

Towards the Keserwan Uprising

(The demand of the people, referred to in the preceding letter, No.II)

Statement of the items requested by which peace may be secured for us and for Their Excellencies the Shaikhs.

First: that the collection of the (mîtri) tax money be in accordance with principles, and likewise the head tax, falling on the great and the small according to the register instituted by His Grace Shakîb Pasha, so that even the Shaikhs shall be obliged to pay what is apportioned to them in the collective and head taxes, without the people having to bear an excessive head tax.

Second: Whereas oppressions, wrongdoings, exaction of extras from travelers and servants, and the money transfers (hawâlât) taken from the people by the dissimulations of Their Excellencies the Shaikhs, are contrary to the laws of the Sublime State and the benevolent decrees, when these deeds are ascertained by whatever body is designated, wherever the present (judicial) council or another, the doer of these offenses and of violations of the law, after confirmation, must return and repay what he has taken in its entirety.

Third: the presents and marriage taxes currently paid to Their Excellencies the Shaikhs in certain places, or the presents to the Shaikhs attached to the sale of their goods to the people, must be discontinued and removed in their entirety.

Fourth: As for the question of the office of ma'mûr, which is of the greatest importance, having to do with governing the people and removing grievances and violations, the ma'mûr must govern in accordance with justice and law so that there shall be no further disputes between us and Their Excellencies the Shaikhs. Whoever is appointed to deal with our affairs, we pray that he will be deserving of this position and worthy of it, and possessing all the conditions suited to the authority and activities of ma'mûr, he being distinct from the mass of the people, and there must be great efforts made to keep his commands. For every village one or two representatives (wakîls) should be instituted, according to the large or small size of the village, so as to achieve peace and facilitate the ma'mûr's orders and to facilitate his work and interests without hindrance.

Fifth: Whereas the Sublime State –may the Lord of Creation preserve it!-has granted us universal equality and complete freedom, so that there should be no distinctions or degradations in addressing persons, and so that all the old principles should be changed in regard to the registers, and whereas new taxes have been levied on all, we pray that all this may be kept in mind by Your Beatitude.

Sixth: The submission of the question of ma'mûrs in Kisrawân to the decision of Your Beatitude is done on condition that the authority of the ma'mûr be effective on everyone without exception in accordance with the reform measures taken, so that from now on no one will be set apart and distinguished from the general public except for the ma'mûr himself. As

for those remaining of Their Excellencies the Shaikhs, if any offenses on their part occur against the people, they shall be punished in accordance with the laws upon confirmation by the council, as it shall be done also to offenders from among the people.

Malcolm H. Kerr, *Lebanon in the last years of feudalism, 1840-1868. A contemporary account by Antun Dahir al-'Aqiqi*, translated with notes and commentary, American university of Beirut, Beirut, 1959, p. 97-98-99.