

## **Druze Request to the Sublime Porte – end o June 1841**

The Druze nation having been Muslim for centuries, our ancestors have always obeyed the Sublime Porte: we never broke our faith with its principles until the year 1241 of the Hegira.

At that time three new sheikhs led us, to wit the Sheikhs Bashir Jumblatt, Ali-Omar and Hussein-Ahmed; the latter two were stalwart defenders of our people. They represented us in all our affairs which were discussed between them in council.

Until then we were happy and absolutely safe.

Under Abdallah Pasha, governor of Sidon, our situation changed. He ordered the destitution of both those sheikhs then entrusted our business to the leader of the Christian people, the former Emir Bashir Shihab, the same who is now in exile.

This emir came from a Muslim family. He embraced the Christian faith but he took good care to act outwardly as a Muslim; there is no doubt that he was a Christian. This notwithstanding, he treated us with every possible mark of respect, better even than the Christians; he never failed in this, right up to his exile.

Today the great prince who governs the Mountain, a Christian, has nothing but scorn for us, seeking to humiliate us at every turn in order to make us embrace his religious beliefs; he even imposes them on us.

We cannot bear any further the persecutions caused by this prince and the Christian people, any more than their tyrannical behaviour towards us. They seek to divert us from the obedience we owe the Sublime Porte to make us accept the authority of infidels, which we cannot accept for we shall never consent to withdraw the obedience we owe the Sublime Porte who has been our protector from time immemorial; we shall say it again, never shall we pass to the infidels should we die because of it, us, our wives and our children.

We have always enjoyed greater consideration and better treatment than the Christians, how could we ever depend on them, be humiliated and degraded? Indeed this condition does not suit us at all and never shall his Hautess' government consent to it.

From time immemorial, our ancestors have been the faithful servants of the Sublime Porte and so shall we also be, declaring ourselves Islam's zealous adepts.

To this day, no one could accuse us of having faltered in the fulfilment of our duties of obedience to the Sublime Porte, it is therefore impossible for us to be placed under the influence of Christian power. We cannot obey it or be submitted to its commands.

We beg our august and magnanimous sovereign (may God grant him victory) to deign protect us and choose us a leader as of old, in the days of sheikh Bashir Jumblatt; His Hautess' sovereign will deign entrust him with the running of our administration by issuing an august firman consecrating him for the dignity and honour of our country.

We beg our sultan's magnanimous benevolence and we commit to submitting to all the institutions proclaimed by the *Hatti Sherif of Gülhane* regarding taxation that will be collected according to our property and wealth.

As for the request already presented by the emirs and sheikhs to the end of establishing taxes as in the days of Abdallah Pasha, which we have stamped with our seal and about which several notes have been exchanged, we reject it and consider it null and void; we had to do this at that point to put an end to the disentions.

We are and have always been Muslim, we cannot, therefore subtract ourselves to the obedience we owe the Sublime Porte.

The Christians, truth to say, are more numerous than us, but with God and the Sublime Porte's help we shall always be the victors in all the fights to come; we hope that it will not come to that and dare hope that His Hautess the Sultan will deign hear our request and that the munificence, the august will and the supreme justice which he has always bestowed on his government (may God protect it) will care for us.