Fortune and Misfortune of a Consul of France in Jerusalem
Amédée Outrey, 1938-1941

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OF A CONSUL OF FRANCE IN JERUSALEM
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René Neuville, former Consul General of France in Jerusalem and occasional historian of this post, is responsible for the title of the present study. The period considered is a phase of abeyance, however unlike what is happening in Europe, it is not the lull before the storm. The years before the War in Palestine are characterized by very violent confrontations, and the region, under British mandate since 1922, is more and more a place of dispute between the main communities, notably Jewish and Arab, who are inescapably opposed.

In order to describe the French standpoint relative to this key moment in the history of Palestine, a precise historical source is at our disposal. Moreover, this source allows one to reconstitute the relationships held by the Consul General of France at this time, as it contains the complete collection of his telegrams and dispatches. The last representative of a very traditional diplomacy, which is even qualified by everyone as “reactionary”, Amédée Outrey arrives in Jerusalem in the month of January 1938. If the perspective he adopts in his correspondence reflects nearly exactly what one expects of him in Paris (and of

2 It can be found in the Papiers privés d’Amédée Outrey (PAAP) at the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, Files 29 to 32. In the following we will give here in parentheses only the dates of the documents considered.
any representative of France in Palestine at that time), this correspondence has at least two advantages.

On the one hand it is chronologically complete. The development of the French perception concerning his role in a region, which is ending a first metamorphosis, is retraced throughout this corpus, spanning from the Third Republic to the Regime of Vichy; and then to Free France.

On the other hand it is complete in the sense that it reveals all of the protagonists of Palestine at that time. It is important to emphasize this, because so far the representatives of France had the tendency to focus only on their clients, that is the Christians. Therefore the other populations seemed most often ignored in a globally unbalanced picture of the region.

Moreover, this correspondence appears as a distant echo of the events in Europe, concerning the French political environment or international tensions.

According to the present study, France seems to pursue its traditional role in Palestine, that of protecting the Catholic communities. At the same time, France attempts to use new means in order to exert its influence by being in contact with populations which are not traditionally close; thus the establishment of the French Cultural Center in Jerusalem and a chair of French Civilization at the Hebrew University date to this period.

Nevertheless, these attempts cannot hinder the evolution of the global context: Paris is mostly obliged to adjust to unfavorable local constraints which will become impossible to sustain in the end⁴.

**France in search of a lost splendor**

In general and in an obvious manner, Outrey’s observations reflect a rather positive image of France concerning its place in Palestine. Of course, there is since 1922 and the establishment of the British Mandate, a situation which France had to live with, *nolens volens*. But Paris and its representatives act as if France still occupied the place of protective power which it had at the time of the Ottoman Empire. In a certain way, only the local authority changed – London replaced the Sublime Porte –, Palestine on the other side offering an unchanging character. France can therefore think to retain its position.

⁴ The different points which mark this study constitute many research elements the author is working on at the Centre de recherche français de Jérusalem (French Research Center of Jerusalem), within the framework of a research fellowship (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
Amédée Outrey.
The relationships with the religious communities

This mindset applies for example to the relationships of the French representative and the religious communities. Since the 16th century, France has from this standpoint a separate place among the European powers. Nevertheless this role of protector of the Catholics (the Latins) is officially suspended since the establishment of the British Mandate. In reality however, a vision which prevails there and in Paris, is that the “older daughter of the Church” wants to keep dominating.

Amédée Outrey thus fits well within the continuity of his predecessors, particularly of his uncle Georges, Consul General of France in Jerusalem from 1904 to 1908. His considerations of the religious communities are similar to those which can be found in the diplomatic correspondence at the end of the 19th century, at the time when Paris still had all of its power. Concerned about the re-establishment or the preservation of his place, he criticizes Jacques d’Aumale (May 4, 1938), in post in Jerusalem from 1928 to 1937. Although d’Aumale, despite reproaches addressed to him, does not consider himself negligent in his job, he is still unanimously disapproved, be it by the Greek Catholics, the Melchites that Paris is proud to protect, or by Outrey himself. Outrey is intent on restoring the traditional interest demonstrated by France toward the congregations.

For him, it is first of all a matter of serving as the arbitrator of the communities and of avoiding absolutely any British interference in their affairs. If in the past the respect of the status quo allowed for Ottoman power to solve their material problems, then at present the local authority must not interfere in this domain either. For, in the eyes of the Catholic institutions, Great-Britain is a Protestant power, prepared to go to any length in order to take some control over the Holy Places.

This preoccupation concerns in particular the Holy Sepulchre which threatens to collapse. Outrey is faced with the following dilemma: either to act in such a way that Great-Britain doesn’t intervene, which means to let the

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5 This respect of the French tradition in the Holy Land is certainly also due to his admiration for Chateaubriand, about whom he published a paper at that time (Revue d’Histoire Littéraire de la France, IV-VI, 1938) and of whom he published in 1950 Journal de Jérusalem (Jerusalem Diary); in 1948 he traces the history of the manuscript (in Revue d’Histoire Littéraire de la France, VII-IX, 1948, pp. 233 sq.)


7 PAAP Louis Canet, 13, Letter by Portier, head of the Greek Catholic seminar; Louis Canet, January 13, 1938.
communities tear each other apart with the problems of seizing the church; or to avoid the fact that the church collapses, therefore allowing the British to take conservatory measures. Facing this situation, the Consul can only encourage a French action which will make up for the two problems: Outrey consults the École Biblique, an unwavering ally of Paris (April 11, 1938), and he pushes forth the enterprise initiated by a French salvage committee. This solution allows him to be for once in agreement with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and therefore with the Vatican, against both the English ambitions and the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, which has always been held responsible, in the eyes of France, for the Italian actions against France.

In the same mind set Outrey commits himself to 61,000 French Francs in order to assure the works of restoration of the national church of Abu Gosh. One finds here again the will to save the buildings which recall the genius of France and its local heritage.

But the attention of the Consul General toward the religious problems doesn’t focus only on the restoration of old buildings. It concerns also the appointment of French personalities to posts of ecclesiastical responsibility. This preoccupation stays very present in the mind of a person for whom the principal goal is to preserve the status quo. Thus, in the archaeological domain in which the vice-consul of the time, the archaeologist René Neuville, is very interested, Paris manages to keep for France the direction of the Institut Biblique Pontifical in the person of Father Lyonnet, a Jesuit.

Outrey seizes also the occasion of the death of prelates in order to attempt increasing the weight of France, with manoeuvres and reflections worthy of the great period of international rivalry. The Latin Patriarchate is thus the focus of the French objectives, when the auxiliary bishop, the German Fellinger, passed away. For Outrey this claim seems justified at a moment when “the patriarch, the custodianship and the apostolic delegate are all three Italian” (February 9, 1940). This case represents a unique opportunity to ally with both the Vatican and Great-Britain, also concerned with calling into question the Italian domination, at a time when Italy is a potential enemy of London and Paris, and when the local Italian clergy seem “fanaticized by nationalism” (March 30,

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8. Ibid., Notes concerning the Holy Sepulchre, May 27, 1938. Hence the call for the effective establishment of a commission on Holy Places, another way for France to stand out. This is a project which had been evoked at the beginning of the 1920s but which had never been realized so far.

9. The event is effectively perceived as a French victory by the rivals of Paris, in particular by the Germans, former masters of the archeology of the Near East.
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1940). To this argumentation one can add the interest of setting aside the English ambitions concerning this post.

Nevertheless the aim of the Consul General doesn’t consist only in having posts of responsibility appointed to French people. He finds in fact the most strict sense of his responsibility to be that of protector, recalling on occasion that it has never been taken away de jure. Outrey is not only a religious observer, he is also very concerned by the disturbed political scene of the British Mandate. He is a protector when he realizes that the religious communities are threatened by all kinds of terrorists (October 17, 1938) or when he organizes, for the benefit of the congregations, a resupplying which was lacking (October 20, 1938).

Moreover the Consul is attentive to the merit and the future of his protégés. He asks thus for the attribution of medals to the directors of seminars devoted to France (October 4, 1940) or he worries about the possible return of religious people to Palestine who were stopped in France by the hostilities (November 11, 1940\(^{10}\)). These concerns fit also with the will of France to become close to its “missionaries” in the Holy Land. Outrey is requested as well to inform the religious communities that the government of Vichy has taken away the ban on teaching imposed on the religious people since the beginning of the century (September 10, 1940).

*Outrey and the other French protégés*

Besides the traditional clientele of a Consul of France in Jerusalem, Outrey expands his range of activity by taking an interest in the other French citizens present in Palestine, whatever their religion.

The viewpoint of the representative from Paris, in the difficult context the region goes through them, focuses for example on the Maghrebian people of the neighborhood close to the Wailing Wall. Following the example of his action in favor of the other religious communities, Outrey’s objective is to protect them from the British tax administration (March 19, 1938).

The Consul is interested also in the fate of certain isolated Jewish communities, for example in Safed, located in the north of the Mandate. In this case, his intervention became necessary since the members of this community “because of their situation as French citizens (...), have obviously nothing to

\(^{10}\) Included in the concern are two Dominicans from the École biblique, Fathers Vincent and Tournay, who only went back to Jerusalem at the end of the war (see Perrot, J., *Et ils sortirent du Paradis... Carnets d’un archéologue en Orient* 1945-1995, Paris, Editions de Fallois, 1997, p. 19).
expect from the local authorities” (May 21, 1938) and are therefore left with no defense in a hostile environment.

The various communities and the evolution of Palestine

The breadth of view which is witnessed by Outrey, a specific aspect of his consular occupation, as well reflects the extreme complication of the Palestinian political landscape. His curiosity is illustrated for example in the fact that he proceeds to collect information related to the different communities just after his arrival in post11. This sharp interest in the whole of his new environment proves that Outrey is willing to open his perspective and not to stay inescapably marked by the classical opinions held by certain civil servants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Even if it is true that Outrey is informed mainly by Louis Canet, Director of Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who is himself rather conservative in his ideas regarding the region12, he also retrieves his information elsewhere. Louis Massignon, the renowned orientalist, is his informant for the Moslim part and he contacts the Jewish Agency directly in order to find out about its activities in Palestine13.

Despite Outrey’s interest in Zionist Jews he remains critical toward them. He notices thus that their activism is manipulated by and helps the Germans, then perceived as a supplementary factor of discord in Palestine. According to him, their attitude can only contribute to a hard line taken by the Arabs (October 20, 1939). In parallel, Outrey takes part in the skepticism and the mocking when he documents the military efforts of the Yeshuv: the apparently derisory equipment of the Jewish population reveals that “we are far (...) from these legions renewed by those of Judas Maccabaeus of which the megalomania of the Jewish Agency had dreamt.” (October 20, 1939). Moreover, he considers that Jewish nationalism is manipulated, or at least slowed down by the British authorities. Therefore this sentiment certainly has not the possibility of flourishing and offers no future (October 25, 1940). This critical attitude doesn’t preclude the

11 PAAP, Louis Canet, 13, Personal letter from Outrey to Canet, January 30, 1938.
fact that at that time France [be it the Third Republic (October 20, 1939) or Vichy (February 11, 1941)] is very interested in the Jewish armament, regardless of whether this equipment is clandestine and therefore terrorist, or official, in the cadre of the British army following the beginning of the hostilities.

At any rate, Outrey isn’t only interested in the growing Jewish power, he also focuses his attention on the rising Arab nationalism whose principle leader, Haj Amin al Hussaini, is under residential surveillance in Beirut. For the Consul, as well as the personnel from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs interested in the region, the fact that the Arabs equip themselves and increase their attacks on the British doesn’t come as a surprise. To the contrary, this serves as a confirmation of a prediction made in the early 1920’s regarding the “striking [proof of] the political bankruptcy of the policy toward the Arabs” in London (May 12, 1941) which amplified the Jewish malcontent (February 29, 1940), demonstrating the total failure of the administration of the British Mandate.

But the Arab activism denotes also an element which worries Outrey about the reality of foreign support for this movement: if the Italian support for the Arabs is evident (January 29, 1938), then it appears more and more obvious that the Germans are very active in this regard.

Informed notably by the Jewish Agency, France notices indeed the rise of the German presence and influence in Palestine. Yet they constitute an additional threat to the place which France occupies there. Therefore, religious rivalry is one thing, especially with German pride having, in the Jesuit Father Köppel, a brilliant representative within the Pontifical Biblical Institute\(^\text{14}\), but the support brought by Berlin to subversive movements represents a danger of another scale and seems much more serious. Outrey has such a vivid awareness of the situation that he writes about it in one of his first telegrams from Jerusalem (February 9, 1938). He emphasizes there the two-fold nature of this risk: the German element is perceived not only as a danger for the well established positions of the powers traditionally present in this region, but it is mostly perceived as an element of destabilization for the whole country. In the eyes of the Consul, the action of Berlin, who has highly ranked representatives passing through the country\(^\text{15}\), is damaging the political context of Palestine.

\(^{14}\) Archives of the State of Israel, Group 67 (Consulates of Germany in Palestine), 1355 Kunst und Wissenschaft 1928-1939 (box P 523), Bericht über die Arbeit der wissenschaftlichen Institute in Jerusalem, 3 XII 1936, Dr. A. Kopp.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 959 Reisen prominenter Persönlichkeiten 1929-1939 (Box P 489), Letter from Hentig (senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to Döhle (Consul General of Germany in Jerusalem), January 21, 1939, who announces his arrival.
Moreover, Outrey’s analysis of the German actions is the occasion which he
takes to emphasize his point of view concerning the Moslim population, a
community which so far has never really been subjected to the solicitude of the
consuls of France. Outrey fits within the continuity of this standpoint since he
observes that “for lack of newspapers to its taste and convenience, the public
looks for information on the German radio. It must be acknowledged here as
well that the heavy insinuations, the gross falsifications, the blatant advertising
of Radio Berlin which have served it so often in the European public, are most
often adapted for the Arab population of Palestine.” (November 6, 1939). The
efficiency of German propaganda, which suffered from the sarcasms of the
French consul, seems implacable to the point that Outrey considers it finally as
an instrument which neither the French nor the British will ever be able to fight
efficiently.

Kept in the state of possible threat before the war, German support to the
Pan-Arab efforts is confirmed during the conflict. Outrey can then reinforce his
opinion, similar to that of his official correspondants in Beirut, according to
whom the enterprise of the Reich is bad for the future of the region. This relates
particularly to the emancipation of a zone for which the inescapable evolution
toward autonomy, or even independence, is not easily accepted in Paris.
Therefore this perspective stands out more and more, including the expected
concretization of tendencies which may have taken shape in the 1930s\textsuperscript{16}: the
independence and the union, “illusions” (May 9, 1941) promised by Germany
which can only contribute to the ousting of France from the Near East.

\textbf{New initiatives to reinforce the French presence in Palestine}

Throughout his correspondence, Amédée Outrey seems mainly concerned
about preserving, defending, and mostly increasing the role of France in
Palestine. It is therefore very interesting to observe that Paris acts then as if it
had to recover, too late, a position long gone.

The Consul’s action is expressed in particular by his will to maintain the
French cultural presence. Here again, Outrey falls within a certain tradition
since the life of the arts and sciences has always been a concern of the consuls
of France in Jerusalem\textsuperscript{17}. It is even more so in Palestine which seems to be more
and more under influence of the British (English is one of the official langages

\textsuperscript{16} See Laurens, H., \textit{L’Orient arabe – Arabisme et islamisme de 1798 à 1945}, Paris,

\textsuperscript{17} See René Neuville, “Heurs et malheurs des consuls de France à Jérusalem”, 2\textsuperscript{nd} part,
pp. 64-65.
of the mandate) and the German Jews (as the remarks of the consuls document since the establishment of the Hebrew University in 1925). It is remarkable from this viewpoint that this concern increases concomitantly with the beginning of the hostilities.

The diffusion of French culture takes, in the beginning, a limited place in Outrey’s earliest telegrams. Yet here he already emphasizes the possibilities which are open in Palestine. For example he mentions that modern French music can have a certain success there, assured, in a contradictory way, by “the persecution of the Jews in Germany [who] brought here first rate artists.” This perspective seems even more feasible as “the reception rooms in the Consular residence offer the most pleasant context for artistic expressions.” (June 2, 1938). These represent so many elements which favor the development of activity in this domain and require “the sending of a Pleyel grand piano.” Why does he specify to this degree? Outrey in fact wants to obtain for himself the means for his political objectives and, by doing so, he must acknowledge that during a Ravel concert, “I have had to pay four Palestinian pounds which increased very unnecessarily the expenses of these two [cultural] evenings. I add that I have not been able to find here a good French piano and had to turn to a ‘Bluthner’ [an instrument of German manufacture], which obviously is not in favor of our national industry.”

As it can be observed, Outrey, since the beginning, appears very interested in the development of French cultural products in Palestine. His attention focuses not only on the merchandise itself, but also on the French language and civilization. In this domain, it is particularly significant that the Consul General makes consistent efforts in the establishment of two new institutions. The first is the French Cultural Center, established in Jerusalem the beginning of the 1930s, and second the chair for French Culture at the Hebrew University, established at the time of Outrey’s arrival in the Holy City.

The French Cultural Center

This first institution was established by the Lay Mission, in the framework of its network of institutions which competed with the religious congregations. Although the Mission had already considered the establishment of a school in Palestine at the beginning of the century, it had to conclude the impossibility of this operation at that time. The obstacles overcome, it can establish a Center of French Culture on Ben Yehuda Street, in the heart of the new city. The choice

18 PAAP Doulcet, 4, Religious protectorate, Notes on the 1905 financial report.
19 See D’Aumale, op. cit., pp. 238-239.
of this location clearly demonstrates France’s interest in a population different from its usual clientele and France’s will to adapt to the new pace of development in the city. In this way, Outrey insists on emphasizing the fact that one of the activities organizers of this Center, Yves Marquet, whose wife was Jewish, knew both Arabic and Hebrew (June 4, 1938) and was thus fully adapted to the context of the 1930s. A fundamental element of the French cultural life in Palestine, the Center remains very active even during the “drôle de guerre” (with for example a talk by André Siegfried, a specialist of Great Britain, February 18, 1940\(^2\)).

It is interesting to observe the continuity of Outrey’s efforts in favor of this institution while France is defeated and is in a difficult position toward the Mandatory power. Therefore, even if France, in order to plagiarize Clausewitz, then goes through its great catastrophe, it must carry on its cultural presence. The courses and the library of the institute are the subject of his correspondence (September 2), at a time when Paris wishes only to reduce the funds of the French institutions abroad. In this regard, Outrey suggests a compromise (October 16, 1940) and asks for the funds which would allow him to pay specifically the rent for the building (November 11 and 26, December 23, 1940). His efforts are rewarded by the favorable position taken by government of Vichy (September 8, 1940), which allows a progressive regularization of the Center’s situation (January 21, 1941).

\textit{The chair for French Culture at the Hebrew University}

The subject of the chair for French Culture at the Hebrew University, of which the analysis is original, is even more remarkable. This position, established at the initiative of the University in agreement with Paris, is funded by the French government. The decision to support this new program within the University (since the part of modern languages is quite limited at that time), is taken by the Front Populaire. But the following governments and, strikingly enough, France of Vichy devote just as much importance to it.

The occupant of this chair, Abraham Duff, following a difficult beginning, slowly gains the confidence of his peers. Yet conversely it is from the start that he benefits from the support of his sponsor in his task of “giving to French culture (...) the rank it deserves” (June 4, 1938). This confidence and the usual procedure of funding this position are not questioned with the political

\(^{20}\) Andr\'e Siegfried is a frequenter of the Center, since he has already given a talk there in November 1937. See \textit{L’Univers Israélite}, n° 13, 26 XI 1937, p. 195. For a non-exhaustive list of the participants, see D’Aumale, \textit{op.cit}. 
disruptions in France. Outrey, who remains in Jerusalem following the end of his post in July 1940, thus serving Vichy, doesn’t seem to express anti-Semitic sentiments. In fact he continues to support Duff, who appears for example in October 1940: according to him, it is normal and necessary that the national revolution carries on the work of the diffusion of French values, even within a Jewish university. We see that his position fits fully within the logic which reigns in Palestine, as the Consul precises: “An unfavorable or ambiguous answer from us could only encourage the coalition of interests or rancours which formed against the progression of our influence at the university and which today brings the friends of England with the German refugees who, after ten years of official persecution, have not yet been disgusted by the intellectual methods on the other side of the Rhine.”

Outrey’s opinion meets a favorable echo in Vichy a few days later, where it is announced (October 22, 1940), that France honors its commitment: in accordance with what had been concluded in February 1938, following a decision made by the Front Populaire, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declares that the chair for French Culture at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem will be funded even after March 1941. This decision, which can seem surprising, is explained, in fact, by an overlapping of interests and reflects the conflicts which mark the French State at that time. The anti-Semitic legislation, voted in at the beginning of the month, cannot take the impulse away from the thought of France’s global influence. This obligation is then imperative even in the case of a Jewish institution, located in a territory under British administration with whom relations are increasingly difficult. Although the Consul of France seems to adapt himself to the context of his country (i.e. he orders the distribution of a booklet entitled Le Maréchal Pétain, chef de l’Etat français (January 7, 1941), he still carries on regular contacts with the authorities of this university.

The other means taken to maintain the French presence in Palestine

The attachment of Outrey and the government of Vichy to upholding a French presence on Palestinian soil, in spite of everything and by any indirect means (even Jewish), is confirmed by two elements which will be briefly discussed here.

21 To a large extent Outrey, like numerous other diplomats of that time, is just assuring the continuity of the post. Therefore the label of “Vichyst” used by C. Nicault (La France et le sionisme, op. cit. p. 203) may seem expeditious.

22 As the archives of the Hebrew University testify to it. Moreover this same “Vichyst” Consul intervened in favor of German Jews confined in the camp of Gurs by France well after the occupation of the northern zone of the country (January 18, 1941).
First, in January of 1940, the Consul insists on fulfilling one of the obligations in the agreement signed with the Hebrew University. Thus he takes responsibility for the organization of a stay in France for two students on a grant from this university.

Nevertheless Outrey isn’t thinking only of this institution when he wants to interest Vichy in pursuing the dissemination of the French in Palestine. The Alliance Israélite Universelle benefits directly by this kind of politic and, once again, the Consul General manages to impose his views. North Africa is therefore not the only place where the Alliance continues to receive funds from the French State. In Palestine as well, the Alliance takes advantage of the generosity of the Vichy government, which recognizes in it a mediator of the French influence in the Yishuv.

Outrey thus takes the Alliance directly under his charge, for he considers it too important to be abandoned by France and he doesn’t want British or Palestinian organizations to usurp France’s role in this regard (August 20, 1940). In this endeavour he participates in a surveillance council in accordance with the British law, at a time when the Alliance is registered in the category of enemy organizations (September 4, 1940). In the same mind set, the Consul emphasizes the necessity for the Alliance to avoid submission to the direct control of London (January 14, 1941). These solicitations, addressed to Vichy, once again meet the favor of the French State, since it allows the Central Committee of the Alliance to grant an amount of 200,000 francs to its schools in Palestine (January 28, 1941).

Relationships with the Mandatory power: from the critique of British politics to a necessary adaptation to the rigors of the times

As we have just seen, throughout his presence in Jerusalem, Amédée Outrey remains particularly concerned with asserting the French presence in Palestine. This kind of politic, unique in the context of this region as well as of the French State, seems even more interesting since it confirms new methods of relating compared with the traditional practice of France.

In sum however, this activity seems quite vain in comparison to the specific context in which Outrey must operate. Before September 1939 as well as after,

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24 Even if the two Jewish institutions which are supported by Paris and then Vichy are not Zionist, there is a continuity in the French distrust toward everything which is related to the work of Herzl’s heirs.
the Consul General is in effect forced to adjust to a reality which doesn’t simplify his work. Outrey’s efforts which were intended for, at any cost, the preservation of France’s rank can appear as a will to overcome the shock arisen from the first world conflict. Whereas France before the first World War was a recognized (even if disputed) protective power and a privileged negotiator of the Sublime Porte, it is afterwards rejected among secondary powers. This tendency, a reality from the seizure of Jerusalem by the British in December 1917, is confirmed with time. It is this situation that Paris cannot easily accept and against which Outrey is charged to act.

It is this framework, in the example of what has just been described, that the Consul General continues to behave as the protector of the religious communities. But this clearly implies a direct confrontation with the Mandatory power and results in a critical attitude toward British politics.

Outrey’s Critiques toward the British management of religious affairs

The critiques of the Consul General address first of all the management of religious affairs. His preoccupations concern first, of course, the problems of the Christian communities, as he has the desire to continue his obligations as a the former protectorate.

Outrey is particularly concerned with maintaining the specific status of the congregations, which includes, for example, the exemption of any tax. Yet the Mandatory authorities question this secular system and decide to assess the tax basis which could be applied to these institutions. In reaction to this initiative, in March 1940, Outrey takes offense notably to the questioning of the status of “Our House”, the institution of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Nablus. The opportunity is thus given to him to denounce the “prejudice of a status for our religious institutions accepted thus far”. Little by little, despite his wish not to poison the situation, the Consul General is obliged to act against the British obstinacy. In that effort he suggests increasing France’s critical position and to act at the highest level in London, since the local administration appears to him particularly aggressive and opposed to any discussion whatsoever.

Outrey’s position vis-à-vis the Mandatory authorities does not improve with time and this problem becomes even exacerbated after the French defeat. The British consider then that the law on trade with enemies must be extended to French institutions. This measure, typical in a context of war, is perceived by the Consul as the announcement of the definitive loss of the French protectorate. As well, the will to avoid any British control pushes Outrey to reject the financial support of London for religious institutions. According to him, while accepting such funding would offer the advantage of reconciling the
financial difficulties of these institutions, it would mean surrounding to, sooner
or later, the British influence (September 4, 1940).

All of these elements explain why Outrey is fully satisfied when that which
appears to him as the good right is preserved: an arrangement in agreement with
his views is indeed reached, which allows notably the French houses to
“collaborate loyally and with good will to the civilizing mission which was
entrusted to the British Empire by the charter of the Mandate in this part of the
world.” (August 17, 1940). The British attempts of seizure on the French
institutions have therefore failed.

In this domain as well, Outrey expresses his open-mindedness and his desire
to support all of the institutions which depend on France. This is the case, for
example, of the Maghrebian waqf (religious foundation) which occasionally
helps to fight British domination. Here again Outrey’s concern focuses on the
financial aspect of the institution, particularly on the distribution of its funds.
The collection of revenue by this institution, intended for “our protégés”,
worries greatly the Consul General (March 19, 1938). Therefore, he demands
for it an administrator who is a French protégé. This demand follows an
implacable logic, which is both financial and political. He writes thus: “If we
could (...) have some control over the management of the Maghrebian waqf, our
citizens coming from North Africa would be led more often to ask for us and
we could perhaps hope to offer for them something other than a nominal
influence.”

In this case like in others, the consul doesn’t think only of the well-being of
his protégés. For him, this measure can allow one to better control a population
directly connected to North Africa, where nationalist rebellions are threatening
at that time. This concern seems therefore directly linked to certain aspects of
internal French politics. But it is a two-fold concern: beyond the French need to
better manage this institution, this control should please the British. At the same
time, the British are indeed concerned with preventing any interference in the
Moslim affairs of Palestine by partisans of the Mufti of Jerusalem. This
involves, therefore, their Maghrebian component: a French surveillance would
result in a calming.

In sum, Outrey’s principal goal seems to be precisely this direct surveillance
of the Moslims. This objective justifies moreover his critique of the British
liberalities toward people of this religion which he perceives as to great, and
which don’t hide very well (in his view) the limited democratic aspect of the
exercise of political and legal power in the Mandate (May 7, 1938). The
assignment of responsibility to Moslims themselves, regarding the management
of their religious institutions, is a hypocrisy, according to Outrey, and it only
helped to enrich “certain agitators” obeying the orders of London. It is therefore beneficial to put an end to it.

*Outrey’s Critiques toward British politics*

Outrey’s disapproval is not limited to these remarks regarding the religious communities. It also focuses on the overall management and future of Palestine.

For example, we can take note of very pessimistic, or even cynical, telegrams about the reaction of the British to the troubles which perturb the region, where he is looking for an illusory solution which satisfies all of the various parties. Therefore, the several inquiry commissions which passed through Palestine can not lead to very much, according to the consul, especially since their suggestions are idle or ignored by the British government.

Moreover, Outrey condemns the British tendency to point out the French laxity, which is supposed to allow for the intrusion of Syrian or Lebanese subversive elements. Outrey precises that it is easy for London to criticize the lack of French good intention, viewing it as a will to see Palestine plunge into chaos in order to serve Haj Amin al Hussaini indirectly. In fact, England itself is the first to play on the local rivalries, leaning on certain opponents of the great Mufti (among them is Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, former mayor of Jerusalem). This argumentation constitutes also the opportunity for the Consul to recall the suspicions which surround the British assistance to the Druze rebellion, from 1925-1926, directed against the French presence in Syria. It appears thus that the so-called cooperation could find a justification, limited on the part of Paris at the end of the 1930s.

In fact, according to Outrey, the main problem is the internal inefficiency of the British inquiry commissions. They had been already criticized by his predecessor, and they are even more so by him, as he observes a torn apart Palestine. According to him, this solution doesn’t bring any improvement to safety (May 7, 1938) and he doesn’t like the division envisioned in order to remedy the conflict; the creation of counties or the sharing of the country are similarly rejected (June 8, 1938).

What is then the solution?

For him, Great-Britain is lacking firmness. It chooses to negotiate, but this approach can lead to nothing (he even qualifies [May 11, 1938] the Judeo-Arab conference organized by Great Britain in London as a comedy), since it reveals

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obvious incompetence on the part of the British when looking at the reality: a determination, but also a division of the Arabs, on one hand, and a hardline attitude of the Jews on the other hand. Facing this situation, Outrey can only advise the use of force. Thus, after observing the weakness of the British military presence in Palestine (7,000 people against 20,000 in French Syria), he declares that “it is only by occupying the country that one can put an end to the present terror” (May 7, 1938). The pacification of the Druze region which, it seems was achieved by France in Syria, can therefore serve as a model.

Deterioration of the relationships with the Mandatory authorities

Outrey’s mind set and his relations with the British power must nevertheless evolve with the international circumstances.

In parallel with the brotherhood of arms which exists in Europe in the first weeks of the war, Outrey seems in favor of a cordial understanding with the Mandatory authorities. England and France have common enemies and the necessity to act against them justifies the search for the best possible collaboration. This explains why Outrey, at first, simply observes and reports the measures taken by Great Britain against the German citizens at the beginning and the Italian ones afterwards.

But a first witness of friction, or at least divergence, with British politics appears when Outrey reproaches London for showing some weakness in its first initiatives. He emphasizes thus the fact that, although German individuals are disturbed, their numerous institutions are not. That’s why he observes with satisfaction, at the end of May 1940, that the “Authorities had finally decided to take more rigorous measures toward German institutions in Palestine. These institutions would be closed or at least directly managed by British functionaries.” (May 25, 1940). In another way, the sanctions imposed on Italians don’t meet his approval. He either wonders about the future of Catholic institutions which mainly consist of subjects of the King of Italy (May 29) or he protests against the idea of requisitioning the French school of the Brothers of Bethlehem in order to put up Italian prisoners there (November 6, 1941). Outrey as well remains worried about keeping the maximum amount of control over elements which are, in principle, submitted to him.

The irritation of the French representative expresses and increases the tensions between his post and the Mandatory authorities. It is mostly caused by the unease of his position. On the one hand, it is possible and necessary to carry on with the relations, namely commercial and financial, between Palestine and Syria-Lebanon (it is also the only means to guarantee the funding of the French
institutions of which Outrey, as we have seen, wants to assure the existence\textsuperscript{26}), but, on the other hand, the Consul exasperates himself because for this he depends on the good will of the British (April 7, 1941).

In the facts, Outrey is more and more restricted from exercising his usual prerogatives\textsuperscript{27}. As a consequence of this situation, the topic of breaking off consular relations, which are the only connection existing from now on between France and Great-Britain, appears more and more regularly in his discourse. If he rejects the idea at first, it is because it would not serve French interests (September 4, 1940); afterwards he considers it as a liberation. He would indeed resign himself “easily to abandoning an occupation which, since the armistice, brought few subjects of satisfaction.” (October 24, 1940). The evolution of his mind set is obvious and understandable: he arrives in Palestine which is the prey of the biggest troubles and where the exercise of his mandate is rendered increasingly more difficult, and the prolongation of his presence becomes necessary due to the British ban on the arrival of his successor, who is appointed in October 1940, but must remain in Syria (November 4, 1940). Outrey must therefore assure the continuity of the French presence\textsuperscript{28}, even though a promotion is awaiting him in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs moved to Vichy\textsuperscript{29}.

The progression of the circumstances doesn’t improve the working conditions of a job which lies more and more heavily on him. He is, from now on, banned from any personal relationships with the British authorities (March 31, 1941) and is forced to secure on a daily basis the survival not only of his protégés but also of himself.

First of all, the closure of the post, considered as early as July 10, 1940, is avoided thanks to improvised solutions. The company \textit{L’Air Liquide} makes some funds frozen in Palestine available, in response to the impossibility of

\textsuperscript{26} That is why Outrey demands an agreement of clearing between the two countries, which will put an end to a difficult situation where France must “depend on the good will of the British authorities in order to ask them from time to time (...) to condescend to free such or such of our frozen French funds.” (November 1, 1940). And he even considers an agreement of exchange (March 1, 1941).

\textsuperscript{27} But isn’t it a normal reaction from London because France does everything it can do to disturb the Consul of Great Britain in Beirut (October 24, 1940)?

\textsuperscript{28} As he mentions it in a conversation with a representative of the Hebrew University at the beginning of January, 1941 (Archives of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, European Languages File 2274/1940, \textit{Notes on Conversation with the French Consul, January 3, 1941}).

\textsuperscript{29} Since July 20, 1940, he knows that he has been appointed assistant director of the Africa Division.
obtaining from local banks a currency exchange on checks from Banque de France. Yet these ingenious remedies remain uncertain and Outrey is forced to emphasize many times his concern about the difficulties of payment which affect his task (February 22, April 26, May 3 and 10, 1941). As a consequence of this difficult situation, his activity slows down and certain decisions are postponed, such as the building of an altar in the national church of Abu Gosh or the works of renovation of the Consulate (December 22, 1940).

The Destabilization of Outrey by the FFF (Free French Forces)...

To these difficulties is added the fact that the presence of the Consul is contested by the “other France” which appears very early in Palestine, and even within the Consulate. Although Amédée Outrey maintains his post under the regime of Vichy, this doesn’t necessarily mean that his stance is in favor of the French State, we need to note that he is a scrupulous observer of the actions of the Forces Françaises Libres (Free French Forces). He therefore knows that de Gaulle passed through Jerusalem (April 9, 1941) and he must deny even the rumors mentioning a meeting with him (April 12, 1941).

But this loyal attitude toward his government doesn’t stop him from rejecting, at the same time, the procedure of the loss of the French citizenship intended against general Catroux. According to Outrey, this very sudden attitude against the partisans of the General can only stimulate their own resistance and especially create confusion among the French in Jerusalem. He advises them to act differently, although he does not precise what he is thinking of, in order to show to the British that France is still unified, in spite of the events which are about to happen in Syria.

Outrey is forced to observe that his own post is not protected from dissidents. He must, in effect, suspend for two weeks and then lay off, following a demand from Beirut, his interpreter of Arabic, G. Rahil, “for wearing, without my realizing, the coat of arms with the Lorraine Cross, the emblem of the partisans of General de Gaulle.” (December 3, 1940). Nevertheless, like the reservation the Consul expressed before, he doesn’t want to denigrate his former collaborator too much. Thus, in a dispatch sent to Vichy

30 Direction du Patrimoine, Paris, Palestine File, Church of Abu Gosh classified as a historical monument.
31 In the interview he has with one of the representatives of the University, he thus mentions his surprise toward the anti-Semitic legislation of Vichy.
regarding him, Outrey mentions: “I maintain the opinion I have previously expressed about his integrity and his patriotic sentiments.”

... and by the British authorities

As we see, elements accumulate which make the life of a Consul General of France in Jerusalem impossible. If he is usually forced to compose with a multitude of contradictory interests, the situation of 1940-1941 constitutes an exacerbation of all these elements. In consequence, the closure of the post becomes more plausible and it seems even more inescapable when the authorities of Vichy in Beirut are about to declare persona non grata the Consul of Great Britain in Syria-Lebanon (May 16, 1941).

In this context, Outrey must organize concretely the closure, which notably includes measures intended to protect the French citizens in Palestine. Religious people, for ever considered by France as “missionaries”, become then, in his eyes, the true defenders of French works and must remain there. Regarding the other French, they could ask to be evacuated to Syria, a solution offered particularly to the “French Israelites (...) who have fulfilled their military obligations during the two wars of 1914 and 1939.” France seems thus able to recognize the merits of those who served her, but this measure is ambivalent, since departure for a territory where the anti-Semitic law of Vichy is still applied for several weeks, constitutes sooner or later an obvious risk for these people.

An eventuality by mid-May 1941, the closure of the Consulate is decided the 23th of the same month. At this date, the British authorities beg Outrey to proceed to the end of his post by the 28th. This extreme decision is explained by the declining atmosphere between Vichy and London. In the mean time, the prerogatives taken by France are too much to take for the British, since Admiral Darlan authorized the passing of German planes in Syria. This indirect support of Iraqi rebels, who were then facing the British forces, constitutes a true declaration of war.

In spite of the deleterious atmosphere in the months which precede it, the British decision seems to surprise the Consul General. As a telegram sent in extreme urgence to Beirut reveals, Outrey is in a hurry to receive his instructions. They concern in particular the protection of the French consular interests. He thinks then to give this charge to the United States or Switzerland, but he rejects Spain which is neutral, yet “already in charge of the German and Italian interests” (May 24, 1941).

Nevertheless, the trouble which reigns is extreme, for, in order to add to the confusion, Madrid will be charged with this protection. In this decision one
finds Paris unchanging in its politics. According to Beirut (May 26, 1941), Spain, a Catholic power, is the only one capable of assuring continuity in the matter of protecting the religious congregations. These congregations remain well the main concern of the French government, especially since it shows a strong connection with the Catholic church since Petain’s accession to power. In 1941, like in 1914, when diplomatic and consular relationships were broken off between Paris and Constantinople, Spain adopts a policy which remains influenced by a strong tradition.

In order to reinforce this impression, the authorities in Beirut make then a comparison between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain. “By boasting about (sic) the essentially beneficial character of the role of our religious institutions in Palestine as well as the tolerance Turkey demonstrated to us during the 1914 war, we should expect from Great Britain a similar treatment to our French personnel in these institutions.” (May 26, 1941). Through this remark a frozen perspective is expressed: Palestine remains the same, only the local authority changed, and France keeps all of her interests there.

On May 28, 1941, France must close down its Consulate General in Jerusalem, for the second time in a bit more than 25 years. Although the latter reflections which have just been mentioned characterize a consistency in the French mind set, one observes that Paris, and then Vichy, is nevertheless forced to accept a new status in Palestine. Amédée Outrey’s surprise, which is expressed in his relatively unprepared attitude toward the closure of his post, translates a very stark reality. Here we find the attestation of a true shock and the great deception, according to French diplomats of the time, which represents the period from 1917-1922. France, a former protective power, attempts relentlessly to impose itself. In this endeavor it has available old resources and it even directs institutions which allow it to assert a certain influence in unfamiliar circles. Despite this, the elements that France cannot control, because they are too distant, continue to persist. For that the “drôle de guerre” represents only a short period of calm. Finally Outrey is forced to give up, literally carried away by hostile circumstances.

Nevertheless the closure of the Consulate General constitutes only a brief parenthetical moment. Indeed, France doesn’t stay away for long from a region where the “French name” is too widely known and respected. Significantly, a “Delegation of Free France in Palestine and Transjordan” is set up in Jerusalem on July 23, 1941, not long after the victory in Syria by the Forces Françaises Libres (Free French Forces) and by the British over the Vichyist forces of General Dentz (convention of Acre, July 14th). Even more clearly, Outrey’s former assistant, Henri Zimmermann, takes direction of this delegation.
Will the “New France” practice a resolutely different kind of politics in Palestine, truly adapted to the new circumstances? In fact, after a period of adopting a willingness to do so, particularly in the relationships with the Zionists, Free France in the end manifests a true attachment to its traditional politics. This type of politics is the respect of secular practice and also reflects a great wariness toward Great Britain.

As we see, from 1938 to 1941, from Amédée Outrey’s arrival in post to his replacement by Zimmermann, it is the continuity which stands out. It is only large scale international changes which will be able to put an end to the picture that has just been sketched.

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33 De Gaulle, for example, chooses to control the French initiatives by assuring their funding in the continuity of Vichy (see De Gaulle, op. cit., Télégramme de De Gaulle à Londres, April 16, 1941, p. 388).