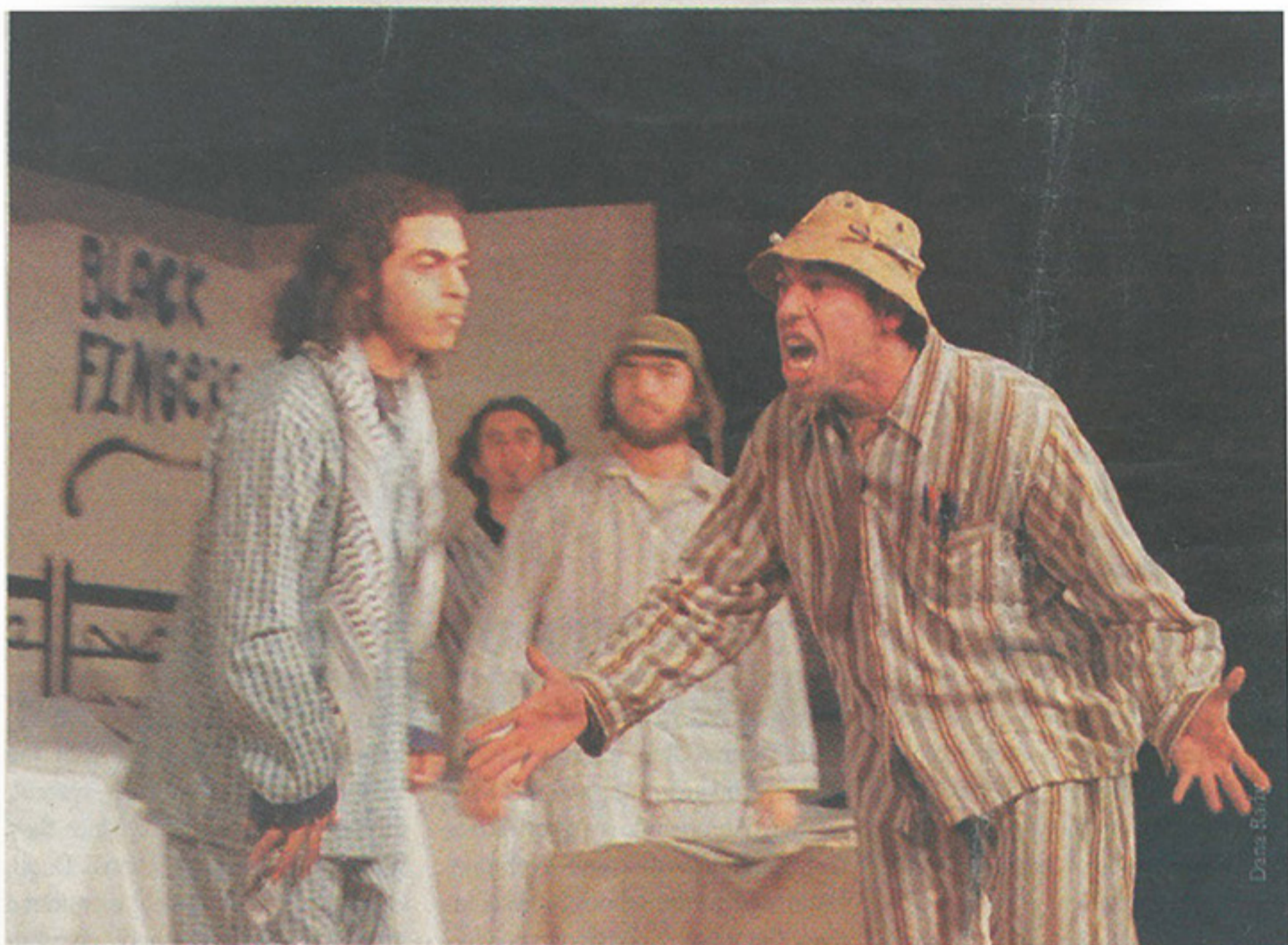


Film ameriky taweel



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The Lebanese civil war was a period of shame and darkness, one that marked our country with no pretty picture. In a time marked by confusion, one can only look back and laugh. Who better than Ziad Rahbani, prominent Lebanese playwright, to bring back this memory through laughter and pungent sarcasm. Thanks to the efforts of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Student Representative Committee, AUB students enjoyed this fulfilling experience at West Hall for three nights last week.

In his play, *Film Ameriki Tawil*, (A Long American Film) Rahbani brings to life the civil war through the eyes of eight mentally disturbed patients, who portray the civil war in all of its facets.

The cast, a blend of AUB and Shemlan School students, consisted of eight characters, each representing a certain aspect of the war period: The petrified family man, the hysterical youngster, the confused university professor, the religious man, the Armenian merchant, the sober drug addict, the political activist, and of course, the overbearing

militiaman.

Abed, a university professor, who went crazy trying to find out the conspiracy behind the war, tries relentlessly to interview his fellow inmates, while waiting to publish his book, an attempt to cease all fighting and expose the conspiracy. While he relentlessly tries to get to the bottom of the struggle, each one of the patients gives his reflections from his own point of view.

The petrified family man, of course, refuses to let people in on his own idea, insisting that he agrees with whatever he is told, and shows his identification card as if he were passing a checkpoint.

Edward on the other hand, refuses to give an answer before he finds out whether Abed is a Muslim or a Christian. Zaven, the Armenian, unable to get over the shock of having both his stereo shops in West and East Beirut blown up, is unable to give a comment.

The lights dim; a plane flies over as a *doshka* explodes outside the window. The scenario continues on for the next hour, during which the audience relives the dark and uneasy days of the war. Yet, this time, they look back and laugh. Rashid, portrayed by lead actor Bassel

Chamseddine, delivered a thrilling performance that replicated the militiaman he was playing, reflecting very well the Lebanese person traumatized by the civil war—an outspoken, violent, and spontaneous thug.

Abou Leila, played by AUB student Ashraf Motawee', said, "This play still expresses the reality of our country, and that is why we love it and love to act it [out]. This play is not only a marvel to understand but also a fulfilling experience to display." Chamseddine stressed that same fact, saying, "This play is still applicable after more than twenty years. We feel through this play that we are doing our share of civil service."

The audience, including Dean Kisirwani and Youssef Hadad, vice president of the University Student Faculty Committee, gave a standing ovation for the well-acted play full of meaning reaching deep into the Lebanese soul.

Director Iyad Wehbe said he has been working with this group for more than seven years, and he relishes the opportunity to perform in front of an audience such as the AUB community, which can truly capture playwright Ziad Rahbani's message.