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## “The Summit of Civilization”

### Nationalisms among the Arabic-Speaking Colonies in Latin America

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Arabic-speaking migrants from the eastern Mediterranean and residing in the Americas played a critical role in the formation, evolution, and diffusion of nationalist ideologies and national identities to their home societies during the first half of the twentieth century. The creation of layered identities and the formulation of ideas about the destiny of the old country was a contested process, producing dissolution and refashioning of the larger community and inspiring the creation of parochial institutions—all of which hardened lines of division within the émigré colonies. There were three critical geopolitical issues directly affecting this group of diverse people, namely, the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, the Ottoman Empire's entry into World War I on the side of the Central Powers, and the emergence and decline of the French and British mandates in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine following the collapse of the Ottoman state. For the majority of these migrants living in the Americas, the question of the French in Syria and Lebanon was by far the most divisive and consequential concern for the community. The mandate provoked the continued and decisive fragmentation of the Arabic-speaking colonies across the Americas as lines of association were redrawn, complete with the promulgation of new institutions, emergence of new press organs, and the birth of new national identities. Migration and transnational processes, notwithstanding local considerations, forced these people to reformulate how they viewed themselves, the immigrant community to which they belonged, and how best to present it to the host society. At the collective level, local memory was constantly contested, readjusted, and rewritten based upon the contingencies of life

and goals of various actors. Certainly, these immigrants were critical to the formation of modern national identities in Argentina, Brazil, and elsewhere in Latin America; however, this essay focuses on the formation and evolution of political identities linked to the old country. As such, to fully understand the long-distance nationalism of these migrants, scholars must assess the social relations among and makeup of Arabic-speaking immigrants to fully appreciate how distant political transformations influenced émigré communities and gave rise to national identities.

This essay highlights some of the key actions and expressions of various nationalist sentiments among Arabic-speaking populations in the Americas. Given the fact that a substantial portion of immigrants from the eastern Mediterranean likely did not associate with immigrant institutions, this discussion focuses on the colonies' intellectual and socioeconomic elites.<sup>1</sup> That said, it is likely that most immigrants would have shared in one or more of the sentiments and ideas circulating in the colonies' Arabic-language newspapers.<sup>2</sup> The essay uses signifiers such as "Syrian," "Lebanese," and "Palestinian" but situates the terms in their historical context. It is clear from the historical evidence that these typologies were never neutral signifiers but were contested spaces designed to create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

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### What's in a Name? Ottomans, Syrians, Lebanese, Syrian-Lebanese, Palestinians, and Arabs

The establishment of modern nation-states and, thus, hegemonic national identities in the Middle East happened in the context of massive emigration, imperial collapse, global war, European imperialism, and decolonization during yet another global war. As such, the states of Lebanon and Syria and territories populated by Palestinians, including present-day Israel, experienced severe political transformations directly affecting the urgencies of nation building, the creation, appropriation and refashioning of national symbols, and the self-identification of these polities. Immigrants from these lands residing in the Americas contributed material aid, clashed in ideologically charged debates regarding the destiny of their homelands, and helped formulate national identities of these newly formed states. At the same time, situations on the ground and the makeup of the community and its elite in the Americas also influenced a particular colony's approach to these national questions. Taken together, there was no single response to these national questions by immigrants across the continents

and, importantly, religious identity did not predict necessarily one's political allegiance.

A majority of sojourners from Bilad al-Sham (present-day Syria, Lebanon, and Israel/Palestine) who lived abroad between 1880 and 1950 arrived before World War I carrying Ottoman documents. These travelers formed a part of the mass movement of people moving to the Americas. Many of the pioneer generation—those who arrived in the Americas prior to 1900—possessed better skills, had access to capital and information, and were overwhelmingly Christian. Most of these migrants elected commerce as the best way to achieve financial betterment, creating an intercontinental phenomenon of the Arab itinerant peddler.<sup>3</sup> As emigration became a more widespread phenomenon after 1900, the composition of the flow changed as poorer and less educated migrants moved, including many more Muslims.

Yet scholars rarely have produced thoughtful discussion about how these migrants possessed a number of competing loyalties and layered identities or why certain allegiances became more or less prominent over time. For many of these people, the terms “Syrian,” “Lebanese,” “Palestinian,” and “Arab” metamorphosed in significance multiple times over the course of a couple of decades. Local issues, such as host society values, legal regimes, economic participation, stereotypes, and prejudices, influenced identity formation. Politics of the homeland and institution building by the migrants themselves did too. The creation of immigrant and national identities was a contested process having as much to do with the old country as with local, internal deliberations within these émigré colonies.

Authors have increasingly focused on the ethnicity of these migrants to better assess how these immigrants viewed and presented themselves privately and publicly, but this scholarship too has suffered from a disposition that there was something essential, an a priori element to a Lebanese, Syrian, or Palestinian identity. Yet focusing on ethnicization—the creation of an ethnic identity in relation to a perceived outside group—has been a critical contribution to the study of Arabic-speaking migrants in the Americas.<sup>4</sup> As Akram Khater has elegantly argued, Syrians became Syrians in the Americas, but this identity was constructed in direct relation with fellow immigrants elsewhere, in dialogue with intellectuals based in Beirut, Cairo, and Damascus and with the host society's social and moral values in mind.<sup>5</sup> Community institutions, particularly the press, served as the critical catalyst to this collective identity formation. Charting the development of these community institutions can assess the expression of competing, emergent, and novel identities and how they change over time.<sup>6</sup>

Ethnicity fundamentally refers to relationships and contacts between groups of people.<sup>7</sup> For ethnicity to materialize, groups of people must have a “minimum amount of contact” between each other and think about “ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves.”<sup>8</sup> It is, therefore, a feature of a relationship and not an innate or primordial quality of a certain group of people. Ethnic groups rely on cultural and historical artifacts to help create boundaries with those deemed different. People use symbols that evoke a certain meaning with which many from the group identify, fostering a perceived authentic and shared cultural heritage.<sup>9</sup> Hence, the construction in the Americas of Arab, Lebanese, Palestinian, and Syrian identities were sensitive to multiple forces, ideologies, and processes.

In the United States, for instance, immigrants did not possess equal economic rights as citizens. Residents there could lease property, but they could not purchase real estate unless they had at least applied for citizenship. Syrian immigrants debated among themselves the value of taking U.S. citizenship. After evaluating, an increasing number of Syrians pursued this option and thus had to prove before a court in places like New York and Atlanta their descent from the Caucasian race, as stipulated by the law. The urgency of creating a racial classification in the first decade of the twentieth century provoked a heated transnational debate among Arabic speakers, including such prominent intellectuals as Jurji Zaydan in Cairo and Muhammad Kurd Ali in Damascus, regarding the importance of defining a racialized identity.<sup>10</sup> This issue was simply not a concern for Syrian immigrants in Argentina, who had equal economic and civil rights as Argentines whether or not they naturalized. More broadly, the process of ethnicization of Arabic speakers would become increasingly associated with nationalist movements. Nationalism, the politicization of ethnic identity, shaped culture because “ethnic, linguistic, and racial differences, *hitherto politically inconsequential*, [acquired] an ideological force and institutional weight.”<sup>11</sup> The idea of national culture had an integrative potential where in many cases elites embraced a shared identity and past with non-elites for the first time. Yet when nationalists appropriated symbols and attached a nationalist discourse to them, their meanings changed, necessarily including some and excluding others.<sup>12</sup>

For the Arabic-speaking communities in the Americas, the cultural and social elites of these immigrants spearheaded the formation of a hegemonic immigrant identity through the erection of community institutions and periodicals. Within the community and in the Arabic-language press published in the Americas prior to the collapse of Ottoman Empire,

the community referred to themselves as “*jāliyya suriyya*” and “*jāliyya ‘uthmāniyya*” (“Syrian colony” and “Ottoman colony,” respectively). In Spanish, they used “*colonia siria*,” “*colectividad siria*,” and “*colectividad sirio-otomana*.” Latin American officials alternated between “*colonia siria*,” “*turcos*,” “*árabes*,” and “*sirios*.” Argentine officials standardized the use of Ottoman for their political identity in 1914, and Brazilian administrators did not start counting Syrians and Lebanese as separate recognized political identities until 1921.<sup>13</sup> This hegemonic immigrant identity went through a variety of transformations during World War I and later throughout the French and British colonial moment in the Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria. After the collapse of the Ottoman state, immigrants in Latin America began to refer to themselves as Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, and Syrian-Lebanese. Which terms were used depended upon local consideration of the particular immigrant communities.

While there is a certain necessity and convenience in using these typologies, simply dividing these people into Syrians and Lebanese and Palestinians has obscured the alterations of the meanings of these terms wrought by intense political transformations in the old country and the corresponding debates and urgencies within the Arabic-speaking colonies in the Americas. Moreover, these terms, as used by most scholars of these communities, essentialize these identities into seemingly self-evident axioms, conflating nationality with ethnicity and obscuring internal dynamics and diversity.<sup>14</sup> And despite the current tendency to see ethnicity as “indissolubly linked to nationalism and race, to ideas about normative political systems and relations, and to ideas about descent and blood,” scholars of immigrants and minorities must appreciate the fluidity and amorphous nature of cultural symbols and discourses and how internal and external processes transformed them.<sup>15</sup>

### The Ottoman Empire and the Syrian Colonies in the Americas

The role of the Ottoman state and its émigré communities in the lives and destiny of each other is remarkably understudied. Part of this problem stems from a general acceptance on the part of scholars to propagate or accept certain myths about the emigrants. The Syrian colonies throughout the Americas forged a saga of fleeing religious persecution from their Ottoman Muslim overlords.<sup>16</sup> The truth is less dramatic. Changes in the regional economy of Bilad al-Sham created an environment where an increasing number of Syrians, who benefited from increased access to education and

information, sought adventure, economic relief, and vast riches by moving into the *mahjar* (land of emigration). As the local economies expanded and greater wealth circulated even among peasants of Mount Lebanon, the Ansariya Mountains and the Valley of the Christians, a cultural shift placed emigration as an acceptable life choice and recognized social practice. While emigration from Ottoman domains was technically illegal until 1900, state officials and diplomats could do little to stem the tide.<sup>17</sup>

Once in the *mahjar*, relations among the migrants and with the Ottoman state were complex, featuring a variety of issues, demands, fears, and expectations. As early as 1890 Syrian immigrants in Buenos Aires began requesting the Ottoman state to establish formal diplomatic relations with Argentina.<sup>18</sup> Brazil and the United States had forged agreements earlier in the nineteenth century. Outside of these formal channels, immigrants certainly kept in touch with family and friends by using the standardized international mail service, remitting between 20 million and 35 million French francs back to the old country via wire transfer and subscribing to periodicals and journals published in Cairo, Beirut, Jerusalem, New York City, Rio de Janeiro, and Buenos Aires.<sup>19</sup> The Young Turk Revolution (July 24, 1908) and the Ottoman entrance into World War I on the side of the Central Powers (August 2, 1914) were two historical events in the old country that proved consequential to immigrants abroad. These incidents intersected with local issues confronting immigrants in the Americas, such as naturalization.<sup>20</sup> For a great number of Arabic speakers abroad, the political destiny of the old country prompted a great deal of anxiety, distress, mobilization, and confrontation.

In broad terms, Syrian immigrants in the Americas desired to remain a part of the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I.<sup>21</sup> In response to a New York-based Arabic-language newspaper support in 1904 for naturalization, Na'um Labaki, a Christian from Mount Lebanon based in São Paulo, argued in his paper *al-Munāẓir* that Syrians must “remain loyal to Ottomanism and committed to Syrian patriotism [*wataniyya*] so they can return to Syria.”<sup>22</sup> The expressed opinions were as diverse as the composition of immigrants, and in spite of “antagonistic attitudes on the part of certain groups of politically motivated intellectuals,” the Arabic-speaking communities in the Americas possessed “close and friendly contact” with Istanbul.<sup>23</sup> Hence, it was not contradictory for Palestinians in Chile to establish the Sociedad Otomana de Beneficencia in 1904 or Maronites from Mount Lebanon in Tucumán to organize the Sociedad Turco-Argentina in 1898.<sup>24</sup>

When the Young Turks seized power in July 1908 and reinstated

constitutional rule, the Syrian émigré colonies embraced them. People across the hemisphere held celebrations commemorating the heroes of the revolution and the shared commitment to reform within the empire. In Buenos Aires, the colony organized an event at the posh theatre house Casa Suiza featuring a performing ensemble of young girls, Ottoman flags, Chinese lanterns, a portrait of Midhat Paşa (author of the Ottoman Constitution) and a rendition of Argentine and Ottoman anthems.<sup>25</sup> In New York, the Young Turks, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and the Hunchakist Society hosted a raucous celebration at Carnegie Hall comprising “Turks, Armenians, Syrians, Albanians and even some former Greek subjects of the Sultan.”<sup>26</sup> Under banners written in Armenian, Turkish, and French declaring “Hurrah for the Young Turks,” “Hurrah for the Armenian Revolutionary Federation,” and “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,” Ottoman Chargé d’Affaires Munji Bey noted the mutual suffering of the Sublime Porte’s subjects under the despot Sultan ‘Abd al-Hamīd and called for common purpose, declaring, “But we must be friends and brothers now. We must respect justice. If we use this force which God has given us we shall be strong and we will fight for liberty without blood.”<sup>27</sup> In November 1912 Tanus Shahin Abi Dagher, writing as “an Ottoman from Mount Lebanon” and supposedly on behalf of the three thousand Syrians in Venezuela, dispatched a letter to the Grand Vizier Kamil Paşa declaring the ability to muster twenty thousand émigrés in Latin America to return and battle the Balkan separatists and defend the “Great Ottoman state.”<sup>28</sup> In Brazil, Nami Jafet, a former schoolteacher in Mount Lebanon, the most respected Syrian intellectual in South America and likely the wealthiest immigrant too, offered public and full-fledged support for the Ottoman Constitution and the Young Turk government on the fourth anniversary of the revolution, concluding with a rousing “Long live the Constitution! Long live the Ottoman homeland!”<sup>29</sup>

Notions of liberty and constitutional rule served as the critical elements for the celebrations in Argentina, Brazil, and the United States. Despite the proscribed nature of democratic practices in these countries, the perception of liberty, the opportunity to purchase property and pursue economic betterment combined to influence how Arabic speakers understood their place in local society and how they interpreted the events in the old country. Arabic-speaking émigrés attempted to identify with their host countries through the liberal discourse of guaranteed individual rights and national leaders responded in kind. For instance, Syrians in Buenos Aires celebrated the empire’s entrance into the pantheon of free nations, while

the distinguished Socialist legislator for the capital, Alfredo Palacios, dispatched a letter reminding local Syrians that one must fight for liberty. Nami Jafet persistently cited Brazil as a “land of freedom and equality, the country of democracy.” At the event in Carnegie Hall, U.S. assistant secretary of the treasury James B. Reynolds read a letter from President Theodore Roosevelt pronouncing that all men who believe in liberal government should take great interest in the events taking place in the Ottoman Empire. Congressman Herbert Parsons spoke on behalf of “young America” in congratulating the restoration of the constitution and welcoming the “newer torch bearers of liberty.”<sup>30</sup>

The excitement of revolution collided with the inertia of institutional change. As the Young Turks, in the form of the Committee on Union Progress, implemented a series of policies perceived to be pro-Turkish, many politically active Syrians began pondering what the particular arrangement should be within the larger imperial superstructure, initiating an intercontinental debate.<sup>31</sup> On the whole, Syrian communities in the Americas supported greater autonomy (expressed as “administrative decentralization”) and equality of representation within the Ottoman bureaucracy. This was best exemplified by Syrian émigrés’ participation in and support of the First Arab Congress, held in Paris, France, in June 1913. The month before the meeting, the Cairo-based Ottoman Administrative Decentralization Party sent letters to editors of Arabic-language periodicals in the Americas requesting opinions regarding the pace and depth of reform.<sup>32</sup> As the congress convened, delegates from New York and a Paris-based envoy for the Syrian colonies in Mexico attended. At the event’s conclusion, the participants produced eleven resolutions and three appendices to be delivered to the Ottoman ambassador stationed in Paris. The most important ones focused on the guarantee of political rights, Arabic as an official state language, improved representation in the Ottoman bureaucracy, and greater local rule via administrative decentralization. These declarations inspired Syrian colonies as far afield as Waynoka, Oklahoma, and Rio de Janeiro to wire congratulatory telegrams to Paris.<sup>33</sup> Yet as it became clear in October 1913 that the Ottoman state would not implement these reforms, communities in Brazil and the United States, as part of a coordinated strategy with activists in Europe, the empire and Egypt, sent telegrams to Istanbul demanding implementation.<sup>34</sup> Despite this increased agitation for greater autonomy and reform within the empire, broad swathes of Syrians abroad continued to celebrate the constitution and the Ottoman state on the eve of global war.<sup>35</sup>



The Ottoman Empire's entrance into World War I as part of the Central Powers provoked great consternation on part of many in the various Syrian colonies and inspired critics of the regime's stalled reforms and advocates of independence to intensify their claims and demands. Indeed, the calls for Lebanese and Armenian independence reached critical mass and led to direct, and at times violent, altercations within the colonies in São Paulo and Buenos Aires. During the war the Syrian communities moved toward a definitive break between the Ottoman state and Greater Syria while simultaneously formulating new and at times confused ethnic and racialized identities: Lebanese, Syrian, and Arab. At the same time, new questions emerged orbiting around whether Mount Lebanon formed a part of an independent Syrian state and whether France should serve as a guarantor and mentor in the transition to independence. In an effort to secure support for French designs in the Levant, the Paris-based and French-funded Syrian Central Committee dispatched Dr. Cesar Lakah and Jamil Mardam Bey to Latin America to raise money and volunteers for the *Légion d'Orient*, a fighting force folded within the French military. The committee envisioned this group comprised of Syrian volunteers helping to fight for the independence of Lebanon and Syria. This Lakah-Mardam mission met varying success depending on which community they visited.<sup>36</sup>

In Argentina, after an initial push of support to the Ottoman war effort, those who were politically committed divided along three axes: pro-Independent Lebanon, independent Syria including Lebanon under the aegis of France, and the establishment of an Arab-led Islamic empire with Husayn, the sharif of Mecca, as its head. Disagreements between these compatriots became so heated that violence manifested multiple times, provoking the expulsion of Ottoman sympathizers (diminished though never extinguished during the war) from the Barrio Turco, located in the downtown Socorro district radiating out from Tres Sargentos Street, as well as the murder of a Syrian Armenian at the hands of a Syrian Muslim in the La Boca neighborhood.<sup>37</sup> While most of the intellectuals advocating French policy in the Levant were Maronites, early on it was not solely them. Alejandro Schamún, a Maronite Catholic writing January 21, 1919, in *La Nación*, argued that Syria included Lebanon and needed French support, while the Lebanese Union in Buenos Aires, a largely Maronite organization, demanded a Lebanon free from European influence. Emir Emin Arslan, a Druze from Mount Lebanon and former Ottoman consul general in Buenos Aires, publicly supported the goals of the Syrian Central Committee,

including in an open letter to President Woodrow Wilson.<sup>38</sup> In Brazil leading members of the colony also struggled to find common ground and consensus. As the war progressed the Lebanese Renaissance Society, which was established in 1912, dedicated itself to the independence of Mount Lebanon. In Rio de Janeiro, émigrés established the Syrian-Lebanese Patriotic Society with Nami Jafet as its president. This organization advocated the independence of Syria (including Lebanon) under the aegis of the French, and contributed men and money to the Syrian Central Committee, which raised volunteers for the French Legion d'Orient.<sup>39</sup> Yet friction between activists in Brazil boiled over into homicide, as Ilyas Masarra, a journalist for the pro-French Arabic-language periodical *al-Brazil*, murdered Salim Labaki, editor of a rival, pro-Ottoman journal.<sup>40</sup> In the United States, the Lebanon League of Progress, led by Naoum Mokarzel, advocated for Lebanese independence. His group clashed with the Syria-Mount Lebanon League of Liberation, which included important intellectuals such as Kahlil Gibran, Ameen Rihani, and Mikha'il Na'ima. This group called for the independence of Syria and Lebanon but did not speculate or advocate on how the arrangement between the two entities should be manifest.<sup>41</sup>

The end of World War I produced a brief moment of Syrian self-rule. In June 1919 the Syrian National Congress convened, composed of delegates from the former Ottoman administrative districts of Syria, Beirut, Aleppo, Mount Lebanon, and Jerusalem. The congress pronounced Faisal al-Hashemi, son of the sharif of Mecca, king of the Syrian Arab Kingdom on March 8, 1920.<sup>42</sup> This constitutional monarchy lasted just four months but produced divisions among the émigrés in the Americas. For instance, the Lebanon-Syria Commission in Montevideo telegraphed French prime minister Alexandre Millerand to protest the "pretensions" of Faisal and reaffirmed their request of Lebanon and Syria's independence with France as guarantor.<sup>43</sup> Groups in Argentina and Paraguay dispatched similar cablegrams. At the same time, Dr. George Sawaya, prominent physician and intellectual, articulated clearly to the French embassy that the destiny of an Arab kingdom lay in the hands of the Allied powers. Following the fall of Faisal in the summer of 1920, Sawaya's newly founded Arab Patriotic Party organized meetings and sent telegrams to local diplomatic missions and the League of Nations condemning France and Britain.<sup>44</sup>

## The French and British Mandates and the Lebanese and Syrian Colonies

### The Early Mandate

The beginning of the new decade witnessed the collapse and partition of the Ottoman Empire and fall of King Faisal in Damascus and the granting by the League of Nations to France of a mandate over Syria and Lebanon. For Arab nationalists, the short-lived monarchy of Faisal I in Damascus was the realization of their dreams and political activities. France's forceful deposing of Faisal in July 1920 and the subsequent creation of the State of Greater Lebanon, which would become the French-dependent Republic of Lebanon in 1926, were critical events for Lebanese nationalists. For advocates of a Greater Syria, many viewed the mandate with great anticipation. In the midst of the maelstrom of competing nationalisms, some intellectuals moved to form groups advocating a cultural politics. For instance, young intellectuals established the *Shabība Mutahīda* (United Youth) in San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina, on June 4, 1921. This group held public events, published a newspaper, staged plays, and used the printing press to further its mission of fashioning an Arab fellowship. In January 1922 the organization launched the monthly literary review *al-Hadiqa* (the garden). In the opening editorial, the directors declared that the surge of competing views expressed in the Arabic press in the Americas on politics and national destinies resulted from poor national education. The editors announced they would use novels to help foster love for the nation, avoid divisive politics, and move Arabic speakers along the path "to reach the summit of civilization."<sup>45</sup>

Yet this vision of a cultural pan-Arabism for the colonies proved futile. A group of activists in Buenos Aires united and formed the Syrian-Lebanese Committee, featuring the leading intellectuals and some of the colony's wealthier members. These men began organizing a public event scheduled for July 1922 designed to remonstrate France's imposition of colonial rule. The scheduled demonstration caused grave concern for supporters of French rule, in particular the Maronite priests resident in Buenos Aires. The superior of the Lebanese missionaries, the order of Maronite priests, convinced the French minister in Argentina to meet with the Buenos Aires chief of police, municipal leaders, and the undersecretary of state at the offices of the Argentine foreign ministry. The diplomat requested state intervention to prevent the demonstration from taking place; however, the

Argentines refused to intercede. Some 250 people took to the streets in protest of France's presence in the Levant. In the aftermath, Gen. Henri Gouraud, the high commissioner of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon, sent a letter to the Argentine president requesting his help in managing the efforts of "a fanatical party of the Lebanese-Syrian colony in Argentina" that had been spreading lies about the mandatory powers. The communication seemingly carried great weight. After the reception of this letter, Argentine officials collaborated with their French counterparts to quiet the dissidents and prevent public criticism of France.<sup>46</sup> The actions of the Argentine government in support of the French demonstrated that anti-imperialism equated with anti-American sentiment.

Similar to Argentina, Syrian and Lebanese émigrés in Brazil advocated a variety of positions and ethnonational identities through the creation of new institutions, the Arabic press, and the occasional public demonstration. France's decision to create Greater Lebanon heartened pro-French Lebanese in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and provoked others. Khalil Saadeh, now resident in Brazil, used his newspaper, *al-Jarīda*, as the mouthpiece of his new National Democratic Party (Hizb al-Dīmuqrāṭī al-Waṭanī), an organization that demanded full independence of Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria under the leadership of locals and the move toward true secular, democratic governance. These aims compared with Asad Bishara's Syrian National Party (Hizb al-Waṭanī al-Sūrī). Yet a strong pro-French current was channeled through the Lebanese Renaissance Party (al-Nahda al-Lubnānī) and the periodicals *al-Brazīl*, *al-Qalam al-Hadīd*, and *Fatāt Lubnān*.<sup>47</sup> The creation of Greater Lebanon also inspired some immigrant institutions in Latin America to transform themselves to fit new realities and identities. For instance, the Sociedad Sirio-libanesa in Durazno, Uruguay, changed its name to the Comité Patriótico Libanes.<sup>48</sup>

#### The Great Syrian Revolt (1925–1927)

The news of the rebellion in Jebel Druze and Damascus in August 1925, known as the Great Syrian Revolt, provoked a variety of opinions and actions by Syrians and Lebanese in the Americas. In Argentina, the press related French actions as "particularly odious and barbaric," thus intensifying opposition toward the French Mandate and prompting a public relations campaign across Argentina. Even the pro-mandate institutions began to see support for France among their membership dissolve. The communities in Rosario and Mendoza raised money for the victims of the Damascus shelling. The colony in Mendoza held a large protest demonstration

during which Syrian and Lebanese merchants shuttered their shops and conducted a procession of mourning complete with black flags. The French worked assiduously with Argentine officials to prevent similar events. At the same time, the French Chargé d'Affaires partnered with the president of the Club Libanés in Mendoza to publish a note declaring that the public protest did not have the support of the majority of Mendoza's Lebanese. A whisper campaign ensued suggesting there was an assassination attempt on the French consul.<sup>49</sup>

In Buenos Aires intellectuals mobilized with great purpose, organizing street demonstrations, demanding—via telegrams to the League of Nations—that France quit its mandate, and pursuing the support of Argentina's representative to the League's Office of Intellectual Cooperation. The *Círculo de Damas Siro-Argentinas* invited Syrians and Lebanese to the Casa Suiza on November 8, 1925, for a wake mourning the lost lives in the outbreak of violence. The ladies stressed this was an apolitical event. Emir Emin Arslan led the anti-mandate charge with a series of articles in *La Nación*, including a confession of his previous error in supporting the French presence in Syria and Lebanon. Habib Estéfano, former Maronite priest and partisan and official for King Faisal's short rein in Damascus, gave public conferences in the most important venues in Buenos Aires and elsewhere in Argentina; even President Marcelo T. de Alvear attended an event. French diplomats asked Argentine officials to intervene and secured a promise from the Argentine press to refrain from printing the articles of Arslan and the speeches of Estéfano. The French, fearing a public relations debacle, even asked the consul in Mendoza to seek state help in muzzling Estéfano in that Andean province.<sup>50</sup>

Yet certain Lebanese and Syrians in Argentina continued to support the French, especially the Maronite priests. Pro-mandate groups dispatched letters of support to the League of Nations and raised ten thousand francs for the communities afflicted by the violence. In October 1926 Estéfano gave a public lecture in Tucumán's prestigious Sarmiento Society excoriating the French mandate in Syria and Lebanon. Naguib Bacclini, a noted Lebanese intellectual in the province, published an editorial in his newspaper *Sada al-Sharq* (Echo of the east) berating Estéfano as "a renegade Ex-Maronite priest" who suffered from a "Bedouin mentality." Bacclini then argued that France was the right partner for Lebanon as it was the paladin of culture and democratic governance.<sup>51</sup>

The criticism of the French for the repression and shelling of Damascus seemingly was more muted elsewhere in the Americas. Pro-French

organizations in Uruguay never wavered in their support. In January 1926 the Liga Patriótica Libanesa in Montevideo circulated a statement declaring that the rebels “came to rob, steal and persecute the Christians.” The Liga then sent a telegram to the League of Nations condemning the foreign campaign against “dear” France and demanding the continuation of the mandate in Syria and Lebanon. The Club Libanés, which historically kept some distance from the French legation, split. A group dispatched a telegram in the name of the organization to the League of Nations criticizing French actions, provoking another group to declare anew their organization’s attachment to France. In Paraguay, after two members from the Unión Líbano-Siria in Concepción failed to establish a separate organization protesting the bombing of Damascus, the Buenos Aires-based Antiochian Greek Orthodox bishop Ignatius Aburrus, during a trip to visit his flock, used the pulpit to express the “loyalty to France” by all Syrians and Lebanese in attendance, regardless of confessional identity.<sup>52</sup>

The large Syrian and Lebanese communities in Brazil split over how to respond to the October bombing of Damascus by the French, during which more than one thousand civilians perished. Khalil Saadeh sent a cablegram to the League of Nations condemning France’s “cruel behavior.” Rashid Atiyeh, publisher of the pro-French *Fatat Lubnan*, organized a meeting of the colonies’ leading members to advocate for open condemnation of the French. Consensus was elusive as several members desired to focus on the crime—not the mandate itself—and push humanitarian efforts. The Antiochian Greek Orthodox communities in Brazil raised and dispatched sixty thousand French francs to their patriarch in Damascus, an activity mirrored by several other Syrian and Lebanese organizations there.<sup>53</sup>

Lebanese and Syrian émigré colonies in the United States also raised large sums of money to aid the bombing victims of French. The community there also divided over how to respond to the violence. Some individuals, speaking in the name of all Syrians and Lebanese in the United States, wired telegrams to the League of Nations to protest France. These actions provoked the American-Syrian Federation, the “representative organization of the Syrians in the United States, [with] affiliated organizations throughout the country,” to clarify that no such protest by the institution or its constituents had been lodged. Naoum Mokarzel, president of the Lebanon League of Progress, went so far as to say that the rebellion against the French was simply cover for “murdering the native Christian” and razing and pillaging Christian villages and towns. Hence, the French departure was tantamount to an existential threat for Levantine Christians.<sup>54</sup> This

declaration provoked a response from fellow Christian Habib Katibah, a New York-based member of the Palestine National League and the Syrian National Society, to point out that the “leaders of the Syrian Nationalist movement” had agreed to the Maronite demand that the French remain in Greater Lebanon provided that they quit the rest of Syria. The French, for Katibah, used the protection of the Christian populations as a pretext for its “lustful colonial ambitions.”<sup>55</sup> Yet, as the violence continued unabated into the next year, the Syrian Convention, another body said to represent Syrian-Americans and Syrians in the United States, met in Detroit and formally asked for help from the U.S. government to “give Syria her rights as befits her culture, her capacity and her aspirations.”<sup>56</sup>

Of the nations with large numbers of Levantine immigrants, Argentina stands out as possessing the most vocal critics of the French presence in Lebanon and Syria. Two primary factors may account for this characteristic. First, the Arabic-speaking colonies in Argentina numbered 160,000 by 1928, with more than half coming from Syria. This compares to the overwhelming majority of Lebanese Christians in Brazil and Uruguay and Palestinians in Chile. Second, the presence of Emir Emin Arslan and brothers Wadi and Alejandro Schamún likely played a critical role. Each came from a prominent family from Mount Lebanon, had close relatives active in anti-French politics in the homeland, and possessed great respect from both the Syrian-Lebanese colonies in Argentina and Argentine government officials. Arslan and the Schamúns each published their own periodicals that demanded self-determination of their homelands. Finally, Muslims accounted for one-third of the immigrant population from the Levant. This vibrant community was especially active in the industrial city of Rosario and Buenos Aires, and it enacted a variety of strategies to challenge French rule and support political and educational initiatives in the old country.

### The High Era of the Mandate

Despite the stalling of the Great Syrian Revolt in 1927, an active campaign against the mandate persisted in Syria and the Americas, especially after the French dissolved the Syrian assembly following an impasse relating to specific articles for inclusion in a Syrian Constitution. This placed the French, in the eyes of its critics, as an imperialist power. The Unión Libanesa continued its demand for complete independence and its criticism of the French. Estéfano perdured, lecturing throughout Argentina and, in the eyes of French diplomats, spreading “his harmful venom.” Yet there was apparently a noticeable waning of support among some actors

and the Argentine public due to the schisms plaguing the executive committee of the Syrian-Palestinian Congress based in Cairo and the revolutionaries in Transjordan and Syria.<sup>57</sup> Even some Maronite priests, hearty supporters of the mandate, expressed occasional disagreement with French policy in Lebanon and Syria.<sup>58</sup>

At the end of the 1920s several Syrian revolutionaries emigrated to South America, in particular to Argentina. Upon their arrival they sought the support of Emir Emin Arslan, George Sawaya, and Habib Estéfano. Arslan, who was disillusioned at this point with the events in Syria and the politics that the Damascene Muslims had toward the Druze, rejected the overtures for financial support by Assad al-Bakri, nephew of the prominent Syrian nationalist Nasib al-Bakri. Further, Sawaya and Arslan asserted that al-Bakri did not leave Syria to work on behalf of the revolution but rather to *hacer la América*. With this rumor circulating, the fundraising for al-Bakri stopped and only Estéfano contributed to the drive. With these meager funds, al-Bakri moved on to visit the Syrian and Lebanese colonies in Chile.<sup>59</sup> But efforts on behalf of the revolution continued in Argentina. In April 1932 the editor of the Buenos Aires Arabic-language weekly *al-Watan* (The homeland) published a letter from the leader of the Syrian Revolutionary Forces, Sultan Paşa al-Atrash, acknowledging receipt of the most recent remittance of funds and thanking the “generous almsgiving” (*al-muhsin al-karim*) from the Arabic-speaking colonies in Argentina. He urged these people to continue giving material aid and emotional support against the “politics of colonialism” (*siyāsāt al-ist‘amār*), a call many immigrants heeded.<sup>60</sup> The same edition contained a letter from Yusef al-‘Issa, a Palestinian Christian based in Amman who was part of the Arab nationalist intelligentsia. Al-‘Issa emphasized the continued struggle of the freedom fighters (*mujāhidīn*) against the French, proudly announcing various Syrian political parties had met in Egypt and had agreed to unify in common cause in support of the fighters.<sup>61</sup>

The resistance benefited from an organized transnational network that exchanged letters and moral support, collected and transferred money to pay for the fight against European colonialism, and debated the future of the homeland. Suleiman Najm al-Bikfāni, a fundraiser for the Syrian revolutionaries, was in constant communication with the leaders of the resistance, including Sultan al-Atrash and leading Arab nationalist figures in South America. In Argentina al-Bikfāni traveled to large cities and small towns where Arabic-speaking immigrants worked and lived, collecting donations for the resistance. In addition to securing funds for remittance,



al-Bikfāni, who self-identified as a “volunteer freedom fighter,” also published the names of the donors and the amounts they gave.

Nevertheless, a firmer sense of a Lebanese national identity among those in Argentina continued to develop at the expense of a collective Syrian or Arab fellowship and with consequences at the institutional level. For instance, activists designed the Centro Libanés in Tucumán specifically as a political association catering to immigrants from Lebanon and the morphing sense of identification with a Lebanese nation. The controversy surrounding this group spread throughout the Syrian and Lebanese colonies in Argentina in early 1931. In explaining the reason for establishing this institution, the members of the Lebanese Center rejected the notions Syrians and Lebanese were united by “indissoluble bonds” as a “false conventionality.” Furthermore, the founders proclaimed “the children of two distinct states [Syria and Lebanon] could never work jointly in good of the interests of their homeland.”<sup>62</sup> In Santiago, Chile, the Club Sirio and Centro Libanés emerged in 1934, spurring a massive wave of institution building within the colonies there.<sup>63</sup>

Nineteen-thirty-six was a critical year for Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and their émigrés in the Americas. The rise of Lebanese president Émile Eddé in January 1936, his partial restoration of the constitution, and his push for parliamentary elections led pro-mandate and anti-mandate Lebanese to close ranks under the banner of an independent Lebanon. This year also witnessed the completion and ratification of the French-Lebanese Treaty (November 13); a protocol of agreement for the French-Syrian Treaty (September 9); the creation of the Phalanges Libanaises by Maronite Pierre Gemayel; the establishment of the Syrian Popular Party by Antun Saadeh, an ardent Syrian nationalist from a Christian Lebanese family who lived for years in Argentina and Brazil; and the claim over Antakya by Turkey. The Syrian Congress enthusiastically ratified the French-Syrian Treaty on December 27, but the French parliament refused, creating another political impasse.<sup>64</sup>

These events were seminal in galvanizing immigrants from Lebanon in Argentina behind the push for independence while at the same time proved decisive in hardening the final split between Syrians and Lebanese émigrés. In August 1936 Maronite priest Miguel Latuf Inderi invited Lebanese of all faiths to an event at the Colegio San Marón in the Retiro neighborhood in downtown Buenos Aires to unite all behind the idea of protecting the independence and integrity of Greater Lebanon. On August 28 a Lebanese delegation led by Domingo Kairuz (president of the Unión Libanesa),

Nami Fares, and the Maronite superior presented a letter to the French ambassador for the French government requesting that the mandatory powers ensure the territorial integrity of Lebanon and support the efforts of Lebanese President Eddé and the Maronite patriarch. These activities inspired the creation of the *Asociación Patriótica Libanesa* on October 18, 1936, its headquarters at the Colegio San Marón. The organization brought together old supporters of the French in Lebanon and some of the anti-mandate Lebanese. Rachid Rustom, a delegate of the *asociación*, arrived in Tucumán and established a branch office the following August, which was rebranded *Asociación Libanesa de Socorros Mutuos* in 1938. The Tucumán-based organization's leadership included prominent merchants and public intellectuals who embraced the goal of an independent Lebanon free from French control.<sup>65</sup> At this point, the internal split of the Syrian-Lebanese colony in Tucumán and beyond was complete; the product of national identities hardened in the crucible of European colonialism. The idea of a Lebanon folded within a nation with Syria was now a nonstarter.

It was in this context that the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) leader Antun Saadeh arrived in Argentina in 1939. To a hero's welcome, Saadeh relocated to Tucumán in 1939 at the invitation of Yubran Massuh, a local Syrian intellectual. The colony's wealthiest merchants and youth leaders met him at the train station, and later held a huge party in his honor at the home of Camel Auad, a prominent wholesaler. At this event, local members of the Syrian-Lebanese colony organized a political party committed to the independence of Syria.<sup>66</sup> Antun Saadeh advocated a Syrian nationalism. For this movement, the past and future Syria included contemporary Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, historical Palestine, the Sinai Peninsula, and the island of Cyprus. These lands possessed natural borders and an assortment of people that over time formed one nation. As a result, Saadeh and his disciples eschewed Arab nationalism, asserting that it was "a surrender of Syria's uniqueness, and an acceptance by its gifted people of an inferior status." This emphasis on a Syrian national identity attracted many "among the educated urban population" in Syria and Lebanon.<sup>67</sup>

As Saadeh settled into his new environs, Yubran Massuh escorted and introduced Saadeh to the various Syrian-Lebanese colonies in Argentina, and soon the two established a periodical, *al-Zawba'a* (The cyclone) with Massuh as editor and chief propagandist. It was in Tucumán that Antun Saadeh set out to mobilize the immigrant colonies and create branches of the SSNP across Latin America. He initially encountered strong support from a broad cross-section of these communities in the Americas. Active

groups emerged in Argentina, Chile, and Mexico, who published articles in *al-Zawba'a* and produced their own local publications. In Tucumán, Saadeh's arrival inspired intense action at the cultural level as immigrants formed theatrical troupes, organized meetings, and produced plays and poetry about the homeland. A strong SSNP branch in Mexico published a periodical in Spanish, and the young Aniceto Schain, the son of an immigrant from Homs, Syria, living in Santiago, Chile, became a regular contributor to *al-Zawba'a*.<sup>68</sup> The Syrian nationalist cause also featured a dispersed set of financial supporters. For instance, Syrian-Lebanese merchants located on the island of Fernando Pó, Spanish Guinea, raised and wired eleven thousand Spanish pesetas (two hundred British pounds sterling).<sup>69</sup> These transnational connections were simply a continuation of a long-held practice by Arabic-speaking immigrants in the Americas, who used communication and transportation technologies to maintain contact, carry on debates, share news, and remit money to support revolutionary movements and assist relatives in the old country.

Yet this early surge in support encountered heavy resistance from many established immigrants who were advocating an independent Lebanon, thus stoking controversy over who spoke for the community. For Saadeh and his adherents, a Syrian identity surmounted all other identities, and divisions along confessional lines were viewed as an impediment to the nationalist project. While others within the Syrian-Lebanese colony also viewed the tragedy of religious divisions and its impact on the community, Saadeh venomously attacked all competitors and enemies, real and perceived.<sup>70</sup> The most infamous case involved a six-month, thirty-six-part rhetorical assault on the dean of Arabic-language poets in the Americas, Rashīd al-Khuri, also known as al-Shā'ir al-Qarawī (Village Poet), who was based in São Paulo. The feud aired for so long that prominent Arab intellectuals residing in New York intervened on behalf of al-Qarawī.<sup>71</sup> This pugilistic attitude toward some of the most esteemed members of the Syrian and Lebanese lettered class abroad and the criticism directed at the supporters and fans of these poets surely undercut support for Saadeh. Shortly after the series concluded, the SSNP in Mexico published two older articles desperately showing that even the most famous Lebanese in the Americas supported a unified Syria.<sup>72</sup> As Saadeh's perceived influence waned, funding for *al-Zawba'a* must have suffered either from cancelled subscriptions or weak fundraising, or both, because by late 1944 the editors began publishing infrequently. For their part, the French never considered Saadeh or his movement in Argentina to be much of a threat.<sup>73</sup>

Meanwhile, Arab nationalists residing in the Americas met in Buenos Aires in early 1941 to discuss the status of the homeland. Emir Emin Arslan served as president of the First Pan-Arab Congress in America (*al-Mu'tamar al-'Arabī al-awwal fī Amīrikā*), announcing Shakib Arslan, Emin's cousin, as the official representative before governments and international bodies. The participants included Sunni Muslims and Christians, such as the Zaki and Elias Qonsol, brothers from Nabk, Syria. The attendees agreed on and published a set of principles, the second declaring Syria consisted of "Lebanon, Palestine, and East Jordan," and together this territory made up the Arab land (*quṭr 'arabī*). The subsequent principle rejected the legitimacy of the French and British Mandates and denied a Jewish national home (*al-waṭan al-qawmī al-sahyūnī*) in "Southern Syria (Palestine)."<sup>74</sup>

Nevertheless, for both Saadeh and the delegates of the pan-Arab Congress, the goal of a united Syria on the scale imagined was simply an unattainable dream. The majority of Syrians and Lebanese in Argentina stayed away from the pan-Arab and pan-Syrian advocates and propagandists. In addition, the treaties signed by France and the political figures in Lebanon and Syria provided a clear path to the end of mandatory rule and eventual independence. As a result, most émigrés in Latin America moved their support to these initiatives, despite the fact that implementation was years in the offing.

## Conclusion

The independence of Syria (1946) and Lebanon (1943) signaled the end of a long pursuit for self-determination and struggle against French colonialism by people in the Levant and their compatriots abroad. Yet the establishment of the new nation-states still had consequences in the Americas. For instance, independence provoked problems in relations between émigrés now from distinct countries. It also created strife in many of the mutual aid societies, cultural associations, and other clubs in Brazil founded in an era where the dominant immigrant identity was Syrian as partisans initiated legal proceedings to break apart institutions established in this era.<sup>75</sup> Actions such as these helped mark the conclusion of nationalist activities by Lebanese and Syrians trying to create barriers of distinction or programs of inclusion. The reality was Lebanese and Syrians were now politically distinct peoples with separate national governments with which to identify. The course of the first half of the twentieth century witnessed a variety

of nationalist sentiments and ideologies emerge. As political transformation and economic collapse, war and famine, colonialism and revolution gripped the old country, Lebanese and Syrians articulated, debated, and grasped at ideologies and arrangements they thought would best serve their homelands. These competing nationalisms added layers to these immigrant identities that on many occasions resulted in internecine violence and sparked contested claims over who spoke in the name of the community. In many cases homeland politics was as much about the local composition of the immigrant colony as it was about securing independence. At the same time, the advocates of these novel national identities were in continual contact with their peers, competitors, and family who remained in the Levant. These émigré communities marshaled resources, mustered volunteers and combatants, wired letter after letter to the League of Nations and international politicians advocating various positions regarding the Levant, and communicated with officials from the host society. Indeed, Arabic-speaking émigrés were critical in the formation of Lebanese and Syrian national identities and nationalist ideologies, both in the old country and abroad. Appreciation of these processes and changes allow for a more subtle understanding of immigrant lives and the evolution of community life amid profound political transformation during the first half of the twentieth century.

## Notes

1. Jeffrey Lesser and Raanan Rein make this point regarding Jewish populations in Latin America, challenging scholars to study “unaffiliated ethnics” too (see also chapter 5 of this volume). I eschew the challenge in this particular essay but certainly recognize the importance of incorporating immigrants who did not associate with the community or its institutions in studies. See Lesser and Rein, “New Approaches to Ethnicity,” 31–32.

2. Abdeluahed Akmir asserts that the Arabic press in Argentina reflected “faithfully the life, aspirations and values of the Arab community.” Akmir, “La prensa árabe en Argentina,” 294.

3. For North America, see Khater, *Inventing Home*, 74–75; for Mexico, consult Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah*, 29–30; for Brazil, review Lesser, *Negotiating National Identity*, 50–51; and for Nicaragua, see González, *Dollar, Dove, and Eagle*, 70–71, 81–82.

4. The concept of ethnicization has been a staple of studies on immigrant communities in the United States; however, little of the scholarship examines how these groups fashioned identities in relation with those in the homeland. See, for instance, Conzen et al., “Invention of Ethnicity.”

5. See Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 81–112; Khater, *Inventing Home*, 71–107; and Khater, “Becoming ‘Syrian.’”

6. For North America, see Khater “Becoming ‘Syrian,’” 302; and Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*.

7. For recent reviews of the concept and scholarship, see Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*; and Banks, *Ethnicity*.

8. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 12.

9. Certainly, ethnic identities are lived identities; however, the ascription of ethnicity by observers cannot be overlooked. The individual or group constructs ethnicity and boundaries as much as the observer does. Banks, *Ethnicity*, 190.

10. Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 65–73.

11. Jusdanis, *Necessary Nation*, 19.

12. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 98–103; and Jusdanis, *Necessary Nation*, 39–43.

13. See República Argentina, *Tercer Censo*, vol. 2; and *Boletim do Departamento Estadual do Trabalho* 16, no. 58, first trimester of 1927.

14. For examples of this tendency, see Valverde, “Integration and Identity in Argentina; Klich and Lesser, *Arab and Jewish Immigrants*; and Khatlab, *Mahjar*.

15. Banks, *Ethnicity*, 189.

16. Khater, “Becoming ‘Syrian,’” 303–4.

17. Khater, *Inventing Home*, 52–55.

18. “Arribo del Cónsul Otomano,” *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), October 30, 1910.

19. Archivo, Biblioteca y Museo de la Diplomacia (ABMD), Box 1210, Folder 42, Arturo de Luciano to Argentina’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Victoriano de la Plaza, November 22, 1910; and Ruppín, *Syrien als Wirtschaftsgebiet*, 24–25.

20. Naturalization for Syrian émigrés in the United States was more important than it was for the colonies in Latin America. Immigrants in Argentina, for instance, had equal economic rights as citizens whereas foreign nationals were prohibited by federal law from purchasing real estate in the United States. Hence, there was greater incentive to naturalize in North America, and a correspondingly larger percentage of Syrians pursued U.S. citizenship than elsewhere in the Americas. See Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 52–80.

21. Prior to the pioneering works of Akram Khater and Sarah Gualtieri, most scholars subscribed to the notion that Syrian émigrés departed the Levant primarily due to Ottoman oppression, a rhetorical device deployed by emigrants themselves. This trope also colored the scholarship on Ottoman state and Arab society relations in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine in the late Ottoman period, which Hasan Kayalı convincingly dispels. See Khater, *Inventing Home*, 48–70; Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 21–51; and Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 17–143.

22. Quoted in Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 86.

23. Karpál, “Ottoman Emigration,” 193.

24. Olgún Tenorio and Peña González, *La inmigración árabe*, 122; and “Solicitada,” *El Orden* (San Miguel de Tucumán), June 10, 1898.

25. “La constitución otomana,” *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), September 9, 1908.

26. The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and the Hunchakist Society were Marxist-influenced movements established by Armenians from the Russian Empire in the late nineteenth century that advocated for the independence of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. In the lead-up to the Young Turk Revolution, ARF partnered with the Committee on Union and Progress—the civil–military secret society that led the coup

against the Sultan—until 1913 in the Second Constitutional era (1908–18). Four ARF and two Hunchakist members won election to the Ottoman parliament in 1908. See Davison, “Armenian Crisis”; and Nalbandian, *Armenian Revolutionary Movement*, 30–131, 151–78. In New York the elements of the Hunchakist Society apparently operated as a mafia outfit led by the Armenian archbishop, extorting and assassinating members of the Armenian colony in the city. See “Evolution of the Armenian Hunchakist,” *New York Times*, August 4, 1907.

27. “Roosevelt Hails Freedom in Turkey,” *New York Times*, September 7, 1908.

28. The Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 were led by and then fought between the Balkan League, composed of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro, which sought independence and to wrest additional lands, such as Macedonia, from the Ottomans. Hall, *Balkan Wars*; and Necati Kutlu, “Ottoman Subjects,” 242–44.

29. Jafet, *Ensaaios e Discursos*, 233–47; for Jafet’s business concerns, consult Dean, *Industrialization of São Paulo*, 31–32, 113; and Tofik Karam, *Another Arabesque*, 25–29.

30. “La constitución otomana,” *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), September 9, 1908; a facsimile of Palacios’ July 1909 note to Schamún is found in Akmir, “La inmigración árabe,” 820; and Jafet, *Ensaaios e Discursos*.

31. Hasan Kayalı criticizes the Turkification trope prevalent in the scholarship as overplayed. See Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 82–96.

32. See the letter to Alejandro Schamún, editor of the Buenos Aires-based *al-Salam* newspaper, dated May 6, 1913, from the Ottoman Administrative Decentralization Party. Akmir, “La inmigración árabe,” 795–96.

33. Tauber, *Emergence of the Arab Movements*, 178–97; and Hizb al-Lâ-Markazîyah bi-Miṣr, *al-Mu’tamar al-’Arabî al-Awwal*, 185–86, 207–10.

34. Tauber, *Emergence of the Arab Movements*, 204–5.

35. See, for instance, the massive banquet in São Paulo held on the sixth anniversary of the Young Turk Revolution featuring the elite of the Syrian colony, the local director of the London Bank, and the Ottoman consul, Emir Sami Arslan. “Constituição Ottomana,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, July 24, 1914.

36. See “O Banquete a Colônia Siria a Dois Membros do Grande Comite Syrio de Paris,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, August 20, 1917; and Tauher, *Arab Movements in World War I*, 212–14.

37. Ikmîr, *al-’Arab*, 142–43.

38. Klich, “Argentine–Ottoman Relations,” 177–205; and Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 149.

39. “O Brasil na Guerra,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, December 4, 1917; and Tauber, *Arab Movements in World War I*, 214.

40. Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 67–69.

41. Tauber, *Arab Movements in World War I*, 226–27; E. G. Tabet, “The French in Syria,” *New York Times*, May 4, 1919; and Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 102–3.

42. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 24–25.

43. “A Independencia do Libano,” *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 19, 1920. See also the telegrams to Millerand from various Arabic-speaking colonies in the Americas that

challenged Faisal's claim; located in Archives Diplomatiques La Courneuve, Série E, Box 44, Folder 313.

44. Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 148–50; and Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 105–6.

45. “Kalimatunā al-Aūla,” *al-Hadiqa* (San Miguel de Tucumán), January 3, 1922.

46. “Pro Independencia de Siria,” *La Razón* (Buenos Aires, Argentina), July 24, 1922; quoted in Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 151–53; and Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 110–11.

47. Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 72, 108–10.

48. Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 149; and Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 109–10.

49. Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 154–56; and Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 115–16.

50. Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 156–58; and Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 116–18.

51. Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 158; and “Habib Estéfano o Estofán,” *Eco de Oriente*, October 30, 1926.

52. Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 154–55.

53. Logroño Narbona, “Development of Nationalist Identities,” 114–15.

54. Naoum A. Mokarzel, “Syria a Religious Problem,” *New York Times*, November 29, 1925.

55. H. I. Katibah, “Islam and Christians in Syria,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1925.

56. A. M. Shakpa, “Pleads for Aid to Syria,” *New York Times*, January 25, 1926.

57. The Syrian-Palestinian Congress was called to session in 1921 in Geneva, producing a demand for independence and territorial integrity (folding Lebanon and Palestine into a larger Syria) and delivering it to the League of Nations. In Geneva, the congress elected an executive committee and relocated its headquarters to Cairo. The committee was composed of two primary groups. The former was led by Michel Lutfallah, scion of a fabulously wealthy Christian Lebanese family based in Egypt, and Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar, a physician from a middle-class merchant family in Damascus. Both men were Western-educated and supported a secular nationalism. Shakib Arslan, Rashid Rida, and members of the Istiqlal (Independence) Party led the latter group. Arslan and Rida supported an Islamic-influenced nationalism while the Istiqlalists were battle-hardened pan-Arabists who brooked no compromise with the British or French and were based in Amman. Personal rivalries and recriminations of compromise and corruption led to a schism among these camps as the Great Syrian Revolt stalled in 1927. See Khoury, “Factionalism”; and Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 75–81.

58. Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 159.

59. *Ibid.*, 159–60.

60. “Jawāb Sulṭān Bāshā al-Atrash ‘an al-Irsāliyya al-Māliyya al-Akhīra,” (“Response of Sultan Paşa al-Atrash to the latest financial remittance”), *al-Waṭan* (Buenos Aires), April 28, 1932. “Ist‘amār” translates into English as both imperialism and colonialism. See Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 644.

61. “Min murābidh al-mujāhidin ila al-waṭiniyyin fi al-jumhūriyya al-fadhiyya,” *al-Waṭan* (Buenos Aires), April 28, 1932.



62. "El Centro Libanés. Causas de su fundación," *al-Hurriyya* (San Miguel de Tucumán), February 3, 1931.

63. Olgúin Tenorio and Peña González, *La inmigración árabe*, 126; and Mattar, *Guía Social*, 191–92.

64. Classic accounts include Hourani, *Syria and Lebanon*, 199–229; and Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*. See also Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 167.

65. Mario N. Turbay, "Asociación Libanesa de Socorros Mutuos. Una parte importante de su historia," *La Casa* (San Miguel de Tucumán), November 1993, 48; Ponsati, *Aportes para una reseña*, 31; and Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 166–67.

66. "Awal Mars fi Tükümän," *al-Zawba 'a*, July 15, 1943. *Al-Zawba 'a* was edited in Tucumán and published in Buenos Aires.

67. Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 97–98.

68. See, among others, Aniceto Schain, "Inquietud Siria," *al-Zawba 'a*, April 15, 1942; and Mattar, *Guía Social*, 317.

69. "Mabarra Qawmīya," *al-Zawba 'a*, April 1, 1942. Fernando Pó is now known as the island of Bioko, where Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea, is located.

70. "al-Bunyān al-Marsūs," *al-Zawba 'a*, August 15, 1941; "World War: Middle Eastern Theater: Mixed Show," *Time*, June 23, 1941. The series against al-Qarawi ran in *al-Zawba 'a* from October 15, 1941 to May 1, 1942. See also Maatouk, "Saadeh's Views on Literature."

71. The series ran in *al-Zawba 'a* from October 15, 1941, to May 1, 1942. See also Maatouk, "Saadeh's Views on Literature."

72. "El Apócrifo Nacionalismo 'Libanés,'" *al-Zawba 'a*, September 15, 1942.

73. Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 169–70; Schumann, "Nationalism"; Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 98.

74. al-Mu'tamar al-'Arabi al-Awwal, *al-Kitāb al-akhḍar*, 44; and "al-Kitāb al-akhḍar al-thānī," *al-Fiṭra al-Islāmiyya* (Buenos Aires), July 14, 1944. Brégain incorrectly notes that Rachid Rustom was the lone Christian at the congress. See Brégain, *Syriens et Libanais*, 170–73.

75. Khatlab, *Mahjar*, 34.

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IMMIGRATION AND  
NATIONAL IDENTITIES  
IN LATIN AMERICA

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