

## The Sharifian Propaganda of Eugène Jung

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Most of the national movements that arose from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire entered the world of international politics without benefit of public relations. The support of European powers was something to be secured through contacts with their official emissaries, and confirmed, if possible, in secret agreements. Few of these nationalist movements had the cross-cultural understanding or intellectual resources to attempt to influence European opinion or affect the climate of public debate over the merits of their causes. They opened no information offices, published no newspapers, lobbied no legislators or officials. Often they existed only as rumours in Europe's capitals. In the absence of an organized information apparatus, public debate was shaped by powerful interest groups, including colonial lobbies, that easily demolished the inarticulate or inaudible claims of new nationalisms.

From the outset of their revolt against the Turks in 1916, Sharif Husayn Ibn 'Ali and his followers understood that their claim to Syria would be contested. Yet they could not muster the means to make a compelling public case in London or Paris. In the Sharifian bid for that part of southern Syria known also as Palestine, poor articulation constituted a formidable handicap. Britain had conquered Palestine by force of arms, and quickly developed an imperial rationale for direct possession. The Zionist movement also utilized many of its best minds to mould British public opinion on the Palestine issue, and it was public opinion which served as Zionism's anchor against the shifting calculations of bureaucratic policy-makers.

But there were fewer competing claims to the future of Syria north

of Palestine. True, the battery of forces arrayed in favour of French control over this part of Syria was impressive. It included French officials and strategists who feared British aggrandizement in the Levant if France did not act; clerical and cultural lobbies which sought to promote France's *mission civilisatrice*; and commercial interests which sought to expand and consolidate French economic enterprise in Syria. It also included not a few Syrian Christians who hoped to be saved from Muslim domination through the agency of French protection and perhaps establish their own dominion. Yet the preponderance of French opinion was indifferent to the expansion of France into Syria. It has even been argued that, had the French public ever debated the issue, it might have rejected the burden of Syria.<sup>1</sup> But the Sharifians could not have initiated that debate themselves. An effective case on their behalf could only have been made by an articulate Frenchman, someone who was a friend of the Sharifians and also knew the rules in the world of Parisian publicity-making. That role was filled by the curious figure of Eugène Jung.

### *Lobbyist for the Arabs*

Eugène Jung was born in Bordeaux in 1863. The son of a noted general and parliamentary deputy, he enlisted in 1883, then joined the marine infantry as a junior officer and left for French Indochina in 1885. His administrative career at Tonkin culminated in his appointment as vice-resident of France in 1895 and chancellor of the Residency in 1900. In 1901 he resigned and returned to Paris, where he lived from the proceeds of a plantation he owned in Tonkin.<sup>2</sup> He wrote occasionally on the problems of colonial administration in French Indochina, and published a number of unacclaimed plays at his own expense.

'On my return from Indochina, the unknown regions of Arabia attracted my attention', Jung later recalled.<sup>3</sup> His career at a loose end, Jung found new purpose in the prospect of an Arab awakening. He established his famous partnership with Najib 'Azuri, former Ottoman official and self-proclaimed leader of an Arab national committee, in Paris in 1905. Under 'Azuri's influence, Jung became an ardent supporter of Arab independence from Turkish misrule, publicizing 'Azuri's claim that the Ottoman Empire's Arab provinces were ripe for revolt. In 1906 Jung published a book, *Les Puissances devant la révolte arabe*, urging France to support the Arab separatist movement that 'Azuri had described in a book of the previous year. From April 1907 to September 1908, Jung and 'Azuri published a monthly in Paris,

*L'Indépendance arabe*, which urged France to take up the Arab cause against Turkish oppression. After the Young Turk revolution, Jung and 'Azuri suspended the paper in the hope that the new regime would allow greater Arab autonomy. But these hopes were quickly dashed, whereupon 'Azuri settled in Egypt and began to write for the newspaper *L'Égypte*. Jung served as Paris correspondent of the newspaper, which called for Arab freedom against the oppressive policies of the Young Turks. In secret contacts, Jung and 'Azuri also worked together to secure French financial and logistical support for an Arab rising against Ottoman rule. Although their campaign caused a minor stir in some journals of opinion, they never gained the confidence of French officials, who rebuffed each of their many overtures.<sup>4</sup>

This propaganda was not Sharifian. In their pre-war efforts, Jung and 'Azuri emphasized the role of secret Arab committees in Syria, on whose behalf they claimed to act. These mysterious committees would launch a revolt and lead the Arabs to independence. But the sharif of Mecca did occupy a privileged place in their vision, for both of their books advocated the transfer of the caliphate to a descendant of the Prophet, who would rule the Hijaz and exercise a general spiritual authority over Muslims everywhere. When the war broke out, Jung integrated this solution to the caliphate problem into his vision of Arab independence. In a letter of 7 November 1914, Jung wrote to the president of France, offering his services in Asia Minor. Arab officers in the Turkish army were ready to revolt, Jung claimed; in order to activate them, France need only proclaim the independence of Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Hijaz, Asir and Yemen, and 'to name an Arab caliph at Mecca, with a specific territory like the Hijaz. My friends could provide the name of one who would be acceptable to all the Muslims.' In a memorandum of 21 January 1915, which Jung sent to French officials and parliamentarians, he urged that the caliphate 'be transferred to an Arab descendant of the Prophet, to whom the Hijaz would be given as a temporal realm'.<sup>6</sup> The sharif of Mecca therefore occupied a privileged place in the scheme envisioned by Jung and 'Azuri, although his authority beyond the Hijaz would be strictly spiritual.

Jung could not contain his excitement when the sharif raised the banner of revolt in June 1916. At last the cause of Arab independence, for which he had written countless articles and badgered dozens of officials, had found a champion. But 'Azuri's untimely death that same month deprived Jung of his Arab collaborator, whom he had always represented as his channel to the Arab movement. Jung could not do

without a claim to such a channel, since he lacked the credential of first-hand experience in the Arab lands. He did not delay. In August 1916 he found a new partner in the person of a Lebanese journalist, Ibrahim Salim al-Najjar.

Najjar, born in 1882, was an established figure in Cairo's world of Syrian journalism despite his youth. He founded his first publication, a weekly, in 1900; during the next few years he founded two other newspapers in Cairo and also corresponded for *al-Ahram*. After the Young Turk revolution of 1908, Najjar went to Istanbul as correspondent of the Cairo daily, *al-Muqattam*. While in Istanbul, he created an Arab club, and in 1911 he visited New York to form an Arab committee. He then returned to Istanbul, where he established more committees, as well as another newspaper. According to Jung, Najjar was also among the founders of the Arab secret society *al-'Abd* (the Covenant), and tried – unsuccessfully – to create ties between disgruntled Arab officers in Istanbul and the French Embassy there.

In 1912, Najjar returned to Lebanon, but he soon fled to Egypt because of Young Turk persecution, and there became an active member of the Decentralization Party. In 1915 he arrived in Paris and proposed the establishment of an Arabic newspaper to counter German propaganda. He first did some translating, and later contributed to *al-Mustaqbal*, a newspaper established with official French subsidies under the editorship of Shukri Ghanim and Georges Samné, who favoured French guardianship over Syria. In September 1916, Najjar fell out with Ghanim and Samné over editorial policy, left *al-Mustaqbal* and offered his journalistic services to the Sharifians. He established a press agency that supplied French newspapers with news from the Hijaz, and he became the Paris political and literary correspondent of the Sharifian newspaper *al-Qibla* of Mecca. He also continued to report for *al-Muqattam* of Cairo, and sent dispatches to *al-Sha'b* of New York and *al-Salam* of Buenos Aires.<sup>7</sup>

Initially, Jung and Najjar wrote and elicited articles on the Arab cause in French journals of opinion. But they were dependent on the whims of editors at a time when their message required an ongoing outlet. This led Najjar, together with Jung, to create a newspaper in French, entitled *L'Orient arabe*.<sup>8</sup> The new journal appeared irregularly in Paris, on the fifth and twentieth day of each month, beginning on 20 January 1917. The *directeur* of the newspaper was Ibrahim Najjar; the *rédacteur en chef*, Eugène Jung. An identical arrangement had existed between 'Azuri and Jung in publishing *L'Indépendance arabe* a decade earlier.

Each issue consisted of four pages on 'political, economic and literary' matters. The first page usually carried statements of Allied principles by Allied leaders, as well as editorials and articles. The inside pages carried additional articles, and the last page, Arab news from various correspondents and press sources. Najjar wrote many of the pieces in the newspaper, attacking the Turks and praising Sharif Husayn, his officials and the progress of the Sharifian state. Jung contributed the editorials. Each issue carried an advertisement for Jung's book of 1906, as well as a notice to Syrian commercial agents with business in France urging them to contact the newspaper and avail themselves of its 'special services' in placing orders with manufacturers. The newspaper declared that it 'conformed to a widespread thought, long germinating in the minds of all Syro-Lebanese Arabs, of having a newspaper in Paris like those of all the oppressed nations who demand justice and liberty'.<sup>9</sup>

For Jung, this neglect of French opinion represented a serious oversight on the part of the Arabs.

After 1916, while the Czechs, the Yugoslavs, the Poles, the Transylvanians and the Armenians had propaganda committees, informed the entire world of their desires, filled newspapers with interviews of their leaders, inundated politicians and intellectuals with their brochures, and interested businessmen in economic documents, the Arabs did nothing. They put faith in the justice of their cause.<sup>10</sup>

This simple faith was particularly dangerous at a moment when Shukri Ghanim's Comité Central Syrien was working assiduously to convince French opinion that Syria cried out for French guardianship. Jung and 'Azuri had always regarded Ghanim as the principal obstacle to French acceptance of the idea of Arab independence. When the Arab congress had been held in Paris in 1913, 'Azuri had informed Jung that Ghanim, together with 'Abd al-Hamid al-Zahrawi, were in league with Turkish decentralists such as the Sabah al-Din group, and had sold out for much less than independence. 'I am most pleased with this congress', 'Azuri had written to Jung, 'because it will make all those persons there [in Paris] and throughout the Arab world aware of the inanity of any attempt at alliance or collaboration with the Turks. Then they will all come around to us.'<sup>11</sup> But before the outbreak of war, Ghanim had shifted from collaboration with the Turks to protection by France, and refuting this required a much more determined effort in Paris. Ghanim's collaborator, Georges Samné, published a newspaper in

French, the *Correspondance d'Orient*, which enjoyed the support both of the colonial lobby and certain officials at the Quai d'Orsay. If Jung and Najjar wanted to enter the debate on an equal footing, they, too, needed a regular outlet for their views.

### *The case for Syrian independence*

The campaign conducted by Jung and Najjar in *L'Orient arabe* opened with the claim that the Arabs were no less worthy of independence than the peoples of Europe. In France, it was by no means obvious that the Arabs were capable of self-government. Shukri Ghanim, for his part, persistently questioned the ability of the Arabs to govern themselves without sliding into anarchy and bringing about European intervention. Jung's position was that the Arabs had already proven themselves capable of mobilizing the human resources necessary for self-rule. Mocking Ghanim's depiction of the Arabs, Jung wrote:

Their lack of discipline has produced incontestable results in the military campaigns of the Hedjaz and Mesopotamia; their lack of administrative and military manpower has been transformed into an organization of merit, thanks to all the Syro-Arab intellectuals in the Egyptian administration and to the thousands of Arab officers who have graduated from the great schools of Europe; their religious fanaticism has permitted Christians to hold the highest posts at Djeddah and has prompted the king to proclaim freedom of religion explicitly.

Criticism of the Arabs, he said, had 'but one purpose: to justify a policy of expansion, which Arab sentiment opposes in advance'.<sup>12</sup> To illustrate these claims, Najjar produced a series of laudatory articles about Sharif Husayn, as well as about Fu'ad al-Khatib, the undersecretary of state for foreign affairs in the Hijaz government, whom Najjar labelled 'the Arab Annunzio'.<sup>13</sup>

But if the Arabs gained independence, would not a fanatical Muslim majority oppress Christian minorities, which had traditionally looked to France for protection? Islam, Jung countered, was not a religion of fanaticism; it only became fanatic under certain conditions. In a number of tribes in Transjordan, a *mélange* of Muslims, Catholics and deists lived side by side without conflict. The Turks alone were responsible for such religious discord as existed among the Arabs.<sup>14</sup>

But did Ibn Sa'ud not reject the claims of Sharif Husayn? No, announced Jung; the two chiefs had been reconciled: 'There are no more rivalries. There is only one purpose: the Arab revival.' The Arabs had taken on a 'new life', wrote Jung; the 'Arab soul' had been 'transformed, almost made anew, through the adoption of modern ideas, the achievements of Western science and concepts of justice'.<sup>15</sup>

Yet even if the Arabs deserved self-government and were capable of exercising it without oppressing minorities, did not Arab independence threaten to undermine France's position? How were French strategic, commercial and cultural interests to be protected if the Arabs gained independence in Syria under Sharifian rule, especially in view of the total Sharifian dependence upon the British? French apprehension over British aggrandizement extended far beyond the colonial lobby to a broad public sensitivity on the issue of prestige. The close collaboration between Great Britain and the Sharifians had created a distinct sense of exclusion among the French, so that even the few Frenchmen who actively favoured the idea of Arab independence thought the Sharifians a poor vessel for the cause.

Jung responded that it was not too late to win the Arabs to the French side. In an article entitled 'As Liberators, Not as Conquerors', Jung praised Britain for its support of the Arabs. 'England has rendered resounding homage to the expansive force of the Arab race. She has recognized that the Arabs have demonstrated themselves to be the equals of Europeans from both the intellectual and moral point of view, in every branch of industry and in the liberal professions.'<sup>16</sup> But if France extended the same homage to the Arabs, the Arabs would reciprocate. 'Is it not France that has always, from the first, supported the independence of peoples? Is not liberty a French word?'<sup>17</sup> Jung urged his countrymen to adopt a fair-minded policy.

We have friends among [the Arabs]; guard them precious. Be their good counsellors, without any unjust thoughts; be their economic support, without ideas of monopoly. We will enjoy advantageous benefits, and will conserve our moral prestige in the eyes of the world. But, for the sake of God, reject the suggestions that conceal shameful purposes and serve evil ambitions. Be liberators, not conquerors.<sup>18</sup>

Jung did not rely exclusively on argument. He was also an amateur playwright with a flair – or perhaps a weakness – for the dramatic. This was vividly reflected in an article he wrote for the seventh issue of *L'Orient arabe*, entitled 'Au Drapeau!' In it Jung described the dream of an Arab officer, a fictitious character named Baha-Eddine, who

deserts the Turkish army to join his Arab compatriots in the Sharifian ranks. Here, Jung's imaginative fantasy is given free rein. The vision opens with Arab tribesmen galloping across vast expanses under a relentless sun, 'their eyes ablaze with feverish glow'. They surge from the depths of the desert, driving out the Turkish troops. Long convoys, hastening to bring provisions to a population which has been starved by the Turks, follow in their wake. Detachments of European armies arrive by sea.

Arrayed before them are the Arab soldiers of the new caliph and great king, who have come from the lands of the south. In their midst is an imposing group of official persons gathered in full dignity – an extraordinary *mélange* of grey, green and blue uniforms, of black cloaks and white burnouses, with crosses and medals of gold that sparkle and dazzle.

To the rear is the crowd.

Silence descends.

A high dignitary steps forth from the group and mounts a dais. He is a representative of the great American republic. In a lofty voice, quite clear, he reads: 'In the name of the free peoples of the world, it is proclaimed that the Arab world is free, that it is master of its destinies, that it will never again know oppression, that happiness, peace and wealth will bring about a rebirth of these beautiful lands, cradle of the world.'

The great Arab chiefs bow in acknowledgement.

The trumpets sound their notes vibrantly; the musicians play the hymn of liberty, the 'Marseillaise'; hurrahs ring out. A poignant emotion stirs hearts when, slowly, upon a mast chosen from the tallest cedars of Lebanon, an immense flag is raised which, when unfurled, reveals its shimmering colours: green, white, black! The green of the Prophet, the white of the Umayyads, the black of the Abbasids. Arabia has awakened; she has been restored to the world.<sup>19</sup>

In the early issues of *L'Orient arabe*, Jung urged French support for the Arab cause based upon the abstract concepts of liberty and justice. But when the prospect of French occupation of Syria became real, he stipulated a specific demand for Arab independence free of any French interference. Syria, he warned, must not be turned into another Tunisia. France's predominant position in Asia Minor could be assured without the complications of 'an occupation full of perils', he wrote.



Our task is simple, from this day forth. Syria and Palestine want their independence. Only the Holy Places will remain internationalized, if this is insisted upon, although the rest of Palestine will neither understand nor accept this measure. These countries will be free, with a parliament, a responsible cabinet and officials chosen among them and by them.<sup>20</sup>

In an unsolicited report submitted to the French prime minister on 2 April 1917, Jung declared that the Syrians wanted 'the greatest possible autonomy, including a constitutional regime, two chambers, a cabinet responsible to both chambers and their own officials chosen by themselves from among themselves'. In no circumstances could Syrians be subjected to the kind of regime that governed Moroccans, Tunisians or Algerians.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, he urged the Syrians themselves to make provisional arrangements until such time as their affairs were institutionalized at a future peace conference. In the meantime, Syrian Arabs outside the country 'should openly declare the absolute freedom of the country and renounce before all the Allies any form of domination, be it a disguised or some other form of protectorate'.<sup>22</sup>

*L'Orient arabe*, in advocating Syrian independence, also opposed Zionism, although this theme did not preoccupy Jung, who regarded French rather than Zionist ambitions as the principal obstacle to Arab independence. The newspaper carried a four-part series against Zionism, written not by Jung but by one of his French collaborators, which bore the title 'Nécrologie: Le sionisme'. Zionism was a threat, but one with no future; the series dismissed it as a mere creation of the Wilhelmstrasse. In later years, Jung would make amends for this underestimation of Zionism, attributing to the Jews a malignant and 'occult' influence over Great Britain and the United States.<sup>23</sup> Yet he never claimed that France had succumbed to this menace; his hostility was directed at the French colonial lobby, determined foe of justice for the Arabs.

### *The suppression of L'Orient arabe*

Most of the passages quoted here were excised from the newspaper by the wartime censor. While the French authorities permitted the publication of *L'Orient arabe*, statements deemed prejudicial to the future status of Syria were struck out. Censorship was applied from the very first issue, and the cuts became progressively more numerous, so that by the fifth issue the editors felt compelled to protest in print. The newspaper, they claimed, had been greeted 'from the outset by an

incomprehensible animosity that has expressed itself in numerous excisions. Why? For what purpose?' The journal 'has not departed from the bounds of correct conduct. It has not raised diplomatic questions or made military assessments – though perhaps on this point it could have said some very useful things. It has not strayed into polemics.' These 'dictatorial' measures had only two plausible explanations: 'they are the work either of an overly zealous subaltern, or of those loyal to a certain coterie known to us.'<sup>24</sup>

At the same time, ominous rumours began to circulate that the newspaper received 'very large sums of money' from 'powerful friends' – a transparent reference to Britain. 'Alas! Three times alas! *L'Orient arabe* has always had a poor little room for an office: its editors have lived from their writing in Job-like austerity.' They had never touched a subsidy, and had never 'extracted from others' pockets – oh, Robert Houdini! – any sum, either for publishing or for withholding their views.<sup>25</sup> Najjar was suspected by the French Foreign Ministry of being a paid agent of Britain,<sup>26</sup> a charge which he denied: 'We received not a centime, not a sou, neither from abroad nor from a foreigner, nor for our work, our labours and our journalistic pains.'<sup>27</sup> The only sum received from the British was the price of two subscriptions to the newspaper – one for the British Embassy in Paris, the other for the Foreign Office in London.<sup>28</sup>

Just how the newspaper was financed is not known. It certainly had subscribers, but was probably subsidized by Jung himself (who later published a number of books privately). According to Jung, the enterprise suffered from a chronic lack of funds that made it impossible to put Arab propaganda in Paris on a proper footing, and he blamed the Syrian diaspora for not financing the defenders of Syrian independence. Syrians had done well in the United States, Egypt, Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

But these people, rich and therefore powerful, did not offer financial support (or offered very little) to their representatives and defenders. Some did not have enough courage to begin the struggle; others thought only of their own affairs. Some were too young and had only ardour and good will; others awaited the outcome of the struggle before committing themselves. And all of them, even those living abroad, feared reprisals by the Turks against their near and dear ones.'<sup>29</sup>

In the end, however, it was not censorship or accusations or deficits that brought the newspaper to ruin, but Najjar's journalistic incompetence. On 13 August 1917, Najjar was suddenly arrested and sent off to

a detention camp near Mayenne in Normandy, and later transferred to Angers. His offence, according to the authorities, had been a cable sent by him to *al-Muqattam* on 1 August in which he reported that the French Prime Minister Alexandre Ribot had made a statement disavowing any French intention of occupying Syria. In fact, the statement in question dealt with French war aims in Europe, and made no reference to Syria.<sup>30</sup> The false item proved to be of considerable embarrassment to the French Foreign Ministry, and since Najjar was an Ottoman national, the authorities were entitled to punish him by arrest.

An issue of *L'Orient arabe* (the sixteenth) appeared on 20 October 1917, protesting Najjar's detention. In an editorial, Jung admitted that Najjar had made an error, but it warranted no more than a reprimand or the revocation of his press telegraph card. He certainly did not deserve to be sent to a concentration camp along with Turks and Germans. 'Coastal Asia Minor is not French territory, and M. Naggiar has committed no crime of *lèse-patrie* by claiming independence for his country under the aegis of France', Jung wrote. The damage France had done to itself by his arrest was 'incalculable'. Jung met with the Prime Minister on 22 September to plead for Najjar's release and to explain his programme, but to no avail. 'Our conversation was long – and useless', he reported.<sup>31</sup> Jung concluded that he had been outdone by the conspiratorial forces of the colonial lobby and international financiers working in concert:

Alas, we face a grouping of financiers, very international before the war and very Ottoman, which has designs on Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. Arrayed against us is a group of functionaries who covet positions (read M. Richard's subsidized book, *La Syrie et la Guerre*)<sup>32</sup> and who had close relations with this world of finance before the war. And finally we have political personalities who aspire to high office. All of them, allied closely together, desire all legitimate opposition to be smashed; they want to succeed in their destructive task. They resort to all means, accusing us for no reason of pan-Arabism; they reproach us, without any proof, for receiving subsidies from certain of our Allies.<sup>33</sup>

The piece, which concluded with a pledge to continue publication despite Najjar's arrest, was struck out by the censor. But Jung sent uncensored copies abroad, whereupon the authorities promptly reacted by issuing a three-month closure order against *L'Orient arabe*. Subscriptions lapsed and the newspaper did not reappear when the closure order was lifted. Ten months later, on 15 August 1918, the seventeenth

and last issue appeared, again lamenting the arrest of Najjar, who was still in detention. This issue, too, was censored. On 25 August the newspaper was banned indefinitely. It never appeared again.

With the closure of *L'Orient arabe*, Jung lost the principal weapon in his propaganda arsenal. The newspaper had given him an instrument, however imperfect, for initiating public debate. Without it, he had to fall back on lobbying behind closed doors, where he was least effective. He had become a familiar figure at the French Foreign Ministry during his partnership with 'Azuri, persistently advocating Arab revolt. Since the considered opinion of France's own representatives in the Arab lands had consistently contradicted Jung's assertions, his views had ceased to carry any weight. As a former colonial official, Jung could not be denied a hearing, and the Foreign Ministry granted him an occasional audience, which also enabled it to keep tabs on him. But Jung's message fell on deaf ears. Publicity, not diplomacy, was his strong suit; without a newspaper he lost his voice.

This did not prevent him from attempting to play a role in the diplomatic struggle that unfolded with the approach of the Peace Conference at Versailles. The young and inexperienced Amir Faysal arrived in Paris in December 1918 to represent Sharifian interests to heads of state and world public opinion. Jung hurried to see Faysal, and the Amir conveyed his father's regards to Jung. The Parisian publicist eagerly placed himself at Faysal's disposal. As Faysal had come to Paris without any supporting documents, Jung put together a dossier of Allied statements for use by the Arab delegation. But Jung wished to play a more active role, reminding Faysal that the visiting Arab was 'unfamiliar with Western customs'. He would need to pursue a 'combative' campaign to win public opinion, and refute every charge against him, particularly the accusation that he was on Britain's payroll.<sup>34</sup> It was clearly Jung's hope that he himself would emerge as Faysal's public relations adviser, and thereby serve as midwife to the birth of the independent Arab state which he had advocated a decade before the Sharifians raised the banner of revolt.

Instead, Jung suffered a devastating blow – not from his old opponents in the colonial lobby and the Quai d'Orsay, but from the Sharifians themselves. 'Unfortunately', he wrote in his book, 'Prince Faïçal was quickly cornered by Syrians who had lived in France for many years but whose experience was in the brasseries of the Latin Quarter rather than in political and diplomatic circles.' Faysal's young Arab advisers were jealous of all those who wished to 'speak the truth', and they plunged the delegation into a series of ill-conceived

manoeuvres. Faysal, complained Jung, made an additional mistake by appearing in Paris alongside T. E. Lawrence, whose role in France was plainly understood to be that of a British agent.<sup>35</sup>

Spurned by the Sharifians at precisely the moment when his talents could have been best put to use, Jung lost heart.

Tired of fourteen years of struggles, unable (as I wrote to King Hussein) to accept being considered an intruder by Prince Faïçal himself, having sustained too many wounds in this interminable struggle on behalf of the Arabs, seeing more and more that the conflict would become acute and not wanting to be involved in it as a Frenchman, I left Paris for the Rhineland.<sup>36</sup>

The Arab delegation's snub completely undermined Jung's pretension that he enjoyed a privileged channel to the leaders of the Arab movement. His pride had been damaged. Although time and again he had suffered rebuffs by French officials, their rejection had never discouraged him from knocking on more doors. He had attributed his setbacks to their misunderstanding of the Arab cause, not to their doubts about his own credibility. His unabashed account of his failed lobbying efforts in his two-volume *La révolte arabe* shows him to have been completely unaware that he had been discredited by the French Foreign Ministry and labelled a nuisance. But when the Arab delegation turned their backs on him in 1919, Jung understood that it was his credibility, not his cause, which the Arabs doubted. He could maintain his pride in the face of rejection by financiers and high officials – enemies of Arab independence – but not when rejected by the Sharifians who shared much of his own vision. Jung remained in the Rhineland until 1923 and did nothing on behalf of the Sharifians at the moment of reckoning when France dashed their Syrian dreams and illusions.

### *The lost cause*

By the time Jung returned to Paris in 1923, his small window of opportunity had closed. The French and British had consolidated their positions in Syria and Palestine; Najjar had left for Jerusalem, where he renewed his career in journalism.<sup>37</sup> During the following decade Jung again took up the cause of the Arabs and Islam, publishing half a dozen short polemical books. But his advocacy lacked the sharp focus on Arab separatism and Sharifian primacy of the war years. In fact, his later work was clearly distinguished from his earlier writing by its increasingly pan-Islamic content. Jung's defence of Islam mirrored his

growing awareness of the role of Islamic fervour in Arab nationalism, a fervour which his earlier propaganda, formulated in partnership with Syrian Christians, had completely ignored. There is no evidence that Jung established any formal partnership with Shakib Arslan, the Geneva-based Syrian exile whose influential French-language propaganda gave expression to Muslim protest against the denial of independence to Syria. But Jung echoed Arslan's message calling for the restoration of the Arabs to their true place in history through adherence to Islam. Previously, Jung had advocated Arab revolt against the Turks – a revolt that resulted in Arab subjugation under yet another imperialism, one which had threatened their cultural integrity and, in Palestine, their actual possession of the land. Jung now sought to make amends, claiming that Islamic revolt had supplanted Arab revolt as the true cause of the hour.<sup>38</sup> This radical shift of emphasis could hardly have enhanced his credibility in his last years.

Jung's passing went unnoticed, and he won no posthumous renown. He does not figure in histories of French policy towards Syria, and in the few places that he is mentioned in histories of Arab nationalism, he appears only as 'Azuri's collaborator. Jung was doubly marginal. His efforts, however tireless, were too insubstantial to provoke a serious French policy debate over Syria, and he never became more than a minor petitioner at the portals of the Quai d'Orsay. Those same efforts also failed to earn the appreciation of an Arab nationalist movement that was so self-absorbed that it did not know how to win or keep foreign friends. Jung's career as self-appointed champion of the Arab cause is not a story of achievement and its recognition. Yet in every sense, Jung exemplifies the small group of foreigners who endorsed Arab nationalism even before it dared put forward its own claims.<sup>39</sup> Their shared romanticism, dilettantism and alienation suggest that their political sympathy for the Arabs was a response to an inner need, that the 'feverish glow' Jung saw in Arab eyes was actually a reflection of his own.

#### NOTES

1. Christopher M. Andrew and A. S. Kanya-Forstner, *France Overseas: The Great War and the Climax of French Imperial Expansion* (London, 1981), p. 29.
2. Police report on Jung, 2 Dec. 1912, Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Turquie: Syrie-Liban, Nouvelle Série, Vol. 118.
3. Eugène Jung, *La révolte arabe* (2 vols.; Paris, 1924–25), Vol. I, p. 11.
4. On Jung's and 'Azuri's overtures to French authorities, see Elie Kedourie, 'The

- Politics of Political Literature: Kawakibi, Azoury and Jung, in his *Arabic Political Memoirs and Other Studies* (London, 1974), pp. 117–21 (article first published in 1972); William I. Shorrock, *French Imperialism in the Middle East: The Failure of Policy in Syria and Lebanon, 1900–1914* (Madison, 1976), pp. 72–5; Martin Kramer, 'Azoury: A Further Episode', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (October 1982), pp. 351–8.
5. Jung, op. cit., p. 106.
6. Ibid., p. 117.
7. For biographical details on Najjar, see *L'Orient arabe* (Paris: henceforth, OA), No. 15 (5 Sept. 1917); open letter from Jung to Clemenceau, OA, No. 17 (15 Aug. 1918). Najjar's connection with *al-'Ahd* and his mediation with the French are mentioned by Jung, op. cit., pp. 32, 74. The newspapers which he founded in Cairo and Istanbul are listed in Yusuf As'ad Dagher, *Qamus al-sihafa al-Lubnaniyya, 1858–1974* (Beirut, 1978) – consult the index.
8. A complete set of *L'Orient arabe* is preserved in the Annex of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Versailles. *L'Orient arabe* was subject to wartime censorship from the very first issue: the collection at Versailles includes both the censored and uncensored versions of most issues of the newspaper.
9. OA, No. 5 (20 March 1917).
10. Jung, op. cit., p. 13.
11. Text of letter from 'Azuri (Egypt) to Jung, received by Jung on 1 June 1913, in OA, No. 16 (20 Oct. 1917). The letter and Jung's commentary were excised by the censor. He later published it in *La révolte arabe*, Vol. I, pp. 67–8.
12. Jung, 'En libérateurs . . . pas en conquérants', OA, No. 6 (5 April 1917).
13. Najjar article on Husayn in OA, No. 9 (20 May 1917); on al-Khatib, OA, No. 1 (20 Jan. 1917).
14. Jung, 'Questions de Conscience', OA, No. 9 (20 May 1917).
15. Jung, 'L'Ame Arabe', OA, No. 4 (5 March 1917).
16. Jung, 'En libérateurs . . . pas en conquérants'. The article owed its title to a proclamation by General Maude of 19 March 1917, when he entered Baghdad.
17. Jung, 'Le coeur de la France et de ses Allies', OA, No. 1 (20 Jan. 1917).
18. Jung, 'En libérateurs . . . pas en conquérants'.
19. Jung, 'Au Drapeau!', OA, No. 7 (20 April 1917).
20. Jung, 'Concorde', OA, Nos. 10–11 (5 and 20 June 1917).
21. Jung's report to the Présidence du Conseil, 2 April 1917, in Jung, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 39.
22. Jung, 'Concorde'.
23. See in particular Eugène Jung, *Les arabes et l'Islam en face des Nouvelles Croisades et Palestine et Sionisme* (Paris, 1931), pp. 68–70.
24. OA, No. 5 (20 March 1917).
25. OA, No. 15 (5 Sept. 1917).
26. Open letter from Jung to Clemenceau, OA, No. 17 (15 Aug. 1918).
27. Najjar to Jung, 5 Oct. 1917, published in OA, No. 16 (20 Oct. 1917). In the letter, Najjar asks Jung to get him a lawyer.
28. Jung, *La révolte arabe*, Vol. II, p. 41.
29. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 12–13.
30. For Jung's version of the episode, see *ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 58–60.
31. Ibid., p. 62.
32. Henry Richard, a colonial official who had served in Africa, urged in his book that Syria be placed under a French governor-general and French officials, and administered as 'our spoils of war, just like German Togo and the Cameroons,

conquered by our troops'. For Jung's criticism of the book, see *La révolte arabe*, Vol. II, pp. 23–4.

33. OA, No. 16 (20 Oct. 1917).

34. Jung, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 116–17.

35. Ibid., p. 121.

36. Ibid.

37. Najjar was freed at the end of the war. His activities as a Sharifian propagandist ruled out journalistic activity in French-controlled Syria, and he settled in Palestine. In 1921 he established a daily newspaper in Jerusalem, the *Lisan al-'Arab*. See Yusuf Q. Khoury, *al-Sihafa al-'Arabiyya fi Filastin, 1876–1948* (Beirut, 1976), p. 35. Later, he returned to Beirut and in 1939 founded and edited the daily newspaper *al-Liwa*, which appeared (sporadically) until shortly after his death in 1957. See Dagher, *Qamus al-sihafa*, p. 236, entry 1429. For his role as a pioneer of Lebanese radio, see Yusuf As'ad Dagher, *Masadir al-dirasat al-'Arabiyya* (Beirut, 1972), Vol. III, Part 2, p. 1316.

38. Jung, *L'Islam sous le Joug* (Paris, 1926), p. 74.

39. For two other examples, see Martin Kramer, 'Pen and Purse: Sabunji and Blunt', in C. E. Bosworth et al. (eds), *The Islamic World From Classical to Modern Times. Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 771–80; *idem*, 'Arabistik and Arabism: The Passions of Martin Hartmann', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (July 1989), pp. 283–300.