

**The Emigration of Moroccan Jews to Palestine
After the Six-Day War
A Report by Mr. P. M. Johnston the British Consul,
Casablanca (February 1968), (Unpublished Document)**

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Introduction

Written in 1968 in Casablanca by the British Consul, Mr P. M. Johnston, the report focus on the history of Jews in Morocco, their origin, relationship with the Muslim majority, emigration from Morocco and their future in the country after The Six-Day War. The author argues that throughout the Moroccan history, Jews have been a minority whose status has been both privileged and precarious. The document consists of a chronology of the most critical events that marked the history of Jews in Morocco. These later developed in three parts to constitute the full report. The first critical event of this chronology dates back to 320 BC when Palestine was invaded by Ptolemy Lagos. It extends to The Six-Day War of 1967 that has tremendously impacted the Jewish community in Morocco.

Overall, the report describes how Jews were treated under the successive dynasties in Morocco from the Almohad (1143-1269) to the Alaouite (1631-present). It argues that Jews were subjected to continued oppression and suffering in their *dhimmi* status, forced to pay special taxes and wear distinctive clothing. However, they were exceptions in which their positions improved. In fact, the Saadian dynasty, for example, witnessed the appointment of many Moroccan Jews as ambassadors in various European countries. Namely, the Pellas Family (Simon Pellas, his brother and his son David,) in addition to Rabbi Sasportas, the brothers Joseph and Haim Toledano, and Samuel ben Sunbal. During the Alaouite Dynasty, Mawlay Suleyman assigned various Jews to positions of high authority including Abraham Sicsu as the *facto* Minister of Finance, Isaac Pinto as Treasurer, and successively Mesod Cohen and his son Meir as ambassadors to the court of St. James. The mid-nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of the first Alliance Israelite school in Tetouan in 1862, followed by the visit of Sir Moses Montefiore in 1863 who obtained from Mohamed Ben ‘Abd al-Raḥmān a *Dahir* granting protection to the Jews. The 30th March 1912 was marked by the establishment

of French Protectorate by the Treaty of Fez. The author pointed out that the Sultan Mohamed Ben Youssef (Future King Mohamed V) refused in 1940 to give effect to anti-Jews legislations passed by the French government of Vichy.

After the establishment of the State of Israel on 14 May 1948, the United Hebrew Immigrant Aid Service (HIAS) representative visited the French zone and Tangier. On the same year, CADIMA (Caisse d'Aide aux Immigrants Marocains), a local organization that promotes emigration of Jews to Israel was founded. As King Mohamed V returned to Morocco in 1955, the First Moroccan government was formed including a Jew, Dr. Leon Ben Zaquen, as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. Shortly after the independence, CADIMA closed down in 1956. This period has seen a big wave of emigration as well as the arrest of many Jews in 1961.

The paper reported that the Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Ahmed Balafrej visited the U.S where it was said that he has agreed with American Jewish organizations to permit Moroccan Jews to emigrate to Israel in return for a gift aid of wheat. In the eve of the Six-Day War of 1967, “*al-'Alam*” newspaper published by *al-Istiqlal* party called for the boycott of Jewish shops and the Minister of Information issued a statement condemning anti-Jewish boycott. On the 14th of August, organized emigration to Israel resumed.

In part one, the report portrays the origin of Jews as well as the evolution of their status in Morocco. The events stated in this part are an extension to the ones mentioned above in the chronology. The report starts by confirming that the Moroccan Jews were divided into two groups, the Touchabim and the Megorachim. The Touchabim were the autochthonous Jews settled in Morocco before the Arab conquest. They claim to be of Palestinian origin and to have come to the Maghreb after the sack of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 AD or even earlier. It is also believed by some African historians that they came from the ancient Jewish Kingdom of Ghana. On the other hand, the Megorachim were Jews who came from Spain and Portugal after being expelled by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. The Touchabim and the Megorachim used to live apart especially in larger towns where they also have separate synagogues.

The report claims that the Jews in Morocco were alternately protected and persecuted by the Sultans as in medieval Europe. In time of persecution or of anarchy, many abjured their faith and were always the first to suffer. After what the report describes as an expulsion, the Jews were installed in an exclusive quarter of the towns, known as the *Mellah* since 1280. When

the Jews came in contact with Europeans, first in Mogador and after the establishment of the French and Spanish Protectorates in 1912 in other towns, they adopted the European lifestyle in regard to dress, housing and social contacts. The Protectorates gave the Jews an unprecedented degree of security and prosperity. As they still were in connection with their Muslim counterparts, with whom they shared many customs and traditions, they became important intermediaries for the French colonial regime. Besides, they had a much higher standard of education than the Muslims thanks to the Alliance Israelite Universelle, which began its work in Morocco since 1862.

However, their position was threatened during the Vichy régime from 1940 to 1942. They regarded the American Forces as their saviors and welcomed them in 1942. After the Second World War, as the Independence movement in Morocco became stronger together with what is termed in this paper “a wave of terrorism,” the Jew’s close identification with the two Protecting Powers led to their suffering. When Morocco recovered its independence and King Mohamed V returned from exile, leaders of the Jewish community pledged allegiance to him. In requital, he reassured their protection. During the visit of the Egyptian President Nasser in January 1961, a large number of Casablanca Jews especially students and even school children were arrested and ill-treated by the Police. However, he did not mention that it was because the Jews were demonstrating, wearing hats with The Star of David and rising Zionist flags.

The Consul highlights in his report that the Jews were once more affected by the general malaise and sense of insecurity of the population succumbed from July 1963, when an insurrectionary plot against the King Hassan II was discovered, followed by the Sand War in November and the Casablanca riots in March 1965. The report considers the boycott of all “Zionists” led by *al-Istiqlal* press during the second Arab-Israeli war in June 1965, as the most violent Anti-Jewish campaign. Furthermore, he accuses the government of being slow to react. It suppressed one or two numbers of the *al-Istiqlal* papers “*al-'Alam*” and “*L'Opinion*,” whose tones is a reminder of the Nazi newspaper “*Der Stuermer*.” Another measure taken was the opening of a fund for “victims of Zionist aggression” by the King of Morocco.

The Consul further claims that the Governor informed the Jewish leaders that all members of the community would be expected to contribute to it as the price of their protection. He also reported that on the 5th of July, the Minister of Information issued a statement condemning the anti-Jewish boycott and it was also condemned by the King Hassan II in a broadcast to the nation. The paper concludes this first part with the events of June 1967, far fewer Jews

suffered in their persons or their property in Morocco than in any other Arab country. Moroccan Jew felt hopeless and insecure in this country as their numbers diminished.

In the second part, the report traces the emigration of the Jews from Morocco. It emphasizes that the emigration of Moroccan Jews to Palestine started even before the foundation of the Zionist movement. This emigration reached significant proportions until after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. In 1950/51, a mission from the United Hebrew Immigrant Aid Service (HIAS) visited the French zone and Tangier. An agreement was signed between the French government and the Jewish Agency, and CADIMA. The CADIMA scheme allowed the poorer classes from the *Mellahs* in the towns and from isolated Jewish villages in the mountains to leave the country. HIAS, which opened a separate office from CADIMA, started to sponsor emigration to Canada, as well as to Latin America and Australia. The first visas granted by the British Embassy to Moroccan Jews were given in 1956. After the Independence, emigration became much more difficult, especially during the heyday of power of the *al-Istiqlal* party from May 1958 to May 1960.

Due to the difficulty of obtaining permits in October 1959, emigration to Israel could only be carried out clandestinely. The report has mistaken the date at which the '*Pisces*' (*Egoz*) vessel was wrecked and its emigrants were drowned. In fact, the accident took place on the 10th January 1961 and not at the end of 1960. These restrictions were later eased following President Nasser's visit to Casablanca in January 1961 and were said to be removed in a statement issued by the Moroccan Minister of Information (Ahmed al Aloui) on 21st of February 1961.

In January 1962, large-scale departures of approximately 250 at a time by sea to Marseilles were reported. Jewish emigration to Israel, as well as to Canada, continued in 1965. It was suspended for two months at the time of the Arab Summit Conference held in Casablanca in September 1965, under the chairmanship of President Nasser. There was very little emigration to Israel from June 1966 to June 1967.

The repercussions of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 spread panic in the Jewish community through Morocco. Many Jewish employees including those in prominent positions left their post and had gone abroad. The escalation of tension between the Jews and the Muslims majority at this period was reflected in the press. Finally, in the middle of August, organized emigration to Israel was resumed. The report expected that the departure of the middle class would create a problem for the Jewish community itself who

depend on them to maintain their schools and welfare services, and for the country which can ill-afford to dispense a large number of its nationals of professional qualifications. The report added that the future of the Jewish community depends evidently on internal and international developments. It predicted that another crisis could have resulted in the disappearance of the entire remaining community. It also pointed out the planning of Jewish leaders on the stabilization of the community at about 30,000.

In the last part of the report, the Consul has concluded that the status of the Jewish community in Morocco has been both privileged and precarious. It was privileged in the sense that every Moroccan citizen was deemed at law to be either a Muslim or a Jew. At least, in theory, a Moroccan Jew is not subject to discrimination by government or employment. From the earliest times, Moroccan Jews have occupied positions of significant influence. In modern times, owing to the benefit of a higher level of education, they have played a major role in foreign business enterprises and banks to the point that their departure became a concern to the modern sector of the economy.

On the other hand, the position of the Moroccan Jews was precarious as the size of the Jewish community has diminished. With the spread beginning of modern education among Muslims, the Moroccan Jews were losing their educational advantage. Furthermore, the report compares their dependence on the protection of the king to that in medieval times. They were always the first to suffer from a breakdown of law and order, administrative judicial and unofficial persecution, extortion and blackmail.

Ultimately, the report lays a description of the remaining Jews in Morocco. It consists at one end of the scale of the wealthy businessmen who would not lightly abandon their financial interests in this country. At the other end, it consists of the Jews of the *Mellah* who wear traditional costumes, working as craftsmen – traditionally goldsmiths. In between, there is a large middle class, including doctors, lawyers and other professionals, quite a number still employed in the public services and nationalized industries and managerial and clerical positions in office and banks.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office showed great interest in the report of Mr. P M Johnston. In fact, Mr. A B Urwick from Near East and North Africa Department wrote a letter to Mr. J S R Duncan, the British Ambassador in Rabat saying: “We were very interested by your predecessor’s despatch of 18 March about the Jewish Community in Morocco and most grateful for the research undertaken by the Consul General in Casablanca to bring Johnston’s massive study up-to-date. We are having the despatch printed in the department series and given it a wide circulation to other Arab

posts. We were glad to have the opportunity to discuss the despatch with Beckett when he came in to see the department.”⁶⁰

Furthermore, this report written by the Consul Mr. P M Johnston became a reference to the Embassy and was later updated in 1975 by the Ambassador Mr. R W Baily with the help of the Consul General in Casablanca, Mr. Becket. In fact, the letter sent by Baily to The Embassy concerning the updates says: “Under cover of his despatch of the 16th of February 1968 my then predecessor transmitted a study of the Jewish Community in Morocco prepared by Mr. P M Johnston CBE, at that time Her Majesty’s Consul-General in Casablanca. In this despatch I attempt to bring up to date the information and show how closely developments have justified the conclusions reached at that time.” In doing to as each indebted to Mr. Consul-General Beckett whose researches in his Consular district have provided the greater part of the material required.”⁶¹

It should be noted that, the report was stained by some historical mistakes in presenting some events. The author’s silence on the motivations behind some events and the lack of objectivity in his judgements bring to memory some colonial aspect of writings about the history of Morocco and its Jews.

Below is the full text of the report:⁶²

The Jews in Morocco Chronology

- 320 B.C Invasion of Palestine by Ptolemy Lagos. Jews said to have settled in North Africa.
- A. D. 70 Sack of Jerusalem by Titus.
- 680 First Moslem raid into Morocco by Uqba ben Nafi.
- 707 Defeat of Dahia el Kahena, Jewish queen of Jerua Tribe in the Aurés (Algeria) by Hassan ben Naaman.
- 788 Arrival of Idris I in Morocco. Jews at first allied with him against Abbasid but later persecuted.
- 1143-1269 Almohad dynasty. Persecution of the Jews.

60. Confidential, Foreign and Commonwealth Office London SW1A2AH. From A B Urwick, Near East and North Africa Department, to H E Mr. J S R Duncan C C: N G S Beckett Esq., Casablanca, Rabat May 1975.

61. Confidential, Department series, Near East and North Africa Department DS No 3/75. The Jewish Community in Morocco, From Her Majesty’s Ambassador at Rabat to the Secretary of state for foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Rabat 18 March 1975.

62. Confidential, PRO, British Consulate General, the Jews in Morocco, Ref: FCO: 39/151- 106348, Restricted, Casablanca, February 1968.

- 1165 Departure of Jewish philosopher Maimonides⁶³ from Fez.
- 1189-1198 Reign of Yacoub el Mansour. Jews obliged to wear special and ridiculous clothes and to pay special taxes.
- 1198 Accession of Abdullah ben Mohamed el Nasr. Jewish costume modified to yellow turban and caftan.
- 1269-1465 Merinid dynasty. Position of Jews greatly improved and some given responsible posts in the government, though they were subject to special taxes used for the relief of the poor.
- 1280 Jews expelled from Fez el Bali and installed in Fez Jdid (new Fez). This is the first recorded instance of what came to be called a *Mellah*.
- 1391 Arrival of large number of Jewish refugees from Spain following massacre in Seville.
- 1465 Murder of last Merinid Sultan, Abdelhaq, owing to resentment against his Jewish chancellor, Haroun. Most of Jewish population of Fez massacred or forced to abjure their faith.
- 1492 Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal; some 25-30,000 came to Morocco whose Jewish population was already some 100,000.
- 1500 Establishment of Saadian dynasty, first as rulers of Marrakech and the south and from 1553 of the whole of Morocco. The Jews were heavily taxed to provide funds for wars against the Turks and Portuguese and subject to periodical pillage by opposing factions.
- 1591 A Jew, Simon Pellas,⁶⁴ sent as Ambassador to Holland where he

63. Moses Maimonides, original name Moses Ben Maimon, also called Rambam, Arabic name Abū 'Imrān Mūsā ibn Maymūn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh, (born March 30, 1135, Córdoba [Spain] died December 13, 1204, Egypt), Jewish philosopher, jurist, and physician, the foremost intellectual figure of medieval Judaism. His first major work, begun at age 23 and completed 10 years later, was a commentary on the Mishna, the collected Jewish oral laws. A monumental code of Jewish law followed in Hebrew, *The Guide for the Perplexed* in Arabic, and numerous other works, many of major importance. His contributions in religion, philosophy, and medicine have influenced Jewish and non-Jewish scholars alike. See *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Jewish Philosopher, Scholar, and Physician, <https://goo.gl/jzw47f> Consulted on 06/06/2018.

64. Samuel Pallache was born in Morocco circa 1550. His grandparents were refugees, expelled from Spain in 1492. He spent his life serving powers on both sides simultaneously. The "discovery" of America's riches had opened an era of colonization and transoceanic empire. Samuel grew up in this "new world order" of global powers and grand alliances and built his career around its geopolitics. At one time or another, he would offer his skills to all the key players: The Catholic Spanish and the Muslim Ottoman empires, as well as the England. For the most part, however, he served two smaller powers struggling to survive the dance of giants: Morocco and the United Provinces (roughly the modern Netherlands). Samuel worked as a trader and translator, diplomat and informant, naval general and privateer... Trusted by none and selling his services to all, he died just out of prison and in penury. See Mercedes García-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers, *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe*, translated by Martin Beagles (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

concluded a trade treaty. His brother, Joseph, was appointed Ambassador to the Court of St. James and his son, David, Ambassador to France in 1636.

- 1656 Foundation of Alouite dynasty. A Jew named Aron ben Mechaal who had become chief of the dissident Berber tribesmen in the Taza area was murdered by a student from Fez. This gave rise to the custom, which still persists, of electing each year a Sultan of the students (Soltan et-Talba).⁶⁵

- 1669 Rabbi Sasportas⁶⁶ sent by Sultan Moulay Rashid as Ambassador to Spain.

- 1672-1727 Reign of Moulay Ismail. The Jews were heavily taxed but some occupied positions of authority. Two brothers named Joseph and Haim Toledano⁶⁷ were sent as Ambassadors respectively to the Netherlands and Britain. Another Jew, Moses Ben Attar,⁶⁸ become in effect Minister of Foreign Affairs.

65. The origins of the festival are linked by local tradition with the founder of the 'Alawī dynasty, Mawlāy Rashīd, and his overthrow of a tyrannical Jewish chief, Ibn Mash'al. E. Laoust considered this to be pure fable, and saw in the festival an ancient rite involving the personification of a god of vegetation. P. de Cenival, however, whilst discarding the patently legendary motifs, thought there was some truth in the story, since native Moroccan historians agree on it, as also three independent, near-contemporary European accounts. But this still leaves unexplained the special relationship between this sultan and the Fās students, unless this is seen as part of his general favour towards learning. The appearance of similar festivals in other parts of Morocco, is clearly derivative. See P., Shinar, "Sultān al-Tālaba," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 12 November 2017 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7182> First published online: 2012. First print edition: ISBN: 9789004161214, 1960-2007; See also Souad Azizi, *Une royauté éphémère: Le sultanat des Tolba de Qarawiyine (Fès)*. Actes des Deuxièmes Rencontres d'Anthropologie du Maghreb, Cahiers de recherche du Centre Jacques Berque, Centre Jacques Berque, 45-52, 2005. A very interesting bibliography used in this paper respecting the topic of Sultān al-Tālaba.

66. The mission was in 1659. Sasportas is a Spanish family of rabbis and scholars. Jacob ben Aaron Sasportas, father of Isaac b. Jacob Sasportas, was a Cabalist and anti-Shabbethaian. He was born at Oran 1610 and died at Amsterdam April 15, 1698. He became rabbi successively of Tlemçen (at the age of twenty-four), Morocco, Fez, and Sali. See Joseph Jacobs & others, Sasportas, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Consulted on 19/06/2018, <https://goo.gl/ovmxXp>.

67. Haim Toledano became the first Morocco Ambassador of Jewish faith to England, in 1691. He was the son of Joseph Toledano, Moroccan Ambassador to Holland. Moulay Ismail was fully aware of the still frail position of the Jewish community in Britain since it had only been re-admitted to the country three decades before Toledano's appointment. The Sultan insisted on repeating three times over, in the letter of Credence of this ambassador, the following sentence: "have confidence in him." The letter of Credence of Ambassador Haim Toledano is translated by Hopkins; see J. F. P. Hopkins, trans., *Letters from Barbary 1576-1774: Arabic Documents in the Public Record Office*, Oriental Documents VI (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1982), letter number 29, 34-5.

68. Moses Ben 'Aṭṭār (known by the acronym Ramba') lived in Salé from the late seventeenth century through the early eighteenth. As a court Jew he helped to negotiate political and economic agreements between Morocco and Britain in 1721 and 1729., Moses Ben 'Aṭṭār held the office of *nagid* in Salé, the premier port city during the reign of Mawlāy Ismā'īl. His court connections enabled him to also become *nagid* of other Jewish communities in the kingdom, carrying out a broad range of duties. The extent of his authority can be inferred from his imposition and collection of taxes on behalf of the government (*Makhzen*), as well as his power to maintain public order and religious discipline within the community. Shalom Bar-Asher, "Ben 'Aṭṭār (or Ibn 'Aṭṭār) Family," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman. Consulted online on 29 June 2018. First published online: 2010.

- 1704 British acquisition of Gibraltar.

Many Jews from Tetuan and North Italy settled there.

- 1757-1790 Reign of Mohamed III.

A Jew, Samuel ben Sunbal⁶⁹ sent as Ambassador to Denmark, and another, Jacob ben Abraham Ben idder,⁷⁰ hitherto British Consular Agent in Salé, to London (1763).

- 1764 City of Mogador founded and peopled predominantly with Jews.
- 1790 Moulay el Yazid succeeded to the throne.

Massacre of Jews at Tetuan, Meknes, Fez, where they were expelled from the *Mellah*, and at Marrakech. He was assassinated in 1792.

- 1792-1822 Reign of Moulay Sliman who favoured the Jews and restored those of Fez to the *Mellah*. He appointed various Jews to positions of high authority including Abraham Sicsu as a Minister of Finance, Isaac Pinto as Treasurer and successively Mesod Cohen and his son, Meir, as Ambassadors to the court of St. James. He severely punished the instigators of pogroms in Meknes and Fez and to this day special prayers are said in the synagogues in his memory.

- 1844 Murder of the honorary Consul of Spain at Mazagan, a Jew named Darmen, nearly led to war.

- 1854 Execution of a young Jewish girl, Sol Hachuel, at Fez for refusing to renounce her faith.

- 1860 War with Spain. Jewish refugees from Tetuan settle in Haifa.

69. Sumbal (Sunbal), Samuel (d. 1782), Moroccan diplomat. After a prosperous career in trade, Sumbal entered the service of the sultan of Morocco as an interpreter and confidential adviser. Ultimately, he was responsible for the conduct of the sultan's foreign policy and was the Moroccan representative in all negotiations with the envoys of the European states. In 1751 he was sent on a special mission to Denmark as ambassador. Sumbal occupied an important position in the life of the Moroccan Jewish communities and was recognized as their *nagid*. In 1780 he fell into disgrace on the charge of smuggling currency abroad, but escaped from prison and made his way to Gibraltar. He subsequently returned to Morocco, and died in Tangier. Cecil Roth, Sumbal (Sunbal), Samuel, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Second Edition, Volume 19.

70. Jacob Benider (ben Idder) was a British consular official from Gibraltar of Maghrebi extraction, who also served as Morocco's ambassador to Great Britain. Born around 1704 in Gibraltar, he was the son of Abraham Benider, who had also been employed by the British government as an interpreter and consular official. Beginning in 1763, Benider served as British vice consul in Tetuan, Tangier, and Salé (see Rabat-Salé, and later at Essaouira (Mogador), Safi, and Agadir.

Brock Cutler, "Benider, Jacob ben Abraham," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman, first published online: 2010. Consulted online on 09/06/2018. See also, P. G. Roger, *A History of Anglo-Moroccan Relations to 1900* (London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1978), v and vi.

- 1862 First Jewish school established by Alliance Israelite in Morocco, at Tetuan.
- 1863 Visit of Sir Moses Montefiore⁷¹ who obtained from Mohamed IV a Dahir granting protection to the Jews.
- 1900 A Jew burnt alive by the crowd in Fez.
- 1902 Revolt of pretender Bu Hamara at Taza.
- Pillage of the *Mellah*, first by his supporters, then by the sultan's troops when they recaptured the town.
- July-August 1907 Sack of Casablanca by tribesman and bombardment by French cruiser "*Galilée*." Pillage of *Mellah*. Jews took refuge aboard ships in port and were taken temporarily to Tangier and Spain.
- 30 March 1912 Establishment of French Protectorate by Treaty of Fez.
- 17-19 April 1912 "*Journées sanglantes de Fez*." 45 Jews and 72 Europeans massacred.
- 1940 Mohamed V refuses to give effect to Vichy anti- Jewish laws in French zone.
- November 1942 American landings in Morocco.
- 1948 Massacre of Jews at Oujda.
- 14 May 1948 Establishment of State of Israel.
- 1950-1951 Visit of HIAS representative to French zone and Tangier. Establishment of CADIMA,⁷² a local organization to promote emigration of Jews to Israel.
- 1952 Moroccan Jewish population 218,000 or 2.4% of population.
- 18 August 1953 Deposition of Mohamed V.
- 18 November 1955 Return of Mohamed V from exile.

71. In 1864 Sir Moses Montefiore, the chairman of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, visited Morocco and met with Sultan Sidi Muḥammad ben 'Abd al-Raḥmān. On February 5, 1864, at his request, the sultan issued a sultan decree (Cl. Ar. *ḡahīr*; Mor. Ar. *ḡahīr*; Fr. *dahir*) reminding his governors and pashas of the rights enjoyed by Jews dwelling in his dominion. The sultan's decree changed nothing with regard to the legal status of Moroccan Jewry. Mohammed Kenbib, "Dahir (*ḡahīr*) of Mawlāy Muḥammad ben 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1864)," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman. Consulted online on 12 November 2017 First published online:2010.

72. The name under which the Jewish Agency's Immigration Department functioned inside Morocco since 1949.

- 7 December 1955 First Moroccan government formed including a Jew, Dr. Léon Benzaquen,⁷³ as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs.
- 2 March 1956 End of French Protectorate.
- 7 April 1956 End of Spanish Protectorate.
- 22 October 1956 “Coup d’Avion.”⁷⁴
- 29 October 1956 Outbreak of 1st Arab-Israeli war.
- 29 October 1956 End of International Zone of Tangier.
- End 1956 CADIMA closed down.
- 12 May 1958 Istiqlal government formed under Balafrej.⁷⁵ Difficulties over emigration of Jews.
- October 1958 Morocco Joins Arab League.
- 9 November 1958 Dahir obliging all foreign organizations to register. Registration of HIAS refused.
- 17 October 1959 Devaluation of Moroccan Franc. Exchange control imposed.
- 20 May 1960 Government of Abdallah Ibrahim (Istiqlal – UNFP) dismissed. King Mohamed V takes over as Head of the Government.
- June 1960 First census for all Morocco gives number of Moroccan Jews as 162,420 out of 11,626,232. (Number of foreigners 395, 823.)
- 5 November 1960 All Moroccans required to obtain exit permits.

73. Léon Benzaquen (1901-1977), attended the Alliance Israélite Universelle primary school and the French lycée (secondary school) in Casablanca, then studied medicine in Paris. Together with representatives of international Jewish organizations, Benzaquen attended the Conference of Aix-les-Bains in August 1955. Dr. Benzaquen was appointed minister of postal and telecommunication. He was also elected president of the Jewish community of Casablanca in 1967 and held this office until his death. See David Cohen, “Benzaquen” Léon, in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman. Consulted online on 12 November 2017. First published online: 2010. See also, Sept membres du gouvernement ont assisté aux obsèques du Dr Benzaquen ancien ministre juif in *Le Monde*, 10.08.1977, <https://goo.gl/UVfnZf>, Consulted online on 08/06/2018.

74. The French Army arrested the principle leaders of the FLN following the interception of their Moroccan civilian flight between Rabat and Tunis headed for Cairo.

75. Ahmed Balafrej received his education from the Lycée Gouraud-Lycée Hassan II in Rabat and the University of Paris. He campaigned against the French Berber Policy and became one of the earliest members of the Istiqlal party, becoming its secretary-general in 1944. Imprisoned from 1944 to 1946, he became Morocco’s first foreign minister (1956) and then served as prime Minister (12 May-3 December 1958), minister of state and representative to Hassan II (1961-1963), vice premier (1956-1966), and then again as minister of state and representative to Hassan II (1966-1977). See Aomar Boum & Thomas K. Park, *Historical Dictionary of Morocco*, third edition (London-New York: Rowan & Littlefield, 2016), 79.

- End 1960 A boat carrying clandestine Jewish emigrants from Morocco wrecked and all are drowned.⁷⁶
- 4-7 January 1961 Visit of President Nasser for Casablanca conference. Many Jews in Casablanca arrested.
- 21 February 1961 Restrictions on grant of passports to Jews removed.
- 26 February 1961 Death of King Mohamed V.
- November 1961 Visit of M. Balafrej (shortly afterwards appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs) to U.S where he is said to have concluded a secret agreement with American Jewish organizations to permit emigration of Moroccan Jews to Israel in return for a gift of wheat.
- December 1961 Regular emigration to Israel via Marseilles started.
- 17 May 1963 Elections to National Assembly. M . Meyer Obadia,⁷⁷ President of Casablanca Jewish community, elected.
- 18 July 1963 Official communiqué reveals a plot against the State.
- September -November 1963 Frontier incursions by Algerian forces.⁷⁸
- 18 June 1964 An elderly Jew burnt to death in Casablanca.
- End 1964 Jewish population estimated at 70 – 80, 000 of which 50-55 in Casablanca.
- 22-24 March 1965 Riots in Casablanca.
- 9-17 September 1965 Arab League Summit conference in Casablanca attended by President Nasser who afterwards paid a State visit to Morocco, Jewish community warned against holding any gatherings or demonstrations, Jews employed by Ministry of foreign Affairs sent on leave. Emigration to Israel suspended for two months.
- 5 June 1967 Outbreak of 2nd Arab-Israeli war.

76. The repercussions of these events prompted local Jewish leaders, Israel, and international Jewish organizations to pressure Morocco to liberalize immigration. For further details see the book review by Aomar Boum in this special issue of *Hespéris-Tamuda* on the recent book written by Raphael Israeli, *Pisces Out of Morocco and the Saga of the Clandestine Jewish Exodus*, Strategic Book Publishing & Rights Agency, Dec 21, 2016.

77. Meyer Obadia, was also Secretary-General of the Council of Jewish Communities. He ran on the royalist "Front pour la Défense des Institutions Constitu FDIC ticket, which did rather badly in Casablanca, electing only one other member in this city-Interior Minister Reda Guedira. Mr. Obadia obtained more than 12,000 votes. Jewish Telegraph Agency (JTA), Daily News Bulletin, Monday, May 20, 1963, vol, XXX, 45th year, No 96. P. 2. <https://goo.gl/29BSm2>. Consulted online on 07/07/2018.

78. The incursions refer to the Sand (s) War, a border conflict between Algeria and Morocco. It resulted largely from the Moroccan government's claim to the Eastern Sahara.

- 6 June 1967 UMT declare a boycott of British and American shipping. Ben Seddik, Secretary General of UMT says there must be no attacks against Jews and produces a Moroccan Jewish comrade to address meeting of UMT cadres.
- 10 June 1967 Two Jews murdered in Meknes.
- 12 June 1967 The King opens fund “for victims of Zionist aggression.” Jewish communities in many places are told that will be expected to subscribe as the price of their protection.
- 14 June 1967 Istiqlal paper “*El Alam*” calls for boycott of Jewish shops.
- 18 June 1967 A Jew named Abitbol denounced by Ben Seddik for “celebrating Israeli victory” in a restaurant and arrested.
- 5 July 1967 Minister of information⁷⁹ issues statement condemning anti-Jewish boycott.
- 6 July 1967 Government changes. Mohamed Cherkaoui stronger supporter of Pan-Arab line, dropped from the government.
- 7 July 1967 Ben Seddik arrested in Casablanca for demanding dismissal of all Jewish employees of Government export corporation.
- 8 July 1967 Attempted general strike in protest against Ben Seddik’s arrest. Troops occupy Casablanca. The King broadcasts to the nation-condemning boycott of Jews.
- 11 July 1967 Governor of Casablanca replaced. Ben seddik sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment.
- 16 July 1967 A Jewish women murdered in the street in Casablanca by street cleaner.
- 14 August 1967 organised emigration to Israel resumed.
- 14 October 1967 Governor of Casablanca attends Yom Kippur service at synagogue with motor cycle escort and band.
- End of 1967 Departure since June crisis estimated at 10-15,000 and remaining Jewish population at 45-50,000.

79. Moulay Ahmed Alaoui.

The Jews in Morocco Part I

Origins and History

The Moroccan Jews are divided into two groups, the Pflistim or Touchabim and the Andalous or Megorachim. The Pflistim were the autochthonous Jews settled in Morocco before the Arab conquest and, as their name implies, claim to be of Palestinian origin and to have come to the Maghreb after the sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD. 70 or even earlier. Many doubtless found their way to North Africa in the wake of Carthaginian traders and it is said that there were Jewish settlement in the Maghreb as early as 320 B.C. Some may also have come from the South and it is believed by some African historians that the ancient Kingdom of Ghana may have been a Jewish Kingdom.

Many of the Pflistim, however, are probably descendents of Berbers who were converted to Judaism and who have clung more tenaciously to their faith than the Christian Berbers who appear to have persisted until about the 11th century. At the time of the first Arab invasion at the beginning of the 8th century, there appeared to have been a number of petty Jewish Kingdom in Algeria and Morocco, including one based at Sijilmassa. Another in the Aurès region of Algeria under its Queen, Dahia el Kahena, resisted the Moslem invaders for four years until she was killed in battle. The first Moslem ruler of Morocco, Idris I (788) at first allied himself with the Jewish inhabitants against the supporters of the Abbasid Caliph Haroun el Rachid, but later turned against them.

2. The Andalous were the Jews who came from Spain and Portugal after their expulsion by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492 (though some came earlier). It is estimated that the Jewish community in Morocco at that time amounted to some 100,000 and that some 25-30,000 arrived from Spain and Portugal. Many of these still bear as family name the names of the towns in Spain from which they originated. It may be noted in passing that Jews of Gibraltarian origin in Morocco are also descendents of those expelled from Spain.

Some settled in Genoa and Northern Italy and went to Gibraltar after the British conquest of the Rock in 1704 while others came from Tetuan and Menorca.

From Gibraltar they came over to Morocco again from about 1840 onwards. Many have the same family names as their Moroccan co-religionists. The Pflistim and the Andalous have tended to keep apart and in the larger towns used to have separate synagogues and even live in separate quarters.

3. As in medieval Europe the Jews were alternately protected and persecuted by the Sultans. In time of persecution many abjured their faith and a large number of the leading Moslem families in Fez are of Jewish descent; to quote one very obvious example, the Elkohens. In times of anarchy, the Jews were always the first to suffer and when a sultan was overthrown; his Jewish protégés were the first victims of the successful usurper, as well as a source from which the depleted exchequer could be replenished.

4. The fanatical Almohad dynasty (1143-1269) persecuted the Jews both in Spain and Morocco, the Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, was forced to leave first Cordoba and then Fez for Egypt. The Jews were obliged to wear distinctive clothing, at first of a nature to expose them to ridicule, and later of yellow colour such as was revived by the Nazis. Under the Merinids (1269-1465) their positions were much improved. Several rose to positions of great power and influence, though the Jewish community were subjected to special taxes used for the relief of the Moslem poor. It was also under the Merinid dynasty in about 1280 that the Jews were expelled from Fes el Bali and resettled in Fez Jadid (new Fez). From then on it became customary to restrict the Jews to a special quarter of each town, known as the *Mellah*. The origin of this word is disputed but it derives from the Arabic *melh* meaning salt, and is said to refer to the duty which devolved on the Jews of salting the heads of beheaded criminals so that they could be exhibited on the town gates. Such of the poorer Jews who remain in Morocco today still live in the *Mellah*. The Merinid dynasty came to an end in 1465 with murder of the last Merinid Sultan, Abdelhaq, as a result of resentment against his Jewish Chancellor, Haroun, His fall was the occasion for a pogrom in Fez in the course of which all but some twenty families were either massacred or forced to abjure their faith.

5. A first wave of Jewish refugees from Catholic Spain arrived in 1391 as a result of the massacre of the Jewish community in Seville. Most of them settled in Debdou, giving the river there the name of Oued Sbila (river of Seville). However, the main influx was after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1492. The dispersion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula led to the establishment of an international network of which the Sultans of Morocco were quick to take advantage in extending their diplomatic and commercial relations with Europe. Thus in 1591, under the Saadian dynasty, we first hear of the appointment of a Jew, Simon Pellas, as Moroccan Ambassador to Holland, where he concluded a trade treaty, while his brother, Joseph, was sent as Ambassador to the Court of Elizabeth I, and his son, David, as Ambassador to France in 1636. In the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries a number of Jews were accredited to European courts and Morocco was represented at the Court of St. James by Haim Toledano during the reign of Moulay Ismail (1672-1727), by Jacob ben Abraham Benidder, hitherto British Consular Agent in Salé, in 1763 and successively by Mesod Cohen and his son, Meir, during the reign of Moulay Sliman (1792-1822).

6. In 1769 the Sultan Mohamed III founded the city of Mogador, now Essaouira, and settled it predominantly with Jews. Not long afterwards, out of a population of 20,000, 12,000 were Jewish. It became, and remained until displaced by Casablanca after the establishment of the Protectorate, the principal centre of foreign trade, especially with Britain. Two leading firms of Mogador Jews were established in Britain, Aaron Afriat & Company, Ltd., of London, and Cansino Bros, of Manchester, dealing with Moroccan produce, including almonds, pomegranate, skins (used in tanning) and leeches for medicinal use, and exports to Morocco of textiles, Tea and spices. English became the second language spoken in Mogador, many British firms were established there, and there was in the last century an English school run by Miss Corcos. Many of the leading Jewish families today originate from Mogador.

7. In 1863 Sir Moses Montefiore paid visit to Morocco and had audience with the Sultan Mohamed IV as a result of which a Dahir was issued enjoining fair treatment for the Jews and proclaiming their equality before the law.

8. The Moroccan Jews are all of the Sephardic rite and are extremely strict in their observances. In matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance they have always been, and still are, subject to Mosaic law as administered by Rabbinical courts. In many ways, however, they have assumed way of life, the customs and the superstitions of their Moslem neighbors. They even have their own *moussems*, pilgrimages to the tomb of saint, which are so much a feature of Moslem life in Morocco. There are still a few Jewish villages in remote areas in the mountains, the inhabitants of which are indistinguishable, except in religion, from their Berber neighbors whose language they speak. The traditional dress which can still be seen amongst the older generation in the *Mellahs* is the same as that of the Moslems except that the turban or Fez is replaced by a black cap.

9. However, when the Jews came in contact with Europeans, first in Mogador and later, after the establishment of the French and Spanish Protectorates in 1912, in other towns, the more successful ones tended to adopt the European way of life in regard to dress, housing and social contacts. They had the advantage over the Moslems of a much higher standard of

education as a result of the Jewish schools founded from 1862 onwards by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*. It is interesting to note that the teaching of Hebrew formed an important part of the curriculum in these schools, which was of some importance when emigration to Israel started. In 1955, 80% of Moroccan Jews had received a primary education and 15% a secondary one compared with 11% and 1.3% respectively of the Moslems.

In the Northern towns of Tangier, Tetuan and Larache, the Jews, who were mostly of Spanish origin, already spoke a form of Spanish as their mother tongue before the Protectorate, as do the Sephardic Jews of Turkey. Elsewhere their mother tongue was Arabic, though English became a second language in Mogador. A further advantage they enjoyed was that their women were far more emancipated than Moslem women and today most Moroccan shorthand typists and women shop assistants etc. are Jewish.

10. Subordinate posts in, and agencies for foreign firms were increasingly occupied by Moroccan Jews. Quite a few became “*semsars*” subject under the capitulatory régime to the jurisdiction of the Consular courts of the protecting power. A number were employed in foreign consulates and in post offices established by foreign powers under the capitulatory régime and quite a few became honorary Consular representatives of European countries. Some acquired the nationality of the countries they served, though it is an established rule of Moroccan subject renounce his allegiance to the Sultan. Only a handful of these who had acquired British nationality by naturalization or birth in the United Kingdom were permitted to renounce their Moroccan nationality. (There was a large Moroccan colony, partly Jewish, partly Moslem, established in Manchester up to the end of the First World War and engaged in the textile trade.)

11. The identification of the Moroccan Jews with the Europeans made them vulnerable to outbursts of anti-European feeling. In 1907 when Casablanca was shelled by the French cruiser “*Galilée*,” the tribesmen who had invaded the town sacked the Jewish quarter and many of the Jewish population took refuge aboard ships in the port and were taken temporarily to Tangier and to Spain. During the “*Journées Sanglantes de Fez*” in 1912, 45 Jews and 72 Europeans were massacred.

12. The French and Spanish Protectorates gave the Jews a degree of security and prosperity such as they had never previously enjoyed. Their position under the International régime in Tangier was perhaps even more favorable. Only briefly was their position threatened in the French Zone during the Vichy régime from 1940 1942, but they remembered with gratitude

that the Sultan Mohamed V categorically refused to apply the Vichy anti-Jewish laws to his Moroccan Jewish subjects. They welcomed the American Forces in 1942. Many were employed in the American bases and quite a few Jewish girls married American Servicemen and afterwards took their families to live in the United States.

13. But in the period after the Second World War, as the Independence movement gathered strength and was accompanied by a mounting wave of terrorism, the Jews suffered by their close identification with the two Protecting powers. In 1948 forty Jews were massacred at Oujda. The Jewish community as a whole, particularly the middle class, tended to take the side of the colons in resisting Independence.

14. Nevertheless a fair number of Jewish intellectuals supported the Independence movement and the Istiqlal party. Some were and still are active in the communist Party (officially banned since 1960) having been presumably previously members of the French Communist Party.

Leaders of the Jewish community pledged allegiance to king Mohamed V on his return from exile and he in return gave them renewed assurances of his protection. The King made a point of including a Moroccan Jew in the first Moroccan government established in December 1955 just before Independence and Dr. Léon Benzaquen was appointed Minister of Posts and Telegraphs (he is now President of the Jewish community in Casablanca). In the following year the king sent the then Crown Prince Hassan to represent him at the Yom Kippur service in a synagogue in Casablanca. After King Hassan succeeded to the throne he was represented on this occasion by his brother, Prince Moulay Abdallah, or by the Minister of the Interior, and in recent years by the Governor of Casablanca.

15. However, after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, every Jew was regarded as a potential Zionist and as such an enemy of the Arab cause. The Government (and the Opposition) always tried to make a distinction between Zionist and Jews who were loyal subjects of the king but in times of nationalist emotion this distinction became blurred.

16. The first Arab Israeli war of 1965 was overshadowed by the “*coup de l'avion*” in which the French in Algeria diverted a Moroccan aircraft carrying Ben Bella and other Algerian leaders who had been to confer with King Mohamed V and were on their way back to Tunis, and arrested them in Algiers. There was an outbreak of violence against the French, and many were murdered, especially in Meknes. We do not have anything on record to show whether any Jews suffered in their persons or their property in these disorders

but they certainly shared the apprehensions of the European community at this time.

17. The Istiqlal party, which identified itself with Arab nationalism and opposition to Israel, controlled the Government from May 1958 to May 1960 and in October 1958 Morocco joined the Arab League. The obstacles placed in the way of Jewish emigration during this period are dealt with in Part II of the report. A lot of Jews were also eased out of filled with Istiqlal supporters) and junior civil servants formed a high proportion of these who eventually emigrated to Canada.

18. In January 1961 when President Nasser visited Casablanca for the conference which gave rise to the Casablanca Pact, a large number of Casablanca Jews, especially students and even school children, were arrested, and some were ill-treated by the police. A delegation headed by Dr. Léon Benzaquen called on Crown Prince Hassan, who blamed Istiqlal elements in the police force who were trying to embarrass the government and promised redress. Soon after there was a complete change of policy and emigration, including emigration to Israel, was facilitated. This is dealt with in Part II. promised redress the Opposition press (*Istiqlal and Union Nationale des Forces Populaires*) used the accusation of being pro-Zionist as a convenient stick with which to beat the government.

19. It is interesting to note that in the elections to the National Assembly held in May 1963, the President of the Casablanca Jewish community, M. Meyer Obadia, was elected with a large majority. As was to be expected he stood as a representative of the *Front pour la Défense des Intérêts Constitutionnels* (FDIC) which was in effect the party of the King's friends.

20. The Jews were once more affected by the general malaise and sense of insecurity to which the whole population succumbed from July 1963, when an insurrectionary plot against the King was discovered, followed by a frontier incursion by Algerian forces in November and culminating in the bloody Casablanca riots in March 1965. Europeans affected by the government's *Moroccanisation* campaign and other measures left in large numbers. The *Moroccanisation* of employment did not, at least in theory, affect Moroccan Jews, but we heard of many instances in which over-zealous labour inspectors required employers to submit separate list of their Moroccan Moslem and Jewish employees and warned them if they thought they were employing too high a proportion of Jews. There was one nasty but isolated incident in Casablanca in June 1964 when an elderly Jew on his way to the synagogue was set upon, sprinkled with petrol and burnt to death.

21. When President Nasser visited Casablanca for the first second time for the Summit Conference of the Arab League in September 1965, no measures were taken against the Jewish community, though its leaders were warned to avoid any gathering or demonstrations. A number of Jews still employed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were sent on leave, as were Jewish employees of the hotel where the delegates were staying. A Jewish journalist also had his press pass withdrawn.

22. In June 1967, the second Arab-Israeli war brought about the most violent-Jewish campaign since Independence. This started in Istiqlal press with an increasingly virulent campaign for a boycott of all "Zionists." Its inspiration was doubtless the feeling of frustrated impotence at the Arab defeat, which also found expression in a four-day boycott of British and American shipping, but its motive was also to cause the maximum embarrassment to the government which was vulnerable to the accusation of being lukewarm to the Arab cause. It was a campaign which could count on popular support. At one end of the scale wealthy businessmen had always been jealous of the privileged position of the business interests of the Royal family, which were largely managed by Jews. At a lower level every wholesaler and retailer saw his chance to force his Jewish competitor out of business or to buy him out cheaply, while every office worker saw his chance of promotion if his Jewish rivals could be eliminated.

23. The government was slow to react. Jewish shops were picketed. Two Jewish owned nightclubs in Casablanca were smashed up by a gang of toughs. Jewish doctors lost their patients and junior members of the Casablanca and Tangier bars called for a boycott of all Jewish lawyers and a strike of their Moslem pupils. This strike was only effective for one day but in the elections to the Casablanca Bar Council held shortly afterwards all Jewish members of the Council were eliminated.

24. A number of Jews arrested (including some 20 in Casablanca and 1 British subject in Rabat) on the flimsiest pretexts, for allegedly insulting behavior towards Moslems, or "celebrating the Israeli victory." Some received quite long prison sentences. However, only three deaths were reported. Two Jews were murdered in Meknes and later a Jewish woman was stabbed fatally by a street cleaner in Casablanca. There were one or two attempts at arson of synagogues and Jewish schools.

25. The government suppressed one or two numbers of the Istiqlal papers "*El Alam*" and "*L'Opinion*," the tone of which began to be reminiscent of "*Der*

Stuermer,⁸⁰ (they even brought out that hoary old forgery “*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*”)⁸¹ but otherwise did little to intervene. Jewish communities were warned by local authorities to avoid any public or private gathering and told to celebrate such occasions as wedding – traditionally accompanied by a horn – tooting procession of cars – with the utmost discretion. Some synagogues were closed and all placed under guard. The King opened a fund for “victims of Zionist aggression” and leaders of the Jewish community in some places (e.g. Marrakech) were informed by the Governor that all members of the community would be expected to contribute to it as the price of their protection.

26. The principal labour organization, the *Union Marocaine de Travail* (UMT) at first concentrated its propaganda against the British and American “imperialists” for allegedly helping the Israelis, and, as noted above, challenged the authority of the government by enforcing a boycott of British and American shipping for four days. Their Secretary General, Mahjoub ben Seddik, warned against taking any action against the Jews and even produced a Jewish comrade at one of the numerous protest meeting which were called.

27. However, when ben Seddik returned from a short absence in Geneva it became clear to him that the opinion of the majority of the UMT militants were in favour of the anti-Jewish boycott and that the Istiqlal were stealing his thunder, so he changed his line. The UMT concentrated on the elimination of Jews from the nationalized industries and public corporations. The SAMIR refinery came out on strike against its Jewish manager. Ben Seddik himself denounced to the police a Jew who was allegedly “celebrating the Israeli

80. “*Der Stuermer*,” was an anti-Jewish German weekly, it appeared between 1923 and 1945, at first as a local paper with a small circulation, but after 1935 with a circulation of 500,000. Its slogan, “Die Juden sind unser Unglueck” (“The Jews are our misfortune”), *Der Stuermer* encouraged the economic boycott and social isolation of Jews, further demanding that they be exterminated “root and branch.” In its “Ritual Murder” issue (May 1939), *Der Stuermer* revived the blood libel accusation, with presumed proofs from the Talmud and frequent quotations from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Nathan Feinberg & Michael Berenbaum, *Der Stuermer, Encyclopedia Judaica*, Second Edition.

81. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is the most notorious and widely distributed anti Jews publication of modern times. The Protocols is intentionally written to blame Jews for a variety of ills. Those who distribute it claim that it documents a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world. In 1903, portions of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were serialized in a Russian newspaper, *Znamya* (*The Banner*). The version of the Protocols that has endured and has been translated into dozens of languages, however, was first published in Russia in 1905 as an appendix to *The Great in the Small: The Coming of the Anti-Christ and the Rule of Satan on Earth*, by Russian writer and mystic Sergei Nilus. Nazi party ideologue Alfred Rosenberg introduced Hitler to the *Protocols* during the early 1920s, as Hitler was developing his worldview. During the 1920s and 1930s, *The Protocols* played an important part in the Nazis’ propaganda arsenal. (The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://go.gl/UPjTJ8>. Consulted on 22/06/2018). The *Protocols* has been translated into Arabic several times and been recurrently referred to, summarized, and quoted by various Arab authorities.

victory” in a restaurant and the man was kept in prison for three months. Eventually he was released without being brought up in court on payment of 30,000 dirhams, divided between the judge, the prosecutor and a lawyer (not his own) supposedly appointed by the court to defend him. The UMT paper “*Avant Garde*” took up the Istiqlal press. Finally, Ben Seddik was persuaded to sign a telegram to the Royal Cabinet demanding the dismissal of “Zionists” in the “*Office de Commercialisation et Exportation (OCE)*,” the government export corporation. On 7 July, he was arrested in Casablanca and soon after sentenced to 18 months imprisonment. Many other UMT leaders were also arrested. An overwhelming display of disorders, which almost certainly would have in a pogrom against the Jews.

28. On 5 July Minister of Information issued a statement condemning the anti-Jewish boycott and it was also condemned by the King in a broadcast to the nation on 8 July. The rejoinder of the Istiqlal press was to publish an article by a Moroccan Jew of known communist affiliation condemning Zionism. On 6 July, the King made changes in the government, handing over the Premiership, which he had himself, to M. Benhima, and dropping Mohammed Cherkaoui, the principal exponent of the Pan-Arab line, from government.

29. Thereafter both official action against the Jews and propaganda against them in the opposition press gradually died down. Both the Governor of Casablanca, who had done little to stop official action against the Jews, and the Secretary-General of the Prefecture, who was notoriously anti-Jewish, were shortly after relieved of their functions. It was said that a number of Casablanca police who had shown excessive zeal were transferred elsewhere. The new Governor attended the Yom Kippur service on October 14 with more than usual ceremony, with a motor cycle escort and a band. The new President of the Casablanca Jewish community, Dr. Léon Benzaquen complained about harassment by the Customs of Jews returning from abroad and it appears that the complaint was effective. One or two Jews got into trouble for the violation of exchange control regulations but it appeared that the authorities were willing to turn a blind eye to attempts to export small sums illegally. Emigration to Israel was resumed (see below).

30. Far fewer Jews suffered in their persons or their property after the events of June 1967 in Morocco than in any other Arab country, and the authorities while admitting that they could not oppose propaganda against Zionism – King Hassan was being referred to in Casablanca as the King of the Jews– never really let the situation get out of hand. It was, admittedly, at

one moment touch and go. But the confidence of Jewry was shaken as never before. No Moroccan Jew felt there could be much future for him and his descendents in this country and their sense of insecurity increased as their numbers diminished. This last phase of their exodus is dealt with in Part II of this report. One of its results has been that the Jewish community is finding it increasingly difficult to maintain its schools and welfare organizations. Many Moslems benefited from the latter – for instance, many Moslem mothers attend the child welfare clinic run by the “*Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants* (OSE)” in Casablanca. One of the steps taken by the Jewish community in Casablanca has been to rehouse the remaining inhabitants of the *Mellah* where the situation is no longer considered safe and doubtless, the very term will soon become a historical memory.

Part II

Jewish Emigration from Morocco.

31. Moroccan Jews started to emigrate to Palestine even before the foundation of the Zionist movement. The Jewish community in Haifa was founded in 1860 by Jewish refugees from Tetuan after the Spanish invasion of Morocco.

32. This emigration did not, however, reach significant proportions until after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, being given impetus by the mounting wave of terrorism against Europeans in the eight years leading up to independence, of which many Jews were also the victims (e.g. the massacre of Jews in Oujda in 1948, noted above).

33. Estimates of the Jewish population in the first half of the present century are unreliable. They were enumerated separately in the censuses taken in the French zone from 1921 onwards, and in the Spanish zone from 1940, but there was no census taken in Tangier before Independence. The first census taken in the whole of Morocco was in 1960 (see below). In the report on the census for that year, however, estimates are given for the Jewish population in the whole of Morocco as follows:

1925-142,000

1935-185,000

1952-218,000

This indicates a high rate of natural increases, with a high birth rate and a death rate considerably lower than the Moslem population as a result of better welfare services. From 1952 the Jewish population started to decline as a result of emigration.

34. In 1950/51 a mission from the United Hebrew Immigrant Aid Service (HIAS) with headquarters in Geneva visited the French zone and Tangier. An agreement was signed between the French government and the Jewish Agency, and a local organization named "*Caisse d'Aide aux Immigrants Marocains* (CADIMA)" was established to promote the emigration of Moroccan Jews to Israel. It is not known whether a similar organization was established in the Spanish zone. Between 1949 and 1953, 25,000 are said to have left and in 1955-56, 55,000, though quite a number of these came back. Nearly all those who left under the CADIMA scheme, however, were of the poorer classes from the *Mellahs* in the towns and from isolated Jewish villages in the mountains. In some of the latter, the entire population disappeared overnight leaving the villages abandoned. After Independence in 1956, the CADIMA office was forced to close down, though they were allowed to send off the Israel those Jews who were waiting in transit camps in Casablanca.

35. However, in general only the poorest class of Jews were interested in going to Israel towards the end of 1954. HIAS, which opened a separate office from CADIMA, started to sponsor emigration to Canada, as also to Latin America and Australia, though Canada had the greater appeal, at least for those from the Canadian Embassy, first from Paris and later from Madrid, came over to process these applications which in the first instance were handled by this Consulate General. The first visas granted by us to Moroccan Jews were given in 1956.

36. Quite a number of the wealthier Jews were also leaving on their own initiative for France and Spain, taking their capital with them, since there was restriction on the transfer of funds from the French Zone to France and from the Spanish Zone to Spain. As noted above, many of the families of Jewish girls who had married American servicemen also settled in the United States.

37. After Independence emigration became much more difficult, especially during the heyday of power of the Istiqlal party from May 1958 to May 1960. It is nevertheless estimated that some 14,000 left in this period. In October 1959 when the French and the Moroccan francs were devalued, strict exchange control was instituted and transfers of funds were stopped. It became extremely difficult for Jews to obtain passports and in November 1960 all Moroccan citizens were required to obtain exit permits, a measure not directed against the Jews but adding to their difficulties. Emigration to Israel could only be carried out clandestinely, chiefly via Ceuta, Melilla and Gibraltar. There were complaints in the press Gibraltar was being used as a staging post by Jews going to Israel. Many Jews without passports went

by lorry to Ceuta or Melilla and bribed their way past the frontier guards or embarked clandestinely on small sailing boats from the Mediterranean coast. At the end of 1960 one such boat, the '*Pisces*,' overloaded with emigrants was wrecked and they were all drowned.

38. Under the terms of the Dahir of 9 November 1958 HAIS, in common with all other foreign organizations, was obliged to submit statues to the local authorities with a request for registration. This was refused and later the HAIS representative was expelled. His office continued, however, to work unofficially with its local staff under the direction of the HAIS office in Paris, dealing for the time being only with applications for Canada.

39. The 1960 census figures give the total number of Moroccan Jews as 162,420 compared with 218,000 in 1952. Had there been no emigration it would have reached, on the basis of previous trends, a figure of about 270,000. Of the estimated 94,000 who emigrated in the period 1952-60 a large number were of child bearing age, thus slowing up the rate of natural increase.

This population of 162,420 was 9.7% urban and the following are comparative figures for the Jewish population of the principal towns in 1951 and 1960:

	1951	1960
Casablanca	74,783	73,036
Marrakech	16,392	12,559
Meknes	12,445	10,266
Rabat	10,239	9,885
Fez	12,648	8,783
Tangier	15,000	6,232
Tetuan	4,122	3,184
Sefrou	4,360	3,138
Essaouira	5,435	2,950

From this, it will be seen that the Jewish population was tending to concentrate in Casablanca, which by 1960 accounted for 45% of the total.

40. Following the measures taken during President Nasser's visit in January 1961 (see above), restrictions on the departure of Jews were eased. On 21 February 1961, the minister of information issued a statement that restrictions on the grant of passports to Jews would be removed. In June 1961, General Driss was appointed Governor of Casablanca and received orders

to facilities the grant of passports of Jews. He opened a special office in the prefecture which was so deluged with applications that a letter had to be read out in the synagogues urging Jews not to apply for passports unless they were absolutely needed.

41. In November 1961 Mr. Balafrej visited the United States and it was reported that he had concluded a secret agreement with Jewish organization there to facilitate the emigration of Jews to Israel in return for a gift of wheat (or barley) paid for by American Jewry. It is believed that this agreement is renewed annually.

42. We reported in December 1961 that regular charter flights (Tai airlines) from Casablanca to Marseilles had started, financed by HIAS with the participation of Canadian Funds. Later flights were organized from Tangier.

43. In January 1962 there were reports of large-scale departures (250 at a time) by sea to Marseilles and protests by the opposition press which named a figure of 30- 50,000 preparing to leave.⁸² All these emigrants were furnished with Moroccan passports and the authorities made no difficulties about their departure though it was public knowledge that their eventual destination was Israel. In June 1962, there was a scandal about graft over the issue of passports in Casablanca as a result of which the Governor's Chef de Cabinet and several of the Prefecture staff were dismissed and the special passport office was closed. There was also a riot amongst Jews who had been brought in from bled and were unable to leave, in the course of which the HIAS offices were sacked. Emigration was suspended for a time.

44. Emigration to Canada sponsored by HIAS continued meanwhile though used their influence to persuade as many as possible to go to Israel. A team from the Canadian Embassy in Paris dealt with some 1,500 applications in 1965 and in 1964, a further team from Madrid, working in conjunction with a team from Paris, dealt with a further 1,200. In 1965 and 1966, teams in Casablanca and Rabat dealt with some 1,800 applications between them.

45. In October 1964 and January 1965 we submitted some estimates, which it seems in retrospect were probably on the low side, for departures under HIAS auspices (apparently including departures for Canada) as follows:

82. Example: "Al-'Alam" newspaper.

العلم، 22 أبريل 1961، "الشبكة الصهيونية تواصل نشاطها: اعتقال عدد من اليهود الفارين".
العلم، 7 مايو 1961، "تهريب البضائع واليهود عن طريق مليلية: المحاكم لا تجد مادة تطبقها على شبكة الصهيونية".

November 1961-December 1962	32,000
1963	28,000
1964	12,500
Total	72,500

At that time, it was estimated that the remaining Jewish community numbered 70-80,000, of which 50-55,000 were in Casablanca.

46. It was still the poorer Jews from the *Mellah* in the Small towns who were, leaving for Israel. The entire *Mellah* in Zagora disappeared overnight (perhaps because it was in a vulnerable area in the event of trouble with Algeria). Those remaining were mostly old people, the middle class Jews in Casablanca who provide most of the office staffs, bank clerks and shop assistants (though quite a lot of these also left, mainly for Canada) and the rich who could not transfer their capital. It is incidentally of interest that while Jews who emigrated to Israel under HIAS sponsorship were able to take their personal effects with them, permission was refused to those who emigrated to Canada or elsewhere, whether under HIAS sponsorship or on their own initiative. Most of them, however, managed to get round the restriction.

47. Jewish emigration to Israel, as well as to Canada, continued in 1965, and it is believed that some 10-12,000 left in the first half of that year. It seems to have slowed down after June 1965; most of those who wanted to go having left. It was suspended for two months at the time of the Arab Summit Conference held in Casablanca in September 1965, under the chairmanship of President Nasser. We heard at that time, but without confirmation, that the HIAS intermediary, who had direct access to the king, was M. Georges Laniel, brother of Joseph Laniel, the former French Prime Minister.

48. We also heard, and reported in March 1965, a very odd story from a well-connected British Jew, to the effect that the Israeli Government in gratitude to the Moroccans for the facilities they had given for the emigration of Moroccan Jews, were encouraging leading British Zionists to invest in the tourist industry in Morocco. The King was said to have received an Israeli citizen of British origin, one General Herzog, as the emissary of Sir Isaac Wolfson in this connexion. However improbable the story may seem, it was established that an organization called Global Tours, of which the chairman, was Lord Mancroft, and which was a subsidiary of Great Stores, was studying investment in Morocco at this time. Sponsorship by Marks and Spencers of a scheme for growing tomatoes in Morocco for their requirements also appears to date from this period.

49. A fairly reliable estimate of the Jewish population in June 1966 is 65,000 of which 40,000 in Casablanca. There was very little emigration to Israel from June 1966 to June 1967. The Jewish population in June 1967 was probably still about 65,000.

50. The repercussions of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, described in Part I of this report, spread panic in the Jewish community. As the holiday season was approaching all those who could afford to do so sent their families abroad and joined them as soon as they could. Many children were withdrawn from school before the end of term. Although they left with return tickets travel agencies were afterwards inundated with claims for the refund of unused return halves. Many firms reported that their Jewish employees failed to report for work from one day to the next and on enquiries, being made it was learnt that they had gone abroad. Quite a number, including many in prominent positions, eventually returned, but some only to pack up. Many of the French Jewish community, which at the beginning of the crisis numbered some 3,000, also left, as did many other foreign Jews, including Gibraltarians. Finally, in the middle of August, organized emigration to Israel was resumed, by air to Marseilles, and departures are said to be taking place at the rate of 100 a month. From Tetuan a number have gone to Andorra, where some have found employment in a self-service store run by American Jewish interests.

51. The best estimate we can obtain of the number of Jews remaining in Morocco at the end of 1967 is 45-50,000 which points to 10- 15,000 departures since the crisis. Certainly, a large number of those who left in a panic in June – July, or sent their families away, have now returned. This means that the Jewish community has fallen to a little over a fifth of what it was in the peak year of 1952 and a little over a quarter of what it was at the time of the 1960 census. It is noteworthy that the banks; who depend so largely on Jewish employees, are now offering them improved terms in an effort to keep them. Many office workers postponed their departure until the New Year as they receive substantial bonuses in December. The Jewish population in Tangier is believed to have fallen to some 2,500 from 6,200 in 1960. Some communities in the smaller towns have disappeared altogether, as for example in Settat. When the community can no longer maintain its own schools, welfare services it ceases to be viable, and those remaining either emigrate or settle elsewhere. The communities in Marrakech, Meknes and Fez are much reduced and there is a concentration of the Jewish community in Casablanca, where poor elderly Jews in traditional dress seem to be more in evidence than formerly. The number of children attending Jewish schools in Casablanca has fallen by though in certain schools the fall has been much

more dramatic. One school in Casablanca had 420 children in June 217 in October and 170 in November.

52. As regards departures for Canada, we know that the HILS office in Paris has been deluged with applications since June and also has a backlog of cases with which the Canadian team were unable to deal in 1966. These applications must await a further visit by the Canadian team to Morocco. We have nothing on record to show how many Moroccan Jews altogether have gone to Canada, but believe it is about 10,000.

53. Emigration is continuing but there is a certain amount of disillusionment amongst those who have emigrated, particularly those not possessing any special skills, who have not found it easy to obtain employment even in Israel, still less in Canada, France, etc. The present tending in contrast to that in earlier years is for those with professional qualifications to show the most interest in emigration, while those who remain will tend to be at one end of the scale and the wealthy who cannot transfer their capital and at the other, the poor, elderly and unskilled. Even wealthy Jewish businessmen are making enquiries about selling their business interests now that they are no longer under pressure. The departure of the middle class will create a problem for the Jewish community itself who depend on them to maintain their schools and welfare services, and for the country which can ill afford to dispense with a large number of its nationals with professional qualifications.

54. The future depends, evidently on internal and international developments. Another crisis could result in the disappearance of the entire remaining community, but Jewish leaders are at present planning on the stabilisation of the community at about 30,000.

Part III

Conclusion

55. The Jewish community in Morocco has always represented a very small minority of the population. Even at the highest level in 1952 the total of 218,000 only represented 2.4% of the global population of 9.3 million, and was far outnumbered by the number of foreigners (539,000). Today, it is believed, there are not more than 50,000 left, though it is still the largest Jewish community in North Africa.

56. Throughout Moroccan History it has been a minority whose status has been both privileged and precarious. It is privileged in the sense that every Moroccan citizen is deemed at law to be either a Moslem or a Jew; he cannot be a Christian or a free thinker. If a Jew he is subject in matters of personal status

(marriage, divorce and inheritance) to Jewish law administered by Jewish tribunals and the Chief Rabbis in each Province are ex-office Presidents of these tribunals and as such leading personalities.

57. At least in theory a Moroccan Jew is not subject to discrimination in government or other employment. There are a few, but very few, Jewish officers in the army. Recently some young Jews were called up for military service. Some emigrated to avoid it and some families raised objections based on Jewish dietary laws. It seems that in the end none were accepted rather to the relief of the authorities. From the earliest times, Moroccan Jews have occupied positions of great influence and, in entrusting their business interests today to Jews, the Moroccan Royal Family are only following the tradition of their ancestors. In modern times, starting with the benefit of a higher level of education, they have provided most of the staff of foreign business enterprises and banks and indeed, there has been concern lest the accelerated rate of departure this year might not lead to the paralysis of the modern sector of the economy. The government's Maroccanisation policy has to some extent favoured the Jews, despite evidence of some discrimination at the local level by labour inspectors, and a foreign firm which cannot employ one of its own nationals is more likely to employ a Jew than Moslem.

58. At the same time the position of the Moroccan Jews is precarious and likely to become more so as the size of the Jewish community diminishes. With the spread of education among Moslems, he is losing his educational advantage. Recent events have shown that he is as much dependent on the protection of the king as he was in mediaeval times. He would be, as he always was, the first to suffer from a breakdown of law and order. He is as vulnerable as he was in the times of the Almohades to outbreaks of religious and nationalistic fanaticism, with the additional risk of being accused of Zionism. Events since last June have shown only too well that he may still be the victim of administrative judicial and unofficial persecution, extortion and blackmail. Moreover, it must be remembered that the King is not only the secular Head of State, but the Commander of the Faithful, and the allegiance of his subjects is not only temporal but spiritual. In this, the Jew is the odd man out. But should the state evolve, as well it may, in a more secular direction, Jewish community will lose the special status it at present enjoys.

59. The Jewish community today consists at one end of the scale of the wealthy businessmen who would not lightly abandon their financial interests in this country. At the other end are the Jews of the *Mellah*, wearing traditional dress, working as craftsmen-traditionally goldsmiths. Few of these are left. In between there is a large middle class, including doctors, lawyers and other professional men, quite a number still employed in the public service and

nationalized industries and managerial and clerical positions in office and banks. It is the middle class, now largely concentrated in Casablanca, which has been most affected by recent events, which is completely Europeanised in outlook and which sees little future for the Jewish community in Morocco. It contributes a great deal to the efficient working of the economy and its loss will be correspondingly felt.

British Consulate, Casablanca, February 1968.

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ملخص: هجرة اليهود المغاربة إلى فلسطين بعد حرب الستة أيام (1968). تقرير من إنجاز القنصل البريطاني بالدار البيضاء، جونستون (فبراير 1968) (وثيقة غير منشورة)

يتناول هذا التقرير الذي أنجزه جونستون (Mr. P M Johnston) القنصل البريطاني بالدار البيضاء سنة 1968، أصول المغاربة اليهود، وتاريخهم ووضعهم القانوني ودورهم الاقتصادي والسياسي والدبلوماسي خلال فترات الأسر الحاكمة التي تعاقبت على السلطة في المغرب إلى حرب 1967. كما تناول التقرير طبيعة علاقة المغاربة اليهود بالأغلبية المسلمة خلال هذه الفترات. وتتبع كاتب التقرير مراحل تهجير المغاربة اليهود إلى إسرائيل وغيرها من البلدان، والأسباب التي أدت إلى ذلك. كما تطرق التقرير إلى ردود الفعل الرسمية وردود فعل الأحزاب الوطنية أمام التهجير. وخلص القنصل جونستون في تقريره إلى أن وضع المغاربة اليهود عبر تاريخ المغرب كان متميزاً، وفي الوقت نفسه غير مستقر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المغرب، المسلمون، اليهود، الحماية، الهجرة، إسرائيل.

Résumé: L'émigration des Juifs marocains en Palestine après la guerre des Six-Jours (1968). Un rapport de MP M. Johnston, consul britannique, Casablanca (février 1968) (Document inédit)

Le rapport rédigé en 1968 par P.M Johnston consul de Grande Bretagne en poste à Casablanca traite de la question des Juifs marocains sur différents plans. Il est question du volet historique, juridique ainsi que de leur rôle économique, diplomatique et politique pendant le règne des différentes dynasties et ce jusqu'à la guerre de 1967.

Le rapport passe en revue les différentes étapes migratoires en direction d'Israël ou vers d'autres pays. Le document aborde également la réaction officielle face à ce mouvement migratoire et ses facteurs déterminants mais aussi celle des partis nationalistes. Le consul conclut en rappelant que le sort des Juifs marocains a toujours été singulier et instable à la fois.

Mots clés: Maroc, Musulmans, Juifs, Protectorat, émigration, Israël.

Abstract: The Emigration of Moroccan Jews to Palestine after the Six-Day War (1968). A report by Mr. P. M. Johnston the British consul, Casablanca (February 1968) (Unpublished Document)

This report, written by Mr. Johnston, the British consul in Casablanca in 1968, examines the origins, history, legal status, and economic, political and diplomatic role of Moroccan Jews during the eras of the successive dynasties that governed Morocco up to the 1967 war.

The author traced back the stages of the deportation/emigration of Moroccan Jews to Israel and other countries, and the reasons that led to this migration. The report addressed also the official reaction towards the deportation of Moroccans Jews as well as the reactions of nationalist parties. In his report, Consul Johnston concluded that the status of the Jewish community in Morocco has been both privileged and precarious.

Key Words: Morocco, Muslims, Jews, Protectorate, Emigration, Israel.

Resumen: La emigración de judíos marroquíes a Palestina después de la Guerra de los Seis-Días (1968). Un informe del Sr. P. M. Johnston, cónsul británico, Casablanca (febrero de 1968) (Documento no publicado)

Este informe, escrito por el Sr. Johnston, el cónsul británico en Casablanca en 1968, examina los orígenes, la historia, el estatus legal y el rol económico, político y diplomático de los judíos marroquíes durante las épocas de las sucesivas dinastías que gobernaron Marruecos hasta 1967. guerra.

El autor remontó las etapas de la deportación / emigración de judíos marroquíes a Israel y otros países, y los motivos que llevaron a esta migración. El informe también abordó la reacción oficial hacia la deportación de judíos marroquíes, así como las reacciones de los partidos nacionalistas.

Palabras Clave: Marruecos, Musulmanes, Judíos, Protectorado, emigración, Israel.