

Muhammad Ali Al-Abed and his Political Role in Syria 1867-1939

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Abstract

Muhammad Ali Al-Abed is a quiet but powerful figure in Syria. He was well-known in science and widely respected in the Arab world and abroad due to his deep expertise in politics, culture, and diplomacy. He held a number of positions in the Ottoman Empire, including ambassador to France and the United States of America. From an early age, he was trained by experienced teachers, and his mother tried to emphasize his unique appearance. the Ottoman Empire and other nations, and that Al-Abed was a wealthy Syrian who spoke Arabic, Turkish, French, Old Ottoman, Persian, and English with ease. Abed studied in Damascus, Beirut, Istanbul and Paris, which he left as a child, worked in the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was appointed ambassador to the United States of America, and after the coup against Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1908, he and his family never returned to the Ottoman Empire, instead, the family moved around Europe until the end of World War I, then settled in Egypt and then returned to Damascus. After the start of the Mandate, the neutrality of the political dimension and his good relations with the Mandate loyalists on the one hand and the national group on the other hand to his inauguration as president on June 13, 1932, and was the first person in Syria to assume the post of President of the Republic, and due to the lack of a constitution adopts the republican system, he called his predecessors the title of "heads of state", and according to the constitution the term of the presidency is five years, but he resigned in 1936 because of his age in preparation for the start of the rule of ethnic groups after the signing of the Syrian-French treaty, during his presidency, four successive governments were formed..

Keywords: *Muhammad Ali Al-Abed - politician - Diplomat - Presidency - Syria.*

Introduction

Muhammad Ali Al-Abed Ibn Ahmed Izzat bin Hulu Pasha Al-Abed known in Syria and the Ottoman Empire and that Al-Abed is the first President of the Republic of Syria from 1932 to 1936 and was first ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the United States of America and he won many positions before assuming the presidency of the Republic and after World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and Syria became under the French mandate was appointed Minister of Finance in Syria and died in Paris and was buried in Damascus.

The atmosphere that Muhammad Ali Abed experienced as a child helped shape his values, principles, worldview and political ambitions, but Muhammad Ali lacked the company of his father in his childhood, as his father was preoccupied with politics and moved away from him most of the time, which had the greatest impact on his personality and choices.

The relationship between father Ahmed Ezzat Abed and his son Muhammad Ali Abed was not good, or at least it was not like any relationship between father and son, because the father was not given enough time to raise his children and take care of his family, Muhammad Ali felt that he was deprived of the company of his father, a famous, influential and well-known figure and the admiration of many and devoted almost all his time to it, so the aim of the research study, which was entitled (Muhammad Ali Al-Abed and his political role in Syria 1867-1939), consisted of The research of the introduction, two sections and a conclusion, the first section included, the social formation of Muhammad Ali Al-Abed and the beginning of his political activity, while the second section focused on, the political role of Muhammad Ali Al-Abed in Syria for the period (1930-1939)

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The first topic: the social formation of Muhammad Ali Al-Abed and the beginning of his political activity.

First: His birth and education

Born in Damascus in 1867 (Safi, 2010, 90), Muhammad Ali al-Abed is part of the feudalism or Syrian bourgeoisie that formed local government under the Ottoman Empire (al-Hakim, 1983, 88). He belongs to the Al-Masharfa clan, one of the branches of the Arab Al-Mawali tribe that settled in the Levant desert since the Abbasid period, and it has ancient origins dating back to the Arab tribe of Bakr bin Wael, and his family formed the local government under the Ottoman Empire, and the Al-Abed family, along with the Al-Azm family and the Al-Yusuf family, his relatives, formed the elite of the Ottoman Arab society in Damascus, as mentioned by Philip Khoury (Khoury, 1997, 426).

When his father traveled, Muhammad Ali al-Abed remained in the care of his mother and the care of maids, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Egyptians and Syrians, he was required to always appear in the best way, and to speak it more than his young age, in Ottoman literature and French poetry, like the princes of Bani Othman, and thus Muhammad Ali Al-Abed spent a gloomy childhood, and this gloom remained with him for a long time even after he ascended to power in Damascus in the days of old age, Muhammad Ali Al-Abed spent his youth in the palace of his father In 1885, Al-Abed sent his young son to Beirut, to study the fundamentals of religion by the scholar Sheikh Muhammad Abdo, and to study the Persian language to be added to Arabic, Turkish, English and French, Ahmed Ezzat Pasha came to his young son Muhammad Ali Al-Abed with a private Italian teacher called «Paolo» to teach him European literature, Latin, protocol rules and etiquette, he learned equestrian since He became a poet and preserver of pre-Islamic and Andalusian poetry, all just to satisfy his father's aristocratic tendencies (Moubayed, 2016, 200), then he was sent to Istanbul to join the Princes' School, called (Galatasaray), and then sent to Paris and entered the Faculty of Law at the prestigious Sorbonne University, where he obtained two degrees in law and civil engineering in 1905 (Al-Zarkali, 2002, 197).

Muhammad Ali belonged to the old school of Ottoman diplomats and politicians, those diplomats and politicians who believed that the issues of penetration and domination of European imperialism could not be addressed by force of arms, and he came from a line of Damascene merchants and landlords that spanned four generations in the service of the Ottoman Empire, and his grandfather, Hulu Pasha, was acting in different regions, and eventually became the head of the administrative council of the province of Syria in the nineties of the nineteenth century, and his father, Ahmed Izzat Pasha, and the secretary The second, by Sultan Abdul Hamid, one of his closest confidants, the inspiration of the Hejaz railway project, and perhaps the most influential Syrian in the Ottoman administration during the last years of Sultan Tawil's reign (Al-Zarkali, 2002, 197).

Muhammad Ali, except for Arabic, mastered the Turkish and French languages, and was surrounded by the history of French literature and economic sciences, so he hardly misses to see anything, and wrote in almost all these sciences, as well as he was conversant with English and Persian and could understand them (Baroudi, 1951, 99).

The father worshiper always enjoyed the challenges and the splendor of victory when overcoming them, and never accepts to give up or apologize for any tasks entrusted to him, with age, the Pasha became a symbol of magnanimity and arrogance, and he always dreamed that his son would succeed him with the same qualities, but Muhammad Ali Al-Abed was of a completely different metal, he spent his childhood in the Harem Council and his youth under a mighty and frightening father, the father worshiper was vocal, including the son worshiper He spoke in a calm and polite voice like the princes of his time (Lawrence, 1998, 684).

The father worshiper loved hunting, archery and playing chess, while his son preferred to stay at home and read a fun novel, away from nature and its challenges, the common features between father and son were completely absent during the period of the latter's youth and the strength of the former (Moubayed, 2016, 219).

In that period, he tied the knot immediately, and also at the behest of his father, on the sister of the wise Abdul Rahman Pasha Al-Youssef Zahra Al-Youssef, the Prince of the Damascene pilgrimage and one of the close also to Sultan Abdul Hamid, Abdul Rahman Pasha was a friend of Ahmed Ezzat Pasha, gathered by the job at the Sublime Porte and the old neighborhood in the Sarouja market neighborhood in Damascus, the father worshipper wanted to benefit from the wealth of the Al-Yusuf family and their close relations with the wealthy of the Kurdish neighborhood, for whom Abdul Rahman Pasha was a leader In Damascus, where the bride was also the granddaughter of Said Shamdeen Agha, the leader of the Salhiya neighborhood and one of the city's most influential people (Khoury, 1993, 40), it was a political marriage in every sense of the word, and the young groom had no say in it at all, and the wife never liked it, despite her mastery of raising children (Moubayed, 2016, 221).

He was appointed in the pen of the Attorney General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then studied the principles of Islamic jurisprudence after studying Roman jurisprudence and European legislation, and was appointed adviser to the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (Sultan, 1982, 11), and continued to be graded in the positions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thanks to the influence of his father and his proximity to the Ottoman Sultan until he was appointed, at the beginning of June 1908 as Minister Plenipotentiary of the Ottoman Empire in Washington, Muhammad Ali Al-Abed arrived in the United States of America accompanied by his wife Zahra, Muhammad Al-Abed had reached the forty-one of Age and his wife did not exceed twenty, his only achievement in Washington was a civil architectural achievement away from the political, participated on the day, as a civil engineer, in a competition held for the best design to build a bridge in Washington, won the design of Mohammed Al-Abed first prize and the American authorities implemented the bridge (Wailing, 1930, 33).

He went with his wife and children, but his stay there did not last more than six weeks due to the July revolution carried out by the Young Turkey Party, and led to the expulsion of many of the Sultan's advisers, including Izzat Pasha Al-Abed, and Muhammad Ali and his wife went to Europe by sea to join his family in political exile, and in Paris he and his brother helped their father manage his many financial interests, and his father fled Astana by a private ship for fear of lethality. Muhammad Ali felt in Washington what his father felt from the fear of Astana, so he left it secretly, including to California and rode the sea undercover and joined his father and kept moving with their families between Switzerland, France, England and Egypt and there also, Muhammad Ali found the intellectual plenty of time to pursue his favorite hobby: reading French and Arabic literature, and during the war years, he had a good opportunity to socialize with many prominent Europeans, an opportunity rarely enjoyed by another Syrian (Khoury, 1997, 136).

Until the end of the World War, his father died on February 10, 1918, a few months before the fall of Ottoman rule in Damascus (Babil, 1987, 17). He returned to Damascus in 1919, but spent the second decade on the margins of political life, and many nationalists accused him of being a lover of France (Ali, 1948, 323).

Muhammad Ali al-Abed was famous as the richest man in Damascus, if not in all of Syria, and his grandfather had converted in the second half of the nineteenth century some of the family's projects in the field into shares in the Suez Canal Company, and to fertile agricultural lands, including several villages in Douma and Ghouta, and to gardens in the canals, and in addition to these properties and large assets in European and American banks, the Abed family owned valuable real estate in Damascus, the most prominent of which was the Victoria Hotel in the city center, a family endowment established by Izzat Pasha that annually generated a respectable income from rent (Longridge, 1924, 197), and was also famous as stingy and unpatriotic, and newspapers and magazines regularly criticized him for keeping a large part of his wealth abroad, it was said that it was estimated in the late twenties at one million pounds sterling gold, and for abandoning the family's traditional home in the Sarouja market to a new modern palace in the suburb of the immigrants, the Abed family extended a hand Helping the poor and disadvantaged, especially in the month of Ramadan, where breakfast is provided to hundreds of people on the eve of each day of this month, and he also directed his attention to the extension of a line of electric buses, tramway, to immigrants, however, there was a degree of truth in his accusation that he refused to return his capital from abroad, and there was no way to make him invest money in Syria except to urge him to do so, and the

National Bloc (Farfut, 1975, 15) was unique in Induced to persuade him to become a major shareholder in the National Cement Company, a project of the bloc (Wailing, 1930, 27).

After the First World War, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire (quoted, 1918), and the fall of Syria under the French mandate, Muhammad Ali returned with his father to Damascus at the end of 1920 with the encouragement of General Henry Gouraud (Al-Kinani, 2009, 97) appointed Minister of Finance in it, and then President of its Republic (Al-Sayed, 2015, 188), Damascus received the Al-Abed family with great hospitality upon their return to Damascus, as Syrian President Alaa Al-Din Al-Dorbi (1870-1920) encouraged Muhammad Ali to invest his wealth in Damascus, and to complete what His father started it from Amran in the city twenty years ago, as he worked to introduce new agricultural roads to his vast lands in Eastern Ghouta, and worked to pave a way for the passage of the tramway to his home in the neighborhood of immigrants, and the Damascene rallied around him believing that Muhammad Ali is very close to the French government, perhaps he will recommend them politically in front of the new rulers of Syria, or when the High Commissioner residing in Beirut, and when General Gouraud established the Syrian Federal Union in 1922, he appointed him to a government position in the Federation Council. The Syrian federalist, who brought together the state of Damascus, the state of Aleppo and the state of the Alawites, and entered the government of President Sobhi Barakat (Khoury, 1997, 144-145) as a minister without a portfolio to work in financial, educational and political affairs at the same time, so he remained in this position for about one year and then left it to cancel it in 1924, to be replaced by France with the current Syrian regime, with a central and main government in Damascus, Al-Abed worked as Minister of Finance, and then resigned from it due to differences between him and President Sobhi Barakat (Keenan, 2011, 162).

It should be noted that Muhammad Ali al-Abed's relationship with his father was a bit complicated governed by absolute loyalty and blind obedience, the father had to spend more time with his son to compensate for the frequent absences in Istanbul during childhood, and to cultivate in him the desired qualities instead of those acquired from foreign servants and teachers.

Second: Muhammad Ali al-Abed entered the political arena and government work in Syria

In May, a prominent supporter of the constitutionalists who had denounced the bloc's violent tactics was assassinated, and an attempt was made to assassinate Sobhi Barakat, an Antioch who turned into an Aleppo politician who thinks only of his personal interests and a collaborator with the French after he was the leader of the rebels against the French, and rumors circulated that many of the deputies of Aleppo were thinking of giving up their seats before the opening session of parliament unless The government provides him with adequate protection (Keenan, 2011, 188).

But what was more serious than the bitter political situation in Syria was the impatience of the commercial and agricultural sectors, which had to bear most of the burden of high taxes when the recession was at its height: in early June, textile workers went on strike to protest France's failure to protect domestic production from the influx of Japanese goods (Kalaji, 2013, 165).

In the Syrian countryside, small farmers, quotas, and wage earners suffered from a harsh tax law that is intolerable due to currency exchange rate fluctuations, four consecutive years of lean crops were not compensated by any serious concessions, such as the postponement of tax payment, and the entrapment of rain in winter and the frost wave in 1932, had led to complete damage to mountain crops and plain vineyards, and all regions were facing the specter of hunger, and as usual, the suffering of the rural community, unorganized. and the incapable of disclosure, in negligence (Freiha, 1966, 18).

Against this background of economic suffering and continuous political discontent, Muhammad Ali al-Abed was elected on April 30, 1932 as a deputy for Damascus as one of the candidates of the French authority, and became a member of the Constituent Assembly, and was supported by the bloc of national deputies in the presidency of the Syrian Republic, and on May 30, 1932 a secret letter arrived from the new deputy of Damascus, Muhammad Ali al-Abed, to the office of the French High Commissioner in Beirut, on the subject of the upcoming presidential elections, said al-Abed. **I consider that France's authority**

must remain in full in Syria without question, in order to perform its duty to the fullest, and all Syrian governments must recognize that it is subordinate to this authority", and my program is simply **"the economy everywhere and justice for all" (British Documentation Center, 1930, 40).**

On June 7, 1932, Muhammad Ali al-Abed nominated himself for the post of President of the Republic on the first day of opening the door for nomination within the parliament (Moubayed, 1997, 243), in the protection of high security measures, and the deputies of Aleppo arrived at the Council at the last minute after angry demonstrators had detained them in their hotels, and in Aleppo itself the local branch of the National Bloc closed the markets to protest the meeting of the falsely elected parliament, and similar actions took place in all centers of patriots, as well as deputies. The sixty-eight The meeting was attended by several French observers, including the two rival delegates Leon Solomiac (<https://www.soham.com/>) and Lavaster. After reading the text of the parliament's decree calling for the meeting, the oldest Antiochian MP Yahya al-Adly assumed the position of speaker of the Council for a temporary period, then Fakhri al-Baroudi urged his colleagues to work in parliament according to the dictates of their consciences and not to fear external pressures, and Shaker Nemat al-Shabani expressed his full approval sarcastically, as he was one of the Aleppo MPs who were detained recently in their hotels (Longrig, 1924, 162).

At the moment that the Vice President of the Council tried to start business, Zaki Khatib, taking what Fakhri Baroudi proposed literally, interrupted by a long word and did not return to his seat despite the warnings of the President of the Council, and soon made a winner Khoury with a long breath his contribution, and the impact prevailed place comprehensive hubbub, and the President of the Council ordered one of the policemen to remove Khoury from the Council, but Khoury refused to obey, saying: **"We are here by the will of the people and will leave only by force of bayonets,"** the policeman took out, and the chairman of the council suspended the meeting for thirty minutes until relative calm was restored (Rabbath, 1983,94).

When the session was reopened, glasses of lemonade were distributed to everyone to calm the souls before the Council moved on to the issue of electing a president, and the results of the first ballot were inconclusive, as Sobhi Barakat received 28 votes, Haqqi al-Azm (Al-Hakim, 1983, 52) received 23 votes, and Hashim Al-Atassi (Al-Bayati, 2006, 13). 17 votes, that is, no candidate got an overwhelming majority, so a second ballot must be held and when the patriots made sure that the matter would come against their interest, they decided to abstain from voting, giving way to Barakat to obtain the twenty-three votes won by the bone in addition to the thirty votes that he won, and from the chair of the presidency of the Council Sobhi Bey's first words sounded, in stuttering Arabic, full of hypocrisy, so he began to declare his commitment to work in harmony with All parties, especially the National Bloc, soon turned and made his followers from the north in all important parliamentary positions (Daft, 1987, 342).

But the real test in parliament is yet to come: the election of a president of the republic, Fabarakat, backed by his bloc of twenty-eight deputies from the north, was likely to win, but Solomiac, sitting quietly on the balcony of the assembly, sensed a threat to his strategy, which is to achieve the election of the only committed candidate loyal to the French: Haqqi al-Azm, and when he glimpsed one of his followers in Damascus, he signaled him to move with the aim of suspending the session, and this request quickly attracted the support of the nationalist deputies who They also realized that their candidate did not have a real chance of winning, but Shaker Nehme al-Shabani and others opposed this move, and Sobhi Barakat was forced to announce a 30-minute break, and when the deputies returned, Shabani withdrew his objection unexpectedly, and the election was postponed for four days, and by concluding this busy opening meeting, Barakat announced that the postponement was conditional on MPs not being detained in their hotels anymore (Mae, 1982, 9-11).

On the morning of the same day, Al-Abed was elected the first President of the Syrian Republic, inflicting defeat on Barakat by a narrow margin of four votes, and was accompanied to his new headquarters by a fiery crowd guarding the "National Youth", and there, artillery fired 21 shots in greeting him, and raised in his presence the new Syrian flag, with three horizontal lines in green, white and black (represented, respectively, by the eras of the Fatimids, Umayyads and Abbasids), but three red stars were added to the white space, indicating Syria's desire to It distances itself from Hashemite influence (Wailing, 1930, 33).

Al-Abed was also one of the first supporters of the newspaper Al-Wataniyin, "Al-Ayyam", which he helped support in 1930 by granting it (5000) pounds sterling, and in Aleppo the problems continued strong, and political anxiety intensified due to the worsening of the global depression, and boycott campaigns culminated in a comprehensive strike announced by workers and owners of national textile factories against the low tariffs specified for imported Japanese goods, and although this frenzy forced the French to double tariffs, the refusal of factory owners to increase workers' wages resulted in Another two weeks of strikes, and at this time the leadership of the National Bloc revealed its bourgeois character by defending the managers and owners of the factories who were mostly supporters of the bloc against the workers and distributed the leadership of the bloc a propaganda appeal in which it called for unity of national ranks against the French, the real enemy of the Syrian people The bloc's branch in Aleppo tried to divert its economic distress towards Mardam and Raslan, but failed and even the popular demonstrations that took place in Damascus in August requesting their resignation did not budge them from Instead, on August 31, police officers surrounded the bloc's headquarters and arrested thirty local commanders who were later tried for conspiring against state security, yet Mardam began to feel pressure and decided to seek refuge in Lebanon (Al-Ayyam, 1932).

The second topic: the political role of Muhammad Ali Al-Abed in Syria for the period (1930-1939)

First: Conspiracies and dialogues before the presidency

The elections are new and political maneuvers (1930-1933) where the economic and financial situation was very bad in 1930, salaries were declining in certain labor sectors and unemployment reached high levels due to a set of factors, including the continuous decline of traditional crafts, and worsened conditions the seasonal nature of many Syrian industries, and the beginning of the global depression that slowed the cycle of reconstruction and public works, and the imposition of new municipal taxes, and the devaluation of Turkish currencies, which was used a lot in the payment of salaries. Homs The number of artisans was declining, the wages of textile workers were cut three times in three months, Damascus witnessed a strike that began in mid-July by thousands of textile workers and led by the Weavers Union. In fact, workers' struggles were obliterated by unions that included workers and employers, and were often headed by supporters of the National Bloc (Thompson, 1999, 176).

In general, the development of the class struggle in Syria was not clearly noticeable during the interwar period, and this was partly due to the standing of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie in a common front against France's economic policies, the prevailing position of foreign goods, especially French ones, in domestic markets supported by low tariffs posed a direct challenge to domestic production and harmed small producers, and workers whose wages were already low, and had prevented the endorsement of conflict of interest. Between workers and employers the small size of factories and shops, the difference between classes, and above all the nature of the conflict between the Syrian people and French domination" (British Foreign Accounts, 1918, 15).

Under these circumstances, the French administration during the reign of Bonsu was the political and administrative decision-maker (Ghaith, 1983, 70), as Bonsu issued a set of important decrees: the organic laws of the governments of Latakia, Jabal al-Druze and the Sanjak of Alexandretta, and the Lebanese and Syrian constitutions, and he accepted the six articles "sovereign", but with the addition of a new article, Article 116, which effectively disrupted those controversial articles and maintained the position of the Mandatory Authority. In general, this article and other decrees approved the status quo that General Gouraud had. It was created and of course, the new constitution was not welcomed, and it even looked worse off a month later, when it granted Iraq, which was in the eyes of the Syrian patriots, culturally and socially backward, and despite the patriots' non-acceptance of the new constitution, the mere announcement of its issuance was a harbinger of the inevitability of new elections, but the French parties and the Syrian nationalists, were not willing to hold them quickly, only Sheikh Taj al-Din was preparing himself for the electoral battle, and he vaccinated His ministry is in an attempt to create a front of moderates to strengthen his position with the High Commission, and against the National Bloc (Al-Azm, 1973, 45).

While the Bloc was sincerely republican and unwilling to tolerate any Hashemite intervention, the Shahbandaris were generally royalists, but associated with Abdullah ibn al-Husayn (al-Husayn, 1970, 99). The Emir of Transjordan is more associated with Faisal I (Abdullatif, 2010, 9). While one of the two radical Arab groups was associated with Shukri al-Quwatli (Mahmoud, 2016, 9) and the second with Shakib Arslan and Ihsan al-Jabri, who remained in exile, these two groups were loyal to the idea of Arab unity and that the independence of Syria is only a step towards achieving this greater goal, and that the establishment of a kingdom in Syria may be a way to achieve greater Arab unity, and this trend was contrary to what prevails in the national bloc, and for this reason al-Quwatli and behind him the Istiqlal Party group suggested that the work be done Quietly to infiltrate the organization of the bloc in order to force it to adopt a more radical position on the issues of independence and Arab unity (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1931).

In this atmosphere, the National Bloc was leading the trend towards republican rule in Syria, which emerged as a political body of a group of politicians who worked for the independence of Syria in the period following the end of the Great Syrian Revolution (1925-1927) (Al-Attabi, 2023, 123), while working cautiously to disrupt Faisal's project aimed at establishing a monarchy in Syria, and in parallel did not put itself in a prominent position on issues that were not directly related to the planned elections. Damascus specifically has a policy of honorable cooperation, and worked to circumvent issues that may cause the severance of relations with the French. The leaders of the bloc avoided appearing clearly in many public festivals held in the months preceding the elections in solidarity with various Arab and Islamic struggles, including, for example, the demonstrations that took place in Damascus denouncing the atrocities of the Italians in Libya, and the apparent absence of the bloc leaders from the anniversary of the martyrs of May 6, 1916, an occasion that was dedicated as a day An official holiday in Damascus by the efforts of the National Bloc itself (Moubayed, 2016, 223).

The bloc's refusal to adopt an Arab program became abundantly clear when, at the end of October, it refrained from participating in the demonstrations in Damascus marking the forty days since the execution of the leader of the Libyan resistance, Omar al-Mukhtar (al-Rawi, 1933, 9). Said al-Jazaery was at the head of the demonstrators, in an attempt to burnish his image in front of the masses for the upcoming elections, meanwhile the French agents, by 1931 announced both Hashim al-Atassi and Jamil Mardam (Mardam, 2009, 343). The bloc is reluctantly ready to swallow the High Commissioner's distortions of the constitution and to participate in the elections in the event of guarantees that there will not be an illegal intervention by the Syrian government and its French protectors, and they also demanded an agreement similar to that concluded between Britain and Iraq, but these concessions were not accepted by all members of the bloc, and in June 1931 the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated before the Permanent Mandate Committee of the League of Nations (Youssef, 2017, 487), expressed its intention to conclude an agreement with Syria and Lebanon parallel to the Anglo-Iraqi agreement (Moubayed, 2016, 155), and this requires "the election of a president or king", but it did not specify either of them and this statement was an attempt to dilute matters and confuse the Syrian political arena, by returning again to raise the issue of the Syrian throne despite its lack of conviction in it, but it tried to exploit the emergence of four groups, somewhat overlapping, within the Syrian national movement, two of which were committed to Syrian independence before each With a retreat from the idea of Arab unity, especially Syrian-Iraqi unity, a third group centered on Jamil Mardam and the moderate wing of the bloc, while the latter group turned its eyes towards Dr. Shahbandar and the Abdeen wing in the Syrian-Palestinian Congress in Cairo (Moubayed, 2016, 189).

Since the Constitutional Declaration in May 1930, they have quietly prepared for elections by finding a group of learnable candidates, relying on specialized electoral teams, and they have discovered a huge number of men, of different tendencies and competing for lucrative positions but who have no influence in Syrian society, but the bloc's political ineffectiveness created a climate that enabled them to work in the countryside under the guidance of the French and to a lesser extent in the cities. In addition to these new followers, the French had older and dependable people. On Bonsu returned to Syria in November 1931, he announced in a letter to Sheikh Taj al-Din, on the twentieth of it, that there was no longer a need for his services, followed by three decrees: The establishment of an advisory council to advise him on the implementation of the constitution (among them was none other than Hashim al-Atassi belonging to the bloc), and measures to continue running the Syrian state until the elections by handing over the work of

the government to a secretary general (Tawfiq al-Hayani, a former employee of the Ottoman administration and in the Mandatory Power with no political inclinations, but a competent employee) and the remaining members of the Taj al-Din ministry (with the exception of Jamil al-Alshi), were appointed, and the latter decree stipulated that they were Monsieur Henri Bonsou (Al-Hakim, 1978, 49). and Leon Solomiac, who chose Salim Gambert, Mazhar Raslan, and Jamil Mardam Bonsu himself as head of state for the elections, which were officially scheduled for December 20, 1931 and January 3, 1932 (Khoury, 1997, 405-408).

Despite the bloc's numerous reservations about the Bonsu decrees and its refusal to accept the announcement of the broad outlines of a Syrian-French agreement before the elections, and its refusal to amend the electoral law, whose shortcomings and shortcomings were recognized by all, and also not allowing patriots such as Shahbandar, Shakib Arslan and Ihsan Al-Jabri to return to the country and run for office, the bloc remained determined to participate in it, the High Commission used a mixture of methods of cruelty and malice in trying to control the course of the elections and their results, keeping national candidates under surveillance until the day of elections, newspapers and magazines supporting them were closed, documented reports from the countryside of pressure exerted by French agents to secure voters loyal to them in the primary elections, and the delegation was busy working in Aleppo to deliver one of its collaborators from the Armenian community to Damascus, where that community, the largest minority in the city with a population of 50,000 people, was divided between the two main Armenian parties, the Tashnaq who was supportive of the High Commission, and Al-Hanshaq, who took a political position in support of the liberation of the Syrian homeland (Russell, 1999, 32).

The first round took place in Damascus amid an atmosphere fraught with tension and clashes, and a clear confusion by the police in favor of the candidates supported by the High Commission, and there was blatant manipulation in the ballot boxes, so violence erupted throughout the city and the French army took to the streets under the pretext of maintaining order, and the elections were suspended in Damascus and a curfew was imposed, but the elections took place quietly in all rural areas adjacent to Damascus, except for the Douma area, where trade unions moved and clashed with gendarmes. and the cavalry of the police, which also led to the intervention of the army and the suspension of the voting process (Hakim, d.t., 42).

In Hama, the events of Damascus were repeated and the electoral process stopped, while Homs and Aleppo completed the two rounds of elections on time, but amid different circumstances, in Homs, the main area of influence of Hashem Al-Atassi, the National Bloc list won easily, and was joined in parliament by two other supporters of the bloc, namely Mazhar Raslan and Rafik Al-Husseini, and the situation was opposite in Aleppo, as the Liberal Constitutionalists Party, supported by the French, which was able to French accredited Lavestre earlier It was established by uniting a group of moderates and some Aleppo notables opposed to the bloc headed by Sobhi Barakat and Shaker Nemat Al-Shabani, and with the clear support of the Aleppo Christian minorities, from the defeat of the National Bloc list following a bitter competition, and what contributed to the bloc's loss was the disease that afflicted Ibrahim Hanano and forced him to stay in bed, which made the patriots unable to hold the reins and address the flagrant violations of the electoral process, for example, stuffing ballot boxes with the names of Aleppo people who died a long time ago, but the inability of the bloc's men This did not prevent widespread unrest in the city that lasted for many days, in which a number of demonstrators were killed and dozens of them were arrested, and when the patriots realized that there was no chance of defeating the government list in the second round held on time, Saadallah Al-Jabri, under the guidance of Hanano, withdrew the list of the National Bloc and won the list of the High Commission (Qadri, 1956, 73).

In the meantime, the patriots made great efforts to refrain from provoking the feelings of the public, and the bloc refused to give its consent to a huge demonstration and a sixteen-day strike, when pupils and schoolchildren protested against the imprisonment of a number of their colleagues who participated in the December unrest in Damascus, but the bloc as a general orientation, was inclined to boycott any new elections (Moubayed, 1966, 319-320).

In these circumstances, the role of Jamil Mardam emerged, as he engaged in secret talks with the French accredited in Damascus, Solomiac, with the aim of reaching a compromise, and eventually the two men made a deal that required that the elections be free if the nationalists guaranteed that no more than six

candidates would be presented to the nine seats contested, and that the remaining three seats would be saved for moderates. Solomiac, the primary elections were held on time in Damascus, Douma and Hama, and Solomiac fulfilled his promise and there was no incident disturbing the conduct of the electoral process, and the Sunni bloc candidates, along with Youssef Linyadou, won in Damascus for the seat allocated to the Jews, and he received the largest number of votes, and Muhammad Ali Al-Abed, Haqqi Al-Azm and Nasib Al-Bakri also won for the seats that were allocated, according to the agreement, to the General Delegation, and thus the moderate wing of the National Bloc scored an important victory, and this tactic became a distinctive mark Especially with the Musharraf victory of the national deputies in Hama, thus increasing their number in the new parliament to 17 out of 69 (Omari, 2007, 188-190).

The patriots were unable this time to control the decisions of the Council as happened in 1928, as the High Commission controlled the course of the sessions and directed them remotely, and in the session of electing the President of the Council the French were planning to ensure that Sobhi Barakat won this position, and when the patriots discovered that they were unable to prevent that, they decided to abstain from voting, Sobhi Barakat won the second presidency, and in the session to elect the President of the Republic, and after a series of violent political intrigues, especially between Solomiac, who was a supporter Li-Haqqi al-Azm, and Lavaster, who was a supporter of Sobhi Barakat (1932 Mae), 148 (the nationalists and Solomiac agreed to support the accession of Muhammad Ali al-Abed to the presidency of the first presidency, and he narrowly won the votes and became the first president of the Syrian Republic on June 11, 1932 (al-Abidin, 2008, 33). On June 15, Al-Abed assigned Haqqi Al-Azm to compose the new government, and it is not known whether this assignment was part of the deal that brought Al-Abed to the Presidency of the Republic, and the ministers were chosen by both Bonsu and Solomiac, who chose Salim Jumbert, Mazhar Raslan and Jamil Mardam and each of the two national ministers was allocated two ministries, while the moderates had only three ministries (two for the bone and one for the Gemert), which indicates the existence of a secret deal between National Bloc and Solomiac (Sultan, 1987, 21).

The government, from its first day, faced a torrent of criticism from all sides in Syria, and began to show differences and cracks in the ranks of the national bloc, especially with regard to the policy of "honorable cooperation", where Shukri al-Quwatli led a violent attack on it and Jamil Mardam and accused him, along with other patriots, of treason and cheating After the return of the French left to power in France, high hopes prevailed again that an agreement with France would be reached along the lines of These hopes were reinforced by the arrival of Edouard Harriou to the presidency of the French ministry, who was described by some Syrians as a loyal friend. Bonsu took the initiative, on the instructions of those who escaped, to market this trend by releasing all political prisoners in Aleppo, and announcing the start of negotiations on a more liberal agreement than the Anglo-Iraqi agreement, but the leaders of the National Bloc reached, almost unanimously, an agreement prohibiting the national deputies from returning to parliament before it was determined. The High Commissioner in writing, the official foundations on which the agreement will be based, and behind this solid position of the bloc were Ibrahim Hanano and Hashim Al-Anassi, and the supporters of the policy of honorable cooperation, Jamil Mardam and Mazhar Raslan, had no choice but to agree, but with reservation (Sultan, 1987, 21).

In that period, specifically on November 2 and 4, 1932, a conference of the National Bloc was held in Homs, dedicated to re-evaluating the strategy of honorable cooperation, during which Shukri al-Quwatli was also included in the ranks of the bloc, and he was appointed at the head of its council. This matter supported the position of the bloc's hardliners against Jamil Mardam, and the conference also witnessed the phenomenon of the apostasy of a group of Aleppo patriots, led by Saad Allah Al-Jabri, and their joining the ranks of Jamil Mardam and their position was this endorsement of their previous disagreement With Ibrahim Hanano, but Hashim Atassi saved the bloc from a serious rupture by completing a new agreement between Jabri and Hanano through a solution based on the bloc's decision not to boycott parliament, but if no immediate progress is made in the negotiations, Al-Jabri will stop his support for the participation of patriots in parliament and the government, Al-Atassi announced at the end of the conference that the patriots accepted to participate in the electoral process (1931 elections) with the aim of reaching with the French government an agreement that guarantees the country's independence and unity, and since we We (i.e. the bloc) have not been informed for five months of France's good intention to amend the form of the

regime, we decided not to participate in parliament until it obtains an agreement no less than the INCO-Iraqi agreement to satisfy us, and because of the recent discussions of the bloc in Homs, and its national ministers, we have become convinced that the temporary resumption of the policy of conciliation will help the demands of the patriots, and for this reason we saw it appropriate to be patient and to reaffirm the patriots' firm belief in the hope of reaching a solution to the current crisis and to Independence and unity, and we hope that the French will appreciate this position and respond in good faith (Atassi, 2019, 116).

Over time, it became clear that the broad outlines of the agreement put forward by the French, as expressed by Bonsu before the League of Nations in Geneva, were the proposal to divide the territory under the French mandate into two areas: one of which was the treaty area, which included the state of Syria, and the other was a mandate area, which included Greater Lebanon, the state of the Alawites and the Druze Mountain. In Syria because of their political backwardness, he also deliberately omitted to mention the Syrian National Bloc as a representative of the Syrian nationalists and only talked about different national elements in Syria (Khoury, 1997, 178).

After that, the Central Council of the National Bloc met in a special session at Hanano's house in Aleppo, and after the conclusion of the meetings, Hashem Al-Atassi read a statement in which he denounced the proposals of the High Commissioner and stressed that the Syrian patriots, keen to achieve the rights and interests of their country, declare to the people of the coast and the interior their firm adherence to the principle of national unity, there is no agreement to sign or negotiations with France except on this basis, and thus the bloc irrevocably linked the issues of unity and the application of the agreement, but it was not able to prevent Jamil Mardam from deviating from the line that it adopted in Aleppo, as soon as he returned from it to Damascus, he began to make secret contacts with Beyoncé, in an attempt to keep the negotiations in place, and this is what launched a counter-campaign to force Mardam and Raslan to resign from the government, as Hanano officially demanded the resignation of the bloc's ministers, and the bloc secured Jamil Mardam honorable resignation by organizing a demonstration in honor of him at the moment of his resignation, as if he were a hero, and this prompted Raslan to submit His resignation as well, but the efforts of the bloc failed to push President Abed to resign, as he found in the resignation of the bloc's ministers his tourist opportunity to steal the glory completely (Khoury, 1997, 178).

Second: The resignation of Muhammad Ali al-Abed

After many Syrians saw that armed struggle is not rewarded with the French forces, he resorted to diplomatic struggle, so the National Bloc and the Constituent Assembly began to appear, which called for the development of a constitution for the country, the work of free parliamentary elections and the abolition of martial law. Shukri al-Quwatli or, then there were developments in the issuance of many constitutions, one of which was for the State of Syria, another for the Alawite state in Latakia, and a third for the Druze, then the interim government was dissolved, new elections were held, and Muhammad Ali al-Abed obtained the presidency of the republic (al-Abidin, 2008, 33).

History immortalized many Syrian figures, but at the same time he also oppressed many of them, and to God, the first president of the republic, Muhammad Ali al-Abed, came at the top of the list of forgotten and neglected, as he did not take his right.

This is due to several reasons, the first of which is the grave events experienced by Syria since the end of his reign in 1936, including successive military coups and wars that cast a shadow on his modest achievements originally, and the other reason, is that the man was calculated on the independents who love France during the days of its rule in Syria, and not on the patriots or on any of the parties, which made him an easy trap for everyone, because he does not have " Street " or supporters to defend it or to preserve its memory, the third and final reason, that the Baath Party, which came to power in 1963, worked systematically to blow up an entire era of contemporary Syrian history, was one of the victims of President Abed, considering that everyone who ruled the country before him condemned feudalism, reaction, elitism, and racism against the Syrian countryside, and the effort of Abed was lost with the rest of the founders of the Syrian Republic, and his name remained unmentioned until the end of the nineties, when historians and writers were active in exploring That era of modern Syrian history (Allawi, 2021, 131).

On the eleventh of June 1932, the president-elect Muhammad Ali al-Abed slowly rose under the dome of the Syrian parliament to the high platform in front of the deputies, with his red fez and his dignity known to the Damascenes, wearing an elegant dark suit in color, leaning on a stick, for exceeding sixty years of age, and put his right hand on the Holy Qur'an divided in the name of God and the homeland, to preserve the constitution and to respect the law and to work to serve national interests, and promised to remain a friend of all Syrian citizens and to be away from narrow partisan discrimination and to be a father to all Syrians, faithful to their long and honorable history and to thank the state for what it has provided to the Syrians (Al-Ahram, 1932). Al-Abed was old at the time, but he stood with pride and glory on that historic day of his country's life, realizing the magnitude of the heavy responsibility placed on him, the hall exploded with loud applause from the deputies, between which artillery fired twenty-one shots in the sky of Damascus in celebration of the great event (Al-Ahram, 1932).

Al-Abed came out of the parliament on foot to the Republican Palace in the Al-Muhajireen neighborhood on the slopes of Mount Qasioun, accompanied by thousands of citizens celebrating his victory and an elite of Syrian statesmen, President Al-Abed did not realize at the time that all this hospitality and this welcome will turn against him, and that he will come out of this beautiful palace defeated and resigned from office after four years, a full year before the end of his constitutional term, Al-Abed did not know that the institution of the Syrian presidency, which was then still symbolic, will dominate the political life in Syria during eighty years of succession of politicians and officers on the seat of power in Damascus, and it will produce a large number of coups, crises, revolutions and protests in Syria in order to reach the same seat of government, as the Syrian regime is described as an authoritarian regime (Ahmed, Salman, 2017, 3). But in late 1935, a general strike took place in Damascus that lasted fifty days, and there was unrest and more than one ministry resigned, and because of that, a treaty was agreed upon to put an end to the mandate, so a Syrian delegation met with a politician and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs was one of the terms of the military agreement that allows the French government to keep for five years some forces outside the cities and two airports and limited forces within the provinces of Jabal al-Druze and the Alawite area, provided that the treaty recognizes the independence of Syria, but nothing was implemented because it did not. It was submitted to the French Parliament and proposed the addition of new annexes to the treaty, including granting autonomy to the Druze, Nusayrin, and the inhabitants of the Euphrates Peninsula autonomy and bypassing the military agreement that required the evacuation of the French army from the country so that this presence would become permanent (Saqqaf, 436).

And nominated Hashem Atassi himself without any competition from anyone, and was able to enter the item of unity of the Syrian territory and the return of Mount Alawites and Mount Druze to the homeland, and this is something that Abed failed to achieve, and upon the return of the bloc's delegation from Paris in September 1936, Syria came out with all its sects and inhabitants to receive a popular reception that the country has not seen since the entry of the Arab armies into Damascus in 1918, as the exit of Muhammad Ali Al-Abed was an honorable and safe exit, he realized that it was time to dismount, and that Events have exceeded him stages, he submitted his resignation letter to the Parliament, giving way to early presidential elections at the end of 1936, accepted the resignation without hesitation, and won to become the second president of the Republic on December 31, 1936, congratulated Abed friend old and his current opponent, and after taking the reins of power, traveled on open leave to the city of Nice on the southern French coast, he lived honorably in self-imposed exile did not haunt his family a day, and no one confiscated. He remained there until he passed away at the age of 72 in 1939 (Moubayed, 2016, 258), when his body returned to Damascus for a state funeral that few Syrian leaders received to be buried in his hometown (Basri, 1991, 100). Despite all this, President Muhammad Ali al-Abed remains the most marginalized in Syria's contemporary history among all these presidents, and is hardly remembered except historians and writers (Sultan, 1982, 23).

It is not possible to understand the personality of President Abed is true without going into the details of the life of his father Ahmed Ezzat Pasha Al-Abed, that famous seasoned politician whose name has always been associated with the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and although Muhammad Ali Al-Abed lived a decent life and held the highest positions in the state, from ambassador to minister, all the way to the presidency of the republic, but his various achievements remained modest compared to those achieved by

his father, so he tried hard to get out from under this cloak The heavy that this lineage threw on his shoulders, which he could never get rid of one day, Ahmed Ezzat Pasha was an exceptional man by all standards, since he entered the court of the Ottoman Sultan in the eighties of the nineteenth century until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and Muhammad Ali Al-Abed owed him everything with his superstitious wealth and extensive political relations, and to Ruba at the helm of the presidency itself, knowing that it reached him seven years after the death of his father, and many citizens, including the men of the bloc, announced Patriotism that Abed erred in his speech by thanking the party, with the start of his presidency and at the same time has emerged a contrary opinion, including the scholar Muhammad Kurd Ali head of the Arab Academy and the great poet Khalil Mardam Bey, where they described President Abed: **"as the greatest politician in Syria and that he means the soul and heart"**, has announced that the scholar Muhammad Kurd Ali in the newspaper (quoted) and that he is a man of goodness and charity charity, and that Abed refused to have a salary from the state (Jazairy, D.T., 140).

He ordered the distribution of his salary to the poor, and that the budget of the presidential palace will be from his own money and not from the state budget, President Muhammad Ali al-Abed worked to appoint men of knowledge, law and experience in the administration of the state, including (Sinan, 2018, 316):

1. Dr. Najib Al-Armanazi: Mira for the Office of the President of the Republic and Secretary General of the Presidency.
2. Haqqi al-Azm became Prime Minister on June 15, 1935.
3. Mazhar Pasha Raslan and the ministries of banking and justice.
4. My right bone is the Ministry of interior.

The National Bloc rejected those appointments headed by Hashim Al-Atassi and Ibrahim Hanano, the fighter who fought the French and founded the National Bloc in 1928, Muhammad Ali Al-Abed is considered the first president of Syria and the first founder of the Syrian Republic and he ruled Syria democratically, without any authoritarianism and worked to achieve justice and economic growth according to Syria's capabilities, but he resigned at the end of 1936 as a result of the opposition to him, thus recording history that his exit was bright and safe (**Moubayed, 2016, 258**).

The end

Muhammad Ali Abed belongs to a family of the Syrian bourgeoisie, one of the richest men in Syria, perhaps the richest man, the first to be appointed president of the Syrian Republic (1932 - 1936) and the first elected president of the people not appointed by the French mandate, the prince, as he was nicknamed, was born in Damascus in 1867, lived in many cities and countries, and died in Rome in 1939.

After the death of Al-Abed, the Syrians quickly forgot him, and the Syrian media at the time did not show any interest in the departure of the first president of the republic and only named Parliament Street as "Al-Abed" in his memory, and took out a seal bearing his drawing, which was officially approved during the reign of Al-Abed himself, without mentioning in the first, he holds the position of President of the Syrian Republic on any national holiday and was not mentioned in any Syrian school history.

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