

F G-81
Beirut, April 19, 1943

The Turkish Consul in Damascus, Ahmet Omar, expressed strong disapproval of the Kutleh's avowed intention of demanding that Turkey give Hatay back to Syria as soon as the New Syrian parliament is formed. Ahmet Omar claimed that Great Britain has promised Turkey that the Hatay problem would not be raised after Syria gains independence; he also said that Turkey would not approve of the formation of a large Arab state or a confederation of Arab states.

The Egyptian Consul, Ahmed Rassy, is supporting the Kutleh and urging its leaders to drop their private quarrels and jealousies to insure victory in the coming elections. Egyptian policy here supports the formation of a strong pan-Arab confederation.

British propaganda has increased since the recent bread riots.

Kamil el-Kassab is trying to form a new party to petition the French, British and American authorities to delay the elections until after the war. He and his followers, including Sheikh Mustafa es-Shatti, Munir Sheikh el-Ard and Said Hameh, are circulating rumors that if Syria is granted independence now, the Allies will conscript Syrian troops and raise the taxes.

The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem sent a letter to the Mufti of Damascus via the German Embassy in Ankara to Shams ed Din Araf of the Turkish Foreign Office to Osman Nuri (previously reported) who brought it to Syria. The Mufti of Damascus read the letter to a gathering of Moslem leaders in the home of Zafer el-Kassim. In the letter the Grand Mufti declared that the present Allied agreement to give Syria and Lebanon independence was a scheme to split up the Arab world into small independent states. He referred to this independence as a false independence with the further aim of isolating Palestine which would become a Jewish state. He reminded the Arabs that he and their other leaders had sacrificed home and fortunes for the time being to work for a great Arab nation and implored the Moslems not to accept the British policy of separating the Arab states, nor to accept false independence under the swords of the colonisers but to wait and work for the day of true Arab independence with all Arab countries united into one. Similar letters were enclosed for the Mufti of Lebanon, the Mufti of Aleppo and Sheikh Akel of the Druses; these letters were delivered by Assim el-Maali, the lawyer.

Al Aleppo

Two Russian Armenians from Arivan named Akbar Tashjian and Asdor Maalabandian have been working in the Aleppo district since March 25 trying to organize Armenians of both the Ghinshak and Tashnak parties into a single Communist and pro-Soviet party. They brought funds from Russia via Persia. Last week (April 5) Martin Madouian came to Aleppo from Beirut to receive funds from them. They plan to go to Beirut for Easter.

SECRET

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