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**FRENCH POLITICS OF OTTOMAN SYRIA DURING THE
THIRD REPUBLIC ERA, 1870-1924**

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ÖZ

ÜÇÜNCÜ CUMHURİYET DÖNEMİ FRANSIZLARIN OSMANLI SURİYESİ
POLİTİKASI 1870-1924

Koyuncu, Alican

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Bu çalışma 1870-1924 arasında Üçüncü Cumhuriyet Dönemi boyunca Fransızların Osmanlı Suriye'si Politikası analiz edilmektedir. Çalışma, Birinci Dünya savaşı öncesi ve sonrası, Fransa'nın Osmanlı Suriye'si politikasında üzerindeki temel değişim ve karakterler gösterilecektir. Bu tez, Fransa'nın savaş sonrası Suriye politikasının, savaş öncesi Hristiyanların geleneksel koruyuculuğu, Osmanlı Devletine ve Suriye eyaletine yapılan büyük çaplı ekonomik yaptırımlar, Fransızların Levant olarak adlandırdığı Suriye ve Lübnan'a Medeniyet getirme misyonu ve Fransa-Prusya savaşı sonrası tehlikede olan onur ve prestijini tekrardan kurma misyonunla alakalıdır. Bu tez yine, Fransa'nın Suriye'ye uzanan kolonyal faaliyetlerinin Üçüncü Cumhuriyet Döneminde Kolonyal Parti adı verilen siyasi örgütlenmeler tarafından şekillendiğini altını çizmektedir. Sonuç olarak tez, Suriye'de Fransız Mandasına karşı 1920 ve 1924 yılları arasında siyasi ve kitlesel bir mücadele olduğunu ifade etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Birinci Dünya Savaşı, Fransa-Prusya Savaşı, Kolonyal Parti, Osmanlı Suriye'si, Üçüncü Cumhuriyet

ABSTRACT

FRENCH POLICY OF OTTOMAN SYRIA DURING THE THIRD REPUBLIC ERA, 1870-
1924

Koyuncu, Alican

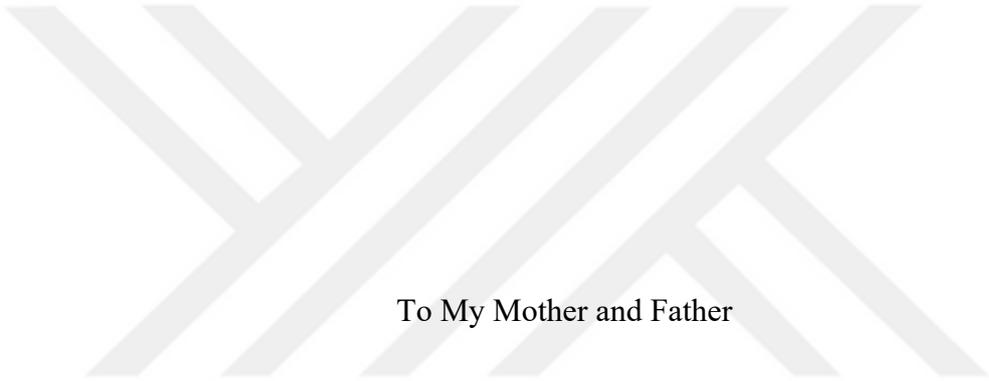
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In this thesis, the French policy towards Ottoman Syria during the Third Republic Era between 1870-1924 is analysed. This thesis aims to demonstrate the main characteristics of pre and the post-war expectation of France over Ottoman Syria after the break-out of World War I. This thesis focuses on that the post-war expectations of France related to the Ottoman Empire and province of Syria based on its position as the traditional protector of Christians as well as the large-scale economic investment in the Ottoman Empire, France's mission of bringing civilization to Levant and an attempt to reinstate France's prestige and honour were at stake after the defeat of Franco-Prussian War in 1870 were also played a significant role. This thesis emphasized that, with the establishing of Third Republic, France started colonial expansion under the Third Republic extending to Syria. The argument here is that the Parti Colonial was one of the most crucial elements of the French political system leading to the occupation of Mandate system in Syria. The thesis concludes that there was political and public mass opposition against the French Mandate in Syria between the years 1920-1924.

Keyword: Franco- Prussian War, Ottoman Syria, Parti Colonial, Third Republic, World War I.



To My Mother and Father

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INTRODUCTION

In general terms, the history of Syria has been divided into five periods, the Ottoman Empire Syria, lasted 400 years; Faisal's Syria, France Mandate Syria, post-Mandate Syria, and finally modern Syria. This thesis aims to analyse the Ottoman province of Syria ruled by French administration, which lasted from 1871 to 1924. It argues that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century France's policy of Ottoman Syria was shaped and reached its peak with the Battle of Maysaloun in 1920 and with the establishing of the Mandate system in Syria and Lebanon. The mandate given by the League of Nations to French for Syria and Lebanon, which ended on November 1943 in Lebanon and five days after in Syria. That was the period in which the Ottoman Empire collapsed, and World War I broke out. Following the First World War, the British and French armies occupied Syria, and then the establishment of the French Mandates under the supervision of the League's Permanent Mandates Commission occurred. This thesis will look into the historical background, political organizations, nationalist organizations and resistances against the French rule in the region.

Ottoman Sultan, Selim I defeated the Mamluks at Marj Dabiq, north of Aleppo on 24th August 1516 and after this victory Ottoman Empire, extended his control over the whole of Syria in the 16th century. Although parts of Syria enjoyed some local autonomy, the area as a whole remained for 400 years an integral section of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the First World War I. The conquest of Sultan Selim in 1516 created a region known as the *Bilad al-Sham* a province centred on what is known as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. Although French rule in Syria started after the break-out of World War I, France's economic and religious presence in Syria can go back to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Before the start of World War I in 1914, France did not have a specific Syrian policy but solely had an Ottoman policy encompassing Ottoman Syria. With the initiative of the Third Republic leaders such as Adolphe Thiers (1871-73), Patrice de Mac-Mahon (1873-79), Jules Grévy (1879-87), Sadi Carnot (1887-94), Félix Faure (1895-99), French extended its cultural, educational, medical and economic interest throughout the Ottoman Empire in cities such as Istanbul, Beirut, Aleppo, Damascus and Mosul. A 1909 memorandum of the Quai d'Orsay epitomized the French interest in Syria until the First World War:

Comme nous nous en tenons plus que jamais à l'intégrité de l'Empire ottoman, nous devons nous garder de paraître songer à une mainmise sur la Syrie. Mais il ne faudrait pas que notre réserve assurât les autres puissances à conclure qu'elles pourraient elles-mêmes mettre la main sur ce pays sans avoir à compter avec nous. Il est bon qu'on n'oublie point que nous n'avons fait abandon à personne des intérêts traditionnels que nous possédons en Syrie.

Since we hold more than to the integrity of Ottoman Empire, we must protect ourselves against seeming to contemplate laying hands on Syria. But our standoffishness must not comfort the other powers in concluding that they might themselves lay their hands on this country without having us to deal with. It is good that it should not be forgotten that we have abandoned to no one the traditional interest we have in Syria.

In 1920, France entered into Syria after World War I in order to establish a mandate system, which basically depended on the Sykes-Picot agreement signed with Great Britain and their “divide and rule” policy. After the mandate was approved by the League of Nations, France created five different states in Syria. As a result, during the years 1919-1925 France faced innumerable resistance from Syrians.

It must be emphasized that historically Syria did not exist before 1920 but it was known as a part of *Bilad Ush-Sham* (Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan) of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, throughout this thesis, Syria before the French Mandate will be called as the Ottoman Syria. In 1864, the Vilayet Law (Law of the Provinces) was promulgated. The law subdivided Ottoman Empire into a number of administrative units, called vilayets, the governor called *vali* was in full of charge of all political, financial, judicial and public affairs in the Vilayet. They were Vilayet of Syria, Vilayet of Beyrouth, Vilayet of Lebanon, and Mutessarrif of Jerusalem. However, after the break-out of World War I, the structure of the region was changed and extended with the out-break of World War I in 1914 to the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916. France described Syria as *la Syrie intégrale*, as the France of the Levant. *La Syrie intégrale* was a very politically and militarily ambiguous concept. The ambiguity emerged especially as result of defining boundaries of Great Syria. In 1915, the Great Syria consisted of Mersin, Alexandretta, Tripoli, Tyr, Acre, Haifa, Port Said, Jerusalem and Gaza. In 1916, Port Said, Gaza, Jerusalem, Haifa and Acre were removed from the boundaries of the Great Syria, and later based on the Agreement of Sykes Picot on May 1916 Mosul was added. Finally in 1920, after the establishment of the French Mandate, Greater Syria consisted of the following provinces: Aleppo, Damascus, Jabal al- Druze, Lebanon, Alawite State and Alexandretta.



Figure 1.1. Provinces of Ottoman Empire in 1914 (Pamuk)



Figure 1.2: The Great Syria on May 1915

Integral Syria on May 1915, (Cloarec)

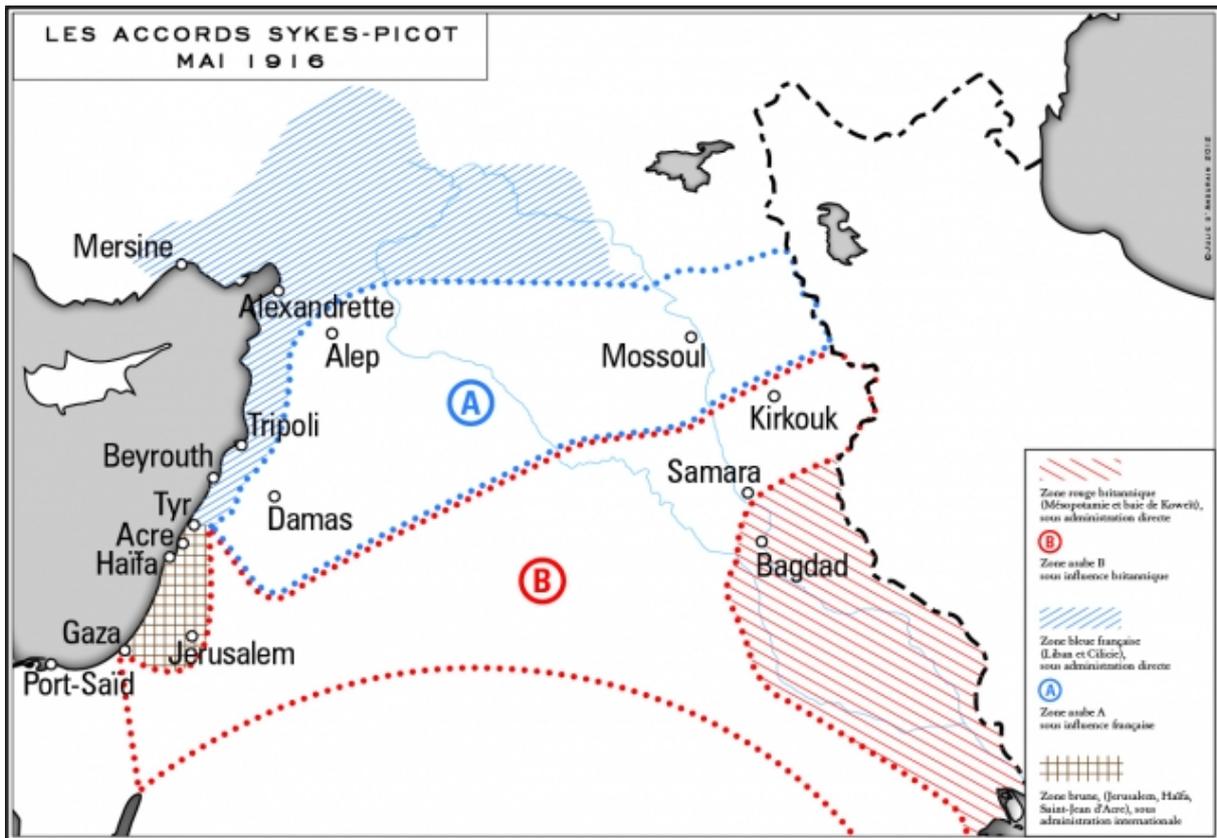


Figure 1. 3 Sykes-Picot Agreement on May 1916 (Cloarec)

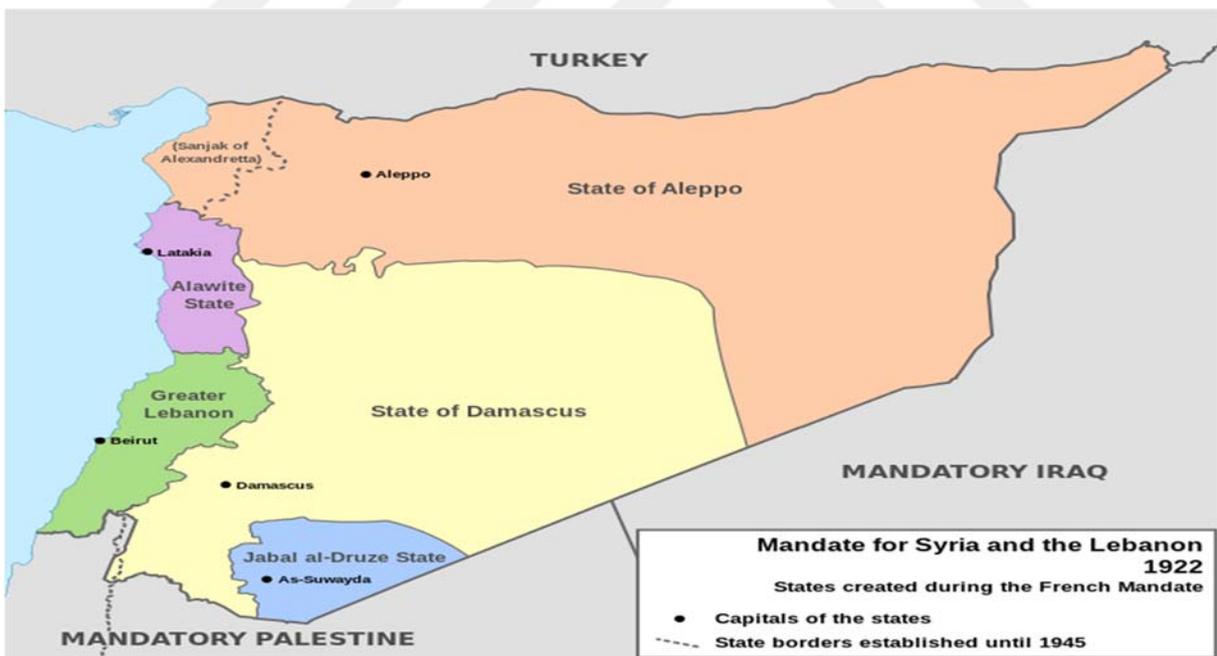


Figure 1.4. Mandate for Syria and the Lebanon 1922 (Cloarec)

In this thesis, the main argument is that the French policy over Ottoman Syria was re-shaped after the break-out of World War I. The Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Syria were off the agenda for France politics before the First World War I. According to Jacques Thobie the

matter of establishing the mandate in the Levant amounted to less than one half of the total content of the Bulletin. This was based on the articles of the *Bulletin of Comité de l'Asie*, which was one of the most important committees shaping the policy of the Ottoman Empire in France in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The new post-war policy and expectation of France related to the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Syria came from the traditional protector of Christians, large-scale economic investment in the Ottoman Empire, France's bringing a civilization mission to Levant and the most important re-gaining France's prestige and honour, which were at stake after the defeat of Franco-Prussian War in 1870. In this thesis, I will be studying the following crucial questions: the scale of French influence in the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Syria prior to World War I, the policy of France over Ottoman Syria between 1871 and 1914 and how it was characterized and shaped; the event following the break-out of World War I and the reactions of Syrians with the emergence of France's new post-war expectations; how World War I re-shaped France's policy over Ottoman Syria during the years 1914-1920.

In this study, France's occupation of Ottoman Syria will be examined in three periods; The first period between 1871, marked the establishment of the Third Republic Era in France to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. The second period from 1914 to 1920 marked the battle of Maysaloun and the establishment of Mandate rules in present day Syria and Lebanon. The third period from 1920 to 1925 marked the last full-fledged revolt against France's political authority.

In this thesis, Ottoman and France archival materials were utilized in order to draw a comprehensive picture of the late Ottoman Syria in the 19th century. The usage of several photographs and French, Ottoman and Arabic newspapers were added to the study in the interest of the visualization of France Third Empire Republic interest in the Ottoman Syria. Finally, memoirs and senate accounts were used for the multiplication of consequences of Mandate system in the Ottoman Syria.

Following the introduction of the thesis, the first chapter concentrates on a wide historical background of France's history in the 19th century. I will look into the formation of the Third Republic Era after the defeat of the Franco-Prussian War. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 marked the end of France's hegemony in continental Europe, establishing the French Third Republic. The war also alone had cost the French 5 billion francs. France's GDP was over 20 billion francs in the early 1870s. Therefore, the Franco-Prussian War indemnity of 1871-1873,

reflected 25 per cent of France's a yearly GDP. I will look again at the French influence in Ottoman Syria prior to World War I. Unlike the post-war condition, France's influence was limited to only economical and religious protectorate of Christian over the Ottoman Empire. Between the years 1871-1914, France's economic interests, in particular were shaped by the Parti Colonial. According to C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya Forstner, Le Parti Colonial played a critical role in the processing and developing of French imperialism for more than twenty years.

In the second chapter, France economical interest and investment in the Ottoman Empire and province of Syria in the 19th century will be analysed. In 1888, France was the second biggest investor with only about of 32 per cent of total, along with that of United Kingdom which was 56 per cent. In 1914, France increased their interests from 32 to 45 per cent and that of the English decreased to 14 per cent. It means that France increased their investment in almost every sphere including education, transportation, electricity and so forth and its investment doubled more than that of its nearest rival including Germany and Britain from 1888 to 1914. France's economic interest will be divided into mainly three categories in the Ottoman Empire and provinces of Syria: Banking, transportation and public utilities.

In the third chapter, the study will analyse the transformation of France's political and military policy in Syria after the break-out of World War I. Unlike prior to World War I that period is considered a period of active military role of France in Syria. Starting from the World War I, the study demonstrates the innumerable military plan, agreements, revolts, correspondences in which France took a key role over Ottoman Syria. Between 1914-1920, Plan of Maucorps, Plan of Hamelin, The Negotiation of Picot and Nicolson, Sykes-Picot Agreements, Hussein-McMahon correspondences, Congress of Syria in Paris, San Remo Conference and the Battle of Maysaloun all proves the transformation of France's political and military active role over the Ottoman Syria. In the third chapter again, the study will examine the Syrian political and public reactions to the French Mandate as a response to the changing post-war expectations of France over Ottoman Syria. Immediately after the Battle of Maysaloun and with the establishing of the Mandate system in Syria, as Jean- David Mizrahi determines, between the years 1922-1924 alone, there were 381 acts of violence. In conclusion, I will conclude by concentrating on the year 1925 and the Great Syrian revolt, which is considered to be largest, last, and longest-lasting revolt against France. Despite its failure, the revolt affected Syrian-France relationships for a long time. After 1925, for twenty years, France would rule Syria in cooperation with Syrian elites, and the French would

recognize Syria as having common interests and a social system inherited from Ottoman Empire times.

Regarding of Ottoman Syria under the French politics led by Third Republic Era, it is not surprising that there are numerous works such as books, articles, master and PhD thesis. However, most notable book was writing by Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945. The British and French Mandates in Comparative Perspectives/Les mandats français et anglais dans une perspective comparative* edited by Nadine Méouchy and Peter Sluglett. This book contributed to the field of study on the French Mandate by comparing it with the British Mandate. Nadine Méouchy's *France, Syrie et Liban 1918-1946: Les ambiguïtés et les dynamiques de la relation mandataire* is one of the most important books to understand and examine the dynamics of France Mandate which will be divided into three categories: knowledge, practices and representations in this book. Another book, written by Daniel Neep is called, *Occupying Syria under the French Mandate: Insurgency, Space and State Formation*. The last book, I will mention, is written by Vincent Cloarec called *La France et la Question de Syrie, 1914- 1918*, which focuses on the important four years after the break-out of World War I. Cloarec's book is crucial to understand the shift in paradigm over Ottoman Syria led by the France Empire.

Regarding of Colonial Party, which as it will be shown how they took a key role in occupation and establishment of French Syria, there has been relatively less books and works. However, without Christopher M. Andrew and A.S Kanya-Forstner, it would have been difficult to understand the dynamics of the Colonial Party and their attitude towards Syria. Therefore Christopher M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner's *The Climax of French Imperial Expansion, 1914–1924*, is invaluable study about the Colonial Party and their direct impact on Syria. In addition to that book, they have written some very important articles, including *The French Colonial Party and French Colonial War Aims, 1914-1918*, and *Le mouvement colonial français et ses principales personnalités (1890-1914)*. L. Abrams and D. J. Miller also contributed to this topic with their important articles *Who Were the French Colonialists? A Reassessment of the Parti Colonial, 1890-1914*.

On the economic interests of the French Empire in the Ottoman Empire and province of Ottoman Syria, the works of Jacques Thobie, need to be mentioned for their significant contribution. Jacques Thobie books include *Intérêts et impérialisme français dans l'Empire ottoman (1895-1914)*, which is the most important book related to the economic interests of

France in the Ottoman Empire. V. Necla Geyikdagi again has written a very important book titled *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire: International Trade and Relations, 1854-1914* and an article called *French Direct Investments in the Ottoman Empire Before World War I*. Michelle Raccagni's article, *The French Interest in the Ottoman Empire* contributed to the study of France's economic interest in Ottoman Empire.

Finally Michael Provinces's *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism, Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* written by John Chalcraft and Alice Poulleau's *À Damas sous les bombes: journal d'une Française pendant la révolte syrienne, 1924-1926* have contributed the political and mass opposition against the France rule in Mandate between 1919- 1924.



CHAPTER 1

1. 1 France in the Long Nineteenth Century

At the turn of the nineteenth century, France had been governed by Napoleon Bonaparte as First Consul. The French Revolution of 1789 had ended rule of monarchy, followed by the establishment of the First Republic. Between the years 1804-1814, Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself emperor of the First French Empire. Then Napoleon was defeated in the Battle of Waterloo. In 1848, Louis Napoleon, nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, proclaimed himself the president of Second Republic. After overthrowing the Second Republics in France, the Third Republic was declared in France on 4 September 1870. However, after years of uncertainty over the leadership of the country, the Third Republic was firmly instituted in Versailles in 1875. Third Republic lasted seventy years and survived until the invasion of France by the German Third Reich in 1940.¹ The Constitutional Laws of 1875, a series of fundamental laws, which came to be known as the constitution of the Third Republic was accepted. The Third Republic consisted of a two-house legislature: a Council of Ministers (cabinet), responsible to the Chamber, and a president, elected for seven years by the two houses. Despite this there was no organised party system. There were four political groups in the Chamber. Ideologically, the Chamber was dominated by centre-left Radical parties, moderate Republicans, and Socialist.² It is worth noting that in the Third Republic there was an absence of no legislative power, and a formalized party. Maréchal MacMahon (1873-79) was the first president of the Third Republic. Despite universal male suffrage, it was not so remarkable on the European Continent. The first electoral democracy was established with universal male suffrage by the Third Republic.³ Presidents of the Third Republic included Adolphe Thiers, Gaston Doumergue, Sadi Carnot, Alexandre Millerand, Patrice de MacMahon, Jules Grévy, Félix Faure, Émile Loubet Armand Fallières, Raymond Poincaré, Alexandre Millerand, and Albert Lebrun, Other important leaders of the Third Republic were:

¹ Stephen E. Hanson, "The Founding of the French Third Republic," *Comparative Political Studies* 43, no. 8–9 (August 2010): 1024

² Alexandre Cirone, "Essays on Historical Political Economy: The Case of the French Third Republic," (PhD diss., University of Columbia, 2017), 138

³ Philip Nord, "The Origins of the Third Republic in France, 1860–1885", in *The Social Construction of Democracy, 1870–1990*, ed. George Reid Andrews, Herrick Chapman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 31

Édouard Daladier, Léon Blum, Pierre Laval, Georges Clemenceau, Georges Boulanger, Aristide Briand.

Before the Third Republic Era, France had no systematic colonialist movement. The colonial passions were aroused and systematised by the Third Republic.

Figure 1: French Current Account/GDP

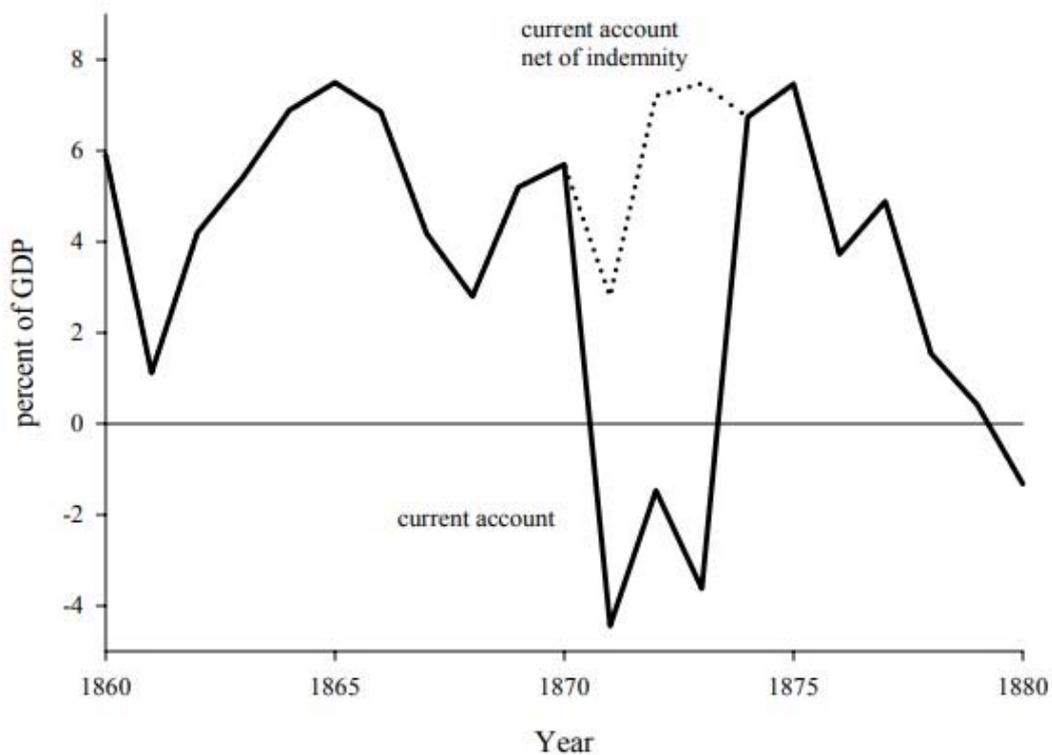


Figure 1.5. French Current Account GDP

In the early 1890s in France, Parti Colonial, which will be explained in detail, is considered the first wave of colonial expansion of France led by Third Republic.⁴ The French colonialist movement were strongly supported by the first generation of the Third Republic politicians because it was seen as the first and foremost important way to recover after the horrifying the defeat of Franco-Prussian War in 1870. The war marked the end of French hegemony in continental Europe, and led to the birth of Third Republic. However, it is worth noting that the war alone had cost the French 5 billion francs. France's GDP was over 20 billion francs in the

⁴ C. M. Andrew, "The French Colonialist Movement during the Third Republic: The Unofficial Mind of Imperialism," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 26 (1976): 143-44

early 1870s. After the Franco-Prussian War, France had to pay war indemnity from 1871-1873, which was the 25 per cent of France's a yearly GDP.⁵ The payment was completed in 1873. According to Brakman and van Marrewijk this indemnity was one the largest money transfers in history.⁶ Adolphe Thiers, as the first president of the republic from 1871 to 1873, was assigned to pay the indemnity. Again in France between 1875 and 1877 an epidemic of phylloxera destroyed 40 per cent of the nation's vineyards between 1863 and 1890. The epidemic had socioeconomic impacts on rural communities.⁷ This devastating effect was crucial because France was a rural and agricultural country until the beginning of World War I. In 1892, 6.6 million of the population were working in agricultural.⁸ Therefore, what the Third Republic had to do was to recover the French economy. The Third Republic embarked upon expanding banks, building schools, roads and railways in the provinces of France, reducing illiteracy, improving public health, and rebuilding industry.⁹ French industrial and transport capabilities grew rapidly after 1860. During the time of Third Republic, universal conscription and an obligatory one to three-year military service were introduced in 1889. Secondly, the Third Republic had commenced colonial expansion in the 1880s. French expansion can be divided into different geographies which were Indo-China, West Africa, Equatorial Africa, Madagascar, Morocco and the Ottoman Empire and Syria. French dominated much of western Africa; they reached Bamako in 1883, Timbuktu in 1893, and Ségou in 1891. Indochina was integrated into France in 1887, Tahiti was declared a colony in 1880, and Madagascar was under control of France after 1895. Moreover, in the middle of the nineteenth century there were four French colonies: Senegal, Sudan, Guinea and the Ivory Coast.¹⁰ In the 19th and 20th century, France established a protectorate first over Algeria during the years 1830-1847, Tunisia in 1881 then Morocco as the result of the agreement of the Treaty of Fezon on March 30, 1912. In the nineteenth century, as part of their colonial expansion the Ottoman Empire became another target for the French Third Republic because the Ottoman Empire was seen as weak and as the sick man of Europe. For the first time Tsar

⁵ Michael B. Devereux, Gregor W. Smith, "Transfer Problem Dynamics: Macroeconomics of the Franco-Prussian War indemnity", *HKIMR Working Paper*, No. 2(2004): 4

⁶ Steve Brakman, Charles Van Marrewick, *The Economics of International Transfers*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11-12

⁷ Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Gilles Postel-Vinay, Tim Watts, 2010, "Long-Run Health Impacts of Income Shocks: Wine and Phylloxera in Nineteenth-Century France," *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, MIT Press, vol. 92(4), 717

⁸ Geogffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War, The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36

⁹ Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War*, 310

¹⁰ Guy Chapman, *Third Republic of France, The First Phrase 1871-1894*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1962) 251

Nicholas coined the phrase ‘Sick Man of Europe’ during the Crimean War.¹¹ In that period, the Ottoman Empire was losing much of its territories. In that process, after the collapse of Ottoman Empire, while the Republic of Turkey was forming, the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire fell into the domination of France. During the time of the Third Republic, France obtained mandates over Syria and Lebanon.

1.2 France Influences in Ottoman Syria Prior to World War I

The historians Etienne Lamy and Josep Aues argue that there always has been a strong relationship between France and the Levant starting from Abbasid-Carolingian alliance between Charlemagne and Caliph Harun al-Rashid in 8th century, then during Crusade periods in the 12th century, and Ottoman capitulations to French in 1535. In this first chapter I will try to explain that the French interest actually began with the Ottoman Empire at the start of 19th century.¹² In the 19th century, as I mentioned before, the Ottoman Empire was seen as the sick man of Europe by Tsar Nicholas in reference to its weakness. Therefore during the 19th century French colonial interest in the Eastern Mediterranean focused on the region. However, on the eve of 19th century, On July 1, 1798 a French army commanded by Napoleon Bonaparte sieged Egypt and later Syria in early 1799. Philipp Shukry Khoury in his book explains that French influence started from First World War I with three main components: moral, political and economic.

The Moral components have two different categories one of which is directly related to educational system. Prior to 1914, even though education remained relatively limited and inactive, it helped to increase French’s moral influences in Syrian provinces of Ottoman Empire. However, French the Third Empire went through a very important problem regarding education. That is to say that, the French education system was competing against the Protestant system controlled by the Anglo-Saxon system, and the Russian Orthodox schools, which was the most influential educational system in the Ottoman Empire.¹³ The first French language Ottoman school was Galatasaray Lycee, which was opened in 1868 under the name of Mekteb-i Sultânî (Galata Palace Imperial School); eventually it became a 12-year

¹¹ Moussa Sarga, “La métaphore de l’homme malade» dans les récits de voyage en Orient”, *Romantisme*, 2006/1 (n° 131) : 19

¹² Etienne Lamy, *La France du Levant*, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1900), 31,32, 36,

¹³ J.P Spagnol, “French Influence in Syria Prior to World War I: The Functional Weakness of Imperialism”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Winter, 1969), 59-60

preparatory school on the French model. The administration of Mekteb-i Sultânî was French; the director chosen by the French, the discipline of lycee was that of Napoleon's lycee. It is worth noting that most of the education was given in the French language.¹⁴ After one year of opening Mekteb-i Sultânî (Galata Palace Imperial School), during the Tanzimat Period, the Ottoman Empire issued the Regulations of Public Education (Maârif-i Umûmiye Nizâmnâmesi) in 1869, which was the product of the French Educational System. We know that the Tanzimat period statesmen invited the French Ministry of Education Victor Duruy in order to prepare a report about reforming the Ottoman Educational system and to obtain information on French Educational System.¹⁵ In that report Duruy defended the opening of new schools and a secular university, founding a public library system and the re-organization of Ottoman educational system.¹⁶



¹⁴ François Georgeon, "La formation des élites à la fin de l'Empire ottoman : le cas de Galatasaray", In: *Revue du monde musulman et de la Méditerranée*, n°72, (1994), Modernités arabes et turque: maîtres et ingénieurs, 18

¹⁵ Nurhayat Çelebi, H. Tezer Asan, "Reforms in the Field of Education During the Period of Sultan Abdulhamid II and Intended Youth Human Typology to be Trained The Last Period in the Ottoman Empire", *US-China Education Review*, B. Edition, Vol. 5, No. 3 (March 2015), 184

¹⁶ Çelebi, Asan, "Reforms," 184

Table 2.2. *The progress of Ottoman education, 1867–1895*⁹⁸

	1858	1867	1895
Secular elementary schools	—	11,008	28,615
Secular elementary students			
boys	—	242,017	640,721
girls	—	126,454	253,349
Military <i>Rüşdiye</i> students			
boys	—	8,247	8,247
<i>Millet</i> elementary schools			
boys	—	—	239,449
girls	—	—	77,740
Foreign elementary schools	—	—	
boys	—	—	8,519
girls	—	—	8,160
Total no. of elementary students			
boys	—	—	896,936
girls	—	—	339,249
Total population of elementary school age			
boys	—	—	1,001,294
girls	—	—	924,175
<i>Rüşdiye</i> schools	43	108	426
<i>Rüşdiye</i> school students	3,371	7,830	33,469
Military <i>Idadi</i> schools ^a	—	—	9
Military <i>Idadi</i> students	—	—	5,492
<i>Millet Rüşdiye</i> schools	—	—	687
<i>Millet Rüşdiye</i> students	—	—	76,359
Foreign middle schools	—	—	74
Foreign middle students	—	—	6,557
Total middle schools	—	—	1,169
Total middle students	—	—	109,877
Male population of middle school age (10 to 15)	—	—	980,320

Stanford J. Shaw & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Volume II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975.*

The period beginning with the Reform Edict of 1856, was a critical point in the history of Ottoman education. With the initiative of Tanzimat politicians, numerous schools were established in the Ottoman Empire between 1859 until the outbreak of World War I: The War School (Mekteb-i Harbiye) in 1834, the Civil Service School (Mekteb-i Mülkiye) in 1859, The Imperial School of Medicine (Mekteb-i Tibbiye-i Şahane) in 1827, and Dar ül-Fünun was opened in its modern form on September 1, 1900 and the language of instruction was mostly French. France estimated that on the eve of the Great War there were approximately from 65,000 to 90,000 Ottoman Children. According to Jacques Thobie, by depending on the report of Maurice Pernot, who published under the title *Rapport sur un voyage d'étude à Constantinople, en Égypte et en Turquie d'Asie, janvier août 1912*. Maurice Pernot was sent in mission by *Le Comité de défense des intérêts français en Orient* (The Committee of defence of the interest of French in Orient). He demonstrated that in total 87, 743 pupils

enrolled in giving French language schools in the Ottoman Empire, including primary school, secondary schools, orphanage, and seminary in 1912. According to Pernot, there were 25,001 boys and 15,098 girls and in total 40,099 students in the Ottoman Syria. This number reflects to the 45 per cent of the total pupils in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁷ Considering the nationality of students, Thobie demonstrates that 97 per cent belongs to Ottoman nationality, 2, 6 to foreigners and 0, 4 to French. Despite his problematic numbers, it is obvious that the students from the Tanzimat Period were most influenced by French language and the French culture.

Region	Boys	Girls	Total	%
Constantinople et environs	4 793	3 632	8 425	9,6
Asia mineure-Archipel	9 249	8 054	17 303	19,7
Syria	25 001	15 098	40 099	45,7
Palestine	3 425	5 577	9 002	10,25
Mesopotamia	6 921	5 993	12 914	14,75
Total Empire ottoman	49 389	38 354	87 743	100

Source : Rapport de Maurice Pernot

The second category of moral components of France was the religious protectorate of Catholics by France. One of the most important interventions of France in Syria as a religious protector was the 1860 Mount Lebanon civil war. In Lebanon, there have always been two different groups among with Arab-speaking. These are the Maronites (Eastern Catholics linked to the Catholic Church), and the Druze, one of the smallest communities in Lebanon, these groups lived in Lebanon in two self-governing districts under the control of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸ During these events, France helped the Catholic Maronites because as I said before French considered themselves as the defenders of the Maronites of Lebanon.¹⁹

According to Shukry, the second important component was economic. Since the beginning of 19th century the French had huge economic interest in the Ottoman Empire and its Arabic provinces. France was by far the biggest investor country in the Ottoman Empire. As Necla Geyikdağı shows in 1888, France was the second biggest investor with only about of 32 per cent of total, along with that of United Kingdom which was 56 per cent. However, the French

¹⁷ Jacques Thobie, "L'importance des écoles dans la diffusion du français dans l'Empire ottoman au début du XX^e siècle", *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde* [En ligne], 38/39 (2007) : 3

¹⁸ Alexis Heraclides, Ada Dialla, *Humanitarian Intervention in the Long Nineteenth Century: Setting the Precedent* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2015), 135

¹⁹ Alexis, Ada, *Humanitarian Intervention*, 136

Third Empire increased their interests from 32 to 45 per cent and the investment of the English decreased to 14 per cent.²⁰ This means that France increased their investment in almost every sphere including education, transportation, electricity and so forth, and its investment doubled more than that of its nearest rival including Germany and Britain.²¹ It is also important that the Ottoman Public Debt was mostly controlled by French capitalists. The French Empire and its investors owned and controlled the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which will be explained in detail later, which controlled the lucrative taxes on tobacco, salt, excise stamps, fish, and silk so forth and so on.²² However, French investors firmly start investing at the beginning of 20th century. The branches of Imperial Ottoman Bank, which was serving as an agent of Quai d'Orsay or the French Foreign Minister, were established in Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Tripoli. There had been a strong economic relationship between Lyon, Marseille and Syria starting from 1854.²³ On the eve of World War I, France like in the Ottoman Empire was the biggest investor also in Ottoman Syria. By 1914 it is estimated that French invested 200 million francs in Syria on railroads, silk and public utilities.²⁴ During the First World War, France continued investing in Ottoman Syria with an extra one billion francs. France was not the only great power interested in Syria before World War I, Italy, Germany, Britain and Russia shared the same interest along with France. Although from the perspective of finance, French capitalist were by far the largest investor, Germans held the concession of building the Anatolian Railway with future extensions to Baghdad. The concession of building Baghdad Railways were given to Germans in 1888. It was quite a negative circumstance because the French feared that the railway would lead to an increase of German influence in the Ottoman Empire and its Arab provinces.²⁵ Along with the Bagdad Railway, since the fear of the possible German influences in Syria, the Foreign Ministry of France started cooperating extensively with French railroad enterprises in Syria in order to expand their influences in Syria.²⁶

²⁰ V. Necla Geyikdağı, "French Direct Investments in the Ottoman Empire Before World War I," *Enterprise & Society*, vol. 12, no. 3, (2011): 527

²¹ Geyikdağı, French Direct Investments, 527

²² Bedri Gürsoy, "100. Yılında Düyun-u Umumiye İdaresi Üzerinde Bir Değerlendirme," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 40 40 / 1-4 (Ekim 2011): 21

²³ Chevallier, Dominique. "Lyon Et La Syrie En 1919. Les Bases D'une Intervention," *Revue Historique* 224, no. 2 (1960): 282-286

²⁴ Philip Shukry Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate, The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920-1945*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 49

²⁵ William I, Shorrock, "The Origin of the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon: The Railroad Question, 1901-1914", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2: 135

²⁶ Shorrock, 140

The last step of three main components of French influence over the Ottoman Empire is political influences, The Arab Congress of 1913, also known as Arab National Congress, was held at Paris in Paris, France. Actually, it was organised by 24 delegates and the Ottoman Decentralisation Party in Paris in 1913. The Ottoman Decentralisation Party (Hizb Al-Lâmarkaziyya Al-Idâriyya Al-"Uthmânî) was founded in January 1913. It consisted of eight Muslim, five Christians and Druzes. However all of the members were Syrians. Rafiq al- Azm was the president of the party, Iskandar Ammun the vice president, Sami al-Juraydini, Najib Bustrus, Rashid Rida were the members of that party.²⁷ However, among the delegates, who met at the First Arabic Congress in 1913, there were important figures that would shape the future politics of Middle East. Jamil Mardam, who was one of the most prominent Syrian families of Turkish ancestry, Tawfiq al-Suwaidi, who was Prime Minister of Iraq from 28 April to 19 September 1929, Charles Dabbas, who was the first President of Lebanon under the French Mandate of Lebanon, Ayoub Thabit, who was 6th Prime Minister of French Mandate of Lebanon.²⁸ Actually, the Arab Congress was convened to discuss and express their discontent with some Ottoman policies. However, it was the beginning of anti-French sentiments by Syrians against French politics, which would continue for a long period especially after the World War I. Syrians were expecting support from the French during that period in order to carry out the reform program against Ottoman Empire with the initiative of First Arab Congress. However, instead of supporting, the French had abandoned the reformers of Syrians in order to hold railroad concession given by the Ottoman Empire to French capitalist and there was no mention for Syrian reform program in the politics of France and liberalization of the Turkish administration of Syria. Thus, French failed to gain political influence among the Syrians and popularity in Ottoman Syrian. It is very apparent that before World War I, on the contrary to the British, the French were unable to gain influence over the Arab and Syria independence movements led by Arabs.²⁹ As a consequence, France came across numerous revolts, in Syria.

There were four French Republican ministers shaping Mediterranean policy before World War I. William Waddington was a French statesman who served as Prime Minister in 1878 and as an ambassador of France. Louis de Charles Louis Freycinet was a French statesman

²⁷ Jean-François Legrain. "L'idée de califat universel et de congrès islamique face à la revendication de souveraineté nationale et aux menaces d'écrasement de l'empire ottoman," Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance (CNED); *Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée*, (1986) : 74

²⁸ Elizabeth Tauber, *The Emergence of the Arab Movements*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), 122

²⁹ J.P Spagnol, "French Influence in Syria Prior to World War I: The Functional Weakness of Imperialism," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Winter, 1969): 62

and four times Prime Minister during the Third Republic; he also served as Minister of War (1883-93). Leon Gambetta was a French statesman and helped the defence of France during the Franco-German War 1870-1871 and became prime minister of France from 1881 to 1882. Lastly was Jules Ferry, a French statesman who twice became prime minister of France from 1880 to 1881 and from 1883-1885. Jules Ferry in his book on the French Colonialism determined that colonial expansion has both an economic and political structure related to three important ideas: economic, reaching to different civilization and political ideas. He also proclaimed that colonialism was the daughter of industrial policy, and therefore France needed colonies to improve their economic power.³⁰ In 4 years, from 1875 to 1879 French colonial policy focused not only on Tunis and Egypt but also Syria. In this period, France particularly helped a relatively small but dedicated group of politicians, businessman, intellectual, scholars, and businessmen known as Parti Colonial, which will be explained in detail, which would help the establishing of mandate over the next over thirty years.³¹

In the case of Ottoman Syria, prior to World War I, there had been important discussion about what Syria actually is. This is because Syria had been described by historians and statesmen as geographical Syria or in French, *Syrie intégrale*. This area included Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. In addition to that, Syria also was described as only the Ottoman provinces.³² To sum up, if it is possible to show the Ottoman Syrian politics of France, it could be characterised in the following ways: avoiding the Arabic unrest, surely and necessarily orchestrated by the United Kingdom, monitoring the political behaviour of the Bedouin in Syria, reviving the French influence in Syria including material interest in Syria.³³

1.3. Le Parti Colonial in France

According to C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya Forstner, *Le Parti Colonial* played a sharp role in the processing and developing of French imperialism for more than twenty years.³⁴ The Parti Colonial was nothing more than the instrument of French economic business and a real

³⁰ Margaret Majumdar, *Postcoloniality: the French Dimension* (Berghan Books: New York&Oxford,2007), 7

³¹ J.P Spagnol, "French Influence in Syria Prior to World War I", 47

³² A.H. Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon A Political Essay by A.H. Hourani* (Oxford University Press: Oxford,1946) 4,5

³³ Vincent Cloarec, *La France et La Question De Syrie (1914-1918)*, (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2002), 18

³⁴ C. M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "French Business and the French Colonialists," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (December 1976): 981

driving force the French imperial expansion and to encourage the development of French colonialist policy during the years 1890-1914.³⁵ In reality, the French colonial party in the sense of the actual term of “party” had never been existed. They had neither director of committee, defined programme, electoral programme or discipline of party.³⁶ It was a group of French colonialist only representing the common thought of public opinion and interested in the economic value of the colonies. It was also known as Union of Colonial Party. On the verge of the First World War the French colonialist movement, known as the Parti colonial, represented only a little minority of the French population. Historians demonstrate that despite the fact that almost all of those committees associated with economic interests, they were known as basically a nationalist organisation. Journalist, intellectuals and some businessmen who were interested in imperialism joined those committees in order to promote national glories.³⁷ In addition, the committees were known as both nationalist and economic organization. Most colonial societies made the organization of lectures, conferences and above all banquets. Lectures were organized by the members of committees. They published books and issued monthly bulletins for the purpose of gaining public support for imperialism. Amongst Le Parti Colonial, *Goundardisme*, one who is excessively fond of eating and drinking was well known.³⁸ They also organized missions abroad. For Andrew and Forstner, the Colonial Party was known as one of the most powerful pressure groups during the Third Republic in France. They shaped the expansionist policy in West Africa; they defended the interchanging of Egypt for Morocco in 1904 and the policy of Fez resulting in the establishment of a French protectorate in Morocco in 1912. Consequently French foreign policy was shaped by the Parti Colonial for more than twenty years.³⁹ Therefore, Andrew and Forstner classified Le Parti Colonial within three main periods. The first period was before 1890, during these years they were no properly colonial organizations or movements. They were some forerunner important names such as Prevost-Paradol, Leroy-Beaulieu, Gambetta, Gabriel Charmes and Jules Ferry. In that period they were no specific organizations interesting in colonized lands or colonialism.⁴⁰ The second stage started onwards from 1890, the acts of the forerunners before 1890 gave opportunity to the creation of colonial

³⁵ Abrams, L, D. J. Miller. “Who Were the French Colonialists? A Reassessment of the Parti Colonial, 1890–1914,” *The Historical Journal* 19, no. 3 (1976) : 685-86

³⁶ C. M .Andrew, A. S. Kanya Forstner, P. Grupp, “Le Mouvement colonial français et ses principales personnalités, 1890-1914”, *La Revue Française d’Histoire d’Outre-mer*, LXII (1975) : 640

³⁷ C. M Andrew, A.S Kanya-Forstner, “The French Colonial Party: Its Composition, Aims and Influence, 1885-1914”, *The Historical Journal*, Volume 14, Issue 01, (March 1971): 101- 102

³⁸ Andrew, Forstner, “The French Colonial Party”, 103

³⁹ Andrew, Forstner, 126

⁴⁰ Andrew, Grupp, Kanya-Forstner, “Le mouvement colonial”, 641

organization, the most notables are *le Comité de l'Afrique française*, *l'Union coloniale française* and *le Groupe colonial de la Chambre*. Until the end of nineteenth century these parties remained restricted, composed of those who had individual fame in French society. Depending on their reports, the influence of these parties was amazing. It is about the territorial expansion, and signing the new destiny for France after the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. The third and last stage took place during the first decade of the twenty century. Following the model of Germany, French colonial leaders tried to constitute mass organizations. Yet the most successful influence belonged to a classical group, which is called *le Comité du Maroc*. The final stages are situated during the debut of the World War I.⁴¹ During this period the colonial movement was very active, due to the collapsing of the German Empire and the Ottoman Empire. It is very important that *Le Colonial Parti* was distinguished by different manners but above they are nationalist, occupied with territorial expansion, interested in the economic development. In, Andrew C. M., Grupp Peter, Kanya-Forstner A. Sydney's *Le mouvement colonial français et ses principales personnalités (1890-1914)*, they have listed 58 colonial parties between 1890 and 1914. Among these parties, there were some important nationalist parties such as *le Comité de l'Afrique française*, *le Comité de l'Asie française*, *le Comité de l'Egypte* and *le Comité du Maroc*, founded to maintain the imperial interest of French on the different continents. For example, *le Comité de l'Afrique française*, constituted in 1890, was in reaction to the sharing of the African continent by Britain and Germany. In addition to *le Comité de l'Afrique française*, *le Comité de l'Asie* was founded in 1900, following the events in the Middle East, and in anticipation of the future sharing of the China.⁴² In the case of the Middle East, *le Comité de l'Egypte* was founded in 1895 in order to organize French opinion in favour of Egypt. *Le Comité du Maroc*, in cooperation with *Comité de l'Afrique française*, played an important role in the orientation of French politics towards Egypt and Morocco. As you see, these parties shaped the French policy in almost all continents particularly after the period of 1900. In addition to these nationalist parties, there were some important parties interested in only economic functions such as *L'Union coloniale française*, *le Comité de l'Océanie française* and *la Fédération intercoloniale*; no doubt the most important was *L'Union coloniale*, founded in 1893 like a satellite of the commerce of Paris.⁴³ Although these parties were divided into two stages as economic and nationalist, these two sides did not oppose each other. For example, the

⁴¹ Andrew, Grupp, Forstner, 642

⁴² Andrew, Forstner, "The French Colonial Party", 643

⁴³ Andrew, Forstner, 644

nationalist side of a party followed the economic side of another party related to France's interest in different continents.

Le Parti Colonial affected not only French public opinion but also French politics. There have been important relationships between le Parti Colonial and Quai' D'Orsay or French Foreign Ministry. The Parti Colonial had direct connections with many foreign ministers during those years. According to Stuart Michael Persell, the Parti Colonial influenced the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Quai D'Orsay in three ways: First, by way of certain of foreign ministers; secondly, by way of the departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself and through the embassies abroad.⁴⁴ From the 1890s onwards, those were in responsible for foreign policy in Paris were the leaders of Parti Colonial. One of the most prominent names was Théophile Delcassé, who was firstly appointed under-secretary for colonies in 1893. In 1898, he became minister as the candidate of Parti colonial lasting from 1898 to 1905.⁴⁵ Although Stephen Pichon, who was French foreign minister from 1906 to 1911, was not active while charging with French foreign minister, he was among the founders of the Parti Colonial. After leaving his foreign minister, he became president of the Comité de l'Orient(1911-1912) and a member of the Asie Française.⁴⁶ His successor, Jean Cruppi, who was French foreign minister from 2 March to 23 July 1911, was a patron of the *Comité de l'Orient* at the same time. ⁴⁷ Joseph Caillaux, who was a patron of the *Comité de l'Orient*, directed French policy after the period of Cruppi. Lastly, the Parti Colonial, throughout its life, remained a pressure group of the French Foreign Minister in the Third French Empire.

French governments had great difficulty evolving and carrying out imperial policy. Third Republic cabinets were often weak and preoccupied with domestic issues and the nation lacked interest in empire. Imperial policy formulation and implementation were dominated by a small number of Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Colonies, At the Quai d'Orsay, which was responsible for French Foreign affairs, a handful of officials and diplomats were involved in French Ottoman policy before and during the war. Nearly all these men belonged to the principal pressure group concerned with French interest in the colonial process. Among them: Eugène-Melchiorre de Vogüé who was one of the member of Academie Française, Paul

⁴⁴ Abrams, Miller "Who were the French Colonialist?", 703

⁴⁵ Anne Røksund, *The Jeune École: The Strategy of the Weak (History of Warfare)*, (IDC Publisher: Leiden, 2007), 144

⁴⁶ John F. V. Keiger, *France and the Origins of the First World War*, (Macmillan International Higher Education: London, 1983) 129

⁴⁷ Salih Tunç, "I. Dünya Savaşı Yaklaşırken Osmanlı-Fransız İlişkilerinde Yakınlaşma Girişimleri: Fransa-Türkiye Dostluk Cemiyeti ve Cemal Paşa'nın Paris Seyahati", *OTAM*, 25 (Bahar 2009) :199

Leroy who was one of the most important economist and Eugène Etienne who was one of the most powerful deputies in Parliament. Philippe Berthelo and François Georges-Picot were also important figures. They were also important journalist including Harry Alis, Paul Borde and Robert de Caix.⁴⁸ The partition of the Ottoman Empire was debated by several colonialist committees but they showed little interest in Syria until France established the Morocco Protectorate in 1912. Before World War I, the dominant thought among French colonialist that Syria should remain in the hands of Ottoman Empire. However, World War I urged France and Colonialist to take some important steps about the Syrian question, along with the dissolving of the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁹

1.3.1 Comité de l'Asie

The construction of French policy was shaped by four important Comités, Comité de l'Afrique française, the Comité du Maroc, the Comité de l'Asie française and Comité France-Amérique over twenty five years. The principle object of these four committees was same. Each of the four committees was preoccupied with a different region of the world. However, they created a coercion group.⁵⁰ In addition, these four comités were settled on the same address: 21 rue Casette Paris. Even more important, the members of the committees were overlapping considerably. The first committee concerning the Ottoman Empire was the Comité de l'Asie française; it was founded in 1901. Its goal was to establish and create a huge French Asian Empire in Indo-China, extending from Thailand to China. This Comité was defending a policy of 'indirect imperialism' which would politically and economically dominate and suppress in Asia and in the Near East including the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Peninsula, and Persia instead of imposing direct colonial rule.⁵¹ Like other committees, they had a Bulletin; it was called, *Bulletin du Comité de l'Asie française* published between 1901 and 1940. It was considered the heart of the committees because it served as a source of French politics. Thanks to the articles written in this bulletin, it is known that French statesmen had no particular interest in the Levant before and during the disintegration years of the Ottoman Empire. According to Jacques Thobie, the matter of

⁴⁸ Shukry, *Syria*, 34

⁴⁹ C. M. Andrew, A. S. Kanya Forstner, *The Climax of French Imperial Expansion 1914-1924* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981), 26

⁵⁰ Abrams, Miller, "Who were the French Colonialist," 687

⁵¹ Abrams, Miller, 687

establishing a mandate in Levant amounted to less than one half of %1 of the total content of the Bulletin.⁵² This finding that the Ottoman Empire and Syria was not on the agenda for those Frenchmen. Instead of political and military matters, the majority of articles published in the Bulletin were business and economy-related: the Baghdad Railway, France's loan to the Ottoman Empire and the religious, educational and language matters.⁵³ One of the articles written by Raymond Koeclin titled by "*Dans La France du Levant*" argues about the importance of the French language as a lingua franca in the Levant cities and the importance of French school in Beirut. Yet, Mount Lebanon and Syria suffered from French education. Especially Syria suffered from it largely because of the disobedient and stubborn attitude of Muslim majority. Koechlin had suggestion: first, paying more money to teachers, developing of commercial, agricultural and professional schools, the third and last one is the supporting from French merchants to support France's policy.⁵⁴ Before 1908 there was no specific Ottoman section in the Comité of de L'Asie, but after the Young Turk revolution in July of 1908, and the overthrowing of Abdulhamid II, these events led to the establishing of the *section du Levant* headed by Marquis de Reverseau who was a French diplomat. Its aim was to increase France's moral and material interest in Ottoman Empire, Arabia and Egypt.⁵⁵ That section had nineteen members such as De Caix and Jean Gout. Section du Levant consisted of 17 persons, including Edmond Bapst, Wladimir Lefèvre d'Ormesson, Jean Gout, Léon Coullard Descos, the French ambassador in Belgrade. Thirteen members of that section had considerable business interest in the Levant.⁵⁶

The members of Comité de l'Asie were responsible for Middle Eastern policy at the Quai d'Orsay during the First World War. It was founded by Eugène Étienne, who was a French politician and Minister of War in 1913. Among the members was Robert De Caix, who was the first secretary general of the mandate in Syria and Lebanon. He was also one of the founding figures, editor and contributors to its monthly Bulletin which is called *Bulletin Du Comité de l'Asie Française* from 1901 to 1919.⁵⁷ Raymond Poincaré, 58th Prime Minister of France and president of France for 7 years, was one of the members of that committee. Commandant Berger, a French representative in the Ottoman Empire, was one of the

⁵² Debra C. Callaghan. "The Thought and Role of A French Expansionist: Robert De Caix and Syria", (Master Thesis., American University of Beirut, 1998), 32

⁵³ Debra, "The Thought and Role of A French Expansionist," 32

⁵⁴ Abrams, Miller, "Who were the French Colonialist," 694

⁵⁵ Debra, "The Thought and Role of A French Expansionist", 38

⁵⁶ Abrams, Miller, "Who were the French Colonialist", 706

⁵⁷ Debra, "The Thought and Role of A French Expansionist", 17

members of committee. In sum, all French presidents, prime ministers and foreign ministers from 1919 to 1924 were members of this committee, with the exception of Georges Clemenceau. Among a list of French politicians were Raymond Poincaré, Aristide Briand, Stephen Pichon, Paul Deschanel and Alexander Ribot.⁵⁸ In *Le Figaro* which was one of the most important newspapers in France, there is a news titled *Le Voyage à Hanoï* written by André Nède. In that news, it is about the composition of that committee and its members below:

President: M. Etienne, Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies,

Vice Presidents: M.M Gullain: Deputy, Ancient Minister,

Thomson Houston, Vice President of the Marine.

Lionel marquis de Moustier, Deputy

General Director: Colonel de La Panouse

A Jouannin: General Secretary

Treasurer: Charles Picot, ancient inspector of the finance

Members:

M.M Adam, deputy, Prince d'Arenberg,

Edouard Aynard: deputy,

Robert de Caix de Saint-Aymour

Commandant Berger, president of the Ottoman Public Dept.

1.3.2 Comité de L'Afrique française

The Second committee was the Comité de l'Afrique française, it was organised in October 1890, for the purpose of defending and extending French imperial interest in Africa against international rivals.⁵⁹ Its founder was Harry Alis, who was a French journalist. In 1890 between French and Britain with regard to Africa the agreement was signed. According to this agreement, France agreed to the establishment of a British protectorate over the territory of

⁵⁸ Debra, 43-44

⁵⁹ "Comité de L'Afrique Française", *Bulletin Du Comité de l'Afrique Française*, 12 Janvier 1891, 1-2

Sultan of Zanzibar, and the extension of French influence in Africa such as Senegal, the Sudan and French Congo, and uniting them with France's North Africa Empire. Therefore, its objective was to defend French imperial interest in Africa against foreign rivals starting with the agreement of 1890 and the extension of the borders of the France Empire in the continent of Africa.⁶⁰ However, their slogan was *'l'union à travers le Soudan, du Congo français, du Sénégal, et de l'Algérie-Tunisie'* (the union across Soudan, French Congo, Senegal and Algeria-Tunisia.)⁶¹ The Comité was a small organization. It had only 30 members at its foundation consisting of 10 parliaments, 7 armed forces, 5 intellectuals, at least 8 businessmen, reached 48 members in 1900, but it never reached more than 1,500 subscribers (adherents). Auguste d'Arenberg was the president of that committee, amongst other members of that committee were Antoine Florent Gullain, Jules Charlex-Roux, Raymond Koechlin, Henri Gouraud who was the commander of French at the battle of Maysaloun, Robert De Caix, Augustin Bernard, F. Crouan, Félix Faure, Édouard Aynard, Louis G. Binger and Auguste Terrier.⁶² Auguste Terrier was one of the most important names for that committee; He served 42 years as secretary-general of the organization and its bulletin. Through his efforts, it became the principal organ for the expansion of France in Africa. In sum, the purpose of the Comité de l'Afrique quoted from the Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique française was clear:

1. To bring the benefits of French civilization to the African colonies
2. To create a monthly a bulletin to provide information about colonial matters
3. To act as pressure group in the government and Parliament.
4. To united French agenda against European rivalries created by the scramble for Africa.⁶³

1.3.2 Comité du Maroc

Comité du Maroc was established as a 'special committee' of the Comité de l'Afrique Française. According to Étienne, the Comité du Maroc existed for several years before in the

⁶⁰ Anglo-French Agreement, *The Queenslander*, 16 August 1890, 324

⁶¹ Dieter Brötel, *Frankreich im Fernen Osten, Imperialistische Expansion und Aspiration in Siam und Malaya, Laos und China, 1880-1904* (Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 148

⁶² *Numéro Bulletin du Comité de l'Afrique française*, 1891, 2

⁶³ Marc Lagana, *Le Parti Colonial, Éléments d'histoire*, (Sillery: Presses de l'Université du Québec : 1990), 9

shadow of the Comité de l’Afrique Française.⁶⁴ It was established under the presidency of E. Étienne. Auguste Terrier and Robert De Caix were the secretaries of that committee. Its fundamental aim was to establish a French protectorate in Maroc. With the treaty of Fez in 1912, France established a protectorate over Morocco in 1912. Like almost all committees, this committee sent some voyageurs to colonialist territory, Comité du Maroc sent them to the region Bled es-Siba or French term Bled Makhzen, where refers to area under the control of the Morocco Sultans before French protectorate or colonial period, with the mission of reporting and data of hydrographical, botanic and geological which would be coordinated with Paris.⁶⁵ Marquis René de Segonzac, was a French army officer and explorer. He led a mission to Morocco as the leader of the committee with Louis Gentil, who was a geographer, geologist, mineralogist and Maghreb specialist, De Flotte de Roquevaire, who, was a French cartographer, Abd el-Aziz Zenagui and Saïd Boulifa, who was an Algerian Berberologist and teacher.⁶⁶ The mission was sponsored by *La Société de géographie*, which is known as the world’s oldest geographical society today, *La Société géologique de France (SGF)*, *Association française pour l’avancement des sciences* and many industrial societies.

1.3.3 Comité France Amérique

The Comité France Amérique was founded in 1909 with the initiative of Gabriel Hanotoux, ancient minister of Foreign Ministry. The mission of Committee launched by the vision of Hanotoux was therefore clear. In its Bulletin, which is known as *L’Œuvre du Comité Franco-Amérique de 1909 à 1908*, He published an article ‘*Pourquoi le Comité Franco-*article, According to Hanotoux, its fundamental objective was to inform, and alarm leaders and public opinion of the importance of the United States in the world because for Hanotoux America was playing key considerable role in the affairs of the world. Also, developing the relationships between France and the United States and developing cordial the relationships between the new continent and France.⁶⁷ The presidents of the Institutes and the heads of the sections were divided into different topics and themes such as law, art, culture, music. Amongst board of that committee’s sections:

⁶⁴ Eugène Étienne, “Notre Politique au Maroc” *BCAF*, December 1903, 3

⁶⁵ Maurice Zimmermann, “Mission du comité sous la direction du marquis de Segonzac”, In: *Annales de Géographie*, t. 13, n°70, (1904), 372

⁶⁶ Zimmermann, “Mission”, 373

⁶⁷ Gabriel Hanotoux “Pourquoi le Comité Franco-Amérique a été fondé” *L’oeuvre du Comité France-Amérique de 1909 à 1918*, Une Campagne De Dix Années, 1-2

President: M. Gabriel Hanotaux

Presidents of Sections: General Brugère (France-United States)

Pallain Heerteau (French ligue of propaganda),

F. Carnot (France-Latin America),

R. De Caix (France-Canada),

Ed. Chaix (Tourism),

de Ribes Christoffle (Industry and commerce),

François Carnot (Fine Arts).⁶⁸

⁶⁸“Appel de la Ligue Française de Propaganda du Comité France-Amérique,” L'oeuvre du Comité France-Amérique de 1909 à 1918, Une Campagne De Dix Années, 36

List I: Colonial Parties in France. Source: Andrew C. M., Grupp Peter, Kanya-Forstner A. Sydney. Le mouvement colonial français et ses principales personnalités (1890-1914). In: Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer, tome 62, n°229, 4e trimestre 1975. pp. 640-673;

fondation

1903	Action coloniale et maritime	A.C.M.
1895	L'Africaine	A.
1883	Alliance française	A.F.
1902	Association cotonnière coloniale	A.C.C.
1901	La Colonisation française	C.F.
1906	Comité d'action républicaine aux colonies	C.A.R.C.
1890	Comité de l'Afrique française	C.A.F.
1908	Comité de l'Amérique française (filiale de l'A.C.M.)	C.Am.F.
1900	Comité de l'Asie française	C.As.F.
1895	Comité de l'Égypte	C.E.
1905	Comité de l'Océanie française (filiale de l'A.C.M.)	C.Oc.F.
1908	Comité de l'Orient	C.O.
1901	Comité de la Guyane	C.G.
1895	Comité de Madagascar	C.Ma.
1901	Comité de propagande de l'Afrique occidentale	C.P.A.O.
1903	Comité du commerce et de l'industrie de l'Indochine	C.C.I.I.
1899	Comité du Congo français	C.C.
1904	Comité du Maroc (filiale du C.A.F.)	C.M.
1894	Comité Dupleix	C.D.
1910	Comité France-Amérique	C.F.A.
1910	Comité marseillais du Maroc (filiale du C.M.)	C.M.M.
1906	Comité national des expositions coloniales	C.N.E.C.
1902	Déjeuner Étienne	D.E.
1899	Déjeuner du Maroc	D.M.
1903	Fédération des industriels et des commerçants français	F.I.C.F.
1910	Fédération intercoloniale	F.I.
1900	La France coloniale moderne	F.C.M.
1900	La France colonisatrice	F.C.
1892	Groupe colonial de la Chambre	G.C.C.

Lis II : Colonial Parties in France

1898	Groupe colonial des Conseillers du commerce extérieur français	G.C.C.C.E.F.
1898	Groupe colonial du Sénat	G.C.S.
1912	Groupe d'études des questions indigènes	G.E.Q.I.
1911	Groupe sénatorial des études algériennes	G.S.E.A.
1900	Institut colonial de Bordeaux	I.C.B.
1893	Institut colonial de Marseille	I.C.M.
1901	Institut colonial de Nancy	I.C.N.
1894	Institut colonial international	I.C.I.
1907	Ligue coloniale française	L.C.F.
1899	Ligue maritime française	L.M.F.
1902	Mission laïque	M.L.
1898	Réunion des études algériennes	R.E.A.
1888	Société africaine de France	S.A.F.
1888	Société antiesclavagiste de France	S.An.F.
1908	Société d'initiative économique française en Syrie (filiale de l'A.C.M.)	S.I.F.S.
1889	Société de colonisation française	S.C.F.
1821	Société de géographie de Paris ¹	S.G.
1876	Société de géographie commerciale	S.G.C.
1912	Société de l'histoire des colonies françaises	S.H.C.
1892	Société de propagande coloniale	S.P.C.
1892	Société des études coloniales et maritimes	S.E.C.M.
1883	Société française de colonisation et d'agriculture coloniale	S.F.C.A.C.
1895	Société française des ingénieurs coloniaux	S.F.I.C.
1897	Syndicat colonial	S.C.
1885	Syndicat de la presse coloniale	S.Pr.C.
1911	Syndicat de la presse marocaine	S.Pr.M.
1893	Union coloniale française	U.C.
1900	Union congolaise française	U.C.F.

CHAPTER 2

THE FRENCH ECONOMIC INTEREST IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN THE 19TH CENTURY

According to Philipp Shukry, the third pillar of French influence in Ottoman Empire was economic. Between 1890 and 1914 France was by far the largest investor in the Ottoman Empire. Just before World War I, France's investment in the Ottoman Empire doubled that of its nearest rival Germany, and Great Britain was the biggest third investment.⁶⁹ The new post-war policy and militarily active role of France related to the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Syria was shaped by France's large-scale economic investment in Ottoman Empire before the World War I, Therefore it is worth mentioning that what and how much France invested in the Ottoman Empire and its provinces of Syria during approximately 25 years. These economic investments paved the way to establishing of an active military role of France over Syria after the World War I. On 6 October 1875, the Ottoman Empire had announced, through the newspaper, its inability to pay back the debt, and declared a moratorium on all. The Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA) was set up to collect revenues in 1881 by a well-known decree of Muharrem by Austria, England, France and Germany. However it was controlled 63 per cent by French. The OPDA ultimately would control more than one quarter of the Ottoman Empire's revenues.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Geyikdağı, "French Direct Investment" 527

⁷⁰ Saffet Kartopu, "Duyun-u Umumiye İdaresi ve İdareyle İlgili Görüşler," *Global Journal of Economics and Business Studies*, Vol: 1 Issue: 2, (2009) : 32

Table 2.1 Foreign Debt of the Ottoman Empire

	1881	1898	1913	1881	1898	1913
	(Million Ottoman Lira)			(percentage)		
				%	%	%
France	36.72	35.00	65.00	40.0	44.9	49.5
Britain	26.62	8.50	9.00	29.0	10.9	6.9
Germany	4.32	9.50	26.30	4.7	12.2	20.1
Belgium	6.61	14.00	14.40	7.2	17.9	11.0
Holland	6.97	3.50	3.90	7.6	4.5	3.0
Italy	2.41	1.00	1.30	2.6	1.3	1.0
Austro-Hun. Emp.	0.89	1.50	1.70	1.0	1.9	1.3
Local Investors	7.28	5.00	9.40	7.9	6.4	7.2
Total	91.82	78.00	131.00	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: V. Eldem, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun İktisadi Şartları Hakkında Bir Tetkik,

Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 1991, p. 188, and C. Morawitz, Les Finances de la

Turquie, Guillaumin et Cie, Paris, 1902, p. 237.

It is well known that, the economics interest of France had a longer history when compared with that of other European powers. Ernest Giraud, president of the French Chamber of Commerce in Istanbul, published a book which is known as *La France à Constantinople*. This book demonstrated the French investments in Istanbul. That book it makes clear that there were numerous small and medium-size stores, including pharmacies, tailors, printing houses, inns and restaurants. There were also mining, navigation and railways established after 1870.⁷¹ *L'Administration des Phares de l'Empire* was the oldest French company in the Ottoman Empire; it was a lighthouse builder and operator. The Ottoman Empire established a lighthouse during the time of the Crimean War in 1855, headed by Marius Michel Ottoman who was a French engineer.⁷² France Empire constructed 36 lighthouses on the Black Sea and Dardanelles along with 4 lighthouses at Danube.⁷³ French investment accelerated in Syria and Palestine during the period of 1890s after the increasing interest of Germany in the Ottoman Empire. During this time, the main objective was to prevent the rise of German interest in the Near East. After 1888, France investments grew steadily and spread to other sectors such as banking, railway construction, insurance, and trade. By 1900, the French

⁷¹ V. Necla Geyikdağı, *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire, International Trade and Relations 1854-1914*, (London& New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2011,) 61

⁷² Yasemin N. Koca, "Denizlerimizi Aydınlatanlar: Türkiye'de Fenerlerin Kuruluşu ve Gelişimi", *Journal of ETA Maritime Science*, 6(2), (2010): 110

⁷³ Koca, "Denizlerimizi Aydınlatanlar," 111

investments in Syria were firmly established. On the eve of World War I, it is estimated that France invested approximately 200 million francs in the region, including banking, railroads, silk and tobacco production. In addition, during World War I, France invested a further billion francs to monopolize investment in Syria.⁷⁴ The Banking sector took three-quarters of this investment.⁷⁵ Therefore, in this chapter, I will be explaining economic investments in Syria According to Necla Geyikdağı, the reasons for French investments in the Ottoman Empire and its Arabic provinces can be summarized below:

- Reducing or eliminating other Europeans
- Increasing economic, cultural and political influence, particularly in the Ottoman Arabic provinces.
- Passivation of other countries' investment in Ottoman regions.
- Investing to the certainty of profits.⁷⁶

2.1 Banking

The infiltration of French bank in the Ottoman Empire had started during the 19th century. During the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz (1861-1876), seven foreign banks were active in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Bank was the most important bank among them. The other six banks in the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz were mostly joint ventures with French, British and local so-called Galata Bankers operating in Istanbul. These banks included Société Générale de l'Empire Ottoman, Crédit Générale Ottoman, Banque de Constantinople, Société Ottomane de Change et de Valeurs, Crédit Lyonnais, Banque d'Orient, The Crédit Foncier d'Orient of France.⁷⁷ The French Empire began to consolidate their position and influence all over the Balkans, Asia Minor and Levant by establishing banks often with the support of French diplomacy. According to Jacques Thobie, this was actually a three-step situation known-as “the bank-industry-diplomacy” in order to participate in the growth of capitalism within the region.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Khoury, *Syria*, 49

⁷⁵ Shorroek “The Origin of the French Mandate” 134

⁷⁶ Geyikdağı, *Foreign Investment*, 64

⁷⁷ A. Du. Delay, *Essai sur l'histoire financière de la Turquie : depuis le règne du sultan Mahmoud II jusqu'à nos jours*, (Paris, 1903), 189-210

⁷⁸ Hubert Bonin, *French Banking and Entrepreneurialism in China and Hong Kong: From 1850 to 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 2020)

2.1.1 Imperial Ottoman Bank (Bank-ı Osmani)

The Imperial Ottoman Bank was known as the first modern bank in the Ottoman Empire. After the Crimean War in 1856, with the economic initiative of Britain, the Ottoman Bank was established. The Ottoman Bank was founded in London and its capital was 500,000 pounds. Despite the fact that it was founded in London; the centre of the Imperial Ottoman Bank was in Istanbul. However, it was given approval to open branches of the Imperial Ottoman Bank in other cities of the Empire, except in Egypt.⁷⁹ The Britain shareholders of Ottoman Bank shared the shares with French companies; French companies purchased 50 per cent of the shares in the Ottoman Bank. This meant that the Ottoman Bank now was managed by both the British and French together. However, by the late 1880s its capital was largely belonged to France. The Imperial Ottoman Bank opened its door on June 1, 1863. However, the Ottoman Bank was both a private British-French bank and state bank in Istanbul. C.G.A Clay called the Imperial Ottoman Bank a multinational “*national bank*.”⁸⁰ It also functioned de facto as the Treasury. The Imperial Ottoman Bank gradually enlarged itself and at the beginning of the World War I had 80 branches, mainly in the Ottoman Empire. At the end of 19th century IOB had no rivals anywhere in the Ottoman Empire, IOB opened its first branches in Galata and after that, Izmir and Beirut branches of Ottoman Bank were opened. The Imperial Ottoman Bank financed the Ottoman-Russian War between 1877 and 1878, which worsened the economic situation of the Ottoman Empire. It led to the restructuring of Ottoman debt, and the establishment of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. As I mentioned earlier, the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA) was controlled 63 per cent by the French. Christopher Clay shows that the Imperial Ottoman Bank had 91 branches in the different parts of the Ottoman Empire including Istanbul, Izmir, Salonika and eastern provinces of Empire including Aleppo, Beirut, Baghdad, Damascus, Bassorah, Sandıklı, Diyarbakir, Van, Serres, Urfa and so on. In the case of Syria, the Ottoman Empire had 15 branches of IOB as sub agency and office:

- 1) Beirut: 1863
- 2) Damascus 1875
- 3) Aleppo: 1893
- 4) Tripoli (S): 1904

⁷⁹ Delay, *Essai sur l'histoire*, 189

⁸⁰ Christopher Clay, “The Origins of Modern Banking in the Levant: The Branch Network of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, 1890-1914”, *Int. J. Middle East Stud.* 26 (1994): 590

- 5) Jerusalem: 1905
- 6) Jaffa: 1905
- 7) Haifa: 1906
- 8) Antep: 1906
- 9) Homs (O): 1908
- 10) Hama (O): 1911
- 11) Saida (O): 1912
- 12) İskenderun (S): 1914
- 13) Akka (O): 1914
- 14) Zahle (O): 1914.⁸¹

The first committee of IOB were determined by the French and English, while Sir William Clay became president of London, Charles Mallet took the presidency of France. The rest of the members were:

In London shareholders: Lord Hobart, T.C Bruce, Sir William Clay, L.M Rate, W.R. Drake, J. Alexander, G.T Clark, J.W Larking, J. Stewart, P. du Pre Grenfell and J. Anderson

In Paris shareholders: Emile ve Isaac Pereire, C. Salvador, Ch. Mallet, A. Fould, Count Pillet-Will, A.J Stern, duc de Galliera, H. Hottinguer, A. Andre, J.Buffarini, F. Greininger.⁸²

In Istanbul shareholders: J. Steward, A. Alleon and CS Hanson

⁸¹ Clay, *The Origins of Modern Banking*, 610

⁸² Hasan Dinçer, Ümit Hacıoğlu, Serhat Yüksel, *Global Approaches in Financial Economics, Banking, and Finance*, (Springer International Publishing: London & Berlin: 2018) 278

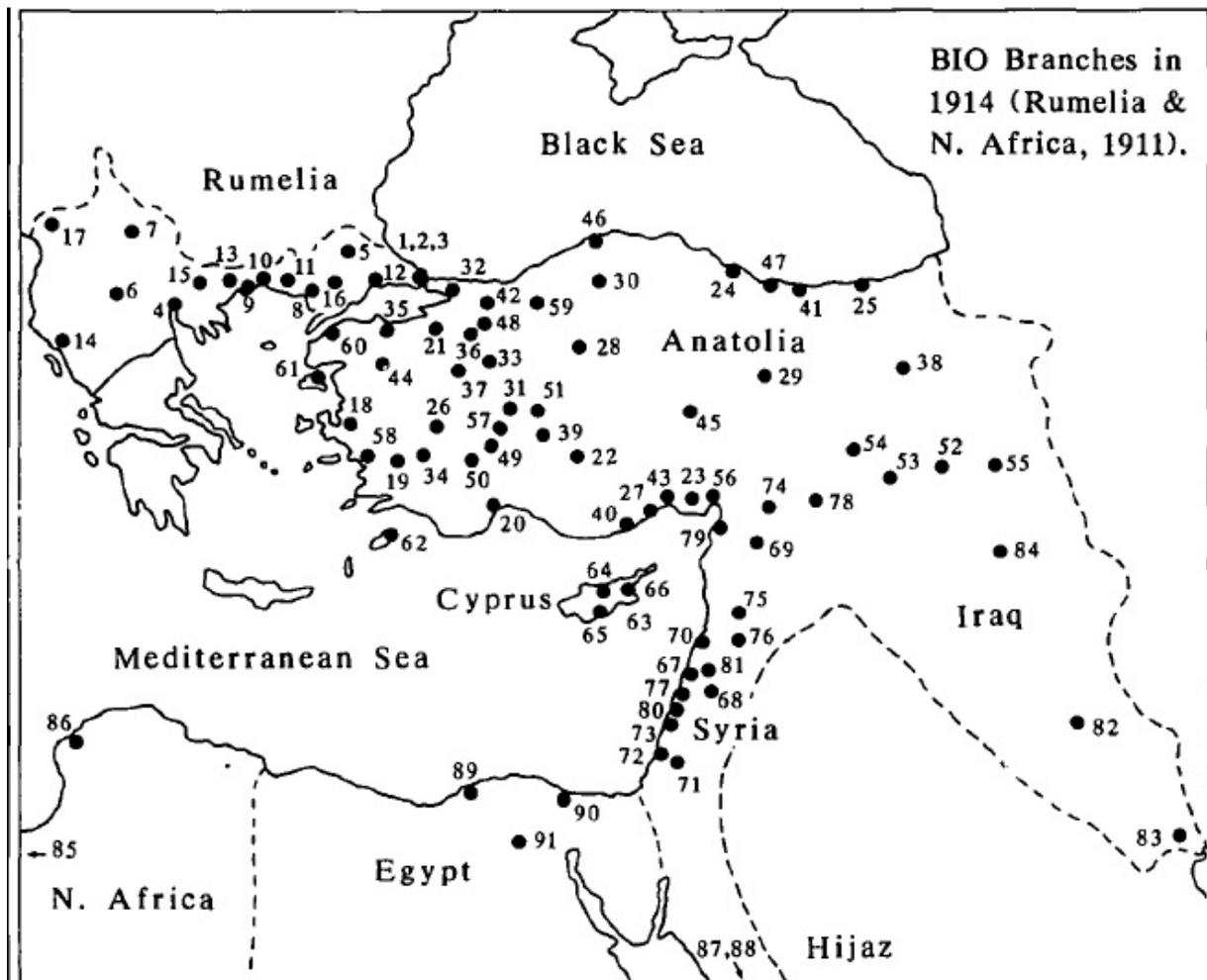


Figure 2.6 Bank of Ottoman Branches in 1914

BIO Branches in 1914 (Rumelia and North Africa) Clay (1994)

2.1.2 Bank of Syria and Lebanon

The Ottoman currency, the Lira was in use prior to World War I in Syria. However, after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the currency became the Egyptian Pound in 1918 by the initiative of British.⁸³ Since from 1920, the monetary unit was the Syrian pound, which is subdivided into 100 Syrian piasters or qurush. Bank of Syria and Lebanon was constituted in 2 January 1919, The Bank of Syria was constituted the Filiale- Subsidiary for the Bank of Imperial Ottoman Bank. It took the name of *La Banque de Syrie et du Grand Liban* in 1924. Bank of Syria and Lebanon had 10 million francs capital paid from the Bank of Ottomans and la Haute Banque. This money was represented by banknotes issued by the Bank of Syria in

⁸³ D. K. Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East 1914-1958* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 261

accordance with a decree of High Commissaries of the French Republic in Syria on March 3, 1920.⁸⁴ There were the circulation notes of 1 piaster, 5 piaster, 10 piaster, 25 piaster, 50 piaster, 1 pound, 5 pounds, 10 pounds, 25 pounds, 50 pounds, 100 pounds. The Syrian pound is worth 20 new francs.⁸⁵ In addition, the nickel coins of the denomination of one-half Syrian piaster were put into circulation by the Bank of Syria. Although there was considerable circulation of Turkish gold and silver coins, The Syrian monetary system applied by the Bank of Syria was legal only in the territories of the French Mandate. However, the circulation of foreign metallic money, and the circulation of foreign bank notes was not forbidden.

The constitutive assemble of Bank of Syria and Lebanon took place on 2 January and named the advice of administration which was composed of the following people:

Felix Vernes: President

Charles de Cerjat (Ottoman Bank)

Maurice Chabrières,

Hubert Giraud(Société Générale des Travaux du Maroc)

Georges Heine(Ottoman Bank)

Arsene Henry(Ottoman Bank)

Raoul Mannel(Ottoman Bank)

Albert Miraud(Ottoman Bank)

Baron de Neufelize(Ottoman Bank.)⁸⁶

2.1.3 French Bank of Syria

First of all, Banque Française de Syrie or the French Bank of Syria was established in 1908 by la Société générale, which was the French corporate bank that had become increasingly involved from the mid-1860s in external Ottoman debt matters, with the initiation of Bank of

⁸⁴ *Tarih Lübnan Al-İçtimayî 1914-1926*, Masut Dahir, Dar al-Farabi (Beirut-Lebanon), 179

⁸⁵ Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism*, 261

⁸⁶ *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 6 Janvier 1914, 4

Thessaloniki, *Crédit foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie and Crédit mobilier français*, some important names from Lyon (Henri Terrail) and Marseille (Adrien Artaud) in order to increase France interest and prepare for a fruitful future for France.⁸⁷ The Capital of Bank of Syria at the beginning was 5 million, and then it increased to 10 million in 1921. Bank of Syria's role restricted to only being a commerce bank and the bank consisted of French and Syrian personnel. The head quarter of this bank was in Paris, Haussmann boulevard. They had opened the first branch in Beirut then opened new branches in Damascus, Aleppo, Mersin and Adana. Bank of Syria had made big profits in the first year its operation in 1919; however, it would inevitably be influenced by the economic crises of 1920. Finally, according to *Correspond d'Orient*, Banque Française de Syrie was established in order to substitute Deutsche Orient Bank in Cilicie.⁸⁸

2.2 Transportation

The Sectorial Distribution of the Foreign Capital in the Ottoman Empire

SECTORS	1890	1914
RAILWAYS	41.1	63.1
HARBOURS	2.3	4.3
MUNICIPAL SERVICES	11.5	5.1
BANKING	23.5	12.0
INSURANCE	0.7
COMMERCE	6.0	5.8
INDUSTRY	10.0	5.3
MINNING	5.6	3.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

Şevket Pamuk, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Yabancı Sermaye, sektörlere ve Sermaye ihraç eden ülkelere göre dağılımı (1854-1914)," in *Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi üzerine Araştırmalar ODTÜ Gelişme Dergisi*, special issue, 143-144

The initiative of transportation started during the reign of Sultan Abdulmecit (1839-61 and by the European-educated statesmen of the Tanzimat period. They wanted to have railways like in Europe; however, the Ottoman Empire lacked the capital and expertise about transportation systems. Therefore, the railway system had to be handed almost entirely to foreigners. We

⁸⁷ Hubert Bonin, "Un outre-mer bancaire méditerranéen. Histoire du crédit foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie (1880-1997)", *Société française d'histoire des outre-mers*, (2004) : 200

⁸⁸ "Banque Française de Syrie" *Correspondance d'Orient* : revue économique, politique & littéraire, 15 Janvier 1922, 32

know that the concession of transportation particularly railways, given to foreign investors during that time. The Ottoman Empire guaranteed profits with certain sums for every kilometre built. Railroads became one of the most influential elements of the Western capitalization process. In 1890 the railways sector was 41,1 of the sectorial distribution of the Foreign Capital in the Ottoman Empire, and almost two-thirds of the whole direct investment in the Ottoman Empire was railroads in the year of 1914. According to Şevket Pamuk, at the end of 1913, while Britain had invested 3,700 million pounds of capital in railways; the French Empire invested 1, 800 million pounds of French capital abroad in 1914. Finally, German invested 750 million pounds of capital between the years 1880-1914.⁸⁹ The first finished Ottoman railway line was a short 60-kilometer line between Boğazköy and Köstence on the Black Sea.⁹⁰ The Second line in Rumeli was the Rusçuk-Varna line which carried cargo from Rusçuk to the port of Varna on the shores of the Black Sea. The concession was given to British group for 99 years; it was actually an international enterprise consisting of British, France, Belgium and Holland.⁹¹ In 1890, Joseph Mouran took the concession to run a steam-powered tramway between Damascus and Hauran. *The Société Ottomane des Tramways de Damas et Voies Ferrées Economiques en Syrie* was founded with the capital of French and Belgium. Historically, the Syrian railroads were constructed for political and strategic reasons in the time of the Ottoman Empire. Actually, even though concessions were granted to build railways, we do not see railways in the province of Syria before 1890s. Although Iran did not have a railway until 1928 and Iraq had only 132 kilometre railway, between 1889 and 1914 Syria witnessed much more railways construction.⁹² In addition to railways, the French invested in electric tramways in Beirut and Damascus. For the first time electric tramways were inaugurated in Beirut 1902 then Damascus from Jerusalem to Jericho and Salt and Amman, in order to connect with the Hedjaz railway and Haifa in 1906 and lastly in Jaffa and Jerusalem line in 1908.⁹³ Except for the Jaffa-Jerusalem, all these railways lines were built by French capital investing.

⁸⁹ Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820-1913: Trade, Investment and Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 68

⁹⁰ Ali Akyıldız, "Bir Teknolojik Transferin Değişim Boyutu : Köstence Demiryolu Örneği", *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, XX (2000): 313,314

⁹¹ Ali Akyıldız, Balkanlar'a Osmanlılardan Miras Bir Çağdaş Küresel Medeniyet Ürünü : Rusçuk-Varna Demiryolu, Balkanlar'da İslam Medeniyeti Milletlerarsı Sempozyumu Tebliğleri, Sofya, (21-23 Nisan 200), 123-124

⁹² Charles Issawi, *An Economic History of The Middle East and North Africa*, (New York: ColumbiaUniversity Press,1982) 55

⁹³ Farid Al-Salim, *Palestine and The Decline of The Ottoman Empire, Modernization and the Path to Palestinian Statehood* (London &New York: I.B Tauris, 2015) 173,

The Jaffa-Jerusalem railway

Beirut-Damascus railway

Damascus-Muzeyrib railway

Hama- Aleppo railway

Rayak-Aleppo railway

Homs-Tripoli railway

Beirut-Mamaltain railway

2.2.1 Jaffa Jerusalem Railway

The First railway in the Middle East was the narrow-gauge 1,0 meter, 87 kilometre Jerusalem-Jaffa line opened in 1892 with the 4 million francs 10 million debentures by the French-owned “*Société des chemins de fer Ottomans de Jaffa a Jerusalem et prolongements.*”⁹⁴ However, due to mistakes in the construction process, the Jaffa-Jerusalem line would be closed to traffic between 1892 and 1894. In that period Haifa had witnessed many developments of demography, social and economic levels. According to May Seikaly, Haifa is the best example for the study of the Arab community’s transformation. Like Jerusalem, Haifa became a centre of activities such as railways, industrial, and ports.⁹⁵ The concession of the Jaffa-Damascus line, the first railway line in Syria, was granted to an Ottoman citizen, Yusuf Novan Efendi, who was actually a representative of a German banker, Johannes Frutiger based in Jerusalem. This line had 176 bridges, seven of which were hanging steel bridges. The trip between Jaffa and Jerusalem took three and half hours. The train went through eight railway destinations: Jaffa, Lud, Ramla, Sujd, Dayr Aban, Batir and Jerusalem.⁹⁶ This line facilitated the transport of the Christian pilgrim route stretching from Jaffa Port to Jerusalem. For pilgrimage, the Ottoman Empire had agreed on the reduction of

⁹⁴ E. Pech, *Manuel des sociétés anonymes fonctionnant en Turquie*, (Constantinople : Gérard Frères, 1911) 59-60

⁹⁵ May Seikaly, *Haifa, Transformation of an Arab Society, 1918,1939* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2002) 6, In Arabic: May Seikaly, *Arabic Haifa, 1918-1939, (Social and Economic Development)* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1997), 17

⁹⁶ Al-Salim, *Palestine*, 179

10% on the price of special tariff for pilgrims on 7 January 1893.⁹⁷ This first railway line gave opportunity to facilitate transportation of construction costs were about 110,000 francs per kilometre. The consequence was very poor because as a location both the Jerusalem and Jaffa stations were some distance from the towns, and traffic still continued by camels and carts. In addition, since there was no government guarantees, this line soon lost its importance. The counsel currently consisted of the following people below:

President: MM. A. Le Bégue

H. De Bertrand

E. De Naléche

P. De Vauréal

L. De La Giraudière

Auditor: M. E. De Bonnemais

Director: M. Jean Bonnafaus⁹⁸

2.2.2 Damascus Hamah Railway

In 1890, Joseph Moutran took the concession of a steam-powered tramway between Damascus and Hauran. Hassan Beyhoum Efendi, a well-known figure from Beirut took a 99-year concession for a railway operation between Beirut and Damascus in 1891. With French capital, the *Société Anonyme Ottomane de la Voie Ferrée Economique de Beyrouth à Damas* was established by Hasan Beyhoum Efendi. This company merged with the *Société Ottomane des Tramways de Damas et Voies Ferrées Economiques en Syrie* under the name of *Compagnie des Chemins de Fer Ottomans Economiques de Beyrouth–Damas–Havran en Syrie*.⁹⁹ The new company was formed with French and Belgian capital. Their concession was extended to 99 years. In 1892, the 182 kilometer Rayak-Hama line was completed. In 1893, the company underwent a new transformation again. With a new imperial decree, promulgated on 2 June 1893, granted an extension of the line with the Damascus-Aleppo-

⁹⁷ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Y. PRK. 3/48

⁹⁸ Pech, *Manuel des Sociétés*, 61

⁹⁹ al-Salim, *Palestine*, 178

Biredjik line the Euphrates, which would connect Baghdad line at Terek, and changed. Its name was changed to la *Société Ottomane des Chemins de fer de Beyrouth-Damas-Hauran et Biredjik sur l'Euphrate*.¹⁰⁰ The 137 kilometre Homs-Aleppo was finished in 1896. The cost of the constructions was expensive. The 103 kilometer Damascus-Muzeirib line opened in 1894, costing 8 million francs, including rolling stock. The rolling stock consisted of 8 engines, 20 passenger cars, and 73 trucks; by 1902 there were 15 engines and 130 cars and trucks. One year later, the 147 kilometer Beirut-Damascus line opened in 1895 costing 19, 1 million francs. This road connected the two largest centres of the province of Syria: Beirut as a considerable port location and one of the commercial regions with the population of 140,000 and Damascus one of the rural towns of Syria. Both were narrow-gauge lines (1,05 meters). Actually, the line Beirut and Damascus was well known by French companies from the period of 1857.¹⁰¹ In 1900, the company went into liquidation and was reorganized and changed its name one more time to "*Société Ottomane du chemin de fer de Damas-Hama et prolongements*."¹⁰²

However, the cost of transportation in Syria was considerably higher than in some of the other Middle East countries and the Ottoman Empire itself. The rail networks within the borders of Syria were divided into three railway system, all of which is a part of an international network. The most important railway systems was the Damas-Hama Railroad (D.H.P), connecting Aleppo and Damascus with the port of Beirut (Lebanon), the Hedjaz Railway (C.F.H), connecting the port of Haifa and Jordan with the South. Third was the Baghdad Railway (L.S.B) connecting Turkish border with Aleppo and Bagdad.

In the transportation case, the French company started constructing one of the roads in Beirut extending to Damascus in 1857. Again a French company took over this road a few years later. In the 1890s, the port of Beirut, a railroad line between Beirut, Damascus and Hawran was built by French companies. In 1902, five different railroads were operating by French firms in Asia Minor. These were *Mudanya-Bursa*, *Mersin-Adana*, *Beirut-Damascus-Muzeirib*, *Jaffa-Jerusalem* and *Izmir-Kasaba*. The total French investment in transportation amounted approximately 202 million francs by 1902. Despite the fact that the original concession of transportation was granted to Germany in October 1888, the Germans (the Deutsche Bank and Anatolian Railway Co.) and the French (the Imperial Ottoman Bank and the Izmir-Kasaba

¹⁰⁰ Pech, *Manuel des Sociétés*, 87

¹⁰¹ *Le Temps*, 30 Mai 1892

¹⁰² *Gil Blas*, 8 Juin 1901, 3/4

Railway Co.) signed an agreement. It meant that both these entrepreneurs would have equal participation.

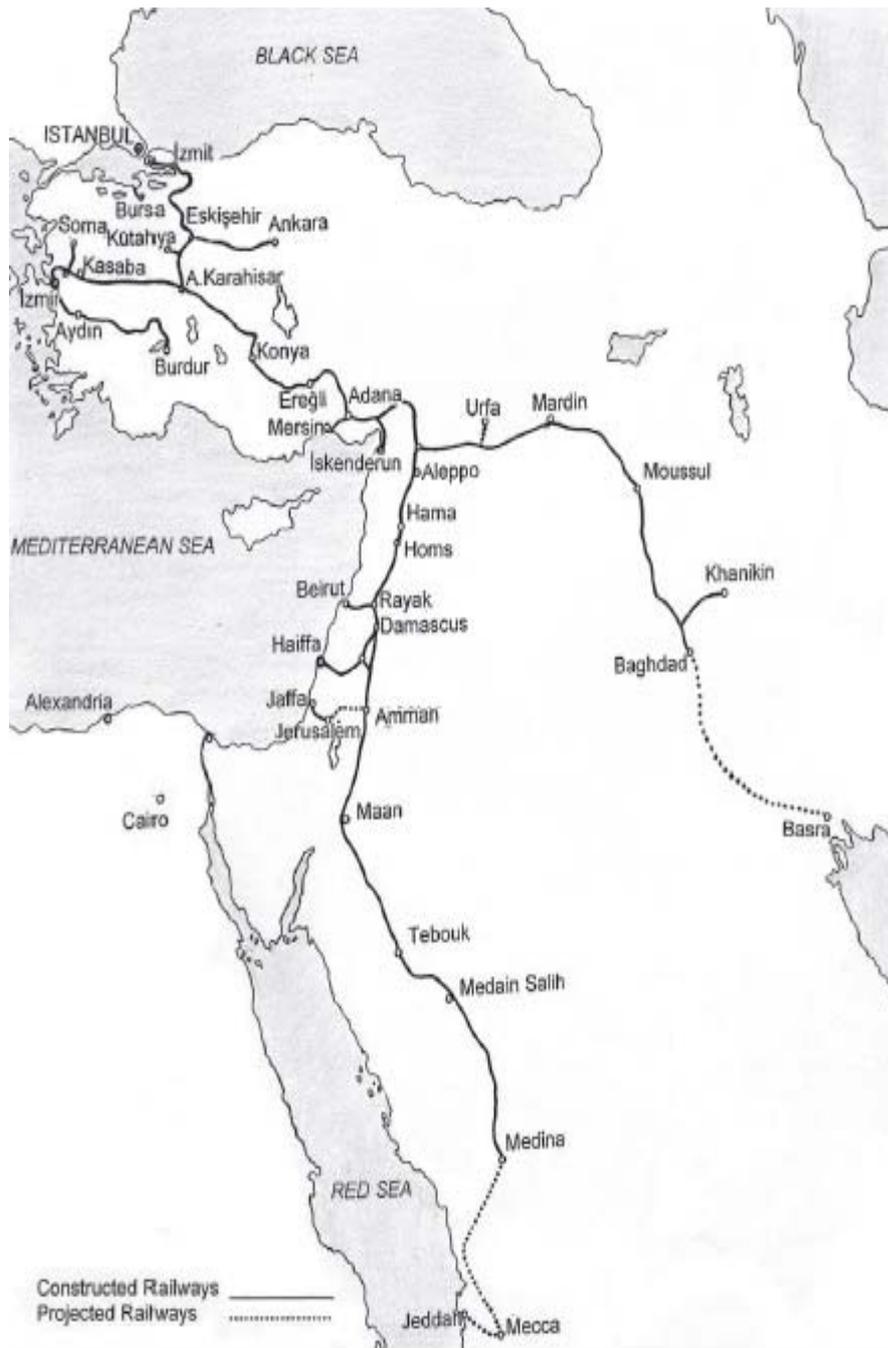
2.2.3 Cilicie North Syria Railway-Bozantı Aleppo Nusaybin Railway

France and the Turkish nationalists signed the agreement in 1921, known as and translated into Ankara Accord in 1921. According to this agreement, the French interest in the Baghdad Railway would be recognized. Therefore the concession of the Baghdad Railway section from Bozanti to Nusaybin, were granted to a French group in 1921, a group known as *Société des Chemins de Fer Cilicie-Nord-Syrie* (CNS), with the ownerships of the DHP.¹⁰³ The DHP, a French company operated the Syrian railways as you see above, and also operated the parts of the Baghdad railways under French control. *Société des Chemins de Fer Cilicie-Nord Syrie* (CNS) was later changed to the *Société du Chemin de Fer Bozanti, Alep, Nusaybin et Prolongements*.¹⁰⁴ Railway line consisted of Adana-Toprakkale-İskenderun-Islahiye-Mediankebez, Nusaybin-Bagdad. Before CNS, service between Aleppo and Constantinople was possible only between Adana and Constantinople. The new railroad reduced the time of the journey considerably between the two cities. The journey from Paris to Aleppo was now possible in six or seven days. It is interesting that this railroad gives opportunity to reduce the cost of the entire journey. The cost of the journey, including sleeping accommodations, is \$38.30 first class and \$29.31 second class.¹⁰⁵ The CNS was established by a group of French banks, industrial firms, among which was the DHP. As far as we know, the CNS's head office was 7 rue Meyerbeer, Paris.

¹⁰³ Sercan Ö. Yıldırım, "Anadolu ve Bağdat- C.F.O.A- ve Bağdat –Halep- Nusaybin- B.A.N.P- Demiryolları Şirketleri Yolcu Binaları Tip Projeler," *Beykent University Journal of Science and Engineering*, Volume 5(1-2), (2012) : 82

¹⁰⁴ Sheeran Khairallah. "Railway Networks of the Middle East," *In The Syrian Land Process of the Integration and Fragmentation, Bilad Al-Sham From The 20th Century*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Birgit Schaebler, (Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart: Stuttgart:1998): 92

¹⁰⁵ "Through Sleeping-Car Service, Aleppo to Constantinople", *Commerce Reports*, No:32, August 9,1926



Map 2 Railways in Ottoman Asia, 1918

Figure 2.7 Railways in Ottoman Asia, 1918

(Necla Geyikdağı, *Foreign Investment in the Ottoman Empire, International Trade and Relations, 1854-1914*)

2.3 Public Utilities

Just like the banks, insurance system and railways, the introduction of public utilities (electricity and water) to Ottoman cities was carried out through the efforts of foreigners. For the first time La Compagnie des Eaux de Constantinople (Constantinople Water) had been established in 1877 to provide water to Pera, and suburbs on the European side of the Bosphorus. It had a capital of 20,000 French francs.¹⁰⁶ Kamil Bey and engineer Ternau Bey obtained the concession for 40 years to bring the water of Terkos, situated Karaburun on the coast of Black Sea, and delivering to Pera and on the coast of Bosphorus.¹⁰⁷ La Société Générale de l'Empire Ottoman, Camondo and Company, La Banque de Constantinople (owned by Zarifi), the Oppenheim-Alberti Company, La Banque d'Escompte de Paris, La Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas and the A.-J. Company were among the partners.¹⁰⁸ Another company was La Compagnie des Eaux de Scutari-Kadiköy, which was established in 1890 by Swiss capital to carry the water of Göksu River to the Kandilli-Erenköy area and following locations: Göksu, Kandilli, Vaniköy, Eski Vaniköy, Kuleli, Çengelköy, Beylerbeyi, Stravkos, Kuzguncuk, Paşa Liman, Üsküdar, Haydarpaşa, Kadıköy, Kızıltoprak and Erenköy.¹⁰⁹ It has a capital of 3,600,000 Swiss franc.

Salonika and Izmir for the first time used electricity in the Ottoman Empire.. In addition, electricity was used for a long time during his reign (1876-1909) in his palaces and the hotels of Istanbul. After Abdulhamid period, the using of electricity became widespread in Istanbul. The British politician, Sir Ellis Ashmead-Barlett obtained the concession of electricity of Izmir and Salonika. This concession was about 35 for Salonika and 50 years for İzmir in order to operate both electrical street car (tramways). It had 100,000 pounds for investment.¹¹⁰ Like electricity, tramways became widespread in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. The first Ottoman tramway company was established in 1869, which was Société des Tramways de Constantinople. The first line started in 1871. The lines operated by the company are in total 21,200 kilometres and consisted of: Galata-Pera-Şişli, Galata-Ortaköy, Aksaray, Yedikule and Topkapı.¹¹¹ Between 1897-1907, there were 6 important tramway companies in the Ottoman Empire: Société des Tramways de Constantinople, The Metropolitan Railway of

¹⁰⁶ *Le Capitaliste*, 24 Juin 1885, 391

¹⁰⁷ Peche, *Manuel des Sociétés*, 176

¹⁰⁸ Peche, 175

¹⁰⁹ Peche, 181

¹¹⁰ Pech, 192

¹¹¹ Pech, 194

Constantinople, Société des Tramways Smryne- Gueuz Tepe, Compagnie Ottomane des Tramways de Salonique, Société Anonyme Ottomane des Tramways et de l'Electricite de Beyrouth and Société Anonyme Ottomane des Tramways et de l'Electricité de Damas. Out of 2, 4 tramway companies had French capital.¹¹²

2.3.1 Beyrouth Water Company (La Compagnie des Eaux de Beyrouth)

During the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire had great difficulty in ensuring and supplying the drinking water to the city in Beirut. In 1870, the Sultan issued a decree, granting a French engineer M. Thevenin for the transformation of Nahr al-Kalb water to Beirut for years.¹¹³ Selim Faris Efendi obtained a 40-year concession for the supply of water in Beirut. In 1873 the Beyrouth Waterworks Company based in London was established to transform Nahr al-Kalb's water to Beirut.¹¹⁴ It had capital of 400,000 pounds sterling; its date of concession was later extended to 1950. One year later, the French obtained the water distribution concession of Beirut. Before 1909, the British controlled the company but in 1909, French bought the concession for the water distribution from British and they established La Compagnie des Eaux de Beyrouth by Crédit Lyonnais and Banque de Financement de Crédit International (BFCI). The water comes from Nahr el-Kalb, situated 20 kilometres from Beyrouth. It passes through filter basins and an elevation plant. The board of the new company consisted of:

Isaac Fernandez, Nasry Misk, J. Menasché, André Gautheron, Elias Sabbag, Max Peter, G. De Breteuil, Ch. Pattin.¹¹⁵

2.3.2 Société Anonyme Ottomane des Tramways et de l'Électricité de Beyrouth

To be specific, in the case of Syria, we have two main locations: Damascus and Beirut. In Beirut, on 12 May 1906 the Ottoman Empire issued an imperial decree permitting the

¹¹² Geyikdağı, *Foreign Investment*, 117

¹¹³ Salname-i Vilayet-i Beyrut, 1311 H. (1893-1984 M.), 262

¹¹⁴ Pelin K. Öztürk, "Urban Transformation of Ottoman Port Cities in the Nineteenth Century: Change from Ottoman Beirut to French Mandatory Beirut", (Master's Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2006). 106

¹¹⁵ Onur Çapar, "Osmanlı Devletinde Fransız Sermayesi, (1838-1914)", (PhD diss., Istanbul Üniversitesi, 2019), 196

establishment of an Ottoman joint stock company to conduct a tramway system in Beirut known also as Société Anonyme Ottomane des Tramways et de l'Électricité de Beyrouth, which was the largest electricity company in Lebanon, though the institution struggled with unstable voltages, power outages, high prices and unstable proliferation. It was given the concession to establish the tramway system in Beirut. The duration of concession was for 99 years in Beirut. The agreement was signed on May 17, 1907, and the status of company had been registered on 4 May 1907. Its capital was 6 million francs; divided into 60,000 shares. It is important to underline that Raad's power company was first established to solely power the tramway system.¹¹⁶ With the concession, the company expanded its role with constructing and operating the tramway of Beirut, electricity in Beirut and its neighbouring regions, flourishing city's electric voltage network, and establishing the Nahr Safa power plant. In 1914, there were some important names in the governing body: Nouri Bey as a president, accompanying other Ottoman persons, Mahmoud Bey, but other two persons played an important role, Victor Limaugue as president of Trust Franco-belge and Charles Toneth as delegated-administrator at the general direction of Beirut. The engineers were Albert Périn and L. Ranscelot. Lastly, Pangiris Bey acted as an eye of the Ottoman Bank in that company.¹¹⁷ Although the concession had been signed in 1907, the works did not begin until 1909. From the very little information we have, the electric tramway of Beirut was inaugurated in 1908. The electric tramway passed through many areas in Beirut:

- 1- From the Khan of Fakhry Bey passing by al-Majdiyyah road and military hospital road to the city wall.
- 2- From Government House to Damascus road
- 3- From Bab Idriss to Sharia al-Jadeed, (or New Street)
- 4- From the city wall to al-Bachourah Quarter
- 5- From the military hospital to Mseitbeh
- 6- From the wheat port to al-Manara (or the lighthouse) in Ras Beirut.
- 7- From Khan Antoun Bey to al-Manara.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Jacques Thobie, "Électrification dans l'aire syro-libanaise des origines à la fin du mandat français", In: *Outre-mers*, tome 89, n°334-335, 1er semestre 2002. L'électrification outre-mer de la fin du XIXe siècle aux premières décolonisations, 528

¹¹⁷ Thobie, , "L'électrification", 529

¹¹⁸ Omar Khaled Tadmorî, "Modernizing Beirut During The Reign Of Sultan Abdulhamid II", (Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Jeostratejisi ve Mirası Uluslararası Sempozyumu), Ankara Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi, Ankara, 04-05 Ekim, (2018): 99

During the French Mandate, electricity and the price of electricity and tramway was the focus of boycott and protest by Arabs. Again *Électricité de Beyrouth* would be targeted by protesters for high prices, low quality of service and poor working conditions in 1922. In 1923, the company changed its name to *la Société anonyme française d'électricité de Beyrouth*.¹¹⁹ According to Abu-Rish, it was a strategic moving from the company in order to keep itself from protests and boycott.¹²⁰ The share of capital increased from 3.6 million to 10 million francs after that change.

2.3.3 Damascus Tramway and Lighting Company (La Société anonyme (ottomane) de tramways et d'éclairage électrique de Damas)

First of all, in the case of Damascus, Damascus Tramway and Lighting Company was one of the important companies in Damascus. As in the case of Beirut, that company was dissolved and its concession were transferred and renamed as TED/2 in 1928 in Damascus. Then la Société des tramways et d'électricité de Damas (TED / 2) was created, and it would be nationalised in 1951 and liquidated in 1958.¹²¹ However the birth of TED/1 is the typical interpenetration of the capital banking and industrial capital. It is known that TED/1 was established on 5 December 1904 at Brussels. According to the contract dating with 16 April 1903, it had the right to construction and operation in Damascus and its surroundings with an electric tramway and the installation of electric in public and private. The capital was 6 million francs but it is important that these capitals are commonly Belgian, the French side representing a under-contribution, conducted by *Crédit foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie (CFAT)*, it was estimated around 6 per cent of total.¹²² It is La Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas (The Bank of Paris and Netherlands) and its branches of Bruxelles, providing financial contact, with the Bank of Brussels. The operation started in 1905, and business in 1907. A factory of electric was constructed at Damascus, but essential electric was coming from the factory of El-Tequieh, at 30 kilo metre out of Damascus, the installed power would put an upper limit on 1,000 kW as public lighting. TED/1 concluded an agreement with the

¹¹⁹ *Journal des finances : cote universelle et correspondance des capitalistes*, 19 Octobre 1923, 5

¹²⁰ Leila Kaban, *Electrifying the History of Lebanon: Public Utilities and Popular Protests in the Wake of Independence* Lecture by Ziad Abu-Rish, Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, AUB, October 7, 2016.

¹²¹ Anne-Marie Bianquis, "Transports en commun et aménagement dans l'agglomération de Damas au XXe siècle", *Bulletin d'Études orientales*, Tome XLVII, Institut français de Damas, (1995): 40-41

¹²² Thobie, "L'électrification", 533

administration of the Hedjaz Railway for the supply of the electric energy to operate the machines situated at Damascus. The duration of the contract was 50 years. In 1907, the electric tramway was inaugurated in Damascus. The tramway had two central destinations. The central line was from Merdje to the Meydan. The second line was from Merdje Square to Jisr al-Abiad, later extending to Muhajirin and Salihyie quarters in 1913.¹²³ In 1925, under the French mandate, a new agreement was negotiated between the French and Syria and the Ottoman's concession transferred to a Belgium company, TED or TED 2 (Société Anonyme des Tramways et Électricité de Damas) for 30 years. The capital was Belgian but the same Crédit Foncier had obtained a small concession for the supply of the water and electricity as well as for the construction of 6 of km tramway lines. This tramway was used to transport 4,000 passengers by day.¹²⁴ Finally TED/2 would be nationalised in 1951 and be liquidated in 1955.¹²⁵

2.3.4 Electricity of Aleppo (EDAP)

Finally, just like Beirut and Damascus, there was an important electric company in Aleppo by the initiative of the French. In 1924, the concession of the electricity, of the tramway and of the water was accorded in with the capital of 3 million Francs. It was signed by Crédit foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie, composed of the *La société française Les électriques, et des sociétés belges, Les Économiques et la Générale d'entreprises électriques*.¹²⁶ However the convention signed by the president of the municipality of Aleppo, and André Lebon, president of the Crédit foncier d'Algérie et de Tunisie, was guaranteed by the state of Syrian.¹²⁷ The capital first increased 10 million francs in 1928, 36 million franc in 1929 and 54 million francs in 1930. The Bank obtained the concession of the water system, tramways and the electricity for Aleppo constituted with various competition.¹²⁸ In the 1920s the population of the Aleppo region was 300,000 inhabitants. To meet the demand, the company set up a thermal unit consisting of two carels groups of 750 kW, and another group of Sulzer installed of 3,500 kW. According to the results of EDAP, the number of subscribers rose from 1,739 in 1929 to

¹²³ Ross Burns, *Damascus, A History (Cities of the Ancient World)*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), 258

¹²⁴ *Bianquis*, Transports, 41

¹²⁵ Thobie, "L'électrification," 537

¹²⁶ Thobie, 539

¹²⁷ Thobie, 539

¹²⁸ *Le Temps*, 17 août 1925, 4, *Cote de la Bourse et de la banque et le Messenger de la Bourse réunis*, 27 Février 1928, 2/8

25,846 in 1950.¹²⁹ The share of electricity profits in total a profit, which was close to 100% from to 1932. However, there was an understandable slowdown in growth between 1940 and 1946. The energy produced 1 million kw/H in 1929, 9,6 million in 1940. After the process of the nationalisation, there was an accord signed on 26 April 1956, the given compensation was 6,709,400 Syrian Lira approximately 970 million French francs.¹³⁰

In the case of the administration of advice or council,

Philippiar Edmund, President of the foncier of the Algeria and Tunisia,

Ithier Gaston, Vice President

Choublier Max

Jourdanne Alfred,

Lagasse de Loch,

Palante Alexandre

Passeleco Maurice

Piat Emile

Weyl Ernest.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Thobie, "L'électrification", 540

¹³⁰ Thobie, "L'électrification", 540

¹³¹ *Cote de la Bourse et de la Banque et le Messenger de la Bourse reunis*, 20 Janvier 1925, 2/6

CHAPTER 3

FROM OTTOMAN SYRIA TO THE FRENCH SYRIA

3.1 French Influence in Ottoman Syria in the Aftermath of World War I

In 1914, as yet France had intensely close economic, cultural, financial and religious ties with the Ottoman Empire and its provinces of Syria and Lebanon. France increased their military influence evidently in the aftermath of World War I. As I said before just in the case of economic influences, the French doubled their economic influence between the years 1888 to 1914 in the Ottoman Empire along with the Ottoman provinces of Syria. However, after World War I, France had a relatively active military role in the Ottoman province of Syria. During this second period lasting from 1914, with the outbreak of World War I, to the Battle of Maysaloun, and the French Mandate in Syria was firmly established in Syria by 1920. In this period there is a paradigm shift from economic, religious, social interest to military interests of French. On December 21, 1922, Raymond Poincaré gave a speech to French Senate concerning of the French aspirations in Syria and Lebanon and he declared that:

I need to say that in Syria and the Lebanon we have traditional interest which we intent shall be respected... We ourselves are resolved to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, but we shall not abandon any of our traditions there, nor leave any of our interests there in abeyance.¹³²

When the Ottoman Empire entered the World War I on the side of Germany and Austria, Russian Tsar Nicholas II told to Maurice Paléologue the French ambassador, and encouraged the Franco-Russian alliance before and during the World War I, that, it was time to re-consider the post-war settlement.¹³³ During the year 1915, French colonial societies, colonial and military authorities, politic and economic pressure groups recommended the sending of troops to the Levant in order to control Syria in relation to the post-war expectation of France. The post-war expectations of France related to the Ottoman Empire and province of Syria arose from the idea of being the traditional protector of Christians, large-scale economic

¹³² France, Assemblée Nationale, *Journal officiel, Senat, Débats parlementaires*, Dec. 21, 1912, 340

¹³³ Jan K. Tanenbaum, "France and The Arab Middle East, 1914-1920", *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Volume 68, Part 7, (1978): 5

investment in the Ottoman Empire, France's Muslim populations in North Africa, France's civilization mission to the Levant, and most important re-gaining France's prestige and honour were at stake after the defeat of Franco-Prussian War in 1870.¹³⁴ All of these reasons shaped the French policy of Ottoman Syria during the years 1914 and 1920.¹³⁵ Therefore, in this chapter, I will try to explain what the causes of French military influence in Syria were. Military interest over Ottoman Syria by France started with the break-out of the World War I and finished with the establishing of the Mandate in the province of Syria on September 1920. At the ending of World War I, the future of the Ottoman Empire and of its Ottoman Syria became a major political question both internationally and within France. The end of 400 years of Syria under the control of Ottoman rule, the major destruction of World War I shaped the destiny of the Syrian provinces of Ottoman Empire. After the end of Ottoman Rule, Syria was first ruled by the members of urban upper class families. These peoples were former officials of the Ottoman Sultan in Syria. Indeed, in addition to these upper class families, there was a remarkable political power continuing the exercise of local power in Syria. When the French Empire took control of Syria in 1920, France was not seen as legitimate overlord as the Ottoman Sultan had. From the beginning of the war, two French administrations clashed each other: The Ministry of War and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This confrontation revealed the fundamental differences of opinion on some topics: The future of Ottoman Empire, the Muslim politics of France, the idea of the independence of the Arab people and establishing of Arabic Kingdom, and finally the relationships between French and Arab officials¹³⁶. Despite their differences of opinion, the French mainly considered and supported the idea of a revolt of certain elements of the population in Syria between Ottoman and Arabs. Actually, it is well known that even before the Great War, France had wanted to carry out some Arab revolt support revolution and revolt politics in the Arab lands but after the outbreak of the war between the Ottoman Empire and Entente greater opportunity and importance was given to these projects. One project was the traditional antagonism between the Arab race and the Turkish race. Therefore, from the beginning of the war, France sought provocation in the Arab regions of the Ottoman Empire. The French again sought to provoke in the Arab regions of Empire, to prepare the emancipation of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia. The emancipation of populations should be understood as emancipation from Ottoman Empire

¹³⁴ Tanenbaum, "France and the Middle East," 6

¹³⁵ Tanenbaum, , 6, Etienne Flandin, "Nos Droits en Syrie et en Palestine" *La Revue Hebdomadaire*, 5 Juin 1915,

¹³⁶ Cloarec, *La France*, 49

guardianships under the control of France. Therefore there were some important military intervention plans or projects starting from 1914, supported by Quai d'Orsay. At the time of World War I, these projects foresee an operation against the Ottoman army, the partition of the Ottoman Empire, the Syrian revolt supported by the French government in order to establish the creation of independent Syria under the control of France. These projects were led by important French military figures mainly: Khalid Ibn Hashim, an important figure of the Young-Algerian movement, The lieutenant-colonel Maucorps, former attaché in Constantinople, the Colonel Henri Descoins, former director of the cavalry at the French mission in Athens, future chief of the expedition corps of the Orient, General Maurice Bailloud, former commander of the 19th corps of army (Algeria- Tunisia).¹³⁷ In addition to these projects, during and after World War I, there had been a great deal of agreements, correspondences, conferences regarding of what would happen to Syria. Let me first recall to you that the main objective of these agreements is to precede the delamination the future Arab kingdom with the Arab revolt. They are mainly Nicolson- Georges Picot negotiation, Sykes-Picot Memorandum, Franco-Anglo-Russian agreement, Franco-Russian agreement and Anglo-Russian agreement, in addition to these agreements; there are also exchange of letters between Grey and Paul Cambon. In sum, from 1914 with the out breaking of the World War I to the establishing of establishment of the Mandate in 1920, French policy was preoccupied with those topics as follows:

- 1) The dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire
- 2) The loss of French influences resulting from the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire requires of huge compensation
- 3) France accepted the creation of an Arab kingdom under the influence of French.
- 4) French Syria must be a vast space and the limits of Syria.¹³⁸

3.1.1 The Plan of Hamelin

The first intervention plan the so-called Plan of Hamelin, Colonel Jules Hamelin (1866-1958), who was the author of the plan proposed by the Ministry of War. Hamelin, as a head of Africa section at the Ministry of War and member of the Committee for Muslim Affairs, was deeply

¹³⁷ Jacques Frémeaux, "Les Interventions Militaires Françaises au Levant Pendant La Guerre", *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, no. 262 (2016) : 49

¹³⁸ Cloarec, *La France*, 118-120

concerned about the Pan-Islamist danger.¹³⁹ Hamelin also commanded the French army, which was *Detachment français de Palestine-Syrie* (DFPS) in the Near East from 1918 to October 1919.¹⁴⁰ The DFPS commanded by Hamelin in order to submerge British affect in the Middle East. He tried to transform the ideas being formulated in military circles to the political level.¹⁴¹ On 1 December 1914 in one of the sessions of the Committee for Islamic Affairs, for the first time he demonstrated his doubtful thoughts of Ottoman Sultan as a universal caliph, Thus Hamelin was looking for political and spiritual alternatives to Ottoman authority.¹⁴² The intervention plan was firstly about disembarking contingents in Syria (Alexandretta, Antioch, Beirut and Tripoli) and the measures to combat Turkish action on the Muslim population of North Africa.¹⁴³ From a strategic point of view, the operation would have had the advantage of isolating Turks from the Arab world by cutting their communications with Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine. From the political point of view, it would provide the zone of influence demanded for a long time by France in case of the Ottoman Empire. He believed that only counter-propaganda can cause the defeat of enemy plans in all Muslim countries. Therefore, France must quickly agitate agents, especially in Syria and the Arabian Peninsula for maintaining the French influence there and encouraging any movement of dissident against the regime.¹⁴⁴ In that report, concerning Syria, it says that the French must arouse a movement leaning on the Emirs of the family of Abd al-Qadir and the Syrian organizations already existing in the metropolis of Syrians.¹⁴⁵ Abd al-Qadir one of the most influential and leading families in Damascus in Syria played a distinctive role in local urban politics. When the Ottoman Empire withdrew from Damascus at the end of the World War I, Sa'id al-Jaza'iri governed Damascus. Amir Khalid, son of the Amir Hashim, another son of Abd al-Qadir, enrolled in the French military of Saint Cyr, which is the foremost French Military academy and became a Sipahi officer in World War I. Amir Khalid was a well-known name because from 1911, as a commander in Algeria, developed the plans to cause a revolt in Syria.¹⁴⁶ The Hamelin plan again proposed the constitution of a Syrian legion to foreign officers in charge, and a Greek legion. In addition, it proposed adding two

¹³⁹Jacques Frémeaux, "Les Interventions Militaires Françaises au Levant Pendant La Guerre", *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, Avril-Juin 2016, No. 262, Moyen Orient et conflits au xxe siècle (Avril-Juin 2016), 49

¹⁴⁰ Cloarec, *La France*, 54

¹⁴¹ Dan Eldar, "French Policy towards Husayn, Sharif of Mecca", *Middle Eastern Studies*, No.3, (1990): 330

¹⁴² Eldar, French Policy, 330-331

¹⁴³ Frémeaux, "Les Interventions Militaire," 49

¹⁴⁴ Cloarec, *La France*, 55-56

¹⁴⁵ Cloarec, 54

¹⁴⁶ Peter Wien, *Arab Nationalism, The Politics of History and Culture in the Modern Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 131

battalions of Senegalese and a battalion of the foreign legion along with Moroccan and Algerian to the Syrian legion. Hamelin convinced Millerand about that project, and Alexandre Millerand, who was a president of the Republic (1920-1924), was strongly interested in the plan of Hamelin. The question was discussed at the meeting of the Inter-ministerial Commission for Muslims and Colonel Hamelin was charged as a head of the Africa Section for preparing that project.¹⁴⁷

3.1.2 The Plan of Maucorps

The second military plan, led by French foreign minister concerning Ottoman Syria, was led by lieutenant-colonel Edmond Maucorps, attaché military at the embassy of Constantinople before World War I. France, Great Britain and Italy are the most interested in the project, and on 15 December 1914, Edmond Maucorps and Husson who was a marshal of lodgings, engaged voluntary, and ancient chef cabinet of Ministry of War, were welcomed by the Quai d'Orsay or French Foreign Minister leaders. The plan was about forming an Allied expeditionary force to disembark in Syria by leaning on local insurgencies.¹⁴⁸ The corps disembarking in Syria should compose of 110,000 men, about 35,000 per nation. A main detachment of 55,000 soldiers would disembark at Caffa, in order to defeat the Ottoman army. A second body would take possession of Mersin to cut the railway tracks of Tarsus. All of the operations would lean on local uprisings of Christian, Druze and Bedouins elements. Yet the plan of Maucorps could only take place with the promise of liberation and autonomy with respect of their religion, their institutions, and their customs. It is interesting that the Maucorps Plan was envisaged by Descoins who was a Lieutenant-colonel in French army. Descoins considered an international intervention plan depending on that of Maucorps, but with the participation of more native fighters.¹⁴⁹ Contrary to Caffa, Damascus must be the objective because in the view of Muslims, this city is very close to Mecca and Islam. However, both Maucorps and Descoins had some problems about commanding, operations management, and the problem of manpower, Therefore a third plan was proposed by General Daumann to General Marshal Joseph Jacques Césaire Joffre. It consisted of using colonial troops during the campaign and organizing and disembarking in Syria, under the direct o the

¹⁴⁷ Cloarec, *La France*, 55

¹⁴⁸ Cloarec, 55

¹⁴⁹ Cloarec, 57

French. According to Bailloud, the essential objective of an intervention in Syria was to take possession of the Syrian coast to support indigenous insurgents, and to prevent Ottoman reinforcements from reaching Egyptian front.

3.1.3 The Negotiation of Picot and Nicolson (1915)

On 23 November 1915 the first meeting took place between François George Picot and Sir Arthur Nicholson, permanent undersecretary of the British state for foreign affairs, in London. George Picot went to London to discuss the boundaries of a French-controlled Syria. Nicholson recalled the urgency of the military plan because they warned that already German influence was already advancing towards Constantinople. At that meeting what Nicholson wished was for France's backing for a future Arab state; Georges Picot realized that Britain could give more territory to the emir of Mecca Sheriff Husain to revolt.¹⁵⁰ Nicholson requested that Syria, including Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hama be given to Sheriff Hussein. For Sir Arthur Nicholson the Arab revolt movement would be unreal and incoherent without French support.¹⁵¹ Nicholson demanded that Syria, including Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hama should be given to Hussein.¹⁵² However, in opposing to the British, the French representative led by Georges Picot did not agreed on the importance of Emir of the Mecca and the Arab nationalist with the Entente side. It shows that there was no prospect for the creation of an Arab kingdom.¹⁵³ Georges Picot refused the idea of an Arab state at that meeting, by insisting that Syria was a purely French possession and by Syria Picot meant the region stretching from Taurus ridges on the north to Diyarbakir-Mosul- Deir-Zor- Kirkuk, the Kirkuk region, and principal oil basin from 250 kilometres north of Baghdad.¹⁵⁴ In the end, Nicholson proposed that in some parts of Syria be allocated to Arabs, France could be a protectorate equivalent to the holding possession. On the base of the declarations of Nicholson, Jean Gout, a senior official in the foreign ministry of France, proposed forming a territory of full French administration in Tripoli, Mount Lebanon (with Beirut), Caffa and Jerusalem on December 16 1915. A second territory with the same status would be in the north, Cilicia. Gout envisaged three Arab emirates under French influence: Damascus, Aleppo (with Mamurat-el Aziz and

¹⁵⁰ Tanenbaum, "France and the Middle East," 10

¹⁵¹ Isaiah Friedman, *The Question of Palestine, British-Jewish-Arab Revolutions: 1914,1918*, (New Brunswick&London: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 102

¹⁵² Tanenbaum, "France and the Middle East," 10

¹⁵³ Cloarec, *La France*, 121

¹⁵⁴ Isaiah, *The Question of Palestine*, 102

Diyarbakir), and Mosul (with Deir el-Zor) two emirates under influence of Britain: Baghdad and al-Basra.¹⁵⁵ France was ready to recognize the Arabic language, rather than Turkish or French, in Syria, and to permit Syria to have a parliament. Finally, in return for these concessions, Feisal had to recognize Syria under the French Mandate.¹⁵⁶

3.1.4 Hussein-McMahon correspondence (1915-1916)

In October 1915, in the Husayn-McMahon correspondence, it was known as series of letters exchanged in 1915-1916 between Sir Henry McMahon who was the British high commissioner in Egypt and Husayn ibn Ali, emir of Mecca during the First World War.¹⁵⁷ Henry McMahon, was a British high commissioner to Egypt, Hussein ibn Ali, was appointed by the Turkish Committee of Union and Progress to the position of Sheriff of Mecca in 1908. In 1915, Sir Henry McMahon presented an offer to Sheriff Hussein of Mecca of an independent Arab state if they fought against the Ottoman Empire with British army.¹⁵⁸ However, Hussein demanded an independent Arab state, one that an Arab state would stretch from Mersin through Urfa, Mardin and Amadia to the Persian border, then to the Indian Ocean, and finally to the Red Sea.¹⁵⁹ However, the British could not carry out Hussein's demands because to do so it would ruin Anglo- French relations.

On October 24 1915, MacMahon in his letter to Hussein depending on the British position the question of the future Arab boundaries: "The two districts of Mersin and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded."¹⁶⁰

On November 5, 1915, the Sheriff of Mecca accepted the exclusion of the vilayets Mersin and Alexandretta. This meant some changes would take place in the territorial boundaries as specified in Sheriff Hussein's letter to McMahon. Hussein agreed to the exclusion of Adana

¹⁵⁵ Cloarec, *La France*, 123

¹⁵⁶ Tanenbaum, "France and the Arab Middle East", 35

¹⁵⁷ Isaiah Friedman, "The McMahon-Hussein Correspondence and the Question of Palestine," *Journal of Contemporary History* 5, no. 2 (1970), 83

¹⁵⁸ Hatem Shareef Abu-Lebdeh, *Conflict and Peace in the Middle East, National Perceptions and United States – Jordan Relations*, (Lanham & New York & Oxford: University Press of America, 1997): 44

¹⁵⁹ Elie Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and Its Interpretations, 1914-1939* (Cambridge, London, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1976), See also A. L. Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria including Lebanon and Palestine*, (Macmillan: St. Martin's Press, 1969), 218-222

¹⁶⁰ Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*, 172

and Mersin, Hussein rejected McMahon's exclusion of Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, and the vilayets of Beirut.¹⁶¹ The two vilayets of Aleppo and Beirut could be considered as a pure Arab region in his letter. For him, there were no differences between an Arab Muslim and Christian Arab because they all come from the same ancestor.

3.1.5 Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916)

France's influence of Syria was recognized by the Anglo-French partition plan known as Sykes-Picot Agreement. Picot met with Sir Mark Sykes, British chief negotiator in 1916. The Sykes-Picot Agreement was an agreement negotiated between Great Britain, France and the Russian Empire at the end of World War I. The Sykes-Picot agreement lasted six weeks and incorporated in a January 3, 1916, the most important matter dealt with the areas of direct control and the protectorate regions. This agreement divided the Middle East into different zones. The Sykes-Picot agreement proposed five different zones and two indirect zones titled as A and B. As Blue zone, France took the control of the some parts of south-eastern Anatolia and Ottoman provinces of Syria, Aleppo and Beirut. In addition to this, France would take the indirect control of the Arab state that would establish on the territories of present-day Syria and Northern Iraq, including Mosul. By late 1918, Lord Curzon, would declare that Sykes-Picot Agreement is not only obsolete, but absolutely impracticable. In subsequent negotiations, some articles of Sykes-Picot was changed, for example, Mosul became part of British-controlled Iraq. Again Palestine, instead of being an internationalized area came under the control of British. The Sykes-Picot agreement implied that France became the dominant military force as well as the dominant economic force in the A zone.¹⁶² The Sykes-Picot Agreement was never realised. Therefore before the World War I, the French accused Britain of depriving them of Syria and their share of the Ottoman Empire and especially in regard to as agreed on by Sykes Picot Agreement.¹⁶³ Britain was accused of having acted uncertain and disputable because after the war, Britain had to deal with problems between the French and Arabs looking for an independent Arab state. In 1916, an agreement known as Husayn-McMahon Correspondence of 1915-1916, Britain was claiming and promising the protection for Arabia and guarantees to the Muslim holy places from external threat and aggression.

¹⁶¹ Hatem Shareef, *Conflict and Peace*, 44

¹⁶² Tanenbaum, "France and the Middle East", 12

¹⁶³ Shukry, *Syria*, 34

Lloyd George wanted to exclude Damascus, Homs, and Hamadan and Aleppo that had already been proposed to the Arabs. Yet for Arabs the Sykes-Picot Agreement contradicted McMahon's promises given to the Arabs. After Sykes-Picot, another problem was related to the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that was a public announcement issued by the British government support the establishment of a Jewish state on the soil of Palestine. From the British perspective, the promises to Arabs and French before World War I was no more applicable or acceptable. Therefore, it must be reinterpreted again at the end of the World War I.¹⁶⁴ In 1918, Lloyd George who was a prime minister of Britain from 1916 to 1922, stressed that the Sykes-Picot agreement no longer corresponded to the condition of the post-war world. On September 15, Lloyd George told the Council that the British troops would withdraw from western coast of Syria on November 1, 1919, however, the cities of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo that would be handed over to Faisal.¹⁶⁵ Faisal was well aware of that once Britain withdrew from Syria; they would lose their supremacy and power in Damascus. Therefore Faisal went to London but he was told that he should negotiate with the French. The French side was determined to impose their authority on Syria without a fight. Faisal al-Hashami was selected by the Syrian National Congress and travelled to Paris as a head of Arab delegation in 1919.

¹⁶⁴ Khoury, 35

¹⁶⁵ Seth P. Tilmann, *Anglo-American Relations at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, 225

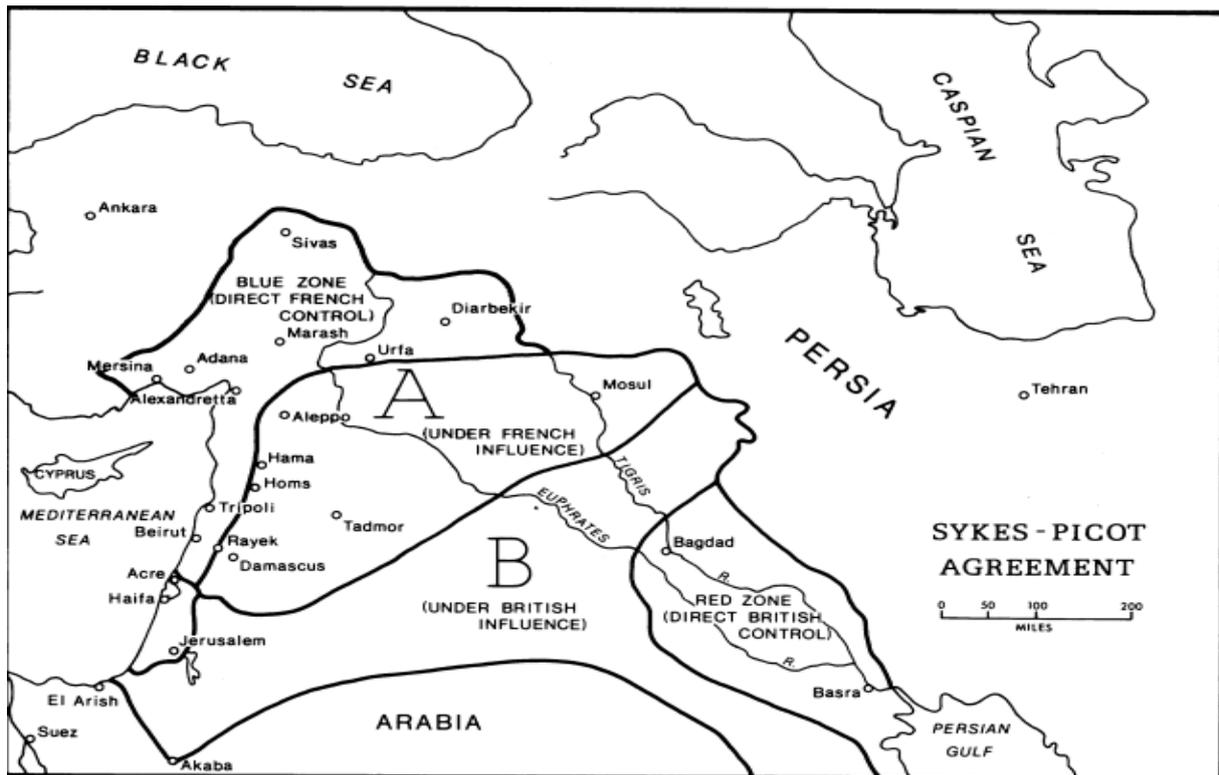


Figure 3.8 Sykes Picot Agreement (Cloarec)

3.1.6 The Arab Revolt of 1916

In 1916, Sheriff Hussein launched the Arab revolt in the Hedjaz. He was governing as de facto the Holy City but he was appointed and paid by the Ottoman Empire. His duty was to maintain order among the tribe, organize the pilgrimage, and support the Turkish garrison, aided by an Ottoman civil administrator. The Sheriff of Mecca is therefore neither a state nor an independent dignity, were directly descended from Prophet Muhammad.¹⁶⁶ Sheriff Hussein in his first proclamation put more emphasis on the religious impiety of Young Turks as a reason for the revolt along with nationalist motif of religion. It was written a manshûr by Sheriff himself, which was a general edict to all Muslims. In that edict, Hussein had presented himself as the best defender of the Ummah. He accused the current Ottoman government for giving way to the attacking the Prophet Muhammad in the press, which was called “Al-Ijtihad”, giving a new legal right to the girls in matters of inheritance and having justified the disrespectfulness to the month of Ramadan. Lastly, the veil was removed and it is obvious

¹⁶⁶ Olivier Hanne, “La révolte arabe en 1916: mythe et realite, De Tannenbergr à Verdun: la guerre totale”, (Nov 2016), *La Roche sur Yon*, France, 333

that the Empire was in the hands of Enver Pasha, Cemal Pasha and Talat Pasha.¹⁶⁷ However, the Arabs were seeking the principles of Sunnah and the Quran. The text insisted on the need to restore the Islamic system by reusing the paradigm of Arab Nationalism and religious legitimacy.¹⁶⁸ According to Ernest Dawn, Rashid Rida claimed the re-writing of the proclamation text written by Sheriff Hussein since he found the proclamation text stylistically bad. What Rashid Rida did was to add a few sentences in which the goal of the Arab revolt was the reconstruction of an Arab state. However Hussein rejected the addition of Rashid Rida.¹⁶⁹

For France, they were strongly opposed to the creation of one more front. In the first half of 1916, the French Empire already was fighting on different fronts, and they had lost in the battle of Verdun in the first half of 1916 and were planning the battle of Somme. But they decided to support the Arab Revolt. Pre-war Arab nationalist in Syria did not contribute to the Arab Revolt in 1916. However, the French government, despite its being favourable to the revolt, remained undecided. French Senator Etienne Flandin recommended sending many Muslims to the holy cities and to arm them in order to constitute the Sheriff's army and prevent the succumbing of the Arab army to the Ottoman Army. Again On July 19, 1916 Roland De Margerie, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, offered more offensive action currently pending with regard to Sheriff Hussein and his revolt, and dispatching a mission politic and military to Hedjaz consisting of soldiers of North Africa. Margarie again proposed to endow 1.25 million francs in gold, given to the Sheriff with a letter and autograph of the President of the French Republic.¹⁷⁰ Finally Lieutenant-Colonel Brémond, who went to Hedjaz as the head of the mission to Hedjaz, recommended the establishment of a permanent French delegation to Sheriff Hussein, because Bremond thought that when everything was over, the Sheriff would become our neighbour in Syria.¹⁷¹

In late 1916, Hussein and his movement were considered as a potential danger to France's position in the Middle East and Syria. Even though only a small number of Syrians joined the movement of the Arab revolt, it strongly affected Syria. In October 1916, during an interview

¹⁶⁷ Arabic text and English version: Stanley Maude, *The King of Hedjaz and Arab Independence: With a Facsimile of the Proclamation of June 27, 1916* (London: Hayman, Christy & Lilly Ltd, 1917), 6

¹⁶⁸ Tanenbaum, "France and the Middle East," 15

¹⁶⁹ C. Ernest Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism. Essays on the origins of Arab Nationalism*, (London, University of Illinois Press, 1973), 69-86.

¹⁷⁰ Cloarec, *La France*, 137

¹⁷¹ Le Pautremat, Pascal. "La mission du Lieutenant-colonel Brémond au Hedjaz, 1916-1917", *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 221, no. 1, (2006) : 17

between Abdelkader Ben Ghabrit, who was an Algerian religious leader, and interpreter who worked for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Sheriff Hussein and his son Abdullah affirmed that, once the conquest of Medina was completed, the Arabs will turn to Syria.¹⁷² The Arab revolt had created an Arab army and they occupied Syria only a few years later. It is called the Faisal period of Syria until the Battle of Maysaloun; yet French forces would defeat the forces of the Hashemite King Faisal army.¹⁷³ According to Shukry Khoury, revolt was regretted by Aleppine political figures, they did not expect or want such a big Arab revolt as it was. According to Aleppines, it led to damaging of Islamic unity, the collapsing of the Ottoman Empire and the separation of Aleppo from Turkish borders.

3.1.7 Congress of Syria of 1919

The Congress of Syria was organized by the Chamber of Commerce Marseille on January 1919. During three days (3-5 January 1919) some important personalities in the fields of politics, commerce, industry, literature, education, religion held in 4 sections (economy, history, education and medicine).¹⁷⁴ This congress hosted many important figures that would shape the political and economic life of Syria in a few years. This congress had historical section, for example, the Byzantine historian Louis René Bréhier, professor at the University of Clermont, brought up the genesis of the protectorate or mandate exercised by Charlemagne in Palestine. Clement Huart, professor of *Persian at l'Ecole des Langues Orientales et interprete* with the one of ministers of foreign ministry explained the historical frontier of the Syria. Again M. de Marton who was professor at the University of Sorbonne, explained the geographical unity of Syria and P. Zummofen demonstrated the geography of the Lebanese. In this conference, M. Casanova, professor at the College of France drew the attention of his audience to the importance of Damascus, which was for him the capital of the Muslim states.¹⁷⁵ Finally Paul Mason, professor at the University of d'Aix-Marseille, presented Elements of French Bibliography of the Syria, which is encyclopaedia work about Syria. In the section of education, presented by Paul Huvelin, he drew up a general table of French schools around Syria: 52,000 children who think in French and needed to be considered

¹⁷² L'Asie française, n° 167, Octobre-Décembre 1916, 149-151

¹⁷³ C. Ernest Renan, "The Rise of Arabism in Syria," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Spring, 1962), 115

¹⁷⁴ Michel Seurat. "Le rôle de Lyon dans l'installation du mandat français en Syrie: Intérêts économiques et culturels, luttés d'opinion (1915-1925)," *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, T.31(1979), 140-141

¹⁷⁵ Seurat, "Le rôle de Lyon," 141

themselves by the French government. In sum, the Congress of Syria held by the Chamber of the Commerce Marseille was very crucial to show what Syria was worth to the for French Empire, to show the considerable intellectual interest over Syria, and the destiny of the future Syria before establishing the Mandate in Syria.¹⁷⁶

3.1.8 The San Remo Conference of 1920

The San Remo Conference held in April 1920, following the World War I, which determined the previous territories of the Ottoman Empire defeated in World War I. Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan attended the Conference and the United States were as a neutral observer. The conference held numerous sessions until in April 28. One of the issues debated in that conference was what kind of rule will be implemented in Syria, Mesopotamia and other Arab regions. In 24 and 25 April sessions, the Former Ottoman Arab territories were discussed, on the basis of the articles of 94 and 95 the old Ottoman provinces of Syria: the northern part Syria and Lebanon was given to France, and the province of Mesopotamia Iraq and Palestine was given to Great Britain for the establishment of mandate system. In this conference France received a 23.75 per cent share of Iraq oil. The San Remo Conference was important because symbolically meaning that France and Great Britain shared equal status in the Middle East. Again for the first time Britain consented to France possession in Syria. Before San Remo Conference, Faisal I had been selected as a king of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine by Syrian National Congress and declared Syria as an independent Arab Kingdom of Syria in 8 March. As soon as King Faisal I was declared himself the head of state France's attitude against Faisal I was strict. When Faisal opposed the French Mandate over Syria after San Remo Conference, he was expelled by the French. After the San Remo Conference, there were massive reactions from the Arab world and Faisal I himself too. In order to break those responses and reactions the French forces took immediately action and tried implement the San Remo Decisions in Syria. It leads us to the Maysaloun War, which took place on July 24 1920.

¹⁷⁶ Ernest Babelon. "Le congrès français de la Syrie," Les travaux de la section d'archéologie et d'histoire. In: *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 63^e année, N. 3, (1919) : 225

3.1.9 The Battle of Maysaloun and Establishing of French Mandate in Syria

In July 14, 1920, Henry Gouraud, gave an ultimatum to Faisal prosed the abolition of the army of Faisal and submit to French authority. However, the ultimatum was rejected Faisal and Gouraud send his army to Damascus. The ultimatum was about accepting of French Mandate in Syria and punishing of enemies of France. The battle of Maysaloun took place a region of Khan Maysaloun, few miles west of Damascus in July 1920. The French forces were composed mainly of Algerians and Senegalese at the war of Maysaloun. The French army of the Levant estimated that approximately 12,000 men and the Arab Army commanded by General al-Azma from a prominent and wealthy family from Damascus and an ex-Ottoman officer, numbered 4,000 men as well as Bedouin and volunteers. At the battle of Maysaloun, French forces captured Aleppo without fighting on July 23, and 24 and the battle lasted only 8 hours and the Arab army was defeated by the French army. In relation to casualties, approximately 150 Arabs were killed and 1,500 were wounded. The French army claimed that 42 soldiers were killed, 152 wounded and 14 missing. In that war, France used tanks, airplanes and heavy artillery to defeat the Syrians. Therefore, after the bombardment, France entered Damascus without a popular resistance. On 28 July 1920, Faisal was obliged to leave Damascus for the last time after the battle of Maysaloun.¹⁷⁷ France imposed an indemnity of 10 million francs on Syria. According to Dr. Daniel Neep, the battle of Maysaloun meant the ending of the fully independent Arab State in the Levant. Instead, the new Mandatory state was created on the soil of Syria in other words; this is the point where the story of French Mandate actually starts.¹⁷⁸

Theoretically, France's role in Syria was mandatory and "trustee" on the behalf of League of Nations. However, the reality was on the ground was far different and beyond acting as a trustee. Alexandre Millerand, prime minister of France from 23 September 1920 to 11 June 1924, ordered Henri Gouraud breaking Syria into several political units. According to Alexandre Millerand, divided Syrian nation would be easier to rule.¹⁷⁹ France segregated the Syrian territories into independent mini-states and special administrative units with semi-autonomous status and autonomous status. The religious and ethnic majority shaped the

¹⁷⁷ Justine Stievenard, "L'implication de l'armée dans la politique irakienne de 1933 à 1936, une étude de cas à travers le personnage de Bakr Sidqi" Mémoire de Master 2, *Histoire de l'Afrique et du Moyen Orient*, spécialité : *Histoire des Sociétés Arabes Contemporaines*, 5

¹⁷⁸ Daniel Neep, *Occupying Syria under the French Mandate, Insurgency, Space and State Formation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 28

¹⁷⁹ Marjorie M. Farrar, "Victorious Nationalism Beleaguered: Alexandre Millerand as French Premier in 1920", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 126, no. 6 (1982), 512

borders drawn by the French Mandate.¹⁸⁰ In 1920, France decreed new state of Lebanon; the territory included coastal cities of Tripoli, Sidon, Beirut became the capital. The States of Damascus, the States of Aleppo, and the Alawis constituted the other part of Syria. The three states were independent at first then they were federated in 1922. The States of Damascus, the States of Aleppo, which both were ruled by a local governor supported by French *conseillers* or advisers. The States Damascus consisted of Homs and Hama. In 1924, both the states of Aleppo and Damascus were dissolved to create a single state which also included the Sanjak of Alexandretta. There was no Alawite state in this new configuration and until they were united with the state of Syria along with the Jabal al Druze in 1922.¹⁸¹ Out of Lebanon, France imposed a policy of ‘divide and rule’, which atomized the territory of French Mandate Syria and Lebanon and lead to innumerable revolts against the French Mandate itself.

The League of Nations recognized the texts of France Mandate Syria and Lebanon in 1922. However, mandate system per se was a vague concept. As Sarah Gualteri points out that in practice, it was pure and simple occupation but it shows the chilling face of force.¹⁸² Depending on that article of 22 League of Nations classified all mandates into three main mandates including A, B, and C Mandates. Syria including Lebanon, was belonged to the so-called A Mandatory along with Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan.¹⁸³ It is important underline Mandatory states exercised full administrative control of states with the supervision of the League of Nations. In contrast to Mandate A, Mandate B included British and French Rule over Cameroon and Togo. Mandate C is the most closest to colonial rule.¹⁸⁴ As Philip Shukry Khoury quoted “A Mandate was neither a colony nor a protectorate, neither an Algeria nor a Morocco. By definition it was “transitory.”¹⁸⁵ One of the passages written by French high commissioner Robert de Caix relation to Mandate system, at the sixth meeting, on February 19th, 1926, he described the mandate system as “visional system designed to enable populations which, politically speaking, are still minors to educate themselves so as to arrive one day at full self-government.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ Neep, *Occupying Syria*, 31

¹⁸¹ Shukry, *Syria*, 58

¹⁸² Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora*, (University of California Press, 2009) 101

¹⁸³ Nele Matz, “Civilization and the Mandate System under the League of Nations as Origin of Trusteeship”, *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law Online*, 72

¹⁸⁴ Matz, “Civilization”, 73

¹⁸⁵ Shukry, *Syria*, 45

¹⁸⁶ Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians : The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 158

Furthermore Pierre Viénot in his *Le mandat français sur le Levant* said that for the mass of public opinion, France possess Syria.¹⁸⁷ But its aim is to administer and to safeguard the interests of French in Syria. “Syria should not be treated like one of the colonized countries. Syria should only be administered;” therefore he said that for the most of French people, their Mandate system in Syria is not a war but a fiction.”

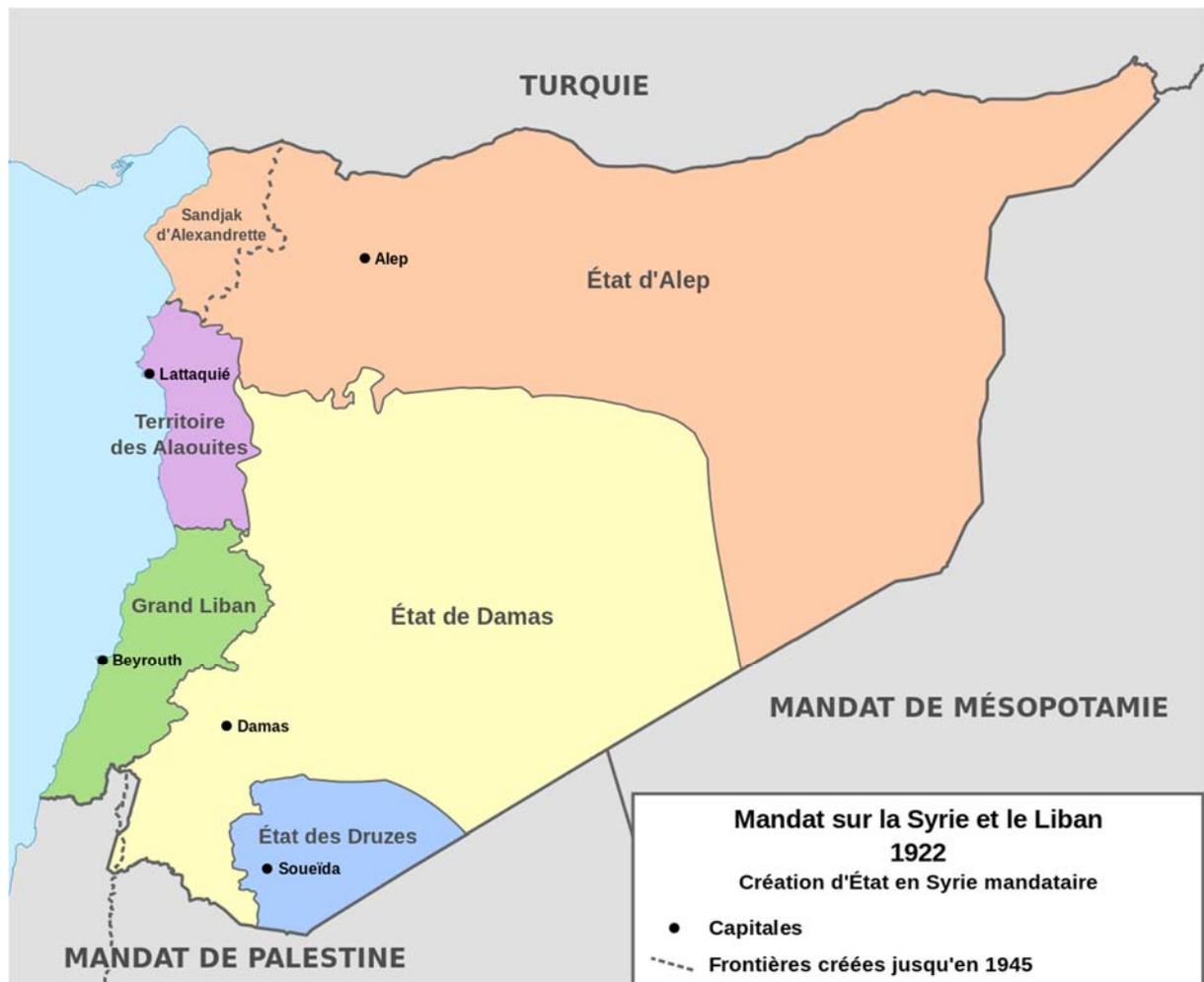


Figure 3.9 Mandate of Syria and Lebanon in 1922 (Cloarec)

3.2 Syrian Reactions after the Establishing of French Mandate in Syria 1919- 1924

As soon as the establishment of the French Mandate in Syria, numerous revolts occurred in the territories. As Jean- David Mizrahi estimates, between the years of 1922-1924, there were 381 acts of violence, in all those, evidently innumerable people including, both French army and Arabian chetehs or irregulars were killed or injured. Actually, according to Mizrahi, these two years can be divided into two periods. Between the years 1922-1923, total 328 acts of

¹⁸⁷ Pierre Viénot, “Le mandat français sur le Levant”, *Politique étrangère*, n°2, (1939), 104

violence were counted that is to say that there was an incident almost every two days. While the year of 1924 marked clearly ebb, the number of acts of violence decreased to 53 incidents, referring to an action by a week.¹⁸⁸ There have been numerous reactions, responses and revolts against French mandate. However some of them could be considered important and less important because at the beginning some of them were small-scale, leaderless, and haphazardly organized. However, later it transformed to big-scale, well-organized revolts. According to Hisham Nishabi,

Syrian never wanted the mandate; it took every occasion to express its aversion to it; it resisted its methods from the day it was established to the day it came to end. The Arabs, in the post-war period were not ready to go through the same experience another time. They knew that the Mandate system was nothing but a new device to deprive them of their independence and to satisfy empire builders.

For Philip Shukry, since France followed a policy of ‘divide and rule’, atomized the territory of Syria and Lebanon as regional and ethnic, and kept the country from uniting politically, therefore, they were confronted with innumerable revolts. During the Mandate years, France created separated Damascus and Aleppo after the Battle of Maysaloun in 1920. The Battle of Maysaloun marked the highest stage of anti-French sentiment throughout Syria. Maysaloun is considered as a deathblow to the establishing of independence of an independent Arab state, and its *raison d’être* for Syrians.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, in this chapter, I would like to elaborate on the Anti-French sentiment and reactions to the French Mandate in Syria between the years 1919-1924. It is important to point out that the anti-French sentiments show up much earlier than the Battle of Maysaloun with the King-Crane report led by United States representatives. On the case of revolting or actions of violence in Syria, there has been important historiographical problem to understand all those rebellions in Syria after establishing the French Mandate System in Syria. One of them is related to nationalist historiography. It means that from the beginning these revolts were considered nationalist motivations against the French during the early Mandate. However, today there is another view considering these revolts not only from nationalist motivation but also regionalist movement.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Jean David Mizrahi, *Genèse de l'État mandataire: service des renseignements et bandes armées en Syrie et au Liban dans les années 1920*, (Paris: Publication de la Sorbonne, 2003,) 115

¹⁸⁹ Nashabi, “The political parties,” 75

¹⁹⁰ Stefan Winder, *A History of the Alawis, From Medieval Aleppo to Turkish Republic* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016) 245-246

3.2.1 King Crane Report (1919)

As mentioned before, anti-French sentiments in Syria emerged before the Battle of Maysaloun in 1920 as the first sign comes from the King-Crane Commissions report. The U.S Commission of Inquiry had prepared a report led by two Americans, Henry King and Charles Crane, that report was completed in 1919 and published in 1922. The Commission had 11 members; five members of the commission were Americans. The members of the commission were as follow: Henry C. King, Charles R. Crane, Albert H. Lybyer, George R. Montgomery, William Yale, Donald Brodie, Laurence S. Moore, Michael Dorizas, Sami Haddad, Paul O. Toren, and Ross Lambing.¹⁹¹ The commission arrived in Jaffa on 10 June and spent six weeks in Palestine and Syria in 1919. They arrived in Damascus on 25 June and remained in Syria until 4 July in 1919. It is interesting that on the contrary to Palestine, Syria gave a negative political atmosphere for the commission. It is crucial that the Commissioners were collecting lots of leaflets during their time in the city. One of the leaflets written by H. Lybyer demonstrates the strong anti-French sentiments by Syrians. In that leaflet, Syrians were demanding:

- a) The unification of Syria within “historical limits” that is to say between the Mediterranean Sea and the desert, the Taurus Mountains and the boundary of Egypt and the Hedjaz.
- b) The independence of Syria within the above limits.
- c) The Assistance of a Great Power in financial and economic respects.
- d) The first choice for an assisting nation is America.
- e) The second choice, in case America should refuse, is Britain, provided independence is safe-guarded
- f) France is not wanted at all.¹⁹²

One of the leaflets known as ‘Distributed in the Bazaars of Damascus’ on 25 June reads as follows: complete political independence of Syria with its natural boundaries, protesting and

¹⁹¹ Andrew Patrick, *America’s Forgotten Middle East Initiative: The King Crane Commission of 1919*, (I.B Tauris: London& New York, 2015), 58

¹⁹² MS Lybyer, Box 16, fol. A.H.L. to C.A.L. May–Sept. 1919, document entitled ‘The Apparent Situation at Syria, July 1 1919’.

refusing against Art. 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations about necessitating of the French Mandate, refusing every right French claims in Syria.¹⁹³ The commission started receiving delegations on 26 June. In another, Lybyer points out those Muslim prominent religious figures emphasis on three points:

- 1) Requesting for American Mandate
- 2) Refusing of French Mandate
- 3) Placing Palestine under none but an Arab government, the same as for the rest of Syria.¹⁹⁴

In sum, the King-Crane Commission's report demonstrated that although the commissioners expressed themselves in favour of French mandatory system for Syria, Syrians vehemently rejected the idea of a French Mandate or any other French presence in Syria. Syrians called for independence and unified Greater Syria. The newly established Syrian state would accept only technical and economic assistance but not a mandate system- except only from the United States. Britain also could be the second choice for Syrians but both French mandates would be strongly and vehemently rejected by Syrians. Therefore they found themselves unable to recommend a French Mandate.¹⁹⁵

3.2.2 Syrian General Congress of 1920

On 1 July, the Syrian national congress was convened by Faisal I, the congress was comprised of 85 elected officials and 35 religious leaders. The congress held two official sessions in 1920. According to Mohammed Jamal Barout, the Syrian National Congress can be considered as three main categories according to the index of its sessions. The first session was the demands of the Syrian people presented to the King-Crane Commission. After two days, the so-called Damascus Program was approved. The Damascus Program was a memorandum to be handed to the American delegation. The second session on November 22,

¹⁹³ MS Lybyer, Box 16, fol. 'Document File #1', document #51 entitled "Distributed in the Bazaars of Damascus"

¹⁹⁴ MS Lybyer, Box 16, fol. 'Document File #1', document #52 entitled "Interview of commissioners, Advisers present, with the Kadi, Mufti, and six others of the Ulema of Damascus, at the Damascus Palace Hotel, at four o'clock p.m," 26 June 1919.

¹⁹⁵ George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening, The Story of Arab National Movement*, (New York & Toronto: J. B. Lippincott,) 297

1920 regarding of the replacement of the French forces in accordance with the Lloyd George-Clemenceau Agreement, and the third session in March-July, regarding the declaration of independence and rejecting of French occupation and the choice of Faisal as the king of Syria.¹⁹⁶ As mentioned before Damascus Program is very important because it is known as the original Independence program. This program contains very important points regarding the independence of Syria. The Damascus Program formed the basis of hostility to the French Mandate; more than 80 per cent of the Congress members demanded complete independence and rejected the concept of Mandate, asking for “assistance” for the Syrian state from America, or if not, from Britain. However, France’s involvement was absolutely rejected in any form.¹⁹⁷ The Damascus Program also criticized and protested against secret treaties and private agreements such as the Sykes-Picot Agreement and Balfour Declaration. The congress also rejected also Zionist claim to make Palestine a Jewish homeland or a land of immigration. It is important that with the declaration of independence, the congress proclaimed Faisal as a king of Syria,¹⁹⁸ Ali Rida Pasha al Rakabi was appointed as supreme leader of the Syrian in that congress.¹⁹⁹ The Arabic language replaced the Turkish language for all public and military institution directorates and schools in Syria. The declaration of Independence was a very important text in Syrian history as it is called the National Covenant.²⁰⁰ The declaration of independence was a hazardous decision. That is to say, it threatened the interests of France throughout the Levant. Therefore, French’ Third Empire republic reactions were quite harsh. At the conference of San Remo of April 1920 only one month later, in response to Syrian Nationalist Congress in 1919, the Allies agreed on a French Mandate in Syria including Lebanon. While entering Syria, General Gouraud and the French Armée du Levant occupied Damascus and dissolved the Syrian Congress which was the only representative body in the country and forced Faisal into the exile.²⁰¹ Instead of Syrian constitution, French placed and established a French-appointed High-Commissioner. General Henri Gouraud was the first high-commissar of France at the Levant. Jean David Mizrahi explained the institution of the High-Commissaries of the French in Syria. According to Mizrahi, the High Commissioner was not only the head of all kinds of services created to

¹⁹⁶ Mohammed Jamal Barout, “The 1919-1920 Syrian General Congress and Syria’s First Constitution: Context, Evolution, Functions, and Challenges,” *Tabayyun*, Issue 3, (2013), 27

¹⁹⁷ Barout, “The 1919-1920 Syrian General Congress,” 28

¹⁹⁸ Müfid Al-Zaydi, *Mawsuat tarih al arab al muasir wa al hadis*, (Amman, Jordan, 2014), 55

¹⁹⁹ Al-Zaydi, *Mawsuat tarih*, 56

²⁰⁰ Karim Atassi, *Syria the Strength of an Idea, The Constitutional Architectures of Its Political Regimes*, trans. Christopher Sutcliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 68

²⁰¹ Nashabi, “The political parties in Syria,” 82

drive administrative and technical reforms but had political, military and legislative powers.²⁰² Valentine de Saint-Point who was a French writer, poet, painter, lecturer and journalist, speaking of the French-appointed High-Commissioner, as a witness, says about that institution: “Le Haut-Commissaire a donc un pouvoir illimité dans tous les Etats de Syrie : pouvoir de direction, de décision, de surveillance ; autorité absolue sur tous les services publics : civils et militaires.” “The High-Commissaries has unlimited power in all the states of Syria: power of direction, power of decision, and power of surveillance; absolute authority over all public services: civil and military.”²⁰³

3.2.3 Alawite Revolt 1919

First of all, the Alawite resistance had minimal interest with the Syrian or Arab nationalism against the French. The Alawite were a syncretic Islamic sect related to the Shia branch of Islam. They considered themselves an adherent of Ali (the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad). In French documents, the Alawites are recorded as *Alouites*. They were living in the mountains in the region of Latakia. For Yusuf al-Hakim, a leading Syrian politician, the Alawis approved French’s customs and tradition even before the France Mandate of Syria in July 1920. “The Alawis saw themselves in a state of grace after hell; accordingly, they were dedicated to French Mandate and did not send a delegation to the Syrian Congress.”²⁰⁴

According to Henri Lammens, in his famous book, *L’Islam: croyance et institutions*, the Alawites during one of their liturgy blasphemed the religion of Islam itself and prayed for the destruction of the Ottoman Empire.²⁰⁵

Again in the late 1919, seventy-three Alawi chiefs from different tribes of Alawites sent a telegram to French General Henri Gouraud, asking about the establishment of an independent Nusayri union under the French protection.²⁰⁶ However it is noteworthy that the Alawis firstly launched a rebellion against Faisal and his men in 1919 but two years later they revolted this time against French ruler. Although Alawites accepted the French Mandate before 1920 the reason, why they revolted against the French is worthy of an explanation. First of all, the

²⁰² Mizrahi, *La France et sa politique*, 27

²⁰³ Mizrahi, 27

²⁰⁴ Yusuf al-Hakim, *Dhikriyat al-Hakint*, Vol. 3, *Suriya wa'l-'Ahd al-Faysali* (Beirut: Al-Matba'a al-Kathulikiya, 1966), 94

²⁰⁵ H. Lammens, *L’Islam, Croyances et Institutions*, 3rd ed. (Beyrouth: Imp. Catholique, 1943), 228

²⁰⁶ Wajih Kawtharani, *Bilad ash-Sham*, (Beirut: Ma'had al-Inma' al-Arabi, 1980), 211

Alawites revolted against the French under the control of Salih al-Ali's leadership. The establishment of French ruling in Syria benefited the Alawites more than any other minority groups because the Alawites gained legal autonomy, low taxation, and therefore the Alawites accepted French occupation willingly.²⁰⁷ The Alawites settled down Latakia or known as Jabal Ansariyya. In early December of 1920, French troops reached to Latakia and proclaimed France's sovereignty over the whole territory. That is the moment of Alawite rebellion which would later continue day by day with new revolts. Salih al-Ali urged the prominent Alawite notables in the town of Sheikh-Bad who started revolting. It is worth noting that Salih Ali was not motivated by nationalist sentiments, and instead interested in the benefits the Alawites would receive. Concurrently with this rebellion, the Turkish irregulars or chetehs, financed and controlled by Kemalist movement who were fighting with French troops for Cilicia. Therefore, in order not to fight both Turkish chetehs and Alawites, the French army withdrew their troops from the mountain.²⁰⁸ However, in the early spring of 1921, French established their authority over much of the mountain. The Alawite revolt lasted more than two years, despite Salih's failure, in his own region, Jabal Ansariyya considered him as the defender of Alawite independence from French hegemony and a great freedom fighter.²⁰⁹

3.2.4 Hananu Revolt

The second important revolt was led by Ibrahim Hananu known as Hananu Revolt between 1920 and 1921. It is important to say that from the beginning the Hananu Revolt was involved with National Struggle led by Mustafa Kemal in Turkey. When the French army occupied northern Syria, political elites and leaders of Aleppo were highly influenced by the Turkish nationalist movement, for Shukry Khoury:

In fact, the northern Syrian resistance movement was far more influenced by the Turkish nationalist movement than it was by the Arab nationalist movement. The Turks were simultaneously fighting the French for control of a large area of northern Syria, which formed a semicircle stretching westwards from the district of 'Urfa through Ma'rash down to the Mediterranean coast and the districts of Antioch and Alexandretta. Within the semicircle the northern Syrian revolt originated and an alliance developed with the Kemalist movement.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Daniel Pipes, *Greater Syria, The History of an Ambition*, (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 166

²⁰⁸ Shukry, *Syria*, 101

²⁰⁹ Shukry, 102

²¹⁰ Shukry, 105

Hananu revolt took place in 1920-1921 in the western countryside of Aleppo led by Ibrahim Hananu. Ibrahim Hananu was born in 1869 in the Harim district west of Aleppo. Ibrahim Hananu was the son of a wealthy rural family. He got education in Istanbul by studying both public administration and law. After finishing his education in Istanbul, he returned to Aleppo where he served in several government departments.²¹¹ Ibrahim Hananu was Harim's representative in the Syrian Congress in Damascus. He was well aware of that after the Battle of Maysaloun, for Hananu, there was only one way to save and defend northern Syria and that was to mobilize mass popular revolts. The Hananu revolt took place in January 1920, ten months before Aleppo was occupied by French troops and continued for several months. The Committee of National Defense, which became the most important institution waging a war against the French, sponsored Hananu's activities. They provided weapons and financial supports to Hananu and his soldiers along with promoting his activities among Aleppo ulama and encouraging them to wage jihad against the French army.²¹² The first war taking place between French and Hananu, the revolt spread rapidly: from 800 men in 1920, their numbers increased to 5,000 with volunteers from Aleppo, Bedouin and villagers from different provinces of Syria.²¹³ Like the Alawite revolt, the Hananu revolt led by Ibrahim Hananu received assistance from the Turkish nationalists who provided men, money and arms to the Hananu's forces.²¹⁴ Just like the Alawite revolt, concordantly, the Turkish nationalist movement was fighting with the French for control of Cilicia and southern Anatolia. Therefore, the Turks supported the political committees and organizations in Syria in order to establish pro-Turkish and anti-French sentiments in Syria.²¹⁵ Therefore, Jamil Ibrahim Paşa who had studied in the Military College in Istanbul and was a member of the Committee of Union and Progress, met with Mustafa Kemal at his 'Antep or Ayntab headquarters to constitute a joint military campaign against the French among the leading dignitaries of Aleppo during the Hananu Revolt. Both these sides were aware that they were fighting a common enemy that was France itself.²¹⁶ *Le Temps*, which is one of the most influential newspaper in French published an important article titled by *A Quand La Paix d'Orient*, stimulate the French government concerning the relationship between the Bolsheviks, the

²¹¹Raheem Hassan Hammad Al-Shami, *Tatavvar al-Hareke al Wataniyya fi Suriya 111-1127, Jumla Kulliya al Tarbiyye li'l benaat al-ulum al-insaniyye*, Vol.21, (2017), 884

²¹² James L. Gelvin, "The Social Origins of Popular Nationalism in Syria: Evidence for a New Framework," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, (1994): 651

²¹³ Chalcraft, *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 223

²¹⁴ Chalfra, 223

²¹⁵ Chalcraft, 223

²¹⁶ Shukry, *Syria*, 106

Turkish nationalist and Arabs because according to *Le Temps*, the Bolsheviks were helping the Turkish nationalist as well as the Turkish nationalist aiding Arabs. *Le Temps* emphasized that if the French government did not take any precaution, they would have problem in Cilicia and Syria.²¹⁷ Just like the Alawite revolt led by Salih Ali, the Hananu revolt were scattered in the spring of 1921 due to shortage of ammunition, supplies and support from the Turkish army. Paris and the Kemalist government reached an agreement over Cilicia in 1921. The Ankara Accord of October in 1921 recognized a boundary between Syria and Turkey. Although Hananu and his militia established an independent state stretching from Aleppo to the Mediterranean Sea, after the agreement of Ankara, Ibrahim Hananu had to flee to newly created British mandate state of Trans-Jordan. The French government wanted the British to deport him to Aleppo as a criminal and revolt leader. Hence in August, British intelligence officers arrested him and extradited Ibrahim Hananu to Syria. He spent six months in prison in Aleppo. In the defence of Ibrahim Hananu, his Aleppine Christian lawyer, Fathallah al-Saqqal, passionately depicted him as a national hero rather than revolted or irregular man. During the defence, Ibrahim Hananu took the floor and strongly emphasized that the French presence in Syria was illegal.²¹⁸ Hananu and his lawyer Fathallah also pointed out that the military operations had been controlled by Mustafa Kemal and his Ankara government.²¹⁹ After his three day trial he was released because the French government had no desire to create a national legend of Ibrahim Hananu in Syria. Some partisans tried to continue their resistance but it remained very limited, so in the fall of 1921, Hananu revolt was over.

3.2.5 The Great Syrian Revolt of 1925

In 1925, there was another revolt that took place in Syria; it is actually both considered the Great Syrian Revolt or The Druze revolt. Unlike Hauran Rebellion of 1921, the Alawite Revolt and the Hananu Revolt, The Great Syrian Revolt can be evaluated as a different kind of revolt because it was the largest and longest-lasting and most destructive revolt in Syria in the Jabal from Ottoman times.²²⁰ The Great Revolt of 1925 was a critical event in the history of Syria, and in the national struggle against the French. According to Shukry, it did not first

²¹⁷ *Le Temps*, 13 décembre 1920, 1

²¹⁸ John McHugo, *A History of the Last Hundred Years Syria*, (The New Press: New York, 2015), 75

²¹⁹ Shukry, *Syria*, 110

²²⁰ Salama Ubayd, *al-Thawra al-suriyya al-kubra 1925-1927 'ala Dau' Watha'iq Lam Tunshar (The Great Syrian Revolt of 1925-1927 in the Light of Unpublished Documents)*, (Beirut: Dar al-Ghadadd, 1971), 23

break out in Syrian's nationalist area, but in the Jabal Druze with no attachment nationalist sentiments. Therefore, at first glance it was nothing more than a local rebellion in order to satisfy local interest of the Druze community.²²¹ First of all, The Great Syrian Revolt lasted two years, when rebels penetrating into Syria. The French army took harsh precautions to end revolt. Without any warning, the ancient city of Damascus was bombarded for nearly twenty-four hours by General Sarrail, the high commissioner of France.²²² When this harsh bombardment finished, the reported loss of life led to Arab dissidents. After the bombing of Damascus in 1925, a strong sentiment emerged that The French Mandate had to be removed by the League of Nations.²²³ However, France suppressed the Great Syrian revolt and France continued its mandate system in Syria until World War II. The revolt of 1925 resulted again from French policy of divide-and-rule in Syria. In doing so, from the beginning, France provided to the maturation and spreading of anti-French feeling in Syria. The Great Syrian revolt started in the state of Jabal Druze, a mountainous region in the southeaster corner of the French Mandate in Syria. Firstly, the majority population in Jabal Druze was Druzes known by the geographical name, and they are a group of ethnically and religiously different people from the mainstream of Islam. They had agreed with the French over France's superiority and recognized the existence of the French Mandate in Syria during the early years of the mandate.²²⁴ Their principal aim was to maintain their autonomy, their current conditions and positions they had inherited from the Ottoman Empire because during the time of the Ottoman Empire they did not have to pay tax, serve in the military service, or follow mainstream laws. They wanted the same privileges from the French. After the agreement between the Druzes and the French government, the Jabal al-Druzes as a region was calm. Robert De Caix who was a former Secretary-General of the High Commissioner of the Levant submitted a report on Syria and the Lebanon to the League of Nations, Permanent Mandates Commission in 1924. In that report, general observations and special observations such as judicial, economic equality, land system, international conventions, education, Christian refugees, public finance, demographic statistics etc. were highlighted. According to Caix, Jabal-Druze had a small importance and has only about 50,000 inhabitants. In most of parts in Syria, there was a local

²²¹ Philip Khoury, "A Reinterpretation of the Aims of the Great Syrian Revolt, 1925-1927," in: Atiyeh, G. N. & Oweiss, I. M. (eds.): *Arab Civilization: Challenges and Responses*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 243

²²² Joyce L. Miller, "The Syrian Revolt of 1925," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 8, no. 4 (1977): 545

²²³ Quincy Wright, "The Bombardment of Damascus," *American Journal of International Law*, 20 (April 1926): 279

²²⁴ Joyce, "The Syrian Revolt," 550

power structure around the Jabal Druze region. Selim al-Atrash, a leading figure of Atrash family had taken control after the massacring of Druzes of Lebanon in 1860 and started governing the Druze state. According to Joyce Laverty Miller, the Great Syrian revolt was caused by a power contesting in the Atrash family; therefore, Captain Carbillet was elected for a short time in the absence of Atrash family ruler. However, Carbillet extended his period indefinitely.²²⁵ Captain Carbillet was a reformer and pro-French civilization. Under the control of Carbillet, the French government opened twenty-three new schools, constructed irrigation canals, roads, and a system of public sanitation. In return for his services, the Druzes had to pay full taxes. According to Philipp Shukry, Carbillet's most important project was to transform the Druze feudal system that would drive most of the Druzes become dissidents. During the revolt of Druzes, Sultan Athrash became the most influential and anti-French figure. He belonged to Al-Atrash family, also known as *Bani al-Atrash* is a prominent Druze clan based in Jabal Hauran in south-western of Syria. The Al-Atrash means to "the deaf" because Ismail who was one of the members of Al-Atrash family, was deaf.²²⁶ In July 1925 for the first time the Druzes attacked the garrisons of French at al-Suwaida. The garrison of al-Suwaida was relatively small, unprepared and vulnerable to the attacks coming from the Druzes. First attack controlled by Zayd al-Atrash who was younger brother of Sultan al-Atrash. Zayd al-Atrash went to the garrison of al-Suwaida with two aims: delivering the Mount Hermon to the Druzes from the French oppression and cutting the access towards Damascus, on two important communication ways, the route Damascus-Beyrouth and the route Damascus-Qunayatra-Marjayoun.²²⁷ A small detachment, the Michaud column, was ambushed and annihilated by the Druzes before they reach al-Suwaida. It was 7 officers, 166 men 2/3 Syrians, 1/3 were Algerians, 70 men of whom had taken refuge at the garrison of Al-Suwaida. It was the spectacular success for the Druzes against France.²²⁸ After that victory, most of the nationalist leaders from other parts of Syria joined the side of Sultan al-Atrash. One of them was Hamza Darwish a small leader and war veteran, who had joined the revolution army of the Sultan under the pressure of the youth in his village. On 2 August, the French took matters more seriously and sent about 3,000 men, 63 officers and 840 men from French troops. It was battle of Mazra controlled by General Roger Michaud. At the battle of

²²⁵ Bokova, Lenka. "Les Druzes Dans La Révolution Syrienne De 1925 A 1927," *Guerres Mondiales Et Conflits Contemporains*, no. 153 (1989): 94

²²⁶ Sam Swayd, *Historical Dictionary of Druzes* (New York London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 58

²²⁷ Lenka, "Les Druzes," 101

²²⁸ George Samne "La Rebellion druze," *Correspondance d'Orient*, 332 (Aug. 1925), 53

Mazra, general Michaud counted 385 injured, 23 of these were officers.²²⁹ However, concerning of death rate, the French said that it was very difficult to evaluate, only 14 people were identified. On the other hand, among 432 events such as disappearing, the biggest number Syrians and Madagascan who were actually prisoners of Druzes or taken refuge in Transjordan where the British send back them to the French again.²³⁰ After the battle of Mazra, the Great Revolt began to be considered a nationalist revolt rather than local, communal or familial revolt under the leadership of Dr. Shahbandar who was a prominent Syrian nationalist during the French Mandate of Syria and a leading factor against French authority.

Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar was born in Damascus in 1880. He went to Beirut to study Medicine at the Syrian Protestant College. Shahbandar was also a student who was interested in politics and political debates of his day. He enthusiastically supported the Turkish organization the Committee of the Union and Progress and their supporters in Damascus.²³¹ Therefore, after the World War I, he and his colleagues established the Iron Fist Society (Jam'iyat al-Qabda al-Hadidiya) in order to challenge French Mandatory rule. In the summer of 1924, he built up a new political organization as the most popular politician in Damascus, the People's Party (Hizb al-Sha'b), which was officially inaugurated in June 1925.²³² His two closest advisers, Muhammad Kurd Ali, a Syrian archaeologist and Emir Ther, an uneducated man. People's Party was supported at least 5,000 men and of whom 1,000 men were registered in the party's books.²³³ There were also some young party members such as the Western-educated Arslan brothers: Adil Arslan and Shakib Arslan. After the People's inauguration on 5 June, more than a thousand people gathered at the Damascus Opera House to express the will of the Syrian people for the first time after the Syrian Congress of 1920. According to Hisham Nishabi, Dr. Shahbandar gave a speech explaining the party's aims: "Dr. Shahbandar said that the People's Part was to Syria what the CUP had been to modern Turkey and just as this was able shatter the despotic rule of Abd-Hamid and establish liberty, so would the People's Party to be instrument of liberation."²³⁴

²²⁹ Samne, 53

²³⁰ Samne, 53

²³¹ Philip S.Khoury "Abd Al-rahman Shahbandar," *Transformed Landscapes: Essays on Palestine and the Middle East in Honor of Walid Khalidi*, (Cairo & Newyork: The American University Press, 2009), 33

²³² Philip S.Khoury "Abd Al-rahman Shahbandar," 36

²³³ Nashabi, "The political parties," 92

²³⁴ Nashabi, 95

Dr. Shahbandar and members of the People's Party were in direct contact with Druzes leaders and the Great Syrian Revolt. However, Joyce Miller stresses that none of these important figures had the potential for leadership as did Mustafa Kemal because Shahbandar was not a soldier training the troops but he was a doctor. Kurd Ali was only interested in saving the archaeological treasures of Syria, Emir Ther was an adventurous man and the Arslan Brothers were only active in political matters of Syria. In sum, none of these men had primarily interest in the independent state of Syria.²³⁵ Yet we know that Shahbandar supported and encouraged Sultan Al-Atrash to attack French forces in Jabal al Druze and Hawran. Meanwhile, the French began arresting and imprisoning a number of prominent nationalist leaders and in attempt to dismember the People's Party. Shahbandar and a few of his friends were taken as refugees to Atrash forces in Jabal Druze.²³⁶ However, the uprisings that started in Jabal al-Druze, Hama and Damascus spread to throughout Syrian territory by the end of October 1926 by the willingness of Shahbandar and his relationships with the local power leaders. However, Damascus played a key role for that revolt. *L'Humanité*, one of the Communist newspapers in France published an article titled *Le Bombardement de Damas (Bombardment of Syria)* saying that in Damascus approximately 1,500 people were killed. General Sarrail said that among the dead were 117 children and 219 women.²³⁷ The revolt of 1925 was unique for the first time because civilians were subjected to daily aerial bombardments. By late December of 1925, the French airplanes, and tanks bombed the villages. The bombardment of the city began at around 5'o clock on Sunday afternoon. The local authorities did not warn anyone before the shelling began.²³⁸ Jaza'iri, who was one of the most important and wealthiest families in Damascus, had enormous agriculture. Hananu and his lawyer Fathallah also pointed out that the military operations had been controlled by Mustafa Kemal and his Ankara government in lands throughout in Syria.²³⁹ Amir Sa'id, who was one of the members of that Jaza'iri family, maintained relationships with the French during the revolt of 1925. Then by the spring of 1926, the French took military control in Syria and Lebanon and recaptured the control of local rebellious places like Damascus, Hama and Homs. From the year of 1926, Atrash, Shahbandar and other leaders of that revolt were became refugee. The Druze was decisively defeated, and the Great Syrian Revolt was over. Concerning the Great Syrian revolt, early in 1925 the leaders of the revolts met at the house of Abî 'Abdû al-Saqbânî.

²³⁵ Miller, "The Syrian Revolt," 559

²³⁶ Nashabi, "The political parties," 97

²³⁷ *L'Humanité*, 17 Novembre 1925, 1

²³⁸ Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Syrian Nationalism*, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2005), 105

²³⁹ Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt*, 105

During the meeting, there were also some important figures, reported by French intelligence as fighters such as Nasīb al-Bakrī, Muḥammad Izz al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī, Alī al-Atrash, and Zayd al-Āmr, Nazīh al-Durūbī, and the council secretary Fā'iq al-Asalī. Half of these men were former Ottoman army officers.²⁴⁰ In conclusion, although there were some important revolts against the French Mandate after the Great Revolt of 1925, the French suppressed the Great Syrian revolt and France's mandate survived on Syria until World War II.

3.2.6 Reactions from French Politics and Public Opinion against Occupation of Syria

Reactions to the establishing of the Mandate of Syria and Lebanon was not limited only Syrians. The Syrian issue was discussed by French politicians, newspapers, and important figures in France both in the pre-war period and the interwar years dating from 1920 and 1940. Between 1920 and 1940, the office of Prime Minister in France changed hands at least 33 times and was filled by 19 different men. At the Quai d'Orsay, responsible for French Mandates, 14 different men became Foreign Minister.²⁴¹ It shows how much the Syrian matter was complex and complicated. During the World War I period many French politicians, including Paul Doumer, Victor Bérard, Raymond Poincaré, were occupied with the matter of Syria for a long time. Pierre-Étienne Flandin, a French lawyer and politician served several times as minister during the final years of France's Third Republic. He was known as the leader of the France Syria movement in the Senate, and he issued a report known as *on Syria and Palestine in 1915* that became the manifesto of the "Syrian Party" in French politics. Flandin based France's claim to Syria on both "geographic necessity" and "historic right". He created *Comité parlementaire d'action à l'étranger (Parliamentary Committee of Foreign Action)*, which was a Muslim section responsible for carrying out propaganda operations towards the Levant, with the collaboration of the Quai d'Orsay Press Office. According to Flandin, France had both historical and cultural connections with Syria. These had started from the relationships between Haroun al-Rashid and Charlemagne, the Crusades, the Capitulations, the Catholic Protectorate, Bonaparte period and finally the humanitarian expedition in 1860. Flandin used the concept of *mission historique*.²⁴² He reported also the

²⁴⁰ Michael Provence, 133

²⁴¹ Shukry, *Syria*, 46

²⁴² David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009) 190

argument of the Muslim power of France because France had millions of Muslim subjects on African continent. Therefore France could not be disinterested in Syria.

Syria became a very important matter for the French parliament as well as French opinion. Part of the French parliament objected to the occupation of Syria. Syria was debated harshly in a lot of sessions at the French Parliament. One of the most important sessions concerning the occupation and mandate of Syria took place with two séances of 28 July 1920. In this séance many important topics were discussed, for example the war budget, and the number of French soldier in Syria. Very important politicians participated in the discussions such as M. d'Estournelles de Constant, M. Louis Martin, M. Bompard, Messieurs, M. Victor Bérard, Bompard Messieurs, and Victor Bérard who harshly criticized the occupation of Syria. In the session of 28 July 1920 in the French Senate, M. d'Estournelles de Constant says that while Tunisia is granary of abundance but Syria is completely different than Tunisia.²⁴³ Constant criticized and argued that the sacrifices in man-power and money given by the French for Syria is disproportionate with our resources in men-power and money.²⁴⁴ M. Victor Bérard in the same session expresses that “la Syrie ne vous donnera rien : c'est la vérité reconnue de tout le monde.” Syria will give nothing to France: it's the truth known by everybody.²⁴⁵ Victor Bérard:

Donc, vous allez attendre des années et des années. Mais pendant ces années, il ne suffit pas de mettre de l'argent, il faut mettre des hommes. Vous avez en Syrie 80,000 hommes ; il faut les entretenir; il faut les relever, et cela d'autant plus que je le sais par expérience — sous le climat fiévreux, ces troupes fondent de jour en jour.

So, you are going to wait for years and years. But during these years, it is not enough to put money, it is necessary to put men. You have 80,000 men in Syria; it is necessary to be maintained them; it is necessary to be raised them, and all the more I know from experience- under the feverish climate, these troupes are melting day by day.²⁴⁶

M. Bompard. Messieurs expressed his consensus with M. Victor Bérard on the session by saying that Syria has undoubtedly a grand moral value both in French and Arab especially Damascus but for Messieurs has a very weak economic value.²⁴⁷

In addition to French politics, French public opinion mostly newspapers, quotidian, journal and hebdomadal were very closely following the Syria issue. One of biggest hebdomadal was *Le Progrès*, which is the biggest hebdomadal of the region in France. *Le Progrès* revealed its

²⁴³ *Compte rendu intégral des débats du Sénat (1914-1920)*, 2· Séance, 28 Juillet 1920, 1519

²⁴⁴ *Sénat*, 2. Séance, 1518

²⁴⁵ *Sénat*, 1522

²⁴⁶ *Sénat*, 1522

²⁴⁷ *Sénat*, 1529

scepticism on the case of military expedition to Syria and its cost-effectiveness. Victor Basch wrote one of the editorials of *Le Progrès* says that what it costs is men and money, tons of petrol and cotton. *Le Progrès* in effect said that France has no interest in Syria. *Le Progrès* further argued that France would need billions and billions for a ruinous war of conquest in Syria, Cilicia or elsewhere.²⁴⁸ Another quotidian was *Lyon Républicain* journal politic quotidian published between the years 1878-1944. *Lyon Républicain* was sharing same ideology with *Le Progrès*, *Lyon Républicain* on the matter of Syria:

La Cilicie est une zone d'influence français, Ah ! Si nous pouvions nous en servir comme monnaie d'échange. En Syrie, où nous sommes, dit-on, par le vœu des populations, nous n'éprouvons que des déboires... Modérons nos ambitions, la France a un domaine colonial suffisamment vaste, exploitons-le avant de chercher à l'agrandir.

Cilicia is the zone of French influence, Ah! If we could use it as currency. In Syria, where we are, it is said through the wishes of populations, we experience only setbacks... Let us moderate our ambitions, France has a sufficiently vast colonial domain, before seeking to enlarge it, exploit it.²⁴⁹

In French newspapers, especially after the period of the establishment of Mandate System in Syria, I came across numerous news and articles concerning economic burden of the Syria. French government were harshly criticized by French public commentators. One of these criticisms was written in *La Croix* titled *Les credits pour la Syrie et la Cilicie*. In this news, there is information that the Minister of War received the reporters of grand commissions about the credits expected for the occupation of the French in Syria and Cilicia.²⁵⁰ In another daily journal was *Le Gaulois* published between 1868 and 1929. In *Le Gaulois* there was news titled *La France en Syrie* (France and Syria) on 20 December 1920. It talks again about the importance of the credits amount of one billion two million cent. However it is important that *Le Gaulois* discussed the limits of French sacrifices for Syria because it gets much heavier day by day for the French people. It reflects that so far as Syria is concerned, I need to find a solution that allows us to evacuate Cilicia as soon as possible that we occupy temporarily.²⁵¹ *Le Temps*, which is a Swiss-French daily newspaper published between 1861 and 1942. On 22 December 1920 *Le Temps* published an article titled *La Syrie et La Cilice* (Syria and Cilicie) saying that Maurice Bompard who was head of the Consular department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Quai d'Orsay), was objecting to the charges of administrative, financial, and military occupation of Syria that impose much burden to the

²⁴⁸ Michel Seurat "Le rôle de Lyon dans l'installation du Mandat français en Syrie : intérêts économiques et culturels, luttes d'opinion (1915-1925)," *Bulletin D'études Orientales*, vol. 31, (1979), 150

²⁴⁹ Seurat, "Le Rôle", 152

²⁵⁰ *La Croix*, 21 Décembre 1920, 2

²⁵¹ *Le Gaulois*, 20 Décembre 1920, 1

French. Bompard also was very worried about the duration of that occupation. However, the president of the council declared that very clearly we could not envisage for the moment evacuation of Syria, which would be harmful and loss of prestige of France in Orient.²⁵²

In sum, there had been quite enough criticisms by French politicians and public opinion of the economic consequences of Syria. Therefore, in the spring of 1919 Paul Huvelin, a French law professor and historian led an economic mission to show the economic value of the Syria. It is crucial that the idea of the mission spread out after the congress of Syria led by Marseille, Lyon Chambers of Commerce in 1919. The mission consisted of eight experts including agronomy, geology, architecture, archaeology, business, law and botany and etc.²⁵³ It is worth noting that the mission of Paul Huvelin in Syria was a scientific research about Syria. For three months those 9 names were divided into their specialities. Mr. Achard studied in Cilicia the question of cotton; Mr. Parmender studied in Lebanon and on the coast of Palestine in order to examine the culture of fruiterer. Mr. Roman devoted himself to petrol and phosphate. That mission demonstrates that amongst the economic consequences of the mission, it holds or supports firstly the economic and agricultural value of Syria. However, mineral resources seemed to be of poor quality and exaggerated for the purpose of speculation.²⁵⁴ When it came to agriculture, they expect much of cotton and grains from northern Aleppo, northern Syria province, Beka and Cilicia. For the mission of Huvelin, it seems to hold 300,000 tons of cotton, which is as much as Egypt was producing. It should be noted that the Huvelin mission had a positive and favourable impression of the density of population. As I try to demonstrate, there were growing reactions to the economic burden of Syria to the French. Therefore what Paul Huvelin wanted to do is to demonstrate the economic, industrial, agricultural, geological, demographic and commercial potential of Syria.²⁵⁵ As soon as Huvelin returned back to France, Huvelin along with his colleagues and the French orientalist Louis Massignon produced a report titled *Que vaut La Syrie* (What is Syria Worth?). It was published by both colonial and mainstream presses one of them was in *L'Asie française*—a leading colonialist journal. Jacques Keryell has demonstrated that a report written by Huvelin with his colleague contributed to guaranteeing the French Mandate in Syria.²⁵⁶

²⁵² *Le Temps*, 22 Décembre, 2

²⁵³ Maurice Zimmermann, La mission Paul Huvelin en Syrie. In: *Annales de Géographie*, t. 29, n°157, (1920) : 70

²⁵⁴ Zimmermann, “La mission”, 71

²⁵⁵ Yusuf al-Hakim, Dhikriyat al-Hakim, Vol. 3, *Suriya wa'l-'Ahd al-Faysali* (Beirut: Al-Matba'a al-Kathulikiya, 1966), 94

²⁵⁶ Jacques Keryell, *Louis Massignon au cœur de notre temps*, (Paris, Karthala, 1999), 142

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to analyse France Third Empire policy of the Ottoman Syria starting from the last quarter of 19th century to 1924 with the establishment of the French Mandate in Syria and last the Great Syrian Revolt. This period was significant in order to understand the basic transformations in Syria from the Ottoman times through the period of French Mandate. This 25 year period shaped both France and Syrian political, economic and social life. This study focuses on two main targets: first target was to clarify and demonstrates the main characteristics of the shifting paradigm of France over Ottoman Syria accompanied by the outbreak of World War I. The second target was to analyse the reactions of Syrians and Syrian politics over this paradigm shift.

This study stressed that the French imperialist and expansionist desire overseas was shaped and conducted by the Third Republic in France for approximately twenty-five years (1890-1914). Historians have determined that Le Parti colonial played one of the most decisive roles in order to understand the birth, development and initialization of French imperialism overseas and in the Levant. The important period of colonial expansion came up in the 19th century with the invasion of Ottoman provinces of Algiers in 1830, conquests in West and Africa during the so-called scramble for Africa. Following the scramble of Africa they established protectorates in Tunisia and Morocco in the two decades prior to World War I. Then, French imperialism and colonialism extended to Indochina in six countries: Vietnam, Thailand, Annam, Cambodia, Tonkin, Kwangchow, and Laos. However, unlike Africa and Indo-China, Syria had never been an important instrument or colonial aim for French imperial policy until the outbreak of World War I.

This thesis demonstrated that, Syria had been important matter in French political life after the outbreak of World War I. Between 1920 and 1940, the office of Prime Ministry changed hands no less than 33 times and was filled by 19 different men. At the Quai d'Orsay or French Foreign Ministry, responsible for the France Mandates, 14 different men became Foreign Minister. It shows that unlike previous periods, the matter of Ottoman Syria, and then Mandate Syria became took key role in French political life and politicians served as Foreign Minister. However, since the establishment of the mandate in Syria and Lebanon, French politics, politicians, and newspapers criticized daily French government because Syria was huge economic burden for France both before the establishment of the French Mandate and

even in the Mandate period itself. In this region they had approximately 80,000 soldiers in 1920 and it was not easy to feed and control them. Therefore, French political figures such as Bompard Messieurs and Victor Bérard harshly criticized Quai d'Orsay or Foreign Ministry of France for the occupation of Syria and particularly about the huge economic burden of Syria for France Third Republic. For the first four years of establishment of the Mandate system between 1919-1920, France's public opinion was especially negative, notably important newspapers including *Le Figaro*, *Le Temps* expressed often their discontent about the sacrificing in men and money were given by France for Syria was disproportionate with the limited sources. They saw the over investment in men and money and it was described as over-sacrifice for a one nation.

This thesis demonstrated that, the French Mandate system affected the political transformation and evolution of Syria. From the early years of Mandate, France followed a divide and rule policy. After the mandate was approved by the League of Nations, France created five different states in Syria. It was a new experience for Syrians that had never confronted in Ottoman times. The States of Damascus and the States of Aleppo, were both ruled by a local governor supported by French *conseillers* or advisers. Throughout the thesis it has been revealed that Syrians never wanted the mandate, and they took every occasion to express its aversion to it; they resisted its methods from the day it was established to the day it came to end. With the fall of France in 1940 during the World War II, the Vichy government took control over Syria. In 1941, British and Free French troops led by General Charles de Gaulle (French: *France Libre and Forces françaises libres*), members of a movement for the continuation of warfare against Germany after the military collapse of France in 1940. In 1945, as in reaction to Syrians, the French bombarded Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo and killing hundreds by aircraft, artillery and tanks and cutting off Damascus's electricity. The Republic of Syria achieved independence when the last remaining French troops withdrew in 1946.

To conclude, continuities and transition from the Ottoman period into the French mandate are important to study in order to understand the evolution of the national political situation, and social organizations in Syria. France occupied Ottoman provinces of Syria and tried to implement their codes, laws and bureaucracy, yet they faced innumerable obstacles. The French mandate period between years 1920-1946 has played the most crucial role in shaping Syrian political life along with after Crisis Phase (1919-1925) and the Conflict Phase (1925-1927.) After the ending of Conflict Phase with the suppressing of Great Syrian Revolt between

1925-1927, for twenty years France would rule Syria in cooperation with Syrian elites, and the French would recognize Syria and its common interests and social system inherited from Ottoman Empire times. From that moment France maintained its impact and influence after these critical periods until the end of World War II. After approximately 27 years of French influence, Syria eventually gained its independence and became the Syrian Republic in 1946. Although rapid economic development followed the declaration of independence, Syrian politics from independence through the late 1960s were marked by upheaval, corruption, and coup d'états. The early years of independence were marked by political instability.



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