

**THE ARAB-AMERICAN PRESS AND THE ARAB WORLD:
NEWS COVERAGE IN AL-BAYAN AND AL-DALIL**

by

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Abstract

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This Master's report deals with the news coverage of the Arab world as well as the Arab-American community in two of the early Arabic-language newspapers published in the United States. **Al-Bayan** and **Al-Dalil** first appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century. Like most Arabic-language newspapers at the time, they were supported by certain religious sects which tried to advance their objectives and ideologies through these newspapers.

Al-Bayan and **Al-Dalil** discussed many issues related to both the Arab world and the Arab community. This report tries to shed light on some of these issues, such as Ottoman control of the Arab World, European control of the Arab world, Arab identity, the Zionist threat to Ottoman rule, and activities of the Arab-American community.

As far as the Arab world was concerned, both newspapers supported Ottoman occupation at the beginning. **Al-Dalil** moved on to support European control of the Arab world, while **Al-Bayan** shifted its position to advocate Arab independence, and then shifted back to supporting the Ottomans when it realized that Arab independence was unattainable.

As far as the Arab-American community was concerned, **Al-Bayan** was the voice of Druze and **Al-Dalil** was the voice of Christians in the United States. When discussing the Palestinian problem, however, **Al-Bayan** tried to represent the Arab-American community in general.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. ARAB IDENTITY VS. OTTOMAN IDENTITY
3. ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NEW WORLD POWERS
 - a. Attitude towards France and Britain
 - b. Attitude towards the United States
5. ZIONIST THREAT TO OTTOMAN RULE
6. ATTITUDE TOWARDS ARABS IN THE U.S.
 - a. Attitude towards community in general
 - b. Attitude towards religious sects
 - c. Attitude towards other newspapers
7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
8. REFERENCES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This report will be a study of the attitudes and orientations of the Arab-American community concerning major issues facing the Arab world at the time of WWI--a critical period of history in that region. Other than oral histories, the main source of information about Arab Americans for the above period is the Arab-American press. While we know that many (over seventy) Arab-American newspapers and magazines were published at the time, only a dozen or so have been preserved (mostly in incomplete collections), recorded on microfilm, and available at the Library of Congress. Even these, however, have not been properly studied--hence the need for, and importance of, this study which concentrates on two fairly representative newspapers, namely Al-Bayan and Al-Dalil. However, before discussing my research project in greater detail, I will present a general introduction concerning Arab-American immigration.

During the second half of the 19th century, emigration of Arabs took place in two forms. The first one appeared within the Arab world itself, such as the movement from Syria* to Egypt. The other form of Arab emigration was external, mainly from Syria and Lebanon to Europe, and South and North America. In the introduction, I am going to discuss the different factors leading to early Arab emigration, the factors leading to emigration of

* "Syria" and "Syrian" will refer to geographic or natural Syria, currently known as Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and the occupied territories, unless otherwise mentioned.

Arab journalists, and finally, I will give an overview of the early Arab community and the press, leading to a brief description of the two newspapers studied in this report, Al-Bayan and Al-Dalil. I will then specify the main research objective for this report.

As detailed below, the literature discusses many reasons behind the emigration of Arabs:

1. Economic hardship: Economic hardship was mentioned the most, as the main cause behind Syrian emigration. This was made clear by the pioneers who left that area to go to America prior to 1905. (Naff,p.83). They were impressed by the opportunities presented by the New World, and by the idea of becoming rich quickly. The economic causes behind Syrian emigration included the lack of industrial development, the scarcity of mineral wealth, drought, decline in the silk industry, and ruinous taxation.(Hitti, pp. 48-49)

2. Political persecution: Economic hardship justified to an extent the emigration of peasants and the lower strata of society. The emigration of intellectuals, however, was justified by the atmosphere of repression and censorship which made their lives miserable under the Ottoman state.(Hitti, p. 51)

3. Military draft: The Ottoman constitution of 1908 promised that citizenship with equal rights and duties would be granted to all Ottoman subjects. For Christians, this meant they would become subject to military draft, something which they had not had to worry about since the Muslim invasion of Syria more than twelve centuries earlier.(Khalaf, p.28)

4. Religious persecution: This is among the most disputed causes for emigration. Many historians consider the persecution of Christians under

Ottoman rule, specially the Damascus massacre of 1860, as the most important factor behind emigration.(Hitti,p. 52) Others consider religious factors to be overemphasized and exaggerated by Westerners who wanted to distort the real causes of emigration.(Khalaf,p. 29)

5. Western missionaries: By 1867, twenty-one schools with more than eight hundred students were opened in Beirut and nearby villages by American and Western missionaries. They also introduced the Arabic press into Lebanon in 1834, and published both religious and secular materials which had a popular appeal among Lebanese.(Khalaf,p. 30) This created a class of highly educated and intelligent young Lebanese who could not go back to the old ways of life. They looked to enrich their lives elsewhere. Hitti, however, argued that missionaries did not explicitly encourage emigration, but rather encouraged higher levels of literacy and socioeconomic standards.(Hitti, pp. 65-66)

6. Love of adventure among Syrians: Naff attributed mass emigration of Syrians not so much to poverty, which was more overwhelming in surrounding countries, but to the energy and drive of Syrians, specially Lebanese. According to Naff, the fact that many of the early Arab pioneers were Lebanese may be attributed to their level of energy, and not to their poverty. She argued that Egyptians, for example, were poor but did not have the drive that the Lebanese had. She supported her argument by borrowing a phrase from the prominent Egyptian poet, Hafiz Ibrahim, who said in a poem that " if they thought there was a livelihood to be made there, the Lebanese would surely migrate to Mars!"(Naff, p.79)

Other factors mentioned as causes of Syrian emigration included the desire to enjoy freedom of expression, the desire to serve the interests of the European powers, and the desire to serve religious sects.(Khalaf,p. 31)

The deteriorating political, economic, and social conditions under the Ottomans created an atmosphere of frustration among Arabs, specially Syrians. They looked for freedom and material survival elsewhere. (Hitti, p. 56)

Coming to America

According to Alixa Naff in her book, **Becoming American**, the earliest Syrians to enter the United States came as part of the Turkish Exhibition to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876. (Naff,p.76) She offers no evidence, however. She argues that the available evidence, indicates that the first Arabic-speaking colony in New York was established by pioneers who came from trading centers in Syria. Naff concluded that the Syrians, mainly Western-oriented Christians, were the first to take advantage of " American economic opportunities. " (Naff,p.77)

Even though some of them lived in colonies, Philip Hitti argued that Syrian immigrants, unlike other immigrants, did not have a strong desire to seclude themselves. In his book, **Syrians in America**, Hitti contended that the Syrians lived in colonies in very few cities, and that the first and largest such colony was the New York colony, also known as "little Syria." (Hitti, p.66)

R.J. Halaby, in his article, " The Portrayal of Pan-Arabism in the 'Syrian World' Magazine, " argued that early Arabic-Speaking immigrants " made their entry into American society in 1882." The first Arab family to

arrive in New York was the Joseph Awad Arbeely family in 1878, from Arbeen, Syria. (Halaby, p.133). Gregory Orfalea considers the arrival of the Arbeely family in New York as the turning point in the history of Syrian emigration to the United States. " Arabs were to come in groups and sizeable numbers only after the emigration of the Arbeely family, " he argued in his book, **Before The Flames: A Quest For The History Of Arab-Americans.** (Orfalea, p.47)

The early pioneers who left Syria to go to America considered their move to be temporary. They wanted to come to the United States for a few years, make some money and go back to their villages and towns in Syria. Syrians migrated to the United States to improve their economic conditions, according to Naff, but also to escape political persecution, military draft and frustration.

Early Arab immigrants to America were predominantly Christians simply because Christian Arabs did not feel that the exposure to the new society would threaten their beliefs, values or religion, as Muslims did. Muslims, including Druze, perceived Christian society as unfriendly to them. Naff argued that because of these anxieties, Muslims and Druze failed to constitute a chain migration comparable to that of the Christians.(Naff, P.120)

Early Syrian immigrants made their living through peddling. Syrian peddlers took to the market place carrying a little QASHSHAH -- from the Spanish word CAIA-- all around the country. It generally included handkerchiefs, ribbons, notions of threads, lace, underwear, suspenders, etc. Orfalea made the point that peddling was a way for Syrians to break their isolation and to walk across America without "

humiliating attempts to adapt to American behavior in a fixed setting." (Orfalea, p.99). According to Orfalea, peddling was also a testimony of how the Syrians had made American self-reliance their own. He also made the point that although a sizeable number of early Syrian immigrants took up peddling, the majority of them did not do so for their early work. Some of them, mainly the educated, viewed the work as demeaning. Others set themselves up as suppliers who stocked the peddlers. Referring to Syrians, Naff wrote: " Pack peddling was the primary source of the tangible bounty on which their hopes and survival depended. " (Naff, p.129). She further stated that peddling was convenient for Syrians. It did not need advanced training or language skills. Naff added, however, that peddling was not a way of Life for all Syrians. Some found it to be very aggressive and physically demanding. Those who did not take up peddling either joined the labor force or gambled with establishing their own enterprise. (Naff, p. 129).

Even before arriving in America, Syrians developed a very positive view of Americans which was based on stories told by Syrian immigrants, or by Americans visiting the region. Suleiman argued that this view was " at least incomplete in that it was highly positive, with hardly any mention of problems, hardships, or difficulties of any kind. "(Suleiman, p. 38).

The main issue where Syrians had a somewhat negative view of America and the Americans, was the issue of racial discrimination. Syrians felt discriminated against when they were referred to as " Turks " or " other Asians ." At that point, Syrian immigrants started the search for their identity.(Suleiman, P. 42) .

As far as the emigration of Arab journalists is concerned, it was mainly related to repression and persecution by the Ottomans. The Ottoman

State directed its most vicious repression towards the intellectual minority. The Ottoman Sultan, Abdul- Hamid, considered the writings of this minority to be threatening to his rule. He also wanted to stop the spread of ideologies influenced by Western thought, such as democracy and nationalism. The continuous repression of journalists, most of whom were Christian, led them to look for freedom of expression elsewhere, including the Americas. (Khalaf, p.19)

Upon their arrival to the new land, Arab immigrants took advantage of the freedom of the press in the United States to establish Arabic-language newspapers, just as the other ethnic minority groups established theirs. (Tayash, p. 109) The first Arabic-language newspaper was **Kawkab America** (Star of America), Published in 1892 by Ibrahim and Najeeb Arbeely in New York. More Arabic-language newspapers were to follow in different parts of the country.

Early Arab-American Press

The early Arabic-language newspapers in the United States were often directly sponsored by the various Syrian religious communities. These newspapers tried mainly to bring Eastern and Western views closer, as well as to preserve the mother tongue. Some of the better-known early Arabic-language publications included* : **Al-Hoda** (Guidance) which was first published in 1898 by Lebanese Maronites in Philadelphia and then in New York city, **Meraat-ul-Gharb** (The Mirror of the West) which was first published in 1899 by a Syrian Greek Orthodox, **Al-Dalil** (The Guide) which was first published in 1910 by Syrian Christians, and **Al-Bayan** (The

* The titles of newspapers will reflect current English transliteration of their names.

Explanation) which was first published in 1911, sponsored by the Syrian Druze community. Naff pointed out that, since most of the early Arabic language newspapers were published by Lebanese Arabs who came from a country that was factionalized, the Arabic press " carried the sectarian attitude of Lebanon to their new homeland." (Tayash, p. 109) .

One of the rare issues on which Arabs and their newspapers were unified, according to Henry Melki, was their strong stand against the American authorities' decision to stop issuing them American citizenship. (Melki, p. 2) He went on to say that soon after the decision was reversed, Syrians went back to their fragmentation and sectarianism.

Accessibility to Arab-American media was perceived differently by the different religious sects. In his study of Arab-American media, Tayash found that, despite the fact that the early Arab-American press was mostly run by Christian Arabs, Muslim Arabs tended to think that the Arabic media were more accessible than did Christians. (Tayash, p. 117).

By 1929, according to Philip de Trazi, there were seventy-nine Arabic-language newspapers and magazines in the United States. (Tayash, p. 116). Also, There were a total of 268 newspapers and magazines in North and South America by 1929.

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The objective of this Master's Report is to address various issues presented and discussed in the two newspapers, **Al-Bayan** and **Al-Dalil**. As several related topics will be considered, the report will look at how these newspapers covered issues in reference to Arab identity vs. Ottoman

identity, their attitudes towards Ottomans, the new world powers, the Arabs in the U.S., and the perceived Zionist threat to the Ottomans.

The period which this report covers was very explosive as far as the Arab world was concerned. Arabs were yearning for freedom and progress after hundreds of years of backward Ottoman control. Many Arabs figured that helping the Europeans against the Ottomans was the way out. Arabs were highly frustrated when they realized that the Europeans were only good for promises, to the point where some Arabs wanted to go back to Ottoman days. This state of disarray and confusion was reflected in the attitudes of Arabs everywhere, including those who emigrated to the United States. Thus, Arabs, in the Arab world and elsewhere, were pre-occupied with the same concerns: How do we feel towards Ottomans? Where do we stand on the Ottoman-European conflict? How do we serve our best interests as Arabs? In addition to these questions, the plight of the Palestinian Arabs and their struggle against British and Zionist plans was of tremendous concern to the Arab masses and their intellectual elite.

The freedom of expression as well as political freedom gave a clear advantage to Arab-American newspapers over their counterparts back home. They debated the issues freely and extensively without fear of political persecution or physical punishment. Thus, Arab-American newspapers were at the forefront of calling attention to, and raising awareness regarding, the main issues facing the Arab world. In addition, Arab-American newspapers covered and debated relations within the Arab community. The Arab-American community was influenced by events in the Arab world. Religion often dictated relations, attitudes, and even political stands within the community.

The majority of Syrians were Muslims, the vast majority among whom were Sunnis. The Druze and Shi'as were minorities among Muslims in Syria. The available figures at that time estimated the numbers of Christians at 25% of the population in Syria, and 50% in Mount Lebanon. Greek Orthodox, Melkites and Maronites were the largest Christian sects in Mount Lebanon. The Maronites, along with the Druze, claimed Mount Lebanon to be their home. The Maronites were the largest sect in Mount Lebanon, while the Orthodox were the largest Christian group in Syria. The smallest sect in the province was the Melkite. (Naff, p.50).

Under the Ottoman empire, each community was run by its highest religious authority figure who controlled all social aspects of the community from education to marriage and divorce. Her was also responsible, before the Ottomans state, to collect taxes and maintain law and order within his community. (Naff, p. 50).

Members from the different sects were free to move within the Ottoman empire. However, they tended to live in homogeneous quarters, or 'haras'. This system was known as the millet system under the Ottomans and it helped their cause in controlling the region and maintaining social order. The millet system ceased to officially exist at the end of the Ottoman empire. (Naff, p.51). However; its legacy lingered on. Long years of divisions reinforced fanatical sectarian and religious tendencies which allowed rivalries among the different sects in Syria to continue. In this report, I will try to advance the null hypothesis which proposes that there is no relationship between religious affiliation of Arab-American newspapers in the United States, and their social attitude. (Orfalea, p.50)

In order for this report to reflect the different viewpoints within the community, it was deemed important to select two different newspapers with different orientations and political affiliations. Al-Bayan and Al-Dalil were among the few Arab-American newspapers published at the time. Al-Dalil had a Christian orientation and tried to represent Christian- Arab viewpoints, and Al-Bayan reflected the position of Muslim and Druze Arabs on the issue.

The discussion will cover all available copies of Al-Dalil and Al-Bayan . The only available copies of Al-Dalil go from January 29,1910 to April 11,1914. On April 10, 1913, Al-Dalil became a semi-weekly. Records, however, indicate that Al-Dalil was first published in 1904 by As'ad Melki and Najib Badran. In 1914, Badran started another newspaper, Al-Nasr. The first issue of Al-Bayan was published on the 24th of January 1911. It was owned by Suleiman Baddour and Abbas Abu-Shakra. In the first issue, Baddour introduced his publication as " a newspaper dedicated to serve nationalism and literature. We hope to win the trust of our readers and supporters." On the 29th of August 1911, Al-Bayan announced that Abbas Abu- Shakra was leaving the newspaper. Baddour became the sole owner. Al-Bayan started as a semi-weekly, published every Wednesday and Saturday. On January 25th, 1917, Al-Bayan started coming out three times a week. At one point, Al-Bayan was printed and published using the facilities of another Arabic-Language newspaper, Al-Hoda. All together, this report will cover Al-Bayan for a span of seventeen years, and Al-Dalil for a period of five years .

CHAPTER TWO

ARAB IDENTITY vs OTTOMAN IDENTITY*

In its early years, Al-Bayan gave complete support to the Ottoman state, and to Arab ties with the Turks. Discussion of Arabism or an independent Arab state did not even exist. Even when the Druze of Houran, Syria, revolted against the Ottomans in 1911, Al-Bayan viewed the revolt as an internal problem within the Ottoman state. The incident was dismissed as an isolated action:

If we are to take a closer look at the revolt in Houran, we would find ignorance to be the main cause behind it. Some anti-Druze forces deceived the Druze and told them that the military campaign is aimed against all the people of Houran, and not only the criminals among them. (Sept. 5, 1911, p.1).

As time went by, and as events developed, Al-Bayan's stands shifted gradually. On January 21st, 1913, Al-Bayan discussed, and for the first time, the need to decentralize the government, and to include Arabs in the decision-making process:

Syrians, specially residents of Beirut, are asking the Ottomans to decentralize the government, to include them in government positions, and to make the Arabic language an official language in government departments, alongside Turkish. We feel that what the Syrians are asking for is just and fair. (Jan. 21, 1913, p.1) .

About a year later, the newspaper followed up on this topic showing how the Turks involved Arabs in the government, and hired them in the different departments and councils. (Feb. 24, 1914, p.4) .

* Materials from Al-Bayan and Al-Dalil were translated into English by the author of this report.

Al-Bayan then began discussing topics such as "Arabism", "glorious Arabs", and "The Arab Nation" :

The glorious Arab Nation rose again under the leadership of its great leader, the Hashemite Prince of Mecca, Hussein Ibn Ali. He is our King who has been accepted by the Europeans and the Americans as a partner and a full ally. (Feb. 18, 1919, p. 1).

Within the context of supporting the Great Arab Revolution, and its leader Hussein, Prince of Mecca, **Al-Bayan** began discovering certain unique Arab qualities . On February 8, 1919, **Al-Bayan** declared that Arabs have all the attributes of nationhood. The article discussed historical, geographic and linguistic ties among the Arab states as sufficient evidence to prove that they formed one nation, the Arab nation:

Arabs are not only those who live in the Arabian Peninsula. The people of Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Yemen are also a part of the Arab Nation. (Feb. 8, 1919, p. 4).

As Arab independence seemed harder and harder to achieve, and as France and Britain began to show their real intentions in the region, some voices began to sing the praises of the good old days of the Ottoman empire. Arabs, according to these voices, were not ready yet for independence. They needed to be more unified, educated, mobilized and mature. Authors who expressed regrets over the end of Ottoman rule, and who published their materials in **Al-Bayan**, made it clear that they were in favor of Arab independence eventually, but that the time had not come yet. In an article entitled " Arab Unity," Shakeeb Arslan, a former Syrian envoy to Berlin, wrote:

/ If Arabs get rid of Ottomans, they will be colonized by the Europeans. I have always been in favor of Arab independence, but we are not ready yet to manage our affairs. (July 2, 1921, p.1).

As for **Al-Dalil**, its support for Ottoman rule was clear and wholehearted in the years 1910 to 1913 .

Turks and Arabs are brothers in nationalism. Their love to their homeland should always lead them to cooperate and unify. They should defend their common goals with honesty and determination. (April 2, 1910, p. 1).

Those who tried to violate the status quo were accused of being reactionary.

Discussion of Arab independence, during this period, was the ultimate sin:

Some reactionary Arabs are writing articles and poems to build a wall of division between Arabs and Turks. The enemies of the constitution want to bring the Arab issue to the surface to reach their despicable goal of destroying the state. Their hopes will be to no avail because each Ottoman ,whose nationalism runs in his blood, wants to see his country unified and strong. (March 12, 1910, p. 1).

When **Al-Dalil** shifted its position away from supporting the Ottomans, it was not in favor of supporting Arabism. From 1913 on, **Al-Dalil** became an adamant supporter of a Syria under French control. One reason, according to the paper, was that European control over Syria would benefit the region a great deal, since Europe at that time was the center of progress and civilization.

The real reason behind supporting the Europeans, however, was different. **Al-Dalil** always feared that an independent Arab nation would leave the Christian Arabs a minority under the control of a Muslim majority, whereas an Arab world divided and controlled by European forces would provide Christians of the region with protection against religious fanaticism:

Religious fanaticism is widespread in Syria and the only reason preventing religious massacres is the involvement of European countries. We said before, and we say it again, the establishment of an independent Syria is impossible, because the Muslim will not accept a Christian as his leader and the Christians will not accept to stay under Islamic control forever. Those who say that it is time to get rid of Turkish control and to have an independent Syria do not realize that such a state will be based on religion. (Feb. 22, 1913, p. 1).

The choice for **Al-Dalil** was for Syria to have autonomy under Ottoman rule, or to be controlled by a European power. (Jan. 18, 1913, p. 3). The newspaper leaned towards the second option because of what it called "blind extremism " :

The extremists among the Ottomans threaten their Christian brothers everyday. They want to take revenge against their Christian brothers because the Balkan War was started by a Christian country. (April 5, 1913, p. 1).

Al-Dalil then blamed the deteriorating conditions of the Ottoman state on the fact that it became an Islamic state which discriminated against its citizens on the basis of religion. (Sep. 18, 1913, p.1).

To summarize, **Al-Bayan** supported the Ottoman state early on, then shifted its position in favor of Arab independence. When it realized that Arab independence was beyond reach and that the alternative was to come under European colonization, **Al-Bayan** went back to writing about the good qualities of the Ottomans. **Al-Dalil** on the other hand, was never in favor of Arab or Syrian independence. It took support away from the Ottoman state and gave it to the Europeans, specially to France. The different religious orientations of the two newspapers were apparent in this context. **Al-Bayan** did not have any problem supporting an independent, predominantly Muslim Arab state. Understandably, **Al-Dalil** looked at such a possibility as a threat to Christians in the region.

CHAPTER THREE

ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTTOMANS

AL-Bayan maintained a completely pro-Ottoman line until it started calling for Arab independence in 1919 and on. This support was specially significant when the newspaper implicitly chose to side with the Ottoman state against the Druze of Houran, Syria, who revolted against Ottoman rule in 1911. Al-Bayan, torn between its strong allegiance to the Ottomans and its obligation as the voice of the Druze in the United States, tried to balance its coverage. Thus, Al-Bayan wrote on the 18th of April, 1911:

We are Ottomans and Ottomanism is suffering today. It is suffering from revolutions and disturbances in Albania, Yemen, and Houran. Our hearts bleed when we see Ottoman blood being shed in Houran or elsewhere. We know that governments have the right to punish the criminal among their citizens, but we ask the Ottoman government to be merciful towards its Houran sons. (April 18, 1911, p. 4) .

On June 13, 1911, Al-Bayan praised the efforts of the new parliamentary Ottoman government which tried to " heal things in Houran and to reassure the residents of Houran that they are the sons of the Ottoman state. God bless the Ottoman state and the new government." (June 13, 1911, p. 1). Also, on September 5th, 1911, and on its front page, AL-Bayan wrote :

What took place in Houran is not a revolution because those who controlled it did not revolt against the government, disobey it, or stop serving it . They did what they did because of the arrogance of the former Ottoman government. Some dirty people convinced the Druze of Houran that the objective behind the Ottomans' military attacks on Houran is to punish all Druze, not only the criminals among

them. The new Ottoman government is our mother who loves us and wishes the best for us.

On October 14, 1911, Al-Bayan's editorial declared that the Druze demonstrated on the battlefield their willingness to die for the Ottoman State. Isolated incidents by some "young ignorant people," added the editorial, should not take away from the "militancy of the Druze," i.e. the strong Druze allegiance to the Ottoman state in this context. To avoid getting into a confrontation with its readers, and to stay away from criticizing the Ottomans for their brutal crushing of the revolution, Al-Bayan chose to blame the whole conflict on a few ignorant Druze. When it did attack the Ottomans for their military actions against Houran, Al-Bayan blamed the attacks on the former exclusivist Ottoman government which was replaced by a new parliamentary government, in which non-Ottomans, including Arabs, were also represented. (June 13, 1911,p. 4).

During the confrontation between the Ottoman state and the European powers, Al-Bayan took a clear cut position in support of the Ottomans. Not only did it attack France and Britain for their intentions in the region, but it also blasted those who advocated occupation by the Europeans. It defended the Ottoman state as the state which "gave us pride and respect." It went even further and suggested that if "we were actually oppressed as Arabs, it is we who oppressed ourselves, and not the Ottoman state." (Sept. 9, 1914, p. 1).

AL-Dalil started out as an adamant supporter of Ottomans, accusing those calling for independence of being "Reactionary Forces." (March 12, 1910,p.3). It also attacked the symbols of independence, such as Iraq's great poet, Alrasafi, who advocated separation between the Turks and Arabs even through violence,if necessary. Al-Dalil saw no difference between Arabs

and Turks, describing them as "two races within the Ottoman nation." (July 9, 1910, p. 1).

In 1911, **Al-Dalil** accused the leaders of the Ottoman Constitution party, then in power, of being weak and indecisive. Yet, the newspaper gave them credit for taking steps to revive a nation destroyed by Abdul-Hamid, the previous Ottoman Sultan. Also, in an article discussing Libya, **Al-Dalil** urged Arabs to side with the Ottoman state against Italy because "all Arabs, Christians and Muslims, are Ottoman." (October 14, 1911).

It was not until 1913 when, for the first time, **Al-Dalil** discussed the possibility of an independent Syria. On the 18th of January, 1913, **Al-Dalil** published an article arguing that Syria could be independent from Ottoman control. The newspaper added, however, that Syria can not make it on its own and will probably have to be controlled by a foreign power, possibly France, because Christians and Muslims will not agree on a form of government. This was an implicit expression of **Al-Dalil**'s desire to see Syria under European control.

In sum, when the choice was between European control and Ottoman control of the Arab world, **Al-Bayan** made it clear that it preferred the Ottomans. Even when the Ottomans clashed with the Druze of Houran, **Al-Bayan** always found ways to give excuses for the Ottoman government. When **Al-Dalil** had to choose, it chose France and the Europeans. Its supportive attitude of the Ottomans suddenly shifted into support of European control over Syria. Again, it was obvious how religious affiliation influenced the stands of both newspapers. **Al-Bayan** chose the Muslim Ottomans over the Christian Europeans, except when it believed that

supporting the Europeans might lead to an independent Arab state. **Al-Dalil**, and from a Christian perspective, advocated European control of Syria.

CHAPTER FOUR

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NEW WORLD POWERS

a. Attitudes Toward the British and the French

Al-Bayan maintained an anti-French, and anti- British position. The newspaper looked at, and discussed, the actions of the British and the French as occupiers who had no respect for Arabs and their human rights:

The Europeans thought that they could deceive the Arabs by telling them that if they sever their ties with the Turks, they will be given independence. They wanted to provide help to the Arabs getting rid of the Turks. Then, France and Britain would divide the Arab world among themselves. The Europeans have become professionals in lying and deception. (May 5, 1921, p. 4) .

AL-Bayan expended much effort to exposing the European powers and their true intentions. Thus, Shakeeb Arslan wrote :

The Europeans told the Arabs that if they help them against Turkey during the war, they will help the Arabs in rebuilding the great Arab nation and bringing back the glorious old days. They lied to us and broke their promises. (July 2, 1921, p. 4).

Al-Bayan also exposed French policies in Syria and Lebanon which aimed at exploiting the region's resources and enslaving its people. Furthermore, it gave extensive coverage to British actions in Yemen, Egypt, Oman, and specially in Palestinē. Many articles were published in Al-Bayan condemning British actions in Palestine, and praising the courageous resistance of Palestinians who refused to budge or to give in to British occupation:

The British thought that the Palestinians will give in to the League of Nations' decision and to the Balfour Declaration which call for a national homeland for Jews in Palestine. The Palestinians, just like the Egyptians and the Iraqis, will keep fighting till they prove to the British that the Arab nation is worthy of independence. (May 5, 1921, p. 5) .

The editorials also included calls for the Arab-American community, especially Palestinian-Americans, to provide support to their brothers in the homeland:

While our Christian and Muslim Palestinian brothers continue their struggle, and refuse to take part in legislative elections under British occupation, Palestinian immigrants are not doing enough to help them out in their struggle. (Mar. 24, 1923, p. 3).

Early on, Al-Bayan failed to completely comprehend the danger represented by the British and the French. It wrongly argued that the two countries have conflicting interests in the region which would prevent either one from attaining its own goals. Al-Bayan believed that both Britain and France had similar but opposing interests in Syria which, according to Al-Bayan, virtually assured Syria of staying independent, or under Ottoman control:

France's interests in Syria are similar to those of Germany and England. England will not allow any other country to occupy Syria. (Jan. 7, 1913, p.1).

Another important reason for Al-Bayan's anti-European sentiments is its allegiance to the Ottoman state. When the choice had to be made, Al-Bayan chose Ottoman rule over either the French or the British. For Al-Bayan, Turks and Arabs were two elements of one nation, while France and Britain were outsiders.

Al-Dalil supported the Ottoman state up until early 1913. When it decided to take its support away from the Ottomans, it did not do so in favor of an independent Syrian state. On February 22, 1913, Al-Dalil explicitly

argued against independence and publicly announced that Syria should come under the control of France or a "European power." The newspaper explained its position on the basis that Europe was the center of "progress and development."

The real reason behind Al-Dalil's position , however, is religious. Al-Dalil argued that Christians would be discriminated against in an independent Syria. The assumption was that Christian Syrians would be protected by France, because it is a Christian country.(Jan.18, 1913, p.1). This latter position by Al-Dalil represented a complete shift from the almost unconditional support of Ottoman rule.

b. Attitude Toward the U.S.

The two Arabic-speaking newspapers under review had a positive view of the United States in general. For Arab-Americans, the United States represented a symbol of positive values and freedom. They believed that America could not sit idle and watch while France and England violated the Arabs' human rights and stole their freedom. Al-Bayan repeatedly called upon the United States to use its leverage to help Arabs and their just cause against the French and the British. Al-Bayan also supported Prince Faisal's proposal to place Arab countries under the United States' mandate:

As we said before, Syria in its entirety is asking for U.S. protection. Meanwhile, and with America observing us, we will have time to exchange ideas and thoughts with our Arab brothers. If we find out that America is oppressing us, we can ask it to leave. (Feb. 8, 1919, p .3) .

The newspaper also discussed President Woodrow Wilson's principles of human rights as an example of the United States' commitment to the causes of justice and self-determination everywhere:

President Wilson made it clear that the United States will assume its responsibilities as a champion of freedom and justice around the world. (Feb. 8, 1919, p. 3).

The issues available from Al-Dalil between 1910 and 1914 do not discuss a potential role for the United States in the Middle East. In part, this can be interpreted as a reflection of Al-Dalil's supportive position of the French occupation of Syria and Lebanon. Al-Dalil looked at such an occupation as the the only viable guarantee for Syria's Christians against a potential Muslim majority. This particular newspaper felt closer to the Christians of Europe than to American Christians. Its attitude reflected a belief that France is more likely to protect the Christians of Syria than any other country. This could partially explain Al-Dalil's lack of discussion of any role for the United States.

In short, Al-Bayan tried to expose European plans to colonize the Arab world. It maintained an anti-European line throughout the years. Al-Dalil on the other hand, felt that European control of the Arab world was the best thing that could happen to Arabs. Such control, according to the newspaper, would eliminate the possibility of confrontation between Christian and Muslim Arabs. Al-Bayan expressed highly favorable views of the United States. It discussed a serious potential role for the U.S. in protecting the interest of the Arab world against European intentions. Such a role for the U.S. was not discussed over the pages of Al-Dalil.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ZIONIST THREAT TO OTTOMAN RULE

The first mention of a Zionist threat in Palestine came in Al-Bayan's issue of October 24, 1911. The newspaper referred to the Zionist " threat to the Ottoman homeland, specially to the people of Palestine." In the same issue, Al-Bayan republished an article from an Arabic-language magazine, issued in Baghdad, describing the intelligence and determination of Jews and their political movement, Zionism.

Al-Bayan differentiated between Judaism as a religion and Zionism as a political movement. For instance, it stated that almost 800,000 Jews, kicked out of Spain in 1492 by King Ferdinand, took refuge in the Ottoman state. They resettled in Egypt, Libya, Palestine, and elsewhere. (Oct. 24, 1911, p. 4). It also made it clear that the Palestine problem is political and not religious, and that the conflict is between Zionists and Palestinians, and not between Muslims and Christians:

The American people should know, even if the Palestine issue is not very important to them, that the Palestinian conflict is not religious, and that Arabs, both Muslims and Christians, will defend their homeland against the Zionists who are trying to occupy it with the help of the British.
(July 23, 1938, p. 3) .

In addition, Al-Bayan gave expanded coverage to anti-Jewish sentiments in the United States. It borrowed and republished articles from major newspapers, such as The Brooklyn Eagle, which discussed some of the characteristics " that Americans hated about the Jews." Accordingly, Al-Bayan concluded that Americans could not put up with the Jews, and that

was why they were being settled away from the United States. (June, 11, 1938, p.3) .

Al-Bayan viewed Zionism as a serious threat to the Ottoman state. It tried to mobilize Arab-Americans, specially Palestinians, against the continuous influx of Jewish immigrants to Palestine. It called upon Palestinian immigrants to help their brothers in Palestine financially, and to leave the political aspects of the problem to experts:

Frankly, and in our opinion, none of the Arab immigrants, whether involved in the Palestinian question or trying to collect money for its cause, should discuss with the Jews the conditions which Arabs accept or do not accept to resolve the conflict with the Zionists. The right to discuss these conditions is reserved to Arab leaders who put themselves in harm's way trying to defend the homeland. We as immigrants can help Palestine through collecting and sending money to those defending our rights and our pride. (Aug. 13, 1938, p. 3).

Palestinian-Americans were criticized by **Al-Bayan** for not doing enough to expose the Zionist ideology, and to help their brothers in their just struggle. (July 23, 1938,p.3).

The materials available from **Al-Dalil** do not include any discussions of Jewish emigration to Palestine, or of the Zionist ideology.

In short, **Al-Bayan** viewed the Zionist movement as a threat to Ottoman rule and to the people of Palestine. It tried to distinguish between Zionism as a political movement and Judaism as a religion. **Al-Bayan**'s position on this issue can be seen as a reflection of the strong support and sympathy which Palestinians received from their fellow Arab brothers, Christians and Muslims. Thus, on this particular issue, one could argue that **Al-Bayan**'s stands reflected those of Christian as well as Muslim Arabs. **Al-Dalil** did not have anything to say about the topic, which makes it difficult to

pass judgment on its true stands.

CHAPTER SIX

ATTITUDE TOWARDS ARABS IN THE U.S.

a. Attitude Towards the Community in General.

Al-Bayan made continuous attempts to mobilize the Arab communities, specially the Druze community, and to raise their level of awareness. In discussing the importance of mobilizing Druze youth through the establishment of organizations throughout the United States, Al-Bayan wrote:

These organizations are essential to the survival and unity of the Druze. They unify, educate, and preserve our identity. Organizations are among the most effective tools to unify a nation, reserve its rights, and reach its goals. (Oct. 31, 1911, p. 4) .

Major political, economic, cultural, as well as social issues, related to the community, were thoroughly discussed and debated over the pages of Al-Bayan. Unity among Arabs, regardless of their sects, was a major topic for the newspaper:

Every immigrant, Christian and Muslim, and every Arab all over the Arab world, has to support this idea of Arab unity and to add their voices to that of the Arab Unity Party which is trying to gather around it Arab immigrants from all over the United States. (Feb. 8, 1919, p. 4) .

Also, developments in Palestine were reflected on the pages of the newspaper which repeatedly called upon its readers to contribute to the cause of their Palestinian brothers, financially and morally. On many

occasions, Arab immigrants were accused of not doing enough to help their brothers in Palestine.

In an article published on February 12, 1910, Al-Dalil defended itself against attacks by Najeeb Diab, editor-in-chief of Meraat-ul-Gharb, who criticized the newspaper for its decision to support The Syrian-American Club (*Al-Muntada al-Suri al-Amriki*) over the Syrian Unity League (*Jam'yat al-ittihad al-Suri*). Earlier, Al-Dalil had criticized the way in which the League tried to manipulate Arabic-speaking newspapers in the United States, and accused Diab of benefiting financially from his support of the League:

Al-Dalil explained before that the Syrian Unity League refused to take part in the coalition designed to defend Syrian citizenship. The League bought some newspapers in order to attack Al-Dalil and the Syrian-American Club which showed every interest in working for unifying Syrian immigrants. (Feb. 5, 1910, p. 1) .

On May 6, 1911, Al-Dalil discussed Syrian businessmen going bankrupt. It claimed that this reflected on the name and reputation of Syrian immigrants in general. The newspaper blamed the problem largely on the lack of experience of Syrian businessmen:

In every country of the Americas, the Syrian immigrant is suffering from the bad commercial conditions to the point where the word " Syrian " became despised by commercial houses in the United States, Brazil, and Argentina. The inexperience of Syrian businessmen led them to bankruptcy, one after another. (May 6, 1911, p. 1).

b. Attitude Towards Religious Sects

Al-Bayan repeatedly tried to strengthen ties between Christian and Muslim Arabs, describing them as brothers. During the few years preceding the Syrian Revolt of 1925, **Al-Bayan** discussed Christian-Muslim relations intensively and attacked "foreign agents" who advocated hate among brothers. This was mainly in response to a campaign by some newspapers with Western ties to convince Christian Arabs that they had more in common with Christian Europeans than with Muslim Arabs. After the Syrian Revolt of 1925, elements with French connections intensified their attacks on the Druze. The anti-Druze campaign maintained that the Druze revolted against France because France was a Christian country, and that if France were defeated, the Christians of Syria would be defeated. **Al-Bayan** defended the revolt vigorously as "every Syrian's revolution..., led by the Druze "who opened their arms and homes to the Christians of Syria." (Nov. 27, 1925, p.4). Syrian and Lebanese Christians, according to the same article, received food supplies from the Druze Mountain when starvation hit the region in the early 1920s. Also, in an article written in **Al-Bayan**, Shakeeb Arslan, a prominent Druze figure, reemphasized the excellent relationships between Muslims and Christians. He discussed how both sects lived side by side in a brotherly fashion, and how Muslims protected the Christians of Bab Tuma, a neighborhood in Damascus, from French occupation forces:

Christians and Muslims have always lived together in a brotherly fashion. When the French occupiers attacked Bab Tuma, a mainly Christian neighborhood in Damascus, it was the Muslims who protected them. (Jan. 4, 1926, p. 3).

Al-Dalil advocated unity among Arab-Americans and among the different religious sects. It rejected the concept of supporting foreign powers over Ottomans just because they were Christians. In an article discussing the conflict between Italy and the Ottomans over Libya, **Al-Dalil** made it clear that all Ottomans, Christians and Muslims, should rally behind their state:

Our Bible tells us to choose right over wrong and, in Libya Turkey is right and Italy is wrong. The Bible also tells us to love our homeland and defend it against enemies regardless of who the enemy is. The Christian is required to love his Christian brother, but he is more required to love and defend his homeland. (June 17, 1911, p. 2).

Most of the time, however, the newspaper conducted itself as a representative of the Christian community and its interests, both in the United States and abroad, specially in its discussion of the possibility of an independent Syria vs. a Syria under French control. The newspaper feared that Christian Syrians would be discriminated against in an independent Syria. (Feb. 22, 1913, p. 1).

c. Attitude Towards Other Newspapers

Despite its repeated calls for cooperation and harmony among Arabs regardless of their religion, **Al-Bayan** was best known for defending the Druze and their point of view. In 1924, **Al-Bayan** defended the Druze against individuals and organizations who tried to exploit the Druze revolt against the French. Some newspapers tried to convince Syrian Christians that France was a target of the Druze because it was a Christian country. (Oct.15, 1924 ,p. 4). **Al-Bayan** viewed attacks by **Meraat-ul-Gharb** as a cheap attempt to set fire to the sectarian fuel.

In 1925, the same newspaper, Meraat-ul-Gharb, renewed its attacks on Muslims and Druze accusing them of coming to America to make quick profits and then going back to their towns and villages. Al-Bayan dismissed these accusations as lies : " The Druze contribute to the community through their generosity and work ethics." (Oct.28, 1925, p.4).

Al-Bayan went on in subsequent issues to thank the people within the Christian-Arab community who wrote letters showing their disapproval and discontent with the actions of Meraat-ul-Gharb which distributed "its poisonous ideas to sow the seeds of disunity among the different sects within the Arab community." (Oct.31, 1925,p.4).

Al-Dalil also had its share of disputes with Meraat-ul-Gharb and its editor-in-chief. The main conflict was over Al-Dalil's decision to support the Syrian-American Club over the Syrian Unity League:

In the previous issue, we criticized the Syrian League for distributing money among its newspapers [meaning the newspapers supporting its point of view], and tried to buy the rest of the newspapers to advocate its point of view. What we said was received well by the Syrian community, with the exception of the owner of Meraat-ul-Gharb and a few League members who wanted to convince people that we wrote our article in support of the Syrian-American Club. (Feb. 12, 1910, p. 1).

Al-Dalil pursued the subject in the following issue calling upon Najeeb Diab, the owner of Meraat-ul-Gharb, to refrain from using foul language in discussing issues related to the community. (Feb. 19,1910,p.1).

In sum, Al-Bayan tried to mobilize and raise the awareness of Arab-Americans. It specially tried to reach the Druze community in the United States, and to protect its interest. Al-Bayan also tried to mobilize Arab-Americans, specially Palestinians, to help their brothers in Palestine as they

faced British and Zionist plans. **Al-Dalil** conducted itself mainly as a representative of the Christian community in the United States, and sometimes as a representative of Christians in Syria . Both newspapers had an ongoing conflict with a third newspaper, **Meraat-ul-Gharb**, which followed aggressive means of discussing issues related to the community and the Arab world.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Attitudes towards the Ottomans varied among Arabic-speaking newspapers published in the U.S. Most of the major newspapers, however, generally supported the Ottomans when they were in control of the state. As the Ottomans started losing ground to the Europeans, newspapers changed their positions in order to fit their own objectives, and to adapt to the new conditions. Early on, and until the start of WWI, Al-Bayan and Al-Dalil generally supported the Ottomans and opposed Arab independence.

Al-Bayan gradually took its support away from the Ottoman state in favor of Arab nationhood. It began discovering how similar Arabs were, and how logical it was to have an Arab nation. It supported its position by discussing economic, political and historical aspects of Arab nationhood. Al-Dalil had different views. It felt that the advocacy of Arab independence meant betraying its Christian constituents. The newspaper expressed concerns that an independent Arab nation would leave Christian Arabs as a minority controlled by the Muslim Arab majority. In its view, the solution to this problem was to keep the Arab world divided and controlled by the Europeans, who happened to be Christians.

As far as their attitudes toward the new world powers are concerned, Al-Bayan and Al-Dalil only agreed on their views of the United States. Both newspapers saw a positive role for the U.S. to play. The United States

was seen as the land of freedom and principle which could use its leverage to influence events in the Arab world. Part of **Al-Bayan**'s enthusiasm about the United States had to do with its support of Prince Faisal's proposal to place Arab countries evacuated by the Ottomans under an American mandate.

Al-Bayan and **Al-Dalil** had opposing views, however, when it came to the French and the British. Thus, **Al-Bayan** dealt with France and Britain as occupiers who wanted to rob the Arabs of their resources and dignity. At first, the alternative was to stay under Ottoman control. When it became clear that the Ottomans would not be able to hold onto power, the second alternative was for Arabs to rally behind their leader and call for independence. For **Al-Dalil**, however, Europeans were the saviors. Europe, being the center of technology, science and civilization, was about to set the Arab world free from backwardness, and to put it on the right track towards advancement and progress. As mentioned before, **Al-Dalil**'s advocacy of the Europeans had political dimensions. It did not want to see Christian Arabs as a minority in a potentially unified Arab nation.

Discussion of the Zionist threat to the Ottoman state was limited. **Al-Bayan** called attention to the political aspirations of the Zionists. The threat was mainly seen as a threat to the Ottoman Empire and to the existence and the very survival of Palestinian identity. Thus, to resist Zionist plans, Arabs had to rally behind the Ottoman state. The copies available from **Al-Dalil** did not make any mention of the Zionist threat or Jewish emigration to Palestine.

In general, the different Arabic-language newspapers in the United States represented different sects within the community. Each newspaper represented a sect and tried to advocate its point of view. Thus, any conflict

among the different sects reflected itself on the pages of these newspapers. Also, different views and approaches to problems and issues facing the Arab community in the United States or the Arab region generally, meant disagreement among the newspapers.

This only goes to prove wrong the null hypothesis which assumed no relationship between the religion of the Arab-American newspapers and their social attitude. There seems to be a direct relationship between Al-Dalil's and Al-Bayan's sectarian affiliation, and their coverage.

One newspaper in particular, Meraat-ul-Gharb, seemed to have annoyed the two newspapers under discussion. This was mainly due to the provocative nature in which this newspaper and its editor-in-chief addressed sensitive issues such as European occupation of the Arab world and Muslim-Christian relations.

In short, Al-Bayan and Al-Dalil were two more Arabic-language newspapers which covered news from the Arab world, and relayed the news of Arab immigrants to the homeland. They had their own style, their own readers and priorities, but they were similar to other Arabic-language newspapers in that they had their own sectarian and ideological affiliations. The only noticeable exception from the above norm was the Syrian World, an English-language Arab newspaper published between 1926 and 1935. The Syrian World was different because of editor Salloum Mokarzel's determination to keep his newspaper away from sectarianism, his decision to target the younger English-speaking first generation Arab-Americans. Mokarzel also regularly included pan-Arab themes in his newspaper. (Halaby, p. 131). Al-Bayan and Al-Dalil can only share the credit of

keeping the identity of Arab immigrants alive with the rest of the Arabic and English-language Arab newspapers.

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