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TO 1861

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## THE RÔLE OF FOREIGN POWERS IN THE HISTORY OF LEBANON AND SYRIA FROM 1799 TO 1861

Foreign relations have been a determining factor in Syrian<sup>1</sup> history for thousands of years.<sup>2</sup> The country has seen many invaders and was open to influences from all sides.<sup>3</sup> The inaccessible mountain ranges in the western parts of Syria, however, served as "regions of retreat,"<sup>4</sup> especially in Islamic times when heterodox Islamic sects (such as the Druzes) and Christian minorities made them, first and foremost Mount Lebanon (Ġabal Lubnān, Mont Liban),<sup>5</sup> their strongholds, where they enjoyed relative independence and where the Muslim states claiming sovereignty over the country only at times succeeded in imposing their direct rule. That situation, of course, favored the development of foreign relations: populations, with almost necessarily strained relations with their overlords, living in mountainous areas open to the sea were very likely to seek support and collaboration from foreign powers, especially if a common faith united foreigners and natives, as

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Syria" is meant here in the sense of a "Greater Syria" comprising Lebanon and Palestine. It is used to designate the region which is called aš-Šām by the Arabs.

<sup>2</sup> P. K. Hitti, *Lebanon in History*, (London, 1957), p. 3 draws the reader's attention to the polyglot inscriptions on the limestone rock at the mouth of the Dog River (Nahr al-kalb) as a symbol for this particular trait of Syrian and especially Lebanese history.

<sup>3</sup> For the geographical foundations of Syrian history see E. Wirth, *Syrien. Eine geographische Landeskunde*, (Darmstadt, 1971), pp. 9—16, 137—187.

<sup>4</sup> X. de Planhol, *Les fondements géographiques de l'histoire de l'Islam*, (Paris, 1968) uses the term "refuges."

<sup>5</sup> The term "Lebanon" is used here to designate the semiautonomous region under a native ḥākim (respectively the two districts or qā'immaqāmiyas from 1842 onwards) which is not identical in its extension with the modern Lebanese state.

in the case of France and the Maronites. Ties of a longstanding friendship existed between the French and the Maronites and those historical ties were very present in the minds of nineteenth century Maronites and also in those of their French allies and protectors.<sup>6</sup>

A very special phenomenon, the "Holy Places"<sup>7</sup> of the three monotheistic religions—with all possible implications of rivalry and strife—were another constant factor attracting foreign interests and foreign intervention throughout the ages.

With Ottoman power declining European intervention became a common feature in the history of the Ottoman Empire and of Syria<sup>8</sup> in particular, where European influence had a long tradition. As France was the one European nation which had the oldest and strongest ties to Syria, the two events marking the chronological beginning and end of the following study are French armed interventions.

Bonaparte's Syrian campaign, intended to secure the French position in Egypt and "to force the Porte to make peace and to secure its consent to his march on India"<sup>9</sup> was too short-lived to have any lasting consequences. It showed, however, how a disturbance from outside could upset the balance between the different religious groups. For the Muslims, the advance of a Christian army into the country seemed to be a danger, and they reacted with distrust. "At Er-Ramle, a town between Jaffa and Bethlehem, where they arrived on March 1, the French found that the Moslem population had fled the day before and that the Christians had stayed to welcome them."<sup>10</sup> Bonaparte had indeed counted on Christian help.<sup>11</sup> In his efforts to gain the col-

<sup>6</sup> See A. Bruneau, *Traditions et politique de la France au Levant*, (Paris, 1932); F. Charles-Roux, *France et chrétiens d'Orient*, (Paris, 1939); R. Ristelhueber, *Traditions françaises au Liban*, (Paris, 1918); these books should not be relied on unconditionally.

<sup>7</sup> "Holy places are sites to which a numinous significance is attached; where 'sacred events,' theophanies, occurred . . . No wonder that they become the goal of visitations, the object of desire, means of political manipulation. Priesthoods will inevitably try to make them their exclusive possession, governments will claim them whether to flatter their subjects or to achieve other, less holy, purposes." C. Wardi, "The Question of the Holy Places in Ottoman Times" in: M. Ma'oz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine During the Ottoman Period*, (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 385—393; here: p. 385.

<sup>8</sup> Syria belonged to the Ottoman empire from 1516 to 1918.

<sup>9</sup> J. C. Herold, *Bonaparte in Egypt*, (London, 1963), p. 265.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>11</sup> H. Lammens, *La Syrie*, I—II, (Beirut, 1921), II, p. 121.

laboration of the Lebanese he stressed the old Franco-Maronite friendship. "Je reconnais que les Maronites sont Français de temps immémorial; moi aussi je suis catholique romain et vous verrez que par moi l'Église triomphera et s'étendra au loin."<sup>12</sup> Bonaparte is reported to have told the Maronites who had shown some doubt concerning his religious convictions. In Egypt he had not manifested so much Christian enthusiasm. His public declarations to the population emphasized his favourable attitude towards Islam.<sup>13</sup>

The Lebanese Christians gave the French some help, for example by sending them food, but were prudent enough not to join them openly. The Druzes, however, thought of resistance against such Christian collaboration with the French and even of exile.<sup>14</sup> In other parts of Syria there were outbreaks of violence against Christians<sup>15</sup> as the real or supposed allies of the infidel invaders. This is a common pattern in the history of Muslim-Christian relations in Islamic countries: whenever there was the approach of Christian armies, violence broke out against the Christians under Muslim rule. This had been the case when Bonaparte had landed in Egypt and it had been alike, centuries before, when the crusaders had reached Muslim lands. For a valuation of the effects of the French expedition to Syria, we can adopt the conclusion of I. F. Harik: "For the first time, different attitudes were demonstrated by Maronites and Druze on a clearly communal basis . . . The Napoleonic episode was a passing one, but it indicated the growing split between the two communities under new challenges."<sup>16</sup>

The ḥākim or governor or prince (as he has been called sometimes) of Mount Lebanon, Bašīr Šihāb, who, on the one hand had given some support to the French (as we have mentioned), had, on the other hand, entertained relations with the British. Moreover he is said to have furnished some horses to the approaching Ottoman troops. That fact and an intervention in favour of Bašīr by the British admiral Sir

<sup>12</sup> Charles-Roux, *France*, p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> N. Turk, *Chronique d'Égypte 1798—1804*, éditée et traduite par G. Wiet (N. Turk, *Mudakkirāt*) (Cairo, 1950) gives some examples: pp. 67 and 71 (French text); pp. 50 and 53 (Arabic text).

<sup>14</sup> I. F. Harik, *Politics and Change in a Traditional Society. Lebanon 1711 to 1845*, (Princeton, 1968), p. 203.

<sup>15</sup> Lammens, *Syrie*, II, p. 123.

<sup>16</sup> Harik, *Politics*, pp. 203—204.

Sidney Smith<sup>17</sup> had led to the confirmation of Bašīr as prince of the Lebanon by the Porte and an extension of his powers.<sup>18</sup> The *wālī* of 'Akkā, al-ğazzār ("the butcher"), however, intrigued against Bašīr and collaborated with his rivals in Mount Lebanon—perhaps because Bašīr hadn't sent him any help during the siege of 'Akka by Bonaparte. Bašīr finally saw himself forced to leave the country. It was with British help that he could return and resume authority after some months.<sup>19</sup>

Such rivalries, interior tensions and petty wars, as described above, were nothing unusual for Syria, but in the present case foreign interference had played a rôle. We see that foreign activities did not yet effect structural changes, but just made themselves felt in provoking developments and events belonging to a traditional pattern. The French invasion of Syria had been due to the geopolitical position of the country. Bonaparte's operations in Syria had been of a strategic order and must be considered as only one stone in a large mosaic-work of tactics and policies, as a means serving ulterior aims.

In the first years of the nineteenth century, the movement of the Wahhābīs, an ultraconservative fundamentalist sect which had originated on the Arabian Peninsula, brought new troubles to Syria.<sup>20</sup> Not only the caravans of pilgrims to Mecca were concerned, but there was the real danger for Syria of an invasion. Military measures were taken by the pasha of Damascus and the *ḥākim* of Mount Lebanon came to his help with fifteen thousand armed men. Perhaps under the influence of Wahhābī ideas, especially restrictive measures were taken against Christians as early as 1807.<sup>21</sup>

The following years saw the monotonous wars of one pasha against the other, of one religious group against the other, and of the "traditional" factional strife in the cities.<sup>22</sup> Rivalries between Greek Ortho-

<sup>17</sup> Lammens, *Syrie*, II, p. 130.

<sup>18</sup> Hitti, *Lebanon*, p. 414.

<sup>19</sup> Lammens, *op. cit.*, p. 131, and Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

<sup>20</sup> For the Wahhābīs: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, First edition, (Leiden, 1913—1942). Article 'Wahhābiya' (the same article can be found in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (rpt. Leiden, 1974).

<sup>21</sup> Lammens, *Syrie*, p. 136.

<sup>22</sup> H. L. Bodman, *Political Factions in Aleppo, 1760—1826*, (Chapel Hill, 1963) has studied the interior situation of one of the major cities of Syria.

dox and Greek Catholic Christians in 1818 led to serious riots, in which eleven Greek Catholics lost their lives. Thus the intervention of the European consuls was provoked.<sup>23</sup> The French ambassador received orders from Paris to take measures to stop that "persecution."<sup>24</sup> But the Greek Catholics themselves expressed the fear that an intervention not carried out with utmost discretion could have dangerous results, according to the French ambassador: "Ceux-ci, dont le tort supposé était d'avoir embrassé la religion franque [i.e. Roman Catholicism], les [i.e. the consuls of France, Austria and Spain, A.S.] firent prier de s'abstenir et de leur donner dans les moments critiques une marque d'intérêt qui jetterait encore plus de défaveur sur leur cause."<sup>25</sup>

If the petty wars among pashas and the continuous revolts against heavy taxation were traditional and typical of Syria,<sup>26</sup> the outbreak of violences between "Greeks" and "Uniates" was in itself connected with foreign activities. The separation of groups from the oriental churches and their conversion to the Catholic Church of Rome (accordingly they were called "Latins") was due to the work of European missionaries under European, especially French, protection.<sup>27</sup>

For the period from 1799 to 1831 we can give the following summary: in those days foreign interventions were less frequent than in the period from 1831 to 1861, and particularly between 1840 and 1861; but they existed and to a certain measure affected the course of events in Syria.

From 1831 onwards, when the Egyptian Pasha Muḥammad 'Alī invaded the country, Syria appeared in the focus of foreign interests. The Egyptian invasion didn't come so unexpected and belonged to a

<sup>23</sup> Bodman, *op. cit.*, p. IX.

<sup>24</sup> J. Hajjar, *L'Europe et les destinées du Proche-Orient (1815—1848)*, (Paris, 1970), p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> Hajjar, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>26</sup> For details see the general books on Syrian history cited in the preceding notes as well as: A. L. Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria including Lebanon and Palestine*, (Edinburgh, 1969). See also Salibi's book (note 70).

<sup>27</sup> Those churches kept their own liturgies in their respective languages and their own hierarchical organisation with their different patriarchs. For more details about Christianity in the Ottoman empire in those days: J. Hajjar, *Le Christianisme en Orient, Etudes d'histoire contemporaine 1684—1968*, (Beirut, 1970).

traditional pattern of Egyptian foreign policy.<sup>28</sup> But it took a special importance in the particular situation of the nineteenth century, in “that shifting, intractable and interwoven tangle of conflicting interests, rival peoples and antagonistic faiths that is veiled under the name of the Eastern Question”<sup>29</sup> made the issue a European one.<sup>30</sup> “Désormais, c’est dans les cabinets de l’Occident que se joue principalement le sort de la Syrie.”<sup>31</sup>

The conflict between Muḥammad ‘Alī and the Porte cannot be subject of the present article. European involvement will be considered only as far as Syria is directly concerned. Only so much should be called to mind: Britain’s foremost aim was to preserve the Ottoman Empire, and any change of the status quo was to be considered as a dangerous shift in the balance of power. No European nation should take advantage of a dismemberment of the Turkish state.

Britain could not tolerate any potential threat to India—Bona-parte’s expedition only lay some thirty years back. Not only the possible and concrete plans for an Indian connection via Syria were concerned—and those indeed existed.<sup>32</sup> But Syria also was to be preserved

<sup>28</sup> Any great power emerging from Egypt had made efforts to control Syria. Some concrete economic reasons for that special case are given by W. R. Polk, *The Opening of South Lebanon, 1788—1840. A Study of the Impact of the West in the Middle East*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), p. 106. Egypt wanted “(1) to secure the Egyptian-Syrian trade route and the Sinai frontier, (2) to seal off Syria as a potential place of escape for those who wanted to avoid the heavy obligations of the Egyptian state, and (3) to exploit the economic resources of Syria either for the direct use of Egypt, in such goods as timber and tobacco, or for the gathering of foreign exchange through sale of such crops as silk.” See also: A. G. Rustum, *The Royal Archives of Egypt and the Origins of the Egyptian Expedition to Syria 1831—1841*, (Beirut, 1936), p. 64.

<sup>29</sup> Those words of Lord John Morley are cited in J. F. Scheltema, *The Lebanon in turmoil. Syria and the Powers in 1860. Book of the Marvels of the Time concerning the massacres in the Arab Country by Iskander Ibn Ya’qūb Abkārīūs*. (New Haven, 1920), pp. 182—183; conclusion, written by Scheltema.

<sup>30</sup> For European implications see: M. Sabry, *L’Empire égyptien sous Mohamed-‘Alī et la question d’Orient (1822—1849)*, (Paris, 1930); and: F.S. Rodkey, *The Turko-Egyptian Question in the relations of England, France and Russia*, (Urbana, 1923).

<sup>31</sup> Lammens, *Syrie*, II, p. 155.

<sup>32</sup> Some hints are found in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Paris: compare *Correspondance Politique des Consuls* (= CPC)/T(urquie)/B(eirut)/vol. 1 letter of consul Desmeloizes, 17/10/1840, f(olio) 243; and: CPC/T/Consulats divers/v. 1 letter of consul H. Guys from Beirut, 15/12/1830, f 103; *ibid.*, letter of the same, 20/5/1831 f 206. See also: H. L. Hoskins, *British Routes to India*,



from the influence of any power which was likely to use the position or have, at least, the theoretical possibility to act against India or searoutes to India. The Ottoman Empire, weak and without any real possibilities, in control of Syria (and 'Irāq), was by far preferable to a dynamic, ascending young power, like Egypt under Muḥammad 'Alī, and a possible ally of a rival European power.

Russia had taken advantage of the difficulties of the sultan with his unruly Egyptian pasha and had offered military help. France was the only nation favouring Muḥammad 'Alī hoping to guaranty her ascendancy in the Middle East by making common cause with what was supposed to be the rising power in the Levant. The powers were less concerned at the fate of Syria than at the balance of power. Syria was merely the scene of the conflict. It was in Syria that the status quo was changed.

The Egyptian occupation, however, had considerable results for Syria: it put an end to the anarchy that had reigned for a long time and subjected the country to a very harsh rule.<sup>33</sup> On the one hand, the new administration policed the country in a far more efficient way than the Ottoman administration had been able to do and brought some relief to the harassed population which previously had been suffering from the outrages of irregular or even regular troops and from Bedouin inroads. In the cities, factional strife came to an end. "Conscription and disarmament drained the source of local military strength, while strict government control undermined the position of the notables."<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, the population now suffered from exceedingly heavy taxes; if corruption was abolished, conscription<sup>35</sup>

(London, 1966), passim. For example Hoskins cites on p. 268 Palmerston who said in connection with the Egyptian occupation of Syria: "... the mistress of India cannot permit France to be mistress directly or indirectly of the road to her Indian dominions."

<sup>33</sup> See J. Gordon, "Coup d'oeil rétrospectif sur les affaires d'Orient et particulièrement sur l'état de la Syrie." The article is published in the *Revue Orientale* (January 1853); I found it in French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Mémoires et Documents* (= MD)/T(urquie) vol. 43 (Syrie et Liban), pièce no. 10 see also: CPC/T/B/v. 1 letter of the French official Péretié, 20/10/1840 f 246 and: CPC/T/cons. divers/vol. 2 consul H. Guys 30/6/1833 f 244.

<sup>34</sup> M. Ma'oz, "Syrian Urban Politics in the Tanzimat Period between 1840 and 1861," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XXIX pp. 277 to 301 (1966), p. 278.

<sup>35</sup> Conscription must not be understood here in the modern meaning: military service was not for a restricted period, it ended with the soldier's life.



was introduced and, at the same time, forced labour was imposed upon the population.

The Egyptians wanted to draw all resources out of Syria and so the system of regular administration, which could have ushered in a period of relative prosperity and interior security, led to a brutal exploitation of men and resources in the country. However, several structural reforms were carried out by the Egyptians and especially the status of the non-Muslim minorities<sup>36</sup> was substantially changed. Like in Egypt,<sup>37</sup> "when the Egyptian Government conquered the country of Syria . . ., equality was established between (all) subjects," according to the statement of a contemporary Christian-Syrian author.<sup>38</sup> At the "Holy Places" restrictions and vexatious dues which previously had been raised from Christian pilgrims<sup>39</sup> were abolished. The French diplomatist, Baron de Boisilecomte noted in 1833: "Ibrahim Pacha est arrivé en Syrie en proclamant partout la liberté religieuse et l'égalité des cultes. Il a fait publier et crier dans les rues qu'une justice égale devait être rendue à chacun et qu'une offense faite à un Chrétien serait aussi sévèrement punie qu'une offense à un Musulman."<sup>40</sup>

So it was clear that Christians and Jews were more friendly disposed towards the Egyptians than the Muslims who saw their century-old superiority in danger<sup>41</sup> and did not accept to treat as their equals

<sup>36</sup> There is a vast literature on non-Muslims in the Islamic state: we only cite some of the more important titles: A. Fattal, *Le statut légal des non-Musulmans en pays d'Islam*, (Beirut, 1958). *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new edition) (Leiden/London, 1960 onward); article "Dhimma," K. Binswanger, *Untersuchungen zum Status der Nichtmuslime im Osmanischen Reich des 16. Jahrhunderts. Mit einer Neudefinition des Begriffes "Dhimma,"* (Munich, 1977). All titles cited give further bibliographical information.

<sup>37</sup> For the situation of the Copts under Muḥammad 'Alī see the respective chapters of T. Tāḡir: *Aqbāṭ wa muslimūn mund al-fatḥ al-'arabī ilā 'ām 1922*, (Cairo, 1951), and S. Chaleur, *Histoires des Coptes d'Égypte*, (Paris, 1960), as well as: A. Schlicht "Les Chrétiens en Égypte sous Mehemmet Ali," *Le Monde Copte* VI, pp. 44—51, (1979).

<sup>38</sup> Ibn Ya'qūb Abkārīūs, *Lebanon*, p. 126 (see note 29).

<sup>39</sup> A. Rustum, *Al-uṣūl al-'arabiya li ta'rīḥ sūriya fi 'ahd Muḥammad 'Alī bāšā*, I—V, (Beirut, 1930), I, publishes a decree abolishing such vexatious practices, p. 87—p. 89.

<sup>40</sup> G. Douin, *La mission du baron de Boisilecomte, L'Égypte et la Syrie en 1833*, (Cairo, 1927), p. 205.

<sup>41</sup> Indeed, according to the reports of European diplomats, the Christians rejoiced at the Egyptians' coming whereas the Muslims were less happy about

people who for a long period had just been tolerated and often treated with contempt.<sup>42</sup> Any effort to establish religious equality was, therefore, a particularly delicate issue. It was part of the general programme of reforms and modernisation of Muḥammad 'Alī and was certainly related to his endeavour to gain favour with the European governments. The Egyptian occupation did not only bring an improvement of the situation of the non-Muslim inhabitants of Syria but also to that of the Europeans. P. Campbell, the British consul-general in Egypt reported to Palmerston in 1833: "His Highness [Muḥammad 'Alī] assured me with great earnestness that his anxious desire was to give to British subjects every support in order to cultivate his relations with us, and to show his respect for His Majesty's Government, and that every necessary order had been given by him in Syria to that effect."<sup>43</sup> The same promises were made to French representatives. The viceroy is reported to have said to the French consul-general:

"Les chrétiens de Syrie... n'auront jamais été aussi indépendants et aussi heureux; ils sonneront leurs cloches tant qu'il leur plaira. Je les estime et je veux les délivrer d'un joug odieux. Donnez à vos nationaux et à votre gouvernement l'assurance de mes idées libérales."<sup>44</sup>

And it seems that the consul-general was convinced that those promises were kept:

"Méhémet Ali est au moins fidèle à la promesse qu'il a faite de couvrir de sa protection les établissements des Chrétiens à Jérusalem et de les délivrer des vexations de tout genre dont ils ont été si longtemps victimes de la part des autorités musulmanes. Des ordres avaient été transmis en conséquence à son fils Ibrahim pacha. Dans ma visite d'hier soir, il s'est empressé de m'annoncer, avec un air de satisfaction et d'intérêt dont je n'ai pu

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the course of events. For example CPC/T/Consulate divers vol. 1/consul Bottu (Larnaca) 17/1/1832, f 316: "Les Turcs [expression often used to designate Muslims in general] de Syrie sont loin de voir avec satisfaction l'invasion d'Ibrahim pacha. Les Chrétiens seuls en témoignent une joie très vive..." About the favourable attitude of the Maronite patriarch see MD/T/vol. 122 Jouannin, Note sur la Syrie, (pièce no. 1) f 75.

<sup>42</sup> The Muslims could refer to the *Coran* to justify this. In several places, the *ḍimmi*s are spoken of in a contemptuous way. See for example *Coran* IX/28, 29.

<sup>43</sup> A. L. Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine 1800—1901*, (London, 1961), p. 37 as cited from British archives.

<sup>44</sup> G. Douin, *La première guerre de Syrie. La conquête de la Syrie (1831—1832)*, (Cairo, 1931) p. 33.

m'empêcher de le remercier, qu'un firman venait d'être donné pour supprimer toutes les impositions de quelque genre que ce fût, établies sur les maisons religieuses des Chrétiens francs, grecs, arméniens et cophtes, ainsi que les droits payés par la nation juive, et pour faire cesser immédiatement toute redevance, tout droit coutumier, tout droit de péage.<sup>45</sup>"

Missionaries found their situation improved: "The Christian missionary enjoys perfect liberty to carry on his operation under the Egyptian Government, more so indeed than under the British Government at Malta or India."<sup>46</sup>

By the measures of the Egyptian government France thought her religious protectorate strengthened. "... l'influence française ... grandissait chaque jour davantage en même temps que l'administration égyptienne prenait de la consistance; s'aidant l'une et l'autre ... nos consuls avaient la prééminence, et semblaient être les redresseurs de tous les torts quels qu'ils furent."<sup>47</sup>

In order to impose their domination efficiently, the Egyptians played the different religious groups off against each other, Christians playing a major part in administrative and even military matters. According to the French consul-general Mimaut, Beirut was under a Christian (probably Lebanese?) garrison,<sup>48</sup> a highly significant fact. Christian contingents in Muslim armies were unusual (but not without precedence). In Syria the use of Christian troops was due to the Egyptian collaboration with the Lebanese *ḥākim* Bašīr Šihāb, and so especially Christian forces stood at the disposal of the Egyptians (the *ḥākim* relying mainly on Christian support), the Druzes being more reserved and sometimes openly turning against the Egyptians. Ibrāhīm

<sup>45</sup> Douin, *op. cit.*, p. 98. Among the reforms in favour of Christians and Jews was their admission to the newly founded municipal councils. The British agent Richard Wood writes in his summary report on Syria (1834): "This Divan, which is established at Acre, serves as a Court of Appeal, it takes cognisance of the proceedings of the other Divans, it receives the officers and has to give an account of its proceeding to the Great Divan of Egypt. This branch of the administration cannot be too much admired when the Turk and the Christian, without distinction, equally administer to the common welfare of their countrymen." A. B. Cunningham, *The Early Correspondence of Richard Wood 1831—1841*, (London, 1966), p. 49.

<sup>46</sup> Tibawi, *British Interests*, p. 16, cites the "Jewish Intelligencer," the official journal of the "London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews."

<sup>47</sup> MD/T/vol. 122 Jouannin (see note 41) f 42.

<sup>48</sup> Douin, *Première Guerre*, p. 315.

Pasha, the son of the Egyptian viceroy Muḥammad 'Alī and commander-in-chief of the Egyptian forces in Syria, had in Bašīr Šihāb his most powerful ally. In their efforts to control the country efficiently the Egyptians pursued a policy of "divide et impera." Thus, in the case of a grave Druze revolt Maronite troops were used to quell it. Such a policy of course did not fail to strengthen sectarian hatred. But the growing demands and harsh measures of the Egyptian administration finally had the effect of uniting the opposed parties against Egyptian rule. Collaboration with the Egyptians had not saved the Lebanese from oppressive measures, from the "insatiable rapacité d'un brigandage organisé,"<sup>49</sup> and so the different religious groups worked together to resist Muḥammad 'Alī's troops. In 1840 a convention was concluded in which Lebanese of all creeds declared their will to stand together against Egyptian rule. In a circular calling all inhabitants of Mount Lebanon up to revolt, the aims of the movement were formulated: the abolition of certain taxes, of conscription and of forced labour; Lebanon should not be disarmed.<sup>50</sup> Bašīr Šihāb still kept his Egyptian alliance as he had nothing to hope from a return of Ottoman rule. So the upheavals of 1840 were directed against the Egyptians as well as against the prince of Mount Lebanon; it remained a mainly Christian revolt in spite of the efforts to make it the cause of the whole population of Mount Lebanon.<sup>51</sup>

France was now in a rather difficult position. On the one hand, Muḥammad 'Alī was the ally of France; on the other hand, there was the longstanding tradition of the French protectorate over the oriental Christians and the special Franco-Maronite relationship on which French influence in Syria was mainly based. As long as the relations between Lebanese and Egyptians had been friendly there had been no problem; but now, at the outbreak of an open armed conflict between both French allies, a way out of this dilemma had to be found. So much the more as British agents took advantage of the situation denouncing France to the Maronites as the ally of their oppressors and offering the insurgents help. France's position was weakened.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Gordon, "État de la Syrie" (cf. footnote 33) MD/T/vol. 43, f 47.

<sup>50</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 1 Consul Bourée 12/6/1840 f 36/37.

<sup>51</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 1 Consul Bourée 27/2/1840 f 4 confirms the intention to form a resistance movement beyond the limits of the sects.

<sup>52</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 1 Consul Bourée 27/6/1840 f 69.

The Lebanese insurgents even asked themselves for British help,<sup>53</sup> in spite of their originally not very favourable attitude towards the British “heretics.”<sup>54</sup> In this context it is noteworthy that one of the most active British agents, Richard Wood, was a Roman Catholic. The Lebanese were very well aware of the importance and power of the European states and asked in connection with their demands for European guaranties as a gage for Egyptian promises.

In France, indeed, there was not even a clear line of action: there were two parties obstructing each other’s policy. On the one hand, there was Prime Minister Thiers who favoured Muḥammad ‘Ali and took the Maronite issue for a minor problem. On the other hand, there was King Louis-Philippe who headed the group of those who wanted to back foremostly the old French allies in the mountains, the Maronites, and even thought of founding an autonomous Christian principality under the natural protectorate of France. The count d’Onfroi, about whose activities we find hints in the political correspondence of the French consul at Beirut, was—according to Professor Farah—a nephew of the French king<sup>55</sup> and went to Mount Lebanon “to help the insurgents against the Egyptians with ammunition, money and the promise of France’s support. As Louis had the backing of the clerical party in this venture, d’Onfroi was able to bring with him a letter from the pope to the Maronite patriarch in which promises of indulgence were made for those who would take up arms against the pasha of Egypt.”<sup>56</sup>

Consul Bourée, belonging to the pro-Maronite party, was rather cautious in his reports but went far enough to propose the creation of an independent Christian-Lebanese state to Thiers explaining that never had the situation been more favourable for enhancing the rôle of France in Syria. Thiers was not very pleased at those ideas and drew the consul’s attention to the fact that his task was merely to mediate between the insurgents and the Egyptians and to appease the spirits.<sup>57</sup> His own opinion about a settlement of the question can be

<sup>53</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 1 Consul Bourée 20/7/1840 f 118.

<sup>54</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 1 Consul Desmeloizes 17/10/1840 f 243.

<sup>55</sup> C. E. Farah, “The Lebanese Insurgence of 1840 and the Powers,” *Journal of Asian History* I, pp. 105—132, (1967), p. 111.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>57</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 1 Ministry to consul Bourée 7/7/1840. The author of the present article intends to publish this document as well as several others in extenso in his thesis about “France and the Syrian Christians 1799—1861.”

found in a letter of September 1840: “Le langage à tenir dans ces contrées, c’est que la France protègera les chrétiens, s’ils ne se rendent pas rebelles; c’est qu’avec la meilleure volonté du monde elle ne pourra pas les sauver du fer égyptien, s’ils ont la sottise de céder aux suggestions étrangères.”<sup>58</sup> Finally Bourée was recalled from his post being not a warm enough supporter of the Egyptian cause. Some efforts to mediate between the insurgents and Egypt were indeed made by way of the religious order of the Lazarists, but it was too late now.

When France tried to bring about a direct understanding between the Porte and the viceroy of Egypt, a kind of “French settlement,” England acted and the London convention of 1840 decided that Egypt had to leave Syria. All major powers of Europe—besides England there were Austria, Russia and Prussia—adhered to that convention and France was excluded from the concert of Europe. This episode has been called the Waterloo of French diplomacy.<sup>59</sup>

As Muḥammad ‘Alī did not comply with the decision of the powers, Britain and her allies decided on a military intervention. British, Ottoman and Austrian forces in not very large numbers, efficiently helped by Lebanese rebels, succeeded in driving the Egyptians back in very short time. In France military preparations began, but when Thiers was replaced as a prime minister by Guizot, all danger of war disappeared.<sup>60</sup> England now had a position in Mount Lebanon, but from the short Anglo-Maronite collaboration, only reluctantly agreed to by many Maronites, no lasting friendship could result.<sup>61</sup> The whole of Syria was restored to Ottoman authority.<sup>62</sup>

In the ten years of Egyptian occupation Syria had considerably changed: the traditional factions and groups were weakened, reforms had shattered the institutions and caused considerable unrest. For

<sup>58</sup> F. Charles-Roux, *Thiers et Méhémet-Ali*, (Paris, 1951), p. 160.

<sup>59</sup> M. Joplain, *La Question du Liban. Etude d’histoire diplomatique et de droit international*, (Paris, 1908), p. 244.

<sup>60</sup> Palmerston wrote about that situation: “The retirement of M. Thiers and his colleagues from office, is a sure pledge to Europe that France is not going to make war in defence of Mehemet Ali.” Cited by H. Temperley, *England and the Near East. The Crimea*, (London, 1936), p. 136.

<sup>61</sup> See a letter from the French consul Cochelet cited by Hajjar, *Proche-Orient*, p. 520.

<sup>62</sup> MD/T/vol. 122 St. Amand, “Le Liban, Note historique (1861),” pièce no. 37, f 414: “Ce n’était pas à la Porte, c’était à l’anarchie que l’Europe avait rendu les Pachaliks syriaques” (sic!).



some years Syria had seen a regular administration, but in the end excessive taxes, forced labour and conscription had led to revolt. The contrasts and tensions between the religious groups were sharpened by the methods of Egyptian administration and were to take serious forms in the coming years.

One effect of the Egyptian rule was the weakening of feudal structure in Mount Lebanon. This process had already begun before the Egyptian era. Bašir Šihāb had restricted, as much as possible, the power of the feudal aristocracy in order to impose his own immediate control over the affairs of Mount Lebanon. Backed by the Egyptians he was in a stronger position than ever against the *šayhs* and *amīrs*. Some of them, mainly Druzes had fled from Mount Lebanon and thrown in their lot with the Ottomans. In that way the Egyptian occupation hastened the gradual disintegration of the feudal system, a development which however had begun earlier.

The influence of France was now at a nadir, even if that situation proved to be a transitory one. England had acquired a position of importance in the whole of Syria.<sup>63</sup> Even the Maronite patriarch doubted, at that period, the efficiency of France and her power in the country.<sup>64</sup> The French consul Bourée, recalled from his post in 1840, as has been mentioned, who was back, however, in 1841, described the situation in that year: "... autrefois, en effet nous régions sans partage, et ... aujourd'hui on nous discute, on nous pèse, on nous compare. Le résultat nous est encore favorable, mais pour qu'il le soit constamment, une surveillance constante sera nécessaire, et nous ne pourrions faire *peu* pour les populations chrétiennes qu'à la condition de les persuader qu'un autre protectorat ne serait pas plus efficace que le nôtre."<sup>65</sup> British agents were now in all parts of Syria and in the company of the new *ḥākim*, Bašir Qāsīm, a nephew of the old exiled Bašir Šihāb whose reign was definitely terminated with Ottoman restoration. The new governor had not been chosen by the native nobility as had been his predecessors, but had been nominated by the British.

As the ties existing between France and the Maronites were based on religious affinity, England consequently tried to assemble followers

<sup>63</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 1 Consul Desmeloizes 18/12/1840 f 281.

<sup>64</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 2 Cons. Desmeloizes 8/3/1841 f 73.

<sup>65</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 2 Cons. Bourée 19/8/1841 f 184.



on the same lines<sup>66</sup> and thus provoked a strong reaction from the side of the catholic Maronites. According to French consular reports there were complaints of the Lebanese population against British interference with the affairs of Mount Lebanon.<sup>67</sup> British-French rivalry became one of the main elements of political life, especially in the coastal regions of Syria and in Mount Lebanon.

Also Russian influence appeared and was, of course, exerted on sectarian lines, too. Russia acted as the protector of the Greek Orthodox Christians (who were Arabs in Syria; only the higher ranks of the clergy were filled with Greeks). The French consul at Beirut wrote in 1840: "Les influences Russe et Anglaise sont, pour le moment, les deux principaux points sur lesquels l'attention doit être portée. La première a, dans le clergé grec-schismatique, des représentans actifs, ardens, envahissans; et dans le consul Russe, M. Basily, un protecteur habile à nouer des intrigues . . ."<sup>68</sup>

Syria, where theoretically Ottoman authority was restored, was from now on in reality under international control. The Ottomans being obliged to discuss Syrian affairs with the representatives of the European powers, international conferences decided about the fate of Syria. Foreign intervention occurred in most cases on behalf of the non-Muslim minorities. Therefore Mount Lebanon was the region where foreign impact was strongest.

The internal organisation of Mount Lebanon and the problems ensuing from it were indeed the main issues of international debates concerning Syria in the following two decades. The reign of Bašīr Qāsim could not last long; he was not up to the situation. The troubles caused by returning feudal lords and conflicts between new and old interests led to his deposition by his Druze subjects. He was replaced by an Ottoman pasha. For the first time after centuries Lebanese autonomy seemed in danger. But this could not be a lasting form of administration for Lebanon. The country was in commotion and riots were numerous; the European powers expressed their discontent. The British ambassador at Istanbul, Stratford Canning, wrote:

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<sup>66</sup> MD/T/vol. 122 Jouannin, "Note sur la Syrie" (November 1842) writes about British missionary work in Mount Lebanon as a means of counteracting French influence, which, however, failed. f 70.

<sup>67</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 2 Cons. Desmeloizes 29/3/1841 f 83/84.

<sup>68</sup> CPC/T/B/vol. 1 Consul Desmeloizes 18/12/1840 f 281.

“... les véritables amis de la Porte ... déclarent leur conviction que l'arrangement actuel est entièrement provisoire, et que les mesures nécessaires seront bientôt prises, sous les ordres de la Sublime-Porte, pour reconstruire le gouvernement local du mont Liban d'une manière permanente, conformément aux anciens privilèges de ses peuples ...<sup>69</sup>”

Finally, according to an Austrian proposal, the following solution was agreed upon: Mount Lebanon was divided in two separate districts (*qā'im-maqāmiyas*), one Druze region and one Maronite region. This new administrative system, which has been called “the formal organization of civil war in the country,”<sup>70</sup> was based on the fictitious supposition that there was a purely Druze and a purely Maronite region. In fact, there was a Maronite district and there were mixed districts, where Druzes and Maronites as well as smaller communities lived together. The artificial division of Mount Lebanon on the base of religious communities bore the germs of many conflicts, laying stress on religious divisions between the two important groups of the Lebanese population and led to daily interventions from Europe. “Our affairs have become the concern of Britain and France. If one man hits another the incident becomes an Anglo-French affair, and there might even be trouble between the two countries if a cup of coffee gets spilt over the ground” as a Maronite leader put it.<sup>71</sup>

The modalities of the new regulation were the object of international conferences which took place on consular level first and then were even moved to Istanbul. Whereas the Porte wanted a maximum of direct control over Lebanon, the European powers wanted for their Lebanese clients a maximum of autonomy. Reports of those conferences give a vivid picture of how much was left of Ottoman sovereignty in the Syrian provinces and to which degree the European powers could impose their will upon the Porte if they were united.<sup>72</sup> In favour of their Lebanese clients they forced upon the Ottoman government that the respective governor (*qā'im-maqām*) of the Druze and Maronite district should be an indigene and not an Ottoman official sent from Istanbul.

<sup>69</sup> Letter published in: I. de Testa, *Recueil des traités de la Porte Ottomane avec les Puissances Étrangères*, I—XI, (Paris, 1866), III, p. 107.

<sup>70</sup> K. Salibi, *The Modern History of Lebanon*, (New York, 1965), p. 64.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79, cites Yūsuf Karam.

<sup>72</sup> CPC/T/B vol. 3 Consul Bourée gives the protocol of a conference, in which the high Ottoman officials seem to undergo an interrogation; see particularly ff 196/7 (20/12/1842).

France had reconquered her position as the natural ally of the Maronites after the crisis of 1840. Protestant England had failed to gain the confidence of the catholic Maronites and British missionaries provoked bitter hatred among them. So Britain turned to another group to protect: the Druzes, who did not yet have any European nation to back them against the Maronites and their ally, France. So British and Druze wishes met. The latter saw their position strengthened as British protégés, while the former gained influence by protecting the Druzes especially in their rivalries with the Maronites; so they were able to counteract French influence in Lebanon. The British-French rivalry took the form of a protectorate over antagonistic religious groups. Any Druze-Maronite conflict was likely to become an Anglo-French conflict, too.

The final regulation of the geographical delimitation of the *qā'im-maqāmīyas* attributed districts under a Druze feudal lord to the Druze *qā'im-maqām* and those under a Maronite feudal lord to the Maronite *qā'im-maqām*. The Maronites strongly objected to being subjected to Druze lords. Of course they were backed by France. France could not obtain the reunification of Mount Lebanon under a (Christian) governor of the Šihāb family, but a compromise was found in the system of *wakīls* (delegates). These were intermediaries between the feudal lords and those of their subjects belonging to a different religion. So, for example, no longer did a Druze lord practise jurisdiction over his Maronite peasants; this from now on fell under the competence of the Maronite *wakīl*. In this way the lords in mixt districts saw their rights restrained, the more so as *wakīls* were not chosen from the aristocracy, but were commoners. The institution of the *wakīls* "brisait l'autorité seigneuriale . . . Les fellahs chrétiens des seigneurs druses et les paysans druses des seigneurs chrétiens recevaient, dans leur lutte pour leur émancipation, des chefs légaux, qui avaient le pouvoir de contrebalancer et d'annuler même l'autorité seigneuriale."<sup>73</sup> This brought about the curious situation that the Maronite peasants in purely Maronite regions were at a disadvantage because they were still completely subjected to the rule of their feudal lords." The Kisrawān peasants were unfortunate enough to have no sectarian problem (the district was almost solidly Maronite) and hence no *wakīls*. In this respect it had now become a privilege for Maronite peasants to live

<sup>73</sup> Jouplain, *Question*, p. 309.

under a Druze rather than a Maronite feudal overlord.”<sup>74</sup> This new regulation could not prevent the outbreak of serious conflicts. The bloody riots degenerating into civil war of the forties and fifties were not mere sectarian strife; these were social conflicts of major importance, too.

A glance on developments of the eighteenth century will help to explain the events of the middle of the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century the Maronite church began to emancipate from the control of the Christian feudal aristocracy and to act as an independent body developing political ambitions opposed to those of the feudal lords.<sup>75</sup> That process was related to a strengthening of the contacts between the Maronite church and the holy see. Western influences may have helped to promote the crystallization of the Maronite church’s own identity. Popular unrest and discontent met with the new political ambitions of the church. A French consular agent observed in 1842:

“Entre Maronites même il y a division d’intérêt; les Emirs et les Cheikhs, . . . la noblesse féodale d’un côté, de l’autre le Patriarche à la tête de son clergé. Les premiers sont la véritable plaie du pays, hautains, avides de richesses, ils pressurent le peuple et ce n’est que dans leurs exactions de tout genre qu’ils sont unis . . . Le clergé qui est fort nombreux et qui se recrute en général parmi les paysans, n’est pas moins avide de posséder, mais il travaille avec courage, il est industriel et ses revenus prospèrent; moins impérieux que les Emirs et les Cheikhs, ministres de la Religion, sortis d’ailleurs du peuple, les moines sont aimés du peuple. Dans les derniers événements surtout, ils ont acquis une grande popularité . . . Une révolution s’opère graduellement, vienne un Gouverneur (*chrétien*) puissant et énergique, et c’en sera fait de la féodalité dans la montagne.”<sup>76</sup>

Another factor favouring the political ambitions of the church had been the policy of Bašir Šihāb. During his long rule, in his endeavour to impose his personal leadership he had wanted to weaken the powerful Druze lords, as has been mentioned. Thus he partly relied on Christians to counterbalance Druze influence. During his reign, the balance of power tended to shift from the Druze to the Maronite side.

<sup>74</sup> M. H. Kerr, *Lebanon in the Last Years of Feudalism, 1840—1868. A Contemporary Account by Anṭūn Dāhīr al-‘Aqīqī*, (Beirut, 1959), p. 18. (Introduction by Kerr.)

<sup>75</sup> Compare Harik, *Politics*, as well as a study of the same author in L. Binder, *Politics in Lebanon*, (New York, 1966).

<sup>76</sup> CPC/T/B vol. 3 Jouannin 1/3/1842 f 44/45.

So, encouraged by the clergy to a certain extent, the Christian Lebanese peasantry rose against the feudal lords. They resented the heavy burden of taxes imposed on them and developed a kind of class-consciousness. The Druzes, on the contrary, did not act in solidarity with their Christian neighbours, did not see in them peasants who shared their own conditions of life. The Druze peasants still thought and felt along sectarian lines, and where Christians rose against a Druze feudal lord, they met solidarity on the Druze side; the Druze peasants did not feel as "commoners," but as "Druzes" as opposed to the "Maronite" rebels. Among the Druzes, the religious allegiance still prevailed over the social one. They still were united by a strong *'asabiya* (in the sense of Ibn Ḥaldūn). Thus, essentially social conflicts could take the shape of sectarian strife in the mixed regions, and this confessional character was further stressed by European intervention, which, as we have mentioned, was exerted on sectarian lines.

Not all riots and disturbances can be traced back to an antifeudal movement. There were also genuinely communitarian quarrels leading to bloody scenes of a small-scale civil war. From the Egyptian period onwards a strong tension between the communities prevailed; outbursts flared up from trivial causes. Each of those incidents embittered the relations further and increased the violence of the Druze-Christian antagonism. The European powers intervened in the problems created by such conflicts: indemnities were asked, who should receive them, who should pay them, who would fix the amounts to be paid?

But not only Mount Lebanon was the scene of foreign activities. The foundation of new Russian consulates manifested this nation's growing interest in Syrian affairs: a first agency was founded at Jaffa in 1820, and in the 1830's "consular agents had been appointed in Aleppo, Latakia, Beirut and Saida."<sup>77</sup> A Russian consul came to Jerusalem after the end of the Egyptian occupation. Porfirii Uspenski, a Russian-Orthodox clergyman was sent to Syria on a secret mission to explore further chances for Russian activities in the country and especially in Palestine. He was not always backed and efficiently helped by Russia.<sup>78</sup> However, contacts between the Orthodox church of Syria and Russia developed. Schools and hospitals were founded,

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<sup>77</sup> D. Hopwood, *The Russian presence in Syria and Palestine 1843—1914*, (Oxford, 1969), p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> Hopwood, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

money was distributed to the Orthodox Christians of Syria. Jerusalem and the holy places stood in the focus of Russian interest. In 1833 the Russian count Mordvinov proposed the conquest of the Holy Land to the czar, who answered that this would be desirable, but that such a project was very difficult to execute.<sup>79</sup> Russia, however, found other means of influencing Syrian affairs and of interfering with interior questions of the Orthodox church. Patriarchs were installed or removed from office according to Russia's wishes, and rivalries between "Greeks" and "Latins" were turned into international issues by Russian and French intervention. Austria was another power getting interested in Syria and competed with France for influence among the Catholics. The "sommès importantes" that were distributed brought Austria many friends.<sup>80</sup>

Palestine with the holy places was a fertile soil for conflict, not only between Muslims and non-Muslims, Christians and Jews, but also among the different Christian communities. Because these communities were protected by European powers, any minor conflict could have consequences of international bearing and degenerate into a serious crisis involving the major European governments. The danger was not restricted to the holy places; it existed wherever different communities lived together, but "in the same manner . . . in which Christianity culminates at the Holy Places, the question of the Protectorate is there found to have its highest ascension."<sup>81</sup>

We certainly cannot enumerate here the incidents and the resulting conflicts between the consuls, we just want to characterise in a general way the situation of tension and suspicion as it dominated Jerusalem and its surroundings. The European powers began to send their agents to Jerusalem. Religious and political interests, interwoven and inseparable, created an unpleasant atmosphere. A French consular agent called the city "un foyer d'intrigues incessantes."<sup>82</sup> The consuls were, as it seems, not on the best terms with each other.

The Christian sanctuaries were in many cases administered and kept by several Christian communities together at the same time; others were kept by one community and the others had the right to

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>80</sup> Hajjar, *Proche-Orient*, p. 521.

<sup>81</sup> K. Marx, *The Eastern Question*, (London, 1897), p. 319.

<sup>82</sup> CPC/T/B vol. 3 Jouannin 22/2/1842 ff 42/43.



celebrate services at fixed times. One may imagine that in this way conflicts were frequent. One of those incidents is particularly appropriate to illustrate how events that were apparently ridiculous and void of importance, could, by the interference of foreign states and the ensuing rivalry of interests, give rise to major international crises. In 1847 a silver star with a Latin inscription belonging to the "Latins" had been removed from the grotto of the nativity. The "Latins" accused the "Greeks." Soon the consuls interfered and finally the problems was brought to a higher level; negotiations continued at Constantinople. Under pressure from Russia and France, the Porte made alternately concessions to both parties. In that way nobody was satisfied and the cause was aggravated. It was, of course, not restricted any longer to the question of that star. Now the question was treated in more general terms.

The always pending problem of the possession and control of the sanctuaries resurged. Those rights and privileges were not clearly defined at all and in no way uncontested. All the parties involved could pretend to rights, as those had been conferred to one side or to the other according to bribes, intrigues or foreign pressure the respective parties could bring up.<sup>83</sup> ". . . the matter of Christian protection in Turkey by Europeans, which had been called up, now showed itself like the cockatrice from the serpent's root" (Isaiah XVI. 29).<sup>84</sup> The contest about the holy places degenerated into a dispute on the general protection of Christians in the Ottoman empire by foreign powers culminating in Russia's ultimatum demanding the formal recognition of Russia as the official protector of Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman empire. Backed by Britain, the Ottomans refused the Russian demand and so the war began which was to be called the Crimean War. It lasted from 1853 to 1856 opposing Russia on the one side to Turkey on the other, supported by Britain and France. We have mentioned that development from "a trivial event"<sup>85</sup> to a European war in order to illustrate what far-reaching consequences "the petty squabbles of a few Greek and Latin priests"<sup>86</sup> could have

<sup>83</sup> For the question of the holy places see: N. Moschopoulos, *La Terre Sainte*, (Athens, 1957); Ma'oz, *Studies* (see note 7); J. Finn, *Stirring Times or Records from Jerusalem Consular Chronicles of 1853 to 1856*, I—II, (London, 1878).

<sup>84</sup> Finn, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>85</sup> Wardi in Ma'oz, *Studies*, p. 392.

<sup>86</sup> Hopwood, *Russian presence*, p. 46.



if used by foreign powers as a welcome pretext to enlarge their influence.

“The Russian claim to protect Orthodox rayas affected some twelve million of them. Nesselrode’s instructions to Mensikov speak of ‘our influence over the secular population of the East’ and he had even once written to the Czar of the possibility of ‘stirring’ (de soulever) the Christian populations to revolt in case of need.”<sup>87</sup> It is significant for the relevance of religious disputes that in this case an incident of no importance at all could lead to an international crisis and to a bloody war. The Crimean war shows particularly well the real character of the “religious protectorate” of Russia. It was meant as a means of breaking up the Ottoman empire from within. Britain and France had been able to save the Ottoman empire from dismemberment by Russia. Christian states had saved a Muslim state and the Muslims resented that. “And it must be confessed that the attitude assumed by France, at this epoch, towards them, must have largely tried their patience, as it undoubtedly increased and embittered all their feelings of sectarian hatred. Throughout Syria, in particular, the French consular authorities suddenly assumed an air of supervision over Christian interests, as pre-eminently theirs by prescriptive right, which had for years lain apparently dormant.”<sup>88</sup>

It is evident that the position of the Porte was not an easy one. The Turks had to face the alliance of several groups of their subjects with foreign powers. Powers which tried and sometimes succeeded in imposing their will upon the Ottoman government, restricted Ottoman control considerably in many parts of the empire and were a constant offence to those Muslims who adhered to the traditional Islamic outlook on what kind of relations should exist between Islam and the non-Muslim world.

There was, however, one attempt, performed with some firmness and vigour, to impose a truly Ottoman settlement concerning Syria. It was the initiative of Šekīb Effendi, who came in person to Syria in 1845 with Ottoman troops to put an end to the intolerable situation in Lebanon. The Europeans were ordered to withdraw from the Mountain; the European consuls protested in vain; and the disarmament of the

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<sup>87</sup> Temperley, *England*, p. 320.

<sup>88</sup> C. H. Churchill, *The Druzes and the Maronites Under the Turkish Rule. From 1840 to 1860*, (London, 1862), pp. 114—115.

population was performed. Any foreign participation was excluded, and the powers of Europe were not asked their opinion. In a note to their representatives Šekīb wrote: “. . . comme la décision prise cette fois ne sera changée d’aucune manière . . . il est important que les consuls ne se mêlent en aucune façon de ce que je dirai, et s’abstiennent de s’ingérer dans l’affaire, et pour le fond et pour la forme.”<sup>89</sup>

Šekīb reformed the administrative system of the Mountain. “The Reglement Shakib Effendi retained the two kaymakamates but tried to rectify some weaknesses of the previous system by providing an institutional mechanism to deal with cases of conflict in the areas where Maronite peasants lived under non-Maronite feudal lords.”<sup>90</sup> The “Reglement”<sup>91</sup> stipulated that in both districts a council should be established, composed of a fixed number of representatives of the different religious communities; the “clergy”, “des évêques et des okkals”<sup>92</sup> of the communities should choose the members of the council. The councils, not necessarily composed of feudal lords<sup>93</sup> “had to decide on the assessment, distribution and collecting of all taxes.”<sup>94</sup> They also had judicial functions. The members of the councils were to receive regular payment and thus took on the character of civil servants. Both in legal matters and in tax-collecting, the acting officials should be of the same religion as the people concerned. So the “Reglement” was one more step to the abolition of the feudal system in Mount Lebanon; the feudal lords still collected taxes, but they did so as agents of the “government,” i. e. of the council and the *qā'im-maqām* and “in accordance with the fiscal decisions of the council.”<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, we can see here another step towards a characteristic feature of modern Lebanon, the system of “confessionalism.”

In 1856 the Porte published a *Hatt-i Hümayūn* which can be looked upon as a consequence of the Crimean War giving equality—in theory—to all Ottoman subjects regardless of their religious affiliation. It was,

<sup>89</sup> Published in Testa, *Recueil*, III, p. 71.

<sup>90</sup> A. I. Baaklini, *Legislative and Political Development: Lebanon, 1842—1972*, (Durham, N. C., 1976), p. 45.

<sup>91</sup> The full text is published by Testa, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 200—207.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>93</sup> D. Chevallier, *La société du Mont Liban à l'époque de la révolution industrielle en Europe*, (Paris, 1971), p. 175.

<sup>94</sup> Baaklini, *Development*, p. 46.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

of course, not possible to create equality of Muslims and non-Muslims by simple decree, and indeed there was "no genuine equality."<sup>96</sup> On the contrary, the situation of the non-Muslims was made even more delicate by measures that should bring about their equality. Muslim fanaticism was aroused by the improvement of the Christians' situation. This was not merely a juridical problem; the growing hostility towards Christians was due to economic changes, too.

The economy of Europe began to exert ever-growing influence on Syria and affected the lives of large parts of the population. "It was foreign commerce which made the impact upon the local economy and not the economy which grew into international commerce."<sup>97</sup> "Routes of trade were forgotten or even reversed: Aleppo traditionally had got its coffee from Yemen and then began to get it from Santo Domingo via France . . . European markets stimulated the specialization of crops and hence tied the old autarkic market units to the world market."<sup>98</sup> The rise of Beirut as the main commercial centre on the Syrian coast was due to the increasing importance of European trade.<sup>99</sup> France had lost her dominant position in Syrian trade and Britain came up as a powerful rival. Silk was the most important of Syrian export goods; clothes constituted the bulk of import goods. What was generally true of the character of Ottoman-European trade relations was valid also for Syria: Europe sent manufactured goods and bought raw materials.

In the 1830's the first steamships called at Beirut and eased the handling of the growing volume of Syro-European trade. The European impact on Syrian economy had considerable consequences: the influx of industrial goods ruined the native craft; the balance of trade being negative on the Syrian side, there was a drain on hard cash leading to quickly rising prices and a lack of specie in the country. Collaboration between Europeans and Christian Syrians led to the formation of an ascending class of wealthy Christian merchants, whereas traditional branches of Syrian economy declined. This stirred up anti-Christian feelings among the Muslims.

<sup>96</sup> R. H. Davison, "Turkish attitudes concerning Christian-Muslim equality in the nineteenth century," *American Historical Review*, LIX, pp. 844—864, (1953—54), p. 848.

<sup>97</sup> Polk, *Opening*, p. 161.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>99</sup> C. Issawi, "British Trade and the Rise of Beirut, 1830—1860," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, VIII, pp. 91—101, (1977).

The drain of specie, its causes, and consequences were described by a contemporary French observer<sup>100</sup> and professor Chevallier wrote about that development: “. . . cette fuite métallique que l’on observait à Beyrouth, témoigne d’un appauvrissement général de la Syrie; elle n’était en outre que l’aspect local d’un mouvement d’ensemble se produisant dans les provinces asiatiques de l’Empire ottoman. Elle rendait la fiscalité particulièrement oppressive, en même temps qu’elle aggravait la situation financière de l’État . . .”<sup>101</sup>

It goes without saying that mainly Christian Syrians were ready to collaborate with European merchants.<sup>102</sup> The conservatism of the Muslim traders and their traditional “Islamic” outlook impeded their readiness to turn towards Europe and the “Unbelievers.” In this way they were outdone by the native Christians, who had had contacts with Christian Europe for centuries and looked upon the Europeans as Christians similar to themselves.<sup>103</sup> French spinning-mills were installed in Mount Lebanon and native entrepreneurs soon followed the French example. The monasteries as “gros vendeurs de cocons”<sup>104</sup> took a share in the European-sponsored silk-boom. Professor Issawi has shown the growing trade of Beirut: whereas in 1835, 341 ships had called at Beirut the number had increased to 680 ships in 1838.<sup>105</sup>

Of course, the Muslims did not look with a benevolent eye at the rise of a wealthy Christian bourgeoisie, accompanied by the Christians’ gradual legal emancipation. European interference and the ascendancy of the native Christians were understood by the Muslims as inter-related facts, and this was hard to bear for those conservative Muslims who saw, at best, second-class citizens in the Christian. One must keep in mind that in the Islamic world-view the task of the *umma*, the community of believers, is the subjection of non-Muslim territories and peoples to Muslim rule. Historical facts were just the inverse in the nineteenth century: infidel states were successfully waging war against the *dār al-islām* and gained ever-growing influence in all parts of the Muslim world in a way that was evident to everyone. That preponderant

<sup>100</sup> CPC/T/B vol. 2, anonymous note (no name, no title, no date; probably 1841) f 56.

<sup>101</sup> Chevallier, *Société*, p. 191.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>105</sup> Issawi, “Trade,” *IJMES*, p. 94.

influence of Christian states also brought about a change of the situation of the Ottoman Christians who were no more content with the place which was theirs, according to the Muslim view, in Islamic society.<sup>106</sup> One may imagine the psychological effects of such a situation. The riots, upheavals and outbreaks of violence which took place in the whole of Syria in the period under consideration must be considered, in a large measure, as a function of the above-mentioned facts.

The outbreak of heavy violence in 1860 was a reaction in traditional forms to new economic realities introduced by Europe. The traditional world of the Middle East clashed with modern occident. Economic facts had strained community tensions; the impact of European economy caused disturbances and unrest. There were, indeed, tangible changes affecting the life of the population: craftsmen who lost their work by the import of European products, the increasing rarity of specie, Muslim traders who suffered from the change of currents of trade and at the same time Christian merchants prospering by their collaboration with Europe.

Wherever massacres occurred they were accompanied by manifestations of hatred against Europe and resentment against natives who cooperated with the Christian powers. In Damascus the consulates were among the chief objects of the mob's attacks. Both Muslim and Christian contemporaries saw the connection between the Syrian Christians and Europe as one of the causes of the outbreaks of violence.<sup>107</sup> There had been much unrest and strife in Mount Lebanon during the last two decades, but the events of 1860 were by far the most vehement outbreak of violence. "In less than four weeks an estimated total of eleven thousand Christians had been killed."<sup>108</sup> The Druzes enjoyed at least the benevolent neutrality of the local Ottoman

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<sup>106</sup> The Christians were no longer as submissive as they used to be and proudly displayed their wealth. An observer writes about the Muslim reaction: "Every post that went out from Beyrout carried letters to the most distant parts of Syria, depicting in fervent terms the degraded and fallen condition of the faithful (i.e. the Muslims, A. S.), and the insults to which they were daily exposed by the meanest *giaour* who could glory in the immunity of Frank protection." Churchill, *Druzes*, pp. 117—118.

<sup>107</sup> Abkārīūs, *Lebanon*, p. 60. K. S. Salibi cites the *naqīb al-ašraf* of Damascus in W. R. Polk/R. L. Chambers, *Beginnings of Modernisation in the Middle East*, (Chicago, 1968), p. 191; in that manuscript of *al-Ḥasībī* mention is made of the economic collaboration between Syrian Christians and Europeans (same page).

<sup>108</sup> Salibi, *History*, p. 106.

authorities and troops, and sometimes the accusation of Druze-Ottoman conspiracy was brought forward against the officials.<sup>109</sup> The spark sprang over to Damascus, a city that was notorious for the fanaticism of its inhabitants, where in July of that same year the whole Christian quarter was looted and burnt and about six thousand persons were killed. The losses would have been even heavier, had there not been 'Abd al-Qādir,<sup>110</sup> the hero of the Algerian resistance against France, who now lived at Damascus. With his one thousand Algerians he could save large numbers of native and European Christians.

There was an immediate reaction in Europe and especially in France. Napoleon III sent a force of six thousand men to Syria in accordance with the other European powers. Those troops were to be looked upon as a "European force" and were to receive reinforcements from other powers. But in fact, no other troops were sent and Britain felt increasingly uneasy about a prolonged occupation of Lebanon by French troops. Palmerston thought "a French occupation might lead to a French protectorate,"<sup>111</sup> in spite of French assurances of the exclusively humanitarian aims of the expedition. The Porte wished to show that a European intervention was not necessary and sent as a special commissioner Fu'ād Pasha, who at once took harsh measures at Damascus, executing large numbers of those who had taken part in the massacres, and enrolling others by force into the army. The French troops, after having given a helping hand to the Maronites in Lebanon, left the country in June 1861.

An international commission decided on the future status of Mount Lebanon, and after long discussions a new system, the "règlement organique" or "nizām al-mutaṣarrifiya" was agreed upon. This regulation consisted of the following major points: unity was restored to Mount Lebanon under a Christian governor; in this, the regulation corresponded to French and Maronite wishes. There would be a council

<sup>109</sup> Anonymous (ed. L. Bleibel), "Tabrīr an-naṣārā," *al-mašriq* 26 (1928) p. 631—p. 644; for Ottoman collabor. with the Druzes, see pp. 634, 635. J. Kurd 'Alī, *Ḥiṭāṭ aš-Šām*, Damascus 1344 (1925) vol. 3, p. 83 reports Lord Dufferin's opinion that the Druzes were encouraged by the Ottomans.

<sup>110</sup> About 'Abd al-Qādir see for example: W. Blunt, *Desert Hawk*, (London, 1947); there is a new edition in French of an older biography: C. H. Churchill, *La vie de Abd-el-Kader* with a useful introduction by M. Habart, (Algiers, 1971); the original English edition appeared in 1867.

<sup>111</sup> Scheltema, 'Conclusion' to *Lebanon* (see note 29) p. 166.



composed of members of all the sects. The task of this council was to assess taxes and to control the finances of Mount Lebanon. The regulation stipulated the "Égalité de tous devant la loi, abolition de tous les privilèges féodaux et notamment de ceux qui appartenaient aux mohâtagis (sic!)." <sup>112</sup> This met to a certain degree with French wishes, too. <sup>113</sup> The "confessionalist character" of the administration was strengthened. But in spite of all the ameliorations there remained some discontent. "The complete disregard in the Règlement of proportional representation was a major Maronite grievance." <sup>114</sup> France did not succeed in imposing a native Christian governor. The governor, who was to be a catholic Christian and directly responsible to the Porte, was nominated in accordance with the European powers. The first governor, Dāwūd Pasha, was a French protégé. The Règlement was officially communicated to the powers and signed by their representatives. So European intervention, which had existed for a long time de facto, was now given a binding legal form, and in a certain way officially recognized by the Porte.

### *Conclusion*

The period under consideration has been one of especially intense foreign influence on Syrian history. In those sixty years developments took place that should be of decisive importance for the future history of that region. The expedition of Bonaparte, of little importance in itself for Syria, produced a phenomenon that should become characteristic in the following decades: the flaring up of sectarian conflicts caused by foreign intervention.

The conquest of Syria by the Egyptian pasha Muḥammad 'Alī, belonging to a traditional pattern of relations between both countries, had in this special historical situation, the "Eastern Question," particular implications. Any change, any disturbance of the status quo in the Middle East was to have repercussions in Europe and would provoke

<sup>112</sup> G. Samné, *La Syrie*, (Paris, 1920), p. 234.

<sup>113</sup> The French Ambassador proposes in a letter to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs as one of the measures to be taken in 1860 the "affaiblissement de l'aristocratie Druse." Archives of the French Consulate General of Beirut (Dossier 63).

<sup>114</sup> J. P. Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon 1861—1914*, (London, 1977), p. 43.



direct European interference. The protection of non-Muslim minorities had a tradition in the history of Muslim-Christian relations, but got a special signification as Ottoman power declined. How important a means of exercising influence the protectorate over minorities was, becomes evident by the "artificial" creation of bonds between the Druzes and the British. In that way, of course, sectarian antagonism was intensified and even conflicts which were not of a primarily sectarian character took the form of religious strife. By foreign influence the position of the non-Muslim communities was changed and so the traditional relations of the religious groups, especially among non-Muslims and Muslims, underwent modification; a decline of the theocratic principle in the Islamic state became evident and was hastened by European pressure.

The impact of European economy had repercussions as well on the religious groups, as it tended to enrich Christians and Jews (who, of course, were ready to collaborate with European partners), and to damage Muslims. Syrian craftsmen experienced the dangerous competition of industrialized Europe and the producers of raw materials came into an increasing dependence on European markets.

If religious affinities were a mean cause and pretext for foreign intervention, it was clear that Lebanon was mainly concerned, being the region of retreat par excellence for minorities. So we can easily understand the fact that the administrative structures of that province and its relations with the central authority were under the supervision of the powers of Europe, and that Mount Lebanon was separated from the rest of Syria in an increasing measure, and that its ties to the Ottoman empire were loosened under European pressure. The concern of the European states for their allies or protégés was also responsible for the introduction of the system of "religious representation," a system that fixed the religion of functionaries and the composition of councils in public administration and of law-courts along sectarian lines. Those were the origins of "confessionalism" which has been looked upon, till our days, as the one system that could safeguard an equilibrium in the Lebanese state and could guarantee the very existence of this state.

In those days the bases were laid for a French-oriented Lebanon with Christians being the dominating group. Their trade relations assured them material superiority; the modern European education they received from missionary schools, gave them considerable advan-

tages over their Muslim compatriots who were separated from Europe by the wide gap of religious prejudice. No wonder that the Christians threw in their lot with Europe as the only means of keeping a position or of attaining one at least equal to that of the Muslims. No wonder that the Muslims resented strongly the new situation, and that their reaction was violent. The outlook of the majority of Muslims had not yet changed, was still traditional, i. e. medieval; the era of Arab secularism had not yet begun.