THE FORMATION OF THE ALAWITE STATE THROUGH DEMARCATION LINES DURING THE FRENCH MANDATE FOR SYRIA

EGECAN ERDOĞAN

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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Egecan Erdoğan

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During the French Mandate for Syria

The thesis of Egecan Erdoğan

has been approved by:

Assoc. Prof. Ahmet Ersoy
(Thesis Adviser)

Assoc. Prof. Meltem Toksöz

Assoc. Prof. Zana Çitak
(External Member)

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ABSTRACT

The Formation of the Alawite State Through Demarcation Lines

During the French Mandate for Syria

This thesis aims to present a cross-section on the political-social relations of the mandate period, by considering an administrative border change that takes place between the State of Damascus and Alawite State in Syria, in 1922, during the French mandate period. The purpose of this study is to shed light on how the border change resonates between the negotiating parties in the context of national, class, religious, and sectarian affiliations; on different geographical, economic, and administrative levels; and at colonial, regional and local scales. In accordance with these purposes, some official correspondence between the French and Syrian political and bureaucratic actors and the notable people living in the territory that the border change takes place is examined. By considering these deliberations on border change, two fundamental conclusions were reached regarding the nature of the political arena in Syria at that time. In this study, the idea that the demarcation process is a process that develops entirely between states and state officials is being questioned. The process itself, sometimes by transcending national, class, religious and sectarian differences, brings different actors side by side or against each other, and thus sheds light on the multi-layered relationships between actors that take part in the process.

ÖZET

Fransız Suriye Mandası Döneminde
Sınır Çizgileri Üzerinden Alevi Devleti'nin İnşası

Bu tez, Fransız mandası döneminde, 1922'de, Şam Devleti ve Alevi Devleti arasında, Suriye'de, gerçekleşen bir idari sınır değişikliğini konu edinerek, manda döneminin siyasal-toplumsal ilişkilerine dair bir kesit sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, tartışmaya konu olan sınır değişikliğinin, farklı coğrafi, iktisadi ve idari düzlemlerde; kolonyal, bölgesel ve yerel ölçeklerde; ulusal, sınıfsal, dini ve mezhepsel aidiyetler bağlamında müzakere eden taraflar arasında nasıl yankı bulduğuna ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçlar doğrultusunda, Fransız ve Suriyeli siyasi ve bürokratik aktörler ile sınır değişikliğinin gerçekleştiği söz konusu bölgede yaşayan nüfuzlu kimseler arasındaki bir kısım resmi yazışmalar incelenmektedir. Sınır değişikliğine dair müzakereler üzerinden, dönemin Suriyesindeki siyaset alanının niteliğine ilişkin, iki temel sonuca varılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, sınır çizgisi çizilme sürecinin, bütünüyle devletler ve devlet görevlileri arasında gelişen bir süreç olduğu fikri sorgulanmaktadır. Sürecin kendisi, kimi zaman ulusal, sınıfsal, dinsel ve mezhepsel farklılıkları aşarak, farklı aktörleri yan yana veya karşı karşıya getirmekte ve böylelikle sürece dahil olan aktörler arasındaki çok katmanlı ilişkilere ışık tutmaktadır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is about a demarcation process in a quite narrow space, the borderlands between the State of Damascus and Alawite State, during a very limited amount of time, the year of 1922 — narrow space vis-à-vis much larger spaces as national, regional, continental, transcontinental etc.; and limited vis-à-vis wider time scales such as decade, century, millennium etc. This roughly shows the temporal and spatial scale of this study. Of course, the questions of why this place and why this period also need to be answered. The border, which is the object of this study, has been drawn along where many points intersect. This border is, far beyond being a political border, at the intersection of colonial, religious, sectarian, class, linguistic, administrative, national, regional fault lines. The struggle over this border also marks a spatial separation between people.

The construction of this narrative was triggered by the presupposition that there might be a missing part in the narratives on the demarcation processes of the mandate state that was established in the same region of the Coast and Coastal Mountains Region of today's Syrian Arab Republic, Alawite State. The idea that there might be some missing pieces in the historical accounts is sprouted by questioning the preconception that the demarcation process is assumed as a process that occurred entirely between the states and state officials. In addition, through this questioning process, specifically while the documents were being examined, the issue of agency became the basis of this academic study. How was it decided that this border line would pass from here or there? Who were the decision makers in this

process? Who might have influenced the decision-making processes of decision makers? Which sections of the society have been involved in this demarcation process? How did people with different cultural and class affiliations influence the process? What was the effect of the people living in the place where the border change would take place as part of the demarcation process? Is it possible to talk about such an effect? What were the means of struggle for these people? How did these people put the tools into effect in order to influence the process? What does this demarcation process show about the state–society relationship in this particular mandate context? What does this demarcation process say about the decision-making processes of this mandate state? Although the answers to these questions are important, the main purpose of this study is to open or to fill a gap at the border, which encircles the state formation through demarcation lines in a mandate context, rather than to give definite answers to these questions.

The correspondence, which is conserved in the diplomatic archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nantes, between the local agents and officials of the mandate administration on the issue of this border change is considered as the main source of reference in this study. For this purpose, the materials that are classified in the subsection entitled *Petits fonds politiques ou administratifs* that covers many internal correspondence between these actors during the French presence in Syria between the years of 1917 and 1946, which itself is categorised within the section called *Division de la Syrie* in the above mentioned archives, were frequently mentioned.

In the introduction chapter of the study, there is a separate subchapter, which is dedicated to the physical and human geography of the region in question, the region that is mostly populated by Alawite people, in order to give an insight of the place that is going to be discussed in the following chapters. There is also an attempt to query the accuracy and legitimacy of the orthodox narration, which enfolds the geographical denominations and their pertinence. In the following subchapter, the accounts of two European orientalists who contemplate on Alawite community and the region populated by Alawite people are briefly visited for the purpose of providing insights to the sources that were once considered as valuable sources of information on the history and geography of the region in question, northern Syria and Syrian littoral, and one of its communities, Alawite people that were still part of the Ottoman Empire at the time. It is important to refer to these sources because the intellectual ground on which the events are to be dealt with in the subsequent period — and also chapters — is moulded through these sources at the beginning of the century. In similar vein, in the last subchapter of the introduction chapter, the legacies of the mandate regimes are mentioned as the elements that draw the boundaries of Arab nationalism and patriotism.

The political and economic outlook of Interwar Europe is worth mentioning because of its direct and indirect influence on the time and space in question in this study. The political boundaries of France and Britain in this historical period have been extended to the Syria and Palestine region; therefore it is possible to say that France and Britain, with a slightly superficial but not unfounded consideration, can even be regarded as Near Eastern countries in this period. The third subchapter of the introduction chapter was prepared with this purpose in mind. Instead of narrating

and / or analysing the dissolution of four European empires — Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman and Russian — and the emergence of new states on the lands left by them, the establishment of new balances of threats between the victorious and defeated parties of the Great War, the ephemeral and volatile social (also read economic) exuberance of the first half of the period, and the ensuing social (also read economic) devastation, and decade-long political tension that capture the great powers will be concisely reviewed in this subchapter. In this study, it is presumed that the consequences of the relations between the states have more direct influence on the region discussed in the study rather than the individual impact of the same states on the region. Political and social outlook of the region that encircles the common destiny of the Syria and Palestine region during the Interwar period is examined in the fourth subchapter of the introduction chapter to grasp the main characteristics of the political regimes that were established in the region during the period, in an attempt to make room for a better understanding through comparison.

The second chapter, which is entitled Syria under French Mandate during the Interwar period, is expressly devoted to the policies and practices that were embraced and enacted by the French authorities and in this respect, the main characteristics of the mandate regime are discussed in detail on political, military, economic and administrative layers. The making process of the Alawite State, with a specific remark on its formation that took place at the beginning of the mandate era, is envisaged as a reverse side of the story of state building process in Syria in the first subchapter. The policies and practices of France, which are discussed in the latter subchapter, are treated as important underlying causes of the ultimate outcome. The chapter argues that the formation processes of the Alawite State and of the

nascent unified state in Syria have multiple faces, that is to say the ineffaceable Ottoman legacy, established policies and practices espoused by France, the reactions of and impacts on the peoples of the region to these policies and practices.

The third chapter consists of two subchapters that concentrate on the relations between the residents and mandate authorities, and the intra- and inter- relations between the several local agents and mandate authorities. In the first subchapter, the relation between the local residents, specifically the Alawite community, and the mandate authorities is going to be discussed. In this part, the concepts of war and peace in specific senses are being referred to in order to make a distinction between the different forms of relations between these parties. In the latter one, it is argued that despite the fact that the mandate authorities were commissioned for the same ultimate nominal purpose — establishing law and order in the name of France, there were several disagreements that prompted the agents to take different sides on the issue of demarcation process. In the meantime, there was a certain degree of coherence between some of the local agents and mandate authorities regarding the same issue. It is a circumstance that might induce one to reconsider the relations between these actors in an unorthodox view.

It can be seen that there are some annotations and references regarding the discussions on the historical method here and there but there is not a separate chapter dedicated solely on this issue. Making a detailed methodological discussion is not preferred because it will go beyond the boundaries of this academic study and because it can change the focal point of the study. On the other hand, when it is needed and where it is needed, information about the approach and method embraced

in the study is given. This attitude is most fundamentally due to the idea of transitivity of the boundary between history writing and historiography. On methodological terms, the study is based on an approach that is framed by an explicit presupposition: A historical study should, alongside the consequences, follow and underscore the processes in order to shed light to the obscure, disregarded and / or untold parts of a story, event or fact — regardless of its scale and object — in the hope of forging a more inclusive historical narrative. At this point, making multi-directional associations and thinking outside the box become indispensable parts of a historian's task. Looking at a historical event and fact from the perspective of the different actors of the same event or fact is like listening to the same story while acknowledging that different tellings are never identical; otherwise why would a person bother herself / himself? — from more than one person and more than once. This can be thought of as watching different films that have the same storyline to capture a different detail, priority, context or interpretation. However, it should not be forgotten that this means that the likelihood of exposure to recurrences may increase. But, every time, there is a possibility that the predecessor and the subsequent scenes of the recurrent scene can change.

The absence of primary resources that could throw light on the intra- and inter- societal relations during the demarcation process compels me to classify the relations of the involved parties in two-dimensions for the sake of the study — between the officials and residents, and amongst officials themselves — without making any first-hand reference to the relations between the residents. This circumstance renders the study's inevitable partiality, which eventually leads us to the initial presupposition that is embraced at the first stage. In this study, the omitted

and unattainable — i.e. untold and / or unaccountable — part of the story is also acknowledged and considered as part of the story but not yet the historical narrative.

1.1 On nominalisation and geography

One of the several things which one may learn from fashion is a rule of thumb: Sewing a dress for an individual's size necessitates a comprehensive measuring and might entail some additional changes in the attire afterwards. This basic rule of the sartorial world is also valid in the realm of geographically bounded historical studies. Therefore, reflecting an argument on an individual pattern requires exactly the same thing for the sake of the study: customisation of the pattern. The terminology used in a study is part of that customisation process in order to prevent any sort of equivocated expression.

The geographical definition of the region in question at the outset could facilitate the construction of the narration, and therefore it is important to perambulate the region in question for the sake of the narration. Throughout this study, if it is necessary, the region that encompasses the present sovereign political entities of Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria or in a retrospective manner, amongst the administrative divisions of Ottoman Empire, the *Vilayet*s (Province) of Aleppo, of Beirut, of Damascus or of Syria, the *Mutasarrifate*s (Governorate) of Jerusalem, of Karak, of Mount Lebanon, the *Sanjak* (County) of Zor — which prevailed until the dissolution of the empire — will be roughly addressed as the Syria and Palestine region without ancient and current connotations of these nouns.[1] The

[1] According to a British report on pre-Great War Syria issued in 1939, "The term Syria in those days was generally used to denote the whole of geographical and historic Syria, that is to say the whole of the country lying between the Taurus Mountains and the Sinai Peninsula, which was made up of part of the Vilayet of Aleppo, the Vilayet of Bairut, the Vilayet of Syria, the Sanjaq of the Lebanon, and

noun *Syria* is written before the noun *Palestine* because the former is going to be the focus of this study. The toponyms *Palestine* and *Syria* are preferred to the words the region in question without any reference other than the ones that were established by the contemporaries of the period regardless of their political affiliation. On the one hand, the British Mandate for Palestine and French Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon (*Mandat français sur la Syrie et le Liban*) were two legal frameworks that were instrumentalised for the establishment of the political entities by the mandatory powers of the period, and on the other hand, social and political parties, fronts, conventions, and organisations regardless of their affiliation and relation with the mandatory powers such as Palestine Arab Party, Palestine Communist Party, Palestine Arab Workers Society, First Zionist Congress,[2] Syrian-Lebanese Communist Party, and Syrian Social Nationalist Party endorsed the toponyms *Palestine* and *Syria*. Even though it is argued in the preceding sentences that it is important to set the boundaries of the region in question; it should also be reminded that the borders of aforementioned political entities are delineated in more concrete manner, and do not entirely overlap with the political entities of the mandate period. Moreover, the borders of the Syria and Palestine region are quite blurry and transitive since they are conceived in geographical terms instead of political. In addition to that, the definition of the Syria and Palestine region is customised in accordance with, but not solely relied on, the specified time and space; therefore the borders of the region are not fixed as one presumes. The last word of the phrase, *region*, is given place to make a direct reference to the geographical quiddity of the

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the Sanjaq of Jerusalem. It included that part of the country which was afterwards detached from it to form the mandated territory of Palestine." See the Secretary of State for the Colonies, "Annex A: 'Memorandum on the British pledges to the Arabs' [handed in by the Arab representatives at the first meeting February 23rd.]," in *Report of a Committee set up to consider certain correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon (His Majesty's High Commissioner in Egypt) and the Sharif of Mecca in 1915 and 1916*, Cmd. 5974, 12–20.

[2] *Palestine* is mentioned as Jewish homeland throughout the Basel Program. See The Executive of the Zionist Organisation, *Jubilee of the First Zionist Congress*.

Syria and Palestine region. The reason behind this preference, or rather predilection, of the name of the Syria and Palestine region also indirectly results from the politically loaded connotations of some other words that are used for the same region at one time / place or another such as Greater Syria, *Bilad al-Sham* or Levant.

Before discussing the specificities of a particular geography, it could be a pertinent remark to mention the moot nature of the demarcation lines of this particular geography. The same also goes for the continents and world regions regardless of their scale. The continents and world regions have a common characteristic with nation-states; they are both visualised as "natural and fundamental building blocks of global geography."[3] However, the former ones' politically charged connotation is conventionally not taken to consideration; continents and world regions are parochially perceived within a purely and simply geographical (and needless to say more natural and scientific) categorisation. But even from this blinkered approach, the criteria that are being referred for the demarcation of the continents and world regions are inconsistent.[4] The prevalent cultural regions of the world stem from the period of World War II[5] when most of the countries in Europe have turned into battlefields and large number of peoples of the world were living under one or another country's sway on every corner of the world, and the vast majority of the peoples of the colonised world — mostly consisting of Asian and African peoples but also including some of the American, Oceanian, and to a lesser degree European peoples — had not yet begun to struggle overtly for their independence but their fight was burgeoning. This was a process, which would change the political geography of the world in a drastic way in the following three

[3] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, 8.
[4] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, 8.
[5] Bonine, "Of Maps and Regions: Where is the Geographer's Middle East?," 60.

decades. The 1950s witnessed the triumph of world regions / areas approach over continental visualisation of the world map in different branches of social sciences.[6] The pregiven categorisation of the world (through) areas and regions was promptly adopted by several social scientists[7] without thinking of its contentious essence, and the Near East is not immune to this categorisation; its boundaries should not be envisaged without this process of questioning.[8]

The boundaries of the Middle East (extending to North Africa) — both on national and regional levels — were almost completely drawn according to the extant political borders of the colonies, mandates[9] and protectorates,[10] which antedate the

[6] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, 166.
[7] Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*, 166.
[8] Bonine, "Of Maps and Regions: Where is the Geographer's Middle East?," 92.
[9] The most salient difference between a colony and a mandate can be said to be legal status of two entities. There were basically two main criteria for a mandate. The first of these was that, unlike a colony, the territory under the mandate was not included in the territory of the mandatory power. The second important point was, again unlike a colony, the territory under rule of a mandate power was not exploited by the mandatory power. On the contrary, it was considered essential for the mandate administration to make efforts for the development of the region in the interests of the people living in the territory (Matz, "Civilization and the Mandate System," 70-72; Sluglett, "An Improvement on Colonialism? The 'A' Mandates and Their Legacy in the Middle East," 417-420).
[10] The colonial protectorate is a political regime, rather than a juridical institution, that can be considered as part of colonial subjugation even though it purportedly differs from direct colonisation. In the nineteenth century, it was frequently used as a tool of acquisition of a certain territory without taking the financial and international responsibility of the direct colonial administration. The territories of the protectorates were nominally considered outside the borders of the protecting states. The nature of the regime and legislative framework was usually defined by a series of treaties signed between the protecting and protected states. The treaties usually bestowed the protecting states with the power of maintaining the foreign affairs, foreign trade and external security of the protected state. In most of the cases, the governmental institutions and internal affairs of the protected state were ostensibly derogated from the direct control of the protecting state on legal terms; but in some cases the protecting state could even have a power on internal affairs such as public administration and domestic law (Wilde, *International Territorial Administration*, 299-300; Van der Linden, *Acquisition of Africa*, 89-94; Crawford, *Creation of States*, 300-303).

The definition of the concept of protectorate differs from British or German to French considerations. Even though there is not a definition agreed on it regarding the concept, in the form of protectorates that one sees throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is one common feature: It is the transfer of external sovereignty rights over a territory from one state to another (Van der Linden, *Acquisition of Africa,* 90-92). On the concept of protectorate, Grewe says:

> "The transfer of the concept of protectorate to overseas and colonial situations resulted in denaturalisations. The 'colonial protectorate' developed as a special type of protectorate, the legal character of which was extremely doubtful - all the more so as the protected entity had generally never been a

contemporary independent states of the region. This phenomenon can be seen as a lingering scar of Western domination — more precisely, the Anglo-French colonial rule — over the region. There has never been any ready and waiting definition for the Middle East. The region is ceaselessly defined and redefined by several different agents for several different agendas. In this respect, one may argue that the region can be perceived as a group of states, the extent of which can be adjusted each and every time according to the priorities and / or purposes of the one who defines the term.[11] On the political layer, in the absence of any international boundary, France

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> 'State' in the meaning of international law. In many cases the establishment of a colonial protectorate was only a disguised form of annexation. Often this legal instrument was chosen in order to safe-guard all the advantages of economic exploitation for the protector without burdening it with full international responsibility for the territory under its rule. The colonial protectorate was frequently only a preliminary stage to complete annexation and transformation into a colony. Madagascar became a French protectorate in 1885 and a French colony in 1896. Korea became a Japanese protectorate in 1905 and a Japanese colony in 1910. Numerous British protectorates such as the Gambia, the Gold Cost, Nigeria and Kenya later became Crown colonies." (Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, 473.)

Although there are several accounts about the French conceptualisation of the notion of protectorate, the one written by the former minister of foreign affairs of France, Gabriel Hanotaux, in quite an early period, in the year of 1896 while he was in charge and when the protectorate of Madagascar was turned into a colony, presents the concluding remark on the issue:

> "Le protectorat, écrivait-il en 1896, n'est qu'une restriction, une limitation, une modération que, dans son intérêt, la Puissance victorieuse s'impose à elle-même au moment de sa victoire, dans la mesure qui lui convient, alors qu'elle pourrait, en vertu du droit de la guerre, aller jusqu'au bout de sa conquête." (Hanotaux, "le Traité de Tananarive," 10, quoted in Dupuis, *Le droit des gens*, 234.)

Even though in some cases, the ruling elites of the protected states preserve their nominal power over their people and national institutions throughout the years of French domination, as Morocco and Tunisia, most of the protectorates of France gradually became under the direct rule of it in practical terms. In most of the cases, France also interfered in the domestic affairs of the protected states (Général Catroux, "L'Union française," 234-235).

In Moroccan case, in the light of the agreements reached by the European powers, the protectorate was established with the Treaty of Fez, which was signed between Morocco and France in 1912 to formalise the French tutelage over Morocco. According to International Court of Justice, Morocco preserved its nominal sovereignty throughout the years of French protectorate, which was formally dissolved with the independence of the country in 1956. According to the Protectorate Treaty of 1912, France was vested with certain rights to exercise power in the name and on behalf of Morocco; and the extent of its power was beyond the issues officially acknowledged (Broms, "Chapter 1: States," 51-52).

[11] Bonine, "Of Maps and Regions: Where is the Geographer's Middle East?," 92.

and Britain had patterned the borders of almost every corner of the Middle East according to their vested (and sometimes adverse) interests, and by doing so they crossed the Rubicon once and for all.

The common usage of Syria as a place name with its historico-geographical connotation in intellectual and political parlance during the late Ottoman period was almost totally abandoned after the establishment of the mandate regimes in the region. However it was in use in certain intellectual and political circles — especially within the ones, which were, relevantly or not, affiliated with the Arab nationalist movements during the World Wars and Interwar period. The northern part of the borders of physically reduced (and customised) Syria was roughly delimited in accordance with the Baghdad railway's route, and the eastern and south-eastern portions of its borders were erected in the middle of the Syrian Desert — and they cut across the desert in v-shape from Jabal al-Druze to Euphrates.[12]

The geographical characteristics of a certain place have always been determinant on the lives of the ones who inhabited in that place. The social and political motifs of that particular place ensue as outcomes of the interaction between the place and its people in a specific period of time. Therefore, it is better to give significant coverage to the physical and human geography of Syria in advance of any sort of discussion regarding the historical and contemporary social, political, and economic outlook of the region — which is being moulded by both the gifts of nature and deeds of humankind. The main motive that relies behind the idea of writing history on a temporally and spatially delineated period and geography, to a

[12] Held and Cummings, *Middle East Patterns*, 285.

certain extent, stems from the necessity that compels all the historians to take specific time and space out of a larger framework in order to contemplate on a specific time and space for intellectual exercise; and on the practical layer, this endeavour presupposes the perpetual interaction of two respective disciplines: history and geography, which in turn obligate historians to take a multi-dimensional perspective toward historical processes.[13] This can be the moment that one needs to mention Fernand Braudel. The Braudelian way of history writing could be a proper departure point in this journey. In this world, the Mediterranean Basin is fenced in as a consequence of a joint venture of history and geography.[14] In this world, the Syria and Palestine region constitutes the eastern most edge of the Mediterranean world, which encompasses the whole eastern Mediterranean coastal region from the Taurus Mountains to the Sinai Peninsula on the north-south line, and from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea to the blurry intersection point of the boundaries of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Arabia. However, within the context of this study, the Mediterranean coastal region is boiled down to a small littoral strip, which lies between the national borders of Turkey and Lebanon, and it obviously occupies a small portion of land area in the Syria and Palestine region. However it is the only maritime area of the post-Great War Syria — except Sanjak of Alexandretta — and had a vital importance for the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern policies of France — and in the ensuing years, for the regional policies of the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia thanks to its naval base in Tartous. It has crucial importance for both the regional history, physical, and human geography of the Syria and Palestine

[13] For more detailed discussion concerning the methodological comparison of the academic disciplines of history and geography in a critical manner, see Veyne's *Comment on écrit l'histoire*, 55–56. For a comprehensive consideration regarding the virtual expansion and contraction of a certain geographical region in historical process through the example of Mediterranean Basin see "la Méditerranée," "la Terre," and "la Mer" sections in Braudel's *La Méditerranée : l'espace et l'histoire*, 7–80.
[14] Braudel, *La Méditerranée : l'espace et l'histoire*, 16.

region. In this regard, one may argue that this small piece of land deserves a close attention more than its size suggests.

It is obvious that, on geographical terms, the borders of the Syrian nation-state do not reflect the absolute physical boundaries of Syria as a geographical region. The landmass within the political borders of today's Syrian Arab Republic, where one can also see the footprints of the mandate era, the physical geography can be examined through several different subregions. These subregions can be organised in a different manner according to the scale of the region under study here.[15] The harmony and / or antagonism between the different characteristics of the geography of Syria have forged Syria's geographical outlook. This is the dichotomy between the mountain ranges, which extend across the western edge of the region and include a series of valleys that are considered as the Asian part of the Great Rift Valley, and the extensive plateaus and vast plain zones of the eastern part of Syria.[16] On the regional level, a specific way of categorisation can be brought into play, that is, these two broad zones can be divided into eight subregions for a more perspicuous explanation and envisaging. These are Southwest Syria, Syrian Desert (*al-Bidayah*), High Mountains, Tadmor Ranges and the Central Mountains, Orontes or al-'Asi Valley, Coast and Coastal Mountains, Aleppo Plateau and Northern

[15] An academic study on the geography of Syria might certainly require a more detailed categorisation; and a more sophisticated classification would have been more convenient for a comparative study, which, as the matter of the fact that, needs to bring together the different methodological tools and equipments of two aforementioned disciplines; however neither the content nor the extent of this study is adequate for such an endeavour. On a different layer, one may also indicate the controversial nature and / or, to a lesser degree, inapt nature of the categorisation, which is taken as a departure point in this study. It can be certainly asserted that there are several different classifications other than the one, which is employed in this study. The region that is known as Alawite Region / State / Territory during the French mandate period roughly corresponds to Adel Abdulsalam's categorisation regarding the geography of Syria. For more detailed information about the geography of Syria and her coastal region, one may would like to look at Dubertret and Weulersse's *Manuel de Géographie*; Thoumin's *Géographie humaine de la Syrie Centrale*. Some other studies have been made, taking into account the economic organisation of the region such as Huvelin's *Que Vaut la Syrie?* and Himadeh, ed., *Economic Organization of Syria*.

[16] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 3.

Shamiyah, al-Jazirah and al-Furat (see Appendix A, Map 1).[17] The Coast and Coastal Mountains subregion of Syria is, au fond, part of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, which extends from the Taurus Mountains at the north to the southernmost tip of Palestine.[18] The region, where the Alawite statelet was once established, relies on two distinct geographical features: mountain chain and coastal plains.[19] The chain of mountains, which runs parallel to the coastline, has been called with different names in different sources. Names such as *Jabal al-Ladhiqiyah*, *Jabal Ansariya*, *Jabal an-Nusayria*, *Jabal al-Alawiyin*, *Jabal Bahra*, *Barglyus* and lastly in the post-independence era, the Coastal Mountain Range (*Silsilat al-Jabal as-Sahiliyah*) are employed for the same geographical unit in compliance with different historical and political connotations. Throughout this study, the chain of mountain is going to be mentioned as *Jabal an-Nusayriyah* in accordance with its widespread usage during the mandate era. The geographical projection of the Alawite State of the Mandate Syria — which ultimately demised in the 1940s as a political unit but has never ceased to function as a cultural subregion — can be reflected through the lens of a certain geographical subregion of semantically restricted Syria. The subregion of Coast and Coastal Mountains (see Appendix A, Map 2) can be seen as the main spatial site of this study with reference to the limited definition of the term in the aforementioned classification. The longitudinal coastal plain area extends throughout Syria's Mediterranean coast, with two distinguishable latitudinal enlargements in Latakia's hinterland and the environs of the Syrian–Lebanese border.[20] This subregion has come to the fore for its agriculturally productive lands, socio-economically vital port city of Latakia, and strategically important stationary ports of

[17] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 3.
[18] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 3.
[19] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 7.
[20] Held and Cummings, *Middle East Patterns*, 268.

Baniyas and Tartous[21] even before the establishment of the independent Syrian state. *Jabal an-Nusayriyah*, Anti-Lebanon Mountains and Mount Hermon occupy a great bulk of area right adjacent to the coastal plains of the Syria and Palestine region. The orogenic characteristics of *Jabal an-Nusayriyah* — which also explain the abundance of limestone in the region originating from Jurassic and Cretaceous periods — are formed by its eastern fault that vertically cuts out the connexion between the inner plains of Syria and *Jabal an-Nusayriyah*. This is the same fault that demarcates the western edge of Ghab Graben and northern tip of the Levant Rift System.[22] Homs Gap is one of the most important passes in the middle of this mountainous region[23] — and that is one of the most conceivable reasons that lied behind the erection of *Krak des Chevaliers* by Crusaders at that confluence. It has always been a perfect spot for an outpost.

Two distinct soil types that are observed throughout the region should be mentioned in the first place in order to conceive not only the main tenets of the economy — which essentially relies on agriculture — but also to contemplate on the historical relation between the region's inhabitants and nature which in turn encapsulates both of them within the same historical ecology. The main bulk of the soil in the coastal area — which lies between the two *al-Kabir* rivers on north and south edges of the region, and the watershed of the *Jabal an-Nusayriyah* in the east — is predominantly *terra rossa* (the red ferrallitic type), which is quite common in the Mediterranean basin, and at the heights of the mountainous region, *terra rossa-the brown forest soils type* is again prevalent. However, the vegetation cover of the soil is permanently damaged in these areas and the region's ecosystem has been

[21] Held and Cummings, *Middle East Patterns*, 268.
[22] Held and Cummings, *Middle East Patterns*, 268.
[23] Akkermans and Schwartz, *Archaeology of Syria*, 3–4.

deteriorating over the years due to the exhaustion of soil, which is actually fertile for cultivation.[24] In the middle part of the region, which lies between the karstic uplands and coastal line, one may observe different types of soil in a relatively small area: the *brown forest soils, terra rossa*, *rendzina* and *terra rossa-rendzina* mixture.[25]

Another important aspect of the geographical location of the country is its climate. Syria is considered as part of the subtropical climate zone and there is a major seasonal difference between summer and winter months. The annual precipitation rate of the region is to a large extent moulded by the mountain ranges, which occasions a sharp divide between the precipitation rates of the region's coastal and inner plains.[26] The region's coastal plains constitute the rainiest part of Syria and it has large arable lands and adequate human power. However due to the lack of sufficient and efficacious infrastructure and irrigation systems, limited use of machinery, the scope of the cultivated lands have remained limited even in the late 1970s.[27]

The coastal parts of the country are directly influenced by the seasonal cyclones and Mediterranean air masses, which have decisive effect on the nature and extent of precipitation.[28] The coastal region receives more rainfall than any other regions, and its rainy seasons are spring and autumn rather than winter, which is the season that the other parts of the country receive the main bulk of their yearly rainfall.[29] However, the region routinely witnesses drought periods — as every other

[24] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 13.
[25] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 13.
[26] Held and Cummings, *Middle East Patterns*, 270–271.
[27] Hatem, *Land of the Arabs*, 214.
[28] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 14.
[29] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 15.

region of the country but for sure to a lesser degree. In addition to its latitude, the climatic outlook of the region is determined by two significant physical features of the region: its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea and the elevation of its coastal mountains;[30] and these features are expediently being determinant on the level of humidity, which is quite high especially in the coastal plains over the course of sultry summer seasons.[31] Thunderstorms, lightning, and thunderbolts can also be frequently observed in the coastal region.[32] In addition to this, the natural phenomena as frost and hail can also be seen particularly in the mountainous parts of the region.[33] In this respect, one may also argue that the coastal region functions as a geographical barrier and / or gateway between the coastal and inner parts of Syria (see Appendix A, Map 3), and these orographic, topographic, and climatic features of the region could also be considered as valuable data for the investigation of the historical and contemporary demographics, and human geography of the region and country. In the coastal region, there are several different expressions concerning the regional climate and weather;[34] the local expressions in any kind — sayings, proverbs, idioms, and phrases etc. — can reveal the relation between inhabitants and nature of the region.

One of the most salient characteristics of the physical geography of the region is the relatively high number of the water resources in comparison with the other parts of Syria. This outcome is directly related to the comparatively large scale of annual precipitation of the region. However the inhabitants of the region cannot avail themselves to this relative abundance of water sources for domestic or commercial purposes due to the lack of and / or insufficient adequate infrastructure — i.e. weirs,

[30] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 16.
[31] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 17–18.
[32] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 17.
[33] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 18.
[34] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 18.

reservoirs, gullies, water supply networks, drainage systems and so on — and this engenders constant shortage of water.[35] One of the most dramatic changes that has influenced the vegetation cover of the region during the long course of natural history is gradual deforestation. In the remaining parts of the region's forests, the prominent species that can be observed are evergreen oak (*quercus ilex*) and pine (*pinus pinea*).[36] The chief rearing animal of Syria's coastal region was goat until the 1960s, as would be expected from a region where the altitude is so high.[37]

The demographic composition of Syria — in the word's narrow and current sense — points out that the country had a complex social outlook. The coastal region of the country had its own characteristics: the ingrained and ubiquitous power of the kinship ties, the inveterate and all-pervasive malevolence between different religious communities and sects, and last but not least, the interminable fissure between urban and rural dwellers generate a contentious social environment for the peoples of the region.[38] In the vernacular, there were / are plenty of expressions regarding rural settlements. The rural settlements have always been at the centre of the socio-economic life of the coastal region. The villages of the region are usually consisted of small number of kins, which generally overlap with each other at some point. The word *beit* (بيت) is customarily used for indicating this shared household attachment, which is based on patrilineal lineage. The regional language provides some distinct coinages for the words relating to rural life. For instance, the word *dhai'ah* (pl. *dhiya'*) has been frequently used for the village-like rural settlements, i.e. *qaryah* (قرية), which means hamlet and village in the common parlance of the region. The

[35] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 18.
[36] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 21.
[37] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 27.
[38] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 34–35 and 48–49.

city-dwellers, who have rural ties, could also refer to their villages as *al-balad* (البلد), which means hometown in this context. Some of the villages in the region have turned to several small settlements, which are known as *mazra'ah* (مزرعة). These settlements are usually founded on the circumjacent arable lands of the villages and mainly composed of a small number of farms and plantations.[39] Toponymy could also provide an insight into the demographic composition of these settlements from a linguistic perspective. For instance: The letter *b* is the prefix of several villages throughout the region, which means house in Aramaic. One may see the word *deir* in the names of several rural settlements, which have Christian origins, or the word *Arab* in the names of Bedouin settlements. The coexistence of words and idioms originating from different languages is quite prevalent throughout the coastal region;[40] and this situation can be considered as a reflection of the historically multi-layered demographic composition of the region.

1.2 The unobtrusive objects of *Wunderkammer*: Alawites and Alawite belief through the lens of two orientalists at the beginning of the twentieth century

The order of the words on the title, Alawites and Alawite belief, can be seen as a reflection of an informed choice. The renascent interest of the Europeans in Alawite belief, which was on the horizon right at the very beginning of the twentieth century, has emerged even before their inevitable encounter with the Alawite communities of the Syria and Palestine region during and after World War I. One may argue that the outsiders of the belief system had always considered the very nature of the Alawite creed, the relation between the Alawites and their belief system within an uncanny or even contentious manner. Revealing the concealed truth that lies behind the creed,

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[39] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 46–48.
[40] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 47.

which was conscientiously concealed by the believers for different purposes, had turned into an intriguing issue for some missionaries, orientalists, travellers, explorers, correspondents, scholars, authors, intelligence agents, civil and military officers.[41] However, Alawite people and Alawite belief system have remained, to a large extent, inscrutable in the eyes of Westerners till the very beginning of the twentieth century.[42] In 1900, time-honoured French orientalist René Dussaud, published his seminal work on the history of Alawites and Alawite belief system, The History and Religion of Nusayris (*Histoire et religion des Nosairîs*). In the

[41] For a detailed list of people from different occupational and academic backgrounds who study the history of Alawite people, Alawite belief system, and the geographical study of the area that is predominantly populated by Alawites; and works in different languages on these issues, see the bibliography part in René Dussaud's seminal work on Alawite creed and Alawites, *Histoire et religion des Nosairîs*, XIII–XXXV. In this bibliography, on the issues of physical and human geography, and topography of the northern Syria and Syrian littoral (today's Coast and Coastal Mountains Region of Syria), there are some valuable accounts as Guillaume-Rey's oeuvre which includes "Exploration de la montagne des Ansariés en Syrie," 50–52; "Rapport sur une mission dans le nord de la Syrie," 329–378; "Reconnaissance de la Montagne des Ansariés," 433–469; and "Essai géographie sur le nord de la Syrie," 337–348; Cahun's "Les Ansariés," 369–400; and some travelogues from an earlier period, the first quarter of the nineteenth century, like Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (1822) and Buckingham's *Travels among the Arab tribes inhabiting the countries east of Syria and Palestine, including a journey from Nazareth to the mountains beyond the Dead Sea, and from thence through the plains of the Hauran to Bozra, Damascus, Tripoly, Lebanon, Baalbeck, and by the valley of the Orontes to Seleucia, Antioch, and Aleppo* (1825) deserve to be mentioned at this point. The works that were written by the missionaries and evangelists more in the genres of ecclesiastical history, missionary diary and report are not mentioned in this part. Because even though there is invaluable information about the human and physical geography of the region in these works, such issues are not the focus of these works. However, it is important to point out that although it is not written in such a manner and by a proselytiser, the focus of Dussaud's *Histoire et religion des Nosairîs* is also religion. A partial list of scholars who work on Alawite belief system and Alawites, and some of their studies, and articles regarding the mentioned issues could be found in Tozlu's "Nusayrîler ve Nusayrîlik Bibliyografyası," 323–350. I would like to thank Ümit Fırat Açıkgöz for making this article available to me.

[42] Reverend Samuel Lyde is one of the vanguard English Christian missionaries of the nineteenth century, who lived and worked in the Near East, and founded a mission school for the Syrian Alawite community, which was established in Bhamra — a village within the administrative borders of today's Qardaha district. (Douwes, "Knowledge and Oppression: The Nusayriyya in the Late Ottoman Period," 158; Moosa, *Extremist Shiites*, 277.) Lyde's accounts on the northern Syria and its different religious creeds, *The Anseyreeh and Ismaeleeh: A Visit to the Secret Sects of Northern Syria with a View to the Establishment of Schools* (1853) and *The Asian Mystery Illustrated in the History, Religion and Present State of the Ansaireeh or Nusairis of Syria* (1860), can be regarded as the pioneering studies on Alawite belief system and its adherents (Bar-Asher, "The Iranian Component of the Nusayrī Religion," 223; Seale, *Asad*, 10). They can be considered as one of the earliest Western sources on the relevant subject. But it has also better to put an emphasis on the phrase Western sources because his depiction and description of Alawite belief system and its followers are largely based on another source, which is written in Arabic, *Kitab al-Mashyakha* (The Manual of the Sheikhs). His studies continued to remain one of the few Western sources on the issue until the publication of René Dussaud's study on Alawite belief system and the history of Alawite society (Seale, *Asad*, 10).

foreword, Dussaud expresses the scope and purpose of his academic work as follows:

> Ayant assuré les bases de la religion nosairî, nous avons cherché à déterminer les influences sous lesquelles elle s'est développée. Comme d'autre part, nous établissions que les Nosairîs uniquement considérés jusqu'ici comme une secte, étaient aussi un peuple installé depuis longtemps dans le pays, nous avons dû rechercher à quel groupe religieux se rattachait ce peuple, avant la transformation d'où est sortie la religion actuelle. Les documents sur les religions syriennes antérieures au christianisme ou ayant vécu en dehors de lui sont si rares qu'on ne peut négliger les survivances très nettes conservées chez les Nosairîs. Sans oser nous flatter d'avoir mis cette population à son rang parmi les multiples sectes syriennes de tous les temps, nous avons voulu signaler son rôle politique et religieux.[43]

Dussaud points out that in this academic study, Alawites are not merely considered in a religious context. He notes that Alawites are also regarded as a people who have lived in Syria for many years. He states that one of his aims in conducting this study is to ascertain which religion the Alawite people belonged to earlier. He also mentions that he will address the foundations of the Alawite belief system and will try to understand the political and religious role of the Alawite people in Syria.[44]

In his book, Dussaud expresses the penetration of the Ottoman administration into the region and the attitude towards the people of the region as follows:

> Depuis la mort d'Ismaël-beg, le Gouvernement turc a tourné tous ses efforts vers une administration directe. Le fait est accompli aujourd'hui : les fonctionnaires ottomans perçoivent l'impôt et lèvent des troupes; les grandes tribus sont désorganisées. Mais il a fallu à plusieurs reprises, notamment en 1870 et 1877, procéder à exécutions sommaires et envoyer des troupes pour dévaster la contrée. Au mois d'août 1870, l'agent russe à

[43] Dussaud, foreword to *Histoire et Religion des Nosairîs*, xi.
[44] Dussaud, foreword to *Histoire et Religion des Nosairîs*, xi.

> Lataquié adressait à son consul général à Beyrouth un rapport qui exposait la situation : « L'état des districts nosairîs est des plus misérables et des plus tristes. Il n'y a pour eux ni justice, ni sécurité. » Après avoir décrit la misère qui régnait dans le district de Lataquié, il ajoutait : « La situation du district de Djabalah est encore pire, les villages des Nosairîs sont dévastés par le pillage et l'incendie. Les percepteurs de dîmes, les fonctionnaires turcs et les amis du Qaimaqam font des injustices inouïes et leur enlèvent tout moyen d'existence. Les Nosairîs et leurs femmes arrivent en masse à Djabalah pour se plaindre devant le Qaimaqam, mais on les éconduit à coups de bâton sous les risées. »
>
> Parallèlement à cette action militaire, on tenta une pression religieuse. Quelques mosquées furent élevées dans la région ; mais comme au temps de Baibars, elles restèrent vides.[45]

Acting on a testimony, Dussaud describes the attitude of the Ottoman administration towards the local people in the last quarter of the century as indifference and humiliation through a high level state officer, a *qaimaqam* (highest ranked representative of the state in a provincial district) in Jableh, and looting, ill treatment, coerciveness through tax officers (tithe collectors) and military authorities. Dussaud also notes that religious pressure has been applied to the people of the region by the official authorities.

At the end of the part of his book that is dedicated on Alawite people's history, Dussaud draws his readers' attention to the fact that amongst all the peoples of the Syria, whose religion and language were Semitic, Alawites are the ones who have managed to preserve their dialect and religious doctrine.[46]

[45] Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairîs*, 38.
[46] Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairîs*, 40.

The book consists of two main chapters and the main bulk of the narration is devoted to Alawite belief system, which is discussed in the second chapter. The history chapter of the book, the first chapter, is entitled as The History of Nusayris (*Histoire des nosairîs*) and itself also consists of two subchapters: The Habitat of Nusayris - Their Origin (*L'habitat des nosairîs - Leur origine*) and Nusayris from the Roman Period to the Present Day (*Les nosairîs depuis l'époque romaine jusqu'a nos jours*). The subject that is examined under such assertive titles covers only forty pages of the book, whereas the chapter devoted to the subject of Alawite belief system consists of one hundred eighteen pages, not counting some other parts related to the issue in the appendix. In this sense, it can be argued that the history as such can only be complementary to give preliminary information on the issue for the sake of the main chapter. But this prioritisation does not change the fact that the book was once an important reference for the history of Alawite people at the turn of the twentieth century for Western scholarship.[47]

For those days' European scholarship and policy-making, most of the information on Alawite people and Alawite belief system was mainly based on this pioneering work, which maintains a more subtle and refined attitude towards the belief system and its adherents. He tries to trace the roots of the belief system and according to Bell, comes to a specific conclusion: it takes its roots from Phoenician tradition.[48] Dussaud asserts that the name of *Nosairî* is dated much earlier than Muhammad ibn Nusayr — a disciple of Hasan al-Akari — and also anterior to the name of *Nazarene*, which means Christian.[49] He argues that because they have remained isolated from the other peoples of the region, they have had a chance to

[47] Seale, *Asad*, 10.
[48] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, 175.
[49] Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairîs*, 14.

preserve "the practices of ancient Semitic cults," which had influenced their belief system even though they were not aware of the phenomenon.[50] If one may put aside the disputable nature of the argument, one could descry the shared mental framework of two contemporary gazes: On the one side there is a distinguished orientalist in the French tradition, René Dussaud, who is known for his pioneering works on Near East, and on the other side there is a "heroine," Gertrude Bell, who is regarded as a byword for the British colonialism in the Middle East.

One of the most acclaimed figures of the British oriental expeditions and colonial administration Gertrude Bell[51] spends some days within predominantly Alawite-inhabited areas of the Syria and Palestine region while she was on one of her early journeys, which dates to 1905. While her theoretical knowledge on Alawite creed and people mainly relies on René Dussaud's seminal work on the issue, she also takes her own experience as a departure point[52] and asserts that her interaction with the people of this area "leads [her] to adopt an attitude of benevolent

[50] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, 175.
[51] Gertrude L. Bell, along with Freya Stark and Colin Thubron, is regarded as one of the top three travellers who describe the city of Damascus in the twentieth century. See Foster, "Damascus," 311. Amongst them the only one who describes the city from a bygone era, from the pre-mandate Syria, is Bell. Her account contains her personal observations on and encounters in northern Syria and the social relations between the members of the local communities of the region. Bell's widely acclaimed book, *The Desert and the Sown* is therefore valuable for this study.
[52] Bell's 1905 journey to Syria and Palestine region has importance for contemporary scholars and readers because of certain interrelated reasons. First and foremost, it gives insight into both the urban and rural areas of the region in addition to the detailed information on its human geography. It was written before the years of global turmoil, when the Great War has been changing the course of history; and the demise and partitioning of the Ottoman Empire, which was even foreshadowed before the Great War, with the Italo–Turkish and Balkan Wars. Those are years that Syria and Palestine region could be seen as a completely integrated region, under the official rule of a central authority; even though the demarcation lines have already been erupted in specific places — as in the case of Lebanon — well before the Great War, for heralding the arrival of Cassandra. Her journal is also significant for its narrative style, which is mainly built on first person narration, which also reflects the cultural and intellectual background of one of the most eminent figures of the British Middle Eastern politics in early twentieth century. The book enables its readers to get first hand information on the region and its peoples with a refined outlook. The notes from the journey may be also considered as early sketches of a colonial policy-maker.

neutrality."[53] In her journey to the Syria and Palestine region, Bell witnesses the ingrained disparity between the manifold religious and ethnic communities of the region on social, cultural, economic and political layers and from this point forth she tries to show the tension between the communities through her own interactions with the local inhabitants of the region:

> The talk turned on religious beliefs. I began by asking about the Nosairiyyeh, but the Kadi pursed his lips and answered:
>
> > "They are not pleasant people. Some of them pretend to worship 'Ali and some worship the sun. They believe that when they die their souls pass into the bodies of other men or even animals, as it is in the faiths of India and of China."
> >
> > I said : " I have heard a story that they tell of a man who owned a vineyard, and the man died and left it to his son. Now the young man worked in the vineyard until the time of the harvest, and when the grapes were ripe a wolf entered in, and every evening he ate the fruit. And the young man tried to hunt him forth, and every evening he returned. And one night the wolf cried aloud : 'Shall I not eat of the grapes who planted the vines?' And the young man was astounded and he said : 'Who art thou ?' The wolf replied : 'I am thy father.' The young man answered : 'If thou art indeed my father, where did'st hide the pruning knife, for I have not found it since thy soul left thy body ! ' Then the wolf took him to the place where the pruning knife lay concealed, and he believed and knew it was his father."
> >
> > The Kadi dismissed the evidence. " Without doubt they are mighty liars," said he.[54]

Dussaud as also quotes the same tale:

> Voici un conte nosairî rapporté par un auteur druze qu'il faut en rapprocher, tout en reconnaissant que ce conte n'est peut-être qu'une satire :
>
> > — On raconte qu'un certain Nosairî possédait une vigne dans laquelle il avait travaillé pendant quelque temps avec son père jusqu'à la mort de celui-ci. On était à l'époque des raisins quand un loup s'installa dans la vigne.

[53] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, 175.
[54] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, 190–193.

> Chaque fois que le Nosairî venait, il trouvait le loup mangeant les raisins et le chassait. Ceci dura jusqu'à ce que fatigué, il décida de le tuer. Or, tandis qu'il s'apprêtait à le frapper de son arme, le loup lui dit : « Ô un tel, vas-tu tuer ton père parce qu'il prend quelques raisins de la vigne qu'il a fécondée sa vie durant par son travail? » Le Nosairî surpris d'entendre parler le loup s'écria : « Qui est mon père? » Le loup répondit : « Moi, car mon âme a émigré dans cette forme. Ceci est ma vigne que tu as cultivée avec moi. » Le Nosairî se souvint alors que son père avant de mourir avait caché dans la vigne une faucille. Après la mort de son père, il s'était aperçu de la disparition de la faucille, mais il n'avait pu la retrouver. « Si tu dis vrai, cria-t-il au loup, dis-moi où est la faucille avec laquelle nous coupions les sarments de vigne. » Le loup répondit : « Suis-moi, » et se dirigeant vers l'endroit où était la faucille : « La voici, » lui dit-il. Le Nosairî la prit et permit au loup de manger des raisins autant qu'il voudrait.[55]

Although it is not possible to say that Dussaud and Bell have referred to the same sources, it can be argued that this folk tale had a widespread circulation and it is obvious that it frequently used to illustrate Alawite belief, during the time when Dussaud and Bell wrote their accounts. Another point to note is that in both cases the tale is transmitted by people other than the Alawites.

Apart from her immediate interactions, Bell also gives place to her observations in the narration. She notices the absence of any conventional place of worship in Alawite belief as mosque or church, and the Alawite's sanctuaries, the shrines, which are erected in honour of sheikhs, also draw her attention.[56] From the viewpoint that Bell's interactions with the outsiders[57] unfold in front of her readers,

[55] Dussaud, *Histoire et Religion des Nosairîs*, 35–36.
[56] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, 213.
[57] At this point, for the Alawites' case, the word *outsiders* need to be highlighted. It can be plainly interpreted in terms of their religious and social norms and practices through a dichotomy between the adherents of the Alawite belief and followers of the other religious belief systems that one may observe in the respective area and country or, as an alternative way, it can be used as an open-ended broader category, which can be essentially defined in different terms for each and every us and them situation. In Bell's social interactions with the local people, she is the one, who can be considered as an outsider hence the outsiders of the Alawite community that she interacts with get into interaction with her knowing that she is a common outsider.

the cultural codification of these sanctuaries, the community's religious norms, obligations and practices are perceived in a sanctimonious manner and one may behold the exasperation between the lines.

> Of the Nosairis Mahmud had much to tell, for he was well acquainted with the hills in which they live, having been for many years employed in collecting the capitation tax among the sect. They are infidels, said he, who do not read the Kur'an nor know the name of God. He related a curious tale which I will repeat for what it is worth :
>
> " Oh lady, it happened in the winter that I was collecting the tax. Now in the month of Kanun el Awwal (December) the Nosairis hold a great feast that occurs at the same time as the Christian feast (Christmas), and the day before, when I was riding with two others in the hills, there fell a quantity of snow so that we could go no further, and we sought shelter at the first village in the house of the Sheikh of the village. For there is always a Sheikh of the village, oh lady, and a Sheikh of the Faith, and the people are divided into initiated and uninitiated. But the women know nothing of the secrets of the religion, for by God ! a woman cannot keep a secret. The Sheikh greeted us with hospitality and lodged us, but next morning when I woke there was no man to be seen in the house, nothing but the women. And I cried : ' By God and Muhammed the Prophet of God ! what hospitality is this ? and there no men to make coffee but only women ?' And the woman replied : ' We do not know what the men are doing, for they have gone to the house of the Sheikh of the Faith, and we are not allowed to enter.' Then I arose and went softly to the house and looked through the window, and by God ! the initiated were sitting in the room, and in the centre was the Sheikh of the Faith, and before him a bowl filled with wine and an empty jug. And the Sheikh put questions to the jug in a low tone, and by the Light of the Truth I heard the jug make answer in a voice that said : 'Bl.. bl…' And without doubt, oh lady, this was magic. And while I looked, one raised his head and saw me. And they came out of the house and seized hold of me and would have beaten me, but I cried : ' Oh Sheikh ! I am your guest ! ' So the Sheikh of the Faith came forth and raised his hand, and on the instant all these that had hold of me released me. And he fell at my feet and kissed my hands and hem of my coat and said : ' Oh Hajji ! if you will not tell what you have been seen I will give you ten mejides ! ' And by the Prophet of God (upon him be peace !) I have never related it, oh lady, until this day."[58]

[58] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, 233–235.

In one of her another interactions with a local inhabitant, she witnesses a similar inimical and discourteous attitude:

> He [one of her guides, Ibrahim] also informed me that the Nosairis who inhabited the adjoining villages were unpleasant neighbours.
>
> " There is feud between you? " said I.
>
> " Ey wallah ! " said he with emphatic assent, and related in illustration the long story of a recent conflict which, as far as it was comprehensible, seemed to have been due entirely to the aggressions of the Armenians.
>
> " But you began the stealing," said I when he had concluded.
>
> " Yes," said he. " The Nosairis are dogs." And he added with a smile: " I was imprisoned in Aleppo for two years afterwards."
>
> " By God ! you deserved it," said I.
>
> " Yes," said he, as cheerfully as ever.[59]

In the absence of any dissenting view on the issue, even though Bell has raised a critical approach, she may prompt her readers to think through an adumbrated way, which may confine them into a parochial approach. But at least, it can be asserted that the attitudes towards Alawite people in the region were not always amicable and / or deferential.

1.3 From La Madelon to Lili Marleen: Europe on trenches

Examining and / or studying any sort of issue related to the history of the modern Middle East requires a multi-layered scrutinisation and insightful consideration process. Besides the field studies regarding the region and the debates concerning its historiography, anyone who aspires to study the region's histories — that is, the

[59] Bell, *The Desert and the Sown*, 329.

histories moulded with a wide array of inflated prefixes such as -pre, -pro, -post; and periodisations as classical, modern, colonial, independent, and so forth — in an analytical and critical manner, should also consider the main tenets and breaking points of modern European history, because of Europe's ineffaceable and transformative impact on the Middle East. By doing so, one's scope of view might encompass the fundamental aspects of the modern history of the region. However, according to Skocpols' notion of concurrent world-time, dealing with modern history also necessitates the recurrent construction of some positive and / or negative way correlations and associations between the ongoing processes and historical factualisations, and theoretical conceptualisations — such as colonialism, capitalism, nation-state, violence etc. — of the specific periods of time.[60] That is the reason why beginning with the overall political and economic picture of Europe during the Interwar period — a term that bears the trace of European history — is considered as a necessity for the sake of this study.

The Interwar period witnessed significant fluctuations in the realms of international relations, politics and economics. Contrary to some domineering arguments of the period, it can be asserted that throughout the Interwar years, the notion of power was very much at the centre of the international relations, and moreover, in this study it is argued that the international relations of the period were dominated by / through several balances of the threats perceived by different parties

[60] On the one hand, the aforementioned amalgamation of multi-layered examination of the modern history of the Middle East is being constructed within the framework of the intermingled histories and historicities, which have been mentioned in the same place. On the other hand, the historical and prevailing hierarchy between these histories and historicities also deserve an in-depth questioning. In this respect, the one who wisely considers to define the peculiar nature of this historicisation may aptly use the term *double distanciation*, which is originally coined by Daniel Neep to clarify the complex relation between the three distinct histories, — the history of Western modernity, the history of colonialism, and the history of violence — which have a great impact on the region's destiny. For further information see Neep, introduction to *Occupying Syria*, 1–2.

— in the form of states, interest groups, alliances, classes etc. The gradual strengthening of political ideologies that challenge the established world order, and the weakening of the imperious liberal democratic worldview proceeded side by side. Economic means and capabilities, as might be expected, preserved their importance and competition for the foreign markets became an integral part of economic policies of the great powers. Middle East received its share from the changes that occurred during this particular period of time due to those aforementioned transnational phenomena alongside of the regional and local level determinants; and in the Middle Eastern context while Britain was reaching the pinnacle of her power in the region, France humbly had to contend herself with a runner-up prize.

The decisive victory of the Allied Powers at the Great War propelled some authors from the Anglophone world to consider the international relations in a more liberal fashion. Following the establishment of the League of Nations in the line of winning parties on 10 January 1920, these authors assertively argued that "the elimination of power from international relations" might be achieved through the preservation of the status quo in this newly arrived era.[61] But on the contrary, the Interwar period witnessed the ascendance of power politics[62] and was concluded by another war. E. H. Carr[63] contends that the struggle between the victorious and

[61] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 103.
[62] The concept of power politics has always been a central — yet controversial by definition — concept for the theories of international relations; and it is primarily employed by E. H. Carr, and Hans Joachim Morgenthau. Morgenthau defines international politics as a struggle for power and indicates that there is not any distinction between other sorts of politics and international politics. See Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 25.
[63] Besides regarded as an established historian, E. H. Carr is also one of the founding figures of the academic discipline of international relations. Carr is widely considered as a realist theoretician with regard to his conclusions considering the essence of international relations. His *The Twenty Years Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* is still one of the most comprehensive publications on the historical narration and analysis of the Interwar period, although he has often been criticised both in his lifetime and after his demise, concerning the methodological framework and units of analysis that he has presented in the field of international relations.

defeated countries should not be considered in a rigid dichotomy between morality, which is, as one would expect, associated to the victorious party, and read in most places as military power, which is linked to the defeated ones as might be expected. Carr claims that the issue of power was at the heart of the struggle for both, independently of the realm of morality.[64] The Locarno Treaties that were signed between France, Belgium, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Italy and Poland in 1925 are adduced as the concrete instance of this power politics by Carr, and thus he argued that the reciprocal threat between Germany and France revealed itself after these treaties,[65] which were concluded immediately after the termination of the military occupation of the Ruhr Region of Germany by France and Belgium. Justin Rosenberg argues that Carr is considering the state as the nonpareil / foremost agent in this international system. He states that Carr's argument regarding the state control over economy is deficient because his evaluation omits the decisiveness of economy on politics and interwoven nature of the world economy. Rosenberg argues that although Carr is aware of the artificiality of the distinction between politics and economy, he does not consider economy's influence over politics. Rosenberg also presents the constraints of the notions that begin with *national* such as national economy, national policy etc.[66] However, it could also be stated that the states are the ones that declare war to each other. In this regard, it can be argued that even though the struggle between the parties — in the form of national governments, dominant classes, alliances of convenience etc. — for supremacy is not confined to the national borders, and specific domains as politics, military and economics, the national borders and domains still constitute the major fronts of the warfare, if one considers the locations and motives of the theatres and campaigns of two World Wars.

[64] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 105.
[65] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 105–106.
[66] Rosenberg, "What's the matter with Realism?," 287–288.

If the foreign policies of the great powers and their respective strategic movements could be considered within the context of their military power vis-à-vis each other, one of the most salient motivations that induce them to acquire some of their overseas possessions could be understood. For instance, it is being argued that military concerns rather than economic ones, chiefly motivated the acquisition of German colonies in Africa by France and Britain after the Great War.[67] In that argument, the emphasis was on concern rather than power, that is to say, in this study, it is acknowledged that the alliances of the Great War and Interwar period were constructed on certain balances of threat[68] on various degrees and realm regardless of their factuality.

Beginning from the early 1920s but precisely in the 1930s, the favourable public perception regarding the liberal democracies, which had come into existence following the victory of the Allied Powers, began to be challenged by the then-burgeoning idea of fascism,[69] which took its first footholds chronologically in Italy, Germany, Portugal and Spain with the accession of its advocates of every stripe to power during the Interwar period. It can be argued that, together with the Russian Revolutions of 1917, the decisive victory of the Red Army at the end of the Russian Civil War and the rise of radical and revolutionary ways of making politics in some countries such as Germany, the emergence of fascist states posed a significant challenge to the established world order that had been formed in line of the political regimes of the victors of the Great War.

[67] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 112.
[68] On the notion of balance of threat, Stephen Martin Walt, who coined the term, points out that there are more than one reason for constructing an alliance and that states usually ally with each other in two particular ways: either coming together with other threatened states in the face of a perceived prime threat, which is defined as *balancing*; or to assure themselves by forming alliances with the threatening state, which is defined as *bandwagoning*. See Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," 4.
[69] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 143.

One particular point that can be indicated regarding the Great War is the fact that the economies of the involved parties were profoundly organised by the political authorities for the war effort.[70] Carr states that it is the Great War that for the first time in history, diminishing the economic power of a rival became an integral part of warfare, and that it is the same war that the planned economies emerge from, at first in Germany, and then in others, for the cause of total warfare.[71] However, it can also be argued that, even from a sovereign state's point of view, there was an aspiration to install its hegemonic control over the whole economic resources of a country for foreign policy purposes, it was and is unattainable for any state to provide such a great scale control over the economy, which was and is not completely formed on national terms.[72] Capital investment, which had been employed as an important tool for imperialism throughout the nineteenth century, lost its hold over the policies of European countries due to the discernible decrease in the total amount of universal surplus capital and bankruptcy of numerous possible borrowers following the Great War.[73] At this point, it is also important to mention that capital flows would not be under the direct control of the governments. Because even as the states functioned as determinants and facilitators, the export of capital was and is a process that is moulded by the interaction of several intermingled determinants.[74] Jostling for the markets has become the chief concern of the rival powers during the Interwar period. Carr point outs that the creditor parties often stipulated the disbursement of a certain amount of the proceeds within the borders of the relevant creditor country; and enunciates that reciprocal trade agreements were the main pillars of prior process of

[70] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 115.
[71] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 115–116.
[72] Rosenberg, "What's the matter with Realism?," 288.
[73] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 125–126.
[74] Rosenberg, "What's the matter with Realism?," 288.

marketisation, and that having a great political power was both the cause and consequence of this process.[75]

Purchasing power, standard of living, population and market size have become the main determinants of the economy of the Interwar period instead of price, being able to produce and production capacity.[76] The year 1919 heralded the ascendancy of British power throughout the world, even though some of the most enduring and vexed questions of the era, i.e., the Irish Home Rule movement and the following Irish struggle for independence, the emergence of rival naval powers such as the US and Japan, had already begun to reveal themselves on internal and external levels. Britain took the advantage of her relative economic robustness and free trade policy, which, most of the time enabled her to assume control over dependent and foreign markets without any direct political intervention. There was no other global power that could assert such a large scale of influence on the world. Britain reaped the benefit of this economic and political outlook; thus she presented herself as a proponent of the independence of "small nations" and therefore she consented or conceded, and thereafter recognised, the independence of Egypt and Iraq respectively, unlike France who was, to a large extent, hamstrung in Syria and Lebanon.[77]

Regardless of the motives, policies, means, practices, and experiences of the two occupying forces, the common ground of the British and French rule in the region was the legal framework, and by extension, the form of government, viz. the mandate system, which was not only established in the former territories of the

[75] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 127–128.
[76] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 129.
[77] Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, 130–131.

Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, but also in the former colonies of the German Empire in Africa by Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations — itself established by the initiation of the Allied Powers. The system came into force on 28 June 1919; and following the demise of the League of Nations and the establishment of the United Nations, it was replaced by the trusteeship system. In the following part of the subchapter, the formation of the mandate states in the Middle East will be briefly addressed.

1.4 Mandate State Formation in the Syria and Palestine region

In the Middle Eastern context, colonialism cannot be merely seen as a simple reflection of a practice that prevailed for a certain period of time in the history of humanity. It also entails the emergence of a new form of colonisation under the title of mandate states. It is also a new form of government, which was entirely moulded for the exigencies of the Interwar era. Whereas there were great differences and bifurcations on the level of practice, the charter of the mandate system entailed a preordained and restricted legal framework for British and French colonial authorities, despite the fact that these countries were the ones that induced the establishment of the League of Nations. The colonies, dominions and protectorates of the British and French colonial empires have remained intact after the Great War. However, the Interwar period demonstrated a profound transformation of political systems. The period witnessed the emergence of a new form of governance, that is to say, the mandate states. However, these states do not constitute a uniform political system. According to the charter of the mandate system, there are three distinct categories: Class A, Class B, and Class C mandates; and the formation processes of

the mandate states essentially differ from one category or even one instance to another.

According to this classification, the regions categorised as Class A mandates consist of former Ottoman territories. The regions categorised as Class B mandates cover the colonies of the German Empire in Africa while the regions classified as Class C mandates consist of the territories of the German Empire in the Pacific region except Namibia. In the Covenant of the League of Nations, one particular article indicates what criteria the classification is based on. According to the Article XXII of the respective covenant:

> 1. To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.
> 2. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.
> 3. The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances.
> 4. Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.
> 5. Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will

> guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League.
> 6. There are territories, such as South-West Africa and certain of the South Pacific Islands, which, owing to the sparseness of their population, or their small size, or their remoteness from the centres of civilisation, or their geographical contiguity to the territory of the Mandatory, and other circumstances, can be best administered under the laws of the Mandatory as integral portions of its territory, subject to the safeguards above mentioned in the interests of the indigenous population.
> 7. In every case of mandate, the Mandatory shall render to the Council an annual report in reference to the territory committed to its charge.
> 8. The degree of authority, control, or administration to be exercised by the Mandatory shall, if not previously agreed upon by the Members of the League, be explicitly defined in each case by the Council.
> 9. A permanent Commission shall be constituted to receive and examine the annual reports of the Mandatories and to advise the Council on all matters relating to the observance of the mandates.[78]

As indicated by this detailed article, these regions have been primarily classified according to their economic, social and political development levels. On the other hand, it is also stated that in each region, different arrangements can be made considering the geographical and cultural characteristics of the region. The common feature of these regions, regardless of their category, is that they will be in the custody of the mandatory powers.

In the Middle East, the only prevailing legal framework for the former territories of the Ottoman Empire was designated as Class A mandates. However, as one may expect, even within the same legal framework, the distinctions were

[78] *The treaty of peace and the covenant of the League of Nations: as negotiated between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany*, 54–56.

manifold on the level of pursuance. In this part of the subchapter, alongside the recurring theme of the connexion between violence, colonialism and state formation, there will also be a shrouded emphasis on the distinction between the pre-Great War and Interwar colonialisms. In this regard, one may argue that the Middle Eastern mandate systems point to a unique subcategory within the main category, consisting of different practical, temporal and spatial dimensions of colonialism and state formation. Their peculiarity, to a lesser degree, stems from the different practices of the French and British colonialisms. However the experiences of the same colonial power could also be diametrically opposed to each other. In this respect, the mandate systems deserve a closer examination. Throughout this part of the subchapter, the formation processes of the mandate states are going to be discussed within that context.

In the Syrian case, Neep argues that the concept of colonial violence should not be only considered as a category for instrumental means, which were used by the French colonial administration to maintain her rule in Syria. More than that, it refers to "the power characteristic of the modern world," which colonised the social field of violence in Syria.[79] From this departure point on, Neep claims that, first and foremost, the French Mandate for Syria can provide a frame and also capacity for discernment in order to understand the state-building process(es) both in colonial and non-colonial instances; and on a more methodological level, it can also point out the micro-level reflections of violence, which are usually omitted, or underestimated in the macro-level theoretical studies.[80]

[79] Neep, introduction to *Occupying Syria*, 2.
[80] Neep, introduction to *Occupying Syria*, 2.

In Palestine, the final retreat of the Ottoman forces from Jerusalem and the successive proclamation of the Allied military control in Palestine indicate a sea-change in the political landscape of the region. The declaration of the martial law in Palestine revealed the convergent interests and intentions of the Military Administration and the Zionist forerunners. The Military Administration was loath to make any political concession in favour of the Zionists and / or any attempt to change the institutional structure of the region in a drastic way until the settlement of a peace treaty, which would have eventually terminated its function. However the Zionist vanguards were zealously advocating for the immediate realisation of the covenants, which had been secured with the conclusion of Balfour Declaration of 1917.[81] From the standpoint of the Military Administration, the Jewish settlers of Palestine were to be considered equal citizens of Palestine, along with the other ones, and the Zionist Commission should represent the Jewish community and function for the interests of the Jewish citizens. However for the Zionist Commission, the precursor of the Chartered Company, the commission was to be treated as an equal partner of the Military Administration; and the Military Administration should consult each and every detail regarding the administration of Palestine to this commission.[82]

On the northern part of the region, after the termination of the tentative military regime of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration, and the dissolution of the short-lived Arab Kingdom of Syria, the French colonial regime gradually allowed a very restricted degree of self-governance to the constituent parts of the Mandate of Syria and Lebanon — the State of Syria, Alawite State, Jabal Druze

[81] Marlowe, *Account of the Palestine Mandate*, 66.
[82] Marlowe, *Account of the Palestine Mandate*, 74.

State, Sanjak of Alexandretta, Greater Lebanon — with the first elections which were held during the 1920s. However, the French influence on the Mandate of Syria deepened the disintegration of the region and dissociated Syria and Iraq.[83]

The British control in Palestine can only be conceived within its multi-layered structure. The connexion between Islam and Arab nationalism should also be taken into consideration in order to understand the rule that was once established by the British Empire in the region. The outcomes of the World Islamic Congress, which was held in 1931, in Jerusalem, and the succeeding process exemplifies British ascendency over the highest established Muslim authority of the mandate, Haj Amin al-Husseini, who was then the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the President of the Supreme Muslim Council.[84] According to some of the Arab nationalist circles, Haj Amin al-Husseini's relations with the British high commissioners and his dependency on British presence in the region could be seen as a replica of the colonial system, which has been established in India on sectarian lines by the colonial authorities.[85] However, it should also be noted that this relationship was reciprocal and the mandate regime was also in quest of legitimacy for its rule in the region.

[83] Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 113.
[84] The Supreme Muslim Council was established by the colonial regime. The prime concerns of the colonial authorities were embodying an institution, which could oversee the internal affairs of the local Muslim community and eventually operate as a local and legitimate defender of the colonial policies (Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 103). The Supreme Muslim Council can be seen as one of the most significant and crucial institutions of the Interwar period in Palestine. Throughout the mandate years, the council functioned as a overseer, mediator, fund provider for the Muslim community; and it was considered as the chief official establishment for the Palestinian Muslims' representation before the British colonial authorities and the League of Nations (Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 104). For a detailed account of the office and its function, see Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 30–34.
[85] Matthews, introduction to *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 6.

In Palestine, the expansion of the mandate bureaucracy consequentially revealed the conflicting ethos of the British and Arab societies. The local members of the mandate state's bureaucracy found themselves in a double bind: On the one hand, there was intensification of the nationalist sentiments among the educated cadres of the young Arab bureaucrats; on the other hand, there was also a system of values, which has been imposed by British officials.[86] The civil service became an alluring opportunity for the educated youth of Palestine; and this circumstance had some direct repercussions on the socio-political life of the mandate. On the one hand, it reduced the influence of the nationalist circles on the educated youth, and on the other hand it begot frictions, or even enmities, between the Muslim Palestinians, who began to demand for more in the distribution of the public offices in the latter half of the 1920s, and the Christian Palestinians, who were proportionally more dominant in the offices.[87]

The reciprocal relation between the phenomena of violence and colonialism, and their respective histories introduce their interwoven story under the title of colonial violence. The definition of this concept is also indicating an ongoing process. The concept resembles a ketch, which relies on two distinct masts: colonialism and violence. Its essence entirely depends on the one who plays the second fiddle. Colonisation is contingent upon the ineluctable and sedulous use of violence. Hence, violence becomes an integral part of the colonial order. But, colonialism itself is also a part of omnipotent and omnipresent praxis of violence. In this regard, the French mandate regime in Syria might be seen as one of the repercussions of this incessant process. On the issue of the establishment and

[86] Matthews, introduction to *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 4–5.
[87] Matthews, introduction to *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 172.

maintenance of the mandate regime in Syria, the state apparatus, in Althusserian terms, which refers to both the penetrating and possessive metropolitan state and the fragile and bourgeoning mandate state at the same time, puts colonial violence in effect both for the abstract and concrete forms of the order. But in return, "the social field of violence was colonised by those effects of power characteristics of the modern world."[88] In the Syrian case, the long-established French colonial state and the ever new Syrian mandate and nation states engender a double curse, as it were, for the peoples of the region. In the Syrian case, it can be argued that the state-building process is procreated by both the indigenous forces of the country — who may be considered as the ardent and defiant members of the insurgence of the country and also as the chief actors of the process of resignation/submission to colonial forces — and the impertinent, and simultaneously, waxing and waning power of the French colonial state. That is why one may assert that the essence of the state in Syria, and with reference to Syrian experience, in more broad terms, the concept of mandate state as such, has been the product of superimposed experiences — which, in an ironic manner, moulded by the colonial and anti-colonial veins — from the very beginning. It can be noted that the unceasing state-building process in the Syria and Palestine region has been, besides other determinants, constructed on this everlasting discrepancy.

The newly emerged competing interests of the state, which was essentially vigorous and modifying, and the society, which was fundamentally autonomous and self-regulating, may be more explicitly observed in the colonial socio-political contexts. This new discrepancy between the state and society could also enlighten us

[88] Neep, introduction to *Occupying Syria*, 2.

about the gradual shift, which takes place in the minds and practice, from the use of violence as a disciplinary mean to its use for the corrective and / or civilising agenda. This sort of employment of violence stems from a certain form of rationality and in this respect, one may argue that the use of violence for corrective and / or civilising purposes is forged by the presupposition of the inferiority and subservience of the respective colonised society by the colonisers.[89] On societal level, to a large extent, the Druze and Circassians, and to a lesser extent, the Alawites, Kurds, and Bedouins were perceived as more generous springs of violence, rather than the major constituent of the Syrian society, Sunni Muslim Arabs.[90]

In the Palestinian context, the multifaceted relations between the local Arab leadership, the mandate government, and the people engendered a complex socio-political grid. The constant monitoring of the people for disciplinarian purposes, and the adaptation of the revamped strategies under new circumstances became part of the repertoire of "the system of colonial control."[91] The social, political, economic, and cultural life of Mandate Palestine was substantially under the sway of British colonial power. The regime established its coercive rule over the region through its mandate government; hence the largest local Arab political party, Independence Party (*Hizb al-Istiqlal* / حزب الاستقلال) opted to track the footsteps of the Indian experience — specifically its leader Mahatma Gandhi — and maintained a disobliging political but civil stance toward the colonial authorities.[92]

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[89] Neep, *Occupying Syria*, 45.
[90] Neep, *Occupying Syria*, 46.
[91] Matthews, introduction to *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 7.
[92] Matthews, introduction to *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 7.

The British rule in Palestine was advocating for equality on religious and communal representation for the sake of their administration. The British rule in India — which positions the raj as a mediator and umpire for the disputes and conflicts that erupt amongst different religious communities and groups — was modelled by the British colonial authorities, who were again charged with the establishment of order in the different parts of the empire. The mandate government in Palestine, to a large extent, exercised the role of the raj, and the government treated the peoples of the region as "a collectivity of religious communities." The British Empire installed her authority in Palestine through miscellaneous tools to fulfil the different necessities of her unsteady rule. Her rule essentially relied on the involved relation of the newly established mandate bureaucracy and traditional local dignitaries, therefore the continuation of the regime was contingent on the coherence of these constituent parties.[93]

Because the borders of the region had been once demarcated by the colonial powers, the reintegration of the Arab peoples was principally perceived as a penultimate goal of their complete independence. From the viewpoint of some of the Arab nationalists, Arab unity was also considered as a telling herald of the demise of the colonial rule, which was undergirded by the fragmented socio-political structure of the Arab people (not with *s*) and the collaborative attitude of some Arab elites. During the Interwar period, a substantial portion of Arab nationalists perceived the establishment of a nation-state, which unites the Arab people (not with *s*) and the

[93] Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 103.

integration of this state into the international system as the only way to be an integral part of the modern world.[94]

The discourse of the civilising mission is actually imbued with violence in practice. From the French colonial perspective, the modern French state introduces the mandate regime in a premodern land; and she uses the discourse of primitivism and progress when she is defining the concept of violence. The concepts such as public interest, private profit, political resistance, premodern banditry were always conceived within the boundaries of this mental framework.[95] The instruments of the colonial order essentially resemble the tools of the contemporary state apparatus. When one compares the discourses of the contemporary nation-states and colonial states, because of their self-attained role in a foreign land, the latter has one salient complementary feature: The truth regime of colonialism — which is essentially based on the idea of gradual civilisation of the colonised indigenous peoples.[96] From the viewpoint of the colonial state, the coercive methods of colonial administration could be seen as counterbalancing measures of the established order in the face of undisciplined, immature, untamed, and benighted peoples of the region.[97] But as it is indicated in this study, the means of the colonial regime might also be wielded by the colonised for their own causes against the colonisers.

A well-developed analogy, which indicates both the similarities and dissimilarities between the distinct implementations of the two colonial administrations, of the French and British states, may provide a telling category of

[94] Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation*, 132.
[95] Neep, *Occupying Syria*, 76.
[96] Neep, *Occupying Syria*, 76.
[97] Neep, *Occupying Syria*, 45.

analysis for us. The newly emerged, post-Great War product mandate regimes might bear some resemblances and at the same time differences to their antecedents, the pre-mandate colonies. The demographically, politically, and economically differentiated structure of the Syria and Palestine region enables the colonial powers to pursue various forms of strategies. To a large or small extent, the alliances that were constituted between the actors of the colonised and coloniser states, deliberately and malevolently emphasised and exploited, the deep-rooted conflicts amongst the peoples of the region were disregarded or even exploited by the colonial powers. The limited enhancement and revitalisation of the infrastructure and public utilities, and arbitrary and unilateral control over the fiscal and monetary regimes of the mandates can be seen as the distinct examples of the commonalities of the two forms of colonial administration in the region. In this regard, one may conclude that studying the colonial past of Syria also necessitates an in-depth look at other forms colonial rules not only in the region, but also on a more broad level, in other parts of the world.

1.5 The slippery ground over which contemporary Arab nationalism and patriotism rises during the mandate era

The 1920s witnessed raft destructions throughout the Middle East from Morocco to Syria; almost all the struggles fought against European colonisation ended in calamity.[98] British Mandates for Palestine and Mesopotamia, and French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon were categorised as separate legal entities, under the name of Class A mandates, which classified them independent of any colonial structure but under the auspices of a mandatory country.[99] The political sphere that once covered

[98] Choueiri, "Nationalisms in the Middle East: The Case of Pan-Arabism," 303.
[99] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 14.

almost all the Middle East shattered with the establishment of these states and then crumbled away with the emergence of several statelets / administrative units within these states.[100]

After the attenuation of the resistance to foreign rule in the rural areas, the cities became the main spots of the social and political life in the post-Great War period. The introduction of monarchical and republican systems can be seen as the reflections of the policies that were carried out by the colonial powers in different colonised countries, which thoroughly change the course of history. The presence or absence of European settlers in a colonised country — specifically in Palestine and Maghreb — may be seen as an important feature of the political life in that respective country.[101]

Creating alliances, in one way or another, with prominent figures on local and regional levels could be considered as one of the common traits of the colonial administrations. In the post-Great War Middle East, this practice was carried out in both British and French mandates.[102] Several tribal sheikhs and landowners, who can be generically classified as conservative social forces — formed the main basis of these alliances; even though, some of them initially struggled against the British and French invasions.[103] The notorious policy of divide and rule, which was re-enacted in the shape of sectarian, ethnic, and religious discrimination and factionalism, can be seen as another conspicuous hallmark of the colonial administration.[104]

[100] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 14.
[101] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 15–16.
[102] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 12.
[103] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 12.
[104] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 13.

The total amount of the money, which was allocated for the necessary outlay of the colonies, was meagre; and the expenditures related to security issues comprised the main bulk of the colonies' budgets. Appropriating funds for the domestic expenditures of the colonies was customarily seen as a last resort. Issuing a local currency pegged to the official currency of the metropolitan country is another salient characteristic of the colonial administrations, which unequivocally impairs the fiscal and monetary regime of colonies[105] — or further than that, one may even contend that this prevalent order must have precluded the formation of any sort of fiscal and monetary policy in real terms.

The colonial administrations, which were established in the Middle East after the Great War, were, to a large extent, obligated to honour the commercial treaties that had been concluded by the Ottoman governments, until the end of the term of agreements in 1930; and predictably this aggravated situation made these states vulnerable in the face of external determinants.[106] Even though there are some counter instances that one may observe, each and every ebb and flow in the social, political, economic or military situation of the metropolises, France and Britain, could have tilted the balance in the colonised country.[107]

It was the Syria and Palestine region, where one may see the dawn of modern Arabism.[108] At the beginning of the twentieth century, pan-Arabism was formed as a cultural revivalist movement, which was mounted on several reform and modernisation programmes, and it bares the indelible trace of the nineteenth century.

[105] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 13.
[106] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 13.
[107] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 14.
[108] Choueiri, "Nationalisms in the Middle East: The Case of Pan-Arabism," 305.

This revivalist approach leads the people to re-conceive the historical phenomena in the light of the imputed magnificent Arab splendour of the foregone centuries for two apparent practical reasons: to give grounds to both decline and revival.[109]

The definition of nationalism in the Arab context differs utterly according to its geographical scope and political reception; and this phenomenon has a momentary impact on Arab politics,110 especially after the eventual partition of the Middle East with the Great War. In this respect, one may argue that the connexion between local patriotism and overarching Arab nationalism is parallel with the one between oil and water, i.e. two immiscible liquids, which cannot form a mixture because of the difference in their densities, but they are able to coexist side by side.

[109] Choueiri, "Nationalisms in the Middle East: The Case of Pan-Arabism," 298.
[110] Choueiri, "Nationalisms in the Middle East: The Case of Pan-Arabism," 303.

CHAPTER 2

SYRIA UNDER FRENCH MANDATE DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The formation process of the Alawite State (see Appendix A, Map 4), or in broader sense Syrian state, should not be considered as mere reflection of French colonial practices on to a certain colonised locality. The main argument of this chapter is based on the idea that the formation of the state mechanism(s) in the mandated area, as an entity, has an eclectic nature considering its characteristics; it can be seen as a superimposition. It is composed on and by the extant legacy of the Ottoman Empire, the ingrained colonial practices of the French Colonial Empire, and last but not least the explicit and implicit impacts of the colonisation on the individuals and society as a whole in the region i.e. all sorts of physical, emotional, and mental processes[111] that had been experienced by the peoples of the Syria[112] throughout the quarter-century story of the French mandate.

In this chapter, the major features of the mandate rule in Syria during the Interwar period are examined through two distinct aspects of the issue: at first, the major deeds and verdicts performed and concluded by France in the mandated region, which ought to have conveyed her ultimate goals that are going to be

[111] By saying that, along with other parameters, it is argued that the state mechanism in the Alawite State, and on broader sense in the Syrian state, was established on the explicit and implicit impacts of the colonisation on the individuals, and peoples of Syria; it is indicated that all the desires, dilemmas, concerns, struggles, frustrations, sorrows, wraths, confrontations, expectations, capabilities and incapabilities of the peoples of Syria, have a substantial influence on the flow of events and their repercussions, which in return, turn the tide. That is the reason why the following chapter is entitled as "The Making of the Alawite State…" On a broader scale, one can resort to literature and cinema in order to broaden one's imagination, thereby conceive of some frames through the narratives that bear the traces of the relations between France and her colonies (see Appendix B).

[112] It has important to make a distinction between the notions of Syrian people and the peoples of Syria; while the emphasis is on the word *Syrian* rather than *people* on the former; it is on *the peoples* in the latter. The making of the Syrian people has its own historical narrations, which are certainly hinged on blurry *Syria* but are also shaped by several other variables. Syria has also its own separate historical narrations, which evidently bear the trace of the making process of the Syrian people, but for sure, it is also defined by several other historical processes.

discussed in the second subchapter, and in the second place, the chief characteristics of French rule, which were, to a large extent, much owed to the deeds and verdicts that will be discussed in the first place.

2.1 Unmaking of the Syrian state

It can be argued that the making of the Alawite State can also be perceived as an inversion of the making of the Syrian state. This affirmation stems from two underlying causes: First the very existence of the Alawite State was an obvious obstacle to construct an all-inclusive Syrian state.[113] This mutually exclusive, and ironically interdependent, relation between the making of the Alawite State and Syrian state could be perceived as an inherent feature of the state mechanism(s) established by the French in Syria. In the second place, more subtly, the mandate charter, and therefore the mandate state were, at least in theory, moulded to indicate a way to form a modern nation-state; however, as a matter of course, the formation of a modern nation-state goes along with the formation of national identity, which inevitably necessitates a group of people who disassociate themselves from the established order and position themselves in accordance with certain vested

[113] The extent and limits of an Arab homeland had been blurry until the twentieth century (Choueiri, "Nationalisms in the Middle East: The Case of Pan-Arabism," 291) and it was the Syria and Palestine region, where the idea of modern Arab state was for the first time projected on and the idea of Arabism was conceived as a modern political ideology to achieve this goal by the common quest of the Damascenes, Beuritis along with Cairenes (Choueiri, "Nationalisms in the Middle East: The Case of Pan-Arabism," 305); however, it should also be noted that maybe not as an idea of a unified nation-state but as a socio-economic space, the roots of the Syria and Palestine region could be traced back to the Ottoman era. The Syria and Palestine region under Ottoman rule can still be perceived as an integral unit with its regional market, migration and matrimonial practices; even though it had ceased to exist as a political entity. It can even be argued that the region had gradually turned into a more coherent entity from the eighteenth century to the fin de siècle (See Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 159). It is also striking that the binary opposition that prevailed between the Alawite State and a unified nation-state in Syria, the same sort of mutual exclusion has also existed between a unified state on Syria, the one on the Syria and Palestine region, and an all-inclusive state for all the Arabs of the Middle East in the form a trichotomy.

interests.[114] In the Syrian case, the very presence of the French in the region poses a dilemma: On the one hand, their presence and rule can be considered as a constraint in the process of the formation of a Syrian nation-state; however they can also be seen as a source of frustration, and even aspiration, for the making of the national identity of the peoples of Syria.[115]

It is asserted that the political arenas in the colonised states were, to a large extent, confined into the political and administrative boundaries of the respective states and their administrative structures.[116] In the Syrian case, and specifically during the creation of the Alawite State, the political and administrative boundaries itself became an issue of debate amongst several different parties — for the States of Damascus and Aleppo, the Alawite State, the Greater Lebanon, all the bordering *kazâ*s (second level administrative division in Syria during the mandate era i.e. district or subdistrict), and the French High Commission for the Levant; therefore it can be argued that the demarcation process that took place in (and out of) the Alawite State can be, along with the other ones, seen as a deviation.

Even though, the mandate regime was based on the division of Syria into several statelets, the severance was formulated as an obstacle for the peoples of Syria, not for the French mandate administration or its interests for which it was

[114] "… Every nationalism was an indigenous development. The availability of the concept alone could not have motivated anyone to adopt a foreign model, however successful, and be the reason for the change of identity and the transformation to occur, influential actors must have been willing, or forced, to undergo it. The adoption of national identity must have been, in one way or another, in the interest of the groups which imported it. Specifically, it must have been preceded by the dissatisfaction of these groups with the identity they had previously. A change of identity presupposed a crisis of identity." See Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 14.
[115] "The underlying ideas of nationality were shaped and modified in accordance with the situational constraints of the actors, and with the aspirations, frustrations, and interests which these constraints generated." See Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 15.
[116] Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State*, 145–152.

conceived as an opportunity to dismantle not only the territory but also the opposition movements raised by a single community and / or cross-community organisations against the French rule. Figures, such as the then President of France, Alexandre Millerand upheld the idea of partitioning the region into small statelets for creating a more manageable administration; however some others like Henri Gouraud, who served as the first High Commissioner of France to the Levant and the commander of the Army of the Levant, also advocated the partition of the mandated area but on more broad terms to ensure the economic viability and administrative functionality of the substates and the mandated area.[117] But on a different layer, it can be argued that there was also a unified Syria, as a found object, for the various interests of France; like the single customs regime, which was supposedly undermining the function of a political border, for preserving the viability of the economy.

According to the initial plans (of Millerand), the mandated area was going to be separated into eight small entities, which were going to be organised according to each and every subregion's local necessities and conditions. There would be a single customs regime, a High Commissioner on the top of the administrative echelon and a federal council the members of which were going to be determined by the local governments. According to these plans, the president of the federal council and some of its administrators would function as consultative agents and in time would have partial authorisation in certain cases. Millerand argued that it would be easier to govern the mandated area, if an administrative model could be organised around

[117] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 254–255.

small states. Henri Gouraud opposed the proposition and asserted that these states would be inclined to coalesce if they were too small to be viable.[118]

Instead of these partition plans, Henri Gouraud proposed a model that relies on the organisation of the mandated area via a small number of statelets, which were going to be afloat and self-sufficient to compete with each other. He contended that such a competition, which had already begun between the cities of Damascus and Aleppo, could overcome the tendency towards unification in the mandated region. It is also asserted that the organisation of the mandated area in the form of small statelets imposed extra weight on the budgets of these statelets. After the San Remo Conference, Gouraud's plan was put into effect.[119] According to his plan, the mandated area was initially divided into four substates: the State of Damascus (1920), the State of Aleppo (1920), the Alawite State (1920), the State of Greater Lebanon (1920); and two more substates were subsequently created: Jabal Druze State (1921) and the Sanjak of Alexandretta (1921).[120] It was utterly a substatetisation process, which bespoke a fractured Syria.

Besides the vague appearance of the administrative policies of the French mandated area, the history of the Alawite State, as a legal entity, has its own ebb and flows; the substate was established in 1920 and incorporated into the newly organised Syrian Federation in 1922, but seceded from the federation after it turned into the State of Syria in 1924; afterwards it was absorbed into the Syrian Republic in 1936 along with Jabal Druze State and disengaged in 1939, and ultimately

[118] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 255.
[119] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 255.
[120] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 256.

integrated into the Syrian Republic in 1942.[121] None of these dates indicate a clear starting point for the making of a unified state — even the reintegration of the Alawite State into the emergent unified state mechanism that was established on Syria. If there is a need to specify a momentum, the establishment of the federation can be regarded as a predecessor to the unified state mechanism; however it should also be noted that even though there was a substantial nationalist sentiment in the region to achieve this goal, the institutional organisation of the state mechanism was initially conceived during the French mandate. To make room for debate, it can be argued that the making of process of the Syrian state had been accompanying the unmaking of process from the very beginning.

2.2 Foreign rule in a foreign land

2.2.1 The debates going on in the Metropole

Internal debates concerning the power of France in the continent and overseas during the Interwar period influenced the foreign and colonial policies of France. These debates and their outcomes formed the colonial expansion of the country. These discussions, which have determined France's position in world politics are important because of their influence on the policies that she has pursued. On the one hand, there were political circles that advocated the maintenance of French power in the old continent, and alongside with that, there were some determined pressure groups — one might as well say a group of lobbyists — that were eagerly trying to enhance the French power overseas.

[121] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 256.

Despite the reserved approach of the last Great War-time prime minister of France, Georges Clemenceau, who was advocating for the maintenance of French power in the old continent, the invasion of Syria was to be accomplished during his successors' terms and thus the role of France in the post-Great War world politics would be defined along these ambitious motives.[122] These motives were undergirded with a certain emphasis on the imputed historicised moral obligation of the eldest daughter of the Church. France has charged herself with the restoration of the order of Christianity in the Levant after a millennial interlude.[123]

The torchbearer of the French interests in the Middle East was a mini yet mighty advocacy group known as the Committee of French Asia (*Comité de l'Asie française*), which was essentially composed of some notable members of French diplomatic and political circles, as Philippe Berthelot,[124] Robert de Caix,[125] and François Georges-Picot,[126] who had a great influence on French colonial policy during the Interwar period.[127] Their efforts were well received by some of the leading figures of the Interwar period such as Pierre-Étienne Flandin,[128] Georges Leygues,[129]

[122] Fromkin, *Peace to End All Peace*, 493.
[123] Fromkin, *Peace to End All Peace*, 94.
[124] Philippe Berthelot (1866–1934) was a French diplomat, who served as secretary-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the 1920s. For more detailed information on Berthelot see Barré's *Le Seigneur-Chat: Philippe Berthelot, 1866–1934*.
[125] Robert de Caix de Saint-Aymour (1869–1970) was a French politician, diplomat, author, and journalist, who was a well-known, and respected figure in French politics for years. As a member of several colonial advocacy groups and being a highly respected advisor of the Quai d'Orsay, he served as secretary-general of the High Commission during the incumbency of Henri Gouraud (1919–1923). See Méouchy, "Khoury Gérard D., Une tutelle coloniale – Le mandat français en Syrie et au Liban – Écrits politiques de Robert de Caix, Paris, Belin, 2006, 535 p.," 277–281, accessed October 22, 2017, http://remmm.revues.org/5153. For more detailed information on de Caix see G. D. Khoury's *Une tutelle coloniale: le mandat français en Syrie et au Liban : écrits politiques de Robert de Caix*.
[126] François Georges-Picot (1870–1951) was a French diplomat, and lawyer, who discussed the terms of Sykes–Picot Agreement with his British counterpart Sir Mark Sykes. For a detailed information on the agreement itself, and its negotiators see Barr's *A line in the sand: the Anglo–French struggle for the Middle East, 1914–1948*.
[127] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 34.
[128] From 1914 to 1940, Pierre-Étienne Flandin (1889–1958) served as a deputy from the centre-right Democratic Alliance (*Alliance démocratique*), which he later served as chairman. He was an undersecretary of the state (*sous-secrétaires d'État*) in the early 1920s, in two separate Alexander

and Stephen Pichon,[130] who were advocating the extension of French influence and presence in the Middle East.[131] It stands to reason that they corroborated this group's cause. Even though the colonial party's long-awaited aspirations were not entirely fulfilled, France acquired a bastion in the eastern Mediterranean by seizing the power in Syria.[132]

2.2.2 The debates on administrative layer

In terms of the administrative layer, French mandate rule in the region had four distinct qualities: It was expensive and exigent; it was deprived of essential economic resources, which adversely affected the budgetary equilibrium. The staff of the administrative units were, to a large extent, uninformed, unqualified and unmotivated. Above all, the French mandate lacked political and moral legitimacy, and coherent administrative strategy.

The French colonial system in Syria was maintained through local statelets, which were established on an identical structure and in this way the High

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Millerand, and Georges Leygues governments. Flandin, who served in many Interwar governments, including the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs, also served as prime minister for two terms; first in the 1930s, during the presidency of Albert Lebrun, then during the presidency of Philippe Pétain in the early 1940s. See "Pierre-Etienne Flandin : Biographie," last modified July 6, 2004 and accessed November 3, 2017, http://archives.gouvernement.fr/villepin/acteurs/premier_ministre/histoire_chefs_gouvernement_28/pierre_etienne_flandin_276/index.html.

[129] From 1885 to 1933, Georges Leygues (1857–1933) served as a deputy from the centre-right Democratic Alliance (*Alliance démocratique*). He served in many governments established between those years. Leygues, who served as the Minister of the Navy between 1917 and 1920, also served three more terms in the 1920s and 1930s. Leygues also served as prime minister, and foreign minister at the beginning of the 1920s, during the presidency of Alexandre Millerand. See "Georges Leygues : Biographie," last modified July 6, 2004 and accessed November 3, 2017, http://archives.gouvernement.fr/villepin/acteurs/premier_ministre/histoire_chefs_gouvernement_28/georges_leygues_263/index.html.

[130] Stephen Pichon (1857–1933) served as resident-general of France in Tunisia (*Résident général de France en Tunisie*) between the years 1901 and 1906, before serving as foreign minister. He served as foreign minister in four different governments from 1906 to 1920, and lastly from 1917 to 1920. See "Pichon Stephen : Ancien sénateur du Jura," accessed November 3, 2017, https://www.senat.fr/senateur-3eme-republique/pichon_stephen0429r3.html.

[131] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 34.

[132] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 34.

Commission could retain its power over the administrative system and whenever necessary it could tighten the reins.[133] The colonial administration had a colossal appearance and an exorbitant price for France. It was headed by the Office of the High Commissioner, located in Beirut and directly answerable to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris.[134]

French officers' knowledge on Syria remained limited until their assignment and was largely based on their experiences and instructions in some other colonies.[135] French officials were rarely being equipped with knowledge on the region and its people; hence they usually relied on their previous experiences in the colonial administration, which moulded their strategies and approach.[136] The Maghreb colonies, especially Morocco but also Tunisia serve as the cases in point for the mandate regime that was established in Syria and Lebanon.[137]

French officers commissioned for the internal affairs of the mandate, who were mostly coming from colonial service background, were members of the Special Services (*Services Spéciaux*).[138] They could be found in almost all of the administrative units as part of an official administrative corps or an unofficial overseer and they exercised influence over the internal affairs and political life of each and every administrative unit. Intelligence Agency (*Service de Renseignements*) was the most distinguished organisation within the administrative structure. The layout of the agency was constructed on the acclaimed members of Hubert Lyautey's

[133] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 79.
[134] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 77.
[135] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 76.
[136] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 245.
[137] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 257.
[138] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 77. The Special Services (*Service Spéciaux*) is an intelligence agency responsible for the issues related to Intelligence, the *Sûreté Générale*, the media and propaganda (Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, 22).

intelligence unit in Morocco. They were the intermediaries between the military and civil bureaucracy.[139]

Some departments known as Common Interests (*Intérêt Communs*) tackled trans-regional issues, and vested interests of Syrian and Lebanese mandates such as customs, the postal services, and supervision of concessionary companies; and they were positioned directly under the authority of the High Commission.[140] In addition to Special Forces and Common Interests, French colonial administration had two supplementary units: on the one hand, there were officials who were nominated by the High Commission whose expenses were covered by French state and on the other hand, there was also a group of formally commissioned people who were employed by the local administrations.[141] The economic and political conditions in the mandate, the low degree of French investments, and high level of political resistance rendered Syria an arduous station for these officers of the colonial administration.[142]

The inordinately fragmented administrative division of the mandated area had begun to be unsustainable for both the High Commission and local governments; therefore the budgetary cuts became prevalent and retrenchments were imminent as of 1922, in accordance with the règlements from Paris.[143] The High Commission was on the horns of a dilemma: On the one hand it was obliged to readjust the administrative budget according to preexisting conditions, and on the other hand it

[139] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 77–78.
[140] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 78.
[141] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 78.
[142] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 75.
[143] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 136.

was zealously attempting to form a novel model for the administrative divisions in order to retain control over the peoples of Syria.[144]

2.2.3 The debates on political layer

The politics of the mandated region could be defined through several features on the political layer. In this subchapter, there will be some instantiations to undergird the following arguments: (1) The administrative structure of the mandate states were based on a borrowed model from a foreign land and this circumstance was motivated by a colonial success story; (2) Throughout the Interwar years, one of the most striking characteristics of French colonial policy in the mandated region was substatetisation and it had always gone alongside with the administrative model projected on the region; (3) Together with the ingrained tensions over several different issues regarding the communities, from the way which the French became entangled in the inter-communal tensions, sectarian conflicts were always on the scene; (4) The legitimacy of French rule in the region had always been an issue of heated debate for the locals from the very beginning to the end; (5) The remnants of the defunct Ottoman Empire constituted a base for the new administration; (6) France provided different administrative tools and a varied degree of political fields for each locality; (7) The French pursued isolationist and particularist policies towards religious minority groups, which were concretised with the disproportionate representative system; they sharpened and embittered the already entrenched unionist and nationalist sentiments of the peoples of Syria; (8) From the beginning, to add insult to injury, there was a dysfunctional administrative system; (9) The French expected to manage to gain political and economic gains through instabilities and

[144] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 137.

short-range policies; (10) The politics of the mandate had two constants: Always stay on ground against the enemy while leaving the door open for negotiation and compromise; the outbreak of the Great Revolt of 1925–1927, and the very existence of a parliament with a limited degree of legal authority can be seen as the embodiment of this motto.

As it is stated before, the administrative system, which was established in French mandated region of the Syria and Palestine region, was modelled on her colonial policies in Morocco.[145] The Moroccan experience — both figurative and literal senses — set the pace for further practices and the Mandated Syria was going to be a perfect spot for the actualisation of the Moroccan formula. Two of the officers who had been in official duty in Morocco, Émile Niéger and Gaston Billotte, were designated as delegates in Alawite State.[146] Émile Niéger was later on appointed as the chief of staff of the *Armée du Levant*.[147]

On the French projection for Syria, one may argue that from the very beginning of the mandate regime, France advocated the establishment of local

[145] The colonial policies, which were carried out after the establishment of the French protectorate in Morocco in the year of 1912, augured the espousal of a new theoretical framework regarding the relation between France and (some of) her colonies. Centuries long policy of colonial assimilation (*assimilation coloniale*) gave way to a new sort of approach, the policy of colonial association (*association coloniale*); and in this respect, it heralds, at least discoursively, a substantial change in state–society relations in colonial settings. It has better to remind at this juncture the definition of the notion of association in French colonial context; the policy of association, as opposed to the policy of assimilation, which champions the incremental transformation of the native peoples, local economies, political and administrative organisations under French sway and in an imperious fashion, relies on, at least theoretically, the idea of the coexistence of the Metropolitan and native practices side by side in each and every colony according the every colony. See P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 55.

[146] Colonel Niéger, "Choix de documents sur le Territoire des Alaouites (Pays des Noseïris)," 1–69, quoted in P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 73.

[147] Longrigg, *Syria and Lebanon*, 125; FO 371/11762, vol. 10165. Hough to FO [Foreign Office], London, 22 Dec. 1924; FO [Foreign Office], London 371/5074, vol. 11516. Crewe (Paris) to FO [Foreign Office], London, 30 Aug. 1926 quoted in P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 73.

statelets, which were to function under a French canopy, the High Commission.[148] Henri Gouraud made this point very clear in some of his early correspondences.[149] The establishment of small minority enclaves within the international borders of the French mandate for Syria, French policy towards the religious minority groups which was principally designed in accordance with sectarian fault lines, French intimidation of Muslim population by the permanent threat regarding the removal of Islamic cultural symbols and establishing control over Muslim institutions, the dominance of French and the local agents under her canopy over the mandate's economy, the reflections of French monetary policies on the mandate's economy, the post-Great War dismemberment of the Syria and Palestine region, and the introduction of the different mandate regimes in the region, the puissance of the European economies over the regional economies exacerbated the perilous state of the mandate's political scene.[150]

Even though the main features of the political scene and its actors had not changed to a great extent since the obtrusion of French order, the jurisdiction, which was established in Syria did not come along with legitimacy and this inherent deficiency begot a volatile political life in the mandated region. France was deprived of what the Ottoman Empire once had: the common religious values, symbolic authority of sultan / caliphate, the four centuries long established rule. Moreover, France's self-attributed, historically charged claim regarding the protection of the Christians in the Syria and Palestine region had made France an illegitimate ruler in the eyes of the main bulk of the region's population, the Muslims.[151]

[148] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 255.
[149] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 253–254.
[150] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 5.
[151] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 4–5.

One of the most salient hindrances of the French colonial regime established in Syria was the lack of necessary sources for the composition of direct governance and instruction of administrative cadres from within the local inhabitants. The middlemen drawn from the local political circles for administrative positions mostly consisted of the remnants of the Ottoman administrative system, who had their own sphere of influence in society. These middlemen almost always belonged to one particular social class, i.e., absentee landlords, who had previously performed the same role in the Ottoman administration.[152]

From the very beginning, the Alawite State functioned under the auspices of the French colonial regime. It was positioned within the Syrian Federation in 1922, when the mandate regime was ultimately promulgated, and detached following the declaration of the Syrian state in 1924. First it remained outside the organisation but then it became part of the state; however, on the eve of World War II, in 1939, it was again removed from the state organisation but finally reunited with the Syrian state in 1942.[153]

The two largest cities of Syria, Aleppo and Damascus, were gathered under a single entity named the State of Syria. The autonomous and sequestered status of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, Alawite State, and Jabal al-Druze smoothed the way for France when she was dealing with the nationalist sentiments arousing from these urban centres. France literally and figuratively endeavoured to immure the nationalists into this vestigial state, the State of Syria.[154]

[152] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 65.
[153] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 58.
[154] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 59.

The existence of Alawite and Druze states were to cease before the terminal dissolution of the mandate regime in 1946, and the presence of Alawite and Druze communities in the mandate politics as national entities could not be materialised; however, to a certain extent as a legacy of the mandate period, but also in a category which exceeds the frames of this rigid periodisation, in a more cumulative manner, the notion of minority consciousness outlasted all of these legal entities. This notion has taken its roots from an intersection of the geographical, religious, communal, and regional affiliations of the said communities, and has had an indelible impact on the ensuing years.[155]

The isolationist and particularist policies of France towards religious minority groups came into action in the wake of the establishment of French authority in the region. However, France embarked on diversifying her policies to form a more elaborate administrative structure for the region, without relinquishing her preconceived policies, following the political disruptions of the spring of 1922, in two epicentres of urban resistance in the region, Damascus and Aleppo. The federal council was founded for this purpose. The three autonomous administrative regions, State of Damascus, State of Aleppo and the Alawite State, were, for the first time, connected with each other on legal terms without making them interdependent. Greater Lebanon and Jabal al-Druze were derogated from this legislative framework.[156] The equal representation of Aleppine and Damascene states with the Alawite State in the federal council and French administration, regardless of their demographic and economic figures, and level of cultural development was also an

[155] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 60.
[156] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 127.

issue of debate amongst the states[157] The manoeuvre of the French administration, on the face of it, appears to have been like a peripeteia; however it stemmed from the same political arrière-pensée, which prompted policies of isolationism and particularism. The French expected that federalism as such would create new fractions within the nationalist, or in broader terms the dissident, circles and thus make room for her policies.[158] The rising unionist sentiment and dysfunctional nature of the council sounded the death knell for the federal system, which had been established one and a half years ago.[159]

Robert de Caix was entrusted with the administrative reorganisation of the mandated area. He predicated his reform proposal on the data and information, which were provided to him by Ernest Schoeffler[160] and Tommy Martin.[161] Both Schoeffler and Martin drew attention to the unionist sentiments burgeoning amongst the peoples of Syria and underlined the disgruntlement of different communities regarding the current French policies based on isolationist and sectarian fault lines, but they made different remarks for the enhancement of the administrative system.

Schoeffler argued for a certain level of consistency between French and British undertakings regarding the degree of liberties ensured to the local peoples under the tutelage of their mandates. Damascus was designated as the capital of the unified Syria, and Aleppo and Alawite Territory were positioned as semi-autonomous districts, which were endowed with a certain amount of allocation in

[157] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 128.
[158] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 127–136.
[159] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 136.
[160] Ernest Schoeffler (1877–1952) acted as the Governor of the Alawite State between the years 1925 and 1936 (Weiss, "Community, Sect, Nation: Colonial and Social Scientific Discourses on the Alawis in Syria during the Mandate and Early Independence Periods," 67).
[161] Tommy Martin was appointed as the chief of the Intelligence Agency (*service des renseignements)* in Damascus, in 1925 (Firro, *A History of the Druzes*, 284; Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt*, 55).

their own disposition, within this newly engendered framework in Schoeffler's examination. He regarded the Alawite separatism as a by-product of the policies that were carried out by France and proposed to give free rein to the local communities in some measure. In Martin's scrutiny, the unified administrative structure proposed for Syria was centred on the city of Homs that he considered as devoid of Arabophile or Turcophile sentiments that were rampant in other major urban centres of the region, Damascus and Aleppo respectively. The Greater Lebanon and Alawite State were excluded from this administrative framework; and he propounded the establishment of a union, which was based on the free flow of goods and services without any interregional border.[162] Even though the French ultimate plan featured some of the guidelines from Schoeffler's and Martin's plans, the eventual one had numerous fundamental differences.

The French plan for the new organisation of Syria was implemented on 26 June 1924. The States of Damascus and Aleppo were merged into the State of Syria and therewithal its predecessor, the Syrian Federation, was dissolved. Damascus was designated as the capital of the new state and the representative councils of the substates were merged into one. The Alawite State, Jabal al-Druze, and the Greater Lebanon were left out of this unitary state; and the Sanjak of Alexandretta became an integral but self-governing entity of the newly created mandate state. The remaining part of the mountainous coastal region of Syria, which contained the Alawite State and Greater Lebanon, was considered to have been the stronghold of French influence in the region.[163]

[162] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 137–138.
[163] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 137–138.

In the following years, in 1933, Henri Ponsot, the High Commissioner of France in Syria and Lebanon between the years 1926 and 1933, propounded the idea of division of the area under French mandate in the Syria and Palestine region into two parts: the State of Syria on the one hand, and the Greater Lebanon, Alawite State, and Jabal al-Druze on the other, on the grounds that the second group of states consisted of politically underdeveloped communities. However, the proposal was not appreciated at the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations and caused contention amongst the nationalist and unionist circles, therefore the contemporary administrative and political structure was preserved.[164]

The divide and rule policy followed by the French colonial regime on territorial, ethnic, and political affiliations set the stage for the enhancement of French sphere of influence on every aspect of life in the mandate. However, while France was working in line with her objective, she legitimised her policies through the fault lines erupted amongst different communal groups and she was exploiting these contrarieties or even animosities. The French emphasis on the manifoldness of political aspirations, affiliations, and realities conventionally led to preventive measures, such as giving support to some of the members of the Francophile minority groups to forestall the escalation of Arab nationalist and / or Syrian unionist sentiments.[165]

The Alawite State had its own share from colonial authorities' attempt to enforce the ultimate colonial rule in the outlying regions. The protection of the property rights of the smallholders and agricultural labourers against proprietors of

[164] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 385.
[165] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 58.

the large estates, both on legal and physical terms, had become a way to maintain order in the region. However this attempt, that is, the weakening of the absentee landlords, would not be successfully materialised.[166] Even though both the Ottomans and French had attempted to expedite the land registrations in the region since the beginning of the twentieth century, these attempts failed to give the expected results. Nonetheless, small landowners registered their lands in the name of village and / or clan chiefs in order to avoid taxation. During the mandate years, the large landowners in the region bought several lands, in exchange for low prices, that were formerly state-owned. This circumstance led the large landowners to establish authority over more villages and peasants.[167] French efforts to pit the smallholders and agricultural labourers against the proprietors of the large estates did not work out all in all, but managed to play the tribal sheikhs and provincial landlords off against urban notables, and as well as to contrive to set the members of the same social class, urban gentry, against each other.[168]

The practice of expropriation and rearrangement of administrative units were two of the ways to achieve this goal: Khoury mentions two of these instances as in the year of 1929, when the French expropriated some of the lands of Sunni urban notables who resided in Hama, in order to shield the Alawite smallholder. Likewise, in 1922, the French detached some Alawite populated rural areas from the district of Hama and put them under the Alawite State's jurisdiction[169] This process of detachment is going to be discussed in the following chapter in detail with a

[166] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 63; and P. S. Khoury, "The Tribal Shaykh, French Tribal Policy, and the Nationalist Movement in Syria between Two World Wars," 180–193; Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*, 180, 196.
[167] Abdulsalam, *Comparative Study of Syria and Japan*, 59–60.
[168] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 66.
[169] MAE [Ministère des Affaires étrangères], Syrie-Liban 1918–29 Feb. 1922, vol. 109, p. 48, quoted, in the 3rd footnote, in P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 63.

particular emphasis on its individual, communal and institutional agents and their respective intra- and inter- relations.

The discontent of the peoples of Syria crystallised during the Great Revolt of 1925–1927. It was not only considered as the most significant insurrection within the jurisdiction of the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon since the end of the Great War till the date it erupted, but also the most indelible and long-running armed revolt of the Syria and Palestine region over the course of the 1920s.[170] The existing tensions between the communities and establishments of different religious denominations were compounded by French colonial policies: The establishment of religious and sectarian enclaves; the constant interfering into the intra- and inter-communal affairs; the social, political, and cultural degradation of the largest religious group in the region, Sunni Muslims; and last but not least French reluctance or ineptitude to form any economic and financial policy for the benefit of the peoples of the region.[171]

Throughout the French overseas empire, during the Interwar period, the political system heavily relied on a three-layered structure; on the first layer, there was above all French law, on the second, there were orders of the colonial administrations, and finally on the lowest layer there were local councils. The local councils had little impact on the political processes. These councils were merely founded for advisory purposes to make inferences regarding the budgetary issues of the colonised entities. But it was well-nigh impossible for these councils to oppose binding decisions made by France, and they were debarred from rule-making power.

[170] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 93.
[171] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 93.

There was not, in this respect, a well-established parliamentary system in any way. The only counter example for this phenomenon was seen in the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon. The elections were held in this region on a regular base even though there were some interruptions in the parliamentary processes. France, when it deemed necessary, could postpone or suspend the parliamentary sessions without the request of the parliamentarians.[172] There were thousands of local constituents within the electoral systems that were established in the colonies during the Interwar period. However, the main bulk of the Muslim peoples remained disenfranchised within the colonial system; they were merely treated as subordinates.[173] The only deviation within the system can only be again observed in the case of the French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon, where the peoples had parliaments to represent themselves on a limited terms for better or for worse.[174]

The voter turnout and results of the 1926 elections for the representative councils of the mandate states, and the popular support for the Great Revolt of 1925 – 1927 revealed the relative weakness of the established nationalist and unionist organisations in the face of comparative success of the isolationist and sectarian colonial policies of the French state in some minority enclaves — such as the Alawite State and the Sanjak of Alexandretta. The elections in the Alawite State were held without any major incident; the voter turnout was 77 percent and the new council pledged its loyalty to the French mandate and declared its willingness to establish good rapport with the other mandate states without renouncing its

[172] Thomas, *French Empire Between the Wars*, 57.
[173] Thomas, *French Empire Between the Wars*, 59.
[174] Thomas, *French Empire Between the Wars*, 57.

independent form of governance under French tutelage.[175] The support for the Great Revolt in the Alawite State can be considered as fractional.[176]

2.2.4 The debates on economic layer

The economic outlook of the mandated area had been moulded by several different realities. First and foremost, the legacy of the Great War clearly did not provide any strength on economic terms; secondly the metropole's policies got the regional economy over a barrel; thirdly French economy had its own ebbs and flows, and thus was in a relatively vulnerable position throughout the Interwar period,[177] which in return brought about certain losses for the regional economy. One of the most important predicaments of the mandate's economic recovery was the French approach to the region's economy: It can be argued that, at the end of the day, the French did not have a consistent strategy, reasoned policies and action plans tailored for the region's exigencies, weaknesses, and strengths. On the societal level, the way in which the French dealt with the problems stemming from urban–rural property relations and their coping mechanisms were mostly not designed to overcome them. On the contrary, they were formulated either to conceal the problems or to make capital out of them.

In order to support the above-mentioned arguments and develop a point of view grounded in them, the region's economic outlook during the mandate period could be examined on different scales as follows: The outlook of the regional economy at the beginning of the mandate era; the extent of the French capital

[175] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 188.
[176] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 205.
[177] The chequered economic performance of France during the Interwar period profoundly influenced the local economies of the colonies, protectorates and mandates. Because of that reason, it might be pertinent to take a brief look at the French economy (see Appendix C).

investment in the mandated area; the share of the mandated area in the overall French economy; the nature of the property relations in the mandated area; the capability of the French economy during the Interwar period.

The Great War's ravage had a substantial impact on the socio-economic composition of the region; as mere consequences of the war, commodity shortages, profiteering, high inflation, high indebtedness, foreclosures etc. became prevalent during and after the war. Rural life in Syria changed in a drastic way when the mandate regime introduced regulations regarding the land ownership: the prevalent land tenure system in the region, *musha'*,[178] was abandoned, the large estates were expanded against the rural communities' interests, the small farmers transformed into sharecroppers.[179]

French efforts concentrated on the restructuring of the Syrian rural setting in accordance with their own priorities; they tried to bring farming families into the picture in place of "communal village organisations or tribes." This policy was adopted for the sake of more accurate and efficient taxing, which essentially necessitates a comprehensive cadastral survey and well-defined property rights regime.[180] So this motivated the French colonial authorities to initiate a changeover in the land system.[181] The coastal plains of the mandated region, Greater Lebanon

[178] Collective ownership of the land by a village and periodic redistribution of the fertile plots to each family of that village are two most salient features of the practice of *musha'* (Seale, *Asad*, 45). This land tenure system was one of the main pillars of the social, and economic life in the Syrian countryside of the Syria and Palestine region. It is sketchily comparable to croft land tenure system. The debates on the system mostly concentrate on its efficiency, and appropriateness. For more detailed information, and incompatible commentaries on the issue see Nadan, "Colonial Misunderstanding of an Efficient Peasant Institution: Land Settlement and Musha' Tenure in Mandate Palestine, 1921–47," 320–354.
[179] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 61.
[180] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 62.
[181] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 62.

and Alawite State, along with Beqaa Valley, and Damascene countryside, Ghouta oasis, were the first spots where the cadastral surveys were conducted.[182]

The land ownership in rural parts of the mandated Syria was under the dominance of a small group of urban dwellers, which were known as absentee landlords; and this association had become more profound once the rural parts of the region fell under the influence of the urban areas.[183] These notables with large estates consider the countryside as a source of secure income and eminence instead of a place to dwell or invest capital.[184] The influence of the absentee landlords was substantial both for urban and rural politics of the mandate by reason of two confounding situation: on the one hand, their very presence in the urban areas and on the other hand, their physical non-existence in the countryside. The notion of absenteeism in this region, which had began to gain wide currency within the rural land system of the region as a social, political, and economic phenomenon, took its roots long before the advent of French, with the gradual demise of collective farming practice, *musha'*, of the region; the trials of the practice could be found in the late Ottoman period; and the expansion of large estates continued throughout the mandate era.[185] Even in post-independence Syria, during the nineteen-fifties, 'Azm, Barazi, Kaylani, and Tayfour families possessed the ninety-one villages out of one hundred thirteen villages in the environ of Hama.[186] In similar vein, these aforementioned families also, partially or totally, owned one hundred and ten villages in the rural areas of Homs up until the very beginning of the land reforms,

[182] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 62.
[183] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 5.
[184] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 9.
[185] Batatu, *Syria's Peasantry*, 108; Commins, *Historical Dictionary of Syria*, 213.
[186] Moubayed, *Men and Women who Shaped Syria*, 246; King, *New Authoritarianism in the Middle East*, 36.

which were initiated in the nineteen-fifties.[187] Some other notable families of the city of Homs were Atasi, Durubi, Jundi, Raslan, Siba'i, and Suwaydan families.[188]

The Great War crumbled the Ottoman Empire and it had grave repercussions on the regional economy of Syria. The direful circumstances, which Syria experienced during and after the war, correlated with the problems of several other regions of the dissolved empire. In the aftermath of the war, the regional economy of the Syria and Palestine region was at a standstill; all the trade routes and accesses to the local markets, which had once enlivened the regional economy, were cut off. The Damascene government, which was established following the war, could not last long. The exports of Syria began its recovery in the middle of nineteen-twenties. The value of the official currencies of the mandate states, Syrian and Lebanese pounds, which were pegged to French franc throughout the mandate era, apart from a break following the Fall of France in the World War II, depreciated at the rate of sixty-four per cent vis-à-vis the US Dollar.[189] The ravages of the war also inflicted agricultural life and production in Syria; famine became widespread, income inequality widened, the volume of total agricultural output remained below the pre-war amount until 1928, and triggered by all these, migration from countryside to the urban areas increased substantially.[190]

At the beginning of the mandate era, in 1920, the greater part of the foreign direct investment in Syria belonged to France and the lion's share in this capital flow concentrated on certain sectors: public service, finance, transportation, silk and

[187] Heydemann, *Authoritarianism in Syria*, 66.
[188] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 9.
[189] Thomas, *French Empire Between the Wars*, 113; Gates, *Papers on Lebanon 10*, 29.
[190] Thomas, *French Empire Between the Wars*, 218.

tobacco production. French investments in the fields of education and religion were also manifold.[191] In addition to that, France also replaced Britain as the most important supplier of commercial goods and products in Syria and Lebanon in 1925, and remained so until the end of the Second World War.[192]

Mandated Syria's overall effect on French economy was negligible; the mandated region can be seen as an encumbrance rather than a precious holding for France.[193] The French were initially inclined to make investments in certain fields; for instance in cotton production, however following the French military withdrawal from Cilicia in 1922, the plans concerning cotton production required to redrafting according to the new borders. The regional economic association of French financiers, chambers, and industrialists, *Union économique de Syrie*,[194] conducted a feasibility study on French mandated part of the Syria and Palestine region and the study indicated that, according to 1922 figures, the plains of northern Syria and the Alawite State had arable and irrigated large tracts, 300.000 hectares, which were suitable for cotton production. The report showed a positive stance towards the extension of land allocations in an attempt to increase cotton production that would be beneficial for both the French interests and the mandate's economy.[195]

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[191] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 41.
[192] Gates, *Papers on Lebanon 10*, 12.
[193] Gates, *Papers on Lebanon 10*, 50.
[194] Khoury describes this alliance as: "… An association of 75 French banks, joint-stock companies, and chambers of commerce dedicated to the 'defense and development of the agricultural, commercial and industrial interests' of France in Syria … The Union's members included the *Banque de Syrie*, the *Crédit Foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie*, the *Banque Française de Syrie*, the *Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes*, the *Compagnie Générale des Colonies*, the *Société du Chemin de Fer de Damas–Hamah & Prolongements*, the *Crédits Foncier de Syrie*, the *Compagnie Française du Levant*, the *Consortium Franco–Syrien*, the *Banque Impériale Ottomane*, the *Société Cotonniére d'Adana*, the *Société Française de Sériculture*, the *Compagnie d'Entreprises de Cilicie*, the *Société Anonym Ottomane des Tramways Libannais [sic]*, and the *Association des Commerçants et Industriels du Levant*." (P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 50–51.)
[195] MAE [Ministère des Affaires étrangères], Syrie-Liban 1918–29. Gouraud to Poincaré, 29 June 1922, vol. 339, 10–11; FO [Foreign Office] 371/9566, vol. 7848. Palmer (Damascus) to FO [Foreign Office], 23 Aug. 1922, quoted in P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 50–51.

The fiscal manoeuvrability of the mandate was restricted by the capabilities of Metropolitan France, and the years following the Great War witnessed an unstable financial outlook. The total cost of the subjugation of Syria for France was over one billion francs, and the main bulk of the expense resulted from the neutralisation of certain regions in the mandated area such as the environ of the city of Aleppo, Sanjak of Alexandretta, and Alawite State.[196] French government gradually laid the financial burden of the administrative mechanism on the local statelets.[197]

2.2.5 The debates on military layer

France had a limited degree of military presence in Syria in order to maintain the public order and provide security for her economic interests; the military strategy was essentially avoiding any kind of international armed confrontation. French military deployment in the eastern Mediterranean had remained negligible throughout the Interwar period. Her key defence strategy was plotted on Maginot Line and western Mediterranean in the face of a possible German belligerence. In the eastern part of this sea in between the lands, France's chief concern was the protection of the terminus of the oil pipelines, which stretch from Kirkuk to Tripoli. France never had a naval base in Syria and her main military strategy relied on British naval presence in the region. All in all, French military power in the region was frail and it would not have provided a sanctuary even for cultural and financial investments in the region if the British, a cordial ally, had not provided one for all.[198]

[196] MAE [Ministère des Affaires étrangères], *Rapport à la Société des Nations sur la situation de la Syrie et Liban 1922–1923*, 55, quoted in P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 85.
[197] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 85.
[198] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 47.

French took some measures to ensure the security of the provincial areas. The organisations as *Services Spéciaux de l'Armée du Levant* and *Contrôle Bédouin* were employed for this mission. The international borders of the mandated Syria were not settled clearly until the 1930s and these organisations were instrumental for the establishment of the order in the eastern part of the mandated region inwardly and outwardly.[199]

The coastal mountainous region of Syria had become under French control long before the establishment of French authority over the other parts of the region. Ottoman military troops and civil bureaucrats departed from Latakia in October 1918. The first organised reaction to the power void caused by this permanent departure, sprouted up from the Sunni Muslim circles of the city; they formed a provisional government, which pledged allegiance to the newly formed government in Damascus. However, the power of the transitional government was limited to a narrow area; the city and its environ. The mountain chain, which rises right behind the city, sheltered the Alawite tribes and sealed the pass to interior parts of the region.[200]

A French military contingent embarked from Tripoli to subdue the coastal mountainous region of Syria, landed to Latakia on November 1918, and unseated the provisional government. Henceforth the military leader of the detachment fathomed

[199] Blecher, "Desert Medicine, Ethnography, and the Colonial Encounter in Mandatory Syria," 254; P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 63. *Contrôle Bédouin* was established at Palmyra in October 1921 to promote sedentarisation for securing wider state control over the region. For detailed information on the instalment of the colonial power in the eastern frontier zone of the mandated region, in al-Jazira, see Velud's *Une experience d'administration regionale en Syrie durant le mandat français: conquete, colonisation et mise en valeur de la Gazira: 1920–1936*.
[200] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 99–100.

out that the sole remedy to establish unmitigated rule in the region, was to follow coercive methods.[201]

2.3 Some remarks on Alawite community inside and outside of the Ottoman, French, and Syrian frameworks

Several different accounts contend that the main motive of the Alawite Revolt of 1919 was not Syrian and / or Arab nationalisms or the presence of French; instead the revolt can be seen as an expression of total rejection of any sort of foreign domination over their community. It is relevant to analyse the multi-layered bilateral relations of the Alawite community in order to ground this argument. Throughout the late Ottoman period, the community had preserved their quasi-independence towards the central authority. The French invasion obviously changed the balance of power in the region, now they were the ones against whom the Alawite community should have protected their independence, and this time around, the community received support from the Turks, who then were in war with France in Anatolia. The Alawite community also received support from Faysal's government in Damascus; again it is worth mentioning because the Interwar period's Arab nationalists were going to be the ones who the Alawite community was trying to keep aloof from, and the French policy for Syria and Lebanon would be the mainstay of the community. One may also assert that this resistance to foreign hegemony was not unique to French presence and authority in the region and / or peculiar to the Alawite community of Syria; this circumstance was also observed through the relations between the central authority of that era, and some of the minority groups of the region. Kurds and

[201] Weulersse, *Le pays des Alaouites*, 118.

Assyrians in Iraq, Alawites and Druze in Syria have some similar experiences in this respect.[202]

The revolt, which is widely known as the Alawite Revolt of 1919, was initiated and conducted by Saleh al-'Ali as the leading figure and it received the assistance and support of the national defence committees of Homs, Hama and Damascus.[203] The motives behind the insurrection vary a lot and they intertwine with each other. Patriotism, revanchism, pillage, the militarisation of the countryside, the possible adverse social and economic outcomes of the French and British hegemony in the region, the discontent of the local tribal and guerrilla leaders arising from the measures taken by colonial masters against their interests and / or the benefits and subsidies provided for the other segments of the society against their interests.[204]

Old habits die hard: the French initially introduced a regime in the mandated area that heavily relied on a time-honoured colonial practice, which meant unquestionable power to exploit the region. French economic interests and political hegemony were established by these means.[205]

2.4 In lieu of conclusion

The mandate rule was erratic because it had been (re)formulated time after time according to the necessities, capabilities, and priorities of Metropolitan France at every turn. Even though the scale and extent of the penetration varied quite a lot, the

[202] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 95,
[203] Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 129.
[204] Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 124.
[205] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 89.

situation was quite common to that of several other colonies and mandated territories all over the world. However it can be argued that the mandate regime that was established in Syria poses an additional footage to the grand narrative of colonialism. The mandate rule in Syria was reinforced by the French officers' comprehensive experiences in Morocco, which included many of the senior officials of the early mandate years.[206] The French mandate rule in Syria can be considered as erratic and contentious, which owing to these features, poses a difficult conundrum for the peoples of Syria during and after its presence as a legal entity.[207]

[206] Such as Henri Gouraud, General de Lamothe as delegate in Aleppo; Colonel Niéger, General Billotte, General Georges Catroux as first delegate in Damascus; and Robert de Caix, who served in Morocco during Hubert Lyautey's term, as secretary-general of the High Commissioner of the Levant until 1924. See Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 257.
[207] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 44–70.

CHAPTER 3

THE MAKING OF THE ALAWITE STATE THROUGH DEMARCATION

3.1 Turbulent relations between the local residents and colonial authorities

The initial stage of the French presence in the region and the other subsequent armed conflicts could be defined in terms of the concept of colonial warfare; however there is obviously a lack of terminology concerning the times that are free from warfare; that is why one needs to define her / his own terms for the moments that cannot be conceived with the existing vocabulary. Two forms of conventionally postulated social association of humankind: war and peace, define the relation between France and the local residents of the mandated area throughout the history of French mandate for Syria. In this study, while the definition of the notion of war, is essentially borrowed from Voltaire, and hence considered as perpetual,[208] the notion

[208] A myriad of reflections concerning the teleology of war could be found on various sources in the post-Enlightenment literature from Carl von Clausewitz's On War:

> … War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of its means. War in general, and the commander in any specific instance, is entitled to require that the trend and designs of policy shall not be inconsistent with these means. That, of course, is no small demand; but however much it may affect political aims in a given case, it will never do more than modify them. The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose. (von Clausewitz, *On War*, 87.)

to Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace:

> "And yet they that war is like a game chess ? " he remarked.
> " Yes, " but with this little difference, that in chess you may think over each move as long as you please and are not limited for time, and with this difference too, that a knight is always stronger than a pawn, and two pawns are always stronger than one, while in war a battalion is sometimes stronger than a division and sometimes weaker than a company. The relative strength of bodies of troops can never be known to anyone.... Success never depends, and never will depend, on position, or equipment, or even on numbers, and least of all on position. (Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, 855.)

Nonetheless, I prefer to go back to basics. Therefore, throughout this examination, the concept is always going to based on the one, which is defined by Voltaire: "All animals are perpetually at war

of peace will also be examined as a form of war in a disguised appearance; therefore it entails a further clarification. The notion of peace is going to be used for the moments that peaceful-but-coercive resolutions to the social conflicts between France and the peoples of Syria were embraced. The notion, peaceful-but-coercive resolution, could have been above all marked by the negative definition of the word war: the non-existence, absence of war, or in its lexical meaning peace; however it is a peace enforced and preserved by an ever-present mean called force of arms, and these are resolutions which are always introduced and validated by one particular party, the French, till the beginning of another armed conflict that can change the course of action adopted by each side, the balance of power between the conflicting parties, and inevitably the conditions for the next peaceful-but-coercive resolution. The relation between France and the local residents of the mandated area, with a particular emphasis on Alawite community, will be examined on these two aforementioned layers.

The first response of the Alawite community to the French penetration was forming a unified resistance block. Al-Shaykh Badr (see Appendix A, Map 5) was the place that the resistance block was formed; the religious and tribal leaders of the community decided to line up against the occupation under the leadership of a young landowner whose name was Shaykh Saleh al-'Ali, who was much esteemed for his deeds and dauntless posture. The connexion between the incumbent government in Damascus and the resistance movement led by Saleh al-'Ali could be defined within the context of mutual assistance; even though the policies of the two were undergirded by dissimilar motivations: While the former had a pronounced

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with each other; each species was born to devour another. … Air, earth and water are arenas of destruction." from Voltaire, *Voltaire Political Writings*, ed. Williams, 7.

nationalist sentiment, the latter was more endowed with the idea of self-autonomy, they both had an apparent vested interest: outfacing French expansionism. Shaykh Saleh al-'Ali was convinced that the nationalist movement is less threatening to Alawite autonomy than the French. It is for this reason that he accepted the assistance provided by Damascus and declared his solidarity with the Damascene government. The conflict that erupted between the Alawite and Ismaili communities in al-Qadmus, which the French acted as arbitrator precipitated the events would become a revolt in a short span of time. The resistance movement's support for the nationalist movement can be considered, to a certain extent, within this context.[209]

The first conflict that erupted between the French authorities and Alawite community stemmed from the former's interference to a local rivalry as a mediator — the rivalry, which arose between Alawite and Ismaili communities over their pretensions regarding the establishment of a sphere of influence in the region that encircles the town of al-Qadmus. The early efforts of French officers to conciliate the Alawite side met with reaction and thus could not provide a solution; the tension, after a while, turned into an armed conflict. By July 1919, Alawite forces largely took the control of the mountain, and the French could not make any progress until July 1920 to establish her control over the region. In the early phase of the armed confrontation, Alawite forces had the upper hand; the respective region and much of the mountainous area fell under the hegemony of Alawite forces led by Shaykh Saleh al-'Ali. French defeat in the early stage of the confrontation was also welded by the military presence of two irregular armed groups: on the northern part of the coastal mountainous region, there were Turkish armed units towards Latakia, and at the

[209] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 100.

southern edge of the region, the forces of pro-Damascus Dandashi clan seized the town of Talkalakh. The blockade, which was engineered by these irregular groups, prevented, or more precisely retarded, French military advance in the direction of the coastal mountain range about a year.[210]

French occupation of Syria became a menace for the Alawite community in the summer of 1920. French government and Turkish provisional government declared a ceasefire on May for twenty days on the condition that the retreatment of French troops, which were deployed in Cilicia, to the south of Adana–Mersin railway line and the evacuation of Antep.[211] French approached the helmsman of the Alawite resistance, Shaykh Saleh al-'Ali, in similar vein, and came up with a conciliatory proposal; however the minister of war and chief of general staff of the government in Damascus, Yusuf al-'Azma, had recently paid a visit for rallying support for the continuation of the resistance against French expansion. Even though, the French endeavour to dispirit the resistance movement, to a certain extent, bore fruit, Shaykh Saleh al-'Ali still had the Damascene government, Turkish irregular forces, and some of the Sunni Muslim Latakian landowning families, such as Shraytas and Haruns, in his corner.[212]

The fall of Damascus can be considered as the penultimate episode for the struggle for Syria, even though it had not sealed the final outcome yet. The collapse

[210] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 100–101.
[211] Güçlü, "The Struggle for Mastery in Cilicia: Turkey, France, and the Ankara Agreement of 1921," 588. For more detailed information on Franco–Turkish armed confrontation in Cilicia, see du Véou's *La Passion de la Cilicie: 1919–1922*; P. Gouraud's *Le Général Henri Gouraud au Liban et en Syrie 1919–1923*; Tachjian's *La France en Cilicie et en Haute Mésopotamie (1919–1933)*; Saral's *Türk İstiklal Harbi IV. Cilt: Güney Cephesi: İngiliz ve Fransızların Güney - Doğu Anadolu'yu İşgal Etmeleri, Milli Mücadele Hareketleri, Bu Bölgede Yapılan Muharebeler ve Revandiz Harekâtı (15 Mayıs 1919–20 Ekim 1921)*.
[212] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 101.

of the Damascene government softened up the Alawite resistance due to the termination of the material and moral support provided by the government. The revolts, which erupted in the area between Aleppo and Antioch following the fall of Aleppo, opened some doors for a while to the Alawite resistance movement, in moral and material means. In this regard, Khoury propounds that the first contact between two resistance leaders, Shaykh Saleh al-'Ali and Ibrahim Hananu[213] took place on 10 February 1921.[214]

The final outcome of the Alawite resistance against French progression loomed large on the horizon when the détente between two belligerent parties of the Great War, French and Turkish, materialised with two consecutive agreements, Cilicia Peace Treaty and Treaty of Ankara (Franklin–Bouillon Agreement) which were respectively signed in March and October 1921, between the French government and Turkish provisional government. It was unequivocally a coup de grâce for the resistance movement. These accords expedited the French military progress in Syrian; and enabled France to concentrate on the Alawite resistance movement. Even though, the resistance movement had conducted successful incursions into French-held territories, it could not prevent the final outcome. French eventually managed to confine the Alawite units to the mountainous area, and beleaguered the region from the west with two columns, which were mobilised from Latakia and Baniyas, and another from Hama in the east. French control over the region, to a large extent, was ensured by the end of summer. The end of Franco–

[213] The rebel movement which was instigated by Hananu suffered the same fate with Shaykh Saleh al-'Ali's one. The resistance movements were bogged down when the Turkish support was cut off. Even though, they both enjoyed Turkish military and material assistance, in the Aleppine case, the resistance movement was much more inclined to pro-Turkish stance. See P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 105, 106, 110.
[214] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 101.

Turkish War, which was marked by Turkish military victory, and French strategic acquisitions, can be perceived as the final nail in the coffin of the then-ongoing resistance movement. By November of that year, the Turkish support was cut off according to the conclusion reached by Franco–Turkish agreement, and the last pockets of resistance capitulated in the following days. France began to pursue her policy of isolationism that is based on the reorganisation of the administrative divisions of the mandated area according to confessional fault lines, immediately after the suppression of the Alawite resistance movement. While French forces were doing that they anticipated rupturing the bond between different nationalist and regionalist movements.[215]

The suppression of the Alawite resistance movement and the establishment of French control over the coastal mountainous range indicate a substantial change in the relation between France and the local residents of the region; their relation gradually proceeded to a peaceful phase, in which the deliberations became the main spot for conflict resolutions instead of battlefields. However one particular party, the French, determined the extent of the deliberations. Colonial authorities nevertheless provided a room for deliberations, not because of their mercy but of political predicaments, economic constraints, and social exigencies that put pressure on them, and in order to generate a working administrative model for their ultimate economic and political gains.

In the literature on the history of French mandate on Syria, there is a precise emphasis on two features of the French rule in the region: The colonial regime that

[215] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 101–102.

was established in Syria has been undertaken through two pivotal policies of the French empire: creating local alliances with large landowners and tribal sheikhs; and sharpening of religious, sectarian, ethnic, and tribal divisions.[216] In similar vein but with an additional and special remark on urban–rural relations, Khoury defines the main strategies followed by the French colonial regime in this newly acquired land as the establishment of autonomous statelets in an attempt to render the crystallisation of minority politics, the wakening of the urban–rural dichotomy in order to restrain the burgeoning nationalist urban politics, and making use of some of the local traditional elites for a more intrusive governance.[217]

This newly created mandate became a perfect spot for the implementation of the new policy of association for the first time in a non-Maghrebian geography. The policy, which was implemented in the North African colonies long before Syria, which was fundamentally based on the presupposition of establishing a close relation between the coloniser and colonised was adapted for the new mandate. The model was essentially based on Hubert Lyautey's system in Morocco, which relied on the idea of peaceful governance of the indigenous people through local political bodies, customs, and laws.[218] The policy of association was requited by another policy, which was adopted by some of the local political agents in Syria during the mandate years. It is defined as honourable cooperation by Khoury.[219] The policy was essentially based on "negotiation and collaboration rather than confrontation" with

[216] Owen, *Making of the Modern Middle East*, 12–13.
[217] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 57.
[218] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 55–57; Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 257.
[219] P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 248. Khoury also employs the concept for a specific period of time in his account on the history of mandate. See "Chapter V: Honorable Cooperation, 1928–1933" in *Syria and the French Mandate*, 327–397.

absolute authority on the part of the mandate regime.[220] Even though, it occurred at the beginning of the mandate era, — therefore it is too early to mention the consistency of the policies of French and Syrian parties, which were never going to be fully achieved — the demarcation process of the Alawite State epitomises the deliberation processes that would occur throughout the mandate years amongst the various agents of the several different parties. French and local officers, civil and military bureaucrats, urban and rural notables collectively provide an early example in the political scene of the mandate by demonstrating a deliberative way of politics. These are the moments that cannot be characterised within the context of armed confrontations, which evidently pose a different form of social association and making politics — unlike the Alawite / Syrian Revolt of 1919, the Franco–Syrian War of 1920, and the Great Syrian Revolt (or Great Druze Revolt) of 1925–1927. The correspondence between / amongst the locales and colonial authorities regarding the issue of demarcation in the Alawite State render a blinkered but still insightful vision on the deliberative way of making politics in the French mandate for Syria in this regard.

On 18 January 1922, after the attenuation of the prolonged effects of the Syrian Revolt of 1919[221] in the previous year, a family submitted a collective petition — a family from Hama whose members were the absentee landowners of some villages in the region (see Appendix A, Map 6) — that was signed by a family member Touffik Ahdab, an agricultural engineer and a graduate of *l'École Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie de Grignon*, to the administrative advisor of the Sanjak of Hama, Major Morbieu, on the issue of the demarcation line, which severed the ties

[220] Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East*, 282.
[221] The Syrian Revolt, which erupted in 1919, was led by Syrian Alawite leader Saleh al-'Ali. See P. S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 99–102.

between the city of Hama, where the family resided and had several local businesses, and the four villages in the vicinity of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah (as written in the texts, el-Omranieh, Omranie, Omranié, and Massyaf)[222] that belonged to this extended family.[223] In their petition, they claimed that the burden on their shoulders, which stemmed from the long distance between Hama and the mentioned kazâ, worsened when the kazâ was attached to the Sanjak of Jableh (as written in the text, Djéblé and Djablé), which was part of the Alawite State. Ahdab family criticised the resolution and asked the reassessment of the decision made by the High Commission, for the decision underpinned economic, geographic, racial, and security arguments, and their unanimous opinion on the issue. They demanded the reattachment of the villages that they owned to the Sanjak of Hama following the examination of their assertions. They raised questions over the relevance and appositeness of the decision in a quite eloquent, consistent, and sophisticated manner. As part of the physical facts, they argued for the prevalent economic connexions between their villages and Hama, and mentioned the remoteness of the area from the centre of the Sanjak of Jableh and the main economic and social hub of the Alawite State, the port city of Latakia; the presence of the Alawite Mountains all of which can be considered as the chief natural obstacles in the subregion. In addition to these physical impediments, they also strengthened their criticism with the arguments on the social aspect of the decision. Their detailed explanations offer

[222] According to the current administrative division of Syrian Arab Republic, al-Omraniah, is entitled as Masyaf; and it is administratively part of Hama Governorate. Initially, the district of Masyaf was under the authority of the State of Damascus but some of its villages and their environs, namely al-Rusafa, al-Bayyadiyah, Akakir, Maryamin and Abu Qubays were positioned under the jurisdiction of the Alawite State in 1929, and the cultivated lands of the villages were allotted to the villagers. In 1936, Abu Qubays was merged with the State of Syria and in 1939, the district of Masyaf was put under the administrative authority of the Province of Latakia. See Honigman and Elisséeff, "Masyad," 791–792.

[223] On behalf of Ahdab family, from Touffik Ahdab to the Administrative Advisor of the Sanjak of Hama, Major Morbieu, on January 18, 1922. Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN), 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

insights into the prevailing relations of production in these villages and their relation with the nearby regional urban centre, the city of Hama; the ownership structure of the estates in the countryside; the flow direction of capital accumulation; and on some delicate issues as the demographic composition of the villages and the maintenance of security in these villages after the reorganisation of the administrative units. Ahdab family argued that they inherited these villages and they were the sole owners thereof. The family stated that the majority of the people living in these villages were not born in these villages; therefore they argued that these communities' arguments regarding the issue should not be considered staidly in ethnographic terms. The city they lived in, Hama, was three or four days away from the administrative centre of the Alawite State, Latakia (as written in the text, Lattaquieh). They argued that such a distance caused a loss of considerable amount of time and eventually would hamper their economic interests.[224] Amongst all these arguments, four out of seven deserve closer attention and consideration.

As mentioned above, the demographic composition of the villages is regarded as a departure point for their arguments, but what is more striking is their confutation. They argue that the main bulk of the population, which consisted of Alawites, Bedouins, Christians, Kurds, and Sunnis, were not born in these settlements, and they were annually hired and recruited by the landowners for their labour. Thus, they concluded that the decision, taken by the High Commission, to attach the area to the Alawite State was not substantiated by a well-evaluated

[224] On behalf of Ahdab family, from Touffik Ahdab to the Administrative Advisor of the Sanjak of Hama, Major Morbieu, on January 18, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

ethnographic consideration.[225] In another argument, they even bluntly criticised the motives behind this ill-conceived decision, which had a decisive impact on their economic interests. It is worth quoting at length from the petition:

> 4) Ces villages sont nos propriétés exclusives et nous sont revenus pour la plupart par héritage. Nos relations au point de vue commerce et propriété étant à Hama comment pouvons nous nous occupér de nos intérêts s'il nous faut nous transporter à Lattaquieh à 4 jours de notre domicile, alors que nous avons dépensés des sommes considérables dans le but d'enseigner à nos fils l'agriculture, l'électricité et la mécanique dans les écoles supérieurs de France et que quelques uns mêmes parmi nous sont des ingénieurs qui se sont mis à l'oeuvre d'après des méthodes récentes et se sont familiarisés avec la civilisation Française? Comment donc nous est-il possible de continuer nos travaux agricoles et industriels pendant que nos villages sont administrés par des fonctionnaires ignorants comme Tajjour, Héfoud et consorts qui sont membres du Conseil Administratif d'Omranieh. Nous considérons donc ce rattachement comme néfaste ou plutôt directement contraire à notre état de civilisation et à notre relèvement agricole.[226]

The passage may shed light on several intertwined layers of the relation between the local colonial authority, and in broad terms France, and the local notables of the mandated area. The notables, in this context including the eminent members of the Ahdab family, invested money to their sons' education. The promising children went to study in France and received education in technical fields, and were endowed with French culture and civilisation. However in this case, the story would not end up with an Arabic version of "How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Paree?"[227] In this story, which has a colonial setting,

[225] On behalf of Ahdab family, from Touffik Ahdab to the Administrative Advisor of the Sanjak of Hama, Major Morbieu, on January 18, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.
[226] On behalf of Ahdab family, from Touffik Ahdab to the Administrative Advisor of the Sanjak of Hama, Major Morbieu, on January 18, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.
[227] It is a Great War vaudeville song, which was first released in 1919, and became popular immediately after the war. The song is about the disquietude on a possible alienation that an American rank-and-file might experience; these soldiers, who were commonly known as doughboys, went to France during the war, and experienced the (Parisian) city life, but with the end of the war, they were

there is a friction: according to Ahdabs' argument, the incompatibility erupted between the ones who had imbibed French technique and culture — and these were also the ones who esteemed themselves, at least ostensibly, as genuine members of the shared state of civilisation with the members of the colonial order — and the ones who were (left) in ignorance, i.e. who could not have benefited from the blessings of the civilisation. In this context, one may notice one of the most salient but also subtle intimations of the petition is when the petitioners faintly indicate the discrepancy between the precepts, which were instilled in the schools of the mother country, and the prevailing unconscionable practices and regulations of the local colonial authority. From this departure point on, one may even argue that one of the most significant arguments of the French colonial empire, *mission civilisatrice*, had already gained a certain ground in the mandated region, and these munitions were utilised for a defensive purpose.

From the way and context that the petitioners defined their relation with the land to their very practical problems, such as transportation, they were in quest for some rational answers for their demur. On another layer, the petitioners even tried to make tenant farmers' and villagers' voices heard:

> 5) Les habitants de ces villages qui constituent un mélange de diverses races ne désirent pas ce rattachement car il leur est difficile de s'adresser à Lattaquieh ou à Djablé qui en sont loin de 3 ou 4 jours si le temps est favorable et auxquels il est impossible de parvenir pendant la saison des pluies; et s'ils ne les ont pas encore désertés c'est parce que ils espèrent une modification de limites. Bien d'ailleurs qu'en demandant leur opinion à ces habitants on pourra constater que ce rattachement est nuisible à l'intérêt public et à l'intérêt particulier.[228]

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on their way to turn back to their villages that they had departed years ago. See Holsinger, "How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Paree? (song)," 207–208.

[228] On behalf of Ahdab family, from Touffik Ahdab to the Administrative Advisor of the Sanjak of Hama, Major Morbieu, on January 18, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

And in the following article, it is said that:

> 7) L'Etat de Damas ainsi que celui des Alaouites étant soumis au même mandat, il doit être naturellement tenu compte de l'unanimité des vœux des propriétaires et des habitants, de l'éloignement et du rapprochement des régions et de la position géographique. Il nous apparait donc bien étrange après tout celà que ces villages restent rattachés au caza d'Omranieh.[229]

In this respect, it can be asserted that another mainstay of their argument is the general public opinion. Independent of the way in which Ahdabs perceive and convey it, the most important fact that they make clear references to the general public opinion in order to provide a consistent argument — even though it solely reflects one particular dimension, which is fundamentally based on the minuses of the border change. They substantiate their argument, and when it comes to the conclusion, they also call for the verification of their arguments through a minute enquiry.[230] From this vantage point, one may contend that this small piece of petition can also be considered as a partial insight to the prevailing state–society relations in the mandated Syria, with a particular stress on the absentee landlords. This petition shows that some of the influential people of the society use the terminology and conceptual frameworks of the colonial state when they get in contact with the state institutions and officials. In doing so, they are trying to influence the decision-making processes, as it is seen, according to their own interests; but there is something to be noted at this point. They put forth their argument by holding the public interest in the foreground.

[229] On behalf of Ahdab family, from Touffik Ahdab to the Administrative Advisor of the Sanjak of Hama, Major Morbieu, on January 18, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.
[230] On behalf of Ahdab family, from Touffik Ahdab to the Administrative Advisor of the Sanjak of Hama, Major Morbieu, on January 18, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

On 29 January 1922, a group of dignitaries — consisting of mukhtars, members of the council of elders and notables — from Ba'amrah,[231] al-Bayyadiyah, and al-Dulaybah villages, which were all located at the junction of Hama and al-Omraniah districts, wrote a petition addressing to the High Commission in order to restate their arguments concerning the detachment of their villages from Hama, and the attachment of thereof to the Kazâ of al-Omraniah, which was at that time part of the Alawite State. It could be pertinent to indicate that forging local alliances was not only a means for the French, but local residents also pursued this strategy. One may even argue that there was a certain degree of solidarity amongst the two sides when they had such common interests, and concerns as in the case of this issue. The petitioners mounted their argument on certain practical reasons. In their request, the distance between their villages and each of the respective administrative centres, the tax office that they had been paying the road tax, the demographic predominance of the Alawite community in the villages were indicated. In addition, they raised a political concern as a solid base for their argument when they claimed that it was necessary to implement this change because they did not have any means to withstand against the notables of Hama when these violated the rights of the villagers.[232]

[231] Shaykh Sulayman al-'Ali, the owner of Ba'amrah, declared his bankruptcy and the village was sold to an Ismaili from Masyaf named Muhammad Ibrahim in the early 1930s. However, the inhabitants of the village would react fiercely to this sale, and abandoned the village to hamper the economic gain of Ibrahim in 1935. Ibrahim gave way to Ismaili settlers from al-Salamiyah to compensate his economic loss; however the former residents of the village prevented the resettlement process. Even though the former residents could turn into their village, the tension between two communities continued for several years. See Douwes, "Modern History of the Nizari Ismailis of Syria," 34–35.

[232] On behalf of the mukhtars, members of the council of elders and notables of Ba'amrah, Al-Bayyadiyah and Al-Dulaybah, Muhammed Dib, Assa'ad Issa, and 'Abd-El-Kerim and Yunes Ramadan to the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, On 29 January 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

The growing expansion of urban control over the countryside in conflict with the needs and interests of the rural lands; the estrangement of the rural populations during this enlargement process; the uneven relationship between the urban and rural economies can all be seen as salient features of urban–rural relations during the mandate period. However, the relation between the colonial authority and absentee landlords was certainly not same at all as the influence of the landlords over the state mechanism that they once had in the late Ottoman period, was dead and buried. French colonial order created a rival power from within its clienteles in the countryside as opposed to the urban notables' supercilious attitude in urban–rural relations.[233]

On 24 June 1922, General Billotte sent a letter to the High Commissioner General Gouraud concerning the delimitation of the south-eastern border of the Alawite State. In his letter, he underlined the urgency of the matter and pointed out the general mood of ominousness. He enclosed a copy of the request that was signed by twenty-nine notables, residents, elders, and mukhtars from three of the villages, which were located in the disputed area: Ba'amrah, al-Bayyadiyah, and al-Dulaybah (as written in the text, Beamra, Dleibe, and Baida, respectively).[234]

The petitioners started by declaring that they threw themselves at the mercy of *la Glorieuse France fondatrice de la liberté et protectrice des faibles* to secure

[233] P. S. Khoury, introduction to *Syria and the French Mandate*, 9–10.
[234] From General Billotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, to General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, On 24 June 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

justice.[235] They requested the separation of above-mentioned three villages from the Sanjak of Hama, and their attachment to the Kazâ of al-Omraniah. It was pointed out that the residents of these villages were predominantly Alawite, and their Christian inhabitants fell in line with them. It was mentioned that the villages were in the further reaches of al-Omraniah, whereas Hama was far from thereof. They alluded to the fact that their villages had always been considered as part of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah for population censuses, and in these villages, there were 2.000 registered taxpayers, who annually paid their road taxes to the treasury of the kazâ. In the petition, it was also stated that apart from a small section most of the properties belonged to the Alawites. It was argued that the administration of the villages as part of the Sanjak of Hama generated adverse outcomes, induced especially by their distance and lack of security. The petitioners were tenaciously appealing for an affirmative answer to their request for a peaceful environment and the cessation of the coercive acts conducted, according to the claim, by the people of Hama, in addition to the other reasons mentioned above. They contended that the residents of the other Alawite-populated villages in question[236] concurred with their opinion, and recapitulated the request in a sycophantic manner not only for their own sake but also their co-religionists from the villages that were located at the disputed area. The colonial authorities were forewarned by the petitioners that if the problem would not be ironed out according to their disposition, the issue could turn into a matter of life and death for their people.[237] It is obvious that in the petition there is a pronounced

[235] From the petition that was sent on 27 May 1922, attached to the document sent by General Billotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, to General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, On 24 June 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.
[236] These villages are Binçaf, Kaframera, Ouge, Khenesir, Kisraya, Kirmesa, Mariamin and Akafir.
[237] From the residents, notables, elders and mukhtars of Beamra, Dleibe, and Baida to the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, General Gouraud on 27 May 1922.

concern regarding the safety of life and property. In this respect there is a striking difference between the petitions submitted by the notables of Hama and the Alawite community as there is not such an emphasis on security in the ones written by the former.

In his letter to Billotte that was written on the 6th of June, Suleiman ‘Ali of Ba’amrah (as written in the text, Baamra) broached his demand concerning the attachment of their villages to the Alawite State after he expressed his gratitude for the governor’s mercy on behalf of the mukhtars of Ba’amrah, al-Bayyadiyah, and al-Dulaybah (as written in the text, Baamra, Beyadie, and Deleibe).[238] The notables of the villages liaised with each other for the assertion of their cause, and he was endeavouring to seek the support of the governor. He claimed that they had been prevailed upon to inform the High Commissioner Henri Gouraud in order to refute “the reiterated machinations of the dwellers of Hama,” and utter their request. He also attached the letter of the bishop of Tripoli, Mgr. Arida to his petition for undergirding their argument.[239] This circumstance can be considered as a part of the same effort mentioned above, i.e., creating local alliances. In his letter, Suleiman ‘Ali briefly indicated that he had been informed by Hubert Lyautey on the course of action, which was going to be taken by the high commissioner, who was considering to receive Billotte’s and Catroux’s opinions before making a decision.[240]

CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

[238] From Suleiman ‘Ali from Baamra to the Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, General Billotte, On June 3, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

[239] From Suleiman ‘Ali from Baamra to the Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, General Billotte, On June 3, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

[240] From Suleiman ‘Ali from Baamra to the Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, General Billotte, On June 3, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

3.2 Horizontal and vertical liaisons between various local agents and colonial agents of the state

Relations between the members of the colonial state mechanism and the local members of the administrative bodies of the statelets were intrinsically volatile and generating frequent contentions. The fault lines of these disagreements vary, and the alignments cannot be confined into dichotomies based on rigid categories such as colonial versus local authorities as the alignments' themselves were protean. The correspondence amongst the members of the colonial state, and those with the local statelets concerning the demarcation process may provide insight into the multifaceted, and erratic nature of these relations. Besides many others, three forms of positional alignments could be regarded with particular emphasis: (1) some of the members of the colonial state could fall in line with some of the local authorities; (2) these officials intimated their dissent from the prevailing slant of some of their colleagues who were assigned under the same administrative unit; (3) the precise stances of the officials in the face of the issue. The relations between the different agents of the colonial and local state mechanisms are going to be deciphered through these lenses in this subchapter.

From the standpoint of the High Commission, while the ongoing settlement was above all a solution to a local problem, some of the colonial agents who were assigned to certain positions in the administrative bodies of the local statelets considered the issue on broader terms. Regardless of their political motivations and orientations, it can be argued that they might have also been prompted by the possible enhancement of their respective domain of authority with a prospective change in the demarcation lines.

Two weeks after the submission of the petition of Ahdab family, Robert de Caix[241] sent a brief note to Edmond-Louis Achard[242] concerning the prevailing dispute over the border lies between the State of Damascus and Alawite State. In his note, de Caix mentioned that General Gaston Billotte[243] had sent him a number of letters regarding the actions taken by the State of Damascus in the disputed areas between two respective states. In the note, de Caix contended that the authorities of the Sanjak of Hama should terminate their actions tout de suite, and that the two sides should forestall the escalation of the tension. He also asserted that the High Commission was eventually going to resolve the demarcation problem. De Caix also took the economic and social aspects of the issue into his consideration. He argued that it was impossible to expand "the ethnographic borders of the Alawite State," and concluded that most of the villages subjected to heated debate between the two sides were in the vicinity of the cities of Homs and Hama.[244] De Caix, in the name of the

[241] Robert de Caix (1869–1970) was one of the pioneering figures of the French mandate system in the Middle East. He was a foreign correspondent and diplomat, and worked as a civil officer during the term of General Henri Gouraud's high commissionership for the French Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon, between the years 1919 and 1923. His last position in the mandate's administration was the secretary general of the high commissioner. Then he worked as the permanent representative of the French government in the committee on the mandates of the League of Nations for the Syrian and Lebanese mandates and in 1933, he was elected as a full member of the *Académie des sciences coloniales* (now *Académie des sciences d'outre-mer*). See "Caix de Saint-Aymour Robert de," accessed on November 13, 2016, http://www.academieoutremer.fr/academiciens/fiche.php?aId=313.
[242] Edmond-Louis Achard, was an agricultural engineer and expert in agricultural development in Syria. He had been part of the mission, which was headed by Paul Huvelin. His reports were published in the supplements of *L'Asie Française*. See Mizrahi, *Genèse de l'État mandataire*, 234. For the impact of Huvelin and his mission, see Kaufman, *Search for Identity in Lebanon*, 30–31; S. Jackson, "'What is Syria Worth?' The Huvelin Mission, Economic Expertise and the French Project in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1918–1922," 83–103.
[243] Gaston Henri Gustave Billotte (1875–1940) was the commander of the 2nd Division of the Army of Levant from June 1921 to November 1924; and the administrator of the Alawite State from September 1921 – July 1922. Apart from his official duties in the mandate, he was commissioned for several other posts in French colonial system as a military officer and administrator. In 1930s, he worked as a member of the Supreme Council of War (*Conseil supérieur de la guerre*), chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Defense of the Colonies (*Comité consultatif de défense des colonies*) from February 1936 to December 1937, and he was also designated as the military governor of Paris in November 1937. He died on 23 May 1940, at the height of the Battle of France, in a traffic collision. See Strait, "Billotte, Gaston Henri Gustave (1875–1940)," 257; Lamar, "Billotte, Gaston Henri Gustave (1875–1940)," 232.
[244] Robert de Caix's note for Mr. Achard on February 2, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

High Commission, and General Billotte, on behalf of the Alawite State, were in an evident opinion split; and there were also two disapprovals: one was from the Alawite State to the State of Damascus and the other was from the High Commission to the Sanjak of Hama.

Another disputed frontier zone of the Alawite State was located in its southern region, the border between Akkar (Greater Lebanon) and Safita (Alawite State). De Caix remarked the possibility of the heightening of the tension and forewarned the French authorities about not relying on local inhabitants' opinions on the dispute. At the end of the note, he suggested to revert to the borders of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah as a remedy for the vexed issue.[245]

Two letters, which were sent from General Billotte to the high commissioner on January 1922, reveal the personal discontent of the general and the strained interstate (i.e. intrastate) relations of the French mandate. In his letter, he accused the Syrian officials of the Sanjak of Hama for their pugnacious demeanour over the demarcation issue and pointed out that the measures taken by the authorities, which were also backed by the opinion of the delimitation commission of the State of Damascus and the Alawite State, would create certain complications regarding the administration of the disputed territory, and would cause harassment of the Alawites within or outside the mentioned territory. He said that the Mutassarif (governer of a sanjak or province) of Hama had demanded, from *Kaymakam* (governor of a provincial district, kazâ) of Masyaf (al-Omraniah), the census registers of the Alawite villages, which the commission was considering to attach to the Alawite

[245] Robert de Caix's note for Mr. Achard on February 2, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

State. He stated that he deemed this measure valuable.[246] In the letter, one particular incident[247] about the confrontation between the gendarmes of Hama and the residents of an Alawite village, Maryamin (as written in the text, Mariamine), was told; and it was argued that it could escalate the tension between two respective communities. General Billotte tried to elucidate the problem and concluded that the local authorities of Hama[248] were trying to dissolve the Alawite political circles, which had explicitly more favourable relations with the French authorities in order to foment unrest in the region.[249]

In one of the letters of General Billotte addressed to the High Commission written on January 27 of 1922, Billotte stated yet another important aspect of the issue that the changes that were applied to the Alawite State's borders would eventuate in the enlargement of the Alawite zone, and were thus to create an Alawite entity which encompassed the largest possible concentrated Alawite population.[250] In

[246] From General Billotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, to General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon on January __ 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie. Exact date is intentionally or unintentionally left blank.
[247] It happened on the 6th of January 1922. On that day, ten gendarmes from Hama went to Mariamine (Maryamin), and demanded the census lists but the residents of the village, which were predominantly Alawite, refused to do so. The gendarmes abused the inhabitants, slaughtered their livestock, and demanded barley for their horses. Two days before this incident, five gendarmes from Hama had come to the village, and demanded the debts of the residents, which were due to 'Azm family from Hama. The gendarmes abused the residents, and then took the mukhtar of the village, Hamed Suleiman (as written in the text, *Sliman*) with them to Hama. The judge of Hama Tribunal issued warrants for the arrest of twenty-three Alawites on the 9th of January, and then eleven more on 17th of January on the charges of murders, beatings, and injuries. General Billotte reported that he suspended all these arrests. From General Billotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, to General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon on January __ 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie. Exact date is intentionally or unintentionally left blank.
[248] Referring specifically to the Sunni Muslim Arab local authorities of the city.
[249] From General Billotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, to General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon on January __ 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie. Exact date is intentionally or unintentionally left blank.
[250] From General Billotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, to General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon on January 27, 1922. CADN,

his letter, General Billotte enunciated that he was anticipating the approval of the High Commission on his decisions regarding the attachment of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah to the Alawite State, and the decisions that were taken by the commission of delimitation concerning the southern border. Billotte also urged for the expeditious completion of the delimitation process worrying about the rising tension in the region.[251]

The tension reveals the multi-layered structure of the mandate state formation in Syria. Billotte's clarification on the issue makes it thoroughly lucent. One may notice that political collisions and compromises between different parties cannot be deemed through parochial dichotomies. As stated earlier, there was not a clear cut binary oppositional positioning between local and colonial agents. On the issue of the rising tension over the southern border of the Alawite State, Billotte asserts that the beys of Akkar[252] were triggering the tension by their propaganda for the attachment of the Alawite villages, which were located at the north of the Nahr al-Kabir[253] to the Greater Lebanon. On the issue of the attachment of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah to the Alawite State, the mutassarif of Hama and the delegate of the High Commission to the government of the State of Damascus were on the same page; they both opposed to this règlement. Billotte looked askance at the delegate's consideration; which compromised an argument that takes its inspiration, and

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[251] From General Billotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, to General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon on January 27, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

[252] The beys of Akkar were Alawites from the Khayatin tribe. Jaber al-'Abbas was the leader of the tribal confederation, and the president of the Representative Council until 1930. Along with Ibrahim al-Kinj, and Suleiman al-Murshid, he was one of the most influential leaders of the Alawite community throughout the French mandate. See, Goldsmith, *Syria's Alawites in War and Peace*, 62.

[253] *An Nahr al-Kabir*, which literally means the Great River, is a flowing watercourse, which consists the northern part of Lebanon from Syria.

ironically its legitimacy, from the former Ottoman administrative borders.[254] At this point, it is worth noting that, regardless of any administrative classification, the Syria and Palestine was a region that had not had political borders for centuries, and the Ottoman administrative borders were perceived as palimpsests. From this standpoint, indeed it can be argued that the defunct Ottoman administration was a ground for the new French administrative order.

On a letter dated March 1, 1922, which was indicted in reply to Achard's letter, De Caix enunciated his concerns regarding the probable outcomes of the eastward expansion of the Alawite State. De Caix predicated his argument on geographic and economic reasons, which were blended with some substantial political reservations. He argued that the geographic limitations, which were set by Orontes, would make the territory inconvenient within the Alawite State due to its remoteness; questioned the appositeness of the proposed change and defined it as an unavailing effort. De Caix conceived this sort of a territorial enlargement of the jurisdiction of Alawite State as frivolous. On the issue of territorial expansion of the statelet, he asserted that such a change in the region should encapsulate the whole area on the left bank of the river, which extends all the way to Hama, where a large community of Alawites dwelled at the outskirts of the city. However he concluded that such a drastic change would be inefficacious in geographic and economic terms, and moreover might cause discontent amongst the preeminent members of the urban dwellers of Hama and Homs, whom the French administration expected to derive

[254] From General Billotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite Territory, to General Gouraud, High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon on January 27, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

economic and political benefits from on a larger scale across the mandate.[255] The dissidence between the High Commission and the local state administration crystallised at this very point.

In his letter to Achard, de Caix digressed a little from his main argument and expressed his acknowledgement of the importance of the regional studies of the villages, which were located at the eastern piedmont of the coastal mountain chain. He mentioned that the lands in the plain, which belonged to the urban notables who resided in Hama, were cultivated by Alawite tenant farmers, and pointed out that if there were going to be any studies, the administration would gain a clear understanding in the matters of social patterns and property relations of the region — such as the exact dates of the alienations, and the period of time when the farmers had settled in the area or questions as to whether these respective dates overlapped with one another or not, whether the new dwellers had subrogated another group of villagers or not etc. — then the process could be considered rewarding. Even though he took an interest in such regional studies, he also mentioned that there would not be any change in the policy of the administration on account of two political disquiets. He opined that a change in the policy would not engender any genuine and consequential support amongst the members of Alawite community, and it might conceivably sow dissension between the colonial administration and the Sunni Muslim urban notables of Hama and Homs. Secondly, he was convinced that there

[255] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, Robert de Caix to Mr. Achard, Agronomy Advisor, President of the Delimitation Commission of the State of Greater Lebanon, Damascus, and Alawite Territory on March 1, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

would not be any valuable quid pro quo to revise the contemporary approach of the administration. He unfalteringly deemed the proposed change as a Sisyphean task.[256]

On the issue of delimitation, de Caix slanted towards the idea that remaining faithful to the boundaries of two former Ottoman kazâs, al-Omraniah and Hosson (also known as al-Husn and al-Hisn), which were located at the eastern edge of the substate as the most convenient solution to the issue.[257]

De Caix asks Achard to:

> 1 — En conservant l'état de fait actuel là où vous le jugerez préférable à l'ancienne délimitation des districts.
> 2 — En apportant a cet état de fait, et a l'ancienne délimitation des districts les très faibles rectifications, qui vous paraitraient absolument justifiées par la topographie.
> Je vous serait reconnaissant d'être prêt a partir le plus tot possible car il y a un intérêt évident a mettre fin, a une incertitude qui a été exploitée de part et d'autre et a la remplacer par une de ces décisions, fermes qui ont toujours un effet apaisant si marqué dans ce pays.[258]

He mentioned that it would be a proper course of action to finalise the study forthwith; he put a premium on the collection of information, which was necessary for the delimitation process, and he elucidated the prime concern of the administration that the delimitation ought to be a case of plus ça change, preferably

[256] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, Robert de Caix to Mr. Achard, Agronomy Advisor, President of the Delimitation Commission of the State of Greater Lebanon, Damascus, and Alawites Territory on March 1, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.
[257] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, Robert de Caix to Mr. Achard, Agronomy Advisor, President of the Delimitation Commission of the State of Greater Lebanon, Damascus, and Alawites Territory on March 1, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.
[258] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, Robert de Caix to Mr. Achard, Agronomy Advisor, President of the Delimitation Commission of the State of Greater Lebanon, Damascus, and Alawites Territory on March 1, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

should only be made to cover very slight rectifications. He concluded that the decision should be promptly taken in order to smooth over the dispute.[259]

In his response to the governor of the Alawite State, de Caix emphasised his key concern regarding the delimitation process, and indicated that the administration refrained from fomenting a political and social unrest, concerned about being torn between two substates or more precisely two communities. De Caix treated the decision, which was going to be taken by the colonial authorities, as a source of inspiration for resolving the problem. He informed the governor that the preliminary consideration of the administration had been heretofore conveyed to the president of the delimitation commission, and herewith the governor was also briefed on the matter in hand. According to this initial consideration, while the administration was inclined to preserve the eastern boundaries of two kazâs, al-Omraniah and Hosson, as the border of Alawite State, it also assented to minor revisions, which were essentially based upon the topography on the demarcation line.[260]

De Caix asserted that the decision taken by the High Commissioner Henri Gouraud, which was not in contradiction with the decrees that had been promulgated by the High Commission — decree numbers 317 and 319 — was not, according to his consideration, aimed at undermining the territorial unity of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah by attaching its population centres to Hama. He dwelled on two probable

[259] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, Robert de Caix to Mr. Achard, Agronomy Advisor, President of the Delimitation Commission of the State of Greater Lebanon, Damascus, and Alawites Territory on March 1, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.
[260] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon to the Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite State on March __ 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie. Exact date is intentionally or unintentionally left blank.

outcomes. He argued that if the instructions issued by Henri Gouraud annulled the Decree No. 337 that pinned down the attachment of the part of the Kazâ of Homs to the Kazâ of Hosson, some predominantly Sunni Muslim populated settlements in the area, which the government of Alawite State had staked its claim upon; they contradicted the founding principles of autonomous territory. Secondly he indicated that the official recognition of the expansion of the jurisdiction of Alawite State on ethnographic terms, which entailed the readjustment of the borders of the Kazâs of Hama and Homs beyond the limits that had been prescribed in the Decree No. 337, would heighten political, administrative, and economic disorder. He contended that preserving the contemporary boundaries of the Kazâs of al-Omraniah and Hosson could appease the tension between the governments of the State of Damascus and Alawite State.[261]

De Caix indicated that the liberal interpretation of the main principles of the constitution of the autonomous territory could cause discontent amongst Alawite people in this context. He further argued that, by doing so, they were labouring under the idea that the regions that were populated by their people would categorically become part of the Alawite State. However he also mentioned that he did not expect to see, contrary to the governor's judgment, a peasant movement originating from this resentment; and he was of the opinion that the règlement, which was brought into force, could have been construed as a victory by the landholders, who resided in Hama. But he was also in the opinion that as far as they, himself and the

[261] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon to the Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite State on March __ 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie. Exact date is intentionally or unintentionally left blank.

administrator, were both concerned, these adverse outcomes were unlikely to happen.[262]

In de Caix's statement, a number of questions were muted concerning the political and social overtones of the probable implementation of the aforementioned decision in a reversed orientation. He purported that a resolution favouring the Alawite cause could equally be perceived as a religious victory against Sunni Muslims, and a political and social advantage over the landholders of Hama and Homs. He argued that such a victory would undoubtedly engender feelings of resentment and indignation on the other side of the border and could trigger demands concerning "the restoration of the old order in the name of '*la réputation prestigieuse du droit des gens*' [sic] that we [French people] like to recognise in France."[263]

In his letter, de Caix explicitly defined himself as pro-Alawite and praised the achievements accomplished under the incumbent governor in a short span of time.[264] But this approbation appears like a backhanded compliment. He indicated that the return of the Kazâs of al-Omraniah and Hosson should not be considered as a pressure on the ethnic and religious presence of the community, and then he addressed to the Alawite notables via the praised governor and maintained that the decision taken by the high commissioner was not at variance with the principles —

[262] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon to the Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite State on March __ 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie. Exact date is intentionally or unintentionally left blank.
[263] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon to the Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite State on March __ 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie. Exact date is intentionally or unintentionally left blank.
[264] From the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon to the Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite State on March __ 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie. Exact date is intentionally or unintentionally left blank.

the rule of law, respect to belief, and freedom that Sheikh Ahmed Suleiman (as written in the text, Sleman) had appealed.

Gaston Billotte mentioned that he was instructed and ordained by de Caix on the issues of the authority of his jurisdiction, and of the measures that were required to de-escalate the tension throughout the Kazâ of al-Omraniah; and he was also informed that the high commissioner's delegate to the government of Damascus was also briefed and prescribed in the same manner.[265] In his response letter to de Caix, which was dated March 10, 1922, Billotte had no reservations about mentioning his discontentment regarding the destructive activities imputed to the authorities in the Sanjak of Hama. He elaborated his criticism on a local source of information: a Sunni Muslim from Hama named Selim Rabbouh, who was the contractor of the forest taxes of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah. Billotte asserted that the mutassarif of Hama repudiated the validity of the receipts delivered by Selim Rabbouh, and obliged the payment of the same tax for the timber transporting from al-Omraniah to Hama, on behalf of the fund of the Sanjak of Hama. Billotte mentioned that the intelligence officer of Masyaf (al-Omraniah) and the administrative advisor of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah had already been informed about the situation, and that the latter conveyed the complaint to the mutassarif, who in turn intimidated the contractor by different sorts of threats. Billotte indicated that the contractor invoked the case as a base for his essential objective — the Alawite farmers of the area were under intense and continuous pressure of the landholders and local authorities of Hama, and these

[265] From General Billlotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite State to the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High-Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, on March 10, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

notables demanded the annexation of their villages to the Sanjak of Hama.[266] Billotte frankly stated that he would not reflect on the Selim Rabbouh's consideration regarding the middle and lower class Francophobe families of Hama, and he had not hitherto contemplated on the attitude of the opinion leaders and Alawite notables of the Kazâ of al-Omraniah. However he was of the opinion that these figures' stances were tally with one another concerning the condition of the villages in the disputed area. He mentioned that the testimony of a Sunni Muslim dweller of Hama regarding the misdeeds of the mutassarif of the Sanjak of Hama could move the needle in the approach of the colonial administration on the issue of delimitation.[267]

De Caix sent a telegram to the administrator of the Alawite State on March 13, 1922, requesting him to inform the delegates of the substate about the time and place of the meeting of the delimitation commission to be held in Homs, on the 22nd of March.[268] On 26 March 1922, the personal assistant of the governor, Major Tommy Martin, sent a telegram to Commandant Andréa on behalf of Gaston Billotte. In this telegram, the commandant was precluded from approving a proposed solution, and prescribed a request for the inclusion to the official report of the meeting of the reasons that prevented the Alawite State from taking a decision concerning the frontiers of the state.[269]

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[266] From General Billlotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite State to the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High-Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, on March 10, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

[267] From General Billlotte, Administrator of the Autonomous Alawite State to the P.I. [Private Investigator] of the High-Commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, on March 10, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

[268] The telegram sent by Robert de Caix to the Administrator of the Territory of Alawites on March 13, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

[269] The telegram sent by General Billotte to Commandant André[a] on March 26, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

On March 27, 1922 the personal assistant of the governor, Major Tommy Martin sent a second telegram to Commandant Andréa,[270] and this time also to Captain Pichon,[271] on behalf of Gaston Billotte. In the telegram, both the courses of action that had been taken up until then and the measures that were going to be taken were specified in order to cast light on the process. Billotte mentioned that on March 24, Captain Pichon informed him on the decision taken by Achard, which dictated the redrawing of the eastern border of the Alawite State in accordance with the former Ottoman boundaries of the Kazâs of al-Omraniah and Hosson. He then explained his decision concerning the issue which repudiated to adopt a course of action that disregarded even the limits stated in the founding decrees of the Alawite State, specifying all the reservations of the administration on the procès-verbal. In his telegram, Billotte confirmed that on March 18, he was well-informed about the high commissioner's instructions by a letter indicating the directives, which were assigned to Achard. In light of these instructions, he proclaimed that he cancelled his telegram dated March 26; and he requested from Commandant Andréa and Captain Pichon to delineate the current de facto border between the governments of Damascus and

[270] Charles-Joseph-Édouard Andréa was the tribal control officer and commander of the French armies in Damascus and Jabal al-Druze. He acted as the commander of the French army in the offensive recapturing the capital of Jabal Druze State, As-Suwayda, during the Great Syrian Revolt (or Great Druze Revolt) of 1925–1927; and later on, he published a detailed account of the revolt, *La révolte druze et l'insurrection de Damas (1925–1926)* (Thomas, "Crisis management in colonial states: Intelligence and counter-insurgency in Morocco and Syria after the First World War," 707, 709, note 66 in 716; Neep, *Occupying Syria*, 136). He was awarded by the *Académie française* in 1938 for his work ("Charles-Joseph-Édouard Andréa," accessed on October 13, 2017, http://www.academie-francaise.fr/charles-joseph-edouard-andrea.

[271] Jean Pichon was a French liaison officer in Aleppo (Tauber, *Formation of Modern Iraq and Syria*, 349). He published a valuable account, named *Le partage du Proche-Orient*, of French way of understanding the Middle East right after the Great War (Smith, "The Historiography of World War I and the Emergence of the Contemporary Middle East," 49). For more detailed information see Depréaux, "Pichon (Jean), Sur la roule des Indes, un siècle après Bonaparte. Préface de M. le maréchal Franchet d'Espérey," 514–515.

Alawites. He added that he was going to convey his instructions following the telegram that was going to inform him about the outcome.[272]

On August 17, Robert de Caix, who was then designated as the secretary-general of the High Commissioner's Office, sent a note to Achard regarding the grievances that were aired by the Alawite villages in the southwest of Masyaf (al-Omraniah), which remain under the jurisdiction of the State of Damascus. He mentioned that Billotte had drawn a line under the whole discussion and decided not to revise the border line but he enabled the establishment of a new administrative unit called *mudirieh* (a subdistrict or subprovince) to be constituted by the government of the State of Damascus for the twelve villages at issue.[273]

[272] General Billotte to Commandant André[a], and Captain Pichon on March 27, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.
[273] Robert de Caix's note for Mr. Achard on August 17, 1922. CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In this study, it is argued that besides the constant determinants as the space and time in question, the Ottoman legacy, the practices of the French colonial empire, the psychological and societal effects of the colonisation on the individual members of the Syrian society and the peoples of Syria as a whole, and the interactions between the mandate power and the mandated peoples generating from this colonisation process, moulded the formation process of the Syrian state at varying degrees.

It should be noted that this border change has crossed many breakpoints of colonial, sectarian, religious, class, administrative, national and regional affiliations. Even though the consequent effects of the deliberation process are open to debate, the deliberation process has become a part of the delimitation process. In this process, many local and regional actors are involved in the debate as concerned parties. People from different denominational, religious, and class affiliations are involved in a debate in which the interest groups they represented. The other important components of the process were the higher and mid-level military, and civil officials of the mandate state. Even though there are national, class-based, linguistic, religious differences between and amongst the members of these two groups, it is not possible to speak of the absolute opposition between the groups in question. On the contrary, it is possible to contend that throughout the deliberation process, both the local and regional actors, and mandate officials support and / or oppose each other's arguments here and there.

Local and regional actors based their assertions regarding the demarcation process according to several different economic, political, social, and cultural grounds; and each of them subsequently demanded that the border change should be made as the way they stated. These actors attempted to substantiate their arguments through several different means as general public opinion, demographic, and economic profiles of the settlements in question etc.

The correspondence between the local and regional actors, and the mandate officials shows us two significant inferences: During the period in question, there was a room for deliberative way of making politics in the French mandate for Syria, and secondly the local and regional actors were transforming the language and repertoire used by the French authorities in the direction of their own agendas. The mandate charter and France categorise the peoples of the region as a group of people who have a limited level of reasoning, which consequently indicates their level of purported progress; and both the charter concludes that the peoples of the region is in need of a supervisor for the formation of an advanced political sphere in the region. The involvement of local and regional actors in the decision-making process turns one of the main arguments of the mandate charter and France for the establishment of the mandate regimes in the first place, into an unsound argument.

In this study, it is argued that the formation process of the Syrian state is the culmination of a common production process, which includes both local and regional, and mandate actors that could sometimes conflict or ally with each other for a shared argument regardless of their political affiliation. This circumstance makes

the Syrian state a hybrid example of a state formation process that encapsulates both colonial and non-colonial veins.

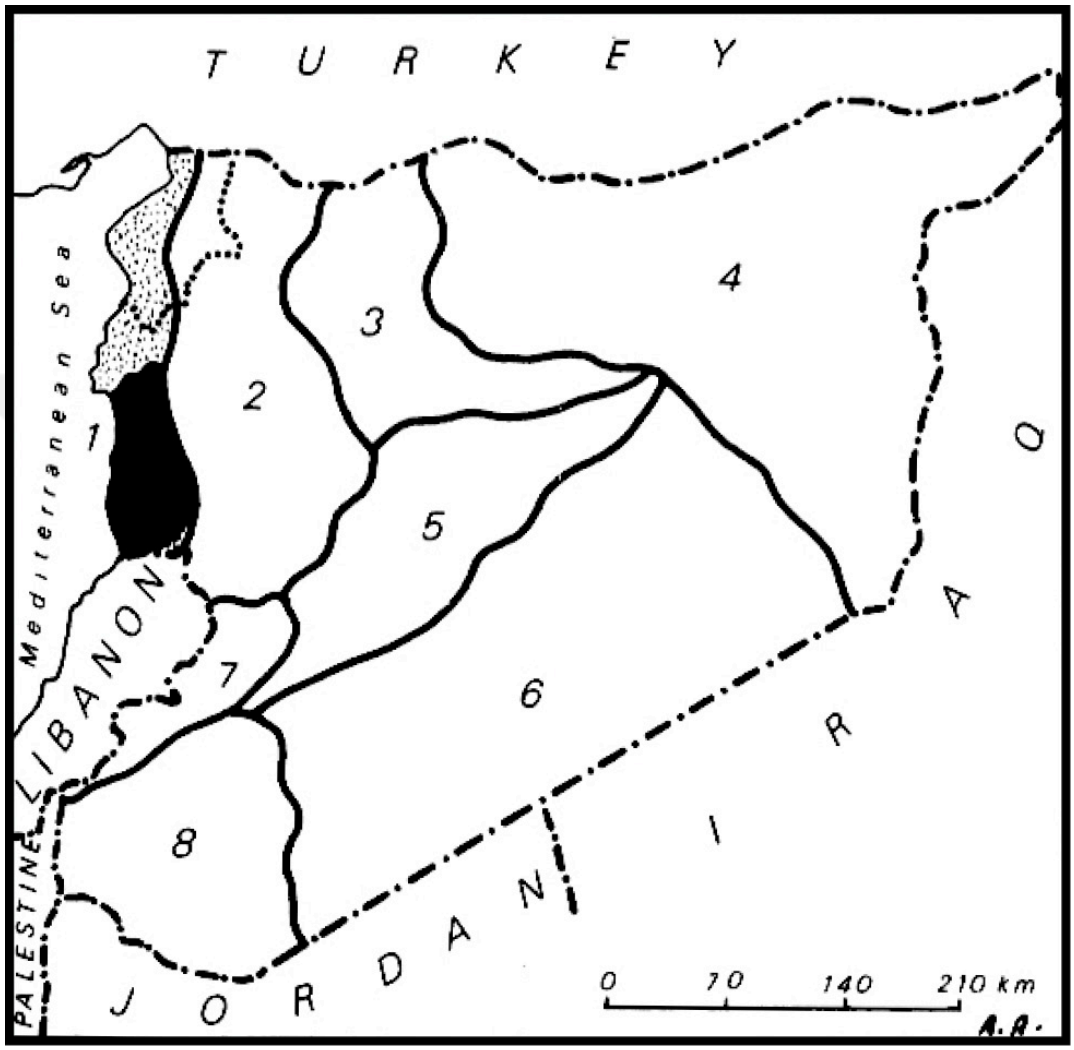
The demarcation process also reveals some of the intricacies of the urban–rural relations during the early mandate period in Syria: such as growing expansion of the urban control over the rural areas, the tension between the absentee landowners and the rural communities, the marked difference between the demographic composition of the aforesaid groups etc.

Another point that could draw attention in this study is that the very existence of the Alawite State hinders the establishment of a unified Syrian state. It should also be noted at this point that the foundations of the independent and unified Syrian state rose on the mandate legacy, both institutionally and intellectually.

This newly established mandate state has served as a laboratory, where previous experiences of the French colonial authorities gained in different geographies can be applied. But in this laboratory, the people thought to be passive in this relation, i.e. the mandated people, transformed some of the kernel policies of the empire, as *mission civilisatrice* and *association coloniale*, according to their interests and causes, during the demarcation process; and added their own dimension to these policies.

APPENDIX A

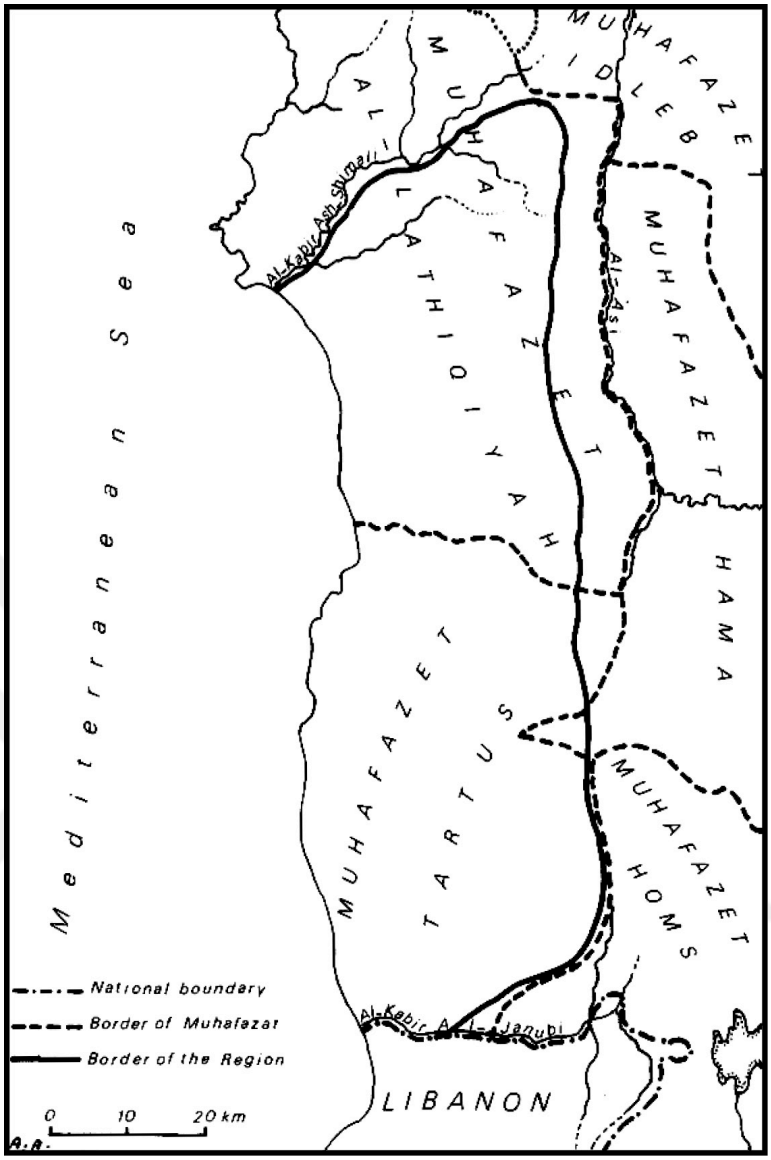
MAPS



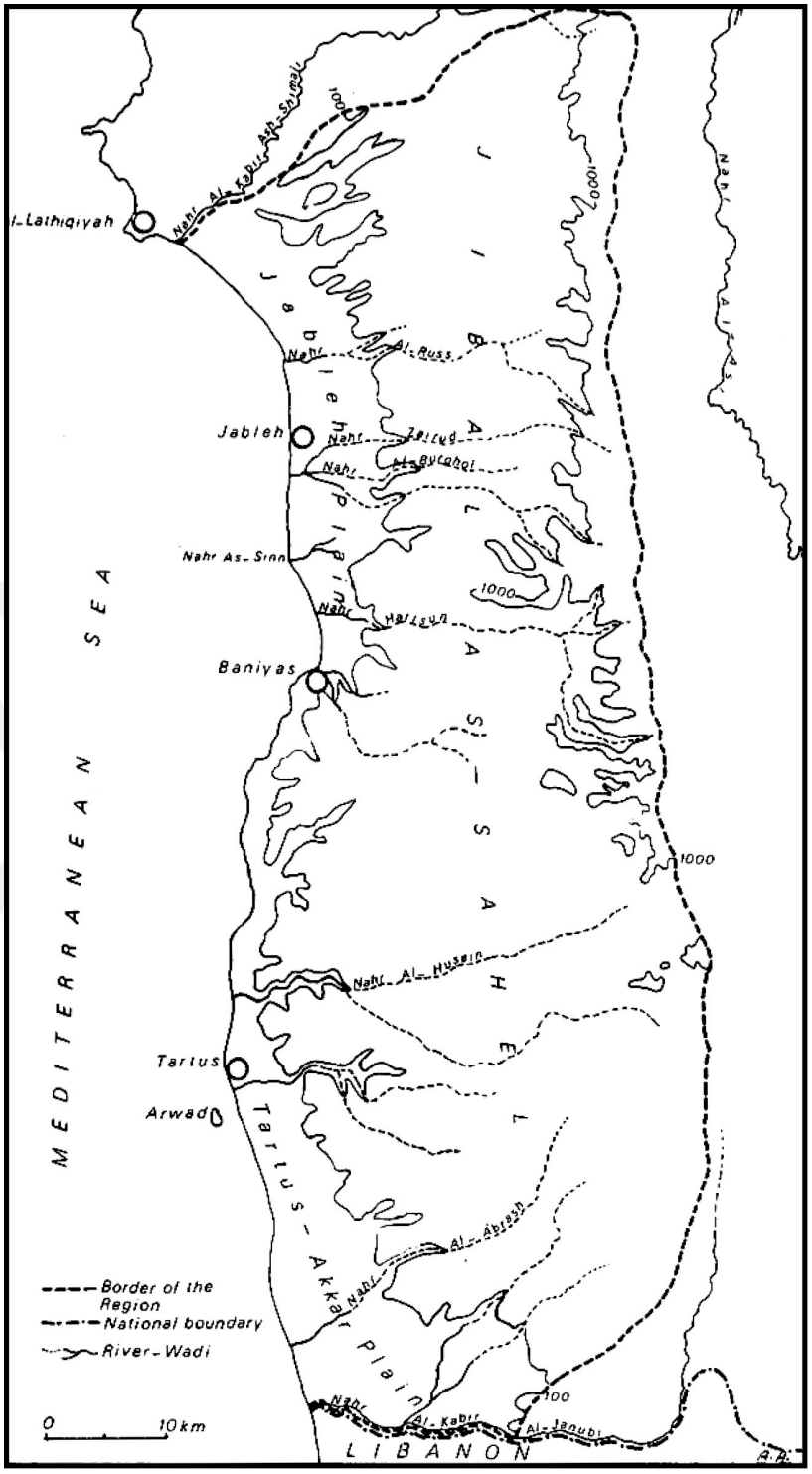
Map 1. The geographical regions of Syria, according to Abdulsalam's classification:

1) Coast and Coastal Mountains
2) Al-'Asi Valley
3) Aleppo Plateau and Northern Shamiyah
4) Al-Jazirah and al-Furat
5) Tadmor Ranges and the Central Mountains
6) Syrian Desert
7) High Mountains
8) South-west Syria

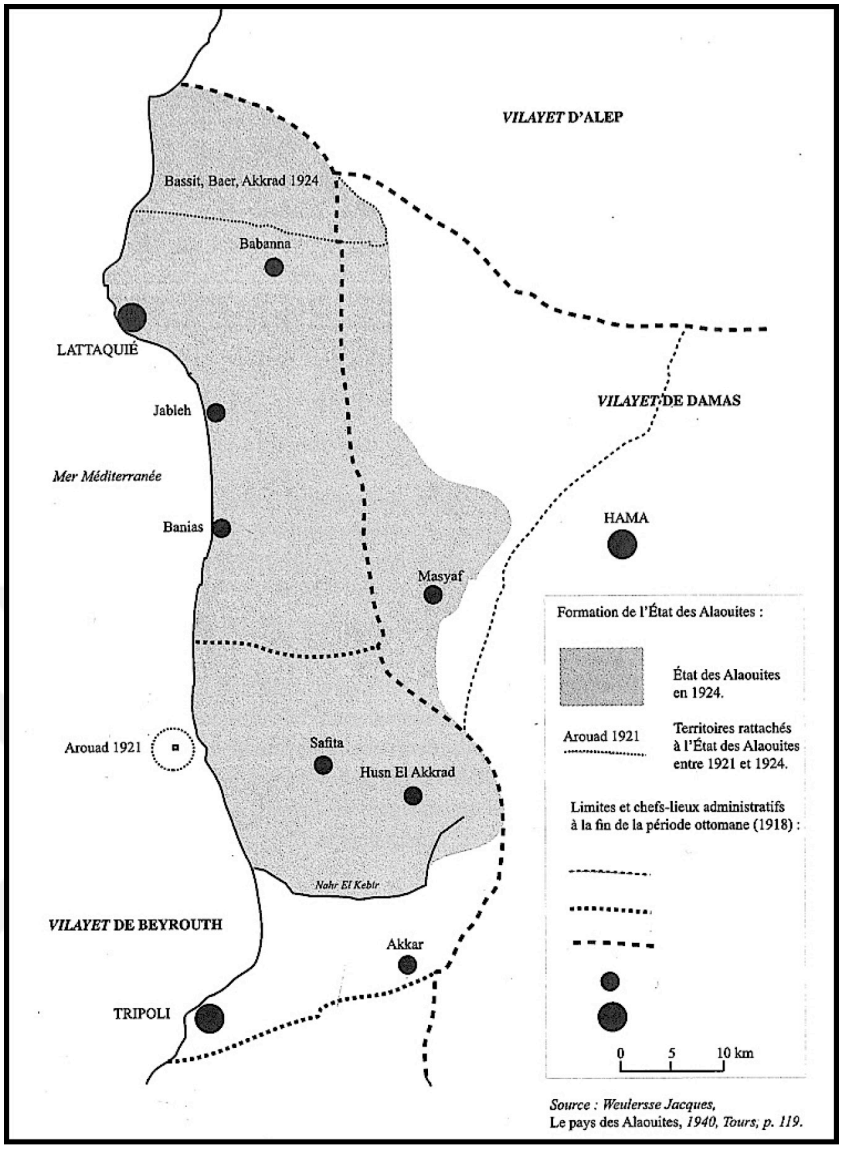
(Source: Abdulsalam, *Comparative study of Syria and Japan*, 4)



Map 2. The Coast and Coastal Mountains, and the intersecting administrative divisions (Source: Abdulsalam, *Comparative study of Syria and Japan*, 5)

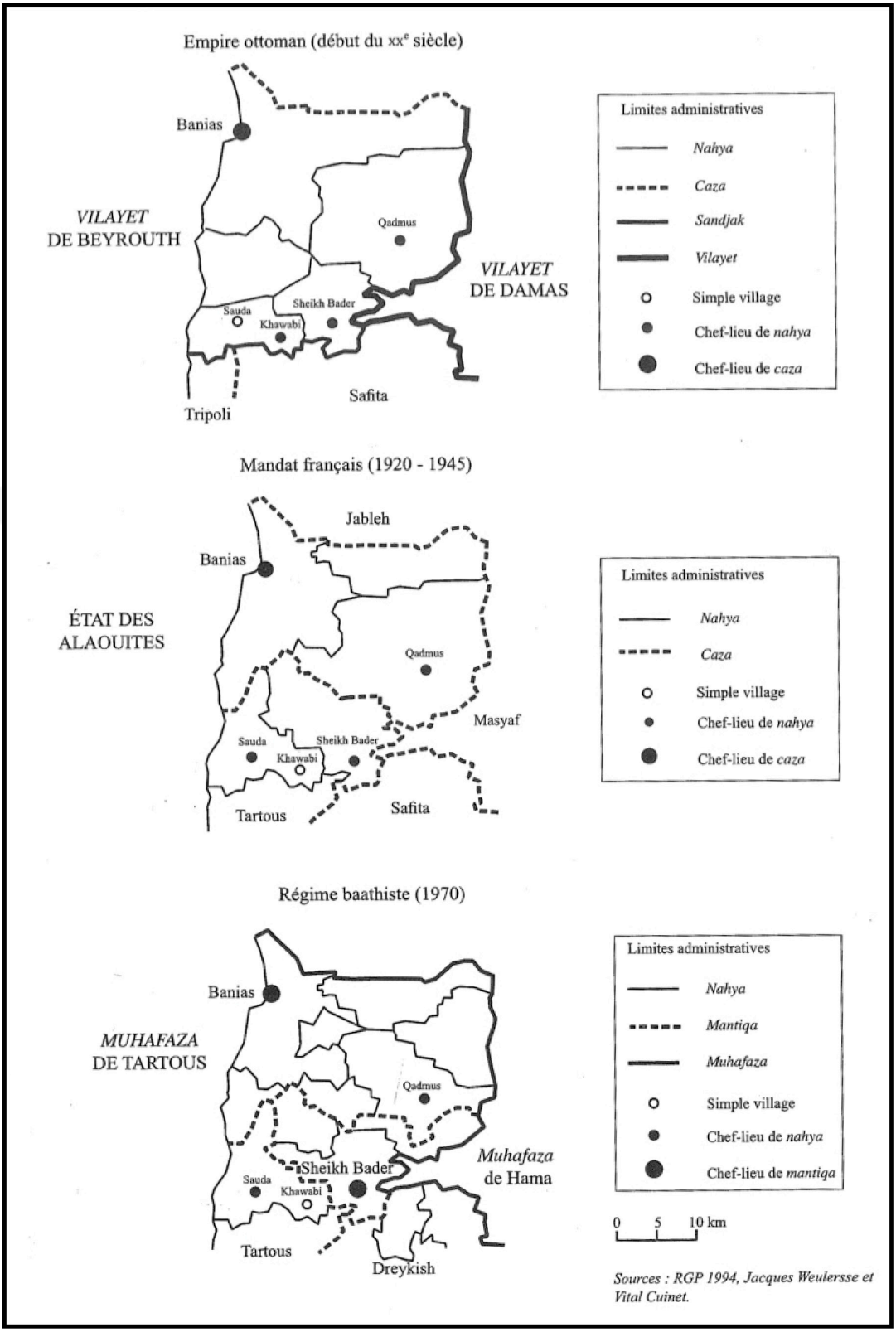


Map 3. The topography and relief map of the Coast and Coastal Mountains Region (Source: Abdulsalam, *Comparative study of Syria and Japan*, 8)

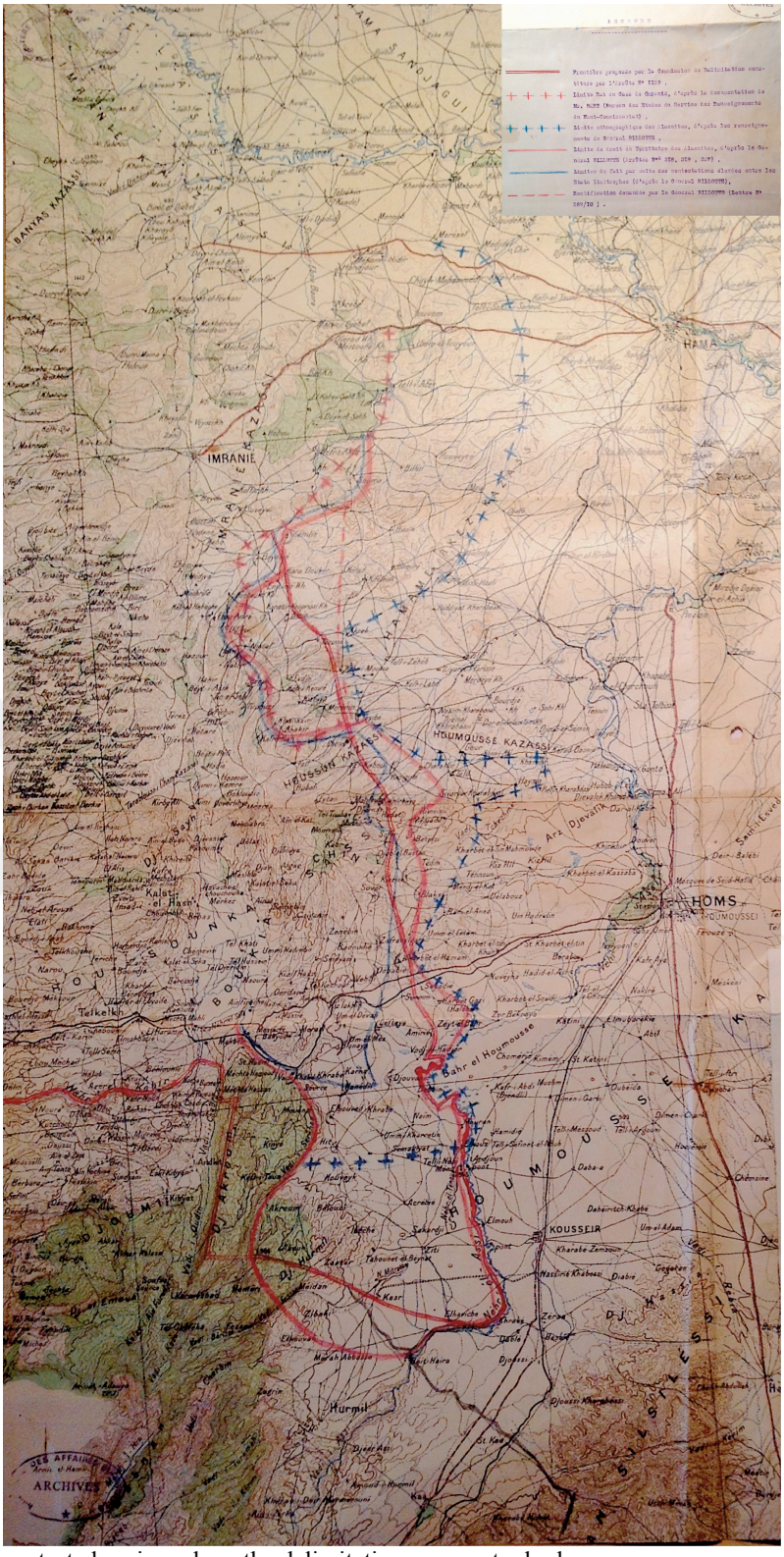


Map 4. The Alawite State during the mandate period

(Source: Weulersse, *Le pays des Alaouites*, 119, quoted and reconfigurated in Balanche, *La région alaouite et le pouvoir syrien*, 35)



Map 5. Al-Shaykh Badr district throughout the twentieth century
(Source: Balanche, *La région alaouite et le pouvoir syrien*, 48)



Map 6. The contested region where the delimitation process took place
(Source: CADN, 1SL/1/V/2375 Petits Fonds Politiques ou Administratifs 1917–1946, série inventoriée (inventaire no. 17), 2375 Division de la Syrie)

APPENDIX B

SELECTED LITERARY AND CINEMATOGRAPHIC WORKS ABOUT FRENCH COLONIALISM

For some first-hand accounts on the multi-layered societal and individual relations and affiliations between France and her colonies through the eyes of her erstwhile subjects and settlers in the colonies, one may peruse Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* [1952], (Paris: Éditions Points, 2015) and *Les Damnés de la Terre* [1961], (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2004); Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme (suivi du discours sur la Négritude)* [1950], (Paris: Présence Africaine Editions, 2000); Albert Memmi's *Portrait du colonisé, Portrait du colonisateur* [1957], (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2002) and through the veins of literature, one may relish to devour Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête* [1969], (Paris: Éditions Points, 1997); René Maran's *Batouala* [1921], (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1982); Édouard Glissant's *La Lézarde* [1958], (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1997); Albert Camus' *L'Étranger* [1942], (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1971) and *Le Premier homme* [1994], (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2016); Louis Hémon's *Maria Chapdelaine* [1913], (Paris: Le Livre de poche, 1961); Georges Conchon's *L'État sauvage* [1964], [Kindle version], (Paris: Albin Michel, 2013); Tahar Ben Jelloun's *La Nuit sacrée* [1987], (Paris: Éditions Points, 2014); Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* [1956], (Paris: Éditions Points, 1996); Marguerite Duras' *L'Amant*, (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1984) and *Un barrage contre le Pacifique* [1950], (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1978); Fadhma Aït Mansour Amrouche's *Histoire de ma vie* [1968], (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2005); Jean Genet's *Les Nègres* [1958], (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2005); J. M. G. Le Clézio's *Désert*, (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1987). Amongst

numerous others, the certain travel writings also present vivid depictions of the colonies such as André Gide's *Voyage au Congo* [1927], (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1995) and *Le Retour du Tchad* [1928], [Kindle version], (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2017).

On motion picture scene, on the one hand there are plenty of films which have colonial settings and were shooted during and after the colonial period such as Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* (*La battaglia di Algeri*), Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina's *Chronicle of the Years of Fire* (*Chronique des Années de Braise*), Claire Denis' *Chocolat*, Brigitte Roüan's *Overseas* (*Outremer*), Marguerite Duras' *India Song*, René Clément's *This Angry Age* also known as *The Sea Wall* (*Barrage contre le Pacifique* / *La diga sul Pacifico*), Régis Wargnier's *Indochine*, Jean-Jacques Annaud's *The Lover* (*L'Amant*), René Vautier's *To Be Twenty in the Aures* (*Avoir 20 ans dans les Aurès*), Pierre Schoendoerffer's *Diên Biên Phu*, *The 317th Platoon* (*La 317e Section*), and *Drummer-Crab* (*Le Crabe-tambour*), Alain Corneau's *Fort Saganne*, Bertrand Tavernier's *Clean Slat*e / *Clean Up* (*Coup de Torchon*), Jean Benoît-Lévy and Marie Epstein's *Itto*, Mark Robson's *Lost Command*, Julien Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko*, Jean-Paul Paulin's *Trois de Saint-Cyr*, Léon Poirier's *Brazza ou l'Epopée du Congo*; and there are also some significant recent releases such as Laurent Herbiet's *The Colonel* (*Mon colonel*), Alexandre Arcady's *What the Day Owes the Night* (C*e que le jour doit à la nuit*), David Oelhoffen's *Far From Men* (*Loin des hommes*); some documentaries with overt pro-colonialist sentiments as *La France est un empire* that is directed by Emmanuel Bourcier, Jean d'Agraives, Georges Barrois, Gaston Chelle, Hervé Missir, Raymond Méjat, André Persin; and some others that are critical towards the colonialism as

René Vautier's *Afrique 50* and *Peuple en marche*, Alain Resnais, Chris Marker and Ghislain Cloquet's *Statues also Die* (*Les statues meurent aussi*), William Klein's *The Pan-African Festival of Algiers, 1969* (*Festival panafricain d'Alger 1969*), Ahmed Baidou's *Bougafer 33*, Bertrand Tavernier's *The War Without a Name* (*La Guerre Sans Nom*), Göran Olsson's *Concerning Violence* (*Om våld*), Dalila Ennadre's *I Loved So Much...* (*J'ai tant aimé...*). For a refined analysis of colonial films see Colleen Kennedy-Karpat's *Rogues, Romance, and Exoticism in French Cinema of the 1930s* (Madison and Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2013), 1–15; and for a detailed list of the films on the experiences of the settlers, indigenous peoples, and agents of the French colonial empire, see from the same book pages between 191–207; specifically for the films on Indochinese and Algerian Wars see Guy Austin's Contemporary French Cinema: An Introduction (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 39–42; and to keep the corner stones of the French Colonial Empire through the lens of cinema in perspective, the seminal work of David Henry Slavin's *Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919–1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, and Settler Myths* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) should also be referred. Another significant work on the relation between the colonial experience and its cinematographic depiction one may see Dina Sherzer, ed., *Cinema, Colonialism, Postcolonialism: Perspectives from the French and Francophone Worlds* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

APPENDIX C

THE FRENCH ECONOMY DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD

France experienced a heavy increase in the field of industrial production — even though its industry was forced to compete with its arch-rival, Germany — by the end of the war owing to the war effort.[274] However, the war has also exacted a toll on French economy: the total number of buildings shrank by 7.5 per cent and the country's industrial capital was seriously crippled, and above all, the war claimed the lives of 1,350,000 persons in the country.[275]

During the Great War, France underwent a difficult financial process. The export income could only meet 29 per cent of the import expenditure of the country; hence it can be uttered that there was a constant negative balance of trade throughout the war. At the end of the war, French foreign debts reached up to 19 billion francs and the total public debt rose from 31 to 62 billion franc. Its system of trade had gradually become dependent on American loans.[276] There was a high level of inflation throughout the war, which was resulted from the endless shortages, and lack of a consistent financial policy.[277]

The decade following the war was conditioned by currency fluctuations on financial markets.[278] Those years' monetary depreciations availed the growth rate of the country's export although Caron argues that it was not a monocausal

[274] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 244–245.
[275] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 247.
[276] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 248.
[277] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 249.
[278] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 252.

expansion.[279] He points out that the nature of French export articles also began to alter in 1920s; there was a rise in the number of luxury items, which itself is considered as part of the increase of industrial manufactured products within the country's total exportation.[280]

According to several different figures, which are provided by organisations like OECD or scholars as Edmond Malinvaud, the growth rates of industry and gross domestic production during the 1920s provide a favourable position to France vis-à-vis the other industrialised countries. The annual growth rate of French industry during the years between 1924 and 1929 is figured out as 4.7 per cent according to the relevant OECD data; and the figures concerning the gross domestic production between the years 1922 and 1929 is annualised as 4.4 per cent by Malinvaud.[281] Caron argues that these overall figures can be considered as the outcomes of two equally important circumstances: "a continuation of the growth of the immediate pre-war years" and "the industrialist spirit of the First World War."[282]

Three industrial sectors — construction and public works, wood industry, and fabric processing — are categorised as stagnant; while textile manufacturing, leather industry, food industry, and extractive industries are categorised as moderate performers by L. A. Vincent according to the industry-specific indices of 1913 and 1928; but on the bright side, sectors such as metal processing, paper, petroleum and

[279] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 256.
[280] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 257.
[281] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 179.
[282] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 181.

fuel, electric power, chemical, and rubber industries are noted as the ones which experienced an expeditious growth.[283]

The investment rate of the French economy indicates a significant increase from 16.8 per cent in 1913 to 20.8 per cent in 1930, and its investments gradually began to centre upon the productive sectors; however this increase was followed by a severe decrease in the ensuing decade, and it regressed to 13.4 per cent in 1938.[284] The accelerating industrialisation of the 1920s went hand in hand with the substantial rise in the scale of investment and a significant impact of the new technologies, which were realised by the dint of use of electricity, on the production processes.[285]

The elongated period of prosperity came to an end in 1931. The amount of the capital inflow and the size of the gold reserve and money supply saved France for a limited period of time from the negative effects of the 1929 however, the country began to sense the effects of the global crisis with a two-year delay.[286] The crises essentially made itself evident in the domains of investments and savings. The depreciation of profits in the industrial sectors in connection with the decrease in prices and production, and agricultural sectors triggered by overproduction in addition to decline in market prices induced the crises.[287] The export volume of the country contracted by 60 per cent between the years 1929 and 1935.[288] The impact of the economic depression of 1930s has lasted longer in France, and it impinged on its

[283] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 253–254.
[284] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 194.
[285] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 255.
[286] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 258–259.
[287] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 259.
[288] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 260.

economy more than any other country in Europe.[289] However, France never confronted with an unemployment rate that exceeds the figures in Britain, Germany, or United States.[290] The governments that came into power after 1932 embraced a policy that was based on three trivets: protectionist measures, subsidies, and organisation of markets.[291]

One of the backbones of the French economy, has always been agriculture and even though there was a remarkable shrinkage in the total number of labourers in the sector, the country witnessed a humble increase in agricultural productivity from 1913 to 1929 by 1.4 per cent, and 2.5 per cent from 1929 to 1938.[292]

The energy need of France became prevalent when the Great War broke up. France had to form a reasoned oil policy in order to supply her demand. The establishment of the *Compagnie Française des Pétroles* (predecessor of Total S.A.) in 1924 was an action to provide independence to France from her British and American rivals. The company was formed to secure and manage the French share (23.75 per cent) in the Iraq Petroleum Company. France supplied the 40 per cent of her oil need from the Iraqi petrol by 1936. The other potential locations for oil production came into question only after 1940.[293]

One common feature of the 1920s and 1930s marked a noticeable change in the composition of the French economy; the empire was economically becoming more integrated than ever in this period. The share of the colonies in the total amount

[289] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 181.
[290] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 261.
[291] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 263.
[292] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 220.
[293] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 224–225.

of exports of the country corresponds to 13 per cent in 1913, 18.5 per cent in 1928-1930, and 31.9 per cent in 1934–1936. However, the percentage of the colonies in the overall industrial export figures remained quite a little.[294]

In accordance with the economic indicators, the demographic figures of the era, such as the country's reproduction rate displays a gloomy picture; the total fertility rate of France between the years 1922 and 1939 is close to one per cent on annual figures. The only reason that insulates France from experiencing a significant demographic decline in 1930s is immigration.[295] Even though the country received a high number of immigrants throughout the Interwar period, which in turn engendered a considerable increase in the working-age population (from 26.6 million in 1920 to 28.1 million in 1930), the sharp decline in the total fertility rate that has begun to arise in the 1930s and continued throughout the decade; and the incontrovertible impact of the Second World War on the country — Caron considers the year 1942 as the beginning of the demographic recovery presumably on the base of the crude birth rates, which show signs of upturn as of this date; however he also indicates that the impact of this amelioration has primarily manifested itself in the domain of demand rather than production; and moreover the population of the Metropolitan France did not begin to increase till the 1945 — triggered a substantial decrease in the working-age population of the country (from 28.1 million in 1930 to 26.7 million in 1946).[296]

For more detailed information on and analysis of the French economy during the Interwar period see Alfred Sauvy, *Histoire économique de la France entre les deux guerres* (Paris: Éditions Economica, 1984); Adrian Rossiter, "Popular Front

[294] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 216–217.
[295] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 183–184.
[296] Caron, *Economic history of modern France*, 187.

economic policy and the Matignon negotiations," in *Historical Journal* 30, no. 3 (1987): 663–684; Julian Jackson, *Popular Front in France: Defending democracy, 1934–38* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Paul Beaudry and Franck Portier, "The French Depression in the 1930s," *Review of Economic Dynamics* 5, no. 1 (2002): 73–99; Jean-Pierre Dormois, *The French Economy in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Pierre-Cyrille Hautcœur, "Was the Great War a watershed? The economics of World War I in France," in *The Economics of World War I*, eds. Stephen Broadberry, and Mark Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 169–205; Kevin H. O'Rourke, "The Great Depression of the 1930s and the world economic crises after 2008," in *A history of the global economy: From 1500 to the present*, 2016, ed. Jörg Baten, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 110–114.

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