



A democratic constitution for Christians and Muslims

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A Democratic Constitution for Christians and Muslims

Excerpt from:

How The West Stole Democracy from the Arabs: The Syrian Arab Congress of 1920 and the Destruction of its Historic Liberal-Islamic Alliance

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In the following excerpt from *How the West Stole Democracy from the Arabs*, the Congress of the Syrian Arab Kingdom continues its debates on drafting a constitution in the spring of 1920. Previous chapters showed how the Congress convinced Prince Faisal to support Syria's Declaration of Independence on March 8, 1920. The Declaration announced Congress' election of Faisal as King, and its intent to establish a constitutional monarchy. The Congress then moved into its new meeting hall in Damascus' Marjeh Square. A constitutional committee, headed by the first Congress president, Hashim al-Atassi of Homs, drafted articles and presented them for debate. Chapter 13 detailed the stormy debate on electoral laws held in late April, where conflict flared on the question of whether to grant women the vote. Chapter 14 concerns debate on a second critical issue, the rights and representation of non-Muslim minorities. In early May, Hashim al-Atassi became prime minister, and Sheikh Rashid Rida (delegate of Tripoli) was elected to replace him as president of the Congress. The chapter ends when the constitutional committee presents a full draft of the constitution to Congress on July 5, 1920. The Congress voted to accept, in principle, all 148 articles. It then began the process of article-by-article ratification. By the time of the Congress' last session, on July 19, it had fully ratified six articles. The following day, King Faisal declared a national emergency and dissolved the Congress. The Congress would never meet again. On July 24, the invading French defeated the Syrian army at the battle of Maysalun.

CHAPTER 14

A Democratic Constitution for Christians and Muslims

Two days before the suffrage debate opened a schism in Congress, deputies had stumbled upon the even greater, diplomatic threat kept hidden by the government. On April 24, Congress interrogated Yusuf al-Hakim, the minister for commerce, agriculture, and public works on troubling incidents in the French-controlled coastal zone. Deputies had received alarming reports that France was circulating a petition against the Congress, that it had lowered the Syrian flag at the Arab delegation office in Beirut, and that it had arrested a Muslim preacher for mentioning King Faisal's name during Friday prayers.

The interrogation revealed the connection between events in Lebanon and the San Remo conference. Both weaponized sectarianism to threaten the pluralist democracy being founded in Damascus. Congress responded by forcing a change in government and—under its new leadership of two Muslim clerics—writing into the constitution legal protections for minority rights and equality. In May and June, as threats multiplied and as the government instituted a military draft for Syria's defense, the Congress finished writing the constitution. The full text, establishing a democratic, parliamentary monarchy, was unveiled to the public on July 5, 1920.

San Remo and the Second Fall of Rikabi

Yusuf al-Hakim, a deputy from Latakia before he joined Rikabi's cabinet, drew cheers from his former colleagues as he strode to the podium to reassure Congress that the government had taken action against the coastal threats to Syria's sovereignty. The government had already lodged a complaint about the petition, demanded the release of the preacher, and restored the Kingdom's colors. "Our flag is fluttering in the wind and it will remain there, as our nation wishes," Hakim declared, trying to soothe worries that the Rikabi government was failing in diplomacy.¹

But Dr. Ahmad Qadri, Faisal's personal physician and deputy from Hebron, was not at all comforted. The preacher's arrest is cause for war, he declared. "It is an intervention into religious affairs." To much applause, Qadri urged preemptive action against the French while their troops were deployed north in Cilicia.

Next, a deputy from Aleppo demanded that Hakim disclose details of the meeting of the Supreme Council at San Remo. Newspapers had reported that two Syrian envoys were there. Who were they? What was the government's policy at San Remo? Hakim insisted that the cabinet could not reveal those details.

¹ Shahrastan, *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri*, 149–59, based on "The Government Before the People: The Cabinet Answers Congress' Questions," *al-Difaa*, April 25–26, 1920; Hakim, *Suriya wa al-'Ahd al-Faisali*, 156–57; Philip S. Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 327.

A deputy from Tripoli, a town in the coastal zone, stood up to protest. “It is for the people to decide their future. It must not be decided in Paris or London or San Remo. It must be decided in the Syrian Kingdom!” he declared.

Hakim bristled at the implication that the government might sell out the country, “No one should portray it that way,” he insisted. Hakim’s hometown was also in the coastal zone. As a child, he had attended the American mission school in Latakia. As one of two Christian ministers in the cabinet, he might have felt vulnerable to suspicions about his loyalties.

Another deputy from the coast, Riad al-Solh of Sidon, stood up to defend the minister. Restating Congress’s demand for vigilance on national defense, he led a round of applause for Hakim.

However, the damage had been done. It became clear that Rikabi’s cabinet had kept Congress in the dark at a critical moment, when the Supreme Council’s refusal to recognize Faisal as king had prompted King Hussein’s withdrawal from the peace conference. With no further official word, the Supreme Council voted the next day, April 25, to assign France the Syrian mandate.

Because Rikabi broke his agreement to permit Congress oversight on issues touching on Syrian independence, Congress exercised its right to remove him.

San Remo and Rida’s Rise as Congress President

On April 26, following the suffrage debate, Rashid Rida spent what he called a “useful and unforgettable evening” with King Faisal; Izzat Darwazah; Sati` al-Husri, the education minister; and several deputies at the home of Faisal’s chamberlain Ihsan Bey al-Jabiri. The men discussed the decision at San Remo and Rikabi’s lack of preparation for it. “It became clear that the King has lost trust in the Rikabi cabinet,” Rida wrote that night in his diary.²

A crisis atmosphere took hold in Damascus. Anti-French demonstrations had already broken out to protest the arrest of the preacher and the lowering of the flag. Now protesters flooded the streets to condemn the San Remo decision.

The next night, the group confronted Rikabi. This time the king was absent, but opposition leaders like Abd al-Rahman Yusuf attended. Rikabi rejected their accusations of poor planning and resisted pressure to build up Syria’s army. Military defense was futile, he argued, insisting that Faisal and the cabinet agreed it was better to sign a treaty with France. Rida marveled that an experienced politician like Rikabi could believe France would respect Syrian independence under mandate, as called for in the discredited Clemenceau accord.³

² Rashid Rida’s diary, April 26, 1926, as published in “Lessons from King Faisal’s Life, Part 7,” *al-Manar* (June 1934): 152–57.

³ Hakim, *Suriya wa al-`Ahd al-Faysali*, 144–45; Darwazah, *Mudhakkirat*, 456, 467; Muhammad Rashid Rida, “The Second Syrian Trip, Part 10,” *al-Manar* 23:4 (April 1922): 313–16.

Contrary to his prime minister's claims, Faisal was persuaded that Syrians must make a show of force to pressure Europe into respecting their independence. The king agreed that Rikabi had to go.⁴

On May 2, Congress exercised its new legislative powers to vote no confidence against the Rikabi government. The old soldier resigned for a second time in six months. Several deputies pushed hard for a strong "defense cabinet." Rida proposed Yusuf al-Azmeh, head of the army, to replace Rikabi. He was a young, passionate, and militant patriot. But Faisal preferred the calm, well-mannered Congress president, Hashim Atassi. The king hoped Atassi might restore confidence between the Palace and the Congress.

The next day, Faisal announced the new Atassi government, which retained most of Rikabi's cabinet but installed Yusuf al-Azmeh as the new war minister and Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar as the new foreign minister. Rida was pleased that Faisal had accepted his recommendation of Shahbandar, a fellow SUP member.⁵

On May 5, the Congress held an election to replace Atassi as president. The Progressive party nominated Rida as president, and Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Kilani as vice president. The Moderate Liberals nominated Riad al-Solh (Rashid Rida's old friend) for president and Sheikh Abd al-Qadir al-Khatib (Rida's nemesis from the 1909 Umayyad Mosque incident) as vice president. Rida came out on top in the final round of voting. But Khatib was elected as his vice president.⁶ Izzat Darwazeh remained Congress secretary.

Rida accepted the post reluctantly. "I told [Riad al-Solh] that I would be the first to vote for your father," Rida wrote in his diary that night. "And I told the Progressive party to vote for [his old friend and Riad's father, Rida al-Solh] but they would not accept him because they are the majority party." Rida conceded that he was better equipped than Riad al-Solh to handle the primary task of the president, to adjudicate the drafting of the constitution. The senior Solh was a better administrator than politician.⁷

There was a clear political benefit of choosing Rida and Khatib: to mend differences in Congress after the stormy suffrage debate. Khatib had walked out of the chamber with other conservative clerics, and Rida had successfully played the role of mediator. In light of the news from San Remo, the need for unity was paramount.⁸ In the same unifying spirit, Rida immediately resigned as president of the Progressive party in order to ease lingering suspicions of his partisanship. "I had to be equally fair to both parties," he wrote. "Most of those who were

⁴ Rida, "Lessons from King Faisal's Life, Part 7."

⁵ Hakim, *Suriya wa al-'Ahd al-Faysali*, 156–59; Darwazeh, *Mudhakkirat*, 467–68; Rida, "Lessons from King Faisal's Life (7)."

⁶ Mazen Yusuf Sabbagh, *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri* [The Syrian Congress] (Damascus: Dar al-Sharq, 2011), 197–98; Shahrastan, *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri*, 115.

⁷ Rashid Rida's diary, May 5–6, 1920, quoted in Umar Ryad, "Like a Mill Donkey: Western Politics in the Aftermath of WWI," paper given at the conference "Human Catastrophe Then and Now," American University of Beirut, June 1, 2016 (hereafter: Ryad, "Like a Mill Donkey").

⁸ Arna'ut, *Dirasat hawla al-Hukuma*, 41–44.

not very pleased with me—when I insisted on maintaining order or stopped them from talking—were from my own party.”

Rida’s first act as president was to summon Foreign Minister Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar to present the Atassi government’s program. On May 8, Shahbandar presented three policy goals: (1) to support full independence with full rights to foreign diplomatic representation; (2) to insist on the unity of Greater Syria against claims of Zionists in the south; and (3) to reject all foreign intervention that undermined national sovereignty.

Congress gave its vote of confidence, and the Atassi government immediately announced a universal military draft and a national loan to cover military costs. After heated debate, Congress approved the loan, which would be guaranteed by state lands. Shahbandar then sent a letter to the British repeating Syria’s request for recognition of Faisal as king, so that he might accept the peace conference’s invitation to Europe. The British again declined.⁹

In the face of looming conflict, Congress accepted Rida’s proposal to complete a draft of the constitution as soon as possible.¹⁰ It spent the next two months (with a short break at the start of Ramadan) debating, revising, and approving articles on minority rights, provincial government, and the judiciary system.¹¹

Tensions at first flared under the new clerical leadership. Young secular nationalists who had, before March 8, voiced support for a secular republic bristled at Rida’s efforts to reintegrate the disaffected conservative party. “The disruptions are tarnishing Congress’ good image,” Rida complained one day to his vice president, Abd al-Qadir al-Khatib. “We need more cooperation.”

Just then, Izzat Darwazeh walked in. Khatib accused Darwazeh of disrupting Congress sessions. When Atassi was president, Darwazeh had helped to keep order in the chamber, he remarked. But now, under Rida, Darwazeh no longer even sat next to the president. Darwazeh apologized to Rida, explaining that he had left his seat on the platform only to consult some deputies on drafting a law.

Rida was surprised and gratified that Khatib, his archenemy, had stood up for him. “It upset him that the “Effendis” [men in suits] found it difficult that the president was a religious scholar wearing a turban.”¹²

Tarbush and turban eventually learned to cooperate. Darwazeh, who had considered Atassi as a personal mentor and friend, at first regarded Rida with awe, as an eminent scholar and elder. Unlike the even-tempered Atassi, Darwazeh noted, Rida would often lose his temper in the chamber. In private, however, Rida was neither terrifying nor condescending. He thought of Darwazeh as “a pillar of the party.” The two men soon developed a respectful and even affectionate working relationship.

⁹ Rimawi, *al-Hukm al-Hizbi*, 210–16; Sabbagh, *al-Mu’tamar al-Suri* 200; Hakim, *Suriya wa al-’Ahd al-Faysali*, 160–65.

¹⁰ Hakim, *Suriya wa al-’Ahd al-Faysali*, 166.

¹¹ Shahrastan, *al-Mu’tamar al-Suri*, 185–87.

¹² Rashid Rida’s diary, June 18, 1920, as published in “Lessons from King Faisal’s Life, Part 9,” *al-Manar* (October 1934): 393–94; Arna’ut, *Dirasat hawla al-Hukuma*, 68–69.

Committed to maintaining a united front against foreign threats, Rida also tried to foster a spirit of pragmatism and negotiation among other deputies as well. “I used to advise not to rebel against the government, saying it was better to work with the government than undermine it,” he recalled.¹³

Maintaining unity was not only a matter of bridging the secular–religious divide, however. It also required maintaining the good faith of non-Muslim Syrians, whose loyalties were severely tested by the sectarian rhetoric of the French, the Lebanese Christian nationalists, and the Muslim nationalists. Even as the Syrian Congress prepared to address the controversial issue of equal rights for non-Muslims, mutual trust was shaken by conflict outside of its chamber.

Guerrilla warfare in the Bekaa Valley took on a sectarian hue. Syrian militias often attacked Christian villages on suspicion of their pro-French sentiments. Combat between Turkish nationalists, the French and Armenians sent new waves of refugees over Syria’s northern border. Efforts made since Independence Day to foster cross-sectarian brotherhood were threatened. “Aleppo is a hotbed of Arab, Turkish, Kurdish and Circassian propaganda,” wrote the American consul. He relayed rumors that Faisal’s Arab officers in the city were socializing with Turkish nationalists, who were once again “endeavoring to exterminate the Armenians.”¹⁴

Lebanese Declaration of Independence

Faisal and the Fatat organization had long prioritized the need for Muslim-Christian unity against France’s divisive claim that Christians needed its protection. No Fatat leader worried more about a potential Muslim-Christian schism than Rustum Haidar. His hometown of Baalbek lay in the Bekaa Valley, where fighting between the French and Syrians since December had upset relations between Muslims and Christians. Events since Faisal’s return to Syria had only deepened his anxiety about the conflict.

Syria’s alliance with Turks was backfiring, he thought. Europe sees it as a renewal of Islamic jihad, and in response they are playing the religion card. “Let’s support rapprochement with the Turks in foreign affairs, but internally, we must kill these sentiments [of Islamic unity] and foreign germs,” he wrote. “The homeland is for both Muslim and Christian together.”

Haidar worried, too, that talk of establishing a separate Armenian Christian state would lead to splitting Lebanon from Syria on sectarian lines. He knew that Christians of the Bekaa, especially in its capital city of Zahle, still mourned the thousands massacred in the 1860 civil

¹³ Darwazeh, *Mudhakkirat*, 353, 356–57; Rida, “Second Syrian Trip, Part 10b.”

¹⁴ U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Jackson to Adm. Mark L. Bristol, Constantinople, May 1, 1920, RG 890d.00/16, microfilm M727, roll 8.

war. But in the sixty years since then, relations had improved under the rule of the cross-sectarian Lebanese Administrative Council.¹⁵

But wartime atrocity and foreign occupation had upset the old Ottoman order.¹⁶ Since October 1918, politicians and intellectuals of the French-occupied West Zone advanced rival visions of a post-Ottoman polity. While some proposed unity with Damascus based on a common Syrian identity, others emphasized the distinct history of Mount Lebanon and the coast in arguments for a separate state. Still others fully embraced the Arabism of Fatah.¹⁷ Political fluidity had encouraged the Damascus government to open an office in Beirut and to engage in the competition for hearts and minds.

Towering over the various factions, in size and influence, was the movement led by the patriarch of the Maronite Church. Monsignor Elias Hoyek had lived through the wartime famine that had killed 200,000 people on Mount Lebanon and the coast, most of them Christian. At the start of the famine, thousands of Armenian survivors had arrived in Lebanon. The decimated villages of Mount Lebanon were proof to him and his flock that the Ottoman military governor, Jemal Pasha, aimed to annihilate Christians of all sects within the empire. At war's end, Hoyek ignored the fact that the Allied blockade had aggravated hunger caused by Ottoman mismanagement, harsh weather, and a locust invasion.¹⁸ He gratefully accepted the French protection, reestablishing a relationship that was centuries old. Premier Clemenceau formally renewed that commitment in November 1919 at a personal meeting with Hoyek in Paris. He even issued a note assuring Hoyek of an independent Lebanese state.

As the primary provider of food to the starving people of Mount Lebanon, the Maronite Church had emerged from the war with more power than the cross-sectarian Lebanese Administrative Council. In his appeal to the French, Hoyek tied the massacres of the 1860 war to the recent famine in order to demand an independent state of Greater Lebanon, expanded beyond Mount Lebanon, as reparation for past injustice.¹⁹ The Church's campaign, supported almost

¹⁵ Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Engin Akarlı, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁶ Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Ronald Gregor Suny and Fatma Müge Göçek, eds., *A Question of Genocide*.

¹⁷ Carol Hakim, *The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea, 1840–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Mark Farha, "From Anti-imperial Dissent to National Consent: The First World War and the Formation of a Trans-sectarian National Consciousness in Lebanon," Najwa al-Qattan, "Historicizing Hunger: The Famine in Wartime Lebanon and Syria," and Andrew Arsan, "The Patriarch, the Amir, and the Patriots: Civilisation and Self-determination at the Paris Peace Conference," in T. G. Fraser, ed., *The First World War and its Aftermath* (London: Gingko Library, 2015), 91–146.

¹⁸ Youssef Mouawad, *Maronites dans l'histoire* (Beirut: L'Orient des livres, 2017) 143–65.

¹⁹ Memorandum by Hoyek to the Paris Peace Conference of October 25, 1919, reprinted in Meir Zamir, *The Formation of Modern Lebanon* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 269–78; Carol Hakim, *The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea* (Berkeley: University of California

exclusively by Christians and opposed by most Muslims and Druze, exerted a sectarian influence on politics in Beirut, pitting Christian “Lebanists” against Muslim “Unionists,” who favored unity with Syria. Beirut newspapers routinely cast Syrian politics in sectarian terms, claiming that the goal of Damascus was to “kill Christians,” Haidar angrily confided to his diary.

“Christians used to respect their Muslim brothers, but since the arrival of the French, they have taken a different view,” Haidar remarked. He scorned accusations by leaders of the Maronite Church that Faisal must be a dangerous sectarian leader simply because he was a descendant of the Prophet. “And what should Muslims say about a leader who comes to the Orient and declares he is a descendant of Crusaders?” Haidar asked, referring to Gouraud. “Will the day come when Christians recognize Muslims honestly, and extend their hands to them sincerely, as the Copts in Egypt have done?”²⁰

Shortly after Haidar penned those lines, he met the members of the third Maronite-led delegation to Paris sent by Monsignor Hoyek. The delegation, led by Bishop Abdallah Khoury, was composed of three Maronites and one Druze prince.²¹ They received a warm welcome from the colonial lobby, which arranged for meetings between the Lebanese and French legislators. On February 20, the French Senate’s foreign relations committee adopted a resolution supporting an independent Greater Lebanon, which was to include Rustom Haidar’s home town in the disputed Bekaa Valley.²²

In a note to Premier Millerand, Bishop Khoury’s delegation dismissed the “parody” of a Congress meeting to declare independence in Damascus. Gouraud assured the premier that he would forbid Lebanese deputies to attend Faisal’s coronation, which was likely to “boost Muslim nationalism.” In mid-March, fearing “embarrassing demonstrations” in French territory, Gouraud decided to tour the French-occupied West Zone to declare publicly that the Syrian declaration was null and void. He claimed four thousand Christians had fled Sharifian terrorists for French protection on the coast.²³

On March 22, with the blessings of both Gouraud and Monsignor Hoyek, a Lebanese group issued a rival declaration of independence. Hundreds of notables, village leaders, and city

Press, 2013), 242–46; Carla Eddé, *Beyrouth: Naissance d’une capitale (1918–1924)* (Paris: Sindbad, 2010), 336–45.

²⁰ Haidar, *Mudhakkirat*, 562, 569–71.

²¹ Clemenceau to Hoyek, November 10, 1919, in Antoine Hokayem, ed., *Documents diplomatiques français relatifs à l’histoire du Liban et de la Syrie à l’époque du mandat: 1914–1946*, vol. I (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003) 738–39; Hoyek to Cambon, January 28, 1920 and Gouraud to Khoury, February 13, 1920 in Hokayem, *Documents diplomatiques*, vol. II: 57–58, 76–77.

²² Gérard D. Khoury, *La France et L’Orient arabe* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2009), 329; Hakim, *Origins of the Lebanese National Idea*, 251–53; Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, 78–79; Sami Salameh, ed. *The Mufakkira of Bishop Abdallah Khoury* (Zouk Mikael, Lebanon: Notre Dame University Press, 2001), 11–13, 22–33, 170–72.

²³ Lebanese Delegation to Millerand, March 18, 1920, and Gouraud to Millerand, March 4 and 21, 1920, in Hokayem, *Documents diplomatiques*, II: 105–07, 156, 162–63.

officials from across Mount Lebanon gathered at Baabda, seat of the Lebanese Administrative Council. As they unfurled a new flag based on the French tricolor, the delegates rejected the authority of the Damascus Congress and proclaimed the independent state of Greater Lebanon under French mandate. They also condemned the Lebanese deputies who had defied Gouraud's ban to attend the Syrian Congress, two of whom were in fact Maronite Christians: Georges Harfouche and Arif al-Naamani from Beirut.²⁴

Although the Maronite Church commanded the largest block of Lebanese Christians, there were other, more flexible political factions in Lebanon. Some Christians, especially Greek Orthodox, supported the March 8 declaration's proposal to incorporate an autonomous Mount Lebanon within independent Syria. Politicians in Damascus had reason to believe that they might cultivate even more support on the coast. To that end, Faisal staged his own tour of Lebanon later in March. Gouraud complained that Syrian flags were flying everywhere in the Bekaa Valley.²⁵

Under the pressure of the rival Lebanese declaration and sectarian violence in the borderlands between the West and East zones, Congress took up debate on minority rights in the Syrian Constitution.

Establishing Minority Rights in Syria

We have no official count of Christian deputies in Congress, but biographical data suggests there were at least a dozen. Darwazeh claimed there were as many as twenty. Rough population estimates suggest this number was proportional to the population of Greater Syria. In the absence of an accurate census, the King-Crane Commission had estimated in 1919 that 18 percent of the population in all of Greater Syria was Christian. The dozen Christian deputies fell just short of that proportion, equaling 14 percent of the total of eighty-five deputies portrayed in the official commemorative portrait of the 1920 Congress.²⁶

However, the Christian population varied by zone: in the East Zone (inland Syria and Jordan), Christians represented 8.3 percent; in the South Zone (Palestine), 10 percent; in the West Zone (Lebanese coast), 37 percent. While Christian representation exceeded their proportion of the population in the East and South zones, Christians in the West Zone correctly argued that the Congress underrepresented them. It was disingenuous to blame Congress for the underrepresentation of Lebanese Christians. Not only had the French blocked open elections in

²⁴ Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, 86–89; Gouraud to Millerand, March 4, 10, and 25, 1920, in Hokayem, *Documents diplomatiques*, II:105–07, 123, 173–74.

²⁵ Gouraud to Millerand, March 21, 1920, in Hokayem, *Documents diplomatiques*, II:162.

²⁶ Muhammad Jamil Barout, "The Syrian General Congress (1919–1920): The First Syrian Constitution, Context, Nature, Stages and Issues," *Tabayyun* 3 (January 2013): 23–48 [in Arabic]. The number of Congress deputies fluctuated over time. By my count, based on memoirs and Shahrastan's *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri*, there were 87–88 deputies in the spring of 1920. A Cairo Bureau intelligence report dated October 18, 1920, counted 88 deputies who served in the Congress between November 1919 and March 1920: TNA-London, FO 371/5040, pp. 213–18.

1919, but also the Maronite Church and Lebanese Administrative Council had refused to send any delegates.

Jews were also underrepresented in Congress: while King-Crane estimated that 110,000 Jews lived in Greater Syria (more than half of those in Palestine), the only recorded Jewish deputy was Yusuf Linado from Damascus. Zionists in Palestine had declined to send deputies. Out of either conviction or fear, Linado raised no public protest against the Congress's condemnation of Zionism. Other groups were also ignored, most saliently Kurds. Thousands lived in their own quarter of Damascus, led most prominently by Abd al-Rahman Yusuf as well as the family of Nazik Abid, the feminist. Thousands more lived in Aleppo and in the northeastern deserts of Syria. Most urban Kurds spoke Arabic and were socially distant from desert and rural communities. No organized Kurdish nationalist movement yet existed in Syria.²⁷ We have no record of petitions by Kurds who may have objected to the designation of Syria as an Arab Kingdom. Nor is there evidence of a discussion of their rights in Congress.

Events in Lebanon and pressure from the Supreme Council, in the end, focused Congress's debate about minority rights on Christians more than any other group. The promise of legal equality had long been accepted by political leaders, but the concept of minority rights was new. In the Ottoman era, Arab officials had never shared the anti-Christian hostility of the Turkish ruling elite. In 1908, Muslim clerics in Beirut and Damascus had publicly embraced the promise of Christians' legal equality.²⁸

Because Rashid Rida was president of the Congress, his views on Muslim-Christian relations would be consequential. Rida had grown up in a Muslim household that had cordial relations with Christian neighbors in Tripoli (Lebanon). After his move to Cairo, however, he had grown critical of the evangelical aggressiveness of Christian missionaries. He engaged in polemics to defend Islam against European Orientalists, and to exhort fellow Muslims to strengthen their learning and faith in the modern world. However, Rida maintained close friendships with Arab Christians, especially Syrian emigrants in Cairo. And he carried on a dialogue between the faiths in his magazine.²⁹

Rida was personally impressed by the relatively egalitarian and tolerant atmosphere in Damascus. "Muslims were not favored in the government of Damascus over Christians or Jews," he wrote. "Muslims didn't expect any better treatment from Muslim ministers. They expected the

²⁷ Jordi Tejel, *Syria's Kurds: History, Politics, and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 9–11; Stefan Winter, "The Other Nahdah: The Bedirxan, the Millis and the Tribal Roots of Kurdish Nationalism in Syria," *Oriente Moderno* 25: 3 (2006): 461–74.

²⁸ Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 93; Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Empire*, 47, quoting *al-Muqattam*, August 22, 1908: 3; Anne-Laure Dupont, "Réforme et Revolution dans la Pensée Arabe après 1908," in F. Georgeon, ed., *L'ivresse de la liberte: La revolution de 1908 dans l'Empire ottoman* (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012), 425–27.

²⁹ Umar Ryad, *Islamic Reformism and Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Simon A. Wood, *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashid Rida's Modernist Defense of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010); Imad Eldin Shahin, *Through Muslim Eyes: M. Rashid Rida and the West* (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1994).

same from both Muslim and non-Muslim ministers.”³⁰ In April, Rida gave a lecture in Congress on Islam and legislative government. Once non-Muslims understand Islamic teaching on the subject, he argued, they should find it satisfactory. To his satisfaction, several Christian deputies told him they were pleased with his lecture.³¹

But Rida warned readers of *The Lighthouse* that Muslims, including himself, were often insensitive. At war’s end, Ottoman-trained Muslim officials had rushed to take posts vacated by the Turks, without thinking to include Christians. And in late 1919, when Rida helped to raise money for an Islamic college in Beirut, he had been unconcerned about the sectarian appearance of his campaign. When Christians complained about favoritism, Rida responded by advocating public schools for both Christians and Muslims.³²

Since January, Faisal had promoted Christian participation in government. Three Christians served in his cabinets: Faris al-Khoury, Yusuf al-Hakim, and Iskander Ammoun. He named the Maronite priest Habib Istifan to a prominent post in the culture ministry, a post he used to tour Syria to rally Christians to the regime. While he continued to subsidize the Greek Orthodox patriarchate, Faisal also began to support the prominent literary salon of Mary Ajamy, which attracted a mix of Christian and Muslim notables. Ajamy also published a women’s magazine that promoted Arabism among Christians as well as Muslims.³³

The political concept of Christians as a minority group was introduced only at the end of the Great War, in the Paris peace process. It was a by-product of the process of carving out states based on the nationality of a supposed majority population in the various districts of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires. Peacemakers were acutely aware that groups deemed external to the majority ruling nation might suffer discrimination.

It was in response to such concerns at Paris that Prince Faisal first proclaimed there to be no minorities in Syria: citizens of all religions were all Arabs with equal rights. He essentially sought to abolish the Ottoman system that organized non-Muslims into separate and inferior communities called millets. However, upon his return to Damascus in May 1919, Faisal began to publicly use the terms *minority* and *rights* in addressing the status of non-Muslims. After accepting a blessing of gratitude from the Archbishop of refugee Armenians, Faisal proclaimed, “The claims of the minority groups will definitely be given preference over the views and wishes of the majority” in order to reverse the sectarian hatreds sown by the wartime Ottoman government. “We must prove to [the Allies] that we are a people who want to be independent. Let us protect the great and small among us, our neighbors, and those who seek refuge with us.” Faisal repeated the message in Aleppo, warning that ignorant Europeans might use discrimination against minorities to undermine the cause of Syrian independence. “The

³⁰ Muhammad Rashid Rida, “Second Syrian Trip (10)” *al-Manar* (April 1922): 313–17.

³¹ Rashid Rida’s diary, Tuesday, April 13, 1920, as quoted in Ryad, “Like a Mill Donkey.”

³² Muhammad Rashid Rida, “Second Syrian Trip, Part 6,” *al-Manar* 22:8 (September 1921): 617–23.

³³ Mari Ajamy, “Hail the Prince of Syria,” *al-Arus* 6:1 (February 1920): 1; Thompson, *Colonial Citizens*, 95, 120–21; Michel Jeha, *Mary Ajami* (Beirut: Riyad al-Rayyis, 2001).

government to be established,” he vowed, “will undoubtedly do whatever is necessary to support the rights of the minority and will make written pledges for the record.”³⁴

Likewise, Rida and the Syrian Union Party had long stressed that constitutional guarantees of full rights were crucial to winning popular support in Syria and European support at the peace conference. “We must always mention the rights of minorities to reassure the Christians,” a member stressed at a January 1919 party meeting. “We must work to erase the fear in Christians’ hearts.” Rida and Shahbandar served on the SUP’s minorities committee. That spring the SUP adopted its own “Fourteen Principles,” the seventh of which called for protection of minorities.³⁵

At first, in October 1918, Christian leaders of Damascus were split in their views toward Faisal’s regime. But at Faisal’s coronation on March 8, 1920, all of the city’s Christian patriarchs confirmed their public support for a constitutional Syrian Arab Kingdom. They exchanged vows of loyalty with the new king, on condition that he continue to uphold his promises of equality. Afterward, they convened a high-profile meeting at the Damascus residence of the Greek Catholic Patriarch, Dimitri Qadhi. Like many Syrian Catholics, Qadhi had at first rejected Faisal’s rule, but he became so dismayed by the inefficient and divisive tactics of High Commissioner Georges-Picot that he turned against the French in late 1919. A British official, who met Qadhi at that time during a visit to Syria, estimated that 40 to 45 percent of Christians opposed the French.³⁶

The Muslim and Christian spiritual leaders who convened at Qadhi’s home on March 11 agreed to establish a permanent committee to promote “unity and agreement among all sects that had recently rejected the international mandate in any form.” They further vowed to work hand-in-hand with one another and the government against “enslavement” (meaning discrimination and subordination) and to “preserve freedom for themselves and their children.”³⁷

³⁴ Abu Khaldun Sati’ al-Husri, *The Day of Maysalun*, Sidney Glazer, trans. (Washington, DC: The Middle East Institute, 1966), 101–14. In Arabic, Faisal used the current term for minority, “al-aqaliya” as opposed to majority, “al-akthariya.” See original Arabic texts of his speeches in Abu Khaldun Sati’ al-Husri, *Yawm Maysalun* (Beirut: Dar al-Ittihad, 1965), 229, 231. On the history of “minoritization” after 1920, see Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011); Laura Robson, ed, *Minorities and the Modern Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2016); Jeffrey Culang, “Liberal Translations: Secular Concepts, Law and Religion in Colonial Egypt,” PhD dissertation, City University of New York, 2017.

³⁵ TNA-London, “Report on a conversation in Cairo with Michel Bey Lotfallah on his return from Syria, August 5th, 1919,” FO 371/4182, pp. 330–333; SUP to Rida, March 1, 1919, and “Fourteen Principles of the Syrian Union Party,” dated Damascus, 1919. I thank Umar Ryad for sharing copies of these documents from his personal archive.

³⁶ Gertrude Bell, “Syria in October 1919, pp. 15–16, in L/P25/10/802, India Office Library and Records, British Library, London; Hakim, *Suriya wa al-`Ahd al-Faysali*, 141–42.

³⁷ “Support for Harmony and Independence Between Muslims and Christians,” *al-Asima* 108 (March 11, 1920): 6.

Debate on minority representation in the national and provincial assemblies lasted two weeks in the first half of June. Heated argument exploded on June 7 over the question of minority quotas. A bloc of deputies proposed that half the seats in the national assembly be reserved for all minorities, meaning non-Sunni Arab Muslims, the various Christian sects, Jews, Druze, and Kurds. The group was led by Teodor Antaki, a Christian deputy from Aleppo who was also a member of the constitution drafting committee. However, on June 7, a majority of deputies voted to reject that proposal in favor of strict proportional representation. Antaki and several defeated deputies stormed out of the Chamber and headed to the Greek Orthodox patriarchate for a strategic meeting hosted by Monsignor Gregorios. This was just the sort of split that Faisal and the SUP had long feared.

A compromise was hammered out after more argument the next week. On June 14, Congress finally approved an amended Article 129, setting minority quotas in provincial elections. The article granted minorities a slightly higher rate of representation (one representative per fifteen thousand inhabitants compared to one for every twenty thousand Muslims). A similar compromise was struck for the national assembly, where one minority deputy would be elected for every thirty thousand inhabitants, compared to one per forty thousand inhabitants for Muslim deputies. Supporters argued that this arrangement would guarantee minorities one-third of the seats in the national and provincial assemblies.³⁸

The compromise represented an improvement over the 1909 Ottoman constitution, which made no special provisions for minority representation. But it did not fully satisfy advocates for fuller minority representation. Several deputies boycotted the June 14 vote for reasons that remain unclear, due to the loss of congressional records. Tension may have flared because non-Muslims distrusted the clerical leadership of Rida and Khatib. Dissent and fear are also understandable reactions to a political context where non-Muslims and non-Arabs confronted violence along the Lebanese and Anatolian borders; their leaders proposed sectarian segregation as a safer alternative to the Congress's liberalism. On the very day that the deputies stormed out of the chamber, June 7, Congress issued a summons to the foreign minister to discuss a new round of French threats.³⁹

After taking the June 14 vote, Congress approved a ten-day recess for the end of Ramadan. Upon their return from the holidays, the deputies completed a full review of the constitution on June 29. Every one of the 148 articles had been discussed in Congress sessions.⁴⁰

Despite the controversy, the electoral provisions for minorities—combined with the constitution's guarantee of equal rights regardless of religion or ethnicity and its disestablishment of Islamic law—represented significant steps beyond its Ottoman predecessor toward

³⁸ Reports on Congress sessions addressing Articles 88, 89, 92, and 127–131 in *Al-Asima*, June 1–14, 1920; Gouraud to Millerand, June 12, 1920, in Hokayem, *Documents diplomatiques*, 413–14; Russell, *First Arab State*, 149. These articles are numbered 87, 88, 91, and 126–130 in the final draft of the constitution reprinted in the Appendix.

³⁹ Shahrastan, *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri*, 147.

⁴⁰ Shahrastan, *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri*, 187.

establishing an inclusive, democratic political system. These steps were taken through democratic procedures involving debate and compromise. While Arabic was designated the official language, the constitution did not require citizens to speak it. And while the state threatened to deport former Turkish officials, it permitted those born in Syria or married into native Syrian families to gain citizenship. Even the official name of the country, the Syrian Arab Kingdom, represented a compromise between those who sought to found the state on the particular mix of populations in Syrian territory and those who sought a broader federation of Arabs. The denial of suffrage to women fell short of democratic ideals, but it was a shortfall shared by France and other democratic countries of the time.⁴¹

“The Muslim majority in the Eastern Zone of Syria treated minorities as brothers in terms of rights and duties. The government did not discriminate between Muslims and Christians in distributing posts,” recalled Yusuf al-Hakim, the Greek Orthodox minister. Hakim had run for Congress president in March and won forty-three votes, landing in third place. His experience with the “clerical” Congress after May 5 was not entirely negative. In his memoir, Hakim remembered Abd al-Qadir al-Khatib as a man of exemplary and modest opinions, not as a fanatic.⁴²

For Rida, the ratification of a constitution that included Christians as full citizens with equal rights was the achievement of an aspiration born in 1908, when he celebrated the revolution at an Armenian Church in Cairo. Muslims in the crowd had carried him on their shoulders to the alter to embrace the Armenian bishop in brotherhood. To readers of *The Lighthouse*, Rida wrote with pride about how the Syrian Arab Kingdom had established a true democracy:

Freedom in all its aspects ruled—including freedom of association, speech, and publishing—which were envied in other parts of Syria and Egypt. The exaggerated salutations and aggrandizement of officials and notables (that Damascus was famous for) disappeared. People sensed their own honor and dignity.

The kingdom ruled with greater justice than the French and British did, Rida argued: non-Muslims were equal to Muslims in every way. In Lebanon and Palestine, by contrast, Muslims suffered discrimination.⁴³

⁴¹ Barout, “Syrian General Congress,” 36–40, 46; Shahrastan, *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri*, 331–32.

⁴² Hakim, *Suriya fi al-'Ahd al-Faysali*, 160, 164; Shahrastan, *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri*, 93.

⁴³ Muhammad Rashid Rida “The Second Syrian Trip Part 10” [al-Rihla al-Suriya al-Thaniya (10): Hukumat Dimashq al-'Arabiya], *al-Manar* 23:4 (April 1922): 314; *Al-Muqattam*, August 31, 1908, p. 4, as quoted in Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, 1–2. The record of Rida’s writings and constitutionalism in 1920 challenges older views that his Syrian-Arab nationalism was fundamentally Islamic at this time. See, for example, Asher Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 7. As will be shown in the Epilogue, Rida’s turn to political Islamism occurred later in the 1920s.

Presentation of the Constitution

On July 5, 1920, Congress held a public reading of the entire draft constitution. More than eighty deputies gathered in the Abid building on Marjeh Square. They represented districts of Greater Syria that today lie in five separate states: about half were from Syria, a third from Lebanon and Palestine/Israel, and the remainder from Jordan and Turkey.⁴⁴

Uthman Sultan, a deputy from Rashid Rida's district of Tripoli, spoke on behalf of the constitution committee. A young professor from Damascus Law School, Sultan was humbled by the honor. He handed a copy of the constitution to Congress president Rashid Rida. The document was 148 articles long and bore the signatures of the 24 deputies who served on the constitutional committee and in Congress leadership.⁴⁵

Sultan stepped to the podium. From beneath a tight tarbush that accentuated his plump cheeks, he looked across the chamber and addressed his fellow deputies:

Today, our Syrian nation prepares for a new era of independence. His Royal Highness Prince Faisal charged the Syrian General Congress, enjoying the trust of all the nation whom it represents, to draft a constitution for the new Syrian Kingdom, to organize it under a new structure and, to safeguard especially the rights of minorities. His Highness expressed the urgent need to set down the constitution now, as a civil weapon to protect the nation from the shock of colonial politics, whose propagandists use a variety of pretexts to take control of our country under misleading terms like tutelage, protectorate, and mandate.

Sultan presented the constitution as "shining proof to the civilized world" that Syrians were sophisticated enough to run a modern state. Syria had matured in the eighteen months since the Supreme Council voted to establish the mandate system, he declared. Syrians now had a system of government that met the criteria for full independence.⁴⁶

Sultan's speech presented the constitution as a living document, tailored to the specific needs of Syrian society. It was not a foreign model of government plucked from textbooks, imposed on Syrians in order to please Europeans at the peace conference, Sultan explained. "The committee studied carefully the roots and bases of democratic life, while minding the conditions of the country and the people, with their differing sects and hopes," he explained. Members finally settled upon a civil, parliamentary form of government because it would balance freedom and rule of law. The proposed regime would mobilize public opinion, but also guard against "exclusionary and religious elements in politics and government."

⁴⁴ Shahrastan, *al-Mu'tamar al-Suri*, 38–41; Darwazeh, *Mudhakkirat*, I:350–52; Pierre Fournié and Jean-Louis Riccioli, *La France et le Proche-Orient 1916–1946* (Tournai, Belgium: Casterman, 1996), 66–67. The proportions given are based on these sources, whose precise counts vary due to the fluctuating membership of the Congress.

⁴⁵ Rashid Rida's diary, July 5, 1920, quoted in Ryad, "Like a Mill Donkey."

⁴⁶ Shahrastan, *Mu'tamar al-Suri*, 179–82, 229.

This was the logic behind Article 1, which Sultan read aloud: “The government of the Syrian Arab Kingdom is a civil, representative monarchy. Its capital is Damascus, Syria, and the religion of its king is Islam.” The Article ensures the people’s right to rule, and does not leave politics to the control of “religious factors,” Sultan explained. But freedom of religion and safeguards against discrimination among sects were also guaranteed in the constitution.

Sultan acknowledged that some Syrians would have preferred to go one step farther, to establish the greater freedom of a republic “after the hardships they suffered under cruel, authoritarian rule.” But the committee believed Syrians were not ready yet for a republic. Without a transition period of social education, a republic would result in anarchy.

The committee chose Faisal as king, Sultan explained, also to suit Syria’s special needs. Faisal’s heroic record of leadership on the battlefield would inspire the people and help them “forget the abyss into which they fell under past governments.” But some Syrians asked, “How can a son of the Hijaz step up to the Syrian throne?” The committee addressed their concern by making Faisal king not by claim to dynasty or geographic origin, but rather “because he is chosen by election of Syrian citizens.” Faisal would not, and could not, become a despot like the Ottoman sultan, he continued, because the government would be responsible to Congress, not the king. “Article 9 addresses this issue: The King is respected, but not responsible.”

Because Syrians had opposed the centralized rule of the Young Turks, the constitution established a decentralized, federal-style government, Sultan continued. Provincial assemblies would hold all local authority, while the General Congress would issue national laws on health, education, labor, and defense. Unity would be fostered through the common official language and through a national school curriculum.

Sultan also emphasized the “bill of rights” embedded in the constitution’s third chapter. It guaranteed citizenship to all residents of Syria, with equal rights under the law. It also protected freedom of belief and religion, as well as freedom from censorship in the press. Forced labor or exile, torture, and unauthorized entry into private residences were completely banned. A free elementary education was obligatory for all citizens. Religious schools, including Christian schools, were permitted.

The young professor spoke at length of constitutional guarantees to protect minorities, to protect their schools and religious rites. Electoral laws would ensure that no ruling clique dominated government, by allowing all (male) citizens to vote and by setting quotas for minority representation.

Sultan concluded by proposing that Congress send a request to Prime Minister Atassi to begin organizing the polls, so that as soon as the constitution was ratified parliamentary elections could be held.

With an elated spirit of achievement, the deputies voted to accept the entire constitution in principle, pending a second round of review, article by article. They also agreed to launch the process of organizing elections.⁴⁷ Within a week, Congress formally ratified the first six articles with minor revisions. These articles established in Syria a civil, representative monarchy and

⁴⁷ Hakim, *al-Watha’iq al-Tarikhiya*, 194.

established the powers of the king, who had to obey the constitution and the laws of God (not Islamic law, as in the Ottoman constitution).

Exactly a year after the Congress first unveiled the constitutional project to the King-Crane Commission, Syrians were ready to implement the constitutional democracy they had promised.

Conclusion: Maronite Support at the Eleventh Hour

While Catholic newspapers generally ignored events in Damascus, other papers in Beirut followed Syrian politics closely. In the spring of 1920, *Lissan al-Hal*, published by a Protestant Christian family, ran a regular column on Syria that followed constitutional debates, especially on minority rights. The paper simultaneously ran critical articles on General Gouraud's project to draft a separate constitution for Lebanon. The general insisted upon appointing the members of the constitutional committee himself and made it clear that a Frenchman, not a Lebanese, would serve as governor. In the week between June 30 and July 7, *Lissan al-Hal* published enthusiastic articles about the Syrian Constitution's emphasis on minority rights and its presentation to Congress, along with an editorial insisting that the people had the right to appoint their own ruler.⁴⁸

Doubts about French intentions in Lebanon had first resurfaced in early May. Leading nationalists worried that Lebanon had not even been mentioned at the San Remo conference. Its fate had been folded into the decision to award France a mandate over all of Syria. Christians, including Maronites, who had insisted on Lebanese independence now suspected there would be no quick passage from French mandate to full independence. Some of them took a second look at the March 8 Declaration of Independence, which had promised Lebanon full autonomy on condition that all foreign powers (France) be excluded from the territory.

Amidst public debate, Lebanese deputies to the Syrian Congress had begun to engage erstwhile opponents of union with Syria in secret talks. The talks that Riad al-Solh, deputy from the coastal city of Sidon, held with the Lebanese Administrative Council produced surprising and dramatic results.

Solh believed that the future of Syria rested on Lebanese opinion. He aimed to puncture France's pretense as protector of Christians by winning Maronite loyalty to the Syrian state. Shortly after July 5, he carried an advance copy of the Syrian Constitution to a meeting of the Lebanese Administrative Council. Many of the councilors were satisfied that non-Muslims would indeed enjoy equal rights of citizenship in Syria. Solh also brought with him a promise from Faisal that the federal state of Syria would rule the coast as an autonomous state of Lebanon stretching from Sidon in the south to Tripoli in the north. Council members were also

⁴⁸ "One People," June 1, 1920, and "Minority Rights," June 3, 1920, in *Lissan ul-Hal*. General observations of press coverage based on a survey of the following papers in 1919–20: *Lissan ul-Hal*, *al-Haqiqa*, *al-Balagh*, *al-Baraq*, and *al-Bashir*. I thank Catherine Batruni for her research assistance.

swayed by false news reports that Faisal and Gouraud were close to sealing an agreement that might leave Lebanon under French control.

On July 10, a majority on the Lebanese Administrative Council—seven of twelve members—voted to defect to the Damascus government. Led by the Maronite Patriarch's own brother, Saadallah Hoyek, the seven councilors set out secretly for Damascus that very night to pledge their oath of loyalty to Faisal. They would then travel to Paris to proclaim their support for the Syrian Arab Kingdom to the Supreme Council. But as their train paused at a mountain checkpoint, a Senegalese soldier arrested them on charges of treason. Gouraud immediately abolished the Lebanese Administrative Council.⁴⁹

The defection of the Maronite patriarch's own brother was a welcome endorsement of Syria's democratic constitution as a "civil weapon of the nation" against colonial designs. It was "the most wonderful event that pleased our hearts," Yusuf al-Hakim recalled. The Lebanese, who had lived in freedom in the Ottoman era, within the district of Ottoman Mount Lebanon, could not bear to submit to direct French rule under the mandate.⁵⁰

Hakim's optimism was short-lived. Events unfolded quickly in the next two weeks, overwhelming Syrians' plans to finally establish their democracy by holding elections. The Congress woke to the fateful diplomatic maneuvers that were about seal Syria's fate.

In Palestine, Congress's Declaration of Independence had provoked popular celebrations. But the British had firmly blocked any actual move toward incorporating the region into Greater Syria. In mid-June, Izzat Darwazeh and other Palestinian deputies had raised futile protests in Congress against Britain's appointment of the first civilian high commissioner to Palestine.

And on the Lebanese coast, the French high commission was working secretly to preempt any flood of support for joining a united Greater Syria. Following the precedent of San Remo, French premier Millerand intended to quash popular opinion on the choice of mandatory power by use of force. Throughout the month of June, even as the Congress debated the last articles of the constitution, he and General Gouraud had been planning the absolute destruction of their state.

⁴⁹ Gouraud to Millerand, July 12, 1920, in Hokayem, *Documents diplomatiques*, II:468–69; Zamir, *Formation of Modern Lebanon*, 89–90; Eddé, *Beyrouth*, 96–99; Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Arab Independence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 150–52.

⁵⁰ Hakim, *Suriya wa al-`Ahd Faisali*, 164–65.