

Mizrahim and Maghrebi Jews: the Exodus of Jews from Arab Lands

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<< Mizrahim: Jews from the Middle East and North Africa >>

Jews of the Middle East: early 20th c pictures



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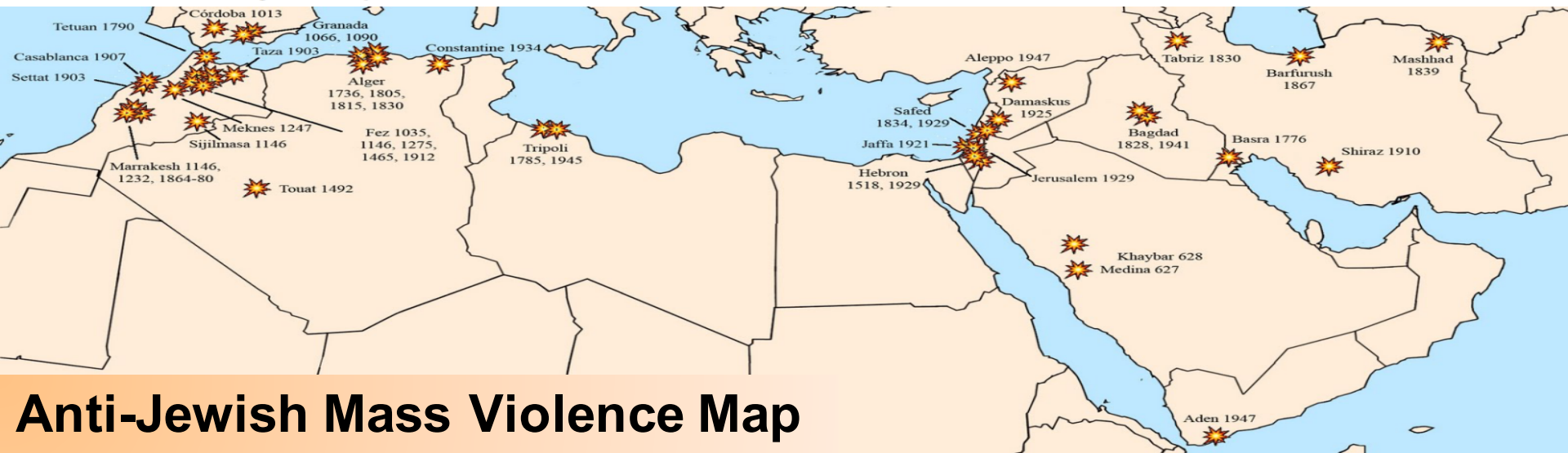
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Table 1: Jewish Population in the Middle East and North Africa, 1948–2012

	1948	1958	1968	1976	2012 (est.)
Aden	8,000	800	0	0	0
Algeria	140,000	130,000	1,500	1,000	0
Egypt	75,000	40,000	2,500	400	75
Iraq	135,000	6,000	2,500	350	50
Lebanon	5,000	6,000	3,000	400	40
Libya	38,000	3,750	500	40	0
Morocco	265,000	200,000	50,000	18,000	3,000
Syria	30,000	5,000	4,000	4,500	~50
Tunisia	105,000	80,000	10,000	7,000	1,000
Yemen	55,000	3,500	500	500	100
Total	856,000	475,050	76,000	32,190	4,315

Source of statistics: Stanley A. Urman, "Displacement of Jews from Arab Countries 1948-2012," in *Middle East Refugees: the Differing Treatment of Palestinians and Jews*, presented to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, House of Commons, 2 May 2013, p. 3.



Anti-Jewish Mass Violence Map

Jews' Dhimmi Status

Non-Muslims under protection of Muslim law. Covenant of protection was made with conquered "Peoples of the Book," which included Jews, Christians, Sabaeans, and sometimes Zoroastrians and Hindus. Adult male dhimmis were required to pay a tax on their income and sometimes on their land. Restrictions and regulations in dress, occupation, and residence were often applied.

- *Dhimmi*, Oxford Islamic Studies Online

http://www.jewishjournal.com/iranianamericanjews/item/uclas_museum_to_host_new_iranian_jewish_art_exhibition

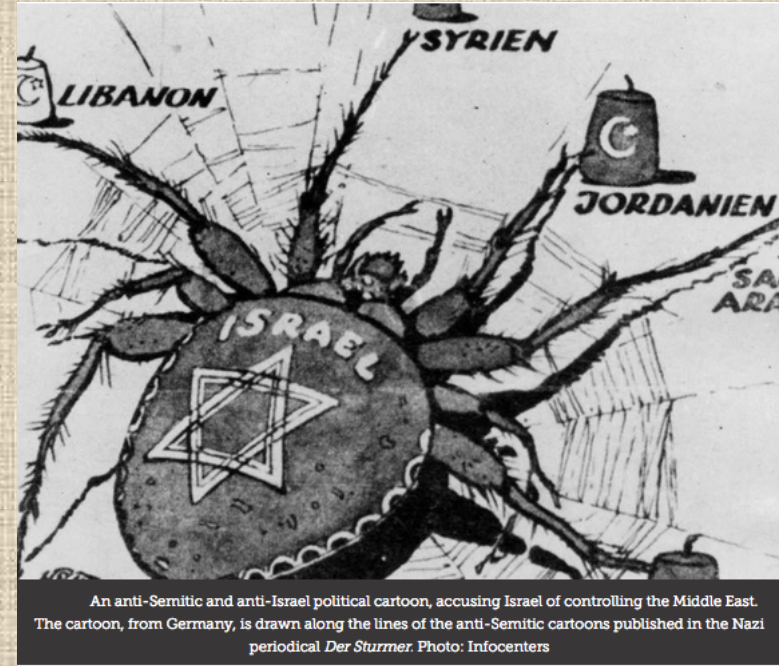


Jewish Dhimmis

- Legal treatment
 - Denied due process of the law
- “Not to build houses which might overlook those of Muslims” (Braude, 37-51)
- Denied ability to testify against Muslims in court of law
 - Were allowed to practice their traditions and religion freely
- Examples of Dhimmitude in Arab countries
 - Caliph al-Mutawakkil of Baghdad designated a yellow badge for Jews, setting a precedent for Nazi Germany (Ye’or)
- Jews forced to walk in shoes of straw or barefoot when outside their ghetto in Morocco
- Dhimmi structure allowed for Jewish contempt
- Gave room for Jewish communities to form roots and prosper
- Moving forward, Zionism would be seen by some as an affront to dhimmi customs

Middle Eastern Anti-Semitism (mid 20th. c)

- Until the late 19th century, under *dhimmi* status Jews had been free to practice their religion in Arab countries
- Jews were **systematically killed** in Arab countries in North Africa, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Libya, and Aden in the first half of the 20th century (Economic and Social Council, 2003, 2-3)
- The 1947 partition plan was refused by all Arab league states and Arab-Palestinian leadership. The latter was headed by the **Mufti of Jersaleum, a Hitler sympathizer and supporter of a Jewish genocide.** (Economic and Social Council, 2003, 2).
- “United Nations decides to partition Palestine, it might be responsible for very grave disorders and for the massacre of a large number of Jews...if a **Jewish state were established, nobody could prevent disorders. Riots would spread through all the Arab states and might lead to a war between the two races.**” – Egyptian UN delegate Heykal Pasha, November 24 1947 (Economic and Social Council, 2003, 2).



An anti-Semitic and anti-Israel political cartoon, accusing Israel of controlling the Middle East. The cartoon, from Germany, is drawn along the lines of the anti-Semitic cartoons published in the Nazi periodical *Der Stürmer*. Photo: Infocenters

<http://www.thetower.org/article/the-anti-semitism-we-never-talk-about/>

International/United Nations Response to Crisis

- from 1947 onward, the response of the international community to assist Palestinian refugees was immediate and aggressive.
 - no concomitant UN response nor any comparable international action to alleviate the plight of the Jewish refugees
- None of the 681 UN resolutions since 1947 refer to or express concern for the 900,000 Jews living in Arab countries
- On numerous occasions, the Israeli govt., World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries and NGOs alerted the UN to the problem of Jewish refugees and sought intervention to little avail
- Since 1947, only one UN entity – the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) – has responded to the needs of the Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Numerous existing agencies addressed wide-ranging needs of Palestinian refugees

(Matas & Urman, Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries:
The Case for Rights and Redress)



Discriminatory Laws and Policies In Surrounding Arab Countries

Egypt:

July 29th, 1947 – amendment introduced to Egyptian Companies Law making it mandatory for 75% of company employees to be Egyptian nationals and 90% of employees in general. Resulted in dismissal and loss of Jewish livelihood.

November 22, 1956 – Amendment to Egyptian Nationality Law of 1926 stipulating that “Zionists” were barred from being Egyptian nationals. Label of “Zionist” was never defined. Sparked mass departure of Jews

Iraq:

November 14, 1948 – Amendment to Penal Code of Baghdad added “Zionism” to communism, anarchism and immorality. Constituted an offense punishable by 7 years imprisonment.

Law No. 1 of 1950 – “Supplement to Ordinance Canceling Iraqi Nationality” – stipulated that the Council of Ministers may cancel the Iraqi nationality of the Iraqi Jew who willingly desires to leave Iraq.

Libya:

December 31, 1958 – Decree that ordered the dissolution of the Jewish Community Council and appointed a Moslem commissioner by the govt.

August 8th, 1962 – Royal decree that a Libyan national forfeited their nationality if they had had any contact with “Zionism.”



(Matas & Urman, Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: The Case for Rights and Redress)

CONTEXT:

Zionism, World War II and the Middle East

- Zionism is the political support for the development of a Jewish homeland in Israel
- The first Zionist Congress met in 1897 due to fears that Jews were unsafe in Europe.... As the state of Israel has developed, Zionism has begun to reflect an increasing diversity of interpretation.
- Zionism can perhaps begun to be understood through grappling with:
 1. World War Two and the Holocaust
 2. European neo-colonialism
 3. Differing understandings of Jewishness
 4. The ongoing Palestinian refugee crisis

Resettlement and Aliyah

- The majority of Jewish refugees who left Middle Eastern and North African countries went to three places: **Israel**, the **U.S.**, and **France**.
- The numbers that made aliyah to Israel were beyond expectation
 - Violence in their homelands lead Mizrahim to come to Israel en masse
 - “Ma’ abarot” were resettlement camps that sprang up to housing the rapid inflow of refugees to Israel
 - *Operation Magic Carpet* the first large scale movement of Mizrahim to Israel
 - 49,000 left Yemen for Israel from 1949-1950
- The exodus was not one mass event, but rather a series of migrations that began following the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 and continued through the 1960s and 1970s.



Yemenite Jews on a flight to Israel

Resettlement outside Israel

- The exodus of Jewish populations from North Africa followed two historic trends in the 20th century: Arab-Israeli Wars and Western decolonization.
- In 1830, Algeria was colonized by France, and in 1870, the French government granted full citizenship to all Algerian Jews, but not to Algerian Muslims, driving a wedge between communities which had lived side by side for hundreds of years.
- When Algeria gained independence from France in 1962 following a long war, with over 120,000 Jews went to France, and another 25,000 to Israel.
- As a result, France now has the largest Jewish population in Europe, and the third largest in the world.



Algerian Jews leaving for France

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html>

<http://www.cija.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Were+Jews+from+Arab+countries+all+refugees.jpg>

Coverage Then

"Already in some Moslem states such as Syria and Lebanon, there is a tendency to regard all Jews as Zionist agents and "fifth columnists"

- 'Jews in Great Danger in all Moslem Lands' , NY Times, May 16, 1948. Mallory Brown

Wrath of Their Foes

"It provides that beginning on an unspecified date all Jews except citizens of non-Arab states, would be considered 'members of the Jewish minority state of Palestine.' their bank accounts would be frozen and used to finance resistance to 'Zionist ambitions in Palestine.' Jews believed to be active zionists would be interned and their assets confiscated"

-- 'Jews in Great Danger in all Moslem Lands' , NY Times, May 16, 1948. Mallory Brown

Oriental Jews Spurn Bids to Leave Israel

Egypt's Offer of Full Citizenship Latest Effort by Arab States

Headline Themes: Emotive, Hatred, Enemies, Bias

Sentiment towards Jews:

- Jews were labelled by the British as "terrorists".
- US press was much more muted, even sympathetic to the cause on anti-imperialist grounds yet once the state was declared, the coverage in broadcasts, in the cinema newsreels and in the newspapers was mainly supportive - at times close to propagandist."

1970s: series of developments began to shift coverage to greater balance

Referenced as: Jews, Zionists, "terrorists, "fifth communists"

Leaders of Egypt's Jewish community have become so discouraged by its withering away that they no longer even bother to keep a count of their numbers.

Coverage Now: The Emergence of 'Refugee' Rhetoric

Headline Themes: The Refugee, Humanitarian Concerns, Objectivity

Sentiment towards Jews:

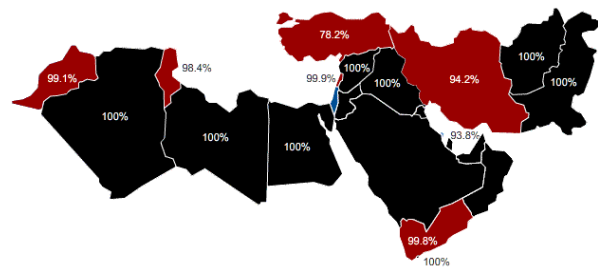
- Powerful imagery of confrontations between Israeli troops and Palestinian civilians in the 1980s and 1990s changed perceptions of Israel
- As settlements increased they became more and more the negative lens through which coverage of Israel was viewed by Western journalists, particularly as the US - especially during the Obama presidency - voiced strong opposition to their growth.
- In the present day, the coverage in the West is polarized, sometimes severely: with right-wing journalism usually in support of Israel and the left wing opposing or skeptical.

The Inconvenient Truth About Jews From Arab Lands: They Were Expelled

Are Jews Who Fled Arab Lands to Israel Refugees, Too?

Jews driven from Arab and Muslim countries since 1948

Only 0.2% Jews remain in these countries, 99.8% have fled or been expelled



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- Moshe Gat, *The Jewish Exodus from Iran*
- Carole Basri, *The Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: An Examination of Legal Rights - A Case Study of the Human Rights Violations of Iraqi Jews*
- Malka Hillel Shulewitz, ed., *The Forgotten Million: The Modern Jewish Exodus from Arab Countries*
- Yehuda Dominitz, *Immigration and Absorption of Jews from Arab Countries*
- Benjamin Braude & Bernard Lewis, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*
- Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi*
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- <http://forward.com/culture/199257/the-inconvenient-truth-about-jews-from-arab-lands/>
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