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“Europeanized” Moroccans: North African Jewish Immigration to Canada, 1955-1960

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Biography

Lianne Robin Koren attended McGill University for both her Bachelor's and Master's degree. In 2018, Koren completed her undergraduate, majoring in both History and World Religions. She received her Master's degree in History in 2019. Koren intends to do a PhD that furthers her research on Sephardic Jewish migration in the 20th century and explores issues related to migration, identity, community and diaspora.

Paper Abstract

In the mid to late 1950s, Canada's federal government established an immigration program specifically for North African Jews as a result of the efforts by Canada's national Jewish bodies: the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society (JIAS). This paper will detail the rhetorical strategies of the CJC and the JIAS in their lobbying effort. These tactics reveal that the CJC and the JIAS accentuated the "Westernized" identities of North African Jews for the purpose of convincing Canada to accept the migration of this group.

On November 8, 1955, in a letter to Saul Hayes (National Executive Director of the Canadian Jewish Congress), Louis D. Horwitz (Director of the European headquarters of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) wrote, "It is our hope that something special can be done to 'sell' this group to the Canadian authorities" (Horwitz 1955). The group Horwitz is referring to in his letter was none other than the Jews of North Africa. Horwitz's push "to 'sell' this group" marks the beginning of the lobbying effort by Canadian Jewish organizations, namely the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society (JIAS), to allow for the immigration of Moroccan Jews to Canada. "Selling" immigrants required Jewish organizations to present the Jews of Morocco in a light favourable to Canadian values and culture, and the Canadian economy. This paper explores the negotiations between Jewish organizations and the Canadian government, specifically its Department of Citizenship and Immigration, to reveal the process by which unsponsored Moroccan immigrants were considered for immigration in 1955—and the reason the program halted in 1960. It is unclear exactly how many North African Jews settled in Canada by the end of this period; the community remained small, however, likely comprising of roughly 500 people by the late 1950s (JIAS News 1959).

The CJC portrayed Moroccan Jews as both a vulnerable Jewish community susceptible to discrimination and persecution, as well as a group of skilled labourers who were thoroughly Europeanized and who would, therefore, be easily assimilated into Canada. As Morocco gained its independence from France in 1956, Jewish status became a question mark. The Jews' perceived relationship with the French elite and with Zionism complicated their relationship with Moroccan Nationalism (Dalit 2011, 161). However, the French education of the Jewish population in Morocco by the Alliance Israélite Universelle would shape Canadians' vision of this group. The federal government's acceptance of North African Jews was predicated on the perception that they were Westernized peoples. This view stands in contrast to Israel's vision of North African and Middle Eastern Jews. Israel sought to "'modernize' and assimilate Middle Eastern Jewry" through their melting pot ethos (Roby 2015, 2). Moroccan Jews were perceived as intrinsically connected to their Arabo-Islamic heritage in Israel and thus as a threat to the *Ashkenazi* establishment. In contrast, this same group was received as essentially European immigrants in the Canadian context in the same era, largely as a result of activism by the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society.

Historiography

The trend in the scholarship on Moroccan Jews in Canada is to highlight the personal dimensions of immigration and, specifically, the role of memory in cross-cultural movement. Yolande Cohen's *Les Sépharades du Québec: Parcours d'exils nord-africains* (2017) explores the complicated construction of identity of the Jewish Moroccan population. Further, Cohen's work with Marie Berdugo and Joseph Lévy, *Juifs marocains à Montréal: Témoignages d'une immigration modern* (1987), contains in-depth interviews of six Moroccan Jewish individuals: Haïm, Hannah, Robert, Monique, Serge and Michelle. Their testimonies are split into different coping strategies used by immigrants to respond to their new communities: "la nostalgie," "le mimétisme" and "l'heure des choix." Lévy and Cohen's argument is reiterated in a chapter entitled "Moroccan Jews and Their Adaption to Montreal Life" in Mervin Butovsky and Ira Robinson's *Renewing Our Days: Montreal Jews in the Twentieth Century* (1995). Drawing on thirty interviews, Levy and Cohen explore Moroccan Jewish immigrants' "perceptions of [their] immigration and adaptation." Aligned with this genre of scholarship is André E. Elbaz's *Séphardim d'hier et de demain: trois autobiographies d'immigrants juifs Marocains au Canada* (1988), which offers the transcribed interviews of three Moroccan men: Aharon Azuelos, Makhlouf Pérez and Elias Malka. While personal accounts are an important contribution to the historiography of Moroccan Jews and their immigration to Canada, the individual memories of Moroccan immigrants cannot speak to the mechanics of the migration process as a whole nor the perceptions of the Canadian government and Jewish organizations of the immigrants. My research aims to fill this gap in the historiography and to answer the following: what was the exact role Jewish organizations played in the acceptance of Moroccan Jewish immigrants to Canada? In order to investigate this question, it is necessary to first trace the history and declared functions of national Canadian Jewish bodies.

The Canadian Jewish Congress and the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society

Founded in Montreal in 1919, the CJC was the "first democratically-elected representative body for Canadian Jewry" ("Canadian Jewish Congress"). The organization "served as an advocate for matters affecting the status, rights, and welfare of Jewish Canadians – for the purpose of strengthening Jewish life in Canada" ("Canadian Jewish Congress").

Following the First World War and "the desperate situation of Jews" in Eastern Europe, the Canadian Jewish community was inspired to form a national body that would represent their interests and be capable of coordinating international humanitarian efforts ("Canadian Jewish Congress"). The JIAS was conceived at the very first Plenary of the CJC in 1919 in Montreal, officially founded in 1920 and incorporated in 1922 ("Canadian Jewish Congress: Over Ninety Years of Advocacy"; Woolf). It was framed as the "Canadian counterpart to the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in the United States" (Woolf). The JIAS quickly began lobbying the Canadian government on immigration policy, and "these lobbying efforts, though fruitless, would become the raison d'être of the JIAS during the 1940s, when Canada had essentially banned Jewish immigration" (Woolf). Moreover, the JIAS functioned as a community agency and "became the centre for the sponsorship and transportation of immigrants, challenging the fixers, agents, and lawyers who sought to profit from the immigration process" ("Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada (JIAS)").

Both the CJC and the JIAS expanded their services and scope in the latter half of the twentieth century under the respective leadership of Saul Hayes and Joseph Kage ("The Canadian Jewish Heritage Network"). Hayes "was a prominent leader of Canadian Jewry in the mid-twentieth century and representative of the world's Jewish community on the international stage" (Pinsky). He was the director of the United Jewish Relief Agencies of Canada (UJRA) from 1940 to 1942 ("The Canadian Jewish Heritage Network"). Significantly, he also served as the Executive Director of the CJC from 1942 until 1959—the longest serving Director in the entirety of the organization's almost century-long history ("Canadian Jewish Congress"). While at the CJC, Hayes represented Canadian Jews at meetings of the World Jewish Congress and other key events. Notably, he acted as a representative at the Second Conference of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) in 1945, the San Francisco Conference on International Security in 1945 and the Paris Conference on Peace Treaties in 1946 ("The Canadian Jewish Heritage Network"). Hayes was pivotal in the transformation of the CJC "into a formative lobby group" ("Canadian Jewish Congress"). Under his leadership, the CJC "became the unchallenged parliament of Canadian Jewry, working to persuade the government to permit greater integration of Jewish refugees" ("Canadian Jewish Congress"). Under Kage's leadership as Director of Social Services, the JIAS was restructured and began to focus on providing "crucial social and economic services" to the tens of thousands of new Jewish immigrants

following the Holocaust (Woolf). The organization "assumed the role of taking care of the new arrivals, particularly their housing and integration into communities nation-wide" (Woolf). This dual effort—championing the cause of Jewish immigrants and refugees through lobbying the Canadian government on their immigration policies, and assisting refugees with the Canadian immigration process and their community integration—were the cornerstone commitments of the JIAS ("Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada (JIAS)"). While the JIAS was "run by and for Eastern European immigrants" up until the 1950s, this changed with the introduction of Francophone Jews from North Africa (Woolf).

North African Jews: Oppressed, Skilled and European

On November 8, 1955, HIAS's European Director, Louis Horwitz, wrote to Hayes and indicated that "the demand for emigration to Canada, particularly from Jews in Casablanca, is increasing every day, as can be verified by Joe Kage, to whom many referrals have already been sent" (Horwitz 1955). In his letter, he commented on the quality of the potential immigrants. Horwitz highlighted the fact that they were highly skilled workers: "excellent material of the kind Canada wants and needs" (Horwitz 1955). Moreover, North African Jews were presented as Europeanized: "our applicants are a thoroughly occidental group in appearance, behaviour and culture" (Horwitz 1955). Horwitz explained that the North African Jews' connection to European culture increased their interest in immigrating to Canada since "it represents both North America, as typified to them by their contacts with American military and civil agencies, and France, with which they culturally identify themselves" (Horwitz 1955). He tasked Hayes with convincing Canada of its need for North African Jewish immigrants in the hopes that Canada may "speed up the emigration process" (Horwitz 1955). Significantly, there were no Canadian visa-issuing representatives in North Africa at this time. This letter represents the beginning of the CJC's partnership with the American-based organization HIAS as well as the CJC's lobbying of the Canadian government to accept Moroccan Jewish immigrants. However, Hayes had to contend with the structure of Canadian immigration policy in order to make his efforts successful.

On June 1, 1952, a new *Immigration Act* came into effect in Canada. The Act simplified the "administration of immigration" (Knowles 2007, 170). Simply, the cabinet was granted "all-embracing powers […] to prohibit or limit the admissions of persons by reasons of such factors as nationality, ethnic group, occupation, lifestyle, unsuitability with regard to Canada's climate,

and perceived inability to become readily assimilated into Canadian society" (Knowles 2007, 170). In addition, it gave the minister and his officials "a large degree of discretionary power" (Knowles 2007, 171). Given this, when Hayes replied to Horwitz's letter, he explained that immigration was more or less restricted to relatives of Canadian residents, and that "the exceptions in these cases are ministerial and discretion is exercised in extraordinary cases which commend themselves to the Department" (Hayes 1955a). Hayes explained that their duty was to convince the Admission Officers that the North African case was deserving enough "to go outside of the priority list" (Hayes 1955a). Hayes began this initiative by reaching out to the Director of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, C.E.S. Smith, but this appeal accomplished little (Smith 1955).

Unfazed, Hayes turned to Colonel Laval Fortier, the Deputy Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, in a letter sent on December 29, 1955. Hayes called attention to the "plight of many residents of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia" (Hayes 1955b). However, rather than going into detail about the plight itself, Hayes conjured up the tragedy of the Holocaust and Canada's lack of interference: "The Jews of the free world had a veritable feeling of impotence in the dreadful years beginning in 1933 when they realized that Hitler's extermination policy would be successful unless the democratic countries did something effective to rescue European Jews" (Hayes 1955b). As Canada had closed its doors to refugees during the Second World War, "The net result was that hundreds of thousands of good people devoted to their religious and cultural values were doomed in the camps of Auschwitz, Osswiecim, Treblinka, Bergen-Belsen and the like" (Hayes 1955b). Hayes suggested that "history is repeating itself and the position of Jewish communities in North Africa is somewhat of a parallel" (Hayes 1955b). In his letter, Hayes made two requests. First, he asked Fortier to "enquire into the emigration possibilities of worthwhile residents of Morocco, Tunis, Algiers where well trained, healthy and desirable people are candidates for Canadian immigration" (Hayes 1955b). Second, he requested that Fortier meet with Horwitz in Paris during his trip to Europe for a debrief of the Jewish situation in North Africa (Hayes 1955b). Fortier agreed (Fortier 1955).

In *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy,* Valerie Knowles highlights the federal government's stark position at the time of the Second World War vis-á-vis refugees fleeing the growing Nazi tide: "When she was most required to show compassion, Canada shut herself off from the world and strenuously fought any attempt by

desperate refugees, especially Jewish refugees, to break the wall of restrictive legislation" (Knowles 2007, 144). Knowles suggests that Canada's restrictions on the acceptance of Jewish refugees was strongly influenced by Quebec. Anti-Semitism was especially rife in the province "thanks to a revival of French-Canadian nationalism, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, and the impact of the Great Depression" (Knowles 2007, 145). From moderate newspapers such as *Le Devoir* to ultranationalist ones like *L'Action*, French language news "sounded dire warnings against Canada's opening its doors to Jewish refugees. French-Canadian MPs and such Quebec organizations as the St.-Jean-Baptiste Society were equally vociferous" (Knowles 2007, 145).

However, Ninette Kelley and Michael J. Trebilcock, in *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy*, postulate that anti-Semitic sentiment and the "exclusion of Jewish refugees in the face of mass extermination" extended well-beyond Quebec. They posit that Canada's position on Jewish refugees "reflected less the influence of one group of interests over another than general ideological, cultural and racial values held by the Canadian population at large" (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010, 16-17). Kelley and Trebilcock insist that concerns over economic competition were less important than the "racially and culturally motivated values" that sought to exclude Jews from Canada (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010, 17). Canada began to reopen its doors to immigrants in the late 1940s as a result of a post-war boom with "a growing demand for skilled and unskilled workers" (Knowles 2007, 155). At the same time, Kelley and Trebilcock contend, "public recognition that a large part of the rationale for the war had been to contest the grotesque implications of claims of racial superiority made by the Nazi regime led to a progressive re-evaluation of discriminatory Canadian immigration policies" (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010, 17). Therefore, it is not surprising that Hayes evoked the Holocaust in his letter to Fortier. Moreover, his appeal that North African residents were "worthwhile," "well trained, healthy and desirable people" spoke directly to Canada's desire for labourers.

A Successful Appeal: Canada's Program for North Africa

As a result of Fortier's meeting with Horwitz, the federal government agreed that "an immigration program for Canada will be initiated at an early date in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco" (Levinson 1956a). The Canadian authorities also considered sending immigration officers to North Africa to process applications on the spot (Levinson 1956a). Mr. Brunet, Chief

Immigration Officer of the Canadian Mission in Paris, told Horwitz that the federal government had "very large plans for processing and movement of emigrants from North Africa to Canada. This activity had been held up temporarily while they were waiting for final permission from the French to send in their first mission to Casablanca" (Horwitz 1956a). Brunet reported that he had asked the Canadian government to "institute a short-cut procedure which would enable him to visa a case in three weeks," which would shorten the process by up to five months (Horwitz 1956a). Once a mission was set up in Casablanca, Brunet "speaks of an anticipated load of 25,000 persons" (Horwitz 1956a). He also contended that "the team that goes into North Africa to do the processing will include a representative of the Canadian shipping lines, and Canadian ships will proceed from Tangier with visaed emigrants as soon as possible" (Horwitz 1956a). Brunet even implied that the North African migrants' passage to Canada would be covered by the "Assisted Passage Loan Scheme"—a scheme which "authorized grants to new immigrants to cover the cost of their transportation" (Horwitz 1956a; Knowles 2007, 170).

Despite Brunet's best intentions, negotiations between France and Canada regarding the establishment of Canadian missions in North Africa stagnated. Fortier informed Hayes that there were no holdups on the Canadian side. Canada was "still extremely eager to get immigrants from North Africa just as Brunet told you. What bothers them is that dossiers are being processed with no indication as yet that they can send in a mission or find some other way of issuing visas" (Rice 1956a). Due to the difficulty with the French Government, Canada "had not made any definite decisions" with respect to processing cases from North Africa (Horwitz 1956b). The problem between France and Canada

> hinges on the security investigation which must be made in North Africa by the French police. […] [Brunet] has hopes that the security investigation may be settled by the Canadian Government establishing the fact that the migrants from North Africa are in fact 'refugees' and that a simple good conduct certificate from the police would suffice (Horwitz 1956b).

The idea to categorize the migrants as refugees was put forward as a suggestion in order to speed up processing and work around the need for security clearances. Up until this point—May 4, 1956—there had been no suggestion that the North African Jews should be classified as refugees. In fact, there was negligible discussion about the situation for Jews of North Africa in the correspondences generally. Even when Hayes wrote to Fortier and evoked images of the Holocaust in comparison with the situation in North Africa, the issue of refugee status was never

presented. Instead, the North African Jews were depicted as highly skilled, Francophone and European immigrants who would be beneficial to Canadian society.

French Nationals Only

Brunet received news from Ottawa at the end of May 1956 "stating that the program had been approved for French nationals [i.e. French citizens] in North Africa [… and that] those instructions appear specifically to authorize visa issuance to French nationals only and the program is being implemented on that basis" (Levinson 1956b). No provisions were made for any other Jewish group. This news was discouraging to the HIAS and the CJC, especially since French Nationals accounted for approximately 10 percent of all their cases (Rice 1956b). In a Memorandum on June 1, 1956, Lottie Levinson, Director of the Paris office of United HIAS Service, sketched the nationalities of "85 to 90% of (the) North African registered cases" as follows:

> a) Moroccan nationals with French protege passports; b) Spanish or Spanish Protectorate passports, also Moroccan nationals, but in smaller numbers and chiefly found in Tangiers; c) National passport holders such as Italian (mainly found in Tunisia, but also to some extent in Tangiers, Tunisian and incidental cases such as Greek, Portuguese, etc.; d) Stateless passport holders—European Refugees—from Hitler and/or communism (Levinson 1956b).

The new program, exclusively for French citizens, disqualified the aforementioned groups who had previously been "accepted for processing under OS8 and the Church Program" (Levinson 1956b). The "Approved Church Program" (ACP) was an agreement between specific religious groups—including the JIAS— and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration in 1953 that granted recognized groups the ability to process and approve sponsored immigrants and, notably, select non-sponsored immigrants (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010, 338). In other words, Canada's newly established program for North Africa curtailed the power of the JIAS through the ACP and disqualified the bulk of their applicants. Furthermore, the French government also confirmed that it would not allow Canadian immigration personnel in North Africa. As a result, as it concerned the processing of French Nationals, all cases were to "be initially screened for eligibility by the Visa Office Paris; those meeting established criteria will be transmitted to the British consulates in their respective areas for examination and visa issuance" (Levinson 1956b).

From the perspective of the HIAS and the CJC, the Canadian Government explicitly excluded North African people on the grounds of their Arabo-Islamic heritage for Canadian immigration. In June, following the federal government's established program for French Nationals, Levinson recalled to Brunet a conversation in January between the HIAS and

> Colonel Fortier, at which time [Horwitz] stressed the fact that a large proportion of our cases would be Moroccan French Protectorate, Italian (born in Tunis) and Tunisian nationals, but that nevertheless they were of western culture and easily assimilable; that Colonel Fortier seemed to understand the situation; and that it was on this basis that applications for Canadian immigration were accepted (Levinson 1956b).

This comment reveals that the HIAS and the CJC had pitched the Moroccans as entirely European in everything except physical features. It was through this framing of the Moroccans that Canada had tentatively approved their immigration. Canada's original program for North Africa—limited to French citizens—seems to support the claim that Canada wanted to exclude Arabo-Islamic peoples. The negotiation over Canada's acceptance of Jews from North Africa was, in essence, a debate over whether they could be considered as 'Western.' If the Jews of North Africa were seemingly too close to their Arabo-Islamic heritage, then North African Muslims and Arabs had no hopes of inclusion in Canada's North Africa program. Levinson explained to Brunet that "It was understood [in all conversations with Canadian officials] and on more than one occasion frankly stated that only persons of Arab or Moslem origin would be excluded from any program developed for North Africa" (Levinson 1956b).

The Push Back

Both the Canadian Consul in Paris and Jewish organizations pushed for the inclusion of indigenous North African Jews without French citizenship. Brunet submitted a report to Ottawa in defence of the "excellent cases" that would not be "eligible for processing with the current program as authorized" in the hopes that the Canadian government would reappraise the program (Levinson 1956b). However, Brunet asked for "assurance that Jewish applicants going forward under [CJC/JIAS] sponsorship be taken care of as regards job placement, housing and initial care and maintenance after arrival in Canada" (Levinson 1956b). The CJC and the JIAS would also be responsible for the cost of travel because the Assisted Passage Loan Scheme did not apply to North Africa (Levinson 1956b). Furthermore, in a letter from James P. Rice—Acting Executive Director of HIAS—to Hayes on the June 11, 1956, he wrote, "Urgent requests have been made

for intervention with the Canadian Government […]. What is urgently required is that the Canadian Government broaden its definition of eligibility for this special project for residents in North Africa to include the large bulk of our applicants who are considered either Tunisian citizens or subjects of the Sultan of Morocco" (Rice 1956b).

Hayes eagerly probed Fortier over what could be done about the North African migrants without French passports. In a letter of August 13, 1956, Hayes explained that of all the applicants,

> the largest number are the indigenous populations of Morocco and Tunisia of Jews whose history in this area goes back to the dim origins of history. Of this group our cooperating agency overseas is of course only interested, as I have explained to you before, in those with western cultural background, European training and skills could be useful in Canada. For those some procedure or examination will I am sure be worked out so that we can make a contribution to the solution of their problem both in the interest of humanity happily coinciding with Canada's interest in obtaining good immigrants (Hayes 1956).

Hayes' comments reveal the care Jewish organizations took to accentuate the claim that the potential Moroccan migrants were 'Westernized' and skilled. They were portrayed as useful Canadian material. Their ability to assimilate and work was the main push—in tandem with claims of oppression and political uncertainty. This was most explicitly demonstrated in Hayes' comment about "humanity happily coinciding with Canada's interest." Hayes also confirmed to Fortier that the JIAS "has definitely agreed to assist in the reception and integration of everyone who comes forward under this plan" (Hayes 1956).

Acceptance, Negotiations and Challenges

On the August 17, 1956, Hayes received a letter from the President of the HIAS, Murray I. Gurfein. The mood was high, "I received a wonderful cable this morning from our people in Europe that the Canadian Government has notified M. Brunet to start processing our cases from Morocco through the Canadian Consul [in Paris]" (Gurfein 1956). He expressed his appreciation to Hayes for the "excellent job" he had done in regard to his interventions with the Canadian government (Gurfein 1956). The news travelled in an exuberant cable from Rice to JIAS Director Joe Kage:

> MAZALTOV […] BRUNET […] RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS PROCESS ALL JEWISH NORTH AFRICAN CASES IN MOROCCO TANGIERS TUNIS ALGERIA STOP SENDING DOSSIERS TO BRITISH CONSULATES STARTING TODAY

> STOP NO NUMBER LIMITATION CONTAINED IN HIS INSTRUCTIONS (Gurfein 1956).

This favourable outcome was accredited to Hayes. Hayes' intervention with Fortier pushed the boundaries of the North Africa program to expand beyond French Nationals in order to include indigenous North African Jews.

By August 24, 1956, Rice received news from HIAS staff that Brunet "really meant business" (Goldsmith 1956). Brunet had "sent over 280 cases to British consulates" which covered roughly 720 persons (Goldsmith 1956). Following processing by the British consulates, "the medical results will come to Paris, as will the results of the British Consul's examination of the cases, after which Mr. Brunet's office will send to the British Consul the final decision about visa issuance" (Goldsmith 1956). Muslims and Arabs would, however, continue to be excluded from the Canadian program for North Africa. Brunet's instructions from Ottawa "only covered Jewish cases—non-Jews are still ineligible!!" (Goldsmith 1956).

Although the Assisted Passage Loan Scheme was not applied to North Africa, Horwtiz reported to Hayes that the "Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration [ICEM] has agreed to help finance the movement of Jews from North Africa" (Horwitz 1956c). The ICEM was an organization responsible for resettling European displaced persons. The funds would be contributed by the United States Government, and as a result "no financial contribution will be asked from the Canadian Government" for the movement of North African Jews (Horwitz 1956c). However, Canadian officials, specifically D.M. Sloan—Chief of the Administration Division of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration—did not look at this offer favourably. Sloan emphasized that the immigrants from North Africa should "either be in a position to pay their own fare to Canada or will be coming to Canada on a sponsorship basis in which case the sponsor [i.e. the CJC] should be able to look after their transportation costs" (Sloan 1957). His comment has a snide tone that seemed to imply that the CJC—who originally took responsibility for the care of the immigrants and their transportation costs—was trying to evade its obligations. He also observed that the "Department considers that ICEM would be operating beyond its mandate if engaged in such operations" since it would be funding the transportation costs of the Jews from North Africa, rather than European migrants. In short, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration decided they "could not support an application from

the United HIAS for inclusion of the migrants in question under any revolving fund agreement with ICEM" (Sloan 1957).

"Cut-off dates" were also a point of negotiation between Canada's Jewish organizations and the Canadian Government. "Cut-off dates" refer to the restriction of immigration into Canada during the winter. Fortier stated that they were "an administrative device for gearing the immigrant movement as closely as possible to the Canadian economy" (Fortier 1958). He explained that "With our particular climate, there are bound to be seasonal fluctuations in employment [… and] it is considered that the dates decided upon in any given year reflect the latest possible time of the year when an immigrant can be advantageously absorbed into the labour market with a minimum of difficulty" (Fortier 1958). Hayes asked Fortier "to make an exception in the case of the North Africans by extending the cut-off date for arrival this year [1958]" (Fortier 1958). This request was initially refused unless the CJC and the JIAS were "prepared to take all responsibility for the care and maintenance of these people immediately from the date that they arrive in Canada until they become finally established" (Fortier 1958). While Kage and Hayes both considered Fortier's advice to respect the "cut-off dates," their concern about Morocco and Tunisia's joining of the Arab League led the CJC and the JIAS to assume responsibility for the incoming migrants (Kage 1958). Founded in 1945, the Arab League was a manifestation of Pan-Arabism and "promoted independence and unity of Arab states and opposition to a Jewish state" (Baïda 2011, 323). Morocco officially joined on October 1, 1958. On September 9, 1958, the JIAS "passed a resolution offering all its services for the North Africans from date of arrival in Canada until they become firmly established, which may not be until the spring of 1959" (Hayes 1958). Similarly, on September 21, 1958, the National Executive Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress

> formally resolved to offer its guarantee to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, that with Jewish Immigrant Aid Services, it will assume all and full responsibility for the care and maintenance of arrivals of Jewish immigrants from North Africa, immediate from the date they arrive in Canada, until they become finally established, up to and including the period of the resumption of the regular immigration flow (Hayes 1958).

However, in late October and early November of 1958, Mr. Grant, the Canadian Immigration Officer in Paris, reevaluated the instructions from Ottawa regarding "Sherifan passports,"

> Mr. Grant's point of view was that the original instructions from Ottawa were made for the benefit of Jews in North Africa who were in danger of persecution and were holders of the "old Cherifian passports." However, since our clients in North Africa are now issued with Moroccan national passports, they would no longer seem eligible under this Scheme as the original instructions explicitly excluded Tunisian and Moroccan nationals (Svarc 1959).

As a result, Grant suspended the processing of Moroccan and Tunisian nationals pending new instructions from Ottawa (Svarc 1959). Grant insisted he was unable to "process such cases on the basis of the instructions issued three years ago" (Svarc 1959). Despite claims by the HIAS that "'Empire Cherifien' and 'Royaume du Maroc' are one and the same thing,"—as well as the insistence that, in the past, "the Embassy's interpretation from the very beginning of the program that applicants holding Tunisian passports are also eligible"—Grant still refused to process any Moroccan or Tunisian applications (Svarc 1959).

Grant's position reflected a shift in Canadian immigration policy. The ACP lost the privileged power to select immigrants in 1958 (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010, 338). Kelley and Trebilcock highlight the tension that quickly arose between church groups and the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, namely, over the type of immigrant each group preferred. Kelley and Trebilcock extrapolate, "Religious groups often sought to promote the admission of unemployed, desperate people, whereas the department favoured skilled or unskilled labourers" (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010, 338). While the Jews of North Africa were presented as valuable workers, the impetus for their acceptance by the Immigration Department was persecution. Another point of strain in relations with the ACP was that "the volunteer agencies would often ask the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to move a candidate to the top of the list, despite a substantial backlog of applicants. The privileges granted by the department to the churches under the ACP required the department to comply" (Kelley and Trebilcock 2010, 338). This was also clearly the case in the lobbying efforts of the CJC.

The Jewish organizations were particularly worried about Grant's decision to halt processing. Harold Trobe—Director of the HIAS—expressed his concern in a letter to Hayes and Kage on November 13, 1959. He wrote, "the outlook is not bright for the Jews of Morocco. During the past few months there seems to have been a speed up in the processes of 'Arabization'" (Trobe 1959a). For instance, Morocco decided to adopt Arabic instead of French in the education system (Semi 2010, 14). Trobe also expressed concern over employment

opportunities for Jews in Morocco, "it is generally believed, for example, that instructions have been issued to all departments of the government not to employ any more Jews" (Trobe 1959a). Moreover, he noted that the end of the International Zone of Tangier and Tangier's reintegration into Morocco will

> result in drastic reductions in the staffs of the banks there, and very likely many of them will eventually close. Since most of the white collar employees of these banks are Jews, hundreds of Jewish families will lose their source of livelihood as a result of this change. As far as one can tell there does not appear to be other employment available for them, nor will there be in the foreseeable future (Trobe 1959a).

According to Trobe, the halting of the program for North Africa would be a "catastrophe" given the increasingly difficult situation in Morocco (Trobe 1959a).

In another letter from Trobe to Hayes and Kage on December 11, 1959, he conveyed the increased demand for Moroccan immigration to Canada as well as the urgency of these requests. During the week of December 7, 1959, the HIAS received "15 new requests for help in obtaining Canadian immigration visas on behalf of 55 individuals" (Trobe 1959b). In the six prior weeks, Trobe reported "a total of 54 inquiries on behalf of 189 persons, plus 25 inquiries where the family composition was not mentioned" (Trobe 1959b). Further, Moroccan applicants had presented themselves in person in France in order to try and speed up the processing of their applications. Their decision to await their visas in France could also be explained by the fear that exit permits to leave Morocco "will be needed after December 31st and many fear that after that date they will be able to leave the country only after sacrificing all assets" (Trobe 1959b). Trobe expressed his concern that the "situation in Morocco is deteriorating from day to day," and that "the Jewish population is seeing the 'Handwriting on the Wall'" (Trobe 1959b).

The sense of urgency from Moroccan Jews wishing to emigrate was evident in their letters to the HIAS. For instance, one letter emphasized the feeling of danger for Jews in Morocco, "notre situation ici est très précaire, surtout pour nous les jeunes" (Trobe 1959c). This sentiment was reiterated elsewhere: "Je pense que vous êtes certainement au courant des circonstances nouvelles qui se sont créées et qui s'aggravent de jour en jour dans ce pays […]. En résumé la situation est devenue telle que j'ai pris, après mure réflexion, la décision formelle d'émigrer et de partir le plus tôt possible" (Trobe 1959c). Other letters emphasized the fear of needing an exit visa, "Le bruit court ici que des visas de sortie seront nécessaires bientôt, alors nous nous sentirons comme prisonnier. Nous comptons sur vous pour nous sortir de là" (Trobe

1959c). There was also concern over the ability to find work, "le travail devient rares" (Trobe 1959c). Full citizenship to Jews, granted by a now independent Morocco, was what ultimately halted the access of Moroccan Jews to Canada. The fear of Jewish persecution was seen as unfounded by Canadian authorities. Moreover, it is also possible that Jews' perceived acceptance by Morocco made them too close to an Arab-Islamic heritage for Canada's liking.

The North Africa program that allowed the CJC and the JIAS to sponsor Jewish immigrants finally drew to an official close on May 6, 1960, in a letter from Ellen L. Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, to Hayes. Fairclough explained that the CJC's sponsorship of Jewish immigrants from Morocco and Tunisia was accepted as an exception to Immigration Regulations due to the understanding that "Jewish resident of these countries were in a most difficult position and faced persecution" (Fairclough 1960). However, Fairclough insisted that this was no longer the case: "At the present time there is no evidence that Jewish residents of these countries are persecuted or subjected to discriminatory treatment" (Fairclough 1960). She dismissed fears associated with 'arabization': "While the process of 'arabization' to which you and Mr. Kage referred is no doubt repugnant to people of Jewish origin, this in itself does not justify large-scale movements of unsponsored immigrants outside the Immigration Act and Regulations" (Fairclough 1960). As a concession, Fairclough offered to make a "special provision for the admission of immigrants from Morocco and Tunisia where they have close relatives in Canada able and willing to sponsor them" (Fairclough 1960). Fairclough made it clear that if Moroccan and Tunisian migrants were sponsored by close relatives, "It will not be necessary for the Canadian Jewish Congress or Jewish Immigrant Aid Society to accept responsibility." The sponsorship of North African Jews by Canadian Jewish organizations ended in 1960.

Conclusion

The effort by the HIAS, the CJC and the JIAS, with the help of key government officials, namely Fortier and Brunet, created a moment of opportunity for otherwise unsponsored Jewish North Africans to immigrate to Canada. This opportunity was carved out through a lobbying initiative that sought to represent Moroccans as oppressed due to their Judaism but also as Westernized Francophones who would make good Canadian labourers. While the program for North Africa originally only applied to French Nationals, pressure from the Canadian Jewish

community opened it up to indigenous Moroccan and Tunisian Jews. Their acceptance was based on their perceived Western identity and the labour they would bring to the Canadian economy. Despite the insistence by Jewish organizations that Moroccans were essentially European, how did Moroccan Jews see themselves? Were they as 'Western' as Canada hoped they would be? Did the immigrants feel connected to their Arabic and to their Islamic heritage? What is clear is that Canadian Jewish organizations, and subsequently some Canadian officials, had a fear that Jews in North Africa in the late 1950s would suffer oppression and persecution. Moreover, they saw Moroccan Jews as Europeanized as a result of their experiences under the French Protectorate. This portrayal of, and these beliefs about, North African Jewish immigrants by the preexisting Jewish community would have to contend with the ideas, beliefs, and understandings of the new arrivals themselves.

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