

Jewish Radicals of Morocco: Case Study for a New Historiography

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ABSTRACT

The confluence of Jews and Communism has long been noted by scholars. However, most historiography has treated European contexts, with the addition of some work on the Americas and the Yishuv, but neglected the broader Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Works that do purport to survey and compare the phenomenon across contexts have typically given the MENA short shrift. Further, most discussion of leftist Jewish politics halts after World War II, just when the story is gaining momentum in the MENA, particularly within anticolonial movements. In this article, I draw on Hannah Arendt's work on the so-called conscious pariah to bridge historiographies and link leftist Jews in the MENA, the Americas, and Europe. Using archival sources, newspapers, oral histories, and novels, I present Jewish involvement in the Parti Communist Marocain as a case study to examine the complications of Jewish involvement in leftist politics in concentric geographic, temporal, and historiographic circles. In so doing, I seek to complicate the story of Jewish attraction to internationalism and universalism and the reconciliation of Jewish affiliations and identities with the nation-state and the colonial.

Key words: Moroccan Jews, Communism, Hannah Arendt, conscious pariah

Although Yiddish was certainly a formative language of leftist Jews, it was not the only one.¹ This article seeks to complicate the historiography on Jews and Communism by adding Jewish leftist voices from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). For Moroccan Jews in the Communist Party, leftist, universalist politics represented a potent strategy to reconcile potentially conflicting

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identities and to secure a place in a future independent Morocco. This was not unique to Morocco, as Communism was often nationalist in colonial contexts. Although this would seem to contradict the central tenets of international Communism, and though each colonial context indeed differed, this was a common feature of what would eventually be called the Global South. Communist parties in the MENA and many other colonial contexts of the twentieth century were viable and popular alternatives to national liberation parties predicated on ethnocentric or religious identities.²

In this piece, I present Jewish involvement in the Parti Communiste Marocain as a case study of the complications of Jewish involvement in leftist politics across comparative temporal and geographic historiographies. To engage in such a vast comparison would require many more pages than the present article allows. Accordingly, I will focus on a few specific questions and theoretical frameworks that have the potential to unite research on Jews on the left across the MENA, Europe, and the Americas. Although this article does not make direct comparison between these geographical contexts, it does explore the connections and possibilities for future comparisons, opening questions of parallels and convergences.

I propose adapting Hannah Arendt's understanding of Jewish pariahs in her 1944 essay "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," as one potential strategy to address lacunae in the historiography of Jews and the left in the MENA, Europe, and the Americas.³ How do the different (or, perhaps, not so different) permutations of the Jewish Question in the MENA and Europe contribute to understanding Jewish attraction to and participation in local and international leftist politics, as well as understandings of pre- and postindependence citizenship? To begin to answer this question, I use the case study of Morocco to ask what the Moroccan case indicates for the MENA region and, more broadly, for Jewish Studies and histories of the left. Greater geographical inclusiveness also highlights the need to expand the temporal scope of studying Jews and the left. Most work that treats Jewish engagement in leftist politics halts after World War II, treating the story as "failed" utopianism in the wreckage of war and genocide. However, the story of leftist participation by Jews in the MENA only begins to gain momentum in the immediate postwar period, accelerating through the 1960s and 1970s. The prevailing historiography of Jews in leftist movements presents a narrative in which utopian, universalist, leftist Jews fall off a precipice into irrelevance or obscurity as part of the "radical roads not taken."⁴

Such investigations contribute to one of the most fundamental questions in Jewish studies since the Haskalah and France's emancipation

of its Jewish populations: what was the balance of Jewish communal allegiance and identification with the demands of the nation-state and national identity? In the MENA context, this question is intimately tied to the issues of colonial occupation and independence movements.⁵ For the most part, the nineteenth century was one of hope and enthusiastic communal organization for Western European Jews, which would have direct consequences for the Jews of the MENA.⁶ A complicated web of philanthropy, diplomacy, war, and capitalism in the long nineteenth century produced the emancipation of European (with the exception of Russian), Ottoman (with the Tanzimat reforms of 1839–76), and (most) French Algerian Jews (pursuant to the Crémieux Decree of 1870).⁷ Jewish philanthropic endeavors proliferated around the globe, aimed at reforming Jews from “backward,” “superstitious,” “Eastern” origins into model citizens.⁸ Successful regeneration would not only ease the individual’s assimilation and success as a productive citizen but also, perhaps more importantly, would prevent antisemitic allegations that painted “civilized,” emancipated and assimilated Jews with the same brush as their “backward” brethren.

For Jews of the MENA, the most important philanthropic organization involved in such regeneration was the Alliance Israélite Universelle, founded in Paris in 1860 by Adolphe Crémieux (1796–1880), a French Jewish lawyer. The goal of the Alliance was to “civilize” Jews in the MENA (as well as southeastern Europe) in order to prepare them for the benefits of full citizenship via an extensive school system, conducted mostly in French with scant attention to Hebrew or local languages. When the Alliance established its first school in the northern Moroccan city of Tetuan in 1862, the British and French Empires had not yet reached their territorial zeniths—France was 30 years into its conquest of North Africa (launched militarily in 1830 in Algeria), and the British Raj in India had just been established in 1858. The respective justifying claims of the Pax Britannica and the *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission) allowed each empire to claim that its dominion over enormous regions was for the benefit of the indigenous populations. Though the precise contours of emancipation and the historic relationship between Jews and the state differed according to context, both imperial settings saw a fundamental reorganization of the state’s relationship to the individual Jew and intensified incipient debates on nationalism and the possibility of individual “human” (Jewish) assimilation and acculturation within emerging nation-states (this was especially the case within multiconfessional and multilingual empires such as the Ottoman).⁹ This individualist, rationalist, emancipationist, yet universalist context would produce Jewish attraction to the left

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across Europe, the Americas, and the MENA. Yet, Jewishness coexisted uneasily with “pure human” emancipated identities in idealist leftist state formations.¹⁰

Morocco is one of many potential nodes of MENA Jewish leftist history. The scholarship on Jews in the Egyptian, Iraqi, and Algerian Communist Parties that has emerged over the last few decades attests to the possibility of similar arguments in other countries. Each context has its conscious pariahs, its own postwar stories. What matters for this article is how Moroccan Jewish stories can figure into a more inclusive literature examining Jews on the left. The same embrace of universalist politics and identities as a means to surmount Jewish segregation in the national or international project applied to Jews in many other geographic and temporal contexts. Across time and space, Jewish involvement in Communist politics hinged on combating alienation by becoming conscious pariahs rather than remaining passive ones. In other words, and perhaps paradoxically, Jewish participation in Communist politics was a unique strategy to achieve normalization through conscious pariahdom, whether in the more traditionally construed Ashkenazi context or in the less examined MENA lands.

Hannah Arendt’s Conscious Pariah

Writing in the final years of World War II, Arendt, a European Jewish refugee, argued in “The Jew as Pariah” for the category of a *conscious pariah*,¹¹ utilizing a discussion of Bernard Lazare and French Jewry around the time of the Dreyfus Affair to illustrate the failure of the emancipation of European Jewry. According to Lazare, if Jews were pariahs in European society, they would be better served by acting as conscious pariahs, working against the Jewish *parvenu*—the typically bourgeois, successfully assimilated Jew—and against oppressive social structures, with the goal of an eventual “admission of Jews *as Jews* to the ranks of humanity, rather than a permit to ape the gentiles or an opportunity to play the *parvenu*.”¹² Further, Arendt argued, “[h]owever much the Jewish pariah might be, from the historical viewpoint, the product of an unjust dispensation . . . politically speaking, every pariah who refused to be a rebel was partly responsible for his own position and therewith for the blot on mankind which it represented.”¹³

It is here that the notion of the conscious pariah relates to Jewish members of the Parti Communist Marocain, who rebelled with the goal of normalizing themselves as Jewish Moroccan nationalists. The following case studies of Moroccan Jewish Communists Simon

Lévy (1934–2011), Abraham Serfaty (1926–2010), and Edmond Amran El Maleh (1917–2010) illustrate different aspects of the conscious pariah in the MENA. As Moroccan Communist Jews, their pariahdom was trebled: within a Muslim-majority context whose dominant nationalist and populist figures (and their followers) often regarded Jews as suspect for collaboration with French and Zionist political aims; within a French society mediated by French Jewish philanthropies like the Alliance that espoused universalism and emancipation but that demonstrated the fickleness of such promises during the Vichy years of World War II, when Vichy legislation was applied to the French colonies; and finally, within a dominant gallicized Moroccan Jewish context that regarded participation in national liberation politics as threatening to the well-being and stability of the community. In rebelling against each of these loci of pariahdom in mid-twentieth-century Moroccan society, Moroccan Communist Jews became conscious pariahs, with the aim of normalizing their Moroccanness, their Jewishness, and their radicalism as mutually constitutive categories in the service of an idealized, independent nation-state.

Arendt's framework of the conscious pariah, combined with her concept of the man of good will, serves as a potent lens through which to examine how Moroccan Jews envisioned themselves to be participating as citizens in a newly independent Morocco and how Communism allowed their participation in Morocco's national liberation struggle. Numerous scholars have taken up Arendt's essay and critical engagement with Jewishness and Zionism; I seek to elaborate on such work in a context that Arendt never had in mind: Morocco, within the broader historiographical context of the MENA.

Arendt defines four pariah categories and examples in her essay. German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) is the schlemiel and the "lord of dreams"; French Jewish scholar and activist Bernard Lazare (1865–1904) is the prototypical conscious pariah; the British comedian and actor Charlie Chaplin (1889–1977) is the "grotesque portrayal of the suspect"; and finally, the Prague-born, German-language Jewish author Franz Kafka (1883–1924) is the "poetic vision of the fate of the man of good will."¹⁴ Each of these subcategories of pariah contrasts with that of the parvenu—the Jew who has assimilated into the dominant body politic with "a permit to ape the gentiles."¹⁵ Lazare was one of the earliest advocates of Zionism and, shortly thereafter, one of its earliest critics. It is not Lazare's anti-Zionism, however, that is of primary interest to Arendt but rather Lazare's relationship to the French state, antisemitism, and the fundamental

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place of the Jew in the nation-state. Chaplin, Arendt states plainly, has not been demonstrated to be Jewish but was so coded by many, including (and most famously) the Nazi Party, due to his prolific and critical film career, notably in the film *The Great Dictator* (1940). Heine, of course, predated Zionism and died only a few decades after the first Jewish emancipations in Europe. Kafka, distant chronologically but closer thematically and literarily to Heine, appreciated the beauty and cultural contributions of the oppressors more than the oppressors themselves, highlighting the alienation of his characters in an oppressive society. (Arendt uses Kafka's *The Castle* as the primary example of this.) Rather than focusing on Zionism as characteristic of the pariah, Arendt is interested in Kafka's alienation, his remove. Each of the four figures represents a particular trajectory and subset of the pariah category. Of the four types, the tropes of the conscious pariah coupled with Kafka's man of good will have the most valence for a discussion of Moroccan Jewish Communists.

The notion of the conscious pariah has frequently been invoked as a lens for exploring subversive, disruptive, or simply unpopular thought and activity on the part of Jews.¹⁶ Often, such applications of the idea of the conscious pariah focus on Jewish opposition to Zionism. According to Arendt, the paradigm of postemancipation Jewish life in Western Europe was the precariously balanced emancipatory dream by which a Jew could be made "human."¹⁷ The conscious pariah is distinct from other varieties of pariah in that he rebels not only against the emancipated parvenu—a rebellion without which, Arendt argues, destruction of both pariah and parvenu is inevitable—but also against the broader body politic that is the scaffolding of the oppression of pariahs. Conscious pariahs thus are not necessarily or only anti-Zionists but rather are those pariahs opposed to a social and political structure that excludes them "from the ranks of humanity"—an identification familiar to those Moroccan Jews rebelling first against French and Spanish colonial state structures and then against the oppression of King Hassan II.¹⁸ Rather than to denote criticism of Zionism, I use the term *conscious pariah* to address three Moroccan leftist Jews—Edmond Amran El Maleh, Simon Lévy, and Abraham Serfaty—as conscious pariahs not only in relation to their opposition to Zionism but also in relation to their own Moroccan Jewish home communities and the Moroccan state, first under colonial domination and then under government repression.

In addition to the better-known conscious-pariah framing, I argue, Arendt's discussion of the man of good will (as exemplified by Franz Kafka) is also a useful framework for examining the place of Moroccan

Jewish radicals both in modern Jewish and in MENA history. The man of good will is not only a pariah, he is a pariah in deep admiration of the dominant culture from which he springs, in whose language he writes, and amid whose legal codes and norms he exists, yet which has moved on without him. This figure is evidenced in prominent Communist Jewish writers not only in Europe but in the MENA as well, as the Moroccan writer Edmond Amran El Maleh (discussed at greater length below) illustrates. In a passage that has compelling reverberations in El Maleh's work, Arendt writes of Kafka's *The Castle* (1926):

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What Kafka depicts is the real drama of assimilation, not its distorted counterpart. He speaks for the average small-time Jew who really wants no more than his rights as a human being: home, work, family and citizenship. He is portrayed as if he were alone on earth, the only Jew in the whole wide world—completely, desolately, alone.... The hero of Kafka's novel does, in fact, what the whole world wants the Jew to do. His lonely isolation merely reflects the constantly reiterated opinion that if only there were nothing but individual Jews, if only the Jews would not persist in banding together, assimilation would become a fairly simple process.¹⁹

Arendt argues that the conscious pariah remains outside the pale of gentile society and that “politically speaking, every pariah who refused to rebel was partly responsible for his own position and therefore for the blot on mankind which it represented.”²⁰ Kafka's man of good will is the evidence for this—alone and alienated both from his surrounding Jewish milieu and from the acceptance of the dominant political society.

El Maleh's 1983 novel *Aïlen ou la nuit du récit* overlaps the most with Kafka's *The Castle*, the text on which Arendt based her analysis of the man of good will.²¹ As is characteristic of El Maleh's semiautobiographical fiction, the narrative plays with nonlinear time, permanence, and absence around a specific set of Moroccan historical moments. In *Aïlen* (a proper noun referencing a personified feminized narrative), the central historical moment is 1965, the year of massive student and labor protests in Casablanca that became antigovernment rioting, ending in bloody government suppression. At the time of the protests, El Maleh and Simon Lévy were both teachers at Lycée Muhammed V in Casablanca and played a role in organizing their students for the protest.²² The protests were “beautiful,” according to Lévy, before central government authorities, the

makhzan (a Moroccan Arabic term that roughly denotes the power of the state as concentrated in the Alawite monarchy), crushed what began as a student protest and escalated across aggrieved groups in the city.²³ For his involvement in the uprising, Lévy was arrested by *makhzan* authorities, tortured for eight days, then dumped unceremoniously on his home's doorstep. In *Aïlen*, El Maleh circles around this moment of government opposition and splices it with stories of radicalized Moroccan Jews and the exodus of the Moroccan Jewish community. Instead of trying to gain entry to meet with castle officials as the protagonist K. does in Kafka's *The Castle*, El Maleh's many characters in *Aïlen* seek to gain a foothold in Morocco's future, which appears to invite them but persists in their exclusion, as Jews and as "Marxist orphans" exiled from one another and from their shared past.²⁴ Evoking K.'s death in the stagnation of waiting for his permit to enter the castle, El Maleh concludes:

You wait one hundred years, a thousand years, you are stuck in the honey of the past like a stubborn fly, you are bogged down by an incurable nostalgia, you give birth to an imaginary country, suckled by fantasies, obsessive desires, obstinately blind to the present, you wander, within yourself, along the ramparts of the Scala [Italian "ramparts," adopted in Moroccan Arabic], facing the sea, captivated, fascinated by it, you are enthralled by the astonishing marriage of the city and the ocean, a dead city—embalmed, intact in its past.²⁵

El Maleh wrote these lines while living in Paris in self-imposed exile, disillusioned with the fate of postindependence Morocco and of its Jewish past. His characters, Jewish radicals and remnants, are relatively isolated, hopeful for a Morocco that does not exist and yet rejected from the Morocco that came to be. El Maleh once said: "I often think that I'm the only existing Moroccan Jew. There are a few of us who think this way, Serfaty, Simon Lévy. . . . We swim in antonyms, in contradictions: an absence of physical presence on the land and at the same time the permanence of something."²⁶ El Maleh speaks for himself and for the few "existing" Moroccan Jews (including Sefaty and Lévy), each simultaneously experiencing alienation and isolation as a Jewish phenomenon and as atomized characters in a national and Jewish narrative. El Maleh anchors this state of being in the image of an ossified city rampart, guarding against the passage of time or new narratives, disenchanted with his prior fantasies of the future of Morocco. Perhaps it is the condition of "swimming in antonyms" that defines the man of good will and the conscious pariah.

The Place of Moroccan Jews in the History of the Left

What accounts for the geographically widespread Jewish affiliation with leftist politics? The historiography on this score remains nascent. A handful of edited volumes and monographs examine Jews on the left, but none do justice to Jewish involvement on the left in the MENA. Further, they tend to halt the chronological narrative following the conclusion of World War II, just when the story of Jews on the left in national liberation movements in the MENA was gaining momentum. Furthermore, such a historiographical trend ignores Jews in the New Left and Third Worldist movements, a crucial continuation of the Jewish connection with socialist politics following World War II, not only in the MENA but also in Europe and the Americas.²⁷

Work on the question of Jews and socialism in the MENA began in earnest in American academia in the 1990s. The literature is currently in development, with many established and junior scholars working on newly available archives in a wider variety of languages than has traditionally been expected of historians of the Jewish past.²⁸ For these works as well as my own, World War II represents not the epitaph of Jewish engagement on the left but rather its moment of intensification and nationalist entrenchment, exemplified by the work of El Maleh referenced above. Further, in MENA (and other) contexts, Zionism and Communism were not necessarily mutually exclusive ideologies—indeed, in earlier periods, politicized Jews often claimed to be both while also endorsing nationalist aims, working for a colonial governing authority and then working against it. In each of these cases, notably in Egypt, Iraq, Iran, and Algeria, those Jews involved in leftist movements sought a means of reconciling Jewish identity and nationalism through the prism of internationalism and the idealism of the left.

Socialist movements in Eastern Europe invoked a rhetoric of liberation from oppressors, a vision of justice, and an often-utopian universalism. Just as Jewish participation in socialist movements in Eastern Europe involved an uneasy relationship with non-Jewish socialist leaders, Jewish socialists in North Africa were beholden to the French Communist Party, unsure of whether to break or ally with a power that might work against their interests. This dynamic differed between the Moroccan, Algerian, and Tunisian Communist Parties, with the most acute and infamous case of torn allegiances being that of Algeria, due to the French citizenship afforded most Jews there and the party's reluctance to support Algerian independence, in contrast

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to its counterparts in the protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia.²⁹ A comprehensive comparison between North Africa and Eastern Europe is beyond the scope of this article, but an initial examination reveals similar tensions for diverse Jewish leftist groups, albeit in different chronologies. For Eastern Europe and the United States, the formative years took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In North Africa, the formative chronology spans the 1930s through the 1950s. As Tony Michels concludes: “If the Yiddish socialists and their descendants failed to achieve their largest goals and dreams, the questions they posed—Who are we? What is a just society? How might we achieve it?—remain forceful and relevant for Jews and all Americans.”³⁰ The same questions could be asked of mid-twentieth-century North Africa regarding its struggles with decolonization and Jewish participation therein.

Moroccan Jewish History of the Left

Moroccan Jews had limited political choices. The mainstream Moroccan national liberation parties, Istiqlal (Independence) and the Parti Démocratique pour l'Indépendance (PDI), were predicated on some form of Arabo-Muslim social identity that largely excluded Jewish affiliation, in practice if not on paper.³¹ Zionism, though present in the country since the beginning of the twentieth century, was not widely popular. French acculturation was high among Moroccan Jews due to institutions such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle, yet most Moroccan Jews did not seek French citizenship. The Parti Communiste du Maroc, renamed in 1945 the Parti Communiste Marocain (both with the acronym PCM), ideologically universalist and nonconfessional, was the primary means of participation for those Jews active in anticolonial politics. Moroccan Jews, and Moroccan Jewish Communists among them, were largely loyal to the Moroccan monarchy. The PCM sought to preserve the monarchy through independence, not to abolish it as was typical of hardline Leninist-Stalinist parties. Contrary to what one might expect of Communism, for Moroccan Jews, it was a means of articulating profound loyalty to the Moroccan monarch in a postindependence setting. Indeed, a hallmark of Moroccan anticolonial activism and one of the great successes of Morocco's Alawite dynasty was the widespread perception that the monarch was the very symbol of Moroccan sovereignty held hostage and not complicit in Western imperialism. This fact differentiates the Moroccan case from that of Communist Jews in Egypt, Iraq,

and Iran at the same critical chronological juncture—the 1950s—in which contexts local forms of nationalism either toppled a Western-compromised local monarch or agitated forcefully to do so.³²

Leftist political agitation began in Morocco during the interwar period's boom of industrial development, primarily in Casablanca. This port city proved to be the site of convergence for European workers and rural Moroccans, Jews and Muslims alike, seeking employment opportunities during the interwar period. Spaniards, Italians, Frenchmen, and others unionized, organized political meetings, and distributed political propaganda. Although such political organizations were expressly forbidden by French protectorate authorities from recruiting "the natives," this policy proved impossible to enforce. Police surveillance records indicate that many Jews and Muslims attended leftist meetings of unions as well as political parties.³³

The PCM, which began as a Moroccan outpost of the Parti Communiste Français (PCF), would remain staunchly and primarily European until Moscow ordered the PCF to agitate for national revolution and rebellion in French colonial holdings.³⁴ When the 1920–26 Rif War³⁵ broke out in the Spanish Moroccan north,³⁶ the PCF began to congratulate the victors and increase its presence in the country, encouraging French soldiers to subvert colonial warfare.³⁷ Such events, combined with an influx of radicalized refugees into Morocco from the 1930s Spanish Civil War and the rise of Nazism, culminated in a heightened Jewish political consciousness with many avenues that were not yet mutually exclusive: Alliances (that is, the gallicism espoused by the Alliance Israélite Universelle), Zionism, and Communism.³⁸

Such ideological trajectories were not always mutually exclusive—not in Eastern Europe, and not in Morocco—for the simple reason that, as other historians have noted, the purported universalism of the French Revolution and the emancipation of Jews gave rise to the universalism that would take shape in Marxism and Communism, in reactionary strains of ethnocentric nationalisms, and in the nation-state of the nineteenth century. This is apparent in the life of Léon René Sultan, who reestablished the Parti Communiste Marocain after its previous incarnation, the European-dominated Parti Communiste du Maroc, was banned definitively in 1940. Sultan was born in Constantine, Algeria, in 1905 to a Jewish family. Pursuant to the Crémieux Decree of 1870, Sultan became a French citizen. He received a doctorate in law in 1926 from the University of Algiers, where he explored the legacy of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen and expressed a strong endorsement of Enlightenment universalism and

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French republicanism.³⁹ By the end of the 1920s, he had set up a law practice in Casablanca, accompanied by his wife, Madame Fortuné Sultan (née Bensidoun). He became a member of the French-founded, European-dominated Parti Communiste du Maroc, and alongside the many Spanish Civil War refugees who flooded Morocco during the 1930s—French Communists, Italians, and others—he spearheaded the party's efforts to recruit indigenous Moroccan Muslims and Jews using French- and Arabic-language pamphlets.⁴⁰ He also endorsed local Zionist organizing and supported a Moroccan team at the 1932 Maccabiah Games in Tel Aviv.⁴¹ That an Algerian Jewish French citizen and key figure in Moroccan Communist politics would also support a Zionist athletic initiative further underscores the fluid nature of the ideological and political commitments of Moroccan Jews during the 1930s, commitments that would become increasingly incompatible during the 1940s.

When World War II broke out and France capitulated to Germany in 1940, the antisemitic Vichy regime and its attendant legislation took root not only in France but also in France's colonies, Morocco included. With the establishment of the Vichy government and the abrogation of the Crémieux Decree in 1940, Sultan lost his French citizenship and his law practice. He petitioned first on his own behalf and then for the many Jewish and non-Jewish refugees and prisoners in forced-labor camps under Vichy, working with the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) to liberate and employ those affected.⁴² Sultan ultimately volunteered with the Free French forces and was wounded in Europe, dying of his wounds in 1945, just two years after he helped reestablish the PCM out of the ashes of the previously banned Parti Communiste du Maroc. According to at least one witness, his funeral cortège through the streets of Casablanca was widely attended by Jews, many if not most of whom were Communists, and by European and Muslim Communists.⁴³ From this point until Moroccan independence in 1956, the party would increasingly Moroccanize and endorse national liberation from France and Spain. Like so many national liberation organizations across the MENA, the party was empowered by the apparent fragility of imperialist powers like France and Britain and the ascendancy of the United States and its ideological promises of freedom. The experience of Vichy's antisemitic policies, under which (on paper, if inconsistently enforced in practice) Moroccan Jews often lost their property, homes, jobs, and educational opportunities, served to galvanize the Moroccan Jewish community into political action.



In the postwar period, the variety of political options available to Jews began to narrow, as the mainstream national liberation movement, predicated on Islam, gained ground and the modern state of Israel was established in 1948.⁴⁴ The Soviet Union's support of the partition of Palestine and the establishment of Israel was deeply problematic for Communists across the Arab world, Morocco included. As the party transitioned to a Moroccan nationalist party following World War II, solidarity with Arabs across the region became increasingly important. The PCM leadership was compelled to perform ideological gymnastics to publicly account for the Soviet Union's decision to support the partition plan. Meanwhile, the dominant Istiqlal party used the Soviet Union's support for partition to continue its attack on the PCM as a French imperialist organization devoid of Moroccan legitimacy.⁴⁵ Jews in the PCM vocally criticized Zionism while endorsing the end of British mandatory rule, increasing their conscious pariahdom within Moroccan nationalist politics and in the broader Moroccan Jewish community.

In the broadest strokes, Moroccan Jews faced increasingly stark political choices: depart or remain; affiliate with Zionism, Communism, or gallicization/assimilation in France. In each of these trajectories, Jews were the active architects of their political destinies. In the struggle for national liberation, achieved in 1956, politically active Moroccan Jews were generally attracted to the PCM, which welcomed religious and ethnic minorities as part of a more inclusive, universalist understanding of an independent Moroccan nation (as was typically true of the wider MENA region as well). The decades that followed independence were ones of intense political repression for any opposition party and co-optation of others, in response to two failed coups d'état, numerous uprisings, and internecine political skirmishes. Meanwhile, Moroccan Jews left the country in record numbers, primarily for Israel, as antisemitism and anti-Zionism were increasingly conflated on the street if not in the press and the legal system. Events involving Israel, notably the 1956 Suez Crisis and the 1967 and 1973 wars, and the rise of Nasserism and pan-Arabism all exacerbated tensions for the Moroccan Jewish community.⁴⁶

As mounting tensions within the left led to fracture and rancor, leftist Jews in Morocco no longer represented a united front. The cases of El Maleh, Lévy, and Serfaty illustrate this rupturing both among Jews and within the left in Morocco. Each joined the PCM when its goals were clearly for national liberation from French and Spanish protectorate rule. Further, they were all part of the party's central apparatus during the 1950s, a time that was simultaneously the height of

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the struggle for independence and the beginning of a strong Zionist current among Moroccan Jews. Following independence in 1956, the party fractured around the ideological and practical question of its continued existence under the increasingly repressive rule of King Hassan II. Some, like Lévy, remained in the intermittently legal form of the PCM. Others, like Serfaty, divorced themselves from what they saw as a sclerotic, co-opted party and formed far-leftist groups like *Ila al-Amam* (Forward). Others still, like El Maleh, quietly left Morocco and leftist politics altogether to eventually pen scathing yet despondent memoirs of Morocco's Jewish past and the hypocrisies of the PCM. All of these men died within one year of each other, each having been recognized for service to the Moroccan state, with many state officials and few Jews attending their funerals as a gesture of reconciliation and perhaps co-optation. Together, these figures stretching from the 1920s to the 1970s amount to a composite image of another, possible Morocco and its Jewish community that became increasingly fractured in the postwar period.

These case studies represent a minority of a minority: politically motivated Moroccan Jews in a party outside the Moroccan mainstream and outside of the predominant Jewish communal fold. This is quite different from the more prominent cases of Egypt and Iraq, where Communist parties were much more widely popular, not only among Jews but also among Muslims and Christians. Their voices speak loudly, however, and disrupt common understandings of the modern history of North Africa and the Middle East as well as modern Jewish and leftist histories, challenging nationalist historiographies that exclude Jewish Communists or Jewish Communist historiographies that exclude the MENA. Most importantly, they alter our understanding of the temporal boundaries of Jews on the left. The story of leftist Jews in the MENA intensifies following World War II, just when historiography of the Jews on the left in Europe and the Americas tends to halt.⁴⁷

Case Studies: Individual, Alienated Agency?⁴⁸

During the 1940s, the political options available to Moroccan Jews had narrowed to Zionism, Alliances, migration to France, or Communism. In the postwar period, the prevailing options for Jews loyal to the left were exile to France, integrationism via a legal political party, or rejection of the regime. The lives of Edmond Amran El Maleh, Simon Lévy, and Abraham Serfaty represent these postindependence narrative

threads and Moroccan Jewish political avenues. Each of these men was deeply patriotic and devoted to a vision of Moroccan identity that considered Jewish, Berber (Amazigh), and Muslim influences integral to the national whole. Each was galvanized by the Vichy period to activism for national liberation.

El Maleh was born in 1917 to a relatively well-to-do Moroccan Jewish family in the Atlantic coastal city of Safi. Following the conclusion of World War II, he held a leadership position in the PCM's Politburo. He would eventually leave the PCM for a mix of political and personal reasons. At the age of 63, living in Paris, where he had moved in 1965, El Maleh picked up a pen and began a prolific career as a semiautobiographical novelist.⁴⁹ El Maleh spoke of his engagement in Communist politics in a series of interviews conducted in 2003 and 2004 with Marie Redonnet.⁵⁰ In one revealing exchange, Redonnet asked El Maleh what persuaded him to join the PCM when so many other Jews had begun to pursue Zionism. His answer speaks volumes:

Three elements are essential to answering this question: place, time, and identity. Time: this was the climate of 1945, which came with the fantastic foundation myth of Communism. I was one of the thousands of human beings swept up by this myth. I now think that the Communist experiment was something magnificent. Indeed, in terms of the imaginary and the existential, it was an explosion of all borders. We were there in a kind of aurora borealis, a kind of birth.⁵¹

El Maleh refers to the boundless optimism that Communism, and the Soviet Union as its victorious emblem, represented upon the conclusion of World War II. As a young man, the Allied victory and the promises of Communism appealed to El Maleh and many other French-educated, philosophically minded Moroccan Jews. El Maleh would eventually abandon the PCM, but in the 1940s and 1950s, he described his engagement as a kind of “seduction.”⁵²

El Maleh's activism began at a Fiat garage in Casablanca—a site El Maleh continually references in his fiction. At that site, he told Redonnet, there were

large meetings of Europeans, Frenchmen and Spaniards, excluding Moroccans. This constituted the embryonic state of the Communist Party. I went there, seduced by people that I found to be kind. The friends I had in my youth weren't part of it. I was in the process of distancing myself from them. It was a solitary choice.⁵³

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El Maleh does not indicate whether his friends were predominantly Jewish, but he clearly considers his political activity to be isolated. In the same series of interviews, El Maleh describes his life as “allegorical” for those Moroccan Jews who participated in the PCM. He was somewhat isolated, a minority of a minority, but with profound optimism for his future in his home country and for the universalist messages of Communism. His language of “seduction” becomes clearer when he talks of being a “young naïve man in that Fiat garage requisitioned by the Italians ... [who] found himself surrounded by pretty, seductive young women, in an ambiance of brotherhood.”⁵⁴ As El Maleh became increasingly engaged in the PCM’s activities, including becoming a member of the Politburo, he switched from seduction to a theoretical and practical engagement with Marxism.⁵⁵ El Maleh, despite his perceived isolation, was one of many in this predicament, as many Jews were drawn to the PCM especially after World War II. Jewish members of the party were mostly well educated and from comfortable, bourgeois families.⁵⁶ A certain Mr. Benchimol (a common Moroccan Jewish last name) was prominent around Oujda, and several young Communist militants in northern Morocco, including Jews, fought to defend their ideals in the Spanish Civil War.⁵⁷

Anthropologist Mikhaël Elbaz conducted a similar series of interviews with Abraham Serfaty, perhaps the most famous Jewish leftist activist in Morocco, in 2001.⁵⁸ Serfaty was born in Casablanca in 1926 to a middle-class Jewish family from Tangier;⁵⁹ he too locates his leftist beginnings in the halcyon period immediate following World War II. Long before his own activism, his father had supported leftist causes in Tangier, joining protests against the executions of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in 1927 and against French and Spanish colonial forces during the interwar period.⁶⁰ The proximity of the family’s home in Maarif, Casablanca, to the shantytown of Derb Ghalef, and the predominance of Spanish and Italian Communists nearby, saturated Serfaty’s political consciousness.⁶¹ He joined the Jeunesses Communistes in 1944; upon embarking on university studies in France in 1945, he joined the PCF. He graduated from the École des Mines in Paris in 1949 and returned to Morocco, joining the PCM and working as an engineer for the Office chérifien des phosphates (OCP) and then heading it after independence. Serfaty addressed his beginnings in the PCM and his relationship to Moroccan Jewry through this political lens, reflecting: “Our teachers were the Communist workers, forged in the Spanish war and in that Spanish Communism that is so distinct from that of the Bolsheviks.”⁶²



To his mind, the PCM ultimately failed to capitalize fully on the surge of Jewish popular support for Communism after World War II: “I left for my studies in France in the summer of 1945. When I came back the next summer, in 1946, the poor Jewish areas of Casablanca were completely in support of the Communist Party... The Communist Party, unfortunately, didn’t know how to continue this sentiment.”⁶³ Serfaty would continue to distance himself from Moroccan Jewry even more radically than had El Maleh, Sultan, or Lévy. It seems that as Moroccan Jews in the PCM became increasingly convinced of and radicalized by their leftist-nationalist, universalist convictions, the vast majority of politically active Moroccan Jews turned to Zionism. For those not inclined toward an ethnically or religiously based form of nationalism, Communism provided a comfortable “third space in colonial cities, one that may have been European in orientation, but remarkably inclusive.”⁶⁴

Simon Lévy, too, inhabited this “third space.” Born in the old imperial city of Fez in 1934, Lévy had a very traditional Jewish upbringing. Though the application of Vichy legislation in Morocco was inconsistent, with the outbreak of World War II Lévy and his family were forced to leave the French-built *Ville Nouvelle* (New Town) and “return” to Fez’s old Jewish quarter, the *mellah*, which was plagued by overpopulation and poor sanitation.⁶⁵ Lévy ultimately moved to Casablanca, as did so many other upwardly aspiring Moroccans, and began work as a teacher and union activist. He joined the PCM to fight for Morocco’s liberation from the colonial rule of France and Spain and rose through the ranks to become a leading figure, along with El Maleh and Serfaty.⁶⁶ However, upon Morocco’s independence in 1956, maintaining party unity, among Jewish adherents and otherwise, became increasingly difficult. The achievement of independence and the PCM’s fraught role therein (largely due to a vexed relationship with the mainstream Istiqlal party) represented the beginning, not the end, of an intensifying debate over Moroccan identity and politics and the Jewish place in it.

The late 1960s saw a major cleavage between leftist movements and the government. Before breaking with the defanged PCM and forming the far-left party Ila al-Amam, Serfaty had resigned his prestigious post at the OCP in 1968 out of solidarity with the miners at Khouribga striking for improved pay and working conditions.⁶⁷ Two years later, he would cofound Ila al-Amam with the poet Abdellatif Laâbi and another Jewish member of the Parti de Libération et Socialisme (PLS, the contemporary incarnation of the Parti Communist Marocain), Raymond Benhaïm.⁶⁸ Jewish defectors from the PLS to Ila al-Amam

hoped to create “a tribunal that surpassed the religious tensions of the era; a tribunal anchored in the continuity of a nationalism in which Moroccans, Muslims and Jews together, would work together against French colonial policy.”⁶⁹ Serfaty’s wife, Christine Daure, who sheltered Serfaty when he was initially arrested and went into hiding in 1972, worked as a teacher at Lycée Mohammed V, the same school where Lévy and El Maleh had worked while fomenting student rebellion in 1965.⁷⁰

Laâbi and Serfaty were both arrested in January 1972 and released pursuant to loud protests led by the Union National des Étudiants Marocains (closely affiliated with other left-wing political entities); their freedom did not last long, and both were arrested again shortly thereafter. Laâbi was caught just a few months later, but Serfaty managed to evade capture for two more years by hiding in his wife’s apartment.⁷¹ At a trial in Casablanca on July 31, 1973, Serfaty was tried in absentia and condemned to life in prison, along with Laâbi and others from radical student organizations and *Ila al-Amam*. Notably, the PLS maintained silence on the affair.⁷² In November 1974, Serfaty was caught and arrested alongside other notables across the opposition movements. About 120 militants altogether were arrested in this particular purge.⁷³ Serfaty and many others were first detained at *Derb Moulay Chérif*, the infamous prison in Casablanca, “where they were savagely tortured.”⁷⁴ Serfaty’s sister and fellow militant Communist Evelyne Serfaty had died from wounds inflicted under torture there in 1972. Christine Daure was expelled from Morocco in 1976 and became engaged in the human rights struggle on behalf of Moroccan political prisoners from exile in France.⁷⁵

The verdict finally came on Valentine’s Day 1977, years after Serfaty’s initial arrest, torture, and solitary confinement at *Derb Moulay Chérif*. Serfaty and several others were sentenced to life in prison. The convicted spontaneously sang “The Song of the Partisans” in Arabic; many were subsequently transferred to the *Kenitra* prison to serve their life sentences.⁷⁶ Some, including Serfaty, would not exit prison for nearly two decades, enduring what Susan Gilson Miller has dubbed a “Golgatha of suffering” in Moroccan prisons during the so-called Years of Lead (generally dated from the late 1960s through the early 1990s under King Hassan II).⁷⁷ Serfaty would become one of the most celebrated of Morocco’s political prisoners.⁷⁸ Upon his release in 1992, he became an enemy of the old left, notably of Simon Lévy as a result of Lévy’s continued adherence to the legal form of the PCM accepted by the monarchy. However, Lévy, Serfaty, and El Maleh continued to agree on anti-Zionism.



In the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and prior to his break with the PLS in 1970, Serfaty had published an article that sharply split Jewish leftists. This article, entitled “Being a Jewish Moroccan and Fighting against Israel,” was published in the PLS mouthpiece *Al-kifah al-watani* (National Struggle) in July 1967⁷⁹ and took an even harsher tone than had the signed tracts addressed to Moroccan Jews that the PCM/PLS had circulated in the same year concerning the need for Moroccan Jewish patriotism. After describing Zionism as a “golden calf” meant to tear Moroccan Jews away from their home, Serfaty chided:

Everyone who understands this reality and, whatever his beliefs, thinks that the life of the patriarch Abraham, Moses’s sermon, and the justice of King Solomon were important to the development of humanity, blushes with shame and anger in thinking that upon these places that symbolize this past, a Nazi general and one of the heads of international capitalism, the Baron de Rothschild, meet. But anger and shame are not enough. The Moroccan Jews who understand things must act. As Moroccans participating in the country’s struggles, as Jews denouncing the monstrous corruption that is Zionism.... To those who ask, isn’t it too late? isn’t it irreversible? it isn’t the author of these sentences who must answer, but his Arab brothers. This tradition of religious and social tolerance, the experience of a common struggle, the fact that the struggle of the Arab peoples is not racial but national, and tied to the liberation of humanity from racism and imperialism, allows me to think that the response will be positive.⁸⁰

Two years later, as Serfaty was about to leave the PLS and found *Ila al-Amam*, he wrote again on the matter in a special issue of the French Moroccan literary magazine *Souffles* devoted to Palestine. He opened the piece saying, “I will be asked, I have been asked: why should anyone continue to be concerned with Moroccan Jewry today? Let this community dwindle down with emigration, the last holdouts will no longer pose a problem.”⁸¹ The full essay is historical in scope, addressing the tropes of a slow Moroccan Jewish deracination first at the hands of the Alliance Israélite Universelle and then by colonial policy and Zionism; it is nearly identical to the conceptual framework Simon Lévy would later use in his brief book on the same topic and to the one used by the more famous Albert Memmi in the Tunisian Jewish context.⁸² Serfaty explained his motivations for the essay:

We would like to summarize this process [of one hundred years of uprooting] in order to share our conviction—a conviction that has only grown stronger with the study of documents past and present—that this mystification will inevitably become known, that Jews from the Arab world,

prisoners of Zionism, will gain consciousness of their solidarity with the Arab revolution and will help to shatter the last historical attempt to lock Jews up in a ghetto—and what a ghetto . . . of global proportions!⁸³

In true conscious-pariah fashion, Serfaty's use of the term *ghetto* is provocative, intentionally blurring Jewish histories of Europe and the MENA region. Serfaty's argument has a cyclical quality: the Jews of Europe, emancipated from the medieval ghetto, sought to emancipate the Jews of the MENA in turn, ultimately forcing them into a Zionist ghetto by dint of war, nationalism, and popular perception. The Alliance, the vehicle of French Jewish visions of emancipation in the MENA, perceived itself to be ushering Jews out of a "backward" ghetto and forward into universalist, "human" progress and regeneration; in the end, it contributed to a widening gulf between Jews and Muslims, marking Jews as separate and gallicizing them. The Alliance functioned as a tool of French colonial policy in Morocco, enacting a Jewish version of the mission civilisatrice. According to Serfaty, El Maleh, and Lévy, the deracination caused by this educational philanthropy, coupled with the growing popularity of Zionism following World War II, served to divorce Moroccan Jews from their fellow Moroccans, the Moroccan Muslims. Whereas Lévy worked to reverse this trend within the makhzan's later, legally sanctioned iteration of the PCM, Serfaty believed a more radical approach was necessary. Lévy remained on the fringes of the Moroccan Jewish community, attached to it despite his status as conscious pariah because of his political activities. Serfaty largely ignored his Jewishness until the later years of his life, turning instead toward a radical politics that antagonized the Moroccan Jewish community and the makhzan alike.

As Serfaty lost friends in the PLS leadership and established stronger ties with student activists and the members of *Souffles*, he ultimately cofounded Ila al-Amam. Ali Yata (1920–97), head of the PCM, accused Abdellatif Laâbi and his "acolytes," named in the text (including Abraham Serfaty and other prominent Jewish Communists), of "having betrayed their political base and joining the bourgeoisie. . . . This constitutes treason. The people and history will judge you."⁸⁴ It was a *fait accompli*, and the left fractured into the far left and the legal left. Jewish members fractured along with it. Serfaty and those who left the PLS to join Ila al-Amam felt, however, that there was no other ideological option for them: the PLS was working with the makhzan and, to their minds, no longer upheld the revolutionary ideals sweeping the world from Cuba to China in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁸⁵

Despite these ideological differences, toward the end of his life Serfaty had profound respect for the militancy of his fellow Moroccan Jewish Communists. In his last years, he came to admire Lévy's work with the labor unions and student unions, in particular recognizing Lévy's 1965 arrest and torture, which "he barely survived."⁸⁶ Using the pronoun "we," in solidarity with Lévy and Moroccan Jewish leftists as a group, Serfaty reflected on the uprising of 1965:

The makhzan cannot and has not tolerated us having a citizen's voice. The makhzan doesn't just go back to Hassan II. You know, the first melah of Fez was founded by the Merinids in 1438. This was the model that Jews shouldn't be heard, except for the court Jews that served it [the makhzan]. A Jew in the political opposition, that's unimaginable.... Simon Lévy was this opposition in the PC [Communist Party]. He was accepted, but the Authorities [*le Pouvoir*] tortured him to near death in 1965. This was no accident.⁸⁷

Serfaty seems to have accepted Lévy as an ideological rival (they disagreed fundamentally about how to work with or against the government, as well as whether to support the separatist Polisario Front in Western Sahara) but accorded himself the same contextual identity as a "Jew who does politics," to paraphrase El Maleh.⁸⁸ Serfaty was freed from prison in 1991 (but deported on the spurious grounds that he was a Brazilian citizen). He spearheaded Moroccan human-rights efforts from afar. Upon Hassan II's death in 1999 and the ascension of Mohammed V to the throne, Serfaty was hailed as a national hero alongside El Maleh and Lévy, part of an effort to redirect the public gaze from Hassan II's brutal autocratic rule. Abraham Serfaty died in 2010 and is buried in Ben M'Sik cemetery in Casablanca. A conscious pariah of the Jewish community, his funeral was publicized and attended by government ministers but few Jews.

Though El Maleh never directly addressed the catalyst for his leaving the PCM, Serfaty had a few thoughts, suggesting that El Maleh was "pushed" out of the party in 1958, likely for ideological reasons.⁸⁹ El Maleh, as a protagonist hints in one of his novels, "left the PC [Communist Party] when he discovered how socialism really worked during a trip to Poland in 1958. He spoke against it and was excluded."⁹⁰ Serfaty and El Maleh both objected to the party's almost religious devotion to Stalinism. Whereas Serfaty's solution was to cofound a far-left, antigovernment movement (and land in prison for 17 years, tortured and often in solitary confinement), El Maleh chose exile and a complete break from political activity. After leaving the party in

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1958, El Maleh continued teaching at Casablanca's prestigious Lycée Mohammed V. He left Morocco in 1965, in direct response to the bloody riots that took place in March of that year. In self-imposed exile in Paris, he taught at the Sainte-Barbe school while also working as a journalist, not publishing his first novel until 1980.⁹¹ Melancholy, disappointment, and a palimpsestic historical consciousness of the *longue durée* of Moroccan Jewish history pervade El Maleh's work. His work is profoundly regretful in tone. El Maleh, too, returned to Morocco toward the end of his life, welcomed as a national hero and celebrity for his writing. Ultimately, he too was publicly acclaimed by Moroccan intellectuals, alongside Serfaty and Lévy. As with those two, El Maleh's legacy was co-opted by a government seeking to move beyond the Years of Lead and their repression of leftists (among others) without full redress.⁹² Today, El Maleh has a public foundation and library in his name in Rabat, just next door to the national archives. He died in November 2010, in the same month as Serfaty, and is buried in his ancestors' storied hometown of Essaouira.⁹³

Simon Lévy's trajectory was one of persistence within the legal operation of Communist politics in Morocco. It was also a path of activism within the Jewish community until his death in 2011. Lévy's strategy within the PCM/PLS and its latest and enduring incarnation, the Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme (PPS) was one of commitment to the Moroccan state apparatus, including the monarchy; he chose to work within those parameters instead of rejecting them. He continued to work closely with the party's Politburo and was one of the leaders of the Fédération Nationale de l'Enseignement from 1958 to 1970. From 1976 to 1983 he served in an advisory capacity on the municipal council of Casablanca, where he worked to create local libraries and professional training centers. A professor of linguistics at the Faculty of Letters in Rabat and a specialist in Hispanophone dialects, Lévy contributed important scholarly works to the study of Moroccan language and literature, in addition to his political activism and legacy. Following Ali Yata's death, Lévy sought to become the secretary general of the PPS but lost to Nabil Benabdallah; Lévy left the central committee in the late 1990s. Toward the end of his life, he poured his energy into one of his most lasting legacies in the country: the Fondation du Patrimoine Culturel Judéo-Marocain and its related museum, the Musée du Judaïsme Marocain, located in Casablanca. Morocco is famous for having one of the only official Jewish museums in the Arab world. Under Lévy's direction, the museum has worked to restore a number of synagogues across the country, most recently his own childhood synagogue of Fez (Slat al-Fassiyine, whose

restoration was completed after his death with help from the German government). The opening ceremony of the restored synagogue in 2014 featured Moroccan ministers, Jewish communal luminaries, members of the Moroccan Jewish diaspora, and, most notably, one of Simon Lévy's sons, Jean Lévy (who was instrumental in the restoration process). When I asked Simon Lévy in May 2010 how he felt about the fading of the Moroccan Jewish community, he insisted: "I am not nostalgic because I am active."⁹⁴ Indeed, when several Jewish sites in Casablanca were bombed by terrorists in May 2003, Simon Lévy visited schools (Jewish and non-Jewish) around Casablanca in a public-outreach program focused on awareness of shared Muslim and Jewish history in Morocco. His funeral, like Serfaty's, was a public, media-covered affair with government officials in attendance, including André Azoulay, the Jewish special advisor to both Hassan II and the current king, Mohammed VI. As with Serfaty and El Maleh, very few Jews attended his funeral.

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Conclusion: Toward a New Historiography

El Maleh, Serfaty, and Lévy, along with many other Moroccan Jewish leftists, worked for another, possible Morocco. Each was a conscious pariah, a man of good will, thematically parallel to the conscious pariahs of other contexts, both far-flung and proximate. Their experiences with Communism in Morocco as a strategy for Jewish inclusion in national liberation politics shed light simultaneously on Jewish politics in Morocco and the wider MENA region and on the phenomenon of Jewish leftist politics more globally. Until quite recently, scholarship of Jews on the left has not made the explicit connection between the two bodies of MENA and European Jewish historiography. It is time to consider a new, more inclusive historiography of Jews on the left. The Arendtian categories of conscious pariah and man of good will offer helpful connective tissue to begin to understand leftist Jews not only in the MENA but also in the European and American contexts. What the MENA context adds to the conversation is a necessary intervention: engagement with colonialism and anticolonial politics. As demonstrated by the Moroccan case studies above, far from passive agents in the sweep of national liberation politics, Jews of the MENA were active in shaping the politics of national liberation and citizenship in a postindependence context. Although the vast majority of Jews from the MENA ultimately went to Israel, former colonial metropolises, or elsewhere, their stories add nuance to and complicate

the global historiography of the left and the persistent questions in Jewish Studies surrounding Jews and citizenship. Finally, this historiography also sheds important new light on the MENA region as a whole. Leftist, internationalist, and even nationalist currents in the region emerged out of a diverse set of historical confluences and cross-currents. The historiography of Jews and the left is thus not one of failed utopianism, an idealist narrative that terminated in the middle of the twentieth century. Rather, it is a narrative of citizenship, emancipation, and alienation populated by conscious pariahs and men of good will that reverberates across the global Jewish left, on the precipice of possibility.

Notes

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- 1 The prevailing literature on Jews and Communist engagement has addressed a population that is largely Yiddish speaking, as that literature has focused on Ashkenazi populations. The Jewish populations of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) did not, of course, speak Yiddish, but rather a myriad of languages including (but hardly restricted to) Arabic (and Judeo-Arabic), Farsi (and Judeo-Farsi), Ladino, Berber (and Judeo-Berber), Turkish, Neo-Aramaic, and Hebrew, as well as European languages such as French, English, Spanish, and Italian. In the case of Moroccan Jews, Communist Party activities largely took place in French and some Arabic, and very rarely in anything else.
- 2 Further, Communist Party leaders and non-Communist nationalist party leaders often shared ideas and collaborated. Labor unions frequently served as the linchpin for such nationalist collaborations and were the crucible of common nationalist goals, both within Morocco and in other colonial contexts.
- 3 Of course, Hannah Arendt was not overly fond of Jews from the MENA region. While reporting on the Eichmann trial for what would become one of her most famous works, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), Arendt made some rather nasty remarks regarding Jews of the MENA region whom she encountered in Israel. As she wrote in a letter to Karl Jaspers: "Everything is organized by a

police force that gives me the creeps, speaks only Hebrew and looks Arabic. Some downright brutal types among them. They would obey any order. And outside the doors, the oriental mob, as if one were in Istanbul or some other half-Asiatic country. In addition, and very visible in Jerusalem, the *peies* [sidelocks] and caftan Jews, who make life impossible for all reasonable people here"; quoted in Richard Wolin, "The Banality of Evil: The Demise of a Legend," *Jewish Review of Books* (Fall 2014), <https://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/1106/the-banality-of-evil-the-demise-of-a-legend/>. In light of such racist remarks, or even perhaps because of them, it becomes all the more intriguing to apply Arendt's framework of the conscious pariah to a group of people she did not have in mind. Engaging another perspective, Arie Dubnov, "Can Parallels Meet? Hannah Arendt and Isaiah Berlin on the Jewish Post-Emancipatory Quest for Political Freedom," *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 62, no. 1 (2017): 27–51, expertly considers how one might read similarities in the works of Arendt and Isaiah Berlin, when the two have typically been considered opposites; most relevant to the present piece, Dubnov argues that Arendt and Berlin shared "a common intransigent concept of Jewishness" and a mutual condemnation of assimilation.

- 4 The historiographical interventions on this score are discussed at length in what follows.
- 5 Citizenship was already granted to Jews in many states of the MENA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including in Iraq, Egypt, and Algeria. In the protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia, the most immediately relevant colonial cases for this article, Jews were subjects, not citizens, until independence. Beyond this legal distinction, both across the MENA and in European and American contexts, citizenship often functions conceptually as well as practically. Here I refer to Jews participating as full citizens in the political life of their respective contexts, the imagined citizen within Benedict Anderson's sense of imagined community; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 2016 [1st ed., 1983]).
- 6 As Salo Baron and Arendt argued, emancipation granted greater individual liberties and inclusions in the state apparatus at the cost of communal autonomy. Communal autonomy within the structure of a central monarchic figure shifted, arguably, into communal philanthropy in the name of making one a better-qualified citizen of the state, often requiring a degree of assimilation. See Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation: Shall We Revise the Traditional View?," *Menorah Journal* 15 (June 1928): 515–26, and Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," *Jewish Social Studies* 6, no. 2 (1944): 99–122.
- 7 As Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Saharan Jews and the Fate of French Algeria* (Chicago, 2014), clarifies, the Jews of the Saharan regions of

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- French Algeria were subject to different legal status than were their coreligionists in the north. This had to do with the time of territorial acquisition, the nature of military rule, and inconsistent colonial policy regarding Jews between Paris and Algiers.
- 8 This was a common trend in Central and Western Europe, among the more “established” (and yet somewhat anxious and insecure) community, upon the arrival of Eastern European Jews. Likewise, Russian Jews in the United States of America seemed to “threaten” the position of Americanized German Jews who had arrived earlier in the nineteenth century. See, for example, Eli Bar-Chen, “Two Communities with a Sense of Mission: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden,” in *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: The French and German Models*, ed. Michael Brenner, Vicki Caron, and Uri R. Kaufmann (Tübingen, 2003), 111–28; Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, Conn., 2004); Howard M. Sachar, *A History of the Jews in America* (New York, 1992); David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (New York, 1987); Nancy L. Green, *Pletzl of Paris: Jewish Immigrant Workers in the Belle Époque* (New York, 1986); Paula E. Hyman, *The Emancipation of the Jews of Alsace: Acculturation and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, Conn., 1991); and Lisa Moses Leff, *Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Internationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford, 2006).
- 9 For a taste of the incredibly rich literature on this subject, see, for example, Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Early Twentieth Century Palestine* (Stanford, 2010); Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford, 2014); Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Making Jews Modern: The Yiddish and Ladino Press in the Russian and Ottoman Empires* (Bloomington, Ind., 2003); idem, *Saharan Jews*; idem, *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, 2016); Aron Rodrigue, *Ottoman and Turkish Jewry: Community and Leadership* (Bloomington, Ind., 1992); idem, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860–1925* (Bloomington, Ind., 1990); idem, *Jews and Muslims: Images of Sephardi and Eastern Jewries in Modern Times* (Seattle, 2003); Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14th–20th Centuries* (Berkeley, 2000); Frances Malino, *Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux: Assimilation and Emancipation in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France* (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 1978); and Joshua Schreier, *Arabs of the Jewish Faith: The Civilizing Mission in Colonial Algeria* (New Brunswick, N.J., 2010).
- 10 Leff, *Sacred Bonds*.
- 11 Arendt, “Jew as Pariah.”
- 12 Ibid., 100.
- 13 Ibid., 109.

- 14 Hannah Arendt, "The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," in *Hannah Arendt: The Jewish Writings*, ed. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York, 2007), 276–77 (subsequent references are to this version).
- 15 *Ibid.*, 275.
- 16 Ron H. Feldman, introduction to Kohn and Feldman, *Hannah Arendt*, xli–lxxvi (a collection of Arendt's work on Jewish history and Zionism), frames Arendt herself as a conscious pariah, largely for her (at the time) unpopular stance on the so-called banality of evil, as evinced in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Judith Butler, *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York, 2012), advances the idea of anti-Zionist critique and the pursuit of social justice as another path of the conscious pariah, an application Gabriel Piterberg, "Public Intellectuals and Conscious Pariahs: Hannah Arendt, Edward Said and a Common State in Palestine-Israel," *Holy Land Studies* 12, no. 2 (2013): 141–59, also embraces.
- 17 Arendt, "Jew as Pariah," 275.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *Ibid.*, 291.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 284–85.
- 21 Edmond Amran El Maleh, *Aïlen ou la nuit du récit* (Paris, 1983).
- 22 "Al-shahid al-maghribi ma'a Simon Lévy," part 3, 00:01:01–00:04:47, *Archive al-Maghrib*, aired October 2016 on al-Aoula.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 El Maleh, *Aïlen*, 81.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 161.
- 26 Marie Redonnet, *Entretiens avec Edmond Amran El Maleh* (Paris, 2005), 81.
- 27 For example, *Essential Papers on Jews and the Left*, edited by Ezra Mendelsohn and published in 1997, extends no attention to the MENA region, despite the 1990s witnessing a renewal of Sephardi and Mizrahi studies with work from Ella Shohat and Aron Rodrigue, among many others. All of the articles treat Eastern Europe, the Yishuv, and the United States, areas that Mendelsohn deems "the three most important regions of Jewish settlement in modern times"; Ezra Mendelsohn, introduction to *Essential Papers on Jews and the Left*, ed. Ezra Mendelsohn (New York, 1997), 2. Mendelsohn omits the significant Jewish populations of the Middle East and North Africa from a supposedly universalist political story of Jews and the left in the twentieth century. Monographs fare better, as long as they do not purport to represent all Jews on the left in all places across all periods. Notably, Philip Mendes, *Jews and the Left: The Rise and Fall of a Political Alliance* (Houndmills, 2014), does an excellent job covering geographic scope, treating Jews around the world on the left. Mendes presents the standard narrative in addition to thematic chapters, with a small amount of ink spent on the MENA or other parts of the world than Eastern Europe, the Yishuv, and the United States. Predictably, he mentions Abraham Serfaty and Henri

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Curiel but says little about other prominent Jewish leftist figures in the region. In Mendes's defense, much of this work is emerging, but at the time of publication of his volume in 2014, Joel Beinin, Orit Bashkin, Hana Battatu, and others had publications available on this topic. Above all, it is the concept of universalist politics as a means of national inclusion that binds Jews together as religious and ethnic minorities across contexts and chronologies.

- 28 Joel Beinin, a historian of labor in Egypt and of broader topics within the region, broke ground with his book *Was the Red Flag Flying There? Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948–1965* (Berkeley, 1990). Beinin does not reference the Eastern European context and is fundamentally concerned with the nature of Marxist politics between Egypt and Israel in the postwar period. The work is dialectical, addressing the relationship between Marxists in each context through famous conduits like Henri Curiel and others who are less well-known in order to demonstrate the nationalist weight of Marxism in each context. Beinin focuses most specifically on the political options and fates of Egyptian Jews in *The Dispersion of Egyptian Jewry: Culture, Politics, and the Formation of a Modern Diaspora* (Cairo, 1998), which argues against teleological Zionist readings of the mass migrations of Egyptian Jews in the 1950s and 1960s and demonstrates moments of political confluence in the form of nationalist politics (in many flavors) and Communist politics. Orit Bashkin follows similar problematics and resolutions in the Iraqi Jewish context of the twentieth century in her two books, *The Other Iraq: Pluralism and Culture in Hashemite Iraq* (Stanford, 2009), and *New Babylonians: A History of Jews in Modern Iraq* (Stanford, 2012). The Iraqi context is more similar to that of Egypt than that of Morocco. Iraq boasted an even more disproportionate Jewish membership in the Communist Party before watershed moments in the region (the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the regional wars with Israel in 1956, 1967, and 1973) and uniquely Iraqi moments such as the 1941 *farhud* (pogrom) against Jews. Lior Sternfeld, “Reclaiming Their Past: Writing Jewish History in Iran during the Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and Early Revolutionary Periods” (Ph.D. diss, University of Texas, Austin, 2014), focuses on the avoidance of Zionist or nationalist triumphalist teleologies in the Iranian context. As such, he includes the regional wars with Israel, World War II, and, unique to the Iranian context, the Mossadegh affair and the 1979 revolution. Works in languages other than English include Pierre-Jean Le Foll-Luciani, *Les juifs algériens dans la lutte anticoloniale: Trajectoires dissidentes (1934–1965)* (Rennes, 2015); Habib Kazdahgli, *Évolution du mouvement communiste en Tunisie (1919–1943)* (La Manouba, 1992); and idem, *Histoire communautaire, histoire plurielle: La communauté juive de Tunisie (Ouvrage collective)* (Tunis, 1999). Finally, Kamilia Rahmouni, a Ph.D. student under the direction of Julia Clancy-Smith at the

University of Arizona, is currently at work on what promises to be a groundbreaking dissertation on the participation of Jews in the Tunisian Communist Party.

- 29 See, for example, Jacob Moneta, *La politique du Parti communiste français dans la question coloniale, 1920–1963* (Paris, 1971); Georges Oved, *La gauche française et le nationalisme marocain, 1905–1955*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1984); Danièle Joly, *The French Communist Party and the Algerian War* (London, 1991); Arsalane Chakib, “Contribution à l’étude de l’histoire du PCM durant la période coloniale” (Ph.D. diss., Université Hassan II, 1985); Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954–1962* (New York, 1987); Jamaâ Baïda, “Le communisme au Maroc pendant la période coloniale (1912–1956),” in *Rethinking Totalitarianism and Its Arab Readings: Proceedings of the Conference “European Totalitarianism in the Mirrors of Contemporary Arab Thought,” Beirut, October 6–8, 2010*, ed. Manfred Sing (Munich, 2012), http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/orient-institut-studies/1-2012/baida_communisme; and Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Daniel Zisenwine, eds., *The Maghrib in the New Century: Identity, Religion, and Politics* (Gainesville, Fla., 2007).
- 30 Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 259.
- 31 Mohammed Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans au Maroc: 1859–1948* (Rabat, 1994), 663.
- 32 The Moroccan Alawite dynasty dates from the early seventeenth century and continues today under King Mohammed VI (r. 1999–). Upon signing the French protectorate treaty in 1912, the French maintained the position of sultan (the title became king after independence), unlike the deposed Ottoman dey of Algeria but somewhat like the maintained bey of Tunis, who did not last through independence. This is akin to the British maintaining the dynasty of Muhammad Ali/Mehmet Ali in Egypt following autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. Egypt became independent in 1922 but continued to house a significant British military presence. The Free Officers coup in 1952 ultimately deposed the monarchy. In Iraq, which prior to becoming a British mandate in 1921 had been three Ottoman provinces, the British installed Faisal ibn Husayn, a Hashemite prince who had briefly been king of Greater Syria, before the rug was pulled from under him by diplomatic debates between Britain and France. The Iraqi monarchy was frail from the beginning and finally collapsed in 1958. As with Egypt, Iraq had been independent since 1932, albeit with a strong British military presence. In Iran, the Communist Tudeh party coincided with the short-lived Pahlavi dynasty (1925–79), which was founded in the ashes of constitutional reform (1906) and on the back of the Qajar dynasty (1796–1925) by an autocratic military leader, Reza Khan (Shah). The

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Moroccan monarchy, which survived independence from France and Spain and the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s (despite two attempted coups by the military), was never the overt target of the PCM. Quite the contrary, as with the more mainstream national liberation parties, Istiqlal and PDI, the PCM too endorsed the continuity of the Moroccan monarchy following eventual independence. The monarchy was viewed not as collaborating with colonial overlords but rather as embodying Moroccan sovereignty held hostage, unlike Britain's open collaboration with and support of the Egyptian and Iraqi monarchies, as well as the Pahlavi pro-Western turn in the time of Bandung and Third Worldism.

- 33 Rapport avec le PCF activités politiques à Paris, cartons II and IV, files GA07 and GA08, "Afrique du Nord," Série GB Maroc, Algérie et la Tunisie, 1930–1960, Archives de la prefecture de Police, Paris, France.
- 34 Moneta, *La politique*, 18.
- 35 In this war, the Berber (Amazigh) leader Emir Abd el-Krim successfully defeated Spanish forces, establishing an independent Rif Republic (so named for the Rif mountains), until the French joined the fray.
- 36 France and Spain had divided Morocco into two protectorates as of 1912, with Tangier as an international zone.
- 37 Rapport avec le PCF activités politiques à Paris.
- 38 Sebastian Balfour, *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War* (New York, 2002); Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939* (London, 2006); Helen Graham, *The War and Its Shadow: Spain's Civil War in Europe's Long Twentieth Century* (Portland, Ore., 2012).
- 39 Léon René Sultan, *Contribution à l'étude de l'abus des droits (jurisprudence): Thèse pour le doctorat en droit* (Constantine, 1926). Although it was printed in Sultan's hometown of Constantine, his law degree was from the University of Algiers Law Faculty. The cover page indicates that Sultan's thesis defense took place on November 17, 1926.
- 40 See Alma Rachel Heckman, "Radical Nationalists: Moroccan Jewish Communists, 1925–1975" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2015); idem, "Multivariable Casablanca: Vichy Law, Jewish Diversity, and the Moroccan Communist Party," in "Jews of Morocco and the Maghreb: History and Historiography," special issue, *Hespéris-Tamuda* 51, no. 3 (2016): 13–34; and idem, "Sultan, Léon René," in *The Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World Online*, ed. Norman Stillman (Brill, 2016), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/sultan-leon-rene-SIM_000782.
- 41 Interestingly, the 1929 Buraq riots in British Mandate Palestine did not figure prominently into PCM discussions of the late 1920s and early 1930s.
- 42 See Heckman, "Radical Nationalists." Susan Gilson Miller is currently working on a book manuscript treating the work of Hélène Cazès

- Benatar on the JDC in Morocco during World War II; see Susan Gilson Miller, "Spotlight on Morocco: Documenting the Holocaust in North Africa," *Memory and Action* (Fall 2014): 6–7.
- 43 Ralph Benarros, interview by the author, Aug. 26, 2013, Paris, France.
- 44 Kenbib, *Juifs et Musulmans au Maroc*, 663, 708. See also Susan Gilson Miller, *A History of Modern Morocco* (New York, 2013).
- 45 'Alal al-Fasi, *The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa*, trans. Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh (Washington, D.C., 1954), 251.
- 46 This was true not only in Morocco but also in the broader MENA region. Regional conflicts with Israel created enormous difficulties for continued Jewish life from Morocco to Iran. Most notoriously, the Egyptian and Iraqi Jewish communities were effectively expelled by the 1960s. Most Moroccan Jews, too, had left by the late 1960s. See Yaron Tsur, *Kehilah keru'ah: Yehudei Marokoh u-leumiyut, 1943–1954* (Tel Aviv, 2001), and Mohammed Hatimi, "Al-jama'at al-yahudia al-maghribia wa al-khiar al-sa'ab bayn nida'h al-Sihiunia wa rihan al-maghrib al-mustaqbal: 1961–1947" (Ph.D. diss., Université Mohammed V-Agdal, 2007).
- 47 After 1945, the trajectories of Jews and Communism across the MENA differ regionally. In North Africa, the 1940s through 1960s represented the apex of Jews and Communist political activism. In Egypt and Iraq, the military coups of 1952 and 1958 abruptly challenged and weakened the possibility of Communist politics. In Iran, the 1953 coup that overthrew Mohammed Mossadegh challenged the viability of Communist politics, fueling the Tudeh (Communist) party's participation in the 1979 revolution. Following 1979, however, the Communists were persecuted, and Jews were often accused of being Zionist spies, leading to mass migration. Interestingly, Iran and Morocco today have the largest Jewish populations in the MENA outside of Israel. In Morocco, the Jewish population is approximately 5,000; in Iran, it is close to 9,000.
- 48 This subsection is excerpted from chapter 4 of my dissertation; Heckman, "Radical Nationalists," 197–253.
- 49 Parts of the biographical sketches that follow derive from Heckman, "Radical Nationalists," 69–129.
- 50 Redonnet, *Entretiens avec Edmond Amran El Maleh*.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 109.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 110.
- 53 *Ibid.*
- 54 *Ibid.*, 114.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 116.
- 56 It is difficult to ascertain precise numbers for PCM membership; Jewish membership specifically is likewise difficult. That said, the prevailing estimates of French protectorate surveillance documents as well as internal PCM numbers suggest that this figure was never very large,

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- particularly when compared with Istiqlal membership, but that it waxed and waned between the 1940s and 1960s. According to Simon Lévy, in 1948 the PCM counted approximately five hundred Jewish members across Morocco's major cities (see Simon Lévy, *Essais d'Histoire et de Civilisation Judeo-Marocaine* [Rabat, 2001], 66).
- 57 Chakib, "Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire du PCM," 92–93.
- 58 Abraham Serfaty and Mikhaël Elbaz, *L'insoumis: Juifs, Marocains et rebelles* (Paris, 2001).
- 59 Susan Slyomovics conducted extensive interviews with Abraham Serfaty in the late 1990s. Though she employs Arendt's concept of the conscious pariah in a 2016 article with respect to Serfaty, she excludes other Jewish members of the PCM; Susan Slyomovics, "Abraham Serfaty: Moroccan Jews and Conscious Pariah," *Hespéris-Tamuda* 51, no. 1 (2016): 113–38. I first published on Arendt's concept of the conscious pariah in a retrospective piece for *Diarna* on the occasion of Simon Lévy's death in 2011; Alma Rachel Heckman, "Simon Lévy Retrospective," *Diarna*, Feb. 2012, <http://diarna.bardoind.com/news/simon-levy-retrospective/>. I developed this concept further for the framework of the introduction to my dissertation; Heckman, "Radical Nationalists," 1–15.
- 60 Robert Watson, "Between Liberation(s) and Occupation(s): Reconsidering the Emergence of Maghrebi Jewish Communism, 1942–1945," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 13, no. 3 (2014): 387.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Serfaty and Elbaz, *L'insoumis*, 28.
- 63 Ibid., 100.
- 64 Watson, "Between Liberation(s) and Occupation(s)," 383–84.
- 65 Simon Lévy, interview by the author, May 7, 2010, Casablanca, Morocco.
- 66 Simon Lévy was recently the posthumous star of a five-part Moroccan television documentary, "Al-shahid al-maghribi ma'a Simon Lévy" (The Moroccan Witness with Simon Lévy), one of several recent documentaries aired on the network about the lives of prominent Moroccan historical personalities. Lévy and El Maleh worked together as teachers in Casablanca around the time of the large-scale student protests that became riots in 1965.
- 67 Kenza Sefrioui, *La revue Souffles, 1966–1973: Espoirs de révolution culturelle au Maroc* (Casablanca, 2013), 87.
- 68 Ibid., 97.
- 69 Ibid., 87.
- 70 Ibid., 65.
- 71 Ibid., 123.
- 72 Ibid., 124.
- 73 Ibid., 133.
- 74 Ibid.

- 75 Ibid., 135.
- 76 Ibid., 133.
- 77 Miller, *History of Modern Morocco*, 169.
- 78 For more on the harsh conditions of imprisonment during the Years of Lead as well as Abraham Serfaty's experiences therein, see Susan Slyomovics, *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco* (Philadelphia, 2005).
- 79 Abraham Serfaty "Being a Jewish Moroccan and Fighting against Israel," *Al-Kifah al-Watani* 125, July 7, 1967, file 357J/42, PCF Archives, Les Archives départementales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, Bobigny, France.
- 80 Ibid.
- 81 Abraham Serfaty, "Moroccan Jewry and Zionism (Excerpts)," trans. Lia Brozgal and Olivia C. Harrison, in *Souffles-Anfas: A Critical Anthology from the Moroccan Journal of Culture and Politics*, ed. Olivia C. Harrison and Teresa Villa-Ignacio (Stanford, 2016), 196.
- 82 Simon Lévy, *Essais d'Histoire et de Civilisation Judeo-Marocaines* (Rabat, 2001). See also Albert Memmi's semiautobiographical novel *La statue de sel* (Paris, 1953), as well as his most famous critical work, *Portrait du colonisé, précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (Paris, 1972). For an incisive examination of Albert Memmi, see Lia Brozgal, *Against Autobiography: Albert Memmi and the Production of Theory* (Lincoln, Neb., 2013).
- 83 Serfaty, "Moroccan Jewry and Zionism," 196.
- 84 PCM circular, signed Ali Yata, Jan. 11, 1971, Simon Lévy's personal papers, Casablanca, Morocco.
- 85 Serfaty and Elbaz, *L'insoumis*, 30.
- 86 Ibid., 143.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 The phrase "Jews don't do politics" recurs frequently throughout El Maleh's semiautobiographical novel *Parcours immobile* (Paris, 1980). He uses the phrase to highlight the transgressive actions of his politicized Jewish protagonists, as if channeling the judgment of the broader Jewish community and of the Moroccan and protectorate governments.
- 89 Serfaty and Elbaz, *L'insoumis*, 110.
- 90 Ibid., 127.
- 91 Bouazza Benachir, *Edmond Amran El Maleh: Cheminements d'une écriture* (Paris, 1997), 19.
- 92 King Mohammed VI inaugurated a truth commission for the abuses during the Years of Lead under his father; however, it has been widely proclaimed a partial, incomplete effort aimed at closing the door on this history rather than airing it out in public. See for example Slyomovics, *Performance*.
- 93 El Maleh's birthplace, the city of Safi is just north of Essaouira.
- 94 Lévy interview, May 7, 2010.

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