CHAPTER 2

SOLDIERS AND PATRIARCHS: PILLARS OF COLONIAL PATERNALISM

Entente and Arab troops entered Damascus on October 1, 1918, and Beirut one week later. By month's end they had occupied Aleppo and Tripoli and signed an armistice with the Ottomans. Military governors were appointed to the various districts, with the French occupying the coast and the British-backed government of Prince Faysal in the Syrian hinterland. When the war ended on November 11, the military government issued a formal proclamation promising liberation and national governments chosen by the indigenous peoples.[1] Syrian and Lebanese Muslim leaders rejoiced and rallied around Faysal's nascent Syrian-Arab kingdom, while most Christians of Mount Lebanon looked toward the founding of a separate state. Seventeen months later, however, in April 1920, European peacemakers eschewed majority popular opinion and unilaterally awarded the French mandatory rule over the territory, to be split into countries called Syria and Lebanon. The mandate was supposed to be a temporary period of unselfish tutelary rule, preparing the people for self-government in the spirit of Woodrow Wilson's principles of self-determination. However, the French immediately made it clear that they would rule by force if cooperation was not forthcoming. Within three months the French expelled Faysal, brutally defeating his army on July 24, 1920 at Khan Maysalun, west of Damascus.

Not everyone opposed French rule. On August 5, a French-language newspaper in Beirut, *Le Réveil*, ran front-page photos of the new French high commissioner, General Henri Gouraud, parading through the Lebanese town of Zahla. Balconies along the general's route were filled with women and girls who sang praises and showered him with flowers. He was greeted by French and Lebanese notables, some of whom bowed and kissed his hand. Gouraud then made a speech praising the Lebanese for their loyalty and welcoming them to France's colonial family, which also included the occupying army:

> France has always found pleasure in this gift, to see marching by her side her adopted children like her own children. Who could believe that these Moroccans and Senegalese, after having spilled their blood for four years on the battlefield, would sacrifice themselves again yesterday, if France were not a true mother to them?[2]

Colonial children who were loyal would be rewarded, he continued, and the few traitors who resisted France would be punished. In recompense for Lebanese loyalty, he announced the creation of Greater Lebanon and a new flag, adding a cedar of Lebanon to the French tricolor. "You have two countries, Lebanon and France . . . the colors [of the flag] represent bravery and generosity."

As for the Syrians, Gouraud told his Lebanese audience that he had shown much patience before issuing an ultimatum to Faysal, who had been crowned King of Syria the previous March. At the moment Faysal agreed to accept the French mandate, however, renegade Syrian forces attacked French troops at Tall Kalakh (northeast of Tripoli). It was necessary to make a show of force, Gouraud said, to end this corruption and intrigue. "I did not make war last month on the inhabitants of Damascus. I made war on a bad government," he said stressing that French troops entered the city without firing a shot. Gouraud neglected to mention the bloody battle at Maysalun, where thousands of Syrians had fought and at least 150 (some claimed 1,200 or more) had died.[3]

The speech, employing a standard familial colonial discourse, portrayed France as a caring mother, and Gouraud as a stern father. The Lebanese and Syrians were their children. But this was a family in crisis, and these were adoptive parents who had to prove their worthiness to their adopted children. Gouraud apologized for France's delay in delivering aid to her loyal Lebanese children during the war, and acknowledged that a colonial mother must earn the affections of her colonial children. As a colonial father, Gouraud argued that he was a fair disciplinarian, who gave his Syrian children every chance to obey before punishing them.

In the subtext of the speech, however, Gouraud was competing with an alternative father figure, King Faysal. Gouraud promised better government than that of Faysal, who, he implied, could not even control his disobedient children, permitting them to attack France despite his decision to accept the French mandate. But Gouraud acknowledged only part of his competition. He apparently ignored the results of an American fact-finding mission in 1919 that found most Syrians and Muslim Lebanese—and significant portions of Lebanon's Greek Orthodox and Druze communities—opposed a French mandate. Gouraud also

ignored the opinion of Christians and Muslims on Mount Lebanon's Administrative Council, who had called for independence from France just two months before. These latter had been deported, and the council dissolved.[4]

There was, indeed, a political crisis of paternity in Syria and Lebanon. For 400 years the region had been part of the Ottoman Empire, a realm defined solely by the House of Osman's claim to privileged dynastic and spiritual authority. Each sultan had ruled as the father, or shepherd of his flock (raya). While many had rejected their sultan-father during the Arab Revolt, they did not agree on his replacement. Faysal made his bid to be an Arab father, rallying a new generation of nationalists around his prestigious Hashemite dynasty, descended from the Prophet's own clan. His name was substituted for that of the Ottoman sultan in Friday prayers, even in Beirut.[5] But many residents of northern Syria held lingering affinities for union with Anatolia, where the sultan was being challenged by Mustafa Kemal's rival government in Ankara. Armenian refugees in Aleppo, on the other hand, were suspicious of rule by both Turks and Faysal. And even in Damascus, Faysal had not been universally loved. Among those who disputed Faysal's paternity were leaders of the city's prominent families who had tried to form their own government in the days between the Ottoman withdrawal and his arrival with the British. They opposed a dynasty drawn from Arabia, preferring rule by local Syrian notables. Still others opposed Faysal's secular monarchy in the hope of reviving an Arab caliphate, where a religious patriarch would reign.

To these rival claims of fatherhood were added challenges against paternalism itself. Pan-Arabists often employed a rhetoric of a broad Arab fraternity reaching far beyond Faysal's realm and based not in a royal lineage but in a shared heritage and republican ideals. Urban populists proclaimed popular sovereignty and rejected the hierarchical relations between dynastic ruler and ruled in favor of equality among a fraternal community of male citizens.[6] If Faysal was king, he would rule only as a constitutional monarch, in concert with the Syrian Congress and local representative committees. In an even more fundamental challenge, women contested any male monopoly on political power, petitioning the Syrian Congress to permit women's suffrage. In essence, women favored universal democracy over both fraternal republicanism and the male hierarchy of paternalism. What drove these ideological rivalries was the new phenomenon of mass politics.[7] Wartime conscription had fostered a broader concept of identity than had previously existed, when the common peasant or city artisan had had little exposure to the world beyond his or her village or quarter.

In response to the crisis, Gouraud marshalled all the symbolism at his disposal to enhance his paternalistic claims during his triumphal tour. *Le Réveil* described Gouraud's arrival on August 7 in Damascus, where he stood at the Hijaz railway station flanked by foreign consuls; Muslim, Christian, and Jewish religious patriarchs; military officers, the male heads of the elite Bakri, 'Abid, and Mu'ayyad families of Damascus; and two Druze tribal chiefs. Gouraud saluted the flag and decorated several heroic soldiers. As he mounted a horse to parade through the streets, "the crowd pressed forward and women leaned from their balconies in a shudder of emotion that passed through the city." The next day, Gouraud attended a Catholic mass officiated by the Vatican's delegate to the Levant and visited the Umayyad mosque, where he promised freedom and tolerance of religion to the assembled Muslim clerics. When they requested amnesty for Faysal's supporters, however, Gouraud demonstrated his stern paternalism, tersely replying that the guilty must be punished. Indeed, most leaders of populist republican and nationalist groups were handed death sentences.[8]

On an even more triumphant day for the French, the formal proclamation of Greater Lebanon on September 1, 1920, Gouraud sat, one sleeve hanging loose (his arm had been lost in battle in World War I) under the portico of his official residence with the Maronite patriarch and the mufti of Beirut seated beside him. Other religious patriarchs, political officials, and soldiers encircled him. Gouraud greeted the assembly thus: "I told you a few weeks ago, at a dangerous moment: The day that your fathers hoped for in vain, and which, happily, you will see shine, is near. That day has come."[9] So the grandest father of all pretended to fulfill the hopes of past generations of Lebanese fathers. A photograph of the event (fig. 3), representing the paternal origins of the new state, was distributed on postcards to the population.

Gouraud's role as stern father was ultimately played out not through symbols, but by recourse to force and persuasion. Soldiers were the primary pillar of French rule. The first three high commissioners were all generals in the French military, as armed revolts beleaguered the regime through much of the 1920s. But by 1930 the French would erect two additional pillars of authority. They built a clientele of paternalistic elites—tribal shaykhs, religious patriarchs and rural landowners like those who stood with Gouraud in 1920—who acted as intermediaries of the regime. And they constructed a large bureaucracy that became the civilian face of the regime, dispensing social and economic services. These three pillars anchored French rule. But they by no means pacified all opposition: dissent was channeled after the armed revolts into parliaments that were set up under constitutions required under the

terms of the mandate. The resultant civic order was a curious and unstable hybrid, combining the colonial method of rule through paternalistic privilege with a political structure based on republican rights and representation. In the rhetoric used by Gouraud, the colonial civic order was a large house with an unruly family, wherein the law laid down by the father was continually challenged and renegotiated by France's adopted sons—and daughters.

Soldiers: The Era of Military Confrontation, 1920–26

Maysalun was only the beginning of armed resistance to French rule. While it continued to center in Syria, violent revolt would spill occasionally into Lebanon as well. From 1919 to 1921, the French fought a sustained guerrilla-style rebellion in northern Syria. Beginning among local tribes and Turkish soldiers in the 'Alawi hills of northwestern Syria, the fighting spread along Syria's northern border under the leadership of Ibrahim Hananu, a former Ottoman bureaucrat and soldier in Faysal's army who became a national hero for his resistance, alongside the martyr of Maysalun, Yusuf al-'Azma. The revolt was supported not only by wealthy Aleppines, but also by the rebel Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal and Prince Abdullah of Transjordan. Meanwhile, the French turned much of Syria's eastern and northeastern desert regions into a military zone to pacify restive nomadic tribes.[10]

The largest armed revolt—and the last until World War II—was the Syrian Revolt, which began in the south of Syria. In July and August 1925, the leader of the Druze tribe on Jabal Druze, Sultan al-Atrash, raised an army of 10,000 troops and captured the provincial capital, al-Suwayda. Soon other regions joined the fight. Causes of the revolt were economic and political. That summer a drought had destroyed crops in the Hawran, aggravating the continued postwar economic disarray. Resentment grew throughout Syria against the effects of the depreciating French franc on local wealth, against French stinginess in spending on education and economic development, and against high unemployment. The Druze, in particular, were also angered by the intrusive political policies of the new French governor, Captain Carbillet, who manipulated tribal factions and threatened the feudal authority of Druze shaykhs with the building of schools and roads and proposals for land reform to benefit peasants. Previously Faysal and the French had respected tribal autonomy, appointing Druze governors who did not contravene tribal patriarchs' power. Indeed, in 1921 the French had upgraded the Atrash clan to a hereditary nobility, with title of prince (amir).[11] The political causes of the revolt thus lay in

France's ambivalent methods of rule. Carbillet was an overzealous exponent of a new French policy in the mid-1920s that rejected General Gouraud's colonial methods of indirect rule in favor of the interventionist and statist republicanism practiced in France itself.

Gouraud, drawing on his previous experience in Morocco, had squarely planted French rule on the shoulders of rural and conservative notables. He cultivated their loyalty by exploiting factions among them and by wooing favorites with such benefits for their districts as roads, medical clinics, schools, and farm loans.[12] While fighting rebels in northern Syria, Gouraud had divided the remaining territory into statelets, where tribal elites were privileged in the Druze, 'Alawi and northeastern Jazira territories, and where conservative, anti-nationalist landowning notables were buttressed in Aleppo and Damascus. Gouraud also wooed religious patriarchs with promises of material and political support. In Lebanon, the General based his power on close ties to the Maronite Church, whose delegates had supported the mandate at the Versailles peace conference. Consequently, the regime was organized around sectarian groups. In 1922 Gouraud decreed the creation of a Lebanese Representative Council, where the 30 seats were allocated according to the proportions of religious sects counted in the 1921 census.[13]

Gouraud's successors as high commissioner, generals Maxime Weygand and Maurice Sarrail, sought to shift French policy from its dependence on mediating, paternalistic elites to a more direct relationship with a broader, middle section of the population. They were responding to sentiment in France that favored, under a newly elected left-wing cabinet, the spirit of self-determination championed by the League of Nations and a French-style, secular republican state in the colonies. Such a state would rule not through favors to mediating elites, but, as Foreign Minister Aristide Briand put it, through respect for the Rights of Man.[14] Republicanism would be Weygand's and Sarrail's remedy to the crisis of paternity that had plagued Gouraud's regime. Colonial republicanism, however, was inevitably paternalistic, for the French still positioned themselves as tutors to citizens who had no right to elect or dismiss them, and who were theoretically ignorant of France's expertise in republicanism. It was more a means of imposing direct French rule over colonial subjects than of granting them rights. In fact, the new republican turn would prove ephemeral, both in Paris and its colonies. In the wake of leftists' defeat in Paris and revolts in Syria, Morocco, and elsewhere, French colonial policy would soon return to Gouraud's indirect methods of "association."[15]

Weygand, high commissioner in 1923–24, sought to foster new middle-class alliances with the regime via economic investment in public works, utilities, agriculture, and industry. He also intended to encourage a new national loyalty

in Syria and Lebanon to replace older, feudal loyalties and to draw support away from pan-Arab nationalists. In Lebanon, he removed the Maronite Church from direct involvement in decisionmaking, in favor of a more even-handed policy. In Syria, he promoted the development of cotton as an export crop to foster wealth among farmers. In 1923, he permitted Syrian elections to representative councils. And to promote a Syrian nationalism, Weygand decreed the union of the Aleppine and Damascene states in 1924, making Damascus the capital. But there were limits to Weygand's efforts to broaden political participation. The Druze and 'Alawi territories were not unified with the rest of Syria. Elections were rigged to favor large rural landowners over urban nationalist elites, causing protest. And when the press became too critical in 1924, Weygand decreed strict censorship.[16]

While Weygand introduced gradual reforms, his successor, Sarrail, moved more brusquely. A staunch laicist, Sarrail insulted church leaders upon his arrival by his failure to attend the ceremonial occasions that his predecessors had. As he conducted consultations to prepare constitutions required by the mandate charter, Sarrail discouraged delegations of religious patriarchs "to avoid giving them the weight they don't deserve." He dismissed the French governor of Lebanon, whom he called a puppet of clerical parties, and sought to abolish confessional quotas in Lebanese elections, changes welcomed by Sunni Muslims but condemned by the Maronite Church.[17] He also envisioned France's role as a counterbalance to the "feudal spirit" that urban political bosses promoted.[18] Sarrail's government moved to elevate the status of peasants and workers with proposals to reform rural taxes and labor laws.[19] Far from resolving the crisis of paternity, however, Sarrail's statist and secular republicanism provoked vigorous defenses of local privilege.

Resentful of Sarrail's efforts to bypass patriarchs, Lebanese Catholic leaders sought to oust him through diplomatic means. Catholic missionaries feared that Sarrail might expel them and close their schools, from which he had already withdrawn the children of French personnel.[20] The Vatican representative in Beirut protested to Rome and Paris that Syrians and Lebanese were not ready for a republican regime based on universal suffrage. Stripping Christian patriarchs of their privileges, he argued, was not a step toward republicanism, but rather a fatal capitulation to Muslim rebels: "[The French] are attempting, it seems, to transform into victims the massacrers of Christians, who are the object of their savagery not only because of Muslims' atavistic fanaticism, but also . . . because of the infidels' implacable hatred for the Mandatory Power."[21] In response to these protests, Pope Pius XI proposed to beatify eight priests and three Maronites killed in the 1860 massacres in Damascus.[22]

The same resentment at being bypassed sparked the Druze revolt and helped it spread into a general rebellion. In early 1925, Druze leader Sultan al-Atrash sent a delegation to complain about Captain Carbillet's interference in their affairs. Sarrail, in keeping with his crusade against feudal exploitation, refused to fire Carbillet. After Druze leaders again tried to meet with French officials, Sarrail had them arrested on July 11. Meanwhile, Atrash had made contact with nationalists in Damascus, particularly wealthy merchants who marketed grain from southern Syria and lent money to peasants there. Clearly influenced by nationalist ideology, the Druze initiated the revolt a week after the arrests, proclaiming its goal as nothing less than independence and the union of all Syrian territories. Urban nationalists joined soon thereafter. The nationalists, like the Druze, were fighting as much against colonial republicanism as against foreign rule. As Philip Khoury, a leading scholar of Syrian nationalists, has argued, "Their real objective was to shift the balance of power between themselves and the French back in their own direction so as to restore their traditional influence over local politics—an influence which the French had undercut both in the nationalist towns and in the Jabal Druze."[23]

While the Arab Revolt had been based upon troops from Iraq and tribes from south of Syria, the Syrian Revolt drew upon the truly Syrian and popular nationalist movement that had emerged in the Faysal era. At its height, the revolt spread well into northern Syria and Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Peasants and nomads who had so far seen little benefit from French proposals to redistribute land joined bands organized by their landlords and tribal chiefs. In October 1925, the town of Hama was held for two days by rebels, who received support from landowners opposed to French plans for land reform.[24] For months, rebels virtually controlled the Jabal Druze and parts of Damascus and the countryside surrounding it. In November, the spread of armed revolt into Lebanon reignited calls by Sunni Muslims there for union with Syria.[25]

The French responded with brutal violence and by mobilizing support from rural landowners against the urban and tribal nationalists. In October 1925, French guns and airplanes bombarded Hama, where landowners readily capitulated after the French guaranteed security of their property. At the same time, French bombers and artillery blasted Damascus, destroying entire quarters of the city. Hundreds of women, children, and elderly people were trapped in collapsed buildings, and more than 500 people were believed killed. The city suffered a second bombardment in May 1926.[26] By November 1926, the rebels were almost completely defeated, although sporadic fighting continued in Hama and Jabal Druze into 1927. Casualties were estimated at more than 10,000 deaths on both sides.[27]

Gender became both a discursive and physical battlefield among these paternalistic rivals. Rebels met French rhetoric of chivalry, honor and protection with accusations of dishonorable conduct and injury to their own honor. Rumors of the rape of Muslim women by French soldiers had circulated as early as 1920 in the Faysal regime's anti-French propaganda. In May 1920, the official Syrian newspaper published a poem alluding to those rumors:

> If the brave sons of Syria were to shrink from death on behalf
> of their fatherland
> How can our girls protect their honor?
> How can our people safeguard their souls?
> How is the nation to be freed from the filth of the enemy?[28]

Propaganda said to be spread by "Anglo-Turk" agents in northern Syria warned: "The French will rape your women! The Senegalese will kill your children!"[29] Rebels were thus addressed as male heads of families whose honor was threatened. The French dislaimed such motives. *Le Réveil*, in the same issue quoting Gouraud's adoptive-father speech to the Lebanese, published an article denying rumors of rape during the July 1920 invasion of Syria: "The perfect conduct of French soldiers toward women was especially noticed, and was the object of conversation everyday."[30]

Rape and the defense of honor emerged again as themes of nationalist propaganda in the Syrian Revolt. Leaflets called upon villagers to protect Syrian women from French soldiers. One of them alerted the Arab nation to French atrocities in Damascus in May 1926: "Not content to bombard, the French sent a column to pillage houses, rape women, and set fire to the quarter, which is still burning."[31] Charges of rape were also levied against Armenian and Circassian troops used to flush rebels out of Damascus's southern Maydan quarter.[32]

Rebel propaganda often called on men to prove their manliness and virility. A Syrian leaflet called the French cowards, and threatened them with images of traditional Arab warriors: "You hide in the city behind your firearms like women, not like fighters. Withdraw with the honor that you still have. If not, we will massacre you with sabres and your blood will flow in streams."[33] Likewise, a Lebanese leaflet sought to rally Christians to the revolt: "Abandon resignation, which is sterile, and run for your sword. . . . You have been complicit with foreigners against your brothers." Another leaflet called Syrian collaborators in the Damascene courts, which had condemned a rebel to death, a "prostituted government" of spies.[34]

Rhetorical jousting reached the highest ranks. The high commissioner and

Sultan al-Atrash made competing claims to be the better paternal provider in appeals to various Druze factions. A leaflet signed by Henry de Jouvenel, who replaced Sarrail in November 1925, said: "Druzes! Why do you fight?. . . . Only France can give you wheat, plumbing, roads and schools. . . . If your wives and children are hungry, if your ruin and defeat are not remedied, this will be not my fault but that of Sultan Atrash." Atrash, in response, accused the French of depriving men, particularly bedouin, of their livelihoods by closing borders: "Grandsons of the noble Arabs, the day has come that will profit warriors [mujahids]. . . . The colonizers have pillaged us. . . . They have robbed our country's freedoms of trade and travel."[35]

Women also participated in both the physical and rhetorical combat. Urban and rural women were active in street demonstrations and in smuggling weapons, food rations and medicine to rebels, often hiding them under their cloaks (hijab) at French checkpoints. A number of rural women became known for their heroism in gunbattles with the French. Dozens were killed in such battles, while hundreds more were killed during French bombardments of cities. Many others were rendered homeless in the rural fighting, fleeing for safety to cities with their children.[36] Even in times of peace, women feared French soldiers. Wadad Qurtas, a Lebanese school director, remembered the beginning of the mandate mainly as the occupation of Beirut streets by foreign soldiers.[37] French policemen routinely followed girls in the street, calling "Fatima!" a generic name for Muslim women used in North African colonies.[38]

Hostility to the French was not only sexualized but also racialized. Senegalese soldiers are often singled out in women's memories of the mandate period as especially threatening.[39] Parents warned girls to avoid them on the streets, and would even keep them home for fear of assault. "When they wanted to scare the children, the French would say 'The Senegalese will come to you now!' " recalled one woman.[40] These warnings were of a piece with the racial undertones of rebel leaflets quoted above, referring to the supposed bestiality of Senegalese soldiers, whose "filth" might violate their pure women. As one observer remarked, the French

> did not grasp the special obligations of the Mandate, but treated the country as if it were a French colony, and the inhabitants as on a level with France's African subjects; and at least in the early part of the Mandatory period they did not hesitate to express their contempt for the Arabs. The use of Senegalese troops first to expel Faisal and then on garrison duty seems to the Syrians and Lebanese to be a sign of this contempt.[41]

For the remainder of the mandate, the Senegalese would become a regular target of nationalist propaganda in sexualized and racialized imagery that fused men's gender anxieties with outrage at French domination. This imagery reinforced an understanding that the nation was a nation of men, tacitly excluding women. Rooted in the crisis of paternity, it reasserted male protection and control over women.

French manliness was wounded, too. In 1930, Abel Moreau, a former French soldier in Syria, published an allegorical novel called *La Nuit syrienne*. In the story, a pious French soldier named Calvier falls in love with a beautiful Lebanese woman who had been Jemal Pasha's mistress. According to Calvier, she has the mesmerizing eyes of the serpent that had tempted Eve and a seductive voice that charmed even wild beasts. Calvier spends his entire savings on her, and repeatedly asks her to "swear to me that you didn't love him [Jemal Pasha]." Not only does she refuse to swear, but she also jilts Calvier as soon as he runs out of money, saying that she would always love a brave soldier like Jemal Pasha more than a weak seminary dropout like him. Calvier, in a frenzy, pushes her off the ledge of a ruined castle to her death. The novel's not unsubtle message was that France was tragically unsuited to imperial rule, because Frenchmen were too generous and idealistic. The Levant, on the other hand, was a perfidious lover who drained France's resources.

French reaction was to reassert Gouraud's stern discipline. The revolt made clear that at its base French rule was, and would remain, military rule. Soldiers vastly outnumbered French civilian personnel throughout the mandate period: While the number of French bureaucrats would never rise above 600, the number of colonial troops rose from 12,889 in October 1919, when the Army of the Levant was created, to 69,416 in 1921, in response to the rebellions in northern Syria and to 100,000 at the start of World War II. Troop levels would fluctuate between these extremes in times of peace and times of trouble. The Army of the Levant consisted of French officers and specialized units commanding troops drawn from North Africa, Madagascar and Senegal. A omit military auxiliary, eventually named the Special Troops, recruited a cross-section of rural volunteers from both countries. It remained small, less than 10,000 troops, for most of the 1920s.[42]

By 1930, the French had consolidated a substantial military, police, and intelligence network to discipline the population. In addition to an average of 30,000 military troops and 3,500 policemen and gendarmes, hundreds of French spies were dispersed through the territories.[43] Troops were called out routinely to quash demonstrations, and martial law was repeatedly declared in cities during periods of unrest. This was the raw face of military occupa-

tion. As one historian put it, "the level of violence, and the frequency of the incidents, makes chilling reading."[44]

Patriarchs: The Rise of Constitutional Governments, 1926–30

The defeat of the Syrian Revolt marked the end of armed resistance, and the start of a new era of politics. Sarrail had been replaced by a civilian high commissioner, Henry de Jouvenel, and civilians would continue to head the mandatory state until 1940. Constitutions were soon drawn up, and elections held in both countries. The religious, class, and gender anxieties that had flared into violence during the revolt were to be, in theory, transmuted into political debate. Indeed, a group of former Syrian rebels formed the National Bloc, a political alliance committed to peaceful negotiation with the French. But the opening of parliaments did not inaugurate democratic government. The revolt had in fact closed the door on the experiments by Weygand and Sarrail to broaden political participation. The French camp and its nationalist opponents alike feared what changes the masses might demand. Together they entered into a pact that reaffirmed the paternalistic pillars of colonial rule first planted by Gouraud.

The Syrian Revolt directly shaped the constitutions of both countries. The Lebanese constitution was written in early 1926 in a climate of sectarian tension enflamed by the revolt's spread into the country. A few months before, 108 Christians had been killed by renegade Druze rebels in the mountains, sparking months of Muslim-Christian violence. At the same time, many Sunni Muslim leaders began openly to support the revolt and union with Syria. Sarrail's dismissal by a new right-wing government in Paris had reversed their growing support for a Lebanese state reorganized under Sarrail's vision of secular, nonsectarian government.[45] Sunni support for the revolt further alarmed Maronite leaders, who were already upset by the Druze attacks on Christians and by Sarrail's efforts to marginalize them in government. As a result, plans for a nonsectarian political system were dropped. Sarrail's successor, Jouvenel, hurried to appease the Maronites and make their Church the pillar of French rule it had always been. The French also hurried preparation of the constitution in order to impress the League of Nations with a show of liberal policy and offset bad press reports of the revolt.

Jouvenel charged the Representative Council to draw up a list of notables and civic leaders to be polled on their preferences for a future government.

Bowing to pressure from Paris and the Maronite Church, the Council sent 75 of the 210 questionnaires distributed in early 1926 to religious patriarchs. Only 132 responded to the poll. Thirty-two Sunni Muslim leaders refused to participate in it, because they hoped the revolt would soon bring union with Syria. Their abstention was critical, because many Sunnis supported nonsectarianism. Those who responded to the poll, in contrast, favored a republican form of government based on sectarian representation. Under pressure to meet the May deadline, a committee supervised by the French quickly wrote Lebanon's constitution. Jouvenel and the Council approved the text on May 23, 1926, and the following day the Republic of Lebanon was proclaimed.

The constitution declared Lebanon's boundaries unalterable. It provided for a parliamentary government dominated by the French high commissioner, who would have the power to dismiss parliament, to annul laws, and even to suspend the constitution, while also retaining control of the military, police and foreign affairs. The relatively weak president, whose main power was to appoint the prime minister, was to be chosen indirectly by a bicameral legislature elected through universal male suffrage. While the constitution assured the right of every Lebanese to hold office, based solely on merit, it also guaranteed, in apparent contradiction, the equitable representation of all sects in the cabinet, the parliament, and the civil service. And it guaranteed respect for each sect's personal status laws and religious schools. These provisions severely limited the state's power, while augmenting that of religious patriarchs. They also ensured that politics would turn on sectarian rivalry. When the Maronite Church promoted one of its own to become the first president, all other sects objected. To allay their fears of Maronite domination, Jouvenel pressured the new legislature to elect a Greek Orthodox lawyer, Charles Dabbas. Nonetheless, Sunni Muslim leaders abstained from political participation well into the 1930s. Meanwhile, factionalism and sectarian bickering so paralyzed the government that the French imposed two constitutional amendments in 1927 and 1929 to reduce the legislature to one chamber and increase the power of the president.[46]

In contrast to Lebanon, in Syria the revolt neither foregrounded sectarianism nor sidelined the opposition. Henri Ponsot, high commissioner from 1926 to 1933, needed to appease nationalists recently defeated on the battlefield. He quashed Jouvenel's brief initiative to install a monarchy in Syria, and instead organized elections in 1928 for a constitutional convention. A key player in the convention was the National Bloc, which emerged between 1927 and 1930. The Bloc was not a political party united by principles, but rather an association of paternalistic elites. Its leaders were mainly young Sunni Muslims from the

urban landowning-bourgeoisie that had supported the revolt. Their goal was to gain control of government, and eventually independence, through political negotiation with the French. They were conservative liberals little interested in social and economic reform, which they saw as dangerous to their own interests. Like their opponents who collaborated with the French, Bloc leaders' power and political goals derived from their status as patrons of personal clientele networks.[47]

While the French rigged the 1928 election to pack the convention with pliant rural notables, the Bloc managed to dominate the proceedings with its experience in political tactics and speechmaking. First, Bloc leaders defeated the bid for convention president by Ponsot's hand-picked prime minister, Shaykh Muhammad Taj al-Din al-Hasani, the shrewd and portly son of a respected religious scholar whose conservative clientele included wealthy landowners and ulama (Muslim clerics). Taj's exclusion paved the way for Bloc member Ibrahim Hananu, hero of armed revolts in northern Syria, to head the committee to draft the constitution. Ponsot tried to derail the Bloc's success by reintroducing the idea of a Syrian monarchy. Some ulama and other pious Muslims in Syria supported the idea of returning the Hashemite dynasty, so revered in Islam, to power. The monarchists were weakened, however, because they could not agree on a candidate. In the end, both Shaykh Taj and Bloc leaders proved themselves more French than Ponsot. Schooled in the republican ideals of the French Revolution, these erstwhile rivals joined ranks to defeat what had promised to become a new form of tyranny.

In August 1928, Hananu's committee submitted to the convention a draft constitution for a parliamentary republic in many ways similar to Lebanon's. It provided for a president to be chosen indirectly by a single-chambered legislature elected by universal male suffrage. The president was to appoint a prime minister, who controlled policymaking and the various government ministries. The draft also granted citizens rights to freedom of property, association, speech and conscience, and fair trials; it also provided for obligatory primary education. Although the draft assured the legal equality of all citizens regardless of religion, in a nod to powerful ulama and majority popular sentiment it required the president to be Muslim. It also reserved for religious minorities seats in parliament, but not posts in the civil service.

But when debate began on the draft, Ponsot interrupted the convention's proceedings. Several articles contravened French authority, declaring that Greater Syria, including Lebanon and the Druze and 'Alawi territories, was indivisible; and that the Syrian president, not the high commissioner, should control foreign affairs and a national army. This assertion of sovereignty was a

blow to Ponsot, who was already under pressure from the resurgent political right in Paris. With their allies in the Army of the Levant, Parisian conservatives had just unseated both Sarrail and Jouvenel for their liberal tendencies. So Ponsot suspended the convention, and in May 1930 he simply decreed the constitution, revised to protect French power.[48] Political uproar ensued, postponing the first elections until late 1931.[49] While the nationalists lost their bid for Syrian unity and sovereignty, they nonetheless had managed to play a central role in establishing a nominally republican civic order, against Islamic and monarchist tendencies that would remain strong into the 1930s.[50]

The resultant Lebanese and Syrian political regimes were not, of course, shaped solely by the immediate circumstances of the revolt. They also reflected past Ottoman practice and French influence. Many Lebanese and Syrian politicians had gained experience in constitutional parliamentary government under the Young Turk regime. The apportionment of parliamentary seats according to religious sect went back further, to the first Ottoman elections of 1876. French influence was exerted not only directly by Ponsot, but also indirectly, by the fact that many politicians were trained in French law schools. Essential attributes of the constitutions—the nonmonarchical, secular, and representational definition of power; the weak presidencies and the faction-ridden and sluggish parliaments; universal male suffrage; and the emphasis on personal liberties—were also hallmarks of the late French Third Republic. The new constitutions also expanded popular participation beyond Ottoman limits, by replacing the sultan with elected heads of state, omitting Ottoman property requirements for voters, and reducing the minimum voting age.[51]

But the constitutions also subverted the republican spirit that they proclaimed. While assigning sovereignty to the people, they also granted supreme power to a nonelected official who stood above the law, the French high commissioner, who could decree laws, dismiss parliaments, and even suspend the constitution itself. Furthermore, the two-staged elections, inherited from the Ottoman era, ensured elites' control of and profit from the electoral system. The routine violation of rules for secret balloting also went back to Ottoman times, and had a similar benefit for elites. In sum, the regimes imagined in the constitutional texts were hardly democratic and barely republics at all. Such was the implicit contradiction between the realities of colonial rule and the vaunted republican ideals of the French civilizing mission.

To the French, the parliaments were noisome window dressing. After the departure of Sarrail, they returned with a vengeance to rule through their own clientele of paternalistic elites. In fact, the French fostered a neofeudal landowning class in both Syria and Lebanon with economic and political

power that far surpassed that of the Ottoman era. In exchange for political loyalty, the French awarded large tracts of Ottoman imperial land to tribal shaykhs, village chiefs, and landlords in the plains of Lebanon and the north and northeast of Syria.[52] The French also undertook irrigation projects and extended agricultural credits to benefit these loyal patrons. While ostensibly measures to increase productivity, they aggravated social inequality. In Syria, just six percent of the rural population possessed 35 percent of all farmland, while the number of small family farms (less than 10 hectares), declined from 25 to 15 percent of all farmland between 1920 and 1945.[53] About 20,000 families (one-tenth of all landowners) had their land bought out from beneath them. Most peasants became indebted sharecroppers. Similarly, much of Mount Lebanon remained under the quasi-feudal notables who enjoyed French support.[54] In exchange for their largesse, the French expected this landed rural elite to discipline peasants. By buttressing the police powers of local landowners and village heads, the French often abetted their routine thievery, violence, and abuse.[55]

The French also built a clientele of religious patriarchs. Through their schools and weekly sermons, the patriarchs wielded potentially more influence over common people's sentiments than did elite politicians, and especially nationalists. The French sought to guide patriarchs' influence with subsidies to their religious schools and charities. Sarrail's successors also reestablished the routine of state visits to religious leaders, who were regularly included, in return, on guest lists to official functions. In July 1926, during the revolt, top Muslim officials were invited at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' expense to attend the inauguration of a new mosque in Paris.[56] A striking example of French efforts to build religious pillars of rule was their installation of Sulayman Murshid, a popular religious divine, as head of the 'Alawi state. They granted him lands, tax revenues, control of the courts, and a cache of armaments with which to consolidate his power against urban Sunni nationalists in the region.[57]

Through their clienteles of landlords, tribal shaykhs, and religious patriarchs, the French operated outside of the framework of constitutional politics to impose their policies and assure their rule. In so doing, they effectively subverted the constitutions' guarantees of legal equality among citizens. It would be wrong, however, to ascribe the subversion of republicanism to the French alone. Nationalists in both Syria and Lebanon confronted French paternalism not by demanding adherence to republican principles, but by marshalling clienteles of their own.

In Syria, the National Bloc and French collaborators were essentially engaged

in an intra-elite conflict. On both sides, urban bosses from prominent families dating from the late Ottoman era expended their public and private largesse to build personal political networks. In Damascus, Prime Minister Shaykh Taj, appointed by Ponsot in 1928, disbursed large amounts of public funds to woo the ulama and the popular masses with building projects and stipends. Also prominent in Damascus on the moderate/francophile side was the ʿAzm family, descended from powerful Ottoman landowners and governors and still among the richest in Syria. They commanded a hefty patronage network of their own. Their opponent, the National Bloc, was represented in Damascus by scions of notable Muslim families like the Mardams and Haffars, influential among the city's merchants; the Bakris and Quwwatlis, wealthy landowners who commanded networks of local strongmen in the city's old quarters; and the Greek Orthodox Khuri brothers, both lawyers with followings among professionals and in the Christian quarter. The Bloc's Aleppo branch was dominated by wealthy Sunni landowning elites, several of them related by marriage, like Ibrahim Hananu, Saʿdallah al-Jabiri and ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Kayyali.[58]

In Lebanon, after the 1926 constitution was promulgated, Muslims organized as an interest group to counter Maronite influence and compete for government posts and services. As in Syria, politics organized around political bosses who commanded clienteles of residents of their quarter or district, members of their religious sect, and/or of their extended families. In Beirut, they were drawn from prominent families like the Sunni Bayhums, Salams, and Sulhs; the Maronite Khuris and Eddés; the Catholic Chihas and Pharaons, and the Greek Orthodox Sursuqs, Turads, and Tuenis. The term zaʿim (pl. zuʿama) came into common usage in the 1920s to describe a new type of political boss, who brokered access to state benefits to nurture clienteles. They often fused economic interests with sectarian ones. One of the main reasons Beirut's Sunni bourgeoisie favored union with Syria is that they were merchants who profited from trade with the hinterland, and so feared the new borders would hurt trade. Maronite leaders who opposed unity with Syria tended to come from landed wealth, and so did not depend on the Syrian hinterland.[59]

After the Syrian Revolt these elite families, who had long dominated urban politics, colluded with the French in fostering this clientelist system of politics. The system worked to the mutual benefit of both sides, in a paternalistic pact that maintained elites' dominance and excluded humbler citizens from power in politics. The state's paternalistic intermediaries were in effect awarded exceptional rights over weaker groups within the population. The French tapped rural patrons to do their police work; that is, to keep the peasants quiet. They tapped urban bosses to control the mob, and religious patriarchs

to discipline their flocks. In response, opposition leaders made rival claims to represent these same subordinate groups of citizens. The paternalistic pact effected a fundamental inequality of rights that placed a privileged mediating elite between the state and peasants, workers, and women.

This is not to say that the public espousal of republican ideals on both sides was insincere. Weygand, Sarrail, Jouvenel, and even Ponsot to a degree were true believers in the great gift France had given the world, but their republicanism was tempered by rightist pressures within their own governments and the brutal necessities of dominating another people. Likewise, Syrian and Lebanese elites who prepared the constitutions had explicitly chosen republics to protect themselves from the tyranny they remembered in the Ottoman sultan, and the abuses of power they currently observed by Egypt's king. But the protection they sought was from interference with their own class, tribal, and sectarian bases of power, not necessarily the protection of all citizens from all forms of tyranny.

In other words, paternalism coexisted in tension with republicanism in the colonial civic order. There is evidence, for example, that the Syrian Revolt itself worked to diminish sectarian and tribal divisions, and to promote a politics based on rights rather than elite patronage. Although the revolt began in the rivalry of Druze clans, the motive for fighting was not solely intra-group loyalty to patriarchal chiefs. Rebel leaflets routinely appealed to the "Arab nation," and to "brothers," and "sons" of the nation. Sultan al-Atrash himself used the language of rights: "We make no distinction in religion or sects, as our only aim is to obtain our legal rights which belong equally to the sons of Syria."[60] In appealing to fraternity rather than paternity, rebel propaganda invoked the principles of the French Revolution seemingly abandoned by the high commissioners and their superiors in Paris. One leaflet advised rebels: "Let us fraternize with the French soldiers, and make them understand that they are the sons of the valiant men who mounted a revolution in 1789 for the liberty of weak nations."[61] Lenka Bokova has argued that while French colonizers took from the French Revolution inspiration to dominate others with their civilizing mission, Syrian rebels embraced the revolution's alternate ideals of liberty and equality.[62]

The Syrian Revolt and the constitutions transformed the terms in which Syrians and Lebanese conceptualized the crisis of paternity. The multiplicity of political tendencies of the immediate postwar period narrowed by the late 1920s into a conflict between visions of a civic order based on the equal rights in a fraternal republic and those based on the distribution of benefits at the will of a privileged elite. Elite nationalists adopted a limited, paternal

republicanism primarily as a weapon to expel their unwanted adoptive fathers, the French. But in the process, they unloosed principles chiseled into republican constitutions that their subordinates might use to challenge nationalists' own privileges. This is exactly what unprivileged citizens would do, as Part Two will discuss. Beforehand, however, it is necessary to address another key factor in the transformation of the crisis of paternity, the colonial state itself, to which we now turn.