

The « Lebanese Question »

Politics played a primary role in the Lebanese question. The Turkish commissioner brought around to his side a few countries, which enabled him to get rid of the valleys and cities and to restrict his attentions to the mountain areas that were deserted. The means of survival became so limited that the Lebanese had to travel abroad. Lebanese youths left Lebanon in order to earn a living not just for themselves but also for those who had stayed at home, the mothers, the brothers, the children. As white collar workers could no longer find work in the country, tradesmen, doctors, engineer, lawyers left the country. An expatriate Lebanese community then appeared throughout the world, which gave Lebanon a very good name. It is no exaggeration to say that Lebanon could only overcome hardship and deprivations thanks to its expatriates' labour. When, during the war, it was blockaded for two years, half its people died of hunger.

This fact had not escaped the notice of the Lebanese government who granted Lebanese expats the same rights as to those living in Lebanon. For this reason the election to the Administrative Council was free from restrictions and residency requirements. The expatriate could vote as soon as he arrived in Lebanon, as indeed he could if he were abroad.

Bayna al-qadim wa-l-hadith. Dirasat Kada'ya Mukarinat bayn nizam Lubnan al-qadim wa-l-jadid [*Comparative juridical studies, between former and modern Lebanese regimes*] Alexandria, 1922, p. 17. (Translated from the French).