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A Diplomat's Portrait: The United States Department of State's View on French Imperial Policy Regarding Syrian Religious Minorities of 1918-1922

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A DIPLOMAT'S PORTRAIT: THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S VIEW ON FRENCH IMPERIAL POLICY REGARDING SYRIAN RELIGIOUS MINORITIES OF 1918-1922

by

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Abstract

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This thesis examines documents from the US department of State relating to the Internal Affairs of Turkey in the years of 1918-1922, to answer questions pertaining to French imperial policy directed toward minority groups in French Mandate Syria, which included present-day nations of Lebanon and Syria. Of the many minority groups present in French Mandate Syria, I chose to examine the Maronite, Druze, Alawi, Eastern Christian, and Armenian communities because of their significant role in the state-building of Syria and Lebanon. By using documents originating from US diplomats, this thesis attempts to present the United States' view on these imperial policies. In the formation of this perspective, the thesis asks some of the following questions: What were the effects of French imperial policies on Syrian minorities? And how did French imperial policy regarding minorities shape French Syrian society as a whole? To answer these questions as completely as possible, I supplemented the archival sources with material from significant scholars in Levantine and broader Mid-East history, like Albert Hourani and Yaron Friedman. My research suggests that policies pursued had a negative impact on all of the minorities but to a lesser extent for the Maronites, and other Christians. It also suggests that French imperial policy led to the creation of a violent society but steps could have been taken to produce a more peaceful outcome. The final goal of this thesis is to provide the historical narratives of the minority groups with an additional perspective, that of the US diplomats throughout the region.

Dedication

This thesis was written for my mother, Barbara Charles, and my father, Joseph Charles, because without their extraordinary patience, I would have never even been capable of embarking on a project of this caliber.

Acknowledgements

I want to first thank Dr. Amelia Lyons, who first inspired me to conduct an undergraduate thesis, and helped me set goals for myself to help me achieve my dream of teaching history at a university level. I also want to thank Dr. Sadri who was gracious enough to be part of my committee. The staff at the University of Central Florida libraries also needs to be recognized for helping me navigate the sources I needed to complete this work. Finally, I want to thank Dr. Hakan Ozoglu, without his guidance, time, and dedication to my cause this project would have never been possible.

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Introduction: A Religious Stew

In the years immediately following War World I treaties at Versailles, Sèvres, and San Remo were signed determining the future of the entire Middle East, including Syria and Lebanon.[1] During these tumultuous times, American diplomats were present in their consular headquarters throughout the Middle East, including Damascus and Beirut, the future capitals of Lebanon and Syria. In the years between 1918 and 1922, these diplomats left an extensive record of the events occurring in French occupied Syria. The accounts left by these diplomats clearly show that the French had many difficulties administering over the former Ottoman province, one of those difficulties being how the French would administer over the various fiercely independent minorities in the region. In just one of many accounts highlighting this problem, American diplomat Khabenhue's November 3rd, 1919 letter describes armed conflict between French and Druze forces in the mountains of the Muktara region to the southwest of Beirut.[2]

This thesis explores the consequences of French imperial policy regarding the Syrian and Lebanese minorities and the reactions from the various minorities during the years of 1918 through 1922 using the United States' perspective on the issue. By providing the United States' viewpoint on this chapter of French imperial policy, this thesis provides a third party's view (who was rising as a significant player in imperial politics), on how French imperial policy

[1] Andelman David, *A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 1-17.

[2] 867.00/983, Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Knabenshue dated November 3, 1919.

shaped the futures of the numerous minority groups under their control. This work's emphasis on the years of 1918-1922 is principally because it was in those years, the French began to occupy the region, the borders of Lebanon and Syria were drawn, and their constitutions were in their infancy. It was also in these years where the Arab world was in the midst of a revolution resulting in the independence of various Arab states, while at the same time, the states of Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq were no longer dependent on the Turks but instead dependent on western powers for governance.[3]

Utilizing the American perspective on this period of Lebanese and Syrian history, this thesis provides the Syrian and Lebanese minorities' historical narrative with another perspective. Within the context of this new perspective, the thesis offers a critique on French and American imperial policy during this time period. The minorities included in this study are Maronites, Druze, Alawis, Armenians, and Eastern Mediterranean Christians, all of whom had major impacts on the region long before the French arrived. During the time period covered, there are many questions concerning the French relationship with the minorities in the region, and in formulating the American perspective the following questions were asked; What were the demands of the minority groups when state-building was taking place? What were French demands of the minorities? To what extent were the demands of the French and the minorities met? And what was French imperial minority policy's impact on greater French Syrian society?

Scholars have longed focused on the actions of the diplomats at the various conferences that produced the world-shaping treaties mentioned, and the French perspective on the events

[3] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 129-137.

that occurred in French Syria between 1918 and 1922, but little attention has been given to the people who actually lived on the land imperialistic diplomats were eyeing. By providing an American perspective focused on the minorities of "French Syria" during the years 1918-1922, this thesis provides a viewpoint on an imperial power's foreign policy from a burgeoning imperial power, and illustrates the significance of the actions taken by Middle East peoples during the early years of the interwar period.

To formulate the United States' perspective on French imperial policy towards Syrian minorities and to answer the proposed questions, this thesis utilizes the United States' "Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Turkey in between the years of 1918 and 1922".[4] The sources in this archive are supplemented with secondary sources from prominent scholars in Syrian, Lebanese, and French history, as well as sources from experts in American and British diplomatic history. These sources are used throughout the work to provide context to the archival sources. This context helps illustrate the political reality that the minority groups lived, the final results of negotiations between French and minority leaders, and interpretations of the impact of actions taken during that time.

French imperial policy in the orient and twentieth century colonialism, in general, has been dissected by scholars and policy makers around the globe. What differentiates this thesis from past works is the use of United States primary documents to study a French colonial history. By providing an American perspective on the subject, this thesis provides an outsider's view of the events that occurred in "French Syria". This perspective serves to elucidate the

[4] National Archives Microfilm Publications. Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Turkey, 1910-29. Washington DC , 1961. (The numbers indicate the specific documents referenced).

ambiguity surrounding western policy in the Orient during the crucial years following World War I, when many of the west's contemporary issues with Middle Eastern peoples can be traced.

The years immediately preceding the First World War, which this thesis covers, have been studied by prominent scholars from a variety of perspectives. The first historical analysis and critique of the Paris Peace Conference was John Maynard Keynes's *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. Published in December, 1919, the work was critical of the decisions made by world leaders in Paris and "for the next 90 years, established the framework for much of the discussion about the Paris Peace Conference after the First World War."[5] Other works include Antony Lentin's *Guilt at Versailles: Lloyd George and the Pre-history of Appeasement* (1985), Margaret MacMillan's *Peacemakers: The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (2001), Alan Sharp's *The Versailles Settlement: Peacemaking after the First World War, 1919-1923 (2008)* [6], and David Alderman's *A Shattered Peace: Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today* (2008).[7]

Works that pertain more specifically to the historical analysis of Syria and Lebanon during this time period include Albert Hourani's *Syria and Lebanon: A Political Essay* (1946), Eyal Zisser's *Lebanon: A Challenge for Independence* (2002), Elizabeth Thompson's *Colonial Citizens* (2000)[8], and Thomas Harris's *Faces of Lebanon* [9] (1997). Lesser works that are

[5] Sharp, Alan. "The Big Four Peacemaking in Paris in 1919." *History Review*, (December 2009): 14-19.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Andelman David, *A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008).

[8] Thompson Elizabeth, *Colonial Citizen: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* . (New York NY : Columbia University Press , 2000).

[9] Harris William, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997).

referenced in this thesis are Itamar Robinovich's *The Compact Minorities and the Syrian State, 1918-45* (1979),[10] and Yusri Hazran's *Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history* (2009)[11]

The works that pertain to the Paris Peace Conference and other high-stakes conferences of the time period covered by this thesis, often analyze the mistakes made by the allies after World War I, and how those miscalculations led to World War II and present day problems. Many of the works that pertain more specifically to the people of "French Syria" cover the history of how minorities interacted with one another, the French, and the majority Muslim population. An example of this interaction comes from Itamar Robinovich's article "Compact Minorities and the Syrian State". When discussing French-Maronite relations, Robinovich explains that it was because of cooperation between the French and Alawis that they gained a relative political advantage over the Sunnis in the area, and where able to obtain a higher standard of living. [12] The sources pertaining more specifically to the history of "French Syria" are used in the thesis to relay a more complete history that the United States archives alone simply cannot tell. They are also used to analyze the decisions made during the years studied.

To better understand the hostile conditions that existed in "French Syria" in the years following World War I, one must revisit some of the events that occurred in the region before and during the war. In the years following World War I, the allies were in the process of carving

[10] Rabinovich Itamar. 1979. "Compact minorities and the Syrian state, 1918-45."*Journal Of Contemporary History* 14, (1979) 693-712.

[11] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009): 459-487.

[12]Rabinovich Itamar. 1979. "Compact minorities and the Syrian state, 1918-45."Journal Of Contemporary History 14, (1979) 693-712, 712.

new states out of the quickly dissolving Ottoman Empire. In the process of politically reshaping the Middle East; Italy, Greece, France, and Britain were also seeking imperial claims and spheres of influence.[13] This process began before the war with a secret agreement known as Sykes-Picot Agreement. Signed on May 16, 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement was a secret agreement between Britain and France that gave France, Syria, and Britain Mesopotamia and Palestine at the conclusion of the war.[14] This agreement would later hinder the aspirations of political agents from Britain and the United States, as well as local leaders like the Arabian prince Feisal in forming states which were conducive towards the safety and prosperity of local populations.[15] It was in the frame of this political reality, that the states of Syria and Lebanon were born, throwing the inhabitants of these lands into a new political world.

Years leading to hostility: 1910-1918

This new world was born out of the former Ottoman province of Syria. Ottoman Syria was an expansive area home to Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The province stretched from Alexandetta (near the modern Turkish/Syrian border), west to the Euphrates, and south to the Egyptian border. This vast area covered, at least parts of, modern day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Gaza, and Iraq. The area was drastically reduced to about the size of modern-day Syria and Lebanon because of the Sykes-Picot agreement, much to the chagrin of Emir Feisal and other

[13]Andelman David, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008) 12-15.

[14] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[15] ibid

Middle Eastern leaders. [16] Though there was a large reduction in the size of Syria, the diversity of the region remained rich. Within the borders of "French Syria", remained a society that included religious and cultural minorities, such as the Maronites, the Druze, Orthodox Christians, Armenians, and Kurds. In addition to these minorities, Sunnis and Shia Muslims existed without a large numerical majority over the other.[17]

In the years immediately before When World War I, the French and British had already turned their imperial ambitions to the Syrian region. After taking control, the imperial powers were handed a population in which the majority of the population, Muslim and Christian alike, were ready to be emancipated from their Turkish oppressors. Because of this thirst for independence from the Turks, the population was ready to accept a new regime, even if it was supervised by a foreign power. This does not mean that the people of Syria and Lebanon would passively accept the rule of a new power; however, each cultural group had their own vision of a new Syria and their own priorities in forming a new state.[18] The French, who believed they deserved reparations for their sacrifice on the battlefields of Europe, also had their own vision of Syria. [19] As World War I pushed forward, the desires of the native population would drastically change as gruesome scenarios played out in what would soon be French Mandate Syria.

In an account from an American Consular official in Syria, who witnessed the events that transpired in Syria before and during the war, the author describes why hostilities began to rise

[16] Ibid see map in appendix, labeled figure 1.

[17] Harris, William, Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[18] 867.00/1022 Letter on Syrian Affairs addressed to the Secretary of State by a consular official stationed in Beirut dated November 10, 1919 See population chart in appendix, labeled figure 2.

[19] Andelman David, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008).

against the French. In the years leading up to War World I, the consular official claimed that the French arrived on the Syrian coast with dazzling war ships and adorned the local leaders with spectacular gifts. In those years, the French made a promise to the Syrians that they would be a freer people under the French. The French leader of the Syrian expedition, François George-Picot (who would later sign the Sykes-Picot agreement), left Syria when the war began, leaving behind, sensitive information in Syria concerning Syrian leaders who were collaborating with the French. This information, held in archives that the Consul official Knabenshue claims he was desperately trying to protect, was soon discovered by the Turks. Accordingly, the Turks sent, now known, French collaborators to the gallows and instituted an even more repressive regime. From this point onward, French-Syrian relations soured, and to make matters worse, Picot became French high-commissioner in Syria after the war, allowing for relations to deteriorate further.[20] When the French landed in Beirut after the war, they immediately had to face issues relating to the various religious minorities in the region, but before delving into those issues, one must study the background of the religious minorities to fully understand the situation facing the French and the religious minorities in 1918.

[20] 867.00/1022 Letter on Syrian Affairs addressed to the Secretary of State by a consular official stationed in Beirut dated November 10, 1919.

The Religious Minorities

Maronites

At the conclusion of the war, after French negligence resulted in suffering for much of the population that formally supported them, the French could only garner significant support from one ethnic group, the Maronites.[21] The Maronites are a unique Christian group who mostly reside in modern day Lebanon and follow the leadership of the Pope but are distinctly different form other Catholics, "exemplified by their slogan 'The Patriarch is our Sultan'"[22]. Since the Crusades, the French claimed themselves as the protectors of the world's Catholics, including the Maronites. In 1861, the French intervened after the slaughter of 12,000 Maronites at the hand of their neighbors the Druze. After the conflict, the Maronites demanded a semi-autonomous state with a Christian leader. These developments, have given the Maronite community special privileges in Lebanon to this very day. [23]

The position of the Maronites was not always advantageous; however, after Syrian monk Marun found the community in the late seventh century, the community was separated by the Catholic authorities in Rome and Constantinople, after the Arab conquests of the seventh century left the Maronites stranded and without support.[24] The community originated out of the Monothelite controversy, a religious controversy involving the Jacobites and Orthodox Christians. The Jacobites believed that Jesus was one, God and man, while the Orthodox

[21]867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[22] House, Michael, "Lebanon's damned inheritance." *History Today* 7-10, 1989.

[23] House, Michael, "Lebanon's damned inheritance." History Today 7-10, 1989 *9.*

[24] Duna, Valentina-Tania, "Religious Minorities, Political Majorities: the Alawis in Syria and the Maronites in Lebanon." *Romanian Journal Of Population Studies* 6, no. 2 (June 2012): 95-112.

Christians believed he was two separate entities God and man. In attempt to unify Christians against the rising Muslim tide, Byzantine Emperor Heraclius laid out a compromise that stated that Jesus had two separate wills but one being. This doctrine was only accepted by communities in the valleys of Homs, Hama, and Ornates in Northern Syria, the birthplace of the Maronite community.[25]

Shortly after being founded by monk John Marun, the Maronites achieved local sovereignty in the midst of the Islamic empire in villages located in the mountains east of Tripoli. Most Maronites remained outside these communities until the tenth century, when the Byzantine Empire reclaimed some of their Syrian lands from Muslims. Religious controversy between the Orthodox and Maronite creeds drove the Maronites south back into Islamic territory. It was not until the 1180, when Crusaders where present in Mt. Lebanon, that a formal link between the Roman Catholic and Maronite Church was created. It was during this time, that the Maronite patriarch accepted the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. During the Crusader's occupation of northern Syria, the Maronite church and the French throne became allies, a development that would have significant impacts for the Maronite community as well as the other communities of "French Syria" for centuries to come. The Monothelite controversy remained as a source of conflict between the two Christian groups. This controversy was not solved until Franciscan and Jesuit friars where sent to Mt. Lebanon in 1450, and even then, the Vatican did not find that Maronite beliefs where in line with Catholic beliefs until the turn of the

[25] Harris, William. *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J: Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997), 68.

sixteenth century. Although the Maronites are in line with Roman Catholic doctrine, they still are led by their Patriarch, and still observe holidays that only apply to them. [26]

During the Ottoman era, the Maronite community slowly grew and expanded outside the borders of Mt. Lebanon. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and the early eighteenth centuries, the Maronites cooperated with the other leading minority in the region, the Druze. As time continued, and both communities grew, conflict arose over demands for land and political power.[27] This source of conflict culminated in the Druze-Maronite war of 1860 where the Druze won decisively and slaughtered thousands of Maronites. Ironically, the Druze victory would lead to the supremacy of the Maronites and the downfall of the Druze in Mt. Lebanon. This was because of the actions taken by the French a year later that would protect the Maronites and grant them political dominance. In 1861, the French ordered the Ottoman Empire to instill the Le Reglement Organique onto the peoples of Mt. Lebanon. This new political order was the first to recognize Lebanon as a national entity, and formally created a Christian territory within the Ottoman Empire.[28]

The Maronites position in Lebanon would be further strengthened when the French separated Lebanon from Syria, giving the community a numerical advantage in Lebanon.[29] The numerical supremacy would be brief, however; and the United States diplomats foresaw the potential problems of the loss of this majority. This is evidenced by a United States diplomat's

[26] Ibid, 68-70.

[27] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009): 459-487.

[28] Ibid, 465.

[29] Ibid, 465.

October, 1918 account in Beirut which stated that the Maronites had the majority in Lebanon but that majority was quickly shrinking, and that this loss would contribute to instability in the future. Evidenced by numerous claims by US diplomats in the years of 1918-1922, the Maronites were the sole group who the French could count on for their full-fledged support. The other Christian groups were not even fully comfortable with a French mandate. Because of this, Maronites enjoyed a favorable position in "French Syria", that the majority Muslims could not attain.[30] In fact, Maronite leaders were the primary authors of the Lebanese constitution.[31]

Druze

The Druze, depending on the time period discussed, were either friend or foe of the Maronites. Druze Islam, founded in Egypt around the turn of the eleventh century, was based on the extremist Shia belief that God would be reincarnated on Earth. Some thought this incarnation came in the form of the Caliph of Cairo al-Hakim; and although this movement could not muster momentum in Egypt, it did so in southern Lebanon. The Druze slowly began to move north into greater Lebanon, which would later cause conflict with the Maronites who were slowly migrating southward into the same region.[32]

In southern Lebanon, Druze doctrine had a positive effect on twelve Arab tribes that were already present on the region. These tribes believed that they were sent to the region to defend the Abbasid Empire from Byzantine, and Western Crusaders hundreds of years earlier. Of these

[30] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[31] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009): 459-487, 463.

[32] House, Michael, "Lebanon's damned inheritance." History Today 7-10, 8-9.

twelve tribes the Banū Tanūkh proved to be the most prominent, and they established a system of self-rule in Lebanon known as the Emirate. According to Druze historians Mujīr al-D īn Ābaq, the last Būrid ruler of Damascus, considered it legitimate in 1147. The Druze also claim that the Emirate was part of the greater Muslim world and was ordered to protect the Syrian coast.[33] In 1516, after the Ottoman conquest of Syria, the Druze entered a new era after the Maʿnīs claimed the position of the dominant Druze tribe from the Banū Tanūkh. It was during this time that Fakhr al-Dīn II came to the Druze throne, launching the Emirate into a golden age. During the Golden Age, the Emirate's borders expanded and an era of peace existed between the Druze, and their traditional rivals, the Maronites.

The Golden Age came to an abrupt end when Fakhr al-Dīn was assassinated by the Ottomans because of their suspicions of his collaboration with European powers of attempting to create an independent state. The assassination did not lead to the end of the independent Emirate, however; as the Sunni Shihābīs were chosen by lead Druze families to lead the semi-autonomous state. The dominant Druze families chose the Shihābīs because of their close relation with the Maʿnīs and their close political ties with the Qaysī faction, the leading Druze power at the time. During this period, which is seen as overwhelmingly negative by most Druze, three important movements came to fruition; the formation of a feudal system, the emergence of a political elite based on land ownership, and the rise of the Maronite Church as the dominant force in the Emirate. These developments occurred due to the fierce competition between Druze feudal lords, the emigration of the Druze from the Emirate (Lebanon), and the interference of

[33] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009): 459-487, 463-464.

western powers. Ironically, the Druze fate of being a weak minority in the land they once ruled was sealed after their bloody triumph over the Maronirtes in 1860. In response, the next year the western powers coerced the Ottoman Empire to implement a political system in Lebanon known as "Reglement Organique". This bolstered the Maronite Church into becoming the dominant power in Lebanon. [34]

In 1920, when the French separated the lands of Lebanon and Syria, the Druze political position was further weakened by the fragmentation that the border caused. In the time period covered, the Druze hostilities with French authorities is second in frequency only to the Arabs in western Syria. [35] The French mandate, because of French support of the Maronite community, would lead to further conflict between the Druze and Maronite. This conflict is foreshadowed by an American diplomat who writes in 1919 ,"that the uneasy mess surrounding the mandate will likely lead to Druze attacks on more Christians (Maronites)".[36] The Druze-Maronite rivalry would prove to be an important factor in the future of the new state of Lebanon, and would be the basis of much French imperial policy concerning the two minority groups in greater French Mandate Syria.

[34] Ibid, 465.

[35] 867.00/983 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Knabenshue dates November 3, 1919.

[36] 867.00/946 Letter to the Secretary of State from a consular official stationed in Beirut dated October 6, 1919.

Alawi

The Alawi, known as the Nusayri until 1922, are a Muslim sect that is a branch of Shi'ism. They were, and still are, the leading minority in modern Syria. There is not much known about the creed of this esoteric group but their history is well documented. Founded by Ibn Nusayer in Kufi (modern day Iraq) sometime in the ninth century, the Alawi where considered to be a Ghulat (extremist) group and one of the last surviving Ghulat groups of Iraq to survive today. At the time, they were considered extremist because of their great love of Ali, Muhammad's cousin who is considered by the Shia to be His rightful heir. Nusayer founded this [37]new sect of Islam after being excommunicated by the Shia community twice, once for claiming that he was a prophet sent by Al-Hadi, and again, for claiming that he was an Imam (immediate messenger) after the death of Hasan al-Askari.[38] Nusayer is part of the sacred triangle of the Alawi which includes Ali (who is considered a deity) and Muhammad. This triangle is inseparable, and the unity of the triangle illustrates the divinity of Ali.[39]

Nusayer's successor was his most loyal disciple Yahya ibn Mu in al-Samarri who served to write down much of what Nusayer taught. The Alawi's first great leader was Al-Husayn Haudan al-Khasibi. Born in second half of the ninth century, al-Khasibi finally organized the Alawi into a formal community. Because of his imprisonment in Baghdad and his connection to the Eastern Mediterranean coast (al-Khasibi claims he escaped prison with the aid of Jesus), al-Khasibi felt the call to move the Alawi community to Syria. Under the leadership of Khasibi, the

[37] Friedman Yaron, *The Nusayri-Alawis An Introduction to Religion, History and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria* (Brill NV :Sebastian Günther , & Wadad Kadi. Vol. 77, 2010), 1-11.

[38] Ibid, 11.

[39] Yvette Talhamy The Fatwas and the Nusayri/Alawis of Syria,." *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (2010), 175-194.

Alawi entered a golden age, when many of the Alawi's religious literature was written and the community was influenced by Greek thought. Al-Khasibi would later return to Baghdad to reestablish an Alawi community there, which would later disappear due to the Mongol invasion. The Syrian community would endure, however, under the leadership of al-Jill. During this age, the Alawi resided in Harran, their original settlement, Aleppo, Tripoli, and Wadi l-Taym (present-day Lebanon). It was in Wadi l-Taym that the Alawi came in contact with another Shia offshoot sect, the Druze. During their initial years of contact, the Alawi threatened the existence of the Druze due to their successful propaganda campaign.

The Golden age came to an end after the death of Abu Abdallah Muhammad Banu Shu 'ba, which occurred in the eleventh century, after which time, the Alawi lacked a charismatic leader. Leadership shifted to local shayks (religious leaders), which would lead to rival sects. These shayks were backed by powerful families who usually owned militarized fortresses. During this time, the Alawi community was under constant assault from Crusaders and Mongols which greatly weakened the community. The Alawi would again be reunited by Shakh al-Nashshabi around 1190, saving the Alawi community from extinction. The Alawi would once again come under assault as the Mamluks took control in Syria in 1260.[40]

Under Mamluk rule a series of fatwas (Islamic edicts) were issued that were instituted to oppress the community. The mufti (religious leader authorized to make edicts) who was responsible for fatwas issued against the Alawi during the Mamluk period was Taqi al-Din ibn

[40]Friedman Yaron, *The Nusayri-Alawis An Introduction to Religon, History and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria* (Brill NV :Sebastian Günther , & Wadad Kadi. Vol. 77, 2010),

Taymiyya (1263–1328). A Sunni who believed that all other sects of Islam were "heretical"[41], ibn Taymiyya issued three fatwas against the Alawi. Each fatwa was more extreme than the other, and all called for the killing of the Alawi warriors and enslavement of Alawi women. These fatwas resulted the massacre of thousands of Alawi and led them to migrate into the hills surrounding Nusayriyya Mountain.[42]

The next series of fatwas concerning the Alawi occurred during Ottoman rule. The first was issued by Sultan Selim I through the local mufti, Shaykh Nuh al-Hanafi, after the Ottoman conquest of Syria in 1516. This fatwa called for persecution of all Shia sects but was especially brutal towards the Alawi resulting in the death of about 40,000 Alawi. This fatwa was likely issued for political reasons stemming from the Sultan's war with the Shia Safavids in Persia. It was not until 1820 when the next fatwa was issued against the Alawi. This fatwa was issued by Sunni Shaykh Muhammad (Ibrahim) Nasir al-Din al-Mugrabi who called for the persecution of the Alawi in the city of Latakia because of their "constant state of insurgency".[43] The final fatwa issued regarding the Alawi occurred in 1936, when the Grand mufiti of Jerusalem Muhammad Amin al-Husayni, a supporter of the pan-Arabism movement, declared the Alawi a Muslim group. This occurred after the Alawi changed their name from the Nusayri to the Alawi, and a pan-Arab movement developed in response to the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the occupation of Syria and Iraq by the West.[44]

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[41] Yvette Talhamy The Fatwas and the Nusayri/Alawis of Syria,." *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (2010), 175-194

[42] Ibid 175-183 see appendix for map it is labeled as figure 3.

[43] Ibid, 183.

[44] Ibid, 183-185.

The Alawi, since their origin, have been persecuted by Shia and Sunni Muslims. To further separate themselves from other Muslim communities, they adopted Christian believes such as the belief in the Trinity and the celebration of Christmas.[45] This led to the persecution and death to thousands in their community, but they endured, and by the time the French occupied Syria they were still a thriving community. The health of their community, like the Druze, was harmed when the French separated Lebanon from Syria.[46] As the leading minority in Syria, the Alawi would be a focus of French imperial policy. In many instances, because of their closer ties with Christianity and their willingness to cooperate with the French, the Alawi would often fair better than their Shia splinter-group counterparts, the Druze.[47]

Eastern Mediterranean Christians

The two final groups analyzed by this thesis are Eastern Mediterranean Christians and the Armenians. The Eastern Mediterranean Christian groups include various sects of Orthodox Christians and Protestants. These religious groups have had a presence in the region since antiquity and, traditionally, have had a more open relationship with the Arabs compared to their Maronite Christian counterparts. Over hundreds of years, a middle class emerged that was comprised of merchants from both Christian and Arab groups.[48] Though the two groups were

[45] Duna, Valentina-Tania, "Religious Minorities, Political Majorities: the Alawis in Syria and the Maronites in Lebanon." *Romanian Journal Of Population Studies* 6, no. 2 (June 2012), 104-105.

[46] Ibid, 105

[47] Yvette Talhamy The Fatwas and the Nusayri/Alawis of Syria,." *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (2010), 175-194.

[48]Harris William, Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997 71.

traditionally partners, the Christians were very wary of an Arab government emerging in "French Syria". [49]

Armenians

The final minority group that is discussed are the Armenians. The Armenians were brand new to the region in the late 1910s and early 20s. Many found themselves in Syria after an attempt to regain medieval statehood in Anatolia. They did not achieve this goal, and were massacred by the Turks and Kurds during the First World War. They finally arrived to the region as refugees, and in Lebanon were guaranteed freedom by the ruling Maronites to bolster Christian power in the fledgling state.[50] Other Armenians were troops in the French colonial regiment, and according to reports on the ground, Armenian troops were often disrespectful to Arab women which was just one of many sources of tensions that arose between the Arabs and the Armenians.[51]

[49] 867.00/903

[50] Harris William, Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997), 71-72.

[51] 867.00/1090 Report sent to the Secretary of State from the USS Cole dated December 19, 1919.

Syrian Political Society

Traditionally, minorities in a society have been, at the very least unfairly represented politically, and at worst, massacred. In the case of French Mandate Syria, however; many of the minority groups examined by this thesis were granted privilege over the Muslim majority. Ideally, all religious, political, or ethnic groups should be given the resources, albeit political or otherwise, to function to their fullest potential within society. What happens, though, when the minority is granted power over the majority? Through the United States' view of the imperial society, the thesis attempts to answer this question. If the French and minorities like the Maronites and Eastern Christians were willing to cede more power to the Muslim majority that had existed in the land for decades, would there have been a more peaceful result? Through history a common problem is the lack of power that minorities had in a society, but just as common as a problem in imperial history, is when the minority has power over the majority, like the Maronites in Lebanon.

Of the minority groups analyzed by this thesis, only the Druze would fall in the category of being underrepresented politically. Even the Alawi, had relative power in Syria considering the size of their community. [52] Through the eyes of the American diplomats, this thesis will examine the differences of experience between the Druze and the other minority groups to analyze what it means to be on the wrong side of the will of an imperial power like France. By examining the experiences of Syrian minorities, the thesis is also an examination of the Muslim majority in the region. This is because of the political advantage of the minorities over the

[52] Duna, Valentina-Tania, "Religious Minorities, Political Majorities: the Alawis in Syria and the Maronites in Lebanon." Romanian Journal Of Population Studies 6, no. 2 (June 2012103-110.

Muslim majority that French imperial policy granted. Advantages that would lead to the belligerent actions of a majority who were unable to determine their own future.

In the following chapters, this thesis utilizes the accounts left by United States diplomats to argue that the actions taken by the French, as well as some of the minority groups involved in policy making during the years of 1918-1922, led to the creation of a toxic society. This thesis defines a toxic society as one where peace cannot be sustained over a substantial period because the best interests of a significant proportion of society are not met.

To better understand the actions taken by groups involved in forming the new nations of Lebanon and Syria, this thesis first provide an overview of the French plans for the region and how their policy evolved as over four years in chapter one. In the next chapter, the analysis shifts to the minorities and how their situation changed as new policies were implemented. The final chapter takes the information gathered in the first and second chapter, and attempts to answer the questions laid out in this introduction.

Chapter 2: France's Long-Awaited Inheritance

At the conclusion of World War I, France was left in tatters, losing nearly 1.7 million people, which amounted to about four percent of their population. This devastation coupled with France's intense imperial rivalry with Britain, was the motivation needed for France to demand mandate control over Syria at all costs. This centuries long rivalry was rekindled after the war when Britain claimed control over oil-rich Mesopotamia. Caught between these rivals were the people of the Middle East and their visions for a post-war Middle East.[53] The leaders and visionaries of the Middle East which included the King of the Hedjaz Hussein, his son Feisal, and his arch nemesis, Wahhabis leader, Ibn Saud all were in negotiations with the west concerning a potential rebellion against the Turks and economic concessions.

When the war began, Britain sent Hussein and his son Feisal a prized young intelligence agent T. E. Lawrence, who is better known as Lawrence of Arabia. Carrying with him arms and gold, Lawrence promised freedom and self-determination to the Middle Eastern leaders. [54] Meanwhile, the French who had a sizable force under the command of Georges Picot in greater Syria and Lebanon, withdrew their presence in the region as the war began, leaving behind sensitive archives. After the Turks gained access to those archives, many French sympathizers were left to the mercy of the Turks, who brutally executed many of them.[55] While the war waged on and these atrocities were committed, George Picot and his British counterpart, Mark

[53] Andelman David*, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 9-15.

[54] Ibid, 46-52.

[55] 987.00/1022 867.00/1022 Letter on Syrian Affairs addressed to the Secretary of State by a consular official stationed in Beirut dated November 10, 1919.

Sykes signed an agreement in May, 1916 which established the borders of Syria and Lebanon, borders that would remain virtually unchanged after the war. This would greatly saddle the abilities of British, French, and American Arab sympathizers as well as Middle Eastern leaders like Feisal and Ibn Saud.[56] These actions taken by the French before and during the war were harshly criticized by virtually all of the United States diplomats.

France's Syrian History

The mistake of leaving archives in Syria was not France's first blunder in the region, whose history in the region stretches back to the eleventh century. France first established a presence in the region during the Crusades, when in 1180, the Maronite Patriarch recognized the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Pope.[57] The French connection to the Maronite community and the Levant was cemented with a letter from St. Louis dated May 21, 1250 that stated, "' We are convinced that this nation [the Lebanon]… is a part of the French nation, for its friendship for the French resembles the friendship which the French have among themselves… We promise to give you and your people protection… and to do whatever will be necessary for your well-being.'"[58] When this letter was written in the thirteenth century, merchants from Marseilles migrated to coastal regions of Lebanon, and remained until the conclusion of the Crusades at the end of the thirteenth century.[59]

[56]Andelman David*, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008)49-52.

[57] House, Michael, "Lebanon's damned inheritance." History Today 7-10

[58]Shorrock, William, *French Imperialism in the Middle East: The Failure of Policy in Syria and Lebanon, 1900-1914*. (Madison , Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 11.

[59] Ibid, 11.

It was not until Constantinople fell to the hands of the Ottoman Turks in 1453, that French, once again, became involved in Levant politics. The first Ottoman capitulation, or special agreement, with France came in 1453, when Sultan Sulieman the Magnificent and King Francis I agreed that France owned "commercial relations" in Turkish ports, and that all French subjects in the Ottoman Empire, which included pilgrims, merchants, and other travelers, are to enjoy full religious freedom. This capitulation would establish what historians refer to France's "Catholic Protectorate in the Middle East".[60] Capitulations signed in 1569, 1604, and 1673 reassured the 1535 agreement. The 1736 agreement built on the previous ones by guaranteeing free and unmolested travel to Jerusalem and other holy sites. Additionally, the newest agreement granted French religious establishments freedom from paying local taxes.[61]

These capitulations only guaranteed the freedom and protection for French laypeople and foreign clergy, but this role was slowly expanding to protect other Christians including Christians of the Ottoman Empire. This expansion is represented by a letter jointly written by King Louis XIV and the Queen of the Maronite nation that stated "[King Louis XIV], took under their 'protection and special safe-guard the very reverend Patriarch and all of the prelates and clerical and secular Maronite Christians who inhabit the Lebanon.'"[62] This trend was strengthened and formalized with the 1740 capitulation that allowed all Christians, even those who belonged to "'hostile nations'", to travel to Jerusalem under the protection of the French Monarchy.

[60] Ibid, 12.
[61] Ibid, 12.
[62] Ibid,13.

French power under the "Catholic protectorate" reached its climax during the Druze-Maronite war, which occurred in the years of 1840-1860. This conflict occurred after the Maronites supported the Egyptians when they had a presence in Syria during the years of 1831-1840. This support angered the Turks, prompting them to encourage the Druze to inflict acts of violence onto the Maronties. This violence culminated in the massacre of 11,000 Maronites in 1860. This prompted France, acting as a representative of the five European powers (France, England, Germany, Austria, and Russia), to intervene on the Maronites' behalf by sending an expeditionary force of 6,000. This resulted in the establishment of the Règlement organique. Ratified on June 9, 1861, the Règlement Organique established the autonomous state of Lebanon within the Ottoman Empire, ruled by the Maronite majority. These developments prompted Christians in Lebanon and Syria to look toward France as their savior, until the early twentieth century when support for the French became confined to the Maronite community.[63]

The French influence would wane in the last chapter of the Ottoman Empire's existence, when the Empire made civil and Islamic law two separate entities. This empowered the Turks to enforce their civil law on French real-estate owners, including the right of taxation. This change in policy coupled with the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871, resulted in the loss of political influence in the Ottoman Empire as Prussian political officers were replacing the French in Istanbul. Though French influence was on the decline throughout the Ottoman Empire, she could still garner substantial support from Syrian Christians, because of Syrians memory of French actions in 1861 and the extensive French missionary network present in Syria

[63] Ibid, 12-14.

which boasted five hundred schools. The French position remained strong in Syria at the turn of the century, but because of diplomatic mistakes, many Christians lost confidence in the French regime.[64]

French actions in Syria in the fourteen years before the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914 mostly concerned remaining the dominant force of influence in the Levant. These actions were often committed to the detriment of France's imperial rivals and Syria's people. The first notable action taken by the French was their refusal to support the opening of a new port able to accommodate steamship traffic in the Lebanese port city of Djounieh. Although the new port would have served as a significant economic benefit to the Syrian people, the French refused to support its construction because they feared the loss of a trade monopoly in Syria to the hands of the British and they feared a potential loss of influence in the region. When word arrived to the Sultan about the proposed project, he solved the French problem by refusing to endorse the project because of the monopoly on tax revenues the Sublime Porte received from the French port of Beirut.[65]

French consular reports from this time show that France's presence in Syria was quickly encouraging Syrians and Lebanese to look toward other European powers for religious and economic leadership. In August, 1904 a report from a French consular general stationed in Beirut noted that British military officials were received more enthusiastically than their French counterparts. 1905 brought a similar report which stated that religious leaders in Damascus were

[64] Ibid, 14-22.

[65] Shorrock, William. "French Suspicion of British Policy in Syria, 1900-1914." *Journal of European Studies* (1976), 191-192.

not happy with French rule and demanded some compromises. [66] This is one of many accounts that suggest that most of the Syrian and Lebanese people preferred the leadership of virtually any other power than France, a sentiment that is later chronicled by American diplomats in the years following World War I.[67] These reports left the French suspicious of the actions of their imperial rivals, and the French were left especially concerned when a February 14, 1907 *Daily Graphic* article was published in England that suggested that Catholic missions were abandoning French flags for German and Italian flags.[68]

France's suspicions of her imperial rivals were somewhat justified by the bevy of reports authored by British and French consular generals in the years of 1907 through 1912, which reported that British support was indeed increasing. During these years, the Syrian press ran an aggressive anti-French campaign, and there were rumors amongst the locals that Britain was going to administer over Syria and Egypt forming a new nation in the process. A sizeable portion of the Muslim and Druze population desired this outcome because of family members who reported freedoms and high quality of life they experienced in Egypt.[69] From these various reports, it is unsurprising that the French were wary of their rivals, in particular Britain, but British sources originating from Whitehall suggest that Britain was content with leaving Syria to France. If US consular reports in the years immediately following the war are indicative of the actions taken by French in the years before the war, there is no reason not to believe those

[66] Ibid, 192.

[67] 867.00/1537 Collection of War diaries from the commanders of various naval vessels in Turkish waters for the Secretary of State dated August 2, 1922.

[68] Shorrock, William. "French Suspicion of British Policy in Syria, 1900-1914." *Journal of European Studies* (1976), 193.

[69] Ibid, 193-198.

reports. The likely cause for the rising pro-British sentiments at the expense of the French was the treatment of local Syrians by French authorities, not British diplomatic policy.[70]

Syrian support of the French was not yet dead, as evidenced by the United States consular-general's report from Beirut in 1919, which claimed that French support was high amongst the majority of the Syrian population.[71] Favor amongst Syrians, yet again, swung towards the French after a speech made by the Foreign Minister and President of the Council of Ministers Poincaré made a speech to the French senate in which he declared:

> I have no need to tell the Senate that in Syria and Lebanon we have traditional interests and that we intend to see they are respected.
>
> I am happy to be able to add that the rumours about the existence of some disaffection between the English Government and us on this point are completely baseless.
>
> The English Government has declared to us in a very friendly manner that in these regions it has neither intentions nor designs, nor political aspirations of any sort.
>
> We ourselves are resolved to maintain, in Asia, the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but we shall not abandon any of our traditions there, nor repudiate any of the sympathies we have acquired, nor leave any of our interests there in abeyance.[72]

These powerful words to the Senate, which were given only after British foreign secretary Sir Edward Grey consented to them, coupled with reforms pertaining to the Lebanese Règlement organique, bolstered Syrian support of the French. After Poincaré's speech, France's primary concern, in the years preceding the outbreak of war, was to secure control of Syria, which it did by coming to an agreement with Constantinople and Berlin in 1914. The French

[70] 867.00/1022 Letter on Syrian Affairs addressed to the Secretary of State by a consular official stationed in Beirut dated November 10, 1919.

[71] Ibid .

[72] Shorrock, William. "French Suspicion of British Policy in Syria, 1900-1914." *Journal of European Studies* (1976), 197-198.

would not come to an agreement with the British until the Sykes-Picot agreement.[73] Agreed upon amongst the fog of war, the agreement ignored many military and political realities. Militarily, it was the British who liberated Syria from the Turks, and politically it was very clear by 1916, that most Syrians would have preferred anyone to administer over their lands other than the French.[74]

Since her eyes first set sight on the region during the Crusades, France has been obsessed with maintaining the small amount of influence she obtained from her connection to the Catholic Maronite community. After the Ottoman Empire was established, France made a series of deals with the Sultan to secure her position as the protector of the world's Catholics. After their intervention in the Maronite-Druze conflict of 1861 and the formation of the Règlement organique in Lebanon, the French now had an established role in Syria and Lebanon that expanded beyond their Catholic Protectorate. From this point onward, it was France's dream to create a gateway to the West in Lebanon. To do this, they established schools and opened a port in Beirut. French activity was permitted by the Sultan, who came to many agreements with the French that gave them special freedoms and economic privileges.

At the turn of the 20th century, during the height of the era of European imperialism, France's rivals including Britain, Germany, and the United States had a presence in what would later be Lebanon and Syria. France's rivals in the region made her suspicious, and as a result, she went to extra lengths to secure her economic sphere of influence in the region. These deals

[73] Ibid, 204-205.

[74] Andelman David, *A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008) 69-70.

were made, even though France knew that she was not favored by the Syrian populous which is evidenced by the many paranoid reports from French consular-generals in the years before the war. France's history in Syria and Lebanon is characterized by French officials going against the wills of the Muslims, and increasingly, Christians in the region. French foreign officials were driven to act against the will of the majority of the Syrian people time and time again by their shared dream to spread, what they thought, was French culture to the Mediterranean Sea. Their persistence would cause them problems when they finally reached their goal and obtained Syria. With Syria, they also obtained a diverse population where all but one faction, the Maronites, were happy about their presence in the country. In able to spread their civilization to this part of the Mediterranean, they would have a new set of aims geared at each faction of the Syrian and Lebanese populations.

French Aims

Since the Middle Ages, the French claimed that their involvement in the Syrian region was due to their obligation to protect the world's Christians. By 1918, however; it was obvious that the French were in Syria not only to protect the Christians there, but also to bolster their imperial position in the world and to acquire new subjects. When George Picot and Mark Sykes divided the spoils of the Ottoman Empire in 1916, it was already determined that that the British would control the resource rich fertile crescent and Arabian Peninsula to better administer over their empire in India. While the French were granted Syria, a land with a long-standing French connection and crucial railways, to protect the Orient from expansionist Russia. [75] Under the

[75]Andelman David, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 49-50.

new mandate system, a policy crucial to the newly ratified League of Nations, the protector nation, France in this case, was ordered to foster the development of a democratic and free society. Instead, quickly after the French established rule in Syria, they brought with them the might of their military machine to protect those doing "'God's work'" converting "'heathen'" Muslims to Christianity.[76]

American diplomats quickly realized that the French were not particularly interested in upholding their mandate responsibilities and had other ideas in mind. One observer, stationed in Beirut, noted that Georges Picot, who was present in Syria before the war, was already beginning to consolidate power and could care less about the local government. When the war concluded, and Picot became high-commissioner of Syria, it was clear to the observer that France was going to control Syria at all costs, even though they had very little understanding of the political situation on the ground.[77] This hypothesis is confirmed by the story of Emir Feisal, who symbolically liberated Syria during the war in accordance with British plans.

Feisal's victory was celebrated in the streets, and Feisal assumed the role of King of Syria. Feisal's British advisor, Lawrence of Arabia, and General Allenby, who made the Arab victory possible because of his campaign through Palestine and Syria, went along with the ceremonies, further cementing his position. To the disappointment of Lawrence of Arabia, the British cabinet decided to uphold the Sykes-Picot agreement, leading to a fiery April 29, 1919 exchange between a resolute French Prime Minister Clemenceau and a devastated Emir Feisal.

[76] Ibid, 69-70

[77] 897.00/1022 Letter on Syrian Affairs addressed to the Secretary of State by a consular official stationed in Beirut dated November 10, 1919.

During the conversation, Feisal explains why Syria cannot be ruled by the French, wisely stating that the French had no intention of upholding the Arab will, and because of that, he refused to except French rule. Clemenceau's purple-faced response to Feisal's position was "The French flag will fly over Damascus!" leading Feisal to finally submit to French will.[78]

Other than the desire to control Syria and Lebanon, France had other aims which included solidifying the Maronite position in Lebanon, improving and controlling crucial rail lines, obtaining new naval bases and to bolster her colonial position in North Africa[79]. To successfully achieve their goals, French diplomats would have to balance their goals for a new Syria and Lebanon with the goals of the Muslim majority and the various minorities groups of the region. France had a plan in place for each of the minority groups discussed in this paper. Plans, that would evolve overtime as the French and their subjects encountered difficulties in achieving their goals.

French Objectives

Maronites

Of any population in Lebanon and Syria, including the Muslim majority, the French were most concerned with the Maronites. Unlike the other groups, however; it was in France's best interest to uphold the best interest of the Maronites. This was because France could use the large pro-French population in and around Mt. Lebanon to solidify a position in the Middle East that would serve to strengthen their colonial holdings in North Africa. They could also use the

[78] Andelman David, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 56-70.

[79] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

sizable pro-French force to protect their religious and economic interests in the region that included the preservation of many ports and railways.[80] The Maronites were interested in preserving their cultural identity and political power, which was only possible with sustained French aid. It was the combined interest of the French and Maronties that the modern state of Lebanon was born, but because of the thirst for land that both groups had, the modern state of Lebanon did not match the Maronite-French vision. This was due to the fact that Lebanon quickly became a place where not even thirty percent of the population was part of the Maronite community, thus defeating the French and Maronite purpose of establishing a pro-France nation whose largest group were the Maronites.[81]

The creation of an independent Lebanon, with the Maronites at the seat of power, was the dream of the French foreign ministry, but its creation was complicated by Feisal and British general Allenby when Allenby permitted Feisal's triumph in the streets of Damascus in September of 1918. As Feisal's troops were marching towards Damascus a telegram from the Arab president Amir Sa`id al-Hassan al-Jaza`iri to Maronite Patriarch Ilias Butrus Huwayyik that stated, "'Syria announces the independence of the Arabs and our Lord, the first Sultan of the Arabs, the Amir Faysal'".[82] After being disbanded in 1915 by the Ottoman Administration, the Majlis, a council of nobles that were responsible for the civil administration of the Règlement Organique from its founding in 1861, reconvened and immediately attached itself to the French,

[80] House, Michael, "Lebanon's damned inheritance." History Today, 129-130.

[81] Duna, Valentina-Tania, "Religious Minorities, Political Majorities: the Alawis in Syria and the Maronites in Lebanon." Romanian Journal Of Population Studies 6, no. 2 (June 2012) 97-98 see appendix for population chart which will be labeled figure 4.

[82] Simon, James, "The Role of the Administrative Council of Mount Lebanon in the Creation of Greater Lebanon, 1918-1920." *Journal of Third World Studies* 13 (2) (1996): 119-171. 119.

expecting that they would push for an independent Lebanon. The Majlis nobles consisted of four individuals from the Maronite community, three from the Druze, two Greek Orthodox, one Sunni, and one Shia. The council's leader was Maronite Sulayman Kanàn, who was adamant in the formation of an independent Lebanon.[83]

At the start of 1919, when delegations from across the Middle East, including one representing the Hashemite of Feisal and another that represented the Majis were convening in Paris, a new voice emerged that belonged to the Central Syrian Committee. The goal of the CSE was to create an untied state of Syria under a French Mandate. When this idea was introduced, many in the French delegation turned their back on the Majis and supported the new position. Nevertheless, the Majis were able to persuade the League of Nations to pass a declaration that allowed for an independent Lebanon as late as March, 1920.[84] The remarkable collaboration amongst the ethnic groups that comprised the Majis was finally broken after the conclusion of the San Remo conference which formally recognized the French and British Mandates. The Balfour declaration was also recognized and Lebanon was not yet given their independence. This angered the non-Maronite Majlis, which led to a secret meeting between them and leaders of the Hashemite of Syria in July, distancing themselves from the French. On their return journey, the seven members who went to Damascus were arrested and the Majis were formally disbanded.[85]

[83] ibid, 1-4.
[84] Ibid, 5.
[85] Ibid, 10-11.

Originally, there was no implication that the French did not want to fulfill the desires of the Majis, but as time moved forward, the Sykes-Picot agreement remained in the minds of the French eventually enticing them to include Lebanon as part of "French Syria". Although this was against the will of the Maronite nobles, they continued to enjoy a favorable position with the French, and continued to cooperate with them. The split in the Majis demonstrates that leaders from other communities within Lebanon, including Christians, understood that the Maronite position with the French would be to the detriment of the other communities.

Druze

When the French landed in Beirut near the conclusion of the war, the Druze were far from the center of their focus. The lack of attention paid to the Druze by the French was primarily because they were more concerned with protecting the Catholic Maronites as well as subduing Feisal and the Arabs. Another likely reason the French ignored the Druze was that in Syria they were only four percent of the population with 150,000, and in Lebanon they comprised of only twelve percent of the population with 51,000.[86] Although the French did not consider the Druze a major priority, the French occupation of Syria was a symbolically significant moment in Druze history because it cemented Lebanon as a Maronite nation. For centuries, the Maronites were the dominant force in and around Mt. Lebanon, but Druze leaders claimed that their Emirate of centuries past had been the legitimate government of Lebanon since the thirteenth century.[87]

[86] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[87] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009):259.

In the years of 1918 and 1919, when Syria was jointly controlled by the British and the French, the Druze, like most groups in French Syria, were in strong opposition to French control. This opposition was seen in Druze acts of violence toward their Maronite rivals. This violence was recorded by United States Beirut consular officer Wallace, who on October 6, 1919, mentioned that the Druze killed five Maronites after the French killed one Druze in an attempt to quell resistance towards the French. In the same letter, Wallace also hypothesized that the French would employ their propaganda in an attempt to sway Druze support in the French's favor.[88] According to a later report from Wallace, the Druze resistance that the French were attempting to sequester consisted of ten thousand armed men who were participating in guerilla warfare.[89]

As the intensity of the political rivalry between the Druze and Maronites became clearer to the French, French policy concerning the Druze aimed at quelling Druze resistance towards the French and protecting the Maronites. The Lebanese border that was drawn in 1920, served to help the French accomplish both of these goals. By placing the border where they did, the French effectively separated the Druze community, diminishing their power to resist. This border would also assure that the Maronites would hold significant political power over the Druze. In addition to the border, the French used propaganda and armed intimidation to quell the Druze movement within Syria and Lebanon.[90]

[88] 867.00/946 Letter to the Secretary of State from a consular official stationed in Beirut dated October 6, 1919.

[89] 867.00/948 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Wallace dated October 4, 1919.

[90] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009): 465.

Alawi

By the time of the French and British joint occupation of French Syria, most of the Alawi existed in both modern Lebanon and Syria, but mostly Syria. Technically Shia Muslims, the Alawi were, in many respects, closer affiliated to Christianity. Influenced by Greek thinking when they first arrived to Syria, the Alawi believed in Christian doctrines like the sanctity of the Trinity, and celebrated Christian holidays like Christmas and Pentecost.[91] Because of this, many French felt that the protection of the Alawi should be of a higher priority than the protection of the Sunni Muslim majority in Syria.[92] When the French, under general Gouraud, took full control of French Syria in 1920, the Alawis, like other ethnic and political groups were under a state of unrest. Settling this unrest was one of the top priorities of the French concerning the Alawi.[93]

To accomplish this, the French relied on collaborators within the Alawi leadership, to not only settle the Alawi, but to also transform them into a cohesive sect rather than a fractured group of tribes. The players in the French-Alawi collaboration were the Al-Abbas family, and later Sliman Murshid who was known for his religious powers. The French used economic incentives to entice these leaders to consolidate the Alawi tribes as one political entity. Leaders like Murshid and the Al-Abbas families worked within the Feudal framework to accomplish these goals. To ensure that Alawi nobles could expand their power within the Alawi community, they aided the French in squelching the rebellion by seizing weapons from the rebels. Because

[91]Friedman Yaron, *The Nusayri-Alawis An Introduction to Religion, History and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria* (Brill NV :Sebastian Günther , & Wadad Kadi. Vol. 77, 2010), 1-11.

[92]Duna, Valentina-Tania, "Religious Minorities, Political Majorities: the Alawis in Syria and the Maronites in Lebanon." *Romanian Journal Of Population Studies* 6, no. 2 (June 2012):104.

[93] Mendenhall, Kurt Lee. "Class, Cult and Tribe: The Politics of `Alawi Separatism in French Mandate Syria." *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *Historical Abstracts* (1992): 135-136.

the nobles helped the French with the rebellion, the French were willing to turn a blind eye to the power gobbling schemes of ambitious Alawi nobles. These schemes included seizing peasant lands and using forced labor to build government headquarters, which was presented to the peasants as a tax paid to their vassal. The collaborators cooperation with the French bolstered their position against the Sunnis and gave the Alawi a disproportionate amount of political power. Yet, many common Alawi suffered under the high-demand of their powerful feudal lords.[94]

Eastern Mediterranean Christians and Armenians

The Eastern Mediterranean Christians were one of the smaller groups in French Syria, with all sects of Christianity (excluding the Maronites) comprising fifteen percent of the population. In Lebanon their numbers were larger, making up about twenty percent of the population. This group's opinion of the French would vary greatly overtime with most Christians eventually coming to the conclusion that the United States mandate, not a French mandate or a Hashemite Monarchy, was the best option for the future of Syria.[95] Fearing interference from the Germans, British, Russians, and other imperial powers, the French wanted to ensure the safety of their Christian subjects, even though most Christians were not in favor of French rule. Because of this reluctance to accept French rule, it can be assumed that anti-American propaganda experienced by Armenian Protestants as reported by Officer Jackson at

[94] Ibid, 136-159.

[95] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

American consular headquarters in Damascus, was an attempt by the French to earn support amongst Syria's Christians.[96]

Indicated by the use of propaganda, the French wished to gain the support of the Christians and offer them protection from Muslims who saw some Christians as French allies. As previously discussed, the French also wanted to bolster their imperial position in North Africa by forming a strong Christian coalition in Syria and Lebanon. This coalition was not only to include the western looking Maronites but also the eastern looking Greek, Lebanese, and Russian orthodox Christians.[97] Although the Eastern Christians would receive extra benefits and protections compared to the Muslim neighbors, the French were still unable to sway the Christians who, from the beginning, thought France was not capable of properly governing Syria.[98]

The Armenians, unlike other Eastern Christian groups, mostly supported the French in Syria and Lebanon. The Armenians were newcomers to Syria and needed the protection of the "protector of the world's Christians" more than anyone else. They arrived to the region as stragglers who suffered through what many consider a genocide at the hands of the Turks and Kurds. When the Armenians arrived to the region, France took quick steps to integrate them in broader Syrian society and offered them special legal rights and protections.[99] Armenians were not only present in Syria as refugees but also as soldiers. Armenian soldiers are first mentioned

[96] 867.00/897 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Jackson dated January 23, 1919

[97] Harris William, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997), 129-132

[98] 867.00/872 Letter to the Secretary of State regarding the Syrian situation, written by C.A. Dara on April 17, 1919

[99] Harris William, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997) 71-72

by American diplomats in the last months of 1919, when sizable French forces began to replace British battalions in Syria. Armenian, and other French colonial forces (primarily North Africans), were assigned the task of controlling the region and ousting Feisal with his Arab army from the region.[100] These Armenian soldiers faced racial discrimination from many Arabs and Kurds in the region, which only served to further raise the animosity between the French and Syrian people. These tensions were exacerbated when, as reported by US officials, many Armenian troops abused Arab women.[101] This policy along with many others was harshly criticized by US foreign officers.

U.S. View on French Goals

In 1919, as the true details of the Sykes Picot agreement were revealed to US foreign officers, they were immediately critical of French and British policy. These diplomats were agents of President Wilson, and as his agents they, at least publically, shared his vision for the new world order which he outlined in his fourteen points. Of all of the tenants raised by Wilson, the idea of self-determination was one of the most important. This placed him at odds with his European allies who were principally interested in reaping the rewards that their men and women earned on the battlefields of Europe.[102] Wilson was so concerned about the concept of self-determination, he sent the King-Crane commission in attempt to discover what Middle Eastern peoples wanted for the future. The report was unfortunately corrupted by the imperial ambitions

[100]867.00/993 A letter addressed to the American Peace Conference written by a consular official in Cairo dated November 14, 1919.

[101] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[102] Andelman David, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 4-5.

of France and England, nevertheless, it shows the effort the Wilson administration placed in the concept of self-determination.

The thoughts and sympathies of the consular officers observed in this report, often reflect the sympathies of President Wilson. Reports written by Consuls Young, Knabenshue, and others show concern for whom the people want as their rulers, and if they would be willing to accept French rule.[103] One consular officer claimed that he knew the people would not accept a French mandate because of the various actions of Picot that have been previously mentioned. [104] Like Wilson, the American foreign officers were critical of the imperial climate that engulfed all of the European powers, but especially England and France, during this time period. In 1919, when the British evacuated the Bekaa plain so that the French could move in, an author from the American Peace Mission stated that the British are going to be responsible for any bloodshed that resulted from said evacuation. Many of the consular officers knew of the anti-French sentiment in the region, and called for the British to remain in Syria until a final agreement could be made in Paris.[105] One of the Consular Generals, Wallace, appeared to have a very good grasp of the situation when he stated on October 4, 1919, "if Feisal accepts the French mandate he will not be able to lead."[106] This excerpt demonstrates the wide range of criticism the consular generals had for the French.

[103] 867.00/1035 A letter to the Secretary of State written by consular official Jackson dated December 1, 1919 867.000/1090 Report sent to the Secretary of State from the USS Cole dated December 19, 1919.

[104] 867.00/1022 Letter on Syrian Affairs addressed to the Secretary of State by a consular official stationed in Beirut dated November 10, 1919.

[105] 867.00/1033 A letter to the Secretary of State written by consular official Wallace dated November 24, 1919.

[106] 867.00/948 A letter to the Secretary of State written by consular official Wallace dated October 4, 1919.

Pertaining to minorities, the consular officers had plenty of criticism for the French, beginning with their policy towards the Maronite community. One officer, in a very comprehensive report on the entirety of the former Ottoman Empire, stated that the plan the French and Maronites had for the future state of Lebanon was destined to fail because he knew the Maronites would not be in the majority for long[107], which was proven by a census conducted in the 1932 that showed that the Maronites lost their majority in Lebanon. [108] The diplomats were also critical of the French policy towards the Druze, stating that their collaboration with the Maronites and neglect of the Druze would lead to further violence from the Druze directed towards Christians[109]. Unfortunately, the diplomats did not have a critique of any kind that was directed at French policy towards the Alawi and Eastern Christians. They, however, mention Armenians in their critiques, specifically, the use of Armenian soldiers. They mention that the use of Armenian soldiers, because of racial tensions and inappropriate actions of the troops, was and would contribute to conflict between the French and the local population.[110]

The diplomats leave a record of a French dream for her newly acquired land and its people. The question remains, however; what was the desire of the minority groups for the future of Syria? Each group had a different visions of the future of their homeland, which would evolve over time. The next chapter examines these visions, and if they came to fruition. Much of the remainder of the thesis examines the implications of a new French policy that often

[107] 867.00/903 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[108] Harris, William. *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J: Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997), 131.

[109]867.00/946 Letter to the Secretary of State written by consular official Knabenshue dated October 6, 1919.

[110] 867.00/1090 Report sent to the Secretary of State from the USS Cole dated December 19, 1919.

contrasted with the goals of the various religious minorities and the Muslim majority. It will also examine how minority leaders' goals changed overtime as their true political situation was revealed.

Chapter 2: A Line in the Sand

The strong desire of the French to mold their new Mediterranean colony into a center of French prestige left the French at odds with the vast majority of her new subjects, including the Arab majority and the minority communities discussed in this thesis. After World War I, the local leaders were given hope that the ideals presented in President Wilson's Fourteen Points would provide them the opportunity to determine their political futures.[111] The beacon of hope that was Wilson's Fourteen Points, was quickly dimmed by a US congress who was paralyzed with fear at the prospect of becoming involved with foreign affairs after the United States' involvement in World War I. This left the various people of the Middle East at the hands of European powers whose imperial appetites were not yet satiated.

The hopes of the Syrian people were quickly dashed after the French landed in Beirut on May, 1918. The loss of these hopes was embodied in King Feisal's depressed form after he was forced to leave Syria because of his fear that if he fought the French head-on, he would lose too many of his Arab warriors.[112] Leaders of Syrian minorities would also have their hopes dashed when groups like the Druze were not given a seat at the negotiating table when forming policy in French Syria[113]. According to Knabenshue, Jackson, and other US consular officials, most of Syria's inhabitants did not wish to be completely on their own, and in fact, wished to work

[111] Andelman David*, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008).

[112] 867.00/1337 Report prepared by Naval Officer to the Secretary of State, prepared on July 21, 1920.

[113] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009):, 459-460.

within the framework of a western mandate for the near future. The problem was that because of French maladministration, which has been highlighted in previous chapters, every group, with the exception of the Maronites, feared the consequences of a French mandate. The American diplomats claim that most groups would have accepted a British mandate but would prefer an American mandate.[114] The likely reason being the United States' lack of history in the region.

None of the minority groups discussed in this thesis received exactly what they wanted for the future administration of Syria and Lebanon. Some groups, however; fared better than others. The groups that fared best were those in which the French had an interest to protect and the groups that best cooperated with the French. At the end of the years covered by this thesis, there were religious minorities in French Syria who emerged with a more favorable political position in comparison to other groups, who emerged from those years in a marginalized position in greater Syrian society. These groups' position in society after 1922, has had consequences to this very day, with the Alawi, who mostly cooperated with the French, at the seat of power in Syria under the Assad regime. Before determining which minorities emerged with a favorable political position, this thesis first discusses the vision of Syria that leaders from the minority groups had before France began to implement her policies.

[114] 867.00/1022 Letter from American Consul in London to Secretary of State dated November 10, 1919 867.00/975 Letter from American Consul in Beirut (probably Knabenshue) to US department of State dated October 30, 1919.

Minority Goals

Maronites

The Maronites' uniquely intimate relationship with their French protectors made it possible for many of their goals to be realized. After establishing a connection with the French during the Crusades, Maronite leaders made some adaptations in their faith, such as recognizing the supremacy of the Pope, at the request of the French. Over the centuries, the French would claim a protectorate over the world's Catholics, with much of their protection duties being directed toward the protection of the Maronites of Mt. Lebanon. In 1861, after the Maronties faced a crushing defeat at the hands of their long-time neighbors the Druze, France stepped in and established the Règlement Organique[115], also known as the Mutasarrifiyya. The Réglement Organique was a semi-autonomous region that encompassed all of Mt. Lebanon, which was a one hundred and ten mile long rage that runs parallel to the Mediterranean coast and is bordered by the Baalbeck valley in the east. Under the rules of the agreement, the Mustasarrifiyya was to be ruled by a non-native Christian, but there was a special clause that allowed for members of the Maronite community to hold high-ranking secondary posts. This allowed for the Maronites to have greater power in Lebanon in the years leading up to the French Mandate.[116]

The war years brought a devastating famine to Mt. Lebanon that diminished the Maronite population from 242,308 in 1911 to 199,181 in 1921. When in 1918, after it became apparent that the French would administer over Mt. Lebanon, Maronite leaders seized the opportunity to

[115] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012) 147-150.

[116] Harris William, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997), 109-116 see map in appendix, it is labeled figure 5.

strengthen their greatly weakened community. Beginning in 1918, Maronite leaders engaged in secret talks with French officials aboard some of France's naval vessels situated off the coast, lobbying for an aggrandized Mt. Lebanon.[117] When the French established their mandate of Syria and Lebanon in 1920, the interests of the Maronite community and the French coalesced, and together they helped shaped modern Lebanon. Principally, the Maronites under the leadership of Patriarch Huwayyik wanted to extend the borders of their Mustasarrifiyya to include the Lebanese coast in the west, the Baalbeck plain in the East, as well as Tripoli and the semi-Christian Akkar hills in the north. The French were the principle players in expanding the Lebanese border in the south incorporating the southern Shia areas south of the Litani River.[118]

The French were perfectly content with this territorial expansion for a variety of reasons. First, there was the "romantic" vision of General Gourand and others of the French colonial lobby, that the French had a responsibility to protect the Maronites according to the rules of their Catholic protectorate. Principally, however; those in the French colonial lobby were primarily interested in weakening the Arabs in Syria and honoring the Sykes-Picot agreement. There were also French commercial and religious interests in the region, with French railroad companies investing large sums of money on the construction and maintenance of railroads in the northeast Mediterranean, and many religious orders having been entrenched in the region. Finally, generals like Gourand and De Caix wished for a strong military position in the eastern Mediterranean to protect France's North African holdings.[119]

[117] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 175-178
[118] Ibid, 129-132.
[119] Ibid, 129-132

Though most French officials were more than happy to allow the Maronites to pursue their political agenda, there was some protest in the colonial lobby. One protestor was De Caix, who was directly below Gourand in the leadership of Syria, who was cited by American Consular general Bristol in saying that "Gourand is too much of a soldier", after a disagreement over the administration of Syria. In addition to believing that civil, not military, authority should rule in Syria, he also believed that Lebanon's expansion into Tripoli was a bad idea and would lead to a loss of the Maronite majority in Lebanon.[120] France also had to take some pragmatic steps that were not fully to the liking of the Maronite community. Some of these steps included the reinstatement of the multi-sect voting system of the Mustasarrifiyya and to appoint high-ranking officials from the other sects of Lebanese society. While the Maronites worked with the French for the entirety of the time period discussed, the Druze would only work with the French after they realized there was no chance for a British mandate.[121]

[120] 867.00/1266 Letter from Consular General Bristol to the Secretary of State dated May 22, 1920

[121] Harris William, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997) 130-131.

Druze

The Druze were once the proud rulers of their self-established emirate (Mt. Lebanon), but by the time the Ottoman Empire had entered the war in 1914, the Druze were on the margin of Mt. Lebanese society. This occurred slowly over the centuries, as the Maronites were given special rights from the Ottoman Empire, who continuously bowed to French pressure. Yet, the Druze remained a powerful force in Mt. Lebanon until 1861 when, ironically, after they crushed the Maronites in battle, killing 10,000, the French stepped in and sealed the fate of the Druze for the next one hundred and fifty years. After the Druze slaughter of the Maronites, the French reorganized Mt. Lebanon giving the Maronites a favorable political position and relegated the Druze community to the edge of Mt. Lebanese politics.[122] During the early 1900s, the British would also make their presence known to the Druze, sending a network of Protestant missionaries to the Druze region, which after the war, would align the community closer to the British.[123]

After the conclusion of World War I, the Druze community was still a feudal society with clan leaders dominating the politics of the community. The Druze were the only other group that had a significant presence in Mt. Lebanon, but there were also clans located in the hills to the east and south of the Mount, located in both modern day Syria and Lebanon.[124] This fact complicates the question of what the Druze envisioned for the future of their homeland. One desire that all Druze leaders did share was the desire to improve the prestige and political

[122] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009), 264-265.

[123] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 178 867.00/903A report on the political affairs of the Middle East addressed to the Secretary of State prepared by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[124] Ibid, 178-180.

position in a land that they thought was traditionally theirs. Many Druze leaders experienced humiliation after the establishment of the Règlement Organique because the agreement formally stripped away the power of the Druze's prized Emirate. The establishment of the Règlement Organique also created a narrative that Mt. Lebanon was the homeland of the Maronites and the advancement of culture and politics in the region, was solely the doing of the Maronites.[125]

Where one will find disagreement amongst Druze leaders is who they wanted as a mandate power and the establishment of the modern state of Lebanon. During World War I, the British established strong ties with the Druze communities in and outside Mt. Lebanon. That is why in 1918 and 1919 Druze leaders were pushing for a British Mandate. When the French landed in Beirut on October of 1918 and it became clear to the Druze that it was France who was to be in charge over the mandate in Syria, many in the community where upset to the point that American consular official Wallace reported the murder of some Maronites at the hands of the Druze around October 6, 1919.[126] Druze agitation towards the French, in Mt. Lebanon, would abruptly end when Junblant (Druze tribe in Mt. Lebanon), leader and widow Nazira announced, "'You British have told us that the country would be handed over to the French, so it is with them that we have to make arrangements.'"[127] It is this support for the French that have led some historians to believe that Nazira's husband, Fuad Junblant was assassinated.[128]

[125] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009), 466-470.

[126] 867.00/946 Letter from consular official Wallace to the Secretary of State dated October 6, 1919.

[127] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 178, 180.

[128] Ibid, 180.

For the Druze clans located within Mt. Lebanon which included those Druze in the Shuf, the Gharb, and the Matn, the establishment of a modern state of Lebanon was in their best interest. This is because of their long history with the Ottoman Empire in an attempt to obtain some form of autonomy over their prized Emirate. Although Druze leaders preferred an independent and expanded Lebanon, they were still not thrilled about a Christian dominion over Lebanon, and Druze leaders that remained outside the borders of Lebanon were still yearning for the recognition of statehood.[129] Though they finally received this recognition with the establishment of the Jebel Druze in April, 1922, a French official would still have the final say over political matters. The formation of this new Druze state had the additional consequence of leaving the Druze out of the political matters of Syria, a state they would later have to rejoin. Like their Lebanese neighbors, the Jebel Druze were not thrilled about another power (the French) having the final say in political matters.[130] That is why during the Druze revolts of 1925-1926, Lebanese Druze stepped aside as Syrian Druze were wreaking havoc on the countryside. This lack of power of Druze leaders led many of them to wish to work with the Hashemite government under Feisal, because, at this point, they would rather work with anyone than the French.[131]

Though many Druze were thrilled to finally have their homeland recognized as a sovereign nation, they still lived under the dominion of their Christian rivals, the Maronites.[132] The border which was drawn in 1920, actually served to weaken Druze community as a whole.

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[129] Ibid, 179-181.

[130] Hourani, Albert. Syria and Lebanon: a political essay (London ; New York: Oxford University Press 1946), 172.

[131] Ibid, 179-181.

[132] Ibid, 180.

The border split the Druze community, which would serve to encourage the continuation of their feudal system and diminished their political power in Syria and Lebanon. With the French establishing representative councils, the Druze had a much smaller presence in those councils compared to what they would have had if they were all located in the same political entity.

Eastern Christians

In this thesis, Eastern Christians are defined as members of Greek, Russian, Syrian, Arab and other eastern Orthodox Churches. Many of these Christians have existed in the Levant for centuries, and have formed unique relationships with other ethnic groups over the years. These Christians traditionally have had a closer relationship with the Arabs in the area compared to the Maronite Christians. A strong business relationship between, especially Arab, Orthodox Christians and middle class Sunnis was formed between merchants from these two groups over the centuries. Over the centuries, a merchant bourgeoisie class emerged from the two groups. Regardless of this relationship, by the time the French arrived in Beirut in October of 1918, the Orthodox Christians were very wary of an Arab government under Feisal in Damascus.[133]

Though these Eastward looking Christians were wary of an Arab government, they were not thrilled over the prospect of having French overlords either, which is confirmed through multiple US consulate reports. From what can be deducted from US reports about the political situation in Syria, the majority of the Orthodox Christians wished for a British Mandate. The likely cause for this hostility towards the French, is the Christians' experience with French mal-

[133] Harris William, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997) 71-72.

administration before the war under High Commissioner Georges Picot.[134] When it became apparent that the French were to have a mandate over Syria, many Christians actually preferred Hashemite rule over a French mandate.[135] This preference may have been the result of the French standing aside as Turkish nationals, participating in Mustafa Kemal's nationalistic movement, slaughtered thousands of Armenians in nearby Cecilia and southern Turkey. Orthodox Christians were probably also not happy that commerce between the coast (Lebanon) and the interior (Syria) was at a standstill, which was a source of income they typically relied on.[136]

Armenians

Compared to their fellow Christians, the Armenians were in a far more desperate situation. At the time of France's arrival in Beirut in 1918, the Armenians were new to Syria and Lebanon. The first Armenians arrived in Lebanon and Syria as colonial soldiers, tasked to enforce the new French regime. While attempting this, the Armenians aroused hostilities against themselves by committing abuses against Arab women, according to US sources[137]. During the First World War, the Armenians experienced what many considered a genocide, when after they tried to regain their homeland after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, they were slaughtered by Turk nationals and Kurds. When the Armenian refugees began to arrive, they were in desperate

[134]867.00/872 Letter from Consular Officer Dara to the Secretary of State sent in May, 1919, 867.00/975 Letter from Consular Official Knabenshue to the Secretary of State dated October 30, 1919.

[135] 867.00/1118 Letter from Consular Officer Knabenshue to the Secretary of State dated July, 1920.

[136] 867.00/1337 Letter from a United States Naval Officer to the Secretary of State dated June 25, 1920.

[137]867.00/1090 Report from the U.S.S. Cole to the Secretary of State dated Dec. 19, 1919.

condition and gladly accepted the Marionties invitation to reside in Lebanon, which was done to bolster the Christian majority in Lebanon.[138]

US consular reports from 1920 and the early portion of 1921 chronical a series of devastating massacres of thousands of Armenians at the hands of Turk nationals in many southern Turkish cities, including Marash and Aintab.[139] These reports state that, on more than one occasion, French soldiers looked away as Turks massacred thousands of Armenian men, women, and children. In a letter to the Secretary of State, Consular official Knabenshue relays a message from American relief worker Boyd, stationed in an Armenian orphanage in Aintab.In his report, Boyd states,

> Besieged, since April first. Turks attacking our orphanage day and night, trying to take position against the French. Several lives lost in our building… fighting is between Armenians and Turks, with French apparently looking on and taking no action. Armenians are fighting from American buildings, and thus Americans are not in a neutral position."[140]

Not surprisingly, during the time of these massacres the French were in high-level talks with Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish nationals about recognizing the new government in Ankara. As part of these negotiations, the French were to relinquish their holdings in Eastern Turkey, which included the cities of Marash and Aintab. By leaving the Armenians at the hands of the Turk nationals, they successfully alienated many Armenians, with many refusing to leave very dangerous areas at the request of the French, and many blamed the French for the Armenian massacre at Marash[141]. Though most Armenians were not happy with the French, Syrian and

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[138]Harris William, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997). 71-72.

[139] 867.00/1267, Letter from Consular Officer Bristol to the Secretary of State dated May 22, 1920.

[140] 867.00/1214, Letter from Consular Officer Knabenshue to the Secretary of State dated April 11, 1920.

[141] 867.00/1165.

Lebanese Armenians' main objective was to regroup and form a new community in their new home. The Armenians that would form a new home in Syria, would flow from Turkey through the Alawi homeland having an effect on that community.[142]

Alawi

During the years of 1918-1922, the Alawi community was going through some drastic changes to adapt to the post World War I world. It was during this time that they formally changed their name from the Nusarryis to the Alawi. It was also during this time that Alawi leadership was pleading to the broader Muslim community that they belonged in that community. These movements led to a joint statement made in 1926 by a group of Alawi religious Shaykhs that read "'Every Alawi is a Muslim ... every Alawi who does not confess his Islamic faith or denies that the Quran is the word of God and that Muhammad is his Prophet is not Alawi ... The Alawis are Shiite Muslims ... they are the adherents of the Imam Ali.'"This message was received favorably by Muslim leaders that were emphasizing pan-Arabism to combat western colonialism.[143]

With these movements in mind, it is safe to assume that the Alawi did not wish to be under the occupancy of the French. This assumption is supported by consular official Knabenshue's report on October 30, 1919 that stated that fighting was occurring between French

[142] Harris William, Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997). 71-72.

[143]Yvette Talhamy The Fatwas and the Nusayri/Alawis of Syria,." *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (2010), 185.

and "Nusseyrieh forces".[144] This antagonism towards the French would cease as the Alawi, like other minorities, would begin to cooperate with the French, participating in governmental, commercial, and educational institution's established by the French. In future years, the Alawi would align themselves into two camps, those that wanted to form their own nation and those who wanted to be a strong faction in the new state of Syria.[145] Like the other minority factions in Syria and Lebanon, the fruits of the French-Alawi relationship are mixed. In the next section, the thesis attempts to make sense of the various Syrian minorities relationship with their French overlords, and if that relationship was an overall benefit or detriment to the community

The Line

In this chapter, the line in the sand does not refer to the boarder drawn by the French and the Maronites that outlined the future borders of Lebanon and Syria, but instead represents the will of the French Colonial lobby that was not to be crossed by other members of the French government, other Western Powers, or the various peoples of French Syria. This line represents the various policies that the French strongly lobbied for in government as well as at the Paris Peace Conference that were ultimately enforced upon France's new subjects. The most important elements of French colonial policy can be outlined as such: that the French were to have mandate power in Syria at all costs regardless of local preferences, the Maronites, and other Christians within Mt. Lebanon, where to have a Christian dominion over a modern Lebanon that

[144]867.00/975 A letter from Consular Official Knabenshue to the Secretary of State dated October 30, 1919.

[145]Duna, Valentina-Tania, "Religious Minorities, Political Majorities: the Alawis in Syria and the Maronites in Lebanon." *Romanian Journal Of Population Studies* 6, no. 2 (June 2012): 104.

expanded beyond its traditional borders, and, to uphold the Sykes-Picot agreement at all costs, regardless of its legitimacy.[146]

The French reasoning for these uncompromising policies have been already outlined in previous chapters as well as the fact that these policies ignored much of the situation on the ground. Principally, implementation of these policies were to further France's military and commercial interests in the region, as well as to increase her imperial prestige compared to Her European rivals.[147] The fact of the matter was that these policies conflicted with what was actually happened in the region, like British general Allenby's endorsement of Feisal when he raised the Hashemite flag throughout French Syria, and the wills of the various people in French Syria, like the Druze who were not permitted to work with their allies, the British.[148] In addition to ignoring the realities of the Syrian situation, there is endless evidence that the French preformed shockingly poorly when governing the region.[149]

The new French authority presented many challenges to the various ethnic groups of French Syria, and depending on how interests of the different minority groups aligned with French interests, many of these challenges were intensified. In the years of 1918-1922, some of these groups made their own adjustments to French policies that would place them in a more favorable or compromising position moving forward during the Mandate period and beyond in

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[146] Andelman David*, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008): 72-79

[147]Andelman David, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008),43-83.

[148] Ibid, 59-60.

[149]867.00/1022 A letter from a consular officer in London to the Secretary of State dated November 10, 1919, 867.00/1401 A letter from the Rear Admiral of the Navy to the Secretary of State dated April 9, 1921.

Syria and Lebanon. This thesis argues that, when it is all said and done, the various religious minorities in Syria and Lebanon were all left in an unfavorable position, because the decisions made during the time period discussed resulted in a toxic society, an argument that will be discussed in the final chapter. That being said, there were groups that the French colonial lobby had vested interested in, this interest would provide a particular group with better opportunities to advance politically and economically in the future. If a minority group was on the favorable side of the French colonial policy their chances of achieving political and economic freedom were greater, but actions taken by the religious ethnicities themselves would also bolster or hinder their position in the future.

Groups in a favorable position regarding the French Colonial Line

Maronites

Of the groups discussed in this thesis, the Maronties' position in this debate is the easiest to determine. This is because the French had already taken steps to strengthen the community nearly a century earlier with the establishment of the Mustasarrifiyya in 1861. In 1918, when Picot returned in Beirut as an established force, the Maronites, just enduring a severe famine, where desperate for aid from a power that they were very comfortable with. The French, on the other hand, were eager to bolster a community that had a lobby in France, was looked at favorably by a large portion of the French populous, and most importantly, presented an opportunity to serve as a strong pro-French force to improve France's position in the Middle-East. To the credit of Patriarch Huwayyik and the rest of the Maronite leadership, they took

advantage of their favorable position by aggressively lobbying to expand Lebanon's border into Tripoli, beyond what the French thought reasonable, and to integrate the Armenian population into Lebanon's political society to strengthen the Christian faction[150].

Unlike any other group within Syria and Lebanon, the French were clearly fighting for the advancement of the Maronite agenda. Other groups, like the Druze and Alawi, had to make concessions to the French before they would attempt to strengthen their communities[151]. The Maronites, as a distinct French ally, were at a huge advantage over other groups, including the Arab majority. This was because the Maronite agenda became part of the French agenda, which meant that, eventually, the desires of Maronite leadership would be fulfilled. This alliance with the French combined with aggressive action, allowed the Maronites to expand their traditional refuge of Mt. Lebanon to include the historically and commercially important city of Tripoli, and were able to subdue any resistance against them[152]. Maybe most importantly, during this time period, the Maronites were able to establish Lebanon as the homeland of the Maronties, to the utter humiliation of the Druze community.[153]

Looking briefly at the years beyond those covered by this thesis, one will see that the Maronite community clearly remained on the favorable side of French Imperial policy. The Maronites were in such a favorable position that they became the primary authors of a Lebanese

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[150] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 154, 174-178.

[151] Ibid, 180, Mendenhall, Kurt Lee. "Class, Cult and Tribe: The Politics of `Alawi Separatism in French Mandate Syria." *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *Historical Abstracts* (1992): 135-150.

[152]Harris William, Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997). 131-132.

[153] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009): 459-462.

Constitution that was ratified in 1926[154]. Compare this to the Syrian Constitution, which was almost wholly written by the French and was not ratified until 1930.[155] Throughout the twentieth century, and especially during the years of the French mandate, Maronites had clear political and economic advantages. The Lebanese presidency became a title that was reserved for Christians and was dominated by Maronites. The Maronites also had a large presence in the army, because of Sunni and Shia parents did not want to send their children to the military academy because of a justifiable bias against the French. Economically, the Maronites, along with Armenians and other Christians, received better jobs throughout the century because they received these jobs from individuals within their respective communities that were placed at high ranking posts by the French in the early years of the mandate.[156]

Although the Maronites enjoyed more advantages than any other group in the post World War I Levant, they did not receive everything they desired, and it could be argued that their twentieth century situation could have been improved if steps were taken to ensure peace and stability in Lebanon and Syria. An example of how stability could have benefited the Maronites comes during the Druze-Arab uprising that occurred in Syria in 1926. During that conflict, Druze fighting spilled into Lebanon forcing Maronites and Christians to flee. Though the Maronites received many concessions in the new Lebanese government, the French still forced them to share power in the council with other Lebanese ethnic groups (this might be one of

[154]Harris William, Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997), 131-132.

[155]Duna, Valentina-Tania, "Religious Minorities, Political Majorities: the Alawis in Syria and the Maronites in Lebanon." *Romanian Journal Of Population Studies* 6, no. 2 (June 2012): , 105.

[156]Harris William, Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997), 130-140.

France's most appropriate actions).[157] Finally, it can be argued, that the overall instability that Lebanon suffered through during much of the twentieth century is due to the unsustainable government established by the French and lobbied for by the Maronites.

Eastern Christians

Other than the Maronites, the Eastern Christians' positioning in regards to the French imperial line is the easiest to determine. This is because, like the Maronites, the French were the Eastern Christians' traditional protector in the Levant.[158] Unlike the Maronites, however; the Eastern Christians did not have a political connection with the French that stretched back to the twelfth century. The French were not as comfortable with a group that preferred a British or an American mandate and lacked a lobby in Paris.[159] What did work in favor of the Eastern Christians, however; was the Maronites' interest to include these Christians in the political life of an expanded Lebanon that no longer had a Christian majority. For reasons discussed in the previous section, the inclusions of these Eastern Christians in Lebanese political life was also in the best interest of the French colonial lobby.

Though they had to concede to a French mandate, the Eastern Christians still received much of what they asked for and were in a more favorable position than the Muslim majority, the Armenians, and the Druze. Another factor that worked to the advantage of the Eastern Christians was that they were willing to enroll their children in western schools and were willing to send their children to the military academy. This allowed them to function more efficiently in

[157] Ibid, 130-132.

[158] Shorrock, William, *French Imperialism in the Middle East: The Failure of Policy in Syria and Lebanon, 1900-1914*. (Madison , Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976) , 11-16.

[159] 867.00/872 Copy of a report prepared by C.A. Dara to the Secretary of State dated March 17, 1919.

an economy that, especially in Lebanon, was quickly westernizing[160]. Most importantly for the leaders of these Eastern Christian communities, the French guaranteed that they were not to be ruled by a Hashemite king, which was of great importance to them because of the oppression they had suffered at the hands of the Arabs in the past.[161] Like the Maronites, however; the Eastern Christians still had to suffer through bouts of violence during the French mandate period and beyond. The conditions created by the French in the years discussed might have led to the advancement of these Christian societies, but ignored the needs of such a significant portion of the Syrian and Lebanese population that the society became volatile and even dangerous for many of French Syria's Christians.

Armenians

The Armenians might be the most difficult group to categorize, because of the stated French policy and France's true actions regarding the Armenians. They remain on the right side of the line because they were officially supported by French policy, even though during these years they suffered through brutal atrocities. Unlike many of the Eastern Christian groups, the French did have a political and historical connection with the Armenians in the years of 1918-1922. In the early years of the war, the French established the Légion d'Orient, which was the Armenian legion in exchange for promising to protect the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire.[162] This legion was used in World War I and throughout French Syria to maintain order[163]. Just

[160] Harris William, Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997), 138-139.

[161]Hourani, Albert. Syria and Lebanon: a political essay (London ; New York: Oxford University Press 1946), 167-168.

[162]Varnava, Andrekos. "French and British Post-War Imperial Agendas and Forging an Armenian Homeland after the Genocide: The Formation of the Légion D'Orient in October 1916" *Historical Journal 57, no 4* (December 2014): 997-1025, 998-999.

[163] 867.00/1090 A report from the U.S.S. Cole to the Secretary of State dated December 19,1919.

suffering through a genocide, the French guaranteed protection to the Armenians in their portion of occupied Turkey and in Syria. The French protection of the Armenians would be compromised, however; as a new line of policy emerged from Paris. With the emergence of Mustafa Kemal in interior Anatolia, it was looking inevitable that the Greeks would be defeated and be forced to leave Turkey. Paris aptly recognized the strength of Kemal, and at the same time, recognized that she could compromise her traditional rival, Britain's, position in the Dardanelles by opening secret talks with Mustafa Kemal.[164]

French secret talks with Mustafa would eventually lead to French outright support of Turkish nationalism. Before support for the Turks would become official, the French were implementing many contradictorily policies. In 1919 and 1920 they officially supported the mandate government at Istanbul, while covertly recognizing the nationalist government in the interior[165]. While the French supported the nationalistic government, those same nationals were massacring Armenians, who the French were sworn to protect. This left the French in an awkward position when they were faced with Turkish nationals massacring Armenians in their territories. Multiple US reports from consular officials in Aleppo describe Armenian men women and children being massacred at the hands of Turkish nationals while the French stand by in the Turkish towns of Marash and Aintab, an action that appears to be a result of French policy with the Turks.[166] The remaining Armenians, after a deal was made with Turkish nationals, were

[164] Kinross, Patrik, *Aaturk: A Biography of Mustafa Kemal, Father of Modern Turkey* .(New York, NY , 1965), 324-325.

[165] 867.00/1247 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Knabenshue dated April 26, 1920. 867.00/1303 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Knabenshue dated July, 1920.

[166] 867.00/1267, Letter from Consular Officer Bristol to the Secretary of State dated May 22, 1920, 867.00/1214, Letter from Consular Officer Knabenshue to the Secretary of State dated April 11, 1920.

evacuated to Syria where many of them remained. Others emigrated to other parts of the Mid-East and to France. While emigrating, many Armenians faced issues getting to France because of Cyprus's refusal to allow in more than a certain number of Armenians to enter the country.[167]

For those who remained in Syria, life would improve. The Armenians were given protections and were quickly included in to Lebanese political life. It may have been the Maronite interest in the Armenian community that saved them from further rounds of violence in Lebanon especially. This was because of Maronite leadership's understanding that their expanded autonomous state, beyond the traditional borders of Mt. Lebanon, contained large numbers of Muslims that needed to be counterbalanced with an influx of Christians to maintain the coveted Christian majority.[168] In addition to this reality, it might not have favored the Armenians to be under the care of a French regime who was primarily concerned with forming a relationship with a new Turkish state.[169] Though the Armenian situation would improve, French policies that would marginalize other minorities and the Muslim majority, would eventually create an unstable society that would become susceptible to outbreaks of violence.

[167]867.00/1473 Letter to the Secretary of State written by consular official Knabenshue dated April 26,1920.

[168] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 179-182.

[169] 867.00/1459 Report from the Rear Admiral of the Navy on operations in Turkish waters addressed to the Secretary of State dated Decembe 13, 1921.

Groups in an unfavorable position regarding the French Colonial Line

Druze

Of the groups discussed in this thesis, the Druze were most clearly in an unfavorable position regarding the French colonial line. Unlike the groups on the right side of the line, the French did not have any interest in the Druze community, except for maybe trying to realign the community's loyalties away from the British.[170] In addition to this hurdle, the French were working more closely with Druze's sworn enemies, the Maronites, than anyone else. The Druze were also subject to negotiations that their feudal society did not have the strength to participate in. The largest negotiation being the conception of the Lebanese border, an action that geographically severed the community in two. The new border also meant that the Druze lost a numerical advantage in both Syria and Lebanon. This had major consequences for the Druze of Lebanon who were now third in population behind the Maronites and Sunnis.[171]

Because the French initially enforced the old Ottoman system of the Mustasarrifiyya, which was a representative assembly whose members are determined by the size of the population in Lebanon, a decrease in size of the Druze community compared to the other factions in Lebanon, hurt the political sway of the community. The political situation was even worse for the Druze that remained outside the confines of a new Lebanon. These Druze, mostly the Jebal Druze, were granted their own state in 1921. This might sound like a development that might benefit a community that has been asking for autonomy for centuries, but the creation of this

[170] 867.00/903 Report on Middle East Affairs prepared by consular official Knabenshue addressed to the Secretary of State dated October 30, 1918

[171] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012),, 178

state, which was under the administration of a French governor, politically ostracized Druze leaders from the Syrian assembly.[172] This ostracism and the eventual reforms that included conscripted labor pursued by French governor, Captain Carbillet, in 1923, led to a revolt led by the Jebal Druze. This revolt would eventually spread to Damascus and Lebanon, causing the French to expend a large amount of resources to quell the revolt. In addition to the harsh measures levied onto the community by French authorities, this community was also left out of shaping the nation of Syria, a nation they would eventually be a part of when the Druze state was reincorporated into Syria in 1936[173]

If these abuses and political atrophying of the community at the hands of the French and Maronites were not enough to cope with, the Druze were left without a homeland with the establishment of Lebanon in 1920. Many Druze scholars believed that they, not the Maronites, were the people of Mt. Lebanon. With the establishment of Lebanon as a heterogeneous society governed by the Maronite community, the Druze dream of having Lebanon recognized as the land of the Druze was dead. Because of the long history of the Druze Emirate of Mt. Lebanon that is highlighted in the first chapter, the Druze considered Mt. Lebanon their own, but now with the expansion of Mt. Lebanon under the dominion of the Maronite Church, the Druze, to the present, have been relegated to the fringe of Lebanese and Syrian society. The Alawi are another group that would experience a similar situation, but unlike their Druze counterparts, they

[172] Robinovich, Itamar, "The Compact Minorities and the Syrian State, 1918-1945." *Journal of Contemporary History 693, no. 14* (1975)697-701.

[173] Provence Michael, *The great Syrian revolt and the rise of Arab nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

participated in French institutions, which would eventually lead to their advancement in Syrian politics.[174]

Alawis

The Alawi, would attempt to work within a new French framework, but unlike the Maronites and Eastern Christians, the French did not have a historical interest in the Alawi community, meaning that the desires of that community often fell on deaf ears, leaving them in an unfavorable position regarding the French colonial line. The Alawi are considered to be on to be in a unfavorable position, because in 1920, their community was separated from greater Syria, effectively excluding the community from Syrian political life. The French separated the Alawi community from the rest of Syria because they were attempting to put into practice a theory laid out by vice-High Commissioner De Caix which required that because nationalities were based on religious leanings, Syria needed to be separated into these groups and eventually incorporated into a Federal government. Even though this is what the Alawi community desired, it was not beneficial to a community that would eventually have to be a part of a Syrian national entity.[175]

Additional problems that would hinder the Alawi was the lack of protections they received, compared to Christians, and the Armenian refugees flooding their territory. In the years of 1920 and 1921, thousands of Armenian and Greek refugees were flooding the northern Syrian coast, the homeland of the Alawi, likely bringing with them disease, crime, and

[174] Hazran, Yusri. "Between authenticity and alienation: The Druzes and Lebanon's history." Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 72 (2009):

[175] Robinovich, Itamar, "The Compact Minorities and the Syrian State, 1918-1945." *Journal of Contemporary History 693, no. 14* (1975)697-701

violence.[176] Although the Alawi were not considered an important aspect by the French colonial lobby, they, unlike their Sunni and Druze neighbors, participated in French institutions when they could which would help one of their own, Hafiz al-Assad to rise to power in 1971.[177]

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When the French landed in Beirut in 1918, quickly tearing down the newly raised Hashemite flags, they had very little intention to compromise with anyone when it concerned their possession of Syria. They, of course, had to make some practical compromises, to ensure that order could be maintained. The policies that they constructed had consequences for every ethnic group in French Syria, and those consequences mostly had to do with if the French were concerned in strengthening the community (Eastern Christians, Armenians , and Maronites), weakening the community (the Sunni Majority), or if they were relatively indifferent towards the community (the Druze and Alawi). Not all of the consequences had to do with the French colonial line, however; communities like the Druze within Lebanon, the Alawi, and some Sunnis compromised with the French, which allowed them to enjoy more stability. The Alawi took this one step further, by participating in French institutions which granted them wealth and political power. To best illustrate the situation of ethnic groups in French Syria during the mandate, one can think of the French as setting the rules of the game, and if you played the game correctly you would advance, if you did not play correctly you would remain in the same position, and if you broke the rules your position would suffer.

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[176]867.00/1477 Report from the Rear Admiral of the Navy to the Secretary of State dated February 4, 1922.

[177] Yvette Talhamy The Fatwas and the Nusayri/Alawis of Syria," *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (2010): 185.

Chapter 3: An American Perspective

In this chapter, the thesis formulates a US perspective on the effects of French imperial policy. This chapter also takes a look at the largest group in French Syria, the majority Sunnis, and the effect of French relationships with minorities had on this community. Before this is done, however; this chapter explores what implications the French-minority relationship in Syria had for the Muslim Arab majority. In the previous chapter, this thesis explored what it meant to be in a favorable or unfavorable position in regards to the French colonial lobby, the Arab Majority was almost certainly in an unfavorable position. This is demonstrated by Clemenceau's and others within the French colonial lobby's absolute refusal to work with Feisal and other prominent Arab leaders.[178] While at the same time, the French fully cooperated with the Maronite community, to the point that they received concessions that were not an original part of French policy, like including the mostly Sunni city of Tripoli within the borders of the new Lebanon.[179]

France's refusal to work with the Muslim majority, while at the same time offering protections and granting many of the wishes of various minority groups, created a toxic society within French Syria for the remainder of the Mandate period and beyond. The level of toxicity in this society was clearly demonstrated in the Druze revolt of 1925 and 1926. This uprising began in the Druze federal district of the Jabal Druze in the southern hills of Syria after a newly

[178] Andelman David*, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008), 69-71.

[179] Andelman David*, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008),178.

appointed French governor imposed very strict rules on the Druze, including conscripted labor. The Druze unrest quickly spread to Damascus, where the Arabs gladly joined the unrest causing the French to employ a large amount of resources to quell the revolt.[180]

A Toxic Society

This thesis defines a toxic society as one where peace cannot be sustained over a substantial period because the best interests of a significant proportion of society are not met. These conditions were undoubtedly met in French Syria during and after the years of 1918-1922. It is clear from countless United States consular sources that the last thing the Arabs in Syria wanted was a French Mandate.[181] The strong Arab animosity towards the French is clearly seen in the wise words of consular official Wallace who says, "Should Feisal be induced to accept French protectorate he would lose his opportunity for leadership, which would be transferred to some more famous chauvinistic leader."[182] There was variety of reasons why the Arabs did not wish to work with the French, the most important of those reasons being the rise of Arab nationalism that emerged during World War I.

The Arab revolt, which began in 1916, can be traced back to the career of Muslim leader and philosopher Muhammad ibn Abd Wahhab and his political partner, powerful chieftain Muhammad ibn Saud. Abd Wahhab, who introduced a new fundamentalist philosophy that

[180]Provence Michael, *The great Syrian revolt and the rise of Arab nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005) 68-72.

[181] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918 867.00/927 Letter to Mr. Car from consular official Knabenshue dated July 31, 1919.

[182] 867.00/948 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Wallace dated October 4, 1919.

emphasized the existence of one God. This philosophy would be spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula through conquest led by Saud who, in 1802, conquered Medina. This conquest was the beginning of the Arab repulsion of the Turks. In the latter part of the 1890s and in 1907, the Young Turks instituted a series of reforms that would further arose Arab anger towards the Turks. The Arab revolt would not gain real momentum until World War I, however, when Britain hand-picked an ally to help them in their fight against the Ottoman Empire. That ally was Hussein ibn Ali and his son Feisal. Hussein was appointed King of the Hedjaz, an area of western Arabia where Mecca is located, by the Ottoman Sultan. Hussein reached out to the British after he felt pressure from the Turks, who wanted to build a railway to Mecca, and the Wahhabis, who challenged Hussein's claim that he was the true Caliph because of a bloodline that originated with Muhammad.[183]

In response to Hussein's offer to aid the British, Whitehall sent him Lawrence of Arabia with weapons and gold in the Fall of 1916, and promised that after the war that the Arabs would be free to determine their own political fortunes. Lawrence would primarily work with Feisal, and together during the war they engaged in battles with the Turks aiding the British. These actions culminated with Feisal marching into a Damascus, whose defense was already defeated by British General Allenby, with a small Bedouin force, establishing an Arab kingdom in Syria. After taking Damascus, Syrian Arabs began to rally around Feisal, and the Arab army of three hundred that ceremoniously conquered Damascus had grown by over ten times that amount.[184] Feisal took the British promise of independence very seriously, thus, he began speaking to local

[183] Andelman David*, A shattered peace: Versailles 1919 and the price we pay today*. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008)43-46.

[184] Ibid, 46-50.

Arabs trumpeting Syrian nationalism and independence. Feisal's claim over a Syrian nation clearly violated the Sykes-Picot agreement (a secret agreement reached between the British and the French that awarded Syria to France and Mesopotamia and Palestine to the British) which would cause problems with the French later.[185]

Other reasons for Syrian Muslims' animosity towards the French include their previous poor experiences with them and their strong desire not to be ruled by a nation, who over the centuries, claimed itself to be the protector of the world's Christians. These poor experiences include the French leaving pro-French locals in Syria at the mercy of the Turks during the war.[186] When the French landed in Beirut on October, 1918, these experiences would continue. As soon as they landed in Beirut the French were causing problems. They began by ripping down Hashemite flags in the style of a conqueror which served to anger locals in Beirut.[187] Additionally, they used a colonial force that utilized Algerians, Moroccans, and Armenians to enforce many of their policies. The presence of these troops angered many Arabs who, according to American sources, were inherently racist towards people of dark skin and the Armenian community.[188] Finally, the creation of the state of Lebanon weakened the commerce that took place between coastal communities and interior communities.[189]

[185] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[186] 867.00/1022 Letter on Syrian Affairs addressed to the Secretary of State by a consular official stationed in Beirut dated November 10, 1919.

[187] 867.00/1118 Letter to the Secretary of State from Consular Official Hicomus dated February 2, 1920.

[188] 867.00/993 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Green stationed in Cairo dated November 14, 1919 867.00/1093 Article from London Paper, *The Morning Post* titled "French Chief of Staff Kidnapped" from January 9,1920.

[189] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

The French policy decisions outlined are many in a set of policy decisions that were against the will of the Muslim Arab community. A Muslim Arab community that was the majority in Syria, accounting for about seventy percent of the population, and would soon be the majority in an expanded Lebanon.[190] What is painstakingly clear when reading US consular reports on French Syria in the years between 1918 and 1922, is that most of the Muslim majority despised the fact that they were under the rule of a western nation, and worse yet, they were under the rule of the French. This already present animosity towards the French was only exacerbated when the French refused to compromise on virtually any issue, and the fact that they aroused Arab hostilities towards Armenians by utilizing them in the enforcement of their harsh policies. The words of Beirut consular official Paul Knabenshue, who has been referenced throughout this thesis, in a 1922 conversation with a commander aboard the USS. Simpson best illustrates why a toxic society would come out of the time period discussed in this thesis. In paraphrasing Mr. Knabenshue's words the commander states, "he feels certain that if a popular vote were taken, that 99% of the people of Syria would vote against a French mandate; that they would first prefer an American, then a British, but by no chance a French."[191]

If the words of consular official Knabenshue are to be believed, it should not be surprising that Arabs gladly joined the Druze Revolt of 1925-1926, even though Arab leadership refused to lead an armed revolt against the French.[192] France's refusal to compromise with the

[190] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918.

[191] 867.00/1537 A compilation of war diaries from the commanders of the USS Litenfield, Lawrence, Simpson, and Macleish compiled by the Rear Admiral of the Navy to the Secretary of State.

[192] Provence Michael, *The great Syrian revolt and the rise of Arab nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005) 68-72.

Arabs on virtually every matter angered them to the point where there were constant attacks on French officials and many Christian civilians, attacks that would persist throughout the remainder of the Mandate period.[193] A heavily suppressed Arab population meant that the majority of the French Syrian population was disgruntled, leading to the formation of a society that was ruled through fear to keep that disgruntled Arab majority in line. This created an atmosphere of fear that had a myriad of detrimental consequences for all of French Syrian society.

The first of which was the heavy amount of emigration that occurred in the years of 1918-1922. Mass emigrations are usually led by the wealthy in society, and with them they take their capital resources and specialized skills. Often times, this leaves a talent and resource vacuum in the home country. An additional consequence was that Sunnis, Druze, and other groups refused to serve in the public sector allowing for minorities, like the Maronites, to continue to institute policies that were favorable for themselves but not the majority.[194] The outbreaks of violence that occurred as a result of the conditions outlined, also hurt the wellbeing of the Syrian economy by damaging infrastructure and farm land. [195] All of these elements contributed to a society that existed during the French mandate and beyond, that did not retain talent, failed to meet the needs of the majority of the population, and failed to keep order. It is in the light of these developments, which allow the author to claim that French mandate Syrian and Lebanese societies were toxic. US. Diplomats witnessed these developments as they unfolded,

[193] 867.00/1337 A naval report prepared for the Secretary of State by a naval officer dated June 25, 1920 Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012)185-196.

[194] Harris, William, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011.(* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012) 185-196.

[195] Provence Michael, *The great Syrian revolt and the rise of Arab nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005) 103-107.

and many where extremely critical of French decisions that led to many unfortunate circumstances.

A Diplomats view

The tone found in the US archival documents is overwhelmingly negative towards the French leaders and their decisions. One notable exception to this tone comes from an April 1, 1920 document written by Admiral Mark Bristol, who was the high commissioner in Constantinople. In the document, Bristol discusses the attitudes of US citizens who are working in Turkey and Syria; saying,

> "it is apparent that the High Commissioner has received reports from the American Relief Workers, most of whom are of a religious tendency, and our missionaries, who are naturally so, and practically all of whom are Protestants, and who are to a unit anti-Catholic, and incidentally can see no good in a Frenchman. This has come to my notice at frequent times during all of my fifteen years service in Turkey, and particularly lately since the French Occupation. …The class of Americans that proselyte in Turkey, either in religious or relief work, are biased against the French simply because France is a Catholic nation. There may be exceptions, but this is the general rule. Many of them would not admit unless approached in a confidential manner, when the truth will come out. As for myself, I am neither pro-French, pro-British, nor a Catholic, but neither am I pro-Turk."[196]

Bristol's words hold significant weight because many of the reports from consular Officers Knabenshue, Jackson, and others first come to the desk of Bristol before being sent to the Secretary of State, and many of these reports are based of testimony from missionaries and other relief workers. It is likely that Bristol's criticism of American relief workers is valid to a

[196] 867.00/1265 A compilation of reports for the Secretary of State prepared by consular official Jackson dated April 1, 1920.

degree, knowing the religious and racial tensions that existed in the United States during this time, but Knabenshue's profile and consistency serve as adequate evidence that these reports should not be disregarded.

Paul Knabenshue, was very well respected within the US department of State. So much so, that in 1928 he promoted to Consular General and transferred to the vital consulate in Jerusalem.[197] Additionally, by 1922 he was recognized by one of his peers as being "pro-French", which provides credibility to many of his scathing reports on French action.[198] Reports from consular officials Grey and Jackson, are similar in tone to Knabenshue's reports, also help to solidify the evidence found in Knabenshue's reports.[199] Secondary source material from respected historians, like Albert Hourani, also backs much of the findings of Knabenshue, Grey, Jackson, and others. Findings, that indicate that the French were ignoring much of the realities on the ground in Syria and Lebanon.[200]

It is clear that the ideas behind Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points were pumping through the veins of the US consular officials working in Syria and Lebanon. There reports are full of sympathy towards Feisal and the Arabs working in Damascus. Above all else, the US diplomats thought that the Syrian people themselves should decide on the future of Syria. In their arguments, they cite the King-Crane report as well as interviews with local leaders as evidence

[197] Jewish Daily Bulletin. "Paul Knabenshue Named Jerusalem Consul General to Succeed Heizer." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. September 27, 1928. Accessed March 15, 2015. http://www.jta.org/1928/09/27/archive/paul-knabenshue-named-jerusalem-consul-general-to-succeed-heizer.

[198] 867.00/1537 A compilation of war diaries from the commanders of the USS Litenfield, Lawrence, Simpson, and Macleish compiled by the Rear Admiral of the Navy to the Secretary of State.

[199] 867.00/1149 Letter to the secretary of State written by consular official Grey dated March 9, 1920 867.00/1162 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Jackson dated February 9, 1920.

[200] Hourani, Albert. Syria and Lebanon: a political essay (London ; New York: Oxford University Press 1946), 163-180.

that Syrians were strongly opposed to a French Mandate.[201] Unlike many in the French colonial lobby, these officials did not ignore the opinions of the Syrian population, which led Knabenshue to conclude on July 31, 1919 that an American mandate is the only way forward saying, "I am more than ever convinced that there is only one solution of the problem and that is an American mandate. A situation has been created which makes a French mandate impossible."[202] Though his opinion would change by 1922, Knabenshue and others up to that time remained critical of many aspects of French policy.

One of the most important aspects of any colonial policy is the enforcement of those policies, an issue that US diplomats were extremely critical of. What first struck them as unwise was the small size of the French force that was at high commissioners Picot and Gourand's disposal when they first landed in Beirut and began occupying Arab zones in the interior of the Levant. Though you can hardly blame the French for their lack of military force, for they were a war-weary nation with crippling war debts, the United States diplomats clearly understood that the Arabs, Druze, and Alawi would not be content with a French mandate and a large force was going to be needed to quell a large disgruntled force that was armed, to maintain peaceful conditions.[203] They also understood the racial tensions that existed in French Syria, and accurately predicted that there would be backlash from the usage of a colonial force that was mostly occupied by Armenian and African troops.[204]

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[201] 867.00/1022 Letter to the Secretary of State written by a consular official in Beirut dated November 10, 1919 867.00/1090 Report from the USS Cole for the Secretary of State dated December 19, 1919.

[202] 867.00/927 A letter to Mr. Car from consular official Knabenshue dated July 31, 1919.

[203] 867.00/966 A letter to the American Peace Commission from consular official Knabenshue dated October 31, 1919.

[204] 867.00/1090 A report from the U.S.S. Cole to the Secretary of State dated December 19,1919.

The treatment of the Syrian people was another aspect of French imperial policy that US officials were highly critical of. Their criticism of French officials begins during the war. By abandoning French sympathizers during the war, one American official believed that he unleashed the wrath of the Turks on all of the Syrian people and that they further convinced Arabs, Druze, and many Christians that the French cannot administer over Syria. When the French established themselves in Syria and Lebanon after the war they thought their treatment of protestors and inappropriate actions from undisciplined troops further angered the population, and especially Muslims.[205]

Some of the loudest opposition to French imperial policy came from US relief workers working with Armenians from Marash and Aintab in southern Turkey, who were the victims of Turkish violence. These complaints are heard through the documents complied by consular official Jackson in nearby Aleppo. Letters and reports coming from US citizens working with Armenians in the area, documented an Armenian massacre at the hands of Turkish nationals, while the French stood by. These aid workers were shocked to see Turkish nationals bombard orphanages, schools, and universities that were occupied by American aid workers while the French restricted Armenian access to firearms.[206] These reports led to consular general Bristol, in Istanbul, to issue the following strong criticism on French imperial policy, "It is reliably reported that the French seem to stand aside and leave the Armenians, greatly outnumbered, to fight alone

[205] 867.00/1337 Intelligence Report on conditions in French occupied Syria compiled by a naval officer on July 25, 1921.

[206] 867.00/1187 A report authored by the Near East Relief organization on March 29, 1920 for the Secretary of State 867.00/1214 Letter written to Knabenshue by American relief worker Boyd on April 11, 1920 forwarded to the Secretary of State.

against the Turks. If the reports now being persistently received are corroborated regarding French methods in Cilicia, the French should be condemned by the civilized world."[207]

Though US officials were critical of most of French policy and opinion, there were some areas of agreement. US diplomats, like the French and the rest of the Western World, did not believe that the native Syrian population could yet properly rule themselves. They also believed that the old Ottoman Empire had to be broken apart, and that special protections were necessary to ensure the safety of numerous Christian populations.[208] Numerous letters, and reports authored from consular officials reporting anywhere from Beirut to Damascus show that opinion on the issues covered was relatively uniform. Opinions on other issues, however; are sparse and originate from only one or two sources. These issues include the sustainability of the Syrian-Lebanese border, the use of French propaganda, and France's treatment of King Feisal. Because of the lack of source material on these subjects, this thesis does not draw conclusions on the diplomats' views of these matters.

[207] 867.00/1244 A letter to the Secretary of State written by Consular General Bristol dated April 23, 1920.

[208] 867.00/903 Report on Middle Eastern Affairs to the Secretary of State compiled by consular official Knabenshue dated October 30, 1918 867.00/1022 Letter on Syrian Affairs addressed to the Secretary of State by a consular official stationed in Beirut dated November 10, 1919 867.00/1157 Letter to the Secretary of State written by Consular General Bristol on March 1, 1920.

Conclusion

The toxic society that emerged during the era of "French Syria " and the years beyond it, had many of its roots in the years of 1918-1922. It was in October of 1918 that the French returned to Beirut after World War I, continuing a chain of events that began with the signing of the Sykes-Picot agreement. The fate of the land that would later become the modern states of Syria and Lebanon was sealed with the Sykes-Picot agreement. Signed on May 16, 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement was a secret agreement between British diplomat Mark Sykes and French diplomat Georges Picot that granted Mesopotamia and Palestine to the British and Syria to the French. This agreement was made in anticipation of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the need for the British and French to have a reliable ally in the post-World War I world. When the time came to uphold the agreement, the British and their general Allenby complicated the scenario by promising independence to Feisal and his Arab subjects in exchange for military aid against the Ottoman Empire. This promise of independence was all but realized when Allenby allowed for Feisal to ride into an undefended Damascus and declare his monarchy over Syria.

Feisal's ride into Damascus was a clear breach of the Sykes-Picot agreement, an agreement that the French had every intention to fulfill. That is why in October of 1918, when the French landed in Beirut they immediately began tearing down Hashmite flags and began to implement their rule in Beirut and the surrounding area. The French had a history in Syria that stretched back to the twelfth century, and that history was deeply intertwined with the Maronite community, who was one of many severely independent minority groups in "French Syria". The Maronites are Christians that did not accept the supremacy of the Pope until the thirteenth

century, after they had encounters with French Crusaders. They resided in an area known as Mt. Lebanon, which was a mountain range in interior present-day Lebanon that was a traditional refuge for Christians and a Shia splinter group known as the Druze. The Druze, who immigrated to Syria from Egypt during the eleventh century, thought of themselves as the Muslim protectors of the Levant and were the friends of the Maronites or their worst enemies depending on the time period discussed. The Druze-Maronite rivalry reached its panicle in 1860 when the Maronites lost thousands of lives at the hands of the Druze. In response, the French were able to secure an agreement with the Ottoman Turks which established the Règlement Organique the next year, which was a semi-autonomous state within the Ottoman Empire that was to be ruled primarily by the Maronite community.

The Maronite and the Druze were two of many minority groups in French Syria, others included the Alawi and Eastern Mediterranean Christian communities. The Alawi were another Shia splinter group who immigrated to Syria from Iraq in the tenth century. Not much is known about the Alawi religion because of the esoteric manner of their community. Other than the secrecy that surrounds their religion, the Alawi also have other unique characteristics that differentiate themselves from other Muslims that include their celebration of Christmas and Pentecost, as well as their belief in the Trinity. Eastern Mediterranean Christians include Christians belonging to any Orthodox faith, Protestants, and Armenians. Many of these Christians have resided in French Syria for nearly two thousand years and formed fruitful business relationships with Sunni Arabs which would eventually result in a Sunni-Christian merchant class. The Armenians were newcomers to region in the years of 1918-1922. Many

arrived as colonial troops and others immigrated to the region after suffering through what many consider a genocide at the hands of the Turks and Kurds.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the conclusion of World War I, the French, who had finally received what they thought was payment for their bloodshed on the battlefields of Europe with the acquisition of Syria, had a vision for Syria that more often than not conflicted with the visions of the various minority groups and the Muslim majority. This vision was to establish Syria as a pro-French entity that had a strong Christian presence where French civilization would flourish. More importantly, however, Syria was to serve as a military launching point to help France protect her North African holdings. In order to make this dream become a reality, the French had specific aims for the various minority groups. The French either wanted to advance the agenda of the various minority groups or realign their interests to fit into the French vision of Syria. This led to conflict that occurred between minority groups, Muslims, and their French overlords.

Much of this unrest was documented by US consular officials located in Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo, Cairo, and Istanbul amongst other locations. They left behind letters, reports, and data for the State Department of the United States that provides a unique third-party perspective on the events that occurred in French Syria in the years 1918-1922. At the time, the US had little history and few interests in the area making their reports relatively unbiased. The author uses these letters and reports in conjunction with secondary source material to create a perspective to analyze the aims of the minority groups, to what extent these aims where fulfilled, and their interactions with the French.

What the consular reports demonstrate is that the aims of the various minority groups of the region varied from group to group, and they all had different visions on who was to eventually rule over their homeland. Of the many ethnic groups in French Syria, the Maronite vision for the future of Syria and Lebanon was the one that was closest aligned with the French vision. Maronite leadership, taking advantage of such a convenient position, strongly lobbied the French foreign ministry to expand Lebanon into Tripoli, beyond what many French foreign officials though wise, and secured their position as the dominate force in Lebanon. This favorable position with the French was partially born out of the French negotiations with the Ottoman Turks on the Maronties behalf and their intensive measures to protect Christians in the Levant in centuries past.

Policy decisions that served to advance the welfare of the Maronites also shoved other minorities to the fringe of society. In fact, by 1920 consular reports show that the Maronites were the only group that the French could rely on for their full-fledged report.[209] Other groups like the Eastern Christians, who originally supported the French, quickly lost confidence in the French because of their careless administration over French Syria and their policy of allowing Turkish nationals to threaten, and even kill, Armenian refugees. Other groups who feared the French, saw those fears realized as their position in society was diminished. The Druze, who wished for a British mandate, saw their position decline as those tribes left outside Lebanon were not permitted to participate in government in Damascus or Beirut, and for those who remained in Lebanon, the hope of establishing Lebanon as the homeland of the Druze was destroyed. The

[209] 867.00/1303 Report on the political situation of Syria by consular official Knabenshue dated July, 1920.

Alawi were another group that suffered from the Maronite-French vision. They too were relegated to a semi-autonomous state ruled by a French governor. The establishment of this state, like the Druze, served to keep their voices out of government in Damascus and Beirut.

Though Armenians and Eastern Christians were a vital part of France's dream for Syria, other French policies, specifically their support of Turkish nationals, led to massacres of Christians at the hands of Turkish nationals while French military officials stood by. Consular reports describe bloody massacres of thousands of Armenians at the hands of the Turks. This violence, coupled with poor administration over Syria and Lebanon, weakened Christian confidence in the French, so much so that many Christians, who were traditionally fearful of the Arabs, favored a Hashemite Monarchy over a French protectorate.[210]

In the years of 1918-1922 the French quickly established their policy line that was not to be compromised for any reason. This automatically gave some minority groups advantages over others, but the actions taken by individuals in these groups in the years of 1918-1922 and in the years immediately following, would help to either bolster or weaken their position in society. French policy placed the Maronites, Eastern Christians, and Armenians in a favorable position, although the Maronites clearly received preferential treatment over the other two groups, and placed the Alawi and Druze in an unfavorable position. Though the Alawi were on the unfavorable side of the policy line, through their participation in French institutions, they were able to make the best of their disadvantaged position. So much so, that one of their own, Hafiz al-Assad rose to power in 1971.

[210] 867.00/1214 Letter to the Secretary of State from consular official Boyd dated April 11, 1920.

French policy and its implementation was looked upon very negatively by the majority of United States consular officials. Most of these officials shared the vision that President Wilson outlined in his Fourteen Points, a vision that called for the self-determination of people. Most believed that an American mandate was the best solution for the future of Syria and that a French Mandate was probably the worst solution. Most also felt that the French did not employ enough resources to maintain order in their new territory. What might have disturbed the consular officials the most, however, is their mal-treatment of the Muslim majority, and the fact that they ignored the needs of many Christians, as they were being slaughtered by the hands of Turkish nationals. One issue that is not directly addressed by the consular officials is the minority-French relationship's effect on the Muslim majority, but this issue very well might be at the crux of the problems that afflict Syria and Lebanon to this very day.

By positioning Maronites and Eastern Christians at the helm of government in "French Syria", the French effectively suppressed the Alawi, Druze, and Muslim majority. These decisions had the additional impact of creating an unwillingness, on the part of the Muslims, to take an active role in government and other essential institutions. So while Maronites, Eastern Christians, and even Alawi continued to advance economically and politically, with their rights continuing to increase, the Muslim majority and the Druze, who together constituted the majority in "French Syria", experienced little economic advancement or enjoyed fewer of the same freedoms that some minorities enjoyed during the mandate period. The reality of the French-minority relationship that existed in 1918-1922 was that it created precedent for a government and society that did not work for the mass majority of the population, which would lead to an

unstable Syrian society that has persisted to this very day. A society that finally collapsed in a bloody civil war that began in 2011 and has no end in sight.

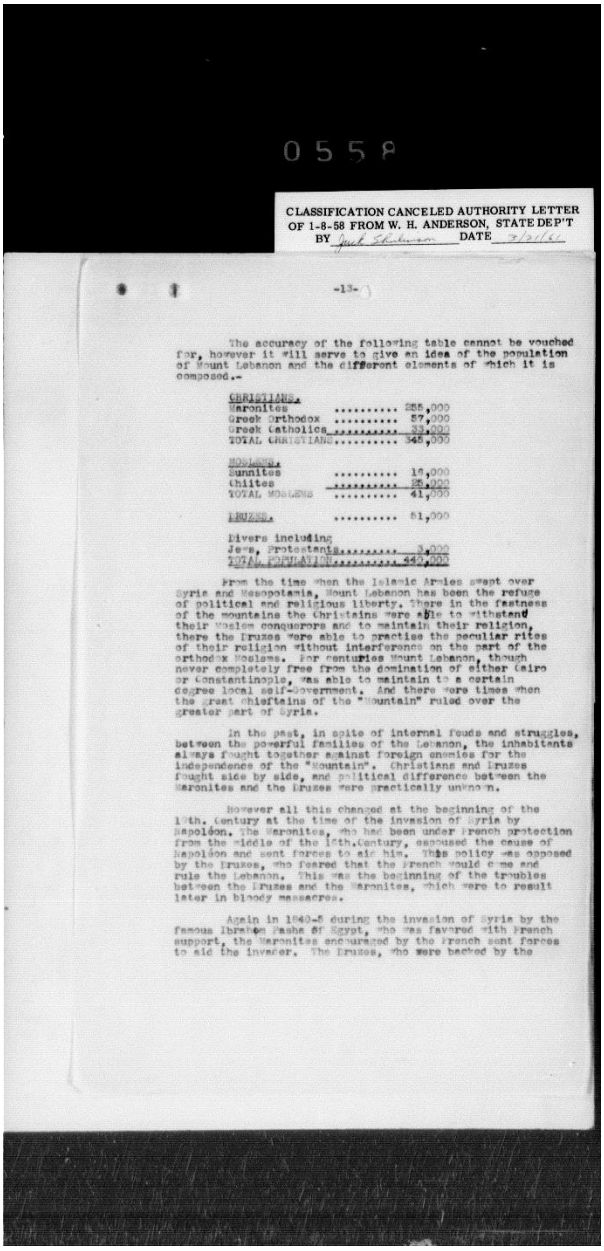
Appendix A: Maps and Graphs

Figure 1

Allied plans for the partition of the Ottoman Empire: Sykes–Picot Agreement, 1916[211]

[211] Williams Ann, *Britain and France in the Middle East and North Africa, 1914-1967.* New York NY: St. Martin's Press, 1968

Figure 2



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CLASSIFICATION CANCELED AUTHORITY LETTER OF 1-8-58 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEP'T
BY Jack Thompson DATE 3/21/62

-13-

The accuracy of the following table cannot be vouched for, however it will serve to give an idea of the population of Mount Lebanon and the different elements of which it is composed.-

CHRISTIANS.		
Maronites	.....	255,000
Greek Orthodox	.....	57,000
Greek Catholics	.....	33,000
TOTAL CHRISTIANS	.....	345,000
MOSLEMS.		
Sunnites	.....	18,000
Chiites	.....	23,000
TOTAL MOSLEMS	.....	41,000
DRUZES.	.....	51,000
Divers including Jews, Protestants	.....	3,000
TOTAL POPULATION	.....	440,000

From the time when the Islamic Arabs swept over Syria and Mesopotamia, Mount Lebanon has been the refuge of political and religious liberty. There in the fastness of the mountains the Christains were able to withstand their Moslem conquerors and to maintain their religion, there the Druzes were able to practise the peculiar rites of their religion without interference on the part of the orthodox Moslems. For centuries Mount Lebanon, though never completely free from the domination of either Cairo or Constantinople, was able to maintain to a certain degree local self-government. And there were times when the great chieftains of the "Mountain" ruled over the greater part of Syria.

In the past, in spite of internal feuds and struggles, between the powerful families of the Lebanon, the inhabitants always fought together against foreign enemies for the independence of the "Mountain". Christians and Druzes fought side by side, and political difference between the Maronites and the Druzes were practically unknown.

However all this changed at the beginning of the 19th. Century at the time of the invasion of Syria by Napoléon. The Maronites, who had been under French protection from the middle of the 17th.Century, espoused the cause of Napoléon and sent forces to aid him. This policy was opposed by the Druzes, who feared that the French would come and rule the Lebanon. This was the beginning of the troubles between the Druzes and the Maronites, which were to result later in bloody massacres.

Again in 1840-5 during the invasion of Syria by the famous Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt, who was favored with French support, the Maronites encouraged by the French sent forces to aid the invader. The Druzes, who were backed by the

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In Great Mount Lebanon there are over 155.000 Christians who are not included in the Province of Mount Lebanon, and there are nearly 130,000 Moslems over and above the 41.000 in the Province of Mount Lebanon, and of the Druzes there are probably over 9,000 more.

The following table gives an estimate of the total population of Great Mount Lebanon not including the population of the Province of Mount Lebanon.

CHRISTIANS.	
Maronites	 50,500
Greek Orthodox	 68,200
Greek Catholics	 36,400
TOTAL CHRISTIAN (no including other sects)	155,100
MOSLEMS.	
Sunnites	 117,650
Chiites	 12,150
TOTAL MOSLEM	 129,800
DRUZES	 9,400
Diverse, including Jews, Christians; Protestant Christians, and Roman Catholics; and some of the semi-Pagan, semi-Moslem sects.	 19,700
TOTAL POPULATION of Great Mount Lebanon but no including the population of the Province of Mount Lebanon..	314,000

The following table gives the entire population of Greater Mount Lebanon including the population of the Province of Mount Lebanon.

CHRISTIANS	 500,100
MOSLEMS	 170,800
DRUZES	 60,400
DIVERS	 22,700
TOTAL	 754,000

It is very probable that this total has been considerably reduced during the war, however it affords a basis of comparison of the strength of the different religions and sects. It will be remarked that the Christians number 66.66% of the entire population of Greater Mount-Lebanon. of the population of the Province of Mount Lebanon the Christians form over 78%;but the extra territory which the Lebanese wish to be incorporated into the Lebanon the Christian form but 50% of the population. More than 63% of all of the Christians in Syria are living within the boundaries of Greater Mount Lebanon. The wishes and desires of this body of Oriental Christians should receive consideration at the hands of the great Western Christian Powers,at the time when the Syrian Problem comes up for solution. In the past it has always been the policy of European Nations when dealing with Oriental peoples to give advantages to the Moslems, this of course in countries where the Moslems far out-numbered the Christians. But in Mount Lebanon the conditions are reversed and there is an opportunity for the World Powers to give the Christians absolutely fair treatment.[212]

[212] 867.00/903

Figure 3

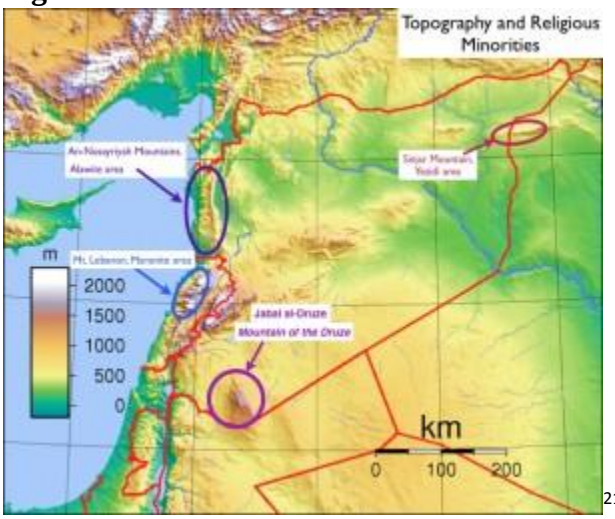

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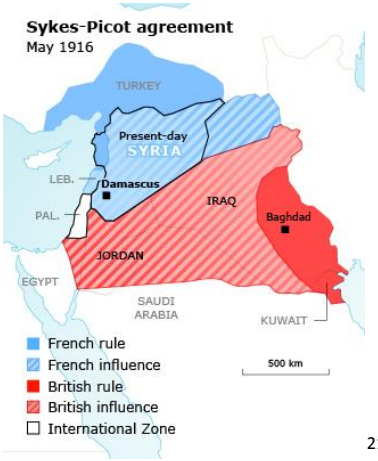
Figure 4



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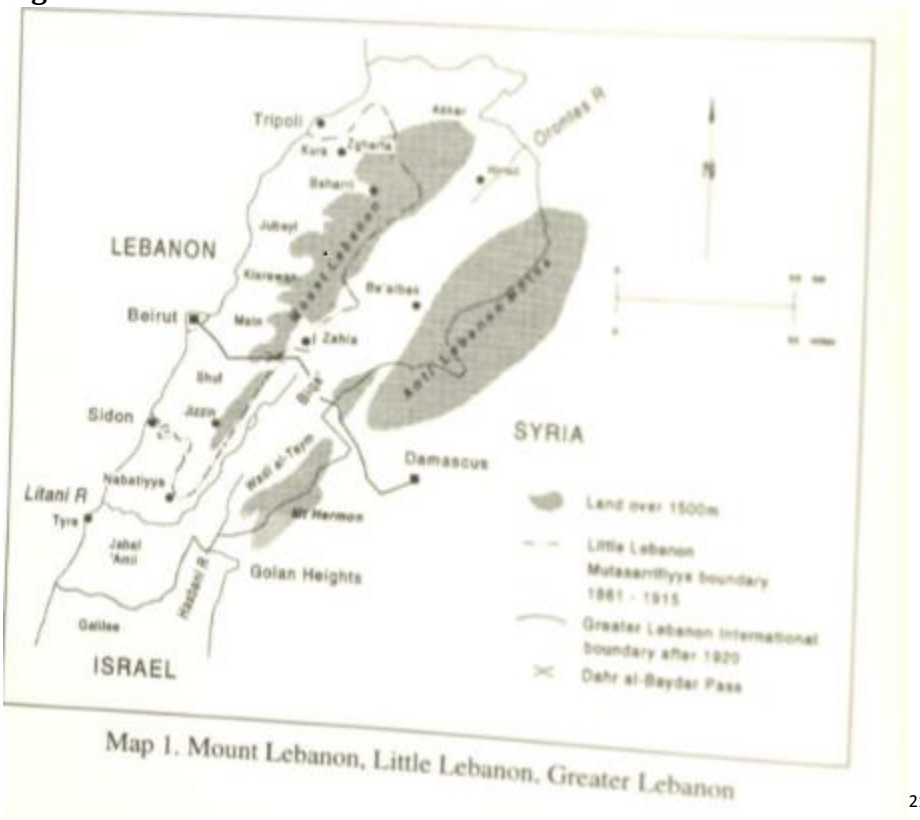
213 Lewis, Martin. "Geographic Environment, Cultural Diversity, and Liberalism in the Eastern Mediterranean." GeoCurrents. April 11, 2011. Accessed March 18, 2015. http://www.geocurrents.info/cultural-geography/geographic-environment-cultural-diversity-and-liberalism-in-the-eastern-mediterranean.

214 "French Mandate." Fanack Chronicle. October 27, 2014. Accessed March 18, 2015. https://chronicle.fanack.com/syria/history-past-to-present/french-mandate/.

Figure 5



Map 1. Mount Lebanon, Little Lebanon, Greater Lebanon

[215]

[215] Harris William, *Faces of Lebanon: Sects, Wars, and Global Extensions* . (Princeton N.J. : Markus Wiener Publishers , 1997),

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