middle East and "real-estate development" is its new religion. Still, what is really most unfortunate is that many of these banal and condescending messages find most of the time an ignorant listening ear and a blinded, excessively consumerist eye in the City. But then what do you really expect from the one-dimensional and non-oppositional society?

Nr. 12 - Spatial Displacement of Neo-Liberalism II

Several neoliberal projects of urban transformation are producing exclusive patches of urban islands and are causing severe cases of gentrification and social and physical displacement in the City. The Abdali Project by turning its back to Amman's original downtown had caused the displacement of the near-by existing Abdali transportation hub together with its drivers, informal vendors and occupants to the outskirts of the City. First Class Tourism Development on the so called Urban Strip have already led to the displacement of another transportation hub (Raghdan) in the downtown area; causing difficulties and financial burdens not only to the users of the transportation hub, but also to the various merchants downtown who used to benefit from the vibrant pedestrian activity. In Amman, the effect of such socio-economic transformation on the creation of new public urban space produces "a privatized public space" based on a highly selective definition of the public in the City.

FURTHER RESOURCES

-> [Rami Daher](#)



POSTCARD NO.11: MESSAGES OF NEOLIBERALISM TO THE ONE-DIMENSIONAL SOCIETY



BACK OF NO.11