CHAPTER 4

State Social Policy: Constructing a Hierarchy of Citizens

The late Ottoman and French mandatory states intervened in the lives of common citizens as never before. While the states claimed to act for the general good, to save the empire or spread civilization, their social policies were not neutral. They implicitly constructed hierarchies of those deemed more or less deserving of state services. In so doing, the states established different social rights for different social groups; that is, they defined a hierarchy of citizenship. French social policies differed from the Ottoman in their amplitude, in their increased dependence on paternalistic mediating agents, and in their ranking of social groups to be served. In reshuffling the civic order, the policies aggravated the regional, class, religious, and gender tensions already created by war and economic change. The political implications of state-imposed social hierarchies were not lost on the people of Syria and Lebanon. As chapter five will show, they would directly influence the shape and goals of emergent social reform movements.

Ottoman Reform: From Imperial Subjects to Imperial Citizens?

Since its earliest days, the Ottoman state had played a regulatory role in society, monitoring markets, setting prices, maintaining caravan routes, and supervising artisans' guilds. However, the state did not spend much on social welfare. Imperial social spending was limited mainly to construction of mosque-school-hospital complexes in major cities and to support for the poor on pilgrimage to Mecca. Basic food supplies were assured through regulations on trade and market prices, and with seizures of grain in times of crisis. Public health consisted primarily of quarantines when epidemics broke out. Most

expenditures on social welfare—poor relief, medical care and education—were delegated to local charities, which commanded funds from local endowments (awqaf; singular: waqf).[1]

Only in the late nineteenth century did the Ottoman state begin to intervene in social affairs with large sums of money, when the Tanzimat reforms finally produced an imperial bureaucracy capable of such intervention. Under the 1858 land code, many peasants gained new rights to landownership. During the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876–1909), the state extended low-cost agricultural loans to farmers in every province, although the wealthiest tended to benefit most. It also built a skeletal system of state schools throughout the empire, enrolling more than 900,000 students in 1895. Istanbul became a mecca of higher education, graduating lawyers, doctors, and civil servants from every province. In regions of the future Syria and Lebanon, Damascus's first public library was opened under the patronage of governor Midhat Pasha around 1880. The state also financed a rudimentary system of hospitals and schools in Beirut, Syria, and Aleppo provinces: In 1895, it funded six hospitals with 119 beds, paying the salaries of 10 physicians and surgeons; by 1914, it funded 478 primary schools with 26,420 students. Medical and law colleges in Damascus were established in the early 1900s. After the 1908 constitutional revolution, the Young Turks expanded education and disbursed significant sums to improve sanitation in cities.[2]

Ottoman social policy was shaped by essentially paternalistic aims. The state's preeminent concern was its own survival against mounting European aggression and intervention. Channeling funds particularly to military defense and administration, the state had little surplus to finance broader social reform. Slim budgets combined with political priorities to make the distribution of state benefits uneven. Under Sultan Abdulhamid the goal of state education was primarily to create skilled cadres for the military and civil service. Hence, when schools were built, boys were privileged because their raw manpower was needed by the army and bureaucracy. Schools were also located in cities, where urban elites who might fill bureaucratic posts lived. These same elites were also endowed with other benefits, like land grants and control of agricultural loans, to bind their loyalty to the state. In sum, state social policy created a loyal landowning and bureaucratic class.[3]

Another motive for state reform was to counteract the erosion of loyalty from within, especially as inspired by foreign missionaries, and especially in the Syrian provinces.[4] From the mid-nineteenth century, dozens of European and American religious orders arrived in the empire to bring the benefits of

their higher civilization, along with their vision of God, to Ottoman subjects. They were most active among religious minorities, like Armenians in Eastern Anatolia and Arab Christians in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. They were also supported by the French, British, and Russian governments, which claimed to protect minorities from the tyranny of the Muslim sultan. In response to this interference with its subjects, the Ottoman state built its national schools as a bulwark against foreign subversion, as a direct bond between state and citizen. Curricula featured lessons in Islam and plenty of Ottoman propaganda designed to promote loyalty to the state. According to Selim Deringil, "In the second half of the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire came into its own as an 'educator state' with a systematic programme of education/indoctrination for subjects it intended to mould into citizens."[5] For example, the Maktab 'Anbar school, founded in Damascus in 1893, offered the sons of notable families both "traditional" subjects like Arabic literature and Islamic studies taught by esteemed ulama of the city, and "modern" subjects, like math, biology and Ottoman history.[6] The Young Turks increased emphasis on inculcating citizenship after the 1908 constitutional revolution. To this end, they required education in Turkish in upper levels, a policy opposed by emergent Arab nationalists, including Maktab 'Anbar students, and regarded by European consuls as Turkish despotism.[7] Young Turk policy also expanded the education of girls because mothers were seen as children's first teachers, and so crucial in inculcating patriotic and modern values among future (male) citizens.

Other segments of the population were not wooed by the Ottoman educator-state, either because they were deemed inessential to the state's survival, or beyond its reach. Few non-Muslims attended the national schools; their health and education was left either to their religious communities or to foreign missionaries. Mount Lebanon was perhaps the most extreme example. Governed as an autonomous province since the 1860 massacres, almost all of its schools and hospitals were built by missionaries and local religious groups. This experience would have a profound effect, not just on Jemal Pasha's suspicions of subversion during the war, but also upon state-citizen relations in the future state of Lebanon. Also neglected by the state were peasants and workers, who rarely attended school or visited a state hospital. The reform of these groups was not considered vital to state interests. The state did not cultivate direct relations with them as citizens, but rather left them under the control of paternalistic elites. Ottoman labor laws, for example, required workers to join officially sanctioned guilds and prohibited them from organizing against their employers.

World War I was a critical watershed in the politics of state social intervention. Whereas before 1914 the state had often forced its schools and urban sanitation schemes upon a population indifferent to its aims of social progress, now people demanded state services as their right and their only hope for survival. Jemal Pasha did in fact organize an unprecedented network of soup kitchens, clinics, orphanages, and rationing to support the Syrian and Lebanese population. To the bitter dismay of local people, however, Turkish officials and the military received preference in food rations. During the Suez expedition of 1915, for example, Jemal Pasha requisitioned 11,000 camels to carry the biscuits, dates, olives, and water needed to feed his 25,000 troops.[8] Popular protests against the diversion of local food supplies implicitly claimed sustenance as a right.

In the immediate aftermath of war, Faysal's government made important initial efforts to meet demand for social and economic services, despite handicaps of a low budget, high inflation, and the exodus of trained Ottoman bureaucrats. His government managed to continue war pensions to widows, settle Armenian refugees in camps, and distribute much-needed seed to farmers. A rudimentary public health service attempted to battle epidemics despite a shortage of doctors and facilities. Education was made a top priority, because it was seen as a means of propagating Arab nationalism and loyalty to the state. The state reopened 36 schools in Damascus and Aleppo (including 10 schools for girls), as well as the medical and law schools in Damascus. Also established were libraries, chambers of commerce, and an agricultural bank. Unable to tax a war-ravaged population, Faysal personally staged fundraisers and lent support to private initiatives to improve general welfare.[9]

In sum, until World War I state benefits were bestowed from above, not by right, but in the paternalistic self-interest of the ruling elite. A hierarchy of privilege extended down from those who received the most benefits, state officials themselves, to Muslim elites in major cities, to potential (male) recruits for the military and civil service, and lastly to non-Muslims, women, workers, and peasants. Despite the limits and inequities of state services, for the most part citizens made few claims on the state. This all changed during the war, when the state became the warden of the masses. Faysal's regime crystallized a new attitude in the wake of the Ottoman state's abject failure to protect its people. While Faysal could not offer much aid, his state became the magnet for a multitude of social demands. Citizens now expected the state to attend to their welfare.

Reshuffling the Social Hierarchy under the French

As discussed in Part One, the maternal spirit of France's civilizing mission was soon overwhelmed by paternalism, as the military need to discipline a rebellious population took precedence. The French, like the Ottomans, awarded benefits in the self-interest of the state. Also like the Ottomans, the French used social policy to construct a loyal social hierarchy. Elites were still preferred over peasants and workers; men over women. But in a reversal with serious political consequences, the French altered the hierarchy to privilege Lebanese over Syrians and Christians over Muslims. And while the Ottomans had sought a direct relationship between state and citizen to counter the influence of foreign missionaries' schools and hospitals, now the French embraced missionaries as mediating agents of the state's social services. A third change was the extent of the state's intervention in society. By 1930, the French had expanded state social services far beyond Ottoman limits. The vigor with which the French sought to rearrange social relations would excite much controversy. The following account focuses on public health, education, and economic and labor policy, areas that would provoke the most reaction.

From its roots in postwar relief, the French built a public health service with little precedent in the Ottoman era. Local health departments were established in the various states under the direction of the High Commission. The Syrian department, for example, was organized almost single-handedly by a French-trained Syrian doctor, Yusuf 'Araqtinji.[10] In 1921, it began building hospitals and clinics to offer free services to the poor. In 1923, it undertook a systematic study of public health conditions in the Damascus region, surveying marshes, mosquitoes, and the incidence of malaria; the cleanliness of water sources; recent histories of epidemics; and major causes of mortality. It eventually established regular inspections of food vendors, restaurants, schools, and public baths. And as there were only 151 doctors in Damascus for a population of 150,000, the medical faculty at the Syrian University was reorganized by French doctors. The number of doctors in Syria more than doubled by 1927 to 346.[11] By 1930, there were 114 clinics and 57 hospitals with about 2,000 beds in all of the mandated territories. The state ran 21 of the hospitals directly, more than double the number the Ottoman state had opened, and subsidized many of the private ones. In propaganda, the French boasted of their investment in public health as evidence of their civilizing mission, claiming, "Hygiene wasn't practiced at all under the Turks."[12]

However, many problems were left unaddressed. Epidemics remained so

widespread through the early 1920s that the French were accused of doctoring health statistics submitted to the League of Nations.[13] Newspapers regularly complained of the need for more services, demanding hygiene as a public right.[14] And despite the persistence of severe health problems after the war, state budgets for health remained lower than those for police or the postal service, at about three percent of total spending.[15]

Indeed, the greatest expansion in public health care occurred in the private sector. The High Commission continued to disburse important sums from the French foreign ministry to subsidize missionaries. Two orders of French nuns, the Sisters of Charity and the Sisters of St. Joseph, ran so many clinics, hospitals, and orphanages that they were officially designated as "branches" of the High Commission's health inspectorate. Another major recipient of state subsidies was the St. Joseph's medical school in Beirut, run by French Jesuits. In 1928, these and other private agencies received 70,000 LLS in extra-budgetary health funding directly from the foreign ministry in Paris. In comparison, the budget for state public health services in all territories amounted only to 125,389 LLS.[16] Moreover, the reliance on missionaries made access to medical benefits uneven. Lebanon, with its longstanding presence of missionaries, was far better served. While Lebanon had 30 hospitals, Syria had just 27 hospitals for a population more than twice as large. The Beirut area alone had 12 hospitals, nine of them private, and hosted two of the three medical schools in the territories, both of them private (American and French). Syria, in contrast, depended more heavily on state institutions. While half of Syria's hospitals were public, only five of the 28 in Lebanon were.[17]

State education exhibited similar patterns. As in public health, the High Commission presided over state ministries of public instruction and maintained an important role in subsidizing, regulating, and inspecting missionary schools. Like the Ottomans, the French saw education primarily as a vehicle to cultivate loyal cadres in the state bureaucracy. Despite demands for Arabic education, French-language study was made mandatory in state schools, and made a requirement to qualify for state subsidies in private ones. Official curricula with exams leading to the baccalaureate degree were made uniform across the territories, and the baccalaureate became a prerequisite for entrance into universities and the civil service.[18] In 1930, the state sent 230 students to French universities on scholarship.

State education expanded dramatically. Enrollment in primary and secondary schools more than tripled between 1922 and 1930, from 17,000 to 59,773 students in all of the mandated territories. This was a significant increase over Ottoman state school enrollment, which in 1914 had totalled

only 27,500 students in the same area. However, the proportion of students attending state schools did not change: in 1930 as in 1914, only 39 percent of all primary schools in the region were run by the state.[19] The consequence of continued reliance on private schools was that Lebanese and Christians had greater access to education than Syrians and Muslims. Lebanese attended school at more than three times the rate of Syrians: in Syria only 3.4 percent of the total population was enrolled in school; in Lebanon, 12.6 percent. Meanwhile, 54 percent of all students were Christian, who represented only 23 percent of the total population.[20] The imbalance resulted mainly from the huge number of private primary schools in Lebanon—1,100—compared to just 325 in Syria. Almost all private schools were Christian, either run by local churches or by foreign missionaries. Uncounted in these statistics were nearly 700 Muslim Qur'anic schools. Mostly in rural Syria, the schools were unfunded, unregulated, and unlicensed by the state, offering limited courses of study on the Qur'an and the Arabic language to about 20,000 children under eight years old.[21]

At first glance, this educational bias appears quite similar to that of the Ottoman era, when state schools were primarily Muslim and private schools Christian, and when schools in Lebanon outnumbered those in Syria. However, there was a crucial difference. The mandatory state subsidized the private, Christian schools heavily, making them in fact quasi-state schools. Drawing on extra-budgetary funds from Paris, the High Commission subsidized about half of all private schools, paying about one-third of their costs. Maronites alone received about one-third of the subsidies granted to local (nonforeign) private schools. Meanwhile, the 433 French missionary schools depended so heavily on state subsidies that they claimed they would have to close without them.[22] While no comprehensive record was kept of subsidies paid to private schools, a 1928 report showed that at least a portion of them totalled 175,000 LLS, spent in addition to the 1.4 million LLS budgeted for state schools.[23] French and Catholic schools also received substantial support from dioceses in France, a source of funding unavailable to Muslim and other private schools.

By 1930, the bargain Gouraud had made in 1919 with religious schools appeared cast in stone. As part of a general budget-tightening effort in 1929–30, High Commissioner Henri Ponsot flirted with the idea of cutting subsidies to religious schools. Local Catholic and Maronite prelates, as well as French missionaries, alarmed that they had a second Sarrail on their hands, again mobilized their diplomatic skills. They argued that Italian missionaries would gain influence at their expense. Because education was seen primarily as a vehicle for French propaganda, Ponsot was forced to renew the mandatory state's

commitment to the subsidies.[24] The consequences of the commitment were not lost on contemporaries. Complaints had already been made about the relative shortage of funding for Syrian schools, which resulted in uncleanliness of classrooms, teachers' corruption, and high fees charged for textbooks.[25] The better-funded Lebanese worried publicly that the babel of foreign and religious schools would aggravate the country's social and political divisions. Lebanon must make its educational system uniform, said one newspaper, to produce "an elite with some homogeneity, the supreme remedy to divided countries."[26] The official sanction of such funding imbalances amounted to the award of greater educational rights to Christian and Lebanese citizens. It also amounted to greater rights for elite classes, since private schools invariably charged fees. And as always, the concentration of state schools in cities situated peasants on lowest rung of educational rights.

Economic policies compounded the privileging of Lebanon over the Syrian hinterland. The pace of postwar economic recovery varied regionally. Aleppo seems to have suffered most, due in part to ongoing rebellions. In April 1920, the U.S. Consul wrote: "Owing to the general disorders existing throughout the Aleppo district, all business since December 1919 has been at a complete standstill."[27] Damascus was plagued in the 1920s first by falling prices of the region's main crops, wheat and apricots, and then by the Syrian Revolt, which prevented the planting of wheat; the government had to stave off famine with emergency imports from Algeria.[28] Beirut, in contrast, saw a brisk return to business by the mid-1920s. The regional difference in wealth was reflected in purchases of automobiles, which barely existed in the region before 1914. In 1927, there were only 1,065 automobiles and no gas stations in the entire state of Syria, while in much smaller Lebanon there were 2,502 automobiles, and 10 curbside gas pumps in Beirut alone.[29]

While external factors like fluctuations in the global economy and foreign tariff barriers played a role in the regional imbalance, French policy did little to correct it. With French funding, Beirut became the preeminent port on the coast and the virtual linchpin of the region's economy. As a result, the Lebanese bourgeoisie profited heavily from financial and service industries, like import-export firms, banking, shipping, and tourism. In contrast, Aleppo and Damascus suffered declines in trade because the new national boundaries cut them off from their former markets in Turkey, Iraq, and Palestine.[30] This bias toward seaborne trade was due partly to the interests of French commercial lobbies (see chapter three) and partly to the influence of francophile commercial interests within Beirut's bourgeoisie.[31] Meanwhile, French efforts to bolster agricultural income in Syria failed, as projects to expand cultivation of

export cash crops like cotton and silk produced disappointing yields. Drops in world prices in the 1930s further limited farm profits.[32] Syrians sought to offset this loss of trade income by promoting industrial development; the French, however, invested little in industry and delayed until the late 1920s tariff reforms that would protect local manufacturers from foreign imports. A nascent industrial sector emerged only in the 1930s, featuring mainly food processing and textile factories, when the French finally raised tariff barriers and the world depression cut competition from imports.[33]

State labor policy produced its own imbalances. Its most important aspect was the provision of jobs. Although there are no global statistics, there is no doubt that the state itself became the largest single employer in the territories. During the 1920s, workers were hired by the thousands into the public sector—in the civil service; in schools, hospitals and clinics; on public works projects; and in transport. In addition to the more than 13,000 bureaucrats, teachers, and police on the state's civil service payroll, more than 2,000 workers were employed by French concessionary companies at the ports, on tramways and railroads, in electric utilities and the telephone service, and in sewage projects. Another 1,500 worked for the state's tobacco monopoly.[34] Others worked on the periphery of the state, indirectly dependent upon it; these included teachers, nurses, and support staff in state-subsidized health and educational institutions and the lawyers, accountants, printers, and others who provided support services to public agencies.

The French established a tacit pecking order of access to state jobs and other economic benefits. In Lebanon, Christians obtained a disproportionate number of civil service jobs, despite the constitution's promise of equitable access. Christians were favored not only for political reasons, but simply because more of them were schooled in French schools, and so knew French. Civil service jobs went increasingly to the many Maronites who moved down to Beirut from the mountains during the mandate. Meanwhile, Greek Orthodox and Catholics who had dominated Beirut's commercial and financial life since the nineteenth century took on important public functions. For example, Michel Chiha, a prominent Catholic banker who helped to write the 1926 constitution, became director of the government's Banque de Syrie et du Liban.[35] Sunni Muslims protested loudly against their relative exclusion from state jobs and economic benefits. Cities where they dominated suffered relative neglect. Sidon, for example, not only received fewer state services but also suffered deeply from the diversion of trade to the port of Beirut.[36] The lowest rung in the pecking order went to Shi'is of the south, who had the least representation in the capital, and so received virtually no jobs and few state benefits. Tensions over these

imbalances flared at the time of the 1932 census, which showed the population of 792,396 to be only 50.1 percent Christian and 48.6 percent Muslim.[37] The results were so disturbing to Christians that no census has been taken in Lebanon since, although it is generally believed that the country became majority Muslim by 1940.

Class differentials also characterized state labor policy. Wealthy urbanites enjoyed the highest paying jobs, in the civil bureaucracy and as consultants. On the lowest end of the pay scale were those who took the intermittent public works jobs, upon which many unemployed artisans and displaced peasants relied to feed their families. Road construction was perhaps the most common temporary job offered by the state, which in the 1920s linked the major cities with paved routes suitable for automobiles. The road linking Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, for example, was built between 1924 and 1930. To accomplish this expansion, the French continued the Ottoman practice of forced labor. Under nineteenth-century laws, the Ottomans had required most men aged 16 to 60 to work up to 30 days every five years. The French modified this policy by paying low wages to volunteers and those who owed back taxes. One area where poor peasants held an advantage, however, was in recruitment to the Special Troops. Many of those displaced by war rushed to sign up.[38]

As in Lebanon, French labor policies aggravated sectarian tensions in Syria. ʻAlawi peasants, notoriously destitute and almost universally illiterate, worked as sharecroppers in the French-supported tobacco and silk industries. French policy diverted their discontent into sectarian strife. The head of the ʻAlawi state, Sulayman Murshid, helped to channel sharecroppers' resentment against their mainly Sunni landlords into a separatist, religion-based movement antagonistic toward Sunni nationalists' ideology of a unified Syria.[39] In the early 1930s, French Jesuits' success in the religious conversion of some ʻAlawis, who apparently sought thereby to escape the authority of oppressive tribal shaykhs, provoked a political scandal.[40] The Special Troops also became a cauldron of sectarian controversy, as ʻAlawi, Druze, Circassian, and Maronite peasants competed to join it as an escape from poverty. Meantime, Sunnis complained that they were relatively excluded from a force routinely used to suppress them.[41]

In addition to providing jobs, the state also played a potentially important regulatory role in labor affairs. In its capacity to supervise relations between employers and employees, the state was placed at the center of the volatile structural shifts in the labor market after the war. Despite workers' distress, however, the state resisted taking an active regulatory role. Its anti-labor stance was supported by the influential and virulently anti-union Lyon Chamber of

Commerce, whose support high commissioners sought.[42] No departments of labor were established and no new labor laws were adopted to protect workers dislocated by war, loss of markets, or import competition. Furthermore, the state blocked workers' attempts to protect themselves from employer abuse, citing a 1912 Ottoman law that forbade employee-only unions and strikes and required all guilds to register with the state. Ottoman labor law, inherited by the mandate, also made no provision for work accident liability, which became a problem with increasing injury rates among public works and concessionary workers. By the 1930s, there were more than 110 serious work accidents and two or three resultant deaths per year.[43] In 1927, the Lebanese parliament (dominated by pro-French, bourgeois delegates) rejected a proposal to hold employers responsible for some accidents because, it was argued, such a law would harm nascent industries.[44]

The state's hands-off policy on labor issues was made apparent early, in a 1922 strike in Beirut against the French tramway concessionary company. The workers demanded pay increases, eight-hour days, occasional days off, the right to keep their jobs when they fell ill, and the right to a hearing before being fired. The director of the tramway company complained to High Commissioner Henri Gouraud that the workers had "a nerve" to demand protections similar to those enjoyed by French workers. Gouraud concurred that French protections should not be extended to employees of French companies in Lebanon.[45] In 1924–25, however, high commissioners Maxime Weygand and Maurice Sarrail considered easing Ottoman restrictions on workers' right to organize, expanding technical education, and freeing peasants from feudal obligations. Under pressure from the League of Nations to adopt legal guarantees of "humanitarian and egalitarian work conditions for men, women and children," the High Commission appointed a committee to prepare a new labor code for Syria and Lebanon.[46] But after the Syrian Revolt, Ponsot reversed course, in keeping with the general return to paternalism. Repressive laws were stiffened to limit workers' unionization because the French feared that organized labor would only strengthen the power of rebellious nationalists.[47] The republicanism of the new constitutions, it appeared, would not embrace the rights of workers.

In sum, the 1920s state significantly expanded benefits in health, education, and labor. However, these policies constructed a hierarchy of citizens based on their location, class, and religion. Lebanese and Christians enjoyed greater access to state-funded health and education, because the 1920s state revived pre-mandatory patterns of funding to French missionaries and local protegés. The educated urban elite also enjoyed privileged access to state-funded schools, universities, and high-paying government jobs. Even nationalist elites

in Damascus sent their children to French lycées. In contrast, Syrians,' Muslims,' and the poor's greater reliance on direct, unmediated state services, like public schools and health clinics, put them at a disadvantage. Benefits were bestowed at the will of the French, not according to the principle of citizens' equal rights, and those with links to the state's network of mediating institutions gained most.

Gender: The Second Pillar of Social Paternalism

The gendering of social services cut across all other disparities of region, class, and religion. Women were systematically placed below men in every category, and placed at a greater distance from the state. The state tended to farm out females' health and education to private agencies, while providing more direct services to men. The state also devalued women's labor compared to that of men. While these policies appear to follow Ottoman paternalism, there were two important differences. First, because they suffered so much in the war, the sheer number of women who sought state services increased dramatically in the 1920s. As a result, they were incorporated into the civic order, albeit in subordinate terms, more than they had ever been in the Ottoman empire. Second, men lost some of their privileges relative to women, because under the mandate they were no longer potential draftees to the army.

In public health, for example, the health of both men and women was secondary to the needs of the French Army of the Levant. Under the direction of the army's chief medical officer, the health inspectorate devoted far more resources to limiting the spread of venereal disease to troops than to gastroenteritis, which caused high infant mortality among Syrian and Lebanese civilians. Both male and female infants suffered. This did not signify a general gender equity in public health policy, however. Women were identified as the primary locus of disease, and uniquely blamed for infant mortality.

The state's programs for mothers were delegated to two bourgeois ladies' philanthropies, which were much touted in French propaganda as symbols of Franco-Levantine cooperation, but hardly equipped to address the magnitude of health problems. The first and most prominent philanthropy was the Red Cross, headquartered in Beirut. While a Syrian-Lebanese Red Cross had been founded during the war by emigrants in Latin America, the French placed it under their national service after the war. Between 1919 and 1921, the Red Cross opened Mothers' Societies (Sociétés Mères) in Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Alexandretta and Latakia that treated wounded soldiers, children, pregnant

women, and the elderly.[48] Eventually, the Red Cross would build a network of orphanages, schools, clinics, and first-aid and nurses' training programs. Second was the Drop of Milk (Goutte de Lait) society, founded in 1922 to supply sterilized milk, food, clothing, and medical advice to the children of impoverished women who practiced "a Syrian infant hygiene that is traditionally deplorable."[49] Heavily subsidized by the state, the program expanded rapidly. In 1922 it distributed 8,850 bottles of sterile milk in Damascus and Aleppo. By 1930 it had opened additional clinics in Beirut and Latakia, distributing a total of 234,000 bottles to more than 2,000 nursing mothers. Women visited the clinics for advice nearly 10,000 times that year.[50]

The Drop of Milk and Red Cross societies were most effective as a political tool, binding elites to the mandatory state. While the French state provided essential funding, prominent French, Syrian, and Lebanese women were recruited to raise additional funds and deliver services. The Drop of Milk, although nominally founded by the Syrian health department, was in fact placed under the direction of honorary president Mme Haqqi Bey al-ʿAzm, wife of the governor-general of Damascus. The wives of high commissioners were routinely named honorary president of the Red Cross. Leaders of these organizations became known in the press mainly for their glamorous charity balls that attracted French and local elites. Bourgeois women and female missionaries became, in effect, the foot soldiers of services delivered to women, while men remained the behind-the-scenes generals. Class difference underpinned the maternalist-paternal system. The poor women who were their clients were constructed as dependent beings unable to protect themselves or provide for their own needs. And although the work of private volunteers was laudable, it was hardly sufficient to meet the needs of the 100,000s of women living in the territories.

The only true maternity wards, for example, were also small and privately run. In Beirut, the Jesuit St. Joseph's medical school ran a maternity that conducted 2,173 free consultations and hospitalized 625 women in 1930; the American University ran a maternity in the Armenian refugee camps, where 252 babies were born the same year. In Damascus, the British hospital provided free maternity services to a limited number of women. As for public hospitals, that at the Syrian University also took some maternity cases, while in all of Aleppo, only eight hospital beds were reserved for maternity cases.[51] Women received, in general, far less medical care than men. In 1927, women were admitted to Syria's eight major state-run hospitals 1,644 times, far less than men's 3,912 check-ins.[52]

But there was a clear demand by women for professional medical care. Consulting a doctor became a norm for many urban women, although Muslim

women in the conservative cities of Hama and Tripoli did so less, because of prejudice against consulting male doctors.[53] Elsewhere, women flooded the few free, state-run clinics available in the 1920s (fig. 4). In 1927, women made nearly 20,000 visits to the six public clinics in Damascus, outnumbering those of men by 30 percent.[54] Women likely visited doctors often because of their childbearing needs. As we have seen, this was an era of large families. Women married young, usually under 20 years of age, and were pregnant often.[55] In 1935, the first year the state produced accurate figures, there were nearly 100,000 recorded births in the mandated territories, about 33 births per 1,000 inhabitants—a rate higher than in contemporary Syria.[56]

Despite women's clear need for medical treatment, the mandatory state lagged behind neighboring Palestine in developing programs for them, according to an American YWCA director in Beirut, who otherwise praised French efforts to fight disease and build clinics:

> Special institutions or provisions for women and children are conspicuous by their absence in Syria. There is very little beyond the maternity hospitals in Beirut. The need has apparently not been realized as one of the urgent necessities.[57]

Most women obviously relied upon midwives, who were not required to hold proficiency licenses. This shortage of programs was particularly unfortunate given high infant mortality rates. In the cities of Damascus, Homs, and Hama in 1922, one-fifth of all deaths were babies under age one, and nearly half of all deaths were children under six years old. In 1927, the situation was only marginally better: 10.5 percent of deaths in Syria (excluding Latakia and Jabal Druze) were infants under age one; 38 percent of deaths were children under age ten. The death rate was worst in the countryside, where women generally expected half of their children to die. Mothers' death rates were high too. In 1922, the only year for which statistics are available, about five percent of deaths (214) were women in childbirth in the cities of Damascus, Homs, and Hama.[58]

In contrast to this generally relaxed attitude toward women's health care was the aggressive regime of health regulation for prostitutes. Among the first relief efforts organized by the French were workhouses for women without jobs or family. In January 1919, about 1,000 women were domiciled in workhouses run by nuns. The primary goal, according to Father Rémy, the principal organizer of French relief, was to shelter the women from debauchery, to which poverty "inevitably" led them.[59] Catholic missionaries taught them alternative

means of supporting themselves, usually sewing (fig. 5). In 1921, the state issued new regulations to combat an outbreak of venereal disease among French troops. Prostitutes, dancers, and singers were required to register with local police, carry identification cards, work in designated brothels (maisons de tolérance), and submit to twice-weekly medical exams. Separate hospitals and clinics were built solely for this purpose; women who refused medical examinations were brought to court. To leave prostitution, a woman was required to inform the police, who would then arrange to have her live with a guardian. In 1922, a total of 764 prostitutes were registered in Syria's four largest cities, and the anti-venereal hospital in Damascus treated 682 cases. Treatment with a drug containing mercury reduced the incidence of syphilis dramatically by year's end. In 1927, Syrian clinics conducted more than 44,000 tests on more than 1,000 prostitutes, dancers, and singers, treating 2,400 cases of venereal disease. Lebanon had only 242 registered prostitutes, presumably because fewer troops were stationed there.[60]

In sum, this was a distinctly colonial health plan. While the prostitution laws mirrored those in France, the neglect of maternal and infant care contrasted with the vigorous campaign pursued in Paris to improve prenatal and postpartum medical care.[61] In the metropole the French worried about the low number of young males available for military recruitment; they had no similar concern in Syria and Lebanon. The mandate's health plan was also paternalistic. Syrian and Lebanese mothers were deemed incompetent and in need of constant supervision by bourgeois philanthropists, while single women unguarded by males were subjected to the vice squad. Although the French publicized their health programs with pride, most Syrian and Lebanese women were not in fact sent the message that the mandatory state was their motherly caretaker. The message they received was that they were poor mothers and sexual threats.

In education, girls were sent a similarly ambiguous message. While demand for girls' education grew, the mandatory state virtually ignored it. Mention of women was omitted in a 1919 list of educational goals by the colonial lobby and again in a 1933 policy statement by the mandate's top school inspector.[62] Stingy budgets produced a critical shortage of space in schools and an atmosphere of competition that favored boys' over girls' attendance. Interest in girls' schooling began among late Ottoman elites, who sought to improve mother's childrearing as a step toward social progress.[63] These sentiments grew into popular demand by the 1920s, augmented by concern that women needed job skills to support themselves in the event of another war.[64] While only 6,000 girls were listed by the Ottoman government in 1895 as enrolled in schools in

the provinces of Syria, Aleppo, and Beirut, by 1938 more than 88,000 were enrolled in the region.[65]

Despite this evidence of interest, girls' enrollments continued to lag far behind boys.' By 1930 girls represented 33 percent of all students (61,000), but the proportion varied greatly by region. In Lebanon, where virtually all school-aged boys attended school, only 30 percent of school-aged girls were enrolled in 1930. In the provinces of Damascus and Aleppo, 39 percent of boys and 16 percent of girls were enrolled; in Latakia, 23.5 percent of boys and only 8 percent of girls. Everywhere, however, girls' enrollment dropped off precipitously at the secondary level: in 1930, only 240 of 3,682 students in Syria's lycées were female; the proportion in Lebanon was 770 girls to 5,850 boys. Virtually no women attended local universities; the American University of Beirut awarded five bachelor's degrees to women through 1930.[66]

The state made even less of a commitment to girls' education than private schools did. In 1930 Syria, girls represented 37 percent of students in private primary schools, compared to 28 percent in public ones; in Lebanon, 41 percent of private-school students were female, compared to 29 percent of public-school students. The public-private gap may have reflected the preference of parents, who believed girls' morality was better protected under the surveillance of nuns.[67] But the rising girls' enrollment in public schools suggests that parents increasingly found them acceptable: The proportion of girls in public schools had nearly doubled since 1895, when just 16 percent of students in Ottoman state schools of the region were female.[68]

The state limited girls' enrollments by not building schools, training teachers or making scholarships available to them. In 1924, there were 414 boys' and 79 girls' public primary schools in Syria and Lebanon. In the next six years, the state opened 99 more boys' primary schools, but only 36 for girls. In contrast, private educators opened 174 girls' primary schools in the same period. Compounding the problem was a chronic shortage of female teachers in public schools. While private schools were mainly religious and employed a large number of foreign (and inexpensive) nuns, public schools depended upon a small pool of female students in teachers' colleges. In 1930, only 43 girls compared to 76 boys were enrolled in the state-run teachers' colleges at Damascus and Aleppo. In contrast, Lebanon's private teachers' colleges enrolled 18 boys and 85 girls, many of them destined to teach in private schools.[69] Finally, lack of scholarships diminished the number of girls at lycées and universities, which routinely charged tuition fees. In 1930, Syria's seven state-run lycées enrolled 32 girls and 369 boys on scholarships from various sources. While the High Commission awarded women 30 percent of

its scholarships (41 of 139) for higher education in 1932–33, many of those went to daughters of French officials.[70]

As a result of state policy, many girls had no public school to attend in their vicinity. Official policy routed girls into private, and mostly religious schools, while it offered more direct support for public boys' education. This meant that proportionately more Muslim girls than Muslim boys were forced to attend Christian schools. The greater reliance of girls on private education also colored their status as citizens. Girls' contact with the state was mediated more through religious elites. Ironically, while the French promoted girls' religious education in the Levant, the anti-clerical ruling elites of the Third Republic so deplored religious education in their own country that they had outlawed state funding for it. As will be seen in the next chapter, many Syrians and Lebanese held similar suspicions about Christian schools.

Women figured even less in state labor policy than in education and health. While women were hired by the state, they were hired in lower numbers and at lower pay. Women participated in road construction, and represented many of the 1,500 workers who sorted tobacco and made cigarettes for the state monopoly. Women also worked as low-paid telephone operators for the post and telegraph department and as typists and secretaries in the civil bureaucracy. Female schoolteachers were routinely paid lower salaries than male teachers and forced to leave their jobs when they married. Disparities in pay in the private sector were also tolerated. And while the High Commission became aware by 1930 of the high rate of women's unemployment, it did little to address the problem.[71] A 1937 report found that the number of Syrian and Lebanese women working in industrial and artisanal jobs had dropped by half from 132,000 in 1913 to 65,000. The report blamed the loss of jobs on the collapse of the silk industry, but dismissed the importance of these findings: "The thousands of women who worked in this field [the silk industry] should not be considered unemployed; they only did these jobs intermittently and their wages went almost exclusively to pay for their own clothes and those of their children."[72] The report completely ignored the fact that families had come to rely on women's supplementary income in a time when many male breadwinners faced cuts in hours and pay. Consequently, few unemployed women benefitted from the state's job-training programs, although several state-subsidized charities like the Red Cross continued to train women in the dying handicrafts: The Damascus girls' handicraft school enrolled 222 students in 1936, turning away many applicants. Like the low female enrollment in state teacher colleges, medical schools only trained a small number of midwives and nurses: a total of 115 women were enrolled in such programs in 1930, compared to 857 men in

medical, pharmacological, dental, and law programs at Syrian University and St. Joseph University.[73]

As a result, women who lost jobs in artisanal homework had little alternative. They were not hired into the new economic sectors—transport, utilities, heavy industry—at anywhere near the rate that their male peers were. Only 6,400 women, as opposed to 24,000 men, were listed in 1937 as holding jobs in "modern" industries. Most of these were employed in the tobacco industry and in large textile factories built in Tripoli and Beirut. The women not only faced discrimination, but also encountered serious obstacles to taking the new jobs, which tended to require work outside the home. This was a difficult proposition for women used to working while minding their children. While unmarried women might take jobs in offices and factories, housework even in urban homes with electricity and plumbing was so demanding that it was quite unthinkable for married women to take them.[74] Also, the majority of families, Muslims who observed customary seclusion of women, would not permit their daughters or wives to work in mixed-sex workplaces.

In sum, even though women's demand for education and work grew in the 1920s and 1930, the state continued to underfund schools and job training programs for them. Similarly, while great strides were made in the provision of medical services, women's needs were not even remotely met. Certainly, social attitudes about women's presence in public contributed to the gender gap in state services, and they will be discussed further in the next chapter. However, it is important to note here that attitudes were inevitably shaped by state policy, which effectively defined men and women differently as citizens. In public health, women were constructed as ignorant, dependent, and the locus of disease in a way that men simply were not. In public schooling, girls' education was treated as optional rather than a necessity. In labor policy, women's work was systematically devalued through policies that tolerated lower pay and ignored their unemployment. Women's participation in the civic order was, finally, more indirect than men's. Women were routinely placed at a farther remove from the state, where their access to state benefits was often mediated by bourgeois philanthropists, religious elites, and the male guardians to whom they were legally bound.

These gendered differences in citizens' status overlapped with and complemented disparities of class, region, and religion. As the next chapter will show, by the late 1920s subordinated groups began to contest their status as second-class citizens in the colonial civic order.