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ADVISE AND RULE:
FOREIGN EXPERTS AND ADVISERS IN THE
INDEPENDENCE OF THE LEVANT

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When the French Mandate in Lebanon and Syria ended in the mid-1940s, the nascent Syrian and Lebanese governments faced a wealth of new challenges from the domestic opposition and residual French influence in administration. The national governments sought assistance in the form of foreign advisors and experts hired in large numbers into state administration after independence. This thesis combines primary sources from the archives of French, British, and American diplomatic services to understand these advisors' activities through several different national points of view. The recruitment of foreign economic and administrative advisors enabled independence from France while placing Lebanon and Syria under new foreign influence. The United States, United Kingdom, and other powers sent advisors to assist Syria and Lebanon, with the hidden goal of building influence and winning privileges in the independent states. To the national governments of Syria and Lebanon, foreign advisors were tools to consolidate control of their countries in accordance with their vision and interests. However, the political opposition viewed the recruitment of foreign experts as a betrayal of their countries' newfound independence and as a relic of the French Mandate. In this way, the recruitment of foreign advisors became a contested issue in the struggle for defining the future of the Levant.

This research fits with other historical literature on the independence of the Levant by detailing how foreign countries and their advisors were both a site of contestation in the politics of the Levant and powerful actors seeking to influence the future of the region. Finally, this project also fits within a growing body of literature, primarily focused on sub-Saharan Africa, that examines the role of administration and development advisors in decolonization. This literature holds that far from being neutral technocrats, advisors and experts had a deeply political role in setting the terms of independence.