

Jews, Citizenship, and Antisemitism in French Colonial Algeria, 1870-1943

by

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Dissertation Abstract

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This dissertation traces the competing forces of antisemitism and Jewish civic activism in French colonial Algeria from the 1870 Crémieux decree to the end of World War II. The dissertation centers on the experience of Algerian Jews and their evolving identity as citizens as they competed with the other colonial groups, including metropolitan French citizens, newly naturalized non-French settlers, and Algerian Muslims. Periodic and recurring episodes of antisemitism resulted from competition for control over municipal government. In colonial Algeria, municipal governments acted as crucibles for politics and patronage available to settlers and citizens. This dissertation contends that through the competition for the scarce resources and rights as citizens, various political groups in the colony exerted their claims on the state via the degradation of Algeria Jews, who were naturalized *en masse* in 1870.

As Algerian Jews assimilated as a result of the urging of their communal leaders and outside influences from metropolitan French Jews and Jewish organizations such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle, antisemites sought to limit Algerian Jewish access to rights. Algerian Jews faced particularly strong competition from the newly naturalized French settlers who emigrated from Italy, Spain, and Malta. These immigrants viewed the Algerian Jews as particularly dangerous status competitors. Rather than accept antisemitism as inevitable, Algerian Jews defended themselves against antisemitic attacks through the formation of defense organizations such as the Comité Algérien des Études Sociales. They urged fellow Jews to fulfill their responsibilities to France, celebrating military service and

sacrifices, and demanding that Jews exercise their right to vote. Algerian Jews negotiated the antisemitism of French and newly French settlers, as well as Algerian Muslims.

Algerian Jews straddled the line between citizen and subject in the colonial context and fought to prove themselves as worthy French citizens in the face of competition and antisemitism. Although specific to the case of French colonial Algeria, these issues of competition for status, identity, and rights are complementary to studies of other colonial contexts and that of newly emerged states. Such debates about citizenship and belonging lie at the heart of much of the turmoil of twentieth century history.

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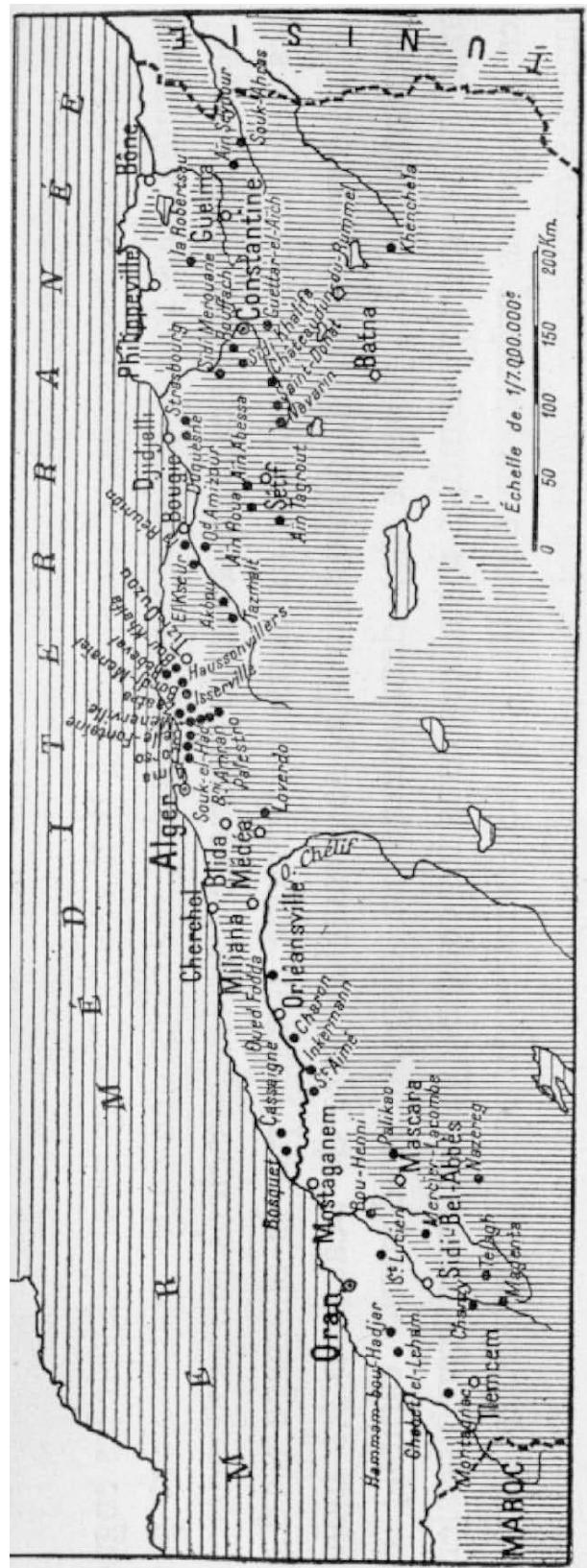
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LES VILLAGES DE COLONISATION (1871-1880)

Introduction

In 1870, the Crémieux decree transformed the Jews of Algeria from colonial subjects into French citizens. Algerian Jews had not agitated aggressively for citizenship in the period leading up to the decree. In the ensuing years, however, Algerian Jews assimilated to their new status at the behest of their elite and in response to efforts to undermine their rights. Algerian Jewish citizenship became the lightning rod for expressions of political antisemitism by Muslim subjects and European settlers who resented the Jews' improved status. Antisemitism took institutional, political, and racial forms. In Algeria, antisemitism was a complex and changing phenomenon that combined different strands depending on the political and economic circumstances. Antisemitism in Algeria drew on both European and Muslim sources, and expressed itself in the particular context of a colonial society.

In this dissertation, I argue that Algerian Jews articulated their citizenship most clearly in response to the virulent antisemitism that swept through Algeria in the 1880s and 1890s. During the 1890s, antisemites learned that by gaining control of municipal governments, they could undercut Algerian Jewish citizenship. Thereafter antisemitism became deeply engrained in Algerian colonial society. Antisemitism manifested itself most dramatically surrounding elections for Algerian municipal government. Jews often voted as a block and their vote could sway the outcomes. Algerian Jews enunciated their citizenship through participation in elections and an aggressive integration into politics, civil service, and the military. In so doing, Algerian Jews competed especially with French settlers, and after 1889, with the newly-naturalized European immigrants, known as the *néos* (*néo-naturalisés*). Faced with political competition and episodic violence fueled by settler and *néo* demagogic

leaders, the Jews of Algeria established associations and political organizations designed to support and defend their interests.

Antisemitism both challenged and accelerated the transformation of Algerian Jews into citizens. Many Algerian Jews served the mother country with pride and heroism during the Great War only to be confronted under Vichy by state-sponsored institutional antisemitism, which led in 1940 to the abrogation of the Crémieux decree and the loss of their French citizenship. The abrogation of their citizenship remained in effect for three years. It was not until 1943 that Charles de Gaulle finally nullified the abrogation of the Crémieux decree and Algerian Jews had their status as citizens restored.

In her homage to Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous uses the term “circumcision” to depict their shared experience as Algerian Jews. In her rendition, the word conveys various episodes of cleaving: separation from previous identities and adherence to new ones. For Cixous, 1870 and the Crémieux decree represent one date in a series of “passovers, transfers, expulsions, naturalizations, de-citizenships, exinclusions, blacklistings, doors slammed in your face, dates of wars, of colonization, incorporation, assimilation, assimulation, indigene/ni/zations that constitute the archives of what [Derrida] calls ‘my nostalgeria’ and that I call my ‘algeriance.’”¹ Cixous further likens the liminal position of Algerian Jews to the acrobatics of trapeze artists, vaulting between statuses: reaching for the new, the French, while being forced to let go of traditions that linked them to their Muslim neighbors. “Spangled in French but sporting kippas...out they swung, having to let go of the bar of their old culture, left it far behind them....swimming across the abyss arms reaching out for the other trapeze, the much-desired French, but there’s France, hostile, snatching it back. The

¹ Hélène Cixous, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 5.

Jewish trapezists cling to the void.”² Algerian Jews, and their identity, were constantly and dangerously in flux.

This dissertation traces the intersection of citizenship, antisemitism, municipal politics, and Algerian Jewish identity. It explores responses to changes and challenges to the status of Jews between 1870 and 1943. As Algerian Jews exerted their rights as citizens, particularly by voting in municipal elections and participating in municipal governments, antisemitism developed in step or one step ahead of them. The improvements to the social and political status of Algerian Jews threatened the position of other colonial groups, notably metropolitan French settlers and newly naturalized European immigrants. Frictions developed over competition for access to the state’s scarce resources (e.g., municipal government patronage, civil service positions). Non-Jews often expressed these frictions in antisemitic terms. The subsequent limits placed on Jewish integration by antisemites illustrate the complex realities of citizenship in colonial Algeria. Using post-colonial scholar Homi Bhabha’s concept of the colonial Other, Algerian Jews as citizens were “the reformed, recognizable Other...almost the same, but not quite.”³ Antisemitism constantly reminded Algerian Jews of the fragility of their claims on citizenship.

This examination of the intertwined relationship between citizenship and antisemitism in the colonial context is shaped by several questions: What did citizenship in a colonial society mean? What did the granting of citizenship to a group—as opposed to individuals—mean to the Jews both as individuals and collectively? How did these newly created citizens respond to the rights and duties of French citizenship in a colonial society? And once transformed into citizens, how did Jews respond to threats to their status?

² Cixous, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida*, 115.

³ Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man,” in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 153.

Four Historiographical Debates

A series of historiographical debates informs my analysis. These debates center on the history of Algerian Jews, citizenship and modern states, antisemitism, and municipal government. The case of Algerian Jews' citizenship throws light on all these issues. The experience of Algerian Jews as French citizens served as the litmus test for the success or failure of the French colonial assimilationist program. Although perhaps reluctant at first, Algerian Jews gradually assimilated to their new identities. Their integration into civil society increased competition between citizen groups and generated resentment among the Algerian Muslim masses whose political rights continued to be ignored. This political inequality spawned reactionary antisemitism and fueled violence against Jews. The Jews' status competitors similarly invoked antisemitism to restrict Algerian Jewish integration into civil society.

The Internal Outsider: Algerian Jews

Although there is a fairly significant body of literature on the Jews of Algeria, these studies share some analytical weaknesses. Some can be explained by their authors' proximity to the subject; many claim Algerian or North African Jewish origin. As a result, many texts on the history of Algerian Jews are strongly shaped by authors' "nostalgérie," nostalgia felt for Algeria by emigrants.⁴ For most authors there are three salient benchmarks in Algerian Jewish history: the first is the Crémieux decree of 1870, by which Algerian Jews became French citizens *en masse*. The second is the abrogation of the Crémieux decree in

⁴ The term is used widely among Algerian Jews who chose to leave Algeria for France in the context of the Algerian War. "Nostalgérie" applies to the period of French control in Algeria.

1940 under Vichy. The third, the Algerian War from 1954 to 1962, looms large over every text by these authors, even if it lies outside the scope of their studies. Over the course of these three events, Algerian Jews were forced to choose between the multiple aspects of their identities. In the midst of the Algerian War, most Jews chose France over independent Algeria. For many, that experience was one of rupture leading to an exile.

Once Algerian Jews became French citizens under the Crémieux decree, they became the quintessential internal outsiders of the French colonial regime, at once French citizens but simultaneously shaped by their “indigenous” customs and practices. Through attendance at French public schools and the “willingness” to adopt French as their language, Algerian Jews assimilated to their French identities through a simultaneous process of “separation and rapprochement.”⁵ The imposition of the consistorial system on the Algerian colony assimilated Algerian Judaism to metropolitan Judaism.⁶ Despite the assimilatory efforts of Algerian and metropolitan Jews, antisemitism in the colony reminded Jews that despite their status as citizens, they were still outsiders in the *colon*-dominated society. Even when they settled in metropolitan France following the Algerian War, Algerian Jews remained isolated, as internal outsider, not even accepted by Europeans from the colony.⁷

Perhaps that sense of alterity is the reason why so many Algerian Jews have sought to study and publish their own histories. Even the widely published historian Benjamin Stora has submitted to the pull of that nostalgia and “returned” to his homeland. At the start of his most recent book, Stora describes returning to Algeria, and Khenchela, his *ville natale*, to

⁵ Jean Jacques Deldyck, *Le Processus d'Acculturation des Juifs d'Algérie* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000), 75.

⁶ Shmuel Trigano, ed., *L'Identité des Juifs d'Algérie: Une Expérience originale de la Modernité* (Paris: Éditions du Nadir, 2003), 74.

⁷ Elizabeth Friedman, *Colonialism and After: An Algerian Jewish Community* (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1988), 126. See also Sarah Sussman, *Changing Lands, Changing Identities. The Migration of Algerian Jewry to France, 1954-1967*, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, 2002.

search for remnants of his family's past. The graves of his ancestors, now in ruins, inspired in Stora a "morose meditation." For Stora, this project was deeply personal. "After studying for so long the history of Algeria, why not research a project on its Jewish population, beginning with the history of my own family?"⁸ Similarly, André Chouraqui dedicated his well-known study of the Jews of North Africa, *Between East and West*, to his parents and his grandfather, Saadia Chouraqui, "who erected a synagogue at Aïn-Témouchent, which now stands deserted."⁹ The ghosts of the past, as well as the traumatic rupture of leaving Algeria in the wake of the Algerian War, shape the profound "nostalgérie" of many scholars on Algerian Jewry.

Despite their proximity to the subject, historians such as Stora, Chouraqui, and Robert Attal, among others, are often reluctant to make that connection overt.¹⁰ In contrast, sociologists and anthropologists of Algerian or North African Jewish origin display their intimate knowledge of the subject. Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Doris Bensimon indicate that their origins and familial connections greatly facilitated contacts for their study, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*.¹¹ In the *Architecture of Memory*, anthropologist Joëlle Bahloul turns her gaze onto herself and her family in her examination of the role of memory and the shaping of identity in what she called a "Jewish-Muslim household" of Dar-Refayil. Bahloul writes of her complicated role as both subject and researcher: "my involvement became an integral part of the tale I was asking others to tell me. I was never a mere observer, an outsider to the tale I was excavating. Once again I experienced the ambiguity of the dual position of the

⁸ Benjamin Stora, *Les Trois Exils: Juifs d'Algérie* (Paris: Éditions Stock, 2006), 17-18.

⁹ André N. Chouraqui, *Between East and West: A History of the Jews of North Africa* (New York: Temple Books, 1973), dedication.

¹⁰ Robert Attal, *Les Émeutes de Constantine: 5 août 1934* (Paris: Éditions Romillat, 2002).

¹¹ Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Doris Bensimon, *Les Juifs d'Algérie: Mémoires et Identités Plurielles* (Paris: Éditions Stavit, 1998), 10.

outsider engulfed by her object, the position of the native exploring her own ritual from a distance.”¹²

Such examples reveal the crucial role of the emic-etic distinction in the study of Algerian Jews.¹³ A few scholars, mostly in recent years, have studied Algerian Jewish history from an etic perspective, from the vantage point of someone not personally associated with the culture or subject. Many of the available works on the subject, however, are emic accounts, conducted by authors who are personally acquainted with their subject matter. Richard Ayoun, Attal, Allouche-Benayoun, Bensimon, Bahloul, Chouraqui, Stora, and Shmuel Trigano, among others, are of Algerian Jewish origin. Not surprisingly, their works are colored by their nostalgia for their lives in Algeria before their emigration to France in the wake of the traumatic and identity-wrenching Algerian War.

Also connected with this emic body of works is the large number of memoirs written by Algerian Jews in recent years.¹⁴ These memoirs, inflected by looking backward at a lost homeland, tend to glorify the French colonial period and the assimilation process undergone by Algerian Jews. Certain works, including Bahloul’s *Architecture of Memory*, describe a microcosm of coexistence between Jews and Muslims under the French. For the most part, however, these emic works adhere to what Mark Cohen called a “neo-lachrymose” approach to the history of Jewish-Muslim relations before the French occupation.¹⁵ According to this school of thought, Jews and Muslims did not coexist under Islam, but rather Jews were

¹² Joëlle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937-1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.

¹³ Marvin Harris, “History and Significance of the Emic/Etic Distinction,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 5 (1976): 329-350.

¹⁴ See for example, Josy Adida-Goldberg, *Les Deux Pères* (Paris: Orizons, 2008); André Akoun, *Né à Oran: Autobiographie en troisième personne* (Paris: Éditions Bouchene, 2004); Claudine Favret, *Les Tribulations d'une Famille d'Algérien* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire: Éditions Alan Sutton, 2003).

¹⁵ Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 4. See also Mark R. Cohen, “The Neo-Lachrymose Conception of Jewish-Arab History,” *Tikkun* 6 (May-June 1991): 55–60.

subject to sustained oppression and suffering in their *dhimmis* status, forced to pay special taxes and wear particular clothing.¹⁶ By negating the positive aspects of Algerian Jewry under Islam, authors in this camp depict the French occupation of Algeria and the subsequent path to Jewish assimilation as a significant improvement.¹⁷

Most emic studies center on the Crémieux decree as a crucial benchmark in the assimilation of Algerian Jewry. Whereas Stora describes the Crémieux decree as an “exile” through which Algerian Jews were separated from their “indigenous” identities, few other authors portray the experience negatively.¹⁸ This pattern fits with Cohen’s “neo-lachrymose” portrayal of Jewish-Muslim relations under Islam. According to these emic examinations, under Islam Jews had few rights and were relegated to subordinate and isolated positions in society. Conversely, under the French, they were incorporated and encouraged to become full members of French culture and society.

Etic studies utilize a very different approach, one that contextualizes Algerian Jews rather than isolating them. The number of books by non-Algerian Jews on the history of Algerian Jewry is limited. These studies usually grapple with broader subjects in which Algerian Jews make up a section rather than the central focus. One of the first was David Prochaska’s 1990 examination of Bône. Prochaska focuses on the role of Jews in the Bône community, particularly following the Crémieux decree, and assessed their subsequent participation in municipal politics. He emphasizes the role of Algerian Jews as important intermediaries for the French colonial regime because of their continued connections and ability to communicate with their Muslim counterparts. Due to their established commercial

¹⁶ Ayoun and Cohen, *Les Juifs d’Algérie*, 68-69; Richard Attal, *Regards sur les Juifs d’Algérie* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996), 21; Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 43.

¹⁷ See for example Bensimon and Benayoun, *Les Juifs d’Algérie*.

¹⁸ Stora, *Les Trois Exils*, 53.

networks in Algeria, Europe, and throughout the Mediterranean, Jews were important commercial mediators.¹⁹ In contrast to the emic studies, Prochaska depicts Algerian Jews as having strong relationships with Muslims before the arrival of the French, sharing many customs, traditions, and mores. These similarities between Jews and Muslims motivated metropolitan Jews to undertake an internal colonization of Algerian Jewry alongside the French colonization of Algeria in order to “elevate and civilize” their Algerian brethren.²⁰ Further, in contrast to most emic studies, Prochaska illustrates the complex situation of Jews in the colony: detached from the Muslim community but not fully welcomed into the European one.²¹

Etic scholars use the tools of social science rather than personal accounts to examine assimilation and antisemitism. Demographer Kamel Kateb examines the impact of colonialism on the various groups in Algeria. Kateb focuses his 2001 study on the positions of Algerian Muslims and Europeans in the colony, but includes a few sections on the Jews of Algeria, whom he calls a “semi-assimilable” population. Like other etic scholars, Kateb argues that Algerian Jews were not necessarily campaigning for French citizenship in 1870. Kateb points to the insignificant numbers of Jews who applied for naturalization through the Senatus-Consulte of 1865. Kateb observes that Europeans were the engine of antisemitism in the colony and, that for the most part, Algerian Muslims were neither antisemitic nor overtly opposed to the Crémieux decree. In contrast to the neo-lachrymose argument, Kateb writes

¹⁹ For more information on Jewish Mediterranean trade networks see Sarah A. Stein, *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Jewish Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

²⁰ David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 138-139.

²¹ Prochaska, *Making Algeria French*, 153-154.

that even after the Crémieux decree, Algerian Muslims felt closer to Jews than to the European settlers.²²

Similar to Prochaska and Kateb, Joshua Schreier has emphasized the role of Algerian Jews as “natural” intermediaries for the French colonial administration. Because the colonial administration needed loyal intermediaries, Schreier maintains, it encouraged reformers, including metropolitan Jews, to promote a separate policy for Jews in the colony, which sought to “elevate” them. From the 1840s, Jews in Algeria were thus subject to different legislation than their Muslim counterparts, concluding with the Crémieux decree. In Schreier’s assessment, metropolitan Jews and non-Jews promoted the extension of the consistorial system to Algeria in order to “attach to France” a powerful base of support in the native population.²³ Rather than lobbying for and welcoming their different status, Algerian Jews resisted the “civilizing” mission forced upon them by French administrators and metropolitan French Jews.²⁴ Like other etic scholars, Schreier counters the neo-lachrymose argument and disagrees with the common emic portrayal of Algerian Jews as supporting the simultaneous assimilation of Algerian Jews to French citizenry and of Algerian Judaism to French Judaism.

For different reasons, emic and etic studies neglect the agency of Algerian Jews. Shaped by “nostalgérie,” most emic examinations emphasize the glory of the French colonial project and ignore the ways that Algerian Jews resisted the imposition of the metropole. Meanwhile, many etic scholars lump Algerian Jews into an amorphous category seen through

²² Kamel Kateb, *Européens, “Indigènes,” et Juifs en Algérie (1830-1962): Représentaions et Réalités des Populations* (Paris: Éditions de l’Institut National d’Études Démographiques, 2001), 191-192.

²³ Jonathan Schreier, “They Swore upon the Tombs Never to Make Peace with Us’: Algerian Jews and French Colonialism, 1845-1848,” in Patricia M.E. Lorcin, ed., *Algeria and France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 102-103.

²⁴ Schreier, “Algerian Jews and French Colonialism,” 116.

the eyes of French Jews and French officials as objects to be acted upon. New studies on Algerian Jews need to incorporate aspects of both the emic and the etic approaches and to acknowledge Algerian Jewish agency while taking into account the intentions and efforts of metropolitan Jews and French colonial administrators who sought to assimilate Algerian Jews to the metropole. The Algerian Jews' path to assimilation and emerging identity as a transnational group was rocky and fraught with conflict, both internal and external. This study complicates the history of Algerian Jews' citizenship by positioning Algerian Jews in French colonial society after the Crémieux decree and examining their relations with various groups in the colony.

Citizenship and the Politics of Difference

Citizenship has long held the interest of historians, political scientists, and anthropologists. In recent years, it has once again become a focus of research as boundaries and borders between citizens and non-citizens and between states continue to blur. In an era of transnationalism, especially within the European Union, issues of overlapping identities and citizenships emerge in political and philosophical debates.²⁵ In his 2008 study of French nationality, Patrick Weil has argued that concepts of nationality and citizenship are shaped by the contemporary circumstances and contexts.²⁶

Jewish citizenship is complex because it encompasses many internal debates and differences, which Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson aptly label the multiple "Paths of

²⁵ Birte Siim and Judith Squires, eds., *Contesting Citizenship* (London: Routledge, 2008), 10.

²⁶ Patrick Weil, *How to be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 7. On the most basic level, nationality is connected with birth in a country or territory while citizenship is a legal institution connected to the praxis of rights. Central to the debates on citizenship is the conflict between legislation based on principles of *jus soli*, principle of residence, and *jus sanguinis*, principle of descent.

Emancipation.”²⁷ The Crémieux decree and the citizenship it afforded Jews meant much more than just the incorporation of a previously marginal and subordinate group into the nation; extending citizenship represented the expansion of the *mission civilisatrice* and the selective development of concepts of assimilation in the colonial context. The Crémieux decree set in motion increased access to citizenship and naturalization to those deemed assimilable, as evidenced by the 1889 decree that naturalized large numbers of European immigrants in the colony and the metropole. Jonathan Gosnell analyzes the making of French identities through such legislation and education in his 2002 study of “Frenchness” in colonial Algeria. In his assessment, “notions of French identity in colonial Algeria were slippery—tied to official means of recognition (citizenship)—yet also linked to perceptions based on ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, and gender constraints.”²⁸

To appropriate the phrase Claude Lévi-Strauss made famous: in terms of citizenship, Jews have always been “good to think with.”²⁹ Ronald Schechter makes this point in his examination of the role of the “Jewish Question” in French Enlightenment debates.³⁰ Whereas Jews in France played the crucial role as the “other” in debating the meaning of citizenship, Jews in Algeria represented a double “other”: not only Jewish, but also colonial natives, who could be used to test the efficacy of assimilation, and more precisely the possibility of assimilation through citizenship. In this way, Algerian Jews were especially “good to think with” for French politicians, colonial administrators, and the French nation.

²⁷ Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

²⁸ Jonathan K. Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria, 1930-1954* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 141.

²⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 89.

³⁰ Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews: Representations of Jews in France, 1715-1815* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 36.

Algerian Jews are also good for historians “to think with” because their engagement with citizenship reveals complex patterns of responses to colonialism and French civilization.

Methods of accessing citizenship in modern states reflect the increasing power of the state over the make-up of its citizens through governmentality and surveillance.³¹ By allowing certain groups access to citizenship while excluding others, governments monitor and make legible the expansion of civil society. T.H. Marshall emphasizes the tripartite relational nature of citizenship: political, civil, and social. This style of citizenship allowed governments to better regulate civil society.³² Underlying Marshall’s concept of citizenship is the relationship between rights (abilities of citizens to lay claims on the state) and duties (the state’s abilities to lay claims on individuals). Andreas Fahrmeir defines citizenship as a means for the state to define groups based on their particular rights and to improve its surveillance of those groups, a form of governmentality.³³ Similarly, Phillip Cole defines citizenship as a process by which the state creates a boundary between citizens and subjects.³⁴ Incorporating concepts of governmentality, Charles Tilly describes citizenship as a relational tie between the citizen and the state, made up of “transactions” between the two.³⁵ Through this contract and the transactions encompassed within it, certain aspects of

³¹ Michel Foucault, “Governmentality” in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 102-103.

³² Steven G. Ellis, Gudmundur Hálfdanarson, Ann Katherine Isaacs, eds., *Citizenship in Historical Perspective* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2006), 3.

³³ Andreas Fahrmeir, *Citizenship: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 2.

³⁴ Gideon Calder, Phillip Cole, and Jonathan Seglow, eds., *Citizenship Acquisition and National Belonging: Migration, Membership and the Liberal Democratic State* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3, 6.

³⁵ Charles Tilly, ed., *Citizenship, Identity and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5, 8.

identity, such as religion, become subsumed by the category of citizen.³⁶ Etienne Balibar describes citizenship as a “relationship of force” between the state and the citizen.³⁷

Citizenship legislation in France reflects these relational forces. France’s *jus soli*, defining citizenship on the basis of the place of birth, is at the center of several debates. Rogers Brubaker contends that France’s assimilationist approach and desire to incorporate immigrants into the nation through generational assimilation exemplifies *jus soli*.³⁸ Colonial expansion and the *mission civilisatrice* as well as the assimilationist flavor of citizenship legislation in the 1880s were central to this practice.³⁹ Citizenship in Brubaker’s terms is a vehicle for the state to define its members, and thus is less relational than in Tilly’s definition.⁴⁰ Like Brubaker, Gérard Noiriel describes France as a “melting pot,” which sought to incorporate and mold immigrants to the nation’s requirements of Frenchness. Noiriel emphasizes the importance of surveillance in the integration of foreigners and immigrants into civil society.⁴¹

The means by which the French government created citizens reflects another set of questions. Patrick Weil assesses the impact of naturalization legislation in France and Algeria and the impact of the 1889 legislation, which increased access to citizenship for immigrants. The law of 1889 created a hierarchy of foreigners and immigrants based on their perceived capacity for socialization and proper integration into the nation. In particular, this law represented an opportunity to shore up French representation in Algeria by naturalizing

³⁶ Tilly, *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History*, 10-11.

³⁷ Ellis, *Citizenship in Historical Perspective*, 2.

³⁸ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), xi.

³⁹ Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 11.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 51.

⁴¹ Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 45.

the masses of European immigrants in the colony.⁴² According to the 1889 law, children born on French territory to a parent who himself was born on French territory were citizens based on a double *jus soli*, and children born on French soil to foreigner parents could become citizens at the age of majority.⁴³ Weil emphasizes the role of education in the process of assimilation as a requirement for citizenship. In contrast, Bertrand Taithe contends that education was not centrally linked to rights to citizenship, especially in the context of France in 1870-1871, which was shaped significantly by war and internal conflicts that required a strong citizenry to build armies.⁴⁴

These debates reflect the complexity of the meanings of citizen and citizenship in the context of modern France and its empire. The terms “citizen” and “citizenship” are problematic because they imply a uniform and static conception of the group and the status being described. The varied and changing paths of access to citizenship illustrate the fact that citizenship as a concept is dynamic, nuanced and multifaceted. In theory, all citizens should be equal, but in reality they are not. Iris Marion Young develops a concept of *differentiated citizenship* as a way of encompassing this diversity.⁴⁵ Frederick Cooper and Brubaker utilize the concept of “identity” as a way to complicate the realities of citizenship. The inclusion of “identity” restrains “citizen” from becoming a hegemonic, and ultimately, meaningless term that fails to account for the heterogeneity of citizens.⁴⁶ Jürgen Habermas maintains, however, that citizens develop a shared identity through the praxis of their rights.⁴⁷ At the very least, the praxis of rights articulates the identity of the citizen.

⁴² Weil, *How to be French*, 182-183, 207.

⁴³ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁴ Bertrand Taithe, *Citizenship and Wars: France in Turmoil, 1870-1871* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1.

⁴⁵ Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Citizenship* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 176.

⁴⁶ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 75.

⁴⁷ Beiner, *Theorizing Citizenship*, 258.

Most studies of citizenship and its meanings focus on European states.⁴⁸ One critical aspect of citizenship, however, is especially relevant to colonialism: citizenship is a method of inclusion/exclusion.⁴⁹ The definition of “citizen” in the colonial context was not identical to that in the metropole. For example, not all legislation promulgated in the metropole extended to Algeria, even after it was considered an integral part of France. Partha Chatterjee highlights that difference between colony and metropole, pointing to the fact that colonial administrations would never allow colonized subjects to be equal members of civil society.⁵⁰ Cooper elaborates Chatterjee’s concept of the “rule of difference,” suggesting that historians should consider a politics of difference in the colonial context. Cooper asserts that colonial institutions established difference between various groups.⁵¹ The French administration in Algeria viewed European immigrants as assimilable and offered them naturalization in 1889. In contrast, Algerian Muslims did not meet the requirements for potential citizenship and their path to naturalization was obstructed with complicated processes.⁵² Homi Bhabha’s use of the concept of mimicry exposes the importance of assimilability, or at least the appearance thereof, in the colonial politics of difference.⁵³

As the scholarship shows, French colonial administrators applied a politics of difference to Algeria. Algeria became a “testing ground” for debates on and developing concepts of citizenship.⁵⁴ Similarly, fears and concerns of the metropole shaped decisions regarding increasing access to citizenship. The context of war in 1870-1871 made the

⁴⁸ Daniel Gorman attempted to bridge this gap by studying British ideologue’s debates on the concept of colonial citizenship. Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship: Empire and the Question of Belonging* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

⁴⁹ Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*, 23.

⁵⁰ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 24.

⁵¹ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 23.

⁵² Fahrmeir, *Citizenship*, 63-64.

⁵³ Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Men,” 158-159.

⁵⁴ Taithe, *Citizenship and Wars*, 83.

Crémieux decree possible as a way of shoring up France's defenses.⁵⁵ Jean-Loup Amselle's concept of "affirmative exclusion" encapsulates the choices of whom to include into and exclude from the masses of citizens in Algeria.⁵⁶ In order to receive citizenship, Algerian Jews had to choose between the obligations of citizenship and those of their religious community, giving up their religious personal status for French civil status. This was a requirement Algerian Muslims were unwilling to fulfill.⁵⁷

The Crémieux decree, I argue, was ultimately less about the Jews themselves than the strategic needs of the colonial regime. French politicians believed that by assimilating Algerian Jews as citizens, they would ensure the security of the regime in the colony by bringing to its French population 35,000 new citizens.⁵⁸ In contrast, French colonial administrators were convinced that Algerian Muslims were unassimilable.⁵⁹ The Jews of Algeria thus benefited from the colonial politics of difference. Through the praxis of their citizenship, Algerian Jews assimilated to such an extent that in 1962, as they faced the realities of Algerian independence, they chose France over their *terre natale*, joining nearly one million *pieds-noirs* in immigrating to France.⁶⁰ Albert Memmi lambasts the Jews of North Africa for their assimilation and eventual rejection of their fellow "colonized," the

⁵⁵ Ibid., 88, 92.

⁵⁶ Jean-Loup Amselle, *Affirmative Exclusion: Cultural Pluralism and the Rule of Custom in France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), xii.

⁵⁷ Amselle, *Affirmative Exclusion*, 62, 104. See also Weil, *How to be French*, 216.

⁵⁸ Weil, *How to be French*, 211.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 53.

⁶⁰ Sarah Sussman, "Jews from Algeria and French Jewish Identity" in Hafid Gafaiti, Patricia M.E. Lorcin, and David G. Troyansky, eds., *Transnational Spaces and Identities in the Francophone World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 218. In statistics regarding *pieds-noirs* immigrants in 1962, Jews are included indiscriminately. Although Jews may not have considered themselves *pieds-noirs* they became part of that group in the eyes of administrators, journalists, and ultimately historians.

Muslims. The Jew “turned his back on the east,” Memmi writes, choosing French over Arabic and adopting French customs.⁶¹

The colonial politics of difference and the interstitial approaches to citizenship reflect the complicated realities of the definition of “citizen.” Like their metropolitan coreligionists in the French Enlightenment, Jews in Algeria proved to be “good to think with” on the topic of citizenship in the nineteenth century. The concomitant lack of naturalization for Algerian Muslims, and the 1889 legislation that opened up citizenship to the masses of European immigrants in Algeria, demonstrated the degree to which colonial administrators depended on affirmative exclusion to form a strategic citizenry. In the colony all citizens were not created equal. Antisemitism made exercising their rights nearly impossible for some Jews, who were removed from electoral lists or harassed when they attempted to vote. The Algerian Jewish experience, as well as the antisemitism that they faced as citizens, exposes the fractures and contradictions of colonial citizenship.

Antisemitism

In the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth, antisemitism in Algeria blended different forms of anti-Jewish sentiment present in the Maghreb and Mashreq as well as in Europe. Although tinged with religious elements, Algerian antisemitism was ultimately politically oriented, focusing on the naturalization of Algerian Jews en masse as a result of the Crémieux decree in 1870. Frustration over Jewish citizenship combined with classical

⁶¹ Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), xiv.

Muslim mistrust of Jews to create a particular brand of Algerian Muslim antisemitism, which was exploited by French colonists and *néos* alike.⁶²

The Frenchmen in the colony, including administrators, were anxious that the native Jews of the colony had rights nearly equal to theirs.⁶³ The status anxieties of other citizens in the colony—the *néos* in particular—centered on the Jew as the main competitor in local politics and the economy. *Néos* were often of working or lower-middle-class origins and competed with Jews for jobs, political offices, and the benefits that came with them. The *néos* melded their religious beliefs with political anxieties to concoct a religio-political antisemitism.

The special status of Algeria—at once an integral piece of the French metropole, but also a colony in which Jews formed a significant part of the electorate—made it a fertile ground and active conduit for metropolitan antisemitism. French Algeria consisted of three *départements* established in 1848. In the colony, unlike the metropole, certain anti-Jewish excesses were acceptable. Edouard Drumont, an infamous metropolitan journalist and politician, used the receptivity of Europeans in the colony to develop his politics of antisemitism.⁶⁴

General studies of antisemitism can be categorized by three different foci: religious antisemitism, usually applied to antiquity and medieval anti-Judaism; political or modern antisemitism; and racial antisemitism embodied by, but not restricted to National Socialist

⁶² Mark Cohen, “Islam and the Jews: Myth, Counter-Myth, History,” in Shlomo Deshen and Walter P. Zenner, eds., *Jews among Muslims: Communities in the Precolonial Middle East* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 55. See also Robert S. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession: Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (New York: Random House, 2010), 46.

⁶³ Algerian Jewish rights were nearly the same as the rights of French *colons* and *néos*; however, Algerian Jews faced discrimination in regards to some of their rights. For example, they were excluded from purchasing lands for colonial expansion (*terres domaniales*). The Comité Algérien des Études Sociales, a Jewish defense organization, fought against this discrimination in the 1910s and early 1920s.

⁶⁴ Frederick Busi called Drumont the “Pope of Antisemitism.” Frederick Busi, *The Pope of Antisemitism: The Career and Legacy of Edouard-Adolphe Drumont* (Michigan: The University Press of America, 1986).

doctrine. These three forms of antisemitism represent the evolution and development of anti-Jewish sentiment as a consequence of changes to social, political, and economic conditions, the growth of the nation-state, and developments in theories of science and pseudoscience. Studies of antisemitism rarely escape the specter of the Holocaust, or in the case of more recent books, the threat of “Islamofascism,” and jihadism.⁶⁵

For the purposes of this study, I am particularly interested in the evolution of political or modern antisemitism, which developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nineteenth century antisemitism had a racial element to it, although it responded more to the evolving political role of Jews in European civil society. The political implications of Jews’ entrée into society stimulated modern antisemitism. Antisemitism transformed alongside modernization and accompanying social change.⁶⁶

Hannah Arendt asserts that antisemitism was born alongside the development of the nation-state in the nineteenth century, which afforded Jews rights as citizens.⁶⁷ According to Arendt, the antisemitism that developed as a political force in Germany, Austria, and France in the 1870s coincided with a series of financial scandals connected to an overproduction of capital. Antisemitic political parties emerged, capitalizing on status anxieties and accusations of Jewish involvement in the scandals. In late nineteenth-century France, antisemitism dominated politics and became a major ideological force capable of gaining the wide support of public opinion, especially in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair.⁶⁸ Writing in the aftermath of the Holocaust, Arendt draws a direct line from Dreyfus to Vichy, an inaccurate trajectory which too often elides intermediary developments, such as the unprecedented

⁶⁵ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1958). Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession*, 6.

⁶⁶ Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (London: Thames Methuen, 1991), 43, 53.

⁶⁷ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 11, 13.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 35-38, 42.

antisemitism organized in response to the election of Léon Blum in 1936. Vichy also represented the first time that antisemitism became the official policy of the French government.

Antisemitism represented a powerful political tool that could be used to secure elections. Léon Poliakov depicts the Dreyfus Affair as an opportunity for massive political inclusion. Citing Proust's *Swann's Way*, Poliakov writes that by being anti-Dreyfus, one could be accepted as properly French and part of the majority. In that way, being anti-Dreyfus signified Frenchness.⁶⁹ In the midst of the Dreyfus Affair, in January 1898, following the publication of Zola's *J'accuse*, violence broke out throughout the metropole. As a result of the leadership of the son of Italian immigrants and future Algiers Mayor Max Régis, the violence in the colony was more severe than that of the metropole.⁷⁰ In the aftermath of the first phase of the Dreyfus Affair in 1898, voters elected nineteen members of Parliament as a result of their antisemitic campaigns. Among those nineteen were four from Algeria, including Edouard Drumont. According to Arendt, the election of this unprecedented number of antisemitic deputies "was the earliest instance of the success of antisemitism as a catalytic agent for all other political issues."⁷¹ Following the success of 1898, antisemites in Algeria realized the unharnessed political power to be found among the discontented *néos*.

In the nineteenth century, Frenchmen used "the Jew" to negotiate and deliberate the meanings of citizenship and the role of the citizen in the nation. Using Zygmunt Bauman's

⁶⁹ Léon Poliakov, *The History of Antisemitism, Volume Four: Suicidal Europe, 1870-1933* (New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1985), 56. The Dreyfus Affair also reminded Jews in the metropole of the fragility of their citizenship and status in France. See Michael R. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: A Study of the French Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 196.

⁷⁰ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 111-112.

⁷¹ Ibid., 46.

concept of Jewish alterity and, implicitly, the Foucauldian political subject, Julie Kalman depicts the Jew as the center of these debates.⁷² Pierre Birnbaum similarly links modern antisemitism with the political successes of the Jews of the Republic, specifically those Jews who integrated into the administration, “state Jews.” Birnbaum uses the example of the aftermath of the Dreyfus Affair to illustrate an internal “Franco-French war,” in which antisemites led a campaign to eliminate Jewish functionaries and deputies from the Third Republic leadership.⁷³

Another element of modern antisemitism focused on ramifications of Jewish participation in society. Jean-Paul Sartre identifies antisemitism as a social phenomenon. According to Sartre, people define themselves in opposition to the Jew, and it is through that comparison that antisemites realize their own rights.⁷⁴ The Manichean dialectic of Sartre’s argument focuses on the antisemite’s thesis that Jews represent evil and the cause of all problems in society, while the antisemite views himself, in contrast, as good.⁷⁵ In order to remove Jews as their status competitors, antisemites impede Jewish assimilation. “The true opponent of assimilation,” Sartre argues, “is not the Jew but the antisemite.”⁷⁶ Sartre thus illustrates the intractable nature of the social and political aspects of modern antisemitism.

In a 1982 piece, Michael Marrus diagrams the varying intensity and character of the social and political aspects of antisemitism as a series of concentric rings. The outermost ring represents the widest realm of anti-Jewish sentiment. The second band is made up of

⁷² Julie Kalman, *Rethinking Antisemitism in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1, 8.

⁷³ Pierre Birnbaum, *The Jews of the Republic: A Political History of State Jews in France from Gambetta to Vichy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 136, 312.

⁷⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1948), 28.

⁷⁵ Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, 40. See also Phyllis Lassner and Lara Trubowitz, *Antisemitism and Philosemitism in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries: Representing Jews, Jewishness, and Jewish Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 48.

⁷⁶ Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, 79, 143.

stronger anti-Jewish feelings, which are “defensive and hostile” and emerge from economic and political problems. The third ring, at the core, is that of anti-Jewish fanaticism, which can influence the other two rings.⁷⁷ In periods of national trauma or political and economic uncertainty, the central ring reverberates to the outer rings, impacting the wider public that uses the Jew as the target of its anxieties.⁷⁸ In 1898, the activities of the center ring influenced the outer rings, leading to attacks on Jews. In other periods of unrest, such as 1934 in Constantine, similar reverberations led to violence.

As Algeria represented a crossroads for various forms of antisemitism, its connection to the metropole is often misunderstood by scholars; Algerian antisemitism was significantly influenced by that of the metropole. It also incorporated the antisemitism of European settlers from Italy, Spain, and Malta, as well as Muslim antisemitism. Although it existed in municipal governments in Algeria, institutional antisemitism reached its peak under Vichy.⁷⁹ Vichy’s official state antisemitism led to the abrogation of the Crémieux decree in 1940. Jacques Cantier has shown that the campaigning of Algerian administrations and the settlers influenced Vichy’s decision to abrogate the Jews’ citizenship.⁸⁰ Seventy years after the promulgation of the Crémieux decree, antisemites finally succeeded in undoing it. Its abrogation created a deep sense of rupture for Algerian Jews who, as a result, were separated from France and from Algerian civil society.

Although the abrogation of the Crémieux decree by Vichy represented the ultimate rupture of Algerian Jewish identity, periodic explosions of antisemitism created tears in the fabric of their identities. Antisemitism flourished under the auspices of municipal

⁷⁷ Michael R. Marrus, “The Theory and Practice of Anti-Semitism,” *Commentary* 74, no. 2 (August 1982): 39.

⁷⁸ Marrus, “The Theory and Practice of Anti-Semitism,” 42.

⁷⁹ Henri Msellati, *Les Juifs d’Algérie sous le régime de Vichy* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1999), 47.

⁸⁰ Jacques Cantier, *L’Algérie Sous le Régime de Vichy* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 2002), 72.

government. Antisemites used the power of the municipal governments to institute antisemitic policies aimed at diminishing the electoral power of Jews.

Municipal Government

Civil society in the colonial setting existed only in a truncated form of that of the metropole as a result of the barriers placed on access to citizenship. Mahmood Mamdani overstates this problem in his model of the “bifurcated state,” in which civil society existed for citizens and rural despotism for subjects.⁸¹ Algeria was in some ways a “bifurcated state” with citizens exercising power over a handful of municipalities, while the colony as a whole existed under the jurisdiction of the French military and later the governor general. Over time, however, municipal governments expanded and military control shrank, leaving municipal government as the locus of significant settler power.

Municipal government constituted the portal through which citizens could involve themselves in the realities of local administration. Through their municipal governments and the patronage system that flowed from control over the local administration, citizens could gain influence, receive perks, and barter their votes for rewards. Local government was the forum for exerting citizenship rights. It also polarized those who had a voice—citizens, whether Frenchmen, *néos*, or Jews—and those who did not, namely Algerian Muslims, who had only a limited degree of involvement. Municipal governments were thus the crucibles of hotly contested competition for the scarce resources and rewards that the state offered its citizens. Algerian Jews’ citizenship acted as the catalyst, resulting in competition and antisemitism. Charles-Robert Ageron describes the role of elector in the colony as a “title of

⁸¹ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 16-17.

nobility in this new feudalism.”⁸² When Jews became citizens, they increased the competition for lucrative positions of power.

The Second Republic declared Algeria an extension of French territory and transformed the provinces of the colony into departments, such as those in the metropole. The Republic allowed French citizens in the colony to have some control over their own government by electing municipal councils and choosing their own mayors.⁸³ On September 28, 1847, the form of French municipal government current in France was extended to civil territories in Algeria.⁸⁴ Europeans were guaranteed two-third of the seats on municipal councils, with the final third set aside for Muslims.⁸⁵ Algerian Muslims comprised a separate electoral college for their designated positions on the municipal council.

Following the Crémieux decree, Jews joined the same electoral pool as Europeans. This change not only increased the pool of electors for European positions on the municipal council; it also escalated competition for such posts. The pervasive nature of the competition for power on municipal councils was reflected in the efforts of certain antisemitic groups in municipal governments to remove Jews as competitors by eliminating them from electoral lists, as was the case in Sidi Bel Abbès in 1937-1938.

Algeria featured three types of political territories: civil territories, which were made up of a majority of Europeans; mixed communes, which included a small, but powerful

⁸² Charles-Robert Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), 47.

⁸³ Maurice Viollette, *L'Algérie Vivra-t-Elle? Notes d'un ancien gouverneur général* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1931), 277-278.

⁸⁴ Charles-Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France, 1871-1919, Tôme Premier* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 135. See also, Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie Contemporaine*, 49. Algerian Muslims were guaranteed six positions on the municipal councils. This was an important concession towards French assimilation program at the time.

⁸⁵ John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 74.

European community and a large Muslim majority; and military territories.⁸⁶ Municipal councils only existed in civil communes in Algeria, known as *communes de plein exercice*, which Claude Collot describes as “instruments of European domination.”⁸⁷ In 1869, 12,000 square kilometers were under the jurisdiction of ninety-six civil communes. That number increased in 1881 to 17,000 square kilometers under the jurisdiction of 196 *communes de plein exercice*. In these communes, Europeans dominated the municipal councils. In 1884, Muslims were granted a very small electoral college, through which they could choose the Muslim council members. At the same time, their representation on the municipal councils was reduced from one-third to one-fourth, and they lost the right to vote for mayors. In the 1880s, approximately 38,000 Algerians out of 3,300,000 met the criteria to be municipal electors. By 1920, the number increased to 50,000.⁸⁸ The mixed communes varied in size but served as an intermediate sphere of interaction between the European stronghold in *communes de plein exercice* and the Muslim majority military territories.⁸⁹

In the 1870s, the metropolitan government instituted another layer of colonial government. By a decree of June 11, 1870, general councils were established to serve as an administrative bridge between municipal councils and the colonial government. The general councils consisted of 30 council members, of which 20 would be French citizens (21 in the department of Algiers), eight Muslims (seven in Algiers), and one foreigner or Jew.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 73.

⁸⁷ Claude Collot, *Les Institutions de l'Algérie durant la période coloniale (1830-1962)* (Paris : Édition du CNRS, 1987), 93.

⁸⁸ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 87. In order to be municipal electors, Algerian Muslims had to be male, at least 25 years old, and be a resident of the commune for a minimum of two years. Muslim electors also had to own or lease land, be a retired or active civil service, or had received a decoration for military service.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 88. The average mixed commune covered 1,136 kilometers and included a population of 294 Europeans and 20,348 Algerian Muslims. By 1920, 3,000,000 out of 4,500,000 Muslims in Algeria lived in mixed communes.

⁹⁰ Charles-Robert Ageron, *De l'Algérie ‘Française’ à l'Algérie Algérienne* (Paris: Éditions Bouchène, 2005), 131. See also, Collot, *Les Institutions de l'Algérie*, 52-53.

Following the Crémieux decree four months later, Jews became part of the competition for the election of the 20 French general council members.⁹¹ The third layer of colonial government was the *Délégation financière*, a colony-wide representative body with authority over the budget for the colony, established by decrees of 1898 and 1900. The assembly included sixty-nine members, of whom forty-eight were European. Twenty-one were Muslims who were elected by a small Muslim electorate of 5,000 members or appointed.⁹²

Despite the critical importance of municipal governments in the history of Algeria, the literature on them is surprisingly sparse. One of the few studies on the structure of institutions in colonial Algeria is Claude Collot's schematic outline of the different colonial structures.⁹³ However, Collot's study does not examine the complex politics within these institutions and the competition between groups. The extant literature on municipal governments in colonies, and Algeria specifically, overlooks this crucial component of colonial government.

As Algeria represented an extension of the metropole, scholarship on French municipal governments illuminates the Algerian case. In his analysis of the growing importance of municipal governments and their control over the politics of French cities, William B. Cohen argues that over the course of the nineteenth century, municipal governments worked to make government more representative and democratic.⁹⁴ Cohen describes the growing influence of municipal governments on their constituencies through

⁹¹ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 88-89. The Muslim members of the general council were appointed by the Governor General. Most were members of municipal councils or were chosen from ranks of native civil servants.

⁹² Ibid., 86-87. The Muslim members generally met separately from the rest of the assembly and had very limited impact on the actions of the *Délégation financière*. In his 1931 book, Viollette described the *Délégation financière* observing: "we are thus very far from universal suffrage." See Viollette, *L'Algérie Vivra-t-Elle?*, 298.

⁹³ Collot, *Les Institutions de l'Algérie*, 6-7.

⁹⁴ William B. Cohen, *Urban Government and the Rise of the French City: Five Municipalities in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 33.

the process of “municipalization,” the expansion of public responsibilities of municipal governments. Through municipalization, municipal councils took over services previously privately controlled.⁹⁵ Cohen contends that patronage strengthened the role of the mayor, who had the power to appoint members of the local councils. Similarly, it fueled high levels of participation in the electoral process, as the possibility of reward encouraged citizens to vote for certain candidates.⁹⁶ In Algeria, efforts by municipal employees to prevent certain voters, often Jews, from participating in elections contributed to the success of particular candidates.

Literature on other French colonies also illuminates the nature of municipal governments in Algeria. G. Wesley Johnson focuses on municipal government as a sphere of power for colonial citizenship in his 1971 book *The Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal*. Using the unique case of the Four Communes as the locus of his study, Johnson examined the role played by the *originaires*, the first African citizens, in the municipal government and the development of emerging African politics.⁹⁷ Similar to the municipal governments in Algeria, the elections of municipal council members in Senegal pitted various colonial citizen groups—Frenchmen, Creoles, and urban Africans—against one another as they competed for the limited seats on the council.⁹⁸ French and Creole businessmen dominated most municipal councils and sought to reduce competition for their powerful positions by denigrating their African competitors.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Cohen, *Urban Government*, 67.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 71.

⁹⁷ G. Wesley Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics in Senegal: The Struggle for Power in the Four Communes, 1900-1920* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), 38.

⁹⁸ Johnson, *The Emergence of Black Politics*, 81, 84.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 46-47.

Although Algerian Jews gave up their personal status, which had allowed them to be governed by their religious laws, as part of the requirements to benefit from the Crémieux decree, antisemites accused them of not being truly French and therefore not worthy of French citizenship. Like the Algerian Jews, the case of the *originaires* in the Four Communes reflected hopes for the assimilationist program. In order to be eligible to participate in elections and to be elected to a municipal government, the candidate had to know how to read and write French, which facilitated the assimilation of African voters.¹⁰⁰ Like the situation in Algeria, the citizenship given to the African *originaires* sought to cement French control in the region but not to threaten the authority of the French population in the colony.

Few books on colonial Algeria emphasize the importance of municipal politics. Charles-Robert Ageron analyzes municipal government only as a lens through which to understand the place of Algerian Muslim politics in the colony.¹⁰¹ None of Ageron's studies analyze the importance of municipal governments as sites of competition among citizens. The most extensive analysis of the organization and significance of the municipal government as the crucible of local politics is John Ruedy's *Modern Algeria*. In his sections on colonization and the colonial system in Algeria, Ruedy outlines the role of the municipal government as appeasing *colon* frustrations regarding the autonomy of the colony and providing them with a greater sense of control of their local politics.¹⁰² Ruedy's description of colonial government, however, lacks an analysis of the role of competition for municipal

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰¹ In his *Histoire de l'Algérie Contemporaine*, Ageron's assessment of municipal government was peripheral to his discussion of the role of Muslim municipal council members and their lack of rights in voting for the mayor and his assistants. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie Contemporaine*, 49. See also Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France*, 135.

¹⁰² Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 86-87.

control and the roles of various citizen groups in contest with one another. In fact, Ruedy disregards the role of Algerian Jews in electoral contests as being the center of the antisemitic backlash in the colony.¹⁰³

One of the best analyses of the patronage system inherent in colonial Algerian municipal governments is David Prochaska's study of Jérôme Bertagna's "bossism" in Bône's municipal government. Prochaska uses Bertagna's activities to demonstrate the stronghold that European settlers had on the municipal governments in the colony and their competition with Algerian Jews. Following the 1889 legislation that naturalized the new non-French European immigrants, particularly those from Spain, Malta, and Italy, the ranks of European voters swelled, further cementing the power of the settlers in municipal government.¹⁰⁴ Prochaska's central argument is that patronage and the promise of reward during elections were the salient features of municipal politics in the colony.¹⁰⁵ Prochaska identifies antisemitism as a powerful political tool used during elections of municipal governments. Jewish identification with a certain political party brought votes to that party's candidate. Antisemites accused Jews of voting as a bloc, following the directions of their rabbis and the Jewish consistory. Mobilizing antisemitism was a way of blocking the Jewish vote.¹⁰⁶

The significant position of municipal governments in Algeria plays a central role in this study. The politics of municipal government served as the crucible of status anxieties and competition in the colony and the praxis of citizenship by Algerian Jews acted as the catalyst that resulted in the explosion of antisemitism in the 1890s, and the recurring waves

¹⁰³ Ibid., 110.

¹⁰⁴ Prochaska, *Making Algeria French*, 184.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 192.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 202, 204.

of antisemitism connected to elections in the 1920s and 1930s. The intense contests in municipal elections as well as the promise of subsequent rewards and patronage established Algerian Jews as the enemy of the European settlers and their central competitor for power and authority in the colony.

From Subject to Citizen: The Crémieux Decree

The 1870 Crémieux decree occupies the center of every study and history of Algerian Jewry. As a watershed, it is crucial to understand the ways in which Algerian Jews and other colonial groups responded to the changes imposed by the mass naturalization. For Algerian Jews, the Crémieux decree represented the first step in a series of transformations, which would usher in a new, dual identity as both “others” and Frenchmen. Algerian Jewish history, like much of Jewish history, is that of alterity.

Under Islam, Jews were isolated into their status of protected minority, *dhimmis*, but still remained an integral part of North African society, especially within the realm of commerce and in their dealings with North African rulers. Two well-known examples include the Bacri and Busnach families, Jewish merchants whose ties with France ultimately led to the French occupation of Algiers in 1830.¹⁰⁷ Algerian Jews celebrated the arrival of the French, who they believed to be their saviors from oppression under Islam.¹⁰⁸

After welcoming the French to Algiers in 1830, the Algerian Jews’ status began to change. By 1842, French courts had jurisdiction over Algerian Jewish affairs, which

¹⁰⁷ Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 142.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Ayoun and Bernard Cohen, *Les Juifs d'Algérie: Deux mille ans d'Histoire* (Paris: Éditions Jean-Claude Lattès, 1982), 116.

decreased the autonomy of the Jewish community.¹⁰⁹ French politicians and metropolitan Jews considered how to assimilate Algerian Judaism to that of the metropole. In France, consistories acted as an intermediate representative governing body between the state and different religious groups. In 1862, the French consistory system formally absorbed the local consistories of Algeria, dealing a fatal blow to the older style of Jewish corporatism in Algeria.¹¹⁰ At that time, there were 23,061 Jews in Algeria: 9,180 in the department of Algiers, 9,414 in Oran, and 6,470 in Constantine.¹¹¹ The story of French Jews in the Revolution and their rapid assimilation served as the rationale for the idea of naturalizing Algerian Jews. The Sénatus-Consulat of July 14, 1865 was the first major step in incorporating Algerian Jews in the French citizenry, allowing Jews to become citizens on an individual basis.¹¹²

The Jewish consistory viewed these measures at integrating Algerian Jews as problematic and incomplete. According to the Jewish Central Consistory of France's 1871 publication on the naturalization of Algerian Jews, the jurisdiction of French courts over Algerian Jews led to extreme "disorganization." French judicial officials ignored the principles of Jewish personal status, and due to their lack of knowledge of Talmudic law, they failed to properly adjudicate Jewish affairs.¹¹³ The Consistory contended that the only solution to this problem was to naturalize the Jews *en masse* and remove all confusion

¹⁰⁹ Andrea L. Smith, "Citizenship in the Colony: Naturalization Law and Legal Assimilation in the 19th Century Algeria," *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 19, no. 1 (1996): 39.

¹¹⁰ Smith, "Citizenship in the Colony," 40. See also Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 146.

¹¹¹ M. Béquet, *Organisation du Culte Israélite en Algérie, Rapport au Conseil de Gouvernement par M. Béquet, Conseiller-Rapporteur* (Algiers: Imprimerie de Gouvernement, 1888), 9, AN F/19/11143. The table with these statistics included a note stating that the census that provided the statistics was several years old at the time of the report.

¹¹² Michel Ansky, *Les Juifs d'Algérie: Du Décret Crémieux à la Libération* (Paris: Éditions du Centre, 1950), 28, 34-35.

¹¹³ Consistoire Central des Israélites de France, "Note sur le projet de loi relatif à la naturalisation des Israélites de l'Algérie," (1871), AN F/19/11144.

regarding their personal status. As the Jewish Central Consistory, located in Paris, took an interest in their situation, Algerian Jews also took action. At the end of December 1869, the Constantine Jewish consistory submitted a petition to the Central Consistory demanding collective naturalization for the Jews of Algeria.¹¹⁴

In March 1870, members of the Oran Jewish consistory participated in a meeting with the Prefect of Oran on the issue of collective naturalization. On this occasion, the Prefect asked the consistory leadership two questions: would Algerian Jews react favorably to naturalization and should the French administration give the Jews a year in which to decide if they would like to refuse such naturalization and make a declaration to this effect? To the former, the consistory leadership unanimously agreed that Jews would welcome naturalization. On the second issue, they were divided on whether Jews should be given such an option.¹¹⁵ Members of the Oran consistory wrote to the National Defense Government in September 1870 to offer their support and express their thanks for the work of the government on behalf of Algerian Jews and their rights.¹¹⁶ Although the Jewish Consistory was supposedly representative, most of its leaders were highly assimilated and therefore cannot be considered to embody the opinions of Algerian Jews as a whole.

In response to lobbying from the Algerian and Parisian consistories, French politicians took up the issue of naturalizing Algerian Jews. In March 1870, Émile Ollivier, then Minister of Justice, presented a law draft to the Conseil d'État (State Council). The law in question collectively naturalized the Jews of Algeria. Ollivier passed on responsibility for

¹¹⁴ Members of the Constantine Consistory, J. Stora, Ab. Cahen, Temime, Narboni, "No. 63," Constantine, January 28, 1870, CC Icc 39.

¹¹⁵ Meeting of Oran Consistory, March 27, 1870, CC Icc 40. The option to "opt-out" of citizenship was a common practice in French mass naturalizations in the late nineteenth century. The 1889 legislation similarly allowed those impacted to reject their citizenship within a certain timeframe.

¹¹⁶ Karoubi, Charleville, Members of the Oran Consistory to the Members of the National Defense Government, Oran, September 16, 1870, AN F/19/11031.

the law to Adolphe Crémieux, an important Jewish politician. Crémieux also served as president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and had a reputation for fighting for the rights of Jews in the Maghreb and Mashreq.¹¹⁷ On July 19, 1870, Crémieux presented to the legislative Chamber his revised law for the naturalization of Algerian Jews.¹¹⁸

Under the National Defense Government, Crémieux became Minister of Justice on September 4, 1870. Among his other responsibilities, Crémieux prepared a Constitution for Algeria. On October 24, 1870 he submitted nine decrees to the Government council, which ratified them. These decrees established a civil regime ending the era of military control of Algeria, enforced trial by jury, and naturalized Algerian Jews *en masse*, giving them the status of French citizens.¹¹⁹ The Crémieux decree represented part of a larger project of the National Defense Government to assimilate Algeria to the metropole.¹²⁰

Immediately following its promulgation, the Crémieux decree faced a series of attacks and efforts to abrogate it. Some accused it of being illegal or outside the jurisdiction of the Government of the National Defense. Others blamed the decree for the Muslim Revolt led by Mokrani in 1871.¹²¹ In 1871, Charles du Bouzet, then Commissaire Extraordinaire in Algeria, was one of the first to publicly demand the abrogation of the Crémieux decree on the basis that it caused Muslim unrest.¹²²

¹¹⁷ In his capacity as president of the Alliance, Crémieux received letters from Jews around the world. One Algerian Jew, B. Baruch, a military interpreter in Mostaganem, wrote Crémieux of his fear that Jews faced increased persecution in North Africa as a result of a series of newspaper articles that negatively portrayed Jews and Jewish activities. B. Baruch to M. Adolphe Crémieux, Mostaganem, May 6, 1870, AIU Algérie IIC8.

¹¹⁸ Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 149.

¹¹⁹ Ansky, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 38. See also, “Décret qui déclare Français les Israélites indigènes de l’Algérie du 24 Octobre 1870,” Tours, October 24, 1870, AN F/19/11145.

¹²⁰ Jacques Cohen, *Les Israélites de l’Algérie et le Décret Crémieux* (Paris: Librairie nouvelle de Droit et de Jurisprudence, 1900), 222.

¹²¹ Friedman, *Colonialism and After*, 10.

¹²² Pierre Birnbaum, “French Jews and the ‘Regeneration’ of Algerian Jewry,” *Studies in Contemporary Jewry: Jews and the State: Dangerous Alliances and the Perils of Privilege* 19 (2003): 94.

The Central Consistory of Paris quickly responded to this accusation. Its leaders pointed to the fact that four months had passed between the promulgation of the Crémieux Decree in October and the start of the revolt in March 1871.¹²³ The Consistory used the opportunity presented by the 1871 revolt to provide proof of Algerian Jewish patriotism and devotion to France. Jews joined Algerian militias in putting down the revolt. The Central Consistory's 1871 publication on the subject included a copy of a declaration made by Algerian Muslim religious leaders and notables, signed on June 20, 1871, contending that the Crémieux decree did not anger or excite Muslims, because "it is rational. On the contrary, all sensible people appreciate and approve of it." The Consistory leadership concluded that should the petitions for abrogation be successful, Algerian Jews would be thrust into a problematic status. They would be "without nationality, without country, without public rights, without legal administrative and judicial guarantees for the safeguarding of their rights. They are on French territory, but would not be French citizens."¹²⁴ Algerian Muslims faced precisely that situation as subjects in the colony, which eventually led to their resentment of Algerian Jews' status.¹²⁵

Crémieux himself responded to du Bouzet's attacks on the collective naturalization of Algerian Jews and dismissed du Bouzet's attempt to link the decree to Muslim revolt. "But you know that Muslims want to remain fully Muslim. They want their laws, their courts, their civil status, their personal status, their religious habits....What promise of the French to the

¹²³ Vice President of the Central Consistory to M. Leopold Javal, July 30, 1871, CC 2E-Boîte 2.

¹²⁴ Consistoire Central des Israélites de France, "Note sur le projet de loi relatif à la naturalisation des Israélites de l'Algérie," (1871), AN F/19/11144.

¹²⁵ Vice President of the Central Consistory to Leopold Javal, July 30, 1871, CC 2^E-Boîte 2. It also appears that the Consistory itself was not entirely convinced that the Crémieux decree was without faults. The Vice President wrote in a letter that the decree should not be applied to all Jews, and felt that it was critical that Jews be able to refuse citizenship.

Arabs has the decree violated?”¹²⁶ Crémieux described the decree as a gift from France, which removed archaic and despotic Jewish traditional laws, replacing them with the modern and civilized French world.¹²⁷ Crémieux added, “I do not deny that the privilege to give the title of French citizens to thirty thousand of my coreligionists was one of the greatest joys of my life.”¹²⁸

According to Elizabeth Friedman, Algerian Jews did not necessarily embrace their new status. In fact, some went so far as to resist the requirement of French civil law by refusing civil marriage. Eventually, however, Algerian Jews accepted their new citizenship and accepted it, even if grudgingly, at the exhortation of their leaders and elites, who had petitioned for such naturalization and held great sway over their community.¹²⁹ In December 1871, the Jewish consistory of Oran noted “very satisfactory” participation in the elections of municipal and general councils. According to their statistics, in the department of Oran, 1,440 Jews were inscribed on electoral lists, and 1,179 had actually voted in the past municipal and general council elections, resulting in the election of 22 Jews to these councils.¹³⁰ This massive entrée onto the political scene led to increased competition in elections and greater competition between groups of citizens, especially following the 1889 naturalization of the non-French European immigrants to the colony.

By 1891, Algerian Jews were rapidly adapting to their new identity and status as citizens. In celebration of his installation as Chief Rabbi, Rabbi Moses Weil gave a sermon

¹²⁶ Adolphe Crémieux, *Réfutation de la pétition de M. Du Bouzet* (Paris: Imprimerie Schiller, 1871), 24, AIU 8JBr 1778.

¹²⁷ Crémieux, *Réfutation*, 30.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 20-21. Crémieux’s defense of the decree was one of several. Another notable defense against du Bouzet’s accusations was C. Taupiac’s 1871 pamphlet. C. Taupiac, *Les Israelites Indigènes: Réponse à la Pétition de M. Du Bouzet, ancien Préfet d’Oran, Ancien Commissaire extraordinaire de la République par C. Taupiac, Avocat* (Constantine : Chez L. Marle Librairie, 1871), AIU 8UBr1271.

¹²⁹ Friedman, *Colonialism and After*, 10, 12.

¹³⁰ Consistory of Oran to the Central Consistoire of Paris, “Résultat au point de vue israélite, des derniers élections du Conseil général et du Conseil municipaux de la Province,” Oran, December 12, 1871, CC Icc 40.

in which he contended that no Algerian Jew would allow someone to protest “the signature of our great and glorious Crémieux placed, next to that of the immortal Gambetta, at the bottom of the decree of October 24, 1870...on both sides of the Mediterranean, the Jews owe everything to France.”¹³¹ Over the next seventy years, Algerian Jews entered politics, joined municipal governments, and actively defended their rights as citizens and their patriotism.

This dissertation is organized chronologically to illustrate the changes and developments in Algerian Jews’ practice of their citizenship, the growing competition between groups in the colony for the scarce resources of state, and the evolution of political antisemitism. The first chapter deals with the growing antisemitism from European immigrants in Algeria, known as the *néos*, in the 1890s. This competition emerged following the 1889 decree that naturalized many non-French Europeans in Algeria. Many *néos* viewed Algerian Jews as status competitors. Antisemitism grew concurrently with events in the metropole, eventually surpassing that of the metropole in its extremity. The Dreyfus Affair galvanized antisemitism, leading to the 1898 riots in the metropole and the colony, which are the focus of Chapter Two. Chapter Two also deals with the growing success of the *néos* in Algerian politics, emblematized by the antisemitic mayor of Algiers, Max Régis. In the years immediately following 1898, antisemitism had its most successful era in Algeria, including the election of four antisemitic deputies to the national assembly. Antisemites found credibility by joining their cause with efforts for Algerian autonomy.

Chapter Three focuses on the Jewish response to the threats posed to their citizenship by antisemites. In the early twentieth century, and especially following their patriotic efforts

¹³¹ Consistory of Algiers, *Installation de M. Moïse Weil, Grand Rabbin, 16 Avril 1891, 8 nissan 5651* (Algiers: Imprimerie Franck et Sodal, 1891), 7-10, AIU 8JBr878.

of World War One, Algerian Jews defended their rights as French citizens against the ever-present tide of antisemitic criticisms. Jewish defense efforts became linked to the influence of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, which began its work in Algeria in 1900. Defense emphasized assimilation, the major goal of the Alliance and its leaders. Algerian Jewish leaders argued that Jews could best fight antisemitism by disproving antisemitic contentions of Jewish backwardness or corporatism. The Comité Algérien d'Études Sociales, one of the most important defense organizations, used Jewish patriotism and participation in World War I as evidence for Jewish assimilation and encouraged continued assimilation and development of Algerian Jews as good Frenchmen.

Chapter Four examines the efforts of Algerian Muslims to gain rights in the colony. It explores daily violent encounters between Jews and Muslims. Deteriorating relationships between Jews and Muslims accelerated as Muslims demanded political rights. Algerian Muslims pointed to service in World War I, in the same manner as Algerian Jews, as the basis for their claims. At the same time, Algerian Muslim nationalism developed as resentment of the Jews' superior status grew. Chapter Five analyzes the results of that resentment. In August 1934, Jews in Constantine faced a pogrom of an unparalleled scale in Algeria. French colonial administrators and police were suspiciously absent over the course of the violence carried out by Algerian Muslims. For Algerian Jews, the Constantine pogrom indicated the frustrations of certain Algerian Muslim leaders, particularly the *évolués*, who believed that Algerian Muslims deserved greater rights.

The Popular Front enhanced the political status of Algerian Muslims. Jewish rights proved inextricable from Muslim rights in debates on colonial citizenship in the interwar period. Antisemites believed that they could destroy Algerian Jewish citizenship while

preventing the growth of Muslim rights. As Algerian Jews assimilated, affiliating themselves ever more with the French and participating in large numbers in elections, they found that there were indeed limits to their citizenship. Antisemitic politicians and leaders of municipal governments used their power and influence to remove Jewish voters from electoral lists. Algerian Jews called upon international organizations to help them defend their rights against attacks by antisemites. Although they achieved certain levels of success, they would soon find out just how pervasive state antisemitism could be in France.

The final chapter deals with the most intense and significant rupture experienced by Algerian Jews. Under Vichy, Algerian Jews had their citizenship revoked. According to the 1941 census of Algerian Jews, there were 116,884 Jews in the colony: 34,742 Jews in the department of Algiers, 50,413 in Oran, 25,614 in Constantine, and 6,115 in the southern territories.¹³² After seventy years of assimilation and participation in French civil society, Algerian Jews were reduced to subjects in even worse conditions than Algerian Muslims. The abrogation of the Crémieux decree under Vichy not only demonstrated the power of antisemitism in the metropole and the colony, it also indicated the degree to which Algerian Jews had assimilated and how much their identities had been reshaped over the course of their seventy years as citizens. Following the abrogation, Algerian Jews fought to regain their citizenship, on an individual basis through appeals to Vichy on the grounds of past demonstrations of patriotism and commitment to France, and on a collective level through lobbying the Vichy government as well as coordinating with worldwide Jewish organizations, and military. The plight of Algerian Jews drew important philosophers and legalists, among them Hannah Arendt and Henry Torrès, to their cause. Algerian Jews played an important role in the Allied landings in 1942 and helped to topple Vichy rule in

¹³² Service des Questions Juives, *Recensement des Juifs par Natioanlité au 15 Juin 1942*, CDJC-LXXXIV-75.

Algeria. Antisemitism proved to be a formidable foe, as the Crémieux decree remained abrogated even after the Allied landings in North Africa. It was not until 1943 that Algerian Jews would once again become citizens when Charles de Gaulle finally reinstated the Crémieux decree.

Although Algerian Jews are the central focus of this study, this dissertation considers debates surrounding the meanings of citizenship and the limits imposed upon it by reactionary political antisemitism. Because my subject intersects several topics—Jews in Algeria, antisemitism, citizenship, and municipal government—I draw upon a variety of different archives. Each archive has a particular identity and focus; as a result, multiple archives must be examined in order to triangulate sources. For the core material on the Algerian Jews, I used the archives of the Jewish Central Consistory in Paris, which include documents from the Algerian Jewish consistories, as well as correspondence between the Algerian consistories and the Central Consistory. I also used the archives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Paris, which contain documentation on the development of the Alliance's project in Algeria. The materials in this collection are limited because the Alliance's work in Algeria was restricted by the fact that as citizens, Algerian Jews attended French secular schools. Also in Paris, I used the Centre de la Documentation Juive Contemporaine's fascinating archives for materials on the Algerian Jews under Vichy and their efforts to regain their citizenship.

The archives of the Centre des Archives d'Outre Mer (CAOM) in Aix-en-Provence contain rich and fascinating sources on the French colonial project in Algeria in which Jews feature prominently. There is extensive documentation on antisemitism and antisemites in Algeria in the 1890s. Particularly useful were the police files and their reports on quotidian,

low-level violence that occurred between Algerian Jews and Muslims as each group acted out their identities. The CAOM archives include collections of appeals made by Algerian Jews to retain their citizenship and the dossiers they submitted for the 1941 census. Files from some departments, including Oran and Algiers, are missing documents destroyed after Vichy. The majority of the documents held in the CAOM archives are administrative materials, and although fascinating in their portrayals of Algerian Jews and the interactions between different groups in the colony, if not used properly they can be very problematic. I worked to triangulate these sources with files produced by Algerian Jews themselves.

The Archives Nationales in Paris, like the CAOM archives, provide administrative reports on Algeria. The materials on Algeria in the AN are rather sparse in comparison to the CAOM files, but in studying the surveillance ledgers from the 1890s and early 1900s on antisemitic leagues and activities, I discovered the extremely strong connections between antisemites across the Mediterranean. I also used the archives of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme for appeals made by Algerian Jews for help and support in defending their rights. The LDH files contain important documents on the impact of antisemitic politics in the colony in the interwar period, as well as collaborative activities between the LDH and Algerian Jewish defense organizations. Finally, I used the archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC for additional documentation on Algerian Jews under Vichy and the Robert D. Murphy Files at the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford University for documents on the Jews' role in the 1942 Algiers Insurrection. All translations are my own. By using a diverse collection of documents from six separate archives, I gained access to sources that reflected different interests and perspectives,

including those of administrators, journalists, politicians, and Algerian Jews themselves to illustrate the complex experience of Algerian Jewish citizenship.

Chapter 1: Competing for Rights and Identity: Citizenship and Antisemitism in Fin-de-siècle Algeria

Fin-de-siècle Algeria was rife with turmoil. During the 1890s the colonists endured economic upheavals and political and electoral anxiety.¹ French settlers feared attacks by the Muslim majority and were concerned by the growing numbers of non-French Europeans who made the colony their home. In particular, they resented the supposed electoral power of the recently naturalized Jews who, the *colons* suspected, mindlessly followed their consistorial leadership. In this climate of insecurity, the general anxieties about recently enfranchised Algerian Jews coalesced in the form of virulent antisemitism. Antisemitism became a weapon used by politicians and opportunists who sought to gain power, prestige, and wealth by controlling municipal governments, the most important site of local power in the colony. The *colons*' status anxieties caused by the integration of Algerian Jews fueled the strength of antisemitism. It unified French and newly naturalized European citizens under the common cause of restricting the presumed power of the Algerian Jews and their intrusion into politics and the economy.

Charles-Robert Ageron has argued that in this climate of fear and uncertainty an “abortive” revolution emerged in the 1890s in Algeria. The *colons* sought to separate the colony from the metropole under guise of an anti-Jewish explosion.² In this chapter, I take issue with Ageron’s analysis of the anti-Jewish movement and examine instead the competition between naturalized groups in the colony for the limited resources of state. I argue that through the processes of naturalization in the colony, including the 1889

¹ Charles-Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France 1871-1919. Tome Premier* (Paris: Éditions Bouchène, 2005), 546, 552.

² Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc, 1991), 63.

legislation, different groups of citizens in the colony—French of metropolitan origin, known as *français d'origine*, Jews naturalized by the Crémieux decree, and the newly naturalized immigrants from Europe, known as *néos*—articulated their identities by denigrating other groups of citizens as they competed for control over municipal governments.

This chapter analyzes the way in which the newly naturalized European immigrants in the colony used Jews as a foil with which to express their worth as Frenchmen and to assert that they were even “more French than the French.”³ The vast expansion and subsequent diversity of citizens in the colony during the 1890s led to increased competition for the scarce resources of municipal governments and the colonial state. Ageron contends that the growth of antisemitism was but a front for the *colon*’s efforts for separatism. In contrast, I argue that the antisemitism of the 1890s emerged from the status anxieties of *colons* and the newly naturalized non-French European settlers. Antisemitism fueled the *néos*’ desire to be accepted as Frenchmen and remove Jews as status competitors. Harnessing the anxiety of *néos* and French *colons* led to the political success of antisemites in municipal government.

Citizenship and *le péril étranger*

Following the arrival of the French in Algeria, the colonial project soon met significant hurdles, the most important of which was the question of how to establish a numerically significant settler society within the majority Muslim colony. In addition to the French of metropolitan origin, immigrants from Spain, Italy, and Malta settled in the colony, following agricultural, political, and economic crises in their home countries. These

³ Andrea L. Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 110.

Europeans imagined Algeria as a land of opportunity. Although many of these immigrants came to Algeria with the expectation of eventually returning home, they eventually formed the foundation of the masses of pied-noirs filled with “*nostalgérie*” in 1962.⁴ In the early period of colonization, these immigrants posed a threat to the security and supremacy of the French *colons* in Algeria, especially in the wake of the 1889 legislation that increased immigrants’ access to naturalization. The assimilationist trend in France during the 1880s widened the definition of citizenship, and as a result incorporated immigrants into the mass of citizens.⁵

The 1889 legislation integrated the diverse populations of non-French Europeans in Algerian civil society, creating an odd brew of new Frenchmen originally from Malta, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere. Dissimilar in their origins, these *néos* did not assimilate fully, remaining separate and distinct groups in the colony. The Maltese, the least numerous group of immigrants, reveal the complexity of the mass of European immigrants in the colony. While not as well-known as the Italian or Spanish immigrants to the colony, the Maltese reflect the complicated experience of the *néos*, caught between integration and the desire to return home. The Maltese came to Algeria in the late nineteenth century following a series of droughts, famine, and epidemics.⁶ By the 1870s, Algeria had become the “Eldorado” for Maltese emigrants, chosen over other destinations such as Tripoli, Egypt, Tunisia, and

⁴ Sheila Crane identifies author Henri de Monthelant as the author of the term *nostalgérie* in her article “Architecture at the Ends of Empire: Urban Reflections between Algiers and Marseille” in Gayan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse, eds., *The Spaces of the Modern City: Impaginaries, Politics, and Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 128.

⁵ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 107.

⁶ Marc Donato, *L’Émigration des Maltais en Algérie au XIXème Siècle* (Montpellier: Éditions Africa Nostra, 1895), 37.

Greece.⁷ Most Maltese immigrants in Algeria worked in agriculture, although some served as translators for the government in dealing with Algerian Muslims because they spoke an Arabic dialect.⁸

In fact, the similarities between the Maltese immigrants and the Algerian Muslims led *colon*s to lump the two groups together, much to the chagrin of the Maltese. As fervent Catholics and new colonists, the Maltese disliked being associated with Muslims, who were seen as inherently unassimilable.⁹ In contrast to the popular theory of a melting pot, or *le creuset algérien*, colonial Algeria and the memories of Maltese *pied-noirs* were heavily racialized and hierarchic. In this colonial hierarchy, the *français d'origine* were at the top, as administrators, and owners of factories, businesses, and estates, followed by naturalized Spanish and Italian migrants, then the Maltese, and at the bottom the naturalized Jews, just above the Algerian Muslims.¹⁰ The Maltese continued to be associated with Arabs even sixty years following their arrival, despite their assimilation and naturalization, which closely mirrored the contemporary association of naturalized Algerian Jews with Muslims.¹¹ Italian and Spanish immigrants distanced themselves from the Maltese, so as not to be associated with them or be seen as a “pale copy of the Arab.”¹² Although considered racially different, following the naturalization *en masse* of immigrants in 1889, the Maltese integrated into the ranks of the *néo-français*. Arguing for a common “Latin heritage,” similar customs and

⁷ Donato, *L’Émigration des Maltais*, 53; Marc Donato, *Elisa, La Maltaise: Histoire des Maltais d’Algérie, 1830-1962* (Nice: Éditions Jacques Gandini, 2002), 37.

⁸ Donato, *L’Émigration des Maltais*, 159.

⁹ Ibid., 84-85.

¹⁰ Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 21.

¹¹ Ibid., 94.

¹² Donato, *L’Émigration des Maltais*, 171.

religion, the Maltese immigrants began to marry outside their ethnicity, further integrating into the developing masses of pieds-noirs.¹³

Spanish immigrants to Algeria made up the most significant non-French European group in the colony, and as a result were the main source of concern among *colons* regarding the *péril étranger*, the threat posed by immigrants to the supremacy of the French *colons*.¹⁴ Spanish immigrants came to Algeria to escape the political turmoil in Spain, including the federalist uprisings in 1868 and 1869.¹⁵ Following the overthrow of Queen Isabella II in 1868, the Carlist uprising in 1873 brought many political refugees to Algeria, including Don José de la Canal and Don Joaquim Fontes, who founded a group in Oran that maintained connections to the Carlist movement in Paris.¹⁶ Most of the new arrivals settled in the *département* of Oran, which had the largest Spanish population in North Africa.¹⁷ By 1860, 114,320 Spanish immigrants made Algeria their new home, and their numbers increased further between 1870 and 1890. These two decades represented a “Golden Age” of Spanish migration towards Algeria.¹⁸ In 1891, 4,000 Italians, 67,000 French (of French metropolitan origin), 20,000 naturalized Jews, and an overwhelming 102,453 Spaniards lived in Oran.¹⁹ Spanish immigrants’ employment was concentrated in agriculture as manual labor and as small-scale farmers.²⁰

¹³ Donato, *L’Émigration des Maltais*, 176.

¹⁴ Ibid., 127.

¹⁵ Jean-Jacques Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie: Histoire d’Une Migration, 1830-1914* (Calvisson: Éditions Jacques Gandini, 1996), 123.

¹⁶ M. Barthelemy-Saint-Hilaire, Minister of Foreign Affairs to His Excellency M. le Duc de Fernan-Nunez, Spanish Ambassador to Paris, July 23, 1881, in *Affaires Étrangères: Documents Diplomatiques. Affaires de Saida (1881-1882)* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1883), CAOM FM F/80/1683. See also Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie*, 127.

¹⁷ Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie*, 26. See also Brubaker’s discussion of the differences between France and Germany naturalization legislation in Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood*.

¹⁸ Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie*, 9.

¹⁹ Ibid., 10.

²⁰ Ibid., 183, 193.

Seen as a tidal wave washing over Algeria, Spanish immigrants increased the general sense of insecurity in the colony. The fear of the *péril étranger*, particularly following the 1889 naturalization law, caused many *colons* to hope for a return to *jus sanguinis* over *jus soli*.²¹ Following the 1889 law and the naturalization of many Spanish immigrants, politicians, particularly those in the radical party, used the antisemitism of Spanish *néos* to gain political power.²²

Italians in Algeria also proved to be a politically significant group in the colony even though they did not boast the same numbers as the Spanish immigrants. The earliest Italians arrived soon after the occupation of Algeria in 1830. Most were fishermen. Following the unification of Italy in 1861, Italy faced a series of economic disasters.²³ Between 1861 and 1866, 5,000 Italian immigrants arrived in Algeria.²⁴ The most intense Italian immigration to Algeria occurred between 1880 and 1890, due in large part to the agricultural crisis in Italy.²⁵ Most immigrants came from southern Italy and Sicily and became indispensable workers in the colony.²⁶ In 1889, Italian immigrants numbered 50,000.²⁷ Max Régis, perhaps the most famous son of Italian immigrants, will be the subject of the next chapter.

Many Italians settled in the department of Constantine.²⁸ Régis hailed from Sétif, and even following his move to Algiers, Régis' elderly mother remained in the family

²¹ Ibid., 156. See also, Patrick Weil, "The History and Memory of discrimination in the domain of French nationality: the Case of the Jews and Algerians Muslims," *HAGAR, International Social Science Review* 6, no. 1 (2005): 52-53.

²² Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie*, 161.

²³ Gérard Crespo, *Les Italiens en Algérie, 1830-1960: Histoire et Sociologie d'une Migration* (Calvission: Éditions Jacques Gandini, 1994), 38.

²⁴ Ibid., 41.

²⁵ Ibid., 13.

²⁶ Kamel Kateb, *Européens, "Indigènes" et Juifs en Algérie (1830-1962): Représentaions et réalités des populations* (Paris: Éditions de l'Institut National d'Études Démographiques, 2001), 28.

²⁷ Crespo, *Les Italiens en Algérie*, 11.

²⁸ Ibid., 20.

homestead.²⁹ The Italians who arrived in Algeria were predominately fisherman, masons, stoneworkers, laborers, miners, artisans, bar or café owners, and merchants. They flocked to where they could find work, often remaining in cities near the coast. Because maritime activity remained an integral element in the Algerian economy, Italians found a significant niche in occupations relating to the fish market.³⁰ In 1930, fishermen in Algeria were still known as “Napolitains” even though the actual fishermen were not necessarily of Italian origin.³¹ Italians also concentrated in the fields of stonework, masonry, constructions, and architecture and in the early years of the construction of the French colony in Algeria, Italians were a welcome addition to the workforce.³² The Italian Consulate in Algiers noted in 1882 that “in Algeria, under the direction of French engineers, Italian immigrants constructed” 2,000 km of national roads, 1,700 km of departmental roads, and 800 km of railways. Italians also worked as artisans, ironworkers, locksmiths, mechanics, and wheelwrights, among other occupations in towns.³³

There was a strong assimilationist trend among Italians. Even before the 1889 naturalization law, Italians showed a significant desire to become French. Italian children learned French, but generally did not give up their native language.³⁴ According to Gérard Crespo, there was more intermarriage between French and Italians than any other immigrant group.³⁵ According to Ageron, however, marriages between French and Spanish immigrants were more numerous, based upon the belief that such unions produced “a strong race, really

²⁹ Ledger Ligue Antisémité 1899 (surveillance), August 4, 1899, AN F7/12882.

³⁰ Crespo, *Les Italiens en Algérie*, 57, 69.

³¹ Ibid., 75.

³² Ibid., 81.

³³ Ibid., 84.

³⁴ Ibid., 135, 144.

³⁵ Ibid., 102.

Algerian.”³⁶ Despite the numbers of mixed marriages, Italians, like the Spanish and Maltese immigrants, were still positioned below the French in the colonial hierarchy. French *colon* culture deemed these immigrants assimilable, due in part to their shared Latin roots, but they were not considered to be as evolved as the French, and remained tied to their nationalities through the maintenance of language, customs, and traditions.

French colonial authorities did not immediately look to the European immigrant population as likely candidates for citizenship; rather they looked to the native Jewish population, which could prove assimilable and lacked other, competing, national allegiances. In the 1860s, Jews in Algeria began to demand more access to rights and privileges, petitioning Napoleon III in 1865 during his visit to the colony. This petition led to the *senatus-consulte* of July 14, 1865 that allowed Jews (and Muslims, as well as new immigrants) access to a naturalization process. This naturalization process was complicated and involved abandoning one’s personal status, something very few French subjects in Algeria, whether Jews or Muslims, were willing to sacrifice. Few Jews and even fewer Muslims opted for this process. Muslims valued their personal status, which provided them with religious autonomy and the right to live by the laws of the Qur’ān.³⁷

Although the *senatus-consulte* is often discussed with reference to Jews, it was influenced by the growing numbers of non-French immigrants.³⁸ A non-French immigrant, upon proving three years of residency, could apply for citizenship through the *senatus-consulte*. Despite the supposed accessibility that the *senatus* provided, it was rarely used, due in large part to allegiance felt by immigrants to their home countries. Between 1865 and

³⁶ Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France*, 577.

³⁷ “Interpellation Samary, Chambre des Députés, Séance du 19 février 1898,” AN F/19/11145.

³⁸ Kateb, *Européens*, “Indigènes,” et Juifs en Algérie, 29.

1914, 36,869 individual naturalizations on the basis of the *senatus* occurred.³⁹ Because of the relative lack of naturalizations through the *senatus*, colonial officials considered other possibilities for naturalization and solidifying the *colons'* presence in the colony. The desire to increase the numbers of French in the colony resulted in the 1870 Crémieux decree and 1889 law, which automatically naturalized the sons of immigrants.

As a tiny minority among the mass of Algerian Muslims, colonists experienced immense insecurity. The large population of immigrants from Europe in the colony both strengthened their position vis-à-vis the Muslims and added another kind of threat, what *colons* deemed the *péril étranger*.⁴⁰ In 1896, Algeria consisted of 318,137 *français d'origine* and naturalized Frenchmen, 48,763 naturalized Algerian Jews, and 211,580 foreign (European) immigrants. Thus the non-French European immigrants constituted 36.6% of the total European/naturalized population.⁴¹ The 1889 naturalization law was a strategic move in order to shore up French numbers against the majority of Algerian Muslims. The 1889 law *I* naturalized the children of European immigrants at the age of twenty-one unless they specifically refused the naturalization.⁴² David Prochaska identifies this step as an integral action in creating the *pied-noir* community, which, using the melting pot analogy, he describes as a “heady new Mediterranean stew.”⁴³

I disagree with both Prochaska and Ayoun’s analogies. The image of the stew and of the mosaic implies a certain integration of the different elements that did not in fact exist as the various groups fought for control. Patricia Lorcin describes the French effort to discover

³⁹ Kateb, *Européens*, “*Indigènes*,” et *Juifs en Algérie*, 188.

⁴⁰ David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 152.

⁴¹ Kateb, *Européens*, “*Indigènes*,” et *Juifs en Algérie*, 187.

⁴² Prochaska, *Making Algeria French*, 153.

⁴³ Ibid., 155. Richard Ayoun describes the impact of the 1889 law as creating a mosaic in the colony.

a Roman or Latin heritage in Algeria upon which to base French claims on Muslim Algeria. As part of this project, the European population in the colony took on the identity of the “Latins of Africa.”⁴⁴ These Latins were the forebears of a new “handsome, hardworking, ardent race,” which at the turn of the century would take on the identity of “Algerians.”⁴⁵ Indeed, the different settler groups impacted by the 1889 legislation made up the various ingredients for Prochaska’s Mediterranean stew, and were perhaps unified by the Latin roots that Lorcin describes. However, they often remained disparate and rarely unified politically or socially.⁴⁶ To suggest that they seamlessly came together is to ignore what nearly all scholars on immigrants in Algeria suggest: that these immigrants remained largely insulated in their national groups, and often retained a strong level of nostalgia for their home country.⁴⁷ Max Régis, considered the great patriot of Algeria by fellow antisemites, had an older brother, Alfred, and a sister, Claudine, both of whom rejected French citizenship and remained Italian nationals.⁴⁸

The law of June 26, 1889 automatically naturalized immigrants on the basis of certain criteria: first, children born to a non-French father, who himself was born on French soil, would be naturalized unless they formally reject French citizenship upon reaching age twenty-one; second, children themselves born in Algeria, but to a father who was not born on French soil, could become citizens as long as they could prove that they had lived on French soil until age twenty-one. Ageron also notes that many of these children of immigrants,

⁴⁴ Patricia M.E. Lorcin, “Rome and France in Africa: Recovering Colonial Algeria’s Latin Past” *French Historical Studies* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 311-312.

⁴⁵ Lorcin, “Rome and France,” 319; David Prochaska, “History as Literature, Literature as History: The Cagayous of Algiers,” *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (June 1996): 706.

⁴⁶ Geneviève Dermenjian described the way in which the various groups remained separate, living in distinct neighborhoods based on national or ethnic identity. Geneviève Dermenjian, *Juifs et Européens d’Algérie: L’Antisémitisme Oranais (1892-1905)* (Jerusalem: Institut Ben-Zvi, 1983), 21.

⁴⁷ Richard Ayoun, “Max Régis: Un Antijuif au tournant du XXe Siècle,” *Revue d’histoire de la Shoah* 173 (October-December 2001), 142.

⁴⁸ Ayoun, “Max Régis,” 144.

although they automatically became citizens, maintained strong ties to their native cultures, languages, and customs. In 1899, the Governor General estimated that of 384,000 French, 140,000 were born in Algeria, 135,000 came from France, and 109,000 were naturalized.⁴⁹ Ayoun argues that the 1889 naturalization law had larger repercussions for Algeria than the Crémieux Decree because of the significant numbers of new settlers naturalized by the law.⁵⁰ The automatic nature of the 1889 law removed the element of choice from naturalization for the children of immigrants. Although they could technically refuse French citizenship, few did, in part because they had to do so within one year of their naturalization at majority.⁵¹

The fact that the 1889 law naturalized the immigrants *en masse* is reminiscent of the 1870 Crémieux decree. Both laws automatically naturalized a group of individuals, thus removing individual elective naturalization applications, such as the *senatus-consulte* of 1865, which proved to be an unsuccessful approach to growing the ranks of French in the colony. There was initially some resistance to the Crémieux decree among Algerian Jews.⁵² However, by the late 1880s, at the time of the new naturalization law, Jews had embarked upon a path of assimilation, particularly the younger ones. Like the 1889 law, the Crémieux Decree contained the stipulation that unless they formally refused citizenship, Jews would automatically become naturalized. The Crémieux Decree can thus be considered a prototype for the automatic naturalization upon which the 1889 law could be based.

The 1889 law nearly immediately doubled the number of young electors in the colony, much to the concern of politicians. In the 1890s, some politicians of the *parti*

⁴⁹ Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France*, 578. Where Algerian Jews factor into these calculations is unclear.

⁵⁰ Ayoun, "Max Régis," 141.

⁵¹ Patrick Weil, "The History and memory of discrimination in the domain of French nationality," 52-53.

⁵² Elizabeth Friedman, *Colonialism and After: An Algerian Jewish Community* (Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, Inc, 1988), 10.

français indulged in a xenophobia that reflected the growing concern over the masses of new voters, including Jews and the *néo-français* or the citizens of *fraîche date*. The famous cry of the antisemitic parties in the late 1890s “À bas les Juifs” morphed into “À bas les Juifs et les étrangers” and “La France aux Français.”⁵³ Of course, by *Français*, these politicians meant most specifically the French of French origin. Many politicians, however, took advantage of the legions of new French citizens, who sought to prove themselves to be truly French in contrast to the most questionable French citizens, the Jews. Patricia Lorcin writes that the 1889 law was in fact a “counterbalance” to the Crémieux Decree.⁵⁴

In the 1890s, a French writer, Auguste Robinet, who used the pseudonym Musette, immortalized the *néo* through his fictional character, Cagayous, the son of a Spanish immigrant and French *colon*. Cagayous and the series surrounding him were immensely popular, and many *néos* related to the fictional character and his exploits. Initially published as a serial in settlers’ newspapers and eventually printed in book form, the *Cagayous* series, appeared between 1894 and 1920. Cagayous came to represent the many *néos* in the colony, encompassing traits of Maltese, Spanish, and Italian immigrants, specifically the lower classes. As such, Cagayous spoke the specific language established by the *néos*, known as *pataouète*, a French dialect which incorporated Mediterranean languages and Arabic.⁵⁵ *Pataouète* varied from location to location, dependant largely on the mix of immigrants in the location; of the 600 non-French words in *pataouète*, approximately 210 were Arabic, 180 Spanish, and 60 Italian.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France*, 579. These slogans translate as “Down with the Jews,” “Down with the Jews and the Foreigners,” and “France for the French.”

⁵⁴ Lorcin, “Rome and France,” 312.

⁵⁵ Prochaska, “History as Literature,” 674-675.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 686-687.

In the *Cagayous* series, Robinet used the turn of the century debates on the making of a new Algerian people to create a popular character.⁵⁷ When asked if he and his comrades were French, Cagayous famously replied: “We are Algerians!” This declaration demonstrates the evolution of the collective identity of the *néos*, while simultaneously excluding Algerian Muslims and Jews from the ranks of “Algerians.”⁵⁸ In *Cagayous Antijuif*, Cagayous reads Régis’ *L’Antijuif* and exclaims to his assorted friends (also *néos*), “me, if I’m not naturally French, I am Algerian....” This is evidence of the emerging identity of the Algerians and the influence of antisemitism over them.⁵⁹ Robinet’s Cagayous is representative of a trend in literature at the time that worked to establish the heritage of the Mediterranean “Latins” and therefore rightfully claim citizenship in Algeria. Furthermore, the identity of the “Algerians” is closely connected to the separatist movement, because they were making explicit the difference between French and Algerian.

Like Robinet, fellow author Louis Bertrand depicted French Algeria as part of a “Latin Mediterranean,” which orbited around France as its spiritual center.⁶⁰ In his writings, Bertrand sought to create a sense of place and history for the settlers in the colony. Throughout the colony, Bertrand “rediscovered” the remains of the Latin-Mediterranean culture with which *néos* could identify and upon which they could base their claim for Algerian identity, and simultaneously discount Arab/Berber claims on the land.⁶¹ By alluding to a shared Roman/Latin ancestry, he used the past to create a claim on the present in Algeria and to unite the heterogeneous masses of the *néos* under a single flag of

⁵⁷ Peter Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 142.

⁵⁸ Prochaska, “History as Literature,” 706.

⁵⁹ Musette, *Cagayous Antijuif* (Alger: Imprimerie Ernest Mallebay, 1898), 18.

⁶⁰ Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria*, 84.

⁶¹ Ibid., 88, 100.

*Algériens.*⁶² The *néos* clung to the identity of Algerians because they were culturally distanced from the French metropole and unwilling to associate with the Algerian Muslims.⁶³

Upon establishing their new identity in the colony after the 1889 naturalization, the *néos* sought to prove this identity to those who questioned it. One way to demonstrate their “Latin”/French identity was to take on a common enemy with the French *colons*, the Jews. The *néos* participated in great numbers during the *crise antijuive* of the 1890s in Algeria. Antisemitism was closely linked to electoral politics in Algeria, because Jews were accused of voting as a bloc. Although Jews often did vote as a group, it was usually because one candidate was antisemitic, making their voting choice obvious. Opportunist and Radical politicians in the colony thus sought to incorporate the *néos* in breaking down the strength of the Jewish vote. Furthermore, the Spanish, Italian, and Maltese *néos* were easily influenced by portrayals of Jews as moneylenders sapping the strength of the hardworking artisanal, laboring, and small business owning *néos*.⁶⁴ As its title suggests, Cagayous expressed his deep antisemitic sentiments in *Cagayous Antijuif*: “there are those who have the courage to say ‘Down with the Jews!’, we will kick them [the Jews] into the sea...”⁶⁵ The *néos*’ desire to prove themselves as Algerians—and as Frenchmen—in a time of economic hardship that fed the rabid antisemitism in fin-de-siècle Algeria.

⁶² Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria*, 84, 88.

⁶³ Lorcin, “Rome and France,” 323. Peter Dunwoodie writes that because of Bertrand “the settler, finally justified, was located in a noble past in a *Méditerranée latine* and projected into a heroic future in *la grande France*, and this (re)insertion of the Maghreb into a French empire was justified by appeals to the specific primacy and superiority of the French as the inheritors of Roman North Africa.” Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria*, 92.

⁶⁴ Prochaska, “History as Literature,” 695.

⁶⁵ Musette, *Cagayous Antijuif*, 28-29.

The antisemitic crisis in Algeria began in 1895, although there were antisemitic outbursts previous to that date.⁶⁶ In 1895 a major economic crisis emerged in Algeria, due in part to the weak price of wine and the resulting decline in vintners' revenues.⁶⁷ Times of economic crisis often provide fodder for scapegoating as well as strong discontentment with government. Ageron connects the fragile economic period of 1894-1896 to the evolution and organization of the new *algérieniste* movement, which he considered to be separatist in orientation.⁶⁸ Indeed, the significant economic downturn in the colony would undoubtedly create frustration, or even resentment, among colonists with regards to the metropole, which did not adequately support them through the crisis. In this time of discontent antisemitism flourished in the colony, taking roots and supporting the height of the antisemitic crisis after 1895.

Multiple Antisemitisms and Electoral Politics in Fin-de-Siècle France and Algeria

Antisemitism also intensified in the metropole in the 1890s. In May 1892, *La Libre Parole* published a series on how Jews were invading the French army and were using corrupt means to receive the best assignments without having the necessary skills. It was not until November 1894 that Alfred Dreyfus was accused of treason, but the *Libre Parole* articles helped prepare for the public outrage the accusation would create. The Dreyfus Affair provided an outlet for the latent antisemitism both in the metropole and the colony and led to violence throughout France and Algeria in 1898. In Algeria, newspaper readers kept up to date on all of the proceedings of the accusation and trial of Dreyfus. Antisemites used

⁶⁶ Geneviève Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise (1895-1905): L'antisémitisme dans l'Algérie coloniale* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1986), 7; Charles-Robert Ageron, *Politiques Coloniales au Maghreb* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), 1895. See also Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie*, 165.

⁶⁷ Crespo, *Les Italiens en Algérie*, 114.

⁶⁸ Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France*, 574-575.

the Dreyfus Affair as proof of the unpatriotic nature of Jews, both in the metropole and in the colony, and of the threat that they posed to the safety of the *mère patrie* and to the French people in general. Throughout the colony and in the metropole, the war cry of the antisemites would be heard: “*À bas les Juifs!*”⁶⁹

Hannah Arendt identifies politics and the development of the nation state as two major factors in the evolution of what she terms “modern antisemitism.”⁷⁰ Arendt argues that politics were more significant than economics in the modern antisemitic movement in the last third of nineteenth century in Germany, Austria, and France.⁷¹ Using the Dreyfus Affair as emblematic of the ideological and political aspects of nineteenth-century antisemitism, Arendt argued that such antisemitism was best exemplified in France, where it lasted a full decade.⁷² In contrast, Zeev Sternhell identifies the origin of modern antisemitism in France in the Boulangist movement, which united Boulangists and some Socialists.⁷³ During a Chamber of Deputies session on November 11, 1898, Deputy Thomson described the antisemitic movement in Algeria as the “new incarnation of Boulangisme.”⁷⁴ Sternhell argues that modern antisemitism incorporated various political and social trends of the era: social radicalism, Social Darwinism, and traditional, religious antisemitism.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Steven Uran, “La réception de l’Affaire en Algérie,” in Michel Drouin, ed., *L’Affaire Dreyfus de A à Z* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 527. See also James P. Daughton, “A Colonial Affair?: Dreyfus and the French Empire,” *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 31, no. 3 (2005): 469-483.

⁷⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1958), 9.

⁷¹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 28, 35.

⁷² Ibid., 42, 45.

⁷³ Zeev Sternhell, “The Roots of Popular Antisemitism in the Third Republic,” in Frances Malino and Bernard Wasserstein, eds., *The Jews in Modern France* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), 103. See also “Réunion antisémite de la Salle Wagram,” Paris, March 4, 1898, AN F/7/12453.

⁷⁴ “Compte Rendu: Chambre des Députés,” November 11, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁷⁵ Sternhell, “The Roots of Popular Antisemitism,” 109.

The economic frustrations of the lower classes became a strong source of power for modern antisemites. Portrayed as unwilling to commit to hard, manual labor to earn his income, the Jew exploited the working classes and the peasantry, who in contrast to Jews were idealized as honest, hard-workers, much like the *néos* in Algeria.⁷⁶ To blend a strong brew that would cement their position, antisemites mixed nationalistic sentiment with economic frustrations and religion.⁷⁷ In this context, a *néo* could demonstrate his nationalism and his identity as French by casting himself in opposition to the Jew. Arendt identifies a strong connection between the evolution of the modern mob and antisemitic violence due to the widespread support for modern antisemitism by those seeking inclusion, like the *néos*. She describes the mob as being the amalgamation of the *déclassés* of all classes, frustrated with the society from which they feel excluded, who develop a hero-worship for their leaders.⁷⁸ Gavin Langmuir notes that the mob's proclivity for antisemitic violence served to dissipate frustrations and concern over larger problems.⁷⁹

Antisemitism in Algeria far surpasses Arendt's classification of fin-de-siècle France as the best example of nineteenth century antisemitism. The political nature of antisemitic concerns were significantly more fraught in Algeria than in the metropole because of the large percentage of votes made up of naturalized Algerian Jews. For Arendt, antisemitism in the metropole was largely political, but not explicitly electoral. In contrast, Algerian antisemitism was of specifically electoral origins.⁸⁰ Prochaska describes the Crémieux

⁷⁶ Sternhell, "The Roots of Popular Antisemitism," 112.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 115.

⁷⁸ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 10, 107, 112.

⁷⁹ Gavin I. Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 332.

⁸⁰ Carol Iancu, "Du Nouveau sur les Troubles Antijuifs en Algérie à la Fin du XIXème Siècle" in Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, *Les Relations entre Juifs et Musulmans en Afrique du Nord, XIXe-XXe Siècles: Actes du colloque international de l'Institut d'Histoire des Pays d'Outre Mer* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980), 173.

decree as a ticking time bomb that would explode during the Dreyfus Affair.⁸¹ Many scholars agree that there existed a link between Algerian and metropolitan antisemitism. In contrast, Geneviève Dermenjian argues that Algerian antisemitism operated independently from the metropolitan version.⁸² Although there were distinct ties between the antisemitic movements in the colony and the metropole, Algerian antisemitism took on a significantly more electoral tint. Both movements were strengthened by the Dreyfus Affair and used it as an opportunity to increase the violent aspect of their philosophy. The Algerian antisemites used the specifically Algerian context of frustrated *néos* wishing to improve their lot and express their identity to create a far more virulent program.

In his analysis of the colonial city of Bône, Prochaska analyzes the nature of highly-contested elections and the various parties involved. While he describes Algerian antisemitism as having a distinctly electoral focus, Prochaska also notes its strong racial element, which related not only to Jews and Algerian Muslims, but also the very large *néo-français* population. This racial aspect was connected to severe status anxiety as a result of the blurring of lines between the dichotomy of colonizer and colonized. With the Crémieux decree the Algerian Jews were the first to cross over from colonized subjects to the ranks of colonizers. In a 1900 brochure printed in Algiers, “Le Juif Algérien et la question anti-Sémite en Algérie,” Gustave des Illiers identified aspects of the Algerian Jew that promoted antisemitic attitudes in the colony. He wrote that the Crémieux decree required Jews to exercise rights for which they were “entirely unprepared.”⁸³ Des Illiers described the Jews as

⁸¹ Prochaska, *Making Algeria French*, 138.

⁸² Geneviève Dermenjian, “Le Juif est-il Français? Antisémitisme et l’idée républicaine en Algérie (1830-1939)” in Shmuel Trigano, ed., *L’Identité des Juifs d’Algérie: Une expérience originale de la modernité* (Paris: Éditions du Nadir d’Alliance Israélite Universelle, 2003), 49.

⁸³ Gustave des Illiers, *Le Juif algérien et la question antisémite en Algérie* (Alger: Imprimerie Pascal Crescenzo, 1900), 27.

incapable of having political convictions and being directed in their voting by the Consistory leadership.⁸⁴

Besides the threat posed to their status by the naturalized Jews, the *français d'origine* were concerned with the fact that Algeria was becoming a “dumping ground” for immigrants and thus was losing the respect of the metropole. Similarly, they feared being overrun not only by Algerian Muslims, but also by the non-French settlers who posed a significant “foreign peril” to the Frenchness of the colony. The *néos* experienced status anxiety even after 1889 because many remained close to the colonized in economic status.⁸⁵ The *petits blancs* viewed the Jews as their main source of competition in the colony and were extremely susceptible to the rhetoric of antisemitic politicians in the colony.

Ageron’s argument that the anti-Jewish crisis in Algeria was part of an “abortive Algerian revolution” ignores the unique conditions on the ground and projects the Algeria crisis of the 1950s back into the past. He underestimates the powerful pull of antisemitism in the colony by subsuming it into the separatist movement.⁸⁶ Ageron does not adequately explicate the *néos’* motivation for participating in the separatist movement. I contend, in contrast, that the antisemitism in Algeria was not a cover for a separatist revolution; rather it was an organic movement, fed by the metropole, but nourished by local conflicts, frustrations, and the strong inclination in the colony for stratification and self-segregation among the various colonial groups. Antisemitism was a means by which the *néos* sought to integrate themselves more fully into Algerian society. Rather than describe Algerian antisemitism as a disguise for separatism, I argue that it was a prime example of nineteenth-

⁸⁴ Des Illiers, *Le Juif algérien*, 27-28.

⁸⁵ Prochaska, *Making Algeria French*, 204.

⁸⁶ Ageron, *Modern Algeria*, 63.

century antisemitism designed to purify the nation or the colony in this case. In his 1886 tome, Drumont predicted that Algeria “would begin the French antisemitic campaign.”⁸⁷

Developing Algerian Antisemitism

The first antisemitic wave occurred immediately following the Crémieux decree in 1871. Deputy Charles du Bouzet attempted to abrogate the decree by claiming that it had instigated the Arab Revolt of 1871. The Jewish community in France together with Adolphe Crémieux immediately refuted du Bouzet’s claim that the Crémieux decree instigated the revolt.⁸⁸ The Crémieux decree and du Bouzet’s failed attempt at abrogating it nonetheless stimulated the formation of antisemitic leagues in the colony. The first antisemitic league organized in Miliana in 1871 with the goal of combating Jewish voters, but it had little impact.⁸⁹ In 1884, Fernand Grégoire founded *la ligue socialiste antijuive*, which attracted right-wing colonists. The third antisemitic league was one of the most significant and focused on economic and social boycotting of Jews. Founded in 1892, its organization coincided with the establishment of Edouard Drumont’s *La Libre Parole*. Between 1894 and 1896, a wave of even more militant antisemitic leagues developed in the major cities of the colony: Algiers, Oran, and Constantine and in smaller towns as well.⁹⁰

In a June 1895 report to the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Justice described the growth of antisemitic leagues in Algeria. He focused on three in particular—Algiers, Sétif, and Constantine—noting that Sétif and Constantine seemed to have a cooperative

⁸⁷ Edouard Drumont, *La France Juive: Essai d’histoire contemporaine, tome deuxième* (Paris: C. Marpon & E. Flammarion, 1886), 47.

⁸⁸ Letter M. Le Vice-President Consistoire Centrale à M. Léopold Javal, July 30, 1871, Consistoire Centrale, CC 2^E-Boite 2; Adolphe Crémieux, *Refutation de la pétition de M. Du Bouzet* (Paris : Imprimerie Schiller, 1871), 13-14.

⁸⁹ Uran, “La réception de l’Affaire en Algérie,” 521.

⁹⁰ Iancu, “Du Nouveau sur les Troubles Antijuifs,” 178; Friedman, *Colonialism and After*, 19.

relationship without having much interaction with that of Algiers. The Minister of Justice wrote that all three leagues featured a distinctly electoral character. The Algiers league, founded in 1892, also by Fernand Grégoire, contained articles in its statutes that emphasized its political nature. The abrogation of the Crémieux decree was among the league's most significant goals. Based on information from the Procurer General of Algiers, the Ligue socialiste antijuive d'Alger had made scant progress, met infrequently, and, despite heavy propaganda, lost members. The Antisemitic League of Sétif, formed in 1894 by adversaries of Deputy Thomson, whom antisemites described "elected by the Jews," lacked official recognition. The League of Constantine, like that of Sétif, focused on combating the electoral power of Deputy Thomson and led protests against him in April 1895. The Ligue antijuive of Constantine had 752 members and had Colonel Corps as its President of honor. Colonel Corps had been the main challenger to Deputy Thomson in the previous two elections. According to the report, the League of Constantine also lacked official recognition.⁹¹

The establishment of these antisemitic leagues indicates that the antisemitism in Algeria in the 1880s and 1890s had a specifically political orientation. Algerian antisemitism emerged not as a result of the Crémieux decree that made Jews citizens, but more specifically because it gave them the right to vote.⁹² The delay in the formation of antisemitic leagues following the Crémieux decree indicates that Jews as citizens only became a real threat when they became a permanent voting element in elections, and as these elections became more competitive. In Algeria, two parties dominated politics: the radical Republican party and the

⁹¹ Minister of Justice to the Minister of the Interior, "Report No. 1306.A.95," June 1895, AN F/7/12460.

⁹² Zosa Szajkowski, "Socialists and Radicals in the Development of Antisemitism in Algeria (1884-1900)" *Jewish Social Studies* 10, no. 3 (July 1948): 259.

moderate Opportunists.⁹³ In 1881 the Opportunist party emerged, splitting off from the Republicans. The Opportunist party wooed the Jewish vote through its moderate program, unlike the Radical party. Because of Jewish votes, the Opportunists achieved victory.⁹⁴ As a result of the significant role that Jewish electors played in the 1881 elections, violence broke out in the colony, particularly in Oran.⁹⁵ At the same time, Jews emerged as critical electors and a politically powerful group, changing the landscape of politics and elections.

One of the first major episodes of antisemitic violence in the colony occurred between June 29 and July 2, 1884.⁹⁶ This outburst came in large part as a result of Jewish electors being excluded from a ball thrown by a political party, the Jews' attempt to enter the event and the ensuing brawls.⁹⁷ Jewish shops and homes were pillaged. David de Moise Stora, the Treasurer of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in Algiers, wrote that the situation of Jews in Algiers following the violence of the past few days was comparable to that of Jews in Russia. Stora complained that "persecution should not exist in civilized countries, especially in the French setting."⁹⁸ Algerian Jews would regularly invoke the civilized nature of France in their requests for intervention in times of antisemitism.

Voting in the colony was a political activity –the right of citizens, but it was also a means of earning something in exchange for one's vote via the patronage system inherent in Algerian municipal politics. Local elections were the key site in which the meanings of

⁹³ David Prochaska, "The political culture of settler colonialism in Algeria: politics in Bone (1870-1920)" *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, no. 48-49 (1988): 296. Prochaska speculated that in the late nineteenth century, the native French voted for the Republican party, while Jews and *néos* voted for the Opportunists.

⁹⁴ Szajkowski, "Socialists and Radicals," 260-261.

⁹⁵ Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie*, 160; Harvey Goldberg, "Jean Jaurès and the Jewish Question: The Evolution of a Position" *Jewish Social Studies* 20, no. 2 (April 1958): 79.

⁹⁶ Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France*, 585; Szajkowski, "Socialists and Radicals," 265-266. Kanoui references the antisemitic violence in 1884 in his letter to the Members of the Central Jewish Consistory, Paris, Algiers, April 24, 1892, CC I^c 38.

⁹⁷ Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 55-56.

⁹⁸ Letter David de Moise Stora to the Treasurer of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, Paris, July 4, 1884, AIU Algérie IC2.

Algerian Jews' citizenship were asserted and contested. Zosa Szajkowski describes voting in Algeria as a form of speculation, particularly among Frenchmen.⁹⁹ Prochaska, in his chapter on bossism and political patronage in Bône, depicts campaigning as abiding by the rule that "anything goes if you could get away with it." Furthermore, vote buying was endemic.¹⁰⁰ All groups in the colony participated in the trafficking of votes. Antisemites contended that Jewish votes were bought in the store of a Jewish merchant. Algerian council members established war-chests with which to buy votes, and candidates regularly threw *punchs* and *aperitifs*, cocktail parties, for prospective voters. Voters attended these events by the hundreds, eating and enjoying "numerous drinks" on the candidate's tab. Other examples of the commercial exchange of votes included offering temporary jobs or welfare subsidies.¹⁰¹ Because of these activities, voting in Bône, and by extension Algeria in general, was controlled by a "political machine" and patronage, which included exchanges between the political "boss" and the voters. The patronage system of municipal government exemplified settler politics.¹⁰²

Although all racial and ethnic groups in the colony participated in such politics, Jews were particularly singled out for corrupt voting practices. Upon joining the antisemitic camp, socialists and radicals argued that due to their immoral voting activities, Jews were committing a crime against universal suffrage and failed to appreciate the importance of what the Crémieux decree had given them.¹⁰³ One of the major theses of the Socialist antisemites was that in France, Jews held significant power with regards to money, but lacked the numerical strength to have any true electoral power. In Algeria, however, Jews had both

⁹⁹ Szajkowski, "Socialists and Radicals," 261.

¹⁰⁰ Prochaska, *Making Algeria French*, 176

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 187.

¹⁰² Ibid., 188, 192.

¹⁰³ Szajkowski, "Socialists and Radicals," 262.

money and numbers, and they used their numbers to exert their power in elections.¹⁰⁴ In particular, antisemites pointed to the influence of the Jewish Consistories on Jewish votes.

Depicted as “docile and without political formation,” Jews blindly followed the directions of their consistorial leaders, the most famous of whom was Simon Kanoui, known as the “Rothschild of Oran.” Ageron calls him Oran’s “great elector.”¹⁰⁵ Kanoui was not only president of the consistory, he also directed its welfare funds.¹⁰⁶ Dermenjian argues that Kanoui crystallized the discontentment of Europeans with regards to Jews, and symbolized for antisemites the epitome of vote and money trafficking in the colony. Anti-Kanouism was thus the entry point for many Europeans in the department of Oran into a more violent antisemitism and Kanoui served as its “detonator” by feeding such stereotypes.¹⁰⁷

In his 1886 *La France Juive*, Edouard Drumont called Kanoui a “potentate,” who controlled the entire department, maintained the prefect as his “humble slave,” and had at his disposition all of the government agents. Drumont noted, however, that it was not just the Jews in Oran who sold their votes; Jews in Constantine also participated in vote-trafficking. According to Drumont, the Jews in Constantine received on average two or three francs for their votes.¹⁰⁸ The 1898 inquiry by Deputy Paul Samary, which analyzed the effects of the 1898 riots, included a discussion of Jewish vote-selling practices. Following a discussion of Jewish usury, Samary stated to his fellow deputies “you know the role of Jews in elections, it is ancient history. You have received reports on consistory action, the sale of votes in open

¹⁰⁴ Goldberg, “Jean Jaurès and the Jewish Question,” 81.

¹⁰⁵ Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France*, 584.

¹⁰⁶ Iancu, “Du Nouveau sur les Troubles Antijuifs,” 174.

¹⁰⁷ Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 50.

¹⁰⁸ Drumont, *La France Juive, tome deuxième*, 34.

offices, multiple voting.... This is yet another reason why the political rights given to Algerian Jews have exasperated the French.”¹⁰⁹

In his analysis of the “political question” regarding Algerian Jews, des Illiers identified the lack of political convictions among Jews as the central problem. Compounded with their innate commercial nature, Jews viewed their political rights as citizens as a method of assuring their fortune and power.¹¹⁰ In this Jewish hegemony, rabbis and consistory leadership, such as the infamous Kanoui, played the role of advisors and major electors.¹¹¹ More troublesome for des Illiers, the corrupt electoral habits of Algerian Jews infected other groups’ voting practices. “Following the example of the Jews, Europeans, French of origin [*de race*] or naturalized of fresh date, sell their votes. The shameful haggling, hypocritical maneuvers, unspeakable calumnies have become standard practice during the electoral period.”¹¹² Des Illiers and other authors of the time who dealt with Jewish voting practices all leveled the same accusation as Drumont in *La France Juive* regarding Algerian Jews post-Crémioux Decree: “You are French in name and not in heart.”¹¹³

The Dreyfus Affair added fuel to antisemitism in the colony and the metropole. On February 25, 1895, Prefect de Malherbe of the department of Oran wrote the Mayor of Oran suggesting that it would be wise to restrict the nominations of Jews to municipal services in the city, while subtly noting that there was a large number of French applicants.¹¹⁴ This note reflects the growing antisemitism among colonial officials. A short time later, in a letter on April 30, Abraham Stora, vice president of the Constantine Consistory, updated the central

¹⁰⁹ “Interpellation Samary, Chambre des Députés, Séance du 19 février 1898,” AN F/19/11145.

¹¹⁰ Des Illiers, *Le Juif Algérien*, 32, 27.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 28-29.

¹¹² Ibid., 30.

¹¹³ Drumont, *La France Juive, tome deuxième*, 48.

¹¹⁴ Prefect de Malherbe of Oran to the Mayor of Oran, “No. 1084,” Oran, February 25, 1895, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

consistory members in Paris on the state of antisemitism in Algeria. Stora requested advice from Chief Rabbi Zadoc Kahn regarding the conditions of Jews in Algeria, indicating the terrible situation caused by the antisemitic movement. Stora wondered how to “stave off the consequences of this campaign of hate and defamation which causes fear for Jews in Algeria in general, and not just for the Jews of the department of Constantine where the animosity of antisemites becomes more complicated due to electoral resentment.”¹¹⁵

In the beginning of May 1895, Jean Jaurès published a series of articles on the Jews of Algeria in the newspaper *La Dépêche de Toulouse*. Jaurès focused on the significant economic troubles in the colony, resulting from the agricultural crises. Portraying the French, Arabs, and *néos* as the victims of Jewish activity, Jaurès relied on economic antisemitism in his argument. “In cities, the whole of the French population is exasperated with the Jews because by usury, by tireless commercial activity, and by abuse of political influence, they [Jews] hoard little by little the fortune, trade, profitable jobs, administrative functions, public power.”¹¹⁶ Furthermore, according to Jaurès, Jews in Algeria were more powerful than their coreligionists in France because in Algeria they had both economic and electoral power due to their numbers, so much so that often, “the Jewish quarter, by its votes, determines the election.” In spite of the 25 years since the Crémieux decree, Jaurès argued that Jews remain “strangers to the traditions, ideas, battles of France,” voting for the opportunists, because opportunism developed the power of finance and because it was the “political form of the Jewish spirit.”¹¹⁷ Because of the highly contested nature of Algerian elections, the Jewish question led to the development of a growing antisemitic movement.

¹¹⁵ Vice President of the Constantine Consistory Ab. Stora to the President and Members of the Central Consistory, Constantine, April 30, 1895, CC I^{cc} 39.

¹¹⁶ Jean Jaurès, “La Politique: La Question Juive en Algérie,” *La Dépêche de Toulouse*, May 1, 1895, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

¹¹⁷ Jaurès, “La Politique: La Question juive en Algérie,” May 1, 1895, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

According to Jaurès, in opposition to the Jew, the Arab and the Frenchman (either of French origin or a *néo*) could be united under the socialist flag.¹¹⁸

In his next article on May 8, 1895, Jaurès continued his critique of the conditions in Algeria. One of his main arguments was that an antisemitic movement in Algeria had diverged sharply from the metropole. More troublesome, he noted, was that the antisemitic movement in Algeria appeared to be taking on a “revolutionary spirit.”¹¹⁹ Unlike most writers of the time, who pointed to the antisemitism of the French *colons* and the *néos*, Jaurès took stock of rising antisemitism among Algerian Muslims. “For twenty-five years, since the Crémieux decree, since the development of an opportunistic Republic, the Arabs watched with stupor and contempt at the official control of the Algerian Jew over Algeria.”¹²⁰ Jaurès described the Algerian Muslims as suffering from material and intellectual misery along with the European proletariat because of the “political hegemony” exercised by Jews and their capitalist regime. He warned that unless the metropolitan French intervened and improved the situation, Germans and British forces, who were distributing anti-French propaganda, would succeed in overthrowing the French in Algeria.¹²¹

According to a report to the members of the Central Jewish Consistory in Paris on antisemitism in Algeria in the mid 1890s, Jews in Algeria had become the favorite scapegoat in the colony. “The Jew has become the common enemy, the universal scourge,” unifying antisemites under the goal of abrogating the Crémieux decree.¹²² A further source of concern for the author, like Jaurès, was that antisemites found support among Algerian Muslims. The

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Jean Jaurès, “La Politique: Choses algériennes,” *La Dépêche de Toulouse*, May 8, 1895, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

¹²⁰ Jaurès, “La Politique: Choses algériennes,” May 8, 1895, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² “Mémoire à Messieurs les Membres du Consistoire Centrale de France,” by R.L. probably 1896, CC2E-Boîte 2.

author described Arabs as having an excitable character, primitive instincts, and being “half-savages.”¹²³ Although Jews and Muslims had coexisted in Algeria for centuries, according to the author of the report, Arabs were particularly susceptible to incitements to violence, pillage, and stealing.¹²⁴

At the end of 1895 and the beginning of 1896, antisemites in Algeria led a movement to revise electoral lists, and more specifically, to remove as many Jewish voters as possible and thus reduce competition in elections.¹²⁵ According to the author of the report to the Central Consistory, the regulations imposed on the Crémieux decree by the October 7, 1871 decree, required that in order to be an official elector, within 20 days of the promulgation of the 1871 decree, Jews were required to renounce their indigenous status before a Justice of the Peace in front of seven witnesses. According to the author of the report, following the success of the antisemites in eliminating Jewish voters from electoral lists, “the Jews are no longer men, they are pariahs, inferior beings, set by them [antisemites] and by the authority itself [government] outside the law and out of humanity, everything is permitted against them.”¹²⁶ This antisemitic argument for the elimination of Jewish electors from voter lists occurred again in Sidi Bel Abbès in 1938.

According to an April 24, 1896 edition of *La Gazette des Tribunaux* on the electoral rights of Algerian Jews, Jewish voters who were unable to justify their indigenous quality by producing a “*titre d’indigénat*” were removed from electoral lists.¹²⁷ In 1896, antisemites succeeded in disenfranchising 900 out of 1,100 Jewish voters in Constantine.¹²⁸ The

¹²³ Jewish representations of Muslims are an important area of conflict, which requires further research.

¹²⁴ “Mémoire à Messieurs les Membres du Consistoire Centrale de France,” CC2E-Boîte 2.

¹²⁵ Dermenjian. *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 67.

¹²⁶ “Mémoire à Messieurs les Membres du Consistoire Centrale de France,” CC2E-Boîte 2

¹²⁷ “Droit Electorale des Israelites en Algérie,” April 24, 1896, *La Gazette des Tribunaux*, AN F/19/11145.

¹²⁸ Friedman, *Colonialism and After*, 19.

disenfranchisement of Jewish voters throughout Algeria paved the way for greater antisemitic electoral successes, winning a series of electoral victories in 1896 and 1897. Antisemites took over municipal councils in Constantine in 1896 and in Oran in 1897, which led to the major parliamentary victories in 1898, including Drumont's election as deputy, along with three other elected antisemitic deputies.¹²⁹

Antisemitism, Violence, and Elections in 1890s Algeria

In the wake of their success in disenfranchising Jewish voters, Algerian antisemites increased the intensity of their growing movement. From 1896 to 1898 there was a series of large explosions of antisemitic violence in the colony. Although the 1897 violence between Jews and antisemites in Oran is often considered one of the first major violent preludes to the 1898 riots in Algiers, antisemites attacked Jews in Constantine in late April and in May 1896 at the time of the municipal elections. Because of its gradual development, it is important to examine the evolution of antisemitic violence in the second half of the 1890s in order to understand the significance of the explosion of antisemitic violence in 1898.

According to a telegram sent from the Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, ritual murder accusations made by the republican newspaper *Silhouette* on April 26 and 28, 1896 incited violence against Jews. The accusation stated that Jews killed children whose blood they used for *galettes* (wafers). The telegram also included a request by Jewish leaders in Constantine for the Prefect's intervention in protecting Jewish voters and maintaining calm in the streets.¹³⁰ In a letter on April 21, 1896, President Abraham le Guenseur Attali of the Constantine Consistory wrote to the members of the Central

¹²⁹ Prochaska, *Making Algeria French*, 202-203.

¹³⁰ Telegram Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, May 21, 1896, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. *Galettes* may actually signify matzos, given the timing of the incident.

Consistory in Paris, describing the worsening conditions of Jews in Constantine. Attali noted that, although the current situation at the end of April was already bad, in the coming election period it would only deteriorate further. “Already we note with concern the precursors of disorders coming on May 3, and viewing the excitement of the spirits, we fear, without exaggeration, worse bloody collisions.”¹³¹ Attali’s concerns proved warranted.

In another letter to the Central Consistory in Paris on May 17, 1896, Attali wrote of the anti-Jewish violence that occurred in Constantine on the eve of the elections on May 3. According to Attali, as a result of the incitement by the antisemitic press in Constantine, the European population, along with Muslim supporters, manifested their hostility towards the Jews. For Attali, the events which occurred on the day of the municipal elections and the following days “exceeded our most pessimistic expectations.”¹³² Even before the day of the elections, Jews were attacked in the streets. According to Attali, police incarcerated for fifteen days Jewish youths wrongly accused of beating a European youth, whereas a leader of an antisemitic club who attempted, but failed, to kill a Jew received no punishment and was acquitted by a jury.

Attali wrote that “It is difficult to imagine the cruel anguish we experienced in the midst of these hostile elements to which was added thousands of Arabs from all corners of the Department to terrorize Jewish voters and prevent them from voting.”¹³³ Attali described how Jewish voters who decided to brave the voting stations, despite the dangers they would invariably face, suffered various attacks and many returned seriously injured. In the letter he described groups of Arabs patrolling the streets and attacking Jews. Attali noted fifty victims

¹³¹ The members of the Constantine Consistory (President Abraham le Guenseur Attali) to the members of the Central Consistory, Paris, April 21, 1896, CC 2E-Boîte 2.

¹³² The members of the Constantine Consistory (Attali) to the members of the Central Consistory, Paris, May 17, 1896, CC 2E-Boîte 2.

¹³³ Ibid.

during the days of violence, some lightly injured, others gravely wounded. According to Attali, although the streets were finally calm, thanks to the actions taken by the military, the antisemitic press continued to incite attacks on Jews, which he described as “calls to civil war against our fellow Jews.” With the newly elected antisemitic municipal council, Attali feared that without metropolitan governmental intervention the violence would continue.¹³⁴

This episode of violence against Jews is significant for several reasons. First, the fact that the violence is tied in with an electoral period indicates that much of the antisemitism of the 1890s was linked to electoral issues, and more generally, the practice of citizenship. Jews suffered disenfranchisement at the hands of antisemitic agitators and violence should they attempt to practice their political right to vote. This episode is reminiscent of the violence and barriers black voters faced in the US during the Jim Crow era. Similar to the Jews in Algeria, the lower class whites, the American *petits blancs*, attempted to restrain the competition they imagined coming from blacks exerting their right to vote.¹³⁵ The power of the antisemitic press was evident in the events of 1896 and later in Oran in 1897 and Algiers in 1898. The historian Dermenjian describes the antisemitic party in Algeria as “the scandal party,” because it leaked rumors about Jews, like ritual murder accusations, to incite both European and Algerian Muslim hostility to Jews.¹³⁶

Algerian Muslims were the main actors of the violence, although clearly European settlers were also involved. Attali carefully noted that the non-Muslim agitators were “European,” not explicitly French, thus one can infer from that semantic choice that the antisemitic Europeans were likely *néos*. Using Prochaska’s logic, these *néos* sought to

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ See, for example, Steven F. Lawson, *Black Ballots: Voting Rights in the South, 1944-1969* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

¹³⁶ Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive oranaise*, 137.

demonstrate their Frenchness by participating in antisemitic violence against their status competitors, the Jews. Because the attacks on Jewish voters in Constantine were not mentioned in official French documents, we must rely on Jewish communication between the local and central consistories. Thus we cannot know exactly what motivations led the Algerian Muslims to attack Jews. Were they paid by European antisemites who wished to keep their hands clean, or were they resentful of the political rights of Jews following the Crémieux decree, rights from which Muslims were excluded? These questions are relevant not only for the specific Constantine case, but for the entire period of 1890s antisemitism. It also appears that Arab-Jewish violence in the Maghreb was not limited to Algeria. In Tunis on March 27, 1897, before the violence in May in Oran, Arab youths took over the souks, searching for Jews, whom they beat with batons. Other groups of Arabs attacked Jewish shops. The violence continued throughout the day, until the authorities reinstated calm. The author of the French report noted that nothing indicated a correlation to “Algerian troubles.”¹³⁷

Following the 1896 violence in Constantine, Oran became the center of antisemitic agitation in Algeria. The brutal conflict in May 1897 in Oran was a precursor to the well-known riots in Algiers and in France in 1898. It pitted antisemites, many of whom were *néos* of Spanish origin, against Jews.¹³⁸ The May 1897 pillaging, destruction of synagogues, and violence marked the beginning of the dramatic antisemitic period in Algeria which extended into the next year. Ageron argued that the May 1897 violence signaled the onset of the abortive revolution of the *Algériens*, citing Max Régis’ term for their program: “*notre*

¹³⁷ Report Tunis, March 27, 1897, AN F/7/12460.

¹³⁸ Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie*, 167, 174; Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 43.

révolution.”¹³⁹ According to Dermenjian, during the events of May 1897, all classes were found in the streets participating in the violence.¹⁴⁰

Italian and Spanish *néos* played a very active role in the violence in 1897 and 1898, and remained strongly antisemitic into the twentieth century.¹⁴¹ Non-French Europeans, specifically the Spanish, responded to traditional and religious antisemitism, and *français d'origine* to modern and secular antisemitism. They were unified, however, alongside Algerian Muslims, by a general Jew-hatred. Following the 1889 naturalization law, *français d'origine* were wary and resentful of the masses of naturalized non-French Europeans. In the late 1890s, however, French antisemites found the *néos* essential for the success of antisemitism in the colony.¹⁴² In the *Marseillaise antijuive* of the Bab-el-Oued, the anthem of the Algiers antisemitic party, the French call upon the Spanish to join them in removing “the Jew” and “disinfecting” Algeria. The Bab-el-Oued, home to Cagayous, was the French-Spanish quarter of Algiers. “Stand, you French, and you brave Spaniards, we have had enough of being subjected to the yoke of *youdis* [derogatory term for Jew]; at our threats of action, they laugh; it is necessary to sweep them away, and disinfect Algeria.”¹⁴³

The violence of May 1897 was the most widespread to date in the colony, originating in Mostaganem, the epicenter, and radiating throughout the department of Oran. For the *néos*, participation in the antisemitic attacks served as proof of their Frenchness, proof that they were “more French than the French.”¹⁴⁴ Spanish antisemitism drew on an event in 1889 that developed into mythic proportions. A young Jewish man, Saul ben Soussan, fell in love

¹³⁹ Ageron, *Politiques coloniales au Maghreb*, 161.

¹⁴⁰ Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 87.

¹⁴¹ Emmanuel Sivan, “Stéréotypes antijuifs dans la mentalité pied-noir” in *Les Relations entre Juifs et Musulmans en Afrique du Nord*, 168.

¹⁴² Sivan, “Stéréotypes antijuifs,” 166.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Sivan, “Stéréotypes antijuifs,” 167.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, *Colonial Memory*, 110.

with a Spanish woman, Maria Molina. After being repeatedly rejected by Maria, Saul shot her twice and then stabbed her. The Spanish community demanded revenge, but did not have the faith in the French justice system to adequately punish Saul and the Jewish community in general. In particular, they feared that the Jewish political and economic influence in Oran would sway the impartiality of the justice system.¹⁴⁵ As a result of such frustrations in the period leading up to 1897 and 1898, Spanish immigrants and *néos* actively participated in the antisemitic violence in fin-de-siècle Algeria.

For these *néos*, anti-Jewish violence took on multiple forms and became a political, religious, economic, and social battle in which they could exert their new French identity and their rights to power in the colony. The violence of 1897 pitted antisemites against Jews, and was one of the earliest cases of Algerian Jewish defense, not only in terms of physical self-defense, but also the protection of their identity as French citizens. The 1897 violence also widened the ranks of antisemites to incorporate *néos* and Frenchmen from all social classes under the same flag in a battle with a common enemy. It is also important to note that, coincidentally, antisemitic rumors spread in the metropole in the aftermath of the Charity Bazaar fire in Paris on May 4, 1897. Although the two events, the Charity Bazaar fire and the antisemitic violence in Oran, are likely unrelated, antisemites surely capitalized on the growing anxiety and paranoia of the public at the time.¹⁴⁶

On May 16, 1897 the *Joyeux Club Cycle Oranaïs* took part in a bicycle tour of Mostaganem. Paul Irr, an antisemitic municipal council member of Oran, served as the leader of the *Joyeux Club*'s delegation, which consisted nearly entirely of Spanish

¹⁴⁵ Jordi, *Espagnol en Oranie*, 163.

¹⁴⁶ Michel Winock, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 59, 73-74. The subject of the coincidental and cooperative nature of antisemitism in the metropole and the colony is the focus of Chapter Two.

immigrants and other *néos*.¹⁴⁷ According to a May 31, 1897 report, “Mr. Irr is one of the most violent antisemites in Oran.”¹⁴⁸ The author of the report alluded to the fact that Mostaganem was a specific choice for Irr, because it had a population of approximately 700 Jews, and there had never been any antisemitic conflict there previously. The bicycle tour began without conflict; however, at the end of the day, the members of the *Joyeux Club*, along with their Mostaganem colleagues, adjourned to the *Hôtel de France* where they enjoyed a dinner on the terrace in front of the hotel. During dessert, the young cyclists sang antisemitic songs and Irr made antisemitic comments. Among the pedestrians making their way along the sidewalk in front of the hotel were several Jews who took offense at the raucous singing and insults, but did not act. Following dinner, the cyclists who had been drinking heavily relocated to the Café Massoulier, the biggest café in Mostaganem. There they continued their rants after which several café patrons accompanied by women departed.¹⁴⁹

At that point, a nineteen year old Jewish man, named Serfaty, accompanied by six (Catholic) friends, entered the café. The author of the report noted that Serfaty had never been to the café before, as it was not patronized by laborers. According to the report’s author, Serfaty entered the establishment because he heard that Irr had insulted Jews while at the restaurant. After exchanging menacing gestures, Irr denied denigrating the Jews. Serfaty stated that “if someone were to yell ‘down with the Jews’ I would respond ‘Vive les Juifs!’” Anticipating a conflict, the café’s proprietor asked Serfaty and his friends to leave. Eventually the police forcibly removed three of Serfaty’s friends. Serfaty and three other friends remained in the café, drinking beer and keeping Irr in their sights. Frustrated with the

¹⁴⁷ “Mémoire sur les troubles de l’Oranie,” May 31, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685; Jordi 169.

¹⁴⁸ “Mémoire sur les troubles de l’Oranie,” CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

continued provocation of Serfaty's presence, Irr demanded why the proprietor could not remove a Jew from the premises. Serfaty responded "I am the only Jew here and am ready to fight you, where you want, and when you want." Irr's fellow cyclists attempted to calm him, and eventually left the café at 10 or 11 pm.¹⁵⁰

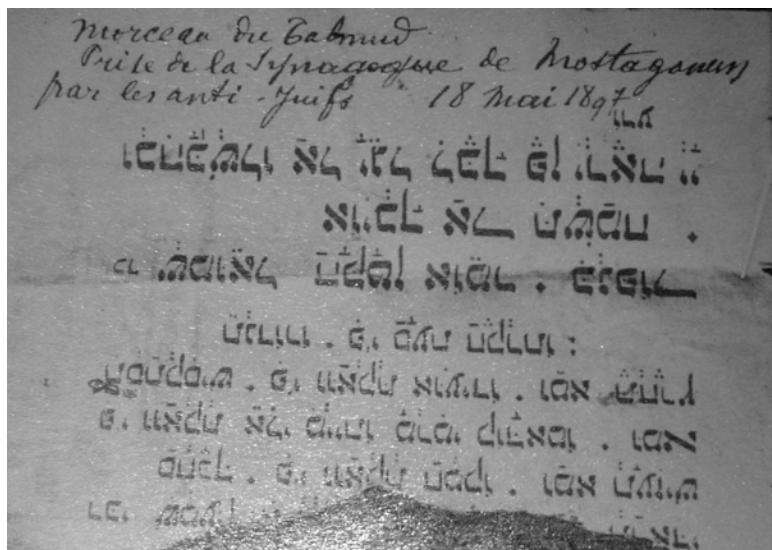
After leaving the café, the cyclists found themselves in front of the theater of Mostaganem, where Irr and his delegation cried out three times "À bas les Juifs!" Not far behind, Serfaty and several other young people, supposedly Jews, appeared. Irr rallied his group, encouraging them to harass the Jews. "You Oranais, you have come here to cause problems and to teach people in our country to do the same," said Serfaty. Soon after, a fight broke out between Serfaty and Irr, which escalated into a larger brawl between Serfaty and his friends, and Irr and his cycling group. After Irr spewed more antisemitic insults, Serfaty pulled out a knife and stabbed him in the chest. The police arrested Serfaty as the crowd shouted "there is the assassin!" Four other Jews were arrested alongside Serfaty on the premise that they were beating the cyclists. The next day, May 17, the news of the attempted assassination of Irr and of the precarious state of two young cyclists, one of them a naturalized Spanish immigrant, spread throughout Mostaganem. Newspapers proclaimed Irr a martyr. Jews locked themselves into their homes for fear of retaliation.¹⁵¹

On the evening of May 17, Arabs, Spaniards, and Frenchmen terrorized Jews and descended upon the Jewish quarter of Mostaganem. Shouting "Death to the Jews!," the demonstrators threw stones, breaking shop windows, and pillaging the contents. Eventually the rioters arrived at the synagogue, breaking down the doors, breaking glasses, taking down

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. It is important to note that the May 31 report cites that the cycling delegation went to a café, whereas other reports and Dermenjian's analysis state that the delegation went to a brothel. See "Mémoire sur les troubles de l'Oranie," CAOM FM F/80/1685; Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 74-75.

¹⁵¹ "Mémoire sur les troubles de l'Oranie," CAOM FM F/80/1685.

the candelabra, the clocks, the lamp, stealing silver and gold, taking rugs, demolishing pews and stealing money destined for the poor. According the report, Arabs and Spanish demonstrators defamed the Torah and Bibles.¹⁵² Finally, the rioters took pieces of the holy books as they left. On these fragments they wrote “Taken from the Synagogue of Mostaganem by the anti-Juifs, May 18, 1897.”¹⁵³ On the morning of May 18, the army finally intervened and refused to allow Arabs into the city. However, a crowd of Arabs managed to enter the city, armed with clubs, pillaging as they went. Arab women accompanied them, filling baskets with stolen objects. Eventually the Prefect arrived and took the necessary measures to stop the pillaging.¹⁵⁴



A piece of the *Pirkei Avot* text, mistakenly identified as Talmud, taken by the *anti-Juifs* from the synagogue of Mostaganem, May 18, 1897,
Source: CAOM FM/80/1683

Although the May 31 report was anonymous, it was likely produced by a government official. Various telegrams sent to newspapers and individuals during the days of pillaging and violence offered different interpretations of the violence. A telegram from Monsieur

¹⁵² According to the report, they “s'accroupissent et couvrent d'immondices le Tabernacles, la Tribune et jusqu'aux accessoires qui servent aux inhumations.” “Mémoire sur les troubles de l'Oranie,” CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Valette to the *Petit Parisien* on May 17 stated that during their evening walk, the cyclists were attacked by a band of Jews armed with clubs and knives.¹⁵⁵ In a telegram on May 18, the Governor General wrote the Minister of the Interior that the violence led to the ransacking of several Jewish shops as well as attacks on Jewish homes and the synagogues. The Governor General also noted concern for future disturbances, given that the population was greatly agitated. He also stated that similar violence and troubles occurred in the commune of Ain Tedeles, near Mostaganem.¹⁵⁶ The Jewish Consistory published a poster which stated:

The Jewish community of Mostaganem completely disavows all those who are guilty of the terrible events which occurred and which it deplores; justice will punish them with all the rigor of the laws. We strongly proclaim that we have no solidarity with the guilty. There has always been a perfect entente with all of the inhabitants of Mostaganem, whatever their religion, and the Jewish community hopes that this isolated fact is not of the nature to break this public harmony.¹⁵⁷

A few hours after the publication, the posters were defaced. This effort at conciliation and dialogue had been flatly rejected by the street.

Despite their attempts at placating the heightened spirits in the department of Oran, the Jewish community feared for their continued safety. On May 19, President Kanoui, Chief Rabbi Netter, and members of the consistory of Oran wrote to the central Consistory of their increasing concern. “Serious antisemitic troubles exploded in Mostaganem and lasted three days. Jewish shops pillaged, dwellings violated. The rioters twice attacked the communal synagogue which they first ransacked and completely destroyed the following day. There is fear of trouble in Oran following the excitation by the malicious press,

¹⁵⁵ Valette to *Petit Parisien*, “Telegram 64559,” Oran, May 17, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1865.

¹⁵⁶ Governor General to the Minister of the Interior (Paris), “Telegram 65582,” Algiers, May 18, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1865.

¹⁵⁷ Saint-André to *Petit Journal* (Paris), “Telegram 65570,” Mostaganem, May 18, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1865.

seditious placards were posted tonight on walls in Oran.”¹⁵⁸ On May 20, journalist Saint-André wrote to the *Petit Journal* in Paris that although there was relative calm in Mostaganem, violence exploded in Inkermann, Ain Tedeles, and Relizane. In Inkermann, the synagogue was broken into and ransacked.¹⁵⁹ On May 21, Kanoui and Netter wrote a telegram to the Minister of the Interior in Paris stating that “Jewish persons and goods are no longer secure in the city and in the department. Pillage and vandalism are committed everywhere.” Kanoui and Netter entreated the Minister of the Interior to act and defend the Jews in Algeria, concluding “we have faith in your justice and that of France.”¹⁶⁰

Kanoui’s and Netter’s concern over the safety of Jews in the department of Oran was warranted. On May 20, Irr and Bonnet, the two gravely injured cyclists who appeared to have recovered sufficiently, departed Mostaganem to return to Oran. The two received a farewell celebration and numerous bouquets from notables in Mostaganem.¹⁶¹ Irr alone received forty bouquets at the farewell ceremony attended by 3,000 people. Their departure took the form of a parade, led by the cyclists of the Vélo Club of Mostaganem and filled with shouts of “Vive la France.” Even the Prefect was in attendance.¹⁶²

In Oran, news of the fight between the cyclists and the Jews arrived on May 17, and soon after, the leadership of the *Joyeux Club Cycle Oranaïs* published a declaration that the club “had not provoked anyone” and published the results of a study conducted in Mostaganem which proved that the cyclists were ambushed by a premeditated attack orchestrated by the Jews. This declaration further incensed the already excited spirits of

¹⁵⁸ Consistory of Oran, Kanoui, Netter, Karsenty, Teboul, Levy, Strok, Valency, etc to the Central Consistory (Paris), “Telegram 65946,” Oran, May 19, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1865.

¹⁵⁹ Saint-André to *Petit Journal* (Paris), “Telegram 66455,” Mostaganem, May 20, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1865.

¹⁶⁰ Kanoui and Netter to the Minister of the Interior (Paris), “Telegram 66576,” Oran, May 21, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1865.

¹⁶¹ “Mémoire sur les troubles de l’Oranie,” CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁶² Saint-André to *Petit Journal* (Paris), “Telegram 66455,” May 20, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1865.

antisemites in Oran. On the day of the return of Irr and Bonnet to Oran, a meeting took place at the antisemitic Gymnastic society, *L'Oranaise*. At the meeting, participants created a list of Jewish shops, which was then given to several young Spanish men, members of *L'Oranaise*, whose main objective was “to defend the rights of the French of France (*français de France*),” and who had under their orders groups of Arabs armed with clubs. According to the May 31 report, these Arabs were paid 0.50 francs for the night and were organized by a non-naturalized Arab member of the *l'Oranaise* and employee of the Prefecture. Another municipal employee, police Commandant Peffau, was an influential member of *l'Oranaise* society, who also served as a municipal council member and as vice-president of the Ligue Antijuive in Oran.¹⁶³ Peffau’s position shows the overlap between municipal government and antisemitism.

Under the leadership of the young Spanish men, a fight broke out between Jews and antisemites in Oran at the Place d’Armes in the evening of May 20. Jews immediately returned to their homes in fear of upcoming violence. According to the report, bands of Arabs demolished windows, followed by Spaniards and women with baskets filled with stolen objects. All the stores on the list were broken into and pillaged. The rioters broke into the building of the *Concorde*, the primarily Jewish gymnastic society, and stole their tricolored flag. The report noted that the police remained “indifferent to the pillage.”¹⁶⁴ On May 21, police agents posted notices informing Spaniards that should they participate in future agitations or violence they would be expelled from Algeria. As the army attempted to restore the order, Arabs dressed as Europeans continued to pillage. On May 22, Jews continued to be attacked on the streets; even Jewish students leaving school were attacked.

¹⁶³ “Mémoire sur les troubles de l’Oranie,” CAOM FM F/80/1685. See also Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 84.

¹⁶⁴ “Mémoire sur les troubles de l’Oranie,” CAOM FM F/80/1685.

Commandant Peffau directed the municipal police to arrest any Jews who had a “provocative attitude.” During the evening, the non-municipal police arrested 60 rioters, among them numerous Spaniards dressed as Arabs. According to the report, following the arrests, the rioting subsided because the municipal police, led by the antisemitic Peffau, were no longer in charge and could not protect the rioters.¹⁶⁵ Peffau’s leadership illustrates the pervasive and powerful nature of antisemitism in municipal governments and their actions.

Violence was not limited to Mostaganem. It exploded throughout the department of Oran. On May 20, rioters ransacked the Inkermann synagogue. On the same day, 400 Arabs invaded Ain Tedeles in hopes of pillaging Jewish shops.¹⁶⁶ In Perregaux, following the arrival of Irr and Bonnet, rioters attacked the synagogue. In the evening of May 21, rioters in Ain Temouchent attacked and pillaged Jewish shops, beat Jews unconscious, and threw the Torah into the river.¹⁶⁷ Similar events also occurred in Fortassa, El Rahel, Rio Salado, Hammam bou Jadjar, and at Noisy les Bains, where Arabs attacked a Jewish shop, as well as that of French merchant. French non-Jews were concerned that the excesses of Arab demonstrators would devolve into an insurrection. Although the violence was largely concentrated in the department of Oran, its reverberations affected Constantine as well. The antisemitic municipal council of Constantine voted to exclude Jewish students at primary schools from receiving the classic school supplies, halting the distribution of aid to Jews, and refusing admission of Jewish patients to the hospital. On May 22, Arabs and Europeans attacked Jews in Constantine.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Monbrun to *Temps*, Paris, “Telegram 67092,” Oran, May 22, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁶⁷ Jewish Consistory delegate to the Minister of the Interior, Paris, “Telegram 67126,” Ain Temouchent, May 22, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁶⁸ “Mémoire sur les troubles de l’Oranie,” CAOM FM F/80/1685.

On May 23, the Governor General released a circular to all administrators requesting Muslim chiefs and religious leaders to encourage calm among Arabs. He also gave an order to suspend all authorizations for Arabs traveling in the department of Oran.¹⁶⁹ The Governor General also entreated Kanoui and Rabbi Netter to demand calm among their coreligionists.¹⁷⁰ Although both Muslim and Jewish leaders emphasized the importance of calm to their religious followers, significant distress and agitation continued among all sectors of the population.

Antisemites, Jewish “Assassins,” Police, and Néos: Assigning Blame for the Violence

In the months leading up to and including the violence in Oran, the municipal councils were complicit with anti-Semitic acts. The author of the May 31 report attributed the majority of the guilt for the Oran violence to the antisemites, who began the general campaign against the Jews in the months before the outbreak of the violence. On March 14, 1897, the newly elected antisemitic municipal council of Oran voted to revoke all Jewish police agents, refused to award scholarships to Jewish applicants, systematically eliminated all Jewish teachers at the girls’ school, removed all Jews in municipal services, and refused them admittance to all municipal celebrations. In terms of the May 1897 violence, although the rioters were largely made up of Arabs and Spaniards, they received directions and orders from French antisemites. Antisemites told Arabs that the administration encouraged their involvement, and that they would be paid 6,000 francs for killing a Jew. The Grand Mufti Si Ben Zakour Ben Mortefa Ben Kaddour did not believe that the Arabs’ participation in the

¹⁶⁹ Governor General to Chief of Service, Indigenous Affaires, “Telegram 38623,” Alger, Paris, May 23, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁷⁰ Governor General to Kanoui, President of the Consistory and Netter, Chief Rabbi of Oran, “Telegram 38247,” Paris, May 21, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

violence was spontaneous. Rather the Mufti suspected that the Arabs were pushed by antisemites. The author of the report identified the antisemites as the main instigators, stating “thanks to them, thanks to their fierce and constant excitations, a simple brawl could escalate into riots.”¹⁷¹

Various newspapers, specifically antisemitic ones, published vastly different accounts of the events than the May 31 report. According to an article entitled “Les Troubles d’Algérie” written by A. de Boisandré on May 22 in Drumont’s *La Libre Parole*, a group of Jewish bandits armed with knives ambushed and severely wounded the “peaceful” cyclists.¹⁷² The May 23 article “Les Conséquences” in *L’Autorité* also placed blame on the Jews. Moreover, the author blamed Jews for the entire antisemitic movement, due to their constant audacity to “molest the French and the Arabs.” In particular, the author identified the Crémieux decree as the root of all problems in Algeria, stating that “it inserted into Algeria the seeds of hatred, discord, and ruin from which will result the desolation of the most beautiful of our colonies.” The author concluded that the “Algerian populations” would have to deal with the Jewish problem on their own, without the support or help of the administration.¹⁷³ This emphasis on the independence of the “Algerians” echoes Ageron’s argument that the antisemitism of the late 1890s in Algeria represented a revolution against the French administration by the *Algériens*.

In the May 26 article “Solidarité Juive” in *La Libre Parole*, de Boisandré linked Algeria to the metropole through his attack on Jewish solidarity. He criticized the Deputies Thomson and Etienne elected in large part due to Algerian Jewish votes, for suggesting that the cause of the violence lay in the recrudescence of Muslim fanaticism as a result of the

¹⁷¹ “Mémoire sur les troubles de l’Oranie,” CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁷² A. de Boisandré, “Les Troubles d’Algérie” *La Libre Parole*, May 22, 1897, AN F/19/11146.

¹⁷³ P. de L., “Les Conséquences” *L’Autorité*, May 23, 1897, AN F/19/11146.

Ottoman successes in Thessaly during the 1897 Greco-Turkish War.¹⁷⁴ Governor General Jules Cambon gave credence to the idea that Islam experienced regeneration in Algeria as a result of other events in the Mediterranean and in the Levant. Cambon noted that Muslims in Algeria read newspapers published in Tunis and Cairo and they were encouraged by Turkish successes in challenging French authority. In particular, Cambon notes the religious frenzy among Muslims and marabouts in Mascara.¹⁷⁵

Chief Rabbi of France Zadoc Kahn challenged the idea that a simple fight between Jews and Frenchmen could have exploded into such disastrous proportions. In Mostaganem, Kahn asked, how was it possible that following “a fight, certainly deplorable, but like all the fights, which broke out between a few excited excursionists and young Jews, harmless people were attacked, looting shops, demolishing synagogues, and destruction of the sacred books that are revered by Christianity as well as Judaism, all without concern for the honor of France, nor even of its interests...?” Kahn criticized “French and Christian” newspapers for applauding and encouraging similar violence.¹⁷⁶ Kahn’s ultimate goal in his letter published in French newspapers was to encourage donations in support of Algerian Jews.

The antisemite De Boisandr   retorted in a letter published the next day that Kahn’s argument that the fight between Jews and the cyclists in Mostaganem was like any other fight was entirely wrong, as settlers and Arabs would not have responded as they did “for so little.” Using Kahn’s term, de Boisandr   wrote that the true “innocent victims” were not the Jews, but the settlers and the Arabs, who were “exploited, pressured, stolen from, and

¹⁷⁴ A. de Boisandr  , “Solidarit   Juive” *La Libre Parole*, May 26, 1897, AN F/19/11146.

¹⁷⁵ Jules Cambon, Governor General of Algeria to the Minister of the Interior, “No 1946 Re: Echos des ´evenements d’Orient en Alg  rie,” Algiers, July 2, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685. See also Administrator of Mixed Communed of Mascara to the Sous-Prefect of the Arrondissement of Mascara, “No 2602 Re: Situation Politique; au sujet d’une article du journal *Le Petit Fanal Oranais*,” Mascara, June 14, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁷⁶ Zadoc Kahn, letter dated May 25, 1897 published in *La Verit  *, May 27, 1897, AN F/19/11146.

assassinated” by Jews. De Boisandr   concluded that the metropolitan Jews would come to the aid of the Algerian Jews by providing them a vast (and unwarranted) amount of aid, despite their guilt in the affair. De Boisandr   not only accused metropolitan Jews of solidarity with the Algerian Jews, he also linked the “nation,” presumably France, with the “Jewish race,” a well-used claim of the anti-Dreyfusards.¹⁷⁷

Jean Drault, a close colleague of Drumont and journalist for *La Libre Parole*, wrote of the growing antisemitism in Constantine during the same period. Like de Boisandr  , Drault used the language of metropolitan antisemites and anti-Dreyfusards in describing the Jew as the “internal enemy, more dangerous than the others, because they are always prepared....to sell France and the French.” Drault recounted a meeting of antisemites in Constantine, led by the politician Rejou, and attended by the council member   mile Morinaud (who would later be involved in antisemitic violence in Constantine in 1934). At the meeting, Rejou delivered a speech in which he stated that “treason is in the Jewish soul, as honesty, devotion, and duty is in the French soul. From Judas until Dreyfus, the list is too long of Jews who have sold, betrayed, and delivered their benefactors. It will be the honor of the young generations of Algerians to free the colony of the hateful Jewish domination.” The meeting concluded with shouts of “Vive la France! Vive l’Alg  rie! Vive la Patrie!    bas les Juifs!”¹⁷⁸

Another article, published in *Le Peuple Fran  ais* on June 4, entitled “La Question Juive en Alg  rie” again identified the Jews as the aggressors in the violence, and blamed the police for protecting the Jewish instigators. The author described Oran as being in revolution. The article detailed the arrest of young *n  os* for participation in the violence and

¹⁷⁷ A. de Boisandr  , “Solidarit   Juive” *La Libre Parole*, May 26, 1897, AN F/19/11146.

¹⁷⁸ Jean Drault, “   Constantine” *La Libre Parole*, June 1, 1897, AN F/7/12842.

pillaging in Inkermann and the despair of their settler parents at their arrests. The article noted the reason for the arrests: the Justice of the Peace in Inkermann was a Jew.¹⁷⁹ This article, like the preceding articles, indicated a strong level of antisemitism in the metropolitan press regarding the events in Algeria. The use of anti-Dreyfusard language also reveals the assimilation of the violence in Algeria and the presumed guilt of Jewish “assassins” into the rhetoric of metropolitan antisemitism. This trend indicates cooperation and connection between the two antisemitic movements.

Governor General Cambon also analyzed the strong influence of the press in inciting the populations in Algeria to violence in May and June 1897. In a report entitled “Troubles du département d’Oran, Poursuite à exercer contre les journaux,” Cambon argued that antisemitic newspapers were directly involved in events in Oran. Noting that the August 11, 1848 legislation in the metropole found incitement of one class of citizens against another to be punishable by law, Cambon suggested that the law might be applied to the antisemitic events in Algeria.¹⁸⁰ Despite Cambon’s proposal about the potential criminal acts of inciting antisemitism, newspapers continued to foment strong antisemitic feeling among the literate population, especially during electoral periods.¹⁸¹ Describing the antisemitic political party as the “*parti du scandal*,” Dermenjian connects the press to the antisemites through the publication of rumors and false information leaked by antisemites to further incite antisemitic sentiment.¹⁸²

Similarly culpable in the events of May 1897 were the police and Commandant Peffau. Peffau had retired from the army at age 45 and settled in Oran. Described as a

¹⁷⁹ “La Question Juive en Algérie” *Le Peuple Français*, June 4, 1897, AN F/19/11146.

¹⁸⁰ Jules Cambon, Governor General of Algeria to the Minister of the Interior, “Troubles du département d’Oran poursuite à exercer contre les journaux,” June 10, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁸¹ Dermenjian, *Juifs et Européens d’Algérie*, 126.

¹⁸² Ibid., 137.

“soldier of fortune,” and an opportunist, Peffau became an antisemite as the antisemitic party gained power. Elected as a municipal council member in Oran in March 1897, Peffau was named adjunct to the police, and through that position played a very significant role in the May 1897 violence in Oran.¹⁸³ On June 13, the Governor General sent a telegram to the Prefect of Oran demanding his opinion on Peffau’s behavior in the disturbances in May, as well as his involvement in eliminating Jewish teachers at the girls’ school of Oran. Peffau’s involvement in the dismissal of Jewish instructors at the school was an abuse of powers outside of his position’s purview. The Governor General wrote that Peffau had committed an “intrusion into a service that does not belong to him. This usurpation constitutes an act serious enough to justify an administrative action and the dismissal of Deputy Peffau.”¹⁸⁴

In June, the Cours d’Assise in Oran analyzed Peffau’s responsibility during the May 1897 violence. On June 20, Lantieri, the Procurer of the Republic, deeply criticized the police for their hesitation and failure to act. Lantieri cited the strong antisemitism of the municipality as one of the main reasons for the lack of police response in the riots during May. The last municipal elections in Oran, which took place in March, witnessed the powerful and successful antisemitic platform and resulted in the election of an antisemitic municipal council. The police officers of the municipality therefore found themselves in a “delicate situation,” because their obligation was to protect the victims, presumably the Jews. However, given the obvious antisemitism of the municipal leadership, these “subaltern agents,” who depended on the council for employment, could not act freely. In one specific case detailed in the report, the police arrested an individual who was in the midst of attempting to demolish the doors to a shop (presumably Jewish-owned). The following day

¹⁸³ Ibid., 114-115.

¹⁸⁴ Governor General to Prefect of Oran, “Telegram 43254,” Paris, June 13, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

the man was released “on the order of Monsieur Peffau,” without further consequences. Lantieri concluded that the attitude of the municipality and its police “was not energetic enough, and that the assistance it [the police] has provided to authorities was insufficient.”¹⁸⁵

The Central Commissioner Ponticelli defended his fellow commissioners’ actions. Ponticelli wrote that the commissioners were warned before the violence that they were required to take all necessary actions to prevent violence and to punish aggressors and instigators of violence. “So if a few cadets and police officers demonstrated sluggishness and lack of energy, they ignored the recommendations made to them, or they were afraid of compromising their situation by doing all their duty.”¹⁸⁶ Ponticelli’s letter echoes Lantieri’s argument that police officers feared they could lose the support of the antisemitic municipal council should they act in defense of Jews during the violence of May 1897. On July 17, Governor General Cambon gave his verdict on the actions of the police officers who failed to act appropriately in defense of Jews during the violence. “These are law enforcement officers responsible for ensuring the safety of citizens, who, in the presence of serious disorder, lent to the authorities only an insufficient effort.”¹⁸⁷ As a result, Cambon reassigned several guilty police officers to other positions and locations.

Oran’s municipal council was not deterred by the official inquiries against it. During a May 25 meeting the municipal council decided to regulate the religious washing, transport, and burial of Jewish cadavers under the guise of public hygiene. In a June 11 letter to the

¹⁸⁵ Procureur de la République Lantieri, “Cours d’Assise et Tribunal de Première Instance d’Oran, Parquet,” Oran, June 20, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁸⁶ “Copie de la Protestation des Commissaires de Police d’Oran,” Algiers, June 24, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁸⁷ Governor General J. Cambon to the Minister of the Interior, “RE: Troubles antisémitiques; au sujet de l’attitude au cours des troubles des commissaires de police de la ville d’Oran,” Algiers, July 17, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685. See also Governor General J. Cambon to the Minister of the Interior, “RE: Au sujet de la police municipale d’Oran,” Algiers, August 13, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1680, which details the resistance to Cambon’s decision by the municipal council of Oran.

Prefect, the Mayor of Oran defended the regulations established by the municipal council, writing that the new rules “respected the liberty of religious practice” and that the tradition of washing the dead “is merely subject to certain precautions that hygiene and public health require.”¹⁸⁸ In particular, the Mayor used the example of the water used for ritualistic washing of bodies to demonstrate the unhygienic implications of the Jewish practices, especially when conducted in private homes.¹⁸⁹

Kanoui wrote to the Prefect on June 8, arguing that the new statutes regarding Jewish burial practices were in fact antisemitic actions cloaked in the guise of matters of hygiene and public health.¹⁹⁰ Kanoui defended the rituals, stating that they were followed throughout the world, without problem. As such, he wrote “The truth...is that they now want, under pretext of public hygiene, to commit a religious persecution.”¹⁹¹ On June 30, Governor General Cambon sided with the municipal council on the issue noting that unless the necessary precautions were taken, the practice of ritual washing of bodies posed a danger with regards to hygiene. He also wrote, however, that given the recent troubles in Oran, it would not be the moment to “again agitate religious passions.”¹⁹² This episode represents another example of how elected officials on the municipal level continued to use their political positions to promote antisemitism.

Given the clear roles of leadership among antisemitic political leaders and newspapers in inciting violence, the clear and overt antisemitism of Irr and the cyclists of the *Joyeux Club*, the aggressively defensive attitude of Serfaty and his friends, the explosive

¹⁸⁸ Mayor of Oran to Prefect, “No 3822, Re: Cimitière Israélite, Salubrité Publique,” Oran, June 11, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁸⁹ Mayor Oran to Prefect, No. 3822, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁹⁰ Kanoui, president of the Consistory of Oran to the Prefect of Oran, “No 928,” Oran, June 8, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁹¹ Kanoui to Prefect of Oran, “No 928,” CAOM FM F/80/1685.

¹⁹² Governor General J. Cambon to the Minister of the Interior, “No 3201, Re: Administration Communale, Ville d’Oran, Inhumation des Israélites,” Algiers, June 30, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

violence and pillaging of Spaniards and Arabs, and the complicity of the police, who was to blame in the violence of the department of Oran in 1897? Clearly, the blame rests with all parties involved: however, to use the words of Zadoc Kahn in his published letter, how did a simple episode of violence between individuals evolve into an enormous explosion of violence and pillaging that permeated the entire department of Oran? Was the violence therefore premeditated and orchestrated by the antisemites?

Municipal councils, the seat of significant local power and influence, became the site of intense competition. In the hands of antisemites, municipal governments could implement policies that would reduce the electoral power of Jews and infringe upon their civil rights. Antisemites could couch their hatred in words and administrative actions, such as the actions taken by Peffau, or by the municipal council regarding Jewish burial practices.¹⁹³ As the violence of May 1897 demonstrates, the electoral emphasis on antisemitism cooperated with great violence that existed beneath the surface. Dermenjian describes the Spanish immigrants as the “shock troops” of the antisemites, who responded to the call to action against Jews based on religious and economic antisemitism.¹⁹⁴ May 1897 was a significant and defining dress-rehearsal for the violence that would take place in January 1898 in Algiers, led by the most famous Algerian antisemite, Max Régis. Similarly, the case of May 1897 and the advances of antisemites in taking over municipal governments in the preceding years demonstrates how municipal councils had become the locus of antisemitic power aimed at eliminating Jews as electors and status competitors.

¹⁹³ Dermenjian, *Juifs et Européens*, 40.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 43, 79.

Chapter 2: Watering the Tree of Liberties with Jewish Blood: Max Régis, *Néos*, and the Explosion of Antisemitism in Algeria, 1898

In February 1898, future mayor of Algiers Max Régis participated in a meeting of the Paris chapter of the *ligue antisémite Française*. He was there to be honored for his leadership of the January 1898 wave of violence in Algiers. After describing his role in the Algiers violence, Régis emphasized that the fight against the Jewish threat must continue. He urged his fellow antisemites to persist in the battle to remove the Jew from France by any and all means necessary, especially violence. “We will water the tree of our liberties with the blood of Jews,” he proclaimed¹ Régis’ attendance at the Paris meeting demonstrated the strong connections between antisemites across the Mediterranean, as well as the admiration of metropolitan antisemites for their more aggressive Algerian counterparts. Régis’ rise to power illustrated the critical role that *néos* developed in Algerian municipal politics and antisemitism over the course of the 1890s.

1898 did not mark the beginning of antisemitism in France and Algeria, although it certainly constituted a watershed. Antisemitism acted as a galvanizing and distracting force in the metropole and colony, serving to direct frustrations and status anxieties away from the government and onto Jews. In Pierre Birnbaum’s assessment, the 1898 wave of riots united former enemies under the banner of antisemitism.² Following the 1870 Crémieux decree, links evolved between antisemitic leaders in France and in Algeria. For many metropolitan antisemites, Algeria served as a testing ground for antisemitism and antisemitic violence, even though the colony was an integral part of the French metropole. Antisemites assumed that the metropole would be less welcoming of antisemitic violence than the colony. In the

¹ “Nous arroserons de sang juif, l’arbre de nos libertés,” Commissioner of Police M. Martin, “Au sujet d’une Réunion de la ‘Ligue antisémite’ à la Salle Chaynes,” Paris, February 23, 1898, AN F/7/16001/1.

² Pierre Birnbaum, *The Antisemitic Moment: A Tour of France in 1898* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 4.

metropole, Jews had long integrated into French society, and alongside liberals they would protest extreme antisemitic activities. French administrators and politicians feared that the extremism of antisemitism in the colony posed a significant threat to the metropole. Albert Memmi describes colonial antisemitic politics as “a permanent danger, a pocket of venom always at risk of poisoning the metropolitan organism.”³

Despite the similarities in their goals, there were some basic differences between Algerian (European) and metropolitan antisemites, beginning with what they called themselves. Antisemites in Algeria defined themselves *anti-juifs*, so as to distinguish between Jews and Muslims. The Algerian antisemites often attempted to lure Algerian Muslims into their ranks. Metropolitan antisemites maintained the title *anti-sémites*. For the purposes of studying the antisemitic movement as a movement across the Mediterranean, I will generally use the term antisemites and antisemitism for Algeria as well as the metropole. I will use the term *antijuive* or *antijuif* when referencing the writings and self-expression of Algerian antisemites.

Régis and his cohort believed that violence and antisemitic hatred could find support, even encouragement, in the colony. He was right. For a period between 1897 and 1902, the French antisemitic leadership fawned over Régis and celebrated his activities in Algeria.⁴ By the end of 1902, however, the metropolitan antisemites began to distance themselves from Régis because of his extravagance, erratic behavior, and political extremism.⁵ At this time, the unity of the *ligue antijuive* and the *ligue antisémite* and among antisemites in general began to fracture.

³ Albert Memmi, *Portrait du Colonisé, Portrait du Colonisateur* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 83-84.

⁴ “Ledger Ligue Antisémite, 1902 (premier),” AN F/7/12883.

⁵ “Ledger Ligue Antisémite 1902 (deuxième),” AN F/7/12833.

This chapter analyzes the connections between colony and metropole in the evolution of antisemitism in France and Algeria during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It discusses the differences between the antisemitism of Algeria and that of the metropole, and the way in which the Dreyfus Affair impacted both movements. There are two central aspects of this examination: the first is the role played by the *néo-naturalisés*, the newly naturalized Europeans in Algeria who contributed to the self-consciousness of “the new race” of European “Algerians” in the colony. Their numerical force encouraged the antisemitic leaders of the period, as long as they could harness that force for their own purposes. Régis himself benefited from the strategic legislation of 1889 that naturalized the significant non-French European population in Algeria. The second core theme is the way in which antisemites capitalized on their control over municipal governments to institute antisemitic policies and reward their ranks of antisemites in the colony.

Studies of *la crise antijuive* and of late nineteenth century Algeria tend to separate Algeria from the metropole. Charles-Robert Ageron analyzes the violence in terms of a growing separatist movement in Algeria, led in part by Régis, at the expense of examining the other causes of the violence in 1898 and the political and ideological linkages between Algeria and the metropole.⁶ This chapter complicates Ageron’s assessment of the violence, highlighting its origins beyond “anti-metropolitanism,” and focusing on the important role played by the *néos* in municipal elections and antisemitism. The competition between *néos* and Jews and the development of antisemitism discussed in the previous chapter intensified

⁶ Charles-Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France 1871-1919. Tome Premier* (Paris: Éditions Bouchène, 2005), 608.

in 1898 due to a series of lingering economic crises, the conquer “credit crisis” in the colony, and the Dreyfus Affair.⁷

Ageron describes the antisemitism of the late 1890s in Algeria as “a psychological transference and passionate resentment against the Metropole.”⁸ Although he acknowledges the importance of “electoral” antisemitism in Algeria, he mistakenly emphasizes the anti-Jewish violence in 1898 as anti-metropolitanism.⁹ By doing so, Ageron understates the complexity of antisemitism in Algeria, specifically the competition between Jews and *néos* for the rights and benefits of citizenship. The Jews’ main status and political competitors, the *néos*, were the principal actors in the violence of January 1898 led by Max Régis. Although Régis and many others in Algeria were involved in an autonomist movement, to depict the violence of 1898 as part of that failed revolution is to ignore the very significant local and political role of antisemitism in the mentality of the *néos* and French in Algeria. By emphasizing the “revolution” in Algeria, Ageron incorrectly distances the colony from the metropole. In contrast, by employing Pierre Birnbaum’s concept of “political antisemitism” and the use of Jews as political scapegoats, I show that Algerian antisemites were motivated by the same political and economic frustrations of *petits blancs* and lower-class whites on both sides of the Mediterranean.¹⁰

The purpose of this chapter is to reconnect colony to metropole and show that the evolution of the antisemitic crisis in Algeria was not only nourished by events in the

⁷ Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans*, 593; Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1991), 63. In his analysis of the Dreyfus Affair and the riots of January 1898, Michael Marrus wrote that the riots in Algeria “got completely out of hand,” and were “little short of a pogrom.” Michael R. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: A Study of the French Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 163, 235.

⁸ Ageron, *Les Musulmans Algériens*, 594, 596.

⁹ Ibid., *Algériens*, 584.

¹⁰ Pierre Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France: A Political History from Léon Blum to the Present* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 5.

metropole, such as the Dreyfus Affair, but also fed the ambitions of antisemites in France. I take issue with the common exclusion of Algeria from studies of the wave of riots of 1898. Stephen Wilson depicts the 1898 riots in Algiers as different and separate from those of the metropole.¹¹ In his study of “the antisemitic moment” of 1898, Pierre Birnbaum only mentions Algeria by suggesting that the French could not imagine that riots and violence like those in Oran in May 1897 could be replicated in the metropole.¹² Richard Ayoun maintains that Algerian antisemitism focused largely on economics whereas metropolitan antisemites maintained a religious, clerical element.¹³ Pierre Hebey acknowledges the coincidental nature of the developments of the Dreyfus Affair in 1898 and the riots. He argues, however, that Algerian antisemitism differed from that of the metropole and that the Jews of Algeria suffered far more than their metropolitan counterparts.¹⁴

The Algerian riots of 1898 need to be understood as part of the same phenomenon that erupted across the metropole and must be examined in a common context. The 1898 riots and the events of the previous year created significant connections between antisemites in the colony and the metropole. The Algerian and metropolitan antisemites differed not because of their focus on economics, but because of their emphasis on the electoral power of Jews in competition for municipal government. Although both metropolitan and Algerian antisemites depended on the frustrations of *petits blancs*, the *néos* of Algeria played a preponderant role. The *néos* used antisemitism as a platform for expressing their new and evolving identities in the colony as the *Algériens*, the Europeans of Algeria. It is therefore

¹¹ Stephen Wilson, “The Antisemitic Riots of 1898 in France,” *The Historical Journal* 16, no. 4 (Dec., 1973).

¹² Birnbaum, *The Antisemitic Moment*, 8; “Memoire sur les Troubles de l’Oranie,” May 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685. Although Birnbaum states in his introduction that he is looking at France in particular, the complete absence of any mention of Algeria unfairly separates the colony from the metropole.

¹³ Richard Ayoun, “Max Régis: Un Antijuif au tournant du XXe Siècle,” *Revue d’histoire de la Shoah* 173 (October-December 2001), 137.

¹⁴ Pierre Hebey, *Alger 1898: La Grande vague antijuive* (Paris: NiL Éditions, 1996), 10, 12.

crucial to situate Algerian antisemitism in the competition for control of municipal governments, the sphere in which Algerian antisemites experienced the greatest success.



“Cigarettes antijuives,” a sign of the linkages between Algerian and metropolitan antisemites.

Source: CAOM FM F/80/1687

The Evolution of Antisemitism in Fin-de-Siècle France and Algeria: The Impact of the Dreyfus Affair

The rapid growth of antisemitism in both France and Algeria surrounded the Dreyfus Affair. Wilson describes the Affair as a public event, during which antisemitism took hold of the wider population.¹⁵ Hannah Arendt argues that the combination of resentment of Jews and Jewish successes alongside frustrations with the parliament and the nation-state exacerbated the conditions of the Dreyfus Affair.¹⁶ Michel Winock depicts the Dreyfus Affair as the first of a series of events in which nationalists strove to “close” nationalism,

¹⁵ Stephen Wilson, *Ideology and Experience: Antisemitism in France at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Rutherford: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1982), xvi.

¹⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books Inc., 1958), 45, 92.

excluding some--the Jews--while including others.¹⁷ The Dreyfus Affair thus represented several trends in fin-de-siècle France: the accusation of the inability of Jews to assimilate fully and their role as pariahs and political others, the growth of a mass of frustrated *petits blancs* in the face of industrialization and economic crises, and the growing power of antisemitism as a political platform.

For Arendt, the treatment of Captain Alfred Dreyfus represented the failure of French Jewish assimilation. Jewish families long sought to insert their sons in the highest military strata, commonly controlled by the French aristocracy.¹⁸ Dreyfus' arrest and conviction emerged out of the antisemitism of the officer corps and the religiously inspired conception of Jews as “Judas,” the eternal traitor. Furthermore, the Affair tapped into the widespread latent state of antisemitism in France and Algeria, which accelerated at the onset of the Affair.¹⁹ The press, particularly the antisemitic press such as Drumont's *La Libre Parole*, played a significant role in the Affair and in galvanizing popular antisemitic sentiment.²⁰ Drumont, known as the “pope of antisemitism,” exploited it at an unprecedented scale.²¹ Drumont's fear of crypto-Jews, those who had superficially assimilated enough to not be easily identifiable, but who remained Jewish, was a major theme of his book *La France*

¹⁷ Michel Winock, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 115-116.

¹⁸ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 103. See also Birnbaum, *Anti-Semitism in France*, 13.

¹⁹ Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 4-5.

²⁰ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 96; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 4. See also Carol Iancu, “Du Nouveau sur les Troubles Antijuifs en Algérie à la Fin du XIXème Siècle” in Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, *Les Relations entre Juifs et Musulmans en Afrique du Nord, XIXe-XXe Siècles : Actes du colloque international de l'Institut d'Histoire des Pays d'Outre Mer* (Paris: Éditions du Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980), 175.

²¹ Frederick Busi, *The Pope of Antisemitism: The Career and Legacy of Edouard-Adolphe Drumont* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), 4. See also Frederick Busi, “*La Libre Parole* de Drumont et Les Affaires Dreyfus,” in Michel Drouin, ed., *L'Affaire Dreyfus de A à Z* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 397, 399.

*Juive.*²² Dreyfus confirmed his suspicions, and Drumont used *La Libre Parole* to inflame public opinion using the press throughout the Affair.²³ Drumont stated “French people don’t think any more...they let their newspaper do their thinking for them.”²⁴

The Dreyfus Affair must be understood within the context of the growing antisemitic crisis in the colony and the circuits of antisemitism that linked colony and metropole. It is important not to look at the Algerian antisemitic crisis through the lens of the Dreyfus Affair. Rather, one must examine the Dreyfus Affair through the lens of Algerian antisemitism and understand it as the Algerian and metropolitan antisemites did: as an opportunity.²⁵

The first notice of the Affair came from Drumont’s *La Libre Parole*, in an article entitled “High Treason: Arrest of the Jewish officer A. Dreyfus,” published on October 29, 1894.²⁶ Although the early years of the Affair caused a heightened paranoia of a Jewish threat in the nation, what Michel Winock calls a “paranoid nationalism,” it was not until 1898 that fear transformed into action.²⁷ In subsequent years, various organizations and political parties emerged as a response to the Affair.²⁸ These political parties and organizations fed off of the economic troubles of the period, particularly in Algeria. A series of agricultural crises between 1893 and 1897 eroded settler agriculture and commerce in the colony. Algerians blamed the metropole for its lack of support in the time of crises.²⁹ In the early 1890s, continuing world-wide depression exhausted economies throughout the world

²² Busi, *The Pope of Antisemitism*, 64. Drumont gives a list of physical characteristics with which to identify a Jew, who sought to assimilate. Edouard Drumont, *La France Juive: Essai d’Histoire Contemporaine, Tome Deuxième* (Paris: C. Marpon & E. Flammarion, 1886), 34.

²³ Busi, *The Pope of Antisemitism*, 140.

²⁴ Drumont, as cited in Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 87.

²⁵ Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 94. See also Steven Uran, “La réception de l’Affaire en Algérie,” in Michel Drouin, ed., *L’Affaire Dreyfus de A à Z* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 521.

²⁶ Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 9.

²⁷ Winock, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*, 116.

²⁸ Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 11, 53. See also Bertrand Joly, “La Ligue antisémite de Jules Guérin,” in Michel Drouin, ed., *L’Affaire Dreyfus de A à Z* (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 409

²⁹ Hebey, *Alger 1898*, 74.

and led to decreasing demand and prices. In this context of insecurity and discontent more antisemitic violence occurred, including the mass-scale violence of May 1897 in Oran. The Dreyfus Affair struck a chord among Algerian antisemites who were already trying to remove Algerian Jews as status and political competitors.³⁰

In Algiers in the late 1890s a young law student at the University of Algiers, Max Régis, born Massimiliano Milano, emerged as the new leader of the Algerian antisemites. Régis was the son of an Italian merchant, who moved with his wife to Algeria in 1864. Régis' father lived in Algeria twenty-four years before he became naturalized in 1888. Even after his naturalization, he maintained solid ties to Italy.³¹ He joined the many other immigrants from Italy, Spain, Malta, and Portugal who moved to Algeria due to political turmoil in their home countries, poverty, or to engage in new and emerging markets in the French colony. Many did not realize the fortunes that drew them to Algeria and they targeted their economic and political frustrations on their perceived economic enemy, the Jews.

Born in Algeria, Régis's main political base came from the *néos*, who identified him as one of them. Régis's own family reflected the ambiguities of *néo* identity. His older brother, Alfred, who did not often approve of his younger brother's political activities, joined the Italian army. His sister, Claudine, married an Italian national. Alfred and Claudine maintained their Italian nationalities.³² However, Max and his younger brother Louis (a medical student at the University of Algiers) identified themselves as fully French, and their political activities initially found resonance among the French settler class.³³ In *Cagayous Antijuif*, Cagayous reads Régis's antisemitic newspaper, *L'Antijuif*, and claims to know its

³⁰ Uran, "La réception de l'Affaire en Algérie," 522-523.

³¹ Ayoun, "Max Régis," 144. See also Uran, "La réception de l'Affaire en Algérie," 524-525.

³² Ayoun, "Max Régis," 144.

³³ Louis never achieved the same celebrity as Max, but served faithfully as Max's assistant and defender.

editor.³⁴ Régis' *néo* identity, which initially brought him popularity, eventually led some French to question his allegiance to France. As the sun set on Régis' short-lived career as an antisemitic agitator, French *colons* accused him of being an Italian spy.

A surveillance report from 1901 illustrates the divisions between *français d'origine* and the *néos*. At a meeting of antisemites at a café in Algiers, Régis gave a speech on the importance of the antisemitic cause for the French, using the image of the “blood of our fathers which dyed the tricolor flag.” An audience member interrupted, stating “Our fathers for those of us who are French, yes, but not your father.”³⁵ Another critique of Régis’s French identity and allegiance appeared in the newspaper *Lanterne Algérienne* on June 30, 1898. In this account, a *français d'origine* wrote of Régis: “You are French by a legal act, but you have nothing of French character....All your family traditions are Italian and not French, and you have the audacity to come raise your voice ... I can say in good conscience that your place is in the shade rather than sunlight.”³⁶ In a contemporary pamphlet, Henri Lazeau wrote that Régis changed his name in an attempt to blur his Italian roots.³⁷

Max and Louis Régis began their political activities in 1897 when a Jewish professor, Levy, received a chair in the Law Faculty at the University of Algiers, at which the brothers were students.³⁸ Max Régis led his fellow students to oppose the appointment. On January 30, students at the University of Algiers invited all of their professors to join their student association as honorary members, with the exception of Professor Levy. The Rector of the University urged faculty not to accept the students’ invitation. Following the Rector’s

³⁴ Musette, *Cagayous Antijuif* (Alger: Imprimerie Ernest Mallebay, 1898), 18, 10.

³⁵ Ledger Ligue Antisémitique, 1901 (one of two), January 15, 1901, AN F/7/12882.

³⁶ *L’Oeuvre des Antijuifs d’Alger* (Imprimerie Commerciale, 1899), 43-44.

³⁷ Henri Lazeau, “Max Régis: Mensonges et Vérités,” (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Imprimerie Nouvelle), AIU 8JBr2162.

³⁸ E. Masson, *Max Régis et son Oeuvre* (1901), AN F/7/12459.

directions to faculty, approximately 150 students protested in the city, yelling “resignation,” even following Levy home.³⁹ On the morning of February 1, students of the law school protested.⁴⁰ They entered Levy’s classroom, disrupting his lecture. Following the intervention of the mayor of Algiers, Monsieur Guillemin, the students temporarily halted their protests until the next day. The students voted to have Levy dismissed from his post, and publicized their decision to Drumont’s *La Libre Parole* and *La France Libre* in Lyon. The student protestors called for the support of metropolitan students, from whom they received telegrams encouraging their actions.⁴¹

The next day, the antisemitic students decided to protest courses at the University. Doors to the University remained guarded by police who only admitted students registered for the current courses, while other students continued to protest in front of the University. Governor General Cambon refused to see a delegation of students, stating that until they called off the strike he would not meet with them.⁴² The Faculty met on February 6 to consider steps necessary to end the strike. They found Max and Louis Régis guilty of organizing and instigating the strike and actions against Professor Levy and decided to suspend them. Upon hearing of the suspensions, approximately 150 students met in the gardens of the university, booing the rector and shouting “Resignation!” They broke windows. Finally the police were summoned to remove the students.⁴³ The “Algerian”

³⁹ Telegram 3665/13574 to *Echo* (Paris), Algiers, January 31, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685. See also Governor General Cambon to the Minister of the Interior, “No 667, Re: Manifestations des Étudiants d’Alger,” Algiers, February 5, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁴⁰ M. Fille to Presse Paris, “Telegram 13777,” Algiers, February 1, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685

⁴¹ Étudiants Algériens to Senator Treille (Paris), “Telegram 14632,” Algiers, February 2, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685; See also Governor General Cambon to the Minister of the Interior, “No 667,” Algiers, February 5, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁴² Governor General Cambon to the Minister of the Interior, “No 667,” Algiers, February 5, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁴³ The Rector to Public Instruction (Paris), “Telegram 16704,” Algiers, February 7, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

students argued that the rector unfairly punished the Régis brothers.⁴⁴ Max Régis's involvement in fighting against the school leadership became the source of his instant popularity.⁴⁵

Cambon feared the implications of the students' riots in Algiers. Students rioted in neighboring towns such as Mustapha, also in the department of Algiers. He noted that increased disorders could grow out of these student demonstrations, writing that "certainly, leaders of the antisemite party may try to take advantage of this emotion, it is important to use a lot of tact in all of this so as to be able to stop any unrest of such character." Cambon also indicated frustration with the mayor of Mustapha, who he claimed was not adequately controlling the rioting students.⁴⁶ Telegrams sent by journalists to their newspapers indicate a high degree of complicity or approval demonstrated by the mayors of Algiers and Mustapha with the striking students.⁴⁷ Students brought their protests from the local to national level when they demanded the "energetic intervention" of *La Libre Parole*.⁴⁸ Drumont took an active interest in these antisemitic demonstrations in the colony, and in Max Régis' activities in particular.⁴⁹

As a result of his leadership during the strike, Max Régis became known as a major antisemitic leader among the younger generation. Upon being suspended for two years,

⁴⁴ Étudiants Algériens to Senator Treille (Paris), "Telegram 16638," Algiers, February 7, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685. See also Boue to *Petit Parisien* (Paris), "Telegram 17643," Algiers, February 9, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁴⁵ Hebey, *Alger 1898*, 97.

⁴⁶ Governor General Cambon to Minister of the Interior, "Telegram 16763," Mustapha, February 7, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁴⁷ Boue to *Petit Parisien* (Paris), "Telegram 17643," Algiers, February 9, 1897; Muston to *Agencia* (Paris), "Telegram 16902," Algiers, February 7, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁴⁸ Étudiants Algériens to *La Libre Parole, L'Intransigeant* (Paris), "Telegram 16935," Algiers, February 7, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁴⁹ Frederick Busi, *The Pope of Antisemitism: The Career and Legacy of Edouard-Adolphe Drumont* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), 146.

Régis left the law school to devote his time to the antisemitic cause.⁵⁰ He gained notoriety through his editorship of the *L'Antijuif Algérien*, a newspaper popular among the *néos* and the *colons*. Through his work as editor of the *L'Antijuif*, Régis became ever more popular with the frustrated *néos* and *colons*. Following Régis' successes in antisemitic politics, French settlers elected him as president of the Algiers Ligue antijuive, a similar organization to the metropolitan Ligue Antisémitique Française. Under Régis' leadership, the ligue antijuive grew rapidly and became a significant settler movement in Algeria.

Concurrently, antisemitism elsewhere in the colony intensified. In a June 1, 1897 article in *La Libre Parole*, Jean Drault detailed events in Constantine and the activities of antisemites there. Drault linked Dreyfus to Judas, describing the long list of Jews who had betrayed their patrons, including France.⁵¹ Just over a week later, 1,500 people met in Constantine to commemorate the anniversary of the death of the notorious Marquis de Morès, also the namesake of several antisemitic organizations that emerged following the onset of the Dreyfus Affair.⁵² Important leaders were in attendance, including the president of Constantine's Ligue antijuive, Monsieur Rejou, and Émile Morinaud, then a general council member who would later serve as a deputy in 1898, and as mayor of Constantine during the 1934 pogrom. Speakers depicted the threat posed to France, and more particularly to Algeria, by the “preponderance of the Jewish race.” They presented only one solution to such a threat: the abrogation of the Crémieux decree.⁵³ This goal resulted in a petition to Governor General Cambon signed by the antisemitic press and various committees in the major cities of the colony. The petition was not successful, but reveals the centrality of the

⁵⁰ Rector of Public Instruction of Algiers, “Telegram16704,” Algiers, February 7, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁵¹ Jean Drault, “À Constantine,” *La Libre Parole*, June 1, 1897, AN F/7/12842.

⁵² Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 172-173.

⁵³ Secretary General of Government, Algiers, to the Minister of the Interior, “No 3303, RE: Meeting organisé à l'occasion de l'anniversaire de la mort du Marquis de Morès,” Algiers, June 18, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

Crémieux decree in the antisemites' program.⁵⁴ A commemorative service for the Marquis de Morès took place in a church in Mustapha. It was also attended by several French military officers.⁵⁵ The collection of participants at these events indicates the convergence of diverse groups under the umbrella of antisemitism: *français d'origine*, administrators, officers, municipal government members, and *néos*.

Over the course of 1897, Max Régis continued to establish himself as an antisemitic leader. Régis led a meeting attended by approximately 100 antisemites on the topic of the economic threat posed by Jews in the colony and the goal of the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree. One speaker proposed the creation of cooperative societies designed to undercut “Jewish commerce,” and Régis to publish in his newspaper *l'Antijuif Algérien* lists of Jewish merchants in Algiers, whom the antisemites should boycott. The president of the *ligue antijuive* of Constantine, Monsieur Rejou, urged the candidates in the upcoming municipal elections to emphasize the Jewish question in their campaigns. Antisemitism was already a powerful political force in 1897, as evidenced by the number of antisemites in municipal governments. Régis encouraged the union of all “Frenchmen” against the Jews. Onesime Mohamed, a former municipal police agent (and Muslim), declared that his fellows Muslims “would always side with the French.”⁵⁶

Régis' newspaper, *L'Antijuif Algérien*, made its debut a few days later, significantly on July 14, 1897.⁵⁷ Following the publication of the names and addresses Jewish stores in Régis' paper, a Jewish butcher, Mantout, accused Régis of libel. Departing the courthouse, a

⁵⁴ Governor General Cambon to the Minister of the Interior, “No 3706, RE: Police Generale, Mouvement antisémite,” Algiers, July 8, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁵⁵ Governor General Cambon to Minister of the Interior, “No. 3590, RE: Anniversaire de la mort du marquis de Morès, Manifestations Mustapha,” Algiers, July 2, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁵⁶ Governor General Cambon to the Minister of the Interior, “RE: Ligue anti-juive, réunion du 11 Juillet,” Algiers, July 17, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685. Antisemites regularly sought the support of Algerian Muslims for their cause. See Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans*, 601.

⁵⁷ Ayoun, “Max Régis,” 147; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 232.

crowd of approximately 300 cheered Régis, who was hoisted up onto the shoulders of a French merchant. The crowd escorted Régis to a local café and then continued on towards the rue de la Lyre, a Jewish street, while shouting “À bas les Juifs!”⁵⁸ Régis led the crowd in cheers of “à bas les juifs! mort aux juifs! à bas Mantout! À mort le voleur Mantout!” Approximately 1,200 people had joined Régis’ spontaneous demonstration.⁵⁹

As Régis and other antisemitic politicians’ power increased, the condition of Jews in Algeria sharply deteriorated.⁶⁰ Approximately 700 people attended the commemoration of Fernand Grégoire, a leading Algerian antisemite, including approximately 40 Arabs and several women. Because the room was filled to capacity, 150 people were required to remain outside. In his eulogy, Régis depicted the Jews as lower than savage beasts and criticized other politicians, particularly the Algerian deputies, for their lack of commitment for the antisemitic cause. Illustrating the link between antisemitism and municipal politics, Régis urged those in attendance to vote only for overtly antisemitic politicians in the next elections. He concluded by yelling “à bas les Juifs, vive l’antijuif!” The meeting ended with cries of “à bas les Juifs, à mort les Juifs, l’Algérie aux Français, les Juifs en Palestine!” Following the meeting, a crowd of 300 surrounded Max Régis cheering him and shouting “à bas les Juifs!” Fearing potential violence, the police intervened, and arrested two demonstrators.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Central Commissioner Paysant, “Report No 645,” Commissariat Central, Ville d’Alger, Algiers July 30, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685. Mantout is identified as either a merchant or as a butcher, depending on the report. See also, Governor General Cambon to Minister of Interior (Paris), “RE: Manifestation antisémite à Alger,” Algiers, August 6, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁵⁹ Prefect of Algiers to the Governor General, Algiers, July 30, 1897, AN F/7/12460.

⁶⁰ Governor General Cambon to Minister of Interior (Paris), “RE: Mouvement antisémite, Alger,” Algiers, September 4, 1897; Secretary General to the Minister of the Interior (Paris), “Telegram 122056,” Algiers, September 19, 1897; Governor General Cambon to the Minister of Interior (Paris), “RE: Réunion antisémite, Alger,” Algiers, September 14, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁶¹ Central Commissioner Paysant, Prefecture of Algiers, “Rapport au sujet du meeting antijuif, réunion publique du Samedi 18 Septembre,” Algiers, September 19, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

Antisemitism was having an impact on Algerian Jews. At the end of September, the Jewish Consistory of Algiers requested aid for unemployed Jewish workers and laborers who had been fired by their European employers.⁶² At the same time, anti-Jewish demonstrations occurred in the town of Mustapha. The Prefect of Algiers explained that the antisemitic demonstrations on September 26 and October 3, 1897 resulted from the instigation of Régis' newspaper and its increasingly violent antisemitic rhetoric. “Insults and outrages against persons designated by name...incitement to hatred of a category of citizens, for whom they demand expulsion from French territory and the dispossession of their property, replace the controversy and the study of legal solutions in the new antisemitic press of Algiers.”⁶³ On September 26, Régis led a demonstration to the tomb of Fernand Grégoire in Mustapha. A riot broke out as a result of the police’s management of the crowds. The Prefect blamed Régis for inciting the mob, making careful note of the fact that Régis was a *néo*, as if to emphasize his role as an agitator. Régis also attacked functionaries and officials in *l’Antijuif*: “Foul Prefect, Sinful Jewish Prefect, Despicable Brute, Prefect Assassin.”⁶⁴ Musette, the pseudonym for the author of Cagayous, Auguste Robinet, featured this demonstration in *Cagayous Antijuif*. Cagayous described how police beat the demonstrators “who don’t want the Jews to control us and to steal our money. Why don’t they want the people to speak

⁶² Governor General Cambon to Minister of Interior (Paris), “Re: Antisémitisme; Réunion d’ouvriers et employés israélites,” Algiers, September 25, 1897.

⁶³ Prefect of the department of Algiers to the Minister of the Interior (Bureau de l’Algérie), “Manifestation antisémite du dimanche 3 Octobre; Attitude de la Municipalité de Mustapha; État des esprits à Alger au point de vue de l’agitation antisémite—Les étrangers et les indigènes; Organisation défectueuse des services de police; Mesures parait comporter à cette situation; Intervention du Conseil Général,” Algiers, October 17, 1897, CAOM FM F/80/1685.

⁶⁴ Prefect of the department of Algiers to the Minister of the Interior, Algiers, October 17, 1897 CAOM FM F/80/1897.

when they are discontented?"⁶⁵ Cagayous continued, "we have the right to walk together and say that Dreyfus is a bastard and Zola is a sell-out."⁶⁶

The Prefect of Algiers was cognizant of the powerful influence of Spanish and Muslim antisemites and their involvement in the growing antisemitic movement in the department of Algiers. He warned that given the widespread popularity of antisemitism in Algeria, it would be nearly impossible to prosecute it and its violence. In the towns of Algiers, Mustapha, and St. Eugène, there were 25,982 non-French Europeans, including 15,028 Spaniards, who made up the bulk of the *étrangers*, as well as 26,372 Muslims, and 11,226 Jews, a relatively large concentration. The recent legislation of 1889 increased the number of "French" in the area to 63,353, including the recently naturalized. As evidence of the pervasive nature of antisemitism in municipal governments, the Prefect alluded to the antisemitic leanings of the mayor of Mustapha, Monsieur Pradelle. The Prefect predicted the dangerous future of antisemitism in the colony, especially as an electoral force:

But then this is the popularity, popularity can be fleeting, but it is strong enough (I do not doubt), to cause the most serious difficulties. Tomorrow, it will probably be disorders in the street, in six months an anti-Jewish candidate elected by ...the most diverse elements, the dissatisfied of any origin, the least worthy ambitions and the most unscrupulous processes. I know in advance the boundaries of his electoral army.⁶⁷

One can comfortably assume that the Prefect was describing Max Régis.

À Bas Les Juifs! En Bas les Juifs! Antisemitic Violence in France and Algeria in 1898

Antisemitism in late 1897 reached a crescendo in the wave of riots throughout the metropole and in the colony in January and February of 1898. These events are generally

⁶⁵ Musette, *Cagayous Antijuif*, 23.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁷ Prefect of the department of Algiers to the Minister of the Interior, Algiers, October 17, 1897 CAOM FM F/80/1897.

associated with developments in the Dreyfus Affair, coinciding with the publication of Zola's *J'Accuse* on January 13, 1898.⁶⁸ The most significant anti-Jewish riots in the metropole and in Algeria took place in the first wave.⁶⁹ Although antisemitic conflicts had previously occurred in the metropole, for example, in Alsace and Provence, the scale of the 1898 riots was unprecedented.⁷⁰ Antisemites in Algeria were developing a tradition of anti-Jewish violence of their own, and perhaps preparing themselves for the explosive riots in January 1898. While the famous antisemitic war cry was pronounced "À bas les Juifs" in the metropole, in the colony, it was often pronounced "*En bas les Juifs*" by *néos* such as Cagayous.

Steven Uran describes the 1898 antisemitic violence as having two faces; one was shaped by the influence and participation of the *néos* coupled with the separatist sentiment described by Ageron. The other face was a "hypernational" desire to prove their Frenchness.⁷¹ As demonstrated in the previous chapter, participation in antisemitic events offered *néos* an opportunity to demonstrate their French identities by eliminating the Jews, who competed with them for status and political power, and thereby purifying the polity. The 1898 violence briefly connected the metropolitan and Algerian antisemitic movements. In Algeria, the 1898 riots further cemented the link between antisemitism and municipal governments.

In 1898, riots took place in fifty-five places in metropolitan France, including Paris.⁷² In Algeria, the riots shook the entire colony but were most savage in Algiers under the

⁶⁸ Winock, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*, 141-142. See also Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 12-13.

⁶⁹ Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 107-108.

⁷⁰ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 107-108; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 107.

⁷¹ Uran, "La réception de l'*Affaire en Algérie*," 527.

⁷² Wilson, "The Antisemitic Riots," 790.

leadership of Max Régis. In France and Algeria, shouts of “*à bas les juifs*” were followed by “*vive l’armée*,” to attest to the rioters’ patriotism.⁷³ This connection between antisemitism and pro-army patriotism is reflective of the mutation of early *boulangisme* into political antisemitism characteristic of Régis and his following.⁷⁴ In France, most demonstrations were on the smaller side, involving fewer than 50 participants; however, some demonstrations involved several thousand, such as 4,000 in Marseille and 3,000 in Nantes.⁷⁵

Although these riots and demonstrations are often considered spontaneous reactions to the Dreyfus Affair and its proceedings, the growing coordination of antisemitic leagues in the period prior to 1898 raises questions regarding this spontaneity. The Ligue Antisémite Française was active in Paris and Marseille. Régis was often in touch with the Ligue Antisémite and its leadership in Paris and received their support following his activities during the student protests of 1897. Antisemitic papers such as *La Libre Parole* were national publications that also had provincial subsections (including Régis’ *L’Antijuif Algérien*) and were influential in inciting popular opinion in support of these “patriotic” demonstrations.⁷⁶ More than half of the demonstrators in France were students and young people. The riots and demonstrations usually took place in the cities and towns of metropolitan France in which there was a sizeable Jewish population. As in metropolitan France, Jews in Algeria tended to concentrate in particular areas, constituting a Jewish quarter, which were often the sites of these demonstrations. The Algiers Jewish community was one of the largest and most significant in Algeria. The sentiment behind these riots

⁷³ Ibid., 792.

⁷⁴ Birnbaum describes the transformation of many famous boulangists into antisemites in the 1890s. Birnbaum, *The Antisemitic Moment*, 14-15.

⁷⁵ Wilson, “The Antisemitic Riots,” 792.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 794. Bertrand Joly, in his article on the Ligue Antisémite, argued that the Ligue had absolutely no role in the 1898 violence. Joly, “*La Ligue antisémite de Jules Guérin*,” 411.

appeared to be a mixture of long-standing latent commercially inspired resentment combined with new politically motivated hatred of supposedly unpatriotic Jews.⁷⁷

In thirty towns in metropolitan France, the rioters attacked Jewish shops and businesses, breaking windows of shop fronts and occasionally pillaging their contents. These attacks on Jewish shops were thus a continuation of a long sustained campaign against Jewish commerce led in many cities by the Ligue Antisémite and other antisemitic organizations.⁷⁸ Algerian antisemites paralleled the metropolitan antisemitic campaign against Jewish business and commerce. Stickers urged Frenchwomen to avoid shopping *chez les juifs*, and to give their financial support to French business owners.⁷⁹ Régis continued this boycott of shops after the January riot in Algiers and after his election as mayor. He used the power of the municipal government to encourage women to patronize only French shops.

The riots in Algiers were an extreme version of those in the metropole. From January 19 to 26, with the most intense days of rioting between January 22 and 24, Algiers was ravaged by disorder under the direction of Régis, who was later tried for his role as agitator. On January 16, Régis wrote in *L'Antijuif* that the coming year would be “*une année terrible*” for the Jews.⁸⁰ Local authorities supported the riots, which caused 400,000 francs worth of damage to Jewish shops and homes, as well as several injuries and one Jewish death.⁸¹ Riots also occurred in other locations in Algeria, but Algiers was the site of the most significant violence.

⁷⁷ Wilson, “The Antisemitic Riots,” 796-797. See also Winock, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*, 91.

⁷⁸ Wilson, “The Antisemitic Riots,” 798.

⁷⁹ “Chambre des Députés, 28e séance, 2e séance du vendredi 23 décembre,” *Journal Officiel*, December 24, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1687.

⁸⁰ Ayoun, “Max Régis,” 150.

⁸¹ Wilson, “The Antisemitic Riots,” 803.

Wilson argues that the antisemitism in Algeria differed from that of the metropole because of its clear political element. According to Wilson, the antisemitic movement in Algeria was left-wing, closely connected to socialism and was anti-capitalist. The situation in Algeria was much more complex than Wilson suggests. The antisemitic movement in Algeria was less anti-capitalist than it was opposed to small-scale Jewish merchants, who competed with French and Europeans in the colony. More importantly, Wilson ignores the crucial role municipal governments played in developing antisemitic power. In Algeria, holding political offices was an avenue to lucrative income.⁸² Not surprisingly, elections were highly contested and antisemites resented what they felt to be the undeserved rights of Algerian Jews, products of the Crémieux decree.⁸³ Algerian antisemites therefore focused on reducing Jewish electoral and financial power in the colony, and improving colonist competition with Jewish commerce.

The 1898 demonstrations in Algeria began on January 19 in Mustapha, when students gathered in the garden of the Écoles supérieures to burn an effigy of Zola. Police intervened and arrested several students yelling “Vive l’Armée! À bas Zola! À bas les Juifs!”⁸⁴ In Algiers, demonstrators broke through police barriers, streaming onto the predominately Jewish rue de la Lyre.⁸⁵ On January 20, new riots occurred in Algiers and fights broke out between Jews and non-Jews, injuring many of those involved.⁸⁶ In Oran, students from the

⁸² Ibid., 803-804; Wilson, *Ideology and Experience*, 231

⁸³ Consistoire Israélite de la Province d’Oran, “Résultat au point de vue israélite, des dernières élections du Conseil général et des Conseils municipaux de la Province,” CC Icc 40.

⁸⁴ Havas to Havas (Paris), “Telegram 8988,” Algiers, January 19, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686. According to a different telegram, the mannequin was actually supposed to be Dreyfus, Havas to Havas (Paris), “Telegram 8583,” Algiers, January 19, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686. See also Minister of the Interior, “Les Faits,” CAOM F/80/1685. Havas to Havas (Paris), “Telegram 8838,” Algiers, January 19, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁸⁵ Minister of the Interior, “Les Faits,” CAOM F/80/1685. See also, Telegram 9216, Boue to *Petit Parisien* (Paris), Algiers, January 20, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁸⁶ Havas to Havas (Paris), “Telegram 9511,” Algiers, January 20, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

university and high school students protested as well, yelling “À bas Dreyfus, à bas la syndicat,” and Jewish shops closed early in the evening for fear of future violence.⁸⁷

On January 21, the mayor of Algiers commended the “French fury” displayed by citizens during the riots. Three thousand people attended a meeting of antisemites in Mustapha, led by the mayor. The mayor and Émile Morinaud, a general council member of Constantine, made violent speeches protesting the “scheming of the Syndicat Dreyfus,” “police provocations,” and “demanding that the government recall the Governor General and the Prefect of Algiers.” Following the meeting, mobs invaded Algiers and took over the mostly Jewish streets Bab-Azoun and Bab-el-Oued, breaking five or six shop fronts, continuing onto the quarter of the prefecture. A rioter beat Police Commissioner Pelletier on the head with a cane and another police officer was injured. In the Jewish streets, Jewish residents threw flower pots and other household items from windows at the rioters below. On the Place du Gouvernement, rioters burned two kiosks.⁸⁸ In spite of the considerable presence of armed police and troops, on January 22, the rioters ransacked and pillaged several Jewish shops. Some non-Jewish merchants closed their shops and placed signs in the window reading “Closed: This shop is not Jewish.”⁸⁹

The height of the rioting occurred on January 23-24. In Algiers, on January 23 a Jew allegedly shot and killed a mason named Cayrol. Musette incorporated this accusation in *Cagayous Antijuif*, in which Cagayous described the shooting of Cayrol and other violence perpetrated by Jews.⁹⁰ Consequently, numerous shops on rue Bab-Azoun were pillaged. The military attempted to occupy the principal streets of the city. In Blida, 1,200 demonstrators

⁸⁷ Pirignet to *La Libre Parole* (Paris), “Telegram 9556,” Oran, January 20, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁸⁸ “Les Faits,” CAOM F/80/1685.

⁸⁹ Isnardi to *Echo de Paris* (Paris), “Telegram 10288,” Algiers, January 22, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁹⁰ Musette, *Cagayous Antijuif*, 54, 60.

broke windows of Jewish stores and markets. In Boufarik, rioters ransacked seven Jewish shops. In Oran, antisemites organized a meeting led by Monsieurs Bidaine, Subercaze, and Peffau, the mayor's deputy who had been integral in the Oran violence in May 1897.

Following the meeting, 300 participants took to the streets of the city shouting “à bas les Juifs!” Jews and Muslims remained in their quarters. In Mostaganem, 200 young people burned an effigy outside of the city.⁹¹

On January 23, Ladmiral, a general council member in Algiers, described the situation in two words: “Complete anarchy.”⁹² In the midst of the chaos, the British Consul requested the Governor General’s assistance in guaranteeing the protection of British nationals (including Jews).⁹³ On January 24, the Jewish socialist leader, Henri Tubiana relayed the horrible conditions in Algiers as “full of looting, arson. Jews murdered, imprisoned. Mayor’s inertia, only culprit. State of siege.”⁹⁴

The unrest resumed in Algiers following Cayrol’s funeral on January 25. The Governor General attended the funeral, along with 6,000-7,000 people at the cemetery in Saint Eugène, a city with a significant Jewish population. Following the ceremony, two groups of mourners harassed and attacked Jews. Israel Chebat, a Jew, died as a result of his injuries. Monsieurs Adda, Azoulay, and Zeraffa, all Jews, were seriously injured. Violence and destruction of property continued elsewhere as well.⁹⁵ On January 24, the Havas news bureau submitted an update announcing that all foreigners arrested during the riots would be

⁹¹ “Les Faits,” CAOM F/80/1685.

⁹² Ladmiral, Conseiller general, to Thompson, deputy (Paris), “Telegram 10873,” Algiers, January 23, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁹³ Governor General to Foreign Affairs (Paris), “Telegram 10968,” Algiers, January 23, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁹⁴ Tubiana to Jaurès, Clemenceau, *Aurore, Droits de l’homme*, (Paris), “Telegram 11243,” Algiers, January 24, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁹⁵ “Les Faits,” CAOM F/80/1685.

immediately expelled.⁹⁶ Another reporter described the rioters as members of all “*nations latines*,” as well as Muslims.⁹⁷ The same day, a journalist reported to *Agencia* that Muslims participated in the disorder. To avoid attack, various merchants displayed signs in their shop windows indicating their business as “Maison française,” or “Maison catholique.”⁹⁸

On January 25, the Chief Rabbi of the consistory of Algiers, Isaac Bloch, informed the Central Jewish Consistory in Paris that for three days and three nights, Jewish stores had been pillaged, despite the presence of troops and police, and that there were several arson attempts, including that of the synagogue of the quarter of Bab-el-Oued, which was ransacked. Bloch requested aid from the Central Consistory to help deal with the “hideous misery” of the Jewish community as a result of the absolute shutdown of Jewish commerce in the city.⁹⁹ Elie Drai, a Jew in Blida, wrote Zadoc Kahn, the Chief Rabbi of France, expressing his great distress and frustration with the lack of official support and protection against the attacks upon Algerian Jews. Drai wrote “let me tell you, in my deep anguish, that you are unworthy of your duty.”¹⁰⁰ Drai’s letter depicted the feelings of many Jews in Algeria who felt abandoned by not only their fellow Jews in France, but also the French colonial administration, which either supported the riots or remained passive in the face of the antisemitic violence. In a separate letter, Drai wrote that Régis (whom he made a point of calling Milana Régis) was principally responsible for the disturbance.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Havas, Paris, “Telegram 921,” Algiers, January 24, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁹⁷ Havas to Havas (Paris), “Telegram 9561,” Algiers, January 24, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁹⁸ Muston to *Agencia* (Paris), “Telegram 4291,” Algiers, January 24, 1898; Boue to *Petit Parisien* (Paris), “Telegram 11605,” Algiers, January 24, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

⁹⁹ Bloch to Consistoire central Israelite, “Telegram 12138, Paris,” CAOM FM F/80/1686.

¹⁰⁰ Elie Drai to Zadok Kahn, “Telegram 12136,” CAOM FM F/80/1686.

¹⁰¹ Elie Drai to Arthur Meyer, *Gaulois* Paris, “Telegram 13838,” CAOM FM F/80/1686. Arthur Meyer, a converted and assimilated French Jew was a foe of Drumont, with whom he had a very famous duel after he accused Drumont of libel. See Winock, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*, 87.

During the riots, Régis published editorials in the *L'Antijuif*, which added fuel to the fire of antisemitism already blazing in the colony. In one article, Régis vilified the new Governor General Lépine, dubbing him Isaac Lépine and accusing him of being bought by the Jews.¹⁰² Cagayous proclaimed Régis the “King of the *Antijuifs*.¹⁰³ Throughout the January riots, Régis remained steadily involved, supporting the rioters, attending events, giving speeches, and encouraging violence. Régis’ popularity eventually led to his election as mayor of Algiers in November 1898.¹⁰⁴ Throughout the riots, certain antisemitic leaders came to the fore, the majority of whom had already been elected to municipal governments. Mayors like Pradelle used their positions of authority to encourage further violence. In Régis’ case, his antisemitic leadership secured his future election as mayor of Algiers. The 1898 riots thus illustrate the intractable and cooperative relationship between antisemitism and municipal government.

Cagayous and Daniel Ulm: The 1898 Algiers Riots in Literature

Literary representations of the 1898 Algiers riots provide interesting insight into the causes, realities, and responses to the violence. In the manner of Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism*, I will be reading two books contrapuntally so as to examine two vastly different experiences during the riots.¹⁰⁵ In particular, by contrasting the story of a *néo* during the riots with that of a Jew, we can understand the overlapping and competing views of the January violence and its significance. One of the most famous texts is *Cagayous Antijuif* by Auguste Robinet, published in 1898. Robinet served as a lawyer and public official in

¹⁰² Max Régis, “Isaac Lépine, Jacob Granet,” *L'Antijuif Algérien*, Algiers, Janaury 23, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

¹⁰³ Musette, *Cagayous Antijuif*, 67.

¹⁰⁴ Ayoun, “Max Régis,” 153.

¹⁰⁵ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1993), 18, 66-67, 279.

Algiers and through his work he interacted regularly with the lower classes of Europeans, many of them *néos*, in Algiers.¹⁰⁶ From these interactions, Robinet developed the character of Cagayous, the son of a Frenchman and Spanish woman, who resided in the Bab-el-Oued neighborhood of Algiers. Cagayous became the emblem of the masses of *Algériens* in late nineteenth-century Algeria. Popular songs included lyrics such as “We are all Cagayous.”¹⁰⁷

Although fiction, *Cagayous Antijuif* constitutes an important “historical document” on the rise of Régis and Drumont, as well as the riots in Algiers.¹⁰⁸ Cagayous represents a group in transition, expressing their new identity.¹⁰⁹ Through their expressions of antisemitism, violent at times, the *néos* attempted to prove their Frenchness to the *français d'origine*, seeking their approval, while simultaneously showing that they were more French than the French and willing to purify the nation by violent means if necessary.¹¹⁰ As representative of the masses of *néos*, Cagayous supported the antisemitism in the colony in 1898 led by Max Régis.¹¹¹

Cagayous and his entourage of fellow *néos* of various backgrounds soon emerge as proud supporters of Régis, shouting the Algerian variation of the antisemitic war cry: “*En bas les Juifs!*”¹¹² Cagayous exclaims “All the time the Jews dabble in the affairs of Government. The French, who are a lot like ants, remain content to work and the Jews at every instant are pulling something, which brings misery, or war, or disputes.”¹¹³ Cagayous

¹⁰⁶ Emanuel Sivan, “Colonialism and Popular Culture in Algeria,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, no. 1 (Jan., 1979): 21-22.

¹⁰⁷ Sivan, “Colonialism and Popular Culture,” 22.

¹⁰⁸ David Prochaska, “History as Literature, Literature as History: The Cagayous of Algiers,” *The American Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (June 1996): 699.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 143.

¹¹⁰ Andrea L. Smith, *Colonial Memory and Postcolonial Europe: Maltese Settlers in Algeria and France* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 110.

¹¹¹ Dunwoodie, *Writing French Algeria*, 89.

¹¹² Musette, *Cagayous Antijuif*, 21.

¹¹³ Ibid., 24.

asserts that the *néos* were more antisemitic than the French. Speaking of the antisemites in Algeria, Cagayous describes them as having “hotter blood than in France!”¹¹⁴ During the riots, Cagayous depicts the booty that he and his friends collected from pillaging Jewish shops, including clothes, jewelry, and linens.¹¹⁵ Cagayous’ friend Gasparette is injured by items thrown by Jews from windows at the rioters below.¹¹⁶ Cagayous also attends the funeral of Cayrol, noting the eulogy given by Max Régis. He describes the crowd as “hotter than a sirocco.”¹¹⁷ Taking the lead from Régis, Cagayous encourages the boycott of Jewish-owned shops in the hopes that in a year there would be no Jews in Algiers.¹¹⁸ Cagayous is emblematic of the receptivity of the *néos* and the *petits blancs* to the violent antisemitism espoused by Régis and Drumont, due in part to their economic and political status anxieties.

In 1911 Jean Steene published *Daniel Ulm: Officier Juif et Patriote*, which deals with many of the themes of the period, including the Dreyfus Affair and antisemitism in the metropole and the colony in 1898. The main character, Daniel Ulm, is a Jew of Alsatian origin, born in Algiers. He thus represents an unusual category in the colonial population: a non-native Algerian Jew or Jewish *français d'origine*. Ulm is the name of a city in Germany, thus “foreignness” is inscribed into the character’s name. Ulm’s parents both moved to Algiers from Alsace, married, and set up a successful small business selling linens and other “confections.”¹¹⁹ Coming from an entirely assimilated Jewish-French family, “Daniel had never considered being a Jew as a striking characteristic, the distinctive sign of a religious sect, not a race. One could be Jewish and French, as one could be French and Catholic or

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 25.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 48-49.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 52.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 58.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 60-61.

¹¹⁹ Jean Steene, *Daniel Ulm: Officier Juif et Patriote* (Paris: Henri Fabre et Cie, 1911), 25-26.

Protestant.”¹²⁰ Completely assimilated, Ulm had rarely even practiced his religion. When he travels to France to study to become a military officer he encountered a great deal of antisemitism. Ulm regularly feels obligated to express his patriotism.¹²¹ In this way, Steene used Ulm as a loose representation of Dreyfus, another assimilated Jew of Alsatian origin who also had to prove his patriotism in a far more precarious situation.

Once faced with antisemitism in the metropole and in the colony, Ulm reexamines his relationship with native Algerian Jews. He previously considered them entirely backward and never thought of himself as having any connection with them; while he was French, the native Algerian Jews were closer to Arabs, “a sect apart.”¹²² Once he receives a letter from his father describing the 1898 riots in Algiers, Ulm suddenly feels a sense of kinship with his fellow Algerian Jews. Ulm’s ardent patriotism and devotion to the army dissipate slightly as he read his father’s account of how the army was “visibly sympathetic with the rioters,” allowing them to run freely through the streets of the city attacking Jews.¹²³ Ulm’s father writes that “bands of Spanish and Maltese immigrants spread terror in Algiers and make no distinction between us and the native Jews.”¹²⁴ Ulm’s father requests that his son seek a month’s furlough to visit his parents, stating that “your uniform is, without a doubt, effective protection for your family, if rioting begins again.”¹²⁵

Upon arrival in the port of Algiers, Ulm is struck by the reality of the situation and the depth of antisemitism in his hometown. As his boat approaches the pier, Ulm reads “Mort aux Juifs!” written in large red letters on the stone of the pier, clearly visible to all

¹²⁰ Steene, *Daniel Ulm*, 46.

¹²¹ Ibid., 45-46.

¹²² Ibid., 47.

¹²³ Ibid., 94.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 95.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 96.

entering ships and throughout the port.¹²⁶ Reunited with his father, Ulm asks him his thoughts on the antisemitic violence in Algiers. Ulm's father grapples with the various sources of violence, including the Dreyfus Affair, and the role of *néos*.

Is it the Dreyfus affair ... It seems. But it seems it was only a pretext ... Is it a lack of patriotism? But all Algerian Jews have been strong patriots. They have proved it in assimilating with astonishing speed the language, the customs and French ideas... And what is this patriotism in whose name all Spaniards and Maltese naturalized yesterday act? ... Because almost all the rioters were composed of these guys ... The Arabs remained mostly indifferent. As for the French population, I believe that ultimately it regrets and disapproves of everything that happens, but it dares not say anything ... It seems that they are afraid....¹²⁷

In his analysis, Ulm's father touches on several critical factors regarding the 1898 riots in Algiers. He weighs the issue of responsibility, blaming the Spanish and Maltese immigrants for the majority of the violence, and identifying the French as complicit bystanders. As a Frenchman, however, Ulm's father is hesitant to place blame on the French, whom he describes as being afraid of the *péril étranger*, and the growing strength of the *néos*. Second, Ulm's father defends the Algerian Jews as patriots, who assimilated and embraced their French identity, unlike the *néos*.

Finally, Ulm's father connects the 1898 violence in Algiers to the Dreyfus Affair, citing it as a “pretext.” This analysis indicates the links between antisemites in the colony and metropole and the centrality of the Dreyfus Affair in the timing of the violence. More important, however, Algerian antisemites used the opportunity presented by the Dreyfus Affair to promote their own antisemitic program, one connected to that of the metropole but also different in character and purpose. While many administrators in the metropole attempted to put an end to the violence in January 1898, administrators and the army in

¹²⁶ Ibid., 115.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 122-123.

Algiers stood by and even promoted it. Ulm's father appeared most distraught at the army's complicity. "I saw not only soldiers, but officers writhing with laughter at the pillaging of a home!... Another day I saw them applaud fishermen, ten of them, who raised the skirts of a small, good Jewish girl of eleven years, and, in the open street, spanked her until she bled!... They were there to support order!"¹²⁸

Ulm's story, although fictional, is generally historically accurate.¹²⁹ Ulm's father expresses the outrage and concerns of the Jews in Algeria when he says "today the world is upside-down. It is we who are cursed foreigners, and it is those rejected by justice from Italy and Spain who, once landed, become good French patriots ... They defend the moral, with batons in the streets, and save the French homeland by destroying the houses of peaceful people."¹³⁰ Through persecution Ulm found a renewed kinship with his fellow Algerian Jews and a resurrection of his Jewish identity.

Ulm is something of an amalgam of different images of Jews, including a version of Alfred Dreyfus, a successfully assimilated Alsatian Jew who could defend himself and his country. In this way, Ulm represents a Jewish ideal. At the same time, however, Ulm also represents the inassimilable Jew who is forever tied to his Jewish identity, despite attempts to ignore or refuse it. For Steene, the perfectibility of Ulm's character and by extension Jewish character in general, is more significant. Following the violence in Algiers, Jewish leaders in Algiers considered ways in which to deal with what seemed to be inevitable future episodes of violence. Following the riots in 1898, Jewish leaders in Oran outlined what Jews had to

¹²⁸ In this case, spank is likely a euphemism for rape. Steene, *Daniel Ulm*, 123. Ageron wrote that the antisemitism of the army stemmed from the Dreyfus Affair. Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans*, 596.

¹²⁹ In fact, Steene writes in a footnote "All the facts reported in this book on the antisemitic disorders of Algiers, are strictly authentic." Steene, *Daniel Ulm*, 115.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 123.

do to withstand future attacks.¹³¹ They depicted the non-degenerated Jew as robust, strong, and capable of self-defense, citing the young Jews who defended themselves during the 1897 violence in Oran. “The past disturbances of Oran have shown antisemites that it is not prudent to attack us, since it will not prevent us from defending ourselves.”¹³² The Jewish leaders also countered the antisemitic cliché that Jews were incapable of physical work, insisting that Jews were apt at the “harshest work.” Jews also proved themselves to be extremely intelligent; Jewish youth excelled in French primary schools. The authors were thus most concerned with the morality of Algerian Jews, specifically their participation in usury, gambling, alcoholism, and other vices, which were purported products of the local environment. Consequently, the authors of the report recommended the creation of programs focused on Jewish youth in Algeria, such as apprenticeships and training in other foreign languages, which would improve their futures if they chose to emigrate to France or Britain, and to provide scholarships that would bridge the schism between the proletarian Jew and the wealthy Jew.¹³³

Another report, written in 1899-1900, promoted moral, physical, and educational improvements on the part of Algerian Jews, observing that unless the condition of Algerian Jews improved, French Jews (in the metropole) would be at risk of similar attacks. The author cited the extreme antisemitism in the colony, the power of the antisemitic press, and the contested nature of elections as the main threats to Algerian Jews.¹³⁴ The author therefore recommended a two-tiered defense on a political and economic terrain, focusing on

¹³¹ “Regeneration” was part of a rhetoric regarding the improvement of Jews in Europe in the nineteenth century. See for example, Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution: The Making of Modern Universalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

¹³² “Étude sur l’antisémitisme Algérien: Remèdes à y apporter,” 1898, AIU Moscou C01.7.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ The author is listed only as Aron, it is unclear whether this is a first or last name.

developing the (manual) skills of Jews, both men and women, and the proper political comportment of Algerian Jews, specifically discouraging their involvement in petty brawls or reactions to antisemitic comments. The references to politics underline the crucial role of competition in municipal politics. The author suggested that some action be taken against the *néos*. “It may also be necessary to group the Israélites and the French of origin against the neo-naturalized Italians and Spaniards led by the clergy.”¹³⁵ the report, along with the 1898 report from Oran, recommended Jewish self-improvement as the best defense against future antisemitic violence. This self-improvement is essentially assimilation—a path often taken by Jews in the face of antisemitism.

For many Jewish leaders, assimilation required absorbing and disproving antisemitic critiques. For example, the stereotype that Jews were incapable of physical labor or could not properly defend their country due to lack of physical strength and patriotism could be debunked by participating in combat and receiving commendations for such actions. Following World War I, the Algerian Jewish leadership published a *Livre d’Or*, which included the name, rank, and commendation received of each Algerian Jew who participated in military action, highlighting those who died for their country.¹³⁶ Here was a powerful token of Jewish patriotism and combativeness. Daniel Ulm, a Jewish officer and patriot, emblematized a defense of Jewish patriotism and assimilability. *Cagayous Antijuif* shows quite the opposite. In Musette’s work the Jew is depicted as conniving, usurious, and the main threat to the *néos*. *Cagayous Antijuif* and *Daniel Ulm* thus portray two very different representations of the violence in Algiers in 1898 and the responses to it.

¹³⁵ Aron, “Affaires Algériennes,” Oran, 1899/1900, AIU Moscou C01.8.

¹³⁶ Comité Algérien d’Etudes Sociales, *Le livre d’or du Judaïsme Algérien* (Algiers, 1919).

From Golden Era to Golden Error: The Decline of Antisemitism in Algeria and France

Following the January riots, Algerian antisemites were at the peak of their success. In February 1898, metropolitan antisemites feted Régis' role in the January riots in Algiers. Régis traveled to Paris, where he addressed a meeting of the *ligue antisémite française* at the Salle Chaynes as their invited speaker. In his speech to the many participants of the *ligue*, Régis outlined the political beliefs of Algerian antisemites. He began by expressing the fraternal sentiments of the Algerian antisemites towards their metropolitan counterparts. He then attributed the 1871 Arab revolt to the Crémieux decree, claiming that when Sidi Mokrani learned of the naturalization of Jews, he revolted, refusing to serve France which had made the Jew the superior of the Arab. Régis announced to his audience that in Algeria hatred of Jews was universal: “there are no dissensions of parties—everyone is actually an antisemite above all.”¹³⁷

Régis continued by describing Jewish behavior in municipal elections, emphasizing the crucial role of competition. He exposed the “commerce” of suffrage rights by Jews who sold their votes to their highest bidder. He continued his diatribe, turning to Governor General Lépine and portraying him as the “protector of the Jews, who ordered his central brigades to serve against the people.” Régis effectively blamed Lépine for ending the riots in Algiers too early, which as the evidence demonstrates, lasted as long as they did precisely because there was no significant military or administrative intervention.¹³⁸ Régis described the causes of the riots in Algiers as the abuse of the residents of the colony.

The Jews violate our women, murder our children! How can one not revolt? We first showed our discontent by taking over the streets of Algiers and shouting ‘death to the Jews’ . . . the police intervened, and as a young man was arrested and driven to the station, he was cowardly attacked from behind by a Jew,

¹³⁷ “Rapport Salle Chaynes,” February 23, 1898, AN F7/16001/1.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

stabbed. The indignation increased and finally the revolt exploded: in an instant we found ourselves in the street, revolvers, rifles or batons in hand.¹³⁹

Régis used his speech as an opportunity to justify and legitimate the antisemitic violence of the January riots, playing upon popular antisemitic stereotypes.

For Régis, the abrogation of the Crémieux decree was insufficient. He believed that “what is necessary is the expulsion of the Jews, or their extermination...if there exists a Jew, there will be those who are duped, and if necessary, we will water the tree of our liberties with Jewish blood.”¹⁴⁰ Régis may have borrowed this line from Thomas Jefferson’s 1787 quote in order to cloak his own political program in the language and symbol of patriotism and struggle against tyranny. He certainly considered himself to be a great Algerian patriot, and for a short period, Algerian and metropolitan antisemites agreed with him.

Max Régis continued to enjoy his celebrity and the support of metropolitan antisemites even after his arrest and imprisonment in March 1898. On March 17, he was condemned to four months in prison and 1,000 francs in damages for brutality and defamation.¹⁴¹ Régis was released early, in mid-May, after the government abandoned certain charges in response to the continued demonstrations by supporters demanding his release.¹⁴² French authorities were increasingly worried about Régis’ growing power and influence, alongside the developing prestige of antisemitic politicians in Algeria. The political aspirations of antisemites were especially troublesome for the administration. A March 24, 1898 surveillance report detailed the candidacy of Drumont for the deputy seat in

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ayoun, “Max Régis,” 155.

¹⁴² Procurer General of Algiers to the Minister of Justice, “Telegram 38548,” Algiers, March 23, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686; Procurer General of Algiers to the Minister of Justice, “Telegram 44439,” Algiers, April 4, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686; Governor General to the Interior Ministry, “Telegram 67011,” Algiers, May 14, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

Algiers and the support he found among Algerian antisemites. The report also suggested that Régis' arrest and imprisonment instigated a violent campaign in Algeria and in France.¹⁴³

Governor General Cambon reported to the Interior Ministry that Régis' arrest and trial were part of a tactical move to remove him from the political scene. Cambon hoped that Drumont would be defeated in the coming elections without Régis' support and backing.¹⁴⁴ Metropolitan antisemites organized a meeting on March 26 in Paris at the Salle Chaynes, during which Jules Guérin, the president of the Ligue antisémite française, defended Régis and his participation in the Algiers riots. Guérin sharply criticized the government for taking action against Régis and argued that he was innocent of inciting the Algérois to theft and pillage.¹⁴⁵ Guérin's defense of Régis indicated the growing connections between Metropolitan and Algerian antisemites at their height in 1898.

Scholars have argued that Algerian antisemitism was inherently different from metropolitan antisemitism, which could occasionally instigate brief episodes of violence, but not a sustained violent populist antisemitic movement such as that of Algeria.¹⁴⁶ Based on communication between Algerian antisemites and metropolitan antisemites, it is clear that there was a significant connection across the Mediterranean between antisemites in the metropole and in the colony. In the 1897-1898 police surveillance ledger of the Paris based Ligue Antisémite Française, Régis is mentioned in fourteen entries, Algeria is mentioned ten times, and the Crémieux decree was mentioned once.¹⁴⁷ The 1899 surveillance ledger contains sixteen entries on Régis, seven on Algeria or Algiers, and one entry on the

¹⁴³ "Report 500," March 24, 1898, AN F/7/16001/1. See also Central Police Commissioner of Grenoble to the Director of General Security, "Rapport," December 11, 1898; Central Police Commissioner of Grenoble to the Director of General Security, "Rapport," January 14, 1899, AN F/7/12460.

¹⁴⁴ Governor General Cambon to the Interior Ministry, "Telegram 37791," Algiers, March 22, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686. See also, "Intimidations Électorales," *Autorité*, March 24, 1898, CAOM FM F/80/1686.

¹⁴⁵ "Report 519," March 26, 1898, AN F/7/16001/1.

¹⁴⁶ Wilson, "The Antisemitic Riots," 804.

¹⁴⁷ "Ledger Ligue Antisémite, 1897-1898," AN F/7/12882.

Crémieux decree.¹⁴⁸ In the 1900 surveillance ledger, Max Régis is mentioned in nineteen entries and Algeria in nine. Most of the entries regarding Régis also discuss his political ambitions in the metropole.¹⁴⁹

The zenith of antisemitic success and links between metropolitan and Algerian antisemites occurred in 1898. In May 1898, when Algeria won four deputy seats for which any French citizen could run, they were quickly filled by antisemitic leaders from Algeria and the metropole. Among the newly elected antisemitic deputies was Drumont, who sought to further the Algerian antisemitic cause. Drumont and the deputy from Oran, Firmin Fauré, appealed to *néos* in their campaigns by signing posters and notices as “Edouardo Drumont” and “Firmino Fauré.”¹⁵⁰ In a letter to the Minister of the Interior, Governor General Lépine described Drumont’s goal for Algeria as ensuring the success and continuation of the antisemitic movement in the colony.¹⁵¹ The election of four antisemitic deputies, and later, Régis’s elections as mayor of Algiers represented the apogee of Algerian antisemites’ political prestige.

After his election as Mayor of Algiers in November 1898, Max Régis instituted a strong antisemitic program, putting Algeria on the path to autonomy.¹⁵² The Algerian antisemites’ interest in Algerian independence threatened the connections made between them and the metropolitan antisemites.¹⁵³ The success and popularity of antisemitic leaders and the resulting fear on the part of the metropolitan government led to the dismissal of Algerian antisemitic leaders such as Régis from political positions.¹⁵⁴ Following a series of

¹⁴⁸ “Ledger Ligue Antisémitique, 1899,” AN F/7/12882.

¹⁴⁹ “Ledger Ligue Antisémitique, 1900,” AN F/7/12882.

¹⁵⁰ Dermenjian, *La Crise antijuive Oranaise*, 91.

¹⁵¹ Governor General Lépine to the Minister of the Interior (Paris), Algiers, May 31, 1898, AN F/7/12460.

¹⁵² Hebey, *Algier 1898*, 202.

¹⁵³ “Ledger Ligue Antisémitique, 1899,” December 8, 1899, AN F/7/12882.

¹⁵⁴ Wilson, “The Antisemitic Riots,” 804.

trials and losing his seat as mayor of Algiers, Régis began to fall out of favor with the metropolitan antisemites, who had supported him in earlier years. In 1899 Régis was exiled to Spain for a year following several guilty verdicts in Algeria and his failed appeal in Grenoble. In Grenoble, Régis was found guilty for “press offenses and glorifying murder and pillage at meetings in Algiers and Paris.”¹⁵⁵ During the trial in Grenoble, new antisemitic protests occurred in the city, evidence of Régis’ continued popularity in the metropole.¹⁵⁶

Régis returned to Algiers and was reelected mayor on May 10, 1900. Colonial bureaucrats were particularly concerned by Régis’ excesses as mayor. While mayor, Régis used the power of municipal government to implement a strongly antisemitic policy. He established an official boycott of Jewish shops and businesses, refused to allow Jewish cafés to use the sidewalk for their terraces, and even prohibited Jewish religious butchers from slaughtering animals. During his term as mayor, Régis went as far as to offer free passage to Marseille to Algiers’ Jews, in hopes of encouraging a Jewish exodus. The colonial administration feared that the Algerian antisemites’ efforts of encouraging Algerian Muslim violence towards Jews could lead to another revolt like that of 1871, and subsequently dismissed several antisemitic mayors in Algeria, including Régis.¹⁵⁷ Certainly, the separatist element of the antisemites in Algeria would have been cause for concern for the French government seeking to tighten, not lose, their colonial hold in Algeria. Régis’ tenure as mayor illustrates the unprecedented power antisemites found in municipal government, although his dismissal by the Governor General shows the limits on municipal autonomy.

¹⁵⁵ “Max Régis Sentenced to Three Years,” *The New York Times*, February 21, 1899.

¹⁵⁶ Central Police Commissariat of Grenoble to the Director of Sûreté Générale, Grenoble, January 14, 1899, AN F/7/12460.

¹⁵⁷ Wilson, “The Antisemitic Riots,” 804.

Régis' use of his mayoral post to promote antisemitism was a model followed by later antisemites such as Dr. Molle in Oran and Émile Morinaud in Constantine in the late 1920s and 1930s.

In 1901, Régis set his sights on the metropole, announcing his candidacy for a legislative seat for the eleventh arrondissement of Paris. He lost and thus began his fall from grace.¹⁵⁸ In the police surveillance ledgers of 1901, Régis appears in sixty-four entries, whereas Algeria appears only nine times. In 1901, Régis spent much of his time in the metropole, and was embroiled in many disputes with fellow antisemites. At this point, his prestige began to dwindle, as did relationships between metropolitan and Algerian antisemites.¹⁵⁹ Régis often appeared in newspaper articles that recounted his scandalous behavior. Régis challenged those he perceived as offenders to duels and was often injured.¹⁶⁰ Régis was attacked on the street and used his injury to attempt to rally supporters, inviting the press into his bedroom immediately following the incident in order to ensure that his picture made it into the newspapers.

Régis was a notorious gambler, frequenting casinos in Algeria and the metropole, spending not only his family's modest fortune, but also the funds of the *ligue antijuive* and sums he borrowed from colleagues, friends, and even the *ligue antisémite française*. He was well-known as a womanizer, and Paris police surveillance records show him in the presence of many different women, some single, many married. He lavished his mistresses with gifts, hotel rooms, and dinners.¹⁶¹ Among Régis' mistresses was supposedly a wealthy Jewish woman, Madame Darribat, who provided him with money, although this seems

¹⁵⁸ Ayoun, "Max Régis," 156.

¹⁵⁹ "Ledgers Ligue Antisémite, 1901," AN F/7/12882

¹⁶⁰ "Réunion Régis à la salle des agriculteurs rue d'Athènes," Paris, June 21, 1901, AN F/7/12461.

¹⁶¹ "Ledger Ligue Antisémite, 1904-1906," AN F/7/12883; "D'où vient l'argent?" *Le Petit Fanal*, Oran, 22 February 1899, CAOM F/80/1686.

implausible.¹⁶² He was also thought to be living in morally dubious conditions with a married couple in Paris, whose neighbors called the police several times because of worrisome noises coming from the home.¹⁶³ A rift developed between Drumont and Régis in 1901, as well as many other squabbles and altercations between metropolitan antisemites and Régis during his stays in France.¹⁶⁴ Eventually Régis, who was the golden boy of the antisemitic movement in the 1890s, became persona non grata at *ligue antisémite française* meetings and events. By 1905, he disappeared from the public record, permanently moving to France. In 1910, he founded another newspaper *La Grande France* in Nice, and managed a chain of hotels in the interwar period.¹⁶⁵

Régis' short-lived success coincided with the highpoint of popular antisemitism in the 1890s and his career can be used as a measure of one of the most significant periods of Algerian antisemitism.¹⁶⁶ The antisemitic “moments” in Algeria in the 1920s and 1930s were largely temporary and localized, and although intense, they were also short-lived. In August 1934 the Constantine “pogrom,” the subject of chapter four, sent ripples of antisemitic violence into surrounding areas, but not the same degree as 1898. Similar to 1898, in the 1934 Constantine pogrom, the police proved scandalously absent until a day into

¹⁶² “Au Sujet de Max Régis,” Algiers, December 31, 1904, AN F/7/12460. See also, “Situation du parti antijuif à Alger,” Paris, December 5, 1904, AN F/7/12460.

¹⁶³ “Ledger Ligue Antisémitique, 1904-1906,” AN F/7/12883.

¹⁶⁴ “Au sujet des antisémites,” Paris, October 30, 1901, AN F/7/12460.

¹⁶⁵ Hebey, *Alger* 1898, 287.

¹⁶⁶ There may be a significant urban foundation to late 19th century antisemitism. The 1890s in general and 1898 in particular represented a particularly significant moment of not only connection, but also of coordination between metropolitan and Algerian antisemites. The late 1890s was a period of widespread power and influence for the antisemites throughout Europe who used municipal governments to promote their antisemitic campaigns. From 1897 to 1910 Karl Lueger, an Austrian antisemite and admirer of Edouard Drumont, served as mayor of Vienna. Lueger's and Max Régis' terms as antisemitic mayors of significant cities overlapped in 1898. See Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 133-134.

the violence.¹⁶⁷ In 1934 the metropolitan antisemites did not seem to be as engaged with or as supportive of the Algerian antisemites as they were in 1898.

1898 cannot be understood without its context of the Dreyfus Affair and the resulting widespread and popular antisemitism. The conditions created by this scandal, and the resulting concern over the perceived threat posed by quickly assimilating and integrating Jewish populations in France, and more recently, in Algeria, led to significant status anxiety. Jews in France had been citizens for over a century in 1898; however, in Algeria, their citizenship was relatively new. This recently naturalized Jewish mass is one of the most significant factors which explain the intensity of violence of the Algiers riots in comparison to those in metropolitan France. Antisemitism in Algeria was so intense because the Jews, as newly naturalized citizens, held a significant number of votes and thus threatened the French *colon* and especially the *néos'* control over municipal elections as well as causing severe status anxiety among the *petit blancs* in the colony. The recent cases of antisemitic violence in the colony, such as 1897 in Oran had preconditioned Algerian antisemites to the acceptability, if not necessity of antisemitic violence in defeating the political, social, and economic power of their Jewish status competitors. The most impacted by this status anxiety, the *néos*, considered Régis one of them, and supported his activities and leadership of the riots in Algiers, forming a significant political force in the 1920s and 1930s in the form of the *Unions Latines*.

No future political leader in Algeria experienced as much popularity as Régis, nor as much direct correspondence and cooperation with the metropole. Even after Régis' disappearance in 1905 from the public eye, references were routinely made to him and to his activities in the late 1890s and early 1900s in newspapers, correspondence, and political

¹⁶⁷ A. Sultan, "Lettre à M. le Président de l'AIU," August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

administrative reports long into the mid twentieth century. By 1902, the political popularity of antisemitism waned. The antisemitic Algerian deputies such as Firmin Fauré and Drumont failed to be reelected in 1902. Antisemitic politicians in twentieth century Algeria were mainly based locally in Algerian municipal governments and they rarely found a positive and supportive following in the metropole.

Historians have argued that 1898 represented the apogee of the antisemitic movement in Algeria.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, antisemitism reached a peak of success in 1898 because of the level of violence and popular support in the January riots as well as the connections between antisemites in the colony and the metropole. Antisemitism, however, continued to exist in the colony, nourished by competition for the scarce resources associated with control of municipal governments and with wider colonial economic conditions. Consequently, it is important to see beyond the antisemitism of the violence in 1898 and understand the layers beneath, those which revolve around identity, citizenship, and competition for control, status, and political power. Throughout the early 1900s *néos*, Jews, and Muslims demonstrated their developing identities through the development of new forms of self-help and self-promotion. Periodic waves of antisemitic violence accelerated these developments.

¹⁶⁸ Uran, “La réception de l’Affaire en Algérie,” 525.

Chapter 3: Navigating Multiple Identities and Evolving French Patriotism

The violence of 1897 and 1898 and the increasing tensions with the newly naturalized Europeans taught Algerian Jewry an important lesson. In order to avoid further victimization in the colony, some Algerian Jews moved assertively towards assimilation and formed associations to defend themselves against antisemitic attacks. Following the Crémieux decree, the Algerian Jewish elite came to realize the importance of assimilation for survival and success in the colonial framework. Meanwhile, French law required that Algerian Jews, as citizens, attend French secular schools. Still, the majority of Algerian Jews remained unassimilated and “backward,” especially in the eyes of the Algerian Jewish elite and their metropolitan French counterparts, who sought to “civilize” them. In the period after 1900, the Alliance Israélite Universelle (Alliance) sponsored religious after-school programs to promote further modernization and assimilation.

The period of the 1910s to early 1930s was a time of opportunity for Algerian Jews to prove themselves as Frenchmen. World War I allowed Jews to distinguish themselves as soldiers and patriots, offering their lives as a sacrifice to the glorious future of *la mère patrie*. Jews also secured leadership roles in municipal governments. For example, the first deputy mayor of Constantine in 1934 was a Jew. Such gains proved costly and fragile. Although the period between the antisemitic “moment” of 1898 and World War I was one of relative calm between groups in the colony, the postwar period brought an increase in political and electoral antisemitism among the French and *néos*, as well as developing antisemitic sentiment among Algerian Muslims, linked to the growing pan-Islamic movement in North Africa and the Middle East and economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s.

This chapter examines the developing identity of Algerian Jews in the context of the early twentieth century. In this period, Jews assimilated at an unprecedented rate, encouraged by the Alliance and in an effort to deflect antisemitic attacks. Following the enormous electoral success of antisemitism in the late nineteenth century, the early 1900s witnessed the mutation of that antisemitism. While municipal government remained the crucible of antisemitic activity, antisemitism further contaminated other institutions, among them universities and the military. During this period, antisemitism was transformed from its violent late nineteenth-century incarnation into an insidious institutional twentieth-century form. As Jews felt their rights being eroded, they established associations and programs to defend themselves. Their response was twofold: they sought election to municipal governments, and they formed defense groups like the Comité Algérien des Études Sociales. Over the course of the early twentieth century, Jews became more skilled at articulating and defending their rights. With the support and leadership of the Alliance, Jewish defense groups, and developing relationships with left-wing metropolitan organizations, like the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, Jews became better equipped to combat antisemitism on local and colony-wide levels.

The Alliance Israélite Universelle in Algeria

In the nineteenth century, Jewish leaders of the Alliance Israélite Universelle connected religious tolerance, human rights, and the achievements of the French Revolution to the civilizing mission of French colonialism. The elite French Jewish leadership of the Alliance viewed their task as a crusade for human and Jewish rights. The Alliance's program of establishing schools for Jews outside of France internalized French Jews' devotion to state

secularism and their belief that their own rights were intrinsically connected to the success of the French civilizing mission and the “regeneration” of their coreligionists in those regions. Established in 1860, and presided over in its early years by Adolphe Crémieux, the Alliance emphasized solidarity between Jews while simultaneously demonstrating their leaders’ own acculturation to Republican ideals.¹

Inspired by the emancipation of French Jewry, the Alliance philosophy maintained that in order to be deemed worthy of emancipation, Jews had to change and be “regenerated.” Western Jews feared that they would be associated with their “backward” coreligionists—referred to as “Jewish Eastern Question”—and that their own rights could be at risk.² In its early years, the Alliance worked independently of the French government. The Alliance invested its early energy in the Levant and other countries of North Africa, particularly Morocco.³ The Alliance leadership originally considered Algeria to be outside the scope of its mission because of its status as a French colony. When the Alliance entered Algeria in 1900, its teachers collaborated with French officials, due in part to the close overlap of their projects and goals.⁴

In Algeria, the Alliance could not follow its usual program of establishing primary schools to introduce western subject matter and reduce the emphasis on religious education. After 1882, Algerian Jews attended French secular schools in the colony. M. Nahon, the director of the Alliance school in Algiers, feared that if the Alliance were to set up alternative educational facilities, they would merely arm their adversaries with further proof of Jewish

¹ Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 153, 157-158.

² Aron Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims: Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Modern Times* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 9-10.

³ Michael M. Laskier, *The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Jewish Communities of Morocco, 1862-1962* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 24.

⁴ Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 12.

“exclusivity.” The Alliance leadership therefore focused their activity in Algeria on two essential aspects: religious instruction and occupational education.⁵ During the early 1900s, the Alliance facilitated assimilation and social improvement among Algerian Jews in order to combat antisemitism. According to the Alliance’s annual report of 1900-1901, its work in Algeria developed as a result of the sense of solidarity among Jews following the “antisemitic excesses of 1898.” Nahon contended “isn’t Algeria a French land? Were not our coreligionists there called to the dignity of citizenship of the Republic? What more solid guarantee of security, what more fertile stimulation for regeneration could one hope for?”⁶

As Algerian Jewish youth attended secular schools, the Alliance schools operated outside of regular school hours: in the afternoon on most days, all day on Sundays, and full-time during school vacations. The Alliance taught students Hebrew, translation of prayers and the Bible, religious history and practices, and the “moral responsibilities” of Jews. The goal of the Alliance in Algeria was “to instruct [students] on the attacks directed against our race and to prepare them to respond, to habituate them to proudly reclaim the name of Jew and Frenchman, and to demonstrate to them the need for human and Jewish solidarity.” Jewish students had to be polite and respectful in order, Nahon contended, to differentiate themselves from the young Kabyles or Spaniards in the streets of Algiers.⁷

The Alliance reorganized the religious schools already in place, the Talmud-Torahs. Typical of the latter, the Talmud-Torah in Algiers was in a terrible state, housed in an old, dark building. “A radical reorganization was indispensable,” wrote Nahon. In July 1900 the Alliance took formal possession of the building and its teachers. The students of the original

⁵ Moïse Nahon, “Rapport Annuel, 1900-1901 de M. Nahon, directeur de l’École de l’Alliance à Alger,” Algiers, September 1901, AIU Moscou EN 01.2.

⁶ M.Nahon, “Rapport Annuel 1900-1901,” AIU Moscou EN 01.2.

⁷ Ibid.

Talmud-Torah immediately became the students of the Alliance school and Nahon encouraged the enrolment of children from wealthy families to finance the school. Nearly all the applications for admission to the school came from poor and middle class families; the upper class was “indifferent to issues of religion.” When the school opened on July 22, 1900, it had a student body of 600.⁸

Nahon bemoaned the fact that he was obligated to keep on the original teachers of the Talmud-Torah. When he attempted to fire one of these teachers, Pariente, whom Nahon depicted as displaying “disheartening stupidity,” he met with opposition from the local Consistory. In addition, local rabbis who tutored students saw the Alliance as competition.⁹ Although Alliance schools were entirely independent from control of the local communities, resistance from local Jewish leaders and organizations, such as the Consistory, could threaten the success of the Alliance schools.¹⁰ The Consistory system, in place since the 1840s, cooperated and competed with the Alliance. Because the Consistory was also an extension of the French system, it worked together with the Alliance to encourage Algerian Jews to adopt European lifestyles. Consistories in Algeria, however, were often run by local Jewish leaders, and as such, remained faithful to the local community and promoted the interests of local rabbis, who were often opposed to Alliance schools.¹¹

Under Nahon, the Alliance school organized religious instruction for girls. The Alliance emphasized the important role of women as conduits of modernity.¹² Without exposure to modern religious instruction, women remained more traditional. Their practices

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 13.

¹¹ Michael M. Laskier, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century: The Jews of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 13.

¹² Rodrigue, *Jews and Muslims*, 80.

and superstitions often collided with western modernity. Nahon described women in Algiers as confusing local superstition with Jewish tradition and dogma. The Alliance leadership realized that women played an integral role in the modernizing process.¹³ Nahon therefore not only improved women's education, but also created apprenticeship opportunities for them, as well as men, in cooperation with the Jewish society, "Le Travail."¹⁴ For Nahon and the Alliance, apprenticeship and training were part of the economic regeneration of Algerian Jews. He organized night courses on French, arithmetic, and design for the apprentices. For girls, Nahon promoted apprenticeship opportunities in sewing/couture, embroidery, and laundry/pressing. In 1900, the girls' apprenticeship program included 60 students.¹⁵

In 1902, president of the Algerian Alliance, Sylvain Benedict, described its significant role in combating Algerian antisemitism, which the Consistory had been incapable of defeating. Benedict highlighted the threat posed to Algerian Jews by their status competitors, the *néos*.

The watchword was to starve, to exasperate the Jews in order to induce them to emigrate and leave the field open to those who pompously called themselves the French of France and were a bunch of Italians, Maltese, and Spanish, naturalized yesterday. Our fellow Jews, unprepared for this fight, were at a loss with little or no defenses ready to fight this smear.¹⁶

The Alliance thus viewed its role in Algiers in particular, but also throughout Algeria, as arming the Jew with the ability to fight against antisemitism. Benedict concluded that the Alliance should expand its scope. "Our work of regeneration should not be confined to the

¹³ See Albert Memmi, *Pillar of Salt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 159-162. In his book, Albert Memmi, a Tunisian Jew, educated in Alliance schools, described seeing his mother participating in a traditional dance as a traumatic, alien experience.

¹⁴ Nahon, "Rapport Annuel 1900-1901," AIU Moscou EN 01.2.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Sylvain Benedict, "L'œuvre d'éducation morale, religieuse et professionnelle," Algiers, April 1902, AIU Moscou EN 01.1.

capital of Algeria. Constantine waits impatiently for the Alliance to take charge of its moral and religious interests. Do not waste precious time.”¹⁷

In 1902, the Alliance set about creating a similar school in Constantine. A.H. Navon of the Alliance reported that students in Constantine continued to speak a Judeo-Arabic dialect and were generally poorly behaved. In contrast to Jews under Alliance tutelage in other locations, such as Fez or Hebron, who could cite and discuss Hugo, Proudhon, and the like, Jews in Constantine could describe only “insanities, filth that would make a monkey blush.”¹⁸ Navon criticized Algerian rabbis, who could not or would not encourage the assimilation of Algerian Jewish children. Despite the Ferry Law of 1882 that made secular education obligatory for all citizens in the colony, Navon depicted Algerian Jews in racial terms as “half-European, half-African,” caught between progress and the vices of their native past.¹⁹

Navon attributed the lack of assimilation to the impact of antisemitism in Constantine. Algerian Jews were stunted by the “profound evil that this epidemic has caused and continues to cause in the economic, civil, and religious life of Jews in Constantine.” Navon argued that education was one path to assimilation that even the antisemites, led by Émile Morinaud, could not suppress.²⁰ Navon described the Constantine school as a “moral prophylactic” for Algerian Jewish children. Navon envisioned the curriculum as courses on

¹⁷ Benedict, “L’œuvre d’éducation morale, religieuse, et professionnelle,” AIU Moscou EN 01.1. By 1930, the Alliance school in Algiers had 537 students with 172 paying tuition, out of the total Jewish community in Algiers of 25,000. A. Confino, “Rapport Financier de l’année 1930,” Algiers, January 9, 1931, AIU Moscou EN 18.079. The Alliance also worked with local Algerian Jews in 1908 to establish an Alliance school in Tlemcen, which contained a religious school for boys and a professional school for girls. See “Projet de Règlement des Écoles de l’Alliance Israélite à Tlemcen,” Tlemcen, March 30, 1908, AIU Algérie IV B 27.

¹⁸ A.H. Navon, “Talmud-Thora de Constantine,” Constantine, August 15, 1902, Alliance Moscou EN 01.1.

¹⁹ A.H. Navon, “Talmud-Tora de Constantine (suite),” Constantine, August 15, 1902, AIU Moscou EN 01.1. See also Deborah Reed-Danahy, *Education and Identity in Rural France: The Politics of Schooling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 110-111.

²⁰ Navon, “Talmud-Tora de Constantine (suite),” AIU Moscou EN 01.1.

religious education, Hebrew language, and Jewish history. The Alliance would also impart to students the importance of the rights and obligations of the Jew towards “his country of adoption, inculcate our young Algerians with the love of France, illustrate their responsibilities and rights as citizens.”²¹

The Alliance perceived its role as developing and civilizing Algerian Jews, making them worthy of their status as French citizens and overcoming the stunting effects of the constant barrage of antisemitic fervor. Navon wrote that the Algerian Jewish child “has so often heard ringing in his ears the hideous slogan ‘Down with the Jews! Death to Jews!’ He is so used to the insult that he believes himself to be inferior.”²² Navon cited antisemitic violence in Algiers, Oran, and Constantine as the main source of Algerian Jews’ mistrust and isolationism.²³

The Alliance in Constantine followed the model of Algiers and established apprentice schools and workshops in order to teach Algerian Jews marketable manual skills. These workshops included bonnet-making, ironwork, carpentry, lingerie, and dress-making, as well as night courses to teach the students of workshops basic reading, writing, and math. In 1924, the director of the Alliance schools in Constantine, David Nabon, wrote in his annual report that the success of the apprentice programs of the Alliance indicated that Jews in Algeria no longer demonstrated their previous repugnance for manual labor, a common antisemitic accusation.²⁴

Navon and other Alliance leaders felt that the role of the Alliance in Algeria was preparing Algerian Jews to become good Frenchmen by providing them with the skills and

²¹ A.H. Navon, “Talmud-Tora de Constantine,” undated, probably 1902, AIU Moscou EN 01.1.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ D. Nabon, “Rapport Annuel, Le Travail,” Constantine, January 1924, AIU Algérie II B 10.

rhetoric with which to combat antisemitism themselves. By introducing Algerian Jews to manual trades, furthering their educations, and inculcating them with French ideals, Alliance leaders in Algeria worked towards their “regeneration.” In collaboration with this project of regeneration, the Alliance also cooperated with certain Algerian Jewish leaders to defend and support Jewish rights in the colony and to encourage Jews to fulfill their rights and responsibilities as citizens, particularly during World War I.

Proving Patriotism: World War I

In contrast to the economic crisis that encouraged and supported the antisemitic success of the 1890s, the period of economic growth in the early twentieth century offered a more favorable climate for Jews in Algeria. Aided by improvements in agriculture, production reached its peak from 1909 to 1913.²⁵ This period of economic success explains the decrease in antisemitic activity in the colony. In addition, following the Margueritte massacre on April 26, 1901 during which approximately 100 Algerian Muslims attacked that settler village, the “native peril” took precedence over the “Jewish question” in the minds of many colonists.²⁶ At the same time, Algerian Jews, with the encouragement of the Alliance, accelerated their assimilation as Frenchmen.

World War I afforded Algerian Jews an opportunity to prove their civic and patriotic devotion to France. Because of the Jews’ status as citizens, their exact role in the war has often been ignored. In statistics, Jews were often counted together with the French of metropolitan origin or naturalized. In the major studies on the history of Algeria, there is

²⁵ Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present* (London: Hurst and Company, 1991), 84.

²⁶ Ageron, *Modern Algeria*, 64.

virtually no mention of Jews in World War I.²⁷ Previously considered unworthy of their citizenship by antisemites who sought to revoke those rights, Algerian Jews proved themselves to be enthusiastic patriots, joining the war effort in great numbers. The camaraderie of the trenches gave Jews hope that the antisemitic attacks of the 1890s were but memories and that their future in Algeria and France would now be assured.²⁸ Algerian Jews would later cite their commitments in World War I as evidence of their devotion to France to combat antisemitic attacks on Jews. Even after 1962, Algerian Jews proudly recalled the service of fathers, brothers, and husbands in the Great War.²⁹ Under Vichy, as Algerian Jews sought to maintain their citizenship by proving service to France, many Jews cited their service in World War I as evidence.³⁰

In 1919, the Comité Algérien d'Études Sociales (CAES) published a *Livre d'Or* honoring the patriotism of Algerian Jews. The preface lauded the tremendous commitment of Algerian Jewry. "To the calls to France, Algerian Jews eligible for mobilization replied with the greatest patriotic zeal. In all actions on all fields of battle, by land, sea, air, our coreligionists of all ranks shared, with all the children of France, the fate of the war."³¹ The three hundred page book listed medals and commendations awarded to Algerian Jews, as well as wounded, dead, and missing soldiers. For each name in these lists, the CAES authors

²⁷ Charles-Robert Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine, Tome II: De l'insurrection de 1871 au déclenchement de la guerre de libération* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979), 261. Ageron gives only statistics on the numbers of Algerian Muslims who served during the war. In his section on World War I, Ageron never mentions Algerian Jews.

²⁸ Michel Anskey, *Les Juifs d'Algérie du décret Crémieux à la Libération* (Paris: Éditions du Centre, 1950), 65-66.

²⁹ Joëlle Allouche-Benayoun and Doris Bensimon, *Les Juifs d'Algérie: Mémoires et identités plurielles* (Paris: Éditions Stavit, 1998), 272-273.

³⁰ See my chapter on Vichy for more detail on such appeals.

³¹ Comité Algérien d'Études Sociales, *Le Livre d'or de Judaïsme Algérien* (Algiers: Publications of the Comité Algérien d'Études Sociales, September 1919), Preface.

included a short homage including the date of their injury or death and, whenever, possible, the story of their heroism.

For example, Youda Ben Barak, part of the 3e Zouaves, received a medal in a ceremony presided over by General Leguay, which took place in a military hospital filled with wounded Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian soldiers. Leguay described how Ben Barak raced forward in battle and as he was severely wounded in the chest yelled out “my skin is nothing. Long Live France!” Leguay commended Ben Barak’s bravery, stating that he “gave the best example of patriotism and sacrifice.” Leguay addressed the wounded soldiers in attendance, mostly Muslims, “Look, you other Arabs, it was a Jew who did this; you must be brave like him and imitate him.” Ben Barak’s citation concluded with the note that despite his injury, he managed to kill the two German soldiers who had attacked him.³²

Algerian Jews departed in great numbers to fight on the various fronts of World War I. In some families, all the men went to war, leaving the women behind to support and run the household. In such cases, some women found themselves in desperate conditions and called upon Jewish organizations for assistance. In one such case, Madame A. Toubiana, a widow, wrote to the Alliance for aid following the mobilization of all of her brothers. Her brother, Abraham Edmond Oualid, had attended the Alliance’s agricultural school established in Djedjeida, as had their four other brothers. Following the start of the war, however, all those young men joined up to fight for France. Abraham Edmond became a sergeant in the first battalion of Zouaves, and in the first days of war went to Morocco with his regiment. In December 1914, as he led his company towards a German occupied trench in Roulaincourt, he was killed. Another brother, Prosper, fought nobly at the Dardanelles, and received a promotion as a result. At the time of her letter, in 1916, all five of Toubiana’s

³² CAES, *Livre d’Or*, 29-30.

brothers had either died for France or were serving in her armies. “I am proud that my brothers have fought and are fighting for our beautiful homeland, protector of the humble against the strong, the weak against the powerful, for freedom and civilization.”³³ Madame Toubiana’s letter illustrates the general commitment of Algerian Jews in the face of war.

Similarly, Algerian Jews did not just give themselves to France by serving during World War I, they also donated to the cause. In a 1917 letter, the Jewish delegates of the Algiers Chamber of Commerce protested the lack of recognition of Jewish donations of precious metals to the war. The 1916 bulletin of the Chamber of Commerce only recognized donations by *français d’origine*, not Algerian Jews. The Jewish delegates wrote

We are all French in our heart, related to France by an unshaken and natural attachment, and indeed have always been ready to shed our blood for Her. The criticisms you have made against us have deeply affected us, because it suggests that the French of other faiths have a higher conception of their patriotic duty than we do, and it is not the case.³⁴

Algerian Jews fought to have their commitment to France recognized by other Frenchmen in Algeria.

For Jews, the “sacred union” established by fighting alongside other Frenchmen gave them hope that antisemitism would no longer threaten their existence and success in Algeria. Algerian Jewish leaders, members of the CAES, wrote in 1915 that the camaraderie of soldiers ensured the success of France in the war. Regarding Jewish involvement in this “sacred union,” they wrote “our fellow Jews, also do their share and their efforts are no less significant, they join with other Frenchmen in this outburst of generosity, of heroism and

³³ Madame A. Toubiana to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Sétif, March 30, 1916, AIU Algérie IL1.

³⁴ Jewish delegates to the Algiers Chamber of Commerce, Algiers, February 1917, AIU Algérie IC2.

sacrifice, which prompts all Frenchmen, to act as one man.”³⁵ Jewish leaders hoped that this camaraderie from the war would translate into greater acceptance of Jews in colonial Algerian society. The CAES leadership hoped that the *Livre d’Or* would demonstrate that “the Algerian Jews were just doing their duty, so that people stop denying their courage and their patriotism, and recognize in all sincerity, that they are worthy of France and its traditions!”³⁶

As France dealt with the aftermath of war, however, Algerian Jews once again faced an increase in antisemitism as a result of their improved and assimilated position within the colony. Following the war, Algerian Jews sought election to municipal councils at an unprecedented rate and Algerian antisemites saw that engagement as a threat to their control of municipal government. By the 1930s, Jews represented a significant number of elected municipal and general council members in the colony.³⁷

The Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales and the Fight against Antisemitism

When France entered World War I, Algerian Jews answered the call of *la mère Patrie* in great number. For these Jews, fighting for France symbolized the highest expression of their patriotism and worth as French citizens, especially in the face of the many antisemitic attacks against them. The Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales (CAES) emerged out of this assimilationist and patriotic mentality as the proponent of universal equality under the French flag, and more particularly, as the defender of Algerian Jewish rights. In a perfect expression

³⁵ Leaders of the Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales, “Letter to Coreligionists,” Algiers, March 1, 1915, AIU Algérie IC2.

³⁶ CAES, *Livre d’Or*, Preface.

³⁷ While there are constant references to Jewish elected officials in the colony in the 1930s, especially around the period of the Constantine pogrom, there are few references to Jewish municipal and general council members in the early 1920s. More research is needed to ascertain when exactly Jews pursued their own candidacies and were successful.

of universalism, all citizens would have equal access to rights as well as the resources of the state, such as voting, participation in associations, and equality in legislation. Antisemitism undermined such universalism by excluding particular groups from access to such resources of the state. The CAES worked to expose and destroy the particularism imposed on Algerian Jews by antisemitism by employing the language of universalism and equal rights.

Founded in 1915, the CAES became the watchdog organization to protect Jewish rights in Algeria. Its founders were patriotic Algerian Jews who sought to prove Algerian Jewish service and commitment to France as well as defend Algerian Jewry against antisemitism. Among the founders of the CAES were Lieutenant Léon Mayer, who would later be killed on the front lines in World War I, Albert Confino, the director the Alliance in Algiers, and Dr. Henri Aboulker, a surgeon and member of a prestigious, assimilated, and influential Algiers-based Jewish family. All three men had strong ties to the metropole and were extremely well respected by the Algerian Jewish community. Describing Algeria as the classic land of antisemitism and invoking the destruction and violence of 1898, they urged the pressing need for action to combat antisemitic politicians and their activities in the colony. In the context of the war, the CAES viewed its task as protecting the rights of Algerian Jews serving France, and as demanding recognition for this service. During wartime, Jews in Algeria and elsewhere were often the victims of scapegoating. Noting that although Algerian Jews had demonstrated their bravery in defense of France since the Crémieux decree of 1870, in Algeria one could find “men blinded by the hatred of the Jew, officers who forget their responsibilities, who, in the barracks, introduce passions, prejudices, and hostile sentiments.”³⁸

³⁸ “Rapport sur la fondation du Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” Algiers, April 8, 1915, AIU Algérie IC2.

At its founding in 1915, the CAES described its goals to combat antisemitism as threefold: to collect statistics on mobilized Jewish Frenchmen for all of Algeria; to provide moral support and assistance to the families of mobilized soldiers; and to attend to the social implications relating to antisemitism. Thus, the CAES, which was connected to the activities of the Alliance, emphasized the importance of Jewish solidarity. “The spirit of solidarity is innate in the Jew,” stated the report. The founders stressed the importance of action rather than inaction. In 1898, Algerian Jews had not been prepared to deal with the threat posed by antisemitism. With the state-sponsored Consistory as their only source of leadership, they lacked unity and were ill-equipped to combat antisemitism.³⁹ Identifying 1898 as a time of inaction on the part of the Consistory and Jewish leadership, the CAES used the context of war to encourage activism among Algerian Jews. “We must deploy a great deal of activity, patience, and tenacity to accomplish our task. We hope that our group will not fail.”⁴⁰

Despite their early ambitiousness, the CAES soon backtracked. Given the context of war, the Alliance Central Committee in Paris urged Confino and the rest of the CAES leadership to be extremely prudent in their actions. The Central Committee urged the CAES to focus on accumulating and organizing the documentation necessary to “effectively combat the crisis of antisemitism which is emerging in Algeria. But this said, the Committee encourages your organization to be extremely careful in its actions, lest it serve, by stirring inappropriate agitation, the cause it purports to defend against.”⁴¹ Confino wrote that the

³⁹ David Cohen, “Les Circonstances de la Fondation du Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales ou la Prise de Conscience d’une Élite Intellectuelle Juive Face Au Phénomène antisémite en Algérie (1915-1921)” *Revue des Études Juives* 161, no. 1-2 (January-June 2002): 184.

⁴⁰ “Rapport sur la fondation du Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” Algiers, April 8, 1915, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁴¹ Central Committee, Alliance Israélite Universelle to M. Confino, Paris, March 10, 1915, AIU Algérie IC2.

CAES would follow the recommendations of the Alliance Central Committee to use caution in their actions and to act only with the greatest circumspection.⁴²

Among their first actions, the CAES hoped to defend the rights of Jewish soldiers in Algeria against the antisemitism of officers and the army in general. In February 1915 they received a letter from a Jewish interpreter, A. Chemoul, who sought a post as an Arabic interpreter in Battalion E in Bizerte.⁴³ He was called to be interviewed by the Colonel of the Battalion. Chemoul transcribed his interview in his letter:

The Colonel: "You know Arabic well?

Chemoul: "Yes, my Colonel, I write and read it well. I speak it and understand it easily; I have a certificate in Arabic and a certificate in Muslim law.

The Colonel: "What do you call yourself?"

Chemoul: "Chemoul, My Colonel"

The Colonel: "You are Jewish, aren't you?"

Chemoul: "Yes, my Colonel"

The Colonel: "In that case, you are not my business"

Chemoul: "Could you be obliged to indicate for me for what reason?"

The Colonel: "Oh well! It is simple-- I decided it is time to eliminate from my companies the entire Jewish element, at the present time, it is a done deal. I won't dwell on my decision and this is why I can not do you any favors"

Chemoul concluded his letter by expressing his hope that that the Jews, who generously spilled their own blood for the benefit of others in France, would not always be the victims of antisemitism.⁴⁴

When alerted to Chemoul's case, the Alliance Central Committee responded that the officer was justified in his decision to refuse Chemoul's appointment, since there was a great deal of animosity between Arabs and Jews. Consequently, the Central Committee strongly urged the CAES not to act on Chemoul's behalf. In fact, they requested that should the CAES seek to intervene in similar situations, "do not make any effort without first consulting

⁴² A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, April 2, 1915, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁴³ Bizerte was actually located in Tunisia, however, it is likely that Chemoul was an Algerian Jew and thus went to the CAES for support.

⁴⁴ A. Chemoul to M. René Scebat, Bizerte, February 5, 1915, AIU Algérie IC2.

us.”⁴⁵ This example demonstrates the extremely tight grip that the Alliance Central Committee had over the CAES during World War I and the Central Committee’s concern that any political action against antisemitism in Algeria might have negative reverberations in both the metropole and the colony. In particular, after Henri Aboulker left the leadership of the CAES to serve at the front, the organization went into a latent period. Moïse D. Stora replaced Aboulker as president, and during his presidency the CAES did not participate in any formal activities to combat antisemitism.⁴⁶

With Aboulker’s return from the front in 1919, the CAES recommitted itself to advocacy on behalf of Algerian Jews. On July 15, 1919, Aboulker and the CAES sent announcements to Algerian Jews regarding to the activities of the CAES, addressing them as “fellow citizens.” Under a section entitled “the goal,” Aboulker wrote that “the peace and prosperity of Algeria cannot result except from the free and complete development of the activity of all French citizens, *including the Jews*. Above all, our mission is to react without weakness against antisemitism.” He described the role of antisemitism in the colony as the most “odious of civil wars.” Linking Jews to the republic, Aboulker argued that antisemitism “coincided with efforts attempted against the Republican regime.” Vowing to respond to all acts of antisemitism, Aboulker and the CAES called upon the government in Algeria to join them in the fight against antisemitism.⁴⁷

Aboulker outlined the activities of the reenergized CAES. Among the most important tasks was the organization and publication of the *Livre d’Or*. Aboulker cited the statistics of the *Livre d’Or*: among Algerian Jews there was close to 2,000 killed in battle; 31 Légions d’Honneurs were awarded as well as 112 military medals, and a thousand various

⁴⁵ Central Committee, Alliance Israélite Universelle, to A. Confino, Paris, March 101, 1915.

⁴⁶ Cohen, “Les Circonstances de la Fondation du Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” 186.

⁴⁷ “Announcement of the Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” Algiers, July 15, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

commendations. “We have contracted vis-à-vis our dead and our combatants...a sacred debt. We must ensure that their sufferings and their sacrifices are used to establish a little more peace, a little more justice among men.”⁴⁸

The CAES also concentrated its efforts on dealing with discriminatory laws against Jews in the colony, particularly those preventing access to land designated for colonization (*terres domaniales*), elections of Financial Delegates, and Jewish voting privileges in merchant tribunal elections. In 1919, the CAES fought for the rights of Jewish students at the University of Algiers to join the general student union, which had refused to grant them entry. Ultimately, the goal of the CAES was to ensure that the equality inscribed in French laws be realized. Aboulker wrote that “the Central Government and our fellow citizens in the metropole imagine that equality exists for all the French of Algeria.... The theoretical equality inscribed in law must become a reality in social as well as political life, from which we are generally excluded.” Concluding his announcement with a plea for both moral and financial support, Aboulker once again emphasized the devotion of Algerian Jews to France: “The generous France, which we love, will see one more time that we are children worthy of her.”⁴⁹ Aboulker’s promotion of the *Livre d’Or* was designed to manifest Jewish sacrifices – that sacred debt—as citizens for France and thus France’s reciprocal obligations to Algerian Jews.

The CAES set as one of its first priorities the collection of statistics of Algerian Jewish commitment to France during the war. In 1915, the CAES sent out questionnaires to all Jewish families requesting information regarding their participation in the war. The

⁴⁸ “Announcement of the Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” Algiers, July 15, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2. See, for example, the concept of a “blood debt” in Gregory Mann, *Native Sons* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁴⁹ “Announcement of the Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” Algiers, July 15, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

CAES explained that the survey would serve as the basis of a future study which “will shine light on the contribution of every class of society, of every group, of every category of individual, to the communal work enterprised for the rights and liberty of all people.”⁵⁰

The members of the CAES framed the *Livre d’Or* project in terms of Jewish heroism and patriotism, describing Algerian Jewish participation in World War I as part of a “sacred union” between the colony and the metropole. They depicted World War I as the first opportunity for Algerian Jews to prove their worth as Frenchmen and their commitment to France. “For the first time since the Crémieux decree we were called to fight in the ranks of the French army, side by side with the soldiers of the metropole, for the defense of the national soil.... The French of Jewish religion generously spilled their blood for their country.” Citing the heroic efforts of Algerian Jews, the CAES leadership wrote that Algerian Jews “have demonstrated that the race has not degenerated at all and that they are worthy descendants of the Maccabees.”⁵¹ In a 1927 speech, the General of the Army increased the number of Algerian Jews who died in battle in World War I to 2,850, out of a total population of approximately 70,000 in 1914.⁵² By highlighting the statistics of Jewish patriotism in World War I, the CAES developed its ammunition with which to fight antisemitism in the colony.

In May 1919, the CAES conducted its first major effort in combating institutional antisemitism in the colony, lobbying on behalf of Jewish students at the University of Algiers. On March 18, 1919, the General Association of the Students of Algiers refused to admit to its ranks thirty out of thirty-two Jewish students. Of the two accepted Jews, one was

⁵⁰ CAES, “Bulletin de Statistique,” Algiers, April 8, 1915, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁵¹ CAES to Algerian Jews, Algiers, March 1, 1915, AIU Algérie IC2. Signed by A. Confino, Henry Athon, Moise D. Stora, Maklouf Scebat, S. Lebar, Ch. Ziza, D. Solal, J. Kanoui, and Mathieu Levy.

⁵² “Le ‘Livre d’Or’ des Israélites Algériens de la Guerre 1914-1918” in Ministry of the Colonies files on the Crémieux decree from 1942-1943, CAOM FM 1affpol/877. The speech occurred on November 13, 1927.

already a member of the General Association of Paris, and the other was admitted because he was not of Algerian origin. Serbian students had also never been admitted to the association, and Muslim students joined only as “adherent” members, and had no voting rights.⁵³ All professors and instructors at the University could theoretically also join the Association as honorary members. There were four Jews eligible for such a position: one professor in the Faculty and three departmental heads at the hospital (including Aboulker). The Association excluded all four as honorary members.⁵⁴

Aboulker criticized Governor General Jonnart’s support of the student association stating that “the association calls itself general but unduly appropriates the title of a general association. It is not general and dissimulates behind this lying title an unspeakable spirit of xenophobia and antisemitism.” In protest, fifty non-Jewish students joined the excluded Jewish one in founding a “General Union of Students” and elected a Jew and a Muslim to its board. Aboulker concluded his note to Jonnart by emphasizing the patriotism of Algerian Jews. “The Algerian Jews proudly claim the honor of helping to defend *la Patrie*. After so much suffering and sacrifice they thought they had the right to relief. They protest with pain and indignation against the exclusionary measures to which they are subjected.”⁵⁵

In June 1919, Aboulker announced that the CAES had achieved its first major victory defending the rights of the Jewish students, who had finally been accepted to the General Association. He cautioned that the work of the CAES was still incomplete. “This is one poisoned fruit of the tree of antisemitism, which is now torn off...But the tree with poisonous

⁵³ Dr. Henri Aboulker to M. Jonnart, Governor General of Algeria, Algiers, May 3, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁵⁴ Ibid. See also A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, May 7, 1919 (No. 336), AIU Algérie IC2. Of these instructors, two were commanders in the army, two were captains, and three of them had been decorated with the Légion d’Honneur, and all four received the Croix de Guerre. Among the students refused admission into the association, many were wounded veterans of World War I, and most had received commendations for bravery demonstrated on the battlefield. Furthermore, four of the students were officers.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

fruit is nonetheless still standing....The antisemitism of this country has its roots in all the classes of society. But the trunk which supports the fruit is the Algerian administration....It seems to us necessary to put to task the administration. It is complicit with antisemitism by its action and by its desired and premeditated inaction.”⁵⁶ Following the success of their first concerted effort, in 1920-1921 Aboulker and the CAES defended the rights of Algerian Jews in the militarily annexed region of Aflou. The French conquered the M’Zab region of southern Algeria after the Crémieux decree, and as a result the decree did not extend to the Jews of that region, who remained French subjects. Due to the conditions of the annexation, the area was under military control. The Jews of Aflou complained of the antisemitism of and mistreatment by the military officer in charge of the region, Captain Cottenceau, and his Muslim subordinates. The Jewish elite of Aflou, all property owners and merchants, wrote to the Governor General to ask for assistance in dealing with Cottenceau. They accused his Muslim subordinates of using their positions of power to abuse the Jews, addressing them as “dirty Jews and dirty race,” while also physically attacking them. The Jewish elite of Aflou concluded “in the name of France, in the name of Justice, we energetically protest against Monsieur Captain Cottenceau and his style of administrative action.”⁵⁷

In 1921, the Jews of Aflou appealed to Aboulker and the CAES regarding Cottenceau and his followers. They claimed that Cottenceau, the administrator of the annexed region for the previous six years, promoted virulent antisemitism in the region. Jewish commerce in the

⁵⁶ Ibid. In his description of the poisoned tree, Aboulker may have been alluding to Max Régis’ tree of liberties that he alluded to in his February 20, 1898 speech at the Salle Chaynes in Paris. See Commissaire of Police M. Martin, “Au sujet d'une Réunion de la ‘Ligue antisémite’ à la Salle Chaynes,” Paris, February 23, 1898, AN F/7/16001/1. A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (No 337), Algiers, June 2, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2. Aboulker and the CAES celebrated the fact that it was the Jews who also managed to obtain rights for Serbian, World War I allies, and Muslim students. In fighting for absolute equality, the CAES and the Jewish leadership achieved victories for foreign and Muslim students of the University.

⁵⁷ Jewish elite of Aflou to the Governor General, Aflou, December 26, 1920, AIU Algérie IC2. The letter was signed by thirty-four Jews, including Jacob Kouhana, most of whom were merchants and property owners.

region was “paralyzed.” The Jews of Aflou requested that Aboulker lobby on their behalf before the administration, requesting that they “finally remember that there still exists in the department of Oran subjects who seek only to live peacefully and honestly without being forced to submit to any occupation, or to return to an inquisition style regime.”⁵⁸ CAES took up the case of Aflou and petitioned the governor general. As a result of Aboulker and the CAES’ efforts, the military conducted an inquiry into Cottenceau’s behavior.⁵⁹ Despite the efforts of the CAES, Cottenceau maintained his position even after the inquiry took place, evidence of the limits of the CAES’ impact and its role in Algerian colonial civil society.

In 1919, the CAES identified three major factors that contributed to the state of Algerian antisemitism: first, the hostility of the European population; second, the indifference or antagonism of government representatives; and finally, the passivity of Jews. Aboulker wrote: “Question any Algerian, no matter his origins, his situation, or his religion, and he will respond that the population is irreducibly antisemitic; ask him what has been done to combat this situation, and he will be surprised and embarrassed. That is because in reality no one has attempted to end the situation which poisons Algeria.”⁶⁰

Citing government complicity in the colony’s antisemitism, Aboulker criticized the government’s “common hostility and constant indifference” towards Jews. In particular, Aboulker emphasized the inconsistent nature of treatment of various citizens. “The naturalized Italian or Spaniard, as a result of the law of 1889, who doesn’t speak French and often left their family in their home country where they maintain an interest, have rights which are refused to Jewish workers, merchants, and intellectuals, born French (to parents naturalized in 1870) and raised in the schools of the Republic.” Aboulker emphasized the

⁵⁸ Jewish elite of Aflou to Henri Aboulker, President of the CAES, Aflou, March 20, 1921, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁵⁹ A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, May 26, 1921, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁶⁰ Henri Aboulker, “Note sur l’antisémitisme Algérien,” 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

opportunism of the fortune-seeking *néos* in contrast to the ardent patriotism of Algerian Jews. The privileged status of the *néos* over the Jews was, to Aboulker, a product of antisemitism in the colonial administration. Aboulker spoke of the government in general terms, but directed much of the CAES efforts to the Governor General's office. This strategy was likely due to the fact that combating the highly institutionalized nature of antisemitism in the municipal government would prove too great a challenge for the CAES.⁶¹

The CAES sought to redress four exclusionary measures: 1. exclusion from access to *terres domaniales*; 2. limitation of the right to vote for Financial Delegates; 3. limitation of number of Jews inscribed on merchant tribunal electoral lists; 4. elimination of Jewish voters from municipal electoral lists, especially in the towns of Oran and Algiers, an antisemitic strategy to reduce competition with Jewish voters. Although the CAES would deal with each of these concerns individually, Aboulker outlined the first general steps towards combating antisemitism in the colony: hostile organizations should be banned; Jews should be given access to positions of leadership in a series of Algerian associations that had previously been antisemitic; finally, the press should publicly recognize the “glorious participation” of Jews in the war.⁶² Recalling the antisemitic successes of 1898, Aboulker linked colony to metropole, stating that “when Drumont needed a seat to conduct his attacks against metropolitan Judaism, he found it in Algiers.”⁶³ Many of the exclusionary measures that the CAES fought against privileged *néos* over Algerian Jews. As shown in previous chapters, significant competition emerged between these two groups in elections and competition for

⁶¹ Henri Aboulker, “Note sur l’antisémitisme Algérien,” 1919, AIU Algérie IC2. See also Musette, *Cagayous Antijuif* (Algier: Imprimerie Ernest Mallebay, 1898).

⁶² Henri Aboulker, “Note sur l’antisémitisme Algérien,” 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁶³ Ibid.

the resources of municipal government. In the wake of World War I, Algerian Jews protested the continuation of this inequality.

The first measure that the CAES contested was the exclusion of Jews from purchasing *terres domaniales*, tracts of land offered to French colonists as part of the process of colonization. After seizing land from Algerian Muslims, the French colonial administration argued that these lands were part of the public domain and thus eligible for purchase by Frenchmen.⁶⁴ The fight for Jewish access to lands earmarked for colonization began in 1919 with the efforts of E. Moatti, a Jewish agricultural engineer. Moatti attempted to acquire such a tract but was refused on the grounds that the law of 1904 only permitted Frenchmen of European origin or naturalized Europeans to obtain *terres domaniales*. As a result, any Algerian Jew, despite his French citizenship, or any Algerian Muslim, even if he had been naturalized, would be refused. “In my quality as an Algerian Jew who has fought since August 2, 1914 as an artillery officer in the French Army, I would like to respectfully point out the unfairness of such legislation, which systematically excludes all the Algerian Jews who have, for the most part, as many titles [and medals], if not more than the naturalized Europeans allowed to take part in the adjudication of *terres domaniales*.⁶⁵

CAES worked with Moatti to challenge these restrictions.

The CAES report highlighted the fact that the *néos* once again had access to more rights than Algerian Jews. The CAES recommended that the 1904 law be repealed and a new one instated that “removes the villainy from which we suffer....”⁶⁶ In their fight for Jewish access to colonial lands, Aboulker and the leadership of the CAES sought the

⁶⁴ John Ruedy, *Land Policy in Colonial Algeria: The Origins of the Rural Public Domain* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1967), 1, 87.

⁶⁵ E. Moatti to the Governor General of Algeria, Algiers, September 16, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁶⁶ CAES, “RAPPORT I: Acquisition des Terres Domaniales,” September 24, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

assistance of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (LDH) in Paris.⁶⁷ The President of the LDH wrote to the Minister of the Interior in 1919 and 1920 protesting the exclusion of Algerian Jews and Muslims from acquiring *terres domaniales*. The president of the LDH painted a portrait of Algerian Jews as great colonists and agriculturalists.⁶⁸ The fact that the CAES contacted the LDH indicates the presence of wide networks of loosely linked civil society associations interested in ameliorating abusive conditions in the colonies.

Success did not come quickly in this case as there was continued reluctance to allow Jews access to such lands.⁶⁹ In 1924, the Governor General Steeg wrote that the 1904 legislation should remain intact because, if altered to enable Algerian Muslims or Jews to purchase land for colonization, this would defeat the purpose of the program. Algerian Muslims would remain ineligible for acquiring such land largely due to their numerical majority. Steeg maintained that these measures were justified due to political and economic imperatives, and that the ultimate purpose of such land offerings was to assure “by way of metropolitan French settlement, the authority of France and her agricultural prosperity in Algeria.”⁷⁰

Despite the slow progress on the issue of *terres domaniales*, the CAES continued its efforts in combating exclusionary measures in the colony, including discriminatory legislation regarding Jewish voting privileges in elections of financial delegates. The *Délégation Financière* was a source of significant control in the colonial administration,

⁶⁷ Dr. Henri Aboulker to the President of the Ligue Française des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, (undated), AIU Algérie IC2.

⁶⁸ President of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme to the Governor General, Paris, 1920, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/97.

⁶⁹ Dr. Henri Aboulker to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, September 13, 1921, AIU Algérie IC2. See also CAES, “Colonisation,” September 18, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁷⁰ Governor General Steeg to the President of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, Algiers 1924, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/97. The administration eventually revised the 1904 legislation, enabling Jewish and Muslim French citizens to acquire *terres domaniales*. See Cohen, “Les Circonstances de la Fondation du Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” 204

especially after a December 1900 law gave Algerian financial autonomy. The budget was created by the Governor General, and voted on by the financial delegates before being settled in Parliament.⁷¹ The Financial Delegation was meant to represent the common interest of all sectors of the colony. Europeans, however, were overrepresented. Twenty-four *colon* delegates represented 19,000 electors while twenty-four non-*colon* delegates represented 74,000.⁷² Frenchmen of metropolitan origin became electors for financial delegates at age 25, whereas Jews could not become electors until 33. The legislation lumped Algerian Jews, who were born French, together with the newly naturalized European immigrants. Aboulker wrote that “the Algerian Jews do not have any other desire but to see these prejudices eliminated from Algerian politics.”⁷³

As the CAES fought against discrimination at the level of the Financial Delegation, antisemites systematically removed Jews from municipal electoral lists in cities such as Constantine, Sétif, Berrouaghia, Médéa, Oran, and Algiers in an effort to maintain their control over municipal government. Aboulker vigorously refuted the common accusation that Algerian Jews voted as a bloc according to the leadership of the Consistory. Instead, he argued, due to the antisemitic tendencies of certain candidates, Algerian Jews were forced to vote together against that candidate.⁷⁴ As we saw earlier, concerted efforts to exclude Jewish voters had begun in 1897. That year, antisemites attempted to revise electoral lists with little resistance from the excluded Jewish voters. Following World War I, however, Jews became better at articulating and defending their rights. The CAES played an important

⁷¹ Claude Collot, *Les Institutions de l'Algérie durant la période coloniale (1830-1962)* (Paris : Édition du CNRS, 1987), 203-205.

⁷² Collot, *Les Institutions de l'Algérie*, 218-219.

⁷³ Dr. Henri Aboulker, “L’Exclusion des Israélites des Fonctions Electives,” undated, AIU Algérie IC2. This is probably from 1919.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

role in this newfound Jewish willingness to raise grievances. Aboulker wrote that “the Algerian Jews do not demand to be accepted because they are Jews; they seek to be received by their fellow citizens in the municipal councils with the same status as the French of foreign origins.... They demand that they not be eliminated because they are Jews. They do not demand one favor; they demand the cessation of disfavor and boycotting.”⁷⁵

On the eve of the arrival of a new Governor General in the colony, Aboulker hoped for a significant change in the nature of discrimination against Jews in the colony. The CAES believed that the cause of Algerian antisemitism was the “indifference or hostility of the representatives of the government of the Republic.” Depicting Algeria as a “the principal country of antisemitism,” shaped by the Dreyfus Affair, the violence of 1898, and the election of antisemitic deputies during the same year, the CAES planned to lobby forcefully for Jewish equality before the new Governor General.⁷⁶ Aboulker was not successful in this effort. In 1920, Aboulker expressed frustration over the fact that the discriminatory measures of the 1890s remained active. Aboulker called upon metropolitan French Jews to come to the aid of their Algerian brethren in fighting antisemitism and discrimination.⁷⁷

The CAES now turned its attention to Jewish participation in elections of merchant tribunals.⁷⁸ According to Alfred Ghighi, the associate director of CAES, the original objective of this discriminatory legislation had been to reduce Jewish commerce after 1871.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Dr. Henri Aboulker to the Secretary General of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, July 30, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁷⁷ Dr. Henri Aboulker to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, August 9, 1920, AIU Algérie IC2. The final issue of inequality on which the CAES concentrated its efforts was the discrimination against Jewish participation in consular tribunals and elections during which the CAES sought to promulgate the legislation of 1883 and extend universal suffrage to Algerian with regards to merchant tribunals.

⁷⁸ Merchant tribunals were a legacy from the Ancien Régime, where merchants sat to resolve their commercial disputes and to voice their collective interests to the king. See Amalia D. Kessler, *A Revolution in Commerce: The Parisian Merchant Court and the Rise of Commercial Society in Eighteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

The merchant tribunal in Algiers was established in August 1834, and the Governor General named its members. The ordinance of October 24, 1847 gave the right to elect their own judges of the tribunal to the merchants. The law of December 21, 1871 defined the mode of election of members of commercial tribunals in France. In Algeria, Jewish merchants were not allowed to vote for the judges. Ghighi concluded that the solution to this problem was ultimately simple: extend universal suffrage to Algeria with regards to merchant tribunals to all citizens, including Jews.⁷⁹ The efforts in the CAES in combating antisemitic exclusionary legislation in the colony marked an important transition in the development of Jewish defense. The CAES actively opposed the erosion of Jewish rights by lobbying the government directly and by coordinating with other groups, such as the LDH.

Aboulker and the leadership of the CAES often described World War I and its immediate aftermath as a crucial period for taking action against antisemitism in the colony. Aboulker wrote that “we are at the most critical hour of the history of Algerian Judaism. Our generation has the weighty task of preparing for the future.”⁸⁰ In 1919, the immediate post-war period, there was antisemitic resurgence in the colony, similar to that of 1898.⁸¹ In spite of this fact, the Committee dissolved in 1923, due in part to internal disagreements.⁸² In post-World War I France and Algeria antisemitism continued to grow in power and influence.

In 1935, Confino wrote of the need to resuscitate the CAES. Confino chronicled the resurgence of antisemitism among the “Latin” population, the non-French naturalized European immigrants and their children, as well as among the leaders and representatives of

⁷⁹ Alfred Ghighi, “Rapport III: Question des Tribunaux Consulaires,” September 24, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁸⁰ “Announcement of the Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” Algiers, July 15, 1919, AIU Algérie IC2.

⁸¹ Cohen, “Les Circonstances de la Fondation du Comité Algérien d’Études Sociales,” 212.

⁸² Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Menachem Laskier, and Sarah Reguer, eds., *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 464.

the government. Detailing recent antisemitic actions, Confino described posters seen throughout the city of Algiers, entitled “Jews everywhere.” Concurrently, there was an effort to establish a quota in schools in Algeria to reduce the number of Jews, especially in professional schools. “The necessity of an organization charged with defending the interests of Algerian Judaism is felt strongly.”⁸³

The legacy of the CAES, however, remained significant among the Algerian Jewish elite as evidence of successful Jewish activism. In campaigning and lobbying for the abrogation of discriminatory measures, actions, and legislation against Jews, the CAES succeeded in achieving equal rights for other oppressed and victimized groups in the colony. The CAES manifestly viewed its role as not only the defender of Algerian Jews, but also the champion of equality in the colony. Although the efforts of the CAES were significant and did bring about some concrete results, they ultimately had a limited impact. Antisemitism, especially within municipal governments, continued to grow in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Antisemitic politicians lashed out Algerian Jews and sought to reduce their role as citizens in elections and competition for control of municipal government. The CAES improved Jewish activism and defense in the context of a civil society organization. In the face of electoral antisemitism in the 1920s and 1930s and the revitalizing influence of the Depression on antisemitism, Algerian Jews sought out more active forms of defense at a grass-roots level.

The Depression and the Revitalization of Antisemitism in the Interwar Period

During the 1920s, the Algerian colony faced an economic crisis of declining production in the 1920s. Annual grain production, European and native, had reached a peak

⁸³ A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, October 31, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

in 1901-1910 at 19.6 million quintals. From 1921 to 1930, this amount decreased to 16 million. Other forms of production, such as olive oil, decreased by half in the 1930s from what it had been in the 1910s.⁸⁴ The problems caused by France's insistence on maintaining the gold standard worsened the conditions of the depression in France and the colonies. In the postwar period, France struggled with inflation resulting from wartime advances and expenditures. The franc depreciated sharply after the war, with the greatest depreciation occurring in 1919-1920. The French currency reform in 1928 undervalued the franc and France's subsequent embrace of deflation prolonged the impact of the depression on France. The problems caused by France's insistence on maintaining the gold standard worsened the conditions of the depression in France and her colonies.⁸⁵

The depression had a significant impact in France and the colonies. As often occurs in times of economic crisis, antisemitism increased in the context of the depression and the uncertainty of the postwar period. Antisemitism also increased sharply in response to the growing number of Jewish refugees escaping Germany. The antisemitic revival of the 1930s gained its strength from middle-class groups seeking to close their ranks to the competition and economic threat posed by these refugees. By the end of 1933, 85 percent of the 25,000 German émigrés in France were Jews.⁸⁶ The lobbying efforts of the middle-class groups resulted in Parliament's promulgation of a law on July 19, 1934 which established a two-tiered system of citizenship. This system granted fewer rights to recently naturalized citizens, while still requiring them to fulfill all other responsibilities the status conferred. At

⁸⁴ Ageron, *Modern Algeria*, 86.

⁸⁵ Kenneth Mouré, "The Gold Standard Illusion: France and the Gold Standard in an Era of Currency Instability, 1914-1939," in Mouré and Martin S. Alexander, *Crisis and Renewal in France, 1918-1962* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 67, 69.

⁸⁶ Vicki Caron, "The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered," *The Journal of Modern History* 70 (March 1998): 27-29, 33.

the same time, antisemites called for the institution of quotas for non-French Jews.⁸⁷ In 1933, Prime Minister Camille Chautemps sent a notice to Prefects of all French departments discussing the economic crisis and encouraging them to take measures to avoid conflicts emerging out of the crisis.⁸⁸ In Algeria, rumors that Muslim employees would be replaced with German Jewish refugees fueled fears for economic stability in the wake of the depression.⁸⁹

The already fraught conditions of the Depression and the growing presence of Jews in commerce and their increased representation on municipal councils stimulated the antisemitic revival in the colony. In the 1930s, Jews represented 12-13 percent of the population in Constantine; however their relative success in commerce and politics in the city led to the conception of Jews as a more powerful and imposing force than they numerically represented.⁹⁰ In 1926 the community consisted of more than 15,000 Jews, three large synagogues, and six smaller ones. The Alliance-run Talmud Torah included thirteen professors, 800 male students, and 100 female students, as well as a nursery. There were also seventeen social societies that provided various services to the community. In Constantine in 1926, Jews held the following political positions: one deputy mayor, seven municipal council members, one general council member, two court judges, and two members of the Chamber of Commerce (vice president and treasurer).⁹¹

Called “Little Jerusalem” by the Europeans in the area, neighboring Ain-Beida became a major site of antisemitic rancor. David Nabon of the Alliance pointed to the fact

⁸⁷ Caron, “The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930s,” 41, 57.

⁸⁸ Camille Chautemps, Letter to Prefects, Paris, February 10, 1933, CAOM Alg Oran //96.

⁸⁹ These rumors are examined in the following chapter as precursors of the violence in Constantine.

⁹⁰ Charles-Robert Ageron, “Une émeute anti-juive à Constantine (août 1934),” *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 13, no. 1 (1973) : 23-24.

⁹¹ Barkatz, President of the Jewish Consistory of Constantine, “Exposé sur la Communauté Juive à Constantine,” Constantine, April 29, 1926, AIU Algérie II B 4.

that all the Jews' candidates were elected to the municipal council, representing six out of sixteen councilors, and one mayor's deputy. Nabon reported that the Jews could be even more numerous on the municipal council, but refrained from presenting such a powerful numerical force on the council for fear of inciting jealousy and incurring antisemitic incidents.⁹² Within this climate of economic turmoil and increased Jewish representation on municipal councils, politicians and antisemites responded with revitalized antisemitism.

Electoral Politics, Antisemitism, and Reverberations from Europe

The antisemitism that the CAES combated reemerged under the leadership of the antisemitic politicians such as Dr. Jules Molle in Oran in the late 1920s. As in the 1890s, the antisemitism of the 1920s developed out of competition for the scarce resources of municipal government. According to Confino, in 1926, the total population of Algeria was 6,064,865, of which 872,439 were Europeans (this figure likely included *néos*). The Jewish population at the time was approximately 100,000; 30,000 in Oran, 20,000 in Algiers, 15,000 in Constantine, and 35,000 elsewhere in the colony.⁹³ Although still relatively small compared to the European population, Jews represented a significant portion of the voting population. Their ability to vote posed a threat to the Europeans, particularly the *néos*, who viewed the Jews as status competitors.

As a result of the electoral power of the *néo* population in the city, Molle became mayor of Oran in 1921. In 1925, antisemitic violence re-emerged during the electoral

⁹² D. Nabon to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, "Communauté d'Ain Beida," Constantine, May 8, 1934, AIU Algérie II B 10.

⁹³ A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, "Re: Demographics," Algiers, February 24, 1927, AIU Algérie IB4. Confino estimated that Jews of European origins made up approximately three percent of the total Jewish population.

period.⁹⁴ With the CAES now defunct, the LDH took interest in the antisemitism of Molle and his followers. Molle was in many ways reminiscent of Max Régis in the late 1890s. Like Régis, Molle edited his own newspaper, *Le Petit Oranais*, which he used for his own political purposes and campaign, and in which he published antisemitic rhetoric.⁹⁵ Similar to Régis, Molle enjoyed the support of the *néo* population of Oran. On May 16, 1914 Molle founded the *Union Latine*, made up of *français d'origine* and *néos*, most of Spanish origin. The main goal of the *Union Latine* was to fight against the “electoral action of the Jewish bloc.” Molle organized cocktail parties (known as apéritifs), banquets, balls, and parties for the members of the *Union*, during which members would celebrate their shared “Latin” heritage and their hatred of the Jew. During Molle’s electoral campaigns, he aimed his rhetoric at “enflaming Spanish fanatics and the reactionary and clerical party of Oran,” according to the LDH. Molle created an antisemitic anthem, the “Marseillaise Latine,” similar to Régis’ “Marseillaise antijuif,” which consisted of such lines as “The children of the Latin People / defend their destiny / and drive away the abhorred race....” Molle further emulated his antisemitic forebears such as Firmin Faure and Edouard Drumont by addressing his Spanish *néo* followers in Spanish, which “flattered their national pride and further excited them against the Jews.”⁹⁶

In 1925, Molle’s deliberately inflammatory tactics prompted a resurgence of antisemitic violence. On March 1, the city inaugurated its monument to the naval casualties of World War I. As mayor, Molle presided over the event and delivered a speech exalting the patriotic heroism of the *Latins*. He then recited the list of the names of the war dead;

⁹⁴ André Chouraqui, *Letter to an Arab Friend* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 12.

⁹⁵ “Rapport sur les Troubles Antisemites Déchainés à l’Occasion de la Campagne Electorale du 3 Mai 1925,” Oran, May 9, 1925, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/71.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

however, he intentionally omitted the names of the ten to twelve Oran Jews killed in submarine warfare. At the base of the monument rested a wreath placed by the “Union of Latin Federations of Oran,” further excluding all trace of Jewish patriotism during the War.⁹⁷ Previous commemorations of war victims were sites of violence.⁹⁸

During his electoral campaign in April 1925, Molle spread rumors that the Alliance gave 80,000 francs to the Synagogue of Oran to bribe Jews to vote as a bloc. Molle accused Rabbi Weill of urging his congregants to vote as “one man” for Molle’s opponent, Beranger. On April 25, 1925, Molle published a call to his “Latin” electors, stating that “everyone knows that the *néo* is anti-Jewish and this is because all the settlers of foreign origin who contribute such a large part to the development of Algeria are horribly exploited by the Jews.” Prior to the municipal elections, Molle and his supporters plastered posters directed at Latin voters throughout the city, which stated “Municipal elections May 3, 1925: Latin Brothers: Attention! Be prepared for the Jewish Saint Barthelemy the day after our triumph!” This statement alluded to the St. Bartholomew’s day massacre in 1572 directed against the Huguenots in the midst of the French Wars of Religion. Molle, in essence, conjured up the wars of religion to advocate for violence. On the days following the elections, May 4-6, Molle’s followers attacked Jews throughout the city of Oran.⁹⁹

In August 1925, the Procureur General wrote of the provocations of Molle and his newspaper. In light of the violence following the elections in May, the Procurer General sought to punish Molle and *Le Petit Oranaïs* for inciting “murder and to pillage.” The Minister of Justice informed the Procureur General that there were “insufficient charges”

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ In May 1922, the return of bodies of World War I soldiers to Algiers, among them seven Jews, was followed by violence. A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, May 26, 1922, AIU Algérie IB4.

⁹⁹ “Rapport sur les troubles antisémites,” Oran, May 9, 1925, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/71.

against Molle, and the case was dropped.¹⁰⁰ Like Régis before him, Molle realized that the status anxieties of the *néos* could be harnessed for his benefit in municipal elections. By unifying *néos* and *français d'origine* against the Jews, Molle capitalized on the competition between these in elections.

In the face of violent political antisemitism espoused by Molle, Jews in Oran established Jewish defense organizations, such as that of the Club Civique d'Oran (Civic Club). The Civic Club was founded in 1928 to combat Molle's antisemitic campaign and the rhetoric of *Le Petit Oranaïs*. The Prefect of Oran described the members of the club as "justifiably irritated by the excess and the persistence of this [antisemitic] campaign, the Civic Club leaders recruited the young and intellectual elements of the Jews of Oran to repudiate any violent action...." The Prefect added that in the face of past attacks, even violent ones, during electoral periods, the Jews of Oran maintained reserved and proper attitudes in response, seeking to combat antisemitism through administrative channels.¹⁰¹

The Civic Club cited the LDH as a source of inspiration and support. The Civic Club's central goal was to combat through peaceful and legal actions the "prejudices of races and all such dissolving theories or others, that is to say all things contrary to the spirit of our immortal revolution of 1789." The Civic Club's program also included the "moral and intellectual improvement of the citizen." The Club planned to defend the rights of citizens through organizing conferences, interventions, and propaganda in the form of brochures, publications, and newspapers.¹⁰² Echoing the early efforts by the CAES, the Civic Club

¹⁰⁰ Procureur General to the Garde des Sceaux, Algiers, August 24, 1925; Garde de Sceaux, Minister of Justice to the Minister of the Interior, "No 57-201," March 4, 1926; CAOM FM 81F/864. See also L.Taourel to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, "No. 156," Oran, April 26, 1925, and the article "Coups d'Épingle," *Le Petit Oranaïs*, August 25, 1925, AIU Algérie IIC9.

¹⁰¹ Prefect of the Department of Oran, Lambry, to the Governor General "No. 2926," Oran, May 15, 1928, CAOM FM 81F/864.

¹⁰² Statuts, Club Civique Oranais, CAOM FM 81F/864.

emphasized the importance of actively combating antisemitism in contrast to those who passively approached it with “silence and forgetting.”¹⁰³ The Civic Club attempted to fill the gap left by the CAES in the defense of Jewish rights. It did not have much success as antisemites continued to erode Jewish rights through constant attacks on Jewish voting practices.

Over the summer of 1929, the question of Jewish electoral power dominated the opinion section of the antisemitic *La Presse Libre*. Confino expressed concern over the first article on the subject, entitled “The Jewish Question: Should the Jews be considered a distinct ethnic or religious group in the midst of the French collectivity?”¹⁰⁴ This “Jewish Question” had originated in the era of Jewish emancipation in Europe and the concerns of lawmakers of how to integrate a formerly autonomous group. Voltaire and his contemporaries debated the worthiness of Jews as citizens and feared that unless properly incorporated, they would create a “state within the State.”¹⁰⁵ On June 7, Dr. Molle’s opinion on the “The Jewish Question” appeared in *La Presse Libre*. Molle wrote that one candidate, Monsieur Brunel, was elected by the Jewish electoral bloc. He cited 5,667 Jewish votes for Brunel, out of 7,000 registered Jewish voters, of whom 6,000 actually voted. Such figures, although utterly unreliable, served to prove Molle’s point of the dangerous power of the Jewish vote. Molle wrote that the solidarity of Jews was well-known throughout the colony, because the “Jew is religious, profoundly religious.” Molle continued, “the Jews always vote

¹⁰³ Chief of Departmental Security to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 967: Re: Réunion du ‘Club Civique,’” Oran, May 14, 1928, CAOM FM 81F/864.

¹⁰⁴ A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle “No. 9469,” Algiers, May 29, 1929, AIU Algérie IC2.

¹⁰⁵ Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 33, 98-99.

for men who commit to refusing to non-Jews that which they find excellent for themselves.”¹⁰⁶

Antonin Duboso, Molle’s colleague, echoed such statements and questioned the Jews’ right to citizenship. Duboso emphasized the religious connection between Jews, which assured the “Jewish Alliance,” and its voting power. “Do not forget, gentlemen candidates of future municipal elections...be sure of Jewish support, otherwise you are lost.” Duboso attacked the Crémieux decree and contended that juridically Jews should be considered to be “indigènes,” the racial brothers of Algerian Muslims, and thus French subjects. “The Jews of Algeria were not more prepared for naturalization as a bloc; they just benefit from a powerful political association,” with the Alliance. Duboso depicted the evolution of Algerians (of European or native origin) to antisemites as natural. “It is this latent, endemic antisemitism that penetrates all the classes of the nation.”¹⁰⁷ Duboso and Molle’s analysis of “The Jewish Question” emphasize the crucial aspect of competition for control of municipal government as the core of Algerian antisemitism. In this way, the political antisemitism of the 1920s and 1930s was an outgrowth of that of the 1890s.

The Governor General expressed concern over Molle’s influence, which he termed a “veritable appeal for the reawakening of antisemitism, not only in Oran, but also in Algiers.” He feared that Molle’s efforts would one day have “adverse consequences.”¹⁰⁸ As evidence, the Governor General cited another article by Molle, which appeared in *Le Presse Libre*

¹⁰⁶ Dr. Molle, “Après les Élections Municipales: La Question Juive: Les Israélites doivent-ils être considérés comme formant un groupe ethnique et religieux distinct aux milieux de la collectivité française? L’opinion de M. le Dr. Molle, maire-député d’Oran,” *La Presse Libre*, June 7, 1929, AIU Algérie IC2. Molle modeled his argument after Count Clermont-Tonnere, who, in 1789, feared that Jews would constitute a “nation within the nation.” Lynn Hunt, *The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History* (Boston: Bedford Books/St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 88.

¹⁰⁷ Antonin Duboso, “Après les Élections Municipales: La Question Juive: Les Israélites doivent-ils être considérés comme formant un groupe ethnique et religieux distinct au milieu de la collectivité française?” *La Presse Libre*, June 13, 1929, AIU Algérie IC2.

¹⁰⁸ Governor General to the Minister of the Interior, Algiers, July 2, 1929, CAOM FM 81F/864.

d'Alger in late June 1929. In the article, Molle again attacked Jewish confessional solidarity, which led to a “shameful farce” in the electoral system. Molle employed the image of the Jew as the fat-cat banker, the enemy of the simple, patriotic Frenchman to emphasize the distinctness of the Jews in Algeria from the rest of the Frenchmen, particularly the poor Frenchmen of Latin blood. To Molle, only the simple Frenchman was truly French. The Frenchmen of Algiers would unite with those of Oran via antisemitism because “the same Latin blood abundantly flows in the veins of one and the other.” He prophesized that in the coming municipal elections, the “good people of Algiers will act against the Jews.”¹⁰⁹ Under Molle, electoral competition reemerged as the foundation of antisemitism, facilitated by contemporary events around the colony and the world.

Events in Palestine, Hitler’s rise to power, and the worldwide depression led to an increase in antisemitism among Algerian Muslims in the early 1930s. In April 1933 in the department of Constantine, the police found pamphlets in a café in the city of Khenchela which included a quote by Edouard Drumont.¹¹⁰ In July 1933, the mayor of Khenchela reported growing unrest in the area among Algerian Muslims. The mayor described flyers posted on the walls of the city in Arabic, which urged Algerian Muslims to boycott Jewish shops, stating that money given to the Jews would purchase bullets destined to kill Muslims in Palestine. The Mayor felt that these flyers had a strong impact on the younger elements of Algerian Muslims, who took to throwing stones at windows of apartments owned by Jewish families.¹¹¹ By late July 1933 a boycott in Khenchela was underway. Inspector Defendini

¹⁰⁹ Dr. Molle, “Une Lettre de M. le Dr. Molle, Député-maire d’Oran,” *Presse Libre d’Alger*, June 30, 1929, CAOM FM 81F/864.

¹¹⁰ Prefect of Constantine to the Governor General, Constantine, April 28, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

¹¹¹ Dr. Maurin, Mayor of Khenchela, to the Prefect of the Department of Constantine, “No 1046,” Khenchela, July 16, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249. See also Prefect of Constantine to the Governor General, Constantine, July 19, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

described the incendiary influence of the flyers on Muslims, who attacked those they found frequenting Jewish shops. Defendini provided a translation of the flyers:

O Arabs, for every five franc piece that you spend at the Jews, five pennies will go to Palestine and serve the purchase of arms to kill the Arabs. O Arabs, the Jew is your enemy and the enemy of Islam, if you buy something from them, you will no longer be under the protection of the Prophet. Whoever buys anything from the Jews, it is like he is buying the death of his brothers. God said: You will certainly not find stronger animosity towards believers than among the Jews and the polytheists; by consequence, he who purchases from the Jews buys a bullet which kills an Arab in Palestine.¹¹²

Defendini observed that Alexandre Toulon, a French mechanic in Khencela and known antisemite, was the author of the flyers.¹¹³ In this and other cases, French antisemites capitalized on Muslim frustrations and world events to encourage antisemitism among Algerian Muslims.

Hitler's rise to power in Germany also facilitated antisemitism in the colony. In Constantine in April 1933, Jewish leaders organized a conference sponsored by the Universal Union of Jewish Youth (Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive) on the "Lessons of German Antisemitism." Approximately 250 people attended the conference led by Monsieur Rabinovitch, a lawyer of the Court of Appeals in Paris. Rabinovitch concluded his presentation by setting out three actions for Jews to take against Hitler: first, to aid German

¹¹² Report of Principal Inspector Defendini, Khencela, July 21, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249. The flyer cited the Qur'anic sura 5:82.

¹¹³ Defendini, Khencela, July 21, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249. See also report of Commissariat of the Police, "Mouvement antisemite, Secret Rapport Special, no 1918," Khencela, July 11, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249; Prefect of Constantine to the Procurer of the Republic, "No 6012," Constantine, August 5, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249. On the appearance of the flyer elsewhere in the colony see Letter Governor General to the Prefect of Algiers, "Au sujet du boycottage de commerces israélites," Algiers, July 20, 1933, CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38. The administrators of the following cities responded to the questionnaire in the negative: Boufarik (July 29, 1933); Duperre (July 29, 1933); Aumale (July 29, 1933); El-Biar (July 29, 1933); Bouira (July 29, 1933); Sidi-Aissa (July 31, 1933); Blida (July 31, 1933); Palestro (July 31, 1933); Maillot (August 1, 1933); Aumale (August 1, 1933); Cherchel (August 1, 1933); Chercell (August 2, 1933); Ain-Bessem (August 2, 1933); Algiers (August 4 and 11, 1933); Bou-Saada (August 4, 1933--also reported that there was no anti-Zionist movement); St-Eugene (August 9, 1933); Orleansville (August 11, 1933); Tablat (August 28, 1933); Tizi-Ouzou (August 30, 1933); Medea (September 4, 1933), CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

Jewish refugees in Paris; second, to boycott all German merchandise; and finally, to open the gates of Palestine to immigration and to colonization.¹¹⁴

Jews in Constantine also collaborated with the International League against Antisemitism (*Ligue Internationale contre l’Antisémitisme*—LICA) in preparing methods with which to combat Nazi antisemitism.¹¹⁵ Jews cooperated with non-Jewish local leaders, including the pastor of the Episcopal Methodist Church, the local LDH, and the Section Française de l’Internationale Ouvrière (S.F.I.O., the French Section of the Workers’ International), to organize a meeting to “protest against the persecutions of which German Jews are victims.”¹¹⁶ The leaders organized an assembly on April 6, 1933, attended by over 1,200 people. At this meeting, Jewish speakers praised France and its democratic citizens who understood the dangerous threat that Germany posed.¹¹⁷ Jews in Algeria, cognizant of the growing antisemitism of many politicians, were careful to couch their critiques in words of praise for France. Jewish leaders also preached calm among the younger generation.

A group of Jewish youth planned to create posters in red, white, and blue, which read “Down with the assassin Hitler, Long live the Boycott, Long live the liberty of conscience and the protection of races.” Jewish leaders intervened, and the young Jews abandoned their plan.¹¹⁸ In the midst of a demonstration on April 1, 1933 by approximately 50 young Jews against Hitler, the police arrested seven Jews for yelling “Long live the war, Down with

¹¹⁴ Leymarie, Departmental Security of Constantine, “No. 955: Conférence organisée par l’Union Universelle de la Jeunesse Juive,” Constantine, April 21, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

¹¹⁵ Departmental Security of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 2415: Ligue Internationale contre l’antisémitisme,” Constantine, September 9, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249. In 1935, LICA began its campaign against Hitler, antisemitism, and racism in earnest. See for example Fonds LICA, CDJC CMXCVI 12-14.

¹¹⁶ Chief of Departmental Security of Constantine, “No. 818: Organisation d’une réunion contre l’action antisémite,” Constantine, April 6, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

¹¹⁷ Commissioner Hug, Departmental Security of Constantine, “No 841: Réunion de protestation contre l’action antisémite Hitlerienne,” Constantine, April 7, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

¹¹⁸ Chief of Departmental Security in Constantine, “No 821: Affiches au sujet de la protestation contre l’action antisémite Hitlerienne,” Constantine, April 6, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

Hitler, Down with Germany, Long live France!”¹¹⁹ It is likely that the Jewish elite, already concerned by the threat of boycott of their shops (which would begin in July), feared that such overt political displays would put the Jewish community at risk. Instead, they favored using Jewish channels to express their concern for German Jews.¹²⁰ The precautions taken by the Jews in Algeria were well founded—the colony had long developed a culture of episodic violence. In the face of growing antisemitism, as well as increased competition in elections, Algerian Jews fought to develop their identities as loyal French citizens distinct from their status competitors, the *néos*, and Algerian Muslims.

Concurrent with the growth of Hitler’s popularity in the colony, a Frenchman named Henri Lautier established an antisemitic newspaper entitled *L’Éclair Algérien*. Lautier was a virulent antisemite, influenced by Nazism.¹²¹ In 1933 Lautier founded the Ligue d’Action latine (LAC) and set up its headquarters in Constantine, nicknamed *Youpinville* by Lautier.¹²² The LAC allowed membership to both *français d’origine* and those naturalized. Jews were obviously excluded.¹²³ On November 25, 1933, Lautier printed the statutes of the LAC in his newspaper, *L’Éclair*, expressing the overt antisemitism of the group.¹²⁴

The goal of the league was to “defend the Latin traditions, beliefs, and mores,” and to “fight by all means, except by violence, notably on the political and commercial terrain, against the intrusion of Jewish elements considered the instigators of troubles and discords,

¹¹⁹ Chief of Departmental Security in Constantine, “No 773: Manifestation contre le mouvement antisémite allemande,” Constantine, April 1, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

¹²⁰ Dr. Guedj to Israel Levy, Chief Rabbi of France, “Telegram,” Constantine, April 3, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

¹²¹ Robert Attal, *Les Émeutes de Constantine: 5 août 1934* (Paris: Éditions Romillat, 2002), 69.

¹²² *Youpinville* translates as a derogative term equating “Jew-ville.” Prefect of Constantine to the Secretary General, “No 81: Sociétés: Ligue d’Action Latine,” Constantine, January 5, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250. See also Ageron, “Une émeute anti-juive,” 36.

¹²³ Departmental Security, Constantine, “No 3025: Au sujet de la création de la ‘Ligue d’Action Latine,’ Constantine, November 16, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

¹²⁴ Henri Lautier, “La Ligue d’Action Latine,” *L’Éclair Algérien*, November 25, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

and guilty of hatred and sectarianism, inassimilable in their great majority....” All league members were required to participate in certain league activities, or risk being removed. These requirements included, “demonstrating his spirit of solidarity vis-à-vis Latin merchants and to abstain from making purchases from Jewish merchants. In the electoral period, he will cast his votes for candidates from the League.”¹²⁵

As a political leader, Lautier followed the models of Régis and Molle. Lautier promoted popular political antisemitism in the colony, uniting *français d'origine* and *néos* by emphasizing shared *latinité* and unity against the common Jewish enemy. Like Régis and Molle, Lautier incited popular opinion with salacious and libelous articles on the many misdeeds and nefarious activities of Jews in the colony, particularly in the realm of politics and commerce. Lautier encouraged his fellow Latins to avoid shopping “*chez le Juif*.” In the same manner as Régis, Lautier infamously participated in various brawls.

Lautier exploited current events to enflame feelings in the colony. Taking advantage of the frustrations of the French in the colony, in December 1933 Lautier published an article entitled “La Juiverie et les Elections Consulaires,” criticizing Senator Henri Beranger for supporting the integration of 4,000 German Jewish refugees in France and the colony. Lautier wrote that “the number of French merchants decreases every day, and after having infested France, the ghettos from Germany will poison the rest of our local commerce.” Appealing to French merchants in the colony, Lautier bemoaned the fact that both of the candidate lists included a Jew. Lautier encouraged his fellow French voters to vote against candidate lists that included a Jew. In his rhetoric, Lautier synthesized economic fears with

¹²⁵ Ibid.

political competition.¹²⁶ Under the leadership of Lautier and Molle, *néos* once again became the foot soldiers of antisemitism in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the face of the extreme antisemitism of Molle and Lautier, Jews also turned to violence. In Souk-Ahras in June 1934, after visiting the local president of *Action Française*, Lautier sought out a police officer to complain that a Jew had ripped up a package of his newspaper. While Lautier spoke to the police officer, a Jew, Albert Levy, walked up to the two men and asked Lautier, “Is it you, Monsieur Lautier? I am a Jew, and a veteran,” and punched Lautier in the face. The police officer quickly intervened to stop the impending altercation, but Lautier immediately fled. In the end, it was Lautier who was taken to the local prison—for his own protection.¹²⁷ Levy’s assault was a departure from the civilized defense of the CAES. That Levy defined himself as a Jew and a veteran shows the duality of his identity: a Jew and a Frenchman. Levy was not unique. In this period of heightened antisemitism, Jews used violence to demonstrate their identities in encounters with Algerian Muslims and the *néos*.

¹²⁶ Henri Lautier, “La Juiverie et les Elections Consulaires,” *L’Éclair Algérien*, found in Departmental Security of Constantine, “Report No 3307, Antisémitisme,” Constantine, December 13, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

¹²⁷ Police Commissioner of Souk-Ahras to the Director of General Security, Algiers, the Prefect of Constantine, the Sub-Prefect of Guelma, and the Mayor of Souk-Ahras, “No. 4331,” Souk-Ahras, June 24, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

Chapter 4: The Politics of Status Anxieties and Identity in Colonial Algeria: Jewish-Muslim Conflicts in Interwar Constantine

Small-scale episodes of violence, often over perceived personal slights or questionable economic exchanges, occurred regularly in Algeria in the 1920s and 1930s. These encounters reveal how Algerian Jews and Muslims used violence to affirm their identities and express their status in the colonial context. Algerian Jews often claimed that Muslims were not treating them with the respect their citizenship demanded. At the same time, Muslim antisemitism, still inchoate in the 1920s and 1930s, began to articulate a clearer political agenda in terms of the lack of Muslim rights in relationship to Jewish citizenship. Deteriorating economic conditions during the interwar period likely exacerbated status anxieties and sharpened competition for increasingly scarce resources.

David Nirenberg's examination of violence between Jews and Muslims in Christian Spain in the Middle Ages provides a way to conceptualize the role of violence in articulating identities in colonial Algeria.¹ Nirenberg used violence to understand how Jews and Muslims carved out their place in Christian Spain. In colonial Algeria, Jews and Muslims used violence—rhetorical and physical—to justify their perceived superior status vis-à-vis their victims. Benjamin Brower has studied the “multiple logic” of violence in colonial Algeria, arguing that violence in the colony reflected the social make-up and political anxieties of its residents.² Although Brower focused his study mostly on cases of institutionalized violence, his understanding of violence as representative of the social, political, and economic anxieties of colonial groups is particular useful for my discussion.

¹ David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 168-169.

² Benjamin Claude Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France’s Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 7.

This chapter examines violence between Jews and Muslims in the department of Constantine.³ Constantine was the site of a violent pogrom in 1934, the subject of the subsequent chapter, and these earlier events are crucial in analyzing that dramatic episode in Algerian history. My key sources are police reports that detailed the names, ages, and professions of the parties involved; provided the officer's analysis of the causes of the incident; and outlined any punitive measures taken. There were certainly many more violent encounters than those reported by the police, and the police themselves were subject to numerous outside influences, including antisemitism and bribery. These factors may have led them to report certain cases and to overlook others. Some files have undoubtedly been lost along the way. As a result, the cases examined in this chapter are but a small sample of a wider phenomenon. Nevertheless they reveal how Algerian Jews viewed themselves and expressed their identity through violence.

The colonial city of Constantine was a mix of modern and traditional. Although large, with 99,600 inhabitants in 1931, the city remained strongly traditional, with little evident modernization and industrialization. Jews, Muslims, and Europeans lived within the city but separated into distinct quarters based on ethnic or religious identity.⁴ Despite these distinct quarters, there was significant interaction between the groups, particularly between Jews and Muslims.

Although violence can be examined through the lenses of economics, professional differences, and religion, I use it to explore the ways in which the parties involved viewed their political and social status in the colony. Very often the Jewish aggressors were initially

³ The police files, especially those for Constantine, are particularly rich, moreso than files for the departments of Oran and Algiers.

⁴ Charles-Robert Ageron, "Une émeute anti-juive à Constantine (août 1934)," *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 13, no. 1 (1973): 23-24.

insulted by Algerian Muslims, whom they viewed as inferiors. These incidents are reminiscent of the violence that the *néos* perpetrated against Jews in the 1890s leading up to the riots in Algiers in 1898. In that period, the *néos* acted out their status anxieties against their perceived status competitors, the Jews.

Although Jews had more rights as citizens than their Algerian Muslim counterparts, they still saw Muslims as status competitors. This was due, in part, to the fact that although technically citizens, Jews were still considered not entirely French by nearly all groups in the colony. In the words of Homi Bhabha, they were “almost the same, *but not quite.*”⁵ This general perception of their place in society only increased the Jews’ status anxieties. This was not merely a transposition of status anxieties from the *néos* to the Jews, as the *néos* remained similarly insecure in their status. This chapter argues that the constantly changing statuses of the different colonial groups compounded by economic decline created ever-present status anxieties emerging out of perceived increases in competition in politics and economics. These status anxieties often resulted in violence, through which one can chart the development of these relational identities.

Blood Debt and Algerian Muslim Demands for Rights

Algerian Muslims and Berbers answered France’s tremendous need for soldiers in the First World War. Approximately 173,000 Arab and Berber soldiers served France during the war, often serving longer than French soldiers and receiving far less compensation for their contributions. The “blood debt” incurred between colonial soldiers and France forced French administrators and politicians to consider offering greater rights to those soldiers. The first

⁵ Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 153.

major concession to these colonial soldiers in Algeria was the Jonnart law of 1919. Each improvement to Algerian Muslim status in the colony, regardless of their limited impact, met with severe opposition from those groups who felt threatened by such developments.⁶

After the Jonnart Law of 1919, Muslims benefited from wider access to French citizenship, further shrinking the gap between Jews and Muslims in the colonial hierarchy. The February 4, 1919 law established an intermediate citizen status between the full French citizen and the French subject. These “half-naturalized” citizens had rights as “electors.” According to the law, all indigenous Muslims could become electors if they were over the age of 25, maintained a residence for more than two consecutive years and met one of the following conditions: 1. served in the military and received a decoration for service; 2. owned land, were a farmer or a sedentary merchant; 3. were employed by the state, the department, the commune, or were retired from such service; 4. were a member of the chamber of agriculture or of commerce; 5. had a certificate of primary education or a university diploma.. The new law created a Muslim electoral body in Algeria of 421,000 new voters, approximately 43 percent of the Muslim population over the age of 25.⁷ The law also altered access to naturalization and allowed Muslims to maintain their personal status, modifying the Senatus-consulte of 1865.⁸ The procedure of applying for naturalization, however, remained complicated, and as a result, few Muslims applied.⁹ Muslims who requested naturalization but sought to maintain their personal status could become “half-

⁶ Jonathan K. Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria, 1930-1954* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 26. See also Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present* (London: Hurst and Company, 1991), 80. On the subject of blood debts, see Gregory Mann, *Native Sons* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁷ Charles-Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans et la France (1871-1919), Tôme Second* (Paris : Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), 1218.

⁸ Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans*, 1221.

⁹ Patrick Weil, *How to be French: Nationality in the Making since 1789* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 221

naturalized.” The half-naturalized status exempted them from the *indigénat*, and they could gain access to public service employment opportunities.¹⁰

As a result the improving status of Muslims in the colony, Jews experienced a status anxiety similar to that of the *néos* in the 1890s. Jews endeavored to establish greater distance between themselves and Muslims by asserting their still-superior position in the colony as full French citizens. Increasing Jewish anxieties provided fodder for the preexisting culture of violence in the colony. There is evidence of violent encounters between Jews and Muslims in the early 1910s; however, their number increased dramatically in the interwar period.

In 1913, there were five reported incidents between Jews and Muslims in Constantine. All five of the cases included Jews who attacked Muslims. In one illustrative episode, a Muslim, Ahmed ben Belkacem Slimini, bargained for a pair of shoes at the shop of a Jew. When Slimini decided not to purchase the shoes, the Jew hit him. Slimini fled but was pursued by a group of Jews who beat him with canes, punched, and kicked him. Slimini pulled out a knife and then fled.¹¹ Following the incident, a group of Muslim municipal council members, merchants, and other elites wrote the Prefect of Constantine to complain about the treatment of their fellow Muslims by Jews. Referencing the Slimini case, they wrote that he was “lynched” by the Jewish population. They also emphasized the fact that the Slimini case was but one in a series of aggressions by Jews on Muslims. “For some time, many Muslims have been victims of these sorts of ambushes.”¹² 1914 proved to be a continuation of the trends of 1913, although more cases reported the police involved young

¹⁰ Ageron, *Les Algériens Musulmans*, 1223-1224.

¹¹ Central Police Commissioner of Constantine, “Rapport journalier,” Constantine, March 27-28, 1913, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

¹² Muslim notables to Prefect of Department of Constantine, Constantine, March 28, 1913, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

Jews against Muslim soldiers.¹³ Violent encounters between Jews and Muslim increased in response to events in Palestine and in Europe.

Following the experience of World War I, Algerian Muslims intensified their campaign for rights in Algeria and compensation for their devotion to France. At the same time certain Algerian Muslim leaders, such as Messali Hadj began articulating the nascent Algerian independence movement. Algerian Muslims organized themselves into political groups with divergent demands regarding their rights. In the early twentieth century, a group of secularized elite Muslims, the *évolués*, who had adopted French customs and values, and received a French education, organized themselves as the Young Algerians. They opposed the official Muslim establishment, the Old Turbans, and the Algerian administration. The goal of the Young Algerians was to gain political equality for assimilated Algerian Muslims. One of their first political activities, the Young Algerians supported the February 1912 establishment of conscription for Algerian Muslims.¹⁴

In 1927 the Young Algerians formed the *Fédération des élus indigènes*. Two leaders of the *Fédération* gained notoriety by 1935: Mohammad Salah Bendjelloul, who had a complicated role in the Constantine pogrom, and Ferhat Abbas, who was living in Sétif during February 1935 riots. Both men were educated at the University of Algiers; Bendjelloul was a doctor, and Abbas, a pharmacist. Abbas and Bendjelloul experienced

¹³ Commission of Police, Constantine, “Rapport spécial à M. le Commissaire Central, No 593,” Constantine, February 7, 1914, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. See also Central Commissioner Report, “No. 2045,” Constantine, February 7, 1914; Departmental Security of Constantine, “Rapport No 319: Au sujet d'une rixe entre tirailleurs et Israélites,” Constantine, February 8, 1914; Commissioner of Police, “Rapport Journalier du 7-8 Fevrier: Bagarre de tirailleurs dans le quartier Israélite,” Constantine, February 7-8, 1914, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

¹⁴ Ageron, *Modern Algeria*, 77. See also Claude Collot and Jean-Robert Henry, *Le Mouvement national algérien, Textes 1912-1954* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1978), 18, 23.

great success in local politics, winning elections to municipal and general council positions.¹⁵

The *Fédération* maintained an assimilationist program, which sought rights for the *évolués* in Algeria.

In contrast to the *Fédération*, the *Etoile Nord-Africaine*, led by Messali Hadj, was influenced and supported by the Communist party. Unlike the *Fédération*, the *Etoile* garnered many of its supporters outside of the colony, mostly Algerian workers in metropolitan France, like Messali Hadj himself. In February 1927, Hadj delivered the *Etoile*'s first list of demands, which included independence for Algerian, the building of a national army, abolition of the *indigénat*, and an Algerian parliament elected through universal suffrage. The *Fédération*'s main concern was with the elite of Algerian society, while the *Etoile* focused more on the situation of rural Algerians and the goal of independence.¹⁶ Hadj and the *Etoile* did not develop a strong following in Algeria until the mid-1930s.¹⁷ The growing organization of Algerian Muslims demanding rights, on varying levels, led Léon Blum and his Minister of State, and former Governor General of Algeria, Maurice Viollette, to pen the Blum-Viollette Plan in 1936. The plan would offer citizenship to some 25,000 Algerian Muslim *évolués*.¹⁸ The question of increased rights for Algerian Muslims became the center of the hotly contested Blum-Viollette project in the 1930s.

Reverberations from Palestine and Europe

¹⁵ John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 133. See also James McDougall, *History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 78

¹⁶ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 137.

¹⁷ Ibid., 138.

¹⁸ Ibid., 141.

The police files of Constantine are relatively silent on Jewish-Muslim violence between 1914 and 1928. In this period, there was greater coexistence, perhaps influenced by the “sacred union” developed in the trenches of World War I between Jews, Muslims, and *colons*. While there were certainly cases of violence between Jews and Muslims in the intervening years, the number of cases increased sharply after 1928. The majority of cases occurred between 1929 and 1930. This heightened period of tensions between Jews and Muslims reflected events in Palestine, which influenced Jewish-Muslim relations in Algeria as well. The boycott of Jewish shops in Algeria the late 1920s is further evidence of the ripple-effect of such developments. In 1929 riots broke out in Mandate Palestine over access to the Western Wall. The area immediately adjacent to the section of the Wall where Jews prayed, was known as the Maghrebi quarter, named for the Maghrebi pilgrims and scholars living there.¹⁹ The proximity of the North African Muslim quarter in Jerusalem to the 1929 events led to significant repercussions in Algeria.

The riots, known as the Western Wall or Buraq Uprising, began over the Jewish insertion of a *mechitzah*, or customary screen that separated men and women during prayer, at the Western Wall on September 24, 1928 for their Yom Kippur service.²⁰ Muslim religious leaders saw this as an infraction of an old Ottoman rule, which forbade Jews from constructing religious structures at the Western Wall. The Muslim leaders reportedly told British administrators that unless the *mechitzah* was removed, they would not be responsible for the actions of the coreligionists. Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, along with other Muslims took advantage of this event and established the Committee for the

¹⁹ Gudrun Krämer, *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 225.

²⁰ Muslims called the section of the Wall which as the site of the dispute *al-buraq al-sharif* named for Mohammed’s stead, which he tethered to that part of the Wall during his night journey. See Krämer, *A History of Palestine*, 225. The French documents often refer to the riots as “*l’Affaire Bouraq*,” using the Arabic title.

Defense of the Noble Buraq Wall at the end of the month.²¹ The strong Muslim reaction emerged from growing fears that Jews sought to claim the entire Temple Mount as a Jewish holy site.²²

On August 15, 1929 during the Jewish fast of Tisha B'av, groups of approximately 300 Jews, including some members of the Betar movement, met in front of the Western Wall chanting “the Wall is ours,” and singing “Hatikvah.” Rumors circulated that Jewish youth beat up Muslims and cursed the Prophet in the Moghrebi quarter. The next day a group of 2,000 Muslims, organized by their leaders, marched to the Wall, attacked Jewish worshippers, and destroyed Jewish religious texts, including a Torah scroll.²³ At the same time, another incident further incensed the already flaring tempers. An Arab beat a Jewish boy who accidentally kicked a ball into an Arab woman’s garden. The Jewish boy died of his injuries and Jews took revenge by stabbing an Arab child.²⁴

Rumors spread that Jews planned to attack the al-Aqsa Mosque. On August 23, thousands of Muslims, urged by religious leaders, attended Friday prayer on the Temple Mount armed with sticks, clubs, knives, rifles, and other weapons. One rumor stated that the Mufti himself called for Arabs to defend the mosque.²⁵ The next day, upon hearing rumors that their fellow Arabs were killed in Jerusalem, Arabs attacked Jews in Hebron, murdering 64. Over the course of the riots, approximately 116 Arabs and 133 Jews were killed.²⁶

²¹ Ibid., 228-229. See also Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 173.

²² Krämer, *A History of Palestine*, 227, 230;

²³ Ibid., 230; Sachar, *A History of Israel*, 173; Philip Mattar, “The Role of the Mufti of Jerusalem in the Political Struggle over the Western Wall, 1928-29,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 19, no. 1 (January 1983): 113. There appears to be some disagreement on the date of the Jewish demonstration. Krämer and Mattar wrote that it took place on August 15 while Sachar noted August 16.

²⁴ Krämer, *A History of Palestine*, 230-231.

²⁵ Ibid., 231-232; Mattar, “The Role of the Mufti,” 114; Sachar, *A History of Israel*, 173-174.

²⁶ Mattar, “The Role of the Mufti,” 115; Krämer, *A History of Palestine*, 232. Again, there is much disagreement on the numbers of casualties. Mattar and Krämer agree with the stated figures; Sachar cited 133

These events in Palestine had a significant impact in Algeria where relations between Jews and Muslims were already strained.

In the early 1920s Zionism was not nearly as strong in Algeria as in Europe. Jews in Algeria generally saw their future in France rather than Palestine, however some Jews in Algeria were Zionists. Algerian Jews first expressed an interest in Zionism in 1897, when antisemitism threatened Jewish security in the colony. That same year a Jew from Constantine, Edouard Attali, attended the first Zionist Congress. In 1920, Zionists established an association, *L'Union Sioniste Algérienne*, in Algiers under the leadership of Lucien Smadja. The activities of the organization were limited to supporting the Jewish National Fund, whose representatives visited Algeria.²⁷ Zionism was not very successful in the colony, because as citizens, Jews were closely connected to the metropole. Algerian Jews were focused on defending their citizenship and civil rights against antisemitic attacks rather than indulging in Zionist ideologies.²⁸ Zionists also competed with the Alliance, whose actions supported the assimilation of Algerian Jewry into French society. In the face of growing antisemitism in the mid-1920s, Zionist activity decreased in Algeria and throughout North Africa.²⁹

Zionists from France, however, traveled to Algeria to promote the cause. In 1923, Dr. Sussman of the Palestine Foundation Fund spoke in Algiers and requested the support of the CAES for the Zionist cause. Confino wrote that the leaders of CAES decided not to publicly support Keren Heyessod and the Zionist program “because of its political character

²⁷ Jews killed, 399 wounded, and 87 Arab fatalities, Sachar, *A History of Israel*, 174. Ilan Pappé gave the figures 300 Jewish dead and a similar number of Arabs, Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 91.

²⁸ Simon, Laskier, and Reguer, eds., *The Jews of the Middle East*, 469; Moshe Davis, ed., *Zionism in Transition* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 197-198, 202.

²⁹ Simon, Laskier, and Reguer, eds., *The Jews of the Middle East*, 469.

²⁹ Davis, ed., *Zionism in Transition*, 203.

and the negative impact it could have on relations between Muslims and Jews in this country.”³⁰ Confino and the CAES feared that Zionism would worsen the already troubled relationships between Jews and Muslims.

Despite the misgivings of the CAES leadership, the number of Zionist meetings in Constantine increased concurrently with events in Palestine in 1929 and 1930. From 1930 to 1934, several Zionists gave presentations in Constantine. A surveillance report lists four Zionist presentations in 1930, 1933, and 1934. The first event took place in 1930, in which Fanny Weil, a leader of the Jewish National Fund gave a lecture on the importance of Palestine and its return to the “Jewish race.”³¹ On February 20, 1934, Sassia Erlich, also a lawyer at the Court of Appeals in Paris, gave a lecture at the Maison de l’Agriculture in Constantine on “the Jewish homeland in Palestine.”³² In the early 1930s Zionism began to gain a foothold in Algeria. It was not until the late 1930s, however, that it became a relatively popular political ideology. It is interesting that these Zionist presentations were given by women from the metropole. It is possible that Zionism in Algeria found most of its support among women, or perhaps female Zionists were viewed as less threatening.

Following the Buraq uprising in Palestine in 1928, the Prefect of Constantine expressed concern for its impact on his department, where Jewish-Muslim relations were already problematic.³³ In late August 1929, immediately following the bloodshed in Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safed, the Prefect of Constantine wrote that based on information

³⁰ A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, February 13, 1923, AIU Algérie IB4.

³¹ Departmental Security of Constantine, “Manifestations d’activité et de propagande parmi l’élément israélite de Constantine au cours des années 1930-1933-1934,” CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

³² Ibid. See also Departmental Security, Commissioner of Bône, “No. 108: Surveillance politique des indigènes,” Bône, March 8, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

³³ Prefect of Constantine to the Governor General, “No. 18386: Presse Arabe: *An Nadjah* No. 662,” Constantine, November 21, 1928, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. See also Smain Mami, “Mon Voyage au Maroc et en Andalousie,” *An Nadja* No. 662, November 9, 1928, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

coming out of Palestine, it appeared repercussions would develop “where Jews and Muslims find themselves in contact. The government cannot remain indifferent to these events, notably in Algeria where one finds a latent antagonism, ready to manifest itself at the first occasion.”³⁴

The mayor of Sétif wrote that given the history of antisemitism in his town, he and his fellow administrators were aware of the potential problems that could arise as a result of the events in Palestine. He made two recommendations to the Prefect: first, that the French press in Algeria print only particular information on events in Palestine, and secondly that the administration conduct careful surveillance of the Muslim press.³⁵ The Police Commissioner of Ain Beida wrote that the conflicts in Palestine increased emotions among the Jewish population and that literate Muslims carefully followed news published on the topic. He also feared that “a contagion might come from Oran, where the population is known for its antisemitic sentiments.”³⁶

It was in this climate of developing nationalistic ideologies, Algerian Muslim independence and Zionism, that violence between Jews and Muslim reemerged. The police files on Jewish-Muslim violence in Constantine in 1928 contain four cases, all of which involved Jewish aggressors. These cases mostly concerned Jews attacking Muslims who entered the Jewish quarter. In one case, which occurred on December 23, 1928, a band of Jews attacked three Muslims who were walking along the rue de France in Constantine. The

³⁴ Prefect of the Department of Constantine, “Affaires Indigènes, No. 17871, Très Confidential,” Constantine, August 27, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. See also Governor General, “Memo No 21829a, Au sujet des troubles qui ont éclaté en Palestine,” Algiers, August 29, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

³⁵ Mayor of Sétif to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 31,” Sétif, September 1, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

³⁶ Commissioner of Police of Ain Beida to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 866: Object: Troubles de Palestine,” Ain Beida, September 5, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. See also Commissioner of Police of Tebessa to the Prefect of Constantine, “Au sujet des événements de Palestine,” Tebessa, September 7, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. The Police Commissioner’s comment about Oran is an allusion to Dr. Jules Molle’s antisemitic activities in Oran in the late 1920s.

Prefect noted that the Jews were clearly drunk.³⁷ In 1929, there were twenty-one cases between Jews and Muslims. The majority of the cases, fifteen, included Jewish aggressors, and six involved Muslim aggressors. As indicated above, events in Palestine impacted relations between Jews and Muslims in the colony. On the first day of the New Year, violence broke out between Jews and Muslims. Upon leaving a ball sponsored by the workers' union, a group of Jews stumbled upon two Muslims, both of whom were editors of the newspaper *Echihab*. After insulting each other, the two groups began to fight.³⁸

Following the January 1 brawl, the Prefect called a meeting of Jewish and Muslim leaders, including the Chief Rabbi and the Jewish elected officials. At the meeting, the Prefect urged calm and encouraged the assembled leaders to demand that their coreligionists avoid future violent encounters. Monsieur Lellouche, the Jewish general council member, assured the Prefect that he and his fellow leaders would not support any Jew involved in aggressions against Muslims and that they would also punish such individuals. In a sermon, the Mufti preached calm to his Muslim followers.³⁹ The Prefect's effort to unite Jewish and Muslim leaders in condemning the violence indicated that its prevalence was already severe enough for the Prefect to take proactive measures.

Another case took place on April 14, 1929, in which a group of Jews stopped a Muslim, former general council member, Allaoua Lounissi, age 55. One of the Jews, Eliaou Zaffran, age 30, demanded whether Lounissi was a Jew or a Muslim. When Lounissi

³⁷ Prefect of Constantine to the Central Commissioner of Constantine, "No. 20813: Object: au sujet d'incidents entre Indigènes Musulmans et Israélites," Constantine, December 29, 1928, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. See also Amar ben Belcacem Hamel, Alile Zouati, Mostefa ben Daoud to the Prefect of Constantine, Constantine, December 24, 1928, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

³⁸ Central Commissioner of Constantine Cayol to the Prefect of the Department of Constantine, "No. 4C," Constantine, January 4, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

³⁹ Prefect of Constantine to the Governor General, "No. 258: Au sujet agressions commises par des Israélites contre des indigènes musulmans," Constantine, January 5, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

responded that he was Muslim, Zaffran punched him in the face.⁴⁰ This instance clearly demonstrates that for many Jewish aggressors, no other instigation was needed other than the mere fact that their victim was Muslim. Situations such as these led the Prefect to demand that Monsieur Barkatz, the deputy mayor of Constantine, intervene in stopping his coreligionists from attacking Muslims. He wrote, “I am appealing again for your help and that you use your prestige in the Jewish community to prevent any excitement and avoid any excessive exaltation of the sense of race.”⁴¹ The Prefect’s letter emphasized the real cause of these cases of violence: that of a Jewish sense of superiority over Muslims. While Jews were often the aggressors in the cases in 1929, Muslims were also guilty of assaults against Jews. In one example, on August 28, two or three Muslim youth broke windows at the Alliance school in Constantine.⁴² Most of the cases involving Muslim aggressors were related to insignificant issues. On September 9, violence resulted from an altercation over the ripeness of a melon.⁴³

An Algerian Muslim newspaper popular among elites and a proponent of Franco-Muslim union, *La Voix Indigène*, published an article on the escalating violence between Jews and Muslims, entitled “Let’s be reasonable.”⁴⁴ The author of the article wrote “having already manifested our best feelings towards our friends the Jews, we now must point to a trend that occurs a little too often on their part, which could have very serious consequences.

⁴⁰ Central Police Commissioner E. Aschbacher to the Prefect of Department of Constantine, “No. 46: Incident entre indigène et Israélite,” Constantine, April 15, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. See also Central Commissioner Aschbacher to Prefect of Constantine, “Report No 47,” Constantine, April 16, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁴¹ Prefect of Constantine to Deputy Mayor Barkatz, “No. 16328,” Constantine, August 9, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁴² Central Commissioner of Constantine Aschbacher to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 126,” Constantine, August 29, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁴³ Central Commissioner of Constantine E. Aschbacher to Prefect of Constantine, “No. 134,” Constantine, September 10, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁴⁴ Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness*, 110.

Jewish youth, when they are in a group, too often quarrel with the Arabs who ventured alone in their neighborhoods.”⁴⁵ These Jewish youth, like the members of the Civic Club, may have seen their actions more in the manner of self-defense than viewing themselves as aggressors as a result of the pervasive nature of violence in the colony.

The same violent trends persisted into 1930. In 1930, significantly more cases of Jewish violence towards Muslims, twenty seven cases in contrast to one case of Muslim assault on Jews, were reported.⁴⁶ Reports of bands of Jews committing violence continued into 1930. On August 25, a group of young Jews attacked some Muslims, allegedly without any provocation. The young Jews punched and kicked the Muslims, tore off their caps, which they threw in the ravine. The twelve Jews arrested for their violence were all between ages 16 and 22.⁴⁷ Such disturbances concerned the Governor General, who feared that the growing number of incidents between Jews and Muslims in Constantine could lead to a revival of antisemitism. He wrote “we can not tolerate such acts, which are repeated endlessly, especially because they risk creating, among the natives and even among some Europeans, a state of mind likely to one day cause serious disorders.”⁴⁸

The newspaper *La Voix Indigène* used the recent violence to follow up on its December 1929 article with another entitled “Cowardly Aggressions.” In this article, the author, Mohammed el Mourtada, criticized the actions of Algerian Jews, writing that “calm is reestablished in Palestine, but doesn’t seem to have appeased certain spirits. The secular union of Muslims and Jews seems to have dissolved to the great detriment of the public

⁴⁵ “Soyons raisonnables,” *La Voix Indigène*, December 12, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁴⁶ Central Police Commissioner, Constantine, to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 199: Re: Incident entre Musulmans et Israélites,” Constantine, January 30, 1930, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁴⁷ Central Police Commissioner, Constantine to the Prefect of the Department of Constantine, “No 328: Objet: Incident entre indigènes et israélites,” Constantine, September 2, 1930, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁴⁸ Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 27833a,” Algiers, September 15, 1930, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. This letter was actually written by Marcel Peyrouton, who was then serving as the Secretary General of Government.

peace.... These cowardly aggressions, in which Muslims are victims of the Jews, are truly regrettable." In particular, Mourtada pointed to the "bands of rascals," groups of young Jews responsible for much of the violence. Although highly critical of the Jewish aggressors, Mourtada did not encourage vengeance on the part of Muslims; rather, he wrote that in terms of Jewish-Muslim relations "it would be better if we remain good friends."⁴⁹

In August 1930, the Governor General reported on the wave of cases of violence between Jews and Muslims in 1929 and 1930. He concluded that "the incidents have continued without interruption, since January 1929, between Jews and Muslims in Constantine and we should take energetic measures to stop them." The Governor General blamed Algerian Jews for much of the violence.⁵⁰ The fact that certain Jews were routinely responsible for violence against Muslims is significant. Combined with the many references to "bands" of Jews, it appears that there may have been a concerted group of young Jews who sought to create tensions or, perhaps in their minds, defend Jewish interests in the colony. Interestingly, there is a discrepancy between the number of cases listed in the Governor General's report and the files in the Constantine police files. In the police files, there are 21 total cases for 1929, and 29 for 1930. The Governor General's report includes only 31 cases for both years.⁵¹ It is unclear why some cases were not included in the report. One can hypothesize that perhaps the Prefect did not pass on certain cases to the Governor General's office for fear of being punished for not dealing with such an increase in Jewish-Muslim violence. The unrest continued into 1931, with seven cases in the Constantine police

⁴⁹ Md. el Mourtada, "Lâche Aggression," *La Voix Indigène*, September 18, 1930, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. See also Chief of Departmental Security to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 2099," Constantine, October 19, 1930, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁵⁰ Governor General to the Prefect of the Department of Constantine, "No. 25038a," Algiers, August 9, 1930, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁵¹ See Governor General Report, Algiers, August, 9, 1930 and Constantine police files, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

files, of which six included Jewish aggressors. Most the cases assume the same form as those in the preceding years, low-level altercations that often resulted in violence.⁵²

The cases of Jewish-Muslim violence reflect several important features of Jewish-Muslim relations in the colony. The situation in Palestine had a significant impact on the relationship between Jews and Muslims in Algeria. This indicates that Jews and Muslims were very much aware of political developments outside of the colony and that both groups had vested interests in the events of the Levant and their coreligionists there. The preexisting culture of violence in the colony allowed for, and perhaps even encouraged, violence between the two religious groups. Finally, altercations and violent encounters served as a terrain upon which the two groups could act out their status anxieties and frustrations, and exert their sense of identity and superiority over the other group. Jews, in particular, used violence to exert their superior colonial status and to maintain distance from Muslims in the colony. It is important to see the Jewish-Muslim violence in Constantine of the late 1920s not as an expression of religious hatred, but rather as enactment of status anxieties. It is within this context that the Constantine pogrom of 1934 can be understood as part of a longer history of Jewish-Muslim relations, colonial violence, and status frustrations.

Hitler's Growing Popularity in Colonial Algeria

In 1930, the French administration in Algeria celebrated the centennial of the capture of Algiers. Throughout the spring and summer of 1930, colonial administrators organized celebrations of the French presence in Algeria, including parades, unveiling of

⁵² Central Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect of the department of Constantine, "No. 1114M: Incident entre indigène et israélite," Constantine, February 11, 1931, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

commemorative monuments, and a visit by the French President Gaston Doumergue in May. The centennial celebration represented the success of the French in Algeria, but it also served to increase the “Frenchness” of the colony.⁵³ These centennial festivities only increased the frustrations of Algerian Muslims who resented the French occupation of Algeria. This resentment, compounded with a sense of alienation due to their lack of rights as citizens in the colony led to the deteriorating relations between Jews and Muslims.⁵⁴ Throughout 1930 violent encounters occurred between Jews and Muslims. Brawls broke out between Jews and Algerian Muslim soldiers (*tirailleurs indigènes*) in August and December 1933.⁵⁵ At the same time, Hitler’s propagandists tried to capitalize on Algerian Muslim frustrations with the French.

Starting in 1933, Algerian Muslims and some Frenchmen boycotted Jewish shops and businesses. That year rumors circulated that the JOB cigarette factory planned to fire all Muslim employees to replace them with Jewish refugees from Germany.⁵⁶ Another rumor that the JOB factory declared that Algerian Muslims “love JOB cigarettes as much as their prophet,” further incensed sentiments against the factory. Among such rumors also spread the belief that the factory’s proprietor, Monsieur Job, was a Jew. Algerian shop owners refused to sell the cigarettes to their fellow Muslims, leading to the widespread boycott of the brand.⁵⁷ According to the Commissioner of Police in Bougie, all Algerian Muslim

⁵³ Gosnell, *The Politics of Frenchness*, 19-21.

⁵⁴ Robert Attal, *Les Émeutes de Constantine: 5 août 1934* (Paris: Éditions Romillat, 2002), 55.

⁵⁵ Commissioner of Police, Constantine, “No. 433: Incident entre Tirailleurs Indigènes et Israélites,” Constantine, December 20, 1930; Commissioner of Police, Constantine, to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 320: Incident entre indigène et israélite,” Constantine, August 17, 1930, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248.

⁵⁶ Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 13031b: Au sujet de la Croix Gammée,” Algiers, June 2, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

⁵⁷ Departmental Security to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 1370/1374: Au sujet du boycottage des produits d’une manufacture de tabacs,” Constantine, June 9, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

merchants refused to purchase products from the JOB factory.⁵⁸ The Police Commissioner in Ain-Beida attributed the boycott to the deteriorating relationship between Jews and Muslims in the colony.⁵⁹

At the same time as the JOB boycott, swastikas appeared and cheers of “Vive Hitler” were heard in various locations throughout the colony. Already in September 1932, Jacques Taïeb and Alfred Levy, editors and directors of the newspaper *Souk-Ahras Républicain* alerted the Prefecture of Constantine that they received an antisemitic letter along with a swastika. The author of the letter blamed the “perpetual excitations” of Jews for the recrudescence of antisemitism among other “races,” motivating them to act against the Jews. The letter was signed by the initials M.A.J., which could represent “Death to the Jews” (*Mort aux Juifs*), a common rallying cry of previous antisemitic demonstrations.⁶⁰ In 1932, Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* was translated into Arabic and distributed under the title *El Hitler* in large numbers.⁶¹ Starting in 1933, National Socialists began a campaign to win over former German colonies in southwest Africa, and to gain support elsewhere in Africa.⁶²

Throughout the summer of 1933, swastikas appeared through the department of Constantine. In June 1933, two trucks bearing swastikas traveled through Batna. In Constantine, young Algerian Muslims openly wore armbands adorned with swastikas, greeting each other with the salutation, “*Tu as le bonjour de Hitler.*” The Governor General

⁵⁸ Commissioner of Police to the Prefect of the Department of Constantine, “No 2-2256: Au sujet du boycottage des produits de la Maison JOB,” Bougie, June 18, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

⁵⁹ Commissioner of Police of Ain-Beida, to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 462,” Ain-Beida, June 19, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

⁶⁰ Alfred Levy to M. Landel, secretary general of the Prefecture, Constantine, Souk-Ahras, September 13, 1932; Prefect of Constantine to Alfred Levy, Director of *Souk Ahras Républicain*, “No 6848,” Constantine, September 16, 1932, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

⁶¹ Attal, *Les Emeutes de Constantine*, 69.

⁶² L. Smythe Barron, ed., *The Nazis in Africa: Lost Documents on the Third Reich Volume III* (Salisbury: Documentary Publications, 1978), i. See also Charles-Robert Ageron, *L’Algérie algérienne de Napoléon III à de Gaulle* (Paris: Éditions Sindbad, 1980), 168-19.

considered that the appearance of swastikas, references to Hitler, the boycott of the JOB cigarette factory, and the rumors circulating regarding the replacement of Algerian Muslims with German Jewish refugees were connected.⁶³ In July, the Police Commissioner of Batna wrote that some young Algerian Muslims supported Hitler's rise to power in Germany, but that they remained a minority. The Police Commissioner suggested also that the boycott of the JOB products was not due to current events, but rather to the latent discord between Jews and Muslims in the colony.⁶⁴

In late August and September 1933 the BASTOS cigarette factory started selling packages of cigarette paper printed with a swastika. The Governor General wrote the Prefect of Constantine requesting that the sale of such packages be halted due to its implicit support of Hitler.⁶⁵ The Sub-Prefect of Bougie, Richardot, suggested that the BASTOS factory wanted to take advantage of the rumors circulating regarding the JOB factory in order to widen their clientele, and to indicate to the frustrated Algerian Muslims that the BASTOS factory was "anti-Jewish." Richardot feared that the anti-Jewish sentiments of the Algerian Muslims in the colony would provide fodder for Hitler's growing success and popularity, and create "political agitation."⁶⁶

Jacob Saffar, a Jewish merchant in Bougie, further articulated Richardot's concerns. Saffar indicated that the cigarette papers with the swastika were not offered only to Algerian Muslim merchants. This choice indicated that "they [BASTOS] have sought to encourage and assist the antisemitic movement and as well as the anti-French movement." Saffar

⁶³ Governor General of Algeria to the Prefect of Constantine, "No, 13031b: Au sujet de la croix gammée," Algiers, June 2, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

⁶⁴ Commissariat de Police of Batna to the Sous-Prefect, "No 3950: Camions portent la croix gammée," Batna, June 21, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

⁶⁵ Governor General to the Prefect of the department of Constantine, "No 18436B: Au sujet des cahiers de papier à cigarettes portent l'insigne de la croix gammée," Algiers, September 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

⁶⁶ Sub-Prefect of Bougie, Richardot, to the Prefect of Constantine, "No 6174: Mouvement antisémite," Bougie, August 25, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

admitted that the actions of BASTOS did not necessarily indicate cooperation between Hitler's representatives and the antisemitic movement in Algeria, which used the factory of BASTOS as its Oran headquarters. Saffar noted that the two main owners of the BASTOS factory were of Spanish origin.⁶⁷ Saffar's letter reflects the continued role of *néos* as influential members of the antisemitic movement in the colony.

In July 1934, just weeks prior to the August 5 pogrom, the Prefect of Algiers wrote of the visit of Dr. Alfred Rosenberg, the director of German foreign propaganda, to North Africa, as well as to Yemen and Syria. The Prefect quoted the Governor General, who indicated Hitler's popularity in those areas, "Indeed, I note that Mr. Hitler is known by all the leaders and they speak with great admiration of modern Germany. Racism is now adopted by the Arabs." The Prefect also noted the connection between Hitler's success in North Africa and the growing Jewish presence in Palestine.⁶⁸ The Commissioner of Police in Kolea wrote that at the end of July 1934 Algerian Muslims, especially those in the department of Oran, showed great "affection" for the image of the swastika, not necessarily as a symbol of Hitler, but more as an emblem of anti-Judaism. The Police Commissioner added that the Algerian Muslims in Oran supported Hitler's anti-Jewish measures taken in Germany. The Commissioner concluded that, in general, Arabs hated the Jews, but remained loyal to France and her government.⁶⁹ The same day, the administrator of Cherchel reported on the activities of the journalist Titus Panaiteescu, an Italian national, who organized propaganda on behalf of Hitler by setting up organizations entitled "Stutzbunkers." Panaiteescu drew upon the "latent" antisemitism of Algerian Muslims who blamed their poor status and conditions on the

⁶⁷ Jacob Saffar to the Sub-Prefect of the Arrondissement of Bougie, Bougie, August 24, 1933, CAOM Alg Const B/3/249.

⁶⁸ Prefect of Algiers, "No. 14823," Algiers, July 19, 1934, CAOM Alg Algiers 2i/38.

⁶⁹ Commissioner of Police of Kolea to the Prefect of Algiers, "No 1781," Kolea, July 25, 1934, CAOM Alg Algiers 2i/38.

nefarious political and economic activities of Jews in the colony. The administrator commented that Algerian Muslims supported Hitler because they viewed him and Nazi Germany as the only credible threat to French control in Algeria.⁷⁰ This assessment hints at the general fear of French colonial administrators in Algeria regarding the growing independence efforts among Algerian Muslims in the colony.

The presence of Nazi propaganda in the colony increased even after the August 5 pogrom. In October 1934, the Governor General commented on the increase in swastikas appearing throughout the colony, pointing to the activities of Panaitescu. The Governor General suggested that Goebbels was the mastermind of such activities in the colony.⁷¹ The administrator in Cherchel reported that large numbers of Algerian Muslims attended screenings of the film *All Quiet on the Western Front*, based on the book by Eric Maria Remarque, and demonstrated an “indecent joy” during scenes negatively depicting the French.⁷² In November 1935, surveillance records indicated that Dr. Bendjelloul, a key figure in the August 5 pogrom, had received a package of antisemitic newspapers entitled “L’Éclaireur Aryen,” from Germany.⁷³ In 1935, the Police Commissioner of Algiers reported the appearance of five pieces of paper found in a Frenchman’s mail box, including various phrases such as “Vive Hitler—Vive Mussolini,” “Mort aux Français et aux Juifs,” “Vive Hitler et Mussolini sauvers des indigènes,” “Vive Mussolini, Vive l’Algérie

⁷⁰ Administrator of the Mixed Commune of Cherchel to the Prefect of Algiers, “No 2662: Au sujet de l’existence d’un mouvement raciste chez les indigènes, Titus Panaitescu,” Cherchel, July 25, 1934, CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

⁷¹ Governor General to the Prefect of Algiers, “No. 16267b: Au sujet de la propaganda hitlerienne en Algérie,” Algiers, October 17, 1934, CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

⁷² Administrator of the Mixed Commune of Cherchel to the Prefect of Algiers, “No. 4706: Au sujet de la propaganda hitlerienne,” Cherchel, October 29, 1934, CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

⁷³ Departmental Security of Algiers, “Report No. 7639: Propagande Allemande,” Algiers, November 30, 1934, CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

indépendante.”⁷⁴ These phrases appeared throughout the colony, scrawled on walls, shouted during protests, and whispered on the streets. Such events as well as the multitudes of other examples indicate Hitler’s growing influence, as well as the continuous development of antisemitism in the early and mid 1930s in the colony.

Relations between Jews and Muslims deteriorated in the years and months prior to the August 5 pogrom, developing into a crescendo of frustrations and hatreds. In April 1934, the Governor General reported the appearance of flyers in Arab markets in the department of Constantine, written in Arabic and directed at Algerian Muslims. The flyers read “Oh Muslims, France loves you and the Jews hate you.” The Governor General noted that the flyer was likely produced by members of the antisemitic movement, and was cause for concern as it could have extremely dangerous repercussions of inciting Algerian Muslim fear and anger towards Jews.⁷⁵ On June 4, 1934, a fight broke out between an Algerian Muslim, 26, and a Jew, 18, over the price of eggs. The Jew, Armand Zaoui, punched the Muslim, Lakhdar ben Ali Djamadi, in the face, breaking his nose.⁷⁶ On June 7, two Jews, Fredj Zerbib, 21, and Isaac Sebbah, 27, attacked a Muslim, Mahmoud ben Ahmed, 29. According to ben Ahmed’s complaint, Zerbib and Sebbah, who were drunk, yelled upon seeing him, “look there, a Muslim,” and hit him.⁷⁷ These small scale altercations occurred with great regularity in the 1920s and 1930s, especially in the department of Constantine. They reflect not only the status anxieties of the groups involved, but also the developing political ideologies and influences that increased such insecurity. These developments further

⁷⁴ Police Commissioner of Algiers, Bethcessahar, to the Secretary General of Affaires Indigènes, Algiers, April 6, 1935, CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

⁷⁵ Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 6170B: Au sujet des papillons antisémites,” Algiers, April 25, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁷⁶ Central Police Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 3338: Incident entre un arabe et un israélite,” Constantine, June 4, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁷⁷ Central Police Commissioner to the Prefect of Constantine, No 3425, “Incident entre Indigène et Israélites,” Constantine, June 7, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/240.

deteriorated relations between Jews and Muslims and set the stage for the violence of the August 5 pogrom. On August 5, 1934 Muslim anti-Judaism joined with colonial antisemitism to yield a conflagration in Constantine. In the next chapter, I analyze the 1934 pogrom in Constantine that shocked both the colony and the metropole.

Chapter 5: Antisemitic Violence in French Colonial Algeria: The 1934 Constantine “Pogrom”

On August 5, 1934 Algerian Muslims ransacked, pillaged, and murdered Jews in Constantine. French administrators depicted the violence as the inevitable manifestation of longstanding Muslim hatred of Jews. The causes of the “pogrom” were, however, far more complex. They stemmed from the unequal rights of Jews and Muslims in the colony, combined with developing Algerian Muslim nationalism, and impacted by events in the Levant and Europe. Rather than an explosion of religious antisemitism, the violence in Constantine was politically oriented, supported and encouraged by French antisemites. The Algerian Muslims’ frustrations with the inequalities of access colonial citizenship manifested themselves in violence against Jews. Once again, Jews were the victims of status anxieties and competition for political rights.

This chapter analyzes the causes and the development of the August 5 riot. By identifying unequal access to rights in the colony as the central cause, I locate the 1934 Constantine pogrom within the trajectory of Algerian Muslim demands for citizenship and the growing antisemitism of the politically charged 1930s. This chapter also examines the Constantine pogrom’s impact on the relationship between Algerian Jews and France. In spite of previous episodes of antisemitic violence, Algerian Jews remained fervently devoted to France. The inaction of the French administration forced Jews to recognize the realities of the limits on their status in the colony. For Constantine’s Jews, August 5 created the first tear in the fabric of their French identities as they realized how deeply antisemitism ran in the French administration.

Constantine Jews and left-wing groups referred to the August 5 violence as a pogrom. Pogrom is a Russian word, meaning to wreak havoc.¹ The term is usually applied to Eastern European episodes of violence perpetrated by non-Jews against Jews. The anthropologist Paul R. Brass' definition of a pogrom involves interethnic violence supported or sponsored by the police or administration. The 1934 Constantine rioting meets such criteria.² Over the course of August 5, Algerian Muslims attacked Jews in Constantine while the police surveyed the violence without stopping it. The Constantine police's inaction demonstrated the inherent antisemitism among the police and more widely in the administration.

Brass writes that a scholar examining interethnic collective violence cannot help but insert herself into the quagmire of responsibilities and the politics of such events.³ The political constructions and interpretations of the 1934 violence, however, provide an unparalleled illustration of the competition between colonial groups and the ways in which political antisemitism manifested itself. The goal of this chapter is not to present an objective recounting of the history of the pogrom. Rather, this chapter uses previously unexamined sources in conjunction with well-known accounts to examine the Constantine pogrom through the prism of political antisemitism and the intense competition for rights in the colonial context. This study is less about the violence itself and more about an enactment of political frustrations, competition, and antisemitism.

Many of the administrative reports of the time concluded that the violence occurred as a result of locally-based conflicts, explained away by administrators as the inevitable consequence of longstanding Jewish-Muslim conflicts. Historians, including Charles-Robert

¹ Ellen Land-Weber, *To Save a Life: Stories of Holocaust Rescue* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 297.

² Paul R. Brass, *Theft of an Idol: Text and Context in the Representation of Collective Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4-5, 11.

³ Brass, *Theft of an Idol*, 5, 8.

Ageron and Rochdi Ali Younsi, echo these administrative analyses, concluding that the violence, although tragic, was of limited origin and not indicative of larger issues in the colony.⁴ These historians rely heavily on administrative reports, published narratives, and contemporary Algerian Muslim analyses. These reports are useful; however, there are other sources that have been ignored by historians. For example, the responses of mayors and administrators in the department of Constantine to a questionnaire on the causes and events of August 5 provide insight into the local conditions and how administrators perceived Jewish-Muslim relations. Although obviously biased, Jewish reports illustrate the way in which Jews understood and internalized the causes of the pogrom, and the actions, or inaction, of the French administration.

This chapter uses the events of August 5 to understand the broader implications of the “disputed” pogrom, specifically the question of rights.⁵ August 5 represents far more than Jewish-Muslim violence. It was a climax of growing tensions between Jews and Muslims in the colony following a deepening of antisemitism in the colony in the 1920s and 1930s.⁶ It is also closely linked to the economic crisis in the late 1920s and 1930s. Examining the pogrom provides an opportunity for understanding the development of various colonial identities and the relationships between these groups.

Central to the increasing tensions between Jews and Muslims is the issue of citizenship. At the time of the August 5 pogrom petitions circulated for the abrogation of the Crémieux decree.⁷ The fact that the pogrom occurred on the anniversary of Bendjelloul’s

⁴ Charles-Robert Ageron, “Une émeute anti-juive à Constantine (août 1934),” *Revue de l’Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 13, no. 1 (1973): 40; Rochdi Ali Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle: Competing Loyalties within the Jewish Community of Algeria, 1842-1943*, Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2003.

⁵ Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 142.

⁶ The depression and economic crisis in the 1920s is dealt with in the previous chapter.

⁷ Ageron, “Une émeute anti-juive à Constantine,” 32.

1933 delegation to Paris is highly suspicious and must be taken into account in understanding its causes. Many contemporary reports described the violence of August 5, 1934 as caused by the frustrations felt by Algerian Muslims towards Algerian Jews. By the 1930s Jews had been elected to municipal governments. These elected Jews were a minority. Poverty remained widespread in both the Jewish and Muslim communities. The upward mobility and economic successes experienced by some Jews inevitably caused resentment among non-naturalized Algerian Muslims. This chapter investigates the events of August 5 for the deeper issues of political identity and competition for rights in the colony. Although the details of the pogrom play a pivotal role, the way in which it was experienced, deconstructed, and interpreted by the various groups involved illuminates the meanings and limits of citizenship in the colony.

The Power of Rumors: The Events leading up to the August 5 Pogrom

The origins of the Constantine pogrom reflect the power of rumors and how they fed upon local frustrations in the colonial context. Rumors reflected the dynamics of power and knowledge and the way in which they could be used by regimes as a form of control. Rumors were particularly effective in inciting public opinion, as was the case in the French Revolution, because they played upon the fears, concerns, and frustrations of the population.⁸ The rumors that circulated around the Constantine pogrom reflect a climate of fear and status anxiety. The immediate causes of the August 5 pogrom can be traced to the dissemination of versions of an altercation between a Jewish soldier and Muslims at a mosque. Algerian

⁸ Michel Foucault, “Governmentality,” in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 92. See also Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 43, 86. See also Brass, *Theft of an Idol*, 19. See also, George Rudé, *The French Revolution: Its causes, Its History, and Its Legacy after 200 Years* (New York: Grove Pres, 1998), 47.

Muslims considered the incident a serious affront to their religion and their status in the colony. Jews feared that it would be used as a pretext for attacks on their community. Europeans reacted to the episode and the resulting violence with a disturbing lack of interest or involvement.

Each colonial group understood the pogrom itself in different ways and placed blame on a range of actors. Jews blamed Algerian Muslim leaders for vilifying them. Algerian Muslims blamed the Jewish soldier for instigating the violence. Europeans blamed ethnic hatred. Some Jews and administrative officials blamed European provocations. Others blamed Henri Lautier's *L'Éclair* and its propagation of antisemitic rhetoric such as "Everything bad comes from the Jews...It is the Jews who should be slaughtered."⁹

Due to the divergent interpretations of the pogrom, it is difficult to find a single, unbiased account of the events. As fact-finding missions supposedly not colored by politics, administrative reports often took sides. The Vigouroux report is one such example. In his analysis, Vigouroux resuscitated old antisemitic arguments, such as the accusation that Jews voted in blocs according to the direction of their religious leaders.¹⁰ Vigouroux's report has been criticized for being too dependent on the Algerian Muslim version of the pogrom, concluding that the Jews were to blame. Robert Attal concludes that Vigouroux found the Jews responsible to cover up the errors of the French administration.¹¹ Instead, Attal emphasizes the political climate and the economic depression, which made the Jew the ideal victim.¹² Both Ageron and Younsi rely heavily on Vigouroux's report.

⁹ Fédération de France du Front de Libération Nationale, "FLN Documents: Les Juifs d'Algérie dans le Combat pour l'Indépendance nationale," CDHA 296 FRO.

¹⁰ Attal, *Les Émeutes de Constantine*, 172.

¹¹ Ibid., 178, 181.

¹² Ibid., 185-186.

Marcel Régnier, the Minister of the Interior in 1934, criticized the Vigouroux report, citing Vigouroux's own antisemitic sentiments. The Vigouroux commission was made almost entirely of local administrators, whose proximity to the violence certainly made their impartiality questionable. Régnier demanded that another enquiry be made, by a public or parliamentary figure named by the French government, who would examine the role of the administrators in particular.¹³ Régnier's report provides an analysis not directly colored by local influence.¹⁴

Despite his historical training, Attal's analysis is profoundly shaped by his personal experiences as a victim of the pogrom. Attal details his own experiences as a “son of ‘August 5’,” and in fact, its orphan. He describes the attacking crowd of Muslims; his family's escape, divided into groups to increase chances of survival; the image of his mother pounding on the door of their neighbor's home, the curtain being pulled aside and quickly returned; his father's body bleeding out on the floor of the truck once their family had been rescued; his little sister crying out for their father.¹⁵ Like many of the documents that emerged out of the wreckage of the August 5 pogrom, Attal's account is tinged with personal loss and horror. Unlike Attal, Rochdi Ali Younsi centers his analysis of the “disputed” pogrom on the Vigouroux report. Younsi identifies the pogrom's main causes as growing Algerian Muslim nationalism, increasing demands for political rights, and the embedded nature of anti-Jewish attitudes within the Muslim population.¹⁶ Younsi points to the Algerian

¹³ Marcel Régnier, “Voyage en Algérie de M. Régnier, Ministre de l'Intérieur, Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” February 28, 1935, CAOM FM 81F/864.

¹⁴ However, it is important to note that Régnier's report seems to draw heavily from Jewish reports, including Sultan's and Confino's.

¹⁵ Attal, *Les Émeutes de Constantine*, 73-76.

¹⁶ Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 142-143.

Jews' harassment of Algerian Muslim as another cause.¹⁷ In the aftermath of the disturbances each side attempted to paint themselves as the victims.¹⁸

Régnier began his analysis of the pogrom with his version of the altercation involving the Jewish zouave, Eliaou Kalifa, and the worshippers of the Sidi Lakhdar Mosque.¹⁹ On the evening of August 3, Kalifa returned to his home in an inebriated state. His home faced the mosque. In order to enter his apartment, Kalifa had to pass through a corridor with two windows looking onto the courtyard where Muslims made their ablutions. Normally, the windows were closed, yet that evening the windows were open. Kalifa requested that the windows be closed. The manner in which he made the request differed based on the source. Régnier cited the Muezzin of the Mosque who stated that Kalifa declared "Cursed be your religion." Régnier denounced the claims made in many newspapers that Kalifa then urinated on the wall of the mosque; however, this rumor appears to have circulated widely throughout the department of Constantine.²⁰

Régnier rightly indicated that the Kalifa incident was relatively innocent and should not have served as the spark for the August 5 attacks. Many reports explained that the Kalifa affair served as a pretext, an excuse for perpetrating premeditated violence on the Jews. The official version of events, subsequently published in newspapers, was that Kalifa drunkenly entered the mosque, insulted Islam, urinated, and after being chased out, called upon fellow Jews to attack Muslims. Rumors spread that Kalifa was actually the illegitimate son of a

¹⁷ Ibid., 160-161.

¹⁸ Ibid., 189.

¹⁹ Depending upon the report, the Jewish zouave's name is spelled differently, ranging from Eliaou Kalifa, to Elie Khalifa, to Elie Khalifat.

²⁰ Régnier, "Note sur les massacres de Constantine," CAOM FM 81F/864. Albert Confino, the director of the Alliance Israélite Universelle schools in Algiers also commented on the rumor, stating that the Muezzin formally declared that Kalifa had indeed offered insults, but had not entered the Mosque, nor had he urinated on the mosque. Albert Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

Jewish mother and Muslim father.²¹ Rumors in Algeria constituted political tools. The spread of the rumors involving Kalifa incensed public opinion, leading to a massive and violent gathering at the Place des Galettes.²²

During the evening of August 3, after 8:30pm, a fight broke out at the Place des Galettes, where the Police department of the second arrondissement was located. Twenty-three participants were injured, including fourteen Jews, eight Arabs, and one Italian.²³ Many of the injured Jews were police officers who had intervened in the fighting. Henri Lellouche, a General Council member and president of the Jewish consistory of Constantine, arrived at the scene at 10:40pm and witnessed a mob of nearly 2,000 composed almost entirely of Muslims. The Mufti, French authorities, and Bendjelloul, the Algerian Muslim-elected General Council member, followed. Lellouche and the Mufti called for unity and calm. An Algerian Muslim climbed onto the shoulders of his friend, calling his fellow Muslims to spill blood for Islam. He announced “We live for Islam, and for Islam, we will die.” The crowd applauded his outburst.²⁴

At the same time, Bendjelloul found an Algerian Muslim being arrested for attacking a Jew. Bendjelloul harangued an arresting police officer for harassing one of his electors and demanded his freedom. Disappointed with the officer’s response, Bendjelloul slapped him.²⁵ Algerian Muslims saw Bendjelloul’s intervention as an act of defiance against the colonial regime. Most, however, chose to ignore the fact that the slapped officer was a Muslim named Gassab.²⁶ Bendjelloul was already extremely popular among Algerian Muslims. His

²¹ Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

²² Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 145.

²³ Ageron includes vastly different numbers than Régnier: 15 injured, which included three police agents. Ageron, “Une Emeute anti-Juive,” 25.

²⁴ Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

²⁵ Ibid. See also Ageron, “Une émeute anti-juive,” 25; Attal, *Les Émeutes de Constantine*, 82-83.

²⁶ Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 146.

demands for Muslim rights as French citizens further added to his popularity. Although Bendjelloul was western-educated, he emphasized his rootedness in Algeria as the descendent of the Bey of Constantine. Bendjelloul's action betrayed the weakness of the French authorities as well as Bendjelloul's own "contempt" for the French.²⁷ Like many other commentators following the pogrom, Albert Confino of the Alliance, felt that the events of August 3 were a pretext for violence. Six Jewish-owned jewelry stores had been broken into and ransacked, a sign of premeditation in Confino's opinion. He suggested that the stores had been marked in advance.²⁸

The day following the Kalifa incident, Muslim and Jewish leaders worked to calm, chastise, and placate their respective communities while preaching unity and coexistence. The morning of August 4, the most widely read newspaper of the city, *La Dépêche de Constantine*, published the alleged urination account of the Kalifa incident. Read by a large number of Algerian Muslims, the article further incensed the Muslim population and served as a catalyst in inciting the subsequent violence. Régnier pondered if this was the intent of the editors of the *Dépêche de Constantine*.²⁹ On Saturday morning, August 4, Monsieur Lellouche visited all the synagogues in Constantine, urging his coreligionists to avoid demonstrations, gestures, and "imprudent words."³⁰

That morning, Lellouche arrived at the Mayor's offices, along with his fellow Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Halimi. There they found approximately thirty Muslim leaders and notables who were in the process of expressing their grievances. Muslim religious leader and president of the association of the Ulamas of North Africa, Benbadis, began the session by

²⁷ Régnier, "Note sur les massacres de Constantine," CAOM FM 81F/864. See also Albert Confino to the President of the AIU, Algiers, August 14, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

²⁸ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

²⁹ Régnier, "Note sur les massacres de Constantine," CAOM FM 81F/864.

³⁰ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

complaining that three years prior, two young Jews threw a tree branch at his head. At the time, he had not submitted a complaint in hopes of avoiding any retribution by his fellow Muslims. He indicated, however, that similar events continued to occur and had increased over the past three years.³¹ Another Muslim delegate, Yabia Ouahmed, a Kabyle fabric merchant, expressed his shock at the fact that Algerian Jews, as French citizens, were able to buy weapons.³²

At this juncture in the meeting, Monsieur Sultan, the Jewish delegate, decorated veteran, and president of the Constantine section of the LDH, spoke of unity and coexistence between Jews and Muslims in Algeria. Sultan offered encouragement, pointing to “this harmony and understanding between Jews and Muslims. On behalf of the Jewish leadership, I am happy to welcome the Muslim delegation, in which I, myself, have many friends and clients. I hope to work in unity and harmony under the aegis and protective guardianship of France.”³³

In the afternoon on August 4, French administrators held a meeting to discuss the protocol for defending the city of Constantine, as well as dealing with possible uprisings.

³¹ Ibid. Much of Régnier’s account of the meeting closely follows Confino’s report. The interaction between the two young Jews and Benbadis may be the subject of a report by Central Police Commissioner, No 113, written August 6, 1929 reflected events taking place on August 5, 1929, in which three Jewish boys were playing with tree branches which had fallen after a windy day. One of them, Prosper Draï, age 17, took an exceptionally large branch and used it to hit a passing Algerian Muslim on the legs, and subsequently on the head, causing him several days away from work in order to heal. Central Commissioner of Police, Constantine, “No 113, Incidents entre indigènes et israélites,” Constantine, August 6, 1929, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248. This event actually took place five years before the meeting of Benbadis and the Jewish leadership, so it might not be such an event, however the Algerian Muslim in the report is unnamed. The timing is also certainly suspicious that the event took place five years earlier, nearly to the day. Régnier noted in his report that the Jewish delegates disagreed with Benbadis’ statements, arguing instead that such incidents had not increased. Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

³² Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864. Régnier noted that this point in particular had the goal to disarm the Jews in order to leave them without sources of self-defense during the coming pogroms. Although certainly suspicious given the timing, it is unlikely that the product of such a meeting of Jewish and Muslim leadership would lead to official prohibitions against Jewish-French citizens’ rights to purchase and own arms. It is possible that much of Régnier’s theories and arguments in his report are too tinged by a teleological outlook on the events of August 1934.

³³ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

The meeting dealt with issues such as the lack of troops in the city and the fact that they were not even armed with bullets. According to Lellouche, the lack of prepared defensive measures was a “fatal imprudence.” At the meeting, the Jewish delegates demanded that General Kieffer request reinforcements from the neighboring areas of Sétif, Guelma, or Philippeville. Kieffer agreed and requested that 200 tirailleurs Sénégalaïs from Philippeville be directed towards Constantine.³⁴ Confino emphasized that the Jewish delegation explicitly requested that only Senegalese soldiers be sent, rather than Algerians.³⁵ This was a calculated request; in the past there had been violent encounters between Algerian Jews and Algerian Muslim tirailleurs.³⁶

Monsieur Fusero, the Police Commissioner, announced that the situation was growing more serious and that reinforcements were needed immediately. Algerian Muslim tirailleurs threatened to scale the walls of their barracks in Constantine so as to invade the Jewish quarter. In the end, Kieffer was only able to produce 150 tirailleurs to serve as reinforcements.³⁷ Régnier’s posited that Kieffer feared that fights would break out between the tirailleurs Sénégalaïs and the Algerian Muslim tirailleurs. Had the tirailleurs Sénégalaïs been called on August 4, they could have arrived on the morning of August 5.³⁸ The failure of French administrators to prepare properly to combat the growing threat of violence was not due to bureaucratic negotiation but, according to Jewish leaders, criminal neglect and

³⁴ Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

³⁵ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

³⁶ See, for example, cases of violence between Jews and Algerian Muslim soldiers (Tirailleurs indigènes): Constantine, Consistoire Israélite Constantine to the Consistoire Central of Paris, May 24, 1875, CC Icc 39; Constantine, Consistoire Israélite Constantine to the Consistoire Central, Paris, Constantine, June 18, 1878, CC 2E-boite 2; Tlemcen, April 1903, AN F/7/12460; Tlemcen, R. Ardette to the Chief Rabbi of the Consistoire Israelite, Paris, August 29, 1912, CC 2E-Boite 1; Constantine, Daily report of Commissariat of the Police of Constantine, February 7-8, 1914, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248; Constantine, Commissariat Central de Police, “Rapport No 433,” December 20, 1930, CAOM Alg Const B/3/248; Sétif, February 1935, See Simon Bakhouche to the Chief Rabbi of the Consistoire Central, Constantine, February 7, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

³⁷ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

³⁸ Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

complicity in the violence. At the time, Constantine's mayor, Émile Morinaud, was away. His subordinates alerted him to the situation so that he could return to Constantine in time to deal with any potential problems. At the same time, thousands of Algerian Muslims participated in a meeting at the central Mosque, where Bendjelloul spoke. Confino wrote that "it is not difficult to imagine, given the speaker's spirit and his fierce nationalism," the impact of Bendjelloul's speech on the gathered crowds.³⁹ On August 4, "an atmosphere of riot and of pogrom weighed upon the city."⁴⁰

August 5

During the early morning hours of August 5, 1934 Algerian Muslims congregated in the forest outside of Constantine known as the Pines of Mansours. According to Régnier, the meeting's main purpose was to assemble forces for the impending pogrom. As proof, he pointed to the fact that the participants were armed with clubs, and as soon as they left the meeting, they descended upon the city. Régnier noted that the police could easily have prevented the rioters from entering the city, but failed to do so.⁴¹ The funeral for Monsieur Narboni, the former president of the Constantine consistory and municipal council member, was to take place on the morning of August 5. Many Jews in Constantine planned to attend the funeral. While making their way to the funeral home, many observed large groups of Algerian Muslims heading towards the Pines of Mansours. Fearing for the safety of their coreligionists, Jewish leaders called upon the police to assure the safety of the city's Jews. The majority of the Constantine Jewish population attended the funeral, as well as four to five Muslim municipal council members. As the cortege made its way to the cemetery, the

³⁹ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

⁴⁰ Régnier, "Note sur les massacres de Constantine," CAOM FM 81F/864.

⁴¹ Ibid. See also Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 150.

Algerian Muslims descended upon the central street of the city, Rue Nationale, and began their assault on Jewish shops.⁴²

What occurred at the meeting at the Pines that led to the pogrom? One rumor spread that Jews strangled two Algerian Muslims.⁴³ Another rumor centered on Bendjelloul, who had been expected at the meeting, suggesting that Jews had killed him.⁴⁴ The rumor of Bendjelloul's murder served as an opportunity to seek revenge on the Jews.⁴⁵ Rumors proved a powerful tool in the colonial climate.⁴⁶ The events of August 3-5 illustrate the importance of rumors in inciting public opinion and fanning fears. The stories that circulated regarding Kalifa's alleged urination, as well as the possibility of Bendjelloul's assassination stirred the already troubled atmosphere and led to an intense escalation of violence.

In their analyses of the causes of the disturbances, Régnier, Confino, and Sultan emphasized the importance of the meeting at the Pines and the suspicious nature of what occurred in that meeting that led to the violence. In contrast, Younsi and Ageron viewed an altercation which took place between Jewish women and Muslim merchants the morning of August 5 as the catalyzing force behind the later violence.⁴⁷ According to this version, a quarrel broke out at the market at the Place des Galettes in the Jewish quarter. Jews fired gunshots and injured several Muslim market attendees. Jews then attacked Arab boutiques situated in the Jewish quarter, shouting "Death to Bendjelloul," which was misunderstood as

⁴² A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI. Confino wrote that the rioters began their pillage and ransacking with a salon and barber shop, breaking the glass of the store front and destroying all of the interior. Confino emphasized the fact that the rioters took all of the razors in the shop, which he claimed they later used to stab Jewish victims.

⁴³ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

⁴⁴ Régnier, "Note sur les massacres de Constantine," CAOM FM 81F/864. Attal also notes a similar rumor of Bendjelloul's assassination. Attal, *Les Émeutes de Constantine*, 141.

⁴⁵ Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 151.

⁴⁶ White, *Speaking with Vampires*, 17, 43.

⁴⁷ Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 151.

announcements of Bendjelloul's death. The rumors of Bendjelloul's death reached the meeting participants at the Pines. Some accused Bendjelloul of spreading them himself.⁴⁸

An altercation did occur between Jews and Muslims on the morning of August 5, but the connection to the meeting of the Pines and the escalation of violence is tenuous at best. Police interviews with some of the Jewish women involved and witnesses suggest that the Jews did not start the violence, but were its victims. Reine Atlan, a 26 year old Jewish housewife, explained that at 9:30am she was at the Place des Galettes in Constantine bargaining for melons, accompanied by two other Jewish women. Suddenly, she was hit on the back with a club. She could not identify her assailant but noted that there were numerous Algerian Muslims present. She abandoned her bags and took flight, seeking refuge at the police station, chased by Algerian Muslims yelling "Kill her! Kill her!" The two other women followed her to the station. There they found one police agent (who happened to be Jewish), Joseph Sebbah. Atlan heard the rioters saying "Go to the Place des Chameaux! That is where we're going to kill everyone." She returned home after giving her statement to Sebbah, and did not hear any gunshots.⁴⁹

Sebbah also denied that Atlan had threatened Muslims. He reported that soon after Atlan arrived, another Jewish woman, who happened to be pregnant, arrived to register a complaint against another unknown Algerian Muslim attacker. He observed that in the half hour between Atlan's departure and the second woman's arrival he heard four gunshots on the rue Combes coming from an unknown source. At 9:45 am, he exited the station to ascertain the situation only to find Algerian Muslims armed with clubs running towards rue

⁴⁸ Ageron, "Une émeute anti-juive," 26. Ageron excuses Bendjelloul's possible involvement, stating that as he learned of the meeting, he sent emissaries ordering its dispersal.

⁴⁹ Henri Coquelin, Chief of Departmental Security, Constantine, "Procès Verbal d'Audition, Préfecture de Constantine, Atlan, Reine," Constantine, September 11, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

Vieux. At that time he heard more gunshots and hurried back into the station to call the central police station for reinforcements. A half hour later, the reinforcements arrived, but Algerian Muslims had already “disemboweled” Jewish shops.⁵⁰ Charles Zaoui, a Jewish jeweler, provided a statement regarding his involvement in the possible gunfire. Zaoui stated that on the morning of August, at 9 am, fearing possible violence, he and his brothers, Ayem and Maurice, closed their stores. On their way home, Monsieur Fusero, the Police Commissioner, requested Zaoui’s aid in dispersing the crowds. Once the street was clear, Zaoui returned home. Zaoui stated that at no time did he or his colleagues fire upon the crowd. Zaoui’s brother, Maurice, gave an identical report.⁵¹

Chaou El Beze, a 24 year old police agent, was accused of firing upon the crowds of Algerian Muslims. He swore that he was still at his home at 10am, when he left upon hearing abnormal levels of noise on the street. In uniform, he received orders to push back the crowds of Algerian Muslims.⁵² El Beze was eventually joined by another Jewish police officer, Maurice Barkatz, age 25. Barkatz also provided a statement regarding his involvement on the morning of August 5. He stated that at 9:20 am, he left his home with his wife because he was not in service, although he was in uniform. He was on his way to the police station of the second arrondissement, and planned to drop his wife at her parents on his way to the station. At that time injured Jews and Muslims were brought to the police station. Arriving at his wife’s parents’ home, Barkatz warned them not to leave, because the situation was deteriorating. His wife feared for his safety, as Barkatz had been injured the

⁵⁰ Henri Coquelin, Chief of the Departmental Security, Constantine, “Procès Verbal d’Audition, Sebbah, Atlan,” Constantine, September 12, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁵¹ Henri Coquelin, Chief of the Departmental Security, Constantine, “Procès Verbal d’Audition, Zaoui, Chaloum (dit Charles),” Constantine, September 11, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁵² Henri Coquelin, Chief of the Departmental Security, Constantine, “Procès Verbal d’Audition, El Beze, Chaou,” Constantine, September 15, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

night of August 3, following the Kalifa incident. Upon hearing cries coming from the street at 9:45am, Barkatz looked out the window to see a group of Algerian Muslims throwing stones at the Jews in the street. He left his in-laws' home. Barkatz joined a fellow police officer, Georges Nakache, in pushing back the crowds away from the street.⁵³ These reports provide inconclusive evidence that Jews attacked Muslims near the Place des Galettes. Although the morning's altercation may have exacerbated the later violence, it is unlikely that it was the instigating factor as Ageron and Younsi contended. These reports do demonstrate, however, that Jews played a significant role on the Constantine police force.

Régnier described the ensuing violence succinctly, stating that “the morning, from nine am, the natives invaded the city, rushing towards Jewish boutiques and stores, and until three pm—in the suburbs, until 5pm—pillaged, massacred, slaughtered, disemboweled, besought, burned, under the watch of the troops of the police.” Jews who called the police, the mayor, and the fire station, received the same response: “the necessary will be done, be reassured.” According to Régnier, “by 2pm there are 13 bodies, horribly mutilated, murdered children, young girls slashed, the men with smashed skulls. Outside, the troops and police are waiting for orders. Through the closed shutters of windows, one can see the corpses in the street.”⁵⁴ Confino described the rue Nationale at noon as “a battlefield,” upon which “heaps of goods scattered on the ground, ripped open safes, records destroyed, promissory notes burned. Nothing can withstand the fury of the assailants. Woe to those who dare to defend themselves, they are beaten on the field.”⁵⁵

⁵³ Henri Coquelin, Chief of the Departmental Security, Constantine, “Procès Verbal d’Audition, Barkatz, Maurice,” Constantine, September 15, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁵⁴ Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

⁵⁵ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

Monsieur Sultan provided most chilling report of the events. A veteran and politician, Sultan was shocked by the lack of administrative response. After attending Narboni's funeral, at 10am, Sultan and other Jewish leaders were alerted to the developing horrors at the Place des Galettes. Accompanied by Lellouche, Sultan arrived at the scene. There they received warnings to leave, that they would be in grave danger. Sultan's home was situated in the center of the growing chaos, on a street which had already been taken over by rioters. Thinking that these warnings were exaggerations, Sultan returned home. Along the rue de France, Sultan witnessed injured Jews carried on stretchers by police or soldiers. A "fellow citizen," a *français d'origine*, protected Sultan. At the threshold of Sultan's home, the Frenchman forcefully pushed him into the corridor and closed the door to the building. Sultan noted that it was just in time: at 11:10 am the rioters started to demolish the store, a hair salon, on the ground level of the building.

From 10:30am on, Sultan's wife telephoned the authorities for help. Through the closed windows she witnessed an old Jewish man beaten to the ground, where his crushed body formed "one large wound. His body was exposed to all the dirt and not removed until 5pm." Sultan wrote,

Every minute the same scenes were repeated, the 'you-you' shouted by native women, amassed on terraces, mingling with the shouts of pillagers and incendiaries....Those discovered in their apartments were ruthlessly slaughtered.... Nothing has been spared in the Jewish quarter itself, we knew that the Jews would defend themselves to the death.⁵⁶

Sultan criticized the inaction of the police and the troops who surveyed the violence, their weapons at their feet, without arresting any rioters. Finally, at 3pm the troops received

⁵⁶ A. Sultan, "Les Événements de Constantine," Constantine, August 9, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

orders and bullets from Morinaud. The violence stopped in the city but continued in the suburbs until 5pm.⁵⁷

Sultan was at a loss for words to convey his deep anger and emotion. The report, written just a few days following the pogrom, captures Sultan and other Jews' exasperation and sense of betrayal. "An entire population has been delivered without defense, with the horrible illusion of being protected by a service which remained *immobile*. Conclude for yourselves, you French of heart. A veritable pogrom has been organized and realized."

Sultan doubted that the administrative enquiry would correctly identify the causes of the violence or attend to the central issue of the "deficiency" of the authorities and their response.⁵⁸ Sultan continued, "it is inconceivable that from 9am until 5pm the bandits were the masters of the street, that they could ransack, destroy, pillage more than 100 stores...beat or slaughter twenty-four people, including five women and four children, that they had the *time to do this without anyone intervening or making arrests....* Here is the other crime!"

Sultan questioned the administration's inaction, attributing it to "incompetence, cowardice, or complicity." Sultan concluded, "*France was absent from Constantine from 9am to 5pm.*"⁵⁹ Afterwards, General Kieffer dismissed Sultan and Lellouche's critiques as defiance of French sovereignty and that their role following the violence was more provocation than appeasement. Kieffer's report represents the antisemitism of the French administration. He suggested that the Jews "demonstrated a certain sense of triumph."⁶⁰

Confino's report similarly depicts the frustration of Jews regarding the inaction of the French administration. Confino cited the statistics following the violence: 25 dead, a large

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Sultan was likely describing the Vigouroux report, which held the Jews largely responsible for the violence.

⁵⁹ Sultan, "Les Événements," AIU Algérie ICI. Emphasis his own.

⁶⁰ General Kieffer, Commander of the Constantine Division, "Lettre à M. Le Député -Maire de la Ville de Constantine, No TS/398," Constantine, August 10, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

number of wounded, four burned buildings, more than 150 million pieces of merchandise pillaged or destroyed, families reduced to poverty, as well as great number of employees of shops unemployed. He surmised that had the authorities “acted responsibly, if they had heard the call of Jewish leaders who begged them to bring the Sénegalais, if the troops had acted, if the cavalry had charged, even without firing one shot, the assailants would have taken flight and we would not have to note the loss of human life and the accumulating ruin.”⁶¹ Sultan’s accusation of complicity on the part of the administration alongside the horrific statistics emerging from the wreckage of the pogrom led to an effort to understand the causes for the pogrom, as well as the roles played by the various parties involved.

⁶¹ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI. Régnier adds further statistics noting that three Algerian Muslims died, that 150 Jews and two Arabs wounded, and 150 shops pillaged. Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

Le "Populaire" en Algérie

POGROM 1934...

« Les émeutiers ne se trouvent pas dans l'élément sain de la population arabe », déclare M. Ben Djelloul. — Les revendications des indigènes. — La recherche du progrès est-elle subversive ?

L'appartement de M. J. Sebbah, avenue Forcioli, après le passage des pilleurs.

Le Populaire, September 13, 1939, AIU Algérie I C 6a



Dépêche de Constantine, August 14, 1934, AIU Algérie I C 6-c

The Post-Mortem on the Pogrom: Causes, Responsibilities, and Rights

Following the pogrom, the Prefect of Constantine sent mayors and administrators in the department a questionnaire, which asked “according to the information collected from native milieu in your commune, was the incident which began the movement (the profanation of a holy Muslim space by a Jew) actually the veritable cause of the riot?”⁶² Of the forty-seven responses reviewed in the archives, thirty-five cited the Kalifa incident as the cause of

⁶² Prefect of Constantine to the Mayors and Administrators of the Department, “No 5265,” Constantine, August 8, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

the pogrom. Of those thirty-five reports, thirteen stated that the Kalifa incident was merely a pretext, part of a premeditated and well-organized program of violence.⁶³ The administrator of Chateaudun responded that Algerian Muslims in his commune felt that Jews had become too arrogant and that they treated Algerian Muslims “like dogs.” Although the administrator identified a variety of rumors, he believed that the Kalifa rumor served as a long awaited pretext for perpetrating violence.⁶⁴

Many administrators pointed to usury and Jewish “arrogance” as the sources of Algerian Muslim discontent and anger towards the Jews.⁶⁵ The accusation of usury is reflective of the economic crisis’ impact on the colony. The Administrator of Khencela suggested that European antisemites in the colony may have exploited Algerian Muslims frustrations with Jews in order to “increase their ranks.” Following the pogrom, Europeans submitted a petition with more than 1,000 signatures to the Mayor’s deputy refusing to contribute to funds for the Jewish victims of the pogrom. Antisemites also organized a boycott of Jewish merchants.⁶⁶ Europeans could profit from attacks on Jews, their economic

⁶³ Administrative reports in response to the Prefect’s questionnaire (August 8, 1934), CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁶⁴ Administrator of the Mixed commune of Chateaudun to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 2645: Au sujet des événements de Constantine,” Chateaudun, August 20, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250. The administrator of Chateaudun noted a variety of rumors which excited the Algerian Muslims of his commune, including “the Jews burned a mosque,” “Algerian Muslim schools were burned, and the children murdered,” “Upon arriving in Constantine the Governor General reprimanded M. Morinaud and embraced Dr. Bendjelloul,” and “The Algerian Muslims had received the order to ransack but not to steal.”

⁶⁵ Administrator of the mixed commune of Ain-Touta to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 3550: Au sujet des incidents antijuifs des 5 et 7 août,” MacMahon, August 21, 1934. Mayor of Bône to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 11635,” Bône, August 18, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250. See also Administrator of the mixed Commune of Sefia to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 4193,” Laverdure, August 10, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁶⁶ Administrator of the mixed commune of Khencela to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 5824: Au sujet des incidents antisémites,” Khencela, August 11, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

competitors, and thus incited Algerian Muslims to violence by preying upon the “latent antisemitism of every Muslim.”⁶⁷

Many colonial administrators attempted to explain away the riots by citing preexisting Muslim antisemitism. The administrator of the mixed commune of Ain-M'lila wrote that “it is not a secret to anyone that the Jewish community of Constantine is detested as much by natives as by the great majority of the European element and that the points of friction are numerous.”⁶⁸ The administrator of the mixed commune of Akbou responded that “the hatred of the Jew is at the heart of every Muslim.” He cited the case of the JOB boycott as evidence of growing Muslim antisemitism. He also indicated that the comparison of Algerian Muslims and Jews’ access to citizenship was a popular subject in newspapers and in conversations.⁶⁹ The Mayor of Akbou suggested that the Jews bullied their Muslim neighbors, and that some Muslims believed that during the violence, “the Jews only got the lesson they deserved.”⁷⁰

For colonial administrators, the overwhelming hatred towards Jews demonstrated by Algerian Muslims over the course of the pogrom stemmed from two sources: antisemitism and the troubled economic climate. According to the administrator of the mixed commune of Sidi-Aich, as the influence of the Jewish population of Constantine increased, so did their insolence towards Algerian Muslims. As Jews made up a sizeable portion of the personnel in

⁶⁷ “Rapport sur les événements qui se sont produits à Khencela à l'occasion des troubles antisémites de Constantine,” Khencela, August 17, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250. The Administrator of Maadid agreed with the Administrator of Khencela, writing that Europeans sought to excite the antisemitic sentiment of Muslims, which used the Kalifa incident as a pretext for the August violence. Administrator of the mixed Commune of Maadid to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 3734: Objet: Surveillance politique des indigènes, au sujet des événements de Constantine,” Bourdj-bou-Arreridj, August 14, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁶⁸ Administrator of the mixed commune of Ain-M'lila to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 6054: Surveillance des indigènes, émeutes de Constantine du 3 au 5 août,” Ain-M'lila, August 14, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁶⁹ Administrator of the mixed commune of Akbou to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 37: Au sujet des troubles Constantinois,” Akbou, August 15, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁷⁰ Mayor of Akbou to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 1265:Rapport sur la repercussion dans la commune, des événements de Constantine,” Akbou, August 14, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

the administration and public services of Constantine, Algerian Muslims saw these positions of power as a threat. For the administrator of Sidi-Aich, the pogrom was merely “a revolt of the hubris of the Arab population of Constantine and its surroundings.”⁷¹ In the poor economy that plagued the colony, many Algerian Muslims suffered from unemployment and poverty, which only increased their hatred of Jews.⁷²

From these initial reports, it is evident that there were essentially three general causes for the August 5 pogrom: first, the Kalifa incident, seen by some as a pretext for premeditated violence; second, the economic crisis and frustration with perceived Jewish economic success, usury, grain speculation, or a general sense of Jewish supremacy; third, antisemitism, built upon secular and religious beliefs, but stemming from social issues, such as the preponderance of Jews in civil service, in the administration, or in elected positions, and most importantly, the sense of unfairness among Muslims regarding their inferior rights.⁷³ The frustrations developed from the unequal rights of Jews and Muslims melded with antisemitism, fueled by the influence of Nazism in North Africa and the economic crisis.⁷⁴

The economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s exacerbated the already problematic political and social conditions in the colony. From the late 1920s into the early 1930s the price of grain dropped significantly, and small farmers in the Constantine area suffered greatly. Creditors, among them Jews, benefited from the economic crisis as purchasers of buildings and other foreclosures. The economic crisis produced a mass of unemployed

⁷¹ Administrator of the mixed commune of Sidi-Aich, to the Prefect of the Constantine, “No 7661: Evénements de Constantine,” Sidi-Aich, September 11, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁷² Administrator of the mixed commune of Souk-Ahras to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 2508: Au sujet des événements de Constantine,” Souk-Ahras, August 21, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250. See also Mayor of the commune of El-Kseur to the Prefect of Constantine, El-Kseur, August 10, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

⁷³ Andrew G. Bostom, ed., *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism: From Sacred Texts to Solemn History* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2008), 51, 150.

⁷⁴ Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 143.

workers, a “floating population,” whose misfortune could be transformed into excitability against Jews.⁷⁵ The poverty of the Muslim masses similarly served as a source of growing power of Algerian Muslim nationalists.⁷⁶

The third cause is that of rights communicated to colonial subjects by the occupying authority. Antisemites immediately contested the Crémieux decree and its abrogation became a central tenet of the various antisemitic groups in the colony. Although the August 5 pogrom and its precursors are often depicted as the result of interethnic and religious hatred, the issue of access to rights is actually at the center of the debate. Sufficient attention has yet to be paid to the way in which status played a role in inciting Muslims to violence against Jews. The LDH emphasized the role of unequal rights in its analysis of the August 5 pogrom.

LDH member Monsieur Deroulède served as the defense counsel of a Muslim involved in the riots. According to Deroulède, the lack of Muslim citizenship rights was the central cause of the “discontentment and exasperation” of Algerian Muslims. The post-pogrom trials served as the occasion to highlight “the abuses of power committed each day by the Administration.” Deroulède hoped that the trials would lead to a measure ending the “terrible state of affairs from which the natives of the three Algerian departments suffered.”⁷⁷ The LDH leaders in Algiers cited the conditions of the *indigénat* as a motivating factor for Muslim participation in the violence. The *indigénat* was a symbol of the inequality of Jews and Muslim in the colony.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ M. Angel to the President of the AIU, “Oeuvres de Constantine,” Constantine, September 30, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI. See also Ageron, “Une émeute anti-Juive,” 34-35.

⁷⁶ Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 142.

⁷⁷ M. Deroulède, Defense of Boufedjil, “Événements de Constantine,” Paris, October 2, 1934, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169.

⁷⁸ Note LDH Algiers to LDH Paris, “Constantine—Pogrome,” V/1, November 3, 1934, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169. On the *indigénat*, see A. I. Asiawaju, “Control Through Coercion: A Study of the Indigénat Regime in

An August 11, 1934 article entitled “The Explanation of the Riots of Constantine,” in *L’Éclaireur de Nice* connected the recent violence to the preponderant electoral role of Jews in Constantine and the Muslims’ quest for rights. According to the article, Jewish electors made up forty percent of the electoral body in Constantine, Ain-Beida, and Sétif. This number resulted in the election of French Mayors and Jewish deputies, as well as many Jews in the police force and in lucrative municipal posts. “A Frenchman is always the leader, but he is encircled by Jewish collaborators who lead him to their dispositions.... In Constantine, they [the Jews] have been the masters for some ten years.” The article contrasted the conniving Jews of Constantine with the “sincerely, loyally” patriotic Algerian Muslims who fought for France. The article blamed the Jews and the French administration for not properly attending to the concerns of the Algerian Muslims. Rather, Governor General Carde supported Jews at the expense of Arabs, “in each incident the Jew is innocent and the Arab imprisoned, thanks to the reports established by the judges, agents of Judaism.”⁷⁹ According to the article, Arab intellectuals wanted to become French, and felt that it was unfair to require Muslims to give up their personal status.⁸⁰ In two years, the author contended, Jews would become the majority of Constantine and in five years, the majority of Algiers and Oran.⁸¹

French West African Administration, 1887–1946,” *Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N.* T.41, ser. B (1979): 35–71. See also Gregory Mann, “What was the *Indigénat*? The ‘Empire of Law’ in French West Africa,” *The Journal of African History*, 50 (2009): 331–353.

⁷⁹ “L’explication des émeutes de Constantine,” *L’Éclaireur de Nice*, August 11, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/687.

⁸⁰ The reluctance of Muslim colonial subjects to give up their personal status was not limited to Algeria. Muslim notables in colonial Senegal sought to maintain their personal status and Muslim tribunals. See Dominique Sarr and Richard Roberts, “The Jurisdiction of Muslim Tribunals in Colonial Senegal, 1857–1937” in Kristin Mann and Richard Roberts, eds., *Law in Colonial Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991), 131–145.

⁸¹ “L’explication des émeutes de Constantine,” August 11, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/687. The author described himself as an “Algerian,” of metropolitan French origin, whose parents lived in Algeria for their entire lives, and who himself worked for twenty-five years there, before returning to the metropole.

Seizing upon the hotly contested issue of rights, Henri Lautier used his newspaper to express his antisemitic sentiments, especially regarding the Crémieux decree and the large numbers of the Jews in elected positions. At the end of August 1934, a petition circulated throughout the city of Constantine demanding the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. It received 1,200 signatures.⁸² At the same time a rumor circulated that traces of blood and a chechia, a hat commonly worn by Arabs in North Africa, were discovered along the Boulevard de l'Abime. The rumor accused local Jews of having taken the corpse and cutting it into tiny pieces so as to make it easier to carry.⁸³ This case, coming just on the heels of the August 5 violence caused great concern among Jewish leaders and French administrators that the violence might resume. The episode was reminiscent of blood libels, which often served as precursors for violence.

At the end of August, Lautier's prepared the next edition of his newspaper with the headline “The Battle of Constantine,” and a discussion of the recent August 5 pogrom. The terminology reflects the spin that antisemites wished to put on the events. By describing it as a battle, the Jewish victims could be conflated with aggressors and the violence could be explained as self-defense. Lautier also organized his candidacy in the upcoming elections for the General Council. He published posters for his campaign, which read “I want to enter into this chaotic assembly to break the windowpanes demanding the abrogation of the Crémieux decree and then leave it at a gallop.”⁸⁴ Sixty-four years following the promulgation of the Crémieux decree, it still played a significant role in the politics of the colony and in the

⁸² Departmental Security of Constantine, Report No 2727, “Antisémitisme,” Constantine, August 29, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/687.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

reality of everyday life. Lautier based his electoral campaign on hatred of the Crémieux decree.

Antisemitism found a fertile environment in Constantine. An anonymous letter dated August 7, 1934 expressed the loyalty of Arabs to the French while simultaneously depicting the non-Frenchness of Algerian Jews. The author of the letter wrote that “the Arabs and the French are brothers. Through the collaboration of Arabs, France emerged victorious from the Great War. Today, the Government supports the Jews against the Arabs....” The author requested that the government intervene in protecting Muslims. “We are asking for the generous government to make a decision. If not, the situation will worsen and the consequences would be disastrous. These incidents have made the Arabs impatient and their discontentment is great.”⁸⁵

Régnier cited Bendjelloul’s failed mission to Paris exactly one year before the pogrom as one of its central causes. Bendjelloul and his colleagues had demanded French citizenship rights for Muslims without forcing them to abandon their personal status. They were dissatisfied with the current method, which simply required Muslims to make a declaration at the Mayor’s office, but which then subjected them to the French Civil Code and the formal abandonment of their personal status. Muslims considered this personal status to be “sacred,” as it provided them with religious autonomy, allowing them to conserve their customs and traditions, as well as the right to live by the laws of the Qur’an. Régnier asserted that Algerian Muslims considered their naturalized coreligionists to be traitors. The Minister of the Interior, Chautemps, refused to grant them an audience. The delegation took

⁸⁵ Administrator of the mixed Commune of Belezma to the Sub-Prefect of the Arrondissement of Batna, “No 5,640: Au sujet des événements de Constantine, lettre anonyme,” Corneille, August 18, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

this treatment as an affront to them and to Algerian Muslims as a whole. Régnier linked the meeting at the Pines to a one-year anniversary of the delegation's visit to Paris.⁸⁶

The delegation was made up of members who called themselves the “young Turks.” Composed of Algerian Muslims, this group sought to differentiate itself from the more conservative collection of “ulama.” The ulama leadership sought access to citizenship rights without losing personal status, while the Young Turks believed that their personal status should not play such an integral role in their fight for citizenship rights. Although loyal to France, the Young Turks’s plan included obtaining the right to vote, taking over the municipality, winning influence over the budget of the colony, and to eventually secure a sovereign and independent Algeria in the future. Régnier attributed some level of responsibility for the pogrom to this group. Régnier also acknowledged the presence of the antisemitic movement in Tunisia, in which young Arab nationalists (similar to those in Algeria and Palestine) believed that directing the Muslim masses against the Jews served as “an excellent method to awaken the national consciousness of the people, and to organize and prepare them for an insurrection and for battle in the streets.”⁸⁷ Régnier also attributed responsibility to the *Action Française* in the colony, which produced propaganda for the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. Régnier suggested that antisemitic groups supported behind the events of August 3-5.⁸⁸ The Croix de Feu also participated; members in Constantine incited the rioters to violence.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Samuel Kalman, *The Extreme Right in Interwar France: The Faisceau and the Croix de Feu* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 216.

Confino ascribed Algerian Muslim discontent to the pan-Islamic movement. He identified the conflagration of anti-French sentiment and antisemitism among Algerian Muslim leadership, especially nationalist leaders, including Bendjelloul.

Hatred against the French, hatred against the Jews, who became French citizens and enjoy all the privileges that this entails, does one need more to excite the masses against a minority that is envied and hated by the weak of the country? For the leaders antisemitism has been, if not a determining factor, at least one of the factors that they have been careful not to neglect in their calculations.⁹⁰

Taking the administration to task, Confino suggested that had the victims not been Jews, the official response would have been different. “If this had not been a case involving Jews, do you think they would have tolerated such a slaughter?” Critical of the lack of punishment handed down to guilty parties, Confino noted that although the “stooges” of the pogrom had been arrested and sentenced to several years in prison, no one “put a hand on the collar of the truly guilty, on Bendjelloul, who seems to be the soul of the movement.”⁹¹

Algerian Muslim leaders sought to distance their effort to gain citizenship rights from the violence. They pointed to Jewish “arrogance” towards Muslims, citing examples in which Jews mistreated Muslim domestic servants and low-level merchants.⁹² Ferhat Abbas believed that these tensions emerged because French legislators made Jews citizens, while maintaining Muslims as colonial subjects. Abbas argued that the French should have upheld the Senatus-Consulte of 1865, which created equal requirements for Jewish and Muslim naturalization. Some Muslim leaders believed that certain Jews in the administration created obstacles to restrict Muslims from attaining French citizenship. By doing so, Jews could retain their privileged position in the colony, especially in politics.⁹³ Although Jews were the

⁹⁰ A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Younsi, *Caught in a Colonial Triangle*, 159-160.

⁹³ Ibid., 164-165, 167.

object of these attacks, the ultimate target was France's unequal development of standards for colonial citizenship.

As victims of the violence of August 3-5, Jews felt a profound sense of abandonment by the French administration. Monsieur Angel, the director of the Alliance's Constantine school described the Jews' frustration. In the climate of escalating antisemitism in the region during and after the pogrom, some Jews chose to leave rather than continue to confront these conditions. "A portion of our population aspires to only one thing: to leave their native village and flee to other regions, particularly in France....It is a heavy atmosphere, charged with much sadness, in which we live."⁹⁴

Premeditation or Spontaneity: The Origins of the Pogrom and the Inaction of the French Administration

The inaction of the French administration weighed heavily upon the Jewish community in Constantine. Régnier cited the social, psychological and political toll of the violence and the Jews' sense of abandonment. He quoted a Jewish notable and veteran, who said

We were targeted for being French, we see now that we are only poor Jewish refugees. At the most grave moment of our lives, when we were attacked because we are French, we were abandoned by France...Ah, if the object of this attack had been French 'Europeans'! What a violent reaction the authorities would have had. But, the moment it involves the Jews, they find a thousand pretexts to remain passive and to sacrifice the eternal scapegoat. We are the French for the Arabs, and the poor Jews for the French. That is our tragedy.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ M. Angel, Letter to the President of the AIU, "Oeuvres de Constantine," Constantine, September 30, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

⁹⁵ Régnier, "Note sur les massacres de Constantine," CAOM FM 81F/864.

For Sultan, the pogrom was not just a product of antisemitism; rather it was a premeditated attack on the French authority in Algeria. The pogrom was allowed to occur “because of the deficiency of the authorities.”⁹⁶

Even after the pogrom, the French administration continued to ignore the Jewish victims. When Governor General Carde arrived in Constantine following the pogrom, he did not visit the corpses of the Jewish victims. Nor did he make an official visit to the victims’ families or attend the funerals. This insensitivity on the part of the government, Sultan feared, would send the wrong message to the rioters of August 5. “The conclusion was quickly drawn by some of the indigenous population: the authorities, indifferent or absent from 9:30 am to 5 pm, maintained the same indifference, the same insensibility, before and during the funerals.”⁹⁷

The President of the LDH emphasized the premeditated nature of the pogrom and the lack of administration response. He depicted the “inconceivable passivity of the army and the police who, from 9 am to 5 pm allowed the riot to unravel and attempted nothing to protect the Jewish population.” According to the LDH, the division of labor involved in the pogrom was evidence of its premeditation. He describes four groups, each with a specific task based on their skills. The first group consisted of blacksmiths and boilermakers, who broke metal doors, shutters, and safes. The second set included butchers who slit throats, even those of “four year old children.” The third category was responsible for finding and destroying account books, documents in portfolios, and deeds. The fourth and final group lacerated fabrics. Although some perpetrators had been arrested and judged, many others

⁹⁶ A. Sultan, Letter to the President of the LDH, Constantine, August 11, 1934, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

still remained at liberty, including those who were guilty due to their “inertia or their incapacity, allowed a pogrom, like those known only in Russia, Poland, or the Balkans, to unfold on French land.”⁹⁸

LDH members and other organizations empathized with Constantine’s Jews. J. Weil, a member of the LDH in Nancy, expressed his concern over the situation. Weil noted that he knew Algeria well and had been there several times and had friends in Constantine. He wrote of the anxiety of a friend in Constantine due to the fact that the police and army in Constantine “remained impassive in the face of such fanatic abuses.” Weil questioned if citizens in Algerian departments were actually protected by the authorities.⁹⁹

The publication of the Vigouroux report, which blamed Jews for inciting the violence on August 5, sharpened the Jews’ sense of betrayal. Sultan contended that Vigouroux’s report sought to “cover” the failures of the local authorities. Vigouroux’s report emphasized the “spontaneous,” antisemitic nature of the violence. It found Jews guilty of firing gunshots into the crowd at the Place des Galettes and “provoking the pogrom.”¹⁰⁰ Police reports, as shown previously, did not reach the same conclusions.

In contrast to the Vigouroux report, the LDH and Jews were convinced that the pogrom was premeditated. A group of Jews denounced the violence as planned and part of an anti-French campaign. “The Constantine Jewish population is convinced that the massacre, of which they were the victims, is a crime which was premeditated well before the incident at the Sidi-Lakhdar Mosque. The murders, pillage, and robbery of which the Jews

⁹⁸ President LDH to the Minister of the Interior, Paris, August 29, 1934, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169.

⁹⁹ J. Weil, Nancy, to M. V. Basch, President of the LDH, Paris, Nancy, August 16, 1934, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169. The LDH president also received a letter from the Red Cross International, written by J. Chauvet, who wrote that perhaps they should send a commission of enquiry of their own to seek out the actual causes of the violence, rather than the official French version which centered on the Kalifa incident. Secours Rouge Internationale, J. Chauvet, Paris, August 28, 1934, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169.

¹⁰⁰ A. Sultan, Letter to the President of the LDH, Paris, “Affaire événements de Constantine 5 août 1934,” Constantine, February 16, 1935, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169.

were the object seem to be the result of an anti-French campaign.” The authors pointed to other indications of premeditation. On August 1, a Muslim tradesman never emptied his store of the majority of his merchandise, under the pretext of cleaning. They also cited Madame Soliveres, who declared in a police statement that the Arab butchers on rue Combes told her eight days before the troubles began that Jews would be the victims of a massacre.¹⁰¹ Régnier also concluded that the pogrom was premeditated. “The Constantine pogrom was premeditated, organized, and executed with a method and a system to which the Arabs are generally not accustomed.” Régnier pointed out the fact that the rioters seemed well informed about which houses and shops belonged to Jews, a further indication of premeditation and organization.¹⁰²

Although non-governmental reports are nearly unanimous that the Constantine pogrom was premeditated, they were less certain of who was behind it. Some blamed Bendjelloul; others looked to Émile Morinaud, the suspiciously absent mayor of Constantine, who had a strong antisemitic background. Maurice Eisenbeth, the Chief Rabbi of Constantine, wrote that “the troubles of Constantine of August 5, 1934, were sought and organized by Monsieur Morinaud, the Mayor of Constantine. For those who know the politics practiced by this man, this could not be surprising.” Eisenbeth substantiated his claim by outlining certain aspects of Morinaud’s politics. Morinaud’s policy regarding

¹⁰¹ “Un Group de JUIFS à M. le Juge d’Instruction, Constantine,” Constantine, August 11, 1934, included in a letter from the Prefect of Constantine to the Commander of the Gendarmerie, No 5466, Constantine, August 16, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250. The police in Constantine followed up on the information included in the letter of August 11, and interviewed relevant witnesses. See Brigade de Constantine, No. 3880, “Témoin KRIEF Simon,” Constantine, August 29, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250. See also R. Adt-chef Touret, 19e Légion, 3e Compagnie, Section de Constantine, Brigades de Constantine, No 3880, “Procès Verbal: de renseignements sur la prétendue préméditation de l’élément musulman dans les troubles antisémites (Enquête administrative),” Constantine, August 30, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

¹⁰² Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864. Confino’s report included testimonies similar to those included in Régnier’s report, which describe certain indications of premeditation. See A. Confino to President AIU, Algiers, August 15, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

controlling the populations of Constantine followed the main French imperial model: divide in order to rule. He also sought to reduce the Jews' status, so as to "teach them a lesson." Eisenbeth concluded that "the power of Morinaud constitutes a real danger, not only for our coreligionists, but also for French sovereignty in North Africa. Should this power be broken, it will not be necessary to make great efforts to restore good relations between Muslims and Jews, a community of mutual interest requires them to live with each other."¹⁰³

The deputy of Constantine, Cuttoli, who owed his elected position in large part to Jewish voters, added his voice to the multiple criticisms of the police's failure to intervene on the Jews' behalf. Cuttoli noted that in the months previous to the pogrom, "we had been advised as to the poor state of spirit of certain natives who would choose the first occasion to demonstrate their hatred.... Truly, Algeria cannot be content to hear declarations of everything returning to order. Algeria wants to know what the Government will do to protect all those who seek the shelter of the French flag." Cuttoli posed the same question as many Jewish leaders: "if this aggression had been directed against the *français d'origine*, would we have left them to be slaughtered under the indifferent watch of the armed forces?" Algerian Jews deserved the same treatment as *français d'origine* in the colony, he added, because they too "are French and need to be protected in the same way as all citizens."¹⁰⁴

Following the violence, a noted Jewish leader in Constantine, André Bakhouche, reported on antisemitism among the *tirailleurs indigènes*. According to Bakhouche, in Telergna, about eighty kilometers from Constantine, Algerian Muslim tirailleurs escaped with their weapons to go to Constantine to "massacre the Jews." The Mayor of Ain-Smara,

¹⁰³ Maurice Eisenbeth, "Rapport de M. Eisenbeth sur le rôle de M. Morinaud dans les événements de Constantine," Constantine, November 21, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI. This same letter was sent on to the Secretary General of the LDH by the National Committee for Aid for German Refugees Victims of Antisemitism on December 17, 1934, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/63.

¹⁰⁴ Cuttoli, Deputy of Constantine, to the Governor General of Algeria, October 8, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

Maurice Momy, arrested three of these soldiers in his town, eighteen kilometers from Constantine. On Saturday, August 4, the *tirailleurs indigènes* in the garrison in Constantine hid their weapons in order to retrieve them later that night and escape over the walls of the barracks to join the rioters.

Bakhouche described the negotiation between the agitated soldiers and their superiors.

A leader: Soldiers! The Arabs are slaughtering women and children. Faced with these crimes, you must forget that these people are your coreligionists, but remember that you are soldiers. Can I count on your discipline?

A tirailleur indigène: It is not true that the Arabs are slaughtering women and children

A leader: And if it is true?

The tirailleurs indigène: We march.

Bakhouche commented that even though some 400 tirailleurs “marched,” they actually participated in the violence in various ways: some collected fallen clubs and handed them to other “murderers.” They handed the pillagers merchandise from Jewish shops. Bakhouche cited a Jewish police officer who arrested two tirailleurs indigènes for ransacking a Jewish apartment. Bakhouche added that when the Jews called from their windows for help from an officer, deputy, or soldier to intervene to save the Jews in the process of being attacked, the soldiers responded that “we don’t have the order to intervene.”¹⁰⁵ Bakhouche held the French administration, particularly the military leadership, responsible for the significant casualties and damages that ensued.

Jewish leadership found the French administration at fault for allowing their community to be sacrificed to the anger, frustrations, and antisemitism of the Algerian Muslim masses in the colony. For some, this was the final insult. A few Algerian Jews

¹⁰⁵ André Bakhouche to the Secretary General of the AIU, “No 8220/3,” Constantine, August 27, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

moved to the metropole; some turned to Zionism and Palestine. Jewish leaders faulted the Algerian Muslims for attacking their Semitic brothers. Many Jews and Muslims fell upon the rote belief that their two communities had lived in perfect harmony before the arrival of the French colonists and even during the colonial period.¹⁰⁶

Immediately following the violence of August 5, Muslim leaders published a proclamation decrying the pogrom in the newspaper *La Voix Indigène*. They stated that they “and the sane population of Constantine deplore the riots and their monstrous excesses. They sincerely disapprove of all pillage, assassination, arson, and disorder of any sort.” The authors emphasized their willing collaboration with Jewish leaders and French administrators. They also spoke out against the ensuing boycotts of Jewish shops. “It is criminal to allow the regrettable events of August to degenerate into a war of races with an economic point of view.” They concluded their proclamation with the hope that “the past be forgotten, the future envisioned....for the greatest prestige of France.” The authors sought to appease not only Jewish concerns regarding future violence, but also the fears of the French administration of an insurrection led by Algerian Muslim nationalists.¹⁰⁷ They signed the proclamation with their various titles, meant to demonstrate a strong affiliation with France. These titles also reflect the limits of their participation in the politics of the colony. Although

¹⁰⁶ See for example, Joëlle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁷ Elected Muslim Officials, “Proclamation,” in *La Voix Indigène*, August 16, 1934, AIU Algérie IC6-c. The proclamation was signed by Mohammed Benbadis, Grand Officier de la Légion d’Honneur, Délègue Financier; Salah Bendjelloul, docteur en médecine, Conseiller General; Ameziane Benhamadi si Mohamed, propriétaire membre de la Chambre de Commerce; Salah Ameziane, propriétaire, agriculteur, Conseilleur municipal; Chabane Touame, propriétaire, agriculture, conseilleur municipale; Mohammed Zerkine, Chirurgien-dentiste, croix de guerre, conseiller municipal; Smail Bellaggoun, chevalier de la Légion d’honneur, conseiller municipal; Hamouda Bencharrad, chevalier de la Légion d’honneur, conseiller municipal; Said Benhafid, Principal Clerc d’avoue, ancien combattant, conseiller municipal; Allaoua Bendjelloul, pharmacien, conseiller municipal; Amar Hammouche, Professeur en Lycée, conseiller municipal; Omar Ben Tchichou, Industriel, Membre de la chambre de Commerce.

Algerian Muslims could achieve certain high positions and status in the colony, they still were colonial subjects and not able to exercise certain rights.

Régnier contended that those frustrations provided fodder for European antisemitic machinations and that Jews and Muslims lived in harmony. “The antisemitic movement in Algeria did not come from the Arabs; it is the work of reactionary French. The relations between Jews and Arabs have always been normal and, even more so, friendly.” Régnier quoted a relative of the murdered Halimi family’s incredulousness “hatred between us and the Arabs? What slander! Our home has been here for forty years and we have never had even the smallest misunderstanding with the natives....” Régnier cited another example of camaraderie between Jews and Muslims in the colony: when a Jewish soccer club had been dissolved, its members were invited to join the Muslim sports club.¹⁰⁸ That harmony, however tenuous, ended with the violence of the pogrom.

Immediately following the August 5 pogrom, Jewish leaders feared for the safety of the Jewish community. Confino reported that Jews in Algiers expected the violence to spill over from Constantine. Members of the Jewish Consistory in Algiers met with the Secretary General of the Prefecture to demand his assurance that measures would be taken in order to avoid any similar events to that of Constantine.¹⁰⁹ The President of the Jewish Consistory in Bone, Benabu, sent a telegram to the Governor General, expressing the Jewish community’s fear for the safety in the aftermath of the August 5 violence.¹¹⁰ Jewish youth in Algiers bought weapons in case of future attacks, nearly emptying the stores of gunsmiths.¹¹¹ In September 1934, Jews in Constantine bought a significant number of weapons. Jews

¹⁰⁸ Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

¹⁰⁹ Confino to the President of the AIU, No 8189, Algiers, August 8, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

¹¹⁰ Benabu to the Governor General, in Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, “No 3365,” Algiers, August 23, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

¹¹¹ Régnier, “Note sur les massacres de Constantine,” CAOM FM 81F/864.

received packages from gun manufacturers in the metropole and distributed the weapons amongst the Jewish community.¹¹² Jews elsewhere in the colony also bought large quantities of weapons.¹¹³ This indicates: first, that Jews felt that they could not count on the administration to defend them in cases of future violence; second, that there was an organized effort at Jewish self-defense following the Constantine pogrom.

As Jewish communities prepared for a dark future, antisemitism increased throughout the colony. In October, Bakhouche reported that the antisemitic press of *L'Éclair* and *Le Tam-Tam* as well as the reactionary *L'Opinion Libre*, continued to “throw oil on the fire.” In the midst of the current electoral period of 1934, Bakhouche feared that the antisemitic party would take advantage of the recent violence of cause further trouble. He wrote that the boycott of Jewish shops following the pogrom first began due to political reasons and developed under the leadership of Mozabite merchants from the M’Zab region, who saw Jews as their main economic competitors. Young Algerian Muslims between the ages of 18 and 30 received payment from Mozabites to organize surveillance of Jewish shops and prevent any non-Jews from entering them. Bakhouche wrote that local authorities did nothing to stop such boycotting, as they also had vested interest in reducing Jewish economic power.¹¹⁴ The slogan of the boycott read: “To have the Jew, not a penny to the Jew.”¹¹⁵

At the end of August 1934, Maréchal de Logis Perrier reported on the attitude of the Algerian Muslims in his district of Algiers. He discerned a great deal of tension between

¹¹² Central Commissioner Constantine to the Prefect, No. 5791, Constantine, September 13, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250. In a later report the Central Commissioner noted that Jews in Constantine received 17 weapons on September 14, and 25 weapons on September 15. See Central Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect, No 5991, “Armes vendues à Israélites,” Constantine, September 18, 1934, CAOM Alg Const B/3/250.

¹¹³ Administrator of Azazga to the Sub Prefect of Tizi-Ouzou, “No 3988: Surveillance politique des indigènes,” Azazga, August 22, 1934, CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

¹¹⁴ André Bakhouche, “Lettre adressée par M. André Bakhouche à M. Confino, Représentant de l’Alliance Israélite à Alger,” Constantine, October 3, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

¹¹⁵ Confino to the President of the AIU, Algiers, October 17, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI. See also Confino to the President of the AIU, Algiers, October 5, 1934, AIU Algérie ICI.

Jews and Muslims following the August 5 violence. He also reported that Algerian Muslims had been overhead stating that “you will see, in some time, there won’t be a Jew left in Aumale,” and “We don’t want the Jews to command the Arabs,” and “The Jews should not be among the functionaries.” These comments reflect a frustration felt with Jewish rights in the colony.¹¹⁶

The electoral period of October 1934 increased Jewish concerns for their safety due to the campaigning efforts of antisemitic candidates, some of them members of the Croix de Feu. Monsieur Angel, of the Alliance, feared that Jews would not vote in the election. “The result could have been harmful to our community and bring even more turmoil in the life of Constantine Jews if Jewish voters had not had the wisdom to recover in time...assured of their safety, they voted en masse and thus contributed to the triumph of candidates for Republican Union.”¹¹⁷ Angel’s report reflects the continued importance of the Jewish vote.

Encore: Setif, 1935

The intensification in antisemitic activity following the Constantine pogrom led up to a recrudescence of the anti-Jewish violence in Sétif in February 1935. On February 1, *tirailleurs indigènes* attacked Algerian Jews in the city of Sétif. The soldiers attacked Jewish shops and threw stones at the windows of Jewish homes. Although the soldiers were the leaders of this attack, they were followed by civilians as well. The Algerian soldiers broke into the police stations as well, killing a police agent, named Colas, stabbing him with their

¹¹⁶ Marechal des Logis chef Perrier, “No 4/4: Objet: Etat d’esprit des Indigènes,” CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

¹¹⁷ Angel to the President of the AIU, Paris, “No 8318/3: Oeuvres de Constantine,” Constantine, October 19, 1934, AIU Algérie, ICI. Angel noted that although not elected, Lautier received 129 votes in the suburbs. In the same district, M. Valle was elected, due to the votes of Jews, with 1,152 votes, while his antisemitic competitor, M. Rival, received 910 votes. Although the antisemitic candidate was not elected, these figures indicate that many voters still voted for antisemitic leaders.

bayonets. Although Jews were the victims of the soldiers, they also attacked Europeans. After killing the police officer, the *tirailleurs indigènes* yelled that they had to kill “all the French,” not specifically the Jews. Patrols made up of Europeans were used to halt the violence.

The violence in Sétif occurred after the election of Ferhat Abbas to the General Council. Abbas would later play a critical role in the war of independence in Algeria, serving as the nation’s first president. Linking Abbas to Bendjelloul, the sub-Prefect of Sétif described the former as a dangerous agitator. He linked Muslim nationalism led by Abbas to the antisemitic movement in the region led by Monsieur Masselot, an antisemitic politician in Sétif. He wrote “through the method of troubling the peace, the so-called super-French meet in a perfect union with the efforts of the anti-French.”¹¹⁸

Abbas submitted his own report on the events of Sétif, in his capacity as General Council member. Abbas explained the violence as originating from an argument between a drunken *tirailleur indigène* named Massaoud Saoula, and a police officer, named Sirven. Saoula threatened Sirven with a knife and Sirven used his revolver for protection. Saoula died instantly. A rumor quickly spread that Saoula was actually killed by a Jewish police agent. Soon, a group of tirailleurs, assisted by civilians (likely Algerian Muslims) attacked a Jewish owned café, moving on to another Jewish café after being shot at by police officers. Yelling “Are we dogs? Are we not children of the flag? Why do you shoot at us?” the tirailleurs continued their rampage. Eventually the riot was stopped and calm returned to the city. Trying to reduce the role of the Jewish victims, Abbas wrote that the soldiers did not ransack any Jewish shop with the exception of the two Jewish-owned cafés, where the

¹¹⁸ Sub-Prefect of the Arrondissement of Sétif to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 66C, Confidential,” Sétif, February 7, 1935, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656. See also “Rapport d’autopsie de l’agent Colas, tué le 1er février 1935 à Sétif,” CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

tirailleurs would often go to drink. Abbas emphasized the harmony between Jews and Muslims in Sétif. “These two populations live side by side in perfect accord.” Abbas added that there was one source of conflict between the two groups, capital--an allusion to complaints of usury on the part of Jews. Abbas concluded his report by suggesting that the actual sources of the problem lay in the fluctuating population of Sétif as well as the powerful influence of unregulated prostitution.¹¹⁹

Abbas clearly played a significant role in the events in Sétif. As early as 1935, he called for Algeria’s independence. In a March 1935 report, Abbas argued for the liberation of Algeria from France. Abbas wrote of a malaise that could only be improved by the “emancipation” of Algeria.¹²⁰ In June 1935, Abbas defended himself against claims by the LDH that he was an antisemite and participating in antisemitic activities of the Croix de Feu. In his defense, Abbas focused on the inequality of Jewish-Muslim rights in the colony, emphasizing the fact that Algerian Muslims did not have any rights as citizens. “You also accuse me of antisemitism. I am careful not to profess this doctrine for the simple reason that, having myself suffered racial prejudice, I can not do the same to the Jewish minority. But if I am to be accused of being anti-Jewish, of bringing to the head of the Municipality a man who was elected without the support of Jewish votes, you cannot say that Muslims, who for 30 years, have dealt with politicians who owe their mandate to that massive vote of the Jewish minority? And yet we [Muslims] have never made the Jews responsible for the attacks to which we have been subjected for long years from those elected politicians.”¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Ferhat Abbas, “Rapport de Monsieur Ferhat Abbas, Conseiller General de Sétif, sur les événements du premier février 1935,” Sétif, February 8, 1935, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

¹²⁰ Ferhat Abbas, “Rapport de M. Ferhat Abbas, Conseiller General de Sétif sur la politique général de la France en Algérie,” Sétif, March 7, 1935, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

¹²¹ Ferhat Abbas, General Council Member, to the Prefect of Constantine, Sétif, June 25, 1935, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

The issue of rights remains central to the history of the Constantine pogrom in 1934, the riots in Sétif in 1935, and the development of the Muslim independence movement in Algeria which began to grow during that time. The distance between Jews and Muslims in the colony widened in the 1920s and 1930s, as Jews became more involved in municipal governments and in the election of such governments and Muslims became acutely aware of their own lack of access to rights. Developments in Palestine exacerbated the already tenuous relationship. The discrepancy between Jewish rights and Muslim rights in the colony served as a major source of conflict, in spite of efforts at coexistence and cooperation between the two groups. Although Jews were not themselves responsible for the lack of Algerian Muslim rights, they became the victims of that frustration. As a result of the antisemitism of the French administration itself, Jews were left to be the victims of an Algerian Muslim colonial subjects' anti-imperial angst.

Efforts by the Popular Front to improve the rights of Algerian Muslims met with resistance from antisemites who challenged Léon Blum's government in the second half of the 1930s. In the intense period in the metropole after 1936, antisemites across the Mediterranean once again united against the political threat posed by Jews. Algerian Jews faced increased antisemitism in the colony as they discovered that their rights were intertwined with those of Algerian Muslims. As antisemites and *colons* combated Blum's attempts to bring Algerian Muslims greater rights, they once again looked to their perpetual foe: Algerian Jewish citizenship.

Chapter 6: The Popular Front, Algerian Nationalism, and Waves of Institutional Antisemitism, 1935-1940

In the years preceding the Constantine Pogrom of 1934, Jews in Algeria had moved aggressively into liberal professions, civil service, universities, and elected positions in municipal governments. After the pogrom, Algerian Jews saw their situation eroded by institutional antisemitism. Not only had their Algerian Muslim neighbors attacked them, the French administration had forsaken them, failing to act in a timely and effective manner to protect them from pillage, injury, and death. In the years between the pogrom and the era of Vichy, the tone and tenor of antisemitism in the colony changed again. Instead of coming from Algerian Muslims, it returned to the leadership of Europeans who called upon the *néos* to serve as its foot soldiers. *Français d'origine* used the events of the mid and late 1930s to bring more supporters to their antisemitic cause. In the late 1930s, electoral antisemitism reached new heights. Politicians systematically removed Algerian Jews as their political and status competitors. Municipal governments eliminated Jews from electoral lists. Violence erupted between Jewish and European antisemitic league members. The 1930s in Algeria witnessed a revival of many of the anti-Jewish tactics used in the 1890s.

The election of the Popular Front in 1936 became a lightning rod for the already growing antisemitism in the metropole and the colony. The Depression and the increasing number of Jewish immigrants escaping Nazi persecution who competed for already rare jobs laid the groundwork for the revitalization of antisemitism in popular French opinion in the early 1930s. Hatred of the Popular Front united various right-wing groups under the common flag of antisemitism.¹ In the late 1930s, Hitler's machinations in Germany and

¹ Samuel Kalman, *The Extreme Right in Interwar France: The Faisceau and the Croix de Feu* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 199.

beyond, especially the presence of his agents building support in North Africa, influenced events the colony.

Even before the emergence of the Popular Front, antisemitism and political competition catalyzed a night of violence in Paris on February 6, 1934 in response to the newly formed government of Edouard Daladier. Members of the Action Française and the Croix de Feu were active in the demonstrations in February 1934.² The Action Française, the Croix de Feu, and Jacques Doriot's Parti Populaire Français shared a hatred of the Jewish Léon Blum.³ These groups found particularly fertile ground in Algeria, where antisemitism was already deeply embedded in daily and political life.

Although shocked and traumatized by the extremes of the Constantine pogrom, Jews in Algeria used the skills they acquired in the late 1910s under the leadership of the Comité Algérien d'Études Sociales (CAES) to fight antisemitism in the 1930s. They collaborated with organizations such as the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (LDH) and the Ligue Internationale Contre l'Antisémitisme (LICA) to confront antisemitism in elections and politics in the colony. In the 1910s and 1920s the Consistory warned against taking a bold, public campaign against antisemitism and urged the CAES to avoid confronting the administration. In the 1930s, Consistory leadership finally responded to the increasing antisemitism in the colony, taking steps to protect Jews. The Alliance Israélite Universelle continued its activist role in Algeria. Its representative in Algiers, Albert Confino, helped to reorganize the CAES in 1937. The late 1930s thus witnessed the contingent trends of extreme electoral antisemitism and revitalized Jewish defense.

² Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1, 22.

³ Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 251.

The late 1930s represented a crucial period of developing and competing political philosophies in the colony. The rise and fall of the Popular Front and its efforts to improve Algerian Muslim rights in the colony met with significant challenges by its increasingly antisemitic and fascist leagues. Opposition to the Popular Front became expressed in the form of antisemitism and rejection of Muslim rights within municipal governments in Algeria. Despite these critical developments, the evolution of municipally-sponsored antisemitism in the late 1930s is surprisingly absent in studies of the period. Secondary sources on the anti-Popular Front leagues briefly address their work in Algeria.⁴ Histories of Algeria emphasize the efforts of Algerian Muslims to gain rights and the development of Algerian Muslim nationalism in the late 1930s.⁵ These studies, however, rarely address the institutional nature of antisemitism in municipal governments and the significant inroads antisemites achieved in restricting and eliminating Jewish rights during this period. In order to confront the new extremes of institutional antisemitism, Algerian Jews developed their arsenal of defense methods and began to reach outside their circle for assistance.

After the Pogrom

Following the pogrom, Algerian Jews, Muslims, *néos*, right-wing groups, and Popular Front supporters jockeyed for power and influence. As in the 1890s, antisemitism reemerged as a potent political instrument. Soon after the Sétif riots, Simon Bakhouche, an affiliate of the Alliance, contended that the violence in Constantine and Sétif were expressions of Muslim frustration regarding their lack of rights. Bakhouche complained that the colonial

⁴ See for example, Kalman, *The Extreme Right in Interwar France*, and Sean Kennedy, *Reconciling France against Democracy: The Croix de Feu and the Parti Social Français, 1927-1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

⁵ See for example, Charles-Robert Ageron, *Modern Algeria: A History from 1830 to the Present* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 1991).

administration refused to acknowledge the anti-French and anti-colonial motifs in these cases. He emphasized the connection between the violence and the growing movements for independence and Muslim rights.⁶

In March 1935, Jewish representatives in Constantine echoed Bakhouche's analyses in their letter to the Minister of the Interior. The Jewish representatives argued that in the recent violence, Algerian Muslims had been influenced by external forces, such as Hitler's propaganda, the situation in Palestine, the action of antisemitic groups, and the anti-Jewish press in Algeria. Extensive poverty throughout the country made Muslims particularly susceptible to their rhetoric. These Jewish leaders called the government to take action against such incitements. "On this Algerian land, prolongation of France, no one can be permitted to create discord, hatred, or to set one group against another, the inhabitants of one country, the servants of one flag, all sons of one *Patrie*."⁷

The Jewish representatives also emphasized the impact of the boycott of Jewish shops. They believed it was organized by Hitler's agents in the colony.⁸ Given the poverty among Constantine's Jews, the boycott motivated some Jews to "seek refuge in France or in the less troubled regions of Algeria." Local Jewish politician Henri Lellouche reported that, contrary to antisemitic rhetoric, Jews were not overrepresented in public employment. Jews were not at all represented in certain public service positions, such as electricians, city-cleaning, gas, and electric trams.⁹ At the municipal casino, there was only one Jewish

⁶ Simon Bakhouche to the Chief Rabbi of France, Constantine, February 7, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

⁷ Alliance Jewish delegation to the Minister of the Interior, March 10, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI. The Jewish delegation was represented by M. Lellouche, general council member, M. Laloum, president of the merchant tribunal, M. Sultan, lawyer and municipal council member, and M. Assouline, president of the Federation of War Victims.

⁸ Charles-Robert Ageron, *L'Algérie Algérienne de Napoléon III à de Gaulle* (Paris: Éditions Sindbad, 1980), 168.

⁹ Angel to President of the AIU, "Déclaration des Élus de Constantine," Constantine, March 15, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

employee out of fifty. Jews represented only twelve percent of the administrative positions in Constantine.¹⁰

The Jewish elected representatives of Sétif also presented their concerns to the Minister. They spoke of the long history of Jewish-Muslim cooperation and unity based on shared traditions and morals. They blamed the influence of “criminal agitators,” who used the press and politics to promote their own political ambitions. As a result, the Jews in Sétif “live in the uncertainty of the hour.... Profoundly French, in this land of Africa, extension of the metropole, we want to live in the shadow of the tricolor flag in security for property and persons that should be conferred to all Algerians.”¹¹ The Minister responded that the Jews of Algeria could count upon the Government to prevent renewals of violence. He assured the representatives that he would ensure the security of each French citizen.¹²

The Alliance, headed by Albert Confino in Algiers, sought to take control of Jewish defense.¹³ Confino maintained that as a result of antisemitism, Jews in the colony believed their lives there to be insecure. He argued for development of legislation to protect against the dangers posed by antisemitic propaganda. Confino feared that the developing popularity of Zionism in the colony could undermine France’s authority and its willingness to protect Algerian Jews. Zionism could also deprecate the Jews’ status as Frenchmen. Another Alliance member, Sylvain Levi, urged Confino to “warn our brethren against the spirit of nationalism that would likely have us alienate the sympathies of the metropole.” Jews who

¹⁰ Alliance Jewish delegation to the Minister of the Interior, March 10, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

¹¹ Angel to President of the AIU, Constantine, March 15, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI. These Jewish leaders may have expressed their support for Muslim demands for rights by suggesting that “security,” and as such, rights, be conferred to all “Algerians.” This was a potentially risky action, but it was couched in identifying Algerian Jews with France.

¹² “Déclaration des Élus de Constantine,” Constantine, March 15, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

¹³ A. Confino to M. Halff, Alliance, Algiers, March 6, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

had left Constantine following the violence threatened a mass emigration to Palestine.¹⁴

Despite such concerns, Zionism did not make major inroads among Algerian Jews.

In response to demands for legislation regulating antisemitic propaganda, Marcel Régnier, former Minister of the Interior, submitted a decree that would punish demonstrations against French sovereignty or attempts at creating racial discord. It included a stipulation that if the offender was a functionary, the punishment would be doubled, and the offender would be banned from public service for five to ten years.¹⁵ The harsh punishment for functionaries is significant, especially in light of Régnier's assessment of the responsibility of French administrators in the Constantine pogrom. The Régnier Decree was only enacted in Algeria.¹⁶

As Jewish leaders lobbied for punishment of antisemitic agitators, they also looked inwards at how they could further cultivate their coreligionists. Confino expressed his frustration that the Jews of Constantine were not as “evolved” as Jewish communities in Algiers and Oran. Despite the efforts of the Alliance in Constantine, Jewish children who attended the Talmudei Torah resisted the imposition of French language.¹⁷ In September 1935, Jews in Constantine established the “Society for the Reeducation of the Jewish Population of Constantine.” The leaders of the Society were doctors, pharmacists,

¹⁴ A. Confino to M. Halff, Alliance, Algiers, March 6, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

¹⁵ Decree of March 30, 1935 (Decret Régnier), CAOM FM 81F/864. The decree proposed certain punishments for such acts. In the offenders were native Algerians (Algerian Muslims), or natives of other French colonies or protectorates, or foreigners residing in Algeria, found guilty of causing disorders or demonstrations against French sovereignty, the “active or passive resistance against the applications of laws, decrees, regulations or orders of the public authority,” would be punished with three months to two years of prison and 500 to 5,000 francs in damages.

¹⁶ Decree of Daladier Government, May 24, 1938, CAOM FM 81F/864. In 1938, attempts would be made to extend it to the rest of the country, through the project of Daladier.

¹⁷ A. Confino to M. Halff, Alliance, Algiers, March 6, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI. Confino ordered his colleagues in Constantine to instate a penalty of a penny for each student who spoke Arabic during recess, based on actions he had instituted during his time working for the Alliance in Persia.

professors, and teachers, who hoped that “old Jewish customs would be abandoned in terms of dress and the use of Arabic, which was not even their maternal language.”¹⁸

The Society attacked certain traditions that made Jews appear backward or uncivilized. They began their activities by dealing with Jewish women who sat on the sidewalks of rue de France on Saturday afternoon and evenings. Pedestrians harassed these women. The Society suggested that the Place Négrier, which was no longer used as an open air market after the Constantine Pogrom, could be turned into a public garden. As the Place Négrier was located in the Jewish quarter, the Jewish women could relax without being exposed to “the disdain of people of other religions.”¹⁹ The Society was strongly influenced by the Alliance’s work in cultivating Algerian Jews as Frenchmen and women. As in the early years of the Alliance, Jewish leaders saw assimilation as the best defense against antisemitism.

Jewish Electors, Croix de Feu, and Elections in 1935

In 1935, Jewish leaders were forced to confront renewed threats to Jews’ ability to perform their rights as citizens, particularly their right to vote. They primarily were concerned by the Unions Latines’ activities and its connection to the municipal government of Sidi Bel Abbès. Sidi Bel Abbès LDH President Martaing feared that “municipal members are preparing an antisemitic movement.” The Unions Latines was led by the mayor’s son, who preached hatred of Jews and spread rumors that Jews abused young Muslim girls whom they kept as maids. At a meeting of the Unions Latines, a speaker announced that the

¹⁸ Central Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 6651: Objet: Réunion au sujet de la Constitution d’une Société de Rééducation de la Population Israélite de Constantine,” Constantine, September 10, 1935, CAOM Alg Const B/3/390.

¹⁹ Commissioner of Department Security of Constantine, “Rapport No. 3369: Intellectual Israélites rééducation de la masse,” Constantine, September 16, 1935, CAOM Alg Const B/3/390.

municipal government wanted to create an “arc de triomphe” in the central square. It was to be carved with the slogan “Foreigners, come to Bel Abbès—there are no more Jews here!”²⁰

In spite of growing antisemitism, elections in Oran in May 1935 were among the first calm elections in many years. Abbé Lambert, who would later realize the power of antisemitic politics, based his candidacy on a program of “the fusion of races.” Jews cited Lambert’s election as evidence that “the Jewish electors do not form a bloc and that like all other electors, they have personal and different opinions.” Although Lambert would later promote a revival of antisemitism in Oran, his election was a loss for the current antisemitic party.²¹

In contrast to Oran, the elections in Constantine in May 1935 brought antisemites to power, and fortified the growing control of the antisemitic groups. Although all four Jewish candidates were elected, according to Alliance director Angel, “this success has been gained at the cost of too many humiliations for the dignity of our people and will be costly to the future of calm and peace, which has been largely compromised...by the political passions unleashed during these elections.” Angel contended that the political ambitions of Lellouche and Sultan put the entire Jewish community at risk.²²

In Constantine’s municipal elections, several groups competed for power. The “Republican Union,” sponsored by Émile Morinaud, former mayor of Constantine, included the four Jewish candidates. The Republican Union faced opposition from the leftist republican “antifascists.” The Croix de Feu nominated candidates. Henri Lautier, the antisemitic editor of *L’Éclair*, also ran in the election. Discontent with the leadership of

²⁰ Sidi Bel Abbès LDH President Martaing to the Secretary General, “Objet: Excitations antisémites de Sidi Bel Abbès,” Sidi Bel Abbès, February 23, 1935, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/96.

²¹ Toledano to A. Confino, Director of the École de l’Alliance Israélite, Algiers, Oran, May 8, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

²² Angel to the President of the Alliance, Constantine, May 17, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

many of their Jewish elected officials, the Jews of Constantine were disorganized. As a result, only twenty-two of the thirty-four Republican Union candidates were elected. Following the elections, Morinaud's paper, *Le Republicain*, published a "declaration of war against all the Jewish element of Constantine." Six Croix de Feu candidates, three antifascists, and three independent candidates were elected to the municipal government as well.²³

Angel wrote that "we lived in very hard times during this election period." When the outgoing municipal government threw a banquet in honor of Morinaud, Jewish council members Lellouche and Sultan were not invited, as per the wishes of Morinaud. Fearing for the security of the Jewish community, Consistory leaders begged Lellouche and Sultan to resign from the government. Angel pondered "what role will the Jewish elected officials play in a municipal assembly that is nearly entirely hostile towards them?"²⁴ The press campaign intensified against the Jews of Constantine, especially in Lautier's "infected journal." *Tam-Tam*, an antisemitic weekly, was responsible for the most passionate attacks against the Jews.²⁵ In previous years, Jews had established themselves as elected members of municipal governments. In 1935, this trend changed as antisemites put up obstacles to Jews' election and their power in government if they succeeded in being elected.

Conditions deteriorated elsewhere in the department of Constantine. In early August 1935, violence erupted between Jews and Europeans in Sidi Bel Abbès. On the night of August 6, groups of the Front Paysan, the Unions Latines, and the Croix de Feu posted antisemitic posters attacking Jews and Freemasons. The posters were in response to a

²³ Angel to the President of the Alliance, Constantine, May 17, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. Letter M. Angel to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Constantine, May 19, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

meeting of grain merchants in Oran. The Unions Latines revived antisemitic accusations of Jewish-Freemason collaboration against the honest French colonist. They publicized falsified revenues of Jews, whom they blamed of instating a ten percent levy on grains with the aid of Freemasons. “They grew rich at their [the colonists’] expense.” Concurrently, members of the Croix de Feu circulated posters entitled “France for the French.” On August 7, 150 people armed with clubs broke into a café, owned and frequented exclusively by Jews. In his report on the violence Confino noted that the new Sub-Prefect of Sidi Bel Abbès, Monsieur Haze, was known for his “antisemitic tendencies.”²⁶ The director of the Alliance school in Sidi Bel Abbès, Monsieur Cohen, reported that posters called the masses to murder Jews, stating “death to the Jews, they are the cause of the crisis, they steal from the workers.” Cohen wrote that, as always, “there were Jewish arrests, not arrests of others,” likely the work of the antisemitic sub-prefect.²⁷

Monsieur Bluamou, the president of the Consistory of Sidi Bel Abbès, explained how he and other Consistory members tore down the posters. As early as seven in the morning on August 7, incidents occurred between young Jews and “partisans of the antisemitic movement.” Bluamou wrote that “for my part, I believe that the mayor and his municipality, who are all antisemites, are responsible, as well as his son, who is actually the President-Founder of the Unions Latines of our city.” Bluamou added that the mayor’s private secretary, many municipal employees, and police officers, were members of an antisemitic society. The offices of the mayor served as the headquarters for all the antisemitic groups. Bluamou was careful to report that Muslims had not been involved in the violence. Bluamou criticized “the unjust attitude of the municipal police, which has shown a flagrant bias against

²⁶ A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, August 14, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

²⁷ M. Cohen to A. Confino, Sidi Bel Abbès, August 13, 1935, AIU Algérie IC2.

the Jews, supported the provocateurs by all means, even making false testimonies which undermine our own.” Bluamou added that the Jewish community of Sidi Bel Abbes filed a legal dispute against an aggressor (censored and thus designated as X.) for incitement to murder, and chose Gandolphe Batonnier as their legal representative.²⁸

Taking an antisemite to court marked an important transition. In the late nineteenth century the Jews in Algeria rarely defended themselves against antisemitic attacks. In the late 1910s, Jews developed defense groups, including organizations such as the Oran Civic Club and the CAES. The law suit by the Sidi Bel Abbès Jewish community indicates an important development in Jewish defense: the Jewish community used non-Jewish intermediaries (legal counsel) and the courts. This new strategy demonstrates the Algerian Jews’ integration and their willingness to use state institutions to protect themselves. The Sidi Bel Abbès LDH President expressed concern, however, that the French administration would not put an end to antisemitic agitation in the colony. He wrote that he had no confidence in the impartiality of any government enquiries into antisemitism. Their main sources of information, the police and the municipal government, were notoriously antisemitic.²⁹

In the face of increased antisemitic violence, Confino again demanded an organization, like the CAES, to defend Jewish rights. Confino identified the “Latins,” the successors of the *néos*, as the motors of increasing antisemitism. “Antisemitism has made alarming progress in Algeria, not among Muslims, as some may imagine, but in the French

²⁸ M. Bluamou, on behalf of the Association Cultuelle Israélite, Consistory Israélite of Sidi Bel Abbès to the Chief rabbi Liber, of the Consistory Central of Vieux-Moulin (Oise), August 17, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI. It is likely that X. was a leader of one of the antisemitic groups. Although not clear in Bluamou’s report, the Jewish defense may have used the Régnier decree as the basis for their case.

²⁹ Sidi Bel Abbès LDH President Martaing to the President of the LDH, Paris, “Object: Oran—Éxcitation antisémite,” Sidi Bel Abbès, August 17, 1935, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/96.

population of Latin origin and especially among intellectuals and civil servants.” Confino cited the case of posters entitled “The Jew Everywhere,” which appeared in Algiers on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. The posters attacked the Jews, who “monopolize any situation: trade, industry, politics, administrator, professional,” and concluded that “Jews are found among the most notorious traitors,” and cited Dreyfus and Blum. He also cited efforts by antisemites to establish quotas in Algeria’s professional schools, such as the faculty of medicine.³⁰

Although primarily concerned with the activities of European antisemites, Algerian Jews remained apprehensive about their relations with local Muslims and growing Algerian nationalism. In an article on Jewish-Muslim relations, Ferhat Abbas wrote that Muslims did not blame Jews for their unequal status in the colony. “The injustice that is at the base of the Crémieux decree was committed by the French Parliament, that is to say the French nation. The Jews did not demand anything.” Despite absolving Jews of any responsibility in terms of their higher political status in the colony, Abbas contended that the Crémieux decree set in motion the development of a powerful Jewish bourgeoisie, which “today is everywhere. In the judiciary, in the administration, in the army, in commerce, in the banks, in agriculture, in the postal service, in the railways, in welfare, wherever the citizen-elector may enter, the Jew has found a place.”³¹

³⁰ A. Confino to the President of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, October 31, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI. Given the inclusion of Blum on the list of traitors, the origins of the poster could be found among the many antisemitic organizations in the colony who would oppose Blum’s Popular Front government. Confino cited Dr. Gauthier, who informed a Jewish doctor that the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Algiers found Jewish students too numerous. He provided that statistic that students in the third year at the medical school included twenty-four Jews out of thirty-five. The imposition of quotas became part of Vichy’s antisemitic legislation.

³¹ Ferhat Abbas, “Juifs et Musulmans d’Algérie,” in *La Dépêche Algérienne*, November 10, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

Abbas accused Jews of not supporting Muslims' campaign for rights in the colony. He quoted Dr. Aboulker, who declared at the General Council of Algiers that "if the Muslims wanted to have rights, they only have to become naturalized." This comment alludes to the fact that most Muslims were reluctant to give up their personal status. Abbas faulted Jewish leaders in France and Algeria for ignoring the plight of the Algerian proletariat, and, by extension, the problem of Algerian Muslim rights. He concluded that "the notables and Muslim elected officials do not practice anti-Jewish politics. They will not do so. But they are not certain that the Jews will not practice anti-Muslim politics.... If we want the Muslim population to be reborn and follow the path of the Jews of Algeria, we say again: Politics first, economics second."³²

In late November 1935, Chief Rabbi Maurice Eisenbeth met with the head of the Governor General's cabinet to present the concerns of Algerian Jews. First and foremost, he reported on the Jewish fear for security in the colony, especially in response to the growing extremism of groups such as the Croix de Feu and the Volontaires Nationaux. After the meeting, Eisenbeth wrote that "this feeling of insecurity justifies our concern that if civil war breaks out in the Metropole, Jewish blood will freely flow in Algeria." This distress developed from lessons learned in 1898 when disturbances in the metropole caused violent reverberations in the colony. Eisenbeth emphasized the fact that Jews and Muslims had traditionally lived harmoniously. The antisemitic threat came not from Muslims but from Europeans. He argued that the Constantine pogrom, although perpetrated by Muslims, was actually the "work of French antisemites."³³

³² Ferhat Abbas, "Juifs et Musulmans d'Algérie," November 10, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI. See also John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 133.

³³ Rabbi Maurice Eisenbeth, "Résumé, No 9236/4," Algiers, December 3, 1935, AIU Algérie ICI.

Over the course of 1935 members of the Croix de Feu or other right-wing groups promoted antisemitism in Algeria. In 1936, the Croix de Feu, the Volontaires Nationaux, and other political parties used events in the metropole, such as the election of Blum and the Popular Front, to pursue a revival of antisemitism in the colony. Elections in 1936 served as an excuse for violence against Jews, boycotts, and the establishment of thoroughly anti-Jewish municipal governments.

Jewish Political Activism, Electoral Antisemitism, and the Popular Front, 1936

Over the course of 1935 and 1936, the Croix de Feu and similar antisemitic organizations gained a strong foothold in Algeria. The Croix de Feu in Algeria sought to incorporate Muslims into its ranks, although they lacked a coherent policy on the role of Muslims in the organization. Muslims eventually made up ten percent of the Croix de Feu's membership in Algeria.³⁴ In late 1935 in Algiers, the Central Police Commissioner reported on the appearance of tracts distributed throughout the town inciting Muslims against Jews. The tracts read "Muslims: the Frenchman is not your oppressor. Your enemy is the Jew, who robs and ruins you."³⁵

The long history of antisemitism among colonists in Algeria challenged La Rocque's attempt at non-sectarianism in the Croix de Feu. Although Croix de Feu leadership emphasized the acceptance of all races and creeds into its ranks, the antisemitism of its members in Algeria informed the group's politics. The Croix de Feu in Algeria cooperated with other antisemitic organizations such as the Action Française (AF), the Parti Populaire

³⁴ Kennedy, *Reconciling France against Democracy*, 62. Croix de Feu leader La Rocque's attended a memorial for Jewish war veterans at a Paris synagogue in June 1936 as a sign of the non-sectarianism of the organization. See also Kalman, *The Extreme Right in Interwar France*, 216.

³⁵ Central Commissioner to the Secretary General of Affaires Indigènes et Police Générale, Algiers, December 24, 1935, CAOM Alg Alger 2i/38.

Français (PPF), and the Rassemblement Nationale d’Action Sociale (RN), led by the increasingly antisemitic Abbé Lambert. The rhetoric, terminology, and propaganda used by the Croix de Feu in the 1930s closely mirrored that of Algerian antisemites of the 1890s.³⁶ In the climate of the depression, the success of the Popular Front, and increasing antisemitism in the metropole and the colony, membership of the Croix de Feu in Algeria grew dramatically.

In the department of Algiers, in December 1933 there were 2,500 Croix de Feu members. In July 1935 that number increased to 8,440, and 15,000 in June 1936. In the department of Constantine, in December 1933 there were 2,000 members; in July 1935, 3,000 members; and in June 1936, 7,000. The department of Oran had 1,500 members in December 1933, 2,520 in July 1935, and 6,000 in June 1936.³⁷ The exponential growth of Croix de Feu members over the course of three years indicates the power of antisemitism in the colony.

By 1935, Croix de Feu militants burst into Jewish neighborhoods, yelling “Long live La Rocque,” and “Long Live Hitler,” and making fascist salutes. Although La Rocque attempted to discourage antisemitism among the Croix de Feu ranks, his efforts had little to no impact in Algeria. The LICA, a left-wing metropolitan organization, became concerned with the Croix de Feu’s activities in Algeria.³⁸ In July 1935, the LICA organized a meeting in Oran to introduce Jews to the role that LICA could play on their behalf. One of the LICA’s first endeavors in the colony was to encourage the boycott of German “Hitlerian” products. The LICA had already organized a successful similar boycott in Paris.³⁹ The

³⁶ Kalman, *The Extreme Right in Interwar France*, 210-212.

³⁷ Kennedy, *Reconciling France Against Democracy*, 87.

³⁸ Ibid., 62. Although the LICA also sought to encourage Muslim involvement by evolving into the Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l’Antisémitisme (LICRA), it remained a predominately Jewish organization.

³⁹ Central Commissioner of Oran to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 947C: Object Réunion de la Ligue Internationale contre l’Antisémitisme,” Oran, July 22, 1935, CAOM Alg Oran //424.

LICA increased its actions in 1936. During a meeting in Oran in February 1936, Bernard Lecache, the head of the LICA, spoke of the situation of Jews in Algeria. Depicting the impact of antisemitism, Lecache argued that “Jews were regarded by some as ‘second class’ Frenchmen and their examples of bravery during the 1914-1918 war and their decorations have been criticized.”⁴⁰

The Alliance also became increasingly concerned with the activities of the Croix de Feu in Algeria. In March 1936, Algerian Croix de Feu delegate, A. Debay, declared “that among our ranks there are Algerian antisemites, it would be futile to deny.” Debay added, however, that “in Algeria, as throughout France, the Croix de Feu movement is open to all French patriots, without distinction of party, race, or religion.”⁴¹ A few weeks later, Debay and the Croix de Feu changed its tune. In a published letter to the Governor General, Debay again denied all antisemitic tendencies, while simultaneously blaming Jews for all ills. “For reasons too numerous to analyze, the majority of Algerian Jews feel rather attracted to political formulas opposed to ours, and as a result, many of our comrades will likely feel little sympathy for Jews.” Debay accused Algerian Jews, specifically those in Constantine, of provoking peaceful Croix de Feu members. He portrayed the Jews of Constantine as not only aggressors, but also as fomenting problems through municipal elections. “The Jewish population of this city endeavors, first, by professional politicians who use an electoral weapon...and secondly, by agents of revolutionary parties, which seek to cause trouble in all

⁴⁰ Central Commissioner of Oran to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 94C: Objet: Conférence par M. Bernard Lecache,” Oran, February 12, 1936, CAOM Alg Oran //424. The report on the meeting estimated that the majority of the 1,500 attendees were Jews, there were also approximately 300 women, and included the mayor of Oran, Abbé Lambert (whose own antisemitism was building), and the General Council members Dubois, as well several European and Muslim municipal council members.

⁴¹ A. Debay, “Mouvement Croix de Feu,” *La Dépêche Algérienne*, March 25, 1936, AIU Algérie ICI. See also A. Confino to M. Halff, Alliance Israélite Universelle, Algiers, March 26, 1936, AIU Algérie ICI.

parts of the country.”⁴² In this letter, Debay linked Jews and the Popular Front, further tying Algerian Jews to discord in the metropole.⁴³

The electoral period of 1936, with legislative elections on April 26 in Algiers, was marked by antisemitism and violence. In late March, Lecache wrote to Charles Aboulker, the president of the LICA in Algeria, of his concern regarding the upcoming elections. He recommended that the LICA submit a “symbolic candidate.” This candidate would enter the election in order to respond to the attacks of antisemites in the election.⁴⁴ In Algiers, the conflict centered on the anti-Jewish candidate Henry Coston. The LICA and Jews worked together to sabotage Coston’s propaganda campaign.⁴⁵ The efforts to undermine Coston’s campaign sometimes bordered on the illegal. On April 21, 300-400 people protested outside of Coston’s campaign headquarters on rue d’Isly. The majority of the protestors were young Jews, aged 16 to 25. The police were called to disperse the crowd.⁴⁶ The next day, protests turned violent. Six to ten “Europeans, mostly Jews,” broke into Coston’s headquarters. Three were injured. While the melee exploded inside the building, outside a crowd of approximately 1,000 people formed.⁴⁷

The men who attacked Coston’s headquarters were treated as heroes. Dr. Charles Aboulker stated “that the Jewish youth [in Algeria] have shown that they do not want to

⁴² A. Debay “Le Mouvement Croix de Feu et l’antisémitisme: Une lettre du commandant Debay, délégué pour l’Algérie du Comité directeur au Gouverneur General,” April 8, 1936, AIU Algérie ICI. Although not specified, it appears that this article was published in *La Dépêche Algérienne*.

⁴³ Jackson, *The Popular Front in France*, 7, 9

⁴⁴ Bernard Lecache to Charles Aboulker, March 27, 1936, CDJC CMXCVI-105.2 (Fonds LICA).

⁴⁵ LICA Secretary E. Yaffi to Bernard Lecache, Algiers, April 18, 1936, CDJC CMXCVI-105.2 (Fonds LICA). The LICA sponsored groups of six or seven young people who circulated the town in a car, taking down Coston’s posters.

⁴⁶ Central Commissioner of Police to the Secretary General (Affaires Indigènes et Police Générale), “Rapport No. 429,” Algiers, April 21, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

⁴⁷ Central Commissioner of Police to the Secretary General (Affaires Indigènes et Police Générale), “Rapport No. 434,” Algiers, April 22, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

repeat the troubles of 1898 and do not want to live in shame.”⁴⁸ In these electoral contests, Jewish youth took on a decidedly active role. In the face of such strong antisemitic propaganda and opposition, they believed that they had no other option by which to defend their rights.

The next day, Henri Lautier sought to use the recent violence to support his own candidacy. He arrived at a meeting with his head bandaged.⁴⁹ Lautier accused Jews of attacking him. “Cowardly assaulted (the 14th time), I lost an eye and it seems that we're the violent ones! Unable to organize a meeting, to open a headquarters, a post a sign without Jewry mobilizing all its forces.... There is uncovered the true oppressors and irreducible sectarians, the organizers of war, and civil disorder fanatics.” Lautier called his supporters to “break the Jewish occupation.”⁵⁰

The elections also paved the way for boycotts in Constantine. Morinaud’s newspaper, *Le Republicain de Constantine*, published articles on Jewish offenses and the need to boycott Jewish shops. One article suggested that the Jewish council member Lellouche forced all Jews to vote against Morinaud. The article called for Frenchmen to defend themselves: “in the face of this declaration of war, don’t bring your money to anyone other than the French!” The article claimed that Jews regularly insulted France: “French pigs, dirty Frenchmen, French traitors,’ such phrases heard in the Jewish quarter. Such infamous statements obliged Mayor E. Morinaud to intervene by saying: Enough! to those insulting France and the French.” Although the article was directed mostly at Europeans in

⁴⁸ Department Security of Algiers, “Rapport No. 2427: Réunion Électorale Fiori,” Algiers, April 22, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

⁴⁹ Central Commissioner of Police Spiteri to the Secretary General (Affaires Indigènes et Police Générale), “Rapport No 444,” Algiers, April 23, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

⁵⁰ Departmental Security of Algiers, “Rapport No. 2421 Au sujet tracts Réunion Lautier, Élections législatives,” Algiers, April 22, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

Constantine, it also called upon Muslims to join the boycott. The author used the Crémieux decree as a way of negating the Frenchness of the Algerian Jews. “Defend ourselves, since we are facing enemies who, 65 years after the Crémieux decree...want to control the French majority!”⁵¹

Morinaud used both the boycott and the elections to create a forum for anti-Jewish rhetoric in the press. *Le Républicain* constantly made reference to the Crémieux decree. The Crémieux decree remained the bête noire of European antisemites in the colony. In the “The dream of a half-fool,” *Le Républicain* emphasized the dangers of the Jewish vote. The article provided statistics for Constantine: 50,000 Frenchmen, 50,000 Muslims, and 10,000 Jews, who were Frenchmen because of the Crémieux decree. As a result, the French electoral lists contained 8,333 electors, among whom there were 2,747 Jews. Of these 2,747 Jewish voters, 2,381 voted in the past election, “all who could vote voted.” Out of 5,586 French voters, 4,424 actually voted. The author argued that French electors voted in great numbers in order to “counterbalance the bloc vote of the Jewish electors.”⁵²

Le Républicain published other articles that promoted bloc voting and Jewish boycotts. Calling upon Frenchmen to follow the insular example of Jews in Algeria, the author encouraged Frenchmen to patronize only French-owned shops. “Frenchmen.... Look at the Lellouches and imitate their example....The Jew doesn’t employ anyone but Jews. The Jew doesn’t buy except from Jews. The Jew helps no one but the Jew.... Frenchmen first, French solidarity, to assure the French predominance.”⁵³ The French organizers of the

⁵¹ “Entre Français d’une part Hai Lellouche et sa Troupe de l’Autre: L’Abime! Le demi fou Lellouche a délibérément creusé cet abîme,” *Le Républicain*, April 28, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656. The next day, *Le Républicain* published a report on the boycott, connecting it to strikes in Palestine, which related to the impact of the Arab Rebellion. See “Le boycottage,” *Le Républicain*, April 29, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁵² “Le rêve du demi-fou,” *Le Républicain*, April 30, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁵³ “Solidarité Nécessaire,” *Le Républicain*, May 1, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

boycott also encouraged Muslim participation by connecting the boycott to the situation in Palestine. In an article entitled “The Jews in Palestine” the author wrote that “the Arabs do not want their invasion. They organize boycotts to defend themselves.” The article quoted Dr. Hussein al-Khalidi, the mayor of Jerusalem and president of the Arab Reform Party, who stated “the Jews cannot consume all the products of their industry. Their economic plan includes the opening of shops in the Near East, which will be indispensable for them to live. We will close the doors of the Levant to them.”⁵⁴

In an article entitled “Bloc against Bloc,” the authors called upon Frenchmen to act against the Jewish bloc: “French of Constantine, you have the NUMBERS, you have the FORCE, and you have the right.... Your decisions are final. Since they [the Jews] had the audacity to declare war, you have proudly accepted the challenge—on all fronts, political, economic, and social!”⁵⁵ With this call to battle, *Le Républicain* articulated a war against the Jews in Constantine. In the face of increased antisemitic agitation, Jews protested the boycott and Jewish veterans sent telegrams to the Governor General. They brought his attention to the calls to violence and boycott made by Morinaud, and urged him to prevent a reenactment of the August 5 violence.⁵⁶ They sent similar telegrams to Ministers in Paris, including Daladier, Blum, and Viollette, as well Bernard Lecache, and Victor Brasch, the President of the LDH.⁵⁷

During the April 26 elections in the department of Constantine, skirmishes broke out between Jews and members of right-wing groups. On April 26, Croix de Feu and

⁵⁴ “Les Juifs en Palestine,” *Le Républicain*, May 1, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁵⁵ “Bloc contre Bloc,” *Le Républicain*, May 2, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁵⁶ Anciens Combattants Français Israélites, Constantine, to Le Beau, Governor General of Algeria, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁵⁷ Anciens Combattants Français Israélites to Sarraut, Concour, Herriot, Daladier, Blum, Thorez, Violette, “Telegram 8541,” Constantine, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656. See also Anciens Combattants Français Israélites, Constantine, to Bernard Lecache, LICA “Telegram 8551”; Anciens Combattants Français Israélites to Victor Brasch, President LDH, “Telegram 8531,” Constantine, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

Volontaires Nationaux members, including some 200 Muslims, staged a demonstration in Khencela. They marched through the city yelling “Down with the Jews, the sell-outs, the traitors...We are now the masters, the fortress of Khencela is demolished!” The Khencela Police Commissioner reported that the demonstration was “symptomatic of a state of spirit which could have grave consequences.”⁵⁸

Violence continued to simmer throughout Constantine, particularly between Jews and Croix de Feu or Volontaires Nationaux members. On April 26, the day of the elections, Croix de Feu members attempted to intimidate Jewish voters. Police Commissioner Fusero reported that he had been called to the voting station at the Lycée to evacuate a group of Croix de Feu who had invaded the station.⁵⁹ The day after the elections, numerous new recruits joined the Croix de Feu.⁶⁰ In Constantine on April 29 four separate altercations broke out between Volontaires Nationaux and Jews.⁶¹

Since the late nineteenth-century, elections in colonial Algeria were times of vote-buying, most famously by the “Boss” of Bône, Jérôme Bertagna, who plied voters with drink and food, and wooed voters through patronage.⁶² At a LICA meeting in Constantine on April 29, speakers, such as Monsieur Francioni, the president of the LDH, congratulated Jews on not giving in to such bribery. Monsieur Ferrier, the deputy Bursar of the Lycée, commented that the Jews of Constantine had “earned the right given to you by Crémieux,

⁵⁸ Commissioner of Police of Khencela to the Prefect of Constantine, “Rapport No. 929,” Khencela, April 27, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656. See also LICA Secretary, E. Yaffi, to Bernard Lecache, Algiers, April 18, 1936, CDJC CMXCVI-105.2 (Fonds LICA).

⁵⁹ Central Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, “Rapport No 3489, Objet: Élections Législatives 1936,” Constantine, May 4, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁶⁰ Departmental Security in Constantine, “Rapport No 1680: Antisémitisme (confidential),” Constantine, May 1, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁶¹ Departmental Security of Constantine, “Rapport No 1661: Antisémitisme,” Constantine, April 30, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁶² David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bone, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 187, 190.

that of the French citizen...you acted with dignity last Sunday [election day], and continue to do so.”⁶³

Propaganda during and after the electoral period increased tensions between Jews and Europeans in the colony. On May 3, one Antoine Fortino, age sixteen, a fish seller, sat in the common room of the brothel “Au Belvedere,” drinking a cherry soda. At a neighboring table sat two Jews drinking anisette: David Chemla, age 28, a tailor, and Felix Atlan, also 28, a stonemason. Inadvertently, Fortino put his foot on the rung of the chair next to the two Jews. Chemla said to Fortino “Remove your foot from there, you are bothering us.” Fortino retorted that he didn’t touch them and didn’t see how he could be bothering them. Fortino and Chemla got into an argument, and Atlan punched Fortino in the face. Fortino managed to get up and threw himself at the two Jews, punching them. Chemla and Atlan spent part of the night in prison and a case of minor assault and drunkenness was opened against Chemla.⁶⁴ Tensions ran high in Constantine immediately following the April elections.

On May 27 following days of skirmishes, Jewish LICA members and their Action Française adversaries got into a gunfight.⁶⁵ Some of the members of the AF involved had Spanish or Italian surnames, suggesting that groups such as the AF and the Croix de Feu were recruiting the children of *néos*. These young people were also united as *Latins* by political leaders such as Lambert and leaders of the Unions Latines. In July 1936, Monsieur Follereau, the head of the propaganda for the Unions Latines and president of its chapter in Paris, organized a meeting in Mostaganem attended by 3,500 participants. Follereau

⁶³ Departmental Security, “Rapport No 1662: Antisémitisme,” Constantine, April 30, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁶⁴ Central Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, “Rapport No. 3444: Objet: Incident entre Israélites et Catholique,” Constantine, May 4, 1936, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁶⁵ Commissioner of Police Spiteri to Secretary General (Affaires Indigènes et Police Générale), “Rapport No 588RS,” Algiers, May 27, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410. See also Mobile Police of Algiers, Third Brigade to the Chief of the Mobile Police of Algiers, Algiers, May 27, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

emphasized the pro-France nature of the organization, defending it against accusations of imperialism, and calling all to the defense of the France's flag.⁶⁶

Antisemitism continued to grow throughout the colony. The boycott of Jewish shops in Constantine extended into Algiers. On July 10 police in Algiers found flyers encouraging the boycott. One flyer on a shop front read "Do not enter, it is a Jew—He is ashamed of his name." Another stated "French, do not buy anything from the Jews. You will control them through boycott." Other flyers posted on shops read "Attention!!! This is a Jewish shop. Danger!!!"⁶⁷ The boycott received support from municipal governments. In June 1936, Victor Brasch, President of the LDH, wrote of his concern for the situation of Sidi Bel Abbès, given the antisemitism of its mayor.⁶⁸ After Blum and the Popular Front took office on June 14, a parade in honor of the occasion traveled through Sidi Bel Abbès. Some of the parade participants were attacked by members of the Unions Latines. The attackers used toxic gas, injuring fifty people. They then ran through the streets yelling "Down with the Jews."⁶⁹

One of the first actions of the Popular Front was to dissolve the antisemitic leagues such as the Croix de Feu. On June 18, the Popular Front banned right-wing organizations such as the Croix de Feu. The Croix de Feu later reorganized as the Parti Social Français.⁷⁰ In spite of—or perhaps because of—the Popular Front's actions, violence erupted between Jews and Croix de Feu members. On June 27, Jewish families walking along the Route de

⁶⁶ Commissioner of Police of Mostaganem to the Prefect of the Department of Oran, "Rapport No 11966," Mostaganem, July 3, 1936, CAOM Alg Oran //424.

⁶⁷ Police Commissioner of the Third Arrondissement Le Boul to the Central Police Commissioner, "Rapport No. 777R.S.," Algiers, July 10, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

⁶⁸ President of the LDH in Paris to the Minister of the Interior, Paris, June 13, 1936, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/96.

⁶⁹ President of the LDH in Paris to the Minister of the Interior, Paris, June 20, 1936, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/96.

⁷⁰ Jessica Wardhaugh, *In Pursuit of the People: Political Culture in France, 1934-39* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 122-123.

Sétif were attacked. The Croix de Feu, led by Monsieur Martin, a history teacher at the Lycée, had invited Volontaires Nationaux to join them in harassing the innocent Jewish pedestrians. That evening a public celebration took place. Jews were told that “this party is only for Frenchmen and not for *Youpins* [Jews].” Other incidents occurred over the next few days. On Tuesday, despite calls for calm, attacks on Jews continued. Several shop windows were broken, hair salons broken into, and an electrician’s store pillaged. According to Lellouche, “naturally no one says anything and no arrests were made.” For Lellouche, Croix de Feu members and other antisemitic groups were clearly behind the incidents.⁷¹ The Popular Front’s ban on right-wing organizations actually unleashed further violence in the colony.

Opposition to the Popular Front continued to be expressed throughout the colony, often by municipal employees. The LDH President Brasch reported that in Souk-Ahras an officer, Monsieur Marrès, interrupted a presentation of a film on the Popular Front yelling “Death to the Jews,” and “Down with the Popular Front!”⁷² The municipal police in Perregaux openly expressed their hostility to the Popular Front. Some members of the police yelled “Long Live Hitler,” and made the fascist salute in the streets and in cafés. One police officer stated “We wait for Hitler to come to Algeria and rid us of those dirty Jews and Reds.”⁷³

⁷¹ Henri Lellouche to M. Vanikoff in Paris, Constantine, July 2, 1936, CDJC DCCXXI-1 (Fonds Vanikoff). See also Henri Lellouche to the Prefect of Constantine, Constantine, July 2, 1936, CDJC DCCXXI-1 (Fonds Vanikoff). M. Vanikoff wrote back to Lellouche stating that the Minister of the Interior had taken interest in the situation, and that Morinaud had promised to cease his antisemitic campaign. Vanikoff to M. Lellouche, July 3, 1936, CDJC DCCXXI-1. Lellouche noted that the night of July 1, swastikas were drawn on Jewish shops in indelible black ink. See also President Consistory of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, Constantine, June 30, 1936, CDJC DCCXXI-1 (Fonds Vanikoff).

⁷² LDH President Victor Brasch to the Minister of the Interior, Paris, September 17, 1936, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/171.

⁷³ Georges Munch, Committee of the Popular Front in Perregaux to M. Victor Brasch, President of the LDH in Paris, Perregaux, October 10, 1936, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/171.

Faced with rising antisemitism in the metropole, Jews established an association to promote and demonstrate Jewish patriotism. Algerian Jews welcomed representatives of the Union Patriotique des Français Israélites in Algiers in October 1936. Although based in Paris, it attracted the support of Algerian Jews. The Union Patriotique circulated a notice in Algeria that lauded the “a great number of enthusiastic Jews from France and North Africa who have joined us and notes of sympathy have been sent to us from leaders of all religions.”⁷⁴ The Union Patriotique relied upon tropes already utilized by other Jewish defense organizations, such as the CAES, which emphasized Jewish patriotism and devotion to France in its work for Jewish rights. As Algerian Jews continued to defend their rights against antisemitism, Algerian Muslims continued to articulate their demands for rights.

The Blum-Viollette Bill and the Quest for Muslim Rights

The development of Muslim-oriented nationalist movements throughout the world in 1936 reverberated in Algeria. The situation in Palestine, including the Arab revolt beginning in 1936, caused great concern for Jews in Algeria. The first phase of the Arab revolt in Palestine lasted from mid-April to November 1936; it included a boycott of Jewish shops and Jewish “goods,” as well as attacks on Jews and British forces.⁷⁵ In November, Jewish shops in Constantine continued to be boycotted by both Muslims and Frenchmen. Monsieur Barthelemy, co-director of the *Libre Parole*, published posters with the following demand: “For the Jews out of Palestine, an economic boycott is required.” Jewish leaders expressed

⁷⁴ “Union Patriotique des Français Israélites,” in Departmental Security of Algiers, “Rapport No. 6669: au sujet de l’Union Patriotique des Français Israélites,” Algiers, October 30, 1936, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

⁷⁵ Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Boston: Bedford Press, 2001), 138.

concern that the nationalist “agitation” in Morocco could also pose serious problems in Algeria.⁷⁶

In June 1936, the first Algerian Muslim Congress met in Algiers. In July the Congress adopted an official program, named the “Charter of Demands of the Muslim Algerian People.” The Charter demanded universal suffrage, a single electoral college, Muslim representatives in Parliament, as well as amnesty for political prisoners. Bendjelloul led a delegation from the Congress to Paris to present the Charter to government. Blum and former Algerian Governor General Maurice Viollette warmly welcomed Bendjelloul and his delegation.⁷⁷ Another goal of the June 1936 Congress was to organize a common front for Algerian Muslims to support the nascent Blum-Viollette Bill. At the same time the Parti Populaire Français, led by Jacques Doriot, and his Algerian representative, Victor Arrighi, developed a strong base of support in Oran. There they recruited both *néos* and Algerian Muslims through antisemitism and anti-communism.⁷⁸ During his work with the Section Française de l’Internationale (SFIO) in the 1920s, Blum developed his thinking on colonization that considered it justified only if it prepared subjects for eventual self-rule. As Governor General of Algeria, Viollette was nicknamed *l’Arbi* (the Arab) due to his pro-native politics.⁷⁹

The Blum-Viollette Bill was actually a revised version of Viollette’s 1931 bill. It gave French citizenship to a small cadre of well-educated and “evolved” Algerians without forcing them to give up their personal status. The Bill encouraged the westernization of colonial subjects and thus only offered citizenship to a select few. As a result, the Bill had a

⁷⁶ A. Sultan to M. Wanikoff, Paris, Constantine, November 18, 1936, CDJC DCCXXI-1 (Fonds Vanikoff).

⁷⁷ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 141.

⁷⁸ Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, eds., *French Colonial Empire and the Popular Front: Hope and Disillusion* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1999), 225.

⁷⁹ Chafer, *French Colonial Empire and the Popular Front*, 218-219.

very small impact and was largely symbolic: out of the five million Algerian Muslims in the colony, approximately 25,000 would receive citizenship.⁸⁰ The Muslim Congress organized a huge rally in the Algiers Municipal Stadium on August 2, 1936 to draw support for the Bill.⁸¹ Some Algerian Muslim leaders, such as Messali Hadj, did not approve of the limited scope and the assimilationist tendencies of the Bill.

Europeans in the colony rejected the idea of allowing Algerian Muslims into their electoral ranks. On August 9, 1936, in response to the Muslim Congress' rally, right-wing groups organized a massive political rally to protest the Bill, attended by 25,000 people.⁸² Croix de Feu groups, reorganized since the June ban as the Parti Social Français, rejected the Bill as an attempt to create equality between Europeans and Muslims in the colony. PSF members blamed Blum and Algerian Jews for attempting to lure Muslims to Communism while also fomenting discord among the Algerian Muslims.⁸³ In December 1936, all but two members of the Congress of Mayors of Algeria, organized by Abbé Lambert, voted for the rejection of the Blum-Viollette Bill.⁸⁴

In Algeria, politicians used the Blum-Viollette Bill as an opportunity to address the issue of rights in the colony. One candidate, Cianfarini, used the topic of rights and assimilation to celebrate the integration of the *néos*, who “have acquired a national sense and proved it in 1914. The assimilative genius of France has realized the miracle of melting and in this crucible men from different backgrounds assimilate to be French.” The Blum-Viollette Bill, Cianfarini contended, only admitted certain elites to the role of citizen and

⁸⁰ Ibid., 220-222.

⁸¹ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 142.

⁸² Chafer, *French Colonial Empire and the Popular Front*, 223, 226.

⁸³ Kalman, *The Extreme Right in Interwar France*, 213-214. See also Kennedy, *Reconciling France against Democracy*, 153.

⁸⁴ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 141. See also Chafer, *French Colonial Empire and the Popular Front*, 226.

therefore represented a symbol of “the will of France to take a step closer to the fusion of races, but we must fight it as inadequate.” He believed that by not passing the Bill, frustrated Algerian Muslims would intensify their demands for independence.⁸⁵ Cianfarini argued that the Popular Front’s ultimate goal was to create a union between Muslims and Europeans to create one people. Blum, a Jew, proved that Jews were not enemies of Muslims.⁸⁶

At a meeting of the LICA, Bernard Lecache cited article three of the LICA’s statutes, which demanded that all their members fight against antisemitism and racism. Lecache argued that the Blum-Viollette Bill was merely a way of demonstrating that the Popular Front worked for the Algerian Muslims as well as Frenchmen. Lecache criticized the fascist groups, who claimed to have Algerian Muslim interests at heart. He pilloried Abbé Lambert, who organized the Mayors of Algeria against the Bill. He indicated that in Oran, these “super-French” did not hesitate to wear the swastika. In Constantine, a French officer stated that he would prefer to become a subject of Hitler than to continue to live under the “occupation of the Popular Front government.” Lecache and Cianfarini called up another speaker, Aissaoui, who spoke in Arabic. He argued that the fascists sought to create discord. He encouraged his Muslim brothers to “march with the Popular Front, because it will give us rights and to not return to the fascists who wish to suppress us and our religion.”⁸⁷

The LICA supported the Blum-Viollette Bill as well as the ultimate goal of achieving rights for Algerian Muslims. At a March 1937 LICA meeting, speakers urged the union

⁸⁵ Commissioner of Police of the First Arrondissement of Philippeville to the Central Police Commissioner, “No. 1871: Au sujet d’une conférence ‘Le Droit de Citoyenneté des Indigènes,’ par M. Cianfarini,” Philippeville, February 30, 1937, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁸⁶ Police Commissioner of the Second Arrondissement of Philippeville to the Central Police Commissioner, Philippeville, February 24, 1937, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

⁸⁷ Police commissioner of the Second Arrondissement to the Central Police Commissioner, Philippeville, March 10, 1937, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

between Jews and Muslims in the colony.⁸⁸ The LICA would continue to support the Bill into 1939 when they demanded that the Blum-Viollette Bill be put to a vote again.⁸⁹ In 1939, Bendjelloul and other Muslim elites again raised their voices to demand citizenship rights for Muslims. They demanded the right to vote, even at the expense of their personal status. Bendjelloul published an article in *L'Entente* in January, in which he called upon his former partisans to rejoin the effort to have the Bill become law.⁹⁰

The Blum-Viollette Bill remained a central theme in the politics of left-wing groups, such as the LICA, as well as right-wing groups, such as the PSF. After the government dissolved the Étoile Nord-Africaine in January 1937, two months later Messali Hadj founded the Parti du Peuple Algérien (PPA). The PPA had a more modest program than its predecessor. Its new motto was “neither assimilation nor separation, but emancipation,” which emphasized the PPA’s goal for gaining rights for Algerian Muslims. Even this less revolutionary program was unacceptable, and the PPA was banned in September 1939. In July 1938, Ferhat Abbas founded the Union Populaire Algérienne, whose goal was emancipation with Algeria reconstituted as a French province. In 1938, the Federation of Mayors went on strike in protest of the Blum-Viollette Bill. After facing so many obstacles, the Blum government gave up on pushing forward the legislation.⁹¹ In 1937, Blum was replaced by Camille Chautemps, who supported the colonists and refused to revive the Bill.

⁸⁸ Central Police Commissioner to the Secretary General (Affaires Indigènes et Police Générale), “No. 277R.S.,” Algiers, March 20, 1937, CAOM Alg Alger F410. See also Central Police Commissioner of Algiers to the Secretary General (Affaires Indigènes et Police Générale), Algiers, March 21, 1937, CAOM Alg Alger F410. See also Departmental Security, “Rapport No. 3141, Assemblé General des Membres de la LICA,” Oran, April 1, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran //2541. See also Police Commissioner of Orléansville, “Rapport Spécial: No. 2475: Re: Antisémitisme: Réunion publique organisée par la LICA,” Orléansville, May 16, 1937, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

⁸⁹ Special Police of Oran, “Report No. 275: Ligue Internationale contre l’Antisémitisme (LICA) Assemblée Générale de la section d’Oran,” Oran, January 16, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran //2541.

⁹⁰ Prefect of Oran, “Rapport No. 51: Renseignements au sujet de la réaction des Indigènes en face du décret du 17 janvier et représentation des Indigènes au Parlement,” Oran, January 27, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

⁹¹ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 143-144.

Even after Blum's return, he could not manage to push the Bill forward, given the weakness of his government. It was not until Charles de Gaulle took power that the Blum-Viollette bill went into effect on March 7, 1944.⁹²

Extreme Electoral Antisemitism, 1937-1938

Over the course of 1936 and 1937, the Popular Front became increasingly unpopular, especially in Algeria. Antisemites in Algeria used Blum's leadership to promote a strong and successful program. Antisemitic politicians took control of several municipalities. Right-wing organizations, such as the PSF (formerly the Croix de Feu) and Jacques Doriot's PPF supported antisemitic campaigns. When Doriot established the PPF in 1936, its program focused on the importance of the empire for France's power.⁹³ Algeria therefore served as a crucial terrain in the PPF's war on the Popular Front. Armies of *néos*, who in the late 1930s identified themselves as *Latins*, elected antisemites to high municipal offices. These events heralded a period of extreme electoral antisemitism, including the elimination of many Jewish voters from electoral lists in late 1937 and early 1938.

In February 1937, violence exploded in Sidi Bel Abbès, sponsored by the openly antisemitic Mayor Bellat. On the morning of February 24, a group of fascists, of whom several were employees of the Mayor, attacked Monsieur Morali, a vendor of *L'Humanité*. The morning of the next day, two young employees of the mayor, accompanied by twenty Muslims, and three police officers in uniform, ran through the streets yelling "Down with the Reds! Down with the Jews! Long Live Doriot!" On their way, they attacked Monsieur Zemrani, gashing his face with razors. They also assaulted vendors of *Oran Républicain* and

⁹² Chafer, *French Empire and the Popular Front*, 226-227.

⁹³ Wardhaugh, *In Pursuit of the People*, 134, 143.

tore up their newspapers under the “complicit eye” of the police officers. They harassed a group of Jews. A crowd gathered outside City to protest the aggressors’ actions. Municipal police officers opened fire on the crowds with their personal revolvers, not their regulation arms. Behind them, a group of fascists also fired upon the protestors. Two died and several were injured. The LDH accused Mayor Bellat of being behind the violence.⁹⁴ The February violence, with the tacit and active support of the municipal government, signaled the development of antisemitism into a social and political force.

In this atmosphere of increased violence, the LICA criticized Jews’ insufficient interest in the organization’s work. At a meeting in Algiers in March, Lecache chided Jews for their lack of support. “At a time when international fascism seeks by all means to create disorders, it is deeply regrettable that many Jews in Algiers are not interested in the LICA.”⁹⁵ At a series of LICA meetings in the department of Algiers in March, Lecache and other LICA leaders urged Jewish-Muslim unity and encouraged the passing of the Blum-Viollette Bill.⁹⁶ At an April 1937 LICA meeting, Cheikh el Hadi of Tlemcen gave a speech in Arabic in which he encouraged unity between Jews and Muslims and denounced the antisemitic campaign. He pointed a finger at mayors in Algeria who encouraged antisemitism in their cities. Lecache condemned Jewish supporters of the fascists and the Muslim “beni-oui-oui” who sustained the antisemitic status quo.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ President LDH, “Rapport sur les événements sanglants du 25 février 1937 à Sidi Bel Abbès,” Sidi Bel Abbès, March 6, 1937, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/171.

⁹⁵ Departmental Security Report, “Rapport No 1623: Au sujet de l’Assemblée Générale de la LICA,” Algiers March 16, 1937, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

⁹⁶ See Central Police Commissioner “Rapport No 277R.S.,” Algiers, March 20, 1937; Police Commissioner of Blida, “Rapport No 1621: Objet: Réunion publique organisée par la LICA,” Blida, March 20, 1937; Central Police Commissioner to the Secretary General, Algiers, March 21, 1937, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

⁹⁷ Police Commissioner of Nemours to the Prefect of Oran, “Rapport No. 986,” Nemours, April 13, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

The LICA also called upon Communists and Algerian Muslims to join the fight against antisemitism. At a meeting in May in Algiers, the SFIO representative Monsieur Chatany decried the Nazis’ “absurd theory of racism.” Another speaker, Ben Ali Boukort, affirmed that the Communist Party “fought against antisemitism because they find it stupid and immoral.” A representative of the Muslim Congress, Monsieur Benhoura, thanked representatives of the LICA for their support of the Blum-Viollette Bill. Benhoura also warned his coreligionists that “everything that is anti-Jewish is anti-Muslim.”⁹⁸ In May 1937, Lecache and the LICA aimed its attention at Lambert and the growing antisemitism in Oran. Lecache criticized Abbé Lambert for encouraging the activities of antisemites in Oran. He “saw a dangerous contagion which will one day attack France, but first Oran.”⁹⁹

Antisemites lashed out at Lecache not only as the leader of the LICA, but also as a representative of the Popular Front. In a letter written to Lecache by “A Group of *Latins*,” they renamed him “Belzebuth Nakach,” for the devil. Depicting Lecache as the representative of “Jewish finance,” and “Jewish commerce,” the letter accused Jews of seeking only to enrich themselves at the expense of Frenchmen. The *Latins* accused Jews of controlling the Popular Front. “The Jews are two percent of the population of France, but in the ministerial officers of Blum, they hold fifty-two percent of the positions.” Seeking the support of Arabs, the *Latins* claimed that “Belzebuth Nakach, under the pretext of defending

⁹⁸ Departmental Security of Algiers, “Rapport No 3675: Ligue Internationale contre l’Antisémitisme,” Algiers, May 24, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

⁹⁹ Departmental Security of Oran, “Rapport No. 4182; Ligue Internationale Contre l’Antisémitisme, Conférence de M. Bernard Lecache dans la Salle du Cinéma Familia,” Oran, May 12, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran //2541. See also Police Commissioner of Perregaux, “Rapport No. 1426: Conférence publique par M. Bernard Lecache,” Perregaux, May 13, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran //2541. Lecache argued that the actions of Germans and Italians in Spain were motivated by their desire for hegemony in the Mediterranean and the ultimate hope of weakening France.

the Arabs and the workers wants to assure in Oran, as elsewhere, the supremacy of the Jew.”¹⁰⁰

In Affreville, antisemitic flyers appeared on Jewish shops, calling for a boycott of Jews. There were several different flyers posted. One read: “Parents! Guard your daughters if they work for Jews.” Another stated that “if you have a Jewish friend, he will cheat on you with your wife...or with his word of honor.” Another warned “A non-Jew is ruined by bankruptcy! A Jew is enriched by bankruptcy!”¹⁰¹ The boycott continued throughout the colony. In Oran in July, the Prefect reported that antisemites were behind the boycott of Jewish shops and aimed their propaganda at Muslims. By connecting the boycott to the situation in Palestine, antisemites gained support among Muslims.¹⁰²

Over the course of 1937 in Constantine, cases of violence broke out between Jews and Muslims, and between Jews and Europeans. In an interesting encounter between Jews and French officers, one can clearly see the ways in which Jews considered themselves to be Frenchmen above all else. On January 21, four French officers, Olicher, Apperce, Michaud, and Rampal, left the Hotel de Paris to go to the Casino. When they arrived at the tram station, Commandant Olicher uttered the word “Jewry” (*Juiverie*). At that time, two Jewish brothers named Gozland were walking in front of the officers. Upon hearing “Jewry,” they turned, allowing the French officers to pass them. The Gozland brothers followed them. One of the brothers called out “at your service, my Commandant.” The officer responded, “I

¹⁰⁰ A Group of Latins, “Le Juif Belzebuth Nakach (dit Bernard Lecache), President de la Ligue pour l’Antisémitisme, vient provoquer en Oranie, la guerre de religion,” Ain-Temouchent, April 11, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran //424. It is unclear why the authors of this letter called Lecache Nakach. It is possible that they sought to make his name sound more Algerian than French. Or, possibly they were alluding to the Algerian Jewish swimmer, Alfred Nakache, who after 1936, became one of France’s top swimmers. See Joseph Seigman, *Jewish Sports Legends* (Dulles: Brassey’s Press, 2000), 151-152.

¹⁰¹ Police Commissioner of Affreville to the Sub-Prefect of Miliana, “Rapport No. 1366,” Affreville, May 12, 1937, CAOM Alg Alger F410.

¹⁰² Prefecture of Oran, “Rapport No. 151: Renseignements au sujet d’antisémitisme,” Oran, July 28, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

don't know you and have nothing to do with you." Gozland replied "I heard the word 'Jewry' and I saw you turn towards me; we're French. I also wear a civil uniform, I am a judge."¹⁰³ Although not violent, this incident displays several important elements. It illustrates the antisemitism of French officers as well as the fact that Jews had achieved significant civil service positions in the colony. It also demonstrates the way in which Jews considered themselves Frenchmen and sought to defend themselves against antisemitic attacks as such.¹⁰⁴

The rhetoric of antisemites as well as the vivid memory of the Constantine pogrom inflamed tensions between Jews and Muslims, despite the unity efforts of the LICA. As of April, the majority of incidents involving Jews transitioned from being between Jews and Europeans to Jews and Muslims.¹⁰⁵ In Algiers in August 1937, a small incident quickly turned dangerous. It began when a Jew threw a tomato from his balcony at Abdelkader Borras, who then complained to a nearby police officer. Borras ended up in an altercation with a Jew, Moise Atlan. After the police separated the two, Atlan returned to his apartment, however, a group of nearly 50 Muslims gathered and followed Atlan. Among the crowd was Brahim ben Yahia Moknine, described as a partisan of Messali Hadj. Moknine encouraged the crowd to "get the Jew who hit one of ours," and to do "as in Constantine." Eventually Moknine was taken into custody as the group of Muslims had grown to more than 200.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Central Commissioner to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 445: Objet: Incident entre Officiers et Israélites," Constantine, January 21, 1937, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

¹⁰⁴ Although Jews considered themselves Frenchmen above all else, there is an interesting case from 1937, in which a young Jewish man, Pinhas El Beze, age 18, was reported missing. According to the report, El Beze left home to join the Spanish military. See Commissioner of Police of Batna to the Sub-Prefect of Batna, "Rapport No. 745," Constantine, February 1, 1937, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

¹⁰⁵ Central Police Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, "Rapport No. 2005: Objet: Incident à signaler," Constantine, April 21, 1937, CAOM Alg Const B/3/656.

¹⁰⁶ "Incident entre Arabes et Juifs à Alger," Algiers, August 27, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

This case indicates the growing tensions in the colony as a result of the agitation of antisemites.

In the face of increasing violence as well as the success of the antisemitic campaign, Jews had three options: the first, to accept the increasing antisemitism that plagued their daily existence; second, to defend themselves with the assistance of certain organizations such as the Alliance, the LICA, and the CAES; and third, to look to a future elsewhere. For those Jews who chose the third route, that future was connected to Palestine and Zionism. Zionism, as in the late 1920s and early 1930s, was not a popular movement in North Africa, especially in Algeria, as most Jews in the colony saw their futures only with France. As antisemitism developed, however, so did hopes for a future Jewish homeland in Palestine. Zionists chose Oran as the focus of their presentations in the colony, in part because antisemitism was so prevalent there.¹⁰⁷

Other groups, such as the Alliance and the CAES, fought to defend a French future for Jews in Algeria. The CAES revived its role as a defense organization. An Algerian Jewish publication, *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d'Algérie*, published an article by the Vice President of the Alliance, Georges Leven, in which he described the evolution of the Alliance from its educative origins to a defense organization. Leven argued that the Alliance should not be seen as part of French imperialism. Rather, Leven and the Alliance leadership viewed its work as an expression of the “generous thinking of France” that used French education to inculcate the best propagandists of France. Since 1933,

¹⁰⁷ Departmental Security Oran, “Rapport No. 12: Oeuvre Israélite,” Oran, January 3, 1937. See also, Departmental Security, Oran, “Rapport No. 3901: Passage à Oran de M. STERN Maurice, délégué du Comité Central de Paris du Keren Kayemeth Leisrael,” Oran, March 30, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran //2539. See also Departmental Security Oran, “Rapport No 3230: Keren Kayemeth Leisrael, Causerie faite par M. Stern au Cinéma Rio,” Oran, April 5, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

however, the Alliance recognized the need to respond to the “worldwide recrudescence of antisemitism,” influenced by Nazi propaganda.¹⁰⁸

Editors of a new paper, *Juste Parole*, published an article entitled “S.O.S.” They argued that regardless of how assimilated Jews might become, antisemites would always consider them to be Jews. “Even if you spilled your blood for your country on the battlefield... and deserve the gratitude of the nation and humanity, even if you abandoned Judaism and received a Christian baptism...in the eyes of antisemites you are part of a cursed race, a hated race, eternally chased, and you will not escape the hatred of antisemites.”¹⁰⁹ Such efforts were not effective. They could not compete with antisemites in the colony, who, since Max Régis, used the press to gain supporters.¹¹⁰

In the absence of another major defense organization in the colony, the CAES reemerged in 1937. In the early 1920s the CAES had disappeared from action, due to internal conflicts. Following the 1934 pogrom Confino described the necessity of the group’s reorganization.¹¹¹ At the 1937 General Assembly of the CAES, President Dr. A. Levy-Valensi presented the organization’s program of combating antisemitism in Algeria through the triple effort of providing information, coordinating Jews in the fight against antisemitism, and “fighting for the respect of human dignity and the rights of French Algerian Jews.” The CAES would also work with Algerian Muslims on a “project of rapprochement and mutual comprehension.” Through unity efforts, the CAES leadership

¹⁰⁸ “M. Georges Leven, Vice Président de l’Alliance Israélite Universelle, à Alger,” *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*, no. 33 (May 1937) : 6-7.

¹⁰⁹ “S.O.S. Dites-Vous Bien Ceci,” *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*, no. 33 (May 1937): 15.

¹¹⁰ Division Chief of Departmental Security of Oran to the Prefect of Oran, “Rapport No. 9411: Re: Foyer Intellectuel Israélite conférence de Mlle BABIS Rachel,” Oran, November 18, 1937, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

¹¹¹ Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Menachem Laskier, and Sarah Reguer, eds., *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 464.

hoped that tensions between Jews and Muslims would diminish and Muslims would be less influenced by antisemitic propaganda.¹¹²

At the end of 1937, the Constantine Section of the LICA submitted a report on the situation of antisemitism in Algeria. The authors, Section President Ricchard Hell, and Secretary General Lucien Sebbah, wrote of the impact of Nazi antisemitic propaganda in Constantine. They gave the example of a picture taken of families of workers, posing and smiling in front of a large swastika and the inscription “Down with the Jews.” Hell and Sebbah also indicated that antisemitic municipal governments went so far as to remove Jews from electoral lists in order to eliminate them as competitors in elections. In Constantine, an electoral commission made up by a fascist majority, removed numerous Jewish voters from the electoral lists. Fascists organized a campaign against Monsieur Laloum, the incumbent judicial candidate. Laloum was the only Jewish candidate in the elections. Hell and Sebbah demanded that the Blum-Viollette Bill be promulgated in the interest of the future of the nation and racial harmony. They also recommended that pro-fascist elements in the Algerian administration be removed from their posts.¹¹³

The issue of Jewish voters being stripped of their electoral rights became a major turning point for groups such as the CAES and the LICA. The LICA presented a report on the removal of Jews from electoral lists in Sidi Bel Abbès at the end of 1937, which they named the “Bellat Affair” after the antisemitic mayor. Over the course of 1937, Jewish electors in Sidi Bel Abbès were called to the Mayor’s office and told to bring proof of

¹¹² “Assemblée Générale du Comité Juif Algérien d’Études Sociales,” *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*, no. 33 (May 1937): 23. It is interesting to note that previously, the CAES left out the “Juif” from its title. In 1937, however, they reinserted the Jewish aspect of the Committee. This is likely due to the new leadership of Levy-Valensi, whereas Henri Aboulker was more concerned with assimilation of Jews, rather than emphasizing their Jewishness.

¹¹³ Richard Hell and Lucien Sebbah, “Brèves Observations de la Section Constantinoise de la LICA (600 membres) sur la situation en Algérie, suivies des remèdes proposés,” Constantine, December 29, 1937, CDJC CMXCVI-123.3.

identity with them. Arriving at the City Hall, the Jews were asked to provide information on their origins, and those of their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents. They were informed that this information was necessary to regulate their military eligibility. Many Jews found the situation suspicious and refused to respond to the call. A second call went out to more Jews. This second group included individuals who were known for their pro-Popular Front politics. As a result, approximately 372 Jewish electors were taken from electoral lists. The reason given for the change was that the Jewish voters did not meet the requirements set forth in the October 7, 1871 law modifying the Crémieux decree.¹¹⁴

When the Administration's representative demanded the reinstatement of the Jewish voters, the electoral commission responded by returning only a small minority of the Jewish electors to the list. The case went before a judge for trial. The authors of the LICA report wrote that "it is undeniable that the actions taken by the administrative commission and confirmed by the municipal commission constitutes a case of bullying with regards to Jews." They pointed to the fact that many of the Jewish victims were veterans of World War I. The authors described this outrage as a continuation of the antisemitic campaign directed by the municipality of Sidi Bel Abbès headed by Monsieur Bellat. Bellat was also the leader of several antisemitic organizations in the region. The authors recommended that the members of the electoral commission be removed from their municipal posts. The Sidi Bel Abbès electoral commission sought not only to remove Jews from the electoral lists, but also strip them of their citizenship. In addition, the municipality refused to allow Jews to serve as witnesses in courts under the pretext that they were not Frenchmen. The authors of the report

¹¹⁴ The LICA, "Affaire Bellat de Sidi Bel Abbès, Rapport sur Radiations," Sidi Bel Abbès, 1937, CDJC CMXCVI-135.2.

called for an immediate enquiry into the situation and demanded that the administration make examples of the offenders involved.¹¹⁵

Several groups became involved in the case of the Jewish voters of Sidi Bel Abbès. The LDH examined the case at the start of 1938 to assess the role they might play in defending the rights of Jews involved.¹¹⁶ In early March, Sidi Bel Abbès LDH President Martaing reported that their local chapter planned to deal with the situation themselves. They collected certain documents, including a complaint made by Levi Henri Pinto, one of the impacted Jewish voters, to the President of the electoral commission, as well as the President's response.¹¹⁷ After being removed from the electoral list, Pinto requested to be reinstated. His request was rejected by the commission. Pinto provided proof of his rights for French citizenship. Born in Oran on March 3, 1899, he had satisfied his military service, and had been on the electoral lists in Oran for many years. In addition, his father, Aaron Pinto, born on March 3, 1862 in Oran, was naturalized. Following Pinto's complaint, the electoral Commission responded that they did not contest the fact that Pinto was French, but the law required him to show proof of his French citizenship. Despite providing the necessary documentation, the Commission still removed Pinto from the electoral lists.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Ibid. Anticipating the potential dangers which could follow the striking of Jewish voters from electoral lists, the authors of the report argued that this invocation of the 1871 law was unfair, however, it could not pose a legal threat to the impact of the Crémieux decree. ‘Even with the inappropriate implementation of the decree of October 7, 1871, this decree is related only to the registration or cancellation of natives Jews on electoral lists and cannot be applied to the status of the decree of October 24, 1870 known as the ‘Crémieux decree,’ which is explicit and states that the native Jews of Algeria are French citizens. For this reason and since that time, they have always been registered for military recruitment and military conscription along with all other French citizens.’

¹¹⁶ Secretary General LDH to M. Bertrand, President of the LDH, “Re: Sidi Bel Abbès protestation contre radiation d’israélites sur listes électorales,” Paris, February 1, 1938. See also Secretary LDH Sidi Bel Abbès to the Secretary General LDH, Paris, Sidi Bel Abbès, January 24, 1938, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169.

¹¹⁷ President Martaing, LDH Sidi Bel Abbès, to the Secretary General of the LDH, Paris, “Objet: Radiation de 372 électeurs israélites à Sidi Bel Abbès,” Sidi Bel Abbès, March 5, 1938, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169.

¹¹⁸ D. Philippe Martinez, “Copie de la sommation de M. Pinto à M. le Président de la Commission de révision des listes électorales,” Sidi Bel Abbès, February 28, 1938, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169. This proof of

Leaders of antifascist organizations in Sidi Bel Abbès submitted a letter of protest on behalf of the Jews. They considered Bellat responsible, given his role as mayor, president of the electoral commission, and leader of the antisemitic movement in the region of Oran.

“The decision he has made has caused legitimate concern in both the Jewish and Republican circles. Since 1870 (the Crémieux decree), never and under no government has the quality of French citizen been contested for a group of electors/citizens.” To defend the rights of Jews, the authors of the letter reiterated the long history of Jewish patriotism and military service. Despite being entirely illegal and unethical, the authors feared that the case of Sidi Bel Abbès would serve as a model to be replicated in other municipalities in the colony. “If the viewpoint of Mr. Bellat only gave rise to a legal controversy without administrative sanctions, we are confident that many reactionary municipalities in Algeria will follow his example.”¹¹⁹

The CAES used the opportunity presented by the Sidi Bel Abbès affair to highlight their concern over Henry Lautier’s increasing antisemitic activities, including his campaigns for the abrogation of the Crémieux decree.¹²⁰ In February, Alliance, CAES, and Consistory leaders met to formulate an intervention on behalf of the Sidi Bel Abbès Jewish voters before the Governor General. At the meeting with the Governor General, Alfred Ghighi of the CAES presented him with the municipality’s egregious offense of power in depriving French citizens of their rights. The Governor General, “deeply moved by the flawless plea and the very high quality of Mr. Ghighi’s presentation, assured us of his benevolent feelings towards

citizenship had to be based on the law of October 7, 1871, or his naturalization or that of his predecessors by virtue of the Senatus-consulte of July 14, 1865.

¹¹⁹ Leaders of antifascist organizations in Sidi Bel Abbès to the President of the Rassemblement Populaire, Paris, Sidi Bel Abbès, March 4, 1938, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/169.

¹²⁰ Elie Gozlan, Secretary General, CAES, to the President of the Centre de Documentation et Vigilance, Paris, Algiers, February 4, 1938, CDJC DCCVVI-2.

our coreligionists.” He assured the Jewish delegates that the administration would not allow similar actions to take place in the future.¹²¹

The Power of Antisemitic Organizations

The Sidi Bel Abbès electoral commission’s successful elimination of over 300 Jewish voters indicated the great strides of electoral antisemitism in the colony. Since Dr. Jules Molle in the 1920s, antisemitism had become entrenched in Oran’s municipal government. When Abbé Lambert first entered politics, he campaigned against antisemitism and preached the union of races. Lambert created the Amitiés Lambert and encouraged Jews, Muslims, and Catholics to join its ranks. Following the elections of 1936, many members of Lambert’s entourage encouraged him to join the battle against the Jews. He refused and lost to the candidate sponsored by the Croix de Feu and Unions Latines. Lambert soon recognized that political success meant harnessing the popular strength of electoral antisemitism. In November 1937, he established a new group oriented towards electoral politics, named the Amitiés Latines.¹²² The goal of Lambert’s propaganda was to organize an electoral bloc to guarantee the election of antisemites and the exclusion of Jews.¹²³

In February 1938, the Governor General finally recognized the danger posed by antisemitic propaganda in Oran because of the involvement of right wing groups.¹²⁴ Another

¹²¹ M. Eskenazi to the Secretary General of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (No. 871/3), Oran, March 24, 1938, AIU Algérie IIC9.

¹²² Prefect of Oran, “Rapport sur le Mouvement antisémite dans le Département d’Oran,” Oran, March 1, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹²³ Prefect of Oran, “Rapport relatif à la Propagande antisémite dans le département d’Oran, au cours du mois de Juin 1938,” Oran, July 13, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹²⁴ Governor General to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 3663s, au sujet: mouvement antisémite,” Algiers, February 21, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran //424. In order to monitor the escalation of antisemitic activity, the Governor General requested that the Prefect send him a report on the 15th of each month detailing 1. the structure and importance of antisemitic groups; 2. the methods and objectives of propaganda such groups employed; 3. the

antisemitic organization, the Rassemblement Nationale (RN), incorporated various right-wing parties that opposed the Blum-Viollette Bill. In Oran, the RN joined the PPF, the PSF, and other similar groups under the leadership of Abbé Lambert. The RN became increasingly antisemitic in orientation; its meetings concluded with cries of “Long Live Hitler.”¹²⁵

During the April 1938 General Assembly of the RN, leaders emphasized the antisemitic orientation of the organization. Monsieur Viniger, President of the RN and a General Council member, called for greater unity between the groups that made up the RN, arguing that their disunity risked “giving power to the Jacobs and the Isaacs.” Viniger urged his compatriots to cooperate with the wave of antisemitism developing in the metropole in response to Blum and other Jewish politicians. Viniger demanded of his audience, “If Bernard Lecache came back to Tiaret, would you let him speak and insult you? What will be your attitude? Ours will be to remain a union against the Jews; we must be a bloc against the Jewish bloc in all branches of their activity: politics, economy, society, and particularly in commerce. With the boycott, Jews will not live long.”¹²⁶

Other antisemitic groups emerged during this period. The Paris-based Front de la Jeunesse incorporated youth into the right wing groups. The Front de la Jeunesse organized meetings in Oran, Sidi Bel Abbès, and Mostaganem. The Prefect of Oran reported on the propaganda of the Front de la Jeunesse’s President Jean Charles Legrand during his visit to the colony. Legrand’s presentations suspiciously coincided with the municipal elections in

results of the propaganda; 4. the repercussions of antisemitic activity among Muslims; 5. other observations on the subject.

¹²⁵ William B. Cohen, “The Colonial Policy of the Popular Front,” *French Historical Studies* 7, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 381.

¹²⁶ Police Commissioner of Tiaret to the Prefect of Oran, “Rapport No. 2824,” Tiaret, April 24, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran //424. At the meeting, Viniger cited an article about Minister Max Dormoy’s comments in Parliament in which Dormoy stated “A Jew is worth a Breton.” Viniger concluded the meeting by stating “Next to a Breton, the Jew is shit.”

Tiaret on June 26, 1938. At those municipal elections in Tiaret, the Unions Latines candidate list won.¹²⁷

On June 19, the Amitiés Latines organized the Muslim Section of its group. Most of the Muslim members worked for the cleaning services of Oran or were municipal employees.¹²⁸ In courting Muslim members to their antisemitic organizations, leaders frequently alluded to the situation in Palestine. In cities, Muslims carefully followed events in Palestine published in newspapers. The department of “Native Affairs” reported that in August 1938 “the sympathy, which is given to the Bedouin of Palestine, leads to a gentle rise of already existent antisemitism.”¹²⁹

Following the summer electoral period, antisemitic groups in Oran and throughout the colony slowed their activities.¹³⁰ In November 1938, however, Lautier increased the level of antisemitic propaganda with the publication of a poster entitled “Jewish Failure.” The posters demanded that Frenchmen hunt and chase the Jews from the colony. “It is necessary, by all means, to hunt this Hebraic rot that comes from the four corners of the universe to our land.” Lautier depicted the Jew as “the master of the beautiful buildings of Algiers and master of the commerce of Algiers, and even master of medicine and law.” Lautier encouraged his followers to “denounce the Jew, boycott the Jew, hunt the Jew, expel him, and spit in his face, at any time, in the street, the café, in trams—this is now our attitude.” The posters promised that antisemites would restitute Muslim property taken through Jewish

¹²⁷ Governor General to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 2572SP: Antisémitisme, Conférence de M. Jean Charles Legrand,” Algiers, June 5, 1938. See also Letter Prefect of Oran to the Governor General, “No. 12097: Objet: Le Front de la Jeunesse, Mostaganem,” Oran, June 28, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran //424.

¹²⁸ Prefect of Oran, “Rapport relatif à la Propagande antisémite dans le département d’Oran, au cours du mois de Juin 1938,” Oran, July 13, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹²⁹ Affaires Indigènes, “Rapport 17204: CIE: Évènements de Palestine à le GGA, d’Alger,” Oran, August 30, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹³⁰ Prefect of Oran, “Rapport No. 18803: Propagande antisémite: Rapport sur la propagande antisémite exercée dans le département d’Oran au cours du mois de Septembre 1938,” Oran, October 1, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

usury. Utilizing the language of racial cleansing, the posters outlined Lautier and his compatriots' goal to return Jews to their "ghettos" and remove them from society.

Concluding that "the torches are ready," Lautier not only called antisemites to boycott the Jew, but also encouraged outright violence.¹³¹

In December 1938, the Governor General reported on the condition of electoral antisemitism in Algeria. Departments in Constantine and Oran were particularly influenced by antisemitic propaganda. The Governor General attributed this to the fact that in the department of Algiers, Jews made up only one-tenth of the European population, but one-fifth in Oran, and one-fourth in Constantine. The Governor General argued that the ultimate goal of antisemites was "to free France and Algeria of Jews." Antisemitic groups in the colony focused on taking over municipal and administrative governments. In the elections of October 1937, twenty candidates representing the RN were elected. Despite the courtship of antisemitic parties, Algerian Muslims rarely joined. The Governor General noted that Muslims appeared to be following the directions of their leaders to avoid antisemitic activities.¹³²

In summer and fall 1938, antisemites stepped up their activities, focusing on abrogating the Crémieux decree. Morinaud published an antisemitic campaign in his newspaper, *Le Républicain*, in which he urged his fellow Europeans to "denounce the Jewish pretension of governing us." At the October PSF congress in Constantine, one speaker

¹³¹ Special Police of Algiers, "Rapport No. 8499, au sujet des affiches de Henri Lautier," Algiers, November 22, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50. Although Lautier's antisemitic rhetoric was extreme, it was not unique. Even in the metropole, antisemitic propaganda proliferated in 1938. A pamphlet entitled "Who wants the War? The Jews!" circulated in the metropole, calling upon familiar tropes that Jews were behind World War I and sought to create a future war from which they would benefit. It concluded with the call to Frenchmen that "It is clear, the Jew wants to put it on your back so that you will defend their cause." See "Qui Veut la Guerre? Le Juif!," 1938, AN F/7/15134. See also "Note sur la Question de la Propagande antisémite," 1938, CDJC DCCXXI-3 (Fonds Vanikoff).

¹³² Governor General to the Minister of the Interior, "Rapport No. 21253S: Rapport sur l'Antisémitisme en Algérie," Algiers, December 10, 1938, CAOM FM 81F/864.

emphasized the necessity of fighting Jews on the “electoral terrain,” arguing that “the Jews don’t have ideas, only goals to pursue by voting as a bloc.” To fix the situation, antisemites had to revise the Crémieux decree, which would reduce Jews’ competitive role in elections. This recommendation was vigorously supported by the 5,000 people in attendance. In November, the PPF held their congress in Algiers. The majority of the speakers dealt with the Jewish question. Dr. Bentami passionately demanded the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. Another speaker, Monsieur St. Germain, criticized the “invasion of our chairs, legal bars, and faculties with strangers and Jews.” The Moroccan delegate, Monsieur Queyrat, condemned the “invasion of administrative posts in the protectorate by Jews.” Doriot encouraged his followers to “remake France,” and suggested that one of the methods by which to realize this goal was the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. In his report, the Governor General concluded that “antisemitism is anchored in the minds of some of the European and indigenous populations.”¹³³

The left-wing organizations, such as CAES, the LICA, and the LDH, reacted to the increasing antisemitism of 1938. In May 1938, the CAES met in Algiers and decided to send a delegation to Paris to present the dangers posed by the antisemitic campaign raging in the colony.¹³⁴ In Paris, the CAES delegation met with Sarraut, Chautemps, and Daladier, and requested that measures be taken immediately to combat the increasing antisemitism in the colony. They expressed frustration at how long the administration took before it intervened in the Sidi Bel Abbès affair and the lack of punishments for the Commission members.¹³⁵ As

¹³³ Governor General to the Minister of the Interior, “Rapport No. 21253S: Rapport sur l’Antisémitisme en Algérie,” Algiers, December 10, 1938, CAOM FM 81F/864.

¹³⁴ Governor General, “Rapport No. 686: Renseignements: Antisémitisme: Inquiétude manifestée par le Comité Juif d’Études Sociales d’Alger, Projet d’Envoi d’une délégation à Paris,” Algiers, May 19, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50. The CAES also sent 20,000 francs to the Bernard Lecache and the LICA.

¹³⁵ Governor General, “Rapport No 926: Renseignements: Retour de la Délégation du Comité Juif d’Études Sociales, parti récemment à Paris,” Algiers, June 30, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

a result of the delegation's presentation, Daladier's government developed the Régnier decree in May 1938 to punish all activities that threatened the security of the metropole and the colony, as well as any efforts to encourage "racial hatred."¹³⁶

In November 1938, the Governor General noted that relations between Jews and Muslims began to deteriorate as a result of events in Palestine and increasing Zionism in certain communities.¹³⁷ In December, a Jewish newspaper based in Tunis appeared in the colony. It published articles on the situation in Palestine and in Europe, and provided commentaries on Jewish life in North Africa.¹³⁸ Zionism made greater inroads in Algeria in 1938 than in previous years. Zionists regularly made presentations in the colony, describing Palestine as the only future home for Jews.¹³⁹ Frustrated by the growing antisemitism in the colony, Jews were more willing to listen than they had previously been.

The LDH also began to investigate the increasing power of the nationalist groups such as the PSF and the PPF in the colony. An LDH member in Mostaganem, Gustave Marie, feared that "one day North Africa will go on its own into the arms of Hitler, as did

¹³⁶ "Décret Ayant Pour But de Réprimer les Atteintes à l'Intégrité du Territoire Nationale ou à l'Autorité de la France sur les Territoires ou cette Autorité s'exerce," Paris, May 24, 1938. See also "Congrès de l'Union Socialiste et Républicaine de Bordeaux." Minister of the Interior, "Note sur une proposition tendant à compléter le décret du 30 mars 1935 réprimant les manifestations contre la souveraineté française," Paris, June 22, 1938, CAOM FM 81F/864. On June 24, an article appeared in the *Oran Républicain*, entitled "Anti-Jewish propaganda in Arab lands." According to M.S. Zahiri, antisemitic propaganda continued to grow in Arab countries, unleashed by the activities of Germans and Italians in the Middle East and North Africa. Zahiri accused Lambert of visiting Berlin to attend a Congress organized by fascist agents. The article also criticized the administration of supporting and collaborating with Lambert. M.S. Zahiri, "La Propagande anti-juive dans les pays arabes," *Oran Républicain*, June 24, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹³⁷ Governor General, "Rapport No 1899: Renseignements au sujet d'état d'esprit chez les Israélites," Algiers, November 25, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹³⁸ Governor General, "Rapport No. 1944: Au sujet du journal *La Gazette d'Israël* de Tunis," Algiers, December 2, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹³⁹ Division chief of the Departmental Security of Oran to the Prefect of Oran, "Rapport No. 71: Re: Conférence: Keren Hayessod LeIsrael," Oran, January 5, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran //2539. See also, Division Chief, Departmental Special Police to the Prefect of Oran, "No. 3468: Keren Hayessod: Conférence à Oran de Melle Erlich Sassia, avocet à Paris," Oran, April 29, 1938; Division Chief, Departmental Special Police to the Prefect of Oran, "No. 3628: Keren Hayessod, Conférence de Melle Sassia Erlich, avocat à la Cour de Paris," Oran, May 4, 1938, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

Austria.”¹⁴⁰ Despite the efforts of groups such as the LICA, the LDH, and the CAES, antisemites remained in power and their influence only continued to grow as Hitler and Mussolini gained control in Europe and North Africa.

Prelude to Vichy, 1939-1940

As France dealt with the reality of the inevitability of the coming war, Algerian Jews realized the war could provide another opportunity to prove themselves as patriots. Jewish communities throughout the colony prepared their sons, fathers, and husbands for battle. In response to the Sidi Bel Abbès affair and in the face of the approaching war, on January, 17, 1939, the French government passed a decree certifying Algerian Jews’ French citizenship. In anticipation of war, the Consistory of Oran published a statement of the commitment of Jews to France. “When our beloved country needs more than ever the union of its children, we are ready to spill the last drop of our blood to defend the influence of our country’s liberal ideas and the integrity of its territory.”¹⁴¹ The 1939 decree added to the disappointment of Algerian Muslims whose status remained unchanged. Certain Muslim leaders in Oran expressed their frustration that the administration quickly passed this decree certifying Jewish citizenship, while the Blum-Viollette Bill faced continuous opposition. In *L’Entente*, Bendjelloul addressed the January 17 decree and urged further support for the Blum-Viollette Bill.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Gustave Marie to President Victor Brasch, Mostaganem, June 13, 1938, BDIC-LDH F Delta Res 798/167.

¹⁴¹ Fédération des Cultuelles Israélites du Département d’Oran to the President of the Republic, the President of the Council, the Vice President of the Council, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Justice, the Governor General of Algeria, Oran, January 22, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran //2539. See also Fédération des Cultuelles Israélites du Département d’Oran to M. Boujard, Prefect of Oran, Oran, January 22, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

¹⁴² Prefecture of Oran, “Rapport 51: Renseignements au sujet de la réaction des Indigènes en face du décret du 17 janvier et représentation des Indigènes au Parlement,” Oran, January 27, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

Jewish and Muslim religious leaders met French Cardinal Jean Verdier to emphasize the importance of solidarity in the colony. On the occasion of Verdier's visit to Algiers, Rabbi Eisenbeth gave a speech honoring the Cardinal. Welcoming Verdier to Algiers on behalf of his fellow Jews, he expressed the great respect of Algerian Jews towards the Pontiff and the Cardinal. Verdier thanked Eisenbeth for his speech, stating that "we're with you...we trust each other and in the triumph of individual rights in the family, in society, in easing international relations. For this we will always be with you."¹⁴³ The Jews' interest in expressing their solidarity with Cardinal Verdier was an important tactical move in the context of the approaching war. Verdier was overtly anti-fascist, despite the official connections between the papacy and both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, through the concordats of 1929 and 1933 respectively.¹⁴⁴ When Germany invaded France in 1940, Verdier commented that "the war is a crusade."¹⁴⁵

Verdier's visit and his reception by the Jews also provided an opportunity for antisemitic commentary. E. Bermin, a Frenchman in Algiers, wrote a letter to Eisenbeth, in which he called the patriotism and Frenchness of Algerian Jews into question. Bermin wrote that Eisenbeth's presentation was very good "on paper and solemnly pronounced before official personalities. Too bad that the acts of the synagogue don't go along with such words!" Bermin questioned Jewish patriotism:

We, Algerians, know what you are doing better than the naive French who are misled so easily by fine words; we know that any nation into which the Jew enters is doomed to gangrene by your solvent action;...we know that you are not and cannot

¹⁴³ "Les Chefs Religieux Musulmans, L'Association Cultuelle et les représentants des Associations Cultuelles Israélites d'Alger sont reçu par S.E. le Cardinal Verdier," *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d'Algérie*, no. 39 (May 1939): 2-3. See also, "Hommage des Israélites d'Alger à son Eminence le Cardinal Verdier," Algiers, April 2, 1939, CDJC CMXCVI-109.1.

¹⁴⁴ Frank J. Coppa, *The Papacy, the Jews, and the Holocaust* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 2006), 154.

¹⁴⁵ "Foreign News: Crusade," *Time Magazine*, February 19, 1940.

be patriots.... we have the right and duty to hold suspect all your fine words, honeyed as they are. We know that hypocrisy is your best virtue.

Bermin stated that he was 200 percent antisemitic because he was 100 percent French.¹⁴⁶

In spite of such attacks on their patriotism, Algerian Jews prepared themselves for the coming war. In April 1939, rabbis in Algeria contacted the central Consistory in Paris to request that they be assigned military chaplaincies in their towns so that they could continue to serve their communities as well as their fellow Jews in the military.¹⁴⁷ When France declared war on Germany on September 3, 1939, Jews in the metropole and the colony answered the call to military service. On September 4, the Rabbi of Oran, D. Askenazi, and President of the Consistory, Albert Smadja, published a letter urging Jews to mobilize, stating that “our country is in a time of extreme gravity...It is our desire to peacefully rise to the occasion.” Calling upon the French identity of Algerian Jews, Smadja and Askenazi exhorted Jews to demonstrate their patriotism. “This call is addressed to the French protected Jews living among us, and in these circumstances they should give the highest testimony of their love and their devotion to the country that so generously welcomed them. Many of you have already placed yourselves at the disposal of the authorities, but each must, according to his abilities and his physical age, be determined to serve in the military or civilian formations.”¹⁴⁸

Despite such calls to service by Jewish leaders, the Prefect of Oran commented that Jewish strategies in the face of the war could further provoke antisemitism. He wrote that “It is not the place to judge the warrior value of Jews as a bloc; however, one must acknowledge

¹⁴⁶ E. Birmin, to Rabbi Eisenbeth, Algiers, May 7, 1939, CDJC LIII-27a.

¹⁴⁷ Rabbi Eisenbeth to the Central Consistory in Paris, Algiers, April 18, 1939, CC ACP-4. See also Secretary General Oualid of the Union of Jewish Religious Associations of France and Algeria to the President of Jewish Associations (form letter), Paris, April 20, 1939, CC ACP-4.

¹⁴⁸ Rabbi D. Askenazi, President of the Consistory of Oran, Albert Smadja, “Appel aux Israélites Protégés Français,” Oran, September 4, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

the public rumor that attributes to them a tendency of seeking posts that are out of the shadow of danger. In certain native circles, they declare that Jews eat soap in order to be sick and not taken for service.” Similar rumors circulated among Europeans.¹⁴⁹ In October, rumors circulated that Jews in the garrison in Oran continued to trick doctors into removing them from service. In contrast, Muslims exhibited their great patriotism, gathering on September 26, yelling “Long Live France!”¹⁵⁰

The period of mobilization was marked by an increase in antisemitic statements such as “The Jews have succeeded in having their war,” “We are going to have to fight for the Jews,” “Jewish finance has succeeded in forcing us into a war against Hitler.” European antisemites also used Nazi propaganda to encourage antisemitism among Muslims, stating that “You will see, that the Jews are the masters of the governments of France and England, and will succeed in expediting Muslims to the front to sacrifice them while they don’t even go to the front.”¹⁵¹ Conscripted Jews experienced antisemitism from their military leaders. In battalions of Zouaves in Algiers, Constantine and Oran, Jewish soldiers were separated from European soldiers without any explanation. In addition, Jews were often separated from Muslim soldiers for fear of violence between the groups. Concurrent with fighting such divisions instated between groups of soldiers, Jewish leaders also provided guidelines for proper conduct for Jewish soldiers in the *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*. The author of the article contended that the antisemitism in the military was

¹⁴⁹ Prefecture of Oran, “Rapport No. 342: Renseignements au sujet: question Israélite,” Oran, September 14, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹⁵⁰ Prefecture of Oran, “Rapport No 1751: Bulletin de Renseignements Produits le 28 septembre 1939, par M. l’Administrateur de la Commune Mixte de Frenda,” Oran, October 2, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50. See also Préfecture of Oran, “Rapport No. 423, Renseignements au sujet de l’antisémitisme,” Oran, October 16, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹⁵¹ Prefect of Oran to the Governor General, “No. 27256: Objet: Antisémitisme septembre 1939,” Oran, October 18, 1939, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

especially unfounded under the current circumstances. Jews felt the need to “personally” seek vengeance against Hitler and to “avenge the hatred that Hitler inspires.”¹⁵²

Antisemites continued to make the Jew the scapegoat for the war. “The famous lie, heard since the first days of the war, is that the war was wanted by the Jews and caused by them, continues to reach the mean spirits who are always ready to exhale their resentment, their rancor, their hatred of the eternal scapegoat: the Jew.”¹⁵³ The author of the article in the *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie* lauded the fact that overall, Algerian Jews showed great patriotism in the first months of the war. “The majority of the Algerian Jews, with the exception of a few black sheep, have, since the first days of war, shown their sentiments of ardent patriotism and necessity with joy to complete the most pious of responsibilities: the defense of *la Patrie*.” Despite the devotion of Jews, antisemitism continued to spread throughout the colony. Nazi propaganda affected the sentiments of many in the colony, including Muslims. Comments circulated, such as “If the French would carry out an expulsion of Jews, peace would return.” The article concluded with a call for the government to intervene in the situation to deter the growth of antisemitism.¹⁵⁴

All of the concerns of Jewish leaders regarding the escalation of institutionalized antisemitism in the military and their fears for the future proved warranted in the months before the German invasion of France in June 1940. In March 1940, the Prefect of Oran reported that rumors circulated that a French officer demanded to be placed in charge of a unit of Muslim *tirailleurs*, because he liked to lead Arabs, while he only had contempt for

¹⁵² “Lettre d’Algérie,” *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*, Algiers, November 20, 1939, CDJC LIII-27b.

¹⁵³ “Le Malaise Continue,” *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*, CDJC LIII-27g.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. It is very likely that these two reports (“Lettre d’Algérie” and “Le Malaise Continue”) were written by Elie Gozlan.

Jewish soldiers.¹⁵⁵ For Algerian Muslims as well, the coming war was a chance to prove their patriotism and promote Muslim rights. Abbé Lambert summed up the mentality of European antisemites on the eve of war when he stated “I love Arabs and I regret not having had more love for them, but I now do. In contrast, I hate the Jews and I feel regret for not having had more contempt for them, but I will in the future.”¹⁵⁶

As Algerian Muslims angled to gain rights, antisemites took advantage of the conditions of war to question Jewish patriotism. Jews feared the new levels of antisemitism the war could bring. These concerns would be proved true with the establishment of Vichy and the subsequent abrogation of the Crémieux decree. Upon being reduced from French citizens to French subjects after seventy years of citizenship, Algerian Jews would have to prove their patriotism and assert their French identity in new ways.

¹⁵⁵ Prefecture of Oran, “Rapport No. 197, Note: Au sujet de l’antisémitisme,” Oran, March 18, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹⁵⁶ Prefecture of Oran, “Rapport No. 220: Renseignements au sujet de l’Antisémitisme à Oran,” Oran, March 26, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

Chapter 7: Rupture: Vichy, State Antisemitism, and the Crémieux Decree

In spite of the numerous calls of antisemites to abrogate the Crémieux decree in the seven decades that followed its promulgation, Algerian Jews never imagined that such a dispossession of their acquired identity and status could occur. In October 1940, “with a stroke of a pen” the Vichy government removed Algerian Jews’ civil rights, which they had fought for and defended since 1870.¹ From 1870 to 1940 Algerian Jews assimilated to the expectations of the French state and its modernizing agenda; they learned French, attended French schools, integrated into the colonial administration, municipal governments, and high economic echelons, and they served in two major wars. For these French Algerian Jews, Vichy’s leaders and the legislation they promulgated against Jews did not represent their true *patrie*. Although the October 1940 abrogation of the Crémieux decree marked a decisive rupture for Algerian Jews, they maintained faith in a future in which the true France would reemerge and they would be once again recognized as French sons and daughters. In the years preceding Vichy, Algerian Jews had confronted increased electoral antisemitism and efforts of antisemitic municipalities to restrict their rights as citizens. As traumatic as those years had been, they could not compare with the scale of institutional antisemitism under Vichy.

Vichy marked the transition to a government formally established upon an antisemitic foundation. Antisemitism was no longer a tool used by politicians to draw votes, nor was it an expression of religious hatred. Under Vichy, and especially its Algerian representatives, antisemitism became an official state project. Xavier Vallat, the leader of the Commissariat General of the Jewish Questions (CGQJ), captured this orientation when he stated “I am a

¹ Michel Ansky, *Les Juifs d’Algérie: Du Décret Crémieux à la Libération* (Paris: Éditions du Centre, 1950), 87-88.

state antisemite, not a passionate antisemite.”² In Vallat’s mind, there was a difference between an antisemite of the state, a rational, educated man, and a passionate antisemite, which evoked images of religiously-charged violent irrationality.

State antisemitism informed rational government’s establishment of legislation that removed Jewish rights. It was an act of pragmatic governmentality. Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton emphasize the deep roots of French antisemitism as a precursor to the Vichy regime. They contend that this legacy dates back to the Revolution, as evidenced by the Dreyfus Affair and the virulence of antisemitism in the 1930s.³ Michel Anskey and Henri Msellati, among other historians, assert that Vichy represented a new era in Algeria with its institutional antisemitism.⁴ As this dissertation argues, however, antisemitism—more specifically its political and electoral varieties—had a long history in Algeria, dating back at least to the 1890s.

The election of antisemitic officials, from Drumont as a deputy for Algeria in 1898 to Dr. Molle and Abbé Lambert in the 1920s and 1930s, demonstrates the deeply engrained nature of antisemitism in the governmental apparatus of Algeria. These elected politicians implemented antisemitic policies during their terms. Mayor Bellat of Sidi Bel Abbès removed hundreds of Jews from voter lists in 1937. The administration’s lack of response to the Constantine violence of August 1934 indicates the toleration if not the support of antisemitism by the state. Certainly, institutional antisemitism in these periods was not on the same scale as under Vichy. To suggest that Vichy inaugurated institutional antisemitism,

² Anskey, *Les Juifs d’Algérie*, 118.

³ Michael R Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), xvii, 26-27. Julian Jackson similarly argued that there was a long history of antisemitism in France before Vichy, emphasizing the role of the Dreyfus Affair. Julian Jackson, *France: The Dark Years: 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 25.

⁴ Henri Msellati, *Les Juifs d’Algérie sous le régime de Vichy* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1999), 47.

however, is to ignore the long history of state-sponsored antisemitism from the fin-de-siècle into twentieth century France and Algeria.

This chapter examines Algeria during the Vichy era, and the immediate post-Vichy period under Generals Giraud and de Gaulle. It charts the ways in which antisemitic legislation, specifically the abrogation of the Crémieux decree in 1940, impacted Jews in the colony, their relationships with France and their Muslim and European neighbors. Under Vichy, the symbolic loss of that citizenship had a significant impact on Algerian Jews. Following the abrogation of the Crémieux decree and their subsequent loss of citizenship, Algerian Jews were surprisingly acquiescent in light of their defense efforts in the late 1930s. This was perhaps because the legislation came from the French state, rather than municipalities, which could more easily be challenged. Instead, the community turned inward to deal with issues such as supporting terminated administrative employees, teachers, and students expelled from their schools as a result of Vichy-imposed quotas.⁵

At the same time, Jews also took individual measures, invoking their commitment to France and loyalty to Pétain to plead that their citizenship be reinstated. These personal requests, as well as the correspondence between Jews on the subject of the antisemitic measures, provide a unique insight into the mentality of Algerian Jews and their assimilation over the seventy years of French citizenship. One particularly fascinating subsection of these requests consists of Jews in interfaith marriages who had converted to Christianity. These letters demonstrate the profound transformation of the Algerian Jewish community from that of an insular, Judeo-Arabic speaking, non-Westernized collective to a diverse group including Jews who had assimilated so fully to their French identity that they left Judaism entirely. Other letters, from veterans of the French army, indicate the embeddedness of the

⁵ Ansky, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 109.

concept of military service and the performance of citizenship responsibilities in the Algerian Jewish identity in the early 1940s.

Literary theorist Jacques Derrida remarks that “citizenship does not define a cultural, linguistic, or, in general, historical participation. It does not cover all these modes of belonging. But it is not some superficial or superstructural predicate floating on the surface of experience. Especially not when this citizenship is, through and through, *precarious, recent, threatened*, and more artificial than ever.”⁶ An Algerian Jew who experienced the rupture of losing his citizenship under Vichy (at age ten), Derrida himself illustrates the multiplicity of identities of Algerian Jews following the Crémieux decree. While their citizenship certainly defined them and their activities within the state, Algerian Jews maintained certain cultural and religious aspects of their pre-Crémieux existence. Similarly, antisemites sought to keep Algerian Jews outside of the French citizenry by emphasizing their “otherness.”

The abrogation of the Crémieux decree created a profound rupture for Algerian Jews. Not only were Jews torn from their adoptive country, but they also experienced an internal rupture, dividing the different, formerly cohesive elements of their identity: Jews, Frenchmen, and Algerians. Algerian Jews were confronted with an unfamiliar form of antisemitism. Previously, Jews encountered the passionate and popular antisemitism of the street, extending to politicians and administrative officials. But they never imagined that their status as citizens could truly be in danger.⁷ In spite of the rupture created by this drastic change in their status, Algerian Jews would fight for the next three years for the government

⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other, or, the Prosthesis of Origin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 14-15, emphasis in original.

⁷ Michael Abitbol, *The Jews of North Africa during the Second World War* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 62.

to reinstate the Crémieux decree. Even following the return of their citizenship, the memory of the rupture would remain.

The Fall of France and the Men of Vichy

Fleeing the imminent arrival of German troops, the French government evacuated Paris on June 10, 1940. German troops entered the city four days later; on June 22 the French government signed an armistice with Germany. Following the armistice, France was divided into two parts: the northern three-fifths of the country occupied by German troops, and the Vichy government in control of the unoccupied zone, under the leadership of Marshal Philippe Pétain.⁸ France's quick defeat was due in large part to the fact that France was ill-prepared for war.⁹ On July 10, the Parliament voted to give Pétain full powers, which transformed French politics by establishing a non-democratic regime.¹⁰ From the start, Pétain portrayed himself as the “protector” of the country, developing the National Revolution for the revival of France in the aftermath of defeat. In contrast, Charles de Gaulle declared his opposition to the Vichy government, who, as of June 18, could be heard calling his fellow Frenchmen to his side over the airwaves.¹¹ Pétain was both the “prop” of the Vichy regime and the mastermind behind the National Revolution. Pétain never protested the antisemitic legislation implemented by his staff, his government and its ministers.¹²

⁸ Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2.

⁹ Jackson, *The Fall of France*, 219, 221.

¹⁰ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years*, 139.

¹¹ Philippe Burin, *France under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 9-10, 16.

¹² Burin, *France under the Germans*, 69, 73. Recent evidence unearthed by Serge Klarsfeld in October 2010 indicates that Pétain himself increased the severity of antisemitic legislation.

Vichy was more than a collaborationist regime working with the Germans to pursue an antisemitic policy. It was an organic reaction to previous French governments.¹³ The men of Vichy had four objectives: protection, sovereignty, status, and regime.¹⁴ They used antisemitic policies to achieve these objectives. Despite France's long history of antisemitism before Vichy, there was a certain degree of opportunism among many Vichy officials who seized upon the antisemitism of the state to develop their own careers. Pétain himself was not necessarily a virulent antisemite, but he became the figurehead of a wildly antisemitic regime.

Vichy leaders quickly implemented measures to remove those groups they considered outside the nation, including some foreigners and Jews. On July 22, Vichy officials organized a commission to revise naturalizations promulgated since 1927. Between 1940 and 1944 this commission took away citizenship from 15,000 people, including 6,000 Jews.¹⁵ The first hundred days of the Vichy regime occurred without the direct influence of Germany. This illustrates the “indigenous” quality of Vichy’s antisemitism.¹⁶ Following the British attack on Mers-el-Kebir, near Oran, on June 25, Vichy could justify its actions against perceived enemies by citing the need to protect the country.¹⁷

The Mers-el-Kebir attack was significant for Algeria. Not only did it bring the reality of the war into the lives of those in Algeria, it also created further tensions in the colony. In the months following the British attack, Jews in Algeria were accused of being Anglophiles

¹³ Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 20.

¹⁴ Burin, *France under the Germans*, 80.

¹⁵ Jackson, *France: The Dark Years*, 150.

¹⁶ Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard*, 48-49.

¹⁷ Burin, *France under the Germans*, 25.

and British supporters.¹⁸ In September 1940, the Governor General reported on the “Anglophilia among the Jews.” The report stated that the Jews were “ferociously hostile to Marshal Pétain and demonstrate, with regards to Britain, sentiments that seem to exceed that of platonic admiration. These dispositions are observed among Jews in Algiers as well as in many interior centers.” According to the report, Jews believed that Britain would be victorious against the Germans and hoped that de Gaulle would take power over France. In an attempt to draw support from Muslims, Jews argued that Britain was a strong “Muslim power,” with Arab countries at her side. Appealing to developing Muslim nationalism, pro-British propagandists cited the example of independent former British territories.¹⁹ Many Algerian Jews looked to de Gaulle for help, especially following the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. In their minds, Britain was synonymous with de Gaulle.

Just as the attack on Mers-el-Kebir brought the realities of the regime change to the colony, so did the massive turnover of colonial administrators under Vichy. Of the 94 Prefects of France in place in 1940, Vichy leaders pushed 26 into retirement, revoked 29, and moved 37 to other posts. Algeria was no exception to this rule: only one Prefect remained, Louis Boujard in Oran.²⁰ Boujard, who served as Prefect under the Third Republic and under the Popular Front, made a surprisingly smooth transition into the era of Vichy and obediently executed the legislation directed against Jews. Under the Popular Front Boujard emphatically criticized the antisemitic mayor of Oran, Abbé Lambert. As a man of Vichy, Boujard oversaw the stripping of Algerian Jews’ citizenship, one of Lambert’s demands

¹⁸ Jacques Cantier, *LAlgérie sous le Régime de Vichy* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 2002), 7. Vichy extended its National Revolution to its colonies. See Eric T. Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain’s National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940-44* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

¹⁹ Governor General, “CIE: No. 970: Renseignements: A/S Courant d’Anglophilie parmi les Juifs,” Algiers, September 4, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

²⁰ Cantier, *LAlgérie sous le Régime de Vichy*, 52. See also Marc-Olivier Baruch, *Servir lÉtat français. Ladministration en France de 1940 à 1944* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1997).

during his tenure.²¹ A new Prefect, Max Bonnafous, arrived in Constantine. A socialist with a degree in philosophy, Bonnafous proved himself such an important servant of the Vichy regime that Minister of State Pierre Laval made him the Minister of Food and Agriculture in April 1942. General Valin, a notorious Doriot supporter, replaced Bonnafous as Prefect, cementing the continued strength of antisemitic leagues in Algeria.²²

Vichy's nomination of Governors General of Algeria were part of the government's concerted effort to transform the character of previous governments. General Governor Le Beau was removed from his position on August 1, 1940. Described as a generous administrator with a particular interest in the Jewish and Muslim populations of the colony, Le Beau even addressed the Jews of Algeria on the eve of his departure, encouraging them to maintain hope and faith in the future. Admiral Jean Abrial succeeded Le Beau and served from August 2, 1940 to July 15, 1941. Famous for his time as a prisoner of the Germans at Cherbourg and his liberation at the request of Vichy officials, Abrial used the regime's anti-Jewish legislation to oppress the Jews under his jurisdiction. On the day of the publication of the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, Abrial famously ordered troops to shoot Jews if they demonstrated against the new legislation.²³

Following Abrial's term, General Maxime Weygand assumed leadership of the colony, serving from July 17 to November 18, 1941. Most of the significant developments in the colony during the period resulted from Weygand's efforts. Weygand's own history, like that of Vichy, reflects the traditional character of French antisemitism. In 1899, Weygand had lent his support to the anti-Dreyfusards.²⁴ From June 1940 Weygand supported the

²¹ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 52

²² Ibid., 53.

²³ Ibid., 53-54. See also Ansky, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 90.

²⁴ Cantier, *L'Algérie sous le Régime de Vichy*, 94-95.

development of anti-Jewish legislation with regards to the Jews of Algeria. Under Weygand's term, Algeria adopted a quota for Jewish students in higher education that was more severe than in the metropole and other colonies. He also extended the quota to primary and secondary schools. On August 14, 1941, Weygand established an Algerian Service for Jewish Questions.²⁵ Like Vallat, Weygand considered himself a state antisemite, which allowed him to vigorously implement antisemitic legislation in Algeria, above and beyond that required by the metropole.²⁶

Yves Châtel served as Governor General from November 18, 1941 to January 17, 1943. Previously Resident General in Tonkin, Châtel was not new to colonial administration. He was also strongly antisemitic, and did not hesitate to extend harsh measures against the Algerian Jews. One of his closest advisors was Monsieur Canavaggio, who served as one of the leaders of the PPF.²⁷ Châtel's support for the PPF also indicated the significant role that Algeria would play in the party's revised program under Vichy. Doriot convened a congress of the PPF in Vichy on August 8, 1940. Algeria served a crucial front for the redevelopment of the PPF. The North African delegate of the PPF, Jean Fossati, acted as a leader in the party's reorganization.²⁸ Following Admiral Darlan's assassination in December 1942, Châtel was replaced by Marcel Peyrouton, who was named Governor General by General Giraud, with the support of Dwight D. Eisenhower.²⁹ Under the leadership of these Governor Generals, Algerian Jews saw their citizenship stripped away, along with the majority of their rights and the manner of life they had come to know as French citizens.

²⁵ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 55. See also Governor General Weygand, "Arrêté No. 5934," August 14, 1941, CAOM FM 81F/846.

²⁶ Cantier, *L'Algérie sous le Régime de Vichy*, 131.

²⁷ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 56. See also Cantier, *L'Algérie sous le Régime de Vichy*, 150.

²⁸ Cantier, *L'Algérie sous le Régime de Vichy*, 219.

²⁹ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 56.

Vichy Legislation, 1940-1941: The Abrogation of the Crémieux Decree and the Statut des Juifs

After the war, Vichy officials claimed that the legislation they enacted was a form of self-defense, a “pre-emptive” strategy to maintain French control and avoid further German encroachment.³⁰ In reality, Vichy’s anti-Jewish measures were of their own making. Vichy’s representatives in Algeria took this legislation even farther. As Algeria was an extension of the Metropole, Jews were subject to legislation impacting their coreligionists in France proper, but also suffered from laws in Algeria specifically aimed at reducing their status. The most significant example is the abrogation of the Crémieux decree.

As early as summer 1940, rumors circulated regarding the Algerian Jews’ future under Vichy. In July 1940, urban Algerian Muslims discussed the possibility of the abrogation of the Crémieux decree.³¹ A Muslim newspaper, *El Balagh el Djezairi*, published an article attacking Great Britain and the Jews as the enemies of Muslims and France.³² For some Muslims, the clearly anti-Jewish stance of Vichy presented an opportunity for expressing their antisemitic sentiment. Others responded to the calls for unity put forth by Algerian Jews. At the end of August 1940, Governor General Abrial commented that Jews and Muslims were working towards unity, especially under the sponsorship of the *Cercle du Progrès*, led by Dr. Loufrani and Elie Gozlan. The central goal of the organization was to

³⁰ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 7. See also Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France*, xvii, 9.

³¹ Departmental Center for Information, “No. 2548,” Oran, July 11, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

³² *El Balagh el Djezairi*, No. 487, July 12, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

reduce antisemitism. Some Muslims, however, accused Jews of working with Europeans to organize a pro-English movement.³³

In Algiers, Muslim leaders associated with the *Cercle du Progès* encouraged their coreligionists to avoid any actions against Jews. Dr. Bendjelloul urged support for the government. A surveillance report emphasized that although “deep within every Muslim is an anti-Jew who wants the most extraordinary measures, if not violence, against the Jews,” the order of calm was well received by the Muslim masses. The report quoted Muslim leaders stating “we do not wish to be the instruments to others’ grievances, because we would only have to bear the consequences; Satan continues to excite the French against the Jews, we’ll just be spectators.” Muslim leaders hoped that Abrial would act on their behalf as a reward for their good behavior.³⁴

The Prefect of Oran, Louis Boujard, reported that the Muslims of Oran demonstrated their support for France and their desire for the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, which placed them “for seventy years in a state of inferiority with regards to their former vassals.” Boujard accused the Jews of critiquing Pétain and his government and celebrating Britain. He concluded that the administration could dictate the attitude of Algerian Muslims. “We must not forget that the Algerian Muslim is very impressionable, he is a big child who always needs good advice.”³⁵

Antisemitism grew in the weeks before the announcement and publication of the October 1940 legislation. This recrudescence resulted from Vichy’s repeal of the

³³ Governor General, “CIE No. 955: Renseignements les Juifs, les Colons, et l’Angleterre,” Algiers, August 29, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

³⁴ Governor General, Center of Information, “No. 1004: Renseignements (source Indigène, bonne), Les Indigènes se tiennent à l’écart du Mouvement d’Antisémitisme à Alger,” Algiers, September 14, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

³⁵ Prefect of Oran, Centre for Information, “CIE, No. 823: Note A/S État d’esprit entre Indigènes et Israélites,” Oran, October 5, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

Marchandeau law, which penalized acts of inciting racial hatred. The repeal of this law supported the PPF's reorganization and reinvigoration of its antisemitic activity in the metropole and the colony. There was a concurrent renewal of Muslim antisemitism. Over the course of the evening of September 11-12, mobs broke the windows of twenty Jewish-owned shops in Algiers.³⁶ The Administrator of Ain-M'lila reported that "the indigenous psychology is profoundly moved by serious or fallacious news reported by demobilized soldiers and is moving very much towards antisemitism."³⁷ In late September, antisemites painted "Down with the Jews! Death to the Jews! Thieves! Are you leaving or not?" on walls in Batna.³⁸ The escalation of antisemitism further intensified Jewish concern for their future.

One of Vichy's first antisemitic laws was the October 3, 1940 *Statut des Juifs* (Jewish Statutes). The law defined Jews racially: someone with three Jewish grandparents would be considered part of the "Jewish race," as would someone with two Jewish grandparents who was married to another Jew. Those who met such criteria could no longer hold administrative positions, be part of the teaching corps, nor serve in the army as officers. The law outlined the exceptions to this rule, which included veterans of World War I or the 1939-1940 war, and recipients of the Legion of Honor or the Military Medal. Jews could practice liberal professions as long as they did not exceed the quotas determined later. Jews were excluded from any editorship in print news, and from the production of films, theater, and other forms of entertainment. Article nine extended the law's reach to Algeria and other

³⁶ Cantier, *L'Algérie sous le Régime de Vichy*, 73.

³⁷ Administrator of the Mixed Commune of Ain-M'lila to the Governor General, "No 11041/R-10/B; Rapport Hebdomadaire," Ain-M'lila, September 11, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

³⁸ Sub-Prefect of Batna to the Prefect of Constantine, "No 757 P.G.R.8/F: Objet: Antisémitisme," Batna, September 26, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

colonies, protectorates, and mandate territories.³⁹ In contrast to the German ordinance promulgated in the occupied zone, which defined Jewishness in religious terms, Vichy defined it racially, making it more inclusive and stringent.⁴⁰

Although Vichy promulgated the Jewish Statute before the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, the Jewish Statute was not published until ten days later. Promulgated on October 7 and published in the *Journal Officiel* the next day, the abrogation of the Crémieux decree was the first of the antisemitic laws to become official. By abrogating the Crémieux decree, the law of October 7 undermined many significant principles of French law, particularly that of the imprescriptible nature of French citizenship in the absence of an individual reason.⁴¹ Article Two defined Jews' new "native status as regulated by the laws governing the political rights of native Algerian Muslims. Article Three contradicted the previous article by stating that Jews' civil rights, their real and personal status would remain governed by French law. Article Four outlined the exceptions to the abrogation, which were the same as Article Three of the October 3 Jewish Statute. Article Six, the most complicated aspect of the law, stated that the new law applied to all the beneficiaries of the 1870 Crémieux decree and their descendants.⁴² The controversy of this article led to much confusion on the part of Algerian administrators who had to implement the law, because descendants of Jews who became naturalized by the Senatus-Consulte of 1865 or via individual naturalization were not impacted by the October 7 law.

³⁹ Philippe Pétain, "Loi Portant le Statut des Juifs," Vichy, October 3, 1940, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G3.

⁴⁰ Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France*, 12.

⁴¹ Cantier, *L'Algérie sous le Régime de Vichy*, 72-73.

⁴² Philippe Pétain, "Loi portent abrogation du Décret du Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale du 24 Octobre 1870 et fixant le statut des juifs indigènes des départements de l'Algérie," Vichy, October 7, 1940, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G6.

The October 7 law represented the importance of Algeria in the eyes of Vichy, but also served as a way of garnering greater support from the European population of the colony and Muslim populations in the three North African territories. By retracting their French citizenship, Jews were made to be French subjects, no longer superior to their Muslim counterparts. In reality, the two groups were not equal, as Jewish civil rights remained under the jurisdiction of French law, while Muslims still maintained their personal status.⁴³ Anticipating potential loopholes in the October 7 legislation, Vichy legislators promulgated a second law relating to the status of Algerian Jews on October 11, which excluded Jews from accessing political rights via the Jonnart law of February 4, 1919.⁴⁴ Had Jews been eligible to benefit from the 1919 law, a significant portion of Jews would have maintained their citizenship.⁴⁵

Responses to the Abrogation

The various groups in the colony responded to the abrogation in divergent ways. Europeans and Muslims expressed satisfaction, sometimes even joy at the reduction of the Jews' status in the colony. Jews, predictably, were dismayed by the new reality that they faced under Vichy. An administrator in the department of Constantine reported that when the news of the abrogation appeared in the press on October, few were surprised by the details. Jews immediately reached out to Muslims, stating that "they have lowered us, and now we are equal!"⁴⁶ The same day, the administrator of the mixed Commune of Souk-

⁴³ Abitbol, *The Jews of North Africa*, 59-60.

⁴⁴ Philippe Pétain, "Loi du 11 octobre 1940 portant suspension de la procédure instituée par les articles 3 à 11 de la loi du 4 février 1919 en ce qui concerne les israélites indigènes de l'Algérie," Vichy, October 11, 1940, CDJC LXXXVII-153.

⁴⁵ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 67.

⁴⁶ The Administrator of the Mixed Commune of Sedrata to the Governor General and the Prefect of Constantine, "No 132: Objet: Rapport hebdomadaire," Sedrata, October 9, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

Ahras reported that he would increase surveillance to ensure that Jews were not harassed subsequent to the news of the abrogation.⁴⁷

The Commissioner of the Departmental Police of Bône depicted the European community as very happy with the abrogation, while members of the left, specifically socialists, argued that the new legislation was against principles of humanity. Muslims expressed the hope that Jews would be quickly removed from posts in the administration and returned to native status. Some Muslims feared that upon being reduced to “native” status, Jews would be included in the Muslims’ electoral college. Some Jewish shops were closed on October 8 and 9 as a sign of mourning. Jews blamed German influence for the new legislation, and more Jews expressed support for the British.⁴⁸ The Central Police Commissioner of Bône reported that Muslims were frustrated by their own attempts to receive citizenship and resented the previous legislation that privileged Jews over Muslims. As a result, they were content with the abrogation’s impact on the Jews’ status.⁴⁹ This response demonstrates the significant impact that the issue of access citizenship had in the colony.

Jewish veterans were disappointed by the news.⁵⁰ Some elected European elected officials feared for their positions if they had been brought to office by a Jewish majority vote, one of the features of the antisemitic rhetoric of the previous century. Public

⁴⁷ The Administrator of the Mixed Commune of Souk-Ahras to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 6371: Rapport sur la situation politique et économique,” Souk-Ahras, October 9, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁴⁸ The Commissioner of the Departmental Police of Bône, “Rapport Journalier, dès 8 et 9 Octobre 1940, No. 2280: Répercussion du Décret Abrogeant le Décret Crémieux,” Bône, October 9, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688. See also Central Police Commissioner of Bône to the Director of General Security of Algeria, “No. 19360: Objet, Repercussion du decree abrogeant le décret Crémieux,” Bône, October 10, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁴⁹ Central Police Commission of Bône to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 46Z/A.I.R./10/B: Objet: État d’Esprit de la population,” Bône, October 10, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁵⁰ The Commissioner of the Departmental Police of Constantine, “No. 6291: Surveillance des Milieux israélites,” Constantine, October 20, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

confidence in Pétain and the Vichy government was at a high point.⁵¹ Certain Muslim intellectuals expressed surprise at the fact that some Jews, such as decorated veterans, remained Frenchmen as a result of the exceptions to the October 7 legislation. They were critical of these decorations, stating that Jews often received them not for individual action, but benefited from the actions of others, including Muslim soldiers, who rarely received decorations for service. In general, Muslims were pleased with the fact that Jews were no longer their superiors in the colony.⁵²

The Jews in Constantine did not publicly respond to the abrogation, in part because they knew that they could not fight it. Jewish intellectuals showed their frustration, arguing that Jews had always served France faithfully. As a way of garnering support, certain Jews attempted to prove to Muslims that they would be the next victims of Vichy. In general, Jews were hesitant to protest, because they feared being forced to leave Algeria and France, like Jewish refugees from Germany and Eastern Europe.⁵³ Despite these antisemitic acts, Jews still saw their future in France.

Educated Jews expressed their hope for a British victory and the fall of the Vichy government, particularly Vice President Pierre Laval, whom they called the “Inquisitor of the Catholic Church charged with destroying everything that is Christian.” The Prefect of Constantine reported that Jews’ clandestinely sent their gold to support the British forces, which they saw as their “future saviors.” In response to the Jewish Statute and the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, Jews in Constantine also began selling their shops and

⁵¹ The Prefect of Constantine, Center for Information, “No. 1105: Renseignements sur le Statut des Juifs,” Constantine, October 21, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁵² The Prefect of Constantine, Department Center for Information, “Compte Rendu Journalier du 22 Octobre 1940, No. 2995S, Statut des Juifs, I. Impressions générales et réactions de la population musulmane,” Constantine, October 22, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁵³ Ibid.

buying gold. Perhaps these Jews feared the eventual aryanization of businesses and sought to gain as much as they could from their businesses before having them usurped.⁵⁴

In Saint Arnaud, Bendjelloul encouraged Muslims to remain distant from the “Jewish question.”⁵⁵ Leaders hoped to maintain the Muslim community on the sidelines of what would become an explosively important matter in the colony. In contrast, PPF members in Bône published and circulated a flyer that encouraged Muslims to support the PPF.⁵⁶ The text lauded Pétain for making the Muslims equal in certain respects to the French.⁵⁷ In November, police found young men putting up signs stating “This is a Jewish shop,” on storefronts in Sétif. The handwritten signs were on paper ripped from student notebooks.⁵⁸

The PPF’s effort to garner Muslim support competed with Jewish efforts at encouraging Muslim-Jewish unity. In Algiers, the Central Police Commissioner reported that a non-Algerian Jew, who spoke impeccable Arabic, urged Muslim solidarity with Algerian Jews, against France:

We Jews, we are the brothers of the Muslims, now that France has rejected us, we have become natives; France needed us in 1870, but since we didn’t want to give our money to the war of 1940, they have rejected us. We need to take one another’s hands and act to obtain all of our rights.... if the French let the Germans and the Italians come to Algeria, you will be beaten with clubs, whereas if the British come, you will be treated like the Muslims of Egypt or of the Indies.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Prefect of Constantine, Departmental Center for Information, “No. 3002/S: Compte Rendu Journalier du 23 Octobre 1940,” Constantine, October 23, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688. See also Police Commissioner of Guelma to the Mayor of Guelma, “No. 838 A.I./R.10/B: situation politique et économeique des indigènes (Secret),” Guelma, October 25, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁵⁵ The Administrator of the Mixed Commune of Guelma, “Rapport sur la Situation Politique et économique de la commune mixte, au 23 Octobre 1940,” Saint-Arnaud, October 23, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688

⁵⁶ The Special Departmental Police Commissioner of Bône, “Rapport No. 2399A/S d’un tract du PPF,” Bône, October 26, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁵⁷ Police Commissioner of Guelma, “No. 882: Rapport Journalier du 9 au 10 Novembre 1940,” Guelma, November 10, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁵⁸ Police Commissioner of Sétif to the Governor General and the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 14.114: Objet: Affiches Antijuives,” Sétif, November 10, 1940, CAOM Alg Cosnt B/3/688.

⁵⁹ Central Police Commissioner of Algiers to the Prefect of Algiers, “No. 2/091R.S.,” Algiers, November 4, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

Immediately after the announcement of the abrogation, Jews began their campaign for Jewish-Muslim unity, pointing out to Muslims that now they were equals, except that the Jews were in an even worse condition. “They added that France, in her troubles, in order to distract the French masses, gave them the Jews in a holocaust and that the day after peace which would certainly be disastrous for France, it will be the Arabs who will become the scapegoats.”⁶⁰ In Sidi Bel Abbès and Tlemcen, areas with large Jewish populations, rabbis “discretely organized prayers, and the order that circulated through the community was: ‘silence.’” The Prefect cited Jews in Relizane, whose words directed at Muslims were a mixture of solidarity and reproach: “It is so as to not give you rights that France took away ours. The decision that she made against us is also directed against you. Now, it is finished for you; you have nothing more to hope for from France.”⁶¹ Alongside such efforts at unity, Jewish leaders focused their efforts on support and solidarity for those Jews impacted by the Jewish Statute.⁶²

Generally Muslims did not rally to support Algerian Jews. Muslims in Oran threatened to remove Jewish names from the monument to the World War I dead, challenging Jewish assertions of patriotism.⁶³ In the month following the announcement of the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, cases of violence between Jews and Muslims, and Jews and Europeans broke out at an increased level. In Constantine, a Jew, Julien Bacri Cohen, a 55-year-old fabric merchant, complained that he had been shoved and called a

⁶⁰ Captain Ben Daoud to the General Commandant of the Division of Oran, “État d’esprit des indigènes et propagande anti-Française dans les milieux israélites,” Oran, October 9, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

⁶¹ Prefect of Oran, Center of Information, “No. 861: Renseignement A/S de l’Abrogation de décret Crémieux,” Oran, October 18, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

⁶² The Police Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 6832: Surveillance des milieux israélites,” Constantine, November 25, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁶³ Chief of the Squad, Roubaud, Company of Oran, “No. 858/2,” Oran, October 18, 1940, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

“dirty Jew” by a Muslim.⁶⁴ The same day, a Jewish woman, Zernouda Nakache, age 59, complained that she had been slapped by a Muslim who told her, “You Jews, you don’t count anymore and you just got what you deserved.”⁶⁵ On October 23, a French student, Louis Frey, age 16, got into a fight with Claude Guedj, a Jewish student, and called him “dirty Jew.” Guedj’s friend Robert Ifrah, another student reproached Frey for his words and proceeded to beat him up.⁶⁶

Another incident involved all Jews, Europeans, and Muslims. A Jewish baker, Charles Levy, age 26, and his wife Rosaline, age 17, were walking when a drunk man, Marcel Beideira, a French citizen and day laborer, age 27, insulted them. The Jewish couple continued on their way and tried to ignore Beideira, but he followed them. Frustrated, Levy approached Beideira and shoved him. Beideira then called to the Muslims who witnessed this altercation, shouting “Beat him, he’s a Jew!” The Muslims threw stones at the Jewish couple and Levy was hit with a cane.⁶⁷ Despite Jewish efforts at Jewish-Muslim unity, antisemites managed to manipulate Muslims to join their cause.

After the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, a group of “Frenchmen” from Oran submitted a letter to Pétain celebrating his leadership, his “specifically French work,” and encouraging a more stringent approach to dealing with the Jews in the colony. They requested the modification of Article One of the Jewish Statute, which defined who was a

⁶⁴ Police Commissioner of the Second Arrondissement of Constantine to the Central Police Commissioner, “No. 6098,” Constantine, October 15, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁶⁵ Police Commissioner of the Second Arrondissement of Constantine to the Central Police Commissioner, “No. 6198,” Constantine, October 15, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁶⁶ Police Commissioner of the Second Arrondissement of Constantine to the Central Police Commissioner “Re: Incident entre deux lycéens israélites et un lycéen Français,” Constantine, October 23, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688. Ifrah was involved in a similar fight on March 29, 1941. See report Police Commissioner of the Second Arrondissement of Constantine to the Central Police Commissioner, Constantine, March 29, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

⁶⁷ The Central commissioner to the Director of Central Security, and the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 21313: Objet: Ivresse, violences et voies de faits,” Bône, November 6, 1940, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

Jew racially, because the Algerian Jews “will not hesitate, to arrive at their goals, to profit from the dispositions of this article by creating mixed homes.... We want a French Algeria; attacks against it by the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy are not empty words, they are increasingly visible....” They concluded that “our ANTISEMITISM is a natural reflexive defense because there is an aggressive and insolent SEMITISM, particularly violent in Algeria.”⁶⁸

The authors of the letter argued that because of the differences in demographics between the metropole and the colony, the Statute needed to be adapted to fit the unique situation of the colony.

200,000 Jews constitute currently a formidable ‘ethnic minority’ for the 800,000 Europeans. A homogenous bloc, which obeys with extreme rigor the orders coming from different consistories...the Algerian Jews, not having any patriotic sentiment, in these conditions how can they love and serve the France that welcomed them? In the French crucible, they have not, nor have they ever wanted to assimilate.⁶⁹

Using the racial calculations of the Jewish Statute, they emphasized an irreducible Jewish nature. They posited that children born of a marriage between a Jewish man and a European woman would inherit not only the “physical characteristics of the Jewish race, but also all the moral and intellectual dispositions.” They observed that if a child was “only one quarter Jewish, he still showed a clear tendency consistent with the Jewish spirit, especially if he had a Jewish name.” They proposed that the revised first article of the Jewish Statute consider anyone with two Jewish grandparents a Jew, and argued that intermarriage should be banned. “The Jewish Statute as it stands can be considered as a first-step accomplishment. Without hatred, only because we want France to remain sovereign in Algeria, we demand other

⁶⁸ “A Group of Frenchmen of Oran,” to Marshal Pétain, “Consideration sur le statut des Juifs en Algérie,” CAOM FM 81F/847. Emphasis their own. Although the letter is undated, it was likely written soon after the implementation of the legislation in 1940.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

measures that do not allow Jews to continue to cause the immense evil that they create in our country.”⁷⁰

Chief Rabbi of France, Moïse Schwartz submitted a letter of protest to the leaders of Vichy following the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. Falling upon familiar tropes of Jewish patriotism and service, Schwartz protested the racial legislation. “We cannot adhere to the principle of a racial legislation, principle outside of our frontiers, repudiated by Judaism, denied by science and condemned *ex cathedra* by the leader of the Catholic church as well as the other Christian churches. We affirm that we are not a racial minority, nor a political minority, but a religious community.” To defend this statement, Schwartz enumerated the similarities between Judaism and the ideals of the new Vichy government. “The cult of the family is part of our religious doctrine...we have always centrally placed the glorification of work. And yet, men of science, judges, officials...who chose to enter government service...will now find themselves excluded and unemployed, often without resources.” Schwartz emphasized the long history of Jewish service, and their significant efforts in the last two wars. In spite of the legislation imposed by Vichy, Schwartz promised an “unfailing devotion to the homeland.”⁷¹

The CAES leaders submitted a letter to Marshal Pétain in response to the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. They outlined the history of Jewish commitment to France since the very early days of French presence in Algeria. “The promoters and the authors of the Crémieux decree were not wrong in according the status of citizen to Algerian Jews. In a general manner, the new citizens have contributed to cement French authority in Algeria,

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Chief Rabbi of France, Moïse Schwartz, to the Pétain, the Head of State, and to the members of Government, “Le Grand Rabbin de France, Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur à le devoir d’adresser au Chef de l’État et aux Membres du Gouvernement la déclaration suivante au nom des Français israélites,” Vichy, October 22, 1940, CAOM FM 81F/846.

which was one of the main goals of the decree.” In analyzing the new legislation, the CAES members pointed out the problems that the exceptions to the abrogation posed, primarily the fact that such exceptions could divide families. By pointing out their former status competitors, they indicated the inequality of the legislation. “In Algeria, a French citizen for 70 years, who experienced the same joys and the same agony as his countrymen, who fought two wars, is being rejected for French citizenship while the son of foreigner retains his rights; even worse, a naturalized citizen who has not participated in the two wars, is still a French citizen.” They concluded their letter with an expression of their unerring loyalty to France. “If the October 7, 1940 decree of abrogation withdraws our rights, we will maintain our responsibilities. We will accomplish them all, as in the past, in all unselfishness, animated only for the greatness of France.”⁷²

Subsequent Legislation and Implementation of the Anti-Jewish Laws

On November 20, Vichy promulgated a subsequent Jewish Statute for the Jews of Algeria. The new law created deadlines for Jews who sought exemptions from the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. Algerian Jews had one month following the promulgation of the current law to demonstrate that they met the requirements for exemption. Jews had to provide all the necessary documentation to support their request to a Justice of the Peace. If the judge did not accept their request, the Jew then had three days to submit another request to the president of the Tribunal of their arrondissement. Article Four retracted Jews’ previous voting privileges, for which they had battled in recent years. The law established a commission to be led by a Member of the State, charged with examining

⁷² Rabbis and Consistory Presidents of Algeria, under auspices of the CAES, “Mémoire à monsieur le Marechal Pétain, Chef de l’État Français,” Algiers, undated, CDJC LXXXIV-1.

the dossiers of requests for exemption.⁷³ Algerian Jews' experiences closely mirrored that of German Jews following the Nuremberg laws, in the sense that both lost their rights as citizens.⁷⁴ Although similar, metropolitan Jews' status was less explicit than the Jews in Algeria: even though they could not practice their citizenship rights, they remained citizens in name. The mayor of Constantine reported in December 1940 that in accordance with the October 7 law, his service marked all certificates of Jews with the word "*Juif*".⁷⁵ The definition of nationality and of citizenship would later cause much confusion for administrators and Vichy officials, especially during the period of the 1941 census.

The implementation of the abrogation of the Crémieux decree and the Jewish Statute had severe implications for the Jews in Algeria and for the colonial administration as well. In 1931, there were 110,127 Jews in Algeria, 850,279 Europeans, and 5,593,045 Muslims.⁷⁶ Many Jews in all three departments were concentrated in certain occupations such as jewelers, merchants, and other similar professions, Jews also represented a significant portion of administrative and municipal employees.

<i>Field of Employment</i>	<i>Jews employed in the Department of Algiers</i>	<i>Jews employed in the Department of Constantine</i>	<i>Jews employed in the Department of Oran</i>
Police	16	40	40
Railroad	34	95	45
P.T.T. (Postes, télégraphes, téléphones)	204	147	200

⁷³ Philippe Pétain, "Statut des Juifs d'Algérie," Vichy, November 20, 1940 (published in the *Journal Officiel of Algeria* on November 26, 1940), CAOM Alg Const 93/3G7. The retraction of voting privileges had little real impact on the situation of Algerian Jews, as under Vichy there were no elections.

⁷⁴ Marrus and Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews*, 193.

⁷⁵ Mayor of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 361: Objet: Certificates de Nationalité," Constantine, December 6, 1940, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G7.

⁷⁶ Maurice Eisenbeth, Grand Rabbin d'Alger, *Les Juifs de l'Afrique du Nord: Démographie et Onomastique* (Alger: Imprimerie du Lycée, 1936), 16.

Administrative positions	162	120	157
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Source: Maurice Eisenbeth, *Grand Rabbin d'Alger, Les Juifs de l'Afrique du Nord: Démographie et Onomastique* (Algier: Imprimerie du Lycée, 1936), 16.

By 1940 and the implementation of the Vichy antisemitic legislation, these numbers would have grown significantly.

Governor General Abrial reported on January 22, 1941 that based on the October 3 Jewish Statute, 423 Jews had been removed from official positions. Of those Jews, 108 were based in Algiers, 176 in Oran, and 139 in Constantine.⁷⁷ Based on the 1936 statistics of Jewish professions, nearly all Jews in the administration would have lost their jobs. The men of Vichy were not ignorant of the problems posed by such a massive purging of administration personnel. At the end of December 1940, the Secretary of State Peyrouton warned of the implications of the upcoming termination of Jewish administrative employees in Algeria. “A large proportion of clerks, attorneys, notaries, and bailiffs currently serving the Algerian departments are indeed of the Jewish race. So far, this situation raises a series of problems that must be addressed quickly.”⁷⁸ Peyrouton’s office followed up in a subsequent letter that tried to work out the complexities of the legislation. “In certain Algerian administrations, the simultaneous eviction of all the Jews also risks causing important gaps and will trouble the effective functioning of the service.”⁷⁹ These concerns demonstrate the extent to which Algerian Jews had integrated into French society in the colony. They represented such an integral part of the administration that the implementation of the Vichy legislation posed significant problems for effective governing of the colony.

⁷⁷ Governor General of Algeria, “Services Communaux (statistiques sur le nombre et la répartition des juifs dans les services publics, loi 3 octobre 1940),” Algiers, January 22, 1941, CAOM FM 81F/846.

⁷⁸ Secretary of State Peyrouton to the Minister of Justice, “Re: Officiers ministeriels israélites en Algérie,” Vichy, December 24, 1940, CAOM FM 81F/847.

⁷⁹ Bergen, Director of Peyrouton’s cabinet to the Secretary General, “Re: Statut des Juifs application de la loi du 3 octobre 1940 en Algérie,” Vichy, January 2, 1941, CAOM FM 81F/847.

By October 1941, the numbers of terminated Jewish administrative employees had increased dramatically. According to the Governor General, of the 2,671 Jews who had been employees of the administration, by October 13, only 469 remained.⁸⁰

	<i>Titled</i>	<i>Auxiliary</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of Jews in the administration	1890	781	2671
Jewish agents terminated December 19, 1940	1400	491	1891
Jewish agents terminated December 10, 1941	11	142	153
Jewish agents affects by the law of June 2, 1941	78	47	125
Total Jewish agents eliminated in application of the Jewish Statute	1489	680	2169
Jews terminated following normal procedure (retirement, discipline)	9	24	33
Jews remaining in the administration	392	77	469

Source: CAOM FM 81F/847

Implementation of the legislation caused confusion. What were officials to do with Jews who did not fall under the purview of the abrogation of the Crémieux decree? The Minister of Justice clarified this issue: all beneficiaries of the Crémieux decree and their descendants would be impacted by the abrogation. Jews who would not be impacted by the law included those in Algeria who became naturalized individually before the promulgation of the Crémieux decree, Jews born outside of Algeria who relocated to the colony and benefited from individual naturalization, and the descendants of both groups. The Minister of Justice added that according to the meeting of the State Council on January 29, 1941, underage children of Jews exempted from the October 7 law could maintain their

⁸⁰ Governor General to the Secretary of State, "No. 465QJ: Objet: Statut des Juifs A/S de l'application aux fonctionnaires de la loi du 3 juin," Algiers, October 13, 1941, CAOM FM 81F/847.

citizenship.⁸¹ In the processing individual files, Vichy officials rarely applied these clarifications.

Confusion over definitions of citizenship and nationality came to the fore during the 1941 census ordered by the law of June 2, 1941. On June 2, Vichy promulgated another Jewish Statute, which extended the list of prohibited professions and organized a census of Jews. According to the law for the census, all those considered Jewish had one month to present themselves to the Prefect of their department or the Sub-Prefect of their arrondissement. There they had to provide a written declaration indicating that they were Jews, detailing their civil status, their marital and family status, their profession, and their property holdings. Infractions of participation in the census would be punished with imprisonment for up to a year, and a fine between 100-10,000 francs.⁸² Pétain extended this law to Algeria on July 18.⁸³

Even before the July 18 promulgation of the law, the Prefect of Constantine, Max Bonnafous, submitted a set of guidelines on how to process the census to the administrators and Sub-Prefects in his department. These guidelines were more stringent than the definition in the first Jewish Statutes. According to Bonnafous, regardless of the religion observed by the individual, if they had three Jewish grandparents, or two Jewish grandparents but was married to a Jew, they would be considered Jewish. To prove non-practice of Judaism, individuals had to provide proof of participation in another religion, which included baptism certificates and letters of certification from priests.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Minister of Justice to the Secretary of State, Vichy, February 8, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G7.

⁸² Philippe Pétain, Admiral Darlan, "Loi du 2 Juin 1941 Prescrivant le Recensement des Juifs (No. 2333)," Vichy, June 2, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G4.

⁸³ Philippe Pétain, Admiral Darlan, "Décret du 18 Juillet 1941 étendant à l'Algérie la loi du 2 Juin 1941 Prescrivant le recensement des Juifs (no. 3032)," Vichy, July 18, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G4.

⁸⁴ Prefect of Constantine to administrators in the Department of Constantine, "No. 4780," Constantine, July 11, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G3.

At the end of August 1941, Bonnafous circulated another set of guidelines for the census to be conducted between September 1 and 10, 1941. All Jews were required to participate. Husbands would make declarations for their wives, and legal representatives for underage children.⁸⁵ 117,656 Jews participated during the census, of which 33,095 were children under age fifteen.⁸⁶ This large proportion of youth in the Jewish community impacted the quota placed on Jewish students in primary and secondary schools in Algeria.

Following the census, the Mayor of Batna reported to Bonnafous that he had received 1,062 declarations of Jews in his city. Mayor Huguon reported some hesitation among the Jews making declarations based on the attribution of nationality and citizenship.⁸⁷ The confusion stemmed from the categories applied to Jews on nationality certificates following the Vichy legislation. These included the following: “non-naturalized native Algerian Jew,” “naturalized native Algerian Jew,” “naturalized or non-naturalized Moroccan or Tunisian Jew.”⁸⁸ In November, the Prefect alerted his departmental administrators that all certificates and identity cards provided for Jews should be marked by one of three categories “Jew-French citizen,” “Jew-Algerian native,” and “Jew-foreign.” He also reminded them that a person’s status could change in concordance with the Jewish statute. For example, someone

⁸⁵ Prefect of Constantine to administrators in the Department of Constantine, “No. 13.501A.C.2: Objet: Recensement des Juifs,” Constantine, August 29, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G4.

⁸⁶ Cantier, *L’Algérie Sous le Régime de Vichy*, 316.

⁸⁷ Mayor of Batna to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 6: Re: Recensement des Juifs,” Batna, September 19, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G4. Huguon reported that the Muslim and European populations in his city were pleased with the steps taken by the census, and the Government in “putting the Jews in their place and outside of harm’s way.” The Prefect of Oran did not report similar issues; he reported 51,316 Jews in his department. See Prefect of Oran, “No. 729 d/2: Note pour Monsieur le Directeur du Cabinet, Objet: Recensement des Juifs,” Oran, March 4, 1942, CAOM Alg Oran //3363.

⁸⁸ Prefect of Constantine to the Governor General of Algeria, “No. 6033: Statut des Juifs, Certificat de nationalité,” Constantine, March 22, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G7.

with two Jewish grandparents would not be considered a Jew, however if he or she married a Jew, that status would change.⁸⁹

The issue of what rights could be inherited further confused colonial administrators. There was little uniformity among different officials' interpretations, which transferred confusion down the line of command. In April 1941, the mayor of Bône asked the Prefect for clarification as to the status of the children of Algerian Jews who maintained their citizenship. Due to the large number of requests from Jews to join the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse*, a paramilitary youth group in Algeria that was only open to French citizens, the mayor needed additional information to process such demands.⁹⁰ The Prefect responded that the children of Algerian Jews who maintained their citizenship did not inherit their parents' citizenship. In contrast, Admiral Darlan ruled that the status of French citizenship did indeed pass down to underage children of Jews who benefited from the exceptions to the abrogation. As a result of the conflicting verdicts, the Mayor was at a loss for how to deal with the requests inundating his office.⁹¹

To deal with the complicated nature of Algerian Jews' status, Governor General Weygand established a Service for Jewish Questions, modeled on the General Commissariat of Jewish Questions in the metropole. The Service was responsible for studying the political, administrative, economic, and social implications of the Vichy legislation regulating Jewish status and interpreting issues specific to Algeria. The Service oversaw the applications of Jews to maintain their citizenship, and ensure that there were no infractions of the Jewish Statute, especially with regard to professions made illegal for Jews. The Service for Jewish

⁸⁹ The Prefect of Constantine to the Mayor and Administrators, "No. 23002," Constantine, November 7, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G7.

⁹⁰ Mayor of Bône to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 6502," Bône, April 10, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G6. The *Chantiers de la Jeunesse* were also intended to replace military service.

⁹¹ Mayor of Bône to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 15963," Bône, August 9, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G6.

Questions also controlled the process of aryonation in Algeria, thus overseeing the liquidation of Jewish property and belongings.⁹²

The endless confusions surrounding the Algerian Jews' status led to the promulgation of another law on February 18, 1942. The law asserted that although the Crémieux decree was abrogated, Jews could still request to become naturalized via the Senatus-Consulte of 1865. They could not, however, benefit from the Jonnart law of February 4, 1919, which allowed certain Algerian Muslims entrance into a semi-citizenship described in Chapter Four. The law reaffirmed the particular exemptions available to Jews from the earlier legislation, under the condition that the applicants had never been found guilty of a crime. The law also added another form of exemption from the abrogation: Jews who were widows or orphans of soldiers who died for France. It clarified the inheritance of citizenship: children of those Jews who maintained their citizenship inherited that status, unless it was opposed by the Governor General. Jews in Algeria not impacted by the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, but were naturalized, were still under the jurisdiction of the Jewish Statute in Algeria. In addition, non-Algerian Jewish women who acquired French nationality by marrying native Algerian Jewish men would have the same political and civil status as their husbands.⁹³ Vichy officials clearly had trouble making the range of Jewish statuses and identities legible. Nonetheless, the multiple laws from Vichy regarding their status and citizenship had a significant impact on the Jews of Algeria. The sense of rupture that these Jews felt can best be understood in their own words in their appeals to Vichy and colonial officials and in their correspondence with one another.

⁹² Governor General Maxime Weygand, "Arrête No. 5934," Algiers, August 14, 1941, CAOM FM 81F/846.

⁹³ Philippe Pétain, "Loi No 254 du 18 février 1942 fixant le statut des Juifs indigènes d'Algérie," Vichy, February 18, 1942, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G6.

Appealing to Vichy: Letters and Petitions to Pétain and Vichy officials

A particularly rich source for interpreting the range of Algerian Jewish identities, statuses, and experiences under Vichy is a body of letters and petitions sent by Jews to Vichy officials claiming exemptions from the abrogation of the Crémieux decree and the Jewish Statute. This correspondence wonderfully illustrates the rupture that they experienced. Although the loss of their citizenship was immediate and initiated the first tear in the fabric that wove Algerian Jews into the metropole, the Jewish Statute provided a continuing and tortuous division between Algerian Jews and their former identities. The rupture was severe, yet Jews maintained a sense of hope for a continued future with France, calling upon the France of philosophers and great politicians, the France of the past and, hopefully, their future, to grant them clemency.

The Jewish Statute excluded Jews from various liberal professions, the military, and reduced the number of Jews allowed to attend schools and serve in the administration. They were also banned from serving as officers and NCOs in the military. The June 2, 1941 Jewish Statute increased the number of occupations from which Jewish were barred. It also established quotas on professions such as doctors and lawyers. Another decree, promulgated on November 5, 1941, applied quotas for Jews in primary and secondary schools in Algeria.⁹⁴ These new realities overwhelmed Jewish communal leadership who had to deal with supporting Jews terminated from their previous occupations and Jewish children who no longer could attend schools.

Sergeant René Boukobza, who was serving in a group of soldiers stationed in Bedeau (Oran), wrote to Suzanne Amoyel soon after the June 1941 legislation. “I’ll talk today of new laws that swirl in my head in a persistent manner. You have read, my dear, that we

⁹⁴ Cantier, *L’Algérie Sous le Régime de Vichy*, 132-133.

[Jews] no longer have the right to be an officer or even an NCO...Since I can no longer perform my duties, a single solution presents itself, to demobilize....”⁹⁵ Elie Gozlan denounced the treatment of Jewish soldiers, particularly those who were held as prisoners after the war of 1939-1940. He wrote of his frustration that upon release from captivity, such prisoners returned not as heroes, but only as Jews impacted by anti-Jewish legislation. “Our children fought to defend their country, they have endured thousands of sufferings while in captivity, they dream of their release and their return to the motherland. Much grief and sadness awaits them.”⁹⁶

The institution of a quota for Jewish students in primary and secondary schools also significantly impacted the entire Jewish community. The June 1941 law instituted a three percent quota for Jews in each faculty of universities. Governor General Weygand set the quota for Jewish students in primary and secondary schools in Algeria at 14 percent in 1941, but reduced it further to seven percent in 1942.⁹⁷ The quota in Algeria was more restrictive than that of the metropole, evidence of the impact of Algerian antisemitism on the implementation of Vichy-inspired legislation.⁹⁸ In the light of such restrictions, the responsibility for educating Jewish children fell to the Jewish community. Elie Gozlan wrote in the Jewish monthly *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives* that “our children must not remain ignorant and we have the responsibility to provide them with instruction for all degrees.... It is within instruction that the Jewish spirit has its safeguard, it is through education that it regains its unity.”⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Sergeant René Boukobza to Suzanne Amoyel, Bedeau, June 16, 1941, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

⁹⁶ Elie Gozlan, “Quand nos Prisonniers reviendront,” *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*, no. 69 (May 1941): 1, CDJC BIB 9001.

⁹⁷ Cantier, *L’Algérie Sous le Régime de Vichy*, 317.

⁹⁸ Msellati, *Les Juifs d’Algérie*, 55.

⁹⁹ Elie Gozlan, “Pour nos Enfants,” *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*, no. 75 (December 1941): 1, CDJC BIB 9001.

André Bakouche, the President of the Jewish Consistory of Constantine submitted a report to Governor General Châtel in September 1941 in which he emphasized the crisis caused by the Jewish quotas in education, particularly primary and secondary schools. He demanded what to do with the mass of children excluded from French schools. “How do we support them...morally and materially? ... It is a generation in total disarray.” Bakouche outlined the efforts of Jews to develop schools of their own. Among them were professional training programs, in the manner of the Alliance, such as apprenticeships and an artisan society. Bakouche also described the development of a farm school in the department of Constantine. He emphasized the patriotism of Algerian Jews and their devotion to Pétain and the men of Vichy, as well as the administrators of Algeria and Constantine. “It is to them that we look, along with all the French of this country, for our unity of purpose, inspiration, and guidance.”¹⁰⁰

Once the education of Jewish students fell to the Jewish community, Jewish aid organizations, such as the *Association d'Assistance et d'Entr'aide* in Oran, organized fundraisers to establish and fund Jewish schools.¹⁰¹ On December 31, 1941, Pétain promulgated a law that placed private Jewish schools under the jurisdiction of the French government. Teachers of such schools were required to be French and had to be approved by the Governor General or the Prefect on the recommendation of the rector of the Academy of Algiers. The Governor General also had the power to temporarily or permanently shut down any Jewish private school.¹⁰² The Governor General’s commission that supervised the

¹⁰⁰ André Bakouche, “Mémoire par M. André Bakouche, President du Consistoire Israélite de Constantine, à M. le Gouverneur Châtel, Gouverneur General Adjoint de l’Algérie,” Constantine, September 12, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G3.

¹⁰¹ Albert Smadja, President Jewish Consistory to the Prefect of Oran, Oran, December 18, 1941, CAOM Alg Oran 1S/41

¹⁰² Philippe Pétain, “Loi No. 5535 du 31 Décembre 1941 relative à l’enseignement privé Juif en Algérie,” Vichy, December 31, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G29.

Jewish schools could reject Jewish teachers based on various aspects of their past, particularly their political activities and affiliations.¹⁰³ Jews in Algeria tended to cluster in certain urban areas. As a result, they often represented a large portion of students in particular schools, and the imposition of the quota greatly reduced their proportion of the student body. The Jewish community faced the difficult responsibility of funding and supporting the schools, the students, and their teachers.¹⁰⁴

Madame Aboab-Azerad expressed her sadness over the situation of Jewish children. “The quota has been applied in all its rigor and caused the expulsion of many young girls from the Lycée (Monique among them). For the young people, this has gone on for a few days.... The time is fertile with sadness. However, we are not less confidant in the France of Montaigne, of Pascal, of Descartes, of Renan, of Pasteur.”¹⁰⁵ Aboab-Azerad’s letter reflects the strength of her French identity. The student-run Zionist organization *Qol Aviv* protested the exclusion of Jewish students from the University of Algiers. They questioned the subjectivity of the Vichy legislation. “We were accused of not being racially French.... But how does one define French race in this country? Most inhabitants of North Africa and the colonies have become naturalized; are they more French than we are?” They continued, “We are accused of not having a French mentality. Did our fathers and our ancestors not fight for France in 1914-1918? Many of us have fought for France more recently; many of us are now prisoners.”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ For example, Réné Kahn, father for two children, a literature professor, was rejected because of his past as a member of the SFIO. “Candidats Enseignement Privé: René Kahn,” Bône, November 21, 1942, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G29.

¹⁰⁴ President Attali, Association Culturelle Israélite de Constantine, to M. Szarka, Cannes, ‘RE: Entr’aide juive pour l’organisation des écoles libres israélites,’ Constantine, January 31, 1942, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G29.

¹⁰⁵ Madame Aboab-Azerad to M. Joseph Levy (Nice), “Intercepted Telegram No. 5281: RE: Application du ‘Numerus-Clausus’ et opinion,” Oran, November 3, 1941, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹⁰⁶ Representatives of *Qol Aviv*, “Aux Étudiants de l’Université d’Alger,” *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d’Algérie*, no. 70 (June-July 1941): 7, CDJC BIB 9001.

The June 1941 Jewish Statute limited the number of Jews who could serve in certain liberal professions, including doctors and lawyers. Dr. J. Salama described the anguish that he felt upon learning of his exclusion from the College of Physicians. “Despite my courage, yesterday was a day of mourning at home. The new measure floored us because we hoped to see applied if not a more just measure, at least a more clement one. Our hopes are dashed.... Can we find a way to live, work, or we will be beaten by this fatality?”¹⁰⁷ While Salama was overwhelmed by grief and uncertainty, Gaston Aboucaya, a senior lawyer, faced the quotas with confidence that Vichy would end and true France return. “I have delayed writing to you because I have prepared the liquidation of my office and it provided me with a lot of work. Today was my last day; I have removed my plaque and hung up my robe at home. It was not without emotion, but my morale is good because I have confidence in the repossession of France and her recovery....”¹⁰⁸

For Jews removed from administrative positions as a result of the Jewish Statute, the realities of their termination were profound and discouraging. In particular, the realization that they would not receive a pension for their work caused great distress. A group of Jewish men who worked for the PTT protested their lost posts and their lack of pensions to support their large families. “The situation that we had created in our Administration by our work and dedication enabled us to establish a home and raise a large family.... We are old servants of the state. We had conscientiously done our duty as officials and we will always remain disciplined, faithful and devoted....”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Dr. J. Salama to M. J. Skalli (Oran), “Intercepted Telegram No. 229: RE: Doléances d’un médecin juif sur l’application du numerus-clausus,” Tiaret, February 6, 1941, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹⁰⁸ Gaston Aboucaya, ancient bâtonnier, to Alphonse Aboucaya (Algiers), “Intercepted Telegram No. 412: Re: consideration sur l’application du ‘numerus-clausus’ aux avocats,” Oran, February 15, 1942, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹⁰⁹ All of the ten men listed on the letter had at least four children, some had as many as eight. Simon Allouche, Sakhar Aouizerate, David Zaouche, Simon Zaouche, Maklouf Halimi, Ephraim Elbez, David Derai, Benoun

In the face of the Jewish Statute and the Crémieux decree, which stripped them of their citizenship and terminated their employment, some Jews appealed to Pétain to maintain their citizenship, based either on their own contributions or that of their parents or spouses. Many women used this avenue. Rénée Zerbib, the widow of a World War I veteran and PTT employee, and mother of four children appealed to Pétain to maintain her citizenship. “To this effect, Monsieur Marshal of France, I allow myself to give my qualifications, dear father, to ask to remain in the shadow of the tricolor flag, which has always been the motto of my defunct husband.” Zerbib’s brother-in-law, a retired police inspector, maintained his citizenship rights because he received a Croix de Guerre and a Medal of Honor for courage and devotion, as well as a Medal of Honor from the police. As Zerbib lived with her brother, who helped her raise her four children, she used his status as the basis for her appeal.

“Monsieur the Marshal of France and dear father, I dare to count on your kindness to get a favorable opinion to my query, and during this wait, I assure you of my deep respect and the complete dedication of a passionate Frenchwoman.”¹¹⁰

Despite the stringent measures taken by administrators against Jews employed by the administration, antisemites did not hesitate to call for even harsher measures. An anonymous “Frenchman” wrote to the Prefect of Constantine in March 1941 to complain that Jews remained in the administration, despite their Anglophilic and traitorous acts.

There are still some Jews in the administration...they are not French at all, their sentiments are far from that, the British radio is their preference....their presence in the administration of the state allows them to see, to hear, all sorts of things. And they keep their coreligionists up to date.....There are true Frenchmen, are they not worthy of replacing the Jews in our truly French administration? We beg you,

Chemba, Maklouf Guedj, Askil Abrahami to the Prefect of Constantine, Constantine, March 25, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G19.

¹¹⁰ Rénée Zerbib to Philippe Pétain, Constantine, May 5, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G30.

Monsieur the Prefect, to reserve for them these employments....Vive la France!
Vive l'Algérie Française!¹¹¹

Expressions of antisemitism also increased during this time among Algerian Muslims. A Muslim man wrote to a Muslim woman reproaching her for working for Jews. “How is it, my dearest Aïcha, that you are separated from your husband, and that you are rented to a Jew? Could you not find work elsewhere? Don’t you know that it is a dishonor to work for the Jews? It would be better if you returned to us; we would pay for your trip.”¹¹²

Some people used Vichy’s antisemitism and the opportunity for denunciations to seek personal vengeance. Madame Braka, who wrote to Xavier Vallat to intervene in her situation, was a non-Jew from Pas-de-Calais who married a Jewish man from Bône, with whom she had two children. Braka and her two children remained Christian, “my children, like me, perform our religious duties.” At the end of 1939, Braka complained that her marital situation changed because her husband became involved with Madame Melki, “both a Jewess and a shameless creature,” whose husband died soon after the start of the affair. In September 1940, Braka’s son was demobilized after a year of service and returned home. In October, Braka’s husband and Madame Melki moved to Tunis, taking with them all of his money and goods. After nine months, Monsieur Braka stopped sending a monthly allowance to Madame Braka and demanded a divorce. “I am therefore begging you, sir, to kindly help me, first, by putting impediment to the divorce that I refused as my religious beliefs forbade it, and then expel the woman who is the cause of all our troubles.”¹¹³

¹¹¹ Anonymous letter to the Prefect of Constantine, “Re: Justice,” Guelma, March 7, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G19.

¹¹² El Hocine ben Abdelmalek to Colomb Bechar, Kaddour ben Belkacem, “Intercepted telegram No 193: Re: Activités Indigènes, Reproche addresses a une musulmane qui travaille chez un juif,” Oran, November 23, 1941, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹¹³ Madame Braka to Xavier Vallat (Vichy), Bône, December 19, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G30.

Madame Braka's letter to Vallat was part of a wave of letters and appeals to Vichy on behalf of interfaith couples confused by their status in light of the Jewish Statute, the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, and the 1941 census. Marcel Tubiana, a lawyer in Bône, married the Catholic daughter of a French officer in 1939, with whom he had two children. He did not declare his children during the 1941 census; however, the Governor General ruled that his children were considered Jewish.¹¹⁴ While he was serving in 1940, his wife gave birth to a daughter. Since he was away, fighting for France, his wife chose to wait until his return to baptize their daughter. His wife gave birth to a son in February 1941, and both children were baptized on June 14, 1941. According to the Jewish Statute, for baptisms to be considered effective, they had to be conducted before June 1940. Tubiana wrote that "my children, having received the Catholic baptism have been and will be raised in the Catholic religion."¹¹⁵

He added that he himself, as well as his brothers, received a Catholic education, even though he was technically Jewish. "From a young age, the Catholic religion was more familiar to us than that of the Jewish religion." Tubiana concluded his appeal, noting that whatever the outcome, he would raise his children with a love of France. "No one has the power, I think, to stop me from making my children into good Frenchmen and women, whatever happens. My essential desire is that they can also be, without restriction, good servants of the country."¹¹⁶ The Governor General eventually ruled that while Tubiana's son could be considered to be a non-Jew because of his timely baptism, his daughter would be

¹¹⁴ Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, "Objet: Recensement des Juifs—A/S de M. Marcel Tubiana, Avocat à Bône," Algiers, November 25, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G6.

¹¹⁵ Marcel Tubiana to the Mayor of Bône, Bône, February 5, 1942, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G6.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

considered a Jew.¹¹⁷ The Tubiana case shows the subjectivity of the implementation of Vichy legislation, to the point where siblings, separated in age by one year, could be divided between two religions and statuses in the eyes of the law.¹¹⁸

Other cases of intermarriage reveal the complexities of interpretation and execution of the Vichy antisemitic laws. The case of Jeanne Abecassis is similarly instructive.

Abecassis (born Jeanne Mouchel) was a Catholic French woman who married a Jewish man, a French citizen of Spanish origin (Alexandre). They had two children, Josette, age nine and a half, and Pierre, age seven. Abecassis raised both children as Catholics, and she noted that in the spring Josette would take communion. Despite their Catholic upbringing, the children were considered Jewish because of the timing of their baptisms.¹¹⁹ Albert Perrot, deputy technician of communal roadways in Constantine, was a French Catholic who married a Jewish woman (Camille Femmem), who was not religious. “When I married her, she was French, as she was born to the beneficiaries of the Crémieux decree.” They had a daughter born February 2, 1940, who was baptized September 9, 1941. The delay for the baptism was due to the fact that Perrot and his brother-in-law, who was the godfather, were fighting in the war. As a result of the delay for the baptism, Perrot’s daughter was considered Jewish.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 2857QJ: Objet: Recensement de M. Tubiana Marcel,” Algiers, April 20, 1942, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G6.

¹¹⁸ Similar cases to the Tubiana case include that of the Joseph Onorato, who was Catholic, but married a Jewish woman, with whom he had four children who were raised without religion but in 1939 joined the Catholic religion along with their mother. Since his children were not baptized early enough, they were considered Jewish in accordance with the Jewish Statute. CAOM Alg Const 93/3G8.

¹¹⁹ Jeanne Abecassis to the General Commissioner of the Jewish Questions, Constantine, October 21, 1941; Mayor of Constantine to the General Commissioner of Jewish Questions (Vichy), “No. 3491/C Objet: Application de la loi du 2 Juin 1941 dans 3 cas particuliers,” Constantine, November 10, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G8.

¹²⁰ M. Albert Perrot to the General Commissioner of the Jewish Questions (Vichy), Constantine, November 4, 1941; Mayor of Constantine to the General Commissioner of the Jewish Questions (Vichy), “No. 3491/C Objet: Application de la loi du 2 Juin 1941 dans 3 cas particuliers,” Constantine, November 10, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G8.

The confusion regarding definitions of nationality and citizenship became apparent again in the case of Raymond Bernard. Bernard, a non-Jewish Frenchman, married a Jewish woman, who had three Jewish grandparents. His wife converted to Catholicism before June 1940, and their four children were raised as Catholics. He wrote to the Governor General demanding French nationality for his wife by virtue of their marriage. Bernard alluded to the Constantine municipal government's antisemitism, suggesting that it may have influenced its decision in regard to his wife. "Perhaps the interpretation of the law is not understood in Constantine? That would not be surprising."¹²¹ The Prefect of Constantine wrote that Bernard had confused the issue of nationality with that of citizenship. Given that his wife had three Jewish grandparents, by the Jewish Statute, she was considered Jewish. "If her grandparents are of Algerian origin and benefited from the Crémieux decree, she is a native Algerian Jew. This quality is independent of nationality."¹²² The nuances of the nationality and citizenship proved complicated for both residents of the colony and the administrators. The fact that Jews remained French nationals but lost their French citizenship created a confusing status for these Jews.

The Jewish Statutes had a clearly powerful impact on Algerian Jews. The laws also deeply affected their spouses, especially if their spouses were not Jewish. For example, in 1941 Madame Chicheportiche wrote to the Governor General to request clarification of her status. She was a French Catholic woman from Paris, who had been married to an Algerian Jew for a year. He was currently engaged with the colonial troops and stationed in the

¹²¹ M. Raymond Bernard to the Governor General, Constantine, September 10, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G8.

¹²² Prefect of Constantine to Raymond Bernard, "No. 7854," Constantine, October 10, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G8.

metropole. Her letter expressed the deep anxiety of those non-Jews married to Algerian Jews regarding their own status and their own sense of rupture.

At this time, the Crémieux law was still in place, and I married a man of French nationality.... Today, what remains of all this? I apologize, Mr. Governor General, for abusing your kindness, but I'm sure you understand my painful situation, and that you will answer me with what I can do. My husband loves France; he married a Frenchwoman; is it possible that the final decree concerning the Jews will impact him too? ... I soon hoped to join my husband at his new post; I left my whole family in Paris, I have been separated from my real race and although this life gave me a companion, I don't yet understand the full meaning of this abolition....¹²³

Madame Chicheportiche's letter depicts the ambivalence of the position of non-Jewish spouses of Algerian Jews following the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, as well as the impact of racial propaganda from Vichy on individuals in the colony.

Non-Jewish spouses of Algerian Jews not only felt concern for their own status, but also fought for their spouses to maintain their citizenship. Léonie Delphine Zekri, a non-Jewish woman born in Paris, wrote to Marshal Pétain to request that her husband, Abraham Zekri, remain a French citizen on the basis of his military service to France. Her husband served in the French army from 1930 to 1934, and during the general mobilization in 1939.

He departed, like all good Frenchmen had to do, leaving me with an eight month-old sick child. He fought with the 3e Zouaves and is in German captivity.... In my current distress, I come to you, Monsieur the Marshal, in the hope that you might comfort me by telling me that the rights of French citizenship will not be taken from my husband and upon his liberation, you will allow him to have a position in the administration, or to have a profession without him being refused because of his origins.¹²⁴

Particularly illustrative, this letter indicates the highly assimilated nature of some Algerian Jews, who not only married non-Jews, but also served in the French military, and sought to remain part of the administration.

¹²³ Madame Chicheportiche to the Governor General in letter Prefect of Oran to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 2897," February 8, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G8.

¹²⁴ Madame Zekri to Marshal Pétain, Philippeville, June 24, 1941, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G8.

Some Jews married to non-Jews appealed to maintain their citizenship on the basis of their marriage, conversion, and their service to France. Salomon Marcel Kharoubi, a bailiff of the civil courts of Bône for twelve years, who served from 1939-1940 in the 4e Zouaves, based his appeal to the Prefect of Constantine on his service, as well as his conversion to Catholicism and marriage to a French, Catholic woman.

Mr. Prefect, although unfortunately it is true that I am of the Jewish race, in the sense of Article 1 of the Act of June 2, 1941, I affirm that I belong to the Catholic religion by *faith, Baptism and Marriage* in the *Catholic Church*. My wife, born Huberte Saulnier, my spouse since December 10, 1930, is European, French, Catholic, from a French family, originally from the Haute Savoie, she herself is Catholic.... French by birth and heart, I have only had the ideal to reach, acquire French citizenship, I left very young the Jewish society and community, I ardently desire not to be returned to it. Mr. Prefect, the decision to make me quit my job removed not only the single resource upon which my family survives, but also removed any possibility to find another source of employment from a *Frenchman*, much less likely from a Jew.... Not being Jewish but by Jewish law, I am, however, a Frenchman in my heart, Catholic by religion, very believing and practicing.¹²⁵

Kharoubi's appeal indicates the highly assimilated identity of some Algerian Jews who left Judaism entirely in their quest to become good Frenchmen. Particularly interesting in Kharoubi's letter is his frustration that the Jewish Statute would return him to the Jewish identity from which he sought to escape. The Mayor of Bône noted in his assessment of Kharoubi's request, that he had not provided the country with any exceptional service deserving of the maintenance of his citizenship.¹²⁶

The Vichy legislation also impacted certain individuals who believed themselves to be outside its jurisdiction. Dr. Marcel Levy, the former Mayor of Aumale, wrote to the Prefect of Algiers in November 1940 to protest his termination as mayor on October 28, 1940 due to his status as a Jew. Although he did not mention his father's religious identity, he

¹²⁵ Salomon Marcel Kharoubi to the Prefect of Constantine, Bône, September 1942, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G23.

¹²⁶ Mayor of Bône, "Rapport confidential: Kharoubi," Bône, January, 1943, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G23.

emphasized his mother's status as a Catholic and his own Catholic education and marriage.¹²⁷ The Prefect of Algiers forwarded Levy's file to the General Commissariat of Jewish Questions in Vichy. Levy received a reply in February 1942, which informed him that because he had two Jewish grandparents, he had to prove that his other two grandparents were not Jews. "While waiting for this proof, you are considered to be a Jew."¹²⁸ The Jewish Statute created an ambiguous reality for Jews who married non-Jews or had converted themselves. The long delays of appeals prolonged their uncertain status. The Commissariat took almost two years to respond to Levy's appeal and then he received only an inconclusive answer.

These cases are profoundly illustrative of the sense of rupture experienced by Algerian Jews, their spouses, and children as a result of the Jewish Statute and the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree. The annihilation of their previous identities, which were the result of a process of assimilation and integration, ripped Jews from their connection to France and their history in the colony. The cases discussed here demonstrate that Jews had assimilated to such a degree that intermarriage was relatively common, and both Algerian Jewish men and women entered into mixed marriages with French Catholics. In their appeals and demands to Vichy and colonial administrators, Algerian Jews made the case for their continued participation in the French nation as citizens based on the intensity and extent of their French identities. Despite the rupture and the feeling of alienation, they maintained their hope for France to once again recognize them as sons and daughters of the *mère Patrie* and reintegrate them into her ranks.

¹²⁷ Dr. Marcel Levy to the Prefect of Algiers, Aumale, November 1, 1940, CAOM Alg Alger F512.

¹²⁸ General Commissariat of Jewish Questions to Dr. Levy, Vichy, February 2, 1942, CAOM Alg Alger F512.

Preparation for Operation Torch

Even after the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, most Algerian Jews maintained their allegiance to France. Many believed that Vichy was an aberration and did not represent true France. In the ensuing years, Charles de Gaulle became their hope for the future and the Free French encapsulated all that was good in France before the arrival of the Germans and the imposition of antisemitic Vichy legislation. That faith was cemented by de Gaulle's statement on October 4, 1941 in honor of the 150th anniversary of the emancipation of the Jews of France. De Gaulle confirmed the politics of the Free French regarding Jewish rights, stating "the celebrated decree of the emancipation of the Jews of France, similarly, the proclamation of the Right of Man and of the Citizen remain always in place and cannot be abrogated by the men of Vichy." Such laws, he continued, were anti-constitutional and illegal. "The Free French...is resolved to reestablish, after the Victory, the equality in dignity as in responsibility, of all the citizens in all French territories."¹²⁹ Although de Gaulle did not explicitly promise to restore the Crémieux decree, such a statement gave Algerian Jews hope that one day they would again be French citizens. As a result, they sought avenues to support de Gaulle and the Free French. One such method of support came in the form of paving the way for the Allied landings in Algeria in November 1942 as part of Operation Torch.

On January 4, 1941, Governor General Abrial decreed that Jews could not buy and collect weapons. As French subjects, Jews no longer had rights to buy and own arms. Abrial felt that Jews should be under the same jurisdiction as the laws that controlled Algerian

¹²⁹ Charles de Gaulle, October 4, 1941, CDJC-XC-15.

Muslims' rights to own weapons.¹³⁰ Abrial's decree limited the scope of Jewish self-defense, which was becoming ever more an issue of concern.

Alongside antisemitic legislation, antisemitism of their former status competitors continued to grow.¹³¹ European antisemites in the colony, such as the President of the Departmental Union of the Légion Français de Combattants et des Volontaires de la Révolution Nationale, worked to eliminate Jews from all sectors of the Algerian economy, as well as any governmental positions. “The total elimination of the Jews from all positions of command is a measure that must be promulgated at the first instance.”¹³² Throughout 1941 and 1942 relations between Jews and Muslims and Europeans in the colony deteriorated and low-level violence and altercations erupted between the groups with growing regularity. A French captain, Léon Guibert, age 42, complained that he had been insulted by a Jew, André Ifrah, a cobbler, age 29. Guibert entered Ifrah’s shop and demanded that he make him a pair of shoes. Ifrah refused to do so, under the pretext that Guibert did not salute him and did not remove his hat upon entering the shop. Frustrated, Guibert shoved Ifrah and told him “there is a big difference between me, a Frenchman, and you, a Jew.” Ifrah called Guibert a “dirty bastard,” (*sale con*).¹³³ Algerian Jews tried to hold fast to their former dignity, defending themselves against perceived attacks on their identities.

¹³⁰ Governor General Abrial to the Secretary of State, “Re: Juifs Algériens, armes,” Algiers, January 4, 1941, CAOM FM 81F/846.

¹³¹ Algerian Muslims living in Marseille followed the events in the colony and maintained a strong sense of antisemitism, despite their physical distance from events there. One Algerian Muslim in Marseille stated “we distinguish their [the Jews] secret work to divide you [the French]. Today, they spread their money among us to have us join with them. They sow money as we sow wheat for the harvest. They also say you will expand their rights for French citizenship, but us, our rights, when will you think of that?” Prefecture of Bouches-du-Rhône, “No. 328: Renseignements: L’antisémitisme parmi les Musulmans de Marseille,” Marseille, March 26, 1942, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹³² President of the Departmental Union of the Légion Française de Combattants et des Volontaires de la Révolution Nationale, Oran, to General Martin, Provincial President of the Légion Française de Combattants, Algiers, “No. 1146/D3, Objet: A/S questions juives,” Oran, August 25, 1942, CAOM FM 81F/846.

¹³³ Commissioner of Police of the Second Arrondissement to the Central Police Commissioner, “No. 8150,” Constantine, January 2, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

Antisemitic slurs also troubled Jewish youth. A Jewish student, Gabriel Smadja, fourteen years old, responded to a French student's epithet "dirty Jew," by calling the French boy "Pétain's whore, the whore of the French." When questioned, Smadja denied any such statement. He claimed that he said "the next time you call me a dirty Jew, I will respond by calling you a dirty Christian." The director of the school suspended Smadja for three days.¹³⁴ This seemingly innocent incident took on greater ramifications because the idea of a Jew defaming Pétain and the French further fed the fires of antisemitism in the colony and served as justification of the measures taken against the Jews in the colony. Other altercations emerged as a result of war-time austerity and accusations of the lack of Jewish patriotism.

Madame Anna Bechmit, a Jew, had a heated discussion with Madame Rosette Camut, a European, over the causes for the rationing and restrictions in France and the colony. Camut argued that the restrictions were due to the British embargo and blockade, to which Bechmit responded, "I don't agree with your opinion. It is the Germans who stole all of France, but have patience; the British will win the war." Camut claimed that Freemasons were responsible for France's defeat. Bechmit retorted that "the Freemasons are worth more than you are, and they know what they are doing. In France, there are only Boches and Fascists now. You are a Boche. When the British come, they will leave you at the door; I would prefer to be British than like you." The Police Commissioner opened up a file on Madame Bechmit for seditious statements.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Commissioner of Police of Souk-Ahras, to the Sub-Prefect of Guelma, "No. 321: Propos injurieux à l'égard du Chef de l'état et des Français," Souk-Ahras, January 16, 1941, CAOM Alg Cosnt B/3/688.

¹³⁵ Commissioner of Police of the First Arrondissement to the Central Police commissioner, "No. 1593: Objet: A/S: Cris séditieux proféré dans un lieu public par Madame Bechmit, Anna," Constantine, February 21, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688. The Commissioner of the Special Departmental Police of Oran reported that M. Bentolila, a Jewish journalist in Oran sent money to support British landings on Algeria's shores. See Commissioner of the Special Departmental Police to the Prefect of Oran, "No. 6703: Objet: Activité gaulliste," Oran, October 10, 1941, CAOM Alg Oran //424.

The Jews' reduced status penetrated daily conversations and encounters between Jews and Muslims. Waiting outside a dispensary, a Muslim man and a Jewish woman got into an argument over whose turn it was in line. When the woman tried to assert her priority, the Muslim man told her "Don't yell so loud, the luck of the Jews is now over."¹³⁶ In another case, a Jewish woman, Camille Attali, and her sons went to a bath house, which refused her son admission. Attali then got into an argument with the Muslim woman who refused her son entry and stated that "the French chased us from our positions to give them to you. But you won't keep them long." Attali denied making such a statement. She claimed that she stated "It's not enough that the French remove us, and now you turn away my son, calling him a Jew."¹³⁷

Accusations of Jewish treason prompted a propaganda campaign among antisemitic groups. In Constantine, police found flyers that read "Frenchmen! The Jews betray us...Attention!"¹³⁸ The PPF and the PSF increased its ranks under Vichy. A fight broke out between a PSF member and Jews in a movie theater in Bône. A film reel starring Pétain premiered, and many civil and military authorities attended the event. At the end of the film, a disc played the "Marseillaise," during which an incident developed. A Jew, Lucien Hamou, did not stand in honor of the national anthem. At this time, another spectator, Nicolas Sarragossa, yelled out to him "Eh! Jew, get up!" Hamou stood, but afterward a fight broke out between Sarragossa and Hamou. Interrogated by the Police, Hamou claimed that

¹³⁶ Police Commissioner of the First Arrondissement to the Central Police Commissioner, "No. 1594: Incident entre Bertali Ahmed et Madame Alimi," Constantine, February 22, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

¹³⁷ Mobile Brigade of Batna, "Rapport Special, No. 403: Propos défaitistes," Batna, February 26, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

¹³⁸ Commissioner of the Special Departmental Police to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 1639," Constantine, March 4, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688. Another flyer declared support for the antisemitic legislation, stating "Frenchmen! We will be free of the Jews! Look around you." See Central Police Commissioner of Constantine to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 2520," Constantine, March 6, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

he did not stand for the Marseillaise because he was distracted. Many Europeans in the audience approved of Sarragossa's actions.¹³⁹

Antisemites organized a demonstration in Khencela on July 13, 1941. At a rally mayor Fremanger spoke about the history of the city and the French colonial project. Afterward sixty children and young men in their twenties ran through the town yelling "Vive la France, Vive Marshal Pétain" which soon devolved into cries of "Vive la France, Down with the Jews!" The groups then moved towards the Jewish quarter, where they threw stones at Jewish homes and shops. The Police Commissioner of Khencela reported that several of the young men involved were the sons of newly naturalized Italian fathers.¹⁴⁰ Members of the local Muslim scouting group also participated in the demonstration.¹⁴¹ Some organizers of the event, most of whom were members of the Légion Français des Combattants, an antisemitic organization responsible for the rally, argued that the violence was in response to Jewish demonstrations of support for the British.¹⁴²

Jewish support for Britain provided fodder for antisemites in the colony. In March 1942, police reported graffiti on walls of Constantine done in tar, "Vive Pétain, down with the Jews, down with Britain," and "The Jews to Borneo," and "Churchill is a bastard."¹⁴³ In

¹³⁹ Commissioner of the Special Departmental Police to the Chief of the Special Departmental Police of Constantine, "No. 1626: Représentation du film 'Philippe Pétain,'" Bône, May 17, 1941.

¹⁴⁰ The Police Commissioner of Khencela to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 72: Objet: Manifestations antijuive," Khencela, July 16, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

¹⁴¹ Sergeant Tabaud, Commandant of the Khencela Brigade, "Rapport No. 34/4 sur un incident survenu entre arabes et juifs," Khencela, July 15, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

¹⁴² Sub-Prefect of Batna to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 558Z.PG.R.8/F: Objet: Manifestations antijuives de Khencela P.E.," Batna, July 18, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688. The day of the rally, members of the Légion posted flyers on Jewish shops and homes in Khencela which contained a quote from a speech by Pétain in August 1940 on the National Revolution and denounced any opponents to the rebirth of France, and concluded with the statement "The Légion will remake a happy France, come to the Légion." See

Commissioner of Police to the Mayor of Khencela, Khencela, July 15, 1941, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

¹⁴³ Commissioner of the Special Departmental Police of Constantine, to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 1175: Journée du 8 mars," Constantine, March 10, 1942; Central Police Commissioner to the Prefect of Constantine, "No. 3353: Objet: Inscriptions faites sur les murs de la Ville au cours de la nuit du 7 au 8 mars 1942," Constantine, March 10, 1942, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

May, the local head of the PPF announced that antisemitism was now part of the official doctrine of the organization.¹⁴⁴ Jews in late 1941 believed that they had a few options before them. A small group of Jews actively demonstrated their faith in de Gaulle by working alongside the Allies in fighting against Germany and, by extension, Vichy. A smaller section of Jews looked to a future elsewhere, or at least considered the possibility of leaving the colony. Joseph Kanoui wrote of such considerations to Alice Serfaty, and expressed his fear for the future. “My disgust is as great as yours, but what can I do?” Kanoui wrote, expressing his sense of hopelessness. “If I liquidated four or five million of my situation, I would leave for South America without hesitation. At my age, 70 years, what else awaits me!!!”¹⁴⁵

In June 1942, Allied propaganda appeared to be making inroads in Oran. The Police Commissioner reported the appearance of the Croix de Lorraine and “V” graffiti in the city.¹⁴⁶ Jews formed self-defense organizations to protect themselves against actions by antisemitic groups. In Constantine, Jews established an “association of fighting,” and Jewish scouting groups oriented themselves increasingly towards physical education.¹⁴⁷ Such activities combined with efforts of Algerian Jews to pave the way for Allied landings in North Africa.

On July 24, 1942, the Combined Chiefs of Staff, with the approval of both President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, reached the decision to launch Operation Torch in

¹⁴⁴ Prefect of Constantine to the Governor General, “No. 1282 AR.2 Secret: Objet: Antisémitisme à Constantine,” Constantine, May 11, 1942, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

¹⁴⁵ Joseph Kanoui to Madame J. Serfaty, “Intercepted Telegram No. 4351: Re: Recriminations des Juifs indigènes,” Tanger-Marbe, September 14, 1941, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

¹⁴⁶ Central Police Commissioner to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 275/S Objet: A/S de la propaganda Gaulliste,” Oran, June 11, 1942, CAOM Alg Oran //424.

¹⁴⁷ Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 11300: Objet: Surveillance des milieux israélites,” Algiers, April 28, 1942; Prefect of Constantine, “Rapport No 3191: Action Juive, Institution Bergson,” Constantine, June 6, 1942, CAOM Alg Const B/3/688.

North Africa in order to relieve beleaguered British forces there. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was selected as the commander in chief.¹⁴⁸ The specific goals of the operation were to occupy French Morocco and Algeria, and later Tunisia, and to gain complete control of North Africa, from the Atlantic to the Red Sea.¹⁴⁹ North Africa thus represented a strategic location for Allied operation.¹⁵⁰ An Allied North Africa would be a staging ground for the campaign against Europe's soft underbelly, southern Italy.

Plans for Operation Torch included military operations, as well as a complex matrix of intelligence contacts and resistance organizations in which Robert Murphy, an American diplomat who had been living in Algiers for the past year, played a key role in organizing intelligence and resistance.¹⁵¹ Roosevelt hoped that North Africa would become the locus of French anti-German activity.¹⁵² He imagined that French army units stationed in North Africa could be secretly recruited. Working alongside Murphy were several American vice-consuls who served as intelligence agents in North Africa, known as the twelve apostles.¹⁵³

In late 1941, a clandestine insurgent movement in North Africa began to make connections with the apostles. This movement was diverse; its members were businessmen,

¹⁴⁸ Arthur Layton Funk, *The Politics of Torch: The Allied Landings and the Algiers Putsch, 1942* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1974), 3.

¹⁴⁹ Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa 1942-1943, Volume One of the Liberation Trilogy* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), 22. See also Keith Sainsbury, *The North Africa Landings, 1942: A Strategic Decision* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1976), 43. In September 1940, a Free French contingent, led by de Gaulle, attempted to take over Dakar, then under Vichy control, but failed. See Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 5.

¹⁵⁰ A cable to Torch leadership on 10 October, 1942 from the Allied Forces Headquarters expressed the goals of President Roosevelt in North Africa. "The only statement of American policy desired by the president is the defeat of the axis powers and the preservation of French administration in the colonies. The president does not want to make any statement of policy which would involve an attitude, either favorable or unfavorable, towards the Vichy government." General Marshall, "Reference Cable 3412," Robert D. Murphy Files (RMF), Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, CA, Box 47, File 8, General Cables. In a series of cables organizing speeches by Roosevelt and Eisenhower to be broadcast in North Africa, the common themes are of friendship and the desire to fight the Germans, not to change the French government. RMF, Box 47, File 8, General Cables.

¹⁵¹ Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 3.

¹⁵² Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Directive for Mr. Robert D. Murphy," September 22, 1942, RMF, File 10, General Directives.

¹⁵³ Norman Gelb, *Desperate Venture: The Story of Operation Torch, the Allied Invasion of North Africa* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1992), 43.

professionals, civil servants, workers, intellectuals, junior as well as high ranking military officers. One of the most important subgroups consisted of young Jewish men from Algiers.¹⁵⁴ Throughout 1941, Murphy reached out to Frenchmen who were frustrated with Vichy and who sought an Axis defeat. Murphy made contact with Colonel Germain Jousse, who had joined the growing French Resistance movement in 1941. With the aid of André Achary, the head of the secret police, Murphy widened his circle of contacts in Oran. The small Oran group consisted of army officers, such as Henri d' Astier de la Vigerie and Lt. Bernard Karsenty, and young local Jews, like Roger and Pierre Carcassonne.¹⁵⁵ Murphy also made a special effort to reach out to Admiral Jean-François Darlan. Darlan was one of the chief architects of Pétain's policy and supreme military commander in North Africa. Although outwardly pro-collaboration, Darlan preferred to be on the winning side. Murphy believed that Darlan could serve the Allied cause.¹⁵⁶

Following the United States' decision to enter the war in early 1942, the Resistance groups in North Africa were growing more active.¹⁵⁷ At this same time, another figure entered the already complicated web of connections. Henri Honoré Giraud, a distinguished general who had been imprisoned in Germany, had recently escaped and clandestinely approached both Allied agents and members of the French underground.¹⁵⁸ Giraud had a

¹⁵⁴ Gelb, *Desperate Venture*, 55-56. "The Five" were the local leaders of the US organized resistance in North Africa. The main members of The Five were Jacques Lemaigre-Dubreuil, a wealthy industrialist; Jean Rigault, a newspaper editor from Paris, brought into the group by Lemaigre-Dubreuil; Colonel A.S. Van Hecke, chief of the youth paramilitary group the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse*; Jacques Tarbé de Saint-Hardouin, a politician who had previously worked with General Weygand; and Lieutenant Henri d' Astier de la Vigerie, who quit his position in the security brigade to work with Van Hecke. The specific goals of The Five were to organize a pro-Allied coup in North Africa and the eventual liberation of France. The historiography of the Allied landings focuses on these characters. However, they played a small role in the Algiers Insurrection.

¹⁵⁵ Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 19-20.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 23-24. See also "Telegram from American Embassy, Paris," March 4, 1941, RMF, Box 47, File 5, Envoy-office files: U.S.-French Negotiations.

¹⁵⁷ Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 42. See also Colonel Jousse, "La libération de l'Afrique du Nord et la résistance nord-Africaine," *Esprit* (January 1945): 194-201.

¹⁵⁸ Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 45.

long and distinguished military record. By early June, Giraud's interest galvanized the Resistance and sparked the Allies interest.¹⁵⁹

Murphy and the Resistance leaders agreed that a meeting with the Allied military leadership was necessary. The meeting was set for October 21 and took place in the beachfront town of Cherchell in Algeria.¹⁶⁰ On the French side, the delegation included General Charles Mast, Giraud's delegate, and Colonel Jousse, his chief of staff. U.S. General Mark Clark and Murphy led the Allied side. Although not directly involved in the negotiations at Cherchell, Henri d'Astier and José Aboulker, ran security for the meeting.¹⁶¹

General Clark promised the delivery of 2,000 small arms with ammunition to the vicinity of Cherchell at the earliest possible date in order to arm the insurgents.¹⁶² The Americans did not tell their French allies the time or exact locations of the landings until four days before, which gave the Resistance only a short time to prepare. This seriously impaired their capabilities.¹⁶³ In the end, only a few supplies were brought, mostly through Murphy's diplomatic connections. Nonetheless, plans for the Allied invasion were in motion.

Operation Torch, the Algiers Insurrection, and the Jewish Role

One of the most notable and important resistance organizations in North Africa was the Géo Gras Group (GGG). Established in 1940, this group provided the major leaders and the bulk of the members of the insurrection. It consisted exclusively of Jews. The GGG was established when a group of three young Jewish men, André Temime, Émile Atlan, and

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 55-56; Gelb, *Desperate Venture*, 81-82. Roosevelt's goals were both political and strategic. He wanted to divert attention away from the major losses being experienced in the Pacific. He also wanted to pave the way for a successful election in November that would make both houses of Congress Democratic.

¹⁶⁰ Gelb, *Desperate Venture*, 146.

¹⁶¹ Jousse, "La Libération," 202-204.

¹⁶² General Mark Clark, "Report on Cherchell," RMF, Box 47, File 3.

¹⁶³ Sainsbury, *The North African Landings*, 146-148.

Charles Bouchara, created a sports club as a front for political purposes. Under Vichy restrictions, sports clubs were among the few kinds of organizations tolerated.¹⁶⁴ Temime, Atlan, and Bouchara bought and furnished the gym in the center of Algiers. They employed Géo Gras as its director.¹⁶⁵ Gras was a non-Jewish French patriot on excellent terms with the Vichy leadership and most right-wing groups in Algiers. A middle-weight boxing champion of France, Gras' involvement gave the gym credibility and served as an excellent front for its covert activities.¹⁶⁶ Members were recruited clandestinely. According to a founding member of the group, Aharon Mesguich, if the potential member did well in his interview and was recommended by at least two people, he was invited to appear before a committee of twelve members for approval. He then took an oath vowing to fight until the death in defense of Algerian Jewry, the liberation of France, and the defeat of the Third Reich.¹⁶⁷

Originally the GGG confined itself to responding to local attacks on Jews.¹⁶⁸ The group soon came to realize that they could do more than merely defend themselves. They dreamed of fighting against Vichy and the Nazis and tried to get in contact with de Gaulle in London, although to no avail. The group trained themselves to fight. They collected weapons and committed various acts of sabotage. For example, they spoiled goods that were on their way to the German occupation army in France. They also distributed leaflets in Algiers stating “the Resistance is watching,” as well as posting anti-Vichy, anti-German

¹⁶⁴ See for example Naval Admiral, Secretary of State to the Minister of the Interior, “Administration et Direction d’un Syndicat Professionnel par des Juifs algérienne,” May 24, 1941, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Archives (USHMMA), Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord.

¹⁶⁵ “Rapport sur le rôle joué dans la préparation et l’exécution des opérations du 8 Novembre par un groupe du combat d’Alger, dit ‘Groupe de la Salle Géo Gras’,” USHMMMA, Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord, 1. This anonymous report was most likely written by one of the leadership of the Géo Gras Group, perhaps Temime, Bouchara, or even Raphael Aboulker.

¹⁶⁶ Gitta Amipaz-Silber, *La Résistance Juive en Algérie, 1940-1942* (Jerusalem: Presses Daf-Chen, 1986), 65-66. See also Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 174. ‘Rapport sur le rôle joué dans la préparation,’ USHMMMA, Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord.

¹⁶⁷ “Rapport sur le rôle joué dans la préparation,” USHMMMA, Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord. See also Amipaz-Silber, *The Role of the Jewish Underground*, 65-66.

¹⁶⁸ “Rapport sur le rôle joué dans la préparation,” USHMMMA, Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord.

posters.¹⁶⁹ By 1942, the Géo Gras Group had grown to around 250 members organized into five-man cells. To maintain secrecy, the members of the group knew only the others in their group. The group leader was known only to the next level of leaders who coordinated five cells. The overall command of the GGG had been given to Captain Alfred Pilafort, who was not Jewish. Pilafort came to Algiers in the summer of 1942, when his unit was transferred to North Africa.¹⁷⁰

Familial networks played an important role in the GGG and insurgents network. Pilafort had known Raphaël and Stéphane Aboulker, José Aboulker's cousins, prior to the war. Pilafort informed them of an Allied landing in North Africa and the necessity of supporting this operation from inside Algeria. The leadership of the GGG agreed to help, but wished their group remain independent.¹⁷¹ Approximately 100 young men from the GGG comprised the group supporting the Allied landings. They were organized into four sections led by young Jewish reserve officers, Lt. Fernard Fredj, Lt. Jean Dreyfus, Sub-Lt. Roger Jaïs, and Aspirant Jacques Zermati. Each section also had a deputy.¹⁷² In addition to organizing and recruiting new members, the Jewish leaders provided the Allies with military information on the defense and surveillance of the coast, places suitable for the landings, and the locations of the Vichy army barracks.¹⁷³

Along with the GGG, other Jewish insurgent groups organized. In Oran, a group of Jewish professionals headed by Roger and Pierre Carcassonne prepared their role for the landings. Roger Carcassonne recruited Henri d'Astier. In 1940, d'Astier worked with small

¹⁶⁹ Amipaz-Silber, *The Role of the Jewish Underground*, 67.

¹⁷⁰ Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 174.

“Rapport sur le rôle joué dans la préparation,” USHMM, Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord. Pilafort received the Legion of Honor for bravery in single-handed combat in 1932.

¹⁷² These group leaders were Jean Gozlan, André Temime, Georges Loufrani, Germain Libine, Roger Albou, Roger Morali Gamshon, Émile Atlan, Charles Bouchara, André Levy, and Fernand Aich.

¹⁷³ Office of Strategic Services, Washington D.C., “Allied Landing in North Africa,” January 28, 1943, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (USNARA), College Park, RG 226, Entry 97, Box 5, File 77.

resistance groups in France. After being captured by the Germans, he escaped to Algeria and found a position on the security staff of Oran. In a conversation with his cousin José Aboulker, Roger Carcassonne realized that the two were involved in similar activities. José was a medical student and the son of the Algiers Jewish community leader and respected doctor, Dr. Henri Aboulker. After Henri Aboulker lost his post at the University of Algiers Medical School as a result of antisemitic legislation, José connected with other outraged young Jews. He organized a resistance group consisting of fellow students of the University of Algiers.¹⁷⁴

Henri d’Astier met José Aboulker after he transferred to Algiers in the spring of 1942 to work under Colonel Van Hecke of the Chantiers de la Jeunesse.¹⁷⁵ Jacques Soustelle, Commissioner of Information for de Gaulle in London, later wrote that “Carcassonne was then a very young man; José Aboulker was an adolescent. Never before were more vast and dangerous undertakings discussed with more composure by more amateur conspirators, who, nevertheless, as proved by their success, surpassed the most experienced specialists in this field.”¹⁷⁶ Soon the groups in Algiers and Oran merged and recruited new members, both Jews and non-Jews.

The participants of the Algiers Insurrection were a very diverse group. There were also several officers from the regular French army such as General Mast, General de Monsabert, Colonel Jousse, and Colonel Baril, and professional officers on inactive duty. In addition, the organizers were counting on the aid of a few hundred young Frenchmen in the

¹⁷⁴ Amipaz-Silber, *The Role of the Jewish Underground*, 69-70.

¹⁷⁵ Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 174-175.

¹⁷⁶ Jacques Soustelle, *Envers et contre tout: Souvenirs et Documents sur la France libre, Tome 2* (Paris: Presses R. Laffont, 1950), 426.

Chantiers de la Jeunesse. The bulk of the forces included young people, students, refugees from France, and Algerian Jews.¹⁷⁷

In the week preceding the Allied landings, an official meeting to plan strategy took place at Raphaël Aboulker's home. Captain Pilafort and all of the GGG group leaders attended. That same week, Raphaël and Stéphane Aboulker, along with other Jews, went several times to the beaches of Algiers to receive the weapons General Clark had promised. They never arrived.¹⁷⁸ On the night of the Allied landings, of the 800 resistance members originally involved in the movement, only about 350 appeared, in addition to the GGG. The insurgents who participated were led primarily by José Aboulker, Henri d'Astier, and Colonel Jousse. According to Aboulker, the insurgents' mission was to rupture communications, arrest Vichy officers capable of organizing defense, and occupy important government and army buildings and arrest their staff. The insurgents wore armbands with 'V.P.' inscribed on them, indicating them as *Volontaires de Place*, a civil defense group. Each group had its particular task.¹⁷⁹ They had 900 very old Lebel rifles and 25,000 cartridges stolen by order of Colonel Jousse.¹⁸⁰

On the evening of November 7, the insurgents listened intently to the radio for word of the Allies' arrival.¹⁸¹ The Allies were to land commandos sufficiently close to Algiers so that they could relieve the insurgents of their posts. The hour set for the insurgency was 1:30am on November 8 and the insurgents were supposed to be replaced by the Allied troops two hours later. Because Colonel Anselme had defected and Jousse and d'Astier were

¹⁷⁷ Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 172.

¹⁷⁸ "Rapport sur le rôle joué dans la préparation," USHMMMA, Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord.

¹⁷⁹ Funk, *The Politics of Torch*, 172; "Allied Landing in North Africa," USNARA, RG 226, Entry 97, Box 5, File 77.

¹⁸⁰ José Aboulker, "La part de la résistance française dans les événements de l'Afrique du Nord," *Les Cahiers Français* (1943), 18.

¹⁸¹ Aboulker, "La Résistance," 23-24. See also William B. Breuer, *Operation Torch: The Allied Gamble to Invade North Africa* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1985), 107. See also "Memo on alert," RMF, Box 47, File 3.

absent, Aboulker was left in charge of the operation. He led his team of 20 men to the Central Police Commissariat where they arrested police agents and cut the telephone lines, keeping only the official line intact. From the Police Commissariat, Aboulker contacted the other teams.¹⁸² Police stations throughout Algiers called in to the Central Station asking for information. Posing as an official switchboard operator, Aboulker gave them the following orders: all the Police chiefs must immediately come to the Central Commissariat in order to receive orders. Upon arrival, they were arrested.¹⁸³

Colonel Jousse and his officers went to greet General Ryder, who had just landed at Sidi-Ferruch. As the morning wore on, Aboulker continued to report to the group leaders, especially when the first American soldiers entered Algiers. The insurgents believed that they had achieved their goals.¹⁸⁴ During the day, the majority of the insurgents had either been arrested or had drifted back to their homes. Two insurgents, Alfred Pilafort and Jean Dreyfus, were killed in action. Fifty members were arrested.¹⁸⁵ At 7:45 pm American troops defeated the regrouping Vichy forces.¹⁸⁶

The Jewish-led insurrection in Algiers created the conditions for the Allied victory because it disrupted the Vichy command's ability to marshal its defense. The Algerian Jewish insurgents played a crucial role in the Allied landings in Algeria. Yet the Allies failed to recognize or reward them. Some insurgents were even punished for their involvement because they lost their mask of anonymity during the insurrection.

¹⁸² Aboulker, "La Résistance," 25. See also "Les événements de la nuit du 7 au 8 Novembre 1942 à la Grande Poste," USHMMMA, Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord.

¹⁸³ Aboulker, "La Résistance," 18, 27.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 27.

¹⁸⁵ "Allied Landing in North Africa," USNARA, RG 226, Entry 97, Box 5, File 77.

¹⁸⁶ Aboulker, "La Résistance," 29.

In the aftermath of the landings at Algiers, the Allied command wanted as little responsibility as possible in organizing a new political regime in North Africa. Prior to the landings, the Allies negotiated with Giraud. In correspondence known as the Giraud-Murphy agreement, Giraud was to be named the commander-in-chief of the entire expedition 48 hours after the landings. On November 8 Giraud accepted the position of commander-in-chief of the French forces.¹⁸⁷ On November 10, Darlan and Clark began negotiations. By the afternoon of November 11, German forces crossed the Line of Demarcation in France and were proceeding to occupy the southern zone. As soon as Darlan learned of the German action, he accepted the “mild armistice” terms and the leadership of North Africa.¹⁸⁸

Frustrated with the continued power of Vichy leaders, former insurgents sought to topple the new Darlan government. The plan to assassinate Darlan moved forward rapidly under the leadership of Fernand Bonnier de la Chappelle, a veteran of the Algiers insurrection. In his second attempt, Bonnier succeeded in firing two fatal shots at Darlan on December 24, 1942. He was arrested and tried in the ensuing hours. He was executed the next day.¹⁸⁹ The insurgents feared reprisals. Henri Aboulker commented that Murphy “shuns us like a case of an extremely contagious disease.”¹⁹⁰ One of the younger insurgents explained that since the government remained in the same hands as before the Allied landings, they feared retribution

The army brass hats and the people of the Prefecture whom we arrested hate us. They hate us because we know what cowards they are. You should have seen how miserably they acted when they saw the tommy guns, the brave Jew-baiters. The chief of the secret police, who has been of course restored to his position, kneeled

¹⁸⁷ Arthur Funk, “Negotiating the ‘Deal with Darlan’,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 8, no. 2 (April 1973): 104-105, 107.

¹⁸⁸ Funk, “Negotiating the ‘Deal with Darlan’,” 111-113. See also “Note sur les évènements qui se sont déroulés à partir du 8 Novembre 1942,” RMF, Box 47, File 2.

¹⁸⁹ D’Astier, *Qui a tué Darlan?*, 35-37, 41-42.

¹⁹⁰ A.J. Liebling, *The Road Back to Paris* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc, 1944), 228.

on the floor and wept, begging one of my friends to spare his life. Imagine his feeling toward the man who spared him! Another friend, a doctor, is to be mobilized—in a labor camp of course—under military jurisdiction of a general whom *he* arrested.¹⁹¹

A.J. Liebling, a journalist for *The New Yorker*, interviewed the insurgents. He learned that the day after the interview, at least fifteen of his interlocutors had been arrested. Those arrested included Dr. Henri and José Aboulker, Raphaël Aboulker, the founding members of the GGG, as well as Henri d’Astier.¹⁹²

Murphy finally intervened and the men were released in February 1943, three months later. José Aboulker left for England after he was released. Upon arriving in London, he gave de Gaulle a written report of the insurrection. De Gaulle sent Aboulker on a mission to occupied France, where he played an important role in the liberation of France.¹⁹³ The Jewish insurgents believed that their actions would bring back the true France and that they would once again become citizens. This was not to be the case.

The Giraud Era: The Renewed Abrogation of the Crémieux Decree and Lobbying Efforts for the Reinstatement of the Crémieux Decree

In the aftermath of the Allied landings and the multiple turnovers over leadership in the colony, Jews hoped that their involvement in the successful landings would ensure their improved status under the new government of General Giraud. Jewish leaders rearticulated their demands for reinstatement as French citizens. On November 14, 1942, Maurice Eisenbeth, the Chief Rabbi of Algeria, wrote to the Governor General of the psychological impact of the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, describing Jews as victims of racism and

¹⁹¹ Liebling, *The Road Back to Paris*, 228-29.

¹⁹² Ibid., 229. See also “Rapport sur le rôle joué dans la préparation,” USHMMMA, Microfilm 1998.A.0087, Reel 1, Afrique du Nord.

¹⁹³ Amipaz-Silber, *The Role of the Jewish Underground*, 167. Georges-Marc Benamou, *C’était un temps déraisonnable: Les premiers résistants racontent* (Paris: Imprimerie Robert Laffont, 1999), 224.

antisemitism. “My coreligionists in Algeria, innocent victims of legislation of exception from which they have truly suffered, wait for you to remove, with the shortest possible delay, all the laws and regulations that impact them as ‘Jews.’”¹⁹⁴ André Bakouche, President of the Consistory of Constantine, also wrote to the Governor General to request the reinstatement of Algerian Jews as French citizens. He outlined the severe economic and social implications that the antisemitic legislation had upon the Algerian Jews. “The Jews in Algeria have demonstrated, throughout their misfortunes, dignity and composure drawn from their patriotic faith and feel that their just cause is mingled with the liberation of the Motherland and the Empire. They have always had confidence in France.... They expect to be reinstated in their rights and be united once again in the Nation.”¹⁹⁵ Jewish leaders were soon disappointed with the lack of action on their behalf.

Prior to his arrest among the Jewish insurgents, Dr. Henri Aboulker resumed his activities on behalf of the CAES with the same intensity as in the late 1910s. On December 7, 1942, he wrote to Darlan to demand that the antisemitic Vichy legislation be abrogated. Calling upon the patriotism and military service of Algerian Jews, Aboulker cited his own military background in expressing the deep distress of Jews who had fought for France and then lost their citizenship under Vichy. “In the name of Frenchmen of the Jewish religion who have unanimously mandated me to this effect, I urge from you the total abrogation of actions taken against us since the armistice.”¹⁹⁶

Following Darlan’s assassination, Rabbi Eisenbeth expressed Algerian Jews’ hope that Giraud would usher in a new era in which they would be reinstated as French citizens.

¹⁹⁴ Chief Rabbi of Algeria Maurice Eisenbeth to the Governor General, Algiers, November 17, 1942, CDJC LXXXIV-9.

¹⁹⁵ André Bakouche, President of the Constantine Consistory to Governor General Châtel and Admiral Darlan, Constantine, November 25, 1942, CAOM Alg GGA 6CAB/1.

¹⁹⁶ Dr. Henri Aboulker to Admiral Darlan, Algiers, December 7, 1942, CDJC LXXXIV-14.

They were disappointed. “The era of the liberation seems to open up to us. However, since November 8, no effort has been made to abrogate the laws of Hitlerian spirit, they are aggravated by military law that has mobilized the Jews in separate units as workers.”

Eisenbeth also protested the arrest of Jews involved in the Allied landings, such as Dr. Aboulker and his son, José, whose patriotism, he argued, was undeniable. He demanded “their liberation as a gesture of justice in order to appease the legitimate concerns of a population that is still waiting today for the abrogation of racist legislation.”¹⁹⁷

Their disappointment continued into the new year. On January 7, 1943, the CAES reported on the continued difficult situation of Jews in Algeria and the maintenance existence of antisemitic legislation in the colony. As subjects, Jews were only permitted to participate in the military as workers and only in separate groups. The CAES leaders added that “concerns have become accentuated by the fact that since the Allied landings, antisemitism has increased in Algeria in great proportions.” They articulated the frustration of Algerian Jewry when they wrote “if the Germans had occupied Algeria, they would have taken the same measures that are about to be applied.”¹⁹⁸

Although the Giraud era would be marked by numerous disappointments for Algerian Jews, Giraud took some minor steps to improve their situation. For example, on January 14, he ordered that all identity cards and certificates no longer be marked by the term “juif,” and contain only three distinctions: “French, citizen,” “French, non-citizen,” and “Foreigner.”¹⁹⁹ The continued implementation of the Vichy antisemitic legislation, however, remained the

¹⁹⁷ Chief Rabbi Eisenbeth to the High Commissioner General Giraud, Algiers, December 31, 1942, CDJC LXXXIV-21.

¹⁹⁸ CAES, “Rapport sur la Situation Générale Actuelle des Juifs en Algérie,” Algiers, January 7, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-26.

¹⁹⁹ Governor General to the Prefect of Constantine, “No. 1003 pol.RG.I,” Algiers, January 14, 1943, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G6.

central focus of Algerian Jews. To that end, Algerian Jewish leaders organized a meeting with Governor General Peyrouton to detail their grievances. Peyrouton dismissed the discussion, stating that fighting the war was the highest priority and that the problems posed by the Algerian Jewish leadership would be dealt with after the end of war.²⁰⁰ Nonetheless, Giraud and Peyrouton considered other measures to improve the situation of Algerian Jews. Among these measures included restoring Jewish property and abrogation the quota for Jews in state schools. According to a surveillance report, the suggestion of such actions caused concern among Algerian Muslims that Jews would return to their previous superior status. They feared that Jews would become citizens once again, and that Algerian Muslims would remain subjects.²⁰¹

These measures were only the first step in undoing the damage of Vichy. Over the course of February 1943, lawyers, doctors, university students and professors, and former administrators and administration employees submitted petitions to the Governor General requesting their reintegration.²⁰² The status of Jews' eligibility to serve in the military remained unclear. Alfred Ghigi of the CAES submitted two petitions to the Governor General. The first, on January 8, cited the long history of Jewish military contributions and demanded that Jews be reintegrated into the military so that they could fight for France in the

²⁰⁰ "Entretien avec Monsieur Marcel Peyrouton, Gouverneur General de l'Algérie, étaient présentes pour y avoir été convoqués: M. le Grand Rabbin M. Eisenbeth, E. Balensi, Marcel Belaiche, Dr. Benhamou, Dr. André Levi-Valensi, Charles Levy, Intendant Général Levy," January 28, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-36.

²⁰¹ Governor General, Center for Information, "No. 181 CIE: Renseignements: Abrogation de certaines mesures anti-juives," Algiers, February 1, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

²⁰² "Motion, Les Avocats Israélites du Barreau d'Oran," CDJC LXXXIV-44; "Motion (CJAES)," Algiers, February 11, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-43; "Motion-Médecins," Algiers, February 15, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-48; "Réunion des médecins juifs non-éliminés," Algiers, February 18, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-49; Jewish students of Algiers to the Governor General, Algiers, February 20, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-50; "Motion-Membres de l'enseignement Public," Algiers, February 20, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-51; "Motion-Membres de l'Université Français," Oran, February 25, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-55; "Motion-Fonctionnaires de toutes catégories," February 28, 1943, CDJC LXXXIV-56.

continued war against Germany.²⁰³ In his second petition, Ghighi expressed his hope that if allowed to fight together, the camaraderie of soldiers on the battlefield would cement “French cohesion, more necessary than ever.”²⁰⁴

Jewish efforts at regaining their lost French citizenship failed. A surveillance report identified four political groups among Algerian Jews at the end of February 1943. The first group included leaders such as Henri Aboulker who hoped for a return to the government pre-Armistice. The second group directed its efforts at a common Jewish-Muslim front under French or Anglo-American dominion. The third group, supported by Elie Gozlan and Dr. Loufrani, preferred American control over the colony, followed by the British, or as a last resort, French rule. The fourth and final group looked towards Palestine for their future and exhibited “Zionist and Anglophilic tendencies.”²⁰⁵

Giraud’s Re-abrogation of the Crémieux Decree

On March 14, 1943, Giraud took one step forward towards remedying the wrongs of Vichy, and one step backward with regards to the Jews of Algeria. “Relative to the measures taken with regard to the Jews,” Giraud repealed Vichy’s antisemitic legislation. Giraud described the antisemitic legislation as a “consequence” of the German occupation, which went against the inalienable rights of Frenchmen. As a result, all distinctions made on the quality of being Jewish in terms of access to and exercise of certain professions, attendance at schools, and involvement in the administration were abolished. Terminated employees of the administration and functionaries would be reintegrated at the soonest possible date. Jewish property and goods confiscated as part of the aryanization program would be returned

²⁰³ Alfred Ghighi to the Governor General, Oran, January 8, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

²⁰⁴ Alfred Ghighi to Governor General Peyrouton, Oran, February 14, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB//71.

²⁰⁵ Governor General, “CIE No. 388: Renseignements Tendances actuelles des Juifs Algérois,” Algiers, February 24, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

to their owners. This act signaled a major transition from the era of Vichy to that of Giraud and the Allies.²⁰⁶

Many applauded this important gesture to remedy Vichy injustices. Algerian Jews discovered the same day that Giraud also promulgated two contradictory ordinances regarding their status. Giraud's first declaration of March 14 cancelled Vichy's abrogation of the Crémieux decree. Theoretically, then, Algerian Jews would revert back to their former status as French citizens. This was not, however, to be the case. Giraud's second decree abrogated the Crémieux decree a second time. In the same manner as Vichy's abrogation, Jews had three months in which to submit requests to be considered exempted from the new decree.²⁰⁷ Under Giraud, official state antisemitism continued.²⁰⁸ In a report on the legal implications of Giraud's decree, Alfred Ghighi wrote that the new law maintained much the same form as Vichy's abrogation.²⁰⁹ Giraud's staff explained the re-abrogation as a way of not inciting Muslim anger in war-time. Despite the improvements brought by Giraud in ending the era of Vichy, the re-abrogation of the Crémieux decree caused further rupture between Algerian Jews and France.

Algerian Jews once again worked Jewish-Muslim unity, as they had following the initial Vichy abrogation. Jews sought to garner Muslim support by emphasizing their shared status as victims of racism.²¹⁰ The re-abrogation of the Crémieux decree became another

²⁰⁶ Henri Giraud, "Déclaration et ordonnance du 14 mars 1943 relative aux mesures prises a l'encontre des juifs," *Journal Officiel du Commandement en Chef Français*, March 18, 1943, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G7.

²⁰⁷ Henri Giraud, "Ordonnance du 14 Mars 1943 portant abrogation du décret du 24 Octobre 1870 relatif au statut des israélites indigènes de l'Algérie," in *Journal Officiel du Commandement en Chef Français*, March 18, 1943, CAOM Alg Const 93/3G7.

²⁰⁸ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 223, 230.

²⁰⁹ Alfred Ghighi, "Renseignements, A/S du Statut des Juifs," Oran, March 29, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

²¹⁰ Governor General, "No. 817CIE: Renseignements Activité de Docteur Loufrani," Algiers, April 7, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

opportunity to fight for both Jewish and Muslim rights in the colony.²¹¹ Algerian Jews immediately protested against Giraud's re-abrogation of the Crémieux decree. The CAES leadership emphasized the illegality of the re-abrogation by asserting that the quality of citizen was imprescriptible. Calling upon the importance of solidarity in war time, they wrote that "the French Republic made Algerian Jews French citizens, its will remains sovereign. The Algerian Jews solemnly declare that they are and remain integrally French."²¹² Algerian Jewish protests against the Giraud abrogation were mainly reiterations of their previous protests against the Vichy abrogation.

Giraud's renewed abrogation of the Crémieux decree thrust the issue onto the world stage. In April 1943, the *New York Times* published a letter by philosopher Jacques Maritain, then President of the Executive committee of the École des Hautes Études de New York. Among his conclusions, Maritain wrote that "This abrogation is unjust in itself and is contrary to all the traditions of French law." He warned that the abrogation may have been motivated by antisemitic sentiments in the colony. "Antisemitism is the carrier of all the Nazi poisons, and there cannot be, under any circumstances, any concessions to it." Maritain maintained that the new government in Algeria had to declare the abrogation null. He also answered that the new government had an opportunity to deal with Algerian Muslim rights. "When the sovereignty of the French people is once again affirmed, we have no doubt that the Algerian Jews will see their rights corroborated, at the same time we must find a just and equitable solution for the Muslim population."²¹³

²¹¹ Prefect of Algiers, "No. 2426: Relations Judeo-Musulmans, A/S Dr. Loufrani," Algiers, May 18, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

²¹² CAES, "L'Action du Comité Juif d'Études Sociales," *Bulletin de la Fédération des Sociétés Juives d'Algérie*, no. 89 (August-September 1943), CDJC BIB 9001.

²¹³ Jacques Maritain, "Le *New York Times* publié la lettre suivante du philosophe Français Jacques Maritain, President du Comité exécutive de l'École des Hautes Études de New York," New York, April 25, 1943, CAOM FM 1affpol/877.

The Free French (now the “Fighting French”—*France Combattante*) and de Gaulle also criticized Giraud’s abrogation of the Crémieux decree. The Fighting French, under the leadership of Captain Pierre Bloch, argued that “It is untrue to say that the abrogation of the Crémieux decree has established equality between Muslim and Jewish natives.... The position of Algerian Jews has become worse. General Giraud goes further than the Vichy government.”²¹⁴ The ramifications of the abrogation became clear at the meeting of the General Council of Algiers. During roll-call, one council member, Belaiche, stood and announced “I realize that, in view of the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree, I shall no longer be qualified to exercise my functions because I am a Jew.”²¹⁵

Giraud’s re-abrogation of the Crémieux decree reverberated throughout the wider Jewish world. George Hexter, of the Community Service Unit of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), sent copies of an article by Hannah Arendt on the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree, to newspapers and radio commentators to Giraud’s actions. In the memo, Hexter touched upon the long history of antisemitism in the colony and its clear influence on the new legislation.

These French colonials, traditionally reactionary, have long been imbued with racial theories. Not only has it been their policy to keep the Arabs in subjection, but they also have a persistent record of antisemitism. Both before and after the Dreyfus Affair, as well as during it, antisemitism on the part of the French in Algeria was far more virulent than in France itself....The claim that the revocation of the Crémieux Decree was necessary in order to prevent discord among Algerian Arabs is regarded by those who are familiar with conditions in North Africa as a smokescreen thrown up by the French reactionaries there.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Jewish Telegraph Agency, “Fighting French Voice Severe Criticism of Abrogation of Crémieux Decree,” April 16, 1943, CDJC CCCLXXXV-1.

²¹⁵ Jewish Telegraph Agency, “Algiers Council-General Embarrassed by Gen. Giraud’s Abrogation of Crémieux Decree,” April 23, 1943, CDJC CCCLXXXV-1.

²¹⁶ George J. Hexter, “Letter and Memo,” April 1, 1943, CDJC CCCLXXXV-1.

Hexter's accusation of antisemitism as the root of the abrogation also became the thesis of Arendt's analysis.

In conjunction with the AJC, Arendt wrote an article entitled "Why the Crémieux Decree was Abrogated." In the article, she analyzed the history of antisemitism in the colony and explained Giraud's abrogation of the Crémieux decree as a continuation of that tradition. Arendt argued that French colonists first resisted the Crémieux decree because they feared that by allowing Algerian Jews to become French citizens, their own power would be significantly reduced. "These French colonials became the major source of antisemitism in Algeria. They were anti-native in general but became anti-Jewish when equality was given to native Jews."²¹⁷ Arendt outlined the history of antisemitic politics and politicians in the colony, from Régis in 1898 to Molle in the 1920s. She cited Viollette as stating in 1935 that "if there is antisemitism in Algeria, be sure that it is Europeans who fan it."²¹⁸

In her analysis of the legal and political problems posed by the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, Arendt emphasized that Algerian Jews no longer had recourse to represent themselves in any political bodies. In contrast, Algerian Muslims had elected representatives as a result of the 1919 Jonnart Law. Arendt firmly denounced the claim that Giraud abrogated the Crémieux decree in order to create equality between Jews and Muslims in the colony. She accused Giraud of acting as an "agent of those French colonials," who sought to exert their own control of the colony. "The French colonials, in other words, took advantage of France's defeat and their freedom from the control of the mother country in order to introduce in Algeria a measure that they would never have been able to obtain through legal

²¹⁷ Hannah Arendt, "Why the Crémieux Decree was Abrogated," *Contemporary Jewish Record*, April 1943, 118, CDJC CCCLXXXV-1.

²¹⁸ Arendt, "Why the Crémieux Decree was Abrogated," 121.

channels.”²¹⁹ Arendt’s scathing analysis of the history of antisemitism in colonial Algeria quashed Giraud’s claims that he eliminated racial legislation. She also demonstrated that the era of state antisemitism under Vichy continued under Giraud’s supervision and that of the American forces, who, through their support of Giraud, were complicit.

Henry Torrès, a French-Jewish lawyer, made famous for his defense of Simon Schwartzbard, also commented on Giraud’s abrogation. Originally published in the *Free World*, his article tried to help American readers relate to the situation of Algerian Jews.

What would be the reaction of the American public opinion if it were to discover that American citizens of two or three generations’ standing, with a record of having heroically carried their country’s flag on the battlefields...and contributed at least their share to the civilization of their motherland ... had been suddenly stripped of their American citizenship? Would it accept as valid the excuse offered by the perpetrator of this arbitrary decision that such a step, directed against a single category of citizens, had been taken to appease Indians or Negroes and to resolve political problems that concerned them?²²⁰

Like Arendt, Torrès contradicted Giraud’s rationale for the abrogation.

Torrès denounced the abrogation as a regressionist approach to dealing with the issue of Arab rights. By retracting Algerian Jewish citizenship in order to appease Algerian Muslims, Giraud went against the history of assimilation in French colonialism, and continued to handicap the Algerian Muslims’ path to emancipation. Torrès also emphasized the long history of antisemitism in Algeria, from Drumont to Doriot’s PPF, whom he described as the “Vassals of the Nazis.” Torrès urged his readers to decide for themselves whether the abrogation of the Crémieux decree was not “a crime against history, a burden on the present, a portentous warning for the future; whether it is not a vestige of Vichy, a

²¹⁹ Ibid., 123.

²²⁰ Henry Torrès, “The Abrogation of the Crémieux Decree,” *Free World*, CDJC CCCLXXXV-1. This article also appeared in *The Canadian Jewish Chronicle* on May 7, 1943.

concession to Nazism.”²²¹ By depicting the Algerian Jews as the allies of American and Allied forces and fellow enemies of Hitler and the Axis powers, Torrès encouraged public support of Algerian Jews.

In addition to its publicity campaign the AJC also lobbied American political leaders on behalf of Algerian Jews. Joseph M. Proskauer, the president of the AJC, wrote Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles in March 1943 to protest Giraud’s abrogation. Proskauer outlined Giraud’s argument regarding his abrogation and pointed out the fallacious aspects. Proskauer noted that he and the AJC were more concerned with implications of Giraud’s abrogation, specifically “that equality between Muslims and Jews is to be gained by, in effect, denying citizenship to both of them.” Regarding the situation of the Algerian Jews, Proskauer acknowledged that he and the AJC “have no desire to add to the burdens of the [State] Department in this situation. These implications, however, are of so grave a nature, affecting not only the status of Jews in Algeria, but possibly of other lands.” Proskauer requested a meeting with Welles to discuss the situation further.²²²

Proskauer posited that the fact that the American government appeared to support Giraud’s abrogation was unacceptable to the AJC. “Our government had expressed approval of what was done in North Africa in this connection. That means it has approved the following: that a group of French citizens, over 100,000 in number that has enjoyed over 70 years of such citizenship, is now deprived of citizenship solely on the ground that they are Jews.” Proskauer emphasized the dangerous similarities between such legislation and that of Nazi Germany and the Nuremberg laws. The “present situation is wholly inconsistent with

²²¹ Torrès, “The Abrogation of the Crémieux Decree,” CDJC CCCLXXXV-1.

²²² Joseph Proskauer, President AJC to Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, New York, March 17, 1943, CDJC CCCLXXXV-2.

the principles announced by the Allied nations.”²²³ Proskauer enclosed the statement prepared by the AJC on the abrogation.

The statement outlined Giraud’s abrogation, and accused him of having “usurped the right to change the law of France.” The AJC argued that the most significant implication of the abrogation was that Jews could no longer vote for deputies to the French Parliament. The eradication of Algerian Jews from voter lists would reduce the number of eligible voters in Algeria by eleven or twelve percent. As Jews often voted for Republican candidates, their elimination in elections would transfer power to the anti-Republicans. In addition, the retraction of Algerian Jewish citizenship would significantly change the composition of the military, as well as the conditions of Jews serving in the military.

The AJC statement contended that “by his procedure, General Giraud establishes equality by lowering the status of the Jews, which is a method without precedent and which violates accepted democratic principles.” The statement concluded that the Giraud abrogation created a precedent for excluding groups of citizens on the basis of religion or race. “This is the first time that a non-totalitarian regime has deprived native born citizens of their citizenship.”²²⁴ Welles responded to that the Americans did not have any involvement in the decision to abrogate the Crémieux decree and did not express approval for such an act.²²⁵

The abrogation of Crémieux Decree also became a central issue for the World Jewish Congress (WJC). In June 1943, the Advisory Council on European Jewish Affairs and the French Jewish Representative Committee, represented by their President Henry Torrès, and

²²³ Joseph Proskauer to Sumner Welles, New York, May 17, 1943, CDJC CCCLXXXV-2.

²²⁴ American Jewish Committee, “Statement Regarding the Abrogation of the Crémieux Decree, submitted to Sumner Welles,” May 17, 1943, CDJC CCCLXXXV-1.

²²⁵ Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles to Joseph Proskauer, Washington, D.C., May 20, 1943, CDJC CCCLXXXV-2.

Secretary General Paul Jacob, created a Memorandum on Giraud's abrogation, a "concession to Fascism and Nazism." In their report, the WJC representatives wrote that "the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree constitutes...the most unjust of racial discriminations, inflicted upon French citizens of the Jewish religion from Algeria. There could not be a greater attack on the democratic principles for which the Allies have fought." Moreover, the memo concluded that "the retraction of citizenship is the most extreme measure that one can take against a citizen such as a criminal, a spy, or a traitor of the country."²²⁶

In their analysis of the situation of the Algerian Jews post-Giraud abrogation, Torrès and Jacob argued that since the Crémieux decree seventy-three years ago, Algerian Jews had assimilated to their new identities. Therefore, returning to their pre-Crémieux status would be impossible as their previous institutions and status no longer existed. Torrès and Jacob highlighted the injustice that the Italian, Spanish, and Maltese *néos*, even those very recently naturalized, were allowed to keep their citizenship, as "Frenchmen, descendants of the beneficiaries of the Crémieux decree, lose theirs."²²⁷

Torres and Jacob argued that Algerian Muslims did not want citizenship, because they continued to remain loyal to their personal status. Furthermore, Algerian Jews had never opposed giving citizenship to Algerian Muslims. Antisemitism in the colony, they argued, was the product of French colonists, particularly the *néos*. Emphasizing the link between antisemitic activity and anti-French agitation, Torres and Jacob called upon the government to act. "It is the duty of all democrats and all democracies to fight and to reduce

²²⁶ Henry Torres, Paul Jacob, World Jewish Congress, French Jewish Representative Committee, "Mémorandum: Une Concession au Fascisme et au Nazisme: L'Abrogation du Décret Crémieux," June 1943, CDJC XC-6.

²²⁷ Torres, Jacob, "Mémorandum: Une Concession au Fascisme et au Nazisme: L'Abrogation du Décret Crémieux," June 1943, CDJC XC-6.

the contagion of fascist and Nazi propaganda, weapons of Axis war, which is the only reason for such an unjust, painful, and unnecessary condemnation.”²²⁸

The CAES also used the platform provided by the WJC to present their own report in June 1943. The CAES leadership outlined the activities of the Jewish community in Algeria in dealing with the repercussions of antisemitic legislation under Vichy and under Giraud. In the aftermath of Giraud’s abrogation, the CAES argued that the conditions of Algerian Jewry worsened as antisemitism increased. Anti-Allied propaganda pointed to Jewish involvement in assisting the landings on North African shores, which caused fear of reprisals in the Jewish community. The continued presence of leaders and officials from the Vichy period in Algeria only heightened that sense of insecurity. The CAES reported that it felt sure that the French administration under Giraud was not providing accurate information on the situation to the Allies. “The continuation of the discriminatory laws is incompatible with the liberation of African France and the presence of the Allies. It is impossible to fight simultaneously against the Axis on the outside and maintain the spirit of the Axis powers on the inside.”²²⁹

The context of World War II presented a new opportunity of Algerian Jews to bring their plight onto the world’s stage in an unparalleled manner. Previous efforts by Algerian Jews to lobby or to speak out against antisemitic measures were directed at French audiences. In fact, they often directed their concerns at the Algerian administration, occasionally calling for assistance from their fellow Jews in the metropole. Bringing the attention of other Jewish organizations such as the AJC and the WJC to their situation represented a major transition from insular defense to creating bonds with worldwide Jewry. Algerian Jews also fostered

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ CAES, “Report on the Present General Situation of Jews in Algeria, presented to the Advisory Council on European Jewish Affairs, World Jewish Congress,” June 1, 1943, CDJC XC-7.

connections with Jewish American and British soldiers stationed in Algeria by celebrating holidays together. In April 1943, 800 American soldiers attended Passover services at the Grand Synagogue of Oran. Chief Rabbi of Oran Askenazi gave a speech in which he stated that “today, all of the Jewish population comes together to celebrate both the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt and slavery as well as from Nazi laws.” He also honored the Allied soldiers, “who came from far away to save France and humanity.”²³⁰ The work of these organizations on behalf of Algerian Jews also indicates the development of Jewish cooperation and collaboration in the face of the devastation of World War II.

The lobbying efforts of Jewish organizations within and outside of Algeria forced French administrators to reexamine the impact of antisemitic legislation. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior J. Abadie first dealt with the repercussions of Giraud’s abrogation of the Crémieux decree in May 1943, when he asked “is there not another method that would be agreeable to Muslims than to adopt their sentiments of animosity towards the Jews, to confirm them, and to augment them by a legal consecration?” Abadie acknowledged that it was critical to ensure Algerian Muslim support of France and their cooperation, especially in the midst of war; however, he believed there was some alternative practical solution besides the abrogation of the Crémieux decree. “In the face of this solution, which we can call destructive since it tends to undo 70 years of evolution already acquired, can we not find a constructive solution that brings Muslims something truly positive, real, that will elevate them as well?” Abadie’s recommendation centered on extending greater access to

²³⁰ Special Police of Oran, “No 1624; RAPPORT Objet: Cérémonies célébrées au Grand Temple à l’occasion des fêtes de Pâques,” Oran, April 20, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

citizenship to Algerian Muslims, which would assuage their frustrations and bring them closer to France.²³¹

Abadie's concerns emerged in response to protests voiced by Algerian Jewish representatives, such as Alfred Ghighi. Ghighi submitted several reports outlining the dangers and legal ramifications of the abrogation. In June, Ghighi reported on the impact of the declaration on the position of Jews in army. As a result of losing their citizenship, Jews were excluded from serving in the army, and could only serve as forced workers in the certain camps such as Bedeau.²³² Abadie submitted another report on the impact of Giraud's abrogation, in which he focused primarily on the issue of Muslim rights.

Abadie argued that the question of European antisemitism needed to be put off to the side, although he acknowledged that it played a role in the colony since the Dreyfus Affair, and was often the cause of local problem around electoral periods. Instead, the report focused on the role and importance of the Algerian Muslims. In spite of regular Jewish efforts to create unity and cooperation between Jews and Muslims, Abadie emphasized the long history of Muslim hatred of Jews. Abadie argued that the question of Muslim rights was more critical than ever in terms of military action: there were 120,000 Jews in the colony in contrast to the seven million Muslims, who could be used in the French army. Abadie reemphasized Giraud's argument that the abrogation would put Jews and Muslims on equal footing. "It is necessary to align the rights of the first group with that of the second." Abadie

²³¹ J. Abadie, Secretary of the Interior, "No. 213C.I.: Note au Sujet de l'abrogation du Décret Crémieux," Algiers, May 28, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

²³² Alfred Ghighi, "Note Remise a M. le Docteur Abadie, Secrétaire d'État a l'Intérieure, Situation militaire des Français de confession Juive," Oran, June 1, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71. The issue of work camps for Algerian Jews under Vichy and Giraud became a contentious issue, but one that cannot be dealt with adequately in this chapter. For more information, see Norbert Bel Ange, *Quand Vichy Internait ses Soldats Juifs d'Algérie, Bedeau, sud oranais, 1941-1943* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005).

also called upon often-used arguments against French citizenship for Jews, stating that one could regularly hear Jews state that they were Jews above Frenchmen.²³³

Abadie's drastic change in opinion from questioning Giraud's abrogation of the Crémieux to supporting it may have originated in an effort to consolidate support for Giraud in the face of Charles de Gaulle's arrival in Algiers on May 30, 1943. De Gaulle was the chief rival to Giraud's control. The abrogation of the Crémieux decree presented an opportunity for de Gaulle to set himself apart from Giraud.²³⁴ De Gaulle's arrival also gave Algerian Jews hope that their situation might soon be improved. Muslims also viewed de Gaulle's arrival as a favorable time to demand their own rights. In July 1943, mobilized Algerian Muslims in Blida and Tlemcen began to call for greater rights.²³⁵ Coinciding with de Gaulle's arrival, General Catroux's replaced Vichy's Peyrouton as Governor General.

Ghigi provided Catroux with documents regarding the politics of Algerian Muslims, as well as reports on the situation of Algerian Jews and their military service. In anticipation of the discussion of the Giraud's abrogation in the next meeting of the Senate of the Comité de Libération National, Ghigi rearticulated his opinion that the abrogation was illegal.²³⁶ In July 1943, Abadie submitted a lengthy report on the impact of Giraud's abrogation.²³⁷ It included the opinions of Algerian Jews, such as Ghigi, and the Consistorial leadership, as well as Muslim notables, representatives of the WJC, and French jurists. Abadie described European antisemitism as oriented around electoral issues, citing examples of antisemitic rhetoric such as the accusation that Jews vote as a bloc. Abadie did nothing in his report to

²³³ J. Abadie, "Note Relative aux solutions a donné à l'ordonnance du 14 Mars 1943, portent abrogation du décret Crémieux," June 6, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

²³⁴ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 248.

²³⁵ General Catroux, "No. 2440CIE: Objet: Situation des militaires indigènes," Algiers, July 1, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

²³⁶ Alfred Ghigi to General Catroux, Oran, July 11, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

²³⁷ Abadie's analysis emerged from a report submitted to Captain Warburg for the purpose of informing the American Press of the situation.

refute such claims, but noted that antisemites were very pleased with the abrogation.²³⁸

Abadie argued that “the most complex question remains that of the future rules for access to French citizenship.” He proposed that the 1919 Jonnart law be extended to Algerian Jews, which would guarantee French citizenship to those who met certain conditions. The alternative to this proposal would be to suspend Giraud’s abrogation; however, Abadie strongly favored the former.²³⁹

Giraud’s abrogation of the Crémieux decree thrust the issue of citizenship for colonial subjects into the consciousness of other colonial administrators. In Algeria, the question of Algerian Jewish citizenship became inextricable from issues of increasing access to citizenship for Muslims. The issue of offering citizenship to increase ranks of Frenchmen and as a way of solidifying French control over its colonies spread to other colonial holdings, such as Senegal. The Commissioner of the Colonies suggested that they take into consideration the system of offering citizenship to Africans in the *communes de plein exercice* in Senegal. He wrote that the case of Senegal indicated that they should “occasionally adapt our rather rigid legislation to the conditions of the people placed under our protection.” To this point, he argued that the title of French citizen should not always require the renunciation of personal status, pointing to the fact that in those four communes in Senegal, courts managed to judge cases in accordance with Muslim custom. “In other words, the concept of citizen is liable to have different meanings, the most essential is achieved when the citizen of a French country, whatever the nuances of his citizenship,

²³⁸ J. Abadie, “Étude Concernant l’ordonnance du 14 Mars 1943 portant abrogation du Décret Crémieux,” July 20, 1943, CAOM FM 1aaffpol/877. In his analysis of the issue of the retroactivity of the abrogation, Abadie outlined the responses to the legal aspects of applying a retroactive abrogation. He concluded that although it was complicated to legislate a retroactive retraction of citizenship, Giraud’s abrogation was still legal and would deprive Algerian Jews of their citizenship.

²³⁹ Ibid.

participates completely in honor of the French name, and wherever he is, in the rights and burdens that it entails.”²⁴⁰

The American forces were worried whether the retraction of the abrogation would enflame Muslim reaction. Colonel Truchet of the Comité de la Libération Nationale wrote of the urgency regarding the matter. Truchet feared that the reestablishment of the Crémieux decree would lead to “agitation at an inopportune moment,” because of the antisemitism of the European and Muslim populations in the colony. Muslims leaders, such as Ferhat Abbas, were waiting for the reinstatement of the Crémieux decree in order to demand their own rights. “The natives of Algeria Muslims seem so attached to their status much more for reasons of vanity than for religious reasons. Besides, they cite the example of people in four French communes of Senegal who are French citizens without renouncing their status.” In light of the American pressure, Truchet recommended that they broaden access to citizenship for Algerian Muslims, but establish definite limits on their involvement in the administration.²⁴¹

General Catroux received a warning that the Americans planned to put greater pressure on the French administration to immediately reinstate the Crémieux decree. Robert Murphy sent a representative of the State Department and specialist in Jewish affairs, Lieutenant Colonel Harold Boies Huskins, to negotiate the return of rights to Algerian Jews. The French explained to Huskins that there were insurmountable obstacles to reinstating the Crémieux decree because the conditions of war made it impossible to risk Muslim

²⁴⁰ Commissioner of the Colonies to the Commissioner of Justice, National Education and Public Heath, “No. 2/COLALG/Circ: Objet: Décret Crémieux,” Algiers, August 9, 1943, CAOM FM 1affpol/877.

²⁴¹ Colonel Truchet to Governor General Catroux, “No. 41, CAM,” Algiers, August 9, 1943, CAOM FM 1affpol/877.

agitation.²⁴² The director of the Muslim Affairs in the Governor General's office wrote "Muslims in Algeria are deeply impacted by the protest movement, and would resent any action taken in favor of Jews that would not be followed, in some measure, by equal concessions for them. Any other position would risk permanently alienating Muslim opinion in this country."²⁴³ The threat of extreme Muslim agitation, which the French administrators continued to use as an excuse for prolonging their decision regarding the status of Algerian Jews, may not have been as extreme as they described.²⁴⁴

The lobbying efforts of Algerian Jews, their American and French counterparts, as well as American officials' exertion of pressure on the French leaders finally brought results. On October 20, 1943, the Comité de la Libération Nationale nullified Giraud's abrogation, returning Algerian Jews to their pre-Armistice status as French citizens. According to the declaration, the laws of the Republic remained in effect; there was no need to reestablish the Crémieux decree.²⁴⁵ The declaration itself nullified the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, and reserved the right of the French authorities to redefine the status of Algerian Jews, as well as other Algerian populations.²⁴⁶ This maneuver not only returned Algerian Jews to their French citizenship, but also gave the illusion that Algerian Muslims' rights would be

²⁴² "Note pour le General Catroux," August 11, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71. The author is probably Abadie.

²⁴³ Director of Muslim Affairs and the Southern Territories to Head of Legislative Service and Administrative Legislation, "GGA CIE, No. 3342CIE: Objet: Application de l'ordonnance du 14 mars 1943, portent abrogation du décret Crémieux," Algiers, September 18, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

²⁴⁴ Governor General Catroux to the Commissioner of the Interior, "No. 2332-CC: Objet: Application de l'ordonnance du 14 mars 1943 portant abrogation du décret Crémieux," Algiers, September 29, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71. Less than a month before de Gaulle would finally reinstate the Crémieux decree, Governor General Catroux maintained his hard-line stance that the Giraud abrogation remain in effect in order to avoid grave repercussions.

²⁴⁵ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 250.

²⁴⁶ Ansky, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 318-319.

addressed in the future. In early October 1943, Giraud lost his co-presidency of the Comité de la Libération Nationale.²⁴⁷

Although Algerian Jews were greatly pleased to be reinstated as citizens, they did not publicly express their happiness.²⁴⁸ It was also likely a calculated decision by Algerian Jewish leadership who feared that public celebrations might anger their Muslim neighbors. Despite the paucity of overt displays of joy, Algerian Jews immediately expressed their gratitude for the return of their French citizenship. Ghighi sent letters of appreciation to Catroux and to de Gaulle. In his letter to de Gaulle, Ghighi thanked his fellow Oran General Council members for their support, singling out his Muslim colleagues, who provided him with “unanimous and spontaneous” support and aid.²⁴⁹ The Jewish Consistory of Tlemcen sent a telegram to de Gaulle expressing their “strong sentiments of appreciations for the accomplishment of a measure of equity that constitutes the reestablishment of the Crémieux decree. We express to you our indefectible attachment to the project you are undertaking for the liberation of our motherland and the restoration of republican principles.”²⁵⁰

At a ceremony for Simhat Torah attended by 3,000 Jews at the Main Synagogue of Oran, the Chief Rabbi gave a sermon in which he connected the holiday to the reinstitution of their status as citizens. “We are again French citizens. The Republic is now what it should be in reality, that is to say, fully free, great, and generous in justice.” The Chief Rabbi then

²⁴⁷ Bruce D. Graham, *Choice and Democratic Order: The French Socialist Party, 1937-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 256.

²⁴⁸ Msellati, *Les Juifs d'Algérie*, 252.

²⁴⁹ Alfred Ghighi to General de Gaulle, Oran, October 23, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71. See also, Alfred Ghighi to Governor General Catroux, Oran, October 23, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

²⁵⁰ Jewish Consistory of Tlemcen to General de Gaulle, “Telegram,” Tlemcen, October 25, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

offered a prayer asking God to aid and assist de Gaulle and the Comité de la Libération Nationale in their task of liberating France.²⁵¹

The AJC also expressed their gratitude. On October 22, Proskauer submitted the following statement: “We congratulate the French Committee of National Liberation on their courageous rectification of an error and humane righting of a wrong. We also express our grateful appreciation of the sympathetic position by the Government of the United States, which we believe had much to do with this fine achievement. This action is a hopeful augury for the prompt restoration of democracy in all Nazi-occupied territories upon their liberation from the Hitler yoke.”²⁵² Similarly, the French Jewish Representative Committee of the WJC published a statement of support for de Gaulle and Catroux. “The French Section of the World Jewish Congress thus feels that it has been compensated for the efforts it made—since the day that the Crémieux decree was abrogated—to bring about the complete restoration of the Republic in North Africa, just as it will be brought about in liberated France of tomorrow.”²⁵³

The President of the American Jewish Congress, Stephen S. Wise, and the president of the World Jewish Congress, Nahum Goldman, sent a telegram to the Comité de la Libération Nationale. “The American and the World Jewish Congress never doubted the spirit of France which framed the Crémieux decree would never permit its annulment.”²⁵⁴ Wise and Goldman also sent a telegram of support to Algerian Jewish leaders Henri

²⁵¹ Principal Commissioner of Oran to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 4982: Objet: Remise en vigueur du Décret Crémieux, État d'esprit en milieux Israélite et musulman d'Oran,” Oran, October 23, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

²⁵² Joseph Proskauer, “AJC Press Statement,” October 22, 1943, CDJC CCCLXXXV-2.

²⁵³ Henry Torres, Paul Jacob, Edouard de Rothschild, “Resolution of the French Jewish Representative Committee of the World Jewish Congress,” October 23, 1943, CDJC XC-14. The French Committee of the WJC also thanked the support of the American press for exposing the realities of the situation to the American people, as well as the leadership of the WJC for their involvement.

²⁵⁴ Stephen S. Wise and Nahum Goldman to the Comité de la Libération Nationale, October 22, 1943, CDJC XC-14.

Aboulker, Elie Gozlan, and Joseph Kanoui. “We greatly rejoice over the long awaited abrogation of the act that annulled the Crémieux decree. Glorious France could have done nothing else. May France soon be free by reason of the valor of its army, the greatness of its leadership, and the resolve of the United Nations.”²⁵⁵

Muslims were not pleased by the restitution of French citizenship for Algerian Jews. In Oran, Muslim elites and intellectuals expressed their frustration that Algerian Jews’ status improved while theirs remained unsatisfactory.²⁵⁶ In Bône, Muslims demonstrated general disappointment, and certain Muslim leaders announced that the measure was a flagrant injustice not in keeping with democratic principles. Right-wing Europeans in Bône criticized the reinstatement of the Crémieux decree, arguing that it was wrong to differentiate between Jews and Muslims.²⁵⁷ In Mascara, Europeans were more upset than were Muslims. Certain Muslim leaders believed that the decision of the Comité de la Libération Nationale indicated a positive future for Muslim rights.²⁵⁸ Despite the optimism of certain Muslim leaders, most Muslims felt discouraged by the reinstatement of the Crémieux decree. According to a surveillance report, “the partisans of Abbas and Messali now constitute a powerful majority and see the return of the Crémieux decree as a justification and argument for a tentative dissociation of the two elements, Jew and Arab, a justification of their anti-French

²⁵⁵ Stephen S. Wise and Nahum Goldman to Henri Aboulker, Elie Gozlan, and Joseph Kanoui, October 22, 1943, CDJC XC-14.

²⁵⁶ Principal Commissioner of Oran to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 4982,” October 23, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran//2539.

²⁵⁷ Special Departmental Police of Bône to the Commissioner of Constantine, “No. 1606: Objet: A/S du rétablissement du décret Crémieux,” Bône, October 26, 1943, CAOM Alg GGA 8CAB/71.

²⁵⁸ State Police of Mascara to the Sub-Prefect of Mascara, “No. 8537: Objet: répercussion du rétablissement du Décret Crémieux,” Mascara, October 29, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran//2539.

sentiments.... Even the *évolués*, even the Muslims the most loyal to the French ideal are discouraged.”²⁵⁹

Although once again French citizens, the memory of the period of rupture and alienation under Vichy and Giraud significantly impacted the identity and activity of Algerian Jews. In preparation for the 1944 meeting of the World Jewish Congress, Algerian Jewish leaders debated whether it would be wise to send delegates. Some argued that Judaism was only a religion, and that participation in the Congress would feed the fires of antisemitism by giving the indication of the existence of a Jewish race, working through international channels to promote the Jewish cause. Algerian Jews were also divided on the issue of Zionism and the possibility of a Jewish state. Most Algerian Jews were against the creation of a Jewish state and did not want to participate in the World Jewish Congress, which would champion such a cause.²⁶⁰ In spite of such divisions, Algeria sent six delegates to the meeting of the World Jewish Congress in Atlantic City in November 1944.²⁶¹ These concerns reflect the sense of insecurity of Algerian Jews regarding their newly reinstated citizenship. They feared that if they participated in an event that might resurrect antisemitic accusations of Jewish separatism, they could again lose their citizenship.

In order to help expunge Vichy’s antisemitic acts, the Governor General ordered the Prefect of Oran to organize the destruction of Vichy files in the presence of Jewish leaders.²⁶² All files ranging from requests to maintain citizenship following the Vichy 1940 abrogation

²⁵⁹ Governor General CIE: “No 3719 CIE: Renseignements: A/S du Maintien en Vigueur du Décret Crémieux,” Algiers, October 25, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

²⁶⁰ Police of General Information, Oran, “No. 1740: Objet: A/S du congrès Mondial Juif de New York: Protestation formulé par l’Entr’aide Israélite d’Oran,” Oran, March 4, 1944, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

²⁶¹ Resolutions, War Emergence Conference of the World Jewish Congress, Atlantic City, New Jersey, November 26-30, 1944, CDJC XC-3. The delegates included André Bakouche, Rabbi Maurice Eisenbeth, Benjamin Heler, Alfred Ghighi, Elie Gozlan, and René Roubache.

²⁶² Governor General to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 1104 IJ/3: Objet: Destruction des documents se rapportant aux déclarations des Israélites,” Algiers, May 22, 1944, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

of the Crémieux decree to declarations for the 1941 census were subsequently destroyed starting on July 11, 1944.²⁶³ Jews also asserted their patriotism and commitment to France through celebrations of their fallen brethren. In December 1944, Jews in Oran organized a memorial for fallen Jewish Scouts. Chief Rabbi David Askenazi gave a sermon emphasizing Jewish commitment and support for the success of the Allied troops.

We are meeting today to gather in memory of the heroes, leaders, and Jewish Scouts of France, known and unknown, buried as martyrs of the resistance, shot by the ruthless Teutonic, or died in battle for the Maquis.... They proved to their fellow citizens and to the entire world that, in spite of the racial laws applied to them that were not the true face of France, conscious of their Judaism, sincere patriots, they knew to die not as traitors, but to save the country, in communion with the ideas of all the members of the true French family.²⁶⁴

By celebrating the memory of the fallen, Algerian Jews continued to assert their patriotism and worth as French citizens.

For some Algerian Jews, however, the experience of rupture under Vichy and the continuation of the abrogation of the Crémieux decree even after the Allied landings proved too profound. They turned to Zionism as an alternative to continued devotion and commitment to a France that had betrayed them. One of the first Zionist groups, the *Foyer Intellectuel Israélite*, developed in Oran in October 1943. The *Foyer* organized conferences on Jewish issues, taught Hebrew, and celebrated the heroism of Jewish biblical figures.

According to the *Foyer*, “Zionism is considered one of the aspects of Judaism.”²⁶⁵ In 1944,

²⁶³ Councilor of the Prefecture to the Prefect of Oran, “Rapport à M. le Prefect/Procès-Verbale,” Oran, July 12, 1944, CAOM Alg Oran //2539. The President of the Consistoire A. Smadja, the rabbi of Oran Askenazi, Alfred Ghighi, M. Garson, and M. Malvy were present for the destructions of the documents. The destruction of these documents in Oran explains the lack of such documents in the archives. It is likely that the Prefect of Algiers executed a similar measure, while the Prefect of Constantine failed to do so. The largest number of remaining Jewish declarations in the archives can be found in the Constantine files at the Archives d’Outre Mer.

²⁶⁴ General Information Police, Oran, “No. 7945: Rapport: Objet: Cérémonie au temple israélite d’Oran,” Oran, December 7, 1944, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

²⁶⁵ Special Police of Oran to the Prefect of Oran, “No. 4898: Objet: Activité Sioniste—Foyer Intellectuel Israélite,” Oran, October 20, 1943, CAOM Alg Oran //2539.

the *Foyer* leadership separated from Consistory leaders, who opposed Zionism.²⁶⁶ Zionists established an Algerian Zionist Federation, led by Benjamin Heler, who made an appeal to Algerian Jews to support their cause in June 1944.²⁶⁷ In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the hope for a future Jewish State proved alluring to some Algerian Jews. In September, Jews in Algiers organized the *Nouvelle Organisation Sioniste d'Algérie*, which support the organization of a Jewish state in Palestine and free immigration to the state.²⁶⁸ Jews in Algiers also organized a *Fédération des Éclaireurs Juifs d'Algérie BETAR*, which focused on physical and Zionist education of Jewish youth.²⁶⁹ Despite the surge in Zionist activity in 1944, most Algerian Jews did not support Zionism and continued to see their future only with France.

From 1940 to 1943, Algerian Jews had their identities torn apart. One moment, they were French citizens, highly assimilated, and integrated into French society over seventy years. The next moment, with the stroke of a pen, they were reduced to their pre-1870 status as French subjects. For most Algerian Jews, they had only lived as French citizens and knew no other existence. Even after combating antisemitic attempts to remove their citizenship over the seventy years between the Crémieux decree and the organization of the Vichy government following the fall of France, Algerian Jews never believed their citizenship to be under threat. Being stripped of their citizenship profoundly altered Algerian Jews' identity, even after being reinstated as French citizens under the leadership of General de Gaulle.

²⁶⁶ “Exposé de la Situation créée par le F.I.J. Œuvre de Judaïsme militant à Oran,” Oran, October 13, 1944, CAOM Alg Oran //424.

²⁶⁷ Fédération Sioniste, Algérienne, “Appel de l’Organisation Sioniste au Peuple Juif,” June 1944, CAOM Alg Oran //424.

²⁶⁸ Nouvelle Organisation Sioniste d’Algérie, “No. 3409,” Algiers, September 21, 1944, CAOM Alg Oran //424.

²⁶⁹ “Statuts de la Fédération des Éclaireurs Juifs d’Algérie BETAR, LE BETAR,” June 2, 1944, CAOM Alg Oran 5i/50.

During that period of rupture, Algerian Jews reached out to Jews outside of the colony and the metropole to demand assistance in combating the state antisemitism of Vichy. In spite of their alienation by Vichy, Algerian Jews paved the way for Allied troops to land on Algerian shores, taking risks that few non-Jewish Europeans in the colony even considered. Algerian Jews' activities in the Allied landings as well as their efforts to be reinstated as French citizens illustrate the profound assimilation of Algerian Jews following the Crémieux decree. They achieved what Adolphe Crémieux promised they would: they became Frenchmen. Despite the rupture caused by the abrogation of the Crémieux decree, Algerian Jews remained loyal to France. In the context of the Algerian War, many would choose France over their *terre natale*.

Conclusion

Like Hélène Cixous' Jewish trapezists spangled in the tricolor flag, desperately reaching out across the abyss and grasping at France, antisemitism ripped Algerian Jews' citizenship and their place in the colony from their grasp. From the 1890s until the reinstitution of the Crémieux decree by Charles de Gaulle in 1943, Algerian Jews faced an endless series of challenges to their role as citizens, electors, and Frenchmen by a particular brand of political antisemitism, uniquely poisonous in the context of the colony.

In Algeria, French *colons*, *néos* and their Latin sons, Algerian Jews, and Algerian Muslims competed for economic advantage and political control in this extension of the metropole. Municipal governments in Algeria provided a singular political space in which *colons*, *néos*, and Jews struggled over power and patronage. French citizens in Algeria elected representatives to the National Assembly, but it was far away in Paris. Colonial institutions dominated the political landscape in Algeria through the operation of the government general. Control over municipal government offered more immediate and tangible benefits to French citizens in Algeria. As such, municipal elections were consistently fraught as electors sought ways to reduce competition from other groups and parties. As citizens, Algerian Jews and their cohesive voting practices threatened the supremacy of French *colons* and after 1889, the *néos* in municipal politics.

Over the years, especially following World War I, Algerian Muslims made increasing demands for political rights so that they could be represented in government rather than continue to exist as a maligned majority. Algerian antisemites insincerely promised improvements in their status to Algerian Muslims in exchange for their cooperation in combating the aggressive integration of Jews into politics, civil service, the military, and the

economy. Antisemites called upon the frustrations of Algerian Muslims to act out their resentment of the Jew as citizen. One result of this rhetoric was the Constantine pogrom in 1934.

In the crucible of municipal governments, Algerian Jews' rights as electors and the competition that those rights represented to Europeans acted as a catalyst in producing political antisemitism. In the 1890s, antisemites discovered that by gaining control of local governments, they could undermine Algerian Jewish citizenship. Antisemitism became deeply embedded in Algerian colonial society, especially in the political arena. Antisemitism manifested itself most dramatically surrounding elections for Algerian municipalities.

Antisemitism in Algeria combined several forms, melding race, religion, and status. In 1898 Max Régis dreamed of an Algeria free of Jews, by violent means if necessary. Political antisemitism also mutated into institutional forms. Institutional antisemitism blossomed under the auspices of anti-Jewish municipal governments that worked to remove the Jews as political and status competitors. Mayor Bellat led his antisemitic electoral commission in removing over 300 Algerian Jewish voters in Sidi Bel Abbès in 1937. Without the concerted efforts of Algerian Jewish defense organizations, the French colonial administration would have remained uninvolved in this egregious abuse of power. Bellat and his compatriots would have been free to establish further obstacles to the Algerian Jews practice of their citizenship.

Antisemitic violence in 1898 and 1934 forced Jews to face the tenuousness of their status in the colony and the fragility of their citizenship. The colonial administration failed to come to their aid. Jews called out to administrators for help only to be reassured that the necessary would be done. The fatal neglect of the administration in the face of violence

further illustrated to Jews that they had to be responsible for their own defense. Elite Jews established organizations, such as the Comité Algérien des Études Sociales, to defend their rights against infringements by municipal politicians and the administration as a whole.

Other Jews realized that defense meant more than battling for their rights; it meant defending themselves physically through the establishment of groups such as the Géo Gras Group.

Algerian Jews also reached out to Algerian Muslims and sought common ground in the face of discrimination and persecution. Jewish-Muslim alliances were developed, but rarely gained traction in the ever changing dynamic of colonial Algeria during two world wars and the Great Depression.

Algerian Jews responded to the threats posed to their rights by antisemitism by accelerating their assimilation at the behest of their leaders. To combat the accusations of backwardness, corporatism, and inappropriate voting practices, Algerian Jews had to become Frenchmen above reproach. They aggressively responded to attacks on their patriotism by pointing to service to their country in the military and civil service. In particular, they found the greatest defense of their rights in military service, mobilizing in great numbers in both World War I and in the war of 1939-1940 before the fall of France to Germany. In 1919, to document commitment to France, the CAES published a *Livre d'Or* detailing the commendations, medals, and heroic deeds of Algerian Jews in defense of France in World War I.

Vichy in Algeria represented the logical exacerbation of institutional antisemitism when it enacted decrees in the colony far harsher than in the metropole. Its Jewish Statutes set firm quotas for Jewish employment in professions and in the civil service and severely limited attendance Jews in schools and universities. In 1940, Algerian Jews experienced the

deepest rupture of their relationship with France caused by the Vichy government's abrogation of the Crémieux decree and the elimination of their identities as French citizens. Their expressions of mourning in the days following indicated how intensely they experienced the circumcision of their connection to France. With the stroke of pen, seventy years of assimilation, integration, and patriotism were erased by the state-sponsored antisemitism of Vichy. The abrogation of Crémieux reduced Algerian Jews to the status of colonial subjects. In assimilating into Frenchmen and citizens of a secular state over the past seventy years, Algerian Jews had left behind their communal institutions and "traditional" leaders. They could not legally or socially function again as colonial subject.

Algerian Jews appealed to Vichy to reinstate them as citizens on the basis of patriotism and assimilation. In the process of assimilating, some Jews illustrated their deep commitment to France through marrying non-Jews and converting to Catholicism themselves. These cases of appeals of intermarried and converted Jews illustrate the rigidity of Vichy's institutional antisemitism and the limits of Algerian Jews' assimilation.

In response to Vichy's institutional antisemitism, a group of Algerian Jews in 1942 risked their lives to pave the way for the Allied landings in Algeria, believing that in doing so true France would return and reinstate them as French citizens. José Aboulker and his father, Henri, a leader of the Algerian Jewish community since the early 1910s, were imprisoned for their efforts, further victimized for their commitment to France. Even after the fall of Vichy, Algerian Jews remained the victims of lingering antisemitism. Algerian Jews mobilized political support from Jewish intellectuals, such as Hannah Arendt, and recently established Jewish political organizations, such as the World Jewish Congress, to pressure the Allies and the Free French to reinstate their citizenship. It was nearly a year after their demonstrated

bravery and patriotism that Algerian Jews finally regained their citizenship. Over the course of their integration as citizens, Algerian Jews discovered that antisemitism, especially virulent in its political form, posed the greatest threat to their status and the practice of their rights as citizens.

This dissertation has explored the complexities of citizenship in the colonial context, the pursuit of rights by various groups, and the competition between them for control of local governments. Citizenship did not exist in a vacuum. Political antisemitism developed alongside the articulation of the Algerian Jews' citizenship as electors and members of civil society. Stemming from a variety of sources and influences, antisemitism emerged as the dominant political ideology for Europeans in the colony who sought the rewards of the patronage system endemic in municipal politics. Algerian Muslims expressed their resentment of the Jews' superior status and their concomitant frustrations with their lack of rights in the colony through political antisemitism. Through its diverse sources of nourishment, the tree of antisemitism grew strong and fruitful, extending its roots throughout all realms of Algerian colonial society: politics, economics, the military and civil service, and daily life.

Algerian Jews experienced decades of integration and assimilation in the colony, aggressively entering the economy and politics, and rising in the military and civil service. They discovered, however, that their path of assimilation was not without obstacles. Political and institutional antisemitism in the colony placed the greatest limits on the practice of their citizenship. Concurrently antisemites learned that they could harness the unprecedented power of the *néos*, French *colons*, and Algerian Muslims to their advantage. Algerian

antisemites plucked the trapeze of citizenship from the Algerian Jews' hands, highlighting the realities of their fragile status.

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