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Returning the Sense of Security

The International Commission on Syria

Here they were again. In Toulon. Sixty-two years after Napoleon Bonaparte's campaign to Egypt,¹ in August 1860 the French port town was once again busy for an expedition to the Levant. Its destination was well known this time: Syria. On the 6th day of the month, Bonaparte's nephew Napoleon III addressed the 6,000 soldiers before him with a familiarly heroic language. In 1798, Bonaparte had reminded his men of the colossal importance of their mission for the world's commerce and civilization. Now, Napoleon III declared that his soldiers were going to make 'the rights of justice and humanity triumph'.²

As in 1798, the French mission was framed as an 'aid' to the Ottoman sultan.³ We have seen in the previous pages that, in both cases, the ultimate objective of the expeditions was to secure French interests in the Levant. It was to imprint a French mark on the Eastern Question, and help realize the dream of Talleyrand and Bonaparte by establishing a zone of influence on the western coasts of Syria in addition to direct or informal control over the Mediterranean shores of Algiers, Tunis, Nice, and Egypt.⁴

We have also seen how times and the meaning of the Eastern Question, and for that matter, the cultures of security in Europe and the Levant, had since changed—how they interacted with each other, transformed one another, and then intercrossed. Unlike 1798, the mission of Napoleon III's men was not a single-handed intervention. The French army was acting on behalf of the other four major European Great Powers and with the consent of the sultan, however reluctant the latter had been.⁵ Unlike 1798, the French army in 1860 was accompanied by an international commission that consisted of the delegates of each major European Power, as well as the Ottoman Empire.

¹ See Ch. 1. ² Edwards, *La Syrie*, 196–7; also in Fawaz, *An Occasion for War*, 115.

³ 'Note sur les causes de l'évacuation de la Syrie par la France, 1860–61', AMAE MD Turquie 50/122/145.

⁴ For an in-depth study on French informal empire in the 19th c., see David Todd, *Velvet Empire: French Informal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

⁵ See Ch. 12.

The first international security institution established in what we call today ‘the Middle East’, the commission consisted of those very men on horseback with whose observations in Syria this book began: Rehfues, Béclard, Novikow, Weckbecker, and Dufferin, alongside the Ottoman foreign minister, Fuad Paşa. I will conclude the book with their experience, going into some depth as to how their mission took shape on the ground—their attempts to hold in check the operation of the French troops while labouring to find ways to prevent the recurrence of violence, monitoring the relief, retribution, and reparation processes, and proposing new administrative models in Mount Lebanon. I will explain here how their work epitomized the emergence of a transimperial culture of security in the Levant, whereby the Powers had now a greater say in the supply of security than ever.

Presided over by the Ottoman foreign minister, the international commission sought to address issues in Syria in 50 meetings that were held in Beirut, Damascus, and Istanbul until 1862. The commissioners received an influx of instructions from their capitals which repeatedly placed imperial objectives, suspicions, and their conflicting threat perceptions and interests on the agenda while addressing the security problems in Syria. The men on the ground, or the professional agents of security, were thus torn between local realities and the expectations of their superiors in the metropolises. The retribution, repayment of indemnities, and administrative reorganization processes were inevitably politicized, and bolted the fate of security in Syria onto the reconciliation of imperial interests. The commission became a contact zone of inter-imperial competition as much as cooperation, of hidden war as much as ‘universal peace’. It became an in-between imperial space, where security was uttered, discussed, and idiosyncratically turned into policy.

Reluctant Imperialists

With the arrival of the last European commissioner, Rehfues, from Istanbul to Beirut on 27 September 1860, Lebanon became a hub for European and Ottoman imperial agents. There was Fuad Paşa, his aides-de-camp, the Ottoman administrators, and approximately 20,000 soldiers at his disposal, General Beaufort and his 6,000 French men, the European commissioners and their delegation, and the European diplomatic corps already situated in Beirut. They shared intelligence, plans, and ideas with each other, all harbouring the single aim of establishing order and tranquillity in the country, while at the same time sustaining the interests of their respective empires.

Fuad Paşa’s mission pertained above all to maintaining the dignity of the sultan, mitigating the stigma of the negotiations for an armed intervention and also making the world see the ‘civilized face’ of the Ottoman world that was able to

'cope with' the 'savage other' within.⁶ This was why some of the most able men in Istanbul had been appointed as his aides-de-camp: Halim Paşa had been the president of the council of war, Armenian Abro Sahak Efendi, the director of French correspondence at the foreign ministry, and the Syrian Catholic Franco Nasri Efendi, had been serving as the director of the disputed claims bureau, prior to their appointment into Fuad Paşa's mission.⁷ Before they set out for Syria, the Ottoman foreign minister had told George Outrey, the French dragoman in Istanbul, that he was determined, even at the peril of his life, to 'wipe out the stain which rests upon the honour of humanity'.⁸

After his arrival in Beirut on 17 July 1860, moved by the sad spectacle of so much misery and tragedy, the paşa took immediate measures for the provision of relief as well as the repression of the 'disturbances'.⁹ A mixed (Muslim and non-Muslim) commission was founded under the presidency of Abro Efendi to distribute relief for the wounded and poor Maronites who lost their houses.¹⁰ Together with Franco Nasri, Abro was also appointed to the reparations commission that would determine the claims of the foreigners for compensations and interests for their losses during the disorders. The paşa then detained the suspects and set up two extraordinary tribunals in Beirut and Mukhtara for their swift trial, alongside a military tribunal. By early August, 400 in total had been arrested, while many of the allegedly 'worst guilty' Druze *muqatadjis* fled to Hawran or anti-Lebanon.¹¹

Among those arrested by order of the paşa and sentenced to death by the military tribunal were senior figures, including the governor of Damascus and the commander of the army, Ahmet Paşa, and several officers of Ottoman regiments.¹² The governor of Sayda Hurşid was detained and awaited a trial by the extraordinary tribunals that looked into civil affairs. The Ottoman delegation from Istanbul was dismayed by the conduct of their agents on the ground. By

⁶ Deringil, 'They Live', 318; Makdisi, 'Ottoman Orientalism', 781.

⁷ Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 106.

⁸ James L. Farley, *The Massacres in Syria* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1861), 96; Edwards, *La Syrie*, 165.

⁹ Abro (Beirut) to Cabouly, 23 July 1860, BOA HR.SYS.3 54/95.

¹⁰ Abro and Franco Cussa Efendi to Cabouly, 18 July 1860, BOA HR.SYS.3 54/81; Abro (Beirut) to Cabouly, 21 July 1860, BOA HR.SYS.3 54/93; Abro (Beirut) to Cabouly, 23 July 1860, ODD 114. To prevent abuses, Abro reported, they classified the people as (i) sick and wounded to be placed in a military hospital, over which the Ottoman commission would exercise surveillance, (ii) widows and orphans who would be received by the Lazarists of the city, and (iii) people who had left their villages for fear of massacres but who had not suffered losses in the Druze–Maronite conflict. These would be maintained temporarily until they were redirected to their homes. As refugees hailed from nearby towns and villages, Abro's relief commission provided bread, candles, and, when there was insufficient food, piastres to the poor—11,803 of them on 23 July 1860.

¹¹ Abro to Cabouly, 28 July 1860, BOA HR.SYS.3 54/106; Dufferin to Bulwer, 1 Oct. 1860, TNA FO 195/656/22.

¹² Yūsuf Al-Dibs, *Tārīkh Sūriyah*, vol. 18 (Beirut: al-Maṭba'ah al-'Umūmiyah, 1893–1905), 192; Al Bitar, *Ḥaliyyāt*, vol. 1, 267–8; vol. 3 (1963), 1326; Kurd 'Alī, *Khīṭāṭ III*, 92.

the failure to stop the Damascene massacres, Abro wrote, Ahmed Paşa had signed an invitation for foreign troops to go to Syria and therefore deserved to be hanged, while Hurşid Paşa, 'by the dark, inert anti-Christian conduct', deserved at least forced labour.¹³ He complained: 'How long will the general governors [continue to] undermine the Empire?'¹⁴

Fuad's punitive mission to Damascus saw the adoption of strict retribution measures that included mass executions (21 August saw the execution of 172 Muslim Damascenes¹⁵) as well as the evacuation of Muslim houses for the use of the Christians victimized by the massacres. Abro Efendi reported that all these punishments had a very positive effect on the local Christians: 'Tranquillity reigned' and the forces available were 'sufficient to deal with any eventuality [of violence]'—which was unlikely. In Aleppo, everything was 'peaceful'. In Jerusalem, imperial authorities were 'in control of the situation'. So, Abro wrote, 'I come back to the same question: what will the French division do [here]?'¹⁶

For his part, Fuad Paşa was equally 'disapproving of the hasty decision of the European Powers.' He had been 'quite confident of showing Europe that... without external interference, [the Porte] could energetically act against the rebels, exerting most rigorous and impartial justice'. As he told a Russian agent in Syria, foreign intervention appeared to him 'completely untimely'.¹⁷

After French troops arrived in Beirut in mid-August, he therefore laboured to forestall General Beaufort's mission, limiting it to the reconstruction of French silk factories in Deir al-Qamar and the construction of roads (Beirut–Damascus) as well as the supply of aid to those in need.¹⁸ Only a small contingent out of the 6,000 French troops were allowed to go into the hinterland and Damascus. All these measures deeply frustrated the French general, who had arrived in the Levant with the expectation of defending 'all the noble and great causes... in the name of civilised Europe'.¹⁹

The meagre communication between Fuad and Beaufort, usually saturated with misunderstandings, added fuel to Beaufort's frustration. For example, at his arrival in Lebanon, the French general was very eager to immediately undertake a joint Franco-Ottoman campaign against the Druze *muqatadjis* in order to expel them 'from mixed districts and to draw a new line of demarcation between the two races, [the Maronites and the Druze]', and thus bring the Christian refugees on the coast back to their homes. When his proposals met with Fuad's reluctance and caution, he became more annoyed.²⁰ He reported back to Paris his suspicions that

¹³ Rehfués to Schleinitz, 18 Oct. 1860, GStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, 125; Abro (Beirut) to Cabouly, 23 July 1860, BOA HR.SYS.3 54/95; Bitar, *Haliyyât*, vol. 1, 168.

¹⁴ Abro to Cabouly, 28 July 1860, BOA HR.SYS.3 54/106.

¹⁵ Salibi, 'Upheaval', 200.

¹⁶ Abro to Cabouly, 6 Aug. 1860, BOA HR.SYS.3 54/110.

¹⁷ 'Kopiya s doneseniya G.k.a. Makeeva', 21 July 1860, AVPRI f. 133, Kantselyariya, o. 459, e. 42, ll. 591–4.

¹⁸ Beaufort to Randon, 23 Sept. 1860, AMV, V.G4/5/8.

¹⁹ Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 120.

²⁰ 'Rapport de Novikow', no. 4, 8/20 Sept. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 37, l. 39.

Fuad was knowingly protecting the Druze. But Fuad's strategy was to confine the French. The paşa wrote to Istanbul the same day that, if they attacked the Druzes and started waging war on them all at once, it would be impossible to hold the French even if they were otherwise occupied. But if he could find the best way to seize 'the guilty chiefs of the Druze by address, and to make them accept the compensation and the domicile of the Christians, it would be possible to bring about a good result in this way'.²¹

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Fuad Paşa's relation with the European commissioners was equally problematic in the beginning. It took a long time for them to establish effective communication. The paşa was at first disinclined to cooperate with the commissioners. 'Apart from personal vanity', Fuad wrote, he found it 'very surprising' that the Ottoman foreign minister was made 'the member of a commission having the same quality as [European] secretaries and consuls'. He not only detested the lack of diplomatic courtesy and considered it an insult, but also lamented that since he was at the centre of all civil and military matters in Syria, it would be impossible for him to add a new duty to his existing ones and make time to preside over the commissioners.²²

It is true that all European plenipotentiaries in the commission were second-tier bureaucrats. The first one named to the commission, the British plenipotentiary Dufferin, had previously served as attaché to Lord John Russell's mission to Vienna to end the Crimean War; he proved to be an excellent orator and a promising young diplomat, as justified by his appointment to the delicate mission to Syria. Despite his previous short visits to Istanbul, Egypt, Syria, and other parts of the empire, his experience of the Levant was limited to hunting along the Nile.²³

Dufferin's appointment was followed on 11 August by that of the Russian commissioner, Novikow.²⁴ Having received his education in Slavic dialects at Moscow University, the Russian plenipotentiary had mainly worked on Balkan affairs.²⁵ He had also served as a trainee and clerk in the Asian Department of the Russian ministry of foreign affairs and, at his appointment, was secretary at the Istanbul embassy.²⁶

²¹ 'Copie d'un rapport de S.E. Fuad Pacha en date du 28 Safer 1277', BOA HR.SFR.3 52/3, 14 Sept. 1860.

²² Ibid.

²³ Musurus to Safvet, 2 Aug. 1860, ODD 132; Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 195; Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1905), 93; Andrew Gailey, *The Lost Imperialist: Lord Dufferin, Memory and Mythmaking in an Age of Celebrity* (London: John Murray, 2016).

²⁴ Montebello to Thouvenel, 11 Aug. 1860, AMAE CP Russie 222/9; Lavalette to Thouvenel, 17 Aug. 1860, AMAE CP Turquie 346/131.

²⁵ Y. S. Kartsov, *Za Kulisami Diplomatii* (Petrograd: Tipografiya «T-va gaz. Svet», 1915), 12–13.

²⁶ E. P. Novikow to M. P. Pogodin, 22 Dec. 1871, RGB f. 231/II, K. 22, e. 44, ll. 1-ob; *Al'manax sovremennyx russkix gosudarstvennyx deyatelej* (St Petersburg: Tip. Isidora Gol'dberga, 1897), 49;

Before he was dispatched to Syria on 16 August, the French commissioner Leon Béclard's only involvement in the Levant consisted of two years as attaché at the French consulate in İzmir (Smyrna) (1844–6) and five months as consul general in Alexandria (1860).²⁷ Similarly, the Prussian commissioner, Guido von Rehfues, had had experience in the Levant only since March 1859, when he was appointed as legation secretary in Istanbul.²⁸ Of all the commissioners, it was only Pierre Weckbecker, who had been Austrian consul general in Beirut since 1856, that had any real familiarity with and understanding of the complexities of Lebanese politics.²⁹

The principal idea behind the establishment of an international security institution in Syria was to develop an 'objective' strategy to address the key issues that had dragged the country into violence and war. With the exception of Weckbecker, the European commissioners were all appointed from outside Lebanon for this very reason: to make their institution 'as independent of ideas, preconceptions and local prejudices as possible', because European consuls residing in the field tended to 'wind up more or less being influenced' by their local experience.³⁰

However, aside from Weckbecker, all four commissioners held their own presumptions and prejudices before their arrival. Just like General Beaufort, looking at Lebanon with a hubristic, imperial gaze, they rarely, if ever, got off their high horse, and harboured a firm belief in the grandiose importance of their missions and responsibilities. They all considered the Lebanese to be semi- or uncivilized barbarians, and insistently included this among the causes of the violence. Again, bar Weckbecker, they all unceasingly suspected that an Ottoman ploy was the main cause of the civil war. In the succeeding months these prejudices and assumptions informed the policies and behaviours of the commissioners while they followed their identical instructions to: (i) investigate the origins and cause of the 'outbreak and massacres', (ii) see that the guilty were punished, (iii) inquire into and advise on 'the best means of preventing a renewal

K. A. Dzikov, *Vostochnyj vopros v istoriosofskoj koncepcii K.N. Leont'eva* (St Petersburg: Aleteiya, 2006), 9, 36.

²⁷ *Annuaire diplomatique de l'empire français pour l'année 1865* (Paris: Veuve Berger-Levrault, 1865), 192–3; Léon Béclard, 'Papiers de personnel de MAE', AMAE 233/PAAP4.

²⁸ Johann Ludwig Guido von Rehfues to Alexander Gustav Adolph Freiherr von Schleinitz, 26 Aug. 1859, and Robert Heinrich Ludwig Graf von der Goltz to Alexander Gustav Adolph Freiherr von Schleinitz, 22 Sept. 1860, AA PA Nr. 11,881; Dietmar Grypa, *Der diplomatische Dienst des Königreichs Preußen (1815–1866). Institutioneller Aufbau und soziale Zusammensetzung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2008), 244f., 292 n. 277, 413, 422, 429, 436, 468, 477, 479, 594; Thouvenel to Béclard, 31 Aug. 1860, BOA HR.SYS.3 54/215.

²⁹ Rudolf Agstner and Elmar Samsinger (eds), *Österreich in Istanbul: K. (u.) K. Präsenz im Osmanischen Reich* (Vienna: LIT, 2010), 50; Robert-Tarek Fischer, *Österreich im Nahen Osten. Die Großmachtspolitik der Habsburgermonarchie im Arabischen Orient 1633–1918* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2006), 162–4.

³⁰ Lobanov to Gorchakov, 16/28 Aug. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 601–3.

of the late bloody scenes, and of ameliorating the government of Syria', and (iv) monitor the indemnification and reparations processes.³¹

The commissioners' lack of familiarity with local realities and the time-consuming obligation to discover those realities was at odds with the demand for the swift completion of their tasks. They had to be quick not only to ensure security in the mountain but also to prevent the prolongation of the French expedition which, as we have seen, had been limited to six months by the conventions of August and September 1860. The risk of its evolution into an occupation and even annexation (as had happened in Nice and Savoy early in the year) was ever-present, despite the assurances of Emperor Napoleon III and the conventions, and because of the immense distrust that both European and Ottoman statesmen harboured toward him.

Also paradoxical was the expectation that the commissioners were to act as a single, European, Christian unit. They were expected to be 'closely united with one another . . . to deliberate on the means of ensuring the well-being of Christians on solid foundations . . . for the dignity of the Commission as well as for the success of its work' under the gaze of the Ottoman authorities and for the prestige of 'identical and collective action by Europe . . . in the eyes of the people of Syria'.³² They should carefully avoid 'any personal rivalry, any struggle for dominance', and their action should be 'guided solely by the general interest, which so rightly considers the fate of all Christians in the Ottoman Empire'.³³ This meant protracted negotiations among the commissioners on almost every subject in order to reach a common position.

Another difficulty here was the fact that the commissioners appeared reluctant to make any concessions detracting from their immediate national interests. As candidly expressed by the Russian commissioner Novikow, none of them 'wanted to believe in [the] final character' of the expectations from them outlined in the collective brief.³⁴ In fact, aside from the collective brief, each of the commissioners received separate orders from their seniors. Dufferin's was one of preservation of the status quo. Russell wrote to him that the chief object of the Commission would be

to obtain security for the future peace of Syria. But internal peace cannot be obtained without a speedy, pure and impartial administration of justice . . . [Y]ou

³¹ Russell to Cowley, 9 Aug. 1860, TNA PRO 30/22/104; Joseph Hajjar, *L'Europe et les destinées du Proche-Orient II. Napoléon et ses visées orientales 1848–1870*, vol. 3 (Damascus: Dar Tlass, 1988), 1303.

³² Lobanov to Gorchakov, 16/28 Aug. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 601–3.

³³ 'Copie d'une instruction spéciale au Commissaire Impérial en Syrie', 25 Aug. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 666–71.

³⁴ 'Kopiya raporta Komissara Rossijskoj imperii v Sirii, gosudarstvennogo sovetnika Novikova', 11/23 Sept. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 736–9.

will always bear in mind that no territorial acquisition, no exclusive influence, no separate commercial advantage is sought by Her Majesty's Government, nor should be acquired by any of the Great Powers,

alluding particularly to France.³⁵ Thouvenel warned Bécларd to pay extra attention to the situation of the French nationals and protégés in the payment of reparations, while Novikow was instructed to support whichever plan for the potential reorganization of Mount Lebanon would give Orthodox Christians a separate political standing, equal in importance to that of the Maronites and the Druze.³⁶ And Rehfués was ordered to

act under the premises that the Sublime Porte itself bears no guilt in the events in the Lebanon (although the Ottoman local agents might)... [His] main goal... should be justice for the Christian victims of the massacres and addressing the systematic grievances the Christians have in their dealings with the local Ottoman authorities.³⁷

With these diverse instructions in their pockets, during the numerous formal and informal meetings they held in the following two years, despite usually remaining 'calm in appearance', the commissioners felt the immense gravity of their national and religious responsibilities.³⁸ Fluid and separate alliances were formed and dissolved between them on each separate issue. They did succeed in many cases in forming a common front against Fuad Paşa, who began to attend the meetings, irregularly, only from late October. But a struggle for influence characterized the commissioners' work all along. The more they discovered about the histories, customs, habits, ideals, and emotions of the inhabitants and the Ottoman authorities, the more they began to feel the weight of the glaring discrepancies between local realities and global imperial anxieties. How they strove to sustain the momentum of the meetings, I will attempt to demonstrate in thematic rather than purely chronological order, explaining the hurdles that the commissioners repeatedly confronted in different domains.

³⁵ Lord John Russell to Lord Dufferin, 30 July 1860, TNA FO 195/659/42.

³⁶ Thouvenel to Bécларd, 16 and 31 Aug. 1860, AMAE MD 138, f. 157 and 213; Lobanov to Gorchakov, 16/28 Aug. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 601–3. 'Copie d'une instruction spéciale au Commissaire Impérial en Syrie', 25 Aug. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 666–71.

³⁷ Schleinitz to Rehfués, 30 Aug. 1860, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7569, f. 11–14.

³⁸ Dufferin was replaced by Colonel A. J. Fraser in July 1861; and Rehfués by the Prussian consul in Beirut, Heinrich Ludwig Theodor Weber, in Jan. 1862. Foreign Office to Colonel Fraser, 10 July 1861, TNA FO 78/1706; Theodor Weber to Albrecht Graf von Bernstorff, 30 Jan. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7572, f. 130; Abro to Cabouly, 30 Apr. 1861, ODD 336.

Securing Hearts: Relief and Reparations

In the summer of 1860, as the violence in Mount Lebanon and Damascus was being subdued, Syria was replete with grim scenes. Thousands were sick. Children were dying with alarming rapidity in the hot climate. Epidemics were spreading in overcrowded hospitals amongst 'the half-fed, half-clothed and half-sheltered multitudes'.³⁹ The immediate provision of relief proved to be the most pressing of all the issues that the commissioners faced on their arrival in the country.

In fact, their work only paralleled the relief efforts that had already begun in an orderly and systematic manner before the European commission was formed. In addition to the Ottoman committees set up by that Abro and Franco in July and August 1860, various religious missions that had been operating in Syria since the 1820s had been the first to take up the task of offering relief. The Lazarists and their female counterpart, *Filles de la Charité*, the Jesuits and their protégés, *Sœurs de Saint-Josep de l'Apparition*, the Church of Scotland, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) had all established committees for the distribution of alms, with the support of their respective consulates.⁴⁰ The Protestant missions later merged under the Anglo-American Relief Committee (AARF). The Austrian, Greek, and Russian consulates instituted their own committees for the same purpose. And French troops under General Beaufort provided both funds and manpower for the reconstruction of damaged roads and buildings.

The relief committees collected donations from the United States and Europe and from Muslim notables in the Ottoman Empire.⁴¹ They distributed bread daily, provided houses and tents for shelter, operated hospitals for the sick, and opened soup kitchens for nursing mothers. They also published several appeals for aid, describing the gloomy situation in the Levant. '[U]nless better food, clothing, and medical care are provided,' the AARF announced in one of its pleas, 'the victims of disease will ere long outnumber those of the sword.'⁴² Another appeal in October 1860 read:

The poor sick are sleeping by the thousand on the earth or the stone floors, with nothing to cover them, and are dying by hundreds from dysentery. Do not relax

³⁹ 'Anglo-American Relief Committee Statement ordered to be printed for circulation in England and America', signed by Niven Moore, 23 Aug. 1860, ABCFM v. 6. Mission to Syria, 1860–1871, v. 1. [291], 102.

⁴⁰ Hauser, *German*, 61–2; Sami Kuri, *Une histoire du Liban à travers les archives des jésuites, 1846–1862* (Beirut: Dar el-Marcheq, 1986), 286; BOA HR.SFR.3 50/22/3.

⁴¹ 'Operations of the Anglo-American Relief Committee and its Auxiliaries', 4 Nov. 1860, GStA I. HA Rep 81, XI Nr. 66, f. 169. On the limits of the altruism of the missions, see Hauser, *German*, 58.

⁴² 'Anglo-American Relief Committee Statement ordered to be printed for circulation in England and America', signed by Niven Moore, 23 Aug. 1860, ABCFM v. 6. Mission to Syria, 1860–1871, v. 1. [291], 102.

your efforts to help these miserable people. They cannot get their bread from burnt stones and plundered fields and orchards.⁴³

Circulars travelled fast among the various establishments calling for the expansion of 'the loins' of their charities, for their 'abundant alms' to 'cross [...] the seas' and bring 'a precious alleviation to miseries whose heart-breaking tales have deeply moved anyone who has retained some feelings of humanity and religion'.⁴⁴

In their first gatherings in October 1860, held in the absence of Fuad Paşa, the European commissioners considered how to make the workings of these various committees most effective and unanimously agreed on the third meeting to coordinate them according to need, regardless of the specific confession for which they were established.⁴⁵ A central aid committee was then formed to coordinate international efforts. However, the commission's influence remained thin.

This was because, even though several missions cooperated with each other transferring funds in between them time and again, as the German historian Julia Hauser tells us, 'Internal divisions [of the commission] were mirrored in the field of charity'.⁴⁶ The 'vigorous competition between missions' that had existed for decades continued even after the civil war. Violence in Syria was regarded by both Protestant (American, British and Prussian) and Catholic (predominantly French and Austria) missions as a 'major chance for consolidating their influence, as a prime opportunity for mission work', whereby '[c]hildren were [considered to be] a particularly promising target group, given their alleged malleability'.⁴⁷ They wished to build better schools in better buildings (mansions) for the orphans. They even toyed with the idea of mass exportation of children to Europe to secure them for their missions.⁴⁸ But the competition amongst them made the centralization of relief impossible.

Existing forms of cooperative action among the different denominations were also undercut in due course. For example, the AARF, which, alongside the *Sœurs de Saint-Josep*, was one of the most active charities, received the support of Prussia in the beginning and thus coalesced into a tripartite Protestant alliance.⁴⁹ The Prussian consul in Beirut, Weber, described it as 'one of the rare cases of a multinational-cooperation'.⁵⁰ A few months later, however, nationalist sentiments came into play: the Prussian agents worked to increase their own influence on the

⁴³ 'The Syrian Massacres: A Second Appeal for the Syrian Sufferers', New York, 22 Oct. 1860, ABCFM v. 6. Mission to Syria, 1860–1871, v. 1. [291], 106.

⁴⁴ 'Monseigneur L'Évêque de Coutances et d'Avranches (Niederbronn) aux clergé et fidèles de notre diocèse', 9 Aug. 1860, BNFM E-2400, no. 76.

⁴⁵ Weckbecker to Rechberg, 21 Oct. 1860, AT-OeStA/HHStA PA XXXVIII 134–5, 9.

⁴⁶ Hauser, *German*, 61. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 76. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 20, 58.

⁴⁹ 'Anglo-American Relief Committee Statement ordered to be printed for circulation in England and America', signed by Niven Moore, 23 Aug. 1860, ABCFM v. 6. Mission to Syria, 1860–1871, v. 1. [291], 102; 'Operations of the Anglo-American Relief Committee and its Auxiliaries', 4 Nov. 1860, GStA I. HA Rep 81, XI Nr. 66, f. 169.

⁵⁰ Weber to Schleinitz, 13 Jan. 1861, GStA I. HA Rep 81, XI Nr. 66, f. 54–5.

ground by means of charity, and decided to establish a separate ‘German committee’ in January 1861.⁵¹

Who the net beneficiaries of these policies were, and if, and to what extent, the donors sought to influence political and administrative decision-making processes on the spot, is difficult to establish. The absence of primary sources and therefore of studies which reconstruct the histories of religious missions from the perspective of the local Levantines constrains our insight into this question, and certainly necessitates further research. Even then, regardless of competition among missions, in an emergency that was so unexpected, pressing, and overwhelming for the men and women on the spot, the quest for ‘humanitarian relief’ in 1860 proved to be a partial success—all the more so because meeting the needs of thousands required a large and steady flow of funds. Proactive fund-raising campaigns in New York, London, Paris, and other major metropolises almost all over the world, in collaboration with major philanthropist families such as the Rothschilds and the Montefiores, helped to allay the disquiet and to meet needs.⁵²

For the almost bankrupt Sublime Porte, which was also liable to pay indemnities and reparations to the Lebanese and foreign victims of the war for justice through compensation, the only way to go forward and to address local expectations was to obtain loans from the very same metropolises. That would turn out to be an entirely different story.

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The fact was that, financially speaking, in early 1860, before the civil war in Syria and the events in Montenegro erupted, the Ottoman treasury had been under immense strain. A few months after his arrival in Syria, the funds at Fuad’s disposal had been exhausted by heavy spending on the relief of the victims. Since the Porte could not supply any more funds, the paşa and the commissioners found themselves confronted with the issue of raising money for restoring the infrastructure and for the relief of the displaced Christian refugees in November 1860.

In the eighth meeting of the commission in Beirut, after giving an account of the needs of the Syrians and the means of providing for them, Fuad explained that the only way to obtain the money the Porte needed to add onto its budget, which amounted nearly to 100 million piastres (£775,000) (while the estimated total amount needed for reparations was 250 million piastres), would be to secure a new loan with the assistance of the Powers.⁵³ But his proposal was declared inadmissible by the European commissioners.

⁵¹ Wolz to M. J. Bosgiovich, 31 Dec. 1860, BOA HR.MKT 363/47. See also Hauser, *German*, 63.

⁵² Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 290–91; ‘The Syrian Relief Fund’, *New York Times*, 23 Aug. 1860, 4; ‘British Syrian Relief Fund’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 Dec. 1860, 5.

⁵³ Rehfues to Schleinitz, 3 Nov. 1860, GSStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, f. 218–20; Lavalette to Thouvenel, 4 Dec. 1860 AMAE CP 133/347/313.

The Prussian commissioner, Rehfuës, suggested that the sum necessary for the restoration of the Christians could be taken from the Muslims of Damascus and Sayda as well as from the Druze, by way of an extraordinary tax. Dufferin intervened on behalf of the Druze, and opposed any such extra taxation.⁵⁴ In order to induce his government to take the same position, he 'launched against the Maronites the most bitter diatribes', sending to Istanbul exaggerated numbers of the losses incurred by the Christians during the war.⁵⁵ Following incessant pressure by the commissioners, and the intervention of Dufferin, Fuad Paşa agreed to demand only some 12.5 million piastres from the Damascene Muslims.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the lands sequestered from the Druze *muqatadjis* were leased to the Christian peasants on a two-year contract.

What interests us here the most is not how much was paid to whom, but who paid for security in the end, and how. As we have seen, the economic suffering that the Syrian Muslims had been subjected to since the incorporation of the Levant into the global capitalist economy were one of many causes of violence that had erupted in Mount Lebanon and Damascus as well as in other parts of Syria and the Ottoman Empire in the 1850s and 1860s. Yet, rightly or wrongly, the fact that the same people were now taxed for the rehabilitation of their belligerents constituted another paradox, provoked bitterness, and once more heightened insecurities. Uncontrollable waves of refugees went on to emigrate to the coasts (*sahil*) from Damascus.⁵⁷ Thousands looked for opportunities to travel even further—to Egypt, Europe, and the Americas.⁵⁸

In the meantime, mixed (Muslim and Christian) inspection committees were established and tasked with listing the victims (namely, the Christian subjects, foreign residents in Syria, and religious institutions and establishments) and assessing the economic damage in order to decide upon collective and individual reparations and property compensation. But their work became more and more complex because of the absence of funds at the disposal of Fuad Paşa, as well as the inconsistent (and therefore often bloated and implausible) demands of the Syrians and foreign residents for reparations, as well as interference by the European commissioners and consuls in the name of justice via compensation.⁵⁹ Only in May 1862, at the last, fiftieth gathering, could the commissioners reach an

⁵⁴ 'Résumé des rapports de M. Nowikow', No. 25, 23 Oct./4 Nov. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, d. 37, ll. 245–6.

⁵⁵ Rizk, *Mont-Liban*, 332.

⁵⁶ 'Résumé des rapports de M. Nowikow', No. 25, 23 Oct./4 Nov. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, d. 37, ll. 245–6; 'Otryvki iz raporta komissara Rossii v Sirii', 3/15 April 1861, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 37, l. 431.

⁵⁷ 'Otryvki iz raporta komissara Rossii v Sirii', 3/15 Apr. 1861, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 37, l. 431.

⁵⁸ Rizk, *Mont-Liban*, 336.

⁵⁹ Farah, *Politics*, 635.

agreement.⁶⁰ But what was decided upon was only a limited and symbolic solution.⁶¹

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It might be fitting to pause here in our discussion of the international commission, and consider the broader financial and economic situation in the Levant at the time. This will enable us to understand why the reparation payments made in the end were only symbolic. It will also allow us to see that the 1860 civil war coincided with a 'financial turn' in the Eastern Question, and not accidentally.

There were several reasons for the poor condition of Ottoman finances at the time. These included the mounting trade deficits accrued since the commercial agreements of the late 1830s, the extraordinary and high volume of expenditures incurred by the Crimean War, the floating internal and external debts (the Porte had contracted the first foreign loans in its history during and after the Crimean War in 1854, 1855, and 1858), the global financial crisis that broke out in Western markets in 1857 (which prevented the repayment of tranches of previous loans), the conspicuously extravagant and unprofitable spending of the palace, and, perhaps most importantly, the excessive issue of Ottoman *kaimes* (paper money), which could not be retrieved for long. All these factors had resulted in an economy unable to keep imperial finances afloat, not to mention the payment of reparations for victims of the civil war in Syria.⁶² In 1860, the total debt of the Ottoman Empire was estimated at 774 million francs (Fr. 310 million external and Fr. 237 million domestic debt, for the most part to the Galata bankers), which amounted to approximately £30.5 million and 390 million Ottoman piasters.⁶³

In mid-July 1860, days after Fuad Paşa's departure for Syria, Ottoman correspondence revealed that 'the recent misfortunes of Syria are threatening new and considerable expenses to [the Porte]... We absolutely need a loan of £5–6 million.' Even though Ottoman ministers were ready to 'offer the most warranted

⁶⁰ The distribution to the Ottoman subjects (individuals) amounted to a sum of 25.5 million piastres (23.93 million was to be paid to the Christians, 1 million to the Druze, 500,000 to the Metuwalis, and 70,000 to the Muslims), while 1,088,009 piastres was to be paid to the religious establishments (436,000 to the Franciscans, 49,000 to the Capucins, 202,000 to the Jesuits, and 400,000 to the Lazarists) and 5.2 million piastres to foreign residents in Syria. BOA HR.SYS 914/5/63–67.

⁶¹ Rizk, *Mont-Liban*, 338.

⁶² A financial commission had been established during the Crimean War to help the Porte repay the loans it had contracted in 1855–6 by changing the tax base and tax collection methods. In June 1860, it was named as *Conseil Supérieur des Trésors*. The council consisted of French, British, and Austrian delegates MM. Falconnet and Lackenbach and the marquis de Ploeuic, alongside Mehmed Rüşdü Paşa, Fuad Paşa, and Hasib Paşa. Sublime Porte, MAE Bureau de Presse, 17 Aug. 1859, BOA HR.SFR.4 30/40/4; Falconnet to Bulwer, 24 Jan. 1860, NRO Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/221/1–40, 567X8; Lobanov to Gorchakov, 19/31 July 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 535–8; A. Du Velay, *Essai sur l'histoire financière de la Turquie depuis le règne du sultan Mahmoud II jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Arthur Rousseau, 1903), 156–7.

⁶³ Velay, *Essai*, 154; André Autheman, *La Banque impériale ottomane* (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France, 1996), 18.

guarantees' to secure the loan, talks with the Rothschild, Bischofsheim, and Goldsmith financial houses would yield no favourable results. The grim situation of the treasury and the policies of the Porte had led to a severe loss of credit-worthiness. Now it was able to access loan offers from European syndicates only on considerably harsher terms compared to the previous loans contracted in 1855–6.⁶⁴

In the slipstream of monetary distress, the Eastern Question took a 'financial turn'. It was the French and British governments that had acted as guarantors of the 1854 and 1855 loans that the Porte now appeared unable to pay back. A large portion of the Ottoman bills of exchange had been bought by French and British investors. The financial survival of the Porte was now both a European and Ottoman concern; French and British statesmen therefore considered it in their 'best interests to help [the Ottoman Empire] extend her sad existence'.⁶⁵

Yet the Eastern Question, as I have argued time and again in this book, was almost never a one-way dilemma. In a similar vein, Ottoman ministers recognized their dependence on the British and French governments, which was (as already noted) one of the reasons for their consent to the Great Power intervention in Syria. In early August, the interim grand vizier, Âli Paşa, admitted that the realization of a new loan relied 'absolutely on the benevolent offices of Britain and France'.⁶⁶

In fact, in late 1860 a way out of this dilemma was found. After failing to contract loans with several European syndicates, the sultan's government had managed to secure a deal with Jules Mirès, the French financier and director-general of the combined treasury of the French railway companies, in November.⁶⁷ However, this deal dragged the Ottoman finances into an even graver crisis by the end of 1861.⁶⁸

The first draw-down of the loan, which amounted in total to £16 million with a record low issue rate (53.75 per cent) and high interest (14 per cent), was to be made on 1 June 1861.⁶⁹ But on 18 February, Mirès was arrested in Paris on charges of *escroquerie* (swindling). This dealt a severe blow to the Porte.⁷⁰ It was not only because with this deal its treasury would have been significantly relieved of internal floating debts. The loan would also have alleviated the markets and reduced the circulation of bills of exchange. The failure of the deal sparked a crisis in Istanbul as well as in Britain and France, whose nationals were holders of

⁶⁴ Musurus to [Sublime Porte], 15 Aug. 1860, BOA HR.SFR.3 53/10/3, Musurus [?] to M. Rodocanachi, 16 Aug. 1860 BOA HR.SFR.3 53/10/5; Eldem, 'Stability', 435–6.

⁶⁵ Lavalette to Thouvenel, 20 June 1860, AMAE CP 133/345/86.

⁶⁶ Aali Pasha to Bulwer, 28 Aug. 1860, BOA HR.SFR.3 53/10/6.

⁶⁷ Aali to Musurus, 7 Nov. 1860, BOA HR.SFR.3 55/5.

⁶⁸ Edhem Eldem, 'Ottoman Financial Integration with Europe: Foreign Loans, the Ottoman Bank and the Ottoman Public Debt', *European Review* 13(3) (2005): 431–45, 436.

⁶⁹ Velay, *Essai*, 158–9.

⁷⁰ 'Matters at Paris', *New York Times*, 13 Mar. 1861, 2.

most of the existing Ottoman bills of exchange.⁷¹ While several major commercial houses dealing with the Levant (e.g. Ede, Rodochanachi, Hava, and Baltazzi) filed for bankruptcy, real panic seized the Galata bankers in Istanbul, and the value of the Ottoman currency dropped by two-thirds. One pound British sterling was quoted to 129 Ottoman piastres in January 1861. By May, this exceeded 200 piastres.⁷²

Due to its lack of creditworthiness, it was now almost completely impossible for the Porte to seek any immediate relief in the markets of Paris and London with a new loan. In this grim context, the grand vizier, Âli Paşa, sent a desperate memorandum to the British and French authorities, stressing that the further fall of the commercial houses of the Levant ‘would cause such disruption and increase the distress of the Ottoman Treasury... that the Eastern Question [*la question d’Orient*], which we hope to reduce, could, as a fatal consequence of this catastrophe, be posed immediately’. The Porte asked for the ‘moral support’ of Paris and London in drafting financial reforms, achieving its borrowing, and liquidating the existing circulation, which was ‘the sole cause of the crisis which threatens the greatest misfortunes of the merchants of the Levant, the French and British interests adhering to it, and what is more serious still, perhaps the future of the political order’.⁷³

Intending to obtain at least a portion of the Mirès loan deal and acquire ‘the moral support’ of Europe in their quest for financial survival, Ottoman ministers also made an unprecedented concession in the customs tariff negotiations with the European empires, which (as already noted) had been periodically held since the 1800s and which had restarted in 1857. They agreed on the immediate reduction of average export duties by 4 per cent (from 12 to 8 per cent) and then to their further reduction at the rate of 1 per cent per year for the next eight years, after which only a nominal duty would be levied.⁷⁴

This was a vital milestone. Even though the liberalization and opening up of the Ottoman Empire to ‘free trade’ is usually associated with the 1838–41 commercial agreements signed with the European Powers, what had in fact happened at the time was only a reregulation of tariffs and the abolition of monopolies. Ottoman economic liberalization was made nearly complete after the Crimean War, with the land reform of 1858 (that allowed international banks control the property) and finally with the agreements of 1861. The first of these, the Kanlıca Commercial Treaty, was signed with France on 29 April 1861, which was followed by similar agreements with all major European Powers in the following months.⁷⁵

⁷¹ The main inspiration of Émile Zola’s best-selling book *L’Argent* originates from this financial crisis in 1861.

⁷² Velay, *Essai*, 164–5. ⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Mr Foster and Lord Hobart, *Report on the Financial Condition of Turkey* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1862), 14.

⁷⁵ Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire*, 113.

With these concessions, the Porte could obtain only a small payment from the Mirès deal (Fr. 32 million francs; approximately £1.2 million) in return. But it did little more than pay lip service to the complaints of the rising middle classes all over the empire, which included the merchants and bankers operating in Lebanon.⁷⁶

In Lebanon too, especially after the bankruptcies of the commercial houses of Marseille and Istanbul in the spring of 1861, commercial transactions were almost entirely interrupted. European and local traders withdrew all their capital from the banks in Beirut, and immense pressure was put on the international commissioners for the swift resolution of the ongoing retributive proceedings and administrative reform talks, which, it was believed, would enable economic recovery.⁷⁷ As we will see, during the following months the influence of traders and bankers on the result of these proceedings would be profound.

As for the indemnities and reparation payments to the Christians of Lebanon and Damascus, they began only after 1863, and only when a new loan was contracted between the Porte and its newly established state bank, the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which was in fact an Anglo-French enterprise.⁷⁸ The indemnities were compensated also by the issue of long-term interest-bearing bonds to the Lebanese.⁷⁹ In need of ready money, some of the poorer locals immediately sold the bonds for a very small price. Moreover, due to the loss of the value of the piastre, most of the claimants received much less than the actual cost of the damage.

Symbolic as the reparation payments truly may have been, they still represented the enforcing power of an inter-imperial condominium in the Levant. In reality, it was with the aid of the French syndicates' lucrative loan deals to the inhabitants in 1861–2 that the local (silk) economy was rescued. Moreover, out of the £250,000 (42.5 million Ottoman piastres) supplied by foreign donors, a considerable amount was spent on the revitalization of the silk industry.⁸⁰ Thanks to the work of the French troops in the mixed districts that helped rebuild many factories, and the increase in the price of silk in international markets after the shortage of cotton as a result of the civil war in North America, merchants and peasants were able to procure immense profits from silk production as of the early

⁷⁶ Autheman, *Banque impériale*, 20. Because the amount produced after the Mirès deal was very small, neither the litigation of the floating debt nor the withdrawal of the kaimes from circulation became possible. Under the weight of indemnities and relief in Lebanon and the expenses of the campaigns in the Balkans and the Levant, more paper money was issued, which increased the kaime's depreciation and disrupted transactions, since the traders refused to accept kaimes in payment. By the time the amount of the indemnity payments for the Lebanese was agreed upon in May 1862, the Ottoman currency had devalued immensely.

⁷⁷ Bentivoglio to Thouvenel, 5 May 1861, AMAE Papiers Thouvenel, 233PAAP/5/16.

⁷⁸ Edhem Eldem, *A History of the Ottoman Bank* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Historical Research Centre, 1999).

⁷⁹ Spagnolo, *France*, 82.

⁸⁰ Bentivoglio to Thouvenel, 6 July 1861, AMAE 42CCC/7/272.

1860s.⁸¹ Equally importantly, the economic recovery of Lebanon was facilitated by the elimination of the political privileges of the *muqatadjis* by means of retributive justice and administrative reform.

The Scapegoats? Retributive Justice and *Règlement Organique*

The *muqatadjis* of Lebanon had long been considered, by the coalition of a rising middle class, merchants, bankers, and their European associates as well as the Christian (Maronite, Greek Orthodox, and Greek Catholic) clergy, as barriers to commercial enterprise and the acquisition of land. In 1861, when the *muqatadjis* were put on trial, along with hundreds of Druze peasants, and when the dual-*kaymakamlık* system was scrapped, the common front of this rising middle-class coalition played a significant role.

European 'traders and industrialists of all nationalities', local merchants, and clergy repeatedly submitted pleas to the commissioners for 'prompt and energetic solutions' to the distress of Lebanon.⁸² They argued:

if the intervention of Europe has provided temporary security by stopping the massacres, no satisfactory measure has been taken again to erase the traces and to conjure the return . . . [T]he unfortunate victims have so far received only illusory promises of compensation. Most of the culprits are still awaiting the punishment that justice and the public opinion demands. The question of reorganization, an absolute condition for a better future, does not seem to have been resolved, even in principle.⁸³

These petitions accentuated the fact that the interests of commerce were 'intimately linked to the re-establishment of order', while 'the delay in payment of compensation due to Christians and foreigners, have long since stopped business . . .'⁸⁴ They symbolized the point at which the imperialism of free trade (i.e. the dominant influence of commercial spirit) and the imperialism of security represented by the international commission overlapped, and turned into a transformative power in their own right.

The retributive justice and administrative reorganization in Mount Lebanon in 1860–64 needs to be considered against this background. Remarkably similar

⁸¹ Owen, *Middle East*, 165; Ulecaly to Outrey, 2 July 1863, AMAE 42CCC/7/403.

⁸² Gortschakoff to Kisselew (Paris), 2 May 1861, AMAE 112CP/224; Bentivoglio to Thouvenel, 20 Apr. 1861, AMAE 42CCC/7/263; Rehfués to Schleinitz, 9 Apr. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 78–80; Rehfués to Schleinitz, 17 Apr. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 98–9.

⁸³ 'Copie de la lettre accompagnant la révisé de l'adresse par les délégués du Commerce (Beyrouth)', 10 Apr. 1861, AMAE 42CCC/7/266.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

patterns were followed during both. In both, the imperial agents' endeavours focused on protecting the interests of their protégés and co-religionists as well as the rising middle class. In both, the European commissioners displayed an immense distrust of the existing systems. In both, pronouncements by men on the spot were largely overruled by statesmen in the metropolises, who then made the final decisions. After both, it was the *muqatadjis*' privileges that were stripped in the face of imperial ambitions, as they were unanimously considered the source of the existing order's ills. The causes of violence in 1860 were sought in the ancient feudal system. The new middle class, merchants and bankers of Lebanon, and their European associates emerged as the net beneficiaries of both.

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During the judicial proceedings, the European commissioners loyally adhered to their specific instructions that 'the punishment must especially reach those that had an official character'.⁸⁵ They were convinced that Fuad Paşa and the judges who served in the extraordinary and military tribunals knowingly protected Ottoman officials and officers during their trials, and deliberately laid the blame at the door of the 'uncivilized' Lebanese and Damascene Muslims rather than of their own imperial officials and officers, to deny their own responsibility.⁸⁶

For these reasons, even though the European plenipotentiaries appeared to have had very little knowledge of the Ottoman penal code in use, they endeavoured to intervene in legal proceedings in the belief that they would render them 'really useful and effectual'. They candidly recognized the 'great delicacy for a body foreign to the state to demand the liberty of . . . interfering with the action of a sovereign Tribunal'. Nonetheless they demanded the right to supply supplementary questions to the courts and prevent the quashing of any evidence discreditable to the Ottoman officers and bureaucrats. This, they argued, would 'satisfy . . . Europe'.⁸⁷

As a consequence of their continuous pestering, the financial distress of the Porte, and Fuad Paşa's unwavering desire to demonstrate his attachment to the 'public conscience of the civilised world', the European commissioners managed to get the Ottoman extraordinary envoy's permission to attend the courts, purely to monitor the legal proceedings, not to participate.⁸⁸ In due course, the paşa agreed on the publication of the minutes of the extraordinary trials, and even granted the commissioners the opportunity to express their 'advisory opinions'

⁸⁵ 'Copie d'une instruction spéciale au Commissaire Impérial en Syrie en date du 25 août 1860', AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 666–71.

⁸⁶ Rehfués to Schleinitz, 29 Sept. 1860, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7569, f. 33–6; 'Rapport de Novikow', 6 Sept. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 37, l. 39.

⁸⁷ Dufferin to Bulwer, 26 Oct. 1860, TNA FO 195/656.

⁸⁸ BOA IMM. 935/1, 24 Jan. 1861; cf. Makdisi, *Culture*, 154.

before the final verdicts on the culpable were made by the extraordinary tribunals.⁸⁹

It would be untrue to argue that the influence of European diplomats over the procedures was merely negative. They detected several irregularities in judicial proceedings, such as the employment of certain Ottoman officials as judges even though their names had been linked to pillaging or to the summary punishment (execution) of people of low social standing in Damascus.⁹⁰ They managed to 'correct' some of these appointments.⁹¹ But, concurrently, the commissioners took almost diametrically opposite positions among themselves with respect to the punishment of the Druze, which complicated matters and, for better or worse, prolonged the retributive justice procedures.

In the beginning, the British commissioner, Dufferin, validated the punishment of the Druze *muqatadjis* in general, and Said Jumblatt, their leading figure, in particular. After returning from exile upon Fuad's summons, when Said requested to see Dufferin to ask his protection, the latter refused to see the Druze sheikh on the grounds that 'he would not associate with common bandits'.⁹² However, when the British commissioner received express orders from London 'to save [Jumblatt] whatever the costs', on account of the special relations that had existed between the British and the Druze since the 1840s,⁹³ he immediately changed his position. Together with Niven Moore, the British consul in Beirut, he eagerly committed himself to clearing Said and the other Druze of responsibility, striving to shield them from any self-interested quest for imperial justice.

The French commissioner, Béclard, General Beaufort, and the Russian commissioner, Novikow, by contrast, pressed Ottoman authorities for summary punishment for the Druze 'atrocities' against the Orthodox and Catholic Christians of the mountain. As early as September 1860, even before the commission began its official meetings, Fuad Paşa's fulminating decree, by which the ranks and titles of the recalcitrant Druze *muqatadjis* were abolished, their property was sequestered, and the Druze *kaymakamlık* in the south was temporarily divided into four military circles, was celebrated by Russian and French agents. They considered these to be 'dexterous' acts against 'the persecutors of Christians'.⁹⁴ However, the British agents Dufferin and Moore questioned any ill intention, i.e. whether the confiscation of the property of such figures as Said

⁸⁹ Rehfuës to Schleinitz, 15 Oct. 1860, GStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, 111fs–121fs.

⁹⁰ The European commissioners argued that a certain Hüsnü Bey, a judge of the extraordinary tribunal in Beirut, was 'biased' and unfit for service, as he had participated in the events in Baalbek he was investigating and was suspected of robbing a church there. Rehfuës to Schleinitz, 18 and 20 Oct. 1860, GStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, f. 125, 131–6.

⁹¹ 'Résumé des rapports de M. Nowikow', 23 Oct./4 Nov. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 37, ll. 245–6; Lobanov to Gorchakov, 11/23 Oct. 1860, AVPRI, f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 778–9.

⁹² Rehfuës to Schleinitz, 28 Oct. 1860, GStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, f. 179.

⁹³ See Ch. 10.

⁹⁴ 'Kopiya raporta Komissara Rossijskoj imperii v Sirii', 11/23 Sept. 1860, AVPRI, f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 42, ll. 736–9.

Jumblatt, 'a person of immense possessions', was considered an 'acceptable accession to Fuad Pasha's military chest'.⁹⁵ These rifts continued until the cases against the Druze *muqatadjis* were definitively closed in 1864.

The subsequent trial of Said Jumblatt shows how the protection of European and Ottoman imperial interests was intimately tied to questions of life or death for the mountain's inhabitants. The Ottoman authorities' readiness to throw the Druze *muqatadjis* before the world public as the culprits of the violence in order to mitigate Ottoman (ir)responsibility during the civil war, British attempts to prevent this to maintain their chains of influence with the Lebanese, and French pursuit of their summary punishment in order to bolster the position of the Maronites, all brought the Eastern Question into the courtroom in Beirut.

Not that no investigation was held into the Jumblatt case. Quite the contrary: divergence of imperial concerns and rancorous competition among the Powers meant that the case was more fastidiously tackled than it could possibly have been otherwise. Said was interrogated in several sessions of the extraordinary tribunals—albeit with a strongly prejudiced and hostile tone on the part of the Ottoman judges. He was allowed to name witnesses, both Muslim (Sunni and Druze) and Christian. Inspection committees were sent to Sayda, Djizzin, and Mukhtara, where he was claimed to have been involved in violence. Dufferin even made an effort to demand additional procedural safeguards for Said Jumblatt such as granting him access to a counsel, but Fuad Paşa denied this because the involvement of defence lawyers was not an Ottoman practice.⁹⁶ And in some sessions of the trial, even though he was allowed in merely as an observer, the British delegate Niven Moore more than once interrupted the interrogation, arguing that the nature of the questions directed to Jumblatt was unacceptable and that the minutes had been recorded improperly.

Said Jumblatt was also listened to. He pleaded his innocence, claiming that he had nothing to do with the murder of the Christians in Deir al-Qamar and Mukhtara and that he protected the Christians 'whenever and wherever possible'. As a matter of fact, Muslim and some Christian defence witnesses refrained from incriminating him. But, apart from Dufferin, the European commissioners suspected that Jumblatt had protected some of the Christians in order to obtain those witnesses, while he had acted with 'even more anger on the Christians in neighbouring communities'.⁹⁷

As the Prussian commissioner reported back to Berlin, British endeavours to protect the Druze prompted 'bad blood inside the European Commission'.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Dufferin to Bulwer, 26 Oct. 1860, TNA FO 195/656.

⁹⁶ Benjamin E. Brockman-Hawe, 'Constructing Humanity's Justice: Accountability for "Crimes Against Humanity" in the Wake of the Syria Crisis of 1860', in *Historical Origins of International Criminal Law*, ed. Morten Bergsmo, Cheah Wui Ling, Song Tianying, and Yi Ping, vol. 3 (Brussels: Torkel Opsahl, 2015), 219.

⁹⁷ Weckbecker to Rechberg, 25 Oct. 1860, HHStA PA XXXVIII 134–5/10.

⁹⁸ Rehfuës to Schleinitz, 7 Nov. 1860, GStA, III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, f. 230–38.

Dufferin suggested—possibly rightly so—that the least culpable position in the hierarchy of crimes against Christians had to be reserved for the Druze, whose excesses proceeded from a civil war into which they had been incited by their Christian antagonists ‘very much against their will’.⁹⁹ But then, when other Christian defence witnesses almost unanimously attributed to Jumblatt ‘all the misfortunes of the Mountain, which he would have had . . . the power to prevent, had he wanted it’, testifying to his involvement in the ‘massacres’, almost all the commissioners were certain that capital punishment awaited Said.¹⁰⁰

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In February 1861, the decision taken by the extraordinary tribunals was as expected. Said Jumblatt and all the major Druze *muqatadjis* and sheikhs who had returned to the mountain from exile in September 1860 after Fuad Paşa’s summons—Hussein Talhuq, Karam Abu Nakad, Asad Hamad—were sentenced to death for their rebellious behaviour, ‘dereliction of their dut[ies] and responsibility[ies] to restrain and control [their] followers’, while hundreds (Druze and Sunni) were sentenced to temporary deportation to Crete and Libya.¹⁰¹ Of all the major Druze *muqatadjis*, only Yusuf Abd al-Malik was acquitted after French silk spinners’ favourable testimonies of him for protecting their property during the civil war.¹⁰² The Ottoman governor of Sayda, Hurşid Paşa, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

When these pronouncements were brought to the attention of the European commissioners for their ‘advice’ before the final verdicts were made, the commission held drawn-out sessions to reach a collective opinion. But their long deliberations yielded no such result. Even though each commissioner had attended the same sessions, read the same minutes, and interviewed the same people, their viewpoints differed irreconcilably. To arrive at a common position as ‘European’ commissioners, they agreed to make their decision by open vote.

Dufferin tried to reduce the responsibility of Said Jumblatt and the Druze, pointing out that there was not sufficient evidence to sentence them to capital punishment. Béclard followed French imperial policy. He condemned to death all the chiefs, all the heads of ‘a plot’, both Ottoman and Druze. More experienced in the affairs of Lebanon, the Austrian commissioner, Weckbecker, thought it a necessity to acquit everyone, given the ‘extenuating circumstances contained in the trials and in the [political] situation itself’. It then came down to the votes of the Prussian and Russian commissioners, Rehfues and Novikow. The manner in

⁹⁹ ‘Substance of an Interpellation addressed by Dufferin to Fuad Pasha at the 8th Meeting of the European Commission’, 10 Nov. 1860, TNA FO 195/657.

¹⁰⁰ Weckbecker to Rechberg, 25 Oct. 1860, HHStA PA XXXVIII 134–5/10.

¹⁰¹ Makdisi, *Culture*, 154.

¹⁰² Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 185.

which they made up their minds illustrated the decisive role of religious sensitivities in inter-imperial decision-making.

Both Rehfués and Novikow admitted that the interrogations during the trials, ‘far from clarifying the judge’s conscience’, cast them ‘into a strange perplexity’. Yet they both considered that ‘rightly or wrongly, the unanimous [Christian] public voice imputes to [Said Jumblatt] all the disasters [in Lebanon]. His acquittal would be interpreted by the Christian population of the country as contempt for justice, and his condemnation to any other punishment than the death penalty may not seem sufficient.’ In the end, while formulating their opinion, they weighed ‘in the scales of justice and the interests of the Christian cause in this country’, and decided in favour of the death penalty, since Said Bey Jumblatt had ‘incurred the most serious responsibility in the evens of 1860’ by distributing war ammunition to the Druze, organizing the massacres of Hasbaya, and acting as the occult leader of a ‘great league which [had] linked the Druze of [Hawran] to those of Lebanon against the Christians’.¹⁰³ Novikow, however, admitted that he was not entirely sure. There was no clear evidence other than the testimonies of the Christians, among whom were Bishop Tobia ‘Awn, members of the Beirut committee, and peasants of the mixed districts as well as Kisrawan.¹⁰⁴

What is striking about the judicial proceedings of the time is not only the fact that the European commissioners, five foreign men with no legal or official authority, had a say in the final verdict. It was also the fact that not one Christian actor—neither the peasants’ leader Tanyus Shahin nor any member of the Beirut committee, Tobia ‘Awn, nor any other Christian clergy, middle-class or peasant actors who had been involved in the civil war—was brought to trial in 1860–61, other than to testifying against their Druze belligerents.¹⁰⁵ Despite

¹⁰³ Novikow to Gorchakov, 12/25 Feb. 1861, and ‘Instrukcii i glava pro Dzhemblata’, AVPRI, f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 16, ll. 251–6, 257–70.

¹⁰⁴ As for Hurşid Paşa, the governor of Sayda, with the exception of Weckbecker, all commissioners asked for the increase of his sentence to capital punishment. At the 17th meeting of the commission, when Béclard inquired into the decision on Hurşid, Fuad replied that the Ottoman penal code decreed the death penalty only against the provocateurs of the disturbances or those who quarrelled personally. This was the case for the Druze, he added, while the Ottoman authorities were immune to such an accusation: Novikow to Gorkachov, 22 Dec./3 Jan. 1861, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 17, ll. 96–9. According to Fuad, the sentence of Hurşid was the harshest possible, ‘a sentence which in the penal code of the Empire comes immediately after that of death’, while the capital punishment of Ahmed Paşa, after he was stripped of his rank, resulted from his role as military commander and trial by the military tribunal: Fuad Pacha to Musurus Bey, 10 Mar. 1861, ODD 306–7. The commissioners interpreted this as a ‘deficit of the Turkish system of justice’, though legal practices in Britain and France (the Ottoman penal code was inspired by the French penal code) were analogously hierarchical, bent on protecting imperial agents before the subjects. Rehfués to Goltz, 7 Mar. 1861, GStA I. HA Rep 81 XI Nr. 66.

¹⁰⁵ Farah, *Politics*, 616, 619–36. In fact, Novikow demanded that the Beirut Committee members should also be put on trial for their role in the civil war. However, after several talks with Bishop Tobia and having studied a memorandum addressed by the latter to the commissioners, Novikow withdrew his demand. Rehfués suspected that there had never been a Beirut committee—that it was ‘a myth’—and was surprised that Weckbecker spoke of it ‘as a factual entity’. Rehfués to Schleinitz, 15 Oct. 1860, GStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, f. 95–110.

Dufferin's attempts to shield their interests, the Druze *muqatadjis* truly became the scapegoats of a civil war which, as we saw in Chapter 11, actually had complex origins and which they did not instigate.¹⁰⁶

Then again, the purpose of the retributive and judicial proceedings appeared more to protect the Ottoman agents, assuage European public opinion, and thus put an end to the French expedition than to genuinely bring the culprits into justice. This was why, when B  clard pressed Fuad for the immediate execution of the sentences, the pa  a seemed more than ready.¹⁰⁷ But, when Dufferin asked him for its postponement, the pa  a again did not refuse, leaving the final decision to Istanbul. Lip service was paid on both occasions. In the end, with the exception of a majority of the deportations, none of the sentences on the Druze *ex-muqatadjis* were carried out on the orders of the Porte. Thanks to British endeavours, all death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment in May 1861.¹⁰⁸

If matters had been left to Fuad, he would have been inclined to invoke that old Ottoman adage of oblivion, 'Let bygones be bygones' (*mazi m   mazi demek*), and declare an amnesty at the time, as he told Dufferin. In fact, the July 1860 truce had been settled between the Druze and Maronites with the mediation of Hur  id Pa  a on the basis of this very principle.¹⁰⁹ But, despite Dufferin's backing, since the lands of the Druze *muqatadjis* had already been leased to the Christians and as a result of the other commissioners' contrary expectations, Fuad would not have been able to enforce the Ottoman tradition, which attested to the subsuming of Ottoman practices of security—in this case, through retribution—within a transimperial system.

The fact is that the subsuming in question was never a complete process, and never would be. It may be true that the Porte's agents attempted to satisfy European statesmen, bureaucrats, and public opinion by swift punishment of the Druze; but they exercised their own authority by means of amending the verdicts. During his second grand vizierate (c.1863–6), Fuad Pa  a obtained a pardon from the sultan for local Lebanese elites who had been under detention or in exile. His cabinet announced an amnesty for the Druze *ex-muqatadjis* at the end of 1864, maintaining that since '[the Porte's] efforts to remove the traces of [the] misfortunes [in Syria] have been rightly appreciated by Europe, and... thanks to the current organisation of Syria', and as the Druze 'submitted to the laws of the Empire', they had solicited the sultan's pardon.¹¹⁰ The *ex-muqatadjis*

¹⁰⁶ On the punishment of the Druze, and their targeting as scapegoats of the civil war, see also Farah, *Politics*, 630–2; Makdisi, *Culture*, 153, 157.

¹⁰⁷ Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 185.

¹⁰⁸ MAE (Istanbul) to Musurus, 15 Apr. 1861, BOA HR.SFR.3 57/27/1; Aali to Musurus, 15 May 1861, BOA HR.SFR.3 57/27/4. Just before he was moved to house arrest due to his illness, Said Jumblatt died from tuberculosis, on 11 May 1861: Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 185, 188.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 186, 192; Spagnolo, *France*, 31.

¹¹⁰ Aali to Musurus, 20 Dec. 1864; 'Report of the Governor of Damascus', n.d.; Aali to Musurus, 11 June 1865, BOA HR.SFR.3 96/17. The deported Druze were repatriated 'only as long as their stay in

were thus spared at the end of these long struggles—but not without having been first stripped of their ancient rights and privileges.

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The reorganization of the administrative structure of Mount Lebanon was also preceded by a momentary and transitional resolution. At negotiations held among the commissioners from November 1860, French agents rooted for the pre-1840 order whereby the Maronites would be reinstated as the rulers of the mountain through the pro-France Shihab family.¹¹¹ The French commissioner, Béclard, incorrectly argued that the misfortunes of Lebanon had begun with the partition of the mountain in 1842, and could now be ended definitively by a return to the status quo ante. He suggested that Amir Medjid, the grandson of the former emir, Bashir II Shihab, should take power. Bishop Tobia 'Awn and the foreign merchant families, such as the Spartalis, actively campaigned in favour of this plan.¹¹²

British agents rejected the French proposition. Dufferin claimed that Béclard and General Beaufort wanted to drive the Druze from the mountain at the point of the bayonet, or to frighten them out of their homes through the instrumentality of the Christians so that the latter could appropriate their villages. When French agents made a pitch for the Christian settlement in the evacuated Druze houses on the grounds of necessity and retributive justice, and when Fuad conceded, Dufferin fervidly complained: 'How speciously the plea of humanity can be used to assist the accomplishment of a political purpose.'¹¹³ According to the Russian commissioner, Novikow, the struggle for influence between France and Britain became a 'source of evil' during the reorganization of Lebanon, 'which did not allow the application of a radical remedy'.¹¹⁴

Despite these differences, the commissioners quickly agreed upon the need to undo the 1842/5 partition plan, concluding that it had been a cause of violence in 1860. This time the Porte's agents, Fuad and Abro, endeavoured to maintain the existing order. To them, preserving the status quo was a question of sovereignty, though paradoxically the very order that they were advocating had been dictated to the Porte by the Powers in 1842 (as we saw in Chapter 10).¹¹⁵

their native country did not offer any concern for public rest'. Those sentenced to punishments for degradation, such as Hussein Talhuq, were not granted amnesty. Kaola Talhouk to Henry Bulwer, 5 Apr. 1865, NRO BUL 1/318/1-52, 569X7.

¹¹¹ See Ch. 10. Refugles to Schleinitz, 16 Nov. 1860, GStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, f. 276-9.

¹¹² 'Otryvok iz raporta komissara Rossii v Sirii', 9/21 Apr. 1861, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 17, l. 441.

¹¹³ Dufferin to Bulwer, 3 Nov. 1860, TNA FO195/657. General Beaufort, for his part, voiced the criticism 'Dufferin est anglais avant tout', for the latter always stated that the commission had to treat the Druze only with equity. Beaufort to Thouvenel, 21 Dec. 1860, AMAE Papiers Thouvenel 233PAAP/43.

¹¹⁴ Novikow to Gorchakov, 15/27 Dec. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 17, ll. 51-9.

¹¹⁵ MAE (Istanbul) to Musurus, 9 Jan. 1861, BOA HR.SFR/3 56/4; Lavalette to Thouvenel, 28 Nov. 1860, AMAE 133CP/347/292; 'Extrait de rapports du commissaire russe en Syrie', 3/15 Nov. 1860, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, d. 37, ll. 296-7.

Several administrative models were proposed, discussed, and then jettisoned, both officially and at a private level, during the first five months of 1861. Eager to prevent the prolongation of the French expedition, whose tenure would expire in February 1861, Dufferin was the first to draw up a detailed plan that was officially discussed. According to the British commissioner, the civil war had demonstrated that Christians should no longer be subjugated to Druze supremacy: 'But if the Druze cannot govern Christians, certainly Christians must not govern the Druze.' His January 1861 proposal was for the organization of the whole of Syria, not just Lebanon, under an Ottoman governor-general (he had Fuad Paşa in mind) who would be appointed by the Porte in conjunction with the Great Powers, and who would be relatively independent from the 'blackmail' of Istanbul.¹¹⁶ Mount Lebanon would be one of the provinces under the paşa's strict control.

Dufferin believed that his plan would automatically solve the indemnity question. By carving out a vice-royalty in Greater Syria along the lines of Egypt or the Danubian principalities, a loan of £6 million secured against Syrian revenues could be easily contracted after enacting a series of administrative, judicial, and financial reforms under the supervision of the Powers.¹¹⁷ European capitalists would be desirous to invest in the agricultural and industrial fields.¹¹⁸ The idea was endorsed by Rehfués, Novikow, the Greek Orthodox clergy, and a group of businessmen in Beirut and Damascus which included the merchant Nicholas Medaur, who declared bankruptcy after the war.¹¹⁹

However, even though the Sublime Porte was impatient for the evacuation of French forces from Syria, the plan was unacceptable to Istanbul. The interim grand vizier, Âli Paşa, was dismayed that such a scheme for the semi-independence of Syria had come from British diplomats, whose traditional policy had aimed to preserve the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Alluding to the Great Mutiny in India in 1857, Âli wrote to the London ambassador that Britain also

had, not long ago, similar disasters to deplore and to be reproached in her positions of East India. No one has ever thought of accusing the British administration of negligence or incapacity. Like us, she was surprised by the events, and like us, she fulfilled her duty by inflicting severe punishments on the perpetrators of the crimes committed.¹²⁰

The Porte categorically rejected Dufferin's plan, given that the protocol of the intervention had allowed the commission to discuss the reorganization of Lebanon only, and the plan surpassed its geographical and political span.

¹¹⁶ Dufferin to Bulwer, 4 Nov. 1860, TNA FO 195/657.

¹¹⁷ MAE (Istanbul) to Musurus, 15 Jan. 1861, BOA HR.SFR/3 56/4/7.

¹¹⁸ Rizk, *Mont Liban*, 331.

¹¹⁹ Rehfués to Schleinitz, 20 Nov. 1860, GStA III. HA MdA, I Nr. 7569, f. 303–6.

¹²⁰ Aali to Musurus, 22 Jan. 1861, BOA HR.SFR/3 56/4/10.

In February, when the six-month duration of the French mandate set by the August 1860 convention was nearing its expiration, the prospect for an agreement over the administrative scheme looked very grim. Worse, in January the Druze of Hawran staged an unexpected attack on several villages in anti-Lebanon to obtain the release of their co-religionists.¹²¹ The French foreign minister, Thouvenel, used these to his advantage. He first mobilized foreign merchants and bankers in Lebanon to submit a petition for the prolongation of the French expedition (the British merchants refused to sign it).¹²² He then convened a conference in Paris to the same end, where he managed to obtain the consent of the Powers for a mandate for another three months, arguing that military intervention was the only guarantee of security for Christians and for much-needed confidence in Syria.¹²³ He succeeded.

The prolongation of the French military intervention hastened the efforts of the commissioners to achieve administrative reform, as they hoped to prevent the further extension of the mandate. It also led to further concessions on the part of the Porte. One month later, in March 1861, Fuad Paşa was involved in the preparation of a new plan with British and Russian commissioners. They initialled a scheme through which 47 articles were delivered allowing for separate Druze, Maronite and Orthodox *kaymakams*, and a Greek Catholic *mudiriya* in Zahla. These *kaymakams* would all be placed under the jurisdiction of the governor-general of Sidon. An accord between a majority of European and Ottoman agents appeared to have finally been achieved.¹²⁴ Rehfués and Weckbecker endorsed the triple-*kaymakamlık* plan. But the French commissioner, Béclard, opposed it, because the scheme reduced Maronite influence. He then began to advocate the first plan proposed by Dufferin, which could have ushered in the establishment of a regime similar to the status quo ante 1840 or permitted the French-backed Algerian Abd al-Qader come to power as the viceroy.

We must emphasize here that the French position with respect to administrative reorganization overlapped with the demands of the so-called Beirut Committee, which, as we saw in Chapter 11, was a coalition of Christian merchants, bankers, and clergy. As the delegates of the Beirut Committee told the French interpreter Schefer in November 1860, their plan was to 'deliver Syria from the yoke of the Turks and obtain their expulsion by all possible means'. And this could be done by demanding from European governments 'a prince of royal Catholic blood, who would govern under the guarantee of the five Great Powers'. Alternatively, a member of the family of Mehmed Âli Paşa of Egypt,

¹²¹ Fawaz, *An Occasion*, 185.

¹²² Bentivoglio to Thouvenel, 11 Feb. and 22 Apr. 1861, AMAE Papiers Thouvenel 233PAAP/5/10 and 14.

¹²³ Montebello to Thouvenel, 26 Feb. 1861, AMAE 112CP/223/116.

¹²⁴ Novikov to Gorchakov, 7/19 Mar. 1861, AVPRI f. 133 (Kantselyariya), o. 469, e. 17, ll. 356–60.

ideally Halim Paşa, could be appointed as the new ruler. But, either way, Mount Lebanon had to form, the delegates told the French dragoman,

a separate government . . . whose jurisdiction would extend as at the time of Amir Fakhreddin . . . The Christians of the Lebanon would be ready, when the time comes, to buy this independence at the cost of the most considerable pecuniary sacrifices. We will live in dust like snakes, if necessary, to be free . . . but we will never agree to fall back under Turkish domination. We are entirely devoted to France . . . we will die for her . . .

According to Schefer, if the wishes of the committee were granted or the independence of Syria or Mount Lebanon were imposed by the Powers on the Sublime Porte, the Christians intended to request the extension of the French mandate in order to establish, 'under her protection, the foundation of a solid and sustainable organization'.¹²⁵ Keeping these considerations in view, the step-by-step approach followed by France oscillated between an endorsement of Dufferin's single-governor plan, instead of the triple-*kaymakamlık* project that would enable Abd al-Qader's vice-royalty in Syria, and the instalment of a Catholic or pro-French, ideally Shihab, governor in Lebanon.

But Béclard lacked both the skill and the charisma to attract the other commissioners to the options France endorsed. This was why, by the end of March, when he was entirely isolated in the commission, Thouvenel stepped up, took up the reins, and did all he could to secure the adoption of a scheme in line with French interests. While his agents on the spot began a new campaign of petitions for a final prolongation of Beaufort's expedition, he pointed out the disadvantages of the triple-*kaymakamlık* scheme to his Austrian, British, Russian, and Prussian counterparts with a series of circulars dated 26 March and 2 and 4 April 1861. He argued that it would require relocating almost half the population of the mountain. The return of the Shihabs would be a more plausible and efficient solution. Since the majority of the region consisted of Christians, he maintained, a single Christian governor should have ruled the mountain.¹²⁶

Thouvenel's diplomatic move brought results in Berlin and Vienna. The Prussian and Austrian commissioners were instructed by their seniors to change their position regarding the new scheme a few weeks later. They abandoned the idea of the continuation of the partition (triple-*kaymakamlık*) system.¹²⁷ But the change of votes in the commission produced a perfect stalemate between the

¹²⁵ Schefer to Le Ministre, 30 Nov. 1860, AMAE Papiers Charles Schefer, Mission du Liban 161PAAP/3a/264.

¹²⁶ 'Thouvenel à représentants à Londres, Vienne, Saint-Petersbourg, et Berlin', 26 Mar., 2 and 4 Apr. 1861, DDC 115, 117, 125; Flahaut to Thouvenel, 4 Jan. 1861, AMAE 8CP/719/320.

¹²⁷ Rehfués to Schleinitz, 22 Apr. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 112–15.

French, Prussian, and Austrian commissioners, on the one hand, and the British, Ottoman, and Russian, on the other.¹²⁸

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The fate of administrative reform and security in Syria was thus tied to the reconciliation of imperial interests. Fuad Paşa and Dufferin were hard pressed for time. The French troops' term was nearing to an end (the end of May 1860). Under pressure from foreign and local merchants, who collectively petitioned for immediate measures for the punishment of the culprits and the reorganization of Lebanon, they drew up a new draft constitution (1 May 1860) of 16 articles abolishing the dual-*kaymakamlık* system, but not permitting the return of the Shihabs either. They left the question of governorship open.¹²⁹ And in mid-May the commissioners were called to Istanbul for an ambassadorial conference, to be held at the end of the month and early June, to finally decide upon the new form of administration.¹³⁰

About ten days before the transport ships to evacuate French troops anchored off Beirut, the essentials of the new regime were debated in the Ottoman imperial capital at two conferences, as well as in all imperial metropolises where immense lobbying activity occurred. Especially in St Petersburg, the Franco-Russian talks proved to be fierce. When Russia appeared inclined to follow the line of Dufferin and Fuad, the French agent in St Petersburg, Louis Napoléon Lannes, the duke of Montebello (1801–74), urged the foreign minister, Gorchakov, to endorse the French demand for the appointment of a Lebanese Christian governor, insistently reminding him of 'the agreement that we had promised to establish between us, especially on the question relating to the East'. When Montebello linked the issue of the administrative reorganization of Lebanon to '[the French] conduct in the Montenegro case', the Russian foreign minister capitulated 'in accordance with [the Tsar's] desire to maintain an intimate understanding with France in the East as elsewhere'.¹³¹

But the courts of Paris and St Petersburg could not obtain the consent of the other Powers and the sultan for the appointment of a Lebanese Christian governor. After a debilitating diplomatic give-and-take among the Powers and the Porte, on 9 June 1861 a new semi-constitutional document, *Règlement et protocole relatifs à la réorganisation du Mont Liban*, was finally signed.¹³² The *Règlement* guaranteed the immediate departure of French troops, and inaugurated a semi-autonomous administrative system unique in the Ottoman Empire: the

¹²⁸ John P. Spagnolo, *France and Ottoman Lebanon, 1861–1914* (London: Ithaca Press, 1977), 37.

¹²⁹ Ibid. 39. ¹³⁰ Spagnolo, 'Constitutional Change', 31.

¹³¹ Thouvenel to Montebello, 23 and 24 May 1861, AMAE 112CP/224/50, 51, 55; Montebello to Thouvenel, 26 May 1861, AMAE 112CP/224/83; Thouvenel to Montebello, 3 June 1861, AMAE 112CP/224/119; Spagnolo, *France*, 40.

¹³² Case, *Thouvenel*, 348.

Mutasarrifat regime. The resulting agreement over the future of Lebanon was considered by its architects to be most likely to prevent the domination of one power (including the Porte) over the country, and to preserve, at least nominally, the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire—a fundamental question for European security.

The *Règlement* was a consociational system that aimed at once to stifle local actors' antagonisms towards each other and, as much as possible, to accommodate their demands. As France advocated, Mount Lebanon was placed under the authority of a Christian governor. But, contrary to French expectations, the governor was to be appointed by the Porte, and he would not be Lebanese. The sect of the governor was deliberately left vague so that France, Britain, and Russia could retain men of their religion or protégés as the new overseers of the mountain. The governor was granted extensive powers for a term of three years (extended to five in 1864). A mixed administrative council was formed for the governor to consult and for the Lebanese to voice their concerns. It consisted of two representatives of each of the six sects (Article II)—which failed to satisfy the Maronites, as their numerical superiority was not reflected in proportional representation.

The mountain was divided into six districts (*arrondissements*) with a sub-governor (*müdüir*) appointed by the governor from the 'dominant sect, either by virtue of number or by virtue of territorial possessions' (Article III), and each village was to elect its sheikhs following its sect.¹³³ By this means, the Druze and the Greek Orthodox were permitted to sustain a degree of influence in areas where they were in possession of lands, as they usually acted as sub-governors or sheikhs. Yet their influence was held in check with mixed judiciary councils in each district (Article VII). A mixed gendarmerie, to be composed of soldiers of different sects, was also established for the security of the mountain, which had previously been the preserve of the *muqatadjis*. At the same time, the mountain's inhabitants were exempted from military recruitment in the service of the sultan, while the annual tax that the Porte could impose on the mountain was limited to 3,500 bourses, with the potential to be increased to 7,000 with the approval of the Powers. These granted Mount Lebanon a degree of autonomy.

The consociational *Mutasarrifat* regime tallied, at least on paper, with the egalitarian ethos of the 1856 Reform Edict. Its *Règlement* declared all inhabitants equal before the law, heeding the demands of the Christian peasantry. Moreover, all feudal privileges, notably those granted to the *muqatadjis*, were definitively abolished (Article VI). This unburdened the prosperity of the new middle classes, merchants and bankers, as well as the silk-rich peasantry, as it cleared the way for the institution of a regular system of land registration, tax collection, and

¹³³ 'Règlement organique pour l'administration du Liban', Pera, 9 June 1861, TNA FO 881/2983.

cultivation, which the rising capitalist class had been demanding since the 1850s.¹³⁴ Finally, even though Beirut was not involved in the new *Mutasarrifat* regime, all commercial (as well as civil) matters between a subject or protégé of one of the foreign Powers and an inhabitant of the mountain were placed under the jurisdiction of the commercial tribunals in Beirut (Article X), which permitted foreign merchants to bring their Levantine debtors to court.¹³⁵

The *Règlement* could not be fully implemented for at least six years—and even then, what was arguably thoroughly implemented was a substantially amended version of it. Discontent, political dissension, vengeful and violent sentiments, as well as inter-imperial quests for influence in the mountain lingered throughout this period. Paradoxically, in the end it was the persistence of the challenges to the system, not their absence, that ensured stability and peace in the mountain.

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On 18 July 1861, Garabed Artin Davud Paşa (1816–73) was installed as the new governor or *mutasarrif* of Mount Lebanon, with the consent of the Powers.¹³⁶ Davud was an Armenian Catholic from Istanbul, educated at French missionary schools in İzmir (Smyrna). He studied law in Germany, and could speak perfect Armenian, French, German, Turkish, and, to a lesser degree, Arabic.¹³⁷ With all these qualities, and especially because of his non-Muslim origins, he personified the new image of the *Tanzimat* paşas in the Ottoman Empire—indeed, he was to be the first non-Muslim Ottoman minister after his tenure in Lebanon ended in 1868.

Upon his arrival in Beirut, intending to alleviate the resentments and grievances of the mountain's inhabitants and inspire them to peace and harmony, Davud announced that his task 'had to do with the future, not with the past', inviting his audience to cooperate with him.¹³⁸ But neither the Druze nor the Maronites in general were happy with the essentials of the *Mutasarrifat* regime or, for that matter, with Davud's appointment.

The blow was severe to the Druze chiefs in the mountain. The appointment of a single Christian governor and the abolition of the Druze *kaymakamlık* were grievous.¹³⁹ The Druze of Hawran engaged in a fierce struggle with the Ottoman authorities in 1861–4 to avoid the payment of penal taxes and imprisonment. Their brethren in Mount Lebanon were for the moment more concerned with

¹³⁴ See Ch. 11.

¹³⁵ 'Règlement organique pour l'administration du Liban', Pera, 9 June 1861, TNA FO 881/2983.

¹³⁶ Al-Dibs, *Tārīkh*, vol. 18, 193.

¹³⁷ Musa Kılıç, 'Bir Ermeni Bürokratın Portresi. Vezaret Rütbesine Ulaşan İlk Gayrimüslim Karabet Artin Davud Paşa', in *Tarihte Türkler ve Ermeniler. Merkez Taşrada Ermeniler, Nüfus ve Göç* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 34; Süleyman Uygun, *Osmanlı Lübnanı'nda Değişim ve İç Çatışma. Maruni Asi Yusuf Bey Kerem (1823–1889)* (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2017), 154.

¹³⁸ Fraser to Bulwer, 27 July 1861, TNA FO 78/1708.

¹³⁹ Ibid.; Kuri, *Une histoire*, 306.

procuring an amnesty for their chiefs and recovering their former lands.¹⁴⁰ Many of them succeeded in the end thanks to the pressure of the British authorities, yet disputes within families, particularly among the Jumblatts over land inheritance, drastically reduced their influence in local politics.¹⁴¹

The Maronite reaction to the new regime was equally stark. During his ceremony of inauguration at Deir al-Qamar, Davud Paşa was greeted 'by the scream for blood' and 'for the banishment of the whole Druze race' by the Maronite victims of the war, mostly women, who 'held up the bones and skulls of the slain and walked towards him'.¹⁴² The Maronite peasants in the north were not allowed to keep what they had seized from the Khazin sheikhs in Kisrawan in 1858–9.¹⁴³ For their part, the clergy were severely disheartened by the departure of the French expeditionary forces, and by the fact that an outsider had been installed as governor over their candidates. Assuaging their frustration was the hope that the new regime was only an interim solution that France had agreed upon to gain time for the restitution of Lebanese Christian rule in the near future.¹⁴⁴ Only the Greek Orthodox were content with the new system and the appointment of a co-religionist as governor.¹⁴⁵

Until their departure in the summer of 1862, the European commissioners closely monitored Davud's rule, his measures, his relations with the locals, and his objectives. And until the very end of their tenure, they continued to quarrel among themselves on a variety of issues that ranged from such trivial subjects as the procedure of Davud's inauguration ceremony to the endeavours to influence the governor in the nomination of district governors.¹⁴⁶ Rehfuës complained that 'right next to the local intrigues [to undercut Davud Paşa's position], the French and English agents pulled out all the stops to facilitate the appointment[s] in their interests'.¹⁴⁷

By 'local intrigues', the Prussian commissioner was not only alluding to the general discontent among the mountain's inhabitants. The major challenge to the new regime was Yusuf Bey Karam, a secondary Maronite sheikh from the north, who denounced the authority of the 'outsider' Davud Paşa.¹⁴⁸ Even though Davud appointed him as district governor in Jazzin and offered him the command of the regional army to gain him over, Karam resigned from the post and rejected Davud's offer so as not to become 'subservient' to the governor and the

¹⁴⁰ Firro, *The Druzes*, 141–2.

¹⁴¹ BOA A.MKT.MHM 277/62/2/1; G. Jackson Eldridge to Bulwer, 10 July 1863, NRO BUL 1/357/1–18, 570X5.

¹⁴² Fraser to Bulwer, 27/7/61, TNA FO 78/1708.

¹⁴³ Owen, *The Middle East*, 164–5.

¹⁴⁴ Spagnolo, *France*, 56; Rehfuës to Schleinitz, 25 July 1861, GStA GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 233.

¹⁴⁵ Rehfuës to Schleinitz, 18 Aug. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 248.

¹⁴⁶ Rehfuës to Schleinitz, 19 Aug. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 207–10.

¹⁴⁷ Rehfuës to Schleinitz, 20 Sept. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 297.

¹⁴⁸ Uygun, *Yusuf Bey*, 156–7.

Powers.¹⁴⁹ In November 1861, he mobilized a militia of 1,200 men to urge Davud to rescind the appointment of sub-governors in the northern district.¹⁵⁰

The point that concerns us here is not how Davud Paşa quelled Karam's dissidence and arranged for his exile to Istanbul and Egypt in 1862–4. It is instead how he responded to the challenges to the system and, by the same token, how he amended the system in due course. On the one hand, the new governor succeeded in limiting the interference of the European commissioners in his task.¹⁵¹ On the other, he consulted, obtained the support of, and acted together with figures like Bishops Tobia 'Awn and Butrus al-Bustani of the Beirut Committee, the French consuls in Lebanon, Bentivoglio and Outrey (who was looking to install Amir Mecid, a Shihab, as sub-governor in the north, to whom Karam opposed), and Fuad Paşa (until his departure in late 1861).¹⁵² Furthermore, Davud tried to revive the influence of the Jumblatts to counter Karam's act of defiance, which gained him the endorsement of British agents.¹⁵³

The European commissioners were thus brushed aside while a very loose common front was formed against the major dissident of the new regime. In dealing with perilous epidemic illnesses, sanitary problems, financial distress, and, now, Karam's opposition to the interests of all, and while implementing projects for the construction of lighthouses and a telegraph line, and building the Damascus–Beirut road, Davud capitalized on the shared threats posed to the ex-belligerents—imperial and local, European and Ottoman.¹⁵⁴ A mixed gendarmerie force that consisted, on 1 January 1864, of 194 men (122 Maronite, 43 Druze, 16 Greek catholic, 5 Greek Orthodox, 1 Sunni, 5 Protestants, and 2 Latins) was enlisted under the supervision of French Captain Fain, while several British engineers and surgeons were employed to counterbalance the French in the governor's services.¹⁵⁵

Hindsight suggests that, seen together, all these developments did not just help establish a steadier transportation and communicational infrastructure in Mount Lebanon, rendering it more secure physically. Together with the economic boom after the rapid recovery of the silk industry, they also laid the ground for gradual yet substantial amendments to the *Règlement* in 1862 and 1864 which transmuted

¹⁴⁹ Spagnolo, *France*, 62.

¹⁵⁰ BOA A.MKT. UM. 523/71, 16 Nov. 1861; cf. Uygun, *Yusuf Bey*, 161.

¹⁵¹ Rehfués to Schleinitz, 25 Oct. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 362.

¹⁵² Spagnolo, *France*, 61, 63; Bentivoglio to Thouvenel, 20 Nov. 1861, AMAE 42CCC/7/302.

¹⁵³ Rehfués to Schleinitz, 19 Aug. 1861, GStA III. HA Mda, I Nr. 7571, f. 257–7; Spagnolo, *France*, 70.

¹⁵⁴ BOA i.HR 180/9954; 187/10437. See also Engin Akarlı, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861–1920* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 38–9.

¹⁵⁵ Two members of the Shihab family commanded these forces. Max Outrey to MAE, 12 Dec. 1863, AMAE 50MD/122/424; Capitaine Fain to MAE, 3 Sept. 1864, AMAE 50MD/122/423; Fain to MAE, 26 Dec. 1863, AMAE 50MD/122/426; Eldridge (Beirut) to Bulwer, 19 Sept. 1863, NRO BUL 1/357/1–18, 570X5.

previously destructive social differences into a protective power (against the dissidents and other threats) and fostered rapport among the Lebanese.¹⁵⁶

To a certain extent the amendments weakened sectarianism and favoured proportional representation and secularization by way of (i) dividing the northern Maronite district into two and, by this means, (ii) increasing the number of Maronite representatives in the council without allowing them the majority, (iii) eliminating the election of village sheikhs by sect, (iv) introducing 'territorial representation to the previous sectarian distribution of seats', and (v) expanding the authority of the governor who could appoint the district judges directly, which diminished the influence of the clergy.¹⁵⁷ As the French diplomat Ernest de Bonnières de Wierre (1825–1909) observed, 'This was an important achievement which should be conducive to bringing the races and religious allegiances together, and consequently hastening the time when the Lebanese populations will understand their true interest is to live together in harmony under the government of a single Christian leader.'¹⁵⁸

The legal particularities of these amendments have been aptly explained by the British historian John P. Spagnolo.¹⁵⁹ But much recent, arguably more analytic scholarship on violence in mid-nineteenth century Lebanon has tended to omit his account, training their analysis on the 1861 *Règlement* only and ending their narratives with it. This is unfortunate because these particularities were of paramount importance for attesting the limits of the perspectives and achievement of the European and Ottoman commissioners on Syria, and those of the statesmen and diplomats in the imperial metropolises. As already noted, the original version of the 1861 *Règlement* aimed at *preventing* the political or religious domination of any one imperial power or sect in the mountain. Yet the persistence of the challenges to the new system, and the experience of Davud Paşa and his Lebanese associates, engendered a legal transposition in the version revised in 1864. The particulars were important also because they embodied a pivotal shift from a cautious attitude of *preventing* domination and potential violence by means of partitioning or separating the Lebanese to a more 'take-charge' mindset *enabling* their peaceful coexistence.

It is true that there were several more immediate and pragmatic factors that allowed for stability in Mount Lebanon in mid-1860s, especially after Yusuf Karam's lingering aspirations were subdued and he was sent into exile once again in 1867. Davud's cordial relations with the French diplomats in the country and with the leaders of the so-called Beirut Committee, Tobia 'Awn and Butrus al-

¹⁵⁶ 'Règlement organique du Liban. Projet de nouvelle rédaction par Daoud Pacha, 1863', AMAE 50MD/122/474.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.; Aali to Musurus, 4/10/64 BOA HR.SFR.3. 95/33; Spagnolo, *France*, 89–91.

¹⁵⁸ De Bonnières de Wierre to Drouyn de Lhuys, 14 Sept. 1865, AMAE CP Turquie 363; cf. Spagnolo, *France*, 91.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Bustani, led to the abandonment of any radical revisionist inclination on the part of France or the Shihabites.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the distress and suffering of war, and the punishment to which they had been (partially) subjected, stifled feudal and Druze ambitions. The Ottoman authorities, Fuad and Âli Paşas, accepted the new regime in Lebanon, and admitted that it was the most practical way to prevent future interventionism in the Levant as well as in the Balkans. Some historians argue that the inspiration of the new provincial law in 1864 (the *Vilayet Kanunnamesi*) originated in large part from the Lebanese model.¹⁶¹ But equally significant was the fact that, after 1860, the mountain's inhabitants learned the hard way, and gradually adopted, modified, and interpreted into their world-views a more inclusive understanding of peace and security.

The Lebanese elite came to argue that peace and security could be guaranteed most effectively through subduing blind, ancient prejudices (*al-ghardh*) between the peoples of Lebanon, which had 'left behind destruction and peril and squandered the land's wealth and its families'. The maintenance of order and tranquility depended on upholding *al-jinsiyya*, as a source of attachment to kinship, and bolstering Arab qualities such as *al-adab* (sophisticated habits, good behaviour), which referred to an amalgam of *al-akhlaq* (morals) and *al-ta'lim* (education). It entailed synthesizing these qualities with a uniquely and locally defined idea of civilization—one that '[stems from within (inner self)] and extends to society', '[aims for] development', 'puts everyone on an equal footing', and '[endorses] concord among [the people] as individuals and groups'.¹⁶²

Aside from administrative reforms that enabled coexistence and economic recovery which lasted until the 1880s, this proto-nationalist intellectual and emotional momentum in Lebanon forged by the peace-minded local Lebanese—partly by dint of their interactions with imperial agents, but largely by way of their own, tragic learning experience—ensured what the Turkish historian Engin Akarlı aptly calls 'the long peace' in the mountain in the decades to come.¹⁶³ It was these reconceptualized peripheral relational dynamics guaranteed by the 1864 version of the *Règlement* that helped gradually return the sense of security and withstood future challenges to stability, more so than the presence of the French expeditionary forces or the investigations and top-down decisions made by the international commissioners in 1860–62 through an unhindered imperialist hubris.

¹⁶⁰ Eldridge to Bulwer, 22 Aug. 1863, NRO BUL 1/357/1–18, 570X5.

¹⁶¹ Cenk Reyhan, 'Cebel-i Lübnan Vilayet Nizamnamesi', *Memleket Siyaset Yönetim* 1 (2006): 171–81.

¹⁶² Jens Hanssen, 'Toward a Conceptual History of *Nafir Suriyya*', in Butrus al-Bustani, *The Clarion of Syria: A Patriot's Call Against the Civil War of 1860*, introduced and trans. Jens Hanssen and Hicham Safieddine (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 49–52, 68, 82–3, 124–5, 128–9.

¹⁶³ Akarlı, *Long Peace*. Also see, Carol Hakim, *The Origins of Lebanese National Idea: 1840-1920* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2013), 149–158.

