TRANSFORMING LEBANON

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Abstract

This work will disclose the ambiguities of the modern exercise of power in the context of the French colonial encounter in the Middle East during the interwar years. The French administration in Lebanon attempted to expand its rule through the build-up of a large bureaucracy designed to oversee social, economic and political affairs in the country. At the same time, it hoped to establish among residents of the different territories brought together within the country a new relation of power according to a chain of command that extended from the remotest village to the Quai d'Orsay. The new modern bureaucracy would be anathema to the myriad of laws, statutes and religious interpretations that had governed the vanquished Ottoman Empire.

In addition to these formal structures of power, the French sought to reproduce their rule and consecrate their position through informal networks with new and traditional political bosses in the region. Although the French had hoped to employ informal arrangements to strengthen the formal institutions of governance, in practice, something different emerged. The bureaucracy empowered informal networks to alter and, ultimately, undermine the efforts of the high commission to administer the country. In these ways, it can be seen that the reproduction of space in the colonial setting was not a function of the imposition of formal institutions of government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate the practices that underpinned this supposed new order. As a result of these often latent networks operative within the reproduction of power, the post- colonial moment appears as the evolution of—and not rupture with—the inequalities of colonial rule and contradictions of modern forms of power.

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A Note on Translation

The work that follows incorporates phrases, names and titles that were (and remain) freely translated and transliterated between French, Arabic and Ottoman Turkish at a time in the first part of the twentieth century when no universal transliteration standards existed. Rendering these words into English has proven complicated and complex. Rather than presenting these terms from nearly one century ago according to current linguistic tastes and standards, I have selected for the sake of simplicity and coherence what I remember from my research as the most commonly used transliterations while also including in the footnotes alternative renditions.

All translations unless otherwise stated are my own.

Introduction

MAKING THE STATE IN THE NON-WEST

"It is the state that makes the nation," says Sami Zubaida.[1] In keeping with Zubaida, statecraft in much of the world did not emerge from an imagined community or popular nationalist movement or awakening, but from imperialism, especially in many parts of Asia, Africa and the Americas. And if state-formation in some parts of the world was not a function of nationalist awakening but a product of imperial design, then how was colonial space produced in terms of discourse and practice? And what processes were instrumental to the reproduction of power within the colonial space?

In order to address these questions, it is worth thinking about how colonial space was linked to modern forms of statehood. In terms of theory, the first task is to explore how statehood is related to the colonial experience. Critical in this examination is the capacity to understand the state as a series of practices and regulations that impact a social body of individuals. The second task is to analyze different schools of thought regarding the reproduction of power within a given space. Furthermore it remains necessary to examine the interplay between colonial mechanisms of authority, opposition to colonial rule and pre-existing forms of political mobilization.

To give context to these questions, one potential area worth examining is colonial Lebanon. The history of the colonial period in this part of the eastern Mediterranean reveals something about the nature of the reproduction of power relations through the production of space. In particular, the mechanisms to administer colonial space were integral to practices of domination and strategies of resistance. The different forms of contestation to the mandate administration challenged and in some ways redefined the exercise of power. As will be seen later, the practices that defined the national borders effectively divided the country between

[1] Zubaida, Sami. "The Fragments Invent the Nation." International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies. 34 (2002) 206, 214.

Mount Lebanon and the annexed territories. The attempt to enforce these divisions not only transformed relations of power, but altered colonial designs as well. Seen from this perspective, examining the history of Lebanon raises the question of how statecraft is linked to colonial control as well as how the rearrangement of space affects political struggle?

Whatever the goals of the metropole, colonial governance as practiced did not operate according to the designs of the mandate. Examining colonial state-building will highlight the ambiguities of power and resistance that underpin the production of space as well as the contradictions of colonial rule and their consequences for the post-colonial state. Colonial governance was not achieved through an overarching centralized logic that supplanted pre-existing understandings of space or through the cultivation of new systems of subjectivity and citizenship among the population. Institutional meddling and maneuvering complicated and challenged the exercise of power whatever extent it bolstered the new world order that the French had envisioned for the Levant. That the informal networks and alliances that Paris had assumed would strengthen its foothold in the country actually undermined its connection with the population illustrates the ambiguities of colonial modernity. In this way, it can be seen that the reproduction of space in the colonial setting was not a function of the imposition of formal institutions of government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate the practices that had underpinned this supposed new order. As a result of these often latent networks operative within the maintenance of power, the post-colonial moment appears as the evolution of—and not rupture with—the inequalities of colonial rule and contradictions of modern forms of power.

THE LOCATION OF POWER

Rather than an anachronism to the modern exercise of power within the system of nation-states, colonial rule was constitutive in the practices and techniques of controlling the population associated with the modern state. One the one hand, historically within academia,

the experiences of statecraft in the non-west is often considered to be outside of the trajectory of modern state building in Europe and North America, in general.[2] The genealogy of what is known as the west has no space for the colonial experience.[3] For, the commonly assumed facets of the modern state—such as territorial sovereignty, the separation between domestic and foreign affairs, and the capacity to guarantee social order within its domain[4] —are assumed to be absent in the colony.

On the other hand, the bodies of scholarship dealing with post-colonial thought assert that colonialism in the non-west can be considered an aspect of modernity out of place with common representations of the west**.** In an allusion to the scholarship of Homi Bhabha, political theorist Timothy Mitchell asserts that, "the non-west must play the role of the outside, the otherness that creates the boundary of the space of modernity."[5] That is, the boundaries and the processes that produce the non-west are vital to understanding what it means to be modern and western. Indeed, this tendency to revert to binaries of traditional-modern, non-west and west is indicative of representations of differentiation. Such representations obscure the practices and discourses linking east to west. In turn, these latent links give rise to what Mitchell has described as colonial modernity.

What is distinctive about colonial modernity, he contends, is that "the colonial-modern involves creating an effect we recognize as reality, by organizing the world endlessly

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[2] See Homi Bhabha's criticism on the erasure of the colonial experience in the thoughts of modernity of Michel Foucault. "By disavowing the colonial moment as an enunciative present in the historical and epistemological condition of western modernity," Bhabha argues, "Foucault can say little about the transferntial relationship between the west and its colonial history. He disavows precisely the colonial text as the foundation for the relation the Western ratio can have 'even with the society in which it historically appeared.'" Central to Bhabha's argument is that the distinction between modern/ traditional as well as post-modern/modern relies upon a perspective of cultural difference. By re-examining the practices that constitute cultural difference, he says, it is possible to unfurl the ambivalences and contradictions within representations of modernity. See *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004. 280-281.

[3] See Edward Said's Orientalism, especially his critique of Marx's oriental despotism. Said, Orientalism. London: Peregrine, 1985.

[4] Agnew, John. *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*. London: Routledge, 2003. 53.

[5] In this, regard, Mitchell describes the "colonial experience as constant absence to the story of Europe." Mitchell, Timothy. "The Stage of Modernity." *Questions of Modernity*. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2000, 16.

to represent it."[6] Within this system of representations, power is produced through the lines that divide the world into a precise picture of metropole and colony. The consequence of this picture of world order is that the modern exercise of power can only exist through a distinction with a binary opposite. In this manner, the practices and ideas that produced divide and rule, a new sense of the modern age distinct from the past, and a Europe separate from and superior to the non-west were but one aspect of colonial power. The counterpoint was imperial coercion and subjugation. In this way, the difference between traditional and modern is a function of political practices. In other words, the colonial encounter in the non-west can be seen not only as a site of colonial modernity, but also as a political field in the operation of modern forms of power. In particular, it featured the capacity to invest territory with new meaning as well as affiliation to that meaning. At the same time, in thinking about colonial space as a site for the operation of power, there exists the possibility of variance and modification of the ideas and practices decreed from the metropole.[7]

This distinction between image and reality is but one facet of the forms of distinction and fracture that shape experiences of modernity. Colonialism was not outside of modernity but a function of the forms of differentiation and contradiction that the modern reproduction of power demands. From this, it is possible to reach the tentative conclusion that the power to enforce colonial geography depended upon an array of complementary as well as contradictory practices of power. Examining power relations within the colony has the potential to reveal the forms of political, social and economic disjuncture that state-building produced. As a result, it is worth considering that if colonialism was an effect of the modern exercise of power, then what were the practices that maintained and reproduced this aspect of modernity?

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[6] Mitchell, 2000, 17.
[7] Mitchell, 2000, 23.

Sites of Contestation

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to explore the role of spatial representations in shaping social relations. For statecraft can also be considered a product of the political strategies and practices to control the ways in which people think and behave in a certain space. Once unacknowledged within academic literature, the production of space has become a popular area of research to think about social control and political contestation. Within this discussion are two broad notions of spatial production, the theory of territoriality as well as the idea of critical geo-politics. The two schools of thought hold contrasting ideas of state power. This contrast becomes important in considering their implications for the ways in which state power is reproduced. Ultimately, the reproduction of socio-spatial relations transformed everyday local regions into sites for the exercise of power and national politics. Defining the location of power, then, contributed to reinforcing social hierarchy and political control.

Since the late 1970s, scholars have seen the need to reintroduce space as a category of social theory. No longer seen as a neutral and passive object where things simply happen or as a domain outside of political contestation, new scholarship understood the organization of space as a material product and function of power-relations.[8] This new scholarship, following Edward Soja, had contended that "social and spatial practices are dialectically inter-reactive, interdependent…social relations of production are both space-forming and space contingent."[9] That is, power dynamics are constitutive in geographic design and *vice versa*. With regards to politics, the ordering of space, then, is a function of political contestation. In turn, this contestation helps to shape the behaviors of individuals within a specific area. Since the earlier work of the likes of Soja and Henri Lefebvre, the role of space as a reflection of

[8] Lefebrve, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
[9] Soja, Eward. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso, 1989. 80.

power relations has formed the basis of various academic studies and journals. Or, in the words of Daniel Neep, "how space is conceptualized, ordered and manipulated—provides fertile ground for the exploration of the internal workings of power, especially state power."[10]

From this perspective, it is possible to think of the production of space as both power over subjects as well the power to cultivate new social relations. That is, in serving as an instrument of power, the production of space contains productive as well as repressive prospects for statecraft. Already, it has been argued by the likes of Joseph Massad that colonial statehood carries both repressive as well as productive elements, especially in the context of nationalism.[11] With regards to its repressive aspect, Massad insists that in order "to produce the new, the old has to be repressed."[12] That is, state power can come from coercive mechanisms. Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci describes this coercive mechanism as the power to elicit "spontaneous consent" from "the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group."[13] In this perspective, state power appears as the capacity to elicit obedience from those within its sphere. This coercive function, argues John Agnew, "leads to a notion of power as a monopoly of control exercised equally over all places within a given territory or geographical area by a dominant social group or elite."[14] Implicit in his contention is the idea that the overemphasis on the coercive function of space production generalizes the operation of power as a simple appendage of the elite. Thus, Agnew goes on to say that "missing from

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[10] Neep, Daniel. *Occupying Syria under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space and State Formation*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. 19.
[11] See Massad, Joseph. *Colonial Effect: The Making of National Identity in Jordan*. New York: Columbia UP, 2000; as well as Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, London: Zed Books, 1993.
[12] Massad, 2000,4.
[13] Gramsci, Antonio. "The Intellectuals" *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Ed. Trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991. 12.
[14] Agnew, John. *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*. London: Routledge, 2003. 55

this account are the contingency and fragility of the infrastructural power" of the state.[15] In addition to its coercive functions, the state draws legitimacy through its provision of public goods and services.[16] This missing component offers a more nuanced understanding of state power that opens up new visions of state-space.

In contrast, the production of space also cultivates new forms of identity and belonging among individual subjects. In this manner, Agnew argues that, "the territorial state draws its power in capillary fashion from social groups and institutions rather than simply imposing itself upon them. Agnew's perspective corresponds to the productive elements of colonial power mentioned by Massad. From this point of view, power is present in all relationships among people, animals and things and the power of the state relies on the wide range of sources that it can tap into."[17] This perspective emphasizes the potential agency of all individuals within a given matrix of power and resistance. This proliferation of agency makes the operation of power ubiquitous and ongoing. Or, as Agnew affirms, "the spatial monopoly of power exercised by a state is not and cannot be total when its power derives from that given up by and potentially retaken by others."[18] Whereas this productive potential of modern state power *vis-à-vis* space cultivates new fields of political contestation and subjectivity, the repressive component contains the potential to limit mass participation in acts of political contestation.

These dual components are prominent in the different approaches to the study of space. Within the scholarship on space, there are two complementary schools of thought that can illuminate the mechanisms of establishing and maintaining imperial authority in the colonies. These theories include the notion of territoriality and the school of thought surrounding critical geo-politics. They offer contending hypotheses for the exercise of power

[15] Agnew, 2003, 55.
[16] Agnew, 2003, 55.
[17] Agnew, 2003, 56.
[18] Agnew, 2003, 56.

over subjects within a given territory. While, within territoriality, state power is seen to extend from the aims of a particular group over the population, critical geo-politics holds that the transformation of power relations is integral to the production of space, by extension, colonial power.

Whereas, in general, the notion of territoriality privileges this repressive facet of the production of space, the critical geopolitics stance places a greater emphasis on its productive potentials. While both facets are instrumental in exploring the practices of colonial modernity, what can be added to this discussion is further consideration of the ways in which power-relations are reproduced at specific sites over time. In this regard, the critical geo-politics approach is more helpful in understanding the potentials for rupture and challenge to the imposition of forms of power. From this perspective, state-building operates as an effort to regulate power relations. In this context, authority does not extend uniformly but reproduces a particular representation of power with the possibility of further variation.

To begin, the theory of territoriality emerged out of post-colonial human geography to take into consideration the transformation of place at the onset of colonialism. Following the scholarship of Robert Sack, the notion of territoriality describes the attempt "by an individual or group to affect, influence or control people, phenomena or relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area."[19] In this way, it addresses the asymmetry of power-relations that produced modern human geography, especially during the colonial period. Due, in part to new inventions in map-making technologies, the creation and promulgation of the new world order replaced visions of space held among the now subject populations of Africa, Asia and the Americas. Territorial control, then, functions as an instrument of power. To produce territoriality requires three components that Sack outlines:

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[19] Sack, Robert David. *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986. 21-22.

it involves the classification of an area; a form of communication of this classification; and a mechanism to enforce access to this area.[20] In this manner, within the school of territoriality, control lies in the capacity to reorder pre-existing forms of space and within the markers of delineation of that space.[21]

While territoriality emphasizes the ways in which space comes to function as a symbol of a specific ruling faction, missing from this theory is an elaboration of the politics of resistance. Certainly, territoriality constitutes a means to assert power. Although Sack presents territoriality as a means to establish authority over a given community,[22] missing from the notion is an equal description of the forms of contestation involved in resisting and even reproducing territorial control. The reason for this absence has to do with the question of evidence, or lack thereof, which lies at the heart of colonial historiography. For, the emphasis of Sack's work comes from the historical capacity of territoriality to in his words, "displace attention from the relationship between controller and controlled to the territory."[23] In other words, Sack's main concern lies within the forms of erasure that resulted from colonial territoriality. In particular, it is the lack of evidence of the pre-existing social bodies that inhabited the colonized world that Sack aims to redress in his role as a historical geographer of the Americas. Despite the contradictions of its origins, state power over territory appears as something almost unchallenged and monolithic upon the onset of colonial rule due to these problems of evidence. As a result of this framework, a given territory becomes associated with the particular factions that ruled it.

In contrast to territoriality, the body of literature that comprises critical geo-politics places a greater emphasis on the forms of contestation that occur between ruler and ruled

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[20] Sack, 1986, 22.
[21] Winichakul, Thongchai. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geobody of a Nation.* Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994. 131.
[22] Sack, 1986, 39
[23] Sack, 1986, 33.

within territories. Emerging out of a reassessment of cold war studies of territories, critical geopolitics incorporates the scholarship of Michel Foucault to consider the mechanisms that shape power-relations rather than the strict sources and structures of power.[24] The production of space, then, is but one dimension that helps to produce forms of association among individuals. In turn, these associations reproduce practices of power and resistance. Thus, this approach emphasizes the ubiquity of power relations across all aspects of social organization.[25] Within the study of critical geo-politics, space is produced through the production of borders, which impact social relations in a number of ways.[26]

The first function is that borders serve as sites of differentiation, as barriers between supposedly different entities. Through the imposition of boundaries, it has been argued that the production of space establishes a situational and contextual form of power. As Paasi insists, "power should not be understood merely as a commodity to be wielded by agents, usually the dominant social group, in order to control all the places and localities within a given territory," but as a more diffuse set of practices that produce and reproduce binary distinctions.[27] This approach contradicts the emphasis in territoriality on the symbolic significance of space for factional control.

The second function is that borders operate as sites of subject-making.[28] It is the place where different conceptions of identity are enacted or set into practice. Considered as a practice, the reproduction of power-relations occurs within the subject population. In this manner, Kuus insists that "these actors [on the margins] do not only consume geopolitical concepts' they also produce these concepts. Therefore we have to unravel the maneuvers of

[24] Kuus, Merje. "Critical Gepolitics" isacompss.com. June 2015. 5.
[25] Or as Joe Painter argues along similar lines, "The idea that social life is suffused with state practices not only extends the apparent spatial reach of state power but also reveals its geographical unevenness." Painter, Joe. "Prosaic Geographies of Stateness." Political Geography. 25 (2006). 755.
[26] Or, in Agnew's words, "borders…make the nation rather than vice versa." See Agnew, John. Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics. Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 95:2, 437-461. 2007.
[27] Paasi, Anssi, "Boundaries as social processes: Territoriality in the world of flows, Geopolitics, 3:1, 82,
[28] Kuus, 2015, 8.

relatively marginal actors *vis-à-vis* the dominant narratives of the center and vice versa."[29] In this way, the framework insists that the everyday practices of individuals across all social groups reproduce forms of authority as well as its contradictions. The onus on individual action enables for a wider understanding for the ways in which power is challenged or modified through its reproduction. Rather than a *fait accompli,* critical-geopolitics views the production of space as a mechanism for the reproduction of shifting power-relations that are prone to further change.

Within critical geo-politics, space is constantly transformed and reconstituted through the practices that create borders. Since critical geo-politics does not attach the production of space to a particular faction, space has to be reshaped through the practices that lend it an apparent order. In this manner, it has been argued that within critical geo-politics, "both the material border at the edge of the state and the conceptual borders designating this as a boundary between secure inside and archaic outside are objects of investigation."[30] The authors of this quote highlight the ubiquity of spatial practices that problematize power relations within state-spaces as well as among them. In turn, the imposition of borders at these different sites across social life compounds political contestation.[31] In this manner, space is constituted through the practices that mark borders. These borders, then, serve as sites of the operation of power and witness the potential for change. As a result, any representation that lends space an apparent order is also subject to transformation over time.

From this, it can be argued that critical geo-politics position is more helpful in studying how visions of space change in the course of shifting relations of power. For the act of resistance to forms of power creates new potentials and possibilities within social

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[29]Kuus, 2015, 12.

[30] Dalby, Simon and O Tuathil, Gearoid, eds. "Introduction: Rethinking Geopolitics- Towards a New Critical Gepolitics. *Rethinking Geopolitics.* London: Routledge, 1998. 3-4

[31] These authors go on to say that "critical geo-politics bears witness to the irredeemable plurality of space and the multiplicity of possible constructions of space. Thus…it pays particular attention to the boundary drawing practices that characterize the everyday lives of states." Dalby et.al, 1998, 3.

relations. In this manner, the production of space discloses that power relations, following Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, are "diffuse and capillary" rather than some entity divided between the haves and the have-nots.[32] That is, the exercise of power is subject to various forms of contestation with the potential to alter, reinforce or further transform the means of control within a given location. Political contestation has the potential to alter the power relations that enforce the production of space. As Adib-Moghaddam insists, "it is within that topological relation between inside and outside, subject and object, self and other, where resistance and power, in other words, the contested space in which agency unfolds itself, can be localized."[33] Due to this dialectical relationship between power and resistance, a given space becomes a site of political contestation. The production of space influences social practice to the same extent that social practice reorders localized sites of contestation.

Imposing Order

From this perspective, it is now possible to define state power within this dialectic of power and resistance. To borrow from Desbiens, *et. al.*, the state "is not a unitary object, but is rather a set of practices enacted through relationships between people, places and institutions."[34] That is, statehood can be understood as a series of practices and regulations to administer and enforce spatial organization as well as to regulate power-relations between different segments of the population. In the colonial context, the re-ordering of space justified the imposition of new forms of hierarchy that were contested at the local level in the colony. The production of space, then, appears as a tool to maintain and produce forms of inequality in power-relations. To borrow again from Mitchell, state power in this case "is not simply a centralized force seeking local allies as it extends out from the political center, but

[32] Adib-Moghaddam, Arshin. *On the Arab Revolts and the Iranian Revolution: Power and Resistance Today*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, 89.
[33] Adib-Moghaddam, 2013, 95.
[34] Desbiens, Caroline, Mountz, Alison and Walton-Roberts, Margaret "Introduction: Re-conceptualizing the state from the Margins of Political Geography," Political Geography, 23 (2004), 242.

is constructed locally whatever the wider connections involved."[35] That is, the capacity to reinforce state power at specific local sites is critical to the reproduction of hierarchy.

From this perspective of space and state power, it can be seen that social hierarchy is not something fixed but a variable element of political contestation. Helpful in this regard is Edward Said's contention that "no society known to human history has ever existed which has not been governed by power and authority and…every society can be divided into interlocking classes of rulers and ruled."[36] Even this division of rulers and ruled, Said insists, remains subject to the dynamics of shifting social relations. For he goes on to say that "there is nothing static about these basic conceptions since, if we consider society to be a dynamic distribution of power and positions, we will also be able to regard the categories of rulers and ruled as [a] highly complex and highly changeable pair of categories."[37] In other words, the forms of hierarchy that emerge from social relations and the production of space help to constitute power and resistance. The institutions of the colonial state designed to regulate authority helped to maintain the asymmetry of power between empire and colonial subject.

Yet, the various practices involved within state formation should not be considered as separate or distinct from one another. There is no external division within state power. The state should not be considered a coherent object onto itself. Instead, state power functions more like what Mitchell has described as a structural effect in that "the line between state and society is not the perimeter of an intrinsic entity," but "a line drawn internally, within the network of institutional mechanisms, through which a certain social and political order is maintained."[38] In other words, there exists no natural boundary between state and society, nor is anyone outside of the matrix of power and resistance. Rather, distinctions are erected

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[35] Mitchell, Timothy. Rule of Experts. Berkeley: U California P, 2000. 169.
[36] Said, Edward. *The World, the Text and the Critic*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983. 168.
[37] Said, 1983, 168.
[38] Mitchell, Timothy. "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics. The American Political Science Review. 85: No. 1 (Mar., 1991). 90

internally within this matrix as an effect of more complex relations of power. As power relations become more internally constituted within social relations, they, paradoxically, appear to take the form of external structures.[39] In this manner, the agencies of the state depend upon the production of difference between state and society.[40] Here again, the notion of the state as a series of practices becomes prominent in Mitchell's contention that "the state should be addressed as an effect of detailed processes of spatial organization, temporal arrangement, functional specification, and supervision and surveillance, which create the appearance of a world fundamentally divided into state and society."[41] Seen as series of practices, state power, even colonial state power, becomes localized.

As such, we should consider the colonial modern as a new space to rethink the exercise of modern forms of power. The contradictory forces that distinguish the west from the east are also present in the production of the colonial space. Authority does not extend like the lines on the map but must be reproduced at specific sites. In this way, the power to produce and maintain colonial space operates through disciplinary practices and regulations that displace and coerce the social body and even challenge the metropole. Seen in this light, colonial modernity reveals the contradictions at work in the exercise of modern forms of power. It becomes possible to consider that local political contestation within the colony created a new space in the exercise of power beyond the intentions of the colonizers and independent of the practices of resistance to colonial rule.

Unbundling Territoriality

In considering state power circumstantial and contingent upon social relations, it becomes possible to understand the potential scenario that John Ruggie describes as the

[39] Mitchell, 1991, 93.
[40] Mitchell, 1991, 91.
[41] Mitchell, 1991, 95.

unbundling of territoriality in which the reach of the state erodes to some degree.[42] This capacity of disciplines to break down creates new possibilities to contest power. As Ruggie asserts, "even where systems of rule are territorial and even where territoriality is relatively fixed, the prevailing concept of territory need not entail mutual exclusion."[43] Examining the social forces and experiences that underpin state formation has the potential to disclose this unbundling. Following Ruggie, John Agnew contends that, "the critical theoretical issue, therefore, is the historical relationship between territorial states and the broader social and economic structures and geo-political order (or form of spatial practice) in which these states must operate."[44] Not only is territoriality socially mediated according to Agnew, it is historically constructed as well, and therefore, subject to the cultural, economic and political structures that challenge state power. Contrary to state-centered narratives of space, then, territoriality is socially mediated rather than geographically imposed. In this manner, Agnew would later write that, "the relative importance of territories and dispersed networks changes historically as a result of the changing geographical conditions under which political practices take place."[45] In the context of colonialism, the practices that underpinned state power in the colony relate to the processes of the unbundling of territoriality during the transition to the post-colonial era. For the exercise of state power in the colony was not simply the blueprint of imperial designs, but comprised the contradictions of modernity. In turn, these contradictions would pave the way for the unbundling of territoriality toward the post-colonial period. In this manner, an examination of the historical circumstances of

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[42] Ruggie, John Gerard. Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations," International Organization 47, No: 1 (Winter 1993), 165.
[43] Ruggie, 1993, 149.
[44] Agnew, John, "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory," Review of International Political Economy, 1:1 (Spring 1994), 77. As Agnew goes on to say, although the territorial trap operates to produce a state-centered narrative of its history "in which the spate occupied by the state is timeless," in practice, however, state power is subject to "decisions and flows operating from networks of power not captured by singularly territorial representations of space" Agnew, 1994 72). Such networks are culturally and economically constituted.
[45] Agnew, John, "Mapping Political Power Beyond State Boundaries," Millennium Journal of International Studies, 28: 33 (1999), 502.

colonial state-building will disclose the ambiguities of territoriality as well as the contradictions of colonial rule.

COLONIAL HISTORIES IN THE LEVANT

Such considerations arise when considering the colonial experiences in the Levant during the French mandate of Lebanon from 1920 to 1946.[46] The practices of reproducing colonial power and of securing the obedience of the masses to the institutions of the colonial administration were anything but traditional to the region. The history of Lebanon will indicate that power does not appear to be a matter of imposing new forms of rule from the center onto the periphery, but results from different forms of contestation and re-appropriation of the practices of power. That is, the reproduction of space in the colonial setting was not a function of the imposition of formal institutions of government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate the practices that underpinned this supposed new order. The efforts to reproduce the rigidities of the geographical boundaries within the colony transformed politics in the region, but not in the ways that the Quai d'Orsay had expected. While, state-building was part of a process to create a representation of hierarchy, its repercussions effectively undermined the capacity of the French high commission to properly administer the colony. This contradiction, then, set the stage for the post-colonial period. As a result of these often latent networks operative within the maintenance of power, the post-colonial moment appears as the evolution of the inequalities of colonial rule and contradictions of modern forms of power.

To begin, the French declaration of statehood would witness the merger of multiple territories that had never existed as a single administrative unit, the historically autonomous

[46] Like many facets of this period, the precise termination of the mandate remains open to dispute. In Lebanon, independence from the French is marked in 1943 following the constitutional crisis, discussed in chapter five, which amended the constitution in ways that foreclosed formal French control in the country. Outside of Lebanon, however, the end of the mandate is said to have taken place in 1946 following the last withdrawal of French and British troops from Syria and Lebanon.

zone of Mount Lebanon as well as a series of territories from different provinces of the Ottoman Empire collectively known as the annexed territories.[47] Throughout the period of French rule, the integration of these annexed territories was contentious and remained a major political issue in the new nation-state. Within Lebanese historiography, the question of gaining consent from those outside of this elite class is taken for granted.[48] As a result, it remains necessary to examine how colonial mechanisms of authority were able to overcome forms of opposition to the mandate outside of this notable elite class centered in the capital of Beirut.

This process began amid the upheaval of empires. Having previously made formal agreements with Britain and Tsarist Russia to carve up the territories of the Ottoman Empire amid the battles of World War I, the French and British would occupy the country in 1918. Following the surrender of the Ottoman Empire, Paris consecrated its occupation during the Treaty of Versailles Peace Conference and eventually received a formal mandate from the League of Nations to govern these territories. Although French foreign policy differed greatly under successive administrations, its penetration and economic influence within the Ottoman territories had expanded during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Upon receiving its mandate, Paris created multiple states within this contiguous territory. It is in this moment that General Henri Gouraud would declare the formation of the State of Greater

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[47] While the historicity of Lebanon remains a contested subject among politicians and citizens, often colored by nationalist narratives, it is a conventional assertion among historians that these territories had unique histories prior to the establishment of the state. As Fawwaz Traboulsi writes, the borders of the country were a product of Franco-British patrician plans that hardly corresponded to the wishes of any political party in the country. Traboulsi, 2007, 75.

[48] Academic priorities aside, the main hindrance to colonial history in Lebanon is the scarcity of evidence. While the methodology section examines this issue in greater detail, it is worth mentioning a few dissertations that examine the fierce resistance to mandate rule: Atiyah, Najla Wadih. *The Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis towards the State of Lebanon,* PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London, 1973.*; Daher, Massoud, L'histoire socio-politique de la république libanaise sous mandat français (1926-1943) PhD Thesis: Sorbonne-Paris I, 1980;* Saliba, Nada, *The Urban History of Tripoli during the French Mandate, 1920-1943,* PhD Thesis: Department of History, SOAS University of London, 2016.

Lebanon in September 1920, inaugurating a protracted contest to define the status of the different areas within the new state.[49]

The borders that Gouraud decreed for the new state resembled the plans found within the private papers of one of the military governors from the 1918 occupation, Colonel de Piépape. The Levant, referred to as *"le territoire ennemi occupé"* was divided into three parts, a southern zone, an eastern zone and a western zone.[50] In particular, the western zone under the command of Colonel de Piépape included "the city of Beirut, the *sanjaks* of Beirut, Mt. Lebanon, Tripoli, Lattakia and the *cazas* of Hasbaya, Rachaya, Baalbek, Giser al-Chegour, Antioch, Arion, Bellan and Alexandretta."[51] With a few exceptions, this western zone under military administration would become the State of Greater Lebanon decreed by the colonel's successor, Gouraud.

Within the territory that he now ruled, Gouraud sought to create a special enclave around the area of Mount Lebanon (Mt. Lebanon) in which the French had long cultivated economic and cultural ties. Parts of the area west of Mt. Lebanon were annexed to form the new capital of Beirut; parts of the area south of the Mt. Lebanon were annexed to form the district of South Lebanon; parts of the area east of the mountain were annexed to form the district of the Bekaa; and parts of the area north of Mount Lebanon were annexed to form the district of North Lebanon. In total, then, there were four districts: North Lebanon, South Lebanon, the Bekaa and, of course, Mt. Lebanon as well as two autonomous zones in Beirut and Tripoli. In this way, regions that were historically governed under different administrative systems came to comprise a single country. Within each of the new

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[49] Arrêté No. 386, Règlement provisoirement l'organisation administrative de l'Etat du Grand Liban. Signed by Gouraud. 6 September 1920.
[50] C2437. Administrateur en chef de Piépape. "Territoire Ennemis occupe zone nord." No. 17. Beyrouth. 7 November 1918. 1 The southern zone would include the Ottoman Sanjaks of Jerusalem, Nablus and Acre. The eastern zone would include all of the districts excluded from the western zone and southern zone, or in the words of Piépape, "tous les districts situés à l'est des territoire ennemis occupes au sud et au nord jusqu'aux limites de Gaza, de Djebel Saman et El-babe."
[51] *ibid*.

administrative zones, Gouraud created a regional capital comprising Sidon in the south, Zahle in the Bekaa, Baabda for Mt. Lebanon and eventually, Tripoli would become the capital of the north.[52] Spatially, these areas in the annexed territories revolved around the geographical center of the country, Beirut and Mount Lebanon.

The maneuverings of Gouraud were critical in helping to expand Lebanon from a relatively small and landlocked *sanjak* within the Ottoman territory into a state with unprecedented frontiers. In the days and weeks before the 1920 declaration, as historian Wajih Kawtharani accounts in his study of the French Mandate, Gouraud had argued with President Millerand that among the areas occupied in 1918, the incorporation of Tripoli would deal a *fait accompli* to Syrian nationalists who had hoped to re-create the unified Ottoman territory of Greater Syria as a nation-state.[53] For, Tripoli, in particular, had served as a strategic outlet on the Mediterranean for the nationalist forces led by Amir Feisal, with one official describing the city as the natural harbor of Syria.[54] Against the objections of a majority within this territory who preferred union with Syria,[55] Gouraud assured his superiors that these facts were a mere memory of the past following the defeat of the nationalists at the Battle of Marjayoun. He assured his bosses that it in the aftermath of the French victory, there was no longer any obligation to uphold promised to abstain from incorporating Tripoli

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[52] See below Arrêté No. 386, Règlement provisoirement l'organisation administrative de l'Etat du Grand Liban. Although Tripoli initially functioned as an autonomous entity, it became the administrative center of North Lebanon in 1929, as described in Gulick, John. *Tripoli: A Modern Arab City*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967, 34. Sidon is also known by its Arab name of Saida. Zahle is also known as Zahlé, Zahla, Zahleh, etc.

[53] Kawtharani, Wajih. "Le grand Liban et le proejet de la confederation syrienne d'apres des documents francais," *State and Society in Syria and Lebanon*, Ed. Youusef Choueri. New York: St Martin's Press, 1993. 54.

[54] C460 MAE letter to HCF, 6 March 1937, written by undersecretary of state, no 137, 460

[55] In its hostility to the French mandate, the residents of Tripoli espoused common sentiments throughout the region. As described in the work of Fawwaz Traboulsi, the July 1919 American initiated King-Crane commission surveyed the attitudes of the inhabitants of the Levant in 36 cities and towns as well as 1520 villages while collecting an additional 1863 petitions. The commission found that 80% of respondents favored a unified Syrian state, of which 74% favored an independent Syrian state and 60% preferred this independent and unified state to be a democratic and decentralized constitutional monarchy. In the event of a mandate for Syria, 60% of respondents favored an American mandate, and only 14% a French mandate. In Paris, the commission recommended a unified Syrian state under Emir Faysal and one mandatory power. Cited in Traboulsi, 2007, 78.

into the state of Greater Lebanon.[56] Instead, Gouraud devised a new plan and urged his bosses to reconsider earlier commitments. For, he sought to take advantage of what he saw as a moment of weakness among his opponents. Thus he goes on to write that, "the disappearance of Emir Faysal has completely changed the aspect of this question and singularly diminished the importance of these demands. The Muslims of Syrian Tripoli today accept the attachment to Greater Lebanon under the condition of maintaining their administrative autonomy that is easy to guarantee them."[57] In this manner, Gouraud had expected to make a separate peace with the residents and leaders of Tripoli in the absence of a political truce or settlement with Amir Faysal and his nationalist forces. Crucially, Gouraud's letters established the notion that the only necessary resolution to questions of political grievances and contestations involved administrative protocols and guarantees, a narrative that will be re-examined in subsequent chapters.[58]

At the same time, the period of the French mandate would witness the culmination of a series of processes that integrated Beirut into the world economy and European capitalism. This transformation was marked with the expansion of the city as the financial, commercial and social capital of the new country at the expense of other towns and cities along the coasts and interior. In addition, this expansion would lead many to consider the environs around the capital to be the modern bastion of the country in contrast to the more traditional forms of life that pervaded in the countryside.

This spatial configuration represented political, social and economic dynamics in the new state. The majority of state resources were concentrated in the area surrounding Mt. Lebanon and Beirut at the expense of the annexed territories. As internal French documents

[56] Telegrams of General Gouraud. MAE Levant-Syrie. V 125. 207. Telegramme No. 1578 F 208. In Kawtharani, 1993. 54.
[57] Kawtharani, 1993, 54.
[58] C460, Notes of Franco-Lebanese Treaty and Tripoli, MAE au sujet des incidents de Tripoli, 27 november 1936 page 2

reveal, "for political and economic reasons, the Lebanese government has treated the annexed territories like conquered territory."[59] In effect, the mandate regime instituted structural inequality between the area of Mt. Lebanon and Beirut on one side and the annexed territories on the other. One major grievance was that, although the French had redefined the region with Arrêté 386 in 1920, it kept in place the unique legal, religious and tax codes that separated Mt. Lebanon from other Ottoman territories in the region. An undated report revealed that, "until 1926, the residents of the autonomous Sanjak of Mt. Lebanon hardly paid any taxes; all of the fiscal expenses were supported by the taxpayers in the annexed regions."[60] In this manner, the division of space reflected the systematic inequality of the new state, which further marginalized the annexed territories. Such distinctions would create animosity between the leaders and inhabitants of Mt. Lebanon and the residents of the rest of the country.

The perception of lawlessness in the annexed territories justified the appropriation of resources from the margins of the country toward the center of the new state. As Najla Atiyah writes in her doctoral dissertation, "the general impression was that the government's neglect was due to the negative attitude of the inhabitants of these districts towards the state of Lebanon."[61] This production of difference between the two territories justified the inappropriate division of resources. Yet, as Daniel Neep affirms, "the boundary between the modern and the non-modern was created through representations and practices of violence."[62] For, systematic violence is critical to the policies, discourses and practices that divided the supposedly modern areas attached to Mt. Lebanon to the annexed territories. Within the annexed territories, state formation altered the links between the largely rural

[59] C460 Situation Politique, HCF Notes au sujet de le ville de triopli- el Mina, undated probably 1939. Pg 1.
[60] *ibid*. As Traboulsi states, tax disparities between the different regions did not end in 1926, but continued until the 1950s. See, Traboulsi, 2007, 104.
[61] Atiyah, Najla Wadih. *The Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis towards the State of Lebanon*. PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London, 1973. 86.
[62] Neep, 2012. 93.

masses and the political bosses of the countryside. The capacity of the government to dispense forms of patronage such as land and the rights to bear arms made political elites less dependent on agricultural production as the primary source of income, social prestige and political prominence, as will be seen in subsequent chapters.[63]

In view of this perspective, power in colonial Lebanon does not appear to be a matter of imposing rule from the center onto the periphery, but a process whereby the local agents of the mandate exploited their public office for personal benefit. Not only did these networks undermine effective administration, it also marginalized and impoverished the majority of the population. In the case of Lebanon, statecraft was part of an effort to impose spatial boundaries on the population. The practices that attempted to regulate this spatial order relied upon different forms of systematic violence. In the course of exercising this institutional power, subsequent chapters will show the ways in which, far from helping Paris make inroads into the subject population, the institutions of statecraft animated opposition to the French mandate.

METHODOLOGIES

In the pages that follow, an examination commences with regard to the processes that underpinned the administration of the annexed territories of Lebanon and the contradictions it generated during the mandate. A large part of the evidence relies upon notes from top-secret diplomatic cables classified for over 60 years found in the Autumn of 2015 at the French Centre des Archives Diplomatiques in Nantes. Among the 5,000 volumes in Nantes relating to Syria and Lebanon,[64] the most widely cited box of files—examined at length in chapters two and four—comprise what mandate agents entitled as *La Situation à Tripoli*, related to the decades of unrest and turmoil that roiled in the coastal city of Tripoli and its environs in

[63] Neep, 2012, 101.
[64] This figure comes from a scholar who worked in the archives and submitted her dissertation about one year before I did mine. Saliba, 2016, 56.

North Lebanon. These files were discovered in the course of seeking material for what would become chapter three in this study concerning the rural politics in Akkar, which, functioned as a locality under the jurisdiction of the regional capital of Tripoli during the mandate. In particular, the high commission's writings on the city gathered pace in the aftermath of the November 1936 general strike and riot against the mandate regime discussed in chapter two. In attempting to learn more about Tripoli, I was able to discover the primary source material discussed in chapter five, which chronicles the end of the mandate system. In these ways, this study focuses on the events of the twilight of empire.

To supplement the sources gathered at the French archives, additional material was sought in Lebanon in the winter and spring of 2016. In particular, more material was gathered in Lebanon at the Naami Jafet Memorial Library of the American University of Beirut as well as the Centres des Archives Nationales (Muassasat al-Muhafizat al-Wataniyya).[65] The bulk of the evidence gathered in Lebanon came from secondary sources. Although I had expected to use archival work in France to prepare for fieldwork in Lebanon, in practice, fieldwork in Lebanon became a way to further explore the developments discovered in France. Despite every effort to find first-hand accounts that bear witness to the experiences described in the French diplomatic archives, gaps remain, in large part due to the secrecy of these diplomatic cables. Later, additional evidence from secondary materials was gathered at the library of my *alma mater*, the Butler Library of Columbia University, in addition to the labyrinth that is the SOAS Library in London. In my desire to publicize untold, if incomplete aspects of the mandate, this dissertation focuses primarily on the experiences that took place in North Lebanon, and to a lesser extent, in South Lebanon at the expense of the eastern areas in the Bekaa.[66] For one of the startling lessons learned in the

[65] For an overview of the challenges of research in Beirut, See Scalenghe, Sara and Sbaiti, Nadya, "Conducting Research in Lebanon: An Overview of Historical Sources in Beirut," MESA Bulletin 37:1, (2003), 68-79.
[66] The area of the Bekaa valley has numerous transliterations, including Beqa, Biqa, Bikaa and Beka'a.

course of this work was the degree to which colonial politics became localized and personalized. Despite the distinct forms of politics within different communities and regions, a number of the trends discussed in the next chapters took hold across the country so that the overall tone of systematic hierarchy and inequality that resounds in this work is commensurate with the experiences that developed in the Bekaa, as well.

In examining power relations in Lebanon, there are a number of methodological challenges. In particular, several issues arise related to a qualitative historical sociological approach to the study politics of imperialism. The first challenge involves analyzing the perspective of the writers and their intended audiences, who arrived in the colony with their own particular worldviews and biases. The second challenge involves acknowledging the role of violence and hierarchy within discourses of imperialism. This, in turn, leads to the third challenge, how to see beyond the elite perspectives of politics in order to evaluate the role of rural and urban poor in colonial Lebanon. Fourth, beyond such issues related to analyzing evidence is perhaps the most arduous challenge, the scarcity and secrecy of primary sources. Confronting these challenges has required several techniques and strategies.

1. Colonial Perspectives

As this work involves the use of colonial archives, it becomes necessary to consider the colonial perspectives, practices and attitudes that inform these materials. The overall tone of these French-language and French-translated documents reflects a certain *noblesse oblige* held among the officials within the high commission, as if the prescription to every problem was to be nicer to the darkies and savages. In the early part of the mandate, the diplomat aristocracy that arrived to serve the civilian posts within the high commission came from the military and espoused a conservative worldview and preference for a strict centralized

military authority.[67] Certainly, the majority of colonial files under review reflected the work of tired and overworked anonymous bureaucrats. Yet, a handful of these documents disclose the candid remarks, observations and personalities of the French officials and citizens residing in the country in addition to the Lebanese subjects under their nominal remit. In the pages that follow, the more prolific of these materials have been emphasized as they disclose the contradictions and challenges that the delegates of Paris faced in the Levant. Despite their limitations, such texts reveal the plights of the marginalized through the perspective of the failures of mandate officials to make inroads with the population and to curb the rise of informal politics in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. These reports stand in marked contrast to the newspapers and journals of Beirut that have generally formed the primary source material for an array of studies of colonial Lebanon, which offer the world views of the emerging middle class that would come to power upon independence.[68] From this alternative perspective, then, the de-classification of these French diplomatic materials in the past ten to fifteen years now offer an alternative portrayal of colonial affairs beyond the limited scope of Lebanese periodicals that have so far been available to researchers, scholars and students.

In order to further grasp the complexities of the colonial archives, it is necessary to reflect upon the diverse perspectives of the writers, themselves, as well as their intended audience. Following Michael Taussig, colonial reports can be considered as narratives that bear witness to efforts of domination and colonial hegemony. By this he means that even everyday official reports helped to corroborate the system of thought that colonists sought to impose upon their objects of study. Following Taussig, colonial discourse indicates an effort to impose a new system of reality onto the social life of the colonized. "People delineate their world, including its large as well as its micro-scale politics, in stories and story-like

[67] Iskandar, Adnan. Bureaucracy in Lebanon, Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1964, 1-60, 123-148.
[68] See Atiyah, Najla Wadih. *The Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis towards the State of Lebanon.* PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London, 1973; and Zamir Meir. *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood*, 1926-1939. London: IB Tauris, 1997. and Zamir, Meir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon*. London: Croom Helm, 1985.

creations," he says.[69] For this reason, colonial narrative serves as a mirror that reflects back on the colonists their own social relations as much as those of the colonized.[70] Narrative, then, is not some objective product but rather a deeply subjective indication of power relations. Within this context, determining objective fact from subjective point of view is impossible. In his words, colonial reports describe an attempt to make "an uncertain reality out of fiction, a nightmarish reality in which the unstable interplay of truth and illusion becomes a social force of horrendous and phantasmic dimensions."[71] With this interplay in mind, numerous and repeated efforts were made to supplement the diplomatic cables cited throughout this work. Although the more salacious claims could not be verified entirely, several works written in the post-colonial period of the 1950s and 1960s corroborated the problems—of violence, over-centralization, structural inequality, informal politics, etc.—that mandate officials and politicians criticized in the 1930s and 1940s. The overall impression, then, is that many of the problems confronting the political establishment built by the French during the mandate lingered long after the last forces of Paris had left the Levant. That much of the corroborating evidence was published well after the termination of the mandate demonstrates the level of secrecy though which politics took place during the interwar years. Finally, it is worth considering that the following pages feature a number of statements and opinions made by French, Syrian and Lebanese observers ranging from the vulgar and offensive to the maudlin and exaggerated, which do not reflect the attitude of this author but reveal the systems of thought that underpinned social, economic and political tensions throughout colonial rule in the region. Rather than an undisputed truth, these assertions disclose the various contradictions and forms of hostility that emerged during the mandate.

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[69] Taussig, Michael. "Culture of Terror: Space of Death, Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture." Comparative Studies in Society and History. Vol. 26, No. 3 (Jul., 1984), pp. 494.
[70] Taussig, 1984, 495.
[71] Taussig, 1984, 492.

2. Recognizing Unspoken Violence and Suppression

The second methodological challenge follows from the first. If colonial narrative is part of an effort to validate a particular belief system among the colonists, then how can one account for the experiences of the colonized? The colonial emphasis on hierarchy and the particular French fixation with centralization are evidenced in their obsession with the notable families of Lebanon. To address similar issues, Taussig portrays the failure to acknowledge coercion, as a function of the culture of fear that mediates colonial power.[72] The culture of terror that Taussig depicts becomes manifest through what is missing, namely the exclusion of violence and the experiences of the poor and powerless. Building upon Taussig, Timothy Mitchell sees discourse and the often latent nods to coercion within it as a necessary component of the framework that reproduces domination. In this manner, Mitchell contends that, "to acquire its usefulness in the play of domination, violence must be whispered about, recalled by its victims, and hinted at in future threats. The disappearance of the hidden act of terror gains its force as an absence that is continually made present."[73] Rather than a complete absence of coercion, the reproduction of domination requires some narrative, which, in turn, has the potential to reveal a more complex glimpse of power relations. To impose silence among victims and witnesses, perpetrators of violence must put forth their own alternative version of events. In turn, this alternative version of events breaks a strict code of silence, and triggers whispers and rumors that contest the accounts of the perpetrators.

With regard to Lebanon, the language that officials employed to address problems becomes instructive. The "administrative crises" that high commission delegates decried and the "administrative reforms" that they mooted as solutions become the gateways to explore

[72] Taussig, 1984, 468. In particular, within his own research on rural violence in Colombia, what is often missing or underappreciated in colonial reports is the practice of bonded labor in commercial enterprises.
[73] Mitchell, Timothy. Rule of Experts. Berkeley: U California P, 2000. 153.

the complexities and contradictions of empire. Each subsequent chapter begins with an examination of particular administrative issues, framed by theoretical analyses that help to highlight the myriad forms of political turmoil typically suppressed by the bureaucratic language of reform. In doing so, it can be seen that while the plight of the marginalized was posited as a function of administrative constraints, in practice, it emerged directly and indirectly from French policy.

3. Elite Focus

This orientation attests to the third major challenge, the focus on Beirut and its elite politics within academic accounts of mandate Lebanon.[74] The most practical reason for this elite disposition is that among a largely illiterate population, much of the material in the archives came from informants and witnesses among this elite class, whether the journalists and editors that covered events or the French officials who reported them.[75] While the *literati* did not serve as spokespeople for the majority, they did enjoy a flourish in publications and letters during the mandate period. Several accounts of state formation produce the narrative that the French creation of the state of Lebanon was sealed with an alliance between the

[74] See Attiyah, 1973; Johnson, Michael. *All Honourable Men: The Social Origins of the War in Lebanon*. London: Center for Lebanese Studies, 2001; Salibi, Kamal. *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. Berkeley: U California P, 1988; Zamir Meir. *The Formation of Modern Lebanon*. London: Croom Helm, 1985 and *Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood*, 1926-1939. Also, for a notable exception to this elite focus, see Traboulsi, Fawwaz. *A History of Modern Lebanon*. Pluto Press, 2007.

[75] Illiteracy rates from the unofficial census of 1932 show that the majority of the population was illiterate, especially in the annexed territories. Widmer, Robert, "Population," The Economic Organization of Syria, Ed. Said Himadeh, Beirut: American Press, 1936, 11. Widmer observes that while 258,021 of the population was literate, the other 368,987 were illiterate. In other words, the estimated total illiteracy rate was 58.85%. Given the reluctance of large swathes of the population to participating in the census, such figures are likely conservative estimates. Still, one can notice the increasing illiteracy from Beirut and Mount Lebanon to the annexed territories on the following table from Widmer, 1936, 11.

Illiteracy Rates According to the Unofficial Census of Lebanon for 1932 by Region

District	Total Number of Illiterates	% Illiteracy
Beirut	42,682	42.06
Mount Lebanon	91,644	50.38
North Lebanon	89,934	66.56
South Lebanon	81,294	71.18
Bekaa	63,433	67.45
Total	369,987	58.85

delegates of Paris and the political elites associated with Mt. Lebanon and Beirut.[76] Most prominent in this alliance were the patriarchs of the Maronite Christian church who advocated for the creation of a sectarian Christian dominated state under the protection of Paris. This integration took place despite the opposition from the majority who preferred political union with the neighboring state of Syria or with a larger kingdom of Arab provinces from the former Ottoman territories. State formation, then, was presented as a contest between these contending visions of the future of the state, or, in other words, as a function of notable politics and feuds.

In contrast to this activity among the elites, the poor are described as indifferent to the politics of the age. In this manner, comments like those of Najla Atiyah's are common within the scholarship when she says that,

> The different ecological environment of the rural people, who are concentrated in the North of Lebanon and who are divided into wealthy feudal lords and poor peasants, made them less responsive to political issues. Their greater economic dependence on feudal lords made them more submissive to their masters. Thus the people played no role whatsoever in determining the attitude of their spokesmen.[77]

While political mobilization of the rural poor was marginal in comparison with political elites, the social relationships within Lebanon are worth examining in greater degree. Rather than indicate a general indifference to the politics of the country, the absence of the poor attest to changing social relations during the period. By introducing *francs* into the country, the mandate effectively bolstered the aegis of an elite that became increasingly less dependent on the underclass employed in the less lucrative agricultural industries. In place of agriculture, the new elite grew occupied with the new commercial banking sector and obtaining access to the government bureaucracy that the French introduced, as discussed in

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[76] See Zamir, Meir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon*. London: Croom Helm, 1988; Zamir, Meir, Lebanon's Quest: The Road to Statehood, 1926-1939, 1997; Salibi, Kamal. *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. Berkeley: U California P, 1988; Firro, Kais. *Inventing Lebanon: Nationalism and the state under the Mandate*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2003.

[77] Atiyah, 1973, 100. A similar remark about the middle class orientation of periodicals from the mandate is found in Saliba, 2016, 57.

chapter two. Ironically, then, the discussion of the marginalized appears in the writings of the French elites in Lebanon. Certainly, a large portion of the files reviewed for this work touch upon the maneuverings and machinations of the rich and powerful. Yet, I did not want to contribute to the existing volumes on notable politics or imperial rivalries for the Arab world. Instead I sought to focus on the socio-economic upheavals that occurred during the transformative years of the mandate. Upon arriving in France, however, I discovered a cache of files dedicated to these same notables that I had tried to avoid, in the context of years and even decades of efforts that the French had dedicated to rallying the old notables in North Lebanon to support the mandate regime. Despite the formal focus on centralized hierarchies, French officials touched upon socio-economic issues from the perspective of their profound resentment toward the Lebanese government that had emerged during the mandate. The reasons for this resentment stemmed from what they considered to be petty personal vendettas among the leading families who used the mandate to settle old scores and establish patron-client relations, especially in the annexed territories. At the same time, these French officials harbored a certain *noblesse oblige* that comes across in their grievance against the Lebanese government over their failure to properly administer the colony. While this *tableau* of the residents of the annexed territories is far from complete, it offers some insight into the far-reaching transformations, upheavals and pressures that residents brooked. As discussed in chapter 4, the tensions and turmoil that faced the marginalized become manifest in the grievances between the French high commission and the Lebanese parliament.

4. Scarcity and Secrecy of Resources

This grievance in particular sheds light on the fourth methodological challenge involving the secrecy and scarcity of materials. It never occurred to me beforehand, but the problem with accessing top-secret files is that many of the issues discussed within them still remain secret to large degree. At one level, the sources that informed this material and the

audiences that consumed it preferred to keep secret claims that—quite literally—indicted the entire mandatory regime, as was the case with the papers reviewed in chapter five.[78] In areas that were historically neglected and underdeveloped, and increasingly marginalized from the cultural and commercial hubs orbiting around the new capital of Beirut, it was possible to maintain secrets among the suppressed populations. Following Priya Satia, such secrecy is indicative of covert imperialism in which the colonial bureaucracy functioned as a cover for an "intelligence organization whose enforced informality would allow covert pursuit of empire."[79] Such covert pursuits precipitated other decisions that restricted the collection of evidence.

In addition, ahead of the Nazi march on Paris, the entirety of the political documents of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1932 -1940 was destroyed on the order of the ministry's secretary general, Alexis Léger.[80] Since the Quai d'Orsay would have received the political documents sent from the Levant, the number of documents lost during this period remains unknown. In addition, other political considerations from the Levant have

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[78] On active suppression and silencing, Michael Gilsenan would refer to his study of Lebanese power relations, commenting, "That forgotten, in the case of figures on the Lebanese political scene, that it seemed to require a certain amount of active suppression and silencing. One did not refer in public to the affair though everyone knew.' More than social politeness was at stake. To refer to the story was to invoke practices and relations of power contradictory to what many wished to maintain and what often felt were appropriate modes of Lebanese politics. It was also too sharp a reminder of the fact that, nonetheless, such practices existed and might even be argued to be essential to the workings of power, rather than an aberrant or marginal." Gilsenan, 1996, 323, Note 6. While the affair to which Gilsenan refers is taken up in later, it is worth pointing out now that the active suppression and silencing that he recounts from his experiences in the 1970s was the product of transformations in relations of power that took place in the mandate. For the figure to which he refers to was the Sunni delegate of Akkar discussed in chapter 3. With regard to the criminality within the Lebanese government, a senior mandate official would comment in a document further examined in Chapter five that with regards to the 1937 legislative elections, "The legislative elections that were at the root of the government, were in this country a public marketplace from the very first day in which illiterate and unconcerned voters sold themselves to the highest bidders. This cynicism and degradation has increased with each new election and are so well entrenched in the government's mores that the election of the current parliament gives rise to official scandals present in everyone's memories that are sufficient to indict the entire regime." C463 HCF secrétaire-général No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin, 2.

[79] Satia, Priya, *Spies in Arabia: The Great War and the Cultural Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East*, Oxford: Oxford UP: 2008, 264.

[80] White, Benjamin Thomas, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2011, 7. Among the aliases of the then secretary-general Léger was Saint-John Perse, under which he would win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1960 following his exile from France in 1940 due to his anti-Nazi political stance.

suppressed related materials. On the order of the French High Commissioner under Vichy France, General Henri Dentz, the records of the political affairs cabinet, the bureau from which most of the documents reviewed in this work originated, were deliberately burned as the forces of the Free French and British mission defeated those of the Vichy government in 1941.[81] Among the existing evidence of police reports, intelligence files, private papers, journal articles and diplomatic cables, gaps remain and questions unanswered. Given the lack of evidence on the annexed territories during the mandate, it has been difficult to fill these gaps. Further complicating research in Lebanon was that during the country's civil war of 1975-1990, records from the mandate and Ottoman periods were destroyed, left unattended and eventually went missing.[82] The scarcity of evidence not only comprises the paucity of reliable census information and medical records, but also more mundane souvenirs like maps and photographs of parts of the annexed territories such was the neglect. Researching and reflecting on such materials bring to mind the "traces of an ever-receding past" that anthropologist Michael Gilsenan describes in the footnotes of his book compiled from the ethnography that he conducted on the eve of the Lebanese civil war when he writes that,

> This book has sometimes seemed like a kind of archaeology of a world that vanished beneath the layers of the Lebanese wars. It speaks of '20 years ago' and a 'then' with which it is difficult to trace any link of continuity. The violence has been so great that a book loses any relevance—moral, intellectual or political. My notes, at such moments, appear to be traces of an ever-receding past. It is as if the world they record is effaced in the very act of remembering here; or memory becomes nothing but a pious offering to something—through what is not clear—now gone, crushed under the foot by years of conflict.[83]

After spending a year in this endeavor, I returned to London to find that the path that I had trekked across three countries in pursuit of the study of the French mandate mirrored that

[81] See Méouchy, Nadine and Sluglett, Peter, eds. *The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives*. Leiden: Brill, 2004 for a discussion on the difficulties of research on the French mandate. The Dentz decision is also recounted in White, 2011, 11.
[82] Saliba, 2016, 308. A similar claim about the loss of archival materials during the civil war was made to the author during a conversation with Nada Sbaiti in April 2016.
[83] Gilsenan, 1996, 324, Note 11.

of one of my colleagues at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Dr. Nada Saliba. Although we never met, her 2016 doctoral thesis, *The Urban History of Tripoli during the French Mandate, 1920-1943*, proved invaluable in helping to answer some of the questions that arose in the course of my fieldwork about the city of Tripoli and North Lebanon, in general, the subjects of chapters two and four.[84] Upon finding her work after completing a rough draft of this dissertation, I discovered that despite our common missions to Beirut, London and Nantes, our two works hardly cover the same events and insofar as they do, offer different perspectives and reach different conclusions.[85] Still, Dr. Saliba speaks much sense when she writes that "locating primary sources for Tripoli was a remarkable feat and therefore recreating an urban history with the available sources has required much imagination."[86] While this current work is neither an urban history nor a solitary study of Tripoli proper, the tone of her comments matches the experiences involved with the research, translation, writing and editing of this work. Gaps remain and questions unanswered. In spite

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[84] Saliba, 2016.

[85] Although I have never met Dr. Saliba, the main factor that distinguishes her from mine is the background through which we approached this subject. A native of Tripoli, the focus of her history project was an attempt to engage in the conversation on the historiography of Tripoli over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As historian James Reilly describes in his book, contemporary historians see Tripoli as a city whose fortune has declined since the mid-nineteenth century, often in indirect proportion to the rise of other Mediterranean coastal cities like Beirut and Lattakia, and in a different way, Haifa and Jaffa-Tel Aviv (Reilly, 2016, 154). In contrast, Saliba offers a riposte to this general gloomy trend by emphasizing the contributions that Tripoli made to events in the Levant. Thus she writes in her conclusion that, "the near absence of Tripoli from current relevant literature on mandate Syria and Lebanon has informed my endeavor to re-construct an urban history of Tripoli and its formative role in shaping the narrative of Tripoli and Lebanon." (Saliba, 2016, 206) With this endeavor in mind, her work documents the expansion of the city that occurred during the transformative years of the mandate. Indeed, this desire to restore and recover the lost luster of her hometown also informs her commentary. For instance, she writes that "it is hoped that this dissertation will fill a gap in the growing literature on Levantine cities through a study that uncover key economic, socio-political and urban changes in Tripoli between 1920 and 1940" (Saliba, 2016, 306).

For my part, however, I entered the French archives knowing very little about the city and the transformations that occurred within it. My initial attraction revolved around my curiosity with the water and health crisis that occurred in the North and why I had never heard of it. Though I was also interested in other areas of the country, my focus shifted to the forms of suppression and interference that allowed this crisis to unravel in silence. The overall impression that I have from reading her work on three occasions is that our works are very different. What most intrigues me is that even though we both cite the same sources, namely Carton 460 in the Nantes archives, the files that I used to describe the city are not mentioned in hers. Similarly, the newspaper archives that she cites came from the same Lebanese archives in which I was told that no such materials existed.

[86] Saliba, 2016, 308.

of these limitations, her work, like mine, breaks new ground on undisclosed aspects of life in mandate Lebanon. On a personal level, nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to be proven wrong with regards to the grim and dire conditions described below. Yet, what I hope does not preclude me from following the evidence, assessing it, and drawing the relevant conclusions. That such material has survived deliberate suppression, burnings, neglect and classification at various points over the past 100 years, one ought to feel encouraged that the gaps that remain will not last as long as it took for me to notice them, whatever my faults, omissions, mistakes, shortcomings and errors.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the experiences of the French mandate in Lebanon disclose that the production of space in the colonial setting was not the result of the imposition of European practices, but emerged through the capacity of the subject population to establish informal networks that reshaped and re-appropriated colonial designs. Territoriality was not so much enforced from the metropole as much as it was socially mediated within the colony. While both theories of the production of space reviewed so far assume that colonialism inaugurated new practices and technologies of discipline, the experience of Lebanon reveals something about the contradictions of power as well as the consequences that they generated for rulers and ruled. The French administration in Lebanon attempted to expand its rule through its bureaucracy with the hope that it would re-organize residents to obey a new relation of power headed by the Quai d'Orsay. In addition to these formal structures of power, the French sought to reproduce their rule and consecrate their position through informal networks with new and traditional political bosses in the region. Although the French had hoped to employ informal arrangements to strengthen the formal institutions of governance, in practice, the bureaucracy empowered informal networks. In turn, these networks undermined French rule. In other words, the very institutions through which the Quai d'Orsay had hoped to augment

its power within the region generated a series of unexpected situations that enabled a select few among the colonial subjects to bolster their authority at the expense—quite literally in some cases—of Paris.

The question of colonial territoriality, then, may be tied to that of the social order within the colony. While the Americas that Sacks studies experienced centuries of European settlement, this strip of the Levant by and large did not brook the same waves of European settlement. Instead, the political class that emerged in the few decades of the mandate was able to boost its position by co-opting the practices of power that the French sought to impose. The result was not a new or modern system of rule in any strict sense, but an intensification of existing patterns of behavior and the contradictions that they generated for the population and the high commission as well.

But if state power is circumstantial and contingent upon social relations, how was colonial state-space created and maintained as a distinct administrative unit? And in the context of a population divided on the question of colonial rule, what enabled the reproduction of colonial power relations? Answers to the above questions involve examining the interaction of the production of space with other institutions of statecraft. In keeping with Daniel Neep's contention that the production of space is "above all a practiced quality, an enactment of dynamic movement which creates space as it unfolds,"[87] it is possible to identify several practices that facilitated the production of space. For the purposes of this study, these institutions include urban design and the creation of public space; efforts of land reform and economic restructuring; municipal administration; and parliamentary elections. Underlying each of these institutions is the role of coercion in not only securing the obedience of dissident individuals, but also in re-shaping social relations.

[87] Neep, 2012, 118-119.

The chapters that follow offer greater insight into the ambiguities of power that proliferated in the age of imperialism. Chapter two reviews the theories of colonial administration through the lens of city planning. Although power in the age of imperialism has been seen along the dichotomy of direct and indirect colonial control, the resistance against the mandate that coalesced in North Lebanon discloses the role of informal politics in re-appropriating colonial designs. The dispatches from the chief French administrator reveal that the republic's efforts to re-orient the city of Tripoli around the high commission office, ironically, helped to concentrate anti-mandate sentiments and bolster competing forms of political mobilization and organization. This shifting landscape, combined with the failure of the station chief to consider the demands of protestors, contributed to the outbreak of violence and the heightening of tensions that continued to menace the high commission.

In a similar fashion, chapter three examines the ambiguities that the high commission confronted in response to its land reform policies. A discussion of different theories related to the production of space reveals that the arrival of European modes of discipline did not supplant existing practices of domination. As seen in the plains of Akkar, land reform did not accomplish the purported goal of returning the land to the peasants but increased the concentration of productive land held by the most unproductive segments of the population. In effect, what had long been considered as a feudal system of land tenure worsened under the mandate. By bankrolling the worst abusers in the countryside, Paris was not able to transform the countryside of Lebanon into a productive cotton field as expected. Instead, the effects of land tenure not only demoralized cultivators and exposed them to various forms of coercion, violence and intimidation, it made Paris more reliant on the new bureaucrats controlling the countryside and widened the gap between the French and the population.

Chapter four returns our attention to the city of Tripoli and the shifting landscapes of the north. On one level, it explores different theories related to the formation of a colonial

political, social and economic elite. Rather than a one-off event, the processes of elite formation precipitate new fields of contestation that have the potential to challenge and undermine imperial objectives. The experiences of late mandate Tripoli and its surrounding dependencies reveal the ambiguities of colonial institution building and the ways in which territoriality is socially mediated rather than geographically imposed. Namely, in the hope of neutralizing indifferent and hostile elements within the population, the agents of the high commission unsuccessfully tried to recruit members of the elite families of the city into the newly established bureaucracy that oversaw municipal affairs. Rather than bolster its authority, however, the new bureaucracy undermined the Quai d'Orsay. Informal patronage networks and acts of sabotage altered colonial designs and further marginalized the high commission from the population to the extent that the chain of command that the French had envisioned became upended. As a result, Paris became increasingly beholden to the Lebanese government.

Chapter five examines the unbundling of territoriality in the more conventional context of imperial rivalries. The contradictions of colonial rule become apparent upon considering the rationales and consequences of the parliamentary system that emerged from the 1926 constitution instituted by High Commissioner Henry de Jouvenel. Far from shoring up French rule, the legislature and executive office empowered informal politics and patronage networks. Over time, these maneuvers opened the door to foreign designs, which helped to facilitate France's ouster from the Levant. Considering the fallout of such practices from the perspective of South Lebanon will shed new light on the tumultuous years of 1940-1946. This capability of Lebanese officials and elites to re-appropriate colonial institutions designed to support France indicates the contradictions and shifting relations of power that underpinned colonial rule.

Finally, chapter six serves as the conclusion. In light of its political events, the post-colonial period in Lebanon does not appear as an epistemological break from the system of thought and practices of domination and resistance that reigned in the before. Instead, colonial governance planted the seeds of the institutional practices and informal networks that would eventually flourish such as excessive centralization, de-development and marginalization of the annexed territories, a culture of violence and intimidation, neo-patrimonialism and institutional mediation into the lives of citizens. In these ways, the formal as well as informal institutions that came into fruition during that mandate, typically in secret, persisted after independence.

II. Order on the Barricades: A Summary of French Designs of Urban Public Space in Syrian Tripoli

UNE SORTE DE BLOCUS

Le Comte Damien de Martel, the sixth High Commissioner of the French Republic for Syria and Lebanon, addressed his superiors in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in late November 1936 to describe the response of his office to a series of protests that had broken out in the city of Tripoli earlier that month. Demonstrations had reached a fever pitch as the residents rallied against the mandate and the agreement of the 1936 Franco-Lebanese treaty. The treaty would have further cemented the integration of the city into the state of Lebanon against the wishes of those who sought its attachment to the neighboring state of Syria. Explaining the success of the ongoing protests, the count cited the configuration of the city as an impediment to the strict surveillance and police presence that he desired. "Whereas Beirut was designed with large avenues in the heart of the city to, in part, facilitate circulation," de Martel explained, "the old quarters of Tripoli where the Muslims are grouped, present an inextricable labyrinth of narrow alleyways conducive to barricades where one cannot engage the public without great risk."[88]

How the count sought to ensure French political, economic and military pre-eminence in a region that his forces could not penetrate without great risk touches upon an aspect of power in the colonial state that this chapter examines. Rather than strength in numbers or of arms, or from some supposed cultural superiority, the centerpiece of de Martel's plan was a policy of transforming the layout of the city, like much of the Levant, to French advantage. A review of different theories of colonial governance will lay the groundwork for understanding the complexities of power that de Martel confronted. For, understanding debates around the nature of colonial rule and the native question will shed light on the practices of power in the colonial setting, and the ways in which these procedures were

[88] C460, Dossier Entitled Notes of Franco-Lebanese Treaty and Tripoli, MAE a/s incidents de Tripoli, 27 November 1936 page 2. Signed by DE MARTEL

challenged. This theoretical review will, in turn, be supplemented with a review of the changing history of the city of Tripoli from the establishment of the Mandate in 1920 up to the events of 1936. Ultimately, it can be seen that the predicament facing de Martel indicates that the reproduction of space in the colonial setting was not a function of the imposition of formal institutions of government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate the practices that underpinned this supposed new order. Rather than entrench imperial power, these practices transformed political contestation in ways that undermined the French mandate and precipitated unrest among the subject populations. Because territoriality was socially mediated rather than geographically imposed, the French administration failed to make inroads in the north.

For the tension that had built up in the Old City was a function of the shifting landscape of Tripoli. The French efforts to incorporate this area into the new order it had designed for the Levant faced a backlash, the epicenter of which was the area that had served as the frontlines of the crusades centuries before. To de Martel, the narrow and cluttered quarters of the Old City—including the nearby Citadel of Saint Gilles, located on the site of the crusader camp of Raymond IV, *Le Comte de Toulouse*— represented the past and those who clung to the proud history of Tripoli. This supposed labyrinth stood at odds with the logical order that the high commission sought to develop in the city, characterized by the infrastructure projects under construction to the west of the Old City in the neighborhood of al-Tall modeled on La Place de L'Étoile in Paris. Although the new landscape was underway, the high commission would discover in 1936 that however much the configuration of the city shifted to match Parisian designs, political power dwelled within the area that the French could not penetrate within the gates of the Old City. The predicament of de Martel would be to find a way to exert French influence in an area that his agency could not easily enter.

His solution relied upon the same strategies of administrative measures taken up by his predecessors in the high commission. Since the Old City represented an impenetrable labyrinth to his agents, de Martel had planned to reorient the land around a parallel cityscape that would effectively blockade the Old City. As de Martel went on to write, "it is because of this reason that a delegate of the high commission preferred to abstain from all active repression. Having established around the Old City *une sorte de blocus*, he was content with prohibiting access to the quarters where gunfire broke out."[89] Beyond a response to civil unrest, this blockade of sorts is representative of the predicament of French policy in Lebanon. For the delegates of Paris sought to redefine the very features of this city and overall landscape in order to control the flow of people and ideas.

In these ways, it can be seen that the French administration in Lebanon attempted to expand its rule in Tripoli through the build-up of a large bureaucracy designed to oversee social, economic and political affairs in the north, but also to establish a new relation of power beholden to the Quai d'Orsay. In addition to these formal structures of power, the French sought to reproduce their rule and consecrate their position through informal networks with emerging and traditional political bosses in the region. Although the French had sought to incorporate the Old City within its new landscape of Tripoli, in practice, however, the shifting configuration of the city animated unrest in the Old City and threatened to undermine France's position in the north, in general.

THEORIES OF COLONIAL RULE

In order to understand the predicament of the high commissioner, it is necessary to explore theories related to the exercise of power in the colonial setting. There are several ways to think of the exercise of power in the age of imperialism. First, Mahmood Mamdani posits colonial rule as a function of complementary practices of direct and indirect rule that

[89] *ibid.*

fragmented the colonial population.[90] In contrast, Benjamin Tobias Dodge characterizes power-relations with the British mandate of Iraq as a reflection of a myriad of perspectives within the colonial office over the best way to rule the colony.[91] Far from a uniform and coherent logic, he contends that the operation of power in the colonial state was a function of competing narratives about the subject population and derived from distinct institutional practices of domination. Still further, the scholarship of Jean-Francois Bayart on the African state offers insight into the ways in which patron-client relations underpinned practices of governance through the colonial and post-colonial experiences.[92]

Beyond the structural framework of colonial rule, it is also necessary to consider the informal politics and latent forces constitutive in power as well as resistance. The challenge with all three scholars is the complexity in determining the degree of agency between European colonial administrators, their native non-European colleagues, and the subject population. For either colonial control resulted from the imposition of European practices in the new world, or the failure of colonial administrators to penetrate into native societies dominated by supposedly tribal customs. Yet, as the French experience in Lebanon will disclose, these formal structures required what can be described as informal alliances and networks with new and traditional political bosses in the region. That is to say, the new relations of power that the French sought to impose through the formal structures of the bureaucracy depended on informal practices. Due to this contradiction that underpinned colonial statecraft, it can be seen that the reproduction of space in the colonial setting was not a function of the imposition of formal institutions of government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate the new bureaucracy. Informal

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[90] Mamdani, Mahmood. C*itizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. London: Fountain Publishers. 1996.
[91] Dodge, Benjamin Tobias. *Social Perceptions of State Formation: The British in Iraq, 1914-1932*. PhD Thesis: School of Oriental and African Studies, Department of Politics, 2002.
[92] Bayart, Jean-Francois. *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. London: Longman, 1993.

politics were not only the reification of the colonial state, but also a challenge to the maintenance of authority that created a legacy beyond the intentions of the metropole.

For Mamdani, the recruitment of the native population into the colonial bureaucracy is seen as the key to understanding the re-production of power. Implicit in his framework of analysis is the idea that the informal alliances of customary rule became institutionalized as a reinforcement of colonial rule in Africa. For, he argues that the organization of the colonial state in Africa developed in response to what he characterizes as the native question, the mechanisms that facilitated the rule of a small and foreign minority over the indigenous majority in the colony.[93] The answers to this question were two-fold and comprised a form of direct rule and a form of indirect rule. "In practice, direct rule," he contends, "meant the reintegration and domination of natives in the institutional context of semi-servile and semi-capitalist agrarian relations."[94] In this context, colonial populations under direct rule enjoyed no rights under the governing framework transposed from Europe onto the colony. In contrast, indirect rule offered a veneer of spatial and institutional autonomy to select native communities in which "tribal leadership was either selectively reconstituted as the hierarchy of the local state or freshly imposed where none had existed as in stateless societies."[95] By this, he refers to the supposedly autonomous tribal zones that were incorporated into the colonial hierarchy. As colonial regimes sought to overcome different forms of resistance to their rule, colonial governance evolved into competing claims of authority, Mamdani insists, in which direct rule reigned in the cities in the name of civil power and respect for minorities while indirect rule dominated the countryside under the notion of customary power and rural

[93] Mamdani, 1996, 16.
[94] Mamdani, 1996, 17.
[95] Mamdani, 1996, 17. He goes on to describe formal rule as centralized despotism and informal rule de-centralized despotism.

tradition.[96] Part of the rationale for the persistence of colonial governance was that it promised a form of limited autonomy for recognized "tribes" even as it sought to incorporate these communities into a colonial hierarchy overseen by the metropole. For him, colonial institution building does not indicate the erosion of colonial control under the impact of growing anti-colonial resistance, but signifies the evolution of a mode of power inherent in colonialism.

In contrast to the underlying despotic portrayal of the colonial state that Mamdani provides, Dodge sees the colonial state as a compendium of competing interests in his study of the British mandate of Iraq. His approach to understanding colonial statecraft relies upon considering the different perspectives of colonial administrators with regards to their views of direct and indirect rule. In contrast to representations of the all-knowing colonial gaze, he posits that, "the state, far from being a whole is better described as a collection of distinct institutional practices reified to give the illusion of political coherence."[97] With this framework of analysis in mind, the shift to indirect rule that Mamadani presents was less of an institutional eventuality than it was the outcome of shifting perspectives among colonial administrators. From his perspective, power emerges from the different perspectives of the colonists with regards to direct and indirect rule as well as from their opinions of the subject populations. In this manner, the institutions of the colonial state appear largely as a reflection of the metropole. At the same time, informal politics appear as an aberration of colonial governance protocols in which native agents emerge as either good or bad enforcers of social

[96] Mamdani, 1996, 18. His main argument is that power operated through decentralized despotic practices that were justified under colonialism. To the extent that pre-existing relations of power remained after the onset of European penetration, they were incorporated into the complimentary efforts of direct and indirect rule. In his words, "direct rule was the form of urban civil power. It was about the exclusion of natives from civil freedoms guaranteed to citizens in civil society. Indirect rule, however, signified a rural tribal authority. It was about incorporating natives into a state-enforced customary order." (Mamdani, 1996, 7, 24.) Anti-colonial resistance centered on expanding the freedoms of limited autonomy and, in the process, also acquired the tribalist tones of customary rule. After independence, the colonial regime of differentiation resembled institutionalized segregation, helping to sow the seeds of neo-patrimonialism across African states.
[97] Dodge, 2002, 8.

policies crafted outside of the colony. In this sense, agency largely rests with policy-makers motivated by political affairs outside of the colony. While Dodge presents the colonial sate as an incoherent collection of practices, power-relations within the colony are seen to have derived from the imposition of European practices of governance to the colony.

From a different perspective, Jean-Francois Bayart contends that patron-client relations underpinned colonial and post-colonial state in Africa. While his emphasis lies on African states, especially those in Francophone West-Africa, it remains helpful when considering the ramifications of French policy more broadly. For many of the colonial officers in Syria and Lebanon arrived there having previously served in different parts of Africa. The most notable example was the very man who decreed the State of Lebanon, General Henri Gouraud, a former colonial officer and administrator in West Africa and Morocco for twenty years prior to the onset of World War I. To Bayart, colonialism inaugurated a practice of institutional mediation in the lives of the native population and fostered the misuse of public office for personal interests. His notion of the politics of the belly, he contends, "can be applied more or less to any aspect of institutional mediation and to the 'situations' it engenders. It creates institutions itself in that it has directly contributed to excessive bureaucracy and bureaucratic structures."[98] From this perspective the exercise of power in the colonial setting was not the carbon copy of practices from the metropole. Instead, the attempt to transplant these practices created new networks of subordination and domination. In thinking about the exercise of power, Bayart writes that "an apparatus of control or domination or a line of dependence are not just what the government or imperialism want them to be, they are also what the actors, even if they are subordinate, make of them."[99] In this, he means that the reproduction of power enabled select individuals

[98] Bayart, 1993, xvii.
[99] Bayart, 1993, 37.

to acquire new forms of authority and status through access to colonial institutions of governance. Thus, Bayart describes the re-appropriation of colonial institutions as the fate of post-colonial Africa.[100]

A consideration of the contradictions between the expansion—or even creation—of customary tribal rule and the social and political hierarchies of colonialism highlights the emergence of a new nexus of power within colonial power relations. Namely, the bureaucracy served as a way to initiate colonial subjects within a new chain of command underpinned by informal politics that relied more upon personal privilege than practices of effective administration. This shadowy intrigue comprises the shadow state that Charles Tripp has described in his study of post-colonial Iraq as the "networks of associates, chains of patronage and clients, circles of exclusion and privilege emanating from the office and person of the president."[101] Rather than supplant tribal and customary links, public office strengthened these supposedly pre-modern affiliations and networks. The configuration of informal power stands counter to the procedures of the modern bureaucracy. In this sense, Tripp writes that the shadow state "stood behind all public state organizations, turning their hierarchies upside down and answering to a very different set of commands."[102] Instead of the bureaucracy disciplining the population into modern subjects, it coerced different segments of the population into patronage networks. For Tripp, at the core of the shadow state were "the men attached to the president through common regional background, family or tribal affiliation or tried-and-tested dedication to his personal service." Beyond this coterie that dominated the inner circle of privilege were "the networks of patronage and association that gave [these senior figures] weight" within the population.[103] In this way, public office

[100] Bayart, 1993, 260.
[101] Tripp, Charles. *A History of Iraq*. London: Cambridge UP, 2007, 259.
[102] Tripp, 2007, 259.
[103] Tripp, 2007, 259.

contributed to the proliferation of informal practices that linked different segments of the population to the state in various ways.

In contrast to Tripp, it can be argued that informal politics were not only a function of the operation of power following independence from imperial rule, but a legacy of colonial institution building. While Tripp sees the emergence of the shadow state as something that reinforced despotism after independence, when framed in the context of colonial rule this informal configuration appears as a more unstable force that tempered, if not altogether undermined, colonial rule. By transforming the intended relation of power within the bureaucracy, the shadow state created new situations that imperial agents would have to address to maintain their rule. As a function of the shift to indirect rule, the shadow state represents a strategy of domination that colonial agents employed to incorporate the subject population within a chain of command dominated by the metropole. Despite these colonial ambitions, the bureaucracy generated the unexpected consequence in which power was increasingly personalized and localized in the hands of the native officers who could exercise state power in swathes of the colony otherwise untouched by imperial rule. In this sense, the rise of informal politics indicates the limits of the colonial administration to penetrate the peripheries of the colony through its bureaucratic practices. Not only did informal politics serve the interests of the colonists, they contributed to the contestation of European encroachment, even by those who were entrusted to carry out its duties. Public office did not strengthen the rule of the colonial state as much as it contributed to the personalization of power in the hands of an ambitious few at the expense of the majority. The challenge in considering the colonial state, then, is to not focus solely on French policy, but also to think about the responses of colonial subjects to this general policy and its effects on power-relations. For, power was challenged and undermined through its very exercise. In these ways colonial management was not solely a function of the imposition of formal institutions of

government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate the practices that underpinned this supposed new order.

In the case of the French mandate in Lebanon, this potential to undermine public office for private benefit created the unexpected scenario in which informal practices flourished despite the attempts of Paris to centralize authority. On the one hand, the French administration attempted to expand its rule through the build-up of a large bureaucracy designed to oversee social, economic and political affairs in the country, but also to establish among residents of the different territories brought together within the country a new relation of power according to a chain of command that extended from the remotest village to the Quai d'Orsay. These efforts resemble what Mahmoud Mamdani describes as indirect rule. The new modern bureaucracy would be anathema to the myriad of laws, statutes and religious interpretations that governed the now vanquished Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, there existed a series of unspoken (though well-documented) arrangements, understandings and intrigues on which French administrators relied to maintain order as they sought to extinguish other fires in the empire. Although the French had hoped to employ informal arrangements to strengthen the formal institutions of governance, in practice, the bureaucracy empowered informal networks to alter and, ultimately, undermine the efforts of the high commission to effectively administer the country. In this manner, it can be seen that the reproduction of space in the colonial setting was not a function of the imposition of formal institutions of government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate the practices that underpinned this supposed new order.

THE COLONIAL BLOCUS

A thorough examination of the colonial bureaucracy in Lebanon will reveal that the French did not seek to immediately eliminate competing representations of space. Instead, it sought to limit the reproduction of these competing claims through an array of practices that

comprise what can be described as the colonial *blocus*, the field where an array of actors compete to exercise power through the institutions of the state as well as to re-appropriate these same institutions to different and contradictory effect. In a literal sense, the colonial *blocus* indicates a blockade, in general, like the one that de Martel outlined to his superiors. In another sense, it represents an attempt to concentrate resources and institutional authority in a specific place and with specific individuals at the expense of others. Moreover, this binary relation carries within it the threat of violence and coercion. At the same time, it implies more than just institutional interference. It also describes the networks through which these same institutions are reconfigured through acts of political appeasement and resistance. This capacity to alter ostensibly fixed relations of power creates new opportunities for domination and subordination.

As mentioned previously, the maintenance of authority was underpinned by a number of formal and informal practices. First, the mandate established an immense bureaucratic structure to administer people and places. Second, it fostered a centralized vision of authority, more generally. Third, it cultivated a culture of strict surveillance. Fourth, it imagined all acts of resistance as nothing more than administrative concerns. In effect, this approach effectively depoliticized all political grievances. Fifth, it tacitly condoned the flourishing of informal political networks beside the formal offices of governance. Seen together, these trends illuminate the atmosphere of latent hostility that de Martel outlined in 1936. Before discussing the informal networks operative in mandate Lebanon, the formal structures of the bureaucracy will first be reviewed.

1. A Bureaucratic Logic

The largest tool of power and legacy of the French mandate in Lebanon was the systematic transformation of the bureaucratic structures that had previously governed the country. The French had intended to maintain its control through the establishment of a

centralized rational bureaucratic administration for its mandates in Syria and Lebanon. The scope of this transformation is best understood when considering the claims of American University of Beirut scholar Fuad Mufarrij when he wrote in his master's thesis that, "during the Ottoman times, the *vilayets* of Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo and the *sanjaks* of Mount Lebanon and Jerusalem were governed and administered [in 1914] by a total of 300 functionaries."[104] The vast area governed by this relatively small number of officials was on a different scale to the state of Lebanon in terms of total area and population. Yet, for a country no larger than the American state of New Jersey, Mufarrij goes on to say that "the mandatory power, for one reason or another, has chosen to institutionalize so many heads of states, ministers, parliaments and so on that the total number of functionaries in the different parts of Syria [the state of Greater Lebanon] natives included, has risen to about 4,000."[105] Mufarrij claimed that the bureaucracy for the roughly 800,000 inhabitants of Lebanon equaled the entire civil service for the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I.[106] The state of the bureaucracy is best summed up by Mufarrij when he wrote that "the inefficiency, the lack of interest and initiative on the part of native officials as well as the red tape resulting from this duplication of functions and this multiplication of state services is considerable and tends to break down the system altogether."

The composition of this bureaucracy was further shaped by the peculiarities of the French mandate. At the bottom of this bureaucratic hierarchy were the new Lebanese citizens

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[104] Mufarrij, Fuad. *Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate*. Master's Thesis: American University of Beirut, 1935, 218. The size of the Ottoman bureaucracy has been hard to confirm due to its various configurations in different territories. Still, it is safe to say that the size of the mandate administration was unprecedented.

[105] Mufarrij, 1935, 218. As further evidence, by 1927, ten years prior to the period in which Mufarrij completed his thesis, records of the Mandate budget lists the number of civilian personnel at 3749 according to charts presented in Grassmuck, George and Salibi, Kamal. *A Manuel of Lebanese Administration*. Beirut: Catholic Press, 1955, 6.

[106] Murfarrij, 1935, 218. In the words of Mufarrij, "the commissariat alone has as many employees as existed in the whole land before the Great War." In comparison, the author states that Mt. Lebanon, prior to becoming the center of the new state decreed by Gouraud, had a civil service of 13 individuals in total, including a single mutessarif (translated by the author as a governor), a secretary and treasurer in addition to a ten-member council. Mufarrij, 1935, 345. See the appendix for population estimates.

of the mandate. This reflected a semblance of native rule that was in sharp contrast to the direct rule of the British in Mandate Palestine.[107] Atop the Lebanese bureaucracy sat the French advisors, representatives of the high commissioner who advised Lebanese officials and largely came from the corps of seasoned colonial bureaucrats from diverse parts of the empire. Despite the overtures to native rule, the rank and file members of the civil administration were often at the mercy of more senior officials from France, or in the words of Mufarrij, "whenever such a conflict [between advisor and local civil servants occurred] the point of view of the adviser has prevailed and the dissenting native transferred to another post or rejected out of the service altogether."[108] Estimates of the number of French officials within the high commission ranged from 300-400 individuals during the mandate years.[109]

Despite their authority, "experience has shown that the mandate formula has many inconveniences," as Paul Gassouin, a senior mandate official, records in a letter circulated within the high commission.[110] In the document, Gassouin outlines two forms of control exercised by the mandate: the office of *le haut commissariat* and the diverse French counselors beside the Lebanese government. Although these two arms of power were supposed to maintain the French position, it was often felt among Lebanese public opinion and even colonial officers that, in the words of Gassouin, "the high commission was preoccupied with Syria rather that Lebanon, leaving the counselors in charge of national affairs."[111] This preoccupation with the turbulent affairs in Syria often left the administrative counselors with, if not total influence, then a considerable scope of authority. Finally, one should remember that although the size of the bureaucracy was large, it did not guarantee

[107] Mufarrij, 1935, 329.
[108] Mufarrij, 1935, 219.
[109] Longrigg, Stephen Hemsley. *Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate*. Beirut: Libraire du Liban. 1968. 260.
[110] C463, HCF, Note sur la reforme éventuelle de la constitution du Liban et sur les principes de la collaboration Franco-Libanaise après le mise en vaguer du traite. pg 11 by M. Paul Gassouin. While the report is undated, it likely was written in the late summer of 1939 due to its proximity to files dated from this period and as well as mentioning of 20 years of protests that had begun in 1939. This letter will be further discussed in chapter five.
[111] *ibid*.

complete power. Given priorities elsewhere, Lebanon was often at the margins of official concerns, and the annexed territories at the margin of the margins. This status, then, gave colonial administrators an undefined status, or as Gassouin states, "the French counselors who are at the service of the Lebanese government, lack authority; as their name indicates, they offer their 'counsel,' but often they cannot do anything else and are not always heard."[112] As administrative control was often checked, the French established other instruments of power.

2. A Centralized Vision of Power

The second trend is a centralized vision of power to reinforce social hierarchy. The mandate administration sought to concentrate power and resources within the new state in order to ensure the pre-eminent position of Paris in all local affairs. The Quai d'Orsay attempted to create this hierarchy through a divide and conquer policy that supported a class of political leaders who would be loyal to its authority at the expense of the majority marginalized from authority. In this manner, the colonial *blocus* represents an effort to re-organize a political bloc through privileged access to state resources and offices. The result of this policy was the establishment of clear lines of social stratification, at the bottom of which were the majority of inhabitants. In this manner, state-building exercises in Lebanon did not reflect an attempt to empower citizens as the mandate charter indicated, or to create new forms of subjects or build an imagined community. Instead, such exercises were designed to prevent linkages between individuals and communities.

French designs are laid bare in internal notes from June 1920 regarding proposals to reorganize the Jabal Amil region of South Lebanon in order to create a diversion from unrest in parts of the country, or as the writer explains, to prevent "the docile Shiites from rallying

[112] *ibid.*

around the Syrian re-unification calls from Damascus."[113] The official suggests bringing together local leaders in order to promise them a limited autonomy in a sort of *"foyer nationale"* zone of independence in exchange for their support of the mandate. [114] Despite this overture to native rule, in reality, this official says,

> The goals that I hope to attain are simply to bring a diversion to the current situation, to break the accord that reigns between the Shi'a to our disadvantage, and to remove from the east zone an organized center in order to show the Jabal Amil that if we are to take concern with its future status, it is because we have the firm intention of staying.[115]

Besides occupying the land of the Jabal Amil, the intention of the French High Commission was to break up the unity among the inhabitants of Syria and Lebanon in order to bolster the authority of Paris. In this manner, it can be seen that implicit in the idea of state formation was a vision of centralized social hierarchies.

3. A Culture of Surveillance

The third trend in colonial politics was the culture of surveillance. The colonial blocus contains punitive measures to restrict and monitor individuals and the spaces they occupy. As Martin Thomas comments in his study of French imperial intelligence, "political policing and intelligence gathering were driven by a recognition of the limits of colonial state power in societies governed through uneasy clientage and elite cooption."[116] In other words, the heavy security presence indicates the degree to which the threat of force remained ever present for residents now policed in their own communities. The security and surveillance presence served as another tool to maintain social hierarchy. Rather than a sign of strength, the security apparatus reflects a limit of French control. As Thomas goes on to say, "the colonial environment in which the British and French security services operated was, in and

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[113] C1553.HCF, Projet d'organisation du Djabel Amel: Manœuvres politique a entreprendre pour obtenir un dérivatif a la situation actuelle" 30 June 1920. pg.4. The writer may have been Henri Gouraud, himself.
[114] *ibid*.
[115] *op. cit.*, 5.
[116] Thomas, Martin. *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914.*, Berkeley: U California P, 2008, 294.

of itself, the principal barrier to their success."[117] The pressures to maintain law and order in an atmosphere of hostility to colonial rule remained constant throughout the mandate. Indeed, the numerous files of the offices of the Sûreté Générale and Renseignements Généraux reviewed in this study attests to the difficulties that the French encountered in this regard. Given that the break up of Syria and Lebanon was designed to prevent unified opposition to French rule, the French were constantly jostling to secure the area.

Within days of establishing the state, one of the first decrees of Gouraud was the imposition of martial law, which would reign for more than four years until January 1925.[118] Next, he ordered the dissolution of the Ottoman gendarmerie and police forces in Syria and Lebanon.[119] In its place, he organized an extensive military and police force.[120] Moreover, this control was bolstered as the French banned the use of firearms within the country.[121] In addition, within the new bureaucracy, the new ministry of the interior commanded the largest concentration of staff and money. It formed over 48% of the civil administration with its personnel of 1,802 individuals, of which 1,382 served in the gendarmerie and 347 in the police.[122] As the numbers indicate, the preponderance of capital and labor invested in the Lebanese state was concentrated on security. For, 1 in 3 members of this vast bureaucracy served in either the military or police forces. As half of the budget was under the control of the ministry of finance, the ministry of the interior received a third of the remaining credits.[123] In such circumstances, individuals hostile to the political regime became captive in their own homes, under the thumb of military and police supervision. In addition, among the

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[117] Thomas, 2008, 294
[118] Mufarrij, 1935, 328.
[119] Arrêté No. 364. 20 September 1920. C1 Lebanese Archives
[120] Arrêté No. 366. 22 September 1920. C1 Lebanese Archives
[121] Arrêté No. 121 10 November 1920 and Arrêté No.130 10 November 1920. Lebanese Archives.
[122] Reprinted in Grassmuck and Salibi,1964, 7.
[123] Of the total budget of 1,219,270 Syro-Lebanese (LS) Pounds, a sum of 589,633 LS Pounds was allocated to the control of the ministry of finance or about 48.35% of the total budget. Of the remaining 629,637 LS Pounds, a sum of 234,833 LS Pounds was allocated to the ministry of the interior, or 37.30% of the total budget. The majority of this sum went to wages. Grassmuck and Salibi,1964, 7.

military personnel were a number of servicemen brought from other areas of the French Empire. Of these men Mufarrij wrote, "the regular troops are composed as is officially concerned, of a majority of Africans, more than half of whom are black semi-savage Senegalese."[124] Whatever the veracity of his comments, its harsh tone bore witness to the tension between residents and troops.

The intelligence apparatus that the mandate built was modeled on infrastructure that developed in other parts of the empire. Historically, the French secret service held close links to military intelligence, the most notable example being the Dreyfuss affair.[125] In particular, the intelligence structures that developed in the Levant came from North Africa and recruited many agents and political officers who had worked in Morocco. This structure included a network of informants and allies and manifested both civilian and military aspects in the police and gendarmerie.[126] As historian Meir Zamir contends in one of his volumes on the French mandate, the intelligence apparatus modeled other aspects of the bureaucracy in that it was "well structured and heavily bureaucratic, and tended to gather copious amounts of raw data and issues a large number of intelligence reports."[127] In these ways, the Deuxième Bureau headquartered in Beirut resembled the office of the same name in Paris.[128]

4. Depoliticizing of Political Grievances

As subsequent chapters will indicate, a recurring idea among the classified files of the high commission was the fourth trend, the notion held among French officials that essentially political problems and grievances could be addressed through civilian measures and reshuffling. The construction of the bureaucracy substantiated this idea, almost as if the

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[124] Mufarrij, 1935, 277-278.
[125] Zamir, *The Secret Anglo French War in the Middle East,* London: Routledge, 2015, 54-55. Despite these links, Zamir argues that, unlike Whitehall and its behavior in Russia, the Quai d'Orsay was historically hostile to using intelligence agencies in foreign affairs.
[126] Zamir, 2015, 55-56.
[127] Zamir, 2015, 55.
[128] Zamir, 2015, 56.

French administrators had complete faith that the bureaucracy could touch any aspect or subject within the new political society. In this way, the colonial *blocus* describes a type of fixation that blocks alternative ideas and possibilities. In the absence of a political alternative, French administrators assumed that they could manage political grievances through carrot and stick policies. On the one hand, the commissariat offered privileged access to resources to those who would support their notion that the ongoing demonstrations against the regime were the manifestation of poor municipal administration. As will be discussed in greater detail later, classified letters show an exchange between the high commission and the notables of North Lebanon arguing that the protests were in response to administrative concerns and not due to the political demands that de Martel had addressed to his superiors.[129] In turn, those individuals who supported this narrative received rewards and political support. On the other hand, the French resorted to punitive measures against those who dissented to its rule like the blockade that de Martel explained. Either way, there was the belief that the inhabitants of the Levant were stuck with the system that the French dictated. Even as administrative reform was seen as the panacea for a myriad of issues, the French broached this possibility as a negotiating chip with local leaders in order to gain the consent of the population. The French believed that their word was final and therefore, their designs had to become reality. As a result, this approach dismissed regional political rivalries, contestation to the French regime as well as the Syrian nationalist movement.

Indeed, this was the attitude of de Martel. Amid talks in Paris to cede North Lebanon and the Bekaa to Syria, de Martel insisted in a 1936 communiqué that the protests in Tripoli could be contained vis-à-vis negotiations with Lebanese politicians. Describing the actions of Sunni leader Riad el-Solh, de Martel said,

[129] C460 Secrétaire Générale No. 8566, Letter of Dr. Bissar to HCF 26 October 1936

> The tactical error of Riad Solh is not to have understood that as a Lebanese, in the Franco-Lebanese negotiations, he could not take the same stance as in Paris when he supported the cause of the Syrians and that if the Muslim claims were to be defended in Beirut, it would have to be in the framework of Lebanon and not in the name of pan-Arabism.[130]

Amid the turmoil and ostensible negotiations for limited independence, de Martel dismissed the notion of altering the decree of Gouraud. For him, the rejection of popular claims for the (re-)attachment of the annexed territories to Syria was the basis of political negotiations. There was a desire to convey that people were stuck within the structure of the state. Eventually the French, themselves, believed this narrative as well. For instance, writing as late as 1939, officials assured one another that with regards to Tripoli, despite the twenty years of unrest in the city, "the imposition of a public works program would certainly suffice to make disappear the discontent that one observes from time to time in the Muslim city."[131] Even as French designs on the Levant were born of political calculations, there was the dogged insistence that resistance to these plans was not political; but a response to poor implementation.

5. Informal Politics

The counterpoint to this extensive system of bureaucracy and oversight was the reliance on informal politics. Seemingly in contradiction to the rigid French system of oversight and centralization, informal networks flourished in the time of the mandate. The primary reason for this, as discussed previously, was that the mandate prioritized the tumultuous affairs in Syria to the extent of marginalizing and ignoring matters in Lebanon. So despite this large unprecedented bureaucracy, relations were often precarious. As Gassouin describes,

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[130] C460, Dossier Entitled Notes of Franco-Lebanese Treaty and Tripoli, MAEa/s incidents de Tripoli, 27 November 1936 page 2 SIGNED BY DE MARTEL. Solh would become a future prime minister in post-independence Lebanon. His role will be discussed in the afterward.

[131] C463, HCF, Note sur la reforme éventuelle de la constitution du Liban et sur les principes de la collaboration Franco-Libanaise après le mise en vaguer du traite. Page 5

> Their [the counselors'] *rapports* with the high commission are poorly defined. In principle, the mandate administration cannot give, officially, any written directive. In actuality, the action of the mandatory power is exercised primarily through oral communications, be it between counselors, leaders or and members of the government. All of this is surely empirical and our respect for Lebanese sovereignty diverts us, very often, from insisting on certain necessary reforms or from making the Lebanese government implement indispensable initiatives.[132]

In effect, Gassouin confesses the limits of the French mandate. First, given priorities elsewhere, power generally rested within these tenuous arrangements and understandings between the notables and counselors. Second, this alliance was generally an unwritten understanding that ignored the formalities of mandate rule. Third, implicit within this understanding was that the French were either unable to implement reforms, or, at worst, turned a blind eye to the political troubles that concerned their allies. Gassouin concludes his statement with the ominous assurance that, "it is this collaboration [assembly of notables—general French counselors] that will ensure effective French control of Lebanon and that will allow them to benefit from our experience in all domains."[133] While the mandate administration built up a bureaucracy unprecedented in its size, equipped with large amounts of cash and staff, and in possession of the potential to mediate the lives of residents, the task of running the country still relied upon unwritten rules between a select few.

In sum, the colonial *blocus* refers to both the formal and informal means through which the French planned to secure and expand their control, as well as the myriad practices that emerged from the inherent contradictions within this system of thought. It was through this institutional mediation that informal politics proliferated and adherence to French rule eroded. The transformation of power-relations did not necessarily empower the French. Instead, it only added to the number of unexpected situations that they would have to confront in the annexed territories. Because only the high commissioner could give written

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[132] *op. cit.*, 11-12.
[133] *op. cit.*,, 14

directives and the majority of officials within the high commission relied on oral communications with Lebanese notables of influence, informal politics had *carte blanche* to proliferate within Lebanon. The struggle of Paris to halt expanding inequality will reveal the contradictions and limits of its authority. The French clung to its blueprint even as informal politics expanded. Beyond the vocal resistance to the mandate, there existed the potential to undermine its institutions from within. In particular, disgruntled administrators could sabotage the rigid French system of centralization by neglecting their duties or interfering with municipal affairs. In these ways, the plethora of written rules, regulations and decrees served as a cover for an array of unwritten and top secret practices. As French officials confronted the consequences of these practices, the contradictions and restrictions that the French administration encountered in colonial Lebanon became manifest.

Contradictions and Constraints

Yet, as the case of Tripoli indicated to de Martel, the borders within the Levant were never secure. Beyond the very real threat of organized armed resistance, the imposition of this system of thought was based upon a series of inherent contradictions that would, ultimately, undermine French rule over the course of the mandate. The first contradiction was the notion that the gradual breakdown of the resistance would in turn bolster French authority. The high commission had a zero-sum understanding of power in which the weakening an enemy or potential adversary would, in turn, bolster its own authority. The dissolution of the Ottoman gendarmerie, the disarmament of inhabitants within the new state, and the arrest of protest leaders in Tripoli all contributed to this understanding that the marginalization of organized opposition to the mandate would strengthen French rule. Yet, as will be seen, the reliance on informal politics generated unintended situations that successive French high commissioners would struggle to confront. Indeed, even as these challenges arose, the French still adhered to this original strategy of blockade and administrative

penetration of the annexed territories. It was with this strategy in mind that Paris assumed it would be able to both weaken opposition to its rule as well as strengthen its own presence within the region.

The second contradiction within French policy concerned the duality of time. The French sought to consecrate a permanent position in the region through a reliance on temporary, provisional alliances and intrigues. Underpinning this plan would be the men and women of influence that the French worked with, who, it was believed or assumed, would eventually fall in line with the system of centralized control that the French preferred. In other words, the hope of the high commission was that these initial unspoken informal arrangements would disappear once the French were in a better position to consolidate their control. In terms of theories of space, the initial phase of French policy resembled a more critical geo-political strategy of managing a given locality. The creation of the state would help to cultivate new relations of power that would serve as the bedrock of political affairs within the mandate. The second phase, in contrast, would involve a more territorial approach to transforming the ways in which people think of space. Over time, the French would have such a large presence in the region that their control would be considered as the natural order. At this later point, they would be able to exert power over the ways in which all—both ruler and ruled—conceived of the annexed territories.

The third contradiction involved another transition that the French tried to implement, the eventual shift from a reliance on the use of force to administer the region to the bureaucracy. Even though French presence in the Levant came about through military occupation and the subsequent imposition of martial law in 1918, Paris hoped that the use of force would no longer be necessary to enforce its territorial vision of the Levant once it was able to consolidate its bureaucracy. Until this consolidation, the French dealt with opposition to its rule through detention, arrest, surveillance and the force of arms. In practice, however,

the transition from military to administrative rule would not be as simple as the Quai d'Orsay had assumed. As the case of the 1936 general strike and riots in Tripoli indicated, the borders within Lebanon were never secure. The threat of armed resistance lingered as the gendarmerie, police and soldiers remained sitting ducks whenever they tried to enter the Old City of Tripoli. As a result, the reliance on the security apparatus never abated. To the contrary, as long as officials within the Lebanese government knew that they could call on the high commission to send soldiers to thwart opposition within the annexed territories, there was no incentive to create a more effective bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the potential loss of life for both mandate agents and civilians was easier for Lebanese politicians to accept than conceding to the grievances of the resistance. In these ways, the bureaucracy that the French created was never too effective despite its size and largesse.

Despite these limitations, French officials by far were loath to admit the contradictions within their policies. Instead it was much easier to admonish supposed bad apples for failing to fall in line with what they considered the most rational and best-suited policies. With others responsible for these deficiencies, the delegates of Paris could continue to apply the same frame of thought that yielded setback after setback. And as long as there existed someone else to blame, then there was never a need to reflect on the inherent contradictions and limitations of French policy in the Levant.

UNE ATMOSPHERE D'HOSTILITÉ LATENTE

To understand the political complexities that developed in the course of the exercise of power during the mandate, it is necessary to return to the terrain where de Martel encountered his troubles in 1936. It was in the city of Tripoli that de Martel would recount to his superiors the atmosphere of latent hostility to the French mandate. Ancient Phoenician city, crusader town, center of Islamic scholarship and original Ottoman province, Tripoli would undergo a series of transformations over the course of the eighteenth, nineteenth and

twentieth centuries concomitant with the shifting fortunes of the empire and world, at large. Ultimately, the unrest that the count described was the fallout from its latest transformation. Upon its annexation into the state of Greater Lebanon in 1920, French rule transformed Tripoli from the administrative center of an Ottoman *sanjak* and crossroads for trade routes stretching from the Eastern Mediterranean to the hinterlands of Syria into a medium-sized second city in the new state deprived of its historic dependencies. The clashes that broke out amid the 1936 general strike were part of a popular campaign to bring pressure on the mandate authorities to (re)unify Tripoli with neighboring Syria, thereby threatening the territorial integrity of Lebanon. Not only did this unrest challenge the composition of the new state, it also called into question the long-standing French policies that had underpinned state-formation in the Levant.

Despite efforts to incorporate the city within the national bureaucratic hierarchy, there remained in Tripoli a nexus of power recalcitrant to the mandate that was, ironically, strengthened by the reforms decreed from Paris. It was within this sphere that the protests had raged for over three days until the high commissioner was able to break up the strike. In this manner, the shifting landscape of Tripoli reflects the different political currents vying for power in the north. On the one hand, the French administration continued or accelerated long-standing trends designed to re-orient Tripoli around a Western influence, in this case centered around the newly remodeled civil administration building housing the delegate of the high commissioner. Paris had hoped to break ground on the vacant lots that surrounded the old quarters and connect them to other neighborhoods so that all roads in the city would lead to the new administration building. This plan would be the culmination of a series of urban transformations that had occurred in this part of the Levant for over two centuries, which would inaugurate a new order for the region. On the other hand, threatening this new order was the apparent disorder that now emanated from the Old City of Tripoli. Much to the

surprise of de Martel and his delegates, the persistence of the clashes in Tripoli disclosed that the new configuration fostered opposition to the regime into a single, concentrated area. In lieu of the modern administration building, power was reproduced within the gates of the Old City to strengthen the protest movement at the expense of the mandate administration. Under threat of canon fire from higher ground, the civil administration was unable to make inroads into the population protected by the layout of the medieval city. If the French regime harbored any hope of surviving this threat, then it would have to find a way to penetrate the labyrinth of intrigue that it saw within the gates of Syrian Tripoli.

A review of the history of Tripoli under the Ottoman Empire will elucidate the transformations that occurred in the Levant in the lead up to WWI as well as the scope of reforms instituted by the mandate regime. Upon understanding the shifting landscape of the Levant, the contradictions and shortcomings of mandate policy will become clear. Ultimately, this historical overview will disclose the ways in which French designs for Tripoli strengthened informal politics, which undermined effective administration. In this manner, the experience of 1936 Tripoli strike reveals that power did not center around the buildup of mandate institutions, but involved the old configuration of power that had animated political energies.

A History of Tripoli

The city that de Martel described had recently been designated as the capital of the Sanjak of Tripoli in the Ottoman Empire. It consisted of two parts, the oldest being the area clustered around the harbor, known as al-Mina, previously the site of the ancient Phoenician city of Tripoli.[134] As the area witnessed raids, invasions and occupations by different conquering armies, the ancient Phoenician city would be destroyed time and again.

[134] See Gulick, John. *Tripoli: A Modern Arab City*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967, 14-25. The *sanjak* was also known as a *liwa*.

Eventually, the residents of the area would regroup to form the Old City of Tripoli further inland, creating by the Middle Ages a prosperous city of narrow streets and alleyways.[135] Cutting through the two parts was a river, known locally as the Abou Ali, along which ran small houses and settlements as the water flowed into the Mediterranean. Surrounding the city were the dependencies of the Ottoman *sanjak*. After 1888, this *sanjak*, in turn, was part of the larger administrative district within the Vilayet of Beirut that stretched along the eastern Mediterranean from Nablus and Haifa, to Latakia in modern day Palestine, Israel and Syria, respectively. To the north of the city was its historic dependencies known as Alawite country and the Sanjak of Latakia. To the west of the city was the Mediterranean and to the east the Sanjak of Hama in the Vilayet of Damascus. To the south, however, was a different entity. Nestled between Tripoli and Beirut was the independent Mutessarif of Mt. Lebanon, home to the Maronite Christian and Muslim Druze religious communities based around the Mt. Lebanon range and governed by a separate legal entity, known as the *mutessarif*.[136]

While the French would institute efforts to change the landscape in 1918, the city had recently undergone a series of transformations initiated during the European encroachment of the eastern Mediterranean and the *Tanzimat* period of Ottoman reforms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These changes contributed to the declining fortunes of the city that the British and later French would occupy beginning in 1918. Although Tripoli had been one of the original provinces of the Ottoman Empire upon the defeat of the Mamluks rulers in 1516, its fortunes eventually changed. [137] Its regional importance waned as the bustling cities of Homs and Hama were transferred from Tripoli's jurisdiction to that of Damascus in 1725 during political disputes with the rulers of Mt. Lebanon.[138] In addition, as Paris cultivated

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[135] Gulick, 1967, 14 .
[136] Mutessarif is also transliterated as *mutassarif* and *mutasarif*.
[137] Saliba, Nada. *The Urban History of Tripoli during the French Mandate, 1920-1943.* PhD Thesis: SOAS, Department of History, June 2016. 19.
[138] Reilly, James. *The Ottoman Cities of Lebanon.* London: IB Tauris, 2016.,125

commercial and cultural links with the Christian rulers within Mt. Lebanon during the nineteenth century, Tripoli's commercial influence further dimmed.[139] Worse was to come in 1888 when Ottoman reformers demoted Tripoli's status from a *vilayet* province to that of a more minor *sanjak* within the dependencies of the new capital of Beirut.[140] Although somewhat *déclassé,* by the turn of the twentieth century, the city's reputation as a center of commerce possessing a formidable harbor and agricultural gardens attracted craft workers, sailors, fisherman, dockworkers, construction workers and agricultural laborers to find employment throughout the city. [141] The picture of Tripoli on the brink of WWI among circles of Ottoman officials was that of a falling star within the empire, rich in potential and flushed with substantial tax revenues, but home to a crumbling infrastructure, an underdeveloped municipality and idle leadership.[142] Such shortcomings exposed the city to the harsh realities of the Great War and the imperial designs of its protagonists.

In several ways, the ravages of the WWI would leave their mark in Tripoli and its environs. By the declaration of war in July 1914 against the Entente powers, Ottoman officials had already instituted the mandatory conscription of all males, Muslim and non-Muslim, into the Ottoman army, thus shattering the family structures and social orders in the city.[143] The women, children and elderly left in the city, too, were exposed to the violence of the war. The great famine that brought death to neighboring Mt. Lebanon did not spare Tripoli and the Syrian hinterlands. According to urban historian of Tripoli Nada Saliba,

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[139] Here Reilly builds upon the arguments put forth in the scholarship of Lebanese historian Masud Dahir. Reilly, 2016133.
[140] Saliba, 2016, 27.
[141] Reilly, 2016, 16. The city's industries is also discussed in Saliba, 2016 and Gulick, 1967.
[142] Reilly, 2016, 115. Here Reilly builds upon the 1916 report of the Arab Ottoman officials Tamimi and Batijat entitled Wilayet Beirut, commissioned by the Grand Vizier and former administrator of Tripoli, Midhat Pasha. The overall picture that the authors portray is that of a city in decline, in need of further modernization efforts like much of the empire. Further details of the report will be mentioned later as it was cited in the dissertation of Saliba.
[143] Saliba, 2016, 105. Historian M. Talha Çicek writes that "forced conscription became a nightmare for Syrians," under the iron grip of military commander Ahmad Jamal Pasha in his study, *War and State Formation in Syria: Cemal Pasha's Governance during World War I*, London: Routledge, 2014, 30.

"toward the end of the war, the sight of corpses of children and beggars in Tripoli as well as Damascus, Beirut and Aleppo became commonplace."[144] Conservative estimates of the casualties of the famine range from 300,000 to 500,000 dead in Greater Syria, including 200,000 victims in what would become North Lebanon.[145] With railroad lines linking the city to the breadbasket of the Syrian interior suspended, food prices soared and poverty festered during the war.[146] Starvation became so dire that by 1918, according to dispatches from the German embassy, inhabitants resorted to murdering abducted children for their flesh, eating dead dogs lying in the streets, and in one case, a mother in Tripoli killed and consumed her own children.[147] At the same time, in 1918, the harbor of el-Mina suffered a blockade at the hands of the Entente forces from 25 August until Christmas Day 1918, triggering the closure of markets and the exodus of residents from the neighborhood to higher ground in the Old City.[148]

At the time of its incorporation into the state, Tripoli served as the second largest city in Lebanon behind the capital of Beirut. Although census information is unreliable given the hesitation of residents to participate in mandate institutions and the tenuous reach of the government, Tripoli was considered the most prominent Sunni Muslim city within the new

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[144] Çicek, 2014, 109.

[145] Schatkowsksi, Linda. "The Famine of 1915 in Greater Syria," *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honor of Albert Hourani*. Ed. Spagnolo. Reading: Ithaca Press, 1992, 229. Saliba, 2016, 109. For an analysis of the great famine in Ottoman Syria, see Çicek, 2014; Williams, Elizabeth, "Economy, Environment and Famine: World War I from the Perspective of the Syrian Interior," *Syria in World War I: Politics, Economy and Society*, Ed. M. Talha Çicek, London: Routledge, 2016. 150-168; al-Qattan, Najwa. "Fragments of Wartime Memories from Syria and Lebanon," *Syria in World War I: Politics, Economy and Society*, Ed. M. Talha Çicek, London: Routledge, 2016.130-149. Linda Schatkowsksi credits the following aspects to the famine: 1) the Entente blockade of the Mediterranean coast 2) the inadequacy of Ottoman supply strategy 3) deficient harvests and inclement weather 4) the diversion of grain supplies from Syria as punishment of the Arab revolt 5) the speculative frenzy of local grain merchants who hoarded food supplies 6) the callousness of German military officials in Syria 7) systematic hoarding. See. Schatkowsksi, 1992, 229-258.

[146] Saliba, 2016, 107.

[147] The notes of the German embassy official Hoffman in March 1918 are recounted in Çicek, 2014, 244. He writes that "in the first quarter of 1918, as a consequence of terrible starvation, the people began to resort to cannibalism. In February of the same year, in Syrian Tripoli, some children between the ages of 5 and 8 began to disappear…police managed to solve the mystery of the lost children. Their cooked bones and heads were found in a well in the house of two Maronite women from [presumably the Sanjak of Mt] Lebanon. The women had killed, cooked and eater the children to avoid starvation. The head of one of the children was still in the kitchen of the when the women were caught."

[148] Saliba, 2016, 106.

country.[149] As a result of this concentration of peoples, resistance to the French mandate was seen to have expressed a religious/sectarian tone as well. It is de Martel who writes that the majority Sunni residents of Tripoli resented what they saw as their subordination to the rule of Christians in Mt. Lebanon. Among these populations, unrest reached a point that the city became the center of anti-mandate protests in the region. On the one hand, residents resented their integration into the borders of Lebanon, still harboring hopes for the re-unification of Syria. As one petition of leading notables of the north to the high commission testifies,

> The zone of Tripoli-Akkar has been separated from Mother Syria against the will of its inhabitants. It does not recognize any convention that does not realize its attachment to Syria. It will continue its battle while trusting in the law and the nobility and equality of the French people until it has gained its national pact.[150]

Not only did nationalist sentiments animate unrest, there were also several popular grievances. Residents resented the administration of the city, its high tax rates, and the intermittent violence that erupted from clashes between demonstrators and the police.[151]

In an effort to cement their rule, the delegates of Paris attempted to make inroads into the population through the establishment of the bureaucracy. The symbol of this effort centered around plans to re-build the damaged administrative building first constructed by the Ottomans in the late 1880s. The initial construction of the *saraya* took place as a part of Ottoman reforms designed to modernize national affairs. In Tripoli, this initiative took the shape of a new administrative building and clock tower, the establishment of a tramway connecting different neighborhoods, as well as the construction of a railroad linking Tripoli

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[149] Opposition to the census is described in Saliba, 2016 and Atiyah, 1973. Population statistics come from Himadeh, Said. *Economic Organization of Syria*. Beirut: American Pres, 1936. Appendix 1 C-2, p410-411. A rough estimate of the total population of Tripoli, according to the census of 1921, was of 37,412 inhabitants while Beirut contained 94,432. Other estimates list the population of Beirut as 150,000. But for our purposes, this exact number is inconsequential. In terms of religious affiliation, the population of Tripoli-el Mina read as 36,000 Muslim, largely Sunni, and 9200 Christian. This number comes from the 1921 unofficial census of Lebanon reproduced in C460. HCF, La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, pg 1.

[150] C460 . DSG No. 3010. 14 Juin 1937. Nationalist petition of notables.

[151] C460. Letter of Dr. Abd al-Latif Bissar, Notable of Tripoli to HCF. HC Secrétaire Générale No. 8566. 26 November 1936.

to the city of Homs in the Syrian hinterlands.[152] Subsequent to these improvements, however, the war brought much damage in the city and the administrative building was in need of repair. This old administrative center would now house the delegates of the high commission installed to oversee municipal affairs in the city and in North Lebanon, in general, similar to the town halls in the cities of France. The French-sponsored administrative building would remain in the al-Tall neighborhood located amid the citrus orchards and barren strips of land that existed between the al-Mina neighborhood to the west and the Old City to the East.[153] To mark its territory, the high commission planned to build a public garden in the plaza across from the administrative building, which would surround the clock tower built there by the Ottomans.[154] From the administrative building to the clock tower and public gardens, all public life would soon revolve around this space that the French now occupied. Further proof of this new order would be the wide boulevards and avenues that the French planned to build which would connect the quarters of the Old City to Tall Square on one side and al-Mina on the other. [155] This creation of public space in the hitherto vacant lands was part of an effort to create a new nexus of power that could regulate the lives of inhabitants in the surrounding territory. Like the wide boulevards of the capital of Beirut, the new space under construction would enable the agents of the high commission to monitor and interfere in social, political and economic affairs—or as de Martel wrote in the letter already mentioned, "to engage the

[152] Salibia, 2016, 77.
[153] Saliba, 2016, 314-315. According to Saliba, urban planning began in earnest in 1929 under high commissioner Henri Ponsot and the French planner René Danger with the goals of connecting and improving roads between the new mandate headquarters in al-Tall and the existing neighborhoods as well as preserving the Old City and updating its infrastructure (Saliba, 2016, 259) Of course, there imperial designs underpinned the new cityscape. As Saliba goes on to write, the purpose of city planning was, "to establish order in the social and physical environment by further promoting the extension of the new city to the west at el-Mina." (Saliba, 2016, 260)
[154] Saliba, 2016, 315. The public gardens at al-Tall would be complete in 1924.
[155] Saliba, 2016, 314. The new roads would only be completed in the 1940s.

public."[156] In effect, the transformations that occurred in the new heart of Tripoli were reflected in the efforts to centralize authority in the country around Beirut and Mt. Lebanon.

Despite the intentions of Paris to transform al-Tall into La Place de L'Étoile, the construction of the new city strengthened opposition in the old quarters of the city against the mandate. Because the narrow alleyways and streets of the Old City stood as anathema to the Haussmannian developments in Tall Square, organized planning concentrated resistance to the mandate regime in the Old City, where protestors could find sanctuary in the mazes of streets that confounded the colonial gaze of the high commission. This apparent pocket of discontent continued to challenge these changing political developments. As one French administrator wrote, "Tripoli, a Muslim city, never ceased to protest since 1920 against its annexation to Lebanon."[157] By 1936, there had erupted 13 strikes during the years of the mandate, from 1919, 1923 and 1931 to 1936 in the city.[158]

Amid these developments, there emerged repeated disputes among Lebanese and French officials regarding the status of Tripoli and the Bekaa valley *vis-à-vis* Lebanon. In 1926 and again in 1932, eventual president and France's man in the Levant Emile Eddé broached the subject of ceding Tripoli and the Bekaa to the Syrian confederation.[159] In this regard Eddé was not motivated by the popular sentiments of the residents of Tripoli, but by the sectarian goal of removing Muslims from the new state and thereby maintaining a Christian majority within it. First, in April 1926, Eddé agreed with then High Commissioner Henri de Jouvenel to re-attach Tripoli and Akkar to Syria.[160] As proof of his support, Eddé

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[156] C460, Dossier Entitled Notes of Franco-Lebanese Treaty and Tripoli, MAE a/s incidents de Tripoli, 27 November 1936 page 2. Signed by DE MARTEL
[157] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, Pg 2
[158] *ibid.*
[159] The name of Emile Eddé is also rendered as Émile Eddé, Emile Eddé, 'Imil 'Iddih, etc.
[160] Zamir, Meir, "Emile Eddé and the Territorial Integrity of Lebanon, Middle Eastern Studies, 14:2 (May 1978), 233.

sent two hand-written notes to the Syrian President, who chose not to publish them.[161] Second, after the dissolution of his government, Eddé met with the new high commissioner Auguste Henri Ponsot to express his concerns that the mooted proposals of granting independence to Syria and supporting its admission to the League of Nations would animate the demands for union with Syria among the Muslim segments of the population.[162] Two years later, in 1932, Eddé penned a memorandum to the Quai d'Orsay in which he raised concerns that the recently completed census and parliamentary elections presaged the erosion of the Christian majority in the country and suggested the attachment of the Bekaa and Tripoli to Syria.[163]

By 1936, there were ongoing protests in February, March, June, July, September and October as well as a general strike in the city that November.[164] By this time, Tripoli remained among the last areas within the new country that the French had yet to penetrate, presumably due to its large population and concentration of people within the Old City. Stripped of its historic, the Old City became the last refuge for an array of anti-colonial forces and its acquiescence would likely have created a domino effect in the Levant. Without the city, the campaign to re-launch the old Ottoman Vilayet of Greater Syria into a nation-state would have been doomed. Because protestors could take cover within the higher ground and complex alleyways of the Old City that blended in with homes and businesses, the mandate regime was not able to exercise the practices of regulation under construction in al-Tall. As events will show, protestors against the regime were able to take advantage of the divisions that the French had imposed between the new city and the old one to reinforce and even fortify their positions against the regime.

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[161] Zamir, 1978, 233.
[162] Zamir, 1978, 233-234.
[163] Zamir, 1978,, 233.
[164] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, Pg 2

The 1936 Strike

The level of agitation and uncertainty that resulted from this milieu created what de Martel described to his superiors as *"une atmosphère d'hostilité latente,"* an atmosphere of latent hostility.[165] Since the state of Lebanon was constructed as a bulwark against Syrian nationalists, the struggle to retain Tripoli within the boundaries of Lebanon became a political field in the effort to maintain the imperial designs for the Levant. These overt and covert competing claims increased the pressures within the city. In one corner were internal pressures from demonstrators and leaders agitating for the re-attachment of the city to Syria. In addition, there existed international unrest in neighboring countries. Not only had Syrian nationalists created an even more hostile atmosphere against the French mandate, but also Turkish leaders appealed to the UN to recognize its competing claims to Syrian territories under the French mandate. Beyond the region, there were murmurs that French socialists agitating for power in upcoming French elections supported a Tripoli delegation to France that demanded reunification with Syria in 1936. Added to this were French imperial interests. The mandate had established a railroad as well as an oil pipeline from Iraq to the Mediterranean through Syria that ended in Tripoli.[166] Finally, there were military interests that the French had prepared.

As early as 1937, de Martel disclosed the strategic importance of Tripoli amid the threat of war. He insisted to the Minster of the Air force, that, "Tripoli is the only place in the Levant that, thanks to its proximity to a good airfield and unique *(highlighted in original)* usable water plan, is ready for the establishment of a base capable of receiving important

[165] C460, Dossier Entitled Notes of Franco-Lebanese Treaty and Tripoli, MAE a/s incidents de Tripoli, 27 November 1936 page 2 SIGNED BY DE MARTEL. He goes on to say that there emerged "an atmosphere of latent hostility that warrants a strict and severe surveillance."
[166] C 1542. Papiers de Martel. Au Sujet du problème Libanais. September 1933.

units of the Garde Aérienne to safeguard our imperial interests."[167] Among, then, the other concerns that kept de Martel interested in Tripoli were geo-strategic objectives. His statements laid bare the reality that the goal of the French mandate was neither liberty, fraternity nor equality for all, but the task of maintaining imperial order by any means. Concomitant with this internal pressure were turbulent developments in the region such as the 1936 Arab revolt and general strike against the British mandate in Palestine in addition to organize opposition to imperial rule in Egypt, Syria and Iraq.

Despite efforts of the mandate regime to establish law and order in the Levant, there remained the conundrum of the impenetrable labyrinthine alleyways of the Old City. By November 1936, the unrest from these competing claims had reached a fever pitch in the one area that the French could not penetrate, the Old City of Tripoli. What remained unabated was the overall hostility of the inhabitants to the mandate regime. Residents clung to the Syrian nationalist vision of a unified modern-nation state that comprised the territories of the historical Ottoman provinces of Greater Syria.

The latest spark of dissent was the news of the negotiation of the Franco-Lebanese treaty, brokered between the high commissioner and the Maronite President of Lebanon, Emile Eddé (1935-1941). If ratified on both sides, the treaty would have extended the French presence in the new state for another 25 years.[168] In response to this proposal, the city was closed by another general strike protest that would last for more than 33 days until November 27.[169] A copy of a telegram from earlier September protests outlined some of the grievances that protestors sought to address. It proclaimed that, "Tripoli closes in retaliation of acts of terror and assassination committed by the gendarmerie and the police who fired gunshots

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[167] C460, letter No. 442 au sujet de la question de Tripoli, 24 February 1937. Letter of De Martel to Le ministère de l'air. In his private papers, de Martel wrote that France could establish a military base in Tripoli in the event of war. C1542 au sujet du probleme Libanais, de Martel September 1933, 3.
[168] Hourani, Albert. Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay. London: Oxford UP, 1946. 200.
[169] C460. DSG No 4639. 27 November 1936. Pg. 1.

against defenseless inhabitants, including women and against children. We demand the punishment of those responsible." [170] The use of violence by the agents of the mandate only exacerbated tensions within the region and portended more hostility to come. Yet, added to this lists of grievances was the historical demand to reunify the Ottoman state of Greater Syria that had included Tripoli. For the letter of the demonstrators ends defiantly with, "the people of Tripoli will not cease from its demand for Syrian unity despite the terrorism."[171] Such social pressures only worsened later that autumn by November.

A review of the crisis in 1936 reveals the ways in which French administrators had overestimated the reach of the high commission to influence affairs in the north and underappreciated the possibilities of informal alliances within the Old City to menace the new order under construction. Recently de-classified diplomatic archives provide an account of the unrest that led up to anti-colonial riots in late November 1936 from the perspective of the highest ranking French official in Tripoli, Le Comte Charles Mercier du Paty de Clam, a figure we will meet again in chapters four and five. A scion of a military family, graduate of Saint Cyr military academy like Gouraud, and hero of WWI in his own right, the count then served as the French administrator of the north. On November 1, 1936, the count and acting army commander encountered on their drive to the new *saraya* in al-Tall a large procession of thousands in the streets carrying Syrian flags with the slogan '*vive l'unité syrienne, nous ne voulons pas être libanais*' and ran into a barricade erected by protestors.[172] On his orders, the native troops managed to restore order after a brisk exchange of gunfire and arrested around 16 demonstrators.[173] The following day, the count met with nationalist leaders who petitioned for the withdrawal of French military forces in return for the restoration of calm;

[170] C460, Delegue du HCF, Beyrouth, No. 7905 16 Sept 1936.
[171] C460, Delegue du HCF, Beyrouth, No. 7905 16 Sept 1936.
[172] Saliba, 2016, 157. This section of her thesis draws on diplomatic archives in Nantes, especially carton 460, probably the same cache of files reviewed by this author and cited in this dissertation.
[173] Saliba, 2016, 157.

and, in response, du Paty de Clam scoffed at these demands and dismissed these anti-colonial leaders, opting instead to maintain the curfew in the city from 6:00pm to 5:00am.[174] The count must have assumed these measures and the preponderant forces under his command sufficient to maintain law and order.

Two weeks later, however trouble would return, as a demonstration following Friday prayers in the Muslim quarter of West Beirut against the signing of the Franco-Lebanese Treaty festered into a riot, with automobiles and tram cars set alight and shops looted, prompting another crackdown, during which many people were arrested and over 100 injured.[175] A few days later, the unrest again reached the gates of the Old City. Only hours after another unsuccessful meeting with du Paty de Clam, a group of residents led some 300 demonstrators in a procession in Tripoli from the Great Mosque during which some members allegedly opened fire on plainclothes policemen without any provocation, prompting a series of reprisals between gendarmes and armed civilians in nearby houses.[176] By November 19, the city was gripped by riots. Amid skirmishes between protestors and agents of the Lebanese police and French gendarmerie, more shots were fired. In response, the attempts to apprehend the suspects of the killings led to more reprisals.[177] As violence shifted from the front lines of the strike to the heart of the Old City, more protestors took up arms and even set up artillery units.[178] As one French official in north Lebanon recounted in his notes on the riots, "the population was able to realize that by taking refuge in the inextricable maze of alleyways of the Old City, they could, without great risk, maintain their significant

[174] Saliba, 2016, 157. These leaders included previous rivalries among the leading families of the city such as Abd al-Hamid al-Karami, Dr. Bissar, Rached al-Muqaddim, and Gabriel Nahhas. Some of these individuals will be discussed later in chapter 4.
[175] Saliba, 2016. *157*.
[176] Saliba, 2016, 158
[177] C460, HCF No. 275. Conseiller administrative du Liban Nord.Pg. 3.
[178] *ibid*.

numbers."[179] The protestors took advantage of the divisions that the French had imposed between the new city and the old to reinforce and even fortify their positions against the regime. Once this series of demonstrations and suppressions turned violent, this ancient complexity became the security of protestors. As another report of these clashes went on to say that, "the rioters attacked troops with fire arms and bombs; also raising the barricades and digging trenches around the Old City."[180] The barriers that the French had erected between the city and its historic dependencies had not only failed once again to bring about order, it even contributed to more unrest.

Une Sorte de Blocus

These numerous activities to fortify these divisions suggest an organized resistance movement against the regime. Indeed, French informants within the Old City reported a campaign of organized activities to maintain the general strike. Several committees were formed to pursue the goals of the resistance campaign. These included a popular committee, a youth committee, a strike committee as well as a committee for the anti-mandate Syrian Nationalist Populist Party.[181] The proliferation of these committees indicated the discontent with the mandate. The success of the strike then owed as much to its popular support as well as to the physical landscape and artificial divides that concentrated this level of discontent within a single area.

As mandate officials described to de Martel, these natural and artificial divisions prohibited the French from successfully penetrating the area. One officer explained that, "it is extremely dangerous for troops to penetrate the 8 quarters of the city, where neither tanks nor

[179] C460. Delegation du HCF No 467/D. Note du conseiller administrative du Liban Nord. 8 Fbruary 1937.by du Paty de Clam
[180] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, Pg 2
[181] C460. DSG No. 4190. 13 November 1936. The party is also known as le Parti Populaire Syrienne, or PPS according to French initials, as well as the SSNP according to its English initials.

armored vehicles could operate, and where firearms are ineffective."[182] Not only did this landscape render the French preponderance of the use of force null, it also provided an advantage to protestors within the barricades who, according to officials, already, "had a month's experience of artillery use."[183] For, once the French soldiers and agents breached the divides to enter the Old City, they effectively became sitting ducks to the gunfire and artillery used by the resistance. As a result, then, Tripoli was effectively impregnable to the French forces. As the gateway to the north, Tripoli represented a major conundrum to the French. It could not be penetrated without the use of force that carried the threat of major casualties; yet the use of violence only served to radicalize the population already hostile to imperial rule.

Eventually, however, the revolt subsided after three days, taking the length of this general strike to 33 and ½ days in total.[184] It is likely that a number of factors contributed to the cessation of tensions including: the intervention of the city's notables who urged for peace and promised political negotiations with the Lebanese government and mandate authorities;[185] the arrest of the nationalist leaders who had organized the protest;[186] the threat of the continued imprisonment of the protest leaders, which forced residents to surrender their remaining firearms;[187] the arrival of further reinforcements of military vehicles, troops and Senegalese snipers from Beirut.[188] These multiple influences, then, enabled de Martel to assure his superiors in Paris that his office was able to extinguish the flames of unrest and

[182] C460. Note du conseiller administrative du Liban Nord. 8 February 1937. Delegation du HCF No 467. It is possible that this file was written by du Paty de Clam.
[183] *ibid*.
[184] C460, DSG No. 4659, 27 November 1936.
[185] *ibid*.
[186] *ibid*.
[187] C460. Delegation HCF No. 451. Copy of letter no. 29 du 6 February 1937 conseiller administrative du Liban Nord au sujet de la visite du président du conseil des ministres a Tripoli, Pg 2
[188] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, Pg 2. According to Saliba, upon the relinquishing of arms, French soldiers received 10 rifles, 30 caliber revolvers and 200 sticks of dynamite. As part of the agreement, 80 prisoners were released from custody on 7 December 1936, including Dr. Bissar and al-Karami. Saliba, 2016, 157.

bring about the return of law and order by reinforcing surveillance and the perimeter around the city.[189]

But even as the violence subsided, the threat of further conflict and discontent in the region persisted. In the words of du Paty de Clam, "nothing assures us that the separatists would not be supported indirectly by the Syrian government, open to supporting the campaign to reclaim Tripoli in compensation for the [loss of] Alexandretta."[190] Not only did the troubles in Tripoli carry the potential to affect internal political dynamics, they also threatened the even more delicate balance of powers in neighboring Syria. In effect, Tripoli represented the spark that could stretch throughout the region. Or following the administrator, "in this case, the movement, instead of being localized to the city, risks extending to the south and to Akkar and it could require political concessions to reduce this risk, like in 1926. In this case, the inconsequential politicians of the Lebanese government where," the count insists, "most of the members know nothing of the Tripoli problem, risks once again leading us into an adventure of which our soldiers will bear the brunt."[191] This potential loss of the annexed territories also threatened more violence. In total then, violence, hostility and social discord were ripe and the potential for more a possibility on the horizon.

CONCLUSION

The experiences in Tripoli show that however much the French had broken ground on its new designs for the annexed territories through its colonial civil service, gendarmerie, city planning, military bases, roads and imposition of martial law, the population could be mobilized through alternative processes. Beyond the reach of Paris were the capabilities to marshal general strikes including the closure of commercial markets, mass mobilizations

[189] C460, Dossier Entitled Notes of Franco-Lebanese Treaty and Tripoli, MAE a/s incidents de Tripoli, 27 November 1936 page 2. De Martel urged that Tripoli possessed "an atmosphere of latent hostility that warrants a strict and severe surveillance."
[190] C460. DHCF No 467/D. Note du conseiller administrative du Liban Nord, by du Paty de Clam. 8 February 1937.
[191] *ibid*. The French word *politique* could translate as politicians or politics. Both are applicable.

through the mosque, the force of arms like canon fire and higher ground. This contradiction between expectation and outcome shows the limits of colonial institutions to penetrate the region under its nominal authority. The consequence of these restrictions meant that the administration had to resort to the tactics of the anti-colonial movement, relying upon the use of force against a largely unarmed civilian population. This putative atmosphere of latent hostility against the regime stood behind the colonial apparatus. Not only did this atmosphere limit effective administration, it escalated political intrigue and the potential of more violence. By attempting to create a new and conspicuous order in this corner of the Levant, the French administration transformed the Old City of Tripoli into the site of disorder. While this configuration signaled to Paris the pressing need for constant vigilance and guard, it also created a new space of resistance around which anti-colonial and nationalist forces in Syria and Lebanon could organize.[192] As the practices that underpinned the new and the old, order and disorder, increasingly mirrored one another, the boundaries between the colonial and pre-colonial eroded and the capability to re-appropriate these competing institutions grew.

The implications of these issues challenge us to rethink the workings of power and resistance. What is clear at this stage is the precariousness of mandate rule. As de Martel wrote upon the assumption of his post in September 1933, "from the French point of view, Lebanon is the traditional center of our influence in the Levant. If we want in the future to continue to exert ourselves in the region, Lebanon will constitute the necessary base of this action in any domain where we intend to act."[193] The foundation of this base was anything

[192] This perspective of continuous appearance of order and disorder picks up on the political theories of Timothy Mitchell in his description of the construction of new Cairo in the period of British colonialism in Egypt and its consequence on the medieval layout of the city. Here he writes that, "as the process of control becomes a question of achieving the continuous appearance of structure or order, there suddenly appears an equally continuous threat, the problem of 'disorder.' Disorder now emerges as a natural and inevitable liability, requiring a constant vigilance. Disorder though, like order, is a notion produced in the distributive practices themselves, It is only now that it appears as an ever present threat." See Mitchell, Timothy, *Colonising Egypt,* London: University of California Press, 1991, 79-80. Mitchell's notion of disorder as a constant threat highlights the unpredictability of state power, always subject to threat of disorder.

[193] C1542. Papiers de Martel. Au Sujet du probleme Libanais. September 1933. 1.

but firm, but subject to competing claims. The success of de Martel and his office, as well as the future of Lebanon, would depend upon manifesting these designs and suppressing alternative claims prevalent in the annexed territories. "If the question of Tripoli and the Bekaa and South Lebanon finds itself opened," he warns, then, "the Syrians would also demand of us…the pure and simple return of pre-war Mt. Lebanon, an autonomous sanjak in the cadre of Syria, which would in effect remove the international status that it currently enjoys, and threaten its future status as a member of the League of Nations."[194] Given this threat to colonial order, the administration of the annexed territories was not a simple matter of municipal administration of neglected areas, but a political struggle to impose a certain vision of space conceived during martial law and imperial quest. Any loss of concession of these areas would have a snowball effect in an already turbulent region teeming with latent hostility.

As de Martel wrote in one of his typical fits of grandiloquence, "in effect, the reality or the fiction of Syrian independence, the possibility of *entente* between the two countries, the probability of their future union, everything will depend on the Lebanon of tomorrow."[195] With regard to Tripoli, the Old City remained the center of opposition to French rule. Stripped of its dependencies and reduced in size, Tripoli remained a conundrum and potential challenge to the implementation of French policy. This political struggle would roil beyond the years of de Martel's tenure and beyond World War II, in fact. But by the end of November 1936, Tripoli was under greater surveillance, now encircled by Lebanese forces and the French army.[196] Amid the riots, five had died, 50 were injured and 76 arrested.[197]

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[194] *ibid*.
[195] C460, Dossier Entitled Notes of Franco-Lebanese Treaty and Tripoli, MAE a/s incidents de Tripoli, 27 November 1936 page 2 SIGNED BY DE MARTEL.
[196] C459 Petition of of Zeki Khatib, leader of the United National Front, to the French Foreign Ministry and UN. Pg. 120.
[197] C460. DSG No 4639. 27 November 1936. Pg. 2.

III. A Combination of Many Evils: Land Reform under the French Mandate

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY

"This region of Akkar remains more than ever faithful to the principle of Lebanese unity," writes the Sunni deputy of Akkar Muhammad Abboud in a letter to the undersecretary of state of the French foreign ministry in July 1936.[198] Despite the deputy's claim, his constituency had a more contested history than he would have cared to admit. Historically, the constituency that he represented was once a part of the Ottoman Sanjak of Tripoli and belonged to the narrow stretch of land along the Mediterranean coast toward the city of Tartus known (among the French anyway) as *le pays des alaouites*. At the time of Gouraud's 1920 decree of statehood, this Alawite country would be split into two and the southern portion incorporated into the northernmost region of the State of Greater Lebanon as the *qada* of Akkar. Regardless, the delegate sought to assure the Quai d'Orsay of the fidelity of his constituency to Paris, no matter the goings-on in nearby Tripoli and Syria. "In effect," he says, "the attachment of Tripoli cannot work without inevitably causing the attachment of Akkar given the geographical layout, and this would be completely against the aspirations of the people of Akkar who remain faithful to their Lebanese homeland."[199]

In different ways, not all of which are stated in the text, the letter of the deputy discloses the contradictions of the mandate's policy of land tenure and their direct and indirect consequences on the population. As the following pages will disclose, far from

[198] In the signed letter seen in the archives, the typed signature on the letter reads Mohamad Bey abd al-Razak. Instead of this spelling, I have adopted the one that appears in the study of Akkar composed by Michael Gilsenan. The delegate's father will be referred to as Abboud Bey and the delegate as Muhammad Abboud in order to avoid any confusion between the two men. See C460 letter of Mohamad bey abd al-razak to Sous-Secrétaire d'état 6 July 1936, 1 on the previous page. The anthropologist Michael Gilsenan offers a profile of father and son in his study of the village that the two men dominated in his study, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches* when he writes of the father, Abboud, "the Sunni representative, was a member for the North Lebanese governorate in the first representative assembly (1922-1925) set up by the French, and in the second assembly (1925-1926). He was a deputy in the first assembly of delegates (1927-1929) and in the second (1927-1932). His son Muhammad took his place as deputy in the third assembly (1934-1937) with an equally pro-French stance. Muhammad continued as the deputy in the fourth assembly (1937-1939) and in the fifth assembly (1943-1947) serving as minister for security in both." The deputy would also serve in parliament between 1947 and 1951 before losing his seat to a rival. Gilsenan, Michael. *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab society*, London: I.B. Tauris, Footnote 26, Page 357.

[199] *ibid*. The original reads les akkariens. Since there does not exist equivalent demonyms in English, the author avoids them wherever possible.

crumbling at the end of war, informal practices such as debt, coercion, intimidation and loan sharking reached their peak during and immediately after the French mandate through the turmoil of land reform and economic restructuring. A discussion of different theories related to colonial governance reveals that the arrival of European modes of discipline did not supplant existing practices of domination. As seen in the plains of Akkar, notorious for the culture of violence in a landscape teeming with exploitation across the Levant, land reform did not accomplish the purported goal of returning the land to the peasants but increased the concentration of productive land held by the most unproductive segments of the population. Much to the surprise of Paris, what had long been considered as a feudal and timeless system of land tenure persisted under mandate rule. By bankrolling the worst abusers in the countryside such as the delegate's family, the Quai d'Orsay was not able to transform the countryside of Lebanon into a cotton field and silk farms to rival the plains of the Nile in Egypt or the Mississippi Delta in the United States as it had expected. Instead, the effects of land tenure not only demoralized cultivators and exposed them to various forms of coercion, violence and upheaval, it also made France more reliant on the new bureaucrats controlling the countryside and widened the gap between the high commission and the population. In this latter sense, the context of the letter proves important. Composed in July 1936 five months before the series of protests and demonstrations against the mandate coalesced into armed revolt and canon fire in Tripoli, the letter illustrates that territoriality in the countryside was precariously enforced through social practices rather than the whims of Paris. Therefore, however much the agents of the administration were aware of the challenges that confronted the mandate, the policies of the Quai d'Orsay and its reactions to these policies effectively constrained the high commission from addressing such problems in a way that would have effectively curtailed the animosity and violence that eventually erupted.

While the ostensible purpose of the letter was to reassure Paris of the affinity of the delegate's constituents to the mandate, it nonetheless throws light on an array of contradictions and inconsistencies that, whatever his words, would continue to mount in an unstable region rife with calls for detachment.[200] Prior to the mandate, the hills and plains of Akkar belonged to a stretch of territory in the Levant infamous for its Bedouin raids and rivalries. Even by the 1920s, Akkar proved a battlefield for the mandate. The Great Arab Revolt of 1925-1927 against the French mandate spread from the Jabal Druze in Syria to Akkar where protests mounted in the village of Akrum. In response to clashes there, French forces applied a policy of collective punishment, laying assault to the village in attacks that left of 35 residents dead and another 65 imprisoned.[201] Despite this history of conflict, the delegate's letter offers a different narrative. In effect, the letter serves the same function as the description of the blockade of sorts around Tripoli described by de Martel to his bosses. It ought to come as no surprise, then, that the two letters were found in the same file in the French archives. For, the letter suggests that, because Akkar lies in between Tripoli and the Syrian frontier, the rootedness of its predominately farming population to the land would

[200] This declaration of fidelity to Paris must have appeared as a welcome relief for the Quai d'Orsay. At the time of its writing, the movement for the attachment of the annexed territories had gathered pace throughout the region. A citizen delegation of residents from Tripoli went to the League of Nations in order to bring a petition of 600 signatories calling for the reunion of the city with Syria in July 1933. (C411 DHCF cabinet politique 29 July 1933.) Meanwhile, organizing continued in the Levant, with campaigns launched against what the high commission deemed communist and Bolshevik groups in Tripoli from as far back as 1926. (C441 DHCF Rapport 22 Mai 1926 1) Such hopes were bolstered with the convening of the Conference of the Coast, which discussed the reunion of Syria and the annexed territories. (Traboulsi,2007 100) Outside of North Lebanon, the seeds of discontent had also bloomed into protest activities against the mandate. A series of press articles advocating for the reunification of the annexed territories with Syria between 1932 and 1934. (See C411 for the press reports on these articles.) In April 1936, a general strike emerged in the southern Lebanese towns of Sidon, Nabatiya, Bint Jubeil and Jabal Amil in reaction to the arrest and killing of unarmed civilians protesting against tobacco concessions to French monopolies and peaked with protestors calling for the attachment of South Lebanon to Syria. (C411 DCHF 21 April 1936, DHCF 2 April 1936. The 1934 protests are mentioned in chapter five. Such ideas had even spread to the high commission. Secret discussions between French administrators and Christian notable of Baalbek, Farid Bey Haraoui in 1932 raised the possibility for the reunification of Syria with the town of Baalbek in the Bekaa district of Lebanon. (C411 DHCF Rattachment de l'état de Syrie "Bekaa") Higher up the food chain, acting high commissioner Robert de Caix contemplated the reunion of the annexed territories with Syria in 1934. Perhaps gravest of all amid such turmoil, a Syrian delegation traveled to Paris in order to petition for the return of Tripoli in compensation for the loss of another the territory of Alexandretta to Kamal Attaturk in Turkey.

[201] Saliba, 2016, 135.

prevent any feasible re-unification. The coastal plains of Akkar primarily served as farmland within the new state. But beyond these geographical constraints, there were also ethnic ties to consider. As the minister explains, "the people of Akkar, for whom I am a Sunni Deputy in the Lebanese chamber and who come from Kurdish and Circassian origins 200 years ago, see within the demands of the people of Tripoli an attack to their rights because they have the completely different aspirations of another race whose rights the people of Tripoli themselves have always respected."[202] Given that his constituents come from Kurdish and Circassian backgrounds, it follows that it would be necessary to respect their minority rights rather than the subject them to the sectarian rule of the majority Arab population of Syria. The recourse to the endangered rights of minorities, in fact, resembles another theme found within French writings of the Levant, the threatened rights of the Christian Maronite population scattered in the villages of Mt. Lebanon, menaced by the machinations of the Druze community and the indifference of the Porte in the mid-nineteenth century.[203] It was in protection of this community that France created ties with Mt. Lebanon, which eventually contributed to the French mandate.

Yet another trope found in his letter is the contention that the unrest in Tripoli was not born of true bona fide nationalist fervor and grievance against the mandate regime, but a misplaced discontent among the population dissatisfied with the regrettable municipal administration of the Lebanese government. In this manner he writes that, "in effect, there are certain material and moral prerogatives made by certain Lebanese individuals to the detriment of others, and these numerous prerogatives and injustices create a fertile ground for the trumpets of detachment," he explains. In other words, the source of the resistance movement in Tripoli was the petty grievances and prejudices among the functionaries of the

[202] C460 letter of Mohamad bey abd al-razak to Sous-Secrétaire d'état 6 july 1936. 1
[203] For a discussion on the increasing role of minority rights within the discourse of the high commission, see the study of Syria conducted by Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

government, which foment inequality and the neglect of the annexed territories. While the forms of injustice mentioned by the delegate will be discussed later, it is worth mentioning his analysis of the ways in which political dynamics in Beirut affected his constituency. At the heart of the troubles, he admits, were political inequalities. Thus he writes that, "it pains me to add that the Lebanese government has always recognized the existence of these inequalities without doing anything to erase them."[204] During the mandate, the farmlands within the annexed territories represented 64% of the cultivatable land within the new state[205] and served as a lucrative source of tax revenue for a government impoverished by the Great Depression. As such, areas like Akkar proved fertile grounds for vice. Despite this, the deputy pledges, "the people of Akkar will never cease from being faithful to its motherland and permit me to assure you that if the unjust differences cease to exist…a good part of this movement for detachment will be muffled."[206]

Nonetheless, the delegate and his family held a rather different reputation among some officials in the high commission. As early as 1933, three years prior to the composition of his letter to the Quai d'Orsay, the notes of Commandant Pechkoff disparages the influence of the delegate's father, Abboud Bey abd al-Razzaq. His role in political affairs, Pechkoff contends, was "solely due to his property status and the fear that he inspires within his numerous debtors."[207] For, prior to passing along his seat in the legislature to his son, Abboud Bey belonged to the minority class of powerful landlords who were able to expand the size of their domains at the expense of the poor during the mandate. Among these influential *latifundia*, the delegate's father was characterized as one of the cruelest landlords,

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[204] C460 letter of Mohamad bey abd al-razak to Sous-Secrétaire d'état 6 july 1936., 2.
[205] These figures come from Gates, Carolyn. *The Merchant Republic: The Rise of an Open Economy*. Center for Lebanese Studies: London, 1998, 24. Based on the work of Masud Dahir, Lubnan al-Istiqlal al-Mithaq wa Sigha (Beirut, 1977).
[206] C460 letter of Mohamad bey abd al-razak to Sous-Secrétaire d'état 6 July 1936., 2.
[207] C 1542 Note du Commandant Pechkoff 16 dec 1933. Pechkoff would become an administrative counselor for South Lebanon. It is possible that at this time, he was head of the special services military unit in the North. For more on this fascinating figure Pechkoff, see chapter five.

"little liked in the region because of his greed (*l'âpreté au gain*) and harshness toward his farmers."[208] In addition to his avarice and cruelty, a dossier on the candidates of North Lebanon seeking election to the House of Delegates credits the expanding status of Abboud Bey to the family's other source of income as usurers, loaning money to the farmers on his property at extortionate rates. It goes on to say that in contrast to the prestige that he presented to Paris, the future delegate was nothing more than a subservient protégé of Bechara al-Khouri, who, save for President Eddé, was the most prominent politician in the country.[209] Moreover, while in office, the deputy's father abolished in 1926 the village council designed to serve as a local elective body for the plains communities in 1918.[210] However maligned as the son of a cruel landlord, greedy usurer and docile politician, the delegate, remained a key figure in mandate politics to the extent that French officials called upon him during the mounting unrest in Tripoli. The bitterness with which he was described reflects the contradiction at the heart of mandate policy toward the countryside of Lebanon—that although officials within the high commission knew of rampant abuse and violence, their administration came to rely upon the very figures responsible for these informal practices.

Under different circumstances, however, the high commission would have preferred to disavow any association with such *beys*. As will be discussed, the initial goal of the mandate had been to undermine men who had come from backgrounds like that of the delegate and his family. French land reform decrees in the 1920s had intended to alter labor relations between landlords and cultivators so as to create a class of small land-owning farmers. In turn, this change in power-relations would end the cycle of debt, usury, coercion

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[208] *ibid*., This file contained a copy of a dossier on candidates to the house of delegates. In addition, according to political scientist Michael Hudson, Abboud Bey controlled some 5000 acres of fertile land in North Lebanon. Hudson, Michael. *The Precarious Republic: Modernization in Lebanon*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1985, 131.
[209] *op. cit*.., 5. According to Najwa Wadih Atiyah, Abboud Bey's son, Muhammad, had studied law in Paris before assuming his father's seat in the legislature. Atiyah, Najwa Wadih, *The Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis toward the State of Lebanon*. PhD Thesis, Department of Politics, University of London (SOAS) 1973, 150. For more on Eddé and al-Khouri, see chapters four and five, respectively.
[210] Gilsenan, 1996, 85.

and violence that had dominated land tenure and agricultural production in the Levant, particularly along the strip of land across the northern frontier of Lebanon and Syria known as *le pays des alaouites*. The primary mechanisms of these reforms were the introduction of private property and the dissolution of the large estates. By the time of the 1936 strikes, however, the consequences of French policy had unraveled in such a way that mandate officials felt compelled to rely upon these landlords.

The pages that follow detail how the policy designed to broaden popular support for the French by producing a new socio-economic class allied to the high commission not only failed, but actively facilitated the empowerment of the very classes that French policy initially sought to undermine. Rather than the development of a structured bureaucratic hierarchy in the countryside, the formal institutions of governance—that already concentrated authority in the hands of a few—generated informal patronage arrangements of power beside them. In this way, the worst practices of domination thrived in a countryside already suffering from exploitative social practices.

Power did not flow through the new bureaucracy as Paris had hoped, but through the capacity of the ambitious to bolster their informal privileges through the new methods of domination. Rather than generating a new relation of power through the imposition of a bureaucratic hierarchy, French reforms led to the reproduction of patronage networks. Within this context, the landlord of a given cultivator was also the policeman and strongman, creditor and something like the village mayor. In this way, the reproduction of space in the colonial setting was not a function of the imposition of formal institutions of government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate the practices designed to underpin this supposed new order. Instead of supplanting existing forms of domination, the technologies of power brought from France—in this case the *franc* and the cadastral survey—bankrolled the status quo that had relied upon debt and coercion.

The capacity to enforce the frontiers across the countryside was not born of disciplinary power as much as it derived from social practices, which, in this case, contributed to the obfuscation of the lines between public and private, modern and medieval. The inability of the high commission to resolve these inextricable links and conflicts contributed to the forms of unrest that Abboud described on the eve of the Tripoli riots.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Land reform is an ideal issue with which to begin our examination of the production of space. The ways in which the French sought to administer the predominately agricultural society in the Levant can disclose the practices of power instrumental to the reproduction of its authority. In order to understand these processes, it is necessary to explore a number of theoretical issues and debates regarding the reproduction of power in the colonial setting. The first theory relates to the notion within territoriality of what can be considered power over with regards to the imposition of colonial authority over the subject population. The second theory concerns the notion of power through transformation of social relations found in critical geo-politics. Yet missing from these accounts is a thorough analysis of how colonial agents challenged and modified the dictates of the metropole. Ultimately, however, it can be seen that the reproduction of power did not occur through the imposition of formal mechanisms of governance or the creation of new forms of subjectivity, but through the proliferation of pre-existing informal institutions and networks within the expanding bureaucracy.

To begin, the theory of territoriality emerged out of post-colonial human geography to take into consideration the transformation of place at the onset of colonialism. Following the work of Robert Sack, the notion of territoriality describes the attempt "by an individual or group to affect, influence or control people, phenomena or relationships by delimiting and

asserting control over a geographic area."[211] In this way, it addresses the asymmetry of power-relations that produced modern human geography, especially during the colonial period. Due, in part to new inventions in map-making technologies, the creation and promulgation of the new world order replaced visions of space held among the now subject populations of Africa, Asia and the Americas. Territorial control, then, functions as an instrument of power. To produce territoriality requires three components that Sack outlines: it involves the classification of an area; a form of communication of this classification; and a mechanism to enforce access to this area and the things within it our outside of it.[212] It is in this manner, that within the school of territoriality, control is not seen to expand across unproblematic and passive geographic dimensions, rather control lies in the capacity to reorder pre-existing forms and markers of authority.[213] In this manner, territoriality emphasizes the coercive aspect of state power *vis-à-vis* the production of space. It says that it is through the negation of previous concepts of space that imperial rule was able to reproduce.

In contrast, the body of scholarship around critical geo-politics objects to this uniform depiction of power. It bristles with what John Agnew has described as "a notion of power as a monopoly of control exercised equally over all places within a given territory or geographical area by a dominant social group or elite."[214] Implicit in his contention is the idea that overemphasis on the coercive function of space production generalizes the operation of power as a simple appendage of the elite. Thus, Agnew adds that, "missing from this account are the contingency and fragility of the infrastructural power" such as state provision

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[211] Sack, Robert David. *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986. 21-22.
[212] Sack, 1986, 22.
[213] Winichakul, Thongchai. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994. 131.
[214] Agnew, John. *Geopolitics: Re-visioning World Politics*. London: Routledge, 2003. 55

of public goods and services from which modern states draw their legitimacy.[215] With this in mind, critical geo-politics emphasizes the relations of power that underpin the production of space. Agnew argues that, "the territorial state draws its power in capillary fashion from social groups and institutions rather than simply imposing itself upon them. From this point of view, power is present in all relationships among people, animals and things and the power of the state relies on the wide range of sources that it can tap into."[216] This perspective emphasizes the potential agency of all individuals within a given matrix of power and resistance. The access of subjects to the disciplinary practices of the state creates the potential for them to alter the exercise of power. Crucially, this protracted struggle makes the operation of power vulnerable to resistance. In the words of Agnew, "the spatial monopoly of power exercised by a state is not and cannot be total when its power derives from that given up by and potentially retaken by others."[217] In other words, the exercise of power remains susceptible to strategies of resistance. The very institutions that are designed to discipline people within a new system of administration contain the potential to generate unintended consequences.

Still, both schools of thought overlap in that the modern practice of power appears as the supplanting of traditional practices and worldviews with new systems of domination. To summarize, while the notion of territoriality privileges this repressive facet of the production of space, the critical geopolitics stance places a greater emphasis on its productive potentials. As mentioned previously, there are both productive as well as destructive elements within the exercise of colonial rule and state power. Whereas critical geo-politics focuses on this productive potential of modern state power *vis-à-vis* space cultivates new fields of political contestation and subjectivity, the notion of territoriality emphasizes the repressive component

[215] Agnew, 2003, 55.
[216] Agnew, 2003,56
[217] Agnew, 2003, 46.

that can mass participation and political contestation. Colonial power manifests itself within both perspectives as something anathema to pre-existing forms of domination. The onset of colonial rule is seen to have disrupted and even displaced pre-colonial systems of thoughts and practices of domination. The old, pre-colonial other has to be first identified within European schools of thoughts and then systematically replaced with the new. The differentiation between the modern and the ancient must be made as stark as night and day. Within this framework, colonized subjects are seen as either obedient adherents to European modes of behavior or intractable anti-modern natives.

In order to enhance this mode of study, more attention must be paid to the actions of colonial agents, themselves. They not only functioned as enforcers of mandate policy, but also managed to assert their own interests within the networks of power that emerged with the onset of imperial rule. It can be seen that the imposition of bureaucratic institutions was met with resistance, not only in terms of overt anti-colonial protest, but also by the bureaucrats, themselves. The administration of space was tempered by the scramble for office and influence. As Bayart contends, "the social struggles which make up the quest of hegemony and the production of the state bear the hallmarks of the rush for spoils in which all actors—rich and poor—participate in the world of networks."[218] In this sense, Bayart's analysis can underscore the various roles that colonial agents played. Beyond functioning as enforcers of dictates from the metropole, they were able to augment their own personal networks of status and patronage, even to the extent that they were able to undermine official policy. From this perspective, the field of contestation emerges within the system of domination. As Bayart adds, "corruption is a method of social struggle, in the fullest sense of the term, and how much it rests squarely upon a lively political consciousness of

[218]Bayart,1993. 235.

inequality."[219] Aware of the hierarchy imposed from abroad, individuals of means sought ways to maintain and expand their own power now under threat from imperial rule. In this manner, Bayart contends, "the strategies adopted by the great majority of the population for survival are identical to the ones adopted by the leaders to accumulate wealth and power."[220] This social struggle absorbed all individuals within the colony, opening the door to new modes of domination, resistance and violence. From this perspective, it is easy to see how land reform was also concomitant with the re-appropriation of colonial institutions and an upswing in coercive modes of domination.

In this manner, the operation of power in colonial Lebanon can be thought of as the re-appropriation of the formal mechanisms of government to fulfill informal ends. The monopoly of power of the new state was constantly challenged, not just through armed revolt, as was the case in Tripoli, but also through the covert misuse of public office to establish patronage networks. Contrary to the development of a landowning elite loyal to the regime, as students of the modern Arab world have learned was the case in colonial Egypt, Palestine and Iraq, there emerged in mandate Lebanon an uneasy alliance between the rural bosses and colonial officials. French advisors resented their reliance on what they described among each other as feudal elements. In turn, rural bosses often flouted their official duties to reinforce the practices of debt, coercion, violence and intimidation of inhabitants in the countryside. In turn, these same supposedly feudal lords would ascend the ranks of the parliament to dominate the region. In lieu of the original designs to undercut their control, these landlords used mandate policies to strengthen their grip on the rural population. In these ways, the failure of the high commission to implement a more effective land reform indicates a social struggle that occurred during the mandate as the *latifundia* and French

[219] Bayart, 1993 ,236.
[220] Bayart, 1993, 237.

advisors competed for power at the expense of the increasingly marginalized and impoverished majority. A review of the mechanisms and effects of French land reform policy reveals that power flowed through indiscipline to the new practices of domination decreed by the high commission rather than through the new technologies of control. Upon considering the reproduction of power as a re-appropriation of resources rather than the supplanting of traditional practices with new and modern systems of domination, the contradictions and limits of effective control become clear. In this context, the failure of land reform to redistribute land or redefine power relations appears as a function of entrenched patronage networks within the new administration.

LA TERRE AUX PAYSANS

The topic of much scholarship at the onset of the mandate, land reform was one of the earliest institutions with which the French had hoped to stamp its authority. While Paris generally thought in absolute terms of space, the processes of implementing its new order for the Levant were hindered by a number of unexpected situations that compromised the influence of the Quai d'Orsay in the villages of the new colony. Initially, French land reform efforts centered on the creation of a class of small tenant farmers who would support the mandate in addition to supplanting the influence of the existing large landowners. In other words, the French hoped to implement their vision of space by transforming relations of power in the countryside. By turning the commonly held lands of tenant farmers into the private property of a new cadre of landowners, the French hoped to upturn the informal practices that had historically governed land administration. Yet the application of this policy did not go according to plan. The attempt to create a new relation of power failed. An examination of the results of this policy in the Akkar region north of Tripoli will disclose the limits and contradictions of French land reform policies.

A review of land tenure in this region prior to the mandate will lay the groundwork for understanding the reforms that the high commission hoped to introduce as well as the complications that they eventually faced. It will be seen that rather than displacing pre-existing practices associated with land tenure, the mandate bankrolled the worst forms of exploitation, usury and debt used against already impoverished farmers to create what one local scholar at the time described as a combination of many evils.[221] In so doing, the ways in which informal relations flourished within the new bureaucracy become manifest. The consequences of this policy will then be analyzed in relation to the unrest surrounding the movement for the re-annexation of the annexed territories to Syria around 1936.

Land Tenure under the Ottomans

Situated along the plains north of Tripoli and south of the Alawite Mountains along the Mediterranean, the narrow strip of land historically known as Alawite country had functioned as an agricultural region under the Ottoman Empire. Historically, this cluster of villages among the coastal plains had served as a dependency of the Ottoman Sanjak of Tripoli. After 1920, it was split into two areas: the north was ceded to the Alawite State that was eventually absorbed into Syria, while the southern portion became a part of the State of Greater Lebanon within the *muhafaza* of North Lebanon.[222] In an area reliant upon agricultural production, the region suffered from several challenges. First, there existed, irregular levels of rainfall, rocky soil, labor-intensive methods of cultivation, as well as the constant threat of raids from the nomadic bands roaming the countryside, all of which yielded inconsistent harvests.[223] Second, cultivated land, in general, was overpopulated due to the scarcity of mineral resources and thin soil so that agriculture offered low wages and

[221] Khuri, Albert. "Land Tenure." *Economic Organization of Syria*. Ed. Said Himadeh. Beirut, American Press, 1936, 58.
[222] Weulersse, 1940, 120.
[223] Luquet, 1923, 162; As Luquet wrote, agriculture suffered from a lack of water in summer months and flooding during winter months. Luquet ,162. Agriculture centered around subsistence crops like wheat and barely in general, as well as corn in Akkar. Khuri, 1936, 76-77.

seasonal employment to cultivators.[224] Third, illiteracy was so common that according to the informal census of 1932, the illiteracy rate for North Lebanon, in which the Akkar was located, was 66.56% of all inhabitants, or nearly 90,000 people.[225] In these ways, Akkar became one of the poorest regions in the new country upon the declaration of statehood. Describing land tenure in this region, one local scholar at the time of the mandate lamented that, "the Syrian peasant is more like a miner than a farmer. He exploits the soil without restoring its fertility."[226]

Underpinning agriculture in the region were practices that French sources had characterized as semi-feudal relations of power. Before, during and after the occupation of the Levant and establishment of the mandate, French observers and Orientalists had long publicized the coercive practices that reigned in the Levant. The literature on Alawite country often depicted a stratified society dominated by ancient, indeed medieval, practices. In doing so, they ascribed the poverty and low productivity of the region to power-relations more so than to its precarious ecology. One such depiction of rural politics comes from *La Politique des Mandats dans Le Levant,* published in 1923 by Jean Luquet, a self-described doctor of law and administrator of colonies.[227] According to these sources, dominating this system was a small cadre of lords who were keen to expand their influence in a region that lacked defined property rights. Rather than profiting from the harvest of the land, this political class profited from collecting taxes on behalf of the Ottoman coffers. Originally, in the plains of Akkar, these *beys* and *aghas* settled in the region in the 18th century in order to keep order for the Ottomans and to subdue rebellions by the communities of predominately Shia Muslim

[224] Widmer, 1936, 14,15.
[225] Robert Widmer. "Population." *The Economic Organization of Syria*. Ed. Said Himadeh. Beirut: American Press, 1936. 11. The total number of illiterates in North Lebanon recorded by the census was 89,934.
[226] Khuri. Albert, "Agriculture," T*he Economic Organization of Syria*. Ed. Said Himadeh. Beirut: American Press, 1936 , 92. Describing the scarcity of cultivated land that reflected the demoralized state of agriculture, Jacques Luquet comments that, "As of 1923, despite the availability of 15 million hectares of cultivatable land, only 4 million hectares were cultivated; despite the availability of 400,000 hectares of irrigable land, only 5,000 hectares were irrigated. Luquet, 146.
[227] Luquet, Jean. *La Politique des Mandats dans Le Levant*. Paris: Editions de la vie universitaire, 1923.

cultivators who then lived in the plains and or in the Alawite Mountain to the north.[228] In time, these men were able to dominate the land through economic arrangements as well as violent means. In addition to collecting taxes, these men loaned money to tenant farmers for faming equipment with rates as high as 400%.[229] The profit that these large landlords received derived not so much from the fickle harvests of the land but from the people who were forced to take out loan advancements prior to the harvests. The power of the landlords was related to the debt of their tenants. Or, in the words of French Orientalist Jacques Weulersse of the Institut Français de Damas, "the large estates, in effect, are nourished by poverty."[230] Having profited from poverty, this landlord elite was more interested in acquiring additional lands and subjugated cultivators than in investing new capital or labor to increase productivity on existing lands.[231] In these ways, the scourge of the countryside, French writers contended, was the uninspired and greedy *latifundia* who maintained this system of exploitation and low productivity.

At the other end of this spectrum, they claimed, were the majority of subsistence farmers with little rights on the lands that they cultivated. The precarious and squalid conditions of these tenant farmers is summed up by Luquet when he writes that, "as for the peasant, nearly always completely illiterate, he lives like a savage, most often, in destitute huts among living conditions that hardly differ from those of the populations of central Africa."[232] The fertile ground for these conditions of poverty was the *métayer* tenancy system that dated back to medieval times.[233] Similar to Europe and the Americas, the lords would

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[228] Gilsenan, Michael. *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab society*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1996. 15. In his account of the historical background of Akkar, Gilsenan writes that at the time ,"labor was relatively scarce and frequently tied by physical coercion to the landowners as much as by economic dependency." (Gilsenan, 1996,93.)
[229] Luquet, 1923,158.
[230] Weulersse, Jacques. Le Pays des Alaouites. Tours: Arrault & Cie, Insitut Francais de Damas, 1940, 120.
[231] Luquet, 1923, 157.
[232] Luquet, 1923, 157.
[233] Khuri, Albert. "Land Tenure." *Economic Organization of Syria*. Ed. Said Himadeh. Beirut, American Press, 1936. 58

lease a portion of their land to tenants in exchange for a share of their harvests. Within this system tenants were at the mercy of the property owners who determined the yearly length of leases and charged a variable rent that was a portion of the annual yield, typically one-half of the produce after the tithe and taxes have been paid to the state.[234] Still worse, tenants often held no lease on the land they worked and were subject to dismissal at any time by the landlord.[235] Even if this were not the case, harvests were subject to the dreaded *dîme*, a fixed tax rate of 12.5% that all cultivators paid to the Porte, regardless of harvest yields, which was typically collected by the same unscrupulous landlords.[236] Under such pressures, tenants often had to resort to borrowing credits from landlords, especially out of season or when harvests were less than expected. As Luquet explains, "the prospect of contracting new debts in order to live was less dire than searching for new living conditions equally precarious."[237] In these ways, the pressures on tenants appeared to create a cycle of debt, impoverishment and exploitation. Summarizing labor relations in the countryside, Weulersse would lament in a later publication, that, "Oriental society is a starkly divided society, without intermediate degrees, without a middle class. Socially speaking, there is no more than two groups that oppose one another; the notables—*aghas, beys* or [sic] *shaykhs* enjoying *de jure* or *de facto* privileges—and the little man."[238]Within this divided system, the fruit of labor relations was a demoralized majority of farmers under the thumb of a select minority who relied upon an array of informal practices to reap their profits.

The overall picture presented to the French public was of an Oriental society recalcitrant to the changes in agriculture that had bloomed in Western Europe. In contrast to mechanized agriculture in Europe and the Americas, poor farmers relied upon ancient

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[234] Khuri, Tenure,1936, 58.
[235] Khuri, Tenure,1936 59.
[236] Luquet, 1923, 159.
[237] Luquet, 1923, 159.
[238] Weulersse, Jacques. *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*. Paris, Gallimard, 1946. 120.

cultivation practices that lacked the latest rational, scientific methods and, ultimately, produced relatively small harvests. This division of labor relied upon traditional customs that tied individuals to the land and enriched a select coterie of landlords. Rich and poor, powerful and weak, the portrait of Ottoman land tenure presented French readers with a black and white portrayal of power-relations. Luquet summed it up best when he characterized the plight of the rank and file farmer as the "serf of a great landlord he is, and serf he will remain, attached to the land by the ancestral tradition."[239]

Reconsidering Ottoman Land Tenure

In contrast to this depiction of timeless serfdom, rural administration had undergone a number of transformations under the Ottomans. The system that the French would adapt had been installed fairly recently during the second half of the nineteenth century. Several of the changes undertaken during this Ottoman era of Tanzimat reforms concerned efforts to modernize the administration of land between the 1840s and 1870s. As recent scholarship has shown, perceptions, especially French perceptions of Ottoman land tenure prove inadequate in terms of reflecting the changes that occurred during this time period. As Martha Mundy and Richard Saumarez Smith have asserted, "the nineteenth century Tanzimat reforms are not a failed attempt at Westernized legal modernization. Nor are they simply a by-product of the imposition of a world market. Rather, the reforms, transforming legal vocabularies from within Ottoman tradition, sought to respond to the competitive world system."[240] In this manner, the authors contend that comparing Ottoman reforms to European systems of privatized land tenure misconstrues the array of objectives that animated such reforms during this period. Chief among the goals of the Sublime Porte were the desire to boost state

[239] Luquet, 1923, 158.
[240] Mundy, Martha and Saumarez Smith, Richard. *Governing Property, Making the Modern*. London: IB Tauris, 2007, 4.

revenue by registering lands within the empire,[241] the aim of codifying divergent practices and groups within the system of land tenure,[242] and the objective of incorporating local political leaders within the expanded bureaucracy to monitor the population.[243] Ultimately, with regards to the goal of boosting revenue, Ottoman land reform had mixed success. As the scholarship of Roger Owen clarifies, the land tax that cultivators paid in the form of a tithe of agricultural produce formed the largest part of government revenue for Istanbul between the 1860s and 1880s.[244] This suggests that agriculture played an important part in government policy. For, such revenue was needed to fund the rising costs of maintaining the Ottoman military and re-supplying it with the latest weapons in its campaigns in the Crimea and the Balkans.[245] Despite the increasing reliance on revenue from agriculture, the Ottoman state spent more money than it gathered from places like Akkar, as will be discussed later.

In addition to these reforms, the Ottomans reorganized municipal administration of the countryside as part of efforts of modernization. Historically, the empire had been organized around a system of *vilayet* provinces that were further subdivided into different *sanjaks*. Within this system, land tenure was governed by an array of Ottoman laws and codes and Islamic court jurisprudence.[246] Among these practices was the reliance on oral testimony of land ownership, which, at times in places like Akkar, involved the use of force

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[241] Mundy, et. al., 2007, 51; Rogan, Eugene. "Bringing the State Back: The Limits of Ottoman Rule, 1840-1910." *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan*. Ed. Eugene Rogan and Tariq Tell. London: British Academic P, 1994 34. Rogan insists in his study of Ottoman land tenure in Jordan that the government's primary concerns in the Ajlun district of present day Jordan were to assure the security of agricultural production and the collection of tax revenue.
[242] Mundy, Martha. "Village Land and Individual Title: Musha' and the Ottoman Land Registration in the District of Ajlun." *Village, Steppe and State: The Social Origins of Modern Jordan*. Eds. Eugene Rogan and Tariq Tell. London: British Academic P, 1994, 62.
[243] Mundy, 1994, 62; Mundy and Saumarez Smith, 2007, 101-103.
[244] During this time, the tithe, also referred to as *la dime*, formed between 25-35% of government revenue. See Table 13 in Owen, Roger. *The Middle East in the World Economy*. London: IB Tauris, 2002, 106.
[245] Owen, 2002, 109.
[246] Khuri, Tenure, 1936, 51.

to coerce such testimonies.[247] In practice, however, the countryside fell under the discretion of local landlords who enjoyed sweeping control over inhabitants and were said to have negotiated treaties with foreign powers.[248] To increase its authority in the countrysides, the Porte turned, ironically, to the French departmental system of municipal administration for inspiration.[249] Having enjoyed success with a closely copied system in the Vilayet of the Danube, Midhat Pasha extended these reforms into the rest of the empire. The Ottoman Vilayet Laws of 1864 and 1871 introduced a four-tier hierarchy that established a chain of command from the *wali* in each province to the *mukhtar* of every village.[250] The Porte appointed the heads of the top three tiers, while the leader of the bottom two tiers were elected by their constituents from a list of approved candidates.[251] In this way, the Ottomans imposed a system of hierarchy of areas as well as of agents to administer the empire.

By installing this administrative hierarchy, the Ottoman reformers hoped to expand their own control and reduce the informal mechanisms that had limited their authority. As part of the *Tanzimat* reforms, land administration and tenure was designed to be a bulwark against three forces, both new and old, that threatened Istanbul. First, Ottoman administrators sought to further integrate the distant lands of the empire so as to counter the threat of ethnic nationalist revolt.[252] As was the case with Greece and other areas of the Balkans and North Africa, this threat was a real possibility to further break up the empire. The second concern of the Ottomans was the threat of ambitious provincial leaders usurping the divine right of the

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[247] Daher, Massoud. *L'histoire Socio-Politique de la République Libanaise sous le Mandat Français* (1926-1943). Thèse Pour le Doctorat en Lettres et Sciences-Humaines. École Pratique des hautes études,, sections des sciences économiques et sociales. Sorbonne, Paris I, 1980 V. 2, 476.
[248] Bahij, Saab Taan. "The Office of the Muhafez." MA Thesis: Department of Political Science and Public Administratin. American University of Beirut, April 1964, 21.
[249] Wickwar, W. Hardy, "Patterns and Problems of Local Administration in the Middle East." Middle East Journal, 12: No. 3 (Summer 1958), 249-260.
[250] Bahij, 1964, 22. The Ottoman system closely resembles the French system of *départements, arrondissements, cantons* and *communes*. Also see Rogan, 1994, 37-38 for a description of the Ottoman municipal reforms.
[251] Bahij, 1964, 23.
[252] Wickwar, 1958, 250.

sovereign. The most famous example of this tendency was the case of one of the earliest Ottoman reformers, Muhamad Ali Pasha, who in the course of building a modern army in Egypt as well as other proto-state institutions to support it, eventually challenged the authority of the Porte in the region.[253] The third concern, as mentioned previously, was the financial imperative to raise funds through land taxes amid the mounting costs of war. With these goals in mind, the Ottoman reformers went about creating a modern bureaucracy to administer and oversee the vast swathes of land that remained—for the moment—within the empire.

Even as revenue expanded for Istanbul through land reform, the costs of war exceeded revenue, forcing the state to borrow from European financiers and eventually created a cycle of debt and dependence.[254] Far from French depictions of primordial relations of power in the countryside, the setbacks of Ottoman land reform stemmed from several circumstances. The first problem was the uneven application of the law in the various corners of the empire. As Mundy writes on land registration efforts, "the Ottoman reforms clearly aimed to unify in one person the holder of title and the taxpayer, but reforms in the system of tax collection often lagged far behind the mere introduction of title to land."[255] Such discrepancies between law and its implementation accounted for regional variation in Ottoman affairs. Second, in recruiting powerful local leaders into the new bureaucracy, the Porte unwittingly allowed these political bosses to temper its efforts to centralize authority throughout the empire. In the words of historian Roger Owen,

> Whatever pressure there might have been to introduce a proper system of registration, taxation or private rights of property, the actual result of policy was generally a bargain between the central government, local council and men of rural power which was clearly neither in the interests of efficient administration nor the most profitable development of the region's agricultural resources.[256]

[253] Wickwar, 1958, 250 . Also known as Mehmet Ali.
[254] Owen, 2002, 292.
[255] Mundy, 1994, 79.
[256] Owen, 2002, 293.

Third, beyond the difficulties of implementing the law, Ottoman land reform failed to invest new money in agricultural production beyond the growth of commercial agriculture in certain regions, most notably the tobacco industry in what became southern Lebanon. While the bulk of state resources went to the build-up of the military and bureaucracy, expenditures in public works and irrigation projects remained limited, stymieing the growth of agriculture.[257] Such relative inactivity in the countryside reflected the failure of Istanbul to generate new sources of revenue; [258] and this general reliance on agriculture further compromised the imperial coffers when a series of bad harvests ravaged the countrysides in the latter decades of the nineteenth century.[259] Given these mixed results in generating revenue from land reform, the Porte reluctantly turned to foreign creditors to finance its military campaigns, obtaining its first foreign loans in 1854 for the campaign in the Crimean War.[260]

Within 20 years of this loan, the regime became embroiled in a cycle of excessive spending, shortfalls in revenue and expanding debt to the point that the Porte declared bankruptcy in 1875; and in doing so it joined a list of countries smarting from the world economic system that included Austria, the Netherlands, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Russia, parts of the United States and all of Latin America.[261] When unable to repay their debts, the Ottomans were forced to make a number of concessions to their creditors. Eventually, the Ottomans were forced to grant sweeping monopoly concessions to Whitehall and Paris and its other European creditors within the remaining territories of the empire.[262] For instance, in the Levant, European creditors seized control of tobacco cultivation, as will be seen in chapter five. Internally, the municipal system crumbled from within under the pressure of

[257] Owen, 2002, 106.
[258] Owen, 2002, 105.
[259] Owen, 2002, 166.
[260] Owen, 2002, 104.
[261] Owen, 2002, 101, 109.
[262] See Mitchell, Timothy, *Rule of Experts*, Berkeley: U California P, 2000; Tripp, Charles, *A History of Iraq*, London: Cambridge UP, 2007.

ambitious Ottoman officials within the new bureaucracy. In addition, the rising tide of ethnic nationalism threatened the hegemony of Istanbul across the empire. Eventually, the system was suspended by the imposition of martial law under military commander Jamal Pasha as WWI encroached upon the Levant and discontent within the empire sparked dissent in the Arab world.

The complex Ottoman system of land tenure that Paris would confront at the end of the war is simplified in the work of American University of Beirut economics professor Said Himadeh, published in the 1930s.[263] This system comprised different forms of both private and communal property. First, the three types of private property included *mulk*, or freehold property that most resembles the western concept of private property; *miri,* or crown land deeded from the state to a particular individual that could be leased, mortgaged or sold; and *wakf*, a religious endowment bequeathed by an individual to a particular religious institution.[264] In addition to these arrangements was collective land tenure, in which, describes Himadeh, "the land is apportioned among individuals of the village once every two or three years, and sometimes every seven years" during which cultivators farmed their allotted portions in the knowledge that they would eventually swap lots.[265] Under this system, it was typical for every male inhabitant within a particular village to receive a share of the communal land under cultivation and upon his death, his share would be redistributed among his heirs.[266] Previously, while *mulk* tenure prevailed in Mt. Lebanon, collective tenure existed primarily in the plains east of Damascus and *miri* and *wakf* systems were most

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[263]Himadeh, Said, *The Monetary and Banking System of Syria*, Beirut: American Press, 1935.
[264] Himadeh, S., 1935, 17-18. The word *wakf* is also transliterated as *waqf.*
[265] Himadeh, 1935 19.
[266] Khuri, Tenure,1936, 57. Following Albert Khuri, this system of collective agriculture is described using the Arabic term of *masha'* or *musha'*. This "system of communal holdings whereby land is actually held by a corporate body, usually a village, and is temporarily apportioned among individual members. The *masha'* land of a village is registered in the name of four of five notables on behalf of its people. The individual villager does not hold the same plot of land permanently, as many *masha'* land is redistributed at intervals varying usually from one to three years"[266] Khuri, 1936, 57

common in the rest of the Levant.[267] In effect, the work of Himadeh points to an aspect of land tenure generally overlooked in French Orientalist literature. Many, but not all, of the lords who ran the large estates in the Levant like Abboud Bey did not own the lands they controlled, but operated at the behest of the Porte, usually as tax collectors who made sure that the coffers sent to Istanbul were overflowing. Only upon the dissolution of the empire did the lords who controlled *miri* property assumed greater discretion over the territory that they controlled.[268] Already, it is possible to discern the pressures on agriculture and land tenure that yielded a complex and precarious existence for farmers in stark contrast to the timeless caricatures painted by European Orientalists. Aside from the ravages of WW I, land tenure was subject to circumstances of death, debt, inheritance, re-allotment, administrative reform, not to mention variable harvests and a lack of technological investment.

In a different way, many of these complexities served as a means to hedge against the precarious and shifting harvests of the land. Indeed, such constant fluctuations rendered the possibility of purchasing land almost impossible for the majority of cultivators.[269] In this context, the shared system was designed to function as a safety net against the erratic productivity of lands that often lacked sufficient capital investment. Despite these insurance measures, land tenure was not without its problems. As scholar Albert Khuri writes in the 1930s,

> The system as it stands is a combination of many evils, the worst being that no shareholders can be induced to fertilize, plant or make any permanent improvement on his holding, since he knows it will be his only temporarily, under such conditions, the land is undoubtedly impoverished to the detriment of the whole country.[270]

Even though the shared cultivation hedged against low productivity, it failed to encourage farmers from investing in the land so that, overtime, harvest yields offered marginally

[267] Himadeh, 1935, 18-19.
[268] Himadeh, 1935, 21.
[269] Khuri, Tenure,1936, 57. .
[270] Khuri, Tenure, 1936, 57-58.

decreasing returns. This insecurity, along with the fear of farmers of arbitrary dismissal from the lands that they harvested, forced tenants to get the most out of the land during the short time in which they leased it, further exhausting the soil.[271] It was under such multiple constraints and shifting insecurities that cultivators often fell into the debt of investors and the *latifundia*. "Another serious evil of the system," Khuri adds, "is the difficulty with which the individual *mahsa'* land holder obtains credit except at usurious interest rates, since the land which he would give as security for a loan is usually not registered."[272] Such precarious and informal conditions proved fertile ground for exploitation.

This system of debt was also the main ingredient within the alternative to collective farming, the *métayer* system of sharecropping. Indebted cultivators kicked off their land had the option of leasing land from large landlords and notables, who often served as creditors to the poor and usually received 50% of their harvests after taxes had been paid.[273] In this context, farming was not as profitable as the system of debt and forced labor proved. Due to this, land in the most remote corners of the empire was never properly surveyed and a precise cadaster of landholdings never existed.[274] In addition, while the spiral of debt enriched landlords, the comparatively small harvests produced by demoralized cultivators robbed the Ottoman state of potential tax revenues. Instead of the persistence of primordial relations of status, power in the countryside was reproduced through the undefined and irregular terms of agricultural production that contributed to a reliance on debt. By WW I, unrest had reached such a nadir that under the pressure of famine—caused by naval blockades and trade

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[271] Khuri, Tenure, 1936, 59.
[272] Khuri, Tenure, 1936, 59.
[273] Khuri, Tenure, 1936, 58. This system is also known in Arabic as *muraba'*. In another description of the system, Himadeh writes in 1935 that "The typical peasant cultivator is very poor and his productivity is very low. He has in ordinary years, but little surplus after paying expenses, taxes and interest on previous indebtedness. He is ignorant and works not for a net return but for subsistence. His indebtedness is very heavy, with the result that his cultivation is hampered and his income is reduced .in a great many cases he is a share tenant (*métayer*) possessing no land and depending upon his landlord for the little capital he needs. The precarious right in the land he cultivates gives him no incentive to improve the land." Himadeh, 1935, 15.
[274] Weulersse, 1940, 360.

restrictions imposed by the Entente Powers—the majority of small landowners were forced to borrow money under usurious terms and then sold their lands to capitalists in Beirut, Tripoli and Aleppo for, in general, less than 10% of their value.[275] In these ways, creditors profited from the uncertainties and changing circumstances in the region. This cycle of debt, combined with the rule of force, enriched *latifundia* at the expense of the already marginalized and increasingly impoverished poor. Moreover, contrary to the opinions circulating within French publications, Ottoman land reform efforts was less an attempt to privatize land than it was to establish deed holders responsible for paying taxes to Istanbul; and as a result, land reform did not displace local elites in the countrysides of the Levant.[276] The French would have to confront these circumstances upon the end of WW I.

Land Reform under the French Mandate

The course of action of taken by the high commission to redress these circumstances consisted of a five-part plan that would reform land tenure in Syria and Lebanon. The first part consisted of conducting a new cadastral survey of land holdings in the countryside. The second part involved the privatization of large estates as well as of communal lands. In addition, the third part called for the creation of new agricultural banks to lend money to cultivators, thereby ending the practice of usury. The fourth element of land reform was the amendment of Ottoman tax codes regarding agriculture. Finally, the fifth part of land reform was tied to the general amendments of municipal administration further described in chapters two and four. Combined, these strategies would accomplish the purported goal of the Quai d'Orsay. In place of these informal practices that had governed land tenure, the high

[275] Weulersse, 1940,158.
[276] Rogan, 1994, 57.

commission would erect a new bureaucracy to realize its promise of *"la terre aux paysans,"* or land for the peasants.[277]

1. Cadastral Survey

The first element of French land reform was the effort to undertake a new cadastral survey of landholdings. This would be the first written record of landholding in the Levant in places like Akkar. While Ottoman officials had managed to conduct cadastral surveys in some parts of the empire, in others, especially remote, rugged and largely inaccessible places like Akkar, they relied upon oral testimonies of land holdings. Given the climate of illiteracy and exploitation, the more powerful and coercive landlords came to dominate the terrain. These village heads, in turn, became the nominal owners of the land. Such complexities help to explain why mandate officials wrote that the landlords of Akkar owned 80% of agricultural land in the region.[278] In such circumstances, it was hoped that a more precise survey would provide legal protections for cultivators from the reported abuses of the indolent class of landlords.[279] The first survey of *La Régie du Cadastre* was implemented in the Bekaa valley along the Lebanese and Syrian frontier.[280]

2. Privatization of Land

The second strategy of French land reform was the privatization of land. The impetus for private property is laid out in the 1925 report of French Orientalist and agent of the French Mandate Edouard Achard. In the fourth part of his wide-ranging study, "Les Problèmes de L'Agriculture Syrienne," Achard proposes a number of reforms including, "the individualization of collective property, the dismemberment of state owned property, the dismemberment of the big landholdings and the installation of small property owners on the

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[277] Luquet, Jacques, *La politique des mandates dans le levant*, Paris, Auxeditions de la vie universitaire, 1923, 159.
[278] C1571 Les Notes d'Achard. No. 4. Les Problèmes de L'agriculture syriennes" 19 December 1925. 2.
[279] Whitaker, 1996, 183.
[280] Daher, 1980, v.2, 476.

dismembered large estates."[281] The reason to break up the large estates, Achard insists, is that the current system offers no incentive for landowners to boost productivity and improve the conditions that guaranteed them the regular reimbursement of their loans to cultivators with interests in an environment where crop yields are irregular.[282] The sharecropping system could be maintained with relatively low levels of capital investment and required nothing more than the intensive labor of the cultivators, themselves. Not only was private property the solution to the abuses of the landlords, it was also seen as the answer to yet another situation that French writers saw as the source of the plight of the poor. Next to these large estates, "the other problem is collective farming, which fails to stir individual efforts to expand production," Achard contends, "since [any surplus] will have to be shared."[283] In addition, the assumed problems of agriculture are disclosed by Weulersse when he writes that "legally, private property does not exist outside of the cities; geographically it is not rooted in the soil and it remains unclear and without precise limits, varying according to circumstance and always under the force of arms."[284] That is, not only were farmers subject to the tyranny of the commons of sorts, but also forced to toil under the threat of the force of arms. In order to boost morale and terminate the alleged culture of intimidation among cultivators, Achard proposed giving farmers rights to individual plots of land that they could then cultivate, secure in the knowledge that the full harvest would belong to them. Of course, such reforms would have to avoid "the regrettable political repercussions" of upsetting the *latifundia,* he cautions.[285]

[281] C1571 Les Notes d'Achard. No. 4. Les Problèmes de L'agriculture syriennes" 19 December 1925. 10.
[282] *op. cit.,* 4, 5-6.
[283] *op. cit.,*, 9-10.
[284] Weulersse, 1940, 218. Original refers to "la pleine propriété."
[285] Weulersse, 1940 12.

3. The Agricultural Bank

In addition, the third reform proposed by the French was the establishment of an agricultural bank to regulate loans to cultivators. Historically farmers borrowed agriculture credits from usurers who offered the extortionate rates. As Lebanese historian Massoud Daher explains in his thesis, at the time of the mandate, "loans were granted in the form of repurchase agreements. The rate of these loans was very high. Borrowers could rarely break free from their commitments and private property thus passed into the hands of usurers."[286] The tonic to this injustice was conceived in 1919 Marseille congress in the form of the La Banque Agricole du Grand-Liban.[287] As cultivators received loans at fixed rates that they could repay, they would be able to invest more money into agriculture and experiment with new forms of mechanized farming in order to boost their harvests. In this manner, it was hoped that the agriculture banks would cultivate the smallholding property owners as well as destroy the clout of loan sharks, absentee landlords, and opportunistic capitalists.[288]

4. Tax Reform

Such prospects would be furthered through the fourth aspect of French land reform, the amendment of the Ottoman tax codes. Instead of a complete transition from Ottoman statues, French officials sought to modify the worst elements of land tenure policy. For Achard, this was an alteration of the tithe that cultivators in the annexed territories were forced to hand over to the Porte. While all subjects of the Ottoman Empire had been subject to this tithe, exemptions were made for its collection within religious endowments and, crucially, within the autonomous sanjak of Mt. Lebanon. Instead of a fixed proportion of the annual harvest, Achard wanted to impose a variable amount that took into consideration the prospect of poor harvests; and the rate that he proposed would be an average of the tithes for

[286] Daher, 1980, 483.
[287] Daher, 1980, 484.
[288] Daher, 1980, 484, 485.

the four previous years.[289] In addition, French administrators sought to end the uneven tax collection that had prevailed. Under the Ottomans, collection for the *dîme*, the 12.5% proportion of annual harvests sent to Istanbul, was subject to the machinations of the large landowners tasked with collecting it. In practice, Weulersse asserts, these landlords were able to exempt their estates from tax collection due to their influence in land administration.[290] The overarching idea behind reform of the Ottoman system was that if cultivators knew that there was a certain amount of taxes that they had to pay, they would then work to increase production above the taxed amount and keep a larger percentage of the harvest for themselves.

5. Municipal Administration

The fifth aspect of land reform concerned the system of municipal administration. While administrative reform was not a specific aspect of land reform, it incorporated land tenure within the new administrative bureaucracy by recruiting personnel to oversee the countryside. Like the tax codes, the high commission kept in place the existing framework—already based on the French departmental system—but modified it in some respects. Under the *muhafaza* system decreed by Gouraud in 1920, there would emerge 5 principle *muhafaza* administrative zones, subdivided into a number of sanjaks, *aqdya*, *nahiyat*, and *kariat*. To supervise each administrative zone and subdivision, agents of the central government were selected either through direct appointment or election. In the countryside, rural areas were re-organized under the *Loi des Moukhtars* of 1928, which decreed that every community with a population of at least 50 inhabitants be administered by a *mukhtar* and council of elders; and Décret No. 5 of 1930, which provided for the appointment of these officials by the

[289] Whitaker, 1996, 183.
[290] Weulersse, Jacques, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche Orient*. Paris: Gallimard, 1946. 195.

interior minister.[291] Following the reorganization of the tax system in 1930, the *mukhtar* was tasked with personally collecting taxes from cultivators in addition to his other duties, which included assisting the judiciary in conducting arrests, raids and seizures and issuing notary certificates.[292] In places like the villages of Akkar, the *mukhtar* was the senior-most official of the government within the countryside. Given his role in collecting taxes, it was hoped that these government agents, who nominally served without pay,[293] would supplant the fraudulent practices that had reportedly dominated tax collection under the Ottomans.

In these five ways, the French planned to restore the land to the peasants and bring about an end to the supposed patterns of abuse and exploitation of the poor at the hands of the greedy and nearly-omnipotent *beys*, landlords, *aghas* and *sheikhs* under the indifferent eyes of the Porte. From a different perspective, the French hoped to replace the assortment of informal practices and inefficient regulations with a more standardized and uniform system of administration. In the words of Albert Khuri commenting on the new land laws passed under the mandate in 1930,

> The new land code is based upon the Ottoman Land Code with its subsequent emendations and amplifications. It is not, properly speaking, like the *majallah*, a codification of Moslem laws. In form, it is similar to the Land Code of North Africa, i.e. Tunis, Algeria and Morocco. It resembles the Swiss civil code and like it, considers registration the point of departure for the establishment of real property rights.[294]

With this system in place, the Quai d'Orsay sought to boost the productivity of lands that had allegedly stagnated under the control of a class of *latifundia* more interested in sowing misery than crops. In turn, the taxes imposed on these expanded harvests would help to

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[291] C 451. Ritsher, Walter, *Municipal Government in the Lebanon*, Beirut: American University of Beirut, Social Science Series No. 3, 1932. Under this system, the interior minister would choose the *mukhtar,* from a list of nominees selected by the *muhafiz*.
[292] Ritsher, 1932, *30-31*.
[293] Ritsher, 1932, 31.
[294] Khuri, Tenure, 1936, 51.

subsidize the costs of the new bureaucracy and their personnel. Such designs depended on the implementation and success of a new system of land tenure.

Informal Policies of Land Reform

Although the stated rationale of land reform under the French mandate was to return the land to the peasants, these reforms harbored the latent desire of Paris to break up the power of the large landowners and replace them with a more pliable class of cultivators who would fall in line with the dictates of the Quai d'Orsay. In other words, the French hoped to supplant existing relations of labor and power in order to create a regime that would follow its foreign policy. Certainly, certain facets of colonial rule relied upon the implantation of settlers to conquer the hinterlands and thereby spread the influence of the metropole, whether they were the Jewish agency acting on behalf of Whitehall in Palestine or the Boers of South Africa in service of the Dutch, or, closer to home, the *Pieds-Noirs* and *colons* in French Algeria. Within the Arab world, supposed "tribal" chieftains in Iraq and rural bosses in Egypt served a similar purpose in aiding the foreign mandates in exchange for near omnipotence in the countryside. In this way, land reform can be considered as more than a benevolent and sanitized reform, but also as part of a political struggle to bolster imperial control and weaken anti-imperial opposition. The unstated goals of land reform include a number of interconnected economic, political and social considerations.

From an economic perspective, land reform was part of an effort to introduce French capital into Lebanon.[295] As the Marseilles conference and other studies of the Levant indicated, French investors were keen to tie the Levant to the global system of capitalism. The fixation with land reform, especially boosting the purported low productivity of agriculture, was that it offered a means to make agriculture attractive to French capitalists. If

[295] Luquet suggests that the antidote to the lack of capital investment could come from France. Luquet, 1925, 172.

creditors believed that investment in mechanized agriculture would boost harvest yields, then they would be more willing to offer the capital necessary for such reforms. The key to increasing productivity was the privatization of land, which would protect farmers from the threats that menaced agriculture. No longer subject to the rule of force of the landlords or the tyranny of the commons presented in Orientalist literature, cultivators would invest more of their energy into lands that belonged exclusively to them. Not only would agriculture serve as the foundation for capital investment, it could also serve as the tax base of the mandate and subsidize the expenditures of the Quai d'Orsay in the Levant. That is, the French sought to replicate in the Levant the global division of labor that saw the colony as the greenhouse for crops shipped to Europe. In this vein, French investors tried to introduce cash crops in a region largely dominated by subsistence farming. These included plans to introduce cotton plants, primarily in parts of Syria.[296] In addition, French reports also mention half-hearted attempts to grow cotton in Tall Kerry in Akkar and at Andjar in the Bekaa Valley with satisfactory results in 1930; and efforts were made by the ministry of agriculture to import olive plants from Europe and grape varieties from the United States in order to boost the production of cash crops.[297]

With this in mind, the political considerations of land reform come to the surface. Namely, the French sought to create a political environment that would facilitate its foreign policy. Already implicit in the studies of Weulersse, Luquet and Achard is the conviction that the system of labor relations ought to be overturned, the villainous large landowners removed from their power and the unfortunate savage-like tenant farmers liberated through the

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[296] For a study of the failed cotton industry in Syria, see Whitaker James, *The Union of Zeus with Demeter: Agricultural Politics in Modern Syria,* PhD Thesis. Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Durham, 1996.

[297] C737 rapport a la S.D.N. sur la situation de la Syrie et du Liban (1929), chapter six. Cotton production remained at a small scale. Plants were only reaped in an area of land of about 100 *deunums*. Some 6,000 olive plants were imported to Lebanon while the number of grape vines remains unknown. Despite these stated successes, the agriculture industry completely collapsed when the effects of the Great Depression reached the Levant.

benevolence of Paris. If the high commission followed the recommendation of Achard to privatize these large estates for their cultivators, then it would be able to create a new class of small-scale proprietors who would support French policy. Indeed, one of the earliest reforms of the high commission was to annul the sale of lands in Mt. Lebanon that transpired during the war, which had been sold for 20% of its value.[298] By building up this sector, the French hoped to rally on its side the majority of the labor force who had been employed in agriculture. Once the introduction of capitalism is considered as a tool of power, its potential to alter relations of power among individuals comes to light.

From a social perspective, the introduction of commercialized agriculture and private property were designed to break up the system of collective farming that had dominated the region for centuries. By supplanting this system, the French were also destroying the safety net that protected cultivators in times of bad harvests. Once deprived of this safety net and entirely responsible for their own harvests, cultivators could be disciplined into complying with French efforts to introduce cash crops like olives and cotton instead of grains and cereals. In effect, French land reform harbored the hope of reproducing the enclosure movement that had transformed the peasants of the commons of Western Europe into a disciplined work force that toiled for salaries on private property or in the newly built factories of the Industrial Revolution.[299] Commercial agriculture would thrive once cultivators lacked any alternative to collective farming. Equally, French officials hoped that the cultivation of small-scale proprietors would bestow legitimacy on their efforts to re-organize the economy and muffle any organized dissent to its policies. It is for such reasons that the obsession of Achard concerned the dissolution of communal property as much as the breakdown of the large estates.

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[298] Luquet, 1923, 159.

[299] For a study of the enclosure movement, See chapter 3, "Accumulation of Labor and the Degradation of Women" in Federici, Silvia, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. California: Autonomedia, 2014.

To summarize, then, French land reform policies contained a number of trends. Its vision of the countryside reflected one trend, an ideological bent toward the complete transformation of social, economic and labor relations into a centralized system of hierarchy overseen by the new bureaucracy. This trend would bring about the breakup of large estates and the development of small-scale proprietors at the expense of the *latifundia*. At the same time, land reform policy reflected a second trend, a more technocratic attempt to modify relations of power through economic means instead of political ones. The land survey, privatization of property and commercialization of agriculture would contribute toward the emancipation of the peasant from his purported medieval shackles as well as enrich French creditors. As will be seen, French reactions to the consequences of these policies revealed yet another trend, a reluctance to shift their expectations and policies amid changing circumstances. This latter trend can be seen in the spread of inequality that French administrators were slow to arrest.

Constraints and Consequences

Despite its hopes and goals, land reform did not liberate the cultivators and boost productivity, but succumbed to a number of shortcomings that the French were unable to overcome. First, French policy relied on indirect mechanisms of enforcement that failed to bring about the necessary structural changes. The second shortcoming involved the unrealistic expectations of the mandate to shift agricultural production and land tenure within a relatively short time span. This, in turn, contributed to a third constraint concerning the commission's underestimation of the prevalence of communal property, which prevented the immediate imposition of private property. Furthermore, the fourth shortcoming concerned the misplaced hope that French reforms would boost productivity in an environment beset by irregular harvests. In contrast, the fifth shortcoming was born of external circumstances made worse by French policy. Combined, these trends help to explain the stagnation in agricultural

production, the grievances of the population, and the expanding inequality that developed during the mandate. Eventually, these contradictions contributed to the growing instability in the region represented by Muhammad Abboud and his letter to Paris. Instead of effecting a new order reminiscent of the communes of the Loire valley, land reform was underpinned by informal practices that generated political, economic and social inequalities. The formal effects of land reform involved the push toward private property, which concentrated land in the hands of a few. In terms of informal practices, the rule of law gave way to systematic abuse of power with these same men holding *de jure* authority. As such, a review of the formal and informal effects of the land tenure system overseen by the French high commission will reveal the reproduction of power through informal mechanisms.

1. Means of Enforcement

The first shortcoming of the administration concerned the indirect means of enforcing land reform. As historian James Whitaker argued, Achard and his colleagues were determined to use only indirect and legalistic methods to accomplish sweeping reforms.[300] Because such proposals risked alienating the lords in a landscape already beset by uprisings and rebellions, Paris refused to impose more drastic reforms in preference to alternative methods of enforcement. In practice, however, even these alternative methods like the establishment of agricultural banks, new irrigation project proposals and the mooted cadastral survey failed to generate their intended economic, political and social designs. For instance, while the first cadastral survey in Lebanon took place in the Bekaa region, it proved inadequate due to the complexity of laws, the absence of proper documents and a lack of skilled staff to carry out the survey.[301] Given these complications, only about half of the cultivated/cultivable land in Syria and Lebanon was surveyed after twenty years of the

[300] Whitaker, 1996, 106.
[301] Dahir, 1980, 476. Moreover, as mentioned in Himadeh, The cadastral survey was never completed but remained an ongoing initiative throughout the mandate, Himadeh 1935, 21.

mandate by 1940.[302] In this context, increasing the harvest would never occur unless the land was placed in the hands of the most productive sector of the population. Instead of redistributing property to the majority of cultivators, French proposals represented a more piecemeal approach to reform, under which agriculture remained in the hands of individuals with no incentive to boost the harvests. As a consolation, the high commission was content to fill its coffers with *la dime* and other taxes that had historically hampered investment.

This hesitation to make more structural reforms is indicative of the political challenges that confronted the policies of Achard. As Lebanese historian Fawwaz Traboulsi writes, despite the initial objective of the mandate to cultivate a class of smallholding farmers, "political considerations ultimately prevailed in favor of attracting the loyalty of the inhabitants of the annexed territories by patronizing their landed notables. In Akkar, the Bekaa and the south, French governors backed leading landowners, who became the main beneficiaries from government aid and project of agricultural developments."[303] As resources earmarked to uplift the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the countryside shifted to the richest and most predatory elements, the social hierarchy that the French had hoped to dissolve became more entrenched. Or as anthropologist Michael Gilsenan writes, "that there was one law for the rich and another for the poor was at the heart of the matter and of practical experience. Personal domination had to be made good in a competitive universe in which ruse, stratagem and overt and covert violence and competition over property were crucial."[304] In these ways, the approach to land reform adopted by the high commission not only failed to deliver its intended effects, it helped strengthen the very elements that it had hoped to supplant.

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[302] Whitaker, 1996, 99. As Whitaker goes on to describe, most of the large-scale infrastructural investments that Achard proposed proved to costly to implement. Those that materialized, like the port redesigns in Tripoli and Latakia, were less grand than had been expected. For a discussion of agricultural banks, see below.
[303] Traboulsi, 2007, 92.
[304] Gilsenan, Michael. "Nizam Ma Fi," *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honor of Albert Hourani*. Reading, Ithaca Press, 1992, 94-95.

2. Unrealistic Expectations

The reforms of Achard were related to a second shortcoming that the high commission never overcame. The system of private property that had developed in Europe was largely alien to most parts of the Levant. Beyond the metropole, the countrysides of the Levant differed from the climate and land tenure system that thrived in the *Maghrib* and West Africa where men like Achard had previously been in service.[305] The idea that the French could transform land tenure within a decade of their arrival proved unfounded. As Whitaker explains, "the French were raised in the classical tradition, which expressed itself through Roman law embodied in prescriptive codes. As a result," he adds, "the French administrators tended to legislate in the abstract and to let systems of expectations overrule facts."[306] Throughout the course of their rule, administrators held fast to the assumption that people throughout the territories would acquiesce to the decrees of foreigners. Moreover, there existed the presumption of uniform assimilation to these new protocols that would create a centralized authority from Paris to the far reaches of Alawite country. Such expectations ran counter to the reality and history of a region long outside the orbit of formal Ottoman institutions. As Whitaker adds, "one could perhaps describe the desire for assimilation of colonized peoples through imposition of a bureaucratic uniformity as an attempt to apply the Jacobin ideal of brotherhood of man. Unfortunately, most of the inhabitants of the French Empire were possessed of no fraternal feelings toward France or each other."[307] In other words, a large portion of the problems that the French encountered came from an unwillingness to accept a reality beyond their own conceptions of the Orient and the colony. The administration still clung to the hope that they could serve as saviors to the peasants trapped in a timeless, medieval system of debt and exploitation. As Whitaker

[305] Whitaker, 1996, 105.
[306] Whitaker, 1996, 119.
[307] Whitaker, 1996,120-121.

contends, French preconceptions of agrarian bureaucracy were never modified by study of facts on the ground.[308]

3. Complex System of Agriculture

This failure, in turn, prevented the French from acknowledging the complex system of land tenure that stood in the way of sweeping reforms. The difficulties of establishing the cadastral survey amid technical flaws and countless disputes over land ownership attest to these complications. In Akkar and the surrounding coastal plains, in general, land was controlled by local bosses or commercial investors and a large portion of the inhabitants there possessed no holdings at all.[309] In Mt. Lebanon, however, private property was divided between the great notable families and religious endowments and in such circumstances, cultivators often owned a portion of the land they farmed.[310] Even if it could have been imposed, the cadastral survey and privatization of property, therefore, would not have offered any benefit to the majority of landless cultivators as much as it would have profited residents of the mountain. Even where such conditions would have benefited the population in Mt. Lebanon, the fall of sericulture, variable rainfall and a series of poor harvests drove more and more cultivators to opt for emigration or relocation to Beirut; and as a result, the economy of the mountain shifted toward remittances and summer tourism.[311]

On a different level, the preoccupations and biases of the French economists blinded them from accepting these complexities. As Whitaker writes, the establishment of a class of small-scale landed cultivators would struggle to thrive in a milieu that effectively profited from coercion and loan sharking. On Achard's proposal of the replacement of large estates with private smallholdings, Whitaker contends that,

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[308] Whitaker, 1996, 122.
[309] Dahir, 1984, 505.
[310] Dahir, 1984, 505.
[311] Himadeh, 1935, 16.

> This obsession with the creation of individual peasant plots blinded him to the essentially communal nature of agriculture in a land where the interests of individual cultivator were carefully balanced against those of the social group within which he functioned. It also led him to ignore the essentially patrimonial relationship between landlord and tenant, although it must be said that during the mandate period, the element of exploitation in this bond was coming more to the fore in certain regions.[312]

In effect, still beholden to the ideas and fantasies of the Levant produced during WW I, Paris and her agents were never able to accept the role that they played in further complicating the complexities of land tenure. Since land tenure was never as simple as they had imagined, the solutions required to overhaul this system were more nuanced than they could implement. As Mundy comments on the complexities of land tenure under the Ottomans, "such systems, far from representing the collectivist bent of a primordial tribalism, appear as responses to the block imposition of agriculture taxes and as strategies for the minimization of risk in agricultural production by equitable distribution and rotation of land."[313] In seeking to simplify these complexities into private property, the mandate administration further exposed cultivators to the shifting fortunes of agriculture.

4. Variable Harvests

A fourth shortcoming within French policy was the presumption that harvest yields would increase through marginal returns year after year. Little consideration and effort was put into resolving the irregular patterns of rainfall and harvest as well as the dearth of funds available to invest in new irrigation systems. Instead, the high commission assumed that all fluctuations would disappear with the onset of mechanized labor and capital investment in agriculture. French officials assumed that their rule would be better than land tenure under the Ottomans. Upon France's entry into Ottoman Syria in 1918, the region had been racked by widespread famine, which conservative estimates credit as causing the death of some

[312] Whitaker, 1996, 105.
[313] Mundy, 1994, 79.

500,000 people in Greater Syria from starvation.[314] Already, a number of factors impacting the harvest have arisen. The hoarding of farmers, disinterest of landlords, and the crippling rates of usurers all contributed to the demoralizing condition of agriculture. Even when these conditions were removed, harvest yields would not have grown exponentially due to the uneven climate and shortage of labor in the coastal plains.

Moreover, the proposed investment in agriculture that the Quai d'Orsay envisioned never materialized to boost productivity as money shifted into other areas of the country. As economic historian Carolyn Gates writes, "capital flowing into agriculture was comparatively small because investment was riskier and the rate of return was lower and slower than that available to investors in commercial and financial ventures."[315] That is to say that, in lieu of the countryside, investment went into the flourishing financial sector based in Beirut, largely run by French and European corporations and subsidiaries managed by Maronite Christians from the mountains. Part of what distinguished Abboud Bey and his son from their fellow landlords over time was their shrewd investment in this nascent financial sector with the profits they made in the countryside.[316] As a result of capital flows to other areas of society, cultivators became even more impoverished under the mandate and left with fewer options for subsistence from the land.

Even when investment was possible in the form of agricultural banks, little of it reached those most in need. A case in point was the agricultural banks conceived in the 1919 Marseille Congress as a way to break up the large estates and progressively eliminate

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[314] Schatkowski Schilcher, Linda. "The Famine of 1915-1918 in Greater Syria. *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective*. Ed. Spagnolo, John, Reading: Ithaca Press, 1992 229-258. Among the casualties, the author estimates that some 200,000 people died in North Lebanon.

[315] Gates, Carolyn. *The Merchant Republic: The Rise of an Open Economy*. Center for Lebanese Studies: London, 1998, 25.

[316] Gilsenan, Michael. "A Modern Feudality: Land and Labour in North Lebanon." *Land Tenure and Social Transformations in the Middle East*. Ed. Khalidi, Tarif. Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1984. 461. Gilsenan made similar comments to the author in a conversation in October 2016.

collective property through the development of smallholding farms.[317] Yet, as Himadeh recounts as early as 1935, the establishment of Le Banque Agricole du Grand-Liban failed to curb the loan sharking that only grew more rampant due to a number of factors.[318] Because agricultural banks could not attract sufficient investment from the commercial sector, the credits they managed to give cultivators were often insufficient for the purchase of machinery, irrigation or drainage technology; did not liquidate older debts; incurred high interest rates while undervaluing the price of land; and often privileged those with political influence like the large landowners at the expense of small cultivators.[319] These factors, combined with a high rate of defaults and bad loans made by the banks, as well as the fact that about one one-third of landless farmers in the Levant did not possess any land to offer as collateral, left cultivators under the thumb of predatory institutions.[320]

5. External Circumstances

In addition to these constraints, the export oriented economy of cash crops that French reformers expected never materialized. Instead, the conditions that laid the groundwork for commercialized agriculture stripped farmers of any protection from the ravages of the Great Depression. The effects of the worldwide recession are recounted in the work of American scholar and eventual president of the American University of Beirut, Norman Burns. In his study, he describes the effects of the depression on the tariff of Syria, the single monetary zone established by France for their separate mandates in Syria and Lebanon. First, the depression contributed to a drop in prices for commodities and therefore weakened the revenue that cultivators could collect from farming. In this regard, Burns

[317] Dahir, 1980, 484.
[318] In fact, Himdaeh, lists well over ten factors for the failure of the agricultural banks. Among these were cultural concerns, as certain segments of the Muslim population held a long standing distrust of banks as dens of usury. Himadeh, 1935, 282. As Dahir writes, in many cases, the lenders to the agricultural banks were often the great lords, themselves. Dahir, 1980, 488.
[319] Himadeh, 1935, 284-285.
[320] Himadeh, 1935, 285.

writes that, "the peasants had no incentive to plant their crops when they knew that the selling price would be less than the cost of production. So the agricultural output of the country decreased in spite of the fact that the real need for agricultural products was as great as before."[321] Despite the needs in agriculture, production dropped due to low prices and as a result, the export oriented market plummeted as well. Even though exports dropped, imports of manufactured goods into the single tariff expanded. As Burns explains, "the disorganization of international prices enabled foreign manufacturers to flood the Syrian market and to force local factories to close their doors." Unable to compete with the low prices of manufactured goods, artisans and factories had to downsize. The total effect of the great depression was characterized by low prices as well as widespread unemployment. This bleak reality is summed up when Burns writes that, "the situation in truth was like economic paralysis. Agricultural lands were idle although urban people were hungry for food. Factories were idle although the urban peasants needed manufactured wares. The potential resources of production were present, but there was little production and the consumers' needs remained unsatisfied." Although the French mandate was not responsible for the Great Depression, the high commission did fail to adjust its *laissez-faire* policy in such circumstances. Instead, the insistence on the shift toward an export-oriented economy only served to further expose the residents of the annexed territories to the fluctuations of global capitalism.

Formal Effects of Land Reform

Eventually, these contradictions contributed to the growing instability in the region represented by Muhammad Abboud and his letter to Paris. Instead of instituting a new order reminiscent of the communes of the Loire valley, land reform was underpinned by informal practices that generated political, economic and social inequalities. From a political and economic perspective, land tenure consecrated the authority of a select few at the expense of

[321] Burns, Norman. *The Tariff of Syria, 1919-1932*. Beirut: American Press Beirut, 1933, 172.

the majority of farmers. In Akkar, 3% of proprietors owned 73% of cultivable land.[322] These landowners would become administrators within the new bureaucracy, effectively in charge of finance and the gendarmerie in towns and villages. Once in power, these officials made sure to deprive their constituencies of any development or infrastructure in order to ensure the population's dependence on their personal patronage.[323] The result of this arrangement was the impoverishment and underdevelopment of the north at the hands of these political bosses. As a 1939 summary of a petition from notable, predominately Muslim families in North Lebanon testifies, residents of the *muhafaza,* "reproach the Lebanese government for having often in this last period [since the reinstatement of the constitution in 1937], undermined the application of laws for personal goals, attacking all liberties (of press, assembly, association), constantly intervening in the affairs of justice and finally, for squandering public funds." [324] The interference of delegates in the administration of the north bears witness to the expansion of personalized rule within the bureaucracy.

This political hierarchy in Akkar was representative of the inequalities that became systematic within the country. While the majority of tax revenues for the new state came from the annexed territories, the overwhelming majority of these funds were allocated to projects in Mt. Lebanon.[325] The political and economic hierarchy that privileged the *beys*

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[322] Gilsenan, 1996, 41.

[323] As Michael Gilsenan writes, "the lords are happy to do everything they can to preserve this social and cultural backwardness to maintain the local domination and their own autonomy from the centre. They have done little to encourage any form of modernization, preferring a population which depends as totally as possible upon their authority. Few dai'a have schools, clinics, post offices, sewage and drainage, piped water or electricity. The beys see to that by their own influence in the national assembly and the ministries." Gilsenan, 1996, 14.

[324] C460 23 January 1939 DHCF au sujet des revendications des notables musulmanes de Liban, 1. A summary of the petition goes on to describe the grievances of these inhabitants with regards to the proposed tax reforms, which would largely benefit the beys at the expense of the majority, including this old notable class. It reads that, "removing a tax on land is only going to benefit big landowners and anger everyone else. They are already mad about irregularities in the last elections, the large number of deputies, and accuse the former president of the council to have his fortune to the detriment of credits, which are destined to favor government candidates in the election. They blame the current president of the republic, who has left his constitutional role by encouraging ministers who are guilty of what has taken place in this period including the agents of the mandate.

[325] As several estimates indicate, regional disparities in the national budget were extreme. First, Traboulsi asserts that some 88% of fiscal revenue of the new state came from the annexed territories, while 80% of those

over the cultivators in Akkar would privilege Mt. Lebanon over the annexed territories, as well. As Muhammad Abboud goes on to detail in his letter, "in effect, there are certain material and moral prerogatives made by certain Lebanese individuals to the detriment of others, and these numerous prerogatives and injustices create a fertile ground for the trumpets of detachment."[326] In effect, the delegate points to certain inequalities *vis-à-vis* the administration of the annexed territories and Mt. Lebanon and Beirut. The first inequality was that whereas the inhabitants of the annexed territories paid a direct tax on landed property in addition to the dreaded *dime* tax that had been a mainstay of the Ottoman tax regime, the residents of Mt. Lebanon paid no property taxes.[327] The second grievance was that whereas residents of the annexed territories paid an excessive tax to change properties and transfer title deeds, the inhabitants of Mt. Lebanon paid no taxes for these services.[328] The third grievance was that whereas there were very few roads in the north and hardly any outside of Tripoli, Mt. Lebanon enjoyed asphalt-paved roads.[329] In addition, perhaps the biggest grievance was that the nearly all of the high posts and most of the junior posts in the government belonged to residents of the mountain at the expense of members of the annexed territories.[330] In these ways, it can be seen that by trying to fix politics to create a subordinate population, the French created a situation for the growth of economic inequality and social stratification. However much the delegate insisted that administrative reform was the panacea

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revenues were spent in Mt. Lebanon. (Traboulsi, 2007, 80). Such grievances are reinforced by the municipal budgets decreed by high commission. In addition, another picture of municipal spending comes from Ritsher, 1932, 41. Data from Decret No. 7410 of November 5, 1930 reveal that the majority of funds was apportioned to the city of Beirut, even though the city held no more than 20% of the national population; with a dispensation of 925,000 Lebanese- Syrian pounds that year, its budget was more than far surpassed the budgets of the cities and towns in the annexed territories. In comparison, the second largest city, Tripoli and its harbor El-Mina, had a total allowance of 195,011 LS pounds. For the rest of the annexed territories, the situation was similar. Saida, the capital of South Lebanon had an allowance of only 20,000 LS pounds; while Zahleh and Baalbek, the two principle towns of the Bekaa district, only had budgets of 20,000 LS pounds and 11,500 LS pounds, respectively. This large concentration of resources away from the annexed territories was dovetailed with the disproportionately high taxrates in these territories. in Ritsher, 1932, 41 Appendix D.

[326] C460 letter of Mohamad Abboud to Sous-Secrétaire d'état, 6 July 1936, 1.

[327] C460 letter of Mohamad Abboud to Sous-Secrétaire d'état, 6 July 1936,2.

[328] *ibid.*

[329] *ibid.*

[330] *ibid.*

to these systematic inequalities, the background of the messenger in this case discloses the conundrum at the heart of land tenure during the mandate. For the advocate of reform, the French educated lawyer and self-described delegate of the peoples of North Lebanon also belonged to the house of the chief lord and loan shark who profited from these same patterns of abuse and hierarchies. Similar to the indirect reforms proposed by Achard a decade earlier, the initiatives suggested by the delegate would, at best, have reproduced a system of predation rather than progressively eliminate it.

In terms of economic trends, not only did fiscal policy further impoverish the poorest sector of the new country, it exacted additional costs from the population as well. Under the *laissez-faire* policy adopted under League of Nations charter, the trade deficit in Syria and Lebanon crashed as the Levant became flooded with imported European goods.[331] With this shift in policy, the staples that people had historically acquired through trade within the Ottoman state of Greater Syria were now imports from Europe or from mandate territories controlled by Britain. The major source of government revenue became import and customs duties rather than a direct tax on incomes. In turn, this indirect tax further impoverished the majority since luxury imports were taxed at about the same rate as necessities.[332] At the other end of the socio-economic spectrum, the *latifundia* enjoyed a comparatively light taxation, or as Burns recounts, "the greater burden of government revenue demands falls on the poor and middle class consumers of the cities. They are the class who consume the imports of foreign necessity goods, and they are the people who are forced to pay the tax which the wealthy succeed in escaping."[333] At the same time, these fiscal policies contributed to the erosion of

[331] Dahir, 1980, 596.
[332] Burns, 1933, 274.
[333] Burns, 1933, 274.

the craft industries in the big cities of the Levant.[334] Equally important, the fall of agriculture, poor harvests in sericulture production and the fiscal policy of Paris prompted a few forward-thinking landlords to diversify their portfolios away from traditional cultivation. While the switch meant that the lords were less exposed to the fall of agriculture, it also implied that cultivators in the lands that these families controlled were more vulnerable to malnutrition and starvation.

Informal Effects of Land Reform

On the other hand, in terms of informal politics, the results of land reform included the spread of social and political inequalities, which in turn, kindled the forms of resistance to the mandate like the Tripoli protests in 1936. A summary of a 1936 speech by the youth wing of the Tripoli branch of the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party branch makes plain that among the list of grievances of the people was the concentration of state resources within Mt. Lebanon at the expense of the annexed territories. "This separatist movement is not only a fanatical Islamic protest," it reads, "but it also translates the very lively discontent of the population with regard to the Lebanese government, which seems until today to consider like strangers the inhabitants of the regions attached to Lebanon in 1919."[335] What such statements sought to emphasize is that the protests witnessed in Tripoli were not only the latest iteration of age-old sectarian hostilities and reprisals, but also a demonstration against the changing political developments that marginalized the poor, in particular, and the citizens of the annexed territories, in general. Such developments were not the product of a few bad apples within the bureaucracy, protestors emphasized, but a direct consequence of mandate policies. Relations in the colony were not designed to cultivate equal rights among citizens, but more closely resembled the hierarchy between creditors and debtors. Or as the youth

[334] For instance, Dahir writes that the number of artisans in the big cities of Syria and Mount Lebanon dropped from 16,500 in 1914 to 5,600 by 1929. Within the sericulture trade, employment had decreased from 5800 to 1529 in 1929. Dahir, 1980, 531.
[335] C411 DSG Tripoli information No. 763, 3 March 1936.

activists said, "the inhabitants of Tripoli and Akkar are discontented that their country has become a colony of the Lebanese republic and that the government concentrates its activity and its concerns within the previous *sanjak* of Mt. Lebanon."[336]

As the government neglected the annexed territories, power brokers were able to disregard the rule of law, continue the coercive practices that had underpinned land tenure and worse, systematically apply violence and intimidation to expand their personal spheres of influence. Abboud Bey, himself, was rumored to have killed a boy working in one of his fields in order to test his newly acquired firearm.[337] Moreover, the *beys* regularly coerced cultivators into forced labor, tax offerings and other customary duties.[338] Due to the contradictions of land reform, the status of Akkar was crystallized during the mandate as a vestige of backward, anti-modern tendencies.[339] Yet, it was during the mandate that the power relations crystallized into the personalized rule of the lords connected to the government. Amid the clamor of protest and upheaval, the pressures of violence and impoverishment mentioned in the introduction further menaced the already vulnerable majority of cultivators lacking legal protection. In this way, the expansion of the bureaucracy contributed to more localized and personalized practices of domination.[340]

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[336] *ibid.*
A list of the party's grievances also includes the following:
- The director of public hygiene has only spent one morning in Tripoli, and there has not been a director in Akkar for two years
-Tariffs are so high for merchants in Tripoli that certain households in the city import their merchandise from the port of Alexandretta
- The situation for cultivators in the plains of Akkar is most difficult as the harvests are ravaged by epiphytes. The director of agriculture has never come to our region to consult its delegates and examination the measures that they take. See C411 information No. 763 DSG Tripoli 3 march 1936

[337] Gilsenan, 1996, 8.

[338] Gilsenan, 1996, 19.

[339] Gilsenan, 1996, 300.

[340] As Michael Gilsenan writes "The power to exclude populations forms services and infrastructure continue to be an important attribute of the *bey*. These relatively small administrative changes have their importance. The point to the ways in which the new state, whose structures and practices were only emerging, was localized and personalized. Whatever rationalities of agronomy, planning and French political ambitions in the region, the coming of direct European rule and its 'new' political institutions on the ground meant the consecration of a more systematically applied domination by those beys who could exploit the developing circumstances." Gilsenan, 1996, 85.

The failure to maintain order within the north was related to the failure of the high commission to cultivate a rural elite capable of administering the countryside that historically served as the dependencies of Tripoli. That is, the failure to administer space emerged from the failure to make inroads with the population and recruit reliable civil servants. The lack of popular support for the mandate can be seen in the increasing reliance on individuals of unsavory character. Very few men and women of influence in North Lebanon were keen to cooperate with the mandate system. In lieu of the formal legal authority reserved for the high commissioner and his appointees, local mandate agents in places like Akkar created for themselves informal situations that empowered and enriched themselves at the expense of the very constituencies that they were supposed to serve.

THE END OF LAW AND ORDER

By the late 1950s, a wizened Abboud Bey, then in his 80s and still the patriarch of a family dynasty that would remain prominent in Akkar until the 1970s, would lament to one American diplomat the erosion of law and order in the country upon the end of the French mandate.[341] In one way, his regret reveals the degree to which reforms initiated under the French mandate institutionalized what had historically been informal practices. The mandate would be seen as the halcyon of power for lords like Abboud Bey and his son Muhammad. The establishment of a new bureaucratic administration did not supplant existing practices of domination, but served to further entrench and localize them. Instead of generating a new relation of power within the production of agriculture, land reform impoverished the productive classes and made them more dependent on the most unproductive elements within the countryside. In this manner, the experiences of Akkar highlight that power was not

[341]. From State Department Files. 853 A 52/12-453 December 4, 1953, As mentioned in Gilsenan, 1996 Page 323. Footnote 2. Abboud Bey visited the American embassy in Beirut following the murder of his son outside of the presidential palace and is reported to have commented that "internal security in the country had evidenced a steady deterioration since the departure of the French in 1943.

reproduced through the emergence of new technologies of power that supplanted traditional experiences or through practices that disciplined the population into modern subjects. Instead the reproduction of power was created within the contradictions of formal institutions underpinned by various informal arrangements and provisional alliances.

Yet from another perspective, the remarks of Abboud Bey underscore the provisional nature of this power. Not only would the autonomy and personal rule that political bosses had enjoyed pass over time, but even during the mandate, land reform was underpinned by practices as variable as the harvest yields. This precariousness reflects the shifting networks and intrigues among French and Lebanese colonial officials that continued to unravel. The rural politics in which Muhammad Abboud emerged was a function of changing circumstances that his family had successfully navigated from the fall of the Ottoman Empire, to the commercialization of agriculture, the privatization of property, the privileges of the new bureaucracy, the integration of Lebanese agriculture into the world market and the Great Depression. To maintain authority in these circumstances required new efforts to re-appropriate the initiatives designed to systematically regulate relations of power. In these ways, new situations emerged that would, in effect, limit the capacity of the high commission to enhance its authority, but rely on a shifting coterie of intermediaries whose ambitions did not always align to those of Paris. This contradiction between the enormous apparatus and backroom dealing would limit the French and their efforts to reproduce their authority. The failure of land reform occurred within this context. Amid such circumstances, what happened to the resistance in Tripoli? Had, as the delegate predicted, the trumpets of discontent softened?

IV. Their Silence ought not Signify Innocence, Our Silence ought not Signify Cowardice

THE TOWN IS HEAVY WITH MINGLED BURDEN

"One notices that certain persons who are used to profiting from the spirit of party and personal ambitions, who are constantly in touch with real authority and personality, succumb to intrigues and plots, while pretending to go back to an earlier state of affairs and playing with all power before the superior authorities."[342] So stated the front-page article of the March 8, 1940 edition of the daily political newspaper of Tripoli, *al-Mustaqbal*. The untitled article, written and signed by the newspaper's publisher and editor-in-chief, French national Madame Elvire Lattouf, suggested certain improprieties among the political elite of Tripoli without explicitly naming these individuals or their crimes.[343] More than anything else, the article signified that the period of unrest and impasse that confronted de Martel in 1936 remained in 1940 despite the efforts of the mandate administration to enforce a blockade of sorts on the restive Old City. The so-called superior authorities that she mentioned dovetailed with the assumptions that underpinned the writings and thoughts of de Martel, the delegate Muhammad Abboud and the agents of the mandate, in general, who held the belief that the attempts to weaken the organized opposition in the north would empower the delegates of Paris to finally make inroads with the population so far removed from their political and spatial remit. In effect, the superior authorities that Mme. Lattouf complained was absent was nothing more than the colonial hierarchy and attitude of strict surveillance

[342] C451. HCF. Translation of extracts from the Tripoli newspaper al-Mustaqbal No. 64. 8 March 1940 Elvira Lattouf.

[343] Very little is known about Madame Lattouf, whose name is sometimes transliterated from Arabic as Alfira Lattuf. Elizabeth Thompson states that her publication began in 1938 as a monthly women's magazine before becoming a daily newspaper in 1943. (Thompson, Elizabeth. *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, New York, Columbia UP, 2000, 215, 336 Footnotes 17.) Despite this claim, the copy of the newspaper discovered in the French archives states that the journal operated as a daily political newspaper by March 1940. Furthermore, it appears that Lattouf stayed in the region after the conclusion of the mandate, given her essay in Jurj Saada's 1960 al-Nahda al-Sihafiya fi Lubnan. Beirut: Dar Wakalat al-Nashr al-Arabiya mentioned in the footnotes of Thompson's Colonial Citizens. Also Saliba describes Mme. Lattouf as the owner and editor in chief of the newspaper. (Saliba, 2016, 285). It is likely that a sketch of Mme. Lattouf appears in the description of the unnamed poor French woman described below. Amid questions about her background, what I seek to emphasize from personal statements described below is the system of thought that animates her position. The scarcity of material from this period complicates efforts of verification. Yet, what becomes apparent in her descriptions is the atmosphere of fiscal and administrative anarchy that reigned so that any phenomenon, no matter how outlandish, becomes possible.

that de Martel had promised to impose over the atmosphere of latent hostility. In lieu of the proper authorities, however, she lamented the emergence of a new political class within the north, adding that, "among these individuals, we wish to point out certain religious chiefs and so called leaders who have been the cause of all divisions and discord and whose regime has been one of misery and misfortune."[344]

This regime of misery and misfortune discussed in the pages that follow will exemplify the ways in which colonial territoriality was socially mediated as opposed to geographically imposed. In this context, the processes of elite formation that the Quai d'Orsay initiated to oversee this territory created an atmosphere of administrative and financial anarchy that the commission was unable to curb in any meaningful way. First, this chapter will explore different theories with regard to the processes of the formation of a colonial political, social and economic elite. Rather than a one-off event that consolidates colonial authority, elite formation precipitates new fields of contestation that have the potential to challenge and undermine imperial objectives. Second, the experiences of late mandate Tripoli and its surrounding dependencies will disclose the ambiguities of colonial institution building. Namely, in the hope of neutralizing indifferent and hostile elements within the population, the agents of the high commission unsuccessfully tried to recruit members of the elite families of the city into the newly established bureaucracy to oversee municipal affairs. Rather than bolster its authority, an analysis of recently de-classified materials shows that the new bureaucracy, in fact, undermined the authority of Paris. Instead, patronage networks and acts of sabotage altered colonial designs and further marginalized the high commission from the population to the extent that the chain of command that the French

[344] C451. HCF. Translation of extracts from the Tripoli newspaper al-Mustaqbal No. 64. 8 March 1940 Elvira Lattouf. The religious figure in question is the Maronite archbishop of Tripoli. More on him and his spat with Mme. Lattouf later.

had envisioned became upended with French mandate officials increasingly beholden to Lebanese bureaucrats and politicians.

The suggestion that commission's policy failed to achieve its intended effect, however, does not imply that it failed to generate indirect effects for the people in the north. Among the aspects of the Lattouf article worth exploring are the ways in which the unforeseen dynamics that emerged during the mandate had a silencing effect on the entire population. Not only had corruption, petty politics and machine politics arrived at the gates of the Old City, it penetrated all facets of political life in ways that the high commission never accomplished. In this manner, Mme. Lattouf insisted that, "if we do not mention in detail their corruptions and atrocities, it ought not signify that they are innocent. Their vices and failings cannot be hidden, because they are established in facts and figures."[345] This intrigue, she argued, now affected the entire political class of the city, from officials loyal to the mandate to even nominal members of the opposition movement. It had created an atmosphere of endemic strife, which, although, it could not be made explicit, affected all facets of daily life in the city. This suggestion of widespread criminality raised questions about the French response to the 1936 general strike as well as the political make-up of the city. At the very least, it intimated that the mutual understanding in the alliance between French administrators and the Lebanese parliament of notables had somehow changed.

At the same time, Mme. Lattouf hints that the high commission under de Martel and his successors had ushered in a new political divide between the majority of citizens and the political and social elites who claimed to represent them. The political divide in Tripoli no longer solely comprised the forces on either side of the picket lines as it had in 1936. Instead, it now constituted a whole coterie of unnamed Lebanese officials and politicians pitted against French nationals and agents loyal to mandate. The bleak reality that she had

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[345] *ibid.*

presented was underpinned by the disappointment that the effort to weaken the organized opposition to the mandate had not reinforced the imperial order in the Levant. In effect, her article discloses unforeseen tensions in the alliance between the French officials, Lebanese notables and the executive office. In response to this silence that did not constitute innocence, Mme. Lattouf asserted that, "our silence cannot be considered cowardice because we have never been accustomed to it and because we have never ceased from defending the law and affirming that it is on our side."[346] In this sense, a new form of trouble had encroached upon Tripoli. Contrary the artillery and gunfire of the riots, or the strikes and demonstrations that preceded it, the unrest that now confronted the city resounded in utter silence.

The contrasting void between them and us, their silence and ours, becomes central to understanding the transformation in power relations that the French mandate initiated in Tripoli before, during and after the 1936 riots. From the bureaucrats to the opposition leaders and everyday residents, this web of silence implicated all segments of the population. Indeed, this silence extended to the messenger of innocence and doom, herself, Mme. Lattouf, in ways that will become clear later. For now, it is worth mentioning that of the numerous named and anonymously written materials cited below, the untitled Lattouf article comprises one of only three texts published during the mandate that referenced the disquiet in the north. Whatever facts and figures Mme. Lattouf had in mind when she wrote her article no longer exist in great detail. Instead, the evidence collected in dribs and drabs and presented here reveals a few of the facets of the crisis. Although incomplete, these previously unreported phenomena shed light on the pressures and transformations that ultimately silenced the population into this web of presumed innocence and deceit, righteous indignation and cowardice. An analysis of these largely unpublished and anonymous materials will disclose that colonial statecraft not only changed the subject population, but also transformed the

[346] *ibid.*

ruling regimes tasked with carrying out the policies of the metropole. In the case of Lebanon, it will become clear how the position of the mandate administrators shifted as the fortunes of the north changed over time. Power did not coalesce to revolve around the new administrative centers set up to ensure the colonial gaze over the subject population. Instead, the contradictions of power and the diverse practices that constituted authority dwelled within different forms of silence that menaced the population. By the time of Mme. Lattouf's publication in 1940, the capability of the high commission to effectively administer the north had waned due to the unforeseen consequences of the emergent shadow state. The silences and secrets that resounded within the ranks of the administration came from the tendency to blame others for these faults rather than to admit the contradictions of French policy.

Ultimately, it can be seen that the efforts to centralize power through the construction of a modern bureaucracy had the opposite effect in that it contributed to the personalization of power into the hands of a select few who re-appropriated state institutions for private benefit. By unpacking different theories of elite formation, it will be possible to consider the ways in which the operation of power generates the opposite of its intended effects. On the one hand, Marxist political theorist Antonio Gramsci contends that the key to the elite maintaining authority in a political society dominated by structural inequality is the capacity to continually alter power relations by recruiting members of the opposition into the ruling regime and therefore weakening organized opposition.[347] At the heart of his analysis, the ruling regime and the status quo remain unchanged despite the recruitment of formerly dissident elements. On the other hand, Jean-Francois Bayart contends that the establishment of the bureaucracy in colonial Africa planted the seeds of social stratification and neo-patrimonialism.[348] In this context, elite formation created unintended consequences and new

[347] Gramsci, Antonio. *The Southern Question. Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Trans. Hoare, Quintin and Nowell Smith, Geoffrey, eds. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991.
[348] Bayart, Jean-Francois. *The State in Africa: The politics of the Belly.* London: Longman, 1993.

situations that the metropole did not envision. The experience of Tripoli and its dependencies will indicate that elite formation did not strengthen the nascent ruling regime, but created new political fields of domination and contestation. In this case, the recruitment of the native population into the bureaucracy contributed to various forms of social, economic and political unrest that the commission was not able to overcome.

With these issues under consideration, it can be seen that before World War II encroached upon the region, a series of crises had reached the gates of the Old City and would spread across the north. Formally, a select few in Beirut were able to manipulate the formal institutions of the government to pursue their personal interests and establish patronage networks within all levels of government. Informally, the protégés of the main political bosses exploited the absence of the rule of law to further criminal enterprise. As such, the reproduction of space did not follow imperial decree. Even as the city became incorporated into the mandate, the processes of transformation and re-appropriation of state resources impacted the high commission. The very institutional practices of municipal administration designed to underpin the new colonial order in the Levant, nonetheless, kindled unrest and weakened the mandate administration. Such complexities and ambiguities of colonial domination presaged the proliferation of informal patronage networks in the dying days of empire. In these ways, the administrative measures that Abboud suggested to muffle the trumpets of discontent and the blockade of sorts that de Martel assured would bring order became the regime of undisclosed misery and misfortune that Mme. Lattouf rued.

YOU CAME AND BY YOUR ARRIVAL SAVED OUR CITY

While elite formation was designed to alter power relations within the colony, the approach adopted here contends that it generated unintentional consequences that undermined the very systems of rule it should have supported. The onset of imperial rule was

subject to different forms of contestation and manipulation.[349] This potential for the breakdown of discipline enables us to rethink the notions of legitimacy and hegemony in the age of imperialism The resort to direct as well as indirect rule discloses that colonial authority was never omnipotent, but subject to internal challenge and resistance. In the course of attempting to implement imperial designs, colonial rule affected both rulers and ruled. These transformations, then, shed light on the failure of effective administration and the proliferation of informal politics in colonial Lebanon. In these ways, the advent of institution building did not strengthen the nascent ruling regime and precipitate the submission of the subject population, but like the shadow state discussed earlier, helped to complicate and weaken effective rule.

One perspective of elite formation comes from Antonio Gramsci. In the context of the Italian state unification, political life, he argued, did not involve transforming the population into some kind of imagined community or nationalist force, but relied upon quieting vociferous opposition to the emergent regime and winning over the leading members of the opposition. For Gramsci, this process was twofold: the first being the overwhelming force, harassment and surveillance of the police that quashed resistance. In contrast to this direct tactic was a non-violent means of coercion that he termed *transformismo*, the gradual and selective absorption of the leaders of the resistance into the ranks of the new ruling elite through access to patronage networks and jobs.[350] For Gramsci, this non-coercive power of the state only extended to the leading intellectuals of the subject population and did not reach the majority who remained marginalized from access to the dominant political arenas. In his words, "the social stratum which could have organized the endemic southern discontent,

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[349] Engles, Dagmar. "Introduction: Marks and Engels." Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Asia and Africa. Ed. Engels and Shula Marks. London: British Academic Press, 194.

[350] Gramsci, 1991, 59. He goes on to write that "the formation of this class involved the gradual but continuous absorption…of the active elements produced [within] allied groups—and even those which came from antagonistic groups."

instead became an instrument of northern policy, a kind of auxiliary private police."[351] Robbed of its leaders and would-be intellectuals, the majority would struggle to influence the ruling stratums of power and, eventually, became the subject of police crackdowns and media campaigns decrying their rebellious spirit and hostile attitude to industry and labor, more generally. Instead, this muted political opposition, what Grasmci remembered as an "anarchic turbulence" appeared before the nation as a mere "matter for the police and the courts," dismissed without further political merit. In effect, state legitimacy for Gramsci constituted a one-off arrangement among a relatively exclusive class of people within the ruling faction, which did not involve the silenced majority of citizens. From this perspective, then, the advent of institution building underpinned the nascent ruling regime.

As elites are recruited into the ruling establishment, Gramsci assumed that relations of power remain static between ruler and ruled. At the same time, he asserted that the ruling class becomes even more extensive as a result of this suppression and marginalization of dissent. For Gramsci, *transformismo* represented "the formation of an ever more extensive ruling class" that never loses its control, but only expands it.[352] As such, the ruling coalition that governs the state remains unaffected by the processes of transformation that impact the rest of the population. The would-be leaders of the resistance are simply added to the establishment as new auxiliary police force. Instead, the only drastic change to this set-up is the amount of force necessary to suppress the marginalized. As a result, elite formation dovetails with increasing levels of oppression from the time of Victor Emmanuel until the rise of Mussolini. However helpful this historical examination of the Italian unification campaign, the analysis of power relations adopted here departs from his in a number of ways.

[351] Gramsci, 1991, 94.
[352] Gramsci, 1991,58.

By focusing on informal mechanisms in lieu of party politics, it becomes possible to notice the ways in which elite formation alters not only practices of resistance, but also structures of power. Elite formation does not occur in a vacuum and political actors bring into any system of domination a myriad of personal and collective interests with them. As Bayart writes, "the political systems whose dynamics are equivocal and reversible, do not have any value outside of their heterogeneous actualization from one actor to another and from one context to another, in the same way that a text is created by the way in which it is read."[353] It is this interplay between different actors with distinct motives that produces new fields of contestation within the dialectic of power and resistance. The capacity to create a new practice of power does not preclude the possibility that it cultivates alternative practices, as well. In this manner, Bayart goes on to write that, "an apparatus of control or domination or a line of dependence are not just what the government or imperialism want them to be, they are also what the actors, even if they are subordinate, make of them."[354] That is, the exercise of power is colored by the contexts in which it occurs. In the context of imperialism, power came to depend on the capacity of certain actors to re-appropriate state institutions.

Such perspective should inform considerations of elite formation within the colony. Although elite formation was part of an effort to create new relations of power that would reproduce social stratification in the colony, it generated unintended consequences. In keeping with Bayart, "the major role of the government in molding social stratification does not, or at least, does not only reveal a cultural resurgence of ancient political forms, [as] it cannot be separated from the colonial episode."[355] From this perspective, it can be seen how the imperatives of indirect colonial rule gave way to the development of informal practices beside the formal institutions of government. As a result, 'corruption' as it is called today,

[353] Bayart, 1993, 37.
[354] Bayart, 1993, 37.
[355] Bayart, 1993, 70.

was an organic part of the system of indirect rule," insists Bayart.[356] Such latent networks and alliances underpinned colonial rule at the same time that they generated unintended consequences that facilitated anti-colonial resistance. For Bayart, the practices that played a part in colonial governance included elections, the formation of political parties, the bureaucracy, chieftaincy and ideology.[357] It can be seen that these different formal practices and informal networks not only held the capacity to weaken opposition to colonial rule, but also to undermine the policies of the metropole.

In sum, then, elite formation in the period of colonialism was not a static *fait accompli*, but an evolving and shifting set of practices that expanded the field of contestation in the colony. Whereas the metropole envisioned direct and indirect rule as the ornaments of the empire, in practice, it created new challenges for colonial regimes to overcome. The proliferation of patronage networks, misuse of office and re-appropriation of government resources did not always benefit the metropole. As the subject population became more polarized between those with access to government resources and those without it, European imperialists became increasingly disconnected from the societies it had hoped to control through the bureaucracy.

But before analyzing Lebanon, it is worth exploring the issue of how to examine largely latent processes of informal politics that rely upon various degrees and forms of silence. For, silence, like control, is never complete. It is always the outcome of practices of domination and resistance. As a result, power relations are at work in what is not said as much as in what is said. As Michael Taussig contends, silence, or the failure to mention acts of coercion, often serves as the missing or underappreciated element in colonial affairs.[358] Building upon the work of Taussig, Timothy Mitchell sees discourse and the often latent

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[356] Bayart, 1993, 71.
[357] Bayart, 1993, 163.
[358] Taussig, Michael. "Culture of Terror: Space of Death, Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture." Comparative Studies in Society and History. Vol. 26, No. 3 (Jul., 1984), 468.

nods to coercion within it as a necessary component of the framework that reproduces domination. [359] Rather than a complete absence of coercion, the reproduction of domination requires some narrative that has the potential to reveal a more complex glimpse of power relations. Letters must be read and sent to the archives, warnings issued, and indiscretions raised in order to then be suppressed. By imposing silence among its victims and witnesses, perpetrators of violence are able to put forth their own alternative version of events. In turn, this alternative version of events breaks a strict code of silence, and triggers whispers and rumors that contest official accounts. In this manner, Mitchell says, "the disappearance of the hidden act of terror gains its force as an absence that is continually made present."[360] In this way, the lack of direct evidence of violence becomes essential to understanding power-relations within marginalized communities.

In the case of Lebanon, silence served as a testament to this web of informal politics within the country. The resort to silence, as will be seen, was imposed to hide the ambiguities of domination and limitations of mandate rule, which reverberated during this period of unrest and political reform. An examination of municipal administration in Tripoli will reveal the contradictions of elite formation and its consequences for the inhabitants of the north. Whether manifested as feigned innocence or cowardice, intimidation or neglect, marginalization or deceit, silence is key to uncovering the shifting forces of power and resistance there.

THE CLUE IS IN THE LAND

In North Lebanon, among the costs of weakening the anti-colonial resistance in Tripoli were the erosion of French influence and the proliferation of informal arrangements and government malfeasance. When combined these two trends incubated disaster for the

[359] Mitchell, Timothy. *Rule of Experts*. Berkeley: U California P, 2000. 153.
[360] Mitchell, 2000, 153.

majority of residents. The high commission became stuck in a series of unfolding crises intimated by Mme. Lattouf. The centralization of authority and expansion of the bureaucracy gave rise to a number of unforeseen—and unspoken—consequences that the French struggled to address. For, the reproduction of power in the annexed territories extended beyond the chain of command that the French had dictated. When the mixed results of French policy combined with the burgeoning informal arrangements that developed during the mandate, trouble began to knock on the gates of the Old City. But rather than answer this call, French officials ignored the reality that in transforming power-relations in Lebanon, their own authority also changed. To understand this predicament it will be necessary to review the formal practices of government, the informal arrangements that underpinned it as well as their consequences. Ultimately, this review will reveal that the establishment of the bureaucracy and attempt to form a new elite within it empowered informal politics in addition to social, political and economic unrest.

By the late 1940s, Tripoli and its environs remained gripped by the latent hostility that de Martel described earlier in the decade. According to reports, as late as March 1939, tension had reached a point at which, for the third time in eight days, French soldiers nearly attacked residents, prompting inhabitants throughout the north to arm themselves with rifles and ammunition in preparation of further conflict in contravention of the ban on firearms.[361] Amid this turmoil, the desire for the attachment of Tripoli to Syria remained as prominent as ever. The leaders of the 1936 riots, freed after their arrests, continued to clamor for the area's independence from the state of Lebanon.[362] At the same time, the majority remained

[361] C460 DHCF No. 95 au sujet de fauxbruits diffues au Liban nord 7 March 39. Pg 1-2.
[362] According to notes from the administrative counselor of North Lebanon, presumable du Paty de Clam, the conclusion of the riots did not abate tensions, instead protestors felt victorious after their standoff with the mandate forces. "From now on," the administrator contends, "this method of pressure eludes us, whatever be the harsh measures that we are asked to consider in the future against instigators and rioters, the population will no longer take them seriously and will think that all sanctions announced will end within a few weeks with the visit of minister to the sites of protestors." By this, the administrative counselor refers to the visit of then prime

discontented, even hostile toward the representatives, delegates and agents of the high commission. While the city's population is difficult to surmise given the lack of an official census and the unreliability of existing data, different reports suggest that it had steadily increased to nearly 80,000 by 1943.[363] As mentioned previously, this population comprised a predominately Sunni Muslim population and a sizable Christian minority. In general, the population within the wider region of North Lebanon would reach an estimated total of 241,000.[364]

Within this landscape, the high commission sought to extend its control in the annexed territories in two ways: formal institutions and, informal networks. The formal institutions of governance sought to expand control by recruiting members of the population into the ranks of the new bureaucracy. In contrast, informal institutions were designed to create ties between agents of the high commission and established and emerging elites within the colony. At the same time, embedded within the large bureaucracy was a desire to construct a social hierarchy that would reproduce French authority across all areas of political, social and economic life. In addition to administering the new jurisdictions set up by Paris, municipal administration also operated as a political project designed to cultivate and to promote individuals loyal to the regime. In practice, the leaders appointed by the mandate and the Lebanese government failed to deliver the promise of improved administration, undermining the solutions that de Martel and Abboud had mooted earlier. Instead, these mechanisms unleashed a series of consequences that, in different ways, curbed French control. In these ways, the bureaucracy contributed to the weakening of anti-mandate

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minister Kheir Eddine Ahdab in 1937. See C460. Copie of letter No. 29 du 6 February 1937. conseiller administrative du Liban nord au sujet de la visited u president du conseil des ministres a Tripoli, delegation HCF No. 451. Pg 2.

[363] This exact figure of 80,000 is mentioned in Gulick, John. *Tripoli: A Modern Arab City*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967, 31. See the appendix for additional information.

[364] MAE Rapport a la Société des Nations sur la Situation de la Syrie et du Liban, 1938, 1942 as mentioned in Hourani, Albert, Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1946, 85.

opposition in addition to eroding the capability of Paris to address the needs of the population. The consequences of the proliferation of these informal networks that relied upon silence included untold suffering for the majority of residents.

Formal Policy of Municipal Administration

The formal laws of municipal administration were born of a political desire to encourage limited self-government within Lebanon under the new constitution of 1926, discussed further in the next chapter. Prior to the French mandate, the region had recently undergone a series of sweeping reforms in municipal administration. The system that the French would adapt had been installed during the second half of the nineteenth century. Ironically, the basis of the new model adopted by the Ottomans was the French system of departmental administration. Upon the 1920 decree of statehood, the French sought to further centralize these Ottoman reforms. Leading this highly centralized bureaucracy was the president of the Lebanese republic, who enjoyed wide discretion on personnel appointments and government spending. The vision of the order that the French tried to establish under de Martel and his successors was not so much like the maze of small streets that dominated the old city of Tripoli, but a highly centralized system that would resemble a series of replicating cells extending *ad nauseam* across the landscape.

The work of then visiting American University of Beirut scholar Walter Ritsher sheds insight into imperial designs. The mandate decreed a system of municipal hierarchy based on the French *département* system designed to concentrate authority within Beirut and overseen by French administrators. Prior to the establishment of Arrêté 1208 of March 10, 1922, there had existed over 500 towns and villages within the boundaries of the State of Greater Lebanon. Yet, the new law governing municipal affairs only recognized 120 of these

localities as part of the new system.[365] In turn, the French reorganized these recognized territories within a five tier hierarchy that included 5 *muhafazat*, further divided into several subdivisions known as *sanjak, qada, nahiya* and *karia.* [366] Overseeing these subdivisions were the minister of the interior and, by extension, the president, who appointed the officials that supervised these areas. In charge of the first two areas was the *muhafiz,* followed by the *kaimakam, moudir al-baladiyya* and *moukhtar,* respectively.[367] The larger *qada,* like Tripoli, were considered municipalities and functioned with a *kaimakam* serving as a sort of mayor as well as with a municipal council. [368] In addition to serving as a *qada,* Tripoli was also the administrative center for the *muhafaza* of North Lebanon. The other *muhafazat* included Mt. Lebanon, South Lebanon, the Bekaa and Beirut. Beirut, much like the prefecture of Paris, was governed as a separate entity. In this way, the national government controlled and supervised these territories by appointing the leaders of each subdivision. In turn, the interior minister selected each *muhafiz* that headed the five *muhafazat* as well as each *kaimakam* that headed the eighteen *aqdya*. [369] Ultimately, at the top of this system of municipal administration were the agents of the high commission since, according to Article 9.5 of Arrêté 1208, the French administrative counselors must approve all affairs within their municipality.[370] As Ritsher concluded in 1932, "all of these officials exercise a constant and vigilant surveillance over the municipalities within their jurisdiction with powers even more

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[365] C451. Ritsher, Walter. *Municipal Government in the Lebanon*. Beirut: American University of Beirut Social Science Series No. 3, 1932. 1. His thesis is one of the few invaluable secondary resources on this subject.
[366] Ritscher, 1932, 1. These terms are extremely difficult to transliterate as French, Ottoman Turkish and Arabic have designated distinct transliterations and translations. With this in mind, I decided to keep the Arabic titles. The plural of *muhafaza* that I use is *muhafazat*.
[367] Ritscher, 1932, 1.
[368] Ritscher, 1932, 17. In each *qada* with a population of 25,000 residents or more, the *kaimakam* is charged with the function of mayor and as Ritsher states, "appoints, with powers of suspension and removal, all municipal employees for whom the laws and regulations have not fixed a specific mode of appointment."
[369] The term *kaimakam* is commonly translated as mayor and muhafiz as governor. Qada is also transliterated as *caza* and *kaza*. The term kaimakam also appears as *kaymakam, caimacam, qaim maqam, qaimmaqam* etc. The *moudir al baladiyaa* is also known as the *ra'is al-baladiya* who oversaw the *nahya*. The *moukhtar,* the lowest ranking administrator who the *karia* or village. The Arabic plural of *qada* is *aqdya*.
[370] Ritscher, 1932, 17, Footnote 5.

extensive than those of the prefects in France, thus brining municipal government well within the highly centralized system of national government."[371]

The overall system that Ritsher described envisions a hierarchy centered on Beirut and the politicians within the Grand Serail. All municipal affairs required the approval of the minister of the interior, who in turn, was appointed by the president of the republic. The intended chain of command was straight-forward. Power was supposed to flow from the French administrative counselors to the Lebanese president, interior minister, *muhafiz*, *kaimakam*, municipal council, and then the local branches of the civil service. For instance, among the remit of the interior minister were the municipal budget, municipal taxes, tariffs and tax revenue collection, special taxes and loans, conditions for the lease or rental of municipal property for periods, the acquisition of new property and public works projects, as well as price controls for staple commodities like bread, flour, meat, butter, milk, oil, vegetables, wood, charcoal and rice.[372] This centralized design was then reproduced within each locality. For each *qada* was led by a *kaimakam* who also served as the president of the municipal council. Each *kaimakam* served a term of one year and was appointed by the minister of the interior from the members of the municipal council; and whereas the selection of the municipal council varied in each *qada*, members typically served for a term of four years and were renewed as a bloc.[373] In these ways, the officials in charge of local administration were as beholden to the national bureaucracy as residents were beholden to the executives of their particular municipality, district or village. Ultimately, although the 1926 Constitution established this system of municipal administration, as discussed in the

[371] Ritscher, 1932, 17.
[372] Ritscher, 1932, 14. According to Saliba, in Tripoli the municipality set prices for base commodities like break. Saliba, 2016, 185.
[373] Ritscher, 1932, 16.

next chapter, in the lead up to the 1932 legislative elections, High Commissioner Auguste Henri Ponsot suspended the constitution and thus nullified these decrees in May 1932.[374]

During the suspension of the constitution, the executive appointed by the Quai d'Orsay, Emile Eddé, assumed even greater authority. In this time, a number of municipalities and municipal councils were dissolved and suspended at his behest. In exchange for his sweeping powers, Eddé signed the Franco-Lebanese treaty in 1936. The treaty, modeled on the Franco-Syrian treaty, would have maintained French control in the Levant while making provisions for an ostensible local government. Crucially, however, it would have extended the French presence in Lebanon for another 25 years.[375] It was such terms that instigated the 1936 riots. In the period between the completion of these negotiations and the ratification of the treaty, High Commissioner de Martel reinstated the suspended Lebanese constitution in January 1937 and a new president was elected, ostensibly with the purpose of convincing the national legislature to ratify the treaty.[376] This period of political uncertainty served as the crucible in which the Tripoli municipality, already beleaguered by poor administration, degenerated into the regime of misery and misfortune recounted by Mm. Lattouf.

Despite its consequences, the high commission envisioned municipal administration as an effort to create a new relation of power in the colony. The supervision and control of the national bureaucracy was intended to create a cadre of small-scale civil servants loyal to

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[374] Saliba, 2016, 142. Here, again Tripoli plays a prominent, if understated, role in Lebanese politics. The possibility of the election of a presidential candidate not approved by Paris led to the suspension of the constitution and parliament in 1932. The proposed candidate was leading notable of Tripoli, Sheikh Muhammad al-Jisr, at the time the most prominent of the few Sunni Muslims to cooperate with the French mandate. An ally of the first high commissioners, General Gouraud and his successor Maxime Weygand, al-Jisr was respected within French circles and received the *legion d'honneur* in 1921. Despite his participation in national politics for well over a decade, the possibility of a Muslim candidate ascending to the highest office in 1932 alarmed Paris. After he refused to withdraw his candidacy for office, the high commissioner suspended parliament and national elections in May 1932. Afterwards, al-Jisr retired from public life. See Saliba, 2016, 125-142. Al-Atiyah, Najla Wadih. The Attitude of the Lebanese Sunnis toward the State of Lebanon. PhD Thesis, Department of Politics, University of London (SOAS) 1973.

[375] Hourani, Albert. *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay*. London: Oxford UP 1946. 200.

[376] Longrigg, 1968, 252.

the mandate. The new bureaucratic hierarchy would serve as the blueprint for efforts to create a social and political hierarchy dominated by the emerging class of lawyers and bankers from Mt. Lebanon like Eddé. Historically and culturally the region closest to France, Mt. Lebanon benefited disproportionately from the *muhafaza* system. Until 1926, for instance, residents there hardly paid any taxes as the French kept in place the distinct tax codes overseen by the Ottomans.[377] In addition to its tax breaks, people from Eddé's constituency in the mountain dominated posts in the civil service. Below this elite, it was expected that the leading notables of the annexed territories would fill the middling ranks of the bureaucracy. In these ways, the bureaucracy was designed to reinforce political, social and economic inequalities.

Informal Policy of Mandate Administration

From this point of view, the informal policy of municipal administration within French mandate in Lebanon becomes apparent. The establishment of the national bureaucracy was part of an effort to win over the leading inhabitants of the city who were initially hostile to the French mandate. A report to the high commissioner lays bare these ambitions. "For twelve years," it reads "the Lebanese government has tried to appease the people of Tripoli by distributing jobs to the separatist leaders and their clients."[378] The underlying policy of municipal affairs involved the same patronage networks responsible for the growth of Mt. Lebanon and Beirut at the expense of the annexed territories. In this manner, the report goes on to say that, "for political and economic reasons, the Lebanese government has treated the annexed territories like conquered territory."[379] Within the system of hierarchy and political inequality that emerged from the mandate system, Tripoli and other

[377] C460 Situation Politique, HCF Notes au sujet de le ville de Tripoli- el Mina, undated probably 1939.
[378] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, Pg 2. As mentioned earlier, this report likely prepares the visit of the high commissioner to Tripoli in 1939. The twelve-year period mentioned likely references the period since the new constitution in 1926.
[379] *ibid*.

areas of the annexed territories became base concerns. This inequality assumed a spatial dimension. As money and influence became concentrated in Beirut, the rest of the country was increasingly marginalized from national policy. Once this money was given to the protest leaders, it was hoped that they would accept their status as conquered territory and leverage their influence to persuade other residents in the annexed territories to do the same. Thus, the report adds that, "outside of the money distributed to the separatist leaders, the Lebanese government has nothing to do with Tripoli."[380] The result of this policy was deliberate and official neglect. Or, in the words of one official describing the actions of Eddé, "the Lebanese leaders always pretended to be disinterested in Tripoli: since 1926 the presidents have only come to visit the second city of Lebanon twice. For the visit of President Eddé, he did not so much as pay a visit to Tripoli has he visited the Maronite Patriarch there and all the Christian regions there."[381] Although the high commission enabled a series Lebanese interlocutors and middlemen like President Eddé to dominate the bureaucracy, these officials, like the French soldiers before them, would have to confront the hostilities in the labyrinth of Tripoli.

On one level, the shortcomings of this secret policy to buy off the leaders of the opposition movement are best evinced when considering the actions of one of the organizers of the 1936 general strike, Abd al-Hamid al-Karami.[382] Born around 1893 into one of the most prominent landowning families further distinguished for its service as *qadi* and *mufti* officials within the Ottoman Empire, al-Karami would witness and participate in the tumultuous transformations that the region brooked in the first half of the twentieth

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[380] *ibid.*
[381] *ibid.*
[382] As in many instances, transliteration has proven complicated. Al-Karami was generally known among the French as Abdul Hamid Keramé or Kerame. His name has even been printed as 'abd al-Hamid Efendi al-Karami in Reilly James, *The Ottoman Cities of Lebanon*, London I.B. Tauris, 2016, 120. From this wealth of options, I have preferred the more Arabized version and for the sake of consistency, have used this spelling within passages that I quote from the French archives.

century.[383] Still a teenager, he continued his family's tradition of public service when he succeed his father as the *mufti* of Tripoli in 1912 at the age of 19.[384] The coronation of this ambitious young man into elite politics appeared complete when he was confirmed in 1918 as the administrator of Tripoli by the Sharifan regime that had sought to establish a Greater Syrian state based in Damascus.[385] From, there, however, al-Karami became one of the many *déclassé* who lost their lofty status with the establishment of the State of Greater Lebanon. Even though al-Karami had retained his office in the initial months following the French occupation, he was then dismissed for his pro-Sharifan and anti-French political activities. By May 1919, a young al-Karami irritated the French when he organized a demonstration calling for an English mandate of the Levant during the passage of the King-Crane commission in the city.[386] Angered that a seemingly ungrateful civil servant sought to sabotage the position of France, the high commission dismissed the former *mufti* from the post that he had occupied since he was a teenager. Since then, in the words of one unnamed official, "he has devoted a bitter hatred toward the French mandate and the state of Lebanon, provoking troubles in Tripoli."[387]

This bitter hatred blazed even as al-Karami came into contact with the regime. Like many individuals and families, al-Karami ran into financial troubles during the early years of the mandate and, with the fall of agriculture, he teetered on the brink of bankruptcy. Yet, unlike the majority, he received political and economic support from the mandate authorities.

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[383] C460 DHCF No. 603 3 March 1939 au sujet de la fermeture des souks a Tripoli, copy of letter of conseiller administrative du Liban nord (du Paty de Clam) Report on Abd al-Hamid Karami. 1. The family's status as *latifundia* is mentioned in Gulick, John. *Tripoli: A Modern Arab City*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967, 34.
[384] C460 DHCF No. 603 3 March 1939 au sujet de la fermeture des souks a Tripoli, copy of letter of conseiller administrative du Liban nord (du Paty de Clam) Report on Abd al-Hamid Karami. In contrast, Saliba lists his age as 17 at the time (Saliba, 2016, 47). Although his exact birthday is unclear, the overall impression is that Abd al-Hamid was still a teenager when he assumed public office.
[385] C460 DHCF No. 603 3 March 1939 au sujet de la fermeture des souks à Tripoli, lettre du conseiller administrative du Liban nord (du Paty de Clam) Report on Abd al-Hamid Karami.
[386] C460 source, conseiller administrative de Tripoli information. du Paty de Clam
[387] C460 DHCF No. 603 3 March 1939 au sujet de la fermeture des souks a Tripoli, lettre du of conseiller administrative du Liban nord (du Paty de Clam) Report on Abd al-Hamid Karami. 1.

After his 1924 arrest for financing the rebellion in Jabal Druze in Syria, he was released, and quickly joined the ranks of the Great Arab revolt to take up arms against Paris.[388] By 1931, French officials would note that, "when his creditors were going to seize his assets, the high commissioner [at the time Ponsot], intervened before the French banks to save him from bankruptcy in the hope of winning over al-Karami. In return, the former *mufti* thanked him by organizing with his brothers a riot that left one dead and 20 injured."[389] Years later, the same pattern would repeat itself whereby the olive branches of the regime were met with firearms and cannon balls. As will be discussed later, when the former *mufti* confronted legal troubles, the mandate intervened to help him escape the gallows. For their reward, al-Karami returned to public life in 1936 to help radicalize the 1936 general strike, which left 5 people dead and another 90 injured. Even then, once arrested, he was freed through an injunction from the Syrian government.[390] The continued overtures to al-Karami attested to another political phenomena that the mandate struggled to address. Namely, many of the leading families of Tripoli and the north, in general, wanted nothing to do with the mandate regime and refused to cooperate with the bureaucracy since, according to the administrative counselor, "the elders of the principal families consider it beneath their dignity to be a party to a simple municipal council."[391] In effect, the French administration failed to win over the power brokers within the city and the expansion of the bureaucracy only animated opposition to the mandate.

In sum, the formal and informal policies with regard to the municipal administration of the annexed territories exacerbated the grievances and hostilities in the region. The French

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[388] Rougier, Bernard. *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: North Lebanon from Al-Qaeda to ISIS*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2015, 2.
[389] C460 DHCF Conseiller administrative de Tripoli information (presumably 1939) Written by du Paty de Clam. I believe that what animated the count's frustration is that fact that for years, the informal policy of the high commission legally and financially supported al-Karami even as he continued his public resistance against the mandate.
[390] *ibid*.
[391] C460 Note sur les municipalities de Tripoli- el-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939. 1.

decreed that power was concentrated in the hands of a select few. The overtures to the majority of the population comprised either outright neglect or cash—supplied by the French or taken from the taxpayers—to a select few of the political opposition. As we will see, this capacity to re-appropriate discretionary spending would have a dangerous and deadly effect in the region already teeming with latent hostility. But for now, it can be tentatively concluded that the overall mandate policies with regard to the annexed territories was unsuccessful in abating tensions. Not only were separatist leaders like al-Karami and his colleague Dr. Abd al-Latif Bissar intent on ignoring these overtures from the regime to advance their activism, their campaigns discouraged other residents from rallying around the mandate.[392] For, as one administrator writes, "the separatist leaders have not been worried, they even organize attacks against the French troops with the people of Tripoli concluding then that the Lebanese government and French authorities are afraid of them, further stoking their demands."[393] Unable to rally any kind of support among the political elites or majority, the French mandate had reached an impasse. It was in this violent context that the 1936 riot was born.

The Effects of Formal and Informal Mandate Policy

The defiance of al-Karami was but one sign that mandate policy had worked better in theory than in practice. Not only did municipal administration fail to absorb dissident ranks within the dominant class that controlled the bureaucracy, it failed to establish the central chain of command from the most remote village to the high commission. Instead of achieving these overt and covert goals, municipal affairs cultivated a series of unintended consequences. The fallout from municipal administration can be thought of as four unspoken phenomena, that, when combined, generated a series of crises that menaced the inhabitants of

[392] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes au sujet de le ville de Tripoli- el Mina, undated, presumably 1939, Pg 2

[393] *ibid*. The translation of this sentence is complicated. I have translated the French word *attentats* as attacks, although it also signifies shootings. It's safe to say that both were present.

North Lebanon in the 1930s and 1940s. Tracing these developments as they were chronicled in reports to de Martel's successor, M. Gabriel Puaux, will reveal the unforeseen mingled burdens that comprised what French officials described as *La Situation* à *Tripoli*. The situation comprised effects of both the formal policies of the mandate as well as its informal policies. Rather than present them separately, they are presented here so as to reflect the co-mingled intricacies of municipal administration and colonial rule. The first crisis that resulted from municipal administration was a public health outbreak that the administration was unable to redress. The second crisis involved what one administrator described as the plague of over-centralization through which bureaucrats and politicians were able to expand their personal rule at the expense of the increasingly impoverished and insecure majority. The third crisis concerned the emergence of petty politics of personal vendettas, rivalries and competition to secure access to government privilege. The fourth facet of this crisis involved the criminal enterprise that the French high commission directly and indirectly bankrolled. Together, these trends reflect the reproduction of patronage networks through the government and disclose the unspoken legacy of colonialism whereby modern institutions of governance relied upon supposedly traditional practices as well as various forms of collusion and informal arrangements. As a result, the growth of the colonial bureaucracy did not strengthen the metropole, but limited its capacity to effectively rule the colony and influence the subjects within it. That is to say, the processes of elite formation did not bolster the colonial regime's control over the colonial space as much as it generated new and unintended consequences that further marginalized the high commission from the population.

1. Public Health

The first sign of turmoil arrived in the form of the unspoken health crisis that the high commission struggled to address. Although the eradication of infections diseases after the Great War had been trumpeted as one of the main accomplishments of the French mandate in

various publications,[394] residents of the *muhafaza* told a different story in their petitions to the high commission. On the one hand, the French claimed to have drastically reduced the spread of infectious diseases by improving upon the city's infrastructure that had festered under the Ottomans.[395] Following Lebanese historian and Tripoli resident Farouk Hoblus, the Ottomans had neglected to upgrade the city's crumbling infrastructure beyond payments to security personnel because, in his words, "the Ottoman's mission in the province was to collect its wealth and carry off as much of it as possible to Istanbul."[396] The chronic lack of investment devastated the population and forced families to fend for themselves, leaving them increasingly vulnerable to the effects of poor sanitation.[397] On the eve of WWI, the city and its environs suffered from an archaic water delivery system that contributed to the spread

[394] C737 Rapport a la Société des Nations sur la situation de la Syrie et du Liban (1929). Also see *La Syrie et Le Liban sous L'occupation et Le Mandat Français, 1919-1927*. Nancy: Berger-Levrault; Weulersse, Jacques. *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*, Paris: Gallimard, 1946.

[395] The main improvement in water delivery the occurred during the French mandate was the 1935 installation of a piped water delivery system in parts of Tripoli discussed at length in Saliba, 2016, 207-210, and to a lesser extent in Gulick, John, *Tripoli: A Modern Arab City*, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1967, 33. Despite the purported success described in these two works, I have a more troubling impression of the water crisis not only in Tripoli, but in North Lebanon, in general. The description at the end of this chapter of near epidemic levels of water-born diseases like Typhus and malaria in 1940, five years after the installation of pipes in Tripoli, should qualify our understanding of the predicament at hand. Even more harrowing is the suggestion below from the *muhafiz* of North Lebanon in 1960 that contaminated water systems still posed a threat to residents of the north. Therefore, I believe that the water crisis only ended during the 1960s during the period of administrative reform discussed in the last chapter. In particular, the geography of the north vulnerable to water-borne diseases as numerous rivers and waterways passed through the region toward the Mediterranean. For instance, four rivers passed through Akkar alone. Abu-Izzeddin, Dr. Halim Said, ed. "The North." 5 December 1960. Minister of Municipal Affairs Lecture. Lebanon and its Provinces. Khayat, Beirut, 1963, 39.

[396] Hoblus, Farouk. "Public Service and Tax Revenues in Ottoman Tripoli, 1516-1918. *Syria and Bilad Al-Sham under Ottoman Rule*. Eds. Peter Sluglett and Stephan Weber. Lieden: Brill, 2010, 134. In the same essay, he goes on to explore the origins of the water crisis, saying that, "The watercourse between the Rash'in and the city had been constructed during the Crusades and until 1917, water was brought into the city through exposed waterwheels and distributed to the various city quarters through cracked earthenware pipes that let in raw sewage in several places. It was delivered to the higher parts of the city through a special system which had to be repaired and maintained by the residents themselves." (Hoblus, 2010,133) He estimates that, due to spread of this contaminated water, thousands in the region died. Even after the Tanzimat reforms, there was only a small increase in the budget allocated to Tripoli, the bulk of which went to the salaries of officials whose number increased in the dying days of the empire to maintain security. (Hoblus, 2010, 127). Beyond these payments, the Ottomans build the Serail in the Tall area in 1890 and in 1902 constructed the clock tower there, soon followed by a post office, school and municipal building. (Hoblus, 2010, 129).

[397] Hoblus, 2010, 129, 132. As an example on this chronic underinvestment, Hoblus adds that, until 1908 there were only two government doctors in Tripoli and el-Mina. (Hoblus, 2010, 133.)

of diseases like typhoid, typhus and malaria.[398] As recounted in the dissertation of Lebanese historian and native son of Tripoli Nada Saliba, the main water supply into the city came from the Rash'in River about 7km from Tripoli and passed through aqueducts and water pipes built during the crusades; overtime these pipes became broken, corroded and infected with microbes and other organisms.[399] When city officials established a commission to investigate the water supply in 1922, it reported finding 60 dead pigs floating in the river, apparently for days; subsequent tests confirmed that E.coli, the main bacteria responsible for the spread of Typhus, germinated in the river.[400] In documenting the harrowing crisis faced by residents during the late Ottoman period, Hoblus adds that, the "city's drinking water supply was always polluted and this was the main reason for the poor state of public health and the spread of diseases and epidemics in the region, which took the lives of thousands of people."[401]

Among French circles, however, the cause of the spread of infectious disease had less to do with the finer details of public infrastructure that had been overlooked for decades if not centuries and more to do with the rather lax attitude of inhabitants toward their own health and wellbeing. According to annual report to the League of Nations for the year 1929, French officials lamented that, "hygiene services often come up against the ignorance or indifference of the population, and even of the municipalities and in other cases due to bureaucratic constraints (*les rouages administratives*). It is, for example, regrettable that cities like Tripoli, Saida, Baalbek are still using dirty water, while they are next to areas with

[398] According to the report of Tamimi and Bahjat, the most common infectious diseases in Tripoli were cholera, malaria (with around 15-20 daily deaths) and dysentery (with about 252 deaths a year). The two officials considered the main causes of infection to be the puddles of water that accumulated in the olive and citrus groves surrounding the city as well as the uncovered pipes that mixed with dirty water at the aqueducts of the citadel. Tamimi and Bahjat, *Wilayet Syria*, 1914 as cited in Saliba, 2016, 209.
[399] Saliba, 2016, 209.
[400] Al-Hawadith, As cited in Saliba, 2016, 209. By September 1922, laboratory tests confirmed that E.Coli, the bacteria responsible for spreading typhoid, was found in the River. At that time, there were 28 reported cases of the disease in the city. Saliba, 2016, 209.
[401] Hoblus, 2010, 133.

excellent water supplies," the report insists.[402] Due to these administrative constraints, the spread of infectious disease derived from the sick body politic rather than from Mother Nature or the agents of the mandate administration. Similar to land reform in the countryside, mandate officials saw the Ottoman Levant as an extension of the sick man of Europe. In this context, the ignorance of the population and bureaucratic gridlock were the main culprits of this blight. To cure it, the French administration resolved to introduce a new bureaucratic regiment to oversee affairs in the annexed territories.

By 1935, some officials were certain that the flow of disease had largely stopped.[403] New investments in water delivery systems were built to curb the rot and there emerged the construction of new hospitals designed to treat residents, as well as the agents of the military police in the north. Despite these claims of success, the predicament facing residents was more complex. By 1939, word had reached the high commission that despite the build up of the bureaucracy, the flow of infection and poor sanitation remained unabated in the most remote areas of the country.[404] The health crisis was a difficult issue for the government to

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[402] C737 Rapport a la S.D.N. sur la Situation de La Syrie et du Liban (1929).

[403] In his 1931 publication, French writer Raymond O'Zoux contended that the French were successful in eradicating infectious diseases by 1931. See his study *Les Etats du Levant sous Mandat Français*. Paris: Laros, 1931. Yet, the statistics he cites tell a different story. For instance, for the year 1927 he reported the following number of cases in the Levant: Typhoid (320) typhus (4) measles (499) and dysentery (181). (O'Zoux, 1931, 204.) Despite the persistence of these diseases, the author asserts that, "with the exception of smallpox, which followed, in 1927-1928, tranchoma, an endemic disease in the French-mandated states, and malaria, which moreover disappeared, the health status of the Levant is satisfactory. If we take into account the total absence of hygiene among the inhabitants of the countryside and the Bedouins, and the delays in the declaration of contagious diseases by carelessness or fear, we can be sure that the public health of the Levant will be Excellent in a few years." (O'Zoux, 1931, 204.) In this regard, O'Zoux reifies the same narrative that the improvements in health occurred despite the ignorance and apathy of the population to their own living conditions. Despite his positive outlook, the numerous exceptions and qualifications that the author makes reveals the extent of the crisis. Considering that the Levant was a primarily agricultural region, the crisis in the countryside would have threatened the majority of the residents there. Given the descriptions of conditions in 1940, the author's predictions appear overly-optimistic.

[404] C460 23 January 1939 DHCF au sujet des revendications des notables musulmanes de Liban. The summary of residents' complaints warns that, even before fighting commenced in the Eastern Mediterranean, "typhoid and malaria were rampant to nearly endemic levels in the most remote corners of the country." In contrast to my grim depiction of public health in North Lebanon during the mandate, Saliba offers a different account in her dissertation, which focuses entirely on the regional capital. Her work emphasizes the campaign of Tripoli residents to replace the ceramic water pipes at the Saint Gilles citadel with a metal pipe network throughout the city (Saliba, 2016, 218) and the proliferation of health offices in the private homes of doctors and nurses throughout the 1950s. (Saliba, 2016, 253) The progressive atmosphere with which she characterizes Tripoli is

address as it involved dealing with a bureaucracy that was no longer beholden to the chain of command that the Quai d'Orsay had envisioned. Even French travel literature admonished its readers to get the proper vaccines before traveling to the Levant due to the high rate of infectious diseases there.[405] In ways that will be seen, the toxic atmosphere in Tripoli owed as much to the antiquated water and irrigation systems as it did to the poor management of resources endemic within the mandate regime.

2. Over-Centralization

The principal effect of the bureaucracy imposed during the French mandate was the plague of over-centralization. While the constitution created a centralized apparatus modeled on the French *département* system, top officials misused, abused and overstepped their duties to extend their personal privileges and enrich their constituencies in Mt. Lebanon and Beirut. Among the chief beneficiaries of this system was the president of the republic. Already empowered by the formal directives of the constitution and the imposition of martial law, the president enjoyed discretionary powers over national and municipal budgets. At the other end of this system were the majority of families who lived and worked under the thumb of these new power brokers in the underdeveloped corners of the annexed territories. As a result, even though residents in the annexed territories bore the brunt of taxes as described in chapters two and three, Beirut and Mt. Lebanon were enriched at the expense of the annexed territories. The concentration of power in Beirut robbed local jurisdictions of authority to decide their own municipal affairs. As Ritsher chronicles, between 1922 and 1930, nearly 98 municipal councils were dissolved and of these, 67 were dissolved for no cited cause.[406] Furthermore, during this time period, an additional 41 municipalities suppressed by the

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best summed up when she writes that by the 1930s, "Tripoli was morphing into a city of pleasure-seekers, of socialites and theatre lovers, of writers and authors, of coffee shop habitués." (Saliba, 2016, 277)

[405] Jacquot, Paul, Lt. Colonel. *L'état des Alaouites: Guide (Gouvernement de Lattaquie. 14 May 1930),* Beirut: Imperie Catholique, 1931, 58. Among the diseases that the Lt. Colonel Jacquot mention are dengue fever, malaria, chicken pox and typhoid.

[406] C451 Ritscher, 1932, 37-39.

government, 10 due to budgetary concerns and the remaining 31 for no reason at all.[407] In addition, such discrepancies are further documented in the 1930 national budget. In contrast to the 925,000 LS Pounds allocated to the capital, Tripoli received a mere 131,301 LS Pounds and el-Mina 63,710 LS Pounds.[408] In comparison to Tripoli, spending in other administrative capitals was even more Spartan, as both Sidon and Zahleh had a total allocation of 20,000 LS Pounds, and Baalbek 11,5000 LS Pounds, respectively.[409] If such authority were not enough, then it should be noted that after the high commissioner suspended the constitution and instituted a state of emergency in May 1932, the president received even more control with Legislative Decree 32 K of September 1932, which amended Arrêté 1208 so that the president could directly nominate municipal council members or present lists of suitable candidates to certain functions and posts.[410] It was in this context of presidential decree that Tripoli held only one local election for its municipal council in the twenty-five years of the French mandate.[411]

This pattern of abuse and intervention extended from the national government to the local government. Its local effects are laid bare in a 1939 report from the administrative counselor of North Lebanon, the witness and arguably instigator of the 1936 riots, Le Comte Charles Mercier du Paty de Clam. A noteworthy figure who we will meet again in the next chapter, the count came from the same conservative military background as Gouraud in Saint Cyr before earning distinction in World War I, and then served for nearly twenty years in the Levant in the high commission, during which he received a special mention from one of the

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[407] C451 Ritscher, 1932, 40.
[408] C451 Ritscher, 1932, Appendix D. Taken from Décret No. 7410 5 November 1930. Jour Officiel No. 662. Pg 41. If we consider the 1939 population data of Tripoli-ville as indicative of the population of 1930, then the per-capita spending of 3.81 LS Pounds/resident in Tripoli was nearly half of the per-capita spending in Beirut of 6.67 LS pounds.
[409] C451 Ritscher, 1932, Appendix D
[410] C451 Ritscher, 1932, Appendix G, pg 47.
[411] Karam, Jihad. *Central-Local Government Relations in Lebanon as Reflected through a Case Study of the Municipality of Tripoli*. MA Thesis: Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1961, 59. The only elected municipal council in Tripoli served from 1923 until its dissolution in 1924. No further municipal elections would take place in Tripoli until 1952.

earliest historians of the mandate in Stephen Longrigg, not to mention from Mme. Lattouf, who championed him as a representative of "the true visage of France: the nobility of sentiment, the righteousness of character and finally, and aid to the interest of those who are oppressed."[412] In his 1939 report, "Les Notes sur les municipalités de Tripoli- El-Mina," one of the few texts describing political life in Tripoli and almost unique in having a signature, the administrator chronicles the extensive intervention and overreach of the national and local governments in the aftermath of the 1936 riots. In addition to this text, several anonymous materials further disclose the pressures brought to bear on the population.

Several parts of the crisis stemmed from French initiatives that marginalized the population. As mentioned by the count, Tripoli was divided into two *qada* municipalities, one for the harbor around El Mina and the other for Tripoli proper, which included the Old City.[413] Despite its history as the seat of an Ottoman court, *sanjak* and *vilayet*, Tripoli now comprised two separate municipalities, the administrator explains that, "this division is necessary from a political point of view. It does not present serious inconveniences; from an administrative point of view, the two municipalities always agree on all important affairs."[414] Such political perspectives animated several facets of daily life. For instance, their effects became manifest in the local municipal councils. While El-Mina was led by a municipal counselor, himself appointed by presidential decree, Tripoli was headed by a *kaimakam* who was supposed to be elected by a list of candidates approved by the interior ministry. Despite this procedure, du Paty de Clam explains that, in practice, election of the *kaimakam* has been suspended in preference for a direct appointment and while this arrangement was only

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[412] C460 DHCF Secrétaire Générale, 9 February 1939 No. 2291, Lattouf letter to MAE ambassador M. Puaux de HC, 2. An agent of the British mandate who we will meet later in chapter five, Longrigg lists the count as an advisor for Lebanon and delegate of the high-commission and counts him as "but a few of the many scores of names remembered with credit, often with affection, in the territory." In one of his footnotes. Longrigg, Stephen. *Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate*. Beirut: Libraire du Liban. 1968. 260, Footnote 1.

[413] C460 Notes Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina, du Paty, 31 March 1939.1.

[414] *ibid*.

supposed to be a temporary situation, he lamented that it was "one that has prolonged for 13 years."[415] In these ways, residents had very little say in the direction of municipal affairs controlled by Beirut. Another anonymous report sums up the situation in the north when it asserts that, "the people of Tripoli are plagued by the excessive centralization of the Lebanese government that does not allow any means of actions to the municipalities."[416]

Furthermore, the recruitment into the civil service was just as cumbersome as the appointment of the municipal council members. Given the hostility of the residents to the regime and the discretion of the president to select appointees, most of the individuals that held posts in Tripoli came from outside of the region. As the administrator describes, "even the most minimal affairs are handled in Beirut by incompetent civil servants, who for the most part never come to Tripoli [and] ignore all of the needs of the population."[417] These supposed individuals who ignored the needs of the population were able to retain their positions as they were beholden to the president instead of the popular vote. Furthermore, adding a sectarian color to this hierarchy the majority of posts in the civil administration were filled by members from the same Christian community as the president.[418] In accordance with the list of popular grievances expressed by Abboud and the organizers of the 1936 strike in the last chapter, among residents of the annexed territories, the national government was seen as a means to tax the population without offering it substantive

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[415] ibid.

[416] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, 3. Excessive centralization would continue to reign not just in Tripoli, but in the country as a whole following independence from France. This pattern would appear in starker relief in books written during the 1960s and 1970s. See Karam, Jihad; 1961; Saab, Taan Bahij, *The Office of the Muhafez*, MA Thesis: Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Beirut, American University of Beirut, 1964; Bashir, Iskander. *Civil Service Reform in Lebanon*, Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1977; Culbertson, Robert. *Program of Public Administration Reform in Lebanon*, 1954. Gilsenan, Michael. *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab Society*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1996; Hudson, Michael. *The Precarious Republic: Modernization in Lebanon*. Boulder, Westview Press, 1985. Iskandar, Adnan. *Bureaucracy in Lebanon*, Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1964; Grassmuck, George and Salibi, Kamal, *A Manuel of Lebanese Administration*, Beirut: Catholic Press, 1955; Abu-Izzeddin, Dr. Halim Said, ed.. *Lebanon and its Provinces*. Khayat, Beirut, 1963.

[417] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, 3.

[418] C460 Situation Politique, HCF Notes au sujet de le ville de Tripoli- el Mina, undated probably 1939.

representation in the national government and bureaucracy. Given the indifference of the leading families to the more menial government posts offered to them, it was little surprise, then, that the highest ranking agent of the national government in the region was little liked and respected. In the words of du Paty de Clam, "the civil servants sent by the government to North Lebanon are in general, chosen among the least intelligent and least honest: the current *muhafiz* is a former forester, who, in the course of his studies, never passed the third grade and is a dreadful idiot."[419] In this manner, civil service recruitment was seen to not only have excluded the majority from local government, but to have elevated those among the least qualified and ill-equipped within the colony.

In turn, this level of complete inadequacy extended to the heads of the local government in Tripoli and El-Mina. With regards to the president of the municipal council of el-Mina, Khaireddine Abd al-Wahab, the administrator describes this political appointee as the largest ship owner of El-Mina and owner of the most prominent docklands and piloting company.[420] As one of the one of the few residents of Tripoli-El-Mina to collaborate with the mandate administration during WWI, Abd al-Wahhab appeared as "flexible from a political point of view, but," the count decries, he "possesses a detrimental tendency to consider the municipality as an extension of his commercial enterprise."[421] In effect, Abd al-Wahab used his office to bolster the patterns of behavior that he had employed prior to the mandate, effectively leveraging public office to shield his indiscretions. For, once in power, he was able to expand his family fortune after he won a lucrative contract for his company to exclusively unload equipment from the pipeline of the Iraqi Petroleum Company in El-

[419] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El Mina, undated, presumably 1939, 3. The figure in question was Husain al-Ahdab, who replaced al-Karami as mufti following his ouster from office. Saliba, 2016, 120.
[420] C460 Notes sur les chefs des services municiPuauxde Tripoli, 31 March 39. 1.
[421] *ibid*. The internet claims that Abd al-Wahab enjoyed a long political career during and after the mandate, to the point that he would be able to purchase and build his own island off of the coast of Tripoli. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kheireddine_Abdul_Wahab.

Mina.[422] Even worse than his detrimental corporate tendencies, it also transpired that, according to the count, he was heavily involved in the smuggling of tobacco, drugs and firearms.[423] Later, it will be seen that in such illegal enterprise and racketeering, Abd al-Wahab would have illustrious company.

Yet, beneath the *muhafiz* and *kaimakam*, the same patterns of conflicts of interests, government over-reach and inadequate service penetrated the municipal councils in Tripoli and El-Mina. As mentioned previously, since the most prominent families dismissed service on the municipal council as beneath their lofty statuses, the members of the council came from the notable families of a second order, and as a result, explains du Paty de Clam, they are "for the most part individuals without influence, without instruction, whose sole preoccupation is to pull from the mandate the maximum profit for themselves, their friends, their clients and their protectors." [424] Effectively deprived of any formal powers due to the concentration of authority in the hands of the president and interior minister, civil servants then devoted themselves to personal enrichment, nepotism and the cultivation of patron-client networks. These unconcerned individuals were not beholden to the population, but relied upon the officials within the government who had appointed them. Such affairs were so rotten that du Paty de Clam laments that even election of the municipal councils would fail to make a real difference since all decisions were made at the cabinet level. In this manner, he adds that, **"**all decisions of the municipalities must be ratified, not by the local representative of the government who is the *muhafiz*, but by the minister of the interior himself. This leads to a complete bottleneck, the simplest affairs do not receive a solution

[422] Saliba, 2016, 180-181.
[423] C460 Notes sur les chefs des services municipuaux de Tripoli, 31 March 39. 1. According to Richard Pearse, who we will meet later, the climate of racketeering continued to exist upon his arrival in 1945, years after the 1939 publication of the notes of du Paty de Clam. He writes that "meat and fish brought fortunes to gangs of racketeers, who sent out bands of thugs to beat up dealers, merchants, shepherds and fisherman who tried to undercut the high prices that they imposed." Pearse, Richard, *Three Years in the Levant*, London, Macmillan and Company, 1949,161.
[424] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939. 1.

until after some delay, generally one of several weeks if not of several months."[425] As a result of this bottleneck around the executive office, local municipalities were at the mercy of the cabinet and civil servants were deprived of any real decision-making authority. In effect, all politics became national to the smallest degree.

Civil Service Recruitment

Even without the constant intervention of the national government, the local municipal councils were deadlocked by internal rivalries among council members. In this manner, the administrator bemoans that, "the members of the government get in each others way too often to impose their decisions on the municipality, unless it is about finding work for their parents or friends. When it is not possible to find a job for a protégé in the civil service, they oblige a municipality to create a job for him."[426] Since government interference restricted delegates and council members from running the affairs of the city, these officials sought to expand their remit by creating jobs for relatives and friends. In this way, the municipal system directly contributed to the proliferation of patronage networks at the expense of the poor and needy. As du Paty de Clam recounts, the posts created included the following:

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[425] *ibid*. Du Paty de Clam went on to write that, Not only does the government nominate the municipal councils, but they do not allow these councils any real power and constantly intervene into the smallest details of local administration." In a similar fashion, Adnan Iskandar contemplates the colonial legacy of centralization in Lebanon when he describes over-concentration as a colonial tactic that successive regimes kept in place to pursue their own interests. (Iskaner, Adnan, *Bureaucracy in Lebanon*, Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 55) "Until very recently," he goes on to say, "the *muhafiz* did not have enough power to grant a hunting license for citizens in his *muhafaza."* (Iskandar, 1964, 58.) Thus, Iskandar employs the same language as the administrator, decrying the bottleneck that prohibits actions on the most routine and simple affairs. In another example, he adds that, "decision-making authority is usually concentrated at the top of the administrative hierarchy, thus causing a regrettable delay in the transaction of official business. Simple and routine decisions, which should normally be made at the low levels in the administration, require the review and approval of the minister, and some of them have to be resolved by the cabinet." (Iskandar, 1964, 21-22)

[426] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939. 1. A similar complaint about the municipal councils is found in a 1961 speech by the *muhafiz* of South Lebanon, Ghalib el-Turk, in el-Turk, Ghalib, "The South." 15 January 1961, Minister of Municipal Affairs Lecture. *Lebanon and its Provinces*. Ed. Abu-Izzeddin, Dr. Halim Said. Khayat, Beirut, 1963, 65. As he says, "municipal elections always produce partisan councils…acting from the beginning of their term, [they operate] in defiance of public interest and constructive work, and bickering with adversaries or combating their provocations and intrigues.

> The post of archivist for the Tripoli municipality to the cousin of M. Ahdab, municipal president for 12,700 francs per year; a post of fire captain created in favor of the cousin of [former] prime minister M. Yafi…even though there are no fire fighters in Tripoli; the incumbent in this post, a former *moukhtar* dismissed for embezzlement [receives a salary of] 11,280 francs per year; the post of inspector of hygiene for 13,700 francs per year (a job paid for by the national budget but which ought to be shortly under the remit of the municipality) has just been created for the son-in-law of the deputy [member of parliament] Daher, who is nearly incompetent and knows absolutely nothing about hygiene and who was just dismissed on grounds of incapacity from his position in the merchant marine service.[427]

A supposed fire chief for a city without firefighters, a *muhafiz* promoted from the forest service, and a likely illiterate director of public health unfit for the merchant marines were among the individuals not only shielded from public scrutiny, but elevated socially, economically and politically within this system of excessive centralization. Amid such claims of malfeasance, the French were unable to make inroads among the population.

Further galling was the culture of re-appropriating funds as deputies intervened into the national and municipal budgets. In this manner, du Paty de Clam reported that with regards to subsidies and grants that were not specifically enumerated in the national budget, the government, "then "suggests" to take them [the funds] from the municipalities under diverse pretexts."[428] Such informal suggestions enabled deputies to expand their power beyond the formal laws of the constitution. It was through such suggestion that, according to the counselor, "a 'severance payment' of 12,000 francs has just been allocated to an individual who left the service of the city of Tripoli *23 years* ago."[429] In this manner, the

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[427] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939. 3.
[428] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939, 3. Furthermore, in his study of Tripoli researched in the 1960s, John Gulick observes that similar complaints of over-centralizations dominated the press; and that nepotism and bribery common. Gulick, 1967, 70-71. In this manner he writes that "the government is aloof, not subject to ordinary citizens' influence, and is corrupted by the bribes, nepotism and pressures of other groups or individuals who are trying to better themselves in or by means of it" (Gulick, 1967, 71).
[429] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939, 3. Empahsis in the original. Moreover, in his 1977 work, Iskander Bashir describes the degree to which patronage and profit had animated every rank within the civil service. (Bashir, Iskander. Civil Service Reform in Lebanon, Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1977.) Following Bashir, the civil service inaugurated a culture of corruption, bribes and kickbacks within all grades of the bureaucracy. (Bashir, 1977,119) He then adds that, "the profit motive is exemplified by the public comments of a former President of the Republic, who was

sweeping powers granted to the president created an atmosphere of greed and political interference at every level of government. While the bureaucracy failed to achieve the goal of reproducing a uniform social hierarchy among the inhabitants of the region, it cultivated a culture of patronage and embezzlement at every level of government.

The administrative counselor concludes his summary of personnel recruitment with another anecdote about the abuse that had taken place within Tripoli. Like the members of parliament who misappropriated funds with their mere "suggestions," local employees sought to impose their own ideas on the system. Thus he reports that,

> One finds among the civil servants of the municipalities a certain number of persons of a doubtful morality: lately two municipal agents were dismissed for attempted robbery of the municipal coffers; and it was not at great effort that I was able to obtain this knowledge…a few months ago there was the termination of a supervisor who was the object of 20 indictments for bearing firearms, shootings, injuries and pederasty.[430]

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relating a story about congratulating a lady because her son was appointed to a civil service post. He said that her immediate response concerned not how much his salary would be but how much he would be able to make on the side. In addition, one often hears in private gatherings Lebanese citizens comment on certain honest officials, by saying 'they are fools for not taking advantage of their public posts.'" (Bashir, 1977, 12)

[430] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939, 3. Similar to the descriptions cited by du Paty de Clam, then ex-prime minister Sami al-Solh would indict the post-independence regime for their extreme interference within the local municipalities in his 1960 memoirs. al-Solh, Sami. *Mudhakirrat*. Beirut: 1960, 320. As mentioned in Kerr, Malcolm, "Political Decision-Making in a Confessional Democracy," *Politics in Lebanon*, Ed. Leonard Binder, New York: Wiley, 1966, 204. According to al-Solh, each and every president under whom he served relied not upon his prime minister but on an unofficial 'sultan' who advised the president. "Every sultan had an entourage and a group of followers, relatives, in-laws, in-laws of in-laws, associates, middle men and hanger-on from every faction and class and every village and quarter. Whichever of us should come to power, to the crematorium of cabinet office, found himself obliged to pay homage to these sultans and their followers and the followers of the followers. It is they who govern and who direct, plan and execute policies, while we are only the instruments, which they set up before the eyes of the public to bear responsibility for their errors and misdeeds." (al-Solh, Sami, 1960, 216-217 as cited in Kerr, 1966, 205) Beyond sour grapes of someone removed from office, the prime minister's account reflects the degree to which informal politics proliferated after independence. The expansion of patronage within the bureaucracy, then, can be considered as part legacy of the French mandate.

Within the patronage circles that al-Solh was forced to enter, he recounts one particular anecdote reminiscent of that of du Paty de Clam when he writes that, "it is well-known how quickly the balance of government—any government, can be lost. Most of the time it is some childish dispute that leads to a cabinet crisis. Thus[in 1952] there arose a quarrel between Mssrs. Maroun Kanaan and the late Rashad Azar, both deputies from Jezzine [in South Lebanon]. The former came to me repeatedly, insistently demanding the dismissal from office of the constable of the town of Kafr Hana, whom he accused of pinching a bottle of wine worth LL 8. Azar, meanwhile, demanded the head of the town clerk, accusing him of pinching LL12 from town funds.

"Eight plus twelve makes 20. More than once I offered to pay the LL20 from my own pocket to put an end to the matter, and perhaps to avert a cabinet crisis' for by counting the votes of our supporters we saw that two votes added to the opposition would be enough to turn the balance to our disadvantage. But Kanaan and Azar

Attempted robbery and murder, the illegal possession of firearms, and pederasty were among the alleged vices that government officials allowed to fester in the two Tripoli municipalities. Such acts contributed to what the advisor euphemistically ascribes as "characters of a doubtful morality" among the civil service. Yet, these were not the only effects that personnel recruitment carried. These dubious characters, in turn, demoralized their subordinates. Thus, he goes on to write that, "with this method of recruitment, the personnel of the municipal administration, who otherwise lack status, guarantees of promotion, pensions or even regular payment, possess insufficient productivity on the job."[431] Beyond individual culpability, the centralized system created by the French animated this ineffective, corrupt and criminal municipal mismanagement. As a result of the development of informal politics within the region, the influence of the high commission waned.

Spending

It is little surprise, then, that the same mismanagement extended to other areas of the municipality. For instance, a review of government revenue disclosed that income collected was well below projected levels according to French sources.[432] Although, Tripoli and other areas within the annexed territories were the most taxed in the country and contributed the bulk of national tax revenue, the allocation of these funds became political. As du Paty de

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took the affair seriously and refused my offer to pay the LL20. I considered dismissing both the constable and the clerk, together, but the two deputies rejected this solution. The fact was that each of them insisted on the dismissal of his enemy alone, as a means of exhibiting his own influence. In the end, I sent both deputies away without having succeeded in settling their dispute, and thus the opposition picked up two new members. Mssrs. Kanaan and Azar were not alone in pressing such disputes as this; indeed the majority of the deputies spent their time in creating difficulties for us on account of some gendarme or doorkeeper. The atmosphere of the chamber was not a healthy one." In these ways, the fall of the national government originated from a dispute among rival protégés over the misuse of about 20 Lebanese lira or approximately $6 USD. (al-Solh, Sami, 1960, 216-217 as cited in Kerr, 1966, 205)

[431] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939, 3. In accord with the count's claim is the work of Adnan Iskandar. In his words, "the attitude of domination on the part of superiors and the docility and obedience on the part of the subordinates is also the result of the authoritarian nature of the Lebanese society in general. Not only the family, but the church and other social institutions in Lebanon are highly authoritarian. The ottoman and French heritage, which has exerted a dominant influence on the country, was also an authoritarian one. (Iskander, 1964, 35)

[432] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 1939, 4.

Clam explains with regard to the division of revenue from the tax of flammable materials, "this division is done in a completely arbitrary way, not considering the needs of the municipalities, but the needs of the politicians of the moment. According to the need of such vote for such deputy, he can augment the share allocated to the municipalities in his district and decrease the portions allocated to others, etc."[433] In this manner, the allocation of tax revenue became another situation that members of parliament could re-appropriate. This system of centralization augmented the power of delegates to act according to their personal wishes. Thus, they were able to trump written directives through informal communiqués. As the administrative counselor writes, "it often happens that credits allocated by decree by the president of the republic are annulled by a simple letter from the minister of the interior, which then leaves the municipalities the task of paying for public works already begun."[434] The re-appropriation of resources from the annexed territories toward the constituencies of parliament members further testified to the structural inequalities that proliferated under the mandate described in the previous chapter. This re-appropriation was even more detrimental considering that spending on personnel already absorbed from the Tripoli municipality more than 30% of its total budget, according to French sources.[435] Such crippling re-allocation of resources would have further undermined the capacity of the local government to address the health crisis that festered in the north.

Law and Order

This atmosphere of demoralization, criminality and corruption within the civil service also affected the primary agents of law and order in the region. For the second largest city in the country, the administrator explains that, "one half of the police force of Tripoli are sent to the city as a punitive measure or because of the desire to clear out the [worst members of the]

[433] *ibid.*
[434] *ibid.*
[435] *op. cit.*, 6.

police force of Beirut. The appointments are never done by the *muhafiz,* the central commissioner or the [French] chief of the Sûreté Générale, tasked with control of the local police."[436] Instead, legislators intervened to politicize the police force. Here again, political appointments further robbed the municipalities of discretion over its affairs. For the top brass of executives, the second city in the new country represented nothing more than a punitive measure for recalcitrant or ineffective officers of the law. In bypassing the normal chain of command that governed the police—the *muhafiz,* central commissioner or the French chief of the Sûreté Générale—deputies were able to politicize the most basic tasks of law and order. Thus the city functioned more like a prison than a settlement under the colonial gaze. Like in the municipal council, this level of intervention extended to every individual within the regime. As du Paty de Clam reports,

> The central commissioner is devoid of all powers, he cannot even appoint an agent from one police post to another within the city without the authorization of the director of the police. For having reminded his subordinates that they should arrive to their posts on time, the central commissioner was recently criticized by the director of the police who declared that he overstepped the boundaries of his authorities![437]

Devoid of any significant authority, real or imagined, even the capacity to remind subordinates of punctuality, the police were incapable of maintaining law and order. This lawless terrain proved fertile ground for the 1936 riots to persist for over three days. In addition, this governmental overreach explains how drug trafficking became rampant in the city. In the words of du Paty de Clam, "the police are powerless to repress the traffic of arms and drugs. If a police officer arrests the protégé of a notable, he immediately receives a sanction from the authorities in Beirut."[438] Unsurprisingly, this culture of lawlessness

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[436] *op. cit.*, 8.
[437] *op. cit.*, 8. Emphasis in the original.
[438] *op. cit..*, 8. In a similar vein, English Sergeant Richard Pearse would recount in his memoirs of his tenure in the region, *Three Years in the Levant,* that the police were completely impotent in the face of crime, asserting that "Gendarmes and police had little to say in the rackets, and any meddlesomeness on their part was met by bands of thugs using force and firearms. In Syria, racketeers operated with some direction and a certain amount

affected the French high commission, as well. As the police budget came under the control of the Lebanese government, agents of the commission, too, were under the thumb of Beirut. The French chief of the Sûreté Générale in Tripoli, for instance, was unable to get a telephone installed in his own home for ten years.[439]

Further demoralizing was the lack of funding available to the police, ironic considering that, within the national budgets of the period analyzed earlier, the interior ministry commanded the largest share of allocated funds and personnel. Despite their preponderant forces, the administrator describes how, "terrorized by political interventions, their [the police's] agents do not even have the most basic guarantees for themselves and their families. The [widow] of one officer murdered in the course of apprehending a bandit received a pension of only 8000 *francs* for her and her four children."[440] The sorry predicament of law enforcement in Tripoli is best summed up with another anecdote on the police commissioner in Tripoli, Christo Naufah, once among the best members of the police force before he was sanctioned for commanding punctuality. On him du Paty de Clam remarks that,

> He has long been one of the better Lebanese police offers, but having combated the action of certain notables involved in drug trafficking and arms smuggling, including the deputies Rached al-Muqaddem and Youssef Stephan, he has been threatened by administrative reprisals by the governments. This has discouraged him and since his performance has been nothing more than mediocre.[441]

It was in such an environment that parliament members allegedly smuggled drugs and weapons and local officials like Abd al-Wahab then transported them to the civil servants

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of respect for the law, but at Tripoli things had gone beyond that stage." (Pearse, Richard, *Three Years in the Levant*, London: Macmillan & Co., 162.)

[439] C460 Notes sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39, 9.

[440] *ibid*,.

[441] C460 Notes sur les chefs des services municipuaux de Tripoli, 31 March 39. Note on M. Christo Naufah. The name al-Muqaddem is also rendered as Moukkadem. In a similar vein to the administrator's account, Sgt. Pearse would note the frequent collusion between growers, dealers and smugglers on the one hand, and government officials on the other. It comes as little surprise then, that top officials within the legislature were also involved in the trade. Pearse, 1946, 176. The expansion of hashish cultivation is a logical consequences of the fall of agriculture during the Great Depression. Because food and cash crop production were no longer profitable, landlords turned to the black market.

who acted as bagmen and brokers. It came as little surprise then that, in the words of du Paty de Clam, "the unhappy police officers allow the circulation of the most dangerous criminals without a worry." [442]

Pubic Hygiene

Such calamities were also evident within the state of public health due to government interference into the department of public hygiene and public welfare (l'hygiène publique and l'assistance publique, respectively). This malfeasance is made clear in the facts and figures that Madame Lattouf mentioned in her 1940 article. As the budget of 1938 for Tripoli–Ville revealed, the provisions for spending on public health was a total sum of 600 francs for the entire population, or according to the math of du Paty de Clam, "only 0.17 centimes per inhabitant!"[443] To put this sum into perspective, he notes that an equal sum was allocated for firing canons on Bastille Day.[444] Given this lack of spending, health facilities, despite the heroics of the doctors there, were decrepit, burdened with inadequate facilities and health instruments. This single government hospital in Tripoli served the entire 180,000 residents in North Lebanon with 50 hospital beds, 10 of which were reserved for members of

[442] C460 Note Sur les municipalités de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39. 9. It seems that the same patterns of tacit approval and even facilitation of drug trafficking among the police continues into the modern day. As drug lord of the Bekaa Ali Shamas said in a 2017 BBC documentary, "The entire government is a broker. Ninety-percent of people in the authorities can be bribed," before adding, that the police transport illegal cannabis in the tones. BBC Pop Up: Lebanon, 2017. Viewed April 2017. The same patterns in 2017 were still in evidence in 1946. According to Pearse, "the rackets crystallised themselves into large rival interests; whilst many unaccountable activities gradually clarified themselves as the details of large-scale corruption on the part of the government officials came to light. Gendarmes and police had little to say in the rackets, and any meddlesomeness on their part was met by bands of thugs using force and firearms. In Syria, the racketeers operated with some direction and a certain respect for the law, but at Tripoli things had gone beyond that stage. (Pearse, 1946, 162).

[443] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39, 6. Emphasis in the original

[444] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39. 6. In addition, Saliba cites the Tripoli newspaper al-Shabab, connected to the political party of al-Karami, as reporting that the municipality was forced to pay for infrastructural developments undertaken by French companies. In addition, its expenditures included a lavish Bastille Day fireworks celebration in 1932. Such expenditures, she argues, contributed to the city's debt. However, it can be argued that equally responsible were the re-appropriation of resources to the benefit of figures like al-Karami, as is discussed below.

the gendarmerie, police and prisoners.[445] As the count describes, "there is no room for disinfection on the beds where [women] give birth, as the one room has scarlet fever. There is no equipment for radiology nor a bacteriological laboratory at this hospital. There is no heating, even in the room for operations. The bathrooms do not work because there is not enough money for plumbing."[446] The hospital languished without sufficient facilities and heating because regulations prohibited doctors from making any purchase without the approval of the health minister. Even a broken window could not be fixed without the authorization of the director of public hygiene.[447] Yet, even this possibility was hampered by the absence of the minister from the region. As the administrative counselor describes, the health minister, Dr. Gargour, only visited the area on two occasions in the course of his four years in office, once for the mere purpose of going to the town of Zghourta to install there a

[445] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39, 9. The inadequate state of public health would continue long after the formal mandate had ended, according to the comments of Dr. Halim Said Abu-Izzeddin, the *muhafiz* of the North. (Abu-Izzeddin, Dr. Halim Said, ed. "The North." 5 December 1960. Minister of Municipal Affairs Lecture. *Lebanon and its Provinces*. Khayat, Beirut, 1963, 19-48). As he recounts in his December 1960 speech, "existing medical services are inadequate;" as there remained in North Lebanon a single government hospital, which had expanded from 50 beds to 120 beds ; outside of which there were dispensaries in each district to serve the estimated 447,662 residents of the muhafaza. (Abu-Izzeddin, 1961, 43). Other areas of the annexed territories fared just as poorly. In South Lebanon, by 1960 there existed only a single hospital for the estimated 340,000 inhabitants there. As the muhafiz of the south, Ghalib el-Turk describes, the single hospital there "was on its way to dilapidation ten years after it was built. There are 6 pharmacies in Sidon, 2 in Tyre, and 1 in Jezzine. There are no pharmacies in Nabatiyya, Marjayyoun, Hasbaya or Bint-Jebeil. I leave you to imagine a worried man taking his sick wife or son on the back of an animal over rough tracks, seeking the chief town of a district, any district, in the hope that he will find a practicing doctor." (el-Turk, Ghalib, "The South." 15 January 1961, Minister of Municipal Affairs Lecture, *Lebanon and its Provinces*. Ed. Abu-Izzeddin, Dr. Halim Said. Khayat, Beirut, 1963, 59.) In the Beka, districdt, the Muhafiz Nasri Salhab laments that, like the north and the south, there is only a single government hospital, with 175, only 78 of which are in use due to personnel shortage by 1960. (Salhab, Nasri. "Al Beka," Minister of Municipal Affairs Lecture. *Lebanon and its Provinces*. Ed. Abu-Izzeddin, Dr. Halim Said. Khayat, Beirut, 1963 9). The uneven development across the country is described by the *muhafiz* of the south, who observes that while there are 148 doctors in Mt. Lebanon, and 854 in Beirut, there are only 52 in the south (el-Turk, 1961, 58- 59). In comparison, there were only 42 in the south. (Salha, 1961, 9). No comparable statistics could be found for the north.

[446] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39, 9.

[447] C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39, 9. Robert Culbertson describes the prohibitive oversight of local municipalities from Beirut, which robbed of basic infrastructure. "Government institutions located outside Beirut appear to have no authority to effect routine administrative actions without referral to Beirut, which often involve no only their own ministry but the ministry of finance and sometimes the court of accounts as well. I visited one institution, which was very short of light bulbs, having three bulbs in one building. It had not been able to acquire the needed bulbs in several weeks because its requests had to run the procedural gamut in Beirut. Two institutions for human care had been unable to secure the repair of leaking roofs in periods of eight and eleven months, respectively, because their requests had become engulfed in the procedural maze in Beirut." Culbertson, Robert. *Program of Public Administration Reform in Lebanon*, 1954, 9.

mission for the French Sisters of Mercy.[448] Such calamitous affairs exposed the dead, the sick and the poor to starvation on the streets.[449] At the same time, however, government neglect of public welfare meant that there was nothing to offer orphan children, those languishing in the slums or the sick suffering from tuberculosis, or syphilis.[450] Equally vulnerable were the hundreds of mostly Muslim children forced to roam the streets, as the government was unable to offer them places in the few public schools that existed.[451] In sum, du Paty de Clam concluded that municipal administration was a complete disaster that marginalized the most vulnerable segments of the population in North Lebanon. In his own words, "the city of Tripoli is administered, in fact, by the Lebanese government, which requires a ruling from Beirut over all local affairs. The government is completely disinterested in the needs of the city, allows the squander of the finances of the municipality and does not accept any control on the way it manages the resources allocated to the municipalities."[452]

Municipal Reforms

Despite the administrative and financial anarchy that stemmed from this policy of centralization, the staff within the high commission still insisted that the problems in Tripoli were not political in nature. Instead, officials held fast to the notion that the crisis there derived from a mere technocratic deficiency to be addressed through better adherence to protocol. There never existed an appreciation that the administrative chaos of municipal affairs had expanded beyond the control of the high commission. Thus, in a March 1939 letter to the Quai d'Orsay, the newly installed high commissioner, Gabriel Puaux, insisted that the chaos in Tripoli would disappear with improved management. For he says that,

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[448] C460 Note sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39, 9.
[449] *op. cit.*, 10. On this subject, the administrator has a more sanguine outlook than conflicting reports examined below. In his estimation, the establishment of private charities such as the French sisters of mercy, the Franco-Lebanese Red cross and the Italian dispensaries, prevented this risk. This attitude conflict with reports below, including one written by du Paty de Clam after his visit with the president.
[450] *ibid.*
[451] *ibid.*
[452] *op. cit.*, 7.

> The problem of Tripoli is not one of a political order, but a purely administrative one. The hesitations of the central government, its complacency inspired by a simple sense of ingenuous [sectarian] camaraderie …in addition to the notorious poor standards of the *muhafiz* incapable of taking the necessary measures to improve the lot of the city, suffice to explain the discontent that has developed, for some time, among the population of Tripoli."[453]

By reproducing the narrative that the profound and systematic mismanagement in Tripoli carried no political significance, Puaux ignored the crisis knocking on the gates of the city. Instead, he argued a mere two weeks before the report of du Paty de Clam was date stamped that the solution to this crisis lay in the same system of political appointees that contributed to the crisis. In effect, Puaux repeated the same frame of thought that animated his predecessor, Damien de Martel, as well as the Sunni delegate from Akkar. Such insistence tacitly condoned the abuse and neglect within the civil service and worse, bankrolled the worst forms of abuse within the government. Similar to the piecemeal efforts of land reform discussed earlier, the scope of administrative reforms mooted within the high commission failed to address the systematic inequalities and hierarchies that multiplied during the mandate.[454] This very plan ignored the informal mechanisms that were crucial to the operation of authority. Because of Paris' desire to impose a social hierarchy in an area hostile to its rule, all areas of administration were under the thumb of the executive, who, as we will see, enjoyed sweeping informal discretion in addition to his formal authority. For the French to acknowledge this structural flaw would be to admit its own mistakes and limits.

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[453] C460 HCF Cabinet Politique No. 269 au sujet de la situation a Tripoli 15 March 1939 signed by HCF Puaux (2). Puaux's 2940 visit to the Jabal Druze can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgisuEb8Qu8

[454] A list of potential reforms can be found in the report of du Paty de Clam. C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de clam, 31 March 39, 7. These included:

1. Decentralization of power to the *muhafiz*.
2. To elect the municipal councils. One does not see why the inhabitants of Tripoli are deprived of a right that is given to the inhabitants of smaller localities in the mountain. One could, easily, reserve in the government the appointment of a third of members elected by universal suffrage.
3. Invite the Lebanese government to manage the least deplorable conditions in common taxes (gas and flammable materials)
4. Move the money made in the municipality to the treasury in a way to support indispensable ministries, especially matters concerning public hygiene
5. Well understood is the cessation of the more egregious conditions in the government, the dismissal of staff, the recovery of tax arrears and a revision in the contract of the electric company.

Another indication of the limited nature of reforms can be found within the notes of the administrative counselor. Among the reforms proposed by du Paty de Clam was a recommendation to reform the public utility services in the city, which had absorbed a large amount of its budget. Among the most corrupt services in the city, he describes the utility as a system with "too many lamps of an insufficient voltage, and the costs to the taxpayers include lighting the entrances and staircases of the houses of the richest landowners of the city," which had cost the city 80,000 *francs* from its budget.[455] In response to his inquiries of this abuse and the reason why the public was bankrolling electricity to the homes of the wealthiest citizens, most of whom were opposed to the mandate, he was told that head *of La Société d'Électricité* was a personal friend of President Emile Eddé.[456] Unable to pay its outstanding bills, the electricity company cut off electricity to the city in 1940.[457] Effectively bankrupt, the city had to incur loans to pay bills that were racked up by its wealthiest residents. In this manner, without altering the networks that allowed the rich to steal from the poor, administrative reform would fail to engender the kind of control that the high commission desired.

Meanwhile, at the very moment when the new high commissioner sought to persuade Paris that the situation in Tripoli was apolitical, his subordinate was warning him of the political repercussions of this mismanagement. In the words of the counselor, "administrative and financial anarchy rules in the municipalities of the city, [and] often contributes to and emboldens the protest movement."[458] That is to say, this administrative anarchy and proliferation of criminal and patronage networks within the civil service exacerbated political

[455] C460 Note Sur les municipalités de Tripoli- El-Mina du Paty de Clam, 31 March 39, 6.
[456] *ibid*. In addition, according to 463 DHCF No. 2651D Beirut. 8 August 1939 Cabinet Politique, Experience d'emancipation, Pg. 13, electric lighting absorbed more than one third of municipal spending in Tripoli, as more than 50 lamps were installed at the home of notables at the expense of the public.
[457] Saliba, 2016, 188. Not only was the city without lights, the sewage company also disrupted its service due to unpaid bills.
[458] C460 DHCF No. 125 Conseiller Administrative du Liban Nord 31 March 1939. As this document was unsigned, it is difficult to verify the author.

grievances. Far from gaining the consent of the governed, municipal administration only exacerbated tensions. Instead, the rotten state of affairs united the population against the government. For, the counselor goes on to say, "the people of Tripoli possess a certain civic pride or spirit contrary to what passes in other localities in Lebanon."[459] The anarchy that reigned in the region helped to cultivate an alternative political vision that sought to alter colonial designs in favor of re-creating the Ottoman State of Greater Syria. Not only did colonial rule fail to rally the population behind the metropole, it linked the population together in opposition to Paris. By failing to acknowledge the political causes and consequences of indirect colonial rule, the mandate regime risked exacerbating the latent hostility in the north.

3. PETTY POLITICS

In turn, the lack of an adequate response from the high commission facilitated the emergence of a new political phenomena in the north, the rise of what one municipal employee in Tripoli described as *al-siyasiyyat al-sghira*, or petty politics. The competition to squander public spending animated family grievances and personal vendettas among the ruling elite in Tripoli. This rancor was then reproduced in publications and public smear campaigns. Such small matters dominated political affairs and the press in the region in lieu of the rampant inequality and mismanagement of resources. This shallow level of political competition did not mobilize the majority or transform the population into a disciplined class of citizens or subjects. Instead, the elites within this web of patronage concerned themselves with how best to divide the spoils taken from taxpayers. In one corner were the notables associated with the Maronite leader President Emile Eddé, who established a patronage network around his supporters. In the other corner was everyone else, including the French

[459] *ibid.*

mandate officials nominally tasked with monitoring the behavior of the government. An account of these tendencies appears in the article next to the open letter of Mme. Lattouf in *al-Mustaqbal,* "Us versus Them: The Petty Politics of North Lebanon," by Dr. Michel Boulous, an employee in the beleaguered Tripoli hospital mentioned earlier. This government over-reach and patrimonialism denigrated into personal attacks against all who criticized such affairs, including French nationals and agents. Thus, he writes that:

> I have also seen that some supposed leaders, led by an ordinary bishop, while searching for a way to attack the dignity of those whom they call their 'political adversaries,' founded a newspaper in order to criticize certain honorable civil servants and their colleagues who defend the law, the weak and the poor as well as to provoke resentment against this or that official, because he did not receive a seat on the first row at an official reception or because someone refused to nominate one of his parents who wished to serve as an aide or spy.[460]

The rancor from the failure to obtain first row seats, or posts for relatives as spies and aids typified the behavior of the circles surrounding top officials in the bureaucracy. With his likely reference to the Maronite archbishop who had met and conferred with President Eddé during his sole official visit to North Lebanon, Dr. Boulos depicts this elite obsession with leveraging special access to the government to secure political and economic favors. In the case of the bishop, this ambition would fester into a personal vendetta with the administrative counselor, du Paty de Clam, and complaints to the high commission about this supposed lack of respect.[461] In such ways, the colonial bureaucracy in Lebanon failed to regulate the behavior of the population as much as it cultivated cults of personality around select individuals.

Beyond this select few, the mandate regime placed the majority of the population under the thumb of a select few who, in turn, menaced inhabitants. Here again, the letter of

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[460] C451. HCF. Translation of extracts from the Tripoli newspaper al-Mustaqbal No. 64. 8 March 1940. Them and Us: Petty Politics in North Lebanon by Dr. Michel Boulous.1.

[461] C451. DHCF No 4178. 29 February 1940. The name of the archbishop is unclear. My tentative reading of cursive script surmises the name to be Antoine Chlad. However, the name of the archbishop in 1936 listed in reports that I have seen names a certain J Kallas as the archbishop of the Greek Melchite Catholic church of Tripoli.

Dr. Boulos is instructive. As he goes on to write, "I have lately read of a poor (female) Parisian worker who got into a dispute with one of the campaigns [the internal notable disputes] because she had accused them of doing nothing for the soldiers."[462] This poor Parisian worker was likely none other than Mme. Lattouf, herself. Whatever the case, the privations of the soldiers mentioned by this woman reflected the enormous contradiction between the large quantities of money allocated to security in the national budget and the bleak reality of personnel. One imagines that given the constraints imposed on the director of public security without a phone to conduct his job, that this misappropriation of funds affected the gendarmerie, as well. As a punishment for raising such discrepancies, Dr. Boulos reports, "this poor worker was then made to send gifts to dozens of soldiers in secret and in doing so spent all of her money. She supported the mockeries of this campaign without uttering a single word, thinking that, in doing so, she was accomplishing a sacred duty."[463] Despite this noble pursuit of her sacred duty, the silence surrounding this political activity enabled those in power to further punish this Frenchwoman. As a result, the doctor says, "the police thought that she was a spy. She was arrested and interrogated; and after many efforts, she finished knowing the true situation. Everyone thanked and admired her."[464] Claims of false accusation, arrest, interrogation, public rebuke and private impoverishment; these were among the activities that pre-occupied those empowered by the city's municipal administration. The smear campaigns against du Paty de Clam and the unnamed Frenchwoman illustrate the ways in which the shadow of internal rivalries among the clients,

[462] C451. HCF. Translation of extracts from the Tripoli newspaper al-Mustaqbal No. 64. 8 March 1940. "Them and Us: Petty Politics in North Lebanon" by Dr. Michel Boulous. 1. While the original Arabic article refers "al-amilat al-barisiyat al-faqirat," or two poor Female French workers, the French translation that I subsequently translated into English only mentions one worker. I presume these individuals to be Madame Lattouf and her husband.
[463] *ibid.*
[464] *ibid.*

protégés, profiteers and would-be profiteers of the executive penetrated across all levels of the colony.

Such behavior that passed for political competition further marginalized the already disgruntled majority within the region and bolstered the anti-colonial resistance. As one French official noted, "poorly managed by a government that despises and often bullies them and that is hostile for confessional reasons, the people of Tripoli do not wait for any occasion to separate from Lebanon and provide a favorable terrain to foreign propaganda: Syrian, Turkish…and Italian."[465] In other words, the colonial regime provoked unrest and, ironically, helped to cultivate alternative political visions of the Levant. Dissent had grown so widespread that the threat of North Lebanon falling into foreign hands became a real possibility, as explored in the next chapter. Similarly, Dr. Boulos strikes a comparable tone when he concludes his editorial by prescribing a solution to the petty politics that menaced the region:

> The small souls cannot elevate themselves above these obsolete and petty politicians and cannot be placed next to the fighters of our noble and superior hearts. They are more worthy of pity than blame. We tell them: it would be better for you as well as for Lebanon, especially North Lebanon, to live in the unknown caves so that men forget your misdeeds and crimes; so that people take the necessary measures in view of safeguarding the dignity of Lebanon and the Lebanese.[466]

Beyond an elite competition, these petty politics indicate the capacity of those in power to humiliate and intimidate others with their misdeeds and crimes. As the case of the two French workers demonstrated, those who spoke out against the malfeasance and crimes of the elite faced not only recriminations, but also secret harassment and persecution by government officials. As a result, those already marginalized within the north were further silenced by the actions of the powerful.

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[465] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El-Mina, undated, presumably 1939, pg 3.
[466] *op. cit.*, 2.

Years later, the population would remain under the thumb of this atmosphere of calumny, slander and persecution, as English Sergeant Richard Pearse recounts of his time in Tripoli during his service in the Spears Diplomatic mission discussed in the next chapter.[467] By 1945, he writes that the culture of petty politics distinguished Tripoli from other areas where he had served in the Levant. "Politically speaking, Tripoli was not a dull place," the sergeant remembers. Amid the attempted murder of the prime minister days before his arrival, racketeering within the main industries of the city, the presence of gangs and smuggling outfits, and corpses lying in the street under the impotent gaze of law enforcement, Pearse devotes his largest description of Tripoli in his memoir to the "evil intent and viciousness" of thought and word that characterized the city's media.[468] During the mornings and evenings, the cafes of Tripoli were full of men from all walks of life who would assemble to meet the reporters and publishers of various texts, who, "for a handful of banknotes would publish slanderous and libelous attacks on gangsters and decent people alike."[469] In this sense, the attack on the Parisian woman falsely accused of espionage was the norm in Tripoli. By the 1940s, "the irresponsible gossip soared to the regions of pure fantasy," the sergeant writes, as "the *effendis*, the *souk*-merchants, the easy-money boys and their hangers-on never let up. With studied deliberation and venomous tongues, they would smear political mud over various personalities they did not like, and relate fulsome details

[467] Pearse, Richard, *Three Years in the Levant*, London, Macmillan and Company, 1949. Of course he would never admit as much, but it is my contention that Pearse did not have an insidious intelligence role within the Spears mission. From his description of his posts along the Turkish-Syrian and Lebanese-Syrian borders in Idlib Province, Tripoli and Southern Lebanon, I have the impression that he was a low ranking officer who patrolled the smuggling routes along the frontiers between the territories of the French mandate and those of British mandate Palestine.

[468] Pearse, 1949, 161. The victim of this attempted political murder was non other than the former mufti himself, al-Karami. As Pearse writes, he "had been shot up in his car close to his home by the gunman of one of his rivals. The Prime Minister, Abdul Kerame, was pro-British, his assailant, a member of the Omary family, was pro-French. (Pearse, 1949, 161.)

[469] Pearse, 1949, 162. As he goes on to say in this sentence, "All the morning until lunch-time, and every evening at aperitif time, the cafes were full of men of all types, from those who counted their fortunes in the millions of pounds sterling to the shabby, needy reporter owners of weekly scandal-sheets, who for a handful of banknotes would publish slanderous and libelous attacks on gangsters and decent people alike. These reporter owners kept alive the reputations of that there own gossip had created about local personalities. (Pearse, 1949, 162)

about private lives mingled with sensational revelations of anti-British activities."[470] This level of open intimidation and slander distinguished Tripoli from the regions in Syria where the sergeant was stationed previously. For, "anyone who disliked anyone else would bribe the owner of a weekly scandal-sheet, to attack him and since there was no law forbidding libel, there was no limit to the mud-slinging and slandering," Pearse adds.[471] The deliberate lies, humiliations and misinformation that passed for entertainment indicate the predatory landscape that developed during the course of the mandate. Since this cloud of intrigue and latent hostility colored the sergeant's view of the city, he retreated from Tripoli to the ski resorts in the nearby mountains, afraid that his company with this class of slanderers and racketeers would corrupt his reputation among the population.

4. Racketeering, Crime and Corruption

This cloud of petty politics and recriminations gives rise to the fourth crisis that confronted Tripoli and already broached in earlier sections, the expansion of organized crime through public office. In practice, the inability of the government to co-opt the leading families of the region into the regime meant that enormous and wide-scale privileges were handed over to segments of the population who abused public office for personal benefit. With the backing of the French, Lebanese leaders like President Eddé were able to cultivate patronage networks. As one unsigned report goes on to say that, "for M. Eddé, the policy in Tripoli consists most of all in favoring his partisans, or instead, a small group among them (the Stephan brothers, Rached al-Muqaddem) who, unfortunately, are among the most deplorable and least intelligent of his friends."[472] These friends of the French-backed president were elevated into posts within the parliament. In addition to the wide-ranging powers that they enjoyed as delegates, they were able to expand their authority through the

[470] Pearse, 1946, 175.
[471] Pearse, 1946, 162.
[472] DHCF 23 February 1939 au sujet fermeture de le ville de Tripoli . 22 February 1939 au sujet de la visite de la president de la republique.

black market. Both families were among the chief weapons smugglers and drug cultivators and traffickers in the region. Like the Abboud family in neighboring Akkar, they came to epitomize within the high commission the spread of illicit activity from the national government in Beirut to the smallest villages of the countryside. Given that legislators received protection from prosecution, they had *carte blanche* to expand their criminal networks. [473]

The activities of these individuals like the members of the Stephan family are laid bare in a letter from our messenger of doom, Mme. Lattouf, delivered to the new high commissioner Gabriel Puaux in 1939. In place of the more confidential tone she would adopt a year later in 1940, her earlier letter frankly discusses the widespread organized crime in the region. In particular, she excoriates the influence of the delegate Youssef Stephan, the personal friend of Eddé, who operated well above the law given his post in the previous government as minister of the interior, a position of authority within the bureaucracy second only to that of the president. She alleges that he used these privileges granted from the executive to bolster his criminal enterprise, including the trafficking of drugs cultivated on his own lands and on the lands of his friends; and in addition to these indiscretions, he was said to have been involved in the death of a young girl whom he had seduced.[474] Given the

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[473] As a case in point, the French high commission worked aggressively to shield Rached al-Muqaddem from prosecution when British officials within the Spears diplomatic mission arrested him for trying to suborn some of their personnel into smuggling drugs from Turkey into Lebanon on his behalf. Historian Oren Barak writes that when the British handed al-Muqaddem over for prosecution in 1943, the French quickly tried and acquitted him of wrongdoing. When, in response, the Spears mission threatened to send its troops to arrest him, the French retorted that they would order their men to resist this approach with force of arms and arrest Britain's man in North Lebanon, Camille Chamoun. See Barak, Oren, "Conflict and Peace in Lebanon," International Journal of Middle East Studies: 34 (2002), 629. It is possible the fear that al-Muqaddem would implicate other officials within the government if arrested animated mandate officials to clear him of charges.

[474] C 460 DHCF Secrétaire Générale, 9 February 1939 No. 2291, Lattouf letter to MAE ambassador M. Puaux de HC. She goes on to write that the coterie surrounding Emile Eddé's unionist faction were complicit in the cultivation of drugs on their property. So, in this regard, Stephan was not alone in trafficking drugs. In his memoir, Pearse writes that other unnamed government officials sponsored drug cultivation in the mountains outside of Tripoli in the town of Bisharah, a.k.a. Becharré, about 45 miles from Tripoli, during which more than 550 pouds of hashish seeds were distributed to cultivators in three nearby villages. He recounts "The two simple gardeners had planted sharish seeds, instead of vegetables, saying they had been told to do it by the sergeant of the local gendarmerie, who had promised them half of the proceeds

authority he wielded, he was able to commit crimes, halt police investigations and, much to the horror of Mme. Lattouf, he was able to "interfere in the one domain that should be most independent, the ministry of justice."[475] Linked to obstruction of justice, drug cultivation and distribution, rape and murder, the most powerful politician in the north was allegedly one of its biggest criminals. Not alone in these exploits, Stephan was one of several delegates in the president's unionist party who allegedly cultivated narcotics in the region and obstructed justice to cover up their misdeeds.[476] However widespread racketeering was, implicit in the tone of her letter is the notion that if only those in power were aware of these misdeeds, then they would take swift action to reform it. Thus she writes that:

> If Your Excellency were in direct contact with the Lebanese people without the twists of the politicians who often deform the true sense of our demonstrations, you would see our revolt against the tyranny of those who sacrifice the poor and unfortunate. Will the deputies continue to bamboozle (please excuse me M. L'ambassadeur, for this crude word, but it is the strict truth that I bring to you) French authority?[477]

Despite the contempt with which she describes the Lebanese government, Mme. Lattouf still holds fast to the same ideology of centralized French authority expressed by Puaux. Thus, in the conclusion of her letter, she assures Puaux, "the Lebanese people want the justice of France, the peace of France, the law of France. The Lebanese people demand that France involves itself more and more within the interior affairs of Lebanon so that LIBERTY,

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from the sale of the grown plants and freedom from interference by the government and military authorities. Since the planting of the seeds had been sanctioned and even recommended by the sergeant, the simple gardeners saw nothing wrong in it. Evidence was abundant, and informants plentiful, though I do not know what induced them to come." (Pearse, 1949, 173-5.)

[475] C 460 DHCF Secrétaire Générale, 9 February 1939 No. 2291, Lattouf letter to MAE ambassador M. Puaux de HC.

[476] *ibid*. As included in the authorized biography of Riad el-Solh written by Patrick Seale that included passages from the British archives, the British also suspected the president of involvement in drug trafficking. Amid the constitutional crisis discussed in the next chapter, General Edward Spears recorded him impressions of the president in response to the 11 November 1943 decision of the French to suspend the constitution and appoint Eddé. Thus Spears writes that, "he [Eddé] had always been a complete French stooge and when he last held presidential office was 'exceptionally corrupt and under strong suspicion of trafficking in narcotics, though this was never definitely proved.'" Spears to Foreign Office, 11 November 1943, FO 226,241 as recounted in Seale, Patrick. *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Riad al-Solh and the Makers of the Modern Middle East.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010.

[477] C 460 DHCF Secrétaire Générale, 9 February 1939 No. 2291, Lattouf letter to MAE ambassador M. Puaux de HC., 2.

FRATERNITY and above all EQUALITY reigns on this land that should be solely and directly French."[478] Such assertions reflected the insistence among the French that the maelstrom in Tripoli was not of a political nature, but a technical matter of better adherence to the centralized system. In effect, there was little to separate the ideology of Mme. Lattouf from that of the high commissioner and Muhammad Abboud. As a result, such perspectives obscured the linkages that connected the mandate to figures like Stephan and the aforementioned Abboud Bey, Ahdab, Abd al-Wahab and Rached al-Muqaddem, all of whom benefited from the formal and informal support of the high commission.

Amid the claims of growing malfeasance and crime, spiraling inequality and organized armed resistance, the delegates of Paris still believed that the antidote to the Tripoli situation was not a reassessment of its policies but simple administrative reform. Underlying their position was the notion that the overall system of municipal administration was the most rational and superior system of organization. The eventual reforms adopted indicated a propensity to treat all problems as essentially non-political. First, the new high commissioner Gabriel Puaux made an official visit to Tripoli in February 1939.[479] The purpose of this tour was "to show the population that France is not disinterested in the Muslims of Lebanon."[480] Having made his presence and interest known, the high commissioner issued the only reform to this crisis in North Lebanon that can be found to date. On November 23, 1939, he decreed a reshuffle of the Tripoli municipality, entrusting administrative management of the beleaguered city to a new post, a director (or *al-moudir* in

[478] *ibid*. Emphasis in the original.

[479] C460, DSG No. 1054. 11 February 1939, pgs. 3-5. Though this paper is unsigned, from the recommendation, it likely prepared the official visit of Puaux to Tripoli on 10 February 1939. Judging by the different tone in the document, I suspect that it was not written by du Paty de Clam. Among the mooted administrative reforms were: 1) to grant a status to the two municipalities that conforms to its importance; they currently have the same status as the small communes of the mountain 2) to increase their administrative and financial autonomy 3) and to replace the director of public hygiene and public welfare Dr. Gargour, who has not visited the city in 5 years 4) an official visit to Tripoli of the High Commission to show that France is not disinterested in the Muslims of Lebanon.

[480] C460. Notes Au Sujet de le ville de Tripoli and d'El-Mina, Situation Politique. Undated. 3. This report likely prepared for the high commissioner's visit.

Arabic) for a period of 6 months with the possibility of renewal.[481] In superceding the normal chain of command that gave sweeping discretion to the president of the republic, the high commissioner hoped to restrict some of the more egregious examples of nepotism and neo-patrimonialism within the civil administration in Tripoli that had demoralized workers and residents. Yet, such reforms only shifted the concentration of power from one strongman to another. In response, the president appointed none other than his relative Dr. Antoine Eddé to head the bankrupt municipality.[482] Despite the executive's role in recruiting some of the worst elements within the civil service, and neglecting the north in order to concentrate resources within his own constituency, the French gave *carte blanche* for informal politics to continue at the expense of the poor and marginalized. In this case, Dr. Eddé would hold this post for the next four years.[483]

Such informal networks even extended to the nominal opposition. The campaign to reunite Tripoli with Syria was hampered by similar personal ambitions, familial grievances and dubious characters. Yet, within some ranks of the high commission, the movement was dismissed as a fig leaf for elite families to jostle and maneuver with one another. For instance, Puaux, dismissed a popular nationalist figure like Riad el-Solh as a mere enemy of the former *muhafiz* of the north, Kheireddine Ahdab.[484] In this case, Ahdab, the former forester-cum-*muhafiz* would join el-Solh in the ranks of the resistance once removed from office.[485] Similarly, the high commission viewed as less than genuine the maneuverings of

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[481] Karam, 1961, 60

[482] Karam, 1961, 61. In an interview with Dr. Antoine Eddé, the author of this master's thesis noted that Dr. Eddé boasted "of the excessive amount of power [afforded him] for the improvement of municipal conditions in Tripoli," including increasing public funds from 100,000 LS pounds to 200,000 LS pounds. Such claims are debatable, however. As the author writes, "It must be emphasized here that this information is not based on any formal evidence from the records in the municipality, since that is missing. On the contrary, it is based on an interview with the director." (Karam, 1961 61). The discourse around improvement stands in stark contrast to the indications of dire poverty mentioned in other works, like the lecture of municipal affairs mentioned above and in the conclusion.

[483] Karam, 1961, 61.

[484] C460 DSG No. 863 4 February 1939. Au sujet de M. l'Haut Commissaire (de Puaux) a Tripoli. 3.

[485] C460 DSG information No. 383. 17 January 1939 au sujet des menaces séparatistes

Dr. Abd al-Latif al-Bissar, who after failing to win a seat in the 1934 parliamentary elections, helped to organize the 1936 general strike.[486]

At the same time, such shifts and machinations reflected the repositioning of political alliances that surmounted the formal protocols laid down by the French. It was none other than Youssef Stephan who secretly bridged the divide of petty politics and organized opposition by coming to the aid of the disgruntled former *mufti* of Tripoli, Abd al-Hamid al-Karami.[487] Even after he was rescued from the brink of bankruptcy by the high commissioner, al-Karami would run into more personal troubles in 1935 in one of the most infamous affairs during the mandate. While walking in the street, he confronted political rivals from the al-Muqqadem family, headed at the time by Rached al-Muqqadem, known among the high commission as one of the main smugglers in the country.[488] In the course of their scuffle, al-Karami pulled out his own revolver and shot his two rivals from point blank range in broad day light, fatally wounding Abd al-Majid al-Muqaddem, at a time when carrying arms was illegal. Upon his arrest for murder, Youssef Stephan personally sent al-Karami a blank check to pay his bail.[489] Later, with his help and, according to one report, "the benevolence of certain French authorities,"[490] al-Karami was acquitted on all charges. Having gotten away with murder, al-Karami then organized a riot to coincide with Eddé's

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[486] Saliba, 2016, 143. As she explores, the question of whether the notables of Tripoli would support the elections seems to have undermined the nationalist movement. Instead of supporting Dr. Bissar's candidacy, al-Karami supported another notable in Amin al-Muqaddem. Ironically, this member of the notorious smuggling family was a police officer separated from the rest of the family, which opted to support Dr. Bissar's candidacy.
[487] C460 DSG information No. 383. 17 January 1939 au sujet des menaces separatists. The deputy was also referred to as Sheik Josephe Stephane. Despite the enormous role this family played in the wings of Lebanese politics, very little information exists on the family. From a dossier on political candidates of the 1933 election, we are told that "Cheikh Yussef Stephan, député du Liban Nord, Maronite, 45 ans environ, banquier a Tripoli, administrateur de la Société Electrique de la Kadisha. Riche propriétaire foncier a Kfarsghab (près d'Eden). Député nomme a la chambre de 1920." Francophile." This Maronite banker in Tripoli came from a landowning family in the outskirts of Tripoli and had served as a loyal Francophile supporter during his tenure in the parliament since 1920.
[488] C460 DHCF No. 603 3 March 1939 au sujet de la fermeture des souks a Tripoli, copy of letter of conseiller administrative du Liban nord (du Paty de Clam) Report on Abd al-Hamid Karami. 2
[489] C460 DSG No. 863 4 February 1939. Au sujet de M. le Haut l'Haut Commissaire (de Puaux) a Tripoli
[490] C460 DHCF No. 603 3 March 1939 au sujet de la fermeture des souks a Tripoli, copy of letter of conseiller administrative du Liban nord (du Paty de Clam) Report on Abd al-Hamid Karami. 2

visit to see the Maronite archbishop in Tripoli, which left one person dead and some ninety injured.[491]

However, as later events would indicate, the resort to violence and judicial interference were parts of a secret negotiation among the Lebanese elites. This capacity to flout law and order demonstrated the personal authority of certain political elites. While Stephan was able to show that he could intervene into the judiciary to help one seemingly get away with murder, al-Karami was able to show that he had the capacity to radicalize the resistance movement. Such informal authority enabled such individuals to maintain their social status amid their dealings with the mandate. At this time, it appeared as if the government and high commission had succeeded in their long-term goal of co-opting al-Karami within their ranks.[492] Between his exoneration and autumn of 1936, reports indicate that he "observed a strict neutrality" and remained uninvolved in the series of demonstrations and general strikes organized in the city that year.[493] Such considerations changed with the announcement of the 1936 Franco-Lebanese, which would have consecrated the territorial integrity of the republic and foreclosed any possibility of reunion with Syria.[494] His activities that November provoked deadly riots in Tripoli as well as in Beirut.[495] With his lofty status, history of opposition and service within the anti-mandate Sharifan administration, al-Karami successfully channeled popular discontent in order to enhance the power he had lost at the commencement of the mandate. This resort to violence indicates the degree to which law and order had disappeared under the mandate.

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[491] C460 Information, Source Conseiller Administrative. Presumably du Paty de Clam
[492] *ibid*.
[493] C460 DHCF No. 603 3 March 1939 au sujet de la fermeture des souks a Tripoli, copy of letter of conseiller administrative du Liban nord (du Paty de Clam) Report on Abd al-Hamid Karami. 2
[494] *ibid*.
[495] *ibid*. Du Paty de Clam adds that, in "November 1936, he actively associated himself with the maneuvers that tended to frustrate the Lebanese treaty in order to avoid the consecration of the territorial integrity of Lebanon. The activities provoked riots in Tripoli and Beirut. Karami then became among the persons damaged and prosecuted by the public ministry (DSG). Nevertheless, shortly afterward, his prosecution was suspended with a goal of appeasement in mind."

Even after judicial interference contributed to the outbreak of violence against mandate agents, the high commission observed the same patterns of behavior in its quest to weaken opposition to the mandate. In particular, the delegates of Paris stood by as Stephan offered another olive branch to al-Karami. To appease him, Stephan did like so many other MP's in creating a new post within the municipal administration. In 1938, he proposed the nomination of al-Karami's brother, Mohamad—viewed by French sources as a near illiterate—and one time participant in the 1936 riots, as Director of the Water Services for Tripoli with a salary of 36,000 *francs* per year.[496] His appointment sheds light on the causes of the water crisis in the north. More than that, it exemplified the ways in which Stephan used the bureaucracy to create a role for himself as mediator between the Lebanese government and different factions of the resistance. While this new role enhanced his personal status and made himself indispensable to the mandate regime,[497] it contained less positive consequences for residents in the north.

For, the civil administration enabled those most disgruntled with the mandate to act against the regime through acts of sabotage. Like his brother almost twenty years earlier who had used his influence to organize protests against the French mandate in 1919, the younger al-Karami sought to undermine the government by neglecting his post. In this endeavor the French were fully aware. With regards to Mohamad al-Karami, du Paty de Clam reports to this superiors that he "knows absolutely nothing about administration or hydrological matters. Rather he spends most of his time creating anti-Lebanese and anti-French policies."[498] Despite his unsuitability to the role, this nationalist was given control of the city

[496] DHCF 23 February 1939 au sujet de la fermeture de le ville de Tripoli in 22 February 1939 au sujet de la visite de la président de la république. The notes of du Paty de Clam list an even higher salary. His hand-written notes read: "the post of administrative director for water services, an absolutely useless post created by the minister of the interior Youssef Stephane in favor of his protégé, the brother of the separatist leader Karami for 41,720 francs a year;" C460 Note Sur les municipalities de Tripoli- El-Mina 31 March 1939
[497] C460 DSG No. 863 4 Ferburary 1939. Au sujet de M. le Haut Commissaire (de Puaux) a Tripoli.
[498] C460 Sur les chefs des service municipuaux de tripoli, 31 March 39

containing the best water supply in the country, an area that de Martel had earmarked for a future military base in case of war due to its suitable water table. It was under his appointment that the water crisis across the north worsened.

Still, the overtures to the al-Karami family continued. At a time when many residents did not have access to safe drinking water, Stephan used his authority to grant al-Karami a loan of 8,000 *francs* and a subsequent subsidy of 200,000 *francs* to supply water to his family's lands in the village of Bkassefrine.[499] To put these numbers into perspective, this subsidy granted to this single village of 40 homes in 1938 exceeded the municipal budget of Tripoli eight years earlier in 1930.[500] The rampant abuse of public funds that had been a rallying call among the resistance continued with one of its most prominent organizers. Without playing psychologist, it is understandable that such salaries and credits for himself, his family and his village would have appealed to the former *mufti* who had been on the brink of bankruptcy.[501] Not only would participation with the government fill his depleted coffers, it would go some way to re-establishing the status that he had lost upon his termination by the mandate in 1919.

At this point, the resistance became the smoke screen to broker backroom deals among a select few. In the words of one official, "this policy followed by the Stephan family

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[499] *ibid*. Another report explained that "when Youssef [Stephan] was minister, he supplied water (il a fait faire l'adduction des eaux) to Bkasssafrine, the village belonging to Karami." C460 DSG No. 863 4 Ferburary 1939. Au sujet de M. le Haut Commissaire (de Puaux) a Tripoli. Also See C460 DHCF Apercu politique Bulletin d'information No. 8 allant 26 August 1939 faits notables de la semaine.

[500] C460 DHCF aperçu politique Bulletin d'information No. 8 allant 26 August 1939 faits notables de la semaine. This report spells the name of the village as Bkassefrine

[501] In contrast to these personal reasons, Saliba credits external factors for Karami's decision. She writes, "Karami became reconciled to the idea of Lebanon long before he accepted premiership in 1945 due to three main factors: the ambiguousness of the nationalists in Syria during the second half of the 1930s, Karami's deteriorated relationship with them, and stronger friendships with his counterparts in Beirut. This could be traced to September 1936 when he became disillusioned with the Syrian nationalists for signing the Franco-Syrian treaty and not supporting Tripoli during its 33-day strike in November 1936. Fearing that it would compromise the Franco-Syrian treaty, the National Bloc sent al-Jabiri to end the strike. Karami was unable to forgive them and that was the defining moment in the break of their friendship." Saliba, 2016, 312. What gives Saliba a different perspective than mine on the *mufti's* motives was the fact that she gained access to the personal collection of his newspapers while I relied exclusively on the notes of the French administrators. The kind of information that I accessed would not have been made public by al-Karami.

is destined to assure them the support of the nationalists who they permit to pressure the Lebanese government."[502]The capacity to divide the spoils of the taxpayers altered power-relations. It was through the circumvention of formal practices—such as acquittal, immunity from prosecution, rescue from bankruptcy—that Stephan succeeded in rallying al-Karami. By re-appropriating the formal protocols of governance, the two were able to expand their power and influence in a way that the French could not.

Not only did this policy exalt the Stephan family, it also created opportunities for other power brokers. This more creative strategy succeeded in seducing other leaders of the 1936 strike. For instance, one of the prominent notables who stood beside al-Karami was Mustafa Khaled al-Muqaddem, the leader of the Tripoli branch of the anti-colonial Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party.[503] His relative, Rached, would eventually receive a seat in the Lebanese parliament under the patronage of the president. The family used this lofty position to not only undercut rival notable families, but, as mentioned previously, to allegedly promote organized crime complicit in weapons smuggling, intimidation of the police and the assault of al-Karami. Equally pliable was the other prominent notable of the 1936 strike, Dr. Bissar. His dealings are mentioned in passing in a 1939 press report. It surmises that:

> The press reports that the attitude with respect to the Muslim capital of North Lebanon lately does not express itself all the time and only goes so far as a timid desire to seduce the principal recalcitrant notables of the city…But the press forgot to add that an order of expropriation was annulled in Beirut to allow Dr. Bissar, another *irredentiste* of Tripoli, to construct an imposing building on a route to one of the principal roads in the projected urban plan, etc. etc.[504]

The concessions like those granted to Dr. Bissar and others disclose the proliferation of informal networks within government institutions. The creation of new patronage networks through the re-appropriation of municipal funds became embedded within the elite cadre of

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[502] C460 DSG No. 863 4 February 1939. Au sujet de M. le Haut Commissaire (de Puaux) a Tripoli
[503] C411. Information No. 816 DSG Beyrouth. 7 March 1936. His role beside al-Karami and Dr. Bissar is mentioned in Longrigg, 1968, 219.
[504] C460 DHCF Apercu politique Bulletin d'information No. 8 allant 26 August 1939 faits notables de la semaine.

Lebanon. The leaders who crossed the picket lines of the resistance not only received financial rewards, they were promised key positions of influence within the new landscapes designed for Tripoli upon the ratification of the Franco-Lebanese treaty. From this perspective, it can be seen that the scope of malfeasance was only exceeded by the efforts to ignore and conceal it.

For the French delegates, as well, the rise of informal networks precipitated a transformation in relations of power. By February 1939, President Eddé and his old friend, Stephan had become the protectors of al-Karami and persuaded another French official, M. Lafond, to back the former *mufti* once again.[505] With these leaders in his pocket, the president saw no need to offer any political concession to the beleaguered majority. For instance, one administrator recounts the president as having urged him that, "it is not necessary to revive the spirit of separatism. It is not necessary to talk of autonomy, one could envision an extension of powers to the municipalities, but only after the treaty [the Franco-Lebanese treaty] is ratified and not before."[506] In effect, the plight of Tripoli had become a bargaining chip.[507] It was through the informal mechanisms connecting the resistance leaders to the regime that the president was able to leverage his influence to dissuade the French from addressing the dire situation in Tripoli. Having benefited from the transformation of power-relations, the executive could now surpass the intermediary role that the French had intended for his office in order to dictate terms to the Quai d'Orsay. In particular, President Eddé was eager to make further reforms in the restive north contingent upon the ratification of the Franco-Lebanese treaty. This, in turn, would have maintained the status quo and therefore

[505] DHCF 23 February 1939 au sujet fermeture de le ville de Tripoli in 22 february 1939 au sujet de la visite de la president de la republique, pg 2.
[506] *ibid*.
[507] *ibid*., As the anonymous author writes, "I definitely have the impression that the president of the republic refuses to recognize that there exists a Tripoli problem and, more specifically, that he hopes that French soldiers will be there, one more time, to prevent the Muslims of North Lebanon from violently protesting their separatist demands."

allowed him and his coterie to wield wide influence in local affairs. Eddé even unsuccessfully admonished the new high commissioner against making an official visit to the city out of fear that it would have undercut his authority.[508] Such complaints about the president reflect the increasingly sectarian and exclusivist configuration of the executive branch that the French directly and indirectly supported.

For Paris, among the costs of unsettling the anti-colonial resistance in Tripoli were the erosion of its influence and its increasing dependence on the dubious and criminal elements that undermined law and order. From the cabinet to the *kaimakam*, elected officials to appointees, government insiders to the opposition, the capacity to re-appropriate the formal institutions affected every level of society until it gradually transformed the political landscape. The large bureaucratic institutions that the French created had failed to safeguard their authority. Instead of reproducing a system of hierarchy, the bureaucracy initiated structural neglect in the annexed territories. The top-down blueprint that successive high commissioners envisioned was effectively supplanted by a number of alternative practices of power. These included existing practices that were strengthened by the mandate like the family structure, nepotism and racketeering. The transition from the relatively small civil service of the Ottomans to the behemoth imposed by the French magnified these practices. In addition to these institutions were the exercises of authority that directly emerged from the mandate such as the sweeping discretionary powers of the interior minister and president, interference into other branches of the government, and the capacity to appropriate public funds at will. These informal practices enabled the government of Eddé to marginalize the resistance to the mandate, which had been effective for nearly twenty years in the north. In doing so, he sought to guarantee the situation that empowered him with sweeping discretion

[508] *ibid*., The report says "M. Eddé told me that he would prefer that M. Puaux not consider Tripoli for the moment."

to concentrate resources within his constituency and make beggars of those who opposed this state of affairs. Until this status quo was consecrated with the ratification of the proposed Franco-Lebanese treaty that Eddé had himself negotiated in 1936,[509] the inequality and despair in Tripoli would remain. Once exasperated from the plight and blight of the city, those seeking improved conditions would be under the thumb of his personalized rule. In these ways, the bureaucracy facilitated the personalization of power instead of the centralization of authority.

Yet, however much power relations had shifted, only few were privy to the extent to which informal networks had transformed political society. The administration set up by the French proved the breeding ground for the plagues that knocked on the gates of the Old City. Informal politics had completely upended the power structure initiated by the French. Allegedly, drug barons became cabinet ministers, mayors drug traffickers, and the once proud *mufti* of Tripoli stared at the gallows, an outlaw and nearly bankrupt figure before a previous adversary intervened to help him seemingly get away with murder. The direct and indirect effects of municipal administration in the mandate reveal that French policy was more effective with the breakdown of a social order than with the creation of a new one beholden to Paris. Instead, the agents, administrators and politicians within the new system re-appropriated the blockade of sorts that surrounded Tripoli to enhance their own personal influence at the expense of the high commission's authority.

At the same time, those with the least suffered the most from these transformations. As a summary of a January 1939 petition of notables of North Lebanon revealed, the longstanding grievances of the population continued to be ignored. The inhabitants, it reads, "they reproach the Lebanese government for having often in this last period, undermined the

[509] Eddé's involvement in Treaty negotiations is discussed in Hourani, Albert. *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay*. London: Oxford UP 1946. 184. Also see Zamir, 1978, 232-235.

application of laws for personal goals, attacking all liberties—of press, assembly, association—constantly intervening in the affairs of justice and finally, for squandering public funds."[510] In these ways, the blockade of sorts that surrounded North Lebanon was not maintained by the strict surveillance that de Martel had ordered in 1936, but by transforming the bureaucracy so that epidemics worsened, the sick languished and the poor starved.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the concessions that enabled the water to flow to the lands of al-Karami, the appointment of his brother to head the water service, and the lucrative payouts to notables of their ilk represented the informal patronage networks that spread misery and misfortune during the mandate. Once in power, these leaders sought to sabotage the civil administration through neglect of their duties. Meanwhile, the government in Beirut stood by unconcerned as legislators and the executive sought to build their own constituencies at the expense of the annexed territories. In turn, those who craved an alternative to the new order overseen by the president were left to manage the despair that followed. The closest semblance of reform was the decision of the president to move the ministry of hygiene and health services into the interior ministry as part of a series of administrative reforms on November 22, 1939.[511] In doing so, the president used one ministry to cover up the indiscretions of another. As a result, the institutional practices that contributed to the health crisis—such as misuse of the post of health director and director of the water utility, under-spending of public health and infrastructure, overspending to irrigate the lands of the al-Karami family, attacks on public

[510] C460 23 January 1939 DHCF au sujet des revendications des notables musulmanes de Liban. 1. According to al-Shabab, a publication linked to the political party of al-Karami, rumors reported that members of the nearly bankrupt municipal council stole money from a relief fund for orphans and the needy in 1935 (al-Shabab, 1 February 1935 as mentioned in Saliba, 2016, 188). In the same year, the minister of finance repossessed municipal property and withheld payments owed to the Tripoli municipality due to its outstanding debts (al-Shabab 29 November 1935, as discussed in Saliba, 2016, 188).

[511] Canaan, Leila Wadih. "The Position of the High Commissioner in the Administration of Lebanon under the French Mandate." MA Thesis. Department of History, American University of Beirut, 1959, 68.

healthcare workers and the press, and obstruction of justice—would be lost to oblivion so that even now, it is difficult to discern the scale of the crisis in the north.

From a different perspective, the breakdown of law and order came to characterize the erosion of French territorial control in the Levant. In attempting to use the large bureaucracy to oversee social, economic and political affairs in the country, the French failed to appreciate that its protocols were also subject to transformation. As a result of these transformations and their inability to respond to them, elite formation largely failed to expand French control over the population. Instead, the very processes of initiating reform in the colony also changed colonial institutions in unexpected ways. While these new developments effectively created more barriers between the residents of Tripoli and their claim for re-unification with Syria, they also sowed divisions between the French administration, its local allies and the population. To rectify these unexpected consequences would have required the high commission to acknowledge and expose the very intrigues and alliances that it had facilitated. The experiences in the north demonstrate that the reproduction of space in the colonial setting was not a function of the imposition of formal institutions of government, but emerged through the capacity of informal networks to re-shape and re-appropriate colonial designs. In ways that will be seen in the next chapter, the administrative crisis that the French struggled to curb opened the door to foreign sponsored political activities as well as direct foreign intervention in Lebanon and Syria.

But for now, it is worth considering the effects of informal politics on the population in the north. As the 1939 summary petition of notables adds, the inhabitants in Tripoli and across the *muhafaza* had complained of "the near inexistence of health and hygiene services, with typhoid and malaria rampant to nearly endemic levels in the most remote corners of the

country."[512] The spread of infection dovetailed the secret re-circulation of money and influence among the elite. In the words of one mandate agent, "nothing is done by the Lebanese public assistance to safeguard the indigents who die of hunger and for whom not a word is spoken. There does not exist any establishment to take in the terminally ill, or the children who roam the streets."[513] In response to the health crisis, the delegates of Paris failed to achieve any solution as the Lebanese government opted instead to allow silence to deepen the burdens of the population. As du Paty de Clam would later report on his meeting with the executive, "in the course of my interview with the president of the republic, I have tried on several occasions, to bring his attention to the extreme poverty of certain classes of the population, to the lamentable inadequacies in hygiene services and public assistance, to the fact that certain children cannot find a place in schools."[514] Although the blockade of sorts remained in place around the Old City, the high commission was in no better position to make inroads with the population, not as a result of cannon fire as had been the case in 1936,

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[512] C460 23 January 1939 DHCF au sujet des revendications des notables musulmanes de Liban. , 2. In addition according to the muhafiz of the north, Dr. Abu-Izzeddin, conditions remained just as grim after the mandate in the 1940s and 1950s. Thus he writes that, "this extensive [sic] *mohafazat*, thickly populated in cities and villages, needs health assurances not available now, especially in the underdeveloped villages where technical organization is non-existent," he says (Abu-Izzeddin, 1961, 43). In the same speech, the *muhafiz* goes on to suggest that the same methods of infection still existed in the region, as tainted water supplies still existed. Thus, he adds, "to prevent the dangers that may take place, it is essential to implement water supply schemes and impose effective hygiene control on all public services for the sake of the safety of citizens and their health. Thus, avoiding the spread of infection diseases." (Abu-Izzeddin, 1961 43-44). The insinuation from this call for preventative care was that such protocols were not yet available. While no statistics are available, his discussion of the spread of infectious disease through the water mirrors the concerns raised within the high commission nearly twenty years earlier.

[513] C460, HCF La Situation Politique Notes on the Subject of the City of Tripoli-El-Mina, undated, presumably 1939.

[514] C460 DHCF 23 February 1939 au sujet fermeture de le ville de Tripoli in 22 February 1939 au sujet de la visite de la président de la république. 3-4. Like with water supplies, hospitals and public health, the same problems of public education continued to exist until the 1960s. According to Dr. Abu-Izzeddin, public education remained completely inadequate. There were a total of two government secondary schools within the whole region, both of which were in Tripoli (Abu-Izzeddin, 1961, 42). Those who could pay were able to gain access to private education. Similarly, the muhafiz of the south comments on the poor state of education that left half of all children illiterate, ruing that "The total of all those are provided with an education in both private and government schools is 32,851 and so 35,000 are left without education, roaming in fields and playing in alleys and lanes, and becoming victims of natural ignorance." (el-Turk, 1961, 59) In other words, half of all school children lacked access to public education. The schools available tended to fail students in Lebanon. Elizabeth Thompson provides an overall picture of public education in Lebanon when she writes that, "in general, state schools remained a ghetto for poor Muslims and poor villages of various sects." (Thompson, 2000, 283)

but due to the very alliances that it had brokered. In response to the petitions of succor from death, disease and starvation, President Eddé, the administrative counselor rues, "has, on each occasion, turned the conversation to allow me to understand that these problems do not interest him, at least, for now."[515]

[515] C460 DHCF 23 February 1939 au sujet fermeture de le ville de Tripoli in 22 February 1939 au sujet de la visite de la président de la république. 4.

V. Eventual Reform

INTRODUCTION

Vichy, Free French, British, Nazi, Iraqi, Egyptian and Syrian designs would each attempt to lay claim to the Levant during the transformative years of 1940 to 1946 following High Commissioner Gabriel Puaux's decree of martial law in July 1939. These competing developments following the collapse of the third republic illustrate the theoretical considerations regarding the unbundling of territoriality. As territoriality is socially mediated rather than geographically imposed, it remains subject to competing practices of domination and resistance within a given location. A review of this theory will help to understand the rival strategies of domination and resistance that developed in Lebanon throughout the 1940s. The informal practices that developed through the formal institutions of governance would assume an international dimension amid regional and imperial rivalries. It is possible to trace these unintended developments by examining the fallout from the electoral and legislative institutions that emerged from the 1926 constitution initiated by the Quai d'Orsay. Through a focus on the aftermath of the 1937 and 1943 legislative elections, it will be seen that far from strengthening the French mandate, these constitutional institutions not only facilitated the competing designs for Lebanon that weakened the already tenuous position of Paris and later Algiers, but also precipitated the informal alliances that drove France out of the Levant altogether.

UNBUNDLING COLONIAL TERRITORIALITY

As has been argued so far, colonial territoriality was not necessarily enforced through the onset of European practices of governance. Alternative worldviews did not always disappear with the arrival of Europe in the non-west. New relations of power did not necessarily become manifest with the establishment of colonial control. Instead, colonial governance involved the expansion of existing modes of political behavior, in the case of Lebanon, through bankrolling the very elements that sabotaged and misused political office.

To borrow a term from critical geo-politics, the upswing of the anti-colonial movement can be understood as the unbundling of territoriality, or the breakdown of the reach of the state. In signaling this potential for breakdown, the notion of the unbundling of territoriality underscores that the question of the reproduction of space is not so much about who controls where as much as it examines which processes are involved in power and resistance. With respect to colonialism, the metropole planted many of the seeds responsible for the erosion of its control, thereby contributing to the unbundling of colonial territoriality.

In effect, the unbundling of territoriality highlights the asymmetry of state power, which, in turn, enables competing practices to develop and challenge state power. In the words of Agnew, "political power also strengthens or weakens geographically because the transmission of political power across space involves practices by others that lead to its transformation as it moves from one place to another. Political power therefore is exercised from sites that vary in their geographical reach."[516] The divergent practices that constitute state power possess varying degrees of effectiveness and reach as they interplay with particular historical, social and political circumstances. With this perspective in mind, the relations of power that underpin the production of space remain subject to change over time. This capacity to change makes possible the potential breakdown of order. Following Agnew, "because power is always manifested in its effects, however, rather than simply as a capacity or possession, power relations are better thought of in terms of territories of power and dispersed power networks in which individual persons, states and other actors…are

[516] Agnew, John, "Mapping Political Power Beyond State Boundaries," Millennium Journal of International Studies, 28: No 3 (1999), 501. In a different article, Agnew comments on the social and historical circumstances that underpin the production of space, writing that, "the critical theoretical issue, therefore, is the historical relationship between territorial states and the broader social and economic structures and geo-political order (or form of spatial practice) in which these states must operate, Agnew, John, "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory," Review of International Political Economy, 1:1 (Spring 1994), 77).

embedded and located spatially relative to one another."[517] Due to these interrelated activities, the potential unbundling of territoriality does not imply the complete disappearance of state practices, but interplay of divergent practices.

More specifically, John Ruggie depicts the practices that comprise the unbundling of territoriality. In his estimation, these include "various types of functional regimes, common markets, political communities and the like."[518] In addition to these predominately economic and political structures, informal politics ought to be considered as an institution that can reshape territoriality. As has been suggested in preceding chapters, informal mechanisms within the shadow state can undermine state power as much as they support it. To assume that territoriality becomes unbundled, however, is not to suggest that the state becomes irrelevant in the reproduction of space. For, as Ruggie goes on to write, "change has never been complete or all-encompassing."[519] Not only is territoriality socially mediated according to Ruggie and Agnew, it is historically constructed as well, and therefore, subject to the cultural, economic and political structures that challenge different iterations of state power. Following from this, the unbundling of territoriality resembles a kind of standoff in which different territorial practices compete against one another. That is, territorial control is not absolute. Since change is not complete and power not absolute, the breakdown of state order does not indicate the absolute absence of the state, but a shift and expansion in the political field. For colonial Lebanon, this shift would evolve into the movement for independence.

Often in the Middle East, the challenge to the metropole owed as much to the native question as to the intrigues of rival empires. As historian Priya Satia contends, the region became subject to the machinations of covert empire, the informal network of spies, covert

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[517] Agnew, 1999, 502. He goes on to write that, "But, the relative importance of territories and dispersed networks changes historically as a result of the changing geographical conditions under which political practices take place" (Agnew, 1999, 502).
[518] Ruggie, 1993, 165.
[519] Ruggie, 1993, 167.

affairs and colonial administration officials.[520] Covert imperialism, she describes, was "a new imperial strategy…a version of indirect rule in which professional agents operated in a hidden realm of colonial government bureaucracy."[521] In this sense, the practices of "enforced informality"[522] that Satia portrays constitute an extension of the forms of indirect rule examined earlier in chapter two. Under this system, the formal institutions of the mandate functioned as a facade for an array of colonial objectives.[523] Far from having a panoptic vision, the maneuverings of covert empire were diffuse and often contradictory between the metropole and its various field offices. In keeping with Hannah Arendt, Satia contends that, "ultimately, the policy of covert empire had to be incoherent; the 'very essence' of the symbolic system created by the bureaucracy and spy is, Arendt explains, [an] 'aimless process,' an end only abetted by an atmosphere of horizonless fear."[524] This incoherence of colonial administration becomes essential to understanding the breakdown of imperialism. In ways that will become clear, the overlap of diplomacy, administration and intelligence facilitated the shadow state in the colony and the movement toward independence in the Levant. In the case of Lebanon, the unbundling of territoriality would take the form of informal politics, espionage, and foreign claims to the territory.

To summarize, territoriality is not fixed, but contains many of the elements that contribute to its undoing. In this sense, the unbundling of territoriality does not constitute the complete absence of state power as much as it represents the existence of alternative practices of power that challenge the reach of the state. This unbundling takes the form of various political, economic and social practices. Such processes are evident in the twilight of

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[520] Satia, Priya, *Spies in Arabia: The Great War and the Cultural Foundations of Britain's Covert Empire in the Middle East*, Oxford: Oxford UP: 2008, 268.
[521] Satia, 2008, 264.
[522] Satia, 2008, 264.
[523] According to Satia, Mark Sykes, the negotiator of Whitehall who helped to carve up the former Ottoman Empire, referred to the mooted independent Arab empire as a façade, as mentioned in Satia, 2008, 268.
[524] Satia, 2008, 278.

empire. As events in Lebanon will indicate, the colonial infrastructure built by the French directly facilitated the anti-colonial movement that contravened the reach of France in the Levant. Already, a number of the factors that helped to curtail French control have been mentioned. Formally, these included policies related to land reform, economic policies and municipal administration. In addition, informal social practices such as racketeering and patron-client relations drained the Quai d'Orsay of *francs*. Added to these elements below will be another internal factor, the constitutional regime instituted at the behest of France as well as external factors, namely British imperial designs. The informal politics that animated the electoral process and facilitated the ouster of France from Lebanon can be considered as an example of the unbundling of territoriality.

OPPRESSION INTO ANARCHY

Although the unforeseen consequences of the mandate have already been presented with regards to public space, land reform, economic restructuring and municipal administration in the preceding chapters, the *coup de grâce* to the Quai d'Orsay involved foreign-funded plans to transform the most principal institution, the 1926 constitution that laid the groundwork for the executive office and legislature. Designed to entrench influence when the high commission faced unrest during the 1925 Druze revolt in parts of Lebanon and Syria,[525] the constitution set the stage for the administrative crisis that the French struggled to overcome by the time of Puaux's decree. The pages that follow offer an examination and review of two national legislative elections that took place in Lebanon during the French mandate. Recently declassified documents shed new light on the 1937 legislative elections, the second in the country since the establishment of the constitution in 1926 as the imposition of martial law in 1932 halted scheduled elections in that year. In addition, the events

[525] See Watenpaugh for an analysis of the Syrian conflicts that prompted the Quai d'Orsay to shift toward a more indirect policy of rule. Watenpaugh, Keith David. *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism and the Arab Middle Class*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006, 211-234.

surrounding the 1943 national elections are reviewed. Though separated by the developments of the World War II, when compared in this fashion, the upheaval that has generally characterized accounts of the 1943 election appears as a logical outcome and continuation of the formal and informal practices evident by the 1930s. While the fallout of this period has already been broached in respect to the administrative anarchy in Tripoli and North Lebanon, it is worth exploring its implications at a national level. It will be seen that rather than strengthen the rule of the Quai d'Orsay, the constitutional regime empowered an array of informal practices that increasingly undermined formal French rule in the Levant to the point that French rule had fallen apart, forcing the termination of the mandate in the wake of the 1943 elections.

Formal Goals of the Constitutional Regime

At the heart of the French mandate was the contradiction between its formal policies and informal goals. The French presence in the Levant was transformed with the establishment of the 1926 constitution, which ended the 8-year period of martial law that had begun in 1918. The architect of the 1926 constitution was High Commissioner Henry de Jouvenel, who had the distinction of serving as the first civilian and non-military high commissioner. His appointment followed the harsh crackdown of the Great Arab revolt by his predecessors, General Maurice Sarrail and General Maxime Weygand. A journalist, publisher and statesmen prior to his arrival in Beirut, de Jouvenel was a scion of the old aristocratic Famille Jouvenel des Ursins and a regular denizen of the elite political and intellectual social circles of Paris in the third republic.[526] He received his appointment to the

[526] Quite the character, de Jouvenel was born Bertrand Henry Léon Robert de Jouvenel des Ursins and enjoyed a well- publicized social life. He was the editor of the daily Le Matin newspaper, brother of the renowned journalist Robert de Jouvenel and later a senator in France. It was rumored that his second wife, the former actress and mime turned writer Sidonie-Garielle Colette had an affair with her stepson Betrand de Jouvenel, the child from the first marriage of de Jouvenel on the eve of his appointment to Beirut in 1924. Whatever the veracity of the senator's involvement in a love triangle with his own son, the narrative surrounding the de Jouvenel family disclose the large degree of insularity within the social stratum that came to rule France during

Levant following the electoral victory of the leftist Cartel des Gauches alliance of socialist and radicals in the 1924 French national elections, which remained in power until July 1926. Despite his short tenure of seven months from December 1925 until June 1926, de Jouvenel left a large institutional imprint on the country by appointing the drafting commission for what would become the 1926 constitution.[527] Boycotted by Sunni and Shi'a leaders in Lebanon, the constitution nonetheless passed its committee and was adopted on May 23, 1926.[528]

The 1926 constitution resembled that of the third French Republic in that it featured a president, prime minister and bicameral legislature with a senate and chamber of deputies.[529] Whereas members of the chamber of deputies were elected to serve 3-year terms of office, the president appointed seven of the sixteen senators to their six-year terms.[530] In turn, the legislature was headed by the speaker of the house and had the task of electing the president to a term of three years.[531] Once elected, the president invited a legislator to head the government as prime minister and selected a cabinet from the two assemblies. In these ways, the political framework of the country resembled that of the third republic. The constitution represented a move to a more indirect form of rule through which the Quai d'Orsay hoped to win over elements of the population that had taken sides with the recalcitrant Druze revolt.

Yet, the constitution portended for the Levant the rampant instability that characterized France during the interwar years. During the tenure of President Gaston

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the interwar years. Concern with the peoples and places within the Levantine colonies did not figure prominently within internal disputes.

[527] Traboulsi, 2007, 89. While de Jouvenel was nominally in office from late December 1925 to June 1926, Patrick Seale attests that de Jouvenel remained in office for eight months, presumably until the appointment of his successor. (Seale, 2010, 745). Whatever the number, his duration was short following a turnover of the government in France.

[528] Traboulsi, 2007, 89. Among other provisions, the constitution prepared a new name for the country, shifting from the State of Greater Lebanon to the Lebanese Republic. The boycott against the constitution followed the unfulfilled agreement of de Jouvenel. Although the former senator had negotiated with the Syrian Prime Minister to return Tripoli and Akkar to Syria, Paris reneged on the agreement in April 1926.

[529] Baaklini, Abdo. *Legislative and Political Development: Lebanon, 1842-1972*. Durham: Duke UP, 1976, 62

[530] Baaklini, 1976, 63.

[531] Baaklini, 1976, 64.

Doumergue, for instance, there existed no less than 15 cabinets between 1924 and 1931, including those responsible for the arrival and ouster of de Jouvenel in the Levant.[532] Under his successor, President Paul Doumber, the pattern continued, with 3 prime ministers holding office in 11 months, before Doumber's violent murder cut short his time in office in 1932.[533] Still further, the reign of his successor, President Albert Lebrun witnessed the rise and fall of another 17 prime ministers and 10 foreign ministers between 1932 and 1940.[534] Despite de Jouvenel's civilian vision for the Levant, the volatile instability that gripped the metropole would eventually reach the colonies.

Less than a year after its imposition, the high commission quickly found it necessary to amend the constitution under High Commissioner August Henri Ponsot. Because the constitution constrained French influence by privileging a strong legislature over a weak executive in much the same ways that had allowed French parliaments to instigate the resignation of the cabinet, Ponsot persuaded the legislature to push through a number of amendments under the threat of arrest and dissolution of the assembly in 1927.[535] These amendments included: 1) the abolishment of the senate in favor of an expansion of the chamber of deputies in which 2/3 of members were elected and 1/3 appointed by the president 2) the capacity of the president to choose his cabinet from the house of delegates 3) the right of the president to dissolve the legislature 4) an increase in the president's discretion over the budget 5) an increase in the president's scope to introduce and approve legislation.[536] As if this power were not enough, the French passed through further amendments to the constitution in 1929 so that 1) the president's cabinet could come from

[532] White, 2011, 16. Despite this high executive turnover, White sees a certain relative stability within the foreign ministry, as indicated in the relatively long tenures of the high commissioners for the Levant. Between 1919 and 1940, for instance, there were only 7 high commissioners for Lebanon and Syria.
[533] White, 2011, 29, Note 29.
[534] White, 2011, 29, Note 29.
[535] Baaklini, 1976, 66. The pitfalls of the weak executive are also described in Mufarrij, 1935, 348.
[536] Baaklini, 1976, 66-67; Mufarrij, 193, 349.

outside of the parliament, 2) the executive could dissolve parliament and 3) presidential term limits were extended from 3 years to 6 years.[537] In these ways, the Quai d'Orsay hoped to maintain control through its influence over the increasingly powerful president.

It was in this context of constitutional reform that France's man in the Levant, Emile Eddé, came to power. Mentioned in previous sections in relation to his alliances with the likes of Abd al-Wahab, the Stephan brothers, and the al-Muqaddem family in the north, the rise to power of Eddé reflected the expanding French influence in the Levant during the first decades of the twentieth century. Born in the Maronite stronghold of Jubayl to a dragoman father employed in the French consulate of Damascus, he went on to study law at the French Jesuit founded Université du Saint Josèphe before marrying into one of the most prominent Maronite families of Beirut.[538] Considered the favorite politician of Maronite Patriarch Elias Huwayik, he became France's man in Lebanon from as early as 1922.[539] This particular Maronite community was instrumental in orchestrating politics during the mandate and filled the ranks of the 1926 constitutional drafting committee. The most prominent member of the drafting committee was the banker Michel Chiha, who worked beside commissioner Petro Trad, Shibl Dammas and Umar Da'uq.[540] As a result of their involvement, the office of the president was usually reserved for a Christian, typically a Maronite. Still, Paris faced unexpected circumstances that challenged the status quo emanating from Tripoli. When one of the city's most respected residents, delegate in the house of assembly Shaykh Muhmammad al-Jisr opted to contest for the presidency during the 1932 legislative elections, the high commission confronted the very real possibility that the sweeping powers that it had earmarked for its man in Lebanon could be possessed by someone not beholden to the Quai

[537] Baaklini, 1976, 68.
[538] Traboulsi, 2007, 93.
[539] Traboulsi, 2007, 93. Jubayl is also transliterated as Jubeil.
[540] Traboulsi, 2007, 89.

d'Orsay.[541] In response to this threat, Ponsot, as indicated in the last chapter, chose to suspend the constitution.[542]

A Martial Spirit

Ponsot's resort to martial law highlighted the informal goals of the high commission. Namely, the high commission sought to use the formal institutions of the mandate to transform power relations in the colonies into a system of centralized hierarchy similar to military control. Not only did martial law endure during the first eight years of French rule between 1918 and 1926, Paris would revert to this tactic during times of unrest, as was the case twice in the 1930s between 1932-1937 and 1939-1943 during WWII. While the interwar years are generally thought of as a peaceful time conjuring images of Bohemian nightlife in Berlin, the colonies suffered from a series of armed conflicts during this time, from the twilight of the ravages of WWI, to the Druze Revolt of 1925-1927, the Great Arab revolt in Palestine in 1936 and the Iraqi uprising of 1941, all of which involved combatants from Syria and Lebanon. This propensity for conflict underpinned the high commission's use of force, as was the case when de Martel ordered a strict surveillance on Tripoli following the events of the 1936 riots chronicled in chapter two.

Such martial objectives are made plain in a 1939 report, *"Rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban*" by M. Paul Gassouin.[543] While his exact role within the high commission is unclear, the details of this report indicate that Gassouin spent twenty years of service in the Levant from the days of Colonel de Piépape in 1919, and the candor of this letter suggest that he not only came from the same conservative military background as

[541] A leading notable in Tripoli, Shaykh Muhammad al-Jisr had been close to General Gouraud and his successor as high commissioner, General Maxime Weygand, while serving in the assembly that eventually became the House of Delegates following the 1926 constitution. He was even presented with the Legion d'Honneur in 1921. See Saliba. 2016 and Atiyah, 1973 for a detailed review of the 1932 crisis.
[542] Ziada, Nicola, *Syria and Lebanon*, Beirut: Libraire du Liban, 1968, 62.
[543] C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin

de Piépape, Gouraud and du Paty de Clam, but served in a high position within the Political Bureau of the High Commission, a post senior to the administrative counselor but junior to the high commissioner and deputy high commissioner. Whatever the case, it is clear that Gassouin was a seasoned political insider within the mandate regime by the time that he authored this report and the dossier cited in chapter one, "*Notes sur la reforme éventuelle de la constitution du Liban et sur les principes de collaboration Franco-Libanais après la mise en vigueur du traité."*[544] In documenting the political landscape in Lebanon, the Gassouin report discloses the system of thought that underpinned mandate rule, and more ominously, foreshadows the informal developments that would develop in the next decade.

First, in his report, Gassouin champions the martial spirit that animated the early years of French rule in the Levant after WWI. "The first high commissioners, Gouraud, Weygand, Sarrail," he asserts, "limited the damages by allocating to Lebanon a suitable economic administration and maintaining a strict control through the interference of its [French] advisors. Therefore, a martial spirit (*l'esprit militaire*) reigned with its probity, rigidity and common sense, qualities of which we were most in need."[545] In other words, the upper echelons sought to rule the inhabitants of the Levant as if they were the infantry corps of an army. Following the imagery of Gassouin, the high commissioners comported themselves as generals and used the French advisors as a junior officer corps to oversee the politicians within the government. It comes as little surprise then, that many of the high commissioners were, in fact, generals. Moreover, some of the French advisors like du Paty de Clam and Commandant Zinovy Pechkoff, described later in this chapter, served as actual junior officers in the French military prior to working in the Levant in the 1920s. Moreover,

[544] C463 HCF Note sur la reforme eventuelle de la constitution du Liban et sur les principes de collaboration Franco-Libanais après la mise en vigueur du traite by M. Gassouin
[545] C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban by M. Gassouin, 1.

this military spirit was made evident during the period of martial law imposed between 1918 to 1926, 1932 to 1937, and 1939 to 1943.

However, this underlying military spirit of the mandate, Gassouin rues, changed with the appointment of de Jouvenel. Among the handful of documents reviewed in this study to critically assess the shortcomings of French policy, the Gassouin report decries what the author describes as "the dogmas and *mystiques* of internal French politics."[546] By this he refers to the ideological views that animated the establishment of the 1926 constitution. Or in his words, "this regime and this constitution were imposed on the country by M. de Jouvenel and M. Souchier in order to appease the Socialists of France."[547] In this sense, this radical faction represented by de Jouvenel and the coalition government that appointed him contravened the conservative, military logic that had previously underpinned mandate rule. In effect, the reforms of de Jouvenel established an untenable dichotomy. In ways that will be seen later, because the constitutional regime facilitated informal politics within the country, the civilian rule of the parliament contravened the military logic that once ruled. In practice, these duel systems of thought eroded French influence. Or, in the poignant words of Gassouin, "they [the people of Lebanon] know perfectly well from the experiences of these past few years that the parliament cannot reform itself, and that when the people rise up they are met with French bayonets that appear to bring oppression into anarchy rather than order into liberty."[548] With a nod to events in Tripoli and Akkar as well as in south Lebanon, the dichotomy of mingled oppression and anarchy highlights the ways in which mandate policy throughout the 1930s and 1940s was born of contradictory rationales that failed to coalesce in practice.[549]

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[546] *op. cit.*, 1.
[547] *op. cit.*, 4.
[548] *op. cit.*, 4.
[549] In the vein of this contradiction, Gassouin goes on to write that, "this little country, lacking the capability of defending its borders or even of guaranteeing order within them, a country without any international

The contradictions at the heart of mandate rule also affected the metropole. As Martin Thomas writes with respect to Paris' policy in mandate Syria, "the essential dichotomy of mandate governance lay between a theoretical long-term commitment to cultivate indigenous government and a short-term recourse to authoritarian, quasi-colonial expedients."[550] For instance, the type of contradictions that Thomas mentions is evidenced in the reaction of the legislature to the 1936 Franco-Lebanese treaty negotiated between de Martel and Eddé. In the case of the ratification of the treaty, adherents to the same underlying martial spirit described by Gassouin trumped the faction agitating for civilian rule. With military interests in mind, the French national assembly refused to ratify the Franco-Syrian and Franco-Lebanese treaties.[551] Instrumental in this decision was the war council within the cabinet, among whom served General Maxime Weygand, the former high commissioner of Lebanon whose harsh policies contributed to the 1925 Druze revolt against the mandate.[552] In their outlook, the war council followed long-standing military considerations in viewing the eastern Mediterranean as a potential base for allied forces against a potential war with Germany and Italy.[553] In addition, the war council had hoped that the Levant could open a new front in a war in the Balkans and assist Britain in defending the Suez Canal in case of war.[554] Such contingency plans informed French foreign policy. It was with the purpose of maintaining the Levant under French control that the war council ceded the state of Alexandretta to Turkey on the

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responsibility, was saddled with a republican regime, a constitution grotesque for its size and with an executive responsible to a parliament elected by universal suffrage!...The Lebanese people remained at times flabbergasted, unable to believe that this Courteline comedy could last. Then they reasoned and said to themselves, what does it matter so long as France and its control is always there! So it must be, so it will be" (*op. cit.*, 1).

[550] Thomas, Martin. "French Intelligence-Gathering in the Syrian Mandate, 1920-40," Middle Eastern Studies, 38:1 (2002), 1-2. He would describe the predicament of the high commission with, "high commission staff were consistently forced to re-evaluate the difficult political choices before them. The rule of law was fragile, military manpower in short supply and French prerogative only fitfully acknowledged by tribal *shaykhs* in the Syrian interior." (Thomas, 20002, 2)

[551] Zamir, 2015, 59; Saliba 2016, 164; Thomas, Martin, *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914*, Berkeley: U California P, 2008, 278.

[552] Zamir, 2015, 59. Zamir tells us that Weygand was one of three generals within the war council who had served in the Levant.

[553] Zamir, 2015, 59.

[554] Zamir, 2015, 59.

premise that Ankara would join the allies in a war against Germany.[555] As a result of France's wartime calculations and fears, the scenario took place whereby the country failed to ratify the treaty that its own representatives had negotiated. Such discord not only reflected the competing forces within the metropole, but the conflicts and crises to come in the colonies.

Effects of the Constitutional Regime

Already, the effects of the constitutional regime have been mentioned in earlier chapters in relation to the actions and indiscretions of the politicians who came to power following the 1926 and 1937 elections such as Abboud Bey and his son Muhammad, Rached al-Muqaddem, Youssef Stephan, and President Emile Eddé, all of whom were said to have links to criminal enterprise and activities. Without recapitulating the turmoil described in previous chapters, it is worth focusing on a few diplomatic cables sent by high commission officials like the Gassouin report. More than other documents cited so far, this handful of reports written in the aftermath of the 1937 elections provide a critical perspective on the contradictions of French policy, especially the ways in which the underlying military logic of the conservative faction within the Quai d'Orsay and French military contravened the overtures to civilian autonomy and indirect rule within the colonies. Far from resolving the strife that had precipitated the drafting of the constitution, this contradiction constrained the high commission from effectively addressing the spread of informal politics in the legislature. First, the constitutional regime generated patrimonialism within the parliament, what Gassouin referred to as the era of politics and the golden age of demagogues.[556] Second, the regime contributed to the administrative malfeasance within the civil service. Third, it led to the marginalization of the poor to the profit of a select few. In these ways, despite the goal of enforcing a military spirit among the inhabitants, the high commission facilitated the rise

[555] Zamir, 2015, 59.
[556] C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin, 1.

of informal politics, bringing what Gassouin described as oppression into an atmosphere of anarchy rather than order into liberty.

1. Pitfall of Elections

More than a blueprint of the underlying logic of mandate rule, the Gassouin text provides a cumulative and critical analysis of the effects of mandate rule during the two decades of the French presence in the Levant. The tone that opens the text sets the stage for the sobering admissions that follow in much the same way that du Paty de Clam confesses his repeated inabilities to convince President Eddé to address the crises in the north. "I confess M. L'ambassadeur," it opens, "that I sent your predecessors notes and studies that were unfortunately perfectly useless because my efforts were always undermined by two terrible setbacks: interior French politics and the absence of a sincere organ to express public opinion in Lebanon."[557] While the first setback mentioned by Gassouin concerns the rival conservative and liberal factions within the French legislature, the second pitfalls takes into consideration the breakdown in the chain of command between the delegates of Paris and the inhabitants of the country.

Among the chief causes for this breakdown was the rampant malfeasance within the parliament and executive branches. On this subject, Gassouin declares that these institutions developed too quickly in sharp contrast to their more organic growth in the republic. In this manner he writes that,

> In less than ten years, all of the institutions that took more than fifty years to develop in France have deepened the clashes here and are almost equal to the rank of public institutions. There is nothing surprising about this since, from the beginning, the corruption that took place at the roots of the tree spread to every branch.[558]

By offering parliamentarians and ministers lucrative salaries, the high commission helped to bankroll abuse of power. In this context, elections did not signify one-man one-vote as much

[557] *ibid.*
[558] *op. cit.*, 2.

as it inaugurated vote buying. Or, per the report, "the legislative elections that were at the root of the government, were in this country a public marketplace from the very first day in which illiterate and unconcerned voters sold themselves to the highest bidders."[559] That is, in relatively poor regions suffering from large degrees of illiteracy and further hampered by French economic and land tenure policies, elections were seen to have degenerated into a racket. It was in such circumstances that a reputed loan shark like Abboud Bey could thrive in office to the point that he could bequeath his seat in the assembly to his son.

Despite the administrative reforms adopted by successive high commissioners, the fraudulent atmosphere of elections only worsened. Or, in the words of Gassouin, "this cynicism and degradation has increased with each new election and are so well entrenched in the government's mores that the election of the current parliament gives rise to official scandals present in everyone's memories that are sufficient to indict the entire regime."[560] Whatever the crimes that Gassouin had in mind, among the claims reviewed in earlier chapters of crimes and scandals reportedly committed by legislators who came to office following the 1937 elections included usury, obstruction of justice, fraud, embezzlement, weapons smuggling, drug cultivation and trafficking, rape and murder. In this sense, then, the Gassouin report corroborates the unreported claims of widespread criminality made by Mme. Lattouf, du Paty de Clam, Dr. Boulos and others. On the other hand, it indicates that not only was such abuse rampant in the north, but prevalent throughout the whole country.[561] This

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[559] *op. cit.*, 2.
[560] *op. cit.*, 2.
[561] On the culture of embezzlement and corruption within the new parliament, another author asserts that it prohibited France from granting independence to Lebanon in C462 notes sur les election legislature au liban 24 October 1937,4 . The author writes that, "We have the right to ask ourselves, in the presence of a government capable of all these turpitudes, of self-serving representatives of the people who carry themselves as thieves at the fair, who rob from the taxpayers and from people who are not duped but dare not to react against them, we wonder and repeat what I have already said in my notes of September 1937: if Lebanon has really reached a political maturity sufficient to enjoy its independence?" Implicit within this assertion is the perspective that Paris was the only force capable of curbing this rampant graft. There is not the self-reflection of the Gassouin article in that there is no mentioning of the fact that this political apparatus emerged from French designs and continued to receive the financial, political and military backing of the Quai d'Orsay.

damning indictment of the whole government represented the pitfalls of the constitutional regime. Amid the systematic criminal behavior, it is plausible that the official scandals still present in everyone's mind referred to the embezzlement of resources within the Société d'Electricité, through which lamps were installed at the homes of leading notables at the expense of the public.[562]

From a different perspective, however, the graft among the legislature was a function of the high commission's amendments to the original 1926 constitution. Since the Quai d'Orsay strengthened the executive office at the expense of the legislature, delegates sought to expand their weakened remit through patron client relations. Following Gassouin, "the majority of deputies, for their part, whether they belong to the opposition or not, do not concern themselves with their portfolios or salaries, but allocate government posts to their clients and protégés."[563] Similar to the al-Karami family, then, those who joined the ranks of the government sabotaged their positions by using them for personal interests, often at the expense of the treasury. Moreover, their brief terms of office seemed to have encouraged legislators to privilege short-term personal interests for fear that they would lose their prominent positions in the next elections. In this vein, the report goes on to lament that,

> It is natural that the majority of candidates who conduct such a market consider their office as merely a fund to exploit and shamelessly profit from it by any means at their disposal. It is natural, then, that in this case the president of the republic, in order to assure re-election, ceases from being an independent arbiter of parties when he confides power in his own group, places his friends in all of the government posts and never hesitates to create for them new and useless expenses that are onerous for the budget. It is also natural in this case that the ministers are anxious to withdraw from their portfolios the maximum benefit because they know that knew that their power is of a short duration.[564]

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[562] C463 DHCF No. 2651D Beyrouth 8 August 1939 Cabinet Politique, Experience d'emancipation.
[563] C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin, 2.
[564] *ibid*.

As criminal and corrupt as legislative affairs were during the 1920s and 1930s, later events will show that the practices inaugurated during this time set the stage for an even larger controversies during the constitutional crisis.

2. The Army of Bureaucrats

At the same time, the patron-client relations that legislators cultivated also implicated the civil service. Already the effects of the constitutional regime have been depicted in relation to the northern municipalities in Akkar and Tripoli. Yet, as Gassouin writes, "the Lebanese have always suffered from the plague of bureaucracy and this is natural within a poor country with a very dense population where the civil servant assumes power without great responsibility and tirelessly ensures his own lifestyle."[565] This lifestyle often came at the expense of the taxpayer. As another author writes of "the pathological government (*gouvernement maladif)* of title and vanity" that absorbs the majority of the national coffers to the point that 80% of the national budget was reserved for personnel salaries of civil servants.[566] This level of spending occurred as delegates used their office to secure jobs within the government for their clientele in order to expand the prestige and power that French constitutional amendments had curbed. Excess spending festered to the point that around the 1937 legislative elections, one official complained that "a veritable regime of terror [reigned], served by the army of bureaucrats: those suspected of sympathy or even

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[565] *op. cit.*, 1. In a similar vein, Mufarrij would write in his AUB master's thesis that, "the history of the Lebanese government since 1926 until the present day has been the history of a series of government abbreviations aiming at narrowing the wide government garment which the French had endowed the Lebanon so as to fit its small body." Mufarrij, 1935, 345-6.

[566] C462 Notes sur les élections législatives au Liban 24 October 1937,1, 3. In a similar vein, Gassouin would write that, "the number of civil servant does not cease to increase with every new judiciary and at each change of ministry so that it has become impossible to establish a sincere budget without creating new taxes. However, the Lebanese—already impoverished by the crisis of sericulture, the fall of the franc and the arbitrary laws that restricted access to credit—refuse to support harmful and unnecessary budget provisions, which already absorb more than 80% of the budget and which nobody dares touch." C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin, Page 3. The pattern that Gassouin described seemed to have continued after the mandate. As Iskander Bashir writes in 1966, "It is a fact that about 85% of the public expenditures are designated annually for personnel salaries and allowances and 15% for developmental projects." (Bashir, 1966, 110.) With such lucrative sums at stake, the civil service was known for its culture of corruption, kickbacks and bribes. (Bashir, 1966, 119.)

half-hearted support for the opposition were replaced by the electoral agents of the government, who went on to possess an even more pompous distribution of resources."[567] This expanding cycle of profligate spending occurred at a time when the majority of residents grew further impoverished due to the fall of agriculture and the Great Depression.

"What do the majority of Lebanese think about this situation," Gassouin poses to High Commissioner Puaux.[568] In answering this question, he discloses the degree to which the population became divided between those with access to the formal structures of governance and the majority without it. On the one hand, Gassouin affirms, "if you were to interrogate the profiteers of this current regime, from the first to the last echelon and all those who have the ambition to become one along with their parents and protégés, they would tell you that everything is fine in Lebanon and that it [this situation] is the talk of ambitious rivals or of the disaffected enemies of France and Lebanon."[569] In this sense, the constitutional regime cultivated several networks of patronage that profited a minority of individuals content with the status quo. It was this class of profiteers and would-be profiteers who dominated the media with their petty politics, as discussed previously, to the extent that the

[567] C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin, 3. In a similar tone to that of Gassouin, High Commissioner Puaux cites the burgeoning informal politics generated from within the assembly and civil service as a rationale for imposing martial law in C463 Declaration radiofiffuse du haut commissaire 21 sept 1939. Direction de Surete Generale. In the speech, he says "the consequences of war are onerous, especially in a country that finds itself, like Lebanon, almost entirely devoid of military force (*poids des charges militaires*). A reduction of public spending should be realized without delay. The current government system is too heavy for a state of 854,727 inhabitants. A parliament of sixty members costs 105,843-livres. A cabinet of 7 members represents a budget of 32,785-livres. The development of the culture of bureaucracy (*fonctionairisme*) constantly threatens a balanced budget, and can only be stopped by a regime that does not limit its initiative to wasting money… For all of these reasons, following the proposition of the high commissioner, the government of France, in accordance with General Weygand, has decided to modify, for the duration of hostilities, the political system currently in place. C463 Declaration radiofiffuse du haut commissaire 21 sept 1939. Direction de Surete Generale, 2. While it is unclear whether Puaux was referring to French francs or Syrian-Lebanese pounds when he mentions livres, it is safe to say that government spending had grown unbearable for Paris. Certainly other factors played a role in shaping French foreign policy, namely the martial spirit that animated the conservative faction in France.

[568] C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin, 3.

[569] C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin, 3.

agents of Paris were unable to discern public opinion.[570] Beneath this brouhaha, however, another reality appeared before the mandate. "If, on the contrary, you were to listen to the working people or to certain classes, professionals or communities," Gassouin informs the high commissioner, "then you would hear with the force of their despair that administrative anarchy and corruption have reached an unbearable and unprecedented level in this country today and, that before the indifference of France, one does not know from which side salvation will come."[571] This force of despair resembles the desperate complaints of municipal administration in the north. The plague of bureaucracy festered through the contradiction of mandate policies at a time when residents suffered from the prevalence of water-borne diseases in the country.

3. Marginalization of the Poor

The force of despair mentioned in the Gassouin report reflects the ways in which the colonial regime marginalized the majority of residents. Rather than assimilate the population into a uniform martial spirit, the mandate helped to divide the inhabitants of the country between, in the words of Gassouin, "on one side, a minority of profiteers and, on the other, the majority of Lebanese people."[572] The stalemate that emerged from the administration worsened through the petty politics, patron client relations, and racketeering that Paris bankrolled. In this manner, Gassouin goes on to add that,

> One the one hand, a scheming minority that is actively organized with its newspapers and men for the struggle to have all of the top government posts, which would make the exploitation of the country its very own affair; and, on the other, the great majority, absorbed with their everyday affairs, without a connection, without an organ of expression and discouraged by the apparent or tacit support that France gives to their exploiters.[573]

[570] *op. cit.*, 1.
[571] *op. cit.*, 3.
[572] *op. cit.*, 3.
[573] *op. cit.*, 3.

His account corroborates the description of petty politics discussed in the last chapter and their negative effects for the disenfranchised. Such perspectives disclosed the economic, political, social and cultural divides that emerged from French policy. The apparent and tacit support mentioned by the author represented the contradictions of mandate rule that contributed to such unrest.

The Indifference of France

Not only was this stalemate detrimental to the beleaguered residents, there also existed an appreciation that the political situation described by Gassouin threatened the mandate. In this manner, the report warns that, "the truth is that a parliamentary regime is necessary but the current system and constitution cannot be maintained for long without generating the most serious political and economic disruptions in the life of Lebanon."[574] In this sense, the Gassouin report offers an indictment of the entire political infrastructure in Lebanon as well as the conflicted French policy that underpinned it. More so than other reports, the Gassouin piece offers the impression that the political infrastructure that France decreed to Lebanon was doomed to failure. "To ratify the Franco-Syrian treaty without changes," Gassouin admonishes, "would be a crime against the peaceful and loyal friend of France who has not done anything to deserve it."[575]

Ultimately, the eventual reform that Gassouin called for to prevent the serious political and economic disruptions in Lebanon never materialized. Instead, the precarious position of Paris worsened amid the surrender of the republic, the rise and fall of the Vichy government in the Levant, the emergence of the Spears mission and British influence, and, last but not least, the 1943 constitutional crisis. Mere weeks following the time stamp of the Gassouin report, Hitler marched troops into Poland and Europe was at war. In the next two

[574] *op. cit.*, 7.
[575] *op. cit.*, 7.

years, the Levant fell under the control of the Vichy-led government linked to Nazi Germany, the nominal authority of the Free French forces under General Charles de Gaulle and his representative in the Levant Georges Catroux as well as the influence of the British diplomatic mission.[576]

The Lead Up to 1943 Elections

As seen from the vantage of events in the south, the warning issued by Gassouin proved correct. The informal arrangements empowered by the electoral process developed to the point that a host of actors could employ them to oust France from the Levant amid the turmoil of World War II. Following the ouster of the Vichy forces in July 1941, the high commission would share and, ultimately, lose its prominent position in Lebanon and Syria to the diplomatic mission set up by the British under the command of Major General Sir Edward Louis Spears. A businessman, army officer, intelligence agent, peer, veteran of WWI and personal friend of Winston Churchill, General Spears would play a similarly multi-faceted role in the Levant.[577] As Israeli historian of the French mandate Meir Zamir describes it,

> The Spears mission, which competed with the French high commission, comprised by 1944 more than a hundred political and intelligence officers stationed throughout Syria and Lebanon. The mission dealt with civilian, economic and political issues, becoming an effective tool for Spears to undermine France's position and mobilize Lebanon and Syrian nationalists against it. It had a large budget, used partly for subversion and propaganda warfare, and many of its political officers were in fact intelligence agents.[578]

In this sense, the Spears mission represented the covert empire that had spanned across the Arab world. Between 1941 and 1945, the Spears mission would seek to expand Whitehall's influence at the expense of the Free French. The overall tone of Spear's intentions remains debatable. For Zamir, this strategy was part of the centuries old imperial logic. In his words,

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[576] For a review of WWII in the Levant, see, Ziada, 1968, Zamir, 2015, Seale, 2010, Pearse, 1949.
[577] Zamir, 2015, 30-31.
[578] Zamir, 2015, 31.

"although he [Spears] presented himself as a champion of Syrian and Lebanese independence, he was, like many other British officials in the region, an imperialist who saw France's defeat as an opportunity for Britain to take over in the Levant."[579] Whatever the case, the Spears mission proved essential in funding informal politics during the 1943 election.

The recent scholarship of Zamir, collected at the same French diplomatic archives where this study was partly researched, discloses the covert workings and goals of the Spears mission.[580] From this new perspective, then, Spears, himself, was not a rogue agent acting in contravention of Whitehall and his long-standing friend and ally, Winston Churchill, but an operative in a clandestine political network designed to ensure and enhance Britain's prominent position within the Middle East from the Persian Gulf to North Africa. For the Spears mission, the key to expanding London's position was to co-opt the leading figures in Syria and Lebanon, especially those who had been marginalized by France's support for the Maronite community headed by Eddé. That is, the mission sought to tap into the rampant informal politics within the country so as to transform the formal institutions of governance. Notable within this network of asset conversion was Colonel Stephen Longrigg, the political officer stationed at the Baghdad office of the Iraqi Petroleum Company, who used the pretext of negotiating the construction of a pipeline terminal in Tripoli as a cover for his role in sounding out potential allies of London.[581] Later, Longrigg would use his association with mandate officials and Lebanese politicians to compose one of the earliest English language

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[579] Zamir, 2015, 31. In contrast to Zamir, Patrick Seale would insist in his study that Spears would turn around to champion the cause of independence. Still, the debate over the intentions of Spears exalts imperial rivalries over the social and economic conditions that took place in the region. Rather than privilege this officer club, I would like to emphasize the effects that these years of upheaval had on the population.

[580] At the heart of Zamir's scholarship is a series of British inteliigence cables that the French managed to intercept and stored at the Nantes Diplomatic Archives. These works by Zamir include: "The Missing Dimension: Britain's Secret War Against the French in Syria and Lebanon, 1942-1945, Part II," Middle Eastern Studies, 46:6 (November 2010) 791-899 and *The Secret Anglo French War in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 2015.

[581] Zamir, 2015, 59.

histories of the mandate, *Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate*.[582] Slightly less prominent but no less prolific with his memoirs was Sergeant Richard Pearse, whose run-ins with the petty politics of North Lebanon were examined in the previous chapter.[583]

Among the local allies of the Spears mission, the most important figure was Riad el-Solh.[584] The maneuverings of el-Solh are documented in the last work of the late British journalist Patrick Seale, based on his special access to the family's private papers and additional research of the British diplomatic cables in London.[585] Like al-Karami, el-Solh was the son of an Ottoman administrator and was groomed from his childhood for a career in public service. His father Rida served for 28 years as an Ottoman official and eventually reached the rank of Mutessarif of the Sanjak of Preveza in Albania.[586] As his father approached retirement, the younger el-Solh went to govern the family's ancestral hometown of Sidon when he was a mere 24 years old; but the upheavals of war cut short his ambitions, prompting his resignation in 1919.[587] Eventually, while his father retired to the family's home in Beirut, the young statesman spent the mandate years in Syria and Europe as a founding member and negotiator for the pan-Arab Syrian Nationalist Bloc. Following historian of the National Bloc Keith David Watenpaugh, its members included the old social classes and prominent families of Aleppo and Damascus who sought to regain some of the social, political and economic status that they had lost upon the dissolution of the Ottoman

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[582] Longrigg, Stephen Hemsley. *Syria and Lebanon Under the French Mandate*. Beirut: Libraire du Liban. 1968. The first edition was printed in 1958.
[583] Pearse, Richard, *Three Years in the Levant*, London, Macmillan and Company, 1949.
[584] The name Riad el-Solh is also transliterated as Riad al-Solh and Riyad al-Sulh.
[585] Seale, Patrick. The Struggle for Arab Independence: Riad el-Solh and the Makers of the Modern Middle East. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. Born in Belfast, Seale spent the first fifteen years of his life in Syria with his missionary father, only to return to Britain and study with the youngest daughter of Riad el-Solh at Oxford in the 1950s. Llewellyn, Tim, "Patrick Seale, Syria Specialist and Former Observer Correspondent, Dies Aged 83," The Observer, 12 April 2014, 9 June 2017, theguardian.com
[586] Seale, 2010, 742.
[587] Seale, 2010, 742. His father Rida was arrested and tried by the feared military commander Jamal Pasha over allegations of undermining the Ottoman state in 1915. Under pressure, father and son were exiled from their homeland. Chalabi, 2006, 46.

Empire.[588] Joining the young el-Solh in the National Bloc were his father-in-law Saad Allah al-Jabiri of Aleppo and Jamil Mardam Bey of Damascus. Long viewed as an adversary of Paris, el-Solh used his contacts in the Levant to help organize the Conference of the Coasts in 1936 in which delegations from different areas within the annexed territories pledged to unify their constituencies with Syria.[589] In addition, el-Solh was one of the negotiators of the Franco-Syrian treaty, which helped to foment the 1936 series of uprisings in Tripoli. In effect, the failure of the French legislature to ratify the treaty and the bloodshed that it generated in the colony tarnished his personal reputation. Upon the commencement of hostilities in Europe, he returned to Beirut and became both observer and participant in the shifting fortunes of the Levant. As a result of these political shifts, el-Solh made inroads with the British by March 1941, months before the Syrian-Lebanese campaign began. Through Spears' assistant, Sir Geoffrey Furlonge, he helped the British intelligence office to secretly communicate with other Syrian nationalists.[590]

The Secret Alliance

The intrigues of the Spears mission proved well-founded Gassouin's fear that the republican infrastructure in Lebanon invited the enemies of France to broker foreign influence and informal arrangements.[591] With these backdoor channels in place, el-Solh was the point man in Lebanon to facilitate the covert plan brokered by British intelligence officials and assets to unify Syria, Lebanon, mandate Palestine and Iraq into an Iraqi-led Hashemite federation under the aegis of Whitehall.[592] For London, the revival of the old Ottoman province of Greater Syria would resolve the questions over Palestine and Iraq in

[588] Watenpagh, 2006, 213.
[589] C459 DSG Information No. 552/s 2 October 1936
[590] Zamir, 2015,83.
[591] C463 HCF Secrétaire générale No. 1536 13 July 1939, rapport sur la situation politique et administrative au Liban par M. Gassouin, 4. There he writes that "If we continue to make it understood that the Lebanese people are free to reform their regime, then WE WOULD FACILITATE THE GAME OF THE ENNEMIES OF FRANCE, WHICH WOULD LEND THEM THE MOST MACHIAVELLIAN INTENTIONS AND LEAVE THE MOST DESPERATE LEBANESE OPEN TO FOREIGN INFLUENCE." Emphasis in the original.
[592] Zamir, 2010, 790.

addition to regulate its control of oil and the Suez Canal.[593] The memos of understanding fastidiously documented, translated and analyzed by Zamir reveal that the Spears mission sought to leverage its influence to elect these nationalist leaders in Lebanon and Syria; and in exchange, they would use their executive power to oust the French from the Levant and move their countries closer to London.[594] Negotiated by Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Said, the plan called for Britain to secretly fund (or as some might argue bribe) the campaigns of these nationalist figures like el-Solh, his father-in-law al-Jabiri, in addition to his colleagues in the National Bloc Shukri al-Quwatli and Jamil Mardam Bey.[595] In effect, the plan of the secret alliance attempted to transform the executive and legislative infrastructure to no longer exalt French influence, but to weaken the Free French. First, when acting high commissioner and representative of the Free French General Georges Catroux stalled on his initial calls for general elections in Syria and Lebanon, these seasoned activists seized on the opportunity to pressure the high commission. In their aid, Spears convinced Catroux to hold elections in order to uphold his earlier promises of granting a fig leaf of independence to Syria and Lebanon.[596] Ultimately, Catroux announced elections for August 1943 in Syria and September 1943 in Lebanon. Whatever the intentions of Catroux, the elections gestured a move toward independence and prompted a number of longtime adversaries of the mandate to contest for office, including Riad el-Solh. Although he resided in Beirut, had been schooled in Istanbul and later Paris, and married into a prominent family from Aleppo, el-

[593] Zamir, 2010, 796.
[594] Zamir, 2015, 95;
[595] Nuri al-Said was actively involved in persuading these long-time adversaries of France to cooperate with the regime, including el-Solh, Quwatli and Mardem Bey. Zamir, 2015, 80-81. While Quwatli initially signed on to this plan, quite literally as documents reveal, in April 1942, with al-Said's to bring Syria into an Arab federal union headed by the Hashemite monarchy, he later had misgivings once Whitehall facilitated his election in 1943. Although Quwatli loathed the Hashemites, he later reasoned that their cooperation with the British could help to oust France from the Levant. Zamir, 2015, 200-203.
[596] Zamir, 2015, 86.

Solh sought a seat in the town of Sidon, the administrative center of the *muhafaza* of South Lebanon, a region known among locals as the Jabal Amil.[597]

History of the Jabal Amil

Historically, the villages that constituted the Jabal Amil dwelled within the mountains, hills and valleys interior of the Mediterranean. Upon Gouraud's 1920 decree, this area was split between the *muhafazat* of Mt. Lebanon and Southern Lebanon. [598] The administrative center of the south was Sidon, a coastal town along the Mediterranean inhabited since the Phoenicians, which had functioned as a dependency of Acre during the Ottoman Empire.[599] A predominately agricultural area, the south served as tobacco country and had a long history of supplying its produce to Egypt.[600] In this sense, the south possessed traits similar to Akkar in that it had a landless majority of cultivators, a small minority of landowners, and an economy—to borrow the words of Weulersse—that was nourished by debt. Economically, the area depended on trade with nearby territories within the Ottoman Empire, especially Mt. Lebanon and the Syrian interior.[601] Witness and participant in the upheavals of the time, the south brooked the ravages of famine, WWI, the impoverishment of the Great Depression as well as the Druze revolt against Paris and subsequent protests against the mandate. Its fortunes remained bleak during the mandate and became like other areas of the annexed territories, an economic, social and political backwater. At the same time, due to

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[597] The Jabal Amil goes by many names including Djabal Amil, Djabal Amal, Djabal Amel, Jabal Amel and Jabal Amel.

[598] C1533 30 June 1920 HCF Projet d'organisation du Jabal Amel: Manouevres politique a entreprendre pour obtenir un derivatif a la situation actuelle; Chalabi, Tamara, *The Shi'is of Jabal Amil and the New Lebanon: Community and Nation State*, 2006, New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 12.

[599] Reilly, 2016, 52. Historically, Sidon was a key commercial center connecting trade between Europe and the Syrian and Palestinian hinterlands. Despite this history, Sidon was generally ignored by the Ottomans and overlooked in favor of other coastal cities like Beirut and Haifa, which expanded from small towns during the nineteenth centuries into proper cities.

[600] Chalabi, 2006, 18.

[601] Chalabi, 2006, 26. Under the Ottomans, the economy declined following a series of economic concessions that the Sublime Porte granted to its European creditors during the period of Tanzimat reforms mentioned in chapter two. To service its debts, the Porte gave a tobacco concession to French companies known as the Tobacco Regie. Chalabi, 2006, 18.

its location at the crossroads of Lebanon, Syria and British mandate Palestine, the south became the center of smuggling networks that transported weapons, narcotics and people.[602] Despite the economic pressures in the region and its history of popular resistance against the mandate, many of the leading notable landlords in the area were on friendly terms with the high commission. By the earlier 1940s, South Lebanon had an estimated population of 198,000.[603]

Colonial Designs of the Jabal Amil

The delegates of Paris considered the south as the home of Shi'a Muslim population, individuals regularly described in French reports in the basest terms for their "well-known feeble degree of evolution" and "docility."[604] Whatever the biases and aspersions of the French, the south suffered from the same chronic neglect and marginalization as areas of the annexed territories. French officials depicted the landscape using the same stock characters that colored accounts of land tenure in Alawite country. As one 1920 report claims,

> In the Jabal Amil, the principal Shiite center in Syria, three elements completely different and born of diametrically opposed sentiments are stitched together without entirely clashing against one another; because the notable that constitutes the first of these elements exercises in the region where he possesses his goods a veritable suzerain in which the peasant, the second element, is a serf and the clergy, the third element, is the devote servant.[605]

Whatever its veracity, the representation of the timeless feudal relations of power between the notables, serfs and clergy discloses the systems of thought prevalent among mandate officials. With this worldview in mind, the Quai d'Orsay sought to make inroads among the

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[602] See Pearse, 1947. Also See C 2423, which contains a hefty file of the Dendache family, one of the principal smugglers in the areas between the south, the Bekaa and Mt. Lebanon. C2423 DHCF Services Spécieux Poste de la Bekaa No 527 SSB 30 September 1932. Notes sur les Dendaches.

[603] MAE Rapport a la Societe des Nations sur la Situation de la Syrie et du Liban, 1942 as mentioned in Hourani, Albert, Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1946, 85. As stated elsewhere, population statistics in Lebanon are extremely unreliable Nonetheless, I have included them to give the reader a sketch of the region.

[604] The quotes come from C459 DHCF No. 3619, 4 October 1940, au sujet du Caimacam du Chouf, 2 and C1533 30 June 1920 HCF Projet d'organisation du Jabal Amel: Manœuvres politique a entreprendre pour obtenir un dérivatif a la situation actuelle, 2 respectively.

[605] C1533 30 June 1920 HCF Projet d'organisation du Jabal Amel: Manœuvres politique à entreprendre pour obtenir un dérivatif a la situation actuelle, 2 respectively.

population by affording the clergy limited autonomy and inviting the powerful landlords into the parliament.[606]

Thus, distinguishing the south from other areas in the country was the unique composition of its notables. "In the Orient more so than in the West," one official explains, "there exists two types of nobility: one of money and one of birth. In its feudality of the Jabal Amil, the two types form but one in that we have seen that the notables are at the same time the most important landlords."[607] Whereas mandate officials complained that they could not attract support from notables in the north who possessed social capital and political prominence, they could rely upon individuals of social and political pull in the south. Ultimately, the results of this strategy resemble the atmosphere of latent hostility seen in Tripoli. Around the same time as the protests in Tripoli, residents of the south demonstrated against the unequal development policies of the government that had generated poverty and in response, these protests precipitated violent and fatal clashes between protestors and French forces throughout 1936.[608] In this sense, the political chasm between the elites and the majority that opened in the north following the defection of al-Karami and Dr. Bissar into the ranks of the Lebanese government had already existed in the Jabal Amil.[609]

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[606] The 1920 report "Projet d'organisation du Jabal Amel: Manouevres politique a entreprendre pour obtenir un derivatif a la situation actuelle" goes some way to explaining the French plans for the south. In order to prevent the "docile Shiites" from rallying around calls for Syrian unification from Damascus, the author suggested the creation of a form of limited autonomy for the religious clergy. In time, this institution would become the Shia Jaafari religious courts. The courts became the first institution to recognize the Shia as a religious minority, a designation that the Ottomans never offered this community. The emergence of the Shia courts should not overshadow the colonial designs of the court, namely, to bolster France's prominent position in the region. Two recent studies of the Jaafari courts in the south are Weiss, Max. *In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism, and the Making of Modern Lebanon*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010 and Sayed, Linda, Sectarian Homes: The Making of Shi'i Familes and Citizens under the French Mandate, 1918-1943, PhD Thesis: Columbia University, 2013.

[607] "Projet d'organisation du Jabal Amel: Manouvres politique à entreprendre pour obtenir un dérivatif a la situation actuelle

[608] See C459 DSG No. 4073 27 October 1936 on the strike of the souks in Sidon, C459 HCF No. 2877 15 September 1936 on the plebescite by residents of the South and the Bekaa for annexation to Syria, HCF No. 3481 7 November 1936 on strikes in Bint Jbeil.

[609] The divide between the elite support for the mandate and popular discontent is made plain in a petition sent to the high commission by the notables of the Jabal Amil (C459 HCF 10 October 1936 Notables of Jabal Amil). On the one hand a total of 385 signatories pledged their support for the mandate, declaring that, "We the

The Tobacco Strikes

This political chasm became manifest during the strikes against the tobacco concessions in 1936. As part of a settlement of the debts it incurred to fund the Tanzimat reforms, the Ottomans allowed its European creditors monopoly concessions in certain industries; in particular, tobacco cultivation and selling in the Jabal Amil came under the control of the tobacco régie in 1883.[610] To renew the contract, the Quai d'Orsay granted a concession for the cultivation and trade of tobacco to the Régie co-intéresse Libano-Syrienne des tabacs et des tombacs in 1934.[611] By this point, the régie was headquartered in the southern town of Nabatiyeh and operated as a private franchise holding company, and, in practice, as the reserve of the lords and their clients who authorized cultivation licenses to farmers.[612] Like in Tripoli and Akkar, popular resentment against the systematic marginalization and impoverishment of the south kindled protests by cultivators against the terms of the renewal of the régie. Again, similar to Tripoli, a figure, who had once profited from the mandate regime led the strikes against it in the form of Adel Osseiran.[613] Born into a Shi'a landowning family in Sidon, and educated at the American University of Beirut, Osseiran was initially on good, even friendly terms with the French, in large part due to his uncle Najib Osseiran's participation in the house of deputies as a delegate for the south.[614] He had initially backed the French during the tobacco strikes and supported his personal friend, the French administrative counselor Commandant Zinovy Pechkoff, who was said to have

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citizens of the Jabal Amil, from all communities and confessions, have the honor of presenting to Your Excellency our attachment to dear Lebanon within its current borders." The pledge of support resembles the letter made by Muhammad Abboud to Paris in 1936. For, on the other hand, general strikes, protests and deadly demonstrations developed in the south in opposition to the mandate. (See the Report of 26 October 1936) Protests erupted in Bint Jubayl and Sidon against the announcement of the signing of the Franco-Lebanese treaty.

[610] Traboulsi, 2007, 165.

[611] Traboulsi, 2007, 96.

[612] Traboulsi, 2007, 165. The régie would last from 1935 until 1973.

[613] There are several iterations of his name, the most common being a.k.a. Adil Usayran, 'Adil 'Usayran, 'Adil Usayran, Adil 'Usayran, etc. The internet says that Osseiran is the father-in-law of the Iraqi politician Ahmad Chalabi, and grandfather of the author whose work has been cited, Tamara Chalabi.

[614] Chalabi, 2006, 137; Seale, 2010, 492.

run the south like a personal fiefdom.[615] However, like in Tripoli, the French resort to violence during fatal clashes with protestors—this time in the village of Bint Jubeil—radicalized the population, including Osseiran.[616] Before a crowd in the town of Nabatiyeh, he declared, "we will swallow these 40-million Frenchmen," for which he was arrested, tried and celebrated as a champion of the downtrodden.[617] In these ways, political tensions mirrored the internal clashes among families in the region. Additional protests arose following the announcement of the Franco-Lebanese treaty in the southern towns of Sidon, Tyre, Nabatiyeh and Bint Jubeil in 1936.[618] Far from bolstering popular support for the regime, these tensions reflected the widening chasm between the majority of inhabitants and the agents and supporters of the high commission.

The 1943 Election

By 1943, these divisions had widened through the tumultuous years of the WWII. In fact, the call for elections further animated political energies in the south. In particular, el-Solh sought to leverage electoral laws to put in place the secret alliance that he had brokered with the Spears mission. Under the constitution, each *muhafaza* served as a single electoral district. As a result, elections usually favored candidates from the powerful families that

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[615] Seale, 2010, 492. A figure we will meet again later in this chapter, Pechkoff was the adopted son of Russian writer Maxime Gorky, the penname of Alexei Peshvok or Pechkoff. Born Yeshua Zalman Sverdlov to a family of Russian Jewish engravers, he came into contact with the most famous resident of the town of provincial city of Nizhny Novgorod when he was 19 in 1902. To fulfill his dream as an actor, the young Pechkoff moved to work in the Moscow Art Theater through the recommendation of his benefactor Gorky. At a time when Jews were banned from living in Moscow, the two skirted prohibitions with Gorky adopting Pechkoff. Following his decision, his biological father disowned him. After abandoning the theater, he went on to travel the world, living in Canada, the United States, Sweden, Italy and England. While residing in France during the outbreak of the WWI, he signed up for the French Foreign Legion, commencing a career as an army officer. See Levkovsky, Alexander, "Brothers: A reflection on destinies of two historical figures," Times of Israel, 17 September 2013, 23 June 2017, http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/brothers-areflection-on-destinies-of-two-historical-figures/

[616] Seale, 2010, 492.

[617] Chalabi, 2006, 138; Seale, 2010, 492. Another account of the incidents appears in C411 DCHF 21 April 1936, DHCF 2 April 1936. In April 1936, a general strike emerged in the southern Lebanese towns of Sidon, Nabatiya, Bint Jubeil and Jabal Amil in reaction to the arrest and killing of unarmed civilians protesting against tobacco concessions to French monopolies and peaked with protestors calling for the attachment of South Lebanon to Syria. (C411 DCHF 21 April 1936, DHCF 2 April 1936.

[618] Traboulsi, 2007, 101.

wielded the most clout.[619] Because the parliament allocated seats according to religious affiliation, these politicians often headed party lists that included their colleagues from other religious sects.[620] To ensure his victory in the south, el-Solh would have to unseat the incumbent Khalid Chehab of the town of Hasbaya who had been one of France's closest Muslim supporters in establishing the mandate.[621] With this ambition in mind, el-Solh negotiated to appear on the same electoral list as Osseiran and Ahmad al-As'ad. Like Osseiran, al-As'ad belonged to a leading Shi'a landowning family in the south and inherited his father's seat in the assembly.[622] Despite his family's loyalty to Paris, the capitulation of the Vichy forces under General Dentz convinced al-As'ad to shift his allegiance away from the waning power of France; and further aiding the joint-campaign of this trio were funds supplied to el-Solh by the British secret intelligence services in addition to, according to French intelligence, more financial backing from Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanese businessman Henri Pharaoun.[623] Moreover, el-Solh received a lifeline from Eddé. Although the high commission, represented in the south by then administrative counselor Pruneaud, sought to keep British-leaning nationalists like Osseiran and el-Solh out of parliament, Eddé intervened on their behalf to minimize French interference in the elections; and in return Eddé expected el-Solh to support his candidacy for president over his rival Bishara al-Khouri.[624] Ultimately, the campaign and funding proved so successful that Osseiran, al-As'ad

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[619] Hudson, Michael. *The Precarious Republic: Modernization in Lebanon*. Boulder, Westview Press, 1985, 148

[620] Hudson, 1985, 148.

[621] Seale, 2010, 491, 494. Seale's account of the 1943 elections relies heavily on Ahmad Beydoun's "Riad el-Solh et les élections législatives de 1943" in Gerard Khoury's *Selim Takla 1895-1945: une contribution a l'indépendance du Liban*, Paris: Karthala, 2004. Despite my every effort to obtain this book, I was not able to find it in the course of my research.

[622] Seale, 2010, 493-494. Interestingly, Ahmad's uncle Kamil al-As'ad, who was close to the Young Turks, denounced Riad el-Solh's father Rida for his participation with Arab nationalist forces, prompting the exile of father and son from their home in Beirut during WWI. (Seale, 2010, 493).

[623] Zamir, 2015, 83-85. The name of Pharaoun is also transliterated as Pharoun. One of the richest men in Lebanon, he was also the brother-in-law of Bishara al-Khouri.

[624] Unfortunately, the first name of Pruneaud is unknown. Eddé convinced him to remain neutral for fear that French machinations would push el-Solh into the arms of the British.

and el-Solh won seats in parliament.[625] Elsewhere in the country, veteran legislators like Sabri Hamadi in the Bekaa, Kamal Jumblatt in Mt. Lebanon won seats besides (perceived) anti-French candidates like Riad's cousin Sami el-Solh in Beirut, and the former *mufti*, himself, al-Karami in the north.[626]

The National Pact

Once again, the development of the formal institutions of governance would bolster informal politics in Lebanon. For the 1943 election precipitated the unwritten national pact between el-Solh and the rival of Eddé for the presidency, Bishara al-Khouri in Cairo on September 19, 1943. Like el-Solh, al-Khouri was the son of an Ottoman administrator and left the family's home in Mt. Lebanon to enter college, where he studied and later practiced law. An Arabic journalist and publisher in Cairo, al-Khouri entered politics in 1922 serving as secretary-general in the precursor to the chamber of deputies.[627] Among his other activities, al-Khouri represented al-Karami during his trial for murder in the al-Muqaddem affair.[628] Outside of the public domain, al-Khouri married into the prominent banking family of Henri Pharaoun, the deputy of the Bekaa, who headed a subsidiary of the French conglomerate the Société du Port de Beyrouth with al-Khouri's cousin, Michel Chiha.[629] For his part, Chiha was also involved in politics, representing his constituency of Beirut and serving in the drafting committee for what would become the 1926 constitution.[630] With

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[625] From Seale, 2010, 496-7, we learn that out of the 37,661 eligible male voters in the south, 24,393 or roughly 65% went to the polls. The votes went to the following figures:
1. Osseiran with 20,011 votes
2. Rashid Baydun with 191,483 votes
3. al-As'ad with 19,424 votes
4. el-Solh with 19,406 votes

[626] Seale, 2010, 497.

[627] Trouboulsi, 2007, 94. Britt, George, "Lebanon's Popular Revolution," Middle East Journal, No. 7: (Winter 1953), 5. His name is also spelled as Bisharah al-Khoury. An American, Britt was stationed in the Levant during WWII as a member of the Office of War Information as later returned during the 1950s to witness the fall of the al-Khouri regime. In this regard, he was as much a chronicler of unfolding events as a historian.

[628] Saliba, 2016, 147.

[629] Traboulsi, 2007, 94.

[630] Traboulsi, 2007, 94.

these political and economic connections, Chiha and Pharaoun became two of the richest men in the country. Such business interests underpinned al-Khouri's secret negotiations with el-Solh.

While the exact minutes of the meeting remain undisclosed, the outcomes are well-known and recounted. First, the two men agreed that if al-Khouri were elected president by the chamber of delegates in the new legislature, he would appoint el-Solh his prime minister, in contravention of the earlier dealings between el-Solh and Eddé.[631] Upon election, they would move to oust France from Lebanon by amending the parts of the constitution that tied the two countries together. Second, the two agreed on the international relations of the post-independent state, opting to move toward independence from France, but retaining an Arab identity and close ties with its neighbors in the Arab world.[632] Third, the two men agreed to formalize the sectarian division of offices that had been common practice, but legally disputable. In practice, this meant that the office of the president was reserved for a Christian, the prime minister for a Sunni Muslim and the speaker of the house of delegates for a Shi'a Muslim. The assembly would retain a Christian majority according to a 6:5 ratio of Christian to Muslim seats.[633] The compromise reached between these two lawyers would come to be known as the national pact.

As ever, animating this formal infrastructure was a series of informal politics, alliances and ambitions. Among the financial considerations were 1) the desire to control the revenue reserved for French monopoly companies of the common interests, 2) the wish to end trading constraints within the weak and closed *franc* monetary zone, and 3) the hope of

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[631] Seale, 2010, 504.

[632] Bashir, Iskandar. *Planned Administrative change in Lebanon*. Beirut: American U of Beirut P, 1966, 24.

[633] For more details on the sectarian divisions of the assembly see Atiyah, 1973 and Traboulsi, 2007. In the words of Traboulsi, "a great deal of the later history of Lebanon and of its conflicts would be articulated around the way those two texts [the written constitution and the unwritten National Pact] were read, interpreted and assigned priority." (Traboulsi, 2007, 111). I do not dwell on the ramifications of the National Pact because, as subsequent events will show, it is doubtful that Riad el-Solh intended for this to be a long-standing text. Instead, like his earlier promise to elect Emile Eddé, the agreement with al-Khouri is better understood as a temporary compromise to further other alliances and personal ambitions.

establishing new links between Lebanese banks and money from Britain and the Gulf states.[634] In addition to these financial incentives, el-Solh was committed to the secret alliance that had been agreed upon with his colleagues in Syria and the Spears mission. The move to oust France from the Levant would prepare for the expanded Hashemite federation. Beyond the small coterie of bankers and lawyers, el-Solh sought to garner popular support for this agreement by promising that, if elected, he would funnel money from the common interests to popular street gangs in Beirut in exchange for their support during the election. In this manner, the market for votes that Gassouin condemned came to include in 1943 the largely Maronite Phalange Libanais led by Pierre Gemayel and the predominately Sunni al-Najjada headed by Jamil Makkawi.[635] In these ways, the legislative elections facilitated informal arrangements, which, as subsequent events will show, helped to foster instability.

The Constitutional Crisis

The plan brokered by the two men became manifest in September when Bishara al-Khouri took office as president and el-Solh as his Prime minister.[636] Also prominent in the

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[634] Traboulsi, 2007, 105. The late political scientist Malcolm Kerr would write on the financial and political incentives animating the national pact that, "the first major duty of the new regime was to take control of the 'common interests' together with Syrian customs and excise, the Beirut port, post, telegram, Sûrete Générale local levies of the French army, etc., which had been run by the high commission. Most of these departments employed large numbers of people, produced large revenues or performed sensitive functions. On all counts, gaining control over them meant a great opportunity for national leaders to expand their prestige, powers of patronage and the size of their clienteles. No sooner had the National Pact confirmed the principle of divide the cake than independence set before its authors a second, even larger cake, in the form of the common interests, as if Providence were signifying its blessings on the system." See Kerr, Malcolm, "Political Decision-Making in a Confessional Democracy," *Politics in Lebanon*, Ed. Leonard Binder, New York: Wiley, 1966, 189.

[635] Seale, 2010, 508. According to French intelligence, el-Solh gave Pierre Gemayel 50,000 SL-pounds to mobilize the Phalange around the national pact with the promise of another 1-million SL-pounds once the government took control of the common interests. Carton 81 DSG 14 November 1943 Inventaire 2 as reported in Seale, 2010, 528.

[636] Al-Khouri was elected president 21 September 1943 and Riad appointed his prime minister the next day. Seale, 2010, 509. It was first reported that al-Khouri represented the compromise candidate since France supported its man Emile Eddé for office and Spears Chamoun, instead. In addition, it was reported that Chamoun would succeed al-Khouri as president. Britt, 1953, 5. In contrast, Seale asserts that Spears and el-Solh took advantage of the rumored support for Chamoun to pressure the Free French to support al-Khouri. Seale, 2010, 509. In addition, according to Zamir, Spears boasted to British diplomat Richard Casey following the appointment of el-Solh, "The appointment of el-Solh ministry means that everything has ended infinitely more satisfactorily than I ever dared hope for. I have felt all along as if I were building a house of cards and that each additional card was likely to bring down the whole structure. Yet, until the last tier was in position nothing had been achieved." Zamir, 2015, 95.

new government were Osseiran, Takla, the Druze leader of Mt. Lebanon Emir Chekib Arslan and future president Camille Chamoun.[637] By this time, the anti-French faction in Lebanon mirrored the government in Syria, headed by President Quwatli, al-Jabiri as prime minister and Mardam Bey as foreign minister. In one of his first speeches before the assembly that October, el-Solh declared in what became known as the Charter of Independence his intentions of nationalizing the French concessions and repealing the constitutional amendments that enshrined French influence.[638] Thus, el-Solh continued the resistance strategy of re-appropriating the formal institutions of the mandate to undermine French rule. The events following the speech are well chronicled.

On November 8, 1943, el-Solh made good on his promise as the new parliament expunged or amended every article of the constitution that recognized ties to France with immediate effect.[639] In essence, the new government sought to use the French created constitution for a purpose that Paris had never intended. Rather than bolster French rule, the constitution would engender the ouster of Paris from the Levant. In effect, the legislature brought about the serious political and economic disruptions that Gassouin had warned of four years earlier in 1939. The declarations had caught the high-commission off-guard, with General-Delegate Catroux stationed in Algiers with de Gaulle.[640] In his place, acting high-commissioner Jean Hellu followed the model of his predecessor High Commissioner Ponsot during the challenge of al-Jisr in 1932. Three days after the passage of the constitutional amendments, Hellu suspended the constitution under another decree of martial law, ordered the arrest of the government and invited Emile Eddé to once again form a new government

[637] Seale, 2010, 512, 522. At the time, Osseiran served as minister of the economy, trade and industry; Arslan as minister of defense, agriculture, health and social services; Chamoun as interior minister; Takla as foreign minister.
[638] Ziada, 1968, 74; Seale, 2010, 513.
[639] Seale, 2010, 522.
[640] Ziada, 1968, 74; Zamir, 2015, 92. The Free French were tied up in Algiers due to disputes between de Gaulle and his general Giraud.

on November 11, 1943.[641] In doing so, Hellu believed that the tactics of Ponsot would secure France's position in the Levant, even though it can be argued that Ponsot's actions contributed to the 1936 outbreak of violence. In the meantime, Hellu employed another souvenir from the 1930s when he insisted that the provisions of the 1936 Franco-Lebanese treaty remained valid, even though Paris had never ratified the accord.[642] Ultimately, such contradictions presaged further difficulties for the regime.

This political standoff lasted for 11 days. During this time, clashes with French forces upholding martial law and the night curfew turned violent. The forces of the Phalange and al-Najjada helped to enforce a national general strike with their forces, numbering 35,000 and 10,000, respectively.[643] On the night of November 11, 1943, protestors in Beirut and the Bekaa launched a riot in defiance of the curfew, vandalizing French vehicles, overturning tramcars, alighting French institutions and throwing stones, which, in turn, precipitated French reprisals.[644]As had been the case in Tripoli and Bint Jubeil previously, the violent response of French forces to unrest had the unintended consequence of radicalizing the population into acts of armed resistance. Lebanese historian at the American University of Beirut Nicola Ziada would recount of the opposition to martial law that,

> The outburst of the people was romantic, sentimental and emotional, but certainly not artificial. The hatred they had harbored for the French, the mistrust that France had succeeded in planting in the souls of the Lebanese, and the fear of losing their hard-earned independence, united a people that had for some time been politically, socially and culturally torn asunder. In Beirut, as in many other places in the country, old and young, men and women, went out to do something the help guard their independence.[645]

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[641] Britt, 1953, 6. In his work, Zamir describes Hellu as "weak and naïve," figure, with little knowledge of the Levant despite his former role as Vichy ambassador to Turkey in Ankara (Zamir, 2015, 92). Despite Zamir's characterization, I see the debacle of the constitutional crisis not so much as the mishandling of a single individual, but as the continuation of a series of protocols and policies exercised by several individuals within the Quai d'Orsay. The resort to martial law imposed by Hellu followed the footsteps of Ponsot, de Martel and even Gassouin, all of whom were confident that a military spirit would suffice to govern the country despite the obvious shortcomings.
[642] Ziada, 1968, 74-76.
[643] Seale, 2010, 528.
[644] Seale, 2010, 527
[645] Ziada, 1968, 76.

The fight for independence that Ziada describes also took place outside of the capital. In Tripoli, French Bren-gun tanks opened fire at close range on a crowd of protestors demonstrating against the suspension of the constitution, wounding 11 individuals, including seven children, and killing three people.[646] In Sidon, clashes were even more deadly. There, French troops opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators protesting at a local school, most of whom were children, wounding about 60 individuals and killing 4, including a seven-year old girl.[647] In response, crowds gathered at the gates of the British hospital hoping to take refuge within the compound. In turn, French forces under the direction of the administrative counselor Pruneaud besieged the protestors at the hospital.[648] In retaliation for these incidents, the notables of Sidon, who used to be largely cozy with Paris, drew up plans to blow up the French marine barracks stationed in the town as well as the house of the French counselor.[649] The popular outcry against Hellu's decree grew so widespread that Eddé had trouble in recruiting politicians to form a new government.[650]

Elsewhere in the south, the government of al-Khouri was detained in the old military fort in Rashaya. Following their arrests in pre-dawn raids at their homes, the fort would hold al-Khouri, Takla, Chamoun and el-Solh, later joined that afternoon by Osseiran.[651] The next day, they received another visitor. The old *mufti*, al-Karami, suffered a fate worse than the others. Like his comrades, his home was raided before dawn on November 11, during which Senegalese troops allegedly roused women and children still in their pajamas, stole valuables and assaulted the family's servants; and upon discovering that al-Karami was nowhere to be

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[646] Seale, 2010, 529.
[647] Seale, 2010, 529. British soldiers volunteered up to 19 pints of blood for the slain children of Sidon, which the British medical officer estimated saved the lives of 7 kids.
[648] Seale, 2010, 529.
[649] Seale, 2010, 539. Seale adds that the plans were part of a plan for a coordinated uprising across Lebanon and Syria. According to Spears, on the night before the scheduled release on November 22, numerous explosions were detonated across Beirut. Britain. NO 21 November 1953 NO 226/242 as mentioned in Seale, 2010, 539.
[650] Britt, 1953, 6.
[651] Seale, 2010, 522, Britt, 1953, 6.

found, soldiers pressed their pistols to the head of his 7-year-old son Umar demanding that he denounce his father's location.[652] To add insult to injury, when al-Karami was found resting in his family's estate outside of Tripoli, soldiers trained bayonets at his chest, pistol-whipped him when he moved to obtain his dentures and promptly dragged him from bed to prison, half-naked and bareheaded without his turban.[653]

Under pressure from Whitehall, Washington and sympathetic protests across the Arab world—not to mention the conspirators of Sidon and elsewhere—de Gaulle was forced to relent his stance. French plans to transfer the imprisoned cabinet to Algiers spurred Whitehall into action, afraid that mob violence across the Middle East would imperil British forces.[654] In response, the Spears mission offered an ultimatum for the release of the prisoners by 10:00 on the morning of November 22, 1943 or else Britain would march troops from Cairo and do so on their behalf.[655] Ultimately, Algiers released the prisoners, dismissing the coordinated raids of their homes and 11-day detention as "a painful misunderstanding."[656] To others, however, more was a stake than a misunderstanding. Upon their release, jubilant crowds championed the imprisoned men as national heroes across the Levant. The day of their release would come to mark national independence from France.[657] Meanwhile, for the Free French government in exile, that day came to signify France's biggest debacle in the Levant, marking the end of decades of expanding French influence in the eastern Mediterranean stretching back to the expeditions of Napoleon. The capitulation over Rashaya appeared as a scandal in France and personal embarrassment to de Gaulle.[658] Shorn of the formal influence

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[652] Seale, 2010, 523.
[653] Seale, 2010. 523-24. To make matters worse, soldiers had stolen his dentures, preventing al-Karami from eating food during his eleven-day detention in Rashaya.
[654] Seale, 2010, 537.
[655] Seale, 2010, 537.
[656] Britt, 1953, 6.
[657] Today the date of November 22 is celebrated as the official holiday of national independence.
[658] During the 1945 Syrian crisis, de Gaulle declared to British ambassador in Paris Duff Cooper that, "We are not, I admit, in a position to open hostilities against you at the present time. But you have insulted France and betrayed the west." De Gaulle, Charles, *The Complete Memoires of Charles de Gaulle: Salvation*, New York,

over the government, the presence of France in Lebanon would wane until the final departure of troops in 1946.[659]

The Game of Enemies

The aftermath of the 1943 uprising in Lebanon would set in motion a series of undisclosed developments that continued to re-shape the shifting political landscape between the Levant and the world empires. As a result, these developments further unbundled the territoriality of the newly independent state. On the one hand, the rise of post-colonial Lebanon would impact imperial rivalries. As chronicled in the essays and documents of Zamir, the French uncovering and response to the British plan to unify the Levant into a single state carried long-lasting ramifications in the region. First, France shared the cables that it had intercepted from Whitehall with the enemies of Britain in the Arab world, namely Egypt and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose leaders worked vociferously to sabotage the potential unification between Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq. The role of Saudi Arabia proved instrumental in helping to change the mind of Shukri al-Quwatli, who reneged on his promise to Nuri al-Said and Whitehall by signing an agreement with Ibn Saud against unification after he was elected president.[660] Around the same time as al-Quwatli's misgivings, el-Solh harbored similar doubts, fearing that his newfound personal power would erode in a larger state.[661] Second, Paris tried to expand its influence with its traditional

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Carroll and Graf, 1998, 889, as mentioned in Zamir, De Gaulle and the question of Syria and Lebanon during the Second World War: Part I," Middle Eastern Studies, 43:5 (2007), 675.

[659] On May 29, 1945, the French initiated yet another crisis that precipitated an agreement to withdraw its final troops from the Levant in Syria. The confrontation was not planned, but a visceral reaction by French General Oliva Roget upon learning form one of his secret agents about the willingness of al-Quwatli and his Prime Minister Mardam Bey to agree to British plans to expand British influence and weaken France's position. In response, Roget ordered the shelling of the parliament and destruction of the presidential office. Like in 1936 and 1943, rather than strengthen French influence, the resort to military rule further weakened its position. This time, it prompted further protests across the Levant and wider Arab world, and precipitated American negotiations to remove British and French troops from the Levant by 1946. Zamir, 2015, 127.

[660] Zamir, 2015, 96. Outside of the Arab world, French intelligence shared details of the secret plan with Zionist forces in mandate Palestine.

[661] Zamir, 2015, 84. From 1945, Riad would gravitate away from Iraq toward the Egyptian and Syrian axis of power in the Arab world.

support base in Lebanon, the Maronite church, informing Patriarch Antoine Arida of the secret alliance between the Syrian National Bloc and el-Solh to unify the two countries.[662] Meanwhil, France shared its intelligence with President al-Khouri. Coincidentally or otherwise, during this same period of time, in January 1945, he suffered a nervous breakdown and retreated from public life.[663] Third, the Quai d'Orsay sought revenge against the key protagonist in this plan, Riad el-Solh. On January 9, 1945, el-Solh's cabinet resigned. Ostensibly, he bowed to pressure of widespread complaints over the rising costs of living and government inefficiency, trademarks of bureaucratic life prevalent since the 1920s as described in the previous three chapters.[664] More than that, however, the resignation of el-Solh was the work of French intrigues designed to scupper the coordinated opposition to its rule in the Levant.[665]

In lieu of el-Solh, France used its influence to facilitate the appointment of another leading Sunni Muslim, none other than its one time public enemy, Abd al-Hamid al-Karami.[666] In succeeding el-Solh, the former *mufti* of Tripoli completed a remarkable series of transformations that had marked and in some ways divided the lives of the two men. Whereas al-Karami was a member of the Committee of Union and Progress of the Young Turks,[667] el-Solh championed the cause of the Arab nationalists; whereas al-Karami followed the traditional paths to success as a religious figure and landowner, el-Solh studied abroad to become a lawyer and diplomat in exile of sorts in Switzerland; whereas al-Karami sought to overturn French rule through force of arms in November, 1936, el-Solh and his colleagues attempted to reduce French influence through diplomatic relations and worked to broker a

[662] Zamir, Meir, "The 'Missing Dimension': Britain's Secret War against France in Syria and Lebanon, 1942–45 , Part II." Middle Eastern Studies, 46:6 (2010), 807.
[663] Zamir, 2010. 807. The degree to which the news of the secret alliance contributed to his nervous breakdown is unknown. However, following his convalescence in Haifa, al-Khouri retreated to his family's home in Mt. Lebanon, leaving the affairs of the country to his brother and son.
[664] This purported rationale appears in Seale, 2010, 571.
[665] Zamir, 2010, 807.
[666] Zamir, 2010, 807.
[667] Saliba, 2016, 99.

settlement to the riots in Tripoli.[668] As the appointment of al-Karami signaled the loss of Britain's inside man in Lebanon, the secret plan to reshape the Levant had effectively died. Although it interfered in Lebanese affairs and stymied plans to reshape its borders, the Quai d'Orsay was never able to revive its foothold in the country and its final troops withdrew in 1946.

On the other hand, the release of the prisoners would re-shape Lebanese politics under the rule of the Bishara al-Khouri regime. Lost in the *joie de vivre* of the French ouster was one important aspect best summed up by American military veteran and resident in the Levant George Britt. He wrote in the 1953 edition of *Middle East Journal* that, "in the rejoicing over the release from Rashaya and the restoration of the Constitution, all political opposition was silenced and no critical voice was heard to point out that the constitution was about the same as written during the mandate."[669] Save for the amendments to the provisions concerning France, the constitutional regime criticized by Gassouin, responsible for the plague of bureaucracy, at fault for the water crisis in the north, at the heart of rural violence and coercion in Akkar remained in place—even after France had undergone two subsequent iterations of its own constitution. Much of the executive power reserved for the high commissioner passed into the hands of the president.[670] With the constitution preserved, the putative system of profiteers, their clients and would-be profiteers continued to underpin the formal institutions of governance while the mingled plights of the majority worsened. These dual systems of formal and informal politics expanded when the government won access to

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[668] Saliba sees the intervention of Mardem Bey and al-Jabiri to end the strikes in Tripoli as one of the factors that helped to persuade al-Karami against union with Syria. Saliba, 2016, 312. Although this was no doubt important in shaping Karami's decision, one should not forget that he and his family had received financial, political and judicial backing from Paris for almost a decade.

[669] Britt, 1953, 5.

[670] Britt, 1953, 6-7; Bashir, 1977, 113; Mufarrij, 1935, 349; Canaan, Leila Wadih, *The Position of the High Commissioner in the Administration of Lebanon under the French Mandate*, MA Thesis, Department of History, American University of Beirut, 1959.

the common interests.[671] The concentration of power and clientelism that Gassouin described came to be known as the oligarchy under the rule of al-Khouri and his successor Camille Chamoun. The persistence of the constitution maintained the contradictions of rule that had characterized mandate politics and invited foreign designs for the Levant, as was the case with the secret war between Britain and France.

Conclusion

In considering the consequences of informal politics as a function of the contradictions of colonial rule, the events surrounding the 1943 constitutional crisis not only appear entirely predictable, but also confirm the predictions of officials like Gassouin. That concomitant with elections there developed an informal unwritten alliance between lawyers to transform the constitution, appropriate revenue from the common interests, fund street gangs, secure foreign funding for electoral candidates and even coordinate a series of riots, illustrate that the formal institutions of governance did not supplant informal relations among the population. At the same time, such experiences reveal the asymmetry of power relations that underpinned colonial territoriality. The contradictions of French authority had undermined its rule as the imperatives of civilian republican rule clashed with the goals of maintaining a military hierarchy. Analyzing the events of Lebanon from the perspective of territorial control indicates that the undoing of French rule owed as much to the consequences of its own colonial policies as to the machinations of foreign actors. That is, the mechanisms designed to enforce territoriality contributed to its undoing.

At the same time, the effects of the covert wars between Britain and France demonstrate that, upon the termination of the mandate, the post-colonial government failed to exercise effective territorial control over the country. Instead, territoriality remained subject

[671] Kerr, 1966, 189. The common interests in Lebanon and Syria included the customs and excise, the Beirut Port, post and telegram, the Sûrete Générale, local levies on the French army etc., all of which had been managed by the French army.

to the same shifting asymmetrical relations of power that had thrived during the mandate. While France was not able to exert the influence in the territory that it had anticipated and expected, neither were competing claims able to permanently alter the borders that General Gouraud had decreed in 1920. In this context, the national pact can be considered a temporary alliance and convenient expedience to prepare for an alternative political system backed by foreign governments. This intentionally flexible system invited foreign designs and intrigues in much the same way as the 1926 constitution. Weakened by the social networks that literally profited from the mandate, territoriality in Lebanon remained subject to competing foreign intrigues after independence.

Post-Script

The turbulent interwar years that witnessed the decline, nadir and re-emergence of transformative figures like Abd al-Hamid al-Karami and Riad el-Solh continued to generate unforeseen circumstances that affected the population in Lebanon and the world at large. In Lebanon, these tumultuous years are perhaps best represented in the fates of two of the most prominent members within the opposition to the mandate. On the one hand, the prominence of al-Karami began to waver shortly after his appointment to office. His tenure as premier ended after eight months in August 1945 due to the same petty politics, upheavals, standoffs and high turnovers that characterized the al-Khouri regim, Lebanese politics, in general, and the defeated third French Republic. Worse, weeks after his appointment as prime minister in late1944, al-Karami survived his own assassination during yet another gun battle in the streets of Tripoli, as described by Sgt. Pearse in his memoirs and mentioned in the previous chapter.[672] Like in the 1935 Muqaddim affair, the opposite protagonist in this duel belonged to a rival family of notables from the Omary family.[673] Later, once out of office, al-Karami's

[672] Pearse, 1949, 161.
[673] Pearse, 1949, 161. Also see Barak, Oren. "Conflict and Peace in Lebanon," International Journal of Middle East Studies: 34 (2002), 619-644

campaign to move from the backbench to the premiership was compromised by corruption scandals involving his uncle Mustafa, the director of the Tripoli municipality; in his post Mustafa had replaced another relative, Mohamad al-Karami, the erstwhile director of the water utility in Tripoli.[674]

Further damaging was another public shootout in Tripoli in 1947. In the lead up to elections, al-Karami sought to garner public support by organizing a parade for the famed Arab nationalist war hero Fawzi al-Qawuqji. Similar to al-Karami, al-Qawuqji was a native son of Tripoli and fellow member of Amir Faysal's administration in Syria, and after the defeat of the regime to Gouraud's forces in 1920, he went on to spend twenty years abroad serving in the 1925 Druze revolt, the 1936 Great Arab revolt in mandate Palestine and the 1941 Iraqi uprising against the British.[675] With the war over, Lebanese officials were eager to give this popular veteran a hero's greeting in Tripoli. During the rally, however, the ongoing tensions that had simmered between supporters of al-Karami and his rivals in the al-Muqaddem family culminated once again in violence, this time before Tall Square and the administrative building there.[676] The ensuing melee not only targeted supporters of the rival families, but also the local police and gendarmerie,[677] still under the thumb of criminal enterprise in a manner parallel to the descriptions of du Paty de Clam's 1939 report. This latest blow to law and order left 14 dead and 68 injured.[678] Not only did the casualties embarrass the Lebanese government by highlighting its inability to maintain any semblance

[674] Barak, 2002, 630.
[675] The characterization of widespread corruption, even in a landscape that was prone to violence in ways we have seen from earlier chapters, comes from Baaklini, 1976,143. For details of the 1947 campaign comes, see Seale, 2010, 605; Barak, 2002.
[676] Barak, 2002, 629.
[677] Barak, 2002, 631.
[678] Barak, 2002, 629. During the 1940s and 1950s, shootouts between forces loyal to rival parliamentarians and notables took place in the northern town of Zghourta and in the Chouf region of Mt. Lebanon, involving the likes of the Arslan, Junblatt, Frangieh families, not to mention the al-Karami and Muqaddem clans (Barak, 2002, 632).

of order, it also effectively terminated al-Karami's campaign for the premiership. He died three years later in 1950.[679]

On the other hand and in different circumstances, the prominence of Riad el-Solh after his victory in 1943 was equally short-lived. The intrigues that helped him to obtain public office were responsible for his downfall. After the resignation of his cabinet, he managed to return to the throne, serving as prime minister during the volatile years that followed the 1948 creation of the state of Israel and the Palestinian *nakba*. His position in his office, however, was not as strong, since he was no longer able to count on external support. His previous ally, General Spears, was called back to London. His Syrian colleagues in the National Bloc confronted a series of internal coups and uprisings. By 1951, he was out of office and had decided to accept the invitation of King Abdallah for a visit to Jordan.[680] His time away from his family turned out to be longer than expected, however. For, on his last day, while driving to the airport for his return flight, he died at the hands of assassins on July 16, 1951; and four days later, his host King Abdallah, was slain outside of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.[681] In these ways, the halcyon that the national pact was supposed to inaugurate never lasted for the founding fathers, much less the population, at large. Instead, the petty politics and maneuverings for power became even more violent.

Not only did the interwar years leave its mark on the peoples of the Levant, it also transformed to fortunes of some of the administrators who had come to rule over them, perhaps none more publicly than the embattled French administrator in Tripoli, du Paty de Clam. Upon his exit from the Levant, his attempt to employ the same tactic as el-Solh, al-

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[679] Rougier, Bernard, *The Sunni Tragedy in the Middle East: North Lebanon from Al-Qaeda to ISIS*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2015, 1-25, 2.
[680] Seale, 2010, 714.
[681] Seale, 2010, 714. Members of the outlawed Parti Populaire Syrienne (a.k.a. SSNP) were implicated and tried in the murder of el-Solh as revenge for his role in the arrest and execution their leader, Antoun Sa'adeh. Seale believes that British and Jordanian intelligence could have also been involved over el Solh's confrontation with Israel. Seale, 2010, 721.

Khouri and al-Karami in sabotaging public office imperiled his life in Europe. Born in 1895, the count received his education at the Saint Cyr military academy before serving in WWI.[682] Like many officials within the high commission, he represented the initial martial spirit of the mandate that Gassouin proudly references in his letter, having joined the high commission following the war and serving under various capacities for twenty years. In 1940, however, he reached a crossroads with the fall of the republic. As opposed to the minority of officials like Commandant Pechkoff who joined forces with the French resistance,[683] du Paty de Clam chose to cooperate with the new Vichy government in 1940. Although well privy to the administrative anarchy that the regime inaugurated in the Levant, he opted to stay in the region for the next year. With the march of the Free French and the Spears mission, however, he faced another crossroads between residing in the colonies with the Free French and returning to the metropole. Ultimately, he took the well-traveled road back to France and joined other mandate veterans like former High Commissioner General Weygand in the Vichy administration.

In March 1944, the count became the Commissioner General for Jewish Affairs for the Vichy regime, heading the agency that, years before, had sent the Jews of France to the concentration camps of Europe.[684] What had helped du Paty win the role under the Vichy regime was that his father, Armand, was a key conspirator in the Dreyfus Affair that displayed the rampant anti-Semitism within the elite echelons of the third republic.[685] In accepting the role, he decided to publicly associate himself with the anti-Semitism of the

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[682] Généaology de Jacques du Paty de Clam http://gw.geneanet.org/jdupaty?lang=fr&p=charles&n=mercier+du+paty+de+clam

[683] It just so happened that the commander of his troupe in the French foreign legion was none other than a young lieutenant named Charles de Gaulle. Later, he followed his former lieutenant into the French Resistance and eventually achieved the rank of Brigadier in the Free French before serving as the French ambassador to Japan after WWII. Seale, 2010, 492; Levkovsky, 2013.

[684] "France: Du Paty de Clam" Time Magazine 13 March 1944; Eric Roussel, "Un antisémitisme administrative", Le Figaro, 15 October 2007, 22 June 2017 http://www.lefigaro.fr/livres/2006/05/26/03005-20060526ARTWWW90250-un_antisemitisme_administratif.php. Also see Joly,Laurent, Vichy dans la "Solution finale". Histoire du Commissariat général auxquestions juives (1941-1944), Paris: Grasset, 2006.

[685] "France: Du Paty de Clam" Time Magazine 13 March 1944.

Nazis only six months before the Liberation of Paris in August of that year. Though he resigned from the post in May of that year, his association with the regime had tarnished his image.[686] Arrested upon the liberation of Paris, he was detained as a suspected war criminal and became a social pariah.[687] Yet, in his defense at trial, he revealed that he had accepted his post in the Jewish Affairs commission under a secret understanding with the French resistance that he would sabotage the office through inaction, in much the same way as the Arab nationalists whom he had vehemently opposed.[688] Although he was freed from prison in 1947, he languished from the poor conditions after almost three years of detainment. Prior to el-Solh and al-Karami, du Paty de Clam died in 1948.[689] He was 53.

[686] Roussel, 2007.
[687] Roussel, 2007; Généaology de Jacques du Paty de Clam http://gw.geneanet.org/jdupaty?lang=fr&p=charles&n=mercier+du+paty+de+clam
[688] Roussel, 2007.
[689] Généaology de Jacques du Paty de Clam http://gw.geneanet.org/jdupaty?lang=fr&p=charles&n=mercier+du+paty+de+clam

VI. Westward Expansion

A CONFUSED AND COMPLICATED BACKGROUND

"It was a confused and complicated background, where Orient and Occident were inextricably mixed in a kind of life that belonged neither to East nor West," remembers Sgt. Pearse of Tripoli in the aftermath of the 1943 constitutional crisis.[690] On one level, the sergeant's depiction points to the contested landscape of Tripoli at a time when he awaited the deadline for the final departure of European troops from the Levant. The city had managed to resist imperial designs to varying degrees of success even as the French attempted to re-orient the city and region, in general. In this manner, he portrays the contrasting cityscape where "many religious sects and all shades of political opinion existed… which was half-Muslim and half-Christian, half-feudal and half pseudo-democratic," adding that "alongside the modern hotels and Swiss style pâtisseries, were the mysterious *soukhs*, situated in a maze of narrow, dark alleyways where men were often found dead, where all sorts of illegality thrived and bullets whizzed."[691]

At the same time, this complicated background where men were found dead and crime thrived intimated the underbelly of government malfeasance, vice and coercion that had managed to transform the social, political and economic institutions of the mandate. Despite French intentions, informal networks and practices undermined French rule. The entrenched divides and resort to coercion that shaped the city's layout in Pearse's account at the twilight of the mandate bring to mind de Martel's description a decade earlier about the barricades surrounding Tripoli amid the 1936 riots. In this sense, Pearse reports that, "out of the confusion emerged the general trends; the rackets crystallized themselves into large rival interests, whilst many unaccountable activities gradually clarified themselves as the details of large-scale corruption on the part of government officials came to light," before adding that,

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[690] Pearse, 1949, 161.
[691] Pearse, 1949, 161.

the "*gendarmes* and police had little to say in the rackets, and any meddlesomeness on their part was met by bands of thugs using force and firearms."[692] Yet, beyond the situation in Tripoli, Pearse's account highlights the contradictions of colonial rule, which in the absence of the rule of law, relied upon a series of informal networks and practices at the expense of the metropole's designs.

ASSESSING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FRENCH MANDATE

This study began with the related questions of how colonial rule managed to reproduce itself, and the consequences of this rule on statecraft in parts of the non-west. Pearse's description of the second city in colonial Lebanon indicates the mixed fortunes of imperial rule as well as the ambiguities of power and resistance that had underpinned the production of space. The overall confusion and complications of the north bear witness to the contradictions constitutive in twentieth century imperialism and their consequences for the post-colonial state. Imperial designs did not eradicate existing practices and power-relations however much social, economic and political life changed within the colonies. Instead, many of the institutions involved in mandate affairs had already thrived prior to 1920 such as the family, force of arms, usury, intimidation and coercion, street politics and religious gatherings. By directly and indirectly bankrolling these practices, the administration undermined its ability to make inroads with the subject population. Such contradictions bring to light one of the many ironies of the French experience in Lebanon and Syria. By the time that Paris had consecrated decades of expanding French influence in the eastern Mediterranean, imperial rule was already in decline. The very construction of the mandate in 1920 indicated that the forms of direct rule described in earlier chapters had already given way to more indirect practices of colonial governance. In practice, the persistence and even expansion of these practices amid western-modeled institutions like the army, gendarmerie,

[692] Pearse, 1949, 162.

agricultural banks, legislature and presidency contributed to the unbundling of French rule. At the same time, the interplay of these formal and informal institutions would presage the instability of the post-colonial state, unable to surmount the standoffs and stalemates that had characterized colonial governance.

In terms of theory, the experiences of colonial Lebanon have revealed several trends worth reconsidering. First, this study has shown the ways in which territoriality is socially mediated rather than geographically imposed from above. Second, it has highlighted the contradictions of imperial rule that facilitated practices of resistance. Third, the focus on the flourishing of informal politics has gestured to the complicated legacy of the mandate for the post-colonial state. In these ways, it can be argued that colonial state power relied more upon the ability of a select few to re-appropriate the institutions of governance than on the uncontested spread of imperial designs from the metropole to the farthest reaches of the colony. As a result, the colonial experience discloses the contradictions of modern rule and the diverse practices that constituted authority.

1. Territoriality as Socially Mediated Institution

When applied to colonial rule, territoriality does not appear to be a uniform, uncontested practice. Instead, territoriality was not so much enforced from the metropole as much as it was socially mediated within the colony. At the same time, it did not operate as a function of modern technologies that replaced pre-colonial practices as Sack may have predicted, nor as a product of new relations of power that linked colonial citizens to the empire as critical geo-politics might have implied. In place of a total transformation, colonial territoriality recycled and even strengthened political, economic and social institutions already present in the colony. At the same time, critical geo-politics proved useful in understanding the ways in which authority was socially mediated rather than geographically imposed in a uniform manner. In practice, then the exercise of power revealed the

unevenness of the reach of the colonial state. Colonial designs confronted various strategies of resistance from the general strikes and canonfire of the organized opposition to the quiet sabotage and vice of government officials. The presence of contrasting and contradictory political behaviors facilitated the unbundling of territoriality, undermining the reproduction of the strict boundaries and hierarchies that the French had sought to impose. In turn, French territoriality further waned until its troops were forced to retreat from the Levant. In these ways, state power remains subject to the shifting processes of domination and resistance.

2. Contradictions of Colonial Rule

In addition, the unbundling of colonial territoriality has highlighted the contradictions of imperial rule. The social milieu that operated in the colony transformed the western institutions that Paris had expected would carry out its foreign policy. The formal institutions of the centralized bureaucracy did not erase existing and informal politics. Such alternative institutions strengthened by the mandate included the likes of the family structure, nepotism, racketeering, usury and force of arms. The transition from the relatively small civil service of the Ottomans to the behemoth imposed by the French magnified these practices. In addition to these institutions were the exercises of authority that directly emerged from the mandate such as the sweeping discretionary powers of the interior minister and president, their interference into other branches of the government, and the capacity of legislators to re-appropriate public funds at will. In turn, the shadow state that developed from mandate policy did not expand the reach of the colonial state, but increasingly destabilized imperial rule and strengthened strategies of resistance.

At the same time, French colonial rule in the Levant suffered from the internal politics and contradictions within France. Several of the formal policies of the Quai d'Orsay conflicted with the informal priorities and practices of the high commission. The imperatives of land tenure reform contradicted the support of notable politics in the countryside; the

universalist principle of a centralized bureaucracy contravened the sectarian and regional biases of the national government and civil service; the re-design of Tripoli ceded higher ground to organized and often armed opposion; the recruitment of known and suspected racketeers undermined the enforcement of municipal administration; the establishment of a republican system of government clashed with the military spirit of senior mandate officials; and the high commission's recourse to violence radicalized armed opposition. It was amid such contradictions that some of the most effective forms of resistance against mandate rule involved individuals linked to the colonial government. Figures like Mohamad and Abd al-Hamid al-Karami in the Tripoli water utility as well as Riad el-Solh and Bishara al-Khouri in the legislature successfully sabotaged colonial institutions. In this manner, the constant talk of administrative reform within the high commission represented a muted confession of its inability to maintain France's position in the Levant.

However unintentionally, the informal practices of colonial governance increasingly marginalized the metropole from the subject population. As a result of the unevenness of state rule, France was forced to retreat from its formal mandate, much to the benefit of many of the privileged figures whom Paris had supported. From this, it is possible to conclude that the power to enforce colonial territoriality depended upon an array of complementary as well as contradictory practices of domination and resistance as Dodge asserted. Or, in the words of Satia, colonial rule was largely incoherent, and this incoherence carried consequences for the population after independence from the metropole.

3. Informal Politics in the Post-Colonial State

At the same time, the flourishing of informal politics during and after the mandate highlights the consequences of imperial rule. Namely, it indicates that the post-colonial period continued many of the contradictions of colonial rule. The capacities of the institutions of the state to meddle into the lives of residents in the manner that Dr. Boulos

described; to facilitate racketeering in the fashion that Pearse, Mme. Lattouf and du Paty de Clam witnessed; and to personalize authority like Eddé, Abboud, al-Karami and others managed came to typify post-colonial politics. Such informal politics did not bolster colonial rule as much as it expanded political fields of politics and resistance. In turn, such developments revealed the shortcomings, contradictions and contested territoriality of the colonial and post-colonial states in the Levant. As a result, the ostensible gap between the shadow state and the marginalized majority in the post-colonial state is a function of the conflicting practices that underpinned colonial relations. In turn, one should not consider the post-colonial state to be divided from society but intricately connected via a series of overt and covert practices that came of age during the age of imperialism. In these ways, colonial rule not only characterized the arrival of modern technologies of power in the non-West, it also represented its contradictions, incoherencies and shortcomings, which have remained in place to varying degree.

In sum, colonial state formation was not a *fait accompli*, but precipitated unintended consequences that cultivated different strategies of power and resistance from the likes of patronage, re-appropriation of money and judicial intervention to foreign meddling, force of arms and internal sabotage. In effect, the experiences in the Levant agreed with Bayart's assertion that, "an apparatus of control or domination or a line of dependence are not just what the government or imperialism want them to be, they are also what the actors, even if they are subordinate, make of them."[693] In the context of Lebanon, colonial statecraft altered the ruling regimes tasked with carrying out the policies of the metropole. The foreign designs that helped to bring down the mandate were a function of the turbulent informal practices that thrived during the mandate. Whereas some of these informal practices preceded the mandate—like coercion, intimidation and debt—others institutions emerged directly from

[693] Bayart, 1993 37.

French foreign policy like patrimonialism and the re-appropriation of funds. Such contradictions imperiled effective rule and planted the seeds of the social, economic and political instability that pressured the end of the mandate. As a result, French colonial control decreased over time so that, within this milieu, its territoriality was socially mediated rather than geographically imposed. In these ways, the exercise of colonial state power transformed practices of domination and strategies of resistance in Lebanon.

AFTER THE FLOOD

With formal independence, the political trends of the mandate intensidied to further alter the political landscape and divide the already stratified population. The instability that had benefited some of the country's politicians became even more precarious. The circles of ambitious profiteers and would be profiteers would unite to unseat anyone who threatened the insecure status quo, only to become divided on the question of who would succeed the deposed leader. At the other end of this political spectrum, those most affected by this game were the poor and marginalized who became even more vulnerable to the machinations and mystiques of the notable politicians. With the goal of re-unifying Syria and Lebanon a mere pipe dream, political bosses set about to enlarge their constituencies through formal and informal means. Such developments characterized politics in Tripoli after independence.

Returning to where this study began, by the 1960s the landscape of the north remained as instable as before.[694] Upon independence, the promise of a better tomorrow that the constitutional crisis had cultivated crumbled under the increasing social, economic and

[694] Despite the lack of substantive sources on the conditions of the annexed territories during the 1940s and 1950s, one helpful text is *Lebanon and its Provinces*, a collection of speeches delivered by the five *muhafizin* of Lebanon, edited by the *muhafiz* of the North, Dr. Halim Said Abu-Izzeddin, and published in 1963. The general picture of the speeches is that the chronic underdevelopment of the north, south and Bekaa, that had characterized the mandate persisted after independence. Through the winter 1960-1961 when the speeches were delivered, the *muhafizin* attest to the dire conditions of the majority of villages and towns within these areas, which suffered from a nearly total absence of the provision of electricity and roads; and inadequate spending on healthcare and education. In particular, the speech of Abu-Izzeddin suggests that several of the elements that contributed to the public health crisis during the mandate continued such as the lack of suitable water supplies, hospitals and public health investment in different parts of the region. Abu-Izzeddin, 1963, 43-44).

political pressures of the al-Khouri regime.[695] His resignation in 1952 after nearly a decade in power followed another general strike and standoff reminiscent of the constitutional crisis. At the same time, his ouster overlapped with increasing turmoil and violence in the north. In 1953, Muhammad Abboud—who in different circumstance had alerted the Quai d'Orsay to the structural inequality of the mandate during his tenure as the Sunni delegate of Akkar—was killed outside of the presidential palace in Beirut; his assailiant on the eve of legislative elections that year was a supporter of his political rival.[696] His death imperiled a political dynasty to the point that his father Abboud Bey rued the erosion of law and order in the post-mandate era.[697]

Elsewhere, in Tripoli, developments were equally precarious. Informal politics there presaged more upheaval for the al-Karami familiy, in particular, and the overall population, in general. In 1955, the banks of the river flooded the city, especially the Old City,[698] prompting more families to move west into the new suburbs that sprung up following the

[695] For an account of the rise and fall of the al-Khouri regime, Traboulsi, 2007; Hudson, 1985; Atiyah, 1973, Kerr, 1966; Gates, 1998, Gilsenan, 1996, Bashir, 1966; Salibi, 1966.

[696] Gilsenan, 1996, 30. Abboud's rival, Bashir Osman, won the campaign following his death, thus ensuring his re-election. Reporting of Abboud's death comes from the American diplomatic mission in Beirut. "On 23 July, 3 days before the elections, Muhammad al-Abboud had been shot five times as he was leaving the presidential palace. He died in the American University of Beirut hospital on 25 July 1953 'The Assailant, who readily surrendered, was a fanatical follower of Abboud's rival in the parliamentary elections. The father of the deceased, Abboud Bey abd al-Razzaq…has refused to permit the burial of the corpse until retribution had been effected.' The killing shows the 'tribalistic nature of politics still prevailing in certain sections of Lebanon. All deputy candidates at the meeting with the President had firearms and the Minister of Public Works had to resign after two machine guns were discovered in his car." (US National Archives and Records Administration/ C-Washington D.C. 783A. 0017-2953, July 29, 1953, As mentioned in Gilsenan, 1996 page 322 footnote 2)

The same files includes another dispatch of the 1953 elections, that still took place three days following the murder of one of the candidates on 26 July 1953. American officials wrote on the rampant violence and coercion that had underpinned elections, in which male voting for the first time was "mandatory." Describing this atmosphere, officials wrote that, "'virtually every candidate had his coterie of ward-healers, taxi-drivers, bribers, fixers, thugs, pan-hadlers, propangandists and rumor-mongers who roamed the streets with all the trappings of gangsterism." (US National Archives and Records Administration/ C-Washington D.C. 853A 52/12-453 December 4, 1953 as mentioned in Gilsenan, 1996, 323 footnote 2.)

[697] From State Department Files. 853 A 52/12-453 December 4, 1953. Abboud Bey visited the American embassy in Beirut following the murder of his son outside of the presidential palace and commented that "internal security in the country had evidenced a steady deterioration since the departure of the French in 1943. As mentioned in Gilsenan, 1996 Page 323. Footnote 2

[698] Gulick, 1967, 24.

development of lands that had once served as citrus orchards.[699] This westward expansion widened the gap between the increasingly impoverished Old City in the east and the growth of the newer western quarters inhabited by the middle classes.[700] This shifting landscape was the culmination of the political and socio-economic pressures that had thrived during the mandate.

In a manner that the French had envisioned but never accomplished, the flood precipitated the re-orientation of the city. Amid a period of administrative reform under then President General Fuad Chebab designed to resolve the inequalities that had thrived since the mandate in the annexed territories, new funds were made available to develop the areas outside of Beirut.[701] In particular, infrastructural development in the city was facilitated by one of Chehab's prime minister, Rashid al-Karami. He had taken over his father's seat in the legislature following his death to become one of the youngest delegates in the history of the country.[702] Like his father before him, his profile rose to national prominence through his party's armed standoff with the government forces during the 1958 civil war.[703] As the prime minister, the younger al-Karami used the president's policy initiative to penetrate the labyrinth that was the Old City. Several sections of the quarters there were demolished to

[699] Saliba, 2016, 40, 48, 236. In contrast, Rougier insists that following the flood, the cityscape represented the socio-economic divides, with more affluent families moving to the Western quarters and poorer residents from Tripoli and the surrounding countryside inhabiting the eastern quarters that now included the Old City. Rougier, 2015, 24.

[700] For an account of 1950s Tripoli, see Collart, Paul et. al. Lebanon: Suggestions for the Plan of Tripoli and for the Surroundings of the Baalbek Acropolis. Report of the UNESCO Mission of 1953, Tours, France: Arrault & Co., 1954. The report highlights the piecemeal approach of city planning between the new quarters in Tripoli and the older ones, citing that, "widespread private initiative has resulted in a piecemeal approach to the same problems in the case of the modern buildings that have sprung up in the vicinity of the castle." (UNESCO, 1954, 18.) As a result of this piecemeal approach, the city grew divided between the modern quarters and the underdeveloped parts surrounding the Old City.

[701] For an account of the reforms under Chehab, See Bashir, 1966; Bashir, 1977; Salibi, 1966; Abu-Izzeddin, 1963; Culbertson, 1954; Traboulsi, 2007. Espcially informative is the group of speeches by the *muhafizin* and cabinet minister in Abu Izzeddin, 1963, which describes the widespread poverty in the annexed territories that had only worsened in the first twenty years of independence.

[702] According to the author, by 1960, 25% of the deputies in the legislature had inherited their seats from relatives. Salem, Elie Adib, *Modernization without Revolution: Lebanon's Experience*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1973, 56. "Of the four deputies who died in office in 1960," the author goes on to say, "three were succeeded by their children" (Salem, 1973, 56). Rashid's rise to power is discussed in Rougier, 2015, 2.

[703] For an account of Rashid al-Karami during the 1958 war, see Rougier, 2015.

push through new boulevards that linked the Old City to Tall Square and the newer western quarters.[704] In addition, other changes arrived. In particular, al- Karami managed to address the water crisis, finally completing in the 1960s the system of piped water begun by the French in the 1930s.[705] As if to mark the new landscape, al-Karami commissioned a new public statue to mark the twentieth anniversary of Lebanese Independence on November 22, 1963 which depicted his father, the former *mufti*, outlaw and national hero, Abd al-Hamid al-Karami.[706] Yet, as a sign of the increasing coercion, contradictions and social, economic and political pressures of the post-colonial regime, the statue of the *mufti* was demolished the following decade as civil war and foreign invasions mounted across the country.

[704] Describing this redesign, Gulick writes that, "All new streets laid out since the war have conformed to a street plan made by the French in the 1930s. Combining grid design with diagonal avenues intersecting at circles surrounded by concentric rings of streets, the plan was conceptually imposed on the entire triangular plain of Tripoli el-Mina." (Gulick, 1967, 35.)

This new city stood in sharp contrast to the older quarters. The boulevards pushed through the Old City gave the area an unseemly effect. In Gulick's words, "a typical quality to these new streets is that they look as if the wreckers who cleared them arbitrarily ignored anything not standing in their path. At many points these new streets pass between the broken arches and even whole ground-floor rooms of buildings which were otherwise destroyed, and peddlers frequently set up booths in these ruins where they afford some shelter." Gulick, 1967, 209.

In a similar fashion to the UNESCO report and Gulick ethnography, Saliba writes of the city's growing divide with a nod to the to the autobiography series of Lebanese writer and Tripoli resident Khaled Ziadeh, describing that what had been considered the new city established during the mandate years like al-Tall Square had become old as families moved into the newer suburbs created in the 1950s and 1960s. (Saliba, 2016, 40).

[705] Gulick, 1967, 83.

[706] Saliba, 2016, 317.

List of Abbreviations

A/S On the subject of, the equivalent of RE: or in regards to, among French officials in the High Commission.

C carton, the box containing files from the diplomatic archives.

DHCF Delegation of the French High Commission according to its French acronym. Reports from this office were usually sent to the high commission from French advisors posted in one of the five administrative capitals.

DSG Office of General Security according to its French initials. One of the security agencies of the High Commission.

HCF French High Commission according to its French acronyms. Reports with this acronym were usually written by officials within the Cabinet Politique of the high commission.

Info. Information, the term for reports within the Office of General Security.

LL Lebanese pound, the currency of post-independent Lebanon.

LS Lebanese Syrian pound, the currency that the French issued in the mandate.

MAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs according to is French acronyms.

SDN French acronym for the League of Nations.

Bibliography

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

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Appendix

Figure 1. Unofficial Population Estimates of Lebanon by Region and Town

A. Estimated Population of Lebanon, Unofficial Census of 1921

Region	Estimated Population
Beirut	94,932
Tripoli	37,412
North Lebanon	136,498
Mt. Lebanon	199,895
South Lebanon	130,361
Bekaa	111,965
Total	710,563

Source: Himadeh, Said, *Economic Organization of Syria*, 1936. Census of 1921. Appendix1 C-2.410-411. As described in the next chapter, at the time of this census the city of Tripoli was an independent administrative zone separate from that of North Lebanon. Eventually, Tripoli would be incorporated within the muhafaza of North Lebanon in 1929.

B. Estimated Population of Towns of Lebanon, 1931

Town	Estimated Population
Beirut	179,360
Tripoli	51,220
Zahleh	14,780
Sidon	12,710
Baalbek	6,010
Tyre	5,890
Total	805,000

Source: Credit Foncier d'Algerie et de Tunisie, Reporoire Economique et Financier de la Syrie et du Liban, (Paris, 1932, 48) as appeared in Himadeh, Said, The Monetary and Banking System of Syria, Beirut: American Press, 1935, 7.

C. Estimated Population of Lebanon, Unofficial Census of 31 January 1932

Region	Estimated Population of Citizens	Non-Citizens
Beirut	113,404	1,852
North Lebanon	174,921	1,584
Mount Lebanon	227,399	1,610
South Lebanon	151,988	845
Bekaa	118,017	1,776

Total	785,729	7,667
Overall Total:	793,396	

Source. Population Census of Lebanon, 31 January 1932, *Economic Organization of Syria*, Ed. Said Himadeh, Beirut: American Press, 1936, Appendix 1-C-1, 408-409. The class of non-citizen residents include French nationals and inhabitants in Lebanon from other parts of the Levant.

D. Estimated Population of Lebanon, 1942

Region	Estimated Population
Beirut	232,000
North Lebanon	241,000
Mt. Lebanon	278,000
South Lebanon	198,000
Bekaa	167,000
Total	1,116,000

Source: MAE Rapport a la Societe des Nations sur la Situation de la Syrie et du Liban, 1942 as mentioned in Hourani, Albert, Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1946, 85.

Figure 2. Estimated Population Growth in Tripoli

A. The Gulick Estimates

Year	Estimate	Source
1914	27,500	President Tripoli Municipal Council
1922	36000	UNESCO report, 1954
1932	54,876	Official Census, Includes El-Mina (13,400)
1939	90,000	Pres, Tripoli Muncp Council, (30k unreg.)
1943	80,000	UNESCO report, 1954
1946	78,000	Longrigg, First edition
1952	110,000	UNSECO report, 1954
1961	210,000	Pres., Tripoli Council (30k el-Mina)

Source: Gulick, John. *Tripoli: A Modern Arab City*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967, 31. Muhammad Misqawi served as the President of the Tripoli Municipal Council who advised Gulick on these statistics

B. The Saliba Estimates

Year	Estimate	Source
1784	5,000	Volney
1812	15,000	Burckhardt
1830	17,000	Robinson
1881	20,000	Yanni
1894	24,000	Baedecker
1913	33,000	Tammimi and Bahjat
1921	36,000	Unofficial Census of Lebanon

1932	70,000	Unofficial Census of Lebanon
1944	78,000	Edward, Mayow, Hastings, Lloyd

Source: Saliba, 2016, 289, Table 3, Estimated Population Growth of Tripoli.

C. UNESCO Estimates

Year	Estimate
1922	36,000
1943	80,000
1952	110,000

Source: Collart, Paul, Chehab, Maurice, and Dillon, Armando, Eds. Lebanon: Suggestions for the Plan of Tripoli and for the Surroundings of the Baalbek Acropolis. Report of the UNESCO Mission of 1953, Tours, France: Arrault & Co., 1954, 13.

Figure 3. Expansion of the Lebanese Public Budget

Year	Revenue
1924 (L-S pounds)	2,159,400
1927	5,791,532
1933 (Great depression)	4,513,500
1936	4,351,200
1939	6,369,000
1942	12, 504,500
1945	43,764,500
1948 (Lebanese pounds)	67,000,000
1954	125,400,000
1957	170,000,000
1960	222,235,000
1963	425,400,000

Source: Bashir, Iskander E. *Planned Administrative change in Lebanon,* Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1966.

Acknowledgements

Of course there was a great deal that I did not notice,
I had no suspicion of the things that were going on in
front of me. I did not divine the presence of consolation
in the midst of all that was hostile.

-Dostoyevsky, *House of the Dead*.

I had only common sense to rely on,
and it was stimulated into action
by the extraordinary situation.

-Mikhail Bulgakov, *A Country Doctor's Notebook*

Standing on the edge of the southern coast of the île de Nantes, I wondered if I were to fall into this water and the river continued its course to carry me to the Atlantic, would anyone know that I had gone missing. There I was, close to the Atlantic, the body of water that I had practically lived my whole life around, whether in New York, Nassau, Baltimore. Yet I was so far from all the places that I had called home. This side of the Atlantic, the relatively eastern coast far different from that which Americans know, was a different world. And over the next year, I had planned to travel farther east from here.

There are two lessons that I have learned in the course of preparing this dissertation thesis. The first has to do with the ambiguity of evidence. When this odyssey began in the French Diplomatic archives in Nantes, I unexpectedly received special access to top secret files that had been archived for some sixty years. In the hope of answering the questions that developed in the course of reading these files, I searched for more clues in Massachusetts, Beirut, Maryland, and New York while also visiting Greece, Turkey, Britain, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas. I spent almost every day from early November 2015 until June 2016 when I began writing my own narrative and analysis haunted by what I discovered in France. It was only at the conclusion of this odyssey that I was able to reach any kind of coherent answer.

In between those moments when I thought of the crisis in Tripoli described above and witnessing the refugee crisis in Lebanon, I received my first glimp I stumbled upon contemporary developments unfolding all around me. my first experience of the Syrian refugee crisis occurred in the French language courses at L'A.N.A.D.E. in the Hautes Paves quarter of Nantes—how I ended up in the highest level with only one year of education in French, I don't know, and even now causes me to chuckle—where I met Moussa, the former director of the Port of Lattakia and best student in the class. How excited I was when I learned months later in the United States that you were able to reunite with your wife and two young children after two years of residing in France, I cannot express. For your story inspires me with hope even now. *Shukran liMoussa*.

While in France I took a break from these files to meet old friends from my studies in Palestine in Paris. My best memories of that country occurred during that single day spent together In Paris. If it's true that God looks out for babies and fools, the you two, Charlotte

and Tomas, are my guardian angels. I don't think that I've been the only person to get lost in the trains heading toward the Paris suburbs late at night, but you two were kind enough to come to my rescue both times this occurred and spare me my blushes. I really am the Russian cousin that Bulgakov described, yet because of you two, I somehow felt at home. *Merci de vous.*

The week after this *rendez-vous* and four days after I left Paris to return to Nantes, the Bataclan attacks occurred a few miles from where I was staying. The people of France—decent deep down—were kinder to one another afterwards, even the woman at the archives suspicious that I was a thief who insisted that I empty the contents of my notebooks before her eyes whenever it was time to leave the archives. People in Nantes even went so far as acknowledging me in the streets after November 13 for the first time. Despite the pleasantries, Paris was a different city upon my return there a few weeks later. The security, guns, checkpoints may well have been the West Bank. The empty streets around La Place de la Concorde during COP 21 was a stark reminder of how much things had changed. Still, I remember that kind French national at the US Embassy who went the extra mile to find my passport and application lost in the mail. You could have given me the run-around like everyone else and just stated the official policy when I showed up in desperation and disbelief that a parcel with a tracking number and address can suddenly disappear without a trace. I always knew that the agents of Chronopost in Nantes were lying. *Merci beaucoup monsieur.*

Other than this good Samaritan and Charlotte and Tomas, the best interactions that I had with the French people occurred in the archives and within that small converted hotel that I made to me home. Djamel and Jamila were courteous enough to speak to me in French every morning whenever we crossed paths in the narrow hallways, no matter how tired and discombobulated I sounded. Because of you two I will always hold a special affinity with Algerians and French Algerians—no matter the horror stories that Djamel recounted of his memories of the second Algerian civil war. I never did follow your advice to marry a French national in order to stay in the country, but if things get too bleak here in America, I may keep that in mind for another day.

Outside of the residence, a strange cosmopolitan insouciance developed between the Spanish, Moroccans, Italians and few Americans who were forced to make friends with one another during around the lockers and vending machines outside of the library. My interactions with the staff at Le Centre des Archives Diplomatiques meant so much to me. Even now, I am surprised that Paul has cousins in the neighborhood of Baltimore where I went to high school. Your tale of the crabs and beer that you enjoyed when you came over for their weddings brought a smile to my face. Thank you for that.

A special tribute lies with Hanen, who almost spend as many weeks in the archives as I did, in her case struggling to decipher the cursive script of the French administrators overseeing North Africa. I hope that you are still alive my dear. If it were not for you and Marwan, I would have passed every day in the archives in almost complete silence. So many ups and downs we did share together over that year. I do hope to see you again in better times.

The question that menaced me from Halloween was, how could one stand by and watch suffering on a grand scale and not be moved to act in some way to relieve the kinds of desperation recounted in mandate Tripoli and North Lebanon? For months, I was haunted by

the images of faceless bodies languishing and dropping in the streets. I thought that sitting at my desk and going through my notes from the archives would relieve this waking nightmare. In a way it did, but somehow this image would always bring to mind my fresh memories of my time in Beirut.

The humanitarian crisis that I read in the archives became the reality that I witnessed walking the streets of Hamra. Without a doubt, the hardest sight to see were the infants and children, barefoot, hungry sleeping facedown on the sidewalk, or chasing after me for change, or being swaddled in their mother's arms from the cold at night. I never became inured to the plight of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Such daily and short encounters revealed to me that for all the archives and records and files that I or anyone could ever hope to access, there remained an unspeakable level of suffering and experience difficult to grasp. So that no matter how much I learned about a given point in time, there would exist something else just beyond my reach that I could not express.

Once, I was traveling along the same road looking for a bus to a different part of the city (I think) when I saw ahead of me a little girl, maybe 3 or 4, playing in the street as she wore a pink tee shirt that was ripped down the center. As I wondered how it came to pass that this girl was wearing a ripped shirt, a modestly dressed old lady in a hijab yelled to get my attention and pointed at the girl's shirt. I could not make out what she said, it might not have even been a word, but the girl's shirt juxtaposed with her modest attire all to clearly indicated the dire poverty that the family faced. I offered the grandmother the little money that I could dig from my pocket at the time and felt ashamed that I could not offer more. From this I learned that however much some aspects of experience escape my consciousness, it is always possible to see the obvious staring in front of us. Because of this, there exists no cloud of mystery that prevents us from addressing the obvious needs of one another. Still, I just wish that I had more to offer.

The memories never fade, but it has taken me a year to continue where I stopped up to this point. The past year from the moment that I began composing this thesis and acknowledgement until now has been full of setbacks, disappointments, accidents and illnesses. I never thought that it would take me this long to record my souvenirs. In such underestimations there were many.

I saw many more families trickle into Hamra and became more aware of the Syrians employed in the service sector and informal economy of Beirut. These were always the people who smiled at me and seemed interested in something other than money. Even people with jobs would ask me for money, and I grew tired of appearing as some foreign savior.

But the Syrians, they were something else. The more I came to know you, the more terrified I became at the journeys that took you so far, and amazed at the courage you displayed every day. Every destination resembled the news reports that had dominated international headlines for the past two years: Aleppo, Deir al-Zor, Idlib and Damascus, the centers of a dangerous and escalating war only a few hours drive from where I stayed.

My brothers Ammar and Muhammad, you two ran the only vegetable shop that didn't give me food poisoning in Hamra. I shuddered when I learned that you two came from Idlib. Did

you notice the smile on my face when I met our other brother Bashar? He was so funny, even younger than I was, and eager to supply jokes and practice the English that he had learned in university.

Then there was the staff in my home away from home on Hamra street. Muhammad, Myyar and Saher, you were always so generous with your time, even if you never understood why I always ordered a Greek salad for dinner, nor why I ordered it at 6:00 in the evening. Neither the time nor the dish were suitable for dinner according to your tastes, but you never held my eccentricities against me. Those moments when the restaurant was empty and we could just talk and exchange stories sustained me in ways that I never told you.

I was so touched to receive Saher's only watch. He could not have offered a gift more generous in the circumstances. That's the souvenir that I remember the most, the total generosity of strangers who tried their best to welcome and accommodate another stranger in their midst.

The most humbling encounter came one cold spring night as I walked back home from the AUB track. I noticed out of the corner of my eye a family huddled together under the awning of a bookshop: mother, father and their three children under the age of 8 with no place to go for the evening. Their plight weighed on me. The parents could have been my age. Minutes later I gathered up the airplane blankets and money that I had with me and went out to find the family. There they were, in the same place, looking as frightened and bewildered at their sudden circumstances as I was. As I approached, I realized that they were afraid of me—and with good reason. Hamra was full of vice, especially at night. When I handed the family the provisions that I had with me, I noticed the mother swaddling an infant in her arms. These young parents, no older than I was, found themselves homeless with four young children. I suspected that they had just arrived in Lebanon from Syria.

When days later, I saw the family in the same place, this time in the afternoon, I witnessed the agony that the past week had brought to father's face. Despite resembling the strain and stress of the dustbowl mother, he took a break from anxiously smoking cigarettes to say, "thank you" to me in English after I offered him my pocket change. I was so touched and humbled that this stranger sought to accommodate me in my native tongue. (Was my Arabic really that bad?)

The kindness and gentle playfulness of the Syrians that I met sustained my spirits in a way that I didn't realize at the time. My time in Lebanon and memories of the country immediately after leaving oscillated between the humanitarian crisis that I learned of in the archives and the one that I witnessed every day on the street, from reading accounts of those who watched people starve to death to seeing the same helpless desperation and misery day after day.

Even the most intrusive peddlers, hustlers and borrowers were somehow playful with me, especially the children. My last week in Lebanon, I sought one of the shoe-shine boys that menaced the streets of Hamra to clean the boots that I soiled in Baalbek. Shortly after finding him, one of his colleagues approached me and inquired as to whether he could clean the shoes that I was wearing at the time. When I told him that my sneakers did not need cleaning, he insisted and I relented. After he finished, he refused to accept the price that we agreed upon. The first boy, who was still cleaning my boots, told me in English no less "no money.

He did only water." In fact, he made my shoes worse than they really were. After I refused to offer him more cash—I had almost ran out of Lebanese lira and decided to save my last 20,000 note for the taxi—he threatened to denounce me to the police. He then proceeded to (pretend to) call the police. When the first boy from Deir al-Zor, finished, I offered him the money and went away. My accuser followed me and finally accepted the money that we had agreed to exchange.

During another late-night walk home from the track, I saw another family sleeping under the stars, this time at the entrance to an underground garage. I watched I the mother attempted to nurse her infant baby with a milk bottle, making vivid the story of Jesus and Marry in the manger. Quickly, however, my thoughts were interrupted. Apparently, the mother noticed me as well. Before I could realize what was unfolding, her two daughters had chased me down the street. They must have been twins I later realized. But at the time, one pulled at my arms while the other attempted to jump on me, both shouting, "Halib! Halib! Halib lil baby." How in the world, I wondered, could I provide them with money to buy milk for the bay if these two five years-olds continued to jump on me and precluded me from moving the hands that were still ensconced in my pockets. Eventually, I stepped back and offered them the little pocket money that I had with me. it wasn't much, since I rarely kept money with me at night to avoid getting accosted in the manner that the two girls and their shrewd mother had accomplished. Before I could regret my meager offering, the girls had scurried back to their mother. That offering was the closest I came to playing the role of one of the three wise men. Afterward, I looked for that family but never managed to find them again.

Maybe they found a home. Once, while getting lost invariably, this time in search of the Bibliotheque Orientale, I passed by a small road and saw coming out of the doorway (for there was no door) of an abandoned home a whole family of women and children. I rarely saw men. They must have not been able to bear residing in the vacant house during the day. The old women looked as if they had just stepped out of a war zone. Yet, the children, like so many children I came across, always had a different look beyond the grief and terror and stress.

I was never able to discern this look until my final week in Lebanon. I sat down with Ali and Ayman. The lock on the door of my apartment broke when I went out for breakfast. Before I could scarf down the food that I picked up in my room, my landlord told me that it would take some time for the locksmith to come. Equal parts dejected, hungry and in need of a shower, I tried to suppress my emotions while standing in the street. My only recourse was to eat that sandwich as quickly as I could. The boys recognized my sorry state and motioned for me to first wipe my face of the tahini sauce there and later invited me to join them.

That was the moment that I learned the backgrounds of the two boys whom I had always seen since my first arrival, sitting on the car outside of my building. This day I joined them on the open trunk of the car parked outside of the tiny convenience store where they worked. Their shop was in the firs floor of my building and run by the family who rented the space from my landlord, the building's owner. The two boys from Aleppo found employment in the shop after coming to Beirut by themselves. They were more interested in the goings-on of my apartment than in describing their background. So I told them what I thought of my fellow roommates: they were all crazy, came from different parts of the world, and were poorly liked by me.

While I had initially misunderstood their question in my tired, frustrated and bewildered state, that conversation taught me the second lesson that I learned in the course of my fieldwork. In my confusion, I told them that I had no friends in Beirut in response to their question of what my roommates were like. Always polite, they told me, they recognized my error and said, "Oh no. Don't worry. We'll be your friends. Sit down for a while with us and together, you can gain the strength you lack now." All my problems wouldn't disappear, but if I were patient, enough of them would to allow me to carry on like the little drummer boy.

It was in such moments as these that I realized that I was never as close to the river's edge as I had feared. The kind ad generosity of so many held me up even when I didn't realize it. I love you all.

Dr. Wafa Daouk, you comforted me when I was at my lowest, confused and bewildered by the throbbing pain in my hand. I'm still embarrassed that I screamed when you pressed down into the insect bite that I had. I don't know what I would have done had you not given me free samples of the antibiotics that my wound required. One day I hope to have health insurance.

Dr. Youssef, you were more than my landlord but a treasured guide and gentleman. In truth, I see a little bit of the sage Yoda in you. You and your wife opened your door to me when I knocked in the middle of the night with a dire case of food poisoning. Always you guided me with directions whenever I was lost and did your best to make me feel comfortable. I want to be like you when I grow up.

Little Nour, my favorite part of the day was passing you and your sisters on the street. I was always amazed at how all for of you resembled your mother there beside you. One of my proudest moments was receiving a smile from her on the day that I donated the dishware and food that my roommates left behind. You are al lovely. But I hope to never see you on the streets again.

Serkan and Federico, you made that madhouse what was our shared apartment bearable. My only wish was that you had arrived earlier. The few times that I actually felt at ease were in your presence. Grazie mille.

Ahmad and habibi al-brazili, Rodrigo, you two represented the best of times. Its' amazing to think that neither one of us is actually from Lebanon. But here's to many more times together abroad.

Back in London, I don't know what I would have done without you Dzenita. I never told you, but the moment when we met in the computer lab at SOAS, I was in the middle of looking for a place to stay. That was the third time that I had arrived in an international city without a home. From then until now, you have been my good luck charm. Thank you so very very much.

To old friendships renewed: Kayla, Boin, Johanne, Sophia, Pauline, Taryn, Soukaina, Joseph, Aisha and Melissa. The women in my life have made it all the better. In a way you're all like my fairy godmothers. Thank you for putting up with all of my meanderings.

Patrick, you've landed me in more trouble that I ever cared for, but it has sure been a lot of fun, the perfect kindling for countless stories that I will tell by the fire when I'm old.

Professors Gilsenan, Khalidi, Mitchell, Neep, Sbaiti, Corinna and Nisrine, thank you for your kind words of encouragement, suggestions and comments. I was overwhelmed with the material, but somehow your words reassured me.

To my family, who have brooked my disappearances, distractions, doubts and difficulties. Your unwavering support and unconditional love have sustained me in all my travels so that I know that I'm always in reach of home wherever I go.

To my dear mother, who has encouraged me to broaden my horizons and cheered me on along the way from the initial first day of school at 5 to the last first day at 26.

Jeff, I have not yet managed to find that avatar font, but I'm still looking. My thesis would have looked sleeker if I had, but I deep down I know that it doesn't come from ClipArt. Maybe I will find it in time for my next publication.

To my grandfather Stafford David Coakley, whose stories of the London that he knew as a resident in the 1960s planted the seeds for my own residence there. By the time you went there, you were around the same age as I was upon entering my doctoral program, except that you were responsible for five children whereas I could hardly manage to find secure housing for myself. It is a tribute to you and my grandmother Joan, that somehow you managed to inspire the rest of your family with that same progressive outlook.

David, you have carried me when I could barely walk, fed me, chauffeured me and done everything that a brother could request from another. Through the lows and the more profound lows, you have been my real twin. Ever since we rode the bus to Ms. Lil's school for pre-K, you have been by my side. You once (partially, foreshadowing the snark that has since become a mainstay) joked that I owe all my success in life to you when we studied together at Calvert Hall College. You were more right than I realized.

And last but not least, this work is dedicated to the memory of A.E.C. and his surviving family. I had the pleasure of sending you my master's thesis, but sadly, not my doctoral work. Even now, you are the best of all the friends whom I've had and lost.

D.S.O.
Somewhere on the train
Between Washington and Baltimore.
August 2017