

DIASPORA POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENTAL EMPIRE: THE SYRO-LEBANESE AT THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

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*We grant readily that France has made certain investments in Syria and that she has been paying some of the bills of this adventure in mandatory rule. But . . . the more Syria becomes indebted to France, the less is she likely to free herself of the bondage that has been placed upon her by the League of Nations. France will always have the excuse that until Syria is able to meet her obligations, Syria will need French “tutelage” and “assistance.”*¹

—Syrian American Society of the United States, 1926

Just before the outbreak of World War I, a villager in Lebanon, when asked about the size of his community, replied, “five thousand abroad and one thousand at home, for purposes of reproduction.”² This answer, while acknowledging the large Syro-Lebanese diaspora, anticipated the difficulties that Syrian and Lebanese communities in the Eastern Mediterranean

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faced in sustaining their populations.³ Through the disintegration and destruction of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, the famine, and later the conflicts and political reconfigurations (including peace treaties and two decades of French rule), Lebanon and Syria faced a crisis of biological, political, economic, and cultural reproduction.⁴ During this period, the large Syro-Lebanese migrant diaspora would remain critical to the Eastern Mediterranean communities' ability to navigate traumatic events. The relationship between Syro-Lebanese abroad and those at home, maintained by a constant circulation of people, goods, and ideas, would evolve radically during the interwar period, but remained crucial to the "sensing" and "placing" of the Syrian Mandate within the imperial and global systems of the day.⁵

This article explores the influence of the Syro-Lebanese diaspora—broadly construed to reflect its intrinsic complexity—on the political economy of Mandate Syria-Lebanon⁶ during the years of French control in the 1920s and 1930s. By doing so, I argue (as part of a growing historiography on Arabs in the Americas⁷) that historians must place the mandate within the context of its global diaspora and move beyond analysis limited simply to national or colonial spaces. I briefly examine the French attempts during World War I to mobilize a "Syrian Legion," recruited by and among the diaspora, which would fight alongside the Entente powers against the Ottomans. Such manipulation of the Syro-Lebanese diaspora by French imperial rulers became habitual throughout the interwar years. Most notably, the Syrian Legion illustrates how French authorities cultivated a repertoire of simplified historical-cultural knowledge about the Syro-Lebanese diaspora in order to nourish Paris's hopes that these communities would become a pliable military-political auxiliary of French colonial interests. We also see how diaspora groups both facilitated and resisted this literal and discursive conscription, sometimes adapting French rhetoric in order to articulate and broadcast their own ideas.

In this article's second section, I assess the varying contexts in which diaspora criticism of the French Mandate's economic policies developed during the 1920s, as well as the nature of that criticism. The memorandum of the Syrian American Society of the United States, cited above as an epigraph, exemplifies this criticism. By looking at writings that emerged out of the Syro-Lebanese diaspora in Washington, DC, New York City,

São Paulo, and Geneva, I address the way in which the League of Nations operated as a forum for political norms⁸ and as an amplifier for debates on economic questions,⁹ thereby heightening the visibility of both the debates and the debaters.

As such, this article attends to the precise ways in which the Syro-Lebanese diaspora participated in the Mandate's political economy during a time of rapid regional and global change. In so doing, it goes beyond traditional nationalist, anticolonial historiographies and nuances theories of diaspora and empire.¹⁰ I place the Mandate system, often depicted as a prelude to nation-states or as a brief and abortive postscript to colonial empire,¹¹ in a transnational and global context.¹² Moreover, the focus here on the circulation of ideas about political economy contributes to a growing historical-sociological literature on colonial economy.¹³ By attending to Syro-Lebanese diaspora critique of that system, my approach challenges analyses—such as that of Carlo Cristiano's work on Keynes—that remain excessively Eurocentric and emphasize the economic ideas of European intellectuals.¹⁴ Finally, by bringing together the history of the Syro-Lebanese diaspora with that of the League of Nations, this article emphasizes both the importance and limits of international organizations before World War II and their role in facilitating the exchange of ideas across imperial boundaries.¹⁵

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, large numbers of people emigrated from Ottoman Syria to other parts of the eastern Mediterranean, notably Egypt, and to the Americas.¹⁶ In the decades following the 1860 French intervention on behalf of Christian client groups, the diaspora grew rapidly. Depressed global economic conditions,¹⁷ exacerbated in the Ottoman Empire by periods of Hamidian and Young Turk authoritarianism and by interludes of inter-community strife, pushed many emigrants onto ever-cheaper steamships sailing across the Atlantic. Moreover, European capitulatory freedoms helped ship captains and owners to ignore Ottoman rules on trafficking people.¹⁸ This diaspora from the Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire was not monolithic. Rather, it was shaped by destination, generation, socioeconomic class, religion, and gender, and by the nature of the relationship each community had to its point of origin, including the regularity (or not) of return migration.¹⁹ Indeed, at the close of World War I, the global Syro-Lebanese community sharply disagreed over the question of how its home region should evolve politically.

A Diverse Diaspora

To get a sense of the different kinds of political visions circulating among Syro-Lebanese activists globally during and just after World War I,²⁰ this article examines six overlapping strands of thought.²¹ First, some called for an independent Greater Lebanon in its “natural and historical” frontiers, and under unspecified great power protection, though they were also wary of the influence of French business interests in the region. The Alliance Libanaise, founded in 1909 in Egypt, held this view,²² as did the Comité Libanais de Paris, associated with Khayrallah Khayrallah,²³ although this latter group favored complete independence from great power control. A second group hoped for an expanded Lebanon under French protection but enjoying substantial autonomy. The patriarch of the Maronite church took this position. As time passed, however, and disillusionment with the French set in, many Maronites began to argue for full independence.²⁴ A third “protectionist” group called for Lebanon to become either a French department on the Algerian model or a protectorate on the historical model of the Crusader states, with a Maronite emir presiding over the organization of interior affairs.²⁵ A fourth group proposed a larger Syrian federation organized and supervised by France, a position championed especially by the Comité Central Syrien (CCS), one of the main groups analyzed in this article, though others in this strand rejected the premise of French control. A fifth group, composed of Syrian nationalist Muslims and some Christians, called for an independent Arab state, under a Faysalite-monarchist or republican banner, that would include a semi-autonomous Mount Lebanon.²⁶ This alliance coalesced during the wake of the Syrian Revolt²⁷ and gathered force in the 1930s, when Syrian nationalists sought to follow Iraq out of mandatory tutelage.²⁸ Finally, a sixth group called for an expansive Syrian Union under the protection of the United States, the latter construed not as an empire, but in its most Wilsonian guise as an advocate and protector of self-determined national states.²⁹ The Nouvelle Ligue Nationale Syrienne supported this position, as did immigrants in North and South America, and those who attended the US-guided Syrian Protestant College in Beirut.³⁰

Within these strands of thought, adherents held a variety of perspectives about Syria, Lebanon’s relationship to it, and their relations with an

external power. The redrawing of political borders and shifts in the balance of power at the close of World War I influenced the political field in the diaspora, making the conflict both a radical watershed, as new majorities and minorities emerged and the Ottoman state collapsed,³¹ and an occasion for reinventing existing political positions and techniques.³² As Keith Watenpaugh and others have argued, World War I transformed larger Syrian society even as Ottoman legacies continued to influence highly fluid postwar politics.³³

That variety and evolution notwithstanding, the relationship between Eastern Christian constituencies and French colonial authorities also played an important part in Syria's transformation.³⁴ It was this privileged connection to Syro-Lebanese Christians in particular that led French officials to think of the diaspora as a powerful, potentially unified, and pro-Mandate political and economic force. The Bonapartist iterations of the French state had won the support of French Catholics during the nineteenth century, through foreign policy interventions on behalf of Eastern Christians. Indeed the military cartography of the French expedition to Lebanon in 1860-61 proved influential in the later imagining of Greater Lebanon.³⁵ Notably, in Paris, "the Ottoman community . . . [was] . . . a hub of political activity"³⁶ before 1914. French victory in World War I, followed by the location of the Peace Conference in the French imperial metropole,³⁷ further strengthened the ability of well-connected diaspora groups to intercede in the constellation of state and parastate agencies steering French imperial foreign policy. In 1919, the French estimated the diaspora to include perhaps a million people, divided primarily between North and South America, West Africa, the Levant, and France.³⁸ By the mid-1920s, immigration quotas in the United States redirected emigrants to Brazil, making it the principal destination of new emigration.³⁹ But this change only added to the diaspora's importance in the minds of various interested French groups. For example, an interwar study in the bulletin of the Union Économique de Syrie (UES) estimated "that 600,000 to 800,000 Syrians live outside Syria and an astute policy can make of them collaborators in our economic and moral expansion. This is an issue of the highest importance."⁴⁰

The UES's perspective on the Syro-Lebanese diaspora deployed what Nathaniel Mathews calls a "durable bundle of meaning,"⁴¹ a resilient and frequently reiterated repertoire of arguments, rooted in stock historical

and cultural accounts. This repertoire included the legacy of centuries of French political intervention in the region, the tradition of commercial investment centered on the silk trade, and French educational institutions in Lebanon. The latter had fostered doctrines like neo-Phoenicianism that postulated a cultural-political continuity between the Mediterranean trading people of antiquity and the Beirut-Marseilles connections of the early twentieth century.⁴²

Building a Syrian Legion

To understand the impact of these connections, it is crucial to turn to the French colonial authorities' efforts to create a Syrian Legion in late World War I. The Syrian Legion was an infantry unit, which in addition to many Armenian volunteers recruited some of its soldiery and funding from the Syro-Lebanese diaspora, especially in the Americas. Its history helps us understand why the French viewed the diaspora as they did and how the diaspora both nourished and resisted French colonialism to suit its own agenda. The French created the Legion to fight alongside other colonial forces in a Franco-British campaign against the Ottomans (one that was led by General Allenby near the end of World War I). Some Paris-based Syro-Lebanese groups, keen for influence and a role in the war effort, also backed the Legion. For these groups, the Legion crystalized loyalty to the Entente forces, anti-Turkish sentiment, Christian or cultural Francophilia, a sense of potential post-war rewards, and an awareness of the importance of "recruitment politics."⁴³

The Paris Comité Central Syrien (CCS) of Shukri Ghanim and Georges Samna, both Syrian intellectuals and publicists well established in France, and the New York League for the Liberation of Lebanon and Syria were both founded in June 1917. They were especially supportive of this recruitment drive among the diaspora to fight under the French flag in a Syrian Legion or a "Legion of the Orient."⁴⁴ The CCS maintained branches across the English Channel in London and Manchester; Georges Samna later described the recruitment enterprise as a success, in keeping with the message of French propaganda. He noted that in June 1917 the French state had dispatched two CCS emissaries, Jamil Mardam Bey and Dr. Lakah, to South America for eight months to raise sympathy, troops, and funds for the Legion. The

mission met with a mixed reception. They reported an enthusiastic welcome in Brazil from crowds who carried tricolor bouquets in loyalty to France and a Syro-Lebanese community that donated 100,000 francs toward the cause.⁴⁵ The Syro-Lebanese of Buenos Aires were less receptive. Many of them were affiliated with the Alliance Libanaise in Cairo and were in favor of an independent Lebanon under great power guarantee. Across the Andes in Santiago, the CCS emissaries reported that the Syro-Lebanese population refused to be dictated to by the numerically superior Porteño community. “We are not slaves to the Lebanese of Buenos Aires,” they declared, and thus proved friendlier to the CCS’s pro-French agenda.⁴⁶ Despite this mitigated recruitment success, however, Samna noted that by the end of 1917 the Legion was in action in the Near East.⁴⁷

Some among the diaspora reacted to this loudly trumpeted success with cautious and nuanced interrogation. In an exchange in April 1918, Shukri Ghanim, a close collaborator of Samna, fielded questions in the colonialist newspaper *Correspondance d’Orient* from a Brazilian-Lebanese group called the Renaissance Libanaise de São Paulo (RLSP). The exchange contained two particularly illuminating passages. First, the RLSP asked for clarification regarding the CCS’s relationship with Parisian Lebanese lobby organizations and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Did the CCS, in other words, merely wish to champion Maronite interests or be a puppet of the Quai d’Orsay? Second, the RLSP wanted to know whether tens of thousands of Syrian Legionnaires were *really* already based in Cyprus, poised to attack the Ottoman armies. The question gives us a sense of how exposed members of the diaspora felt to French propaganda efforts, and how actively critical of them they could be.

Wishing to position his organization as an ecumenical and authoritative institution within the diaspora, Ghanim replied to the first question that older diaspora groups like the Comité Libanais in Paris had dissolved in 1914. In his opinion, the war marked a new Syro-Lebanese unity. Ghanim stated that the CCS had a broader agenda than that of the Maronite Christians living in the Lebanese mountains, whose influence had dominated the older Comité Libanais.⁴⁸ He claimed (rather ironically, given the colonialist nature of the newspaper printing the exchange) that the CCS was in no sense linked to any “colonial party.” In multiple respects—personal, institutional, and ideological—this statement was untrue, though we should not therefore see the CCS as a puppet organization or a mere channel for the opinions of the

Quai d'Orsay. Indeed, aware of the global appeal of Wilsonian, nationalist ideas at the time, and conscious of the need to palliate suspicions that his group was a front for French interests, Ghanim questioned the validity of the term "colonial party" and the existence of any such group, presenting the Syrian Legion in anti-Ottoman terms instead.⁴⁹

In response to the second question, however, Ghanim admitted that between 1916 and 1918, the Legion recruited only 550 Syrians, along with about 4,000 Armenians, many of whom had fled persecution in the Ottoman territories.⁵⁰ The CCS, in conjunction with local organizations in the Americas, managed recruitment for the Legion. Following a medical checkup, recruits were supposed to be shipped to France. Paid two francs a day, they were classed as auxiliaries and were to be employed as workers in war industries if they were not fit for military service.⁵¹ The entire operation was supposed to be conducted with "discretion," since the recruitment proceeded in neutral countries among people who were neither citizens nor nationals of France.⁵² But despite the CCS's repeated claims that the recruitment would yield great numbers of men, results proved unsatisfactory. In a series of increasingly angry letters, army officers charged with organizing and training the Legion in Cyprus pointed out that, contrary to "assurances reiterated so many times," recruitment had largely failed. "On 1 October 1917, the number of Syrian Volunteers enrolled was only 263 men," one officer wrote.⁵³

Correspondence between Quai d'Orsay representatives in Paris and Rio de Janeiro, and between War Ministry representatives in Cyprus and Paris, also reveals French scorn of the recruits' quality.⁵⁴ French officers portrayed the Syrian recruits as "vain, verbose, scheming [. . .] fakers of illness and characterized by a complete lack of trust in everything."⁵⁵ Drawing on a long colonial tradition of identifying "non-martial races," one officer asserted that the Syrian recruits were a bad influence on the "hardier" Armenians. Moreover, fumed French officials, the Syrians apparently sought to justify their alleged "indiscipline and lack of military spirit" by claiming that they had not been told precisely what their role would be in the Legion.⁵⁶ The official French portrayal of the Syro-Lebanese recruits anticipates later, negative, French characterizations of Mandate citizens as generically mercantile and individualist and at best commercially adept auxiliaries. Using such caricatures, subsequent French policymakers would often try to deny the Syro-Lebanese diaspora access to decision-making. The "auxiliarizing" approach of the French authorities was therefore a harbinger of things to come.

Complaints of French officers, or the promises of diaspora leaders like Samna and Ghanim, do not, of course, capture the lived experience of Syro-Lebanese recruits in the Legion. Even those soldiers who ranked their participation as “positive” might actually have engaged in pragmatic individual survival. For example, in the Philippines, US authorities treated the Syro-Lebanese diaspora with harsh suspicion because they suspected diaspora sympathy for the Ottoman enemy. In Manila, therefore, members of the diaspora may have served in the Syrian Legion as a way of proving loyalty to the Entente powers.⁵⁷ Such complex relationships continued and developed after the war, as diaspora Syro-Lebanese leveled various criticisms at the economic strategy of the French Mandate authorities. It is to those postwar views that we now turn.

Diaspora and the French Mandate

Syro-Lebanese clubs and organizations in the diaspora communicated with one another in part through newspapers, where they published their critiques of the Mandate.⁵⁸ Through correspondence and by reprinting each other’s articles, these institutions fostered social spaces in which discrete communities across the world debated ideas and evolved politically. Clubs organized existing commercial, cultural, and familial connections, and newspapers encouraged collective adherence to political agendas. For example, *Assalam*, a newspaper based in Buenos Aires, printed increasingly anti-Mandate articles during the early 1920s.⁵⁹ The paper took a pro-Hashemite line in 1919 and strongly criticized the French arrest of the Conseil du Liban, an Ottoman-era representative organization that had tried to rally to Faysal in Damascus. *Assalam* regarded such actions as colonialist and compared them to French aggression in the protectorate of Tunisia, its colonial departments in Algeria, and in the colony of Madagascar. In correspondence with reproving French consular officials in Buenos Aires, the editor of *Assalam*, Alejandro Shamun, pointed out that he was not dogmatically anti-French, but that he retained the right to criticize French policies and to practice the ideals of liberty that French power only superficially supported.⁶⁰ *La Patrie*, a French-language, pro-Faysal, Syro-Lebanese newspaper in Santiago went on to reprint *Assalam*’s articles.

Indeed, as the reproaches of the French consul in Buenos Aires suggest, influenced by their interlocutors in the Lebanese diaspora the French continued to envisage the Syro-Lebanese diaspora as potential investors in the French-managed “regeneration” of Syria after 1918. What made this notion of regenerative investment viable, without risking any loss of French power, was precisely the idea of the diaspora as wealthy and politically distant. Colonial authorities imagined that the diaspora could therefore act not only as commercial agents to French businesses and ideas, but also as silent—and silenced—partners in the Mandate’s political economy. For instance, the French Information Bureau wrote in 1927 that:

Many Syro-Lebanese make their fortune [once they emigrated] and possess resources that could almost independently finance the *economic development* of their country of origin, by sending the requisite capital there. If a tenth of them, say 100,000 people, could invest a few thousand francs in each of the industrial and agricultural businesses that will regenerate Syria, imagine what prosperity they could guarantee the country.⁶¹

The diaspora responded to this wishful thinking in multiple ways after World War I. Certainly, it had collectively remitted capital to Syria-Lebanon, thereby supporting the economy there. During the war, the diaspora engaged in numerous relief efforts, such as the Union of Syrian Ladies sending aid parcels from Alexandria or Maronite intellectual Charles Corm organizing food distribution efforts in Beirut in 1919. It is not surprising, then, that some groups bought into the French vision for a Mandate in Syria and Lebanon. In October 1918, the French consul in New York City met with two predominantly Maronite, pro-French, Syro-Lebanese organizations and the editors of five community newspapers to record those groups’ enthusiastic support for a French Mandate. We should note again the privileged access Christian Lebanese enjoyed to French power. As Fawwaz Traboulsi states, in Syria-Lebanon itself, immediately after the war the American King-Crane mission—sent by the Paris Peace Conference to assess the political preferences of the Syrian population but whose conclusions the great powers then ignored—received 1,863 petitions and delegations from thirty-six cities and 1,520 villages. But while

fully 80 percent of the respondents voted for a united Syria, 74 percent supported independence and 60 percent chose a ‘democratic and decentralized constitutional monarchy’ . . . in the event of the imposition of a foreign mandate on Syria, sixty percent opted for an American mandate, a much smaller number for a British mandate, and only 14 percent, mainly Lebanese Maronites, requested a French Mandate.⁶²

The support offered to the French consul in New York represented only one (minority) perspective on the French Mandate and its economic development plans for Syria and Lebanon.

Unsurprisingly, then, as early as 1920, after the French deposed the Hashemite monarchy in Damascus, a group called the New York City Party for the Liberation of Syria published a pamphlet arguing that the French had come to Syria unwanted and uninvited. It added that even in 1919, only a few Lebanese had been pleased with the new mandate and that they had since “repented.” Cataloguing what it described as the “crimes of the regime,” the pamphlet focused on the political economy of Syria and Lebanon. It noted that national companies, such as the railways, had already been allocated to French interests, thus “depriving the *indigènes*.” The pamphlet argued: “The concessions of the country are an easy target for the colonizers, and they farm out such businesses like a feudal privilege to those *indigènes* with whom they’re most pleased.”⁶³ The rhetorical violence of this position drew on the language of French colonialism and the highly charged term of *indigène*, a legal category describing a condition of legal-political subservience, to signal a distance between the diaspora in New York City and Syro-Lebanese in the Levant. And even as it did so, it spoke on the behalf of the latter, using the US diaspora’s greater freedom from censorship to influence French policy in the Mandate. Second, and more directly, the pamphlet declared diaspora contempt for the wealthy Syro-Lebanese whose collaboration with the “regime” had earned them access to concessionary opportunities. This frankness shows how diaspora communities’ freedom from censorship afforded them opportunities to offer condemnations or solutions that those in the Mandate territories could not.

Another example of this type of “long-distance criticism” appears during the years of the Great Revolt in Syria (1925–27), when the French Foreign Ministry received numerous letters from Christian Syro-Lebanese

diaspora communities seeking to leverage their strong connections to the French authorities. Scholars like Michael Provence have shown how complex the Revolt's dynamics were, operating as much along class and rural-urban divides as through sectarian divisions.⁶⁴ Syro-Lebanese Christian diaspora petitioners in the United States certainly engaged in sectarian advocacy, however. More extreme voices among these emigrants requested the extermination of "Druze rebels," the Druze community in the Levant, or even "Muslims" in all of Syria. One example is a letter to the *New York Times* in November 1925. In it, Naoum A. Mokarzel, editor of *Al-Hoda* newspaper and the president of the Lebanese League of Progress, stated that French protection of Lebanese Christians through the Mandate was the only barrier between them and an unholy alliance of American missionaries, foreign powers, and "the ruthless fanaticism of the Mohammedan element." As the *New York Times* summarized Mokarzel's intervention: "A Western Power's Protection is Declared Essential until Islam learns to be Tolerant—Situation unchanged since the Crusades."⁶⁵ Mokarzel's position attracted further letters to the editor from other Lebanese Christians in the diaspora who took exception to his opinions. Indeed, it is difficult to say how representative Mokarzel's views were. Further research should seek to quantify diaspora responses in the press to establish the prevalence of the different reactions to the Revolt and the weight and social position of the respective readerships. Mokarzel's anti-Muslim and pro-French line, however, did emerge from an influential tradition of Franco-Lebanese Christian thought.⁶⁶

Another example of diaspora intervention in French policy is evident in the misleading narratives circulating among emigrants of a besieged "Lebanese Mountain" during the Great Revolt. Even after the French had brutally suppressed the revolt in 1927,⁶⁷ both the French Foreign Ministry and the CCS continued to receive concerned telegrams from Syro-Lebanese Christian groups in North America worried about intersectarian conflict and advocating ethno-religious segregation. The United Syrian Christian Association (USCA), based in Worcester, Massachusetts, claimed sixteen American branches and a Brooklyn-published newspaper called *The Eagle*. It wrote to the CCS in February 1927 expressing its concern for the safety of Christians in inland, majority-Druze areas and urging that the French Mandate transfer Christians *en masse* to coastal Lebanon. The USCA also asked the CCS to lobby the French high commissioner in Beirut to indem-

nify Christian groups for damages incurred during the fighting.⁶⁸ While acknowledging that the idea of Syrian national unity was “modern and progressive,” the USCA concluded that Lebanon needed independence from Syria under the protection of the French. This need was due to the presence of “barbarian” groups like the Druze in the Levant (though in economic matters, the USCA acknowledged that “fusion” was desirable).⁶⁹ Not all diaspora groups in the United States supported the French Mandate; a 1920 pamphlet of the Parti de la Libération de la Syrie of New York City reveals that group to be anti-French. Such groups, however, illustrate a dynamic whereby efforts to mobilize the diaspora in support of policies in the Mandate territories provoked unforeseen responses and initiatives among diaspora groups.

Moreover, such groups often backed up their rhetoric with financial capital, transferring substantial funds to Lebanon through charities engaged in political philanthropy. In this enterprise, Syrian and Lebanese Christians enjoyed a marked advantage over their Druze and Muslim counterparts. Their earlier migration waves to the United States in the last three decades of the nineteenth century allowed them to accumulate greater wealth by the time of the Great Revolt than those who came later.⁷⁰ Also, while Muslim and Druze emigrants tended to work in lower-wage industrial jobs in the mid-1920s, Syro-Lebanese had in general moved on to more rapid modes of capital accumulation.⁷¹ Thus, the “Rachayya United Benevolent Society” and other associated groups backed their concern for the Lebanese town of Rashayya during the Syrian Revolt with 1.28 million francs in 1926–27. Meanwhile, the Syrian Mount Lebanon Relief Committee, a Maronite organization, dispatched 166,000 US dollars between 1925 and 1927, to offset damage the Revolt caused to Maronites.⁷² By comparison, the French ambassador in Washington, DC reported to Paris in December 1925 that the Druze communities in the United States raised and dispatched 8,000 US dollars in support of the revolt.⁷³ This claim was confirmed by a simultaneous letter from the High Commission in Beirut to Paris requesting intensification of counter-propaganda efforts in the Americas, since some emigrants there were sending money to support the revolt.⁷⁴ Even if those groups supporting the revolt were outspent in the North American diaspora, their fundraising clearly alarmed the French colonial authorities.

Who Represents the Diaspora ?

In a letter dated February 1927 to the CCS, the USCA of Worcester, Massachusetts observed that four leading members of a diaspora Syrian nationalist organization called the “Syrian-Palestinian Congress” (SPC) came to the United States to attend a fundraiser in Detroit in mid-January 1927.⁷⁵ These leaders, Shakib Arslan, Tawfiq al-Yaziji, Nasim Sayba’, and ‘Abd al-Rahman Shabanda, traveled from Cairo (where the SPC was founded) as well as Geneva, Switzerland, to attend the meeting.⁷⁶ They were prominent reformist intellectuals and politicians of Arab nationalism, drawn from a variety of sectarian backgrounds.⁷⁷ During the 1920s and 1930s, the SPC became a staple presence in Geneva, lobbying constantly, leading petition drives, and obtaining informal meetings with League of Nations officials such as William Rappard. Funded substantially by the fortunes of its wealthy leaders, and in the 1930s also by contributions from the French and Axis governments alike, the SPC suffered politically from the narrowness of its social base. Nonetheless, its leaders, Michel Lutfallah and Shakib Arslan, played a significant role in the diplomacy of the Syrian Mandate, helping to negotiate the Syrian independence treaty in 1936 (on which France reneged). Though the SPC was only one candidate for the support of the pro-independence tranche of the Syro-Lebanese diaspora, it was arguably the most prominent group that claimed—in the absence of any electoral mechanism—to speak on behalf of Syrians and Lebanese everywhere.

Still, not everyone considered the SPC to represent the diaspora, especially due to its distance from the centers of diaspora population. A telegram of 30 October 1921, from As‘ad ‘Arqash to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League (PMC) described Lutfallah as a self-titled “amir” and as a “megalomaniac expatriate,” born and raised in Egypt and followed only by a crew of “convicts and villains.” Other telegrams, signed mostly by elites favorable to the French Mandate, poured in from Syria-Lebanon via the Quai d’Orsay in late 1921 rejecting the SPC as, above all, unrepresentative. From Beirut came the signatures of Christians Michel Chiha and Emile Eddé and Druze leader ‘Ali Junblatt (20 September 1921); from Damascus came a message from notables who held government posts (27 September 1921); and from Aleppo came those of the Chaldean, Armenian, Jewish, Maronite, Greek Orthodox, and Catholic religious executives (29 September

1921). The SPC responded to this opposition by denouncing the Lebanese and Syrian representatives to the Lausanne conference in July 1923, 'Ata Bey Ayyubi and Auguste Pacha Edib, as little more than French stooges.⁷⁸

Why Geneva ? The League of Nations as a Hub for Diaspora Activism

Haunted by the question of representativeness—by the gap between diaspora being and diaspora belonging—the SPC located itself in Geneva, the headquarters of the League of Nations. Geneva was the locus of international mediation and media-driven amplification of the Mandate and its political economy. Susan Pedersen has described the Mandates system as more “a mechanism for generating publicity and norms than ... a system of governance: League oversight proliferated information and publicity about the Mandates and offered legitimacy to those powers that complied with the system’s formal requirements and professed to uphold its norms.”⁷⁹ As a system of publicity and information, the League and its PMC also offered opportunities to non-state Syro-Lebanese groups, notably in the diaspora. League officials read the petitions from the Syro-Lebanese diaspora, and they informed the questions they asked of the French government. These questions elicited answers that were published by the League or leaked to the global press corps in Geneva. Syro-Lebanese groups seized these answers as grist for further petitionary action. Genevan diplomatic politics, committee meetings, and lobbying efforts surrounding the League’s PMC may have seemed unrelated to relief fundraising among Massachusetts Maronites or ardent exchanges in the pages of diaspora newspapers in Argentina and Chile. But in practice Geneva acted as a political “distillation column” for the global Syro-Lebanese diaspora—a venue where Syro-Lebanese in various countries could analyze and duplicate political positions.

Indeed, along with state authorities such as the US government, the League’s secretariat served as the major official avenue of appeal available to diaspora critics of the Mandate administration. It offered a platform for publicity, but also a political tool for diaspora groups, with which they could intervene in Syria-Lebanon and simultaneously shore up support in their diaspora. As such, it formed an institutional junction at which members of the diaspora could meet one other and plan political action, forming what

sociologist Peggy Levitt and social anthropologist Nina Glick-Schiller call the “transnational social field of diaspora.”⁸⁰ Levitt and Glick-Schiller use this term to denote a system in which diaspora individuals and groups may pass from conditions of passive transnational *being* to those of transnational *belonging*.⁸¹ The very prominence of the League facilitated this process of political activity, granting the diaspora a way to reformulate and amplify a more dynamic type of belonging, both in the *mahjar* (the lands of emigration) and the Mashriq (the Arab east). In this way, Geneva as a site became a global tool for the Syro-Lebanese diaspora.

The PMC acted in particular as the most important venue for the transnational politics of the Mandate. By engaging the PMC in Geneva, Syrian nationalist groups like the National Bloc expressed the political aims of their community. In 1933, the National Bloc sent a telegram from Haifa in the British Mandate of Palestine responding to High Commissioner Henri Ponsot’s testimony to the Mandates Commission. The message stated: “The *mujahedeen* [National Bloc activists] held numerous meetings in Damascus during which they studied the declarations made by the High Commissioner before the Permanent Mandates Commission.”⁸² This triangle of transnational politics, between Geneva, Syria-Lebanon, and the diaspora, became increasingly economic in focus, as the League began to lose political clout during the interwar years. The early withdrawal of the United States from the League of Nations, as well as the dominance of global politics by a small club of major imperial powers, forced the League to focus on regulatory and humanitarian questions such as refugees, health, and economics. Indeed, innovations made in these areas would decisively shape the United Nations structures created during and after World War II.⁸³

Even with its increasingly economic focus, the PMC still negotiated political conflicts surrounding the Mandates. In March 1922, Swiss League official William Rappard met in Geneva with Sa’dallah al-Jabri, who was a former secretary to the Ottoman Sublime Porte and later the grand chamberlain of Faysal’s short-lived government in Syria. According to Rappard, al-Jabri stated that not only did the “inhabitants of Syria . . . feel deprived of even the semblance of independence and of national unity,” but they also “violently resent the recent cession of Syrian territory by the French to the Kemalists, which deprives Syria not only of essential economic resources, but also of her natural frontier of the Taurus.”

Economically they complain of the burden of taxation and of the threat of exploitation by French capital, which is being granted dangerous monopoly privileges. Mr. Djabri [*sic*] mentioned particularly companies involved in large-scale flour milling and road construction. The buying up of all available grain threatens Syria with famine. . . . Some [of the population] favored absolute and unqualified independence; others, of whom Mr. Djabri seemed to be one, while anxious to have the independence of the new state proclaimed, recognized the necessity of European advice and technical assistance.⁸⁴

Rappard then recorded al-Jabri's proposal for a federation of free Arab countries, with French military advice and British financial and infrastructural support.⁸⁵ When Rappard rejoined that such a vision was "unrealistic," al-Jabri stated that the cost of the Mandate arrangement would soon make a prosperous and cooperative independence more attractive to the great powers.

While some diaspora critics like al-Jabri emphasized the need for continued technical and developmental assistance, groups like the Syrian American Society of the United States argued in their petitions that World War I had so weakened the French Empire that it could not deliver on promises of economic development at all.⁸⁶ A petition from the SPC argued that French control of Syria was "so colonialist [that] Syria, an essentially commercial country, is seeing its commerce decline daily." In so arguing, the SPC adapted the French notion (analyzed above) of the inherently commercial character of Syria-Lebanon. The SPC complained, however, that French imperial domination had suppressed the abilities of the Syro-Lebanese.⁸⁷

Diaspora petitioning to the League on economic matters drew on a repertoire of global hierarchies of development, sometimes adopting the very same racial hierarchies that underpinned the colonial political economy. Petitioners therefore argued regularly that Eastern European League of Nations members, formerly part of the Habsburg Empire, were no more "advanced" than Syria or Lebanon and that the Arab peoples living under colonial Mandates ranked above their counterparts in Africa.⁸⁸ The SPC noted as such in a petition to the League:

The abandoning of our people to these [Mandatory] powers can, at a pinch, be explained in 1919 by a war mentality that wrecked political judgment. It is now time to return to reality and to renounce this

factitious assimilation . . . of peoples who just cannot be compared to the blacks of Africa. The Syrians cannot allow their country to continue to be cited in the list of countries under Mandate rule, alongside Cameroon.⁸⁹

By accepting and deploying the stereotype of the “inherently commercial” Syrians and Lebanese, then, the diaspora also accepted the colonial racial stereotype of African backwardness. The SPC thereby framed its economic reasoning using cultural and racial characterizations. It proceeded to argue that the imposition of a paper currency pegged to the French franc was, despite the “incomparable activity of (Syro-Lebanese) businessmen,” driving the country into the abyss, and that by draining gold from Syria and enforcing a paper currency subject to wild fluctuations thanks to the French franc, the French were “treating Syria like Senegal.”⁹⁰ Likewise, in a 29 October 1924 letter, the SPC asserted that “as soon as [High Commissioner] General Gouraud arrived in Syria in 1919, he behaved as if he were Governor-General of a Negro Colony.”⁹¹

Conclusion

In closing, we should note that the international press corps covered Geneva constantly and reported on the activities of the League and its Permanent Mandates Commission. It republished minutes of meetings and published leaks that helped fuel further petitions, as noted above in the case of the Damascene Syrian nationalists. But the press also provided a direct platform for diaspora voices, and not just in the *New York Times*. The *Manchester Guardian*, for example, featured an interview in December 1925 that it conducted with “a Beirut businessman” who owned businesses in the English manufacturing hub of Manchester. This businessman stated that in regard to the Great Revolt: “We feel that the League of Nations ought to ensure that if we have a Mandate, at least the Mandatory Power should be in a position to defend our lives and property; if France cannot do it then we feel somebody ought to come here who can. Otherwise let us run our own show and finish with the Mandate altogether.”⁹²

Despite the best efforts of French power to restrict such requests from Beirut or Damascus, petitions continued to pour into the League from the interwar diaspora, addressing topics from the levying of fines in gold to

Maronite efforts to take over Shi'ī tobacco production in southern Lebanon. Indeed, Syro-Lebanese nationals wrote 1,322 of the total of 3,044 petitions that reached the PMC.⁹³ Within the triangle of transnational politics negotiated between Syria-Lebanon, Geneva, and the diaspora, the League constituted not just a factory for new norms of state behavior, but also a platform for protest, drawing on older methods of mobilization to adapt to the radically new circumstances of the post-1918 era.⁹⁴ Such behavior anticipated the Algerian FLN's or the South African ANC's use of the United Nations and diaspora organization in the years after 1960.⁹⁵

Scholars should not be tempted to assign the Mandate-era Syro-Lebanese diaspora a singular political unity or coherence of political technique that its very diversity precluded. Instead, this article has shown how Mandate rule, thanks to its structural uncertainties and particularly due to its external nexus in Geneva, helped to mobilize diaspora communities to an important degree. It encouraged political behavior that bound the diaspora more tightly into a transnational social field that stretched from various national capitals to Geneva and on to the evolving Syro-Lebanese homelands. This tendency endured even when these communities remained skeptical about the League's credibility or its ability to directly influence events. The League thus strengthened the transnational Syro-Lebanese diaspora, galvanizing the correspondence and petitioning of its unevenly clustered but influential clubs and newspapers, and energizing debate and political action.

In conclusion, scholars should also re-emphasize the utility of an approach that includes diaspora and its mobilization through international institutions to Mandate history, French colonial history, international history, and the history of political economy. Such an approach broadens the analytical field from the dualism of metropole and Mandate/empire toward the acknowledgement of a global web of actors. It also shows how subaltern constituencies that were transnational in nature could manipulate and reform imperialism (as represented by the Mandate system). French so-called control was therefore challenged not just by direct failures of its practice and ideology, as in the Great Revolt of 1925. Thanks to the activities of the diaspora, Mandate rule and its underpinning political-economic theories endured sustained criticism in Geneva. If the French in part built new Mandatory civic orders in Syria and Lebanon, the diaspora, and its polyvalent "sense of place," influenced how the world would view this construction.

ENDNOTES

Author's Note: I thank the organizers and participants at the Georgetown University CCAS 2011 Annual Symposium, notably Osama Abi-Mershed, and the two anonymous reviewers and the editors of the *Arab Studies Journal*. I have also benefited from discussion with the participants at conferences at North Carolina State University and Cambridge University in April 2012, and at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in Denver, Colorado, in November 2012.

- 1 Syrian American Society of the United States, *Memorandum on the Application of the Mandatory System of the League of Nations by France in Syria* (Washington, DC: Press of C. H. Potter & Co., 1926), 22.
- 2 Charles Issawi, "The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration, 1800-1914," in *The Lebanese in the World*, eds. Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi (London: I. B. Tauris, 1993), 31. Louise Cainkar has reminded us of how twentieth-century migration was tabulated and reified in new ways: the very posing of the question to which the villager responded is symptomatic of the trend she describes. Louise Cainkar, Plenary Remarks, "A Sense of Place: Arab World Diasporas and Migrations," Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 21 March 2011.
- 3 I use the term "Syro-Lebanese" in this article to denote a global diaspora that at the end of World War I was the result of accumulated out-migration by Ottoman subjects from the Syrian provinces and Lebanese mountain within the Ottoman Empire. These people were known by a variety of labels in the countries to which they traveled, for example as "Turcos" in parts of South America. This diaspora played an important role in the formation of Syrian and Lebanese national identities and nation-states during the first four decades of the twentieth century, even as it contributed to similar processes in the countries in which it settled. The hyphenated term reflects this dialectical process of political evolution and gradual identity formation. But it also reflects the need for a term that acknowledges the overlap between the Syrian and Lebanese states and the fluidity of identity claims by members of the diaspora during the late Ottoman and Mandate periods, a time when the shape and nature of the Syrian and Lebanese political units was at stake. The use of Syrian/Syria or Lebanese/Lebanon reflects either usage by protagonists at the time—for instance, "Syrian Legion"—or acts as shorthand to refer the reader to the contemporary meaning of those terms, as in this sentence. See also footnote six below.
- 4 Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
- 5 As Thomas McDow emphasizes, diaspora should be conceptualized as a process of circulation rather than dispersal. McDow, "Arabia to Africa: Reassessing the Omani Trade Diaspora in East Africa, 1861-1920," paper presented at "A Sense of Place: Arab World Diasporas and Migrations," Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 21 March 2011. See also Kohei Hashimoto, "Lebanese Population Movement 1920-1939: Towards a Study," in *The Lebanese in the World*, 66, and Kohei Hashimoto, *Causes and Consequences of International Migration: The Case of Lebanon, 1888-1939*. D.Phil diss., University of Oxford, 1992.
- 6 I use a hyphenated term here because the French Mandate state, despite the creation of different parliaments and frontiers in Syria-Lebanon, continued to administer the territory as a single unit, and because the League of Nations continued to receive petitions under a unified rubric.

- 7 John Tofik Karam, *Another Arabesque: Syrian-Lebanese Ethnicity in Neoliberal Brazil* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007); Akram Fouad Khater, *Embracing the Divine: Passion and Politics in the Christian Middle East* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011); Andrew Kerim Arsan, "Failing to Stem the Tide: Lebanese Migration to French West Africa and the Competing Prerogatives of the Imperial State," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no. 3 (2011), 450–78. See also Stacy Fahrenthold, "Transnational Modes and Media: The Syrian Press in the *Mahjar* and Emigrant Activism During World War I," *Mashriq & Mahjar: Journal of Middle East Migration Studies* 1 (Spring 2013), 32–57.
- 8 Susan Pedersen, "Getting Out of Iraq—in 1932: The League of Nations and the Road to Normative Statehood," *American Historical Review* 115, no. 4 (October 2010), 975–1000; Susan Pedersen, "Back to the League of Nations," *American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (October 2007), 1091–1117.
- 9 Yann Decorzant, *La Société des Nations et la naissance d'une conception de la régulation économique internationale* (Bruxelles: P. Lang, 2011).
- 10 Frederick Cooper has argued, "Colonial history in the era of decolonization has suffered a double form of occlusion. In the 1950s into the 1970s, the idea of modernization occluded the colonial. In the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of modernity occluded the history." See Cooper, "Decolonizing Situations: The Rise, Fall, and Rise of Colonial Studies, 1951–2001," *French Politics, Culture and Society* 20, no. 2 (Summer 2002), 47. For an influential theory of diaspora, see *Globalization*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
- 11 Jennifer M. Dueck, *The Claims of Culture at Empire's End: Syria and Lebanon Under French Rule* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- 12 See Patricia Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005), 421–439.
- 13 Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002); Dave Donaldson, *Railroads of the Raj: Estimating the Impact of Transportation Infrastructure*. Working Paper, National Bureau of Economic Research (October 2010), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w16487>. October 2010.
- 14 Carlo Cristiano, "Keynes and India, 1909–1913: A Study on Foreign Investment Policy," *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 16, no. 2 (2009), 301–306.
- 15 Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin, 2012).
- 16 Engin Deniz Akarli, "Ottoman Attitudes towards Lebanese Emigration, 1885–1910," in *The Lebanese in the World*, 109–138. For more on pre-Mandate emigration, see Akram Fouad Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).
- 17 *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization Before 1950* eds. Sevet Pamuk and Jeffrey Williamson (London: Routledge, 2000).
- 18 Issawi, "Historical Background," 13–31. Issawi estimates that, by 1914, emigration ran to 20,000 people a year.
- 19 Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society," *International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004), 1002–1039.
- 20 Souraya Kanaan Abi Fares, "Le Commerce de Beyrouth d'après les archives Françaises et Libanaises," Ph.D. diss., Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1999, 40. See also Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007).
- 21 Andrew Arsan has recently emphasized highly fluid overlaps of personnel, conceptual repertoire, and political technique throughout the late Ottoman and early postwar period.

- See Andrew Arsan, "'This Age Is the Age of Associations': Committees, Petitions, and the Roots of Interwar Middle Eastern Internationalism," *Journal of Global History* 7, no. 2 (2012), 166–88.
- 22 See Yusuf al-Sawda, *Dans la vallée du Nil (1906-1922)* (Beirut: 1967).
- 23 A journalist in Paris, Khayrallah "fitted together Lebanese, Syrian, Arab, and Ottoman identities in various overlapping permutations" in his writings and organizational activities. Arsan, "'This Age Is the Age of Associations,'" 169.
- 24 Antoine Hokayem and Marie-Claude Bittar, *L'Empire ottoman les Arabes et les Grandes Puissances* (Beyrouth: Les Éditions Universitaires du Liban, 1981).
- 25 Ferdinand Tyan, *France et Liban, défense des intérêts en Syrie* (Paris: 1917).
- 26 James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).
- 27 Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005).
- 28 Jørgen S. Nielsen, ed., *Religion, Ethnicity, and Contested Nationhood in the Former Ottoman Space* (Boston: Brill, 2012).
- 29 Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- 30 See John Tofik Karam, "Area Studies through Diasporic Eyes: Philip Hitti and the AUB Alumni Network in Brazil." Paper presented at "A Sense of Place: Arab World Diasporas and Migrations," Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 21 March 2011.
- 31 Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).
- 32 Arsan, "'This Age Is the Age of Associations,'" 170.
- 33 Watenpugh, *Being Modern*.
- 34 For a comparative treatment see J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 35 Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 91-118.
- 36 Arsan, "'This Age Is the Age of Associations,'" 176.
- 37 Gerard D. Khoury, *La France et l'Orient Arabe: naissance du Liban moderne, 1914-1920* (Paris: A. Colin, 1993).
- 38 French Diplomatic Archives, Nantes (henceforth CADN), Fonds Beyrouth, Premier Versement-Cabinet Politique, Dossiers de Principe 1920-1941, Carton 419, Colonies Syro-Libanais à l'étranger, Notes on the representation of Syrians and Lebanese abroad. Prepared by the Services des renseignements du Levant 15 November 1927. Kohei Hashimoto reckons the total at "well over half a million," but the difficulty of assessing the size of communities holding different passports and nationalities makes a definite figure impossible to obtain. See Hashimoto, "Lebanese Population Movement," 75-76.
- 39 Robert de Beauplan, *Où va la Syrie? Le mandat sous les cèdres* (Paris, Editions Jules Tallandier, 1931), chapter fourteen.
- 40 CADN, Periodicals, UES Bulletin, March 1925, Études Économiques. The UES was an association of French capitalists and major investors in the Syrian Mandate territories.
- 41 Nathaniel Mathews, "Reimagining Communities: Sheikh al-Amin Mazrui, al-Islah, and Transnational Arab-Muslim Identity in Kenya, 1897-1933." Paper presented at "A Sense of Place: Arab World Diasporas and Migrations," Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 21 March 2011.

- 42 Asher Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia: The Search for Identity in Lebanon* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004).
- 43 Richard Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
- 44 Georges Samna, *La Syrie* (Paris: Editions Bossard, 1920), 490.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 495.
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- 47 Samna, *La Syrie*, 491.
- 48 Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, (henceforth BNF), *Correspondence d'Orient*, 24 April 1918.
- 49 C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "The French Colonial Party and French Colonial War Aims, 1914–1918," *The Historical Journal* 17, no. 1 (1974), 79–106.
- 50 BNF, Paris, *Correspondence d'Orient*, 24 April 1918.
- 51 Tyler Stovall, "Colour Blind France? Colonial Workers During the First World War," *Race and Class*, 35, no. 2 (1993), 35-55; Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 208.
- 52 CADN, Autres Fonds, Dépeches pour Information, Collection de l'ambassade de France à Rio de Janeiro, Carton 2, MAE to Claudel, Ambassador of France at Rio, 19 October 1917, communiqué no. 123.
- 53 CADN, Autres Fonds, Dépeches pour Information, Collection de l'ambassade de France à Rio de Janeiro, Carton 2, MAE to Claudel, 20 October 1917, forwarding War Ministry memo 7719 9/11.
- 54 CADN, Autres Fonds, Dépeches pour Information, Collection de l'ambassade de France à Rio de Janeiro, Carton 2, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (henceforth MAE) to Claudel, Ambassador of France at Rio, 19 October 1917, communiqué no. 123.
- 55 *Ibid.* Letter from War Ministry to MAE, 13 November 1917, 83049/11.
- 56 *Ibid.* MAE to Claudel, 20 October 1917, forwarding War Ministry memo, 7719 9/11.
- 57 I am grateful to William Gervase Clarence Smith for this point.
- 58 Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," 428.
- 59 The Argentinean Syro-Lebanese community numbered 110,000 and was highly involved in textile trading.
- 60 CADN, Fonds Buenos Aires, Légation puis Ambassade, Série 1887-1925, Carton 99, doss. 1530, Syrian commerce in Argentina and attitudes to events in Levant by Syro-Lebanese press in Buenos Aires, Assalam October–December 1920.
- 61 CADN, Fonds Beyrouth, Premier Versement-Cabinet Politique, Dossiers de Principe 1920-1941, Carton 419, Colonies Syro-Libanais à l'étranger, Notes on the representation of Syrians and Lebanese abroad. Prepared by the *Services des renseignements du Levant*, 15 November 1927.
- 62 Traboulsi, *History of Modern Lebanon*, 78.
- 63 CADN, Fonds Beyrouth, Premier Versement-Cabinet Politique, Dossiers de Principe 1920-1941, Carton 419, Colonies Syro-Libanais à l'étranger, Pamphlet dated August 1920, transmitted by French Consul at New York to MAE.
- 64 Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt*.
- 65 Naoum A. Mokarzel, "Syria A Religious Problem; A Western Power's Protection Is Declared Essential Until Islam Learns to Be Tolerant—Situation Unchanged Since the Crusades," *New York Times*, 29 November 1925.

- 66 Asher Kaufman, "Henri Lammens and Syrian Nationalism," *The Origins of Syrian Nationhood* ed. Adel Beshara (London: Routledge, 2011).
- 67 Daniel Neep, *Occupying Syria Under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space, and State Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
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- 70 Alixa Naff, *Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), 120.
- 71 Rosina J. Hassoun, *Arab Americans in Michigan* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2005), 41.
- 72 Hashimoto, "Lebanese Population Movement," 70.
- 73 CADN, Fonds Beyrouth, Premier Versement-Cabinet Politique, Dossiers de Principe 1920-1941, Carton 419, Colonies Syro-Libanais à l'étranger, French Ambassador in Washington, DC to MAE, 9 December 1925.
- 74 Ibid. High Commission to MAE, 14 December 1925.
- 75 A hostile marginal note scribbled onto the letter from the USCA by CCS or Quai d'Orsay personnel described the quartet as "wanting to take Syria back to the Faysal era." CADN, Fonds Beyrouth, Premier Versement-Cabinet Politique, Dossiers de Principe 1920-1941, Carton 419, Colonies Syro-Libanais à l'étranger, United Syrian Christian Association of North America, Worcester, MA to CCS, 8 February 1927.
- 76 On the SPC, see Friedhelm Hoffmann, *Die Syro-Palästinensische Delegation Am Völkerbund Und Šakib Arslān in Genf, 1921-1936/46*, Geschichte 83 (Berlin: Lit, 2007); William L. Cleveland, *Islam Against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism* (London: Saqi Books, 1985). Thanks to an anonymous reader from the *Arab Studies Journal* for calling the former work to my attention.
- 77 On Arab intellectuals, see *The Making of the Arab Intellectual (1880-1960): Empire, Public Sphere, and the Colonial Coordinates of Selfhood*, ed. Dyala Hamsah (New York: Routledge, 2012).
- 78 See League of Nations Archive (LNA), Mandates Correspondence, Volume 1, 1919-1927, Carton R. 39. LNA, Mandates Correspondence, Volume 1, 1919-1927 and for the SPC attack Carton R. 22, Chékib Arslan to Lausanne Conference Secretariat, 5 July 1923.
- 79 Susan Pedersen, "The Meaning of the Mandates System: An Argument," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 32, no. 4 (October-December 2006), 560. See also Pedersen, "Back to the League of Nations," 1091-1116.
- 80 Levitt and Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity," 1006.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 CADN, Fonds Beyrouth, Premier Versement, Cabinet Politique, Dossiers de Principe 1920-41, Carton 728, Petitions to the League, Petition from Damascus rejecting proposed treaties, 18 February 1933.
- 83 Decorzant, *La Société des Nations*; Clifford Rosenberg, "The International Politics of Vaccine Testing in Interwar Algiers," *American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (June 2012), 671-97.

- 84 LNA, Mandates Correspondence, vol. 1, 1919-1927, Carton R. 60, 91.SDN, Doc. 1188.
- 85 This was a picture, albeit with different sources of advice and assistance, closer to that of the Cold War era, illustrating trans-World War II continuities and ruptures.
- 86 Syrian American Society of the United States, *Memorandum on the Application of the Mandatory System*.
- 87 LNA, Mandates Correspondence, vol. 1, 1919-1927, Carton R. 39, SPC to Assembly of League, 8 November 1921, Doss. 15122.
- 88 Ibid., "Independence and admission have been granted to Georgia, Estonia, Lithuania, Litonia [sic], Albania and Armenia, which states are neither more developed nor more important than we are."
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 LNA, Mandates Correspondence, Volume 1, 1919-1927, Carton R. 39, SPC to PMC, 29 October 1924.
- 92 LNA, Mandates Correspondence, Volume 1, 1919-1927, Carton R. 25, Series 4284, Dossiers 48001 to 49500; *Manchester Guardian*, 9 December 1925.
- 93 Arsan, "This Age Is the Age of Associations"
- 94 Ibid., and Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).
- 95 Matthew James Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Stephen Ellis, *External Mission: The ANC in Exile, 1960-1990* (London: Hurst, 2012); Stephen Ellis, *Comrades Against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992).