



COLLUSION BY THE ARAB LEAGUE

IN THE DISPLACEMENT OF JEWS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES

Introduction

It was during the twentieth century that up to one million Jews were uprooted from their ancient Jewish communities in ten Arab countries – Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Aden. There is dramatic evidence that proves the human rights violations perpetrated on Jews in Arab countries were not independent phenomenon but rather the result of collusion of the League of Arab States to target and persecute the Jewish populations in their respective countries.

The Arab League, established by Pact on March 22, 1944, was initially composed of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Transjordan, Saudi-Arabia, and Yemen,. According to the Pact, the League has as its purpose to strengthen relations between the member-states, to coordinate their policies in order to achieve cooperation between them, and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty.

Over time, these Arab League member states colluded in, and coordinated, a shared pattern of conduct that appeared intended to coerce Jews to leave, or to use them as weapons in their struggle against first Zionism and then the State of Israel. This is evidenced from: (a) reports on multilateral meetings of the Arab League from which a blueprint emerged for a coordinated strategy of repressive measures against Jews; (b) statements made by delegates of Arab countries at the U.N. representing a pattern of ominous threats made against Jews in Arab countries; c) and strikingly similar legislation and discriminatory decrees, enacted by numerous Arab governments, that violated the fundamental rights and freedoms of Jews resident in Arab countries.

Chronology of Events and Evidence

1) Text of Law Drafted by the Political Meeting of the Arab League

In 1947, the Political Committee of the Arab League (*League of Arab States*) drafted a law that was to govern the legal status of Jewish residents in all Arab League countries. Entitled: *Text of Law Drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League*, it provided that “...all Jews – with the exception of citizens of non-Arab countries – were to be considered members of the Jewish ‘minority state of Palestine,’; that their bank accounts

would be frozen and used to finance resistance to 'Zionist ambitions in Palestine'; Jews believed to be active Zionists would be interned as political prisoners and their assets confiscated; only Jews who accept active service in Arab armies or place themselves at the disposal of these armies would be considered 'Arabs.'

2) Official Statements And Threats Made Against Jews In Arab Countries

At the same time as the Arab League was colluding to encourage state sanctioned discrimination against Jews in all of its member states, Arab diplomats at the UN were vehement in seeking to deflect the blame for any danger to Jews on the Arab “masses” – indeed, even to the UN itself. By way of example:

November 24, 1947

In a key address to the Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly on the morning of November 24, 1947, just five days before that body voted on the partition plan for Palestine, Heykal Pasha, an Egyptian delegate, made the following statement:

“The United Nations...should not lose sight of the fact that the proposed solution might endanger a million Jews living in the Moslem countries [emphasis added]If the United Nations decides to partition Palestine, it might be responsible for the massacre of a large number of Jews.

“A million Jews live in peace in Egypt [and other Muslim countries] and enjoy all rights of citizenship. They have no desire to immigrate to Palestine. However, if a Jewish State were established, nobody could prevent disorders. Riots would break out in Palestine, would spread through all the Arab states [emphasis added] and might lead to a war between two races”¹

Although Heykal Pasha spoke in his capacity as Egypt’s representative to the U.N., his references to Jews “in the Muslim countries” and “all the Arab states,” was reasonably understood as a threat to what the future might hold for the one million Jews in Arab countries.

In the afternoon session of the Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly, the Palestinian delegate to the UN, Jamal Husseini, representing the *Arab Higher Committee of Palestine*, made the following threat:

“It should be remembered that there were as many Jews in the Arab world as there are in Palestine whose positions might become very precarious.”²

November 28, 1947

¹ U.N. General Assembly, Second Session, Official Records, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Record of the Thirteenth Meeting, Lake Success, N.Y., November 24, 1947 (A/AC.14/SR.30).

² U.N. General Assembly, Second Session, Official Records, Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, Summary Record of the Thirty-First Meeting, Lake Success, N.Y., November 24, 1947 (A/AC.14/SR.31)

Similar dire projections were made by Iraq's Foreign Minister Fadil Jamali, delivered at that same 126th Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly when he stated:

The masses in the Arab world [emphasis added] cannot be restrained. The Arab-Jewish relationship in the Arab world will greatly deteriorate... Harmony prevails among Moslems, Christians and Jews [in Iraq]. But any injustice imposed upon the Arabs of Palestine will disturb the harmony among Jews and non-Jews in Iraq; it will breed inter-religious prejudice and hatred."³

3) Discovery and Publication of the Draft Law of the Political Committee

January 19, 1948

On this date, the *Text of Law Drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League* was revealed in a Memorandum submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) warning that, "*all Jews residing in the Near and Middle East face extreme and imminent danger.*" The memorandum, which was submitted by the WJC, went into considerable detail on this "*danger*". It referred specifically to the *Text of Law Drafted by Political Committee of [the] Arab League* and reported that it had already been adopted by Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

The text Law adopted by the Political Committee was referred to in two communications by ECOSOC, released by the Committee on Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations.⁴

The *Text of Law Drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League* was reported on publicly in a May 16, 1948 *New York Times* article headlines: "*Jews in Grave Danger in All Moslem Lands: Nine hundred Thousand in Africa and Asia Face Wrath of their Foes.*" The article, authored by Mallory Browne, reported on the discriminatory measures recommended by the Political Committee of the Arab League against the Jewish residents of Arab League member states and referred to the:

"Text of a law drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League which was intended to govern the legal status of Jewish residents of Arab League countries. It provides that beginning on an unspecified date all Jews except citizens of non-Arab states, would be considered 'members of the Jewish minority state of Palestine.' Their bank accounts would be frozen and used to finance resistance to 'Zionist ambitions in Palestine.' Jews believed to be active Zionists would be interned and their assets confiscated."⁵

³ U.N. General Assembly, Second Session, Official Records, Verbatim Record of the 126th Plenary Meeting, November 28, 1947, p. 1391.

⁴ ECOSOC Document E/C.2/75, 5 February 1948; and E/710, February 24, 1948 ⁵ New York Times, May 16, 1948

4) Multilateral Meetings of the Arab League

There were numerous meetings of the Arab League, its Political Committee, Arab Foreign Ministers, etc. from which emerged a coordinated strategy on the “Palestinian” issue – i.e. the declared War of Arab League states against Israel. Also discussed were the proposed repressive measures to be taken against Jews in Arab countries as formalized in the 1947 Law drafted and endorsed by the Political Committee of the Arab League

The Pact of the League provides that: *"Committees shall be entrusted with establishing the basis and scope of co-operation in the form of draft agreements which shall be submitted to the Council for its consideration preparatory to their being submitted to the States referred to."*⁵

Arab League Meeting - Feb. 17, 1948

It appears that the full Arab League’s consideration of the Law recommended by the Political Committee took place on Feb. 17, 1948 at its meeting in Cairo.

There was no formal announcement that the Draft Law recommended by the Political Committee was endorsed by the Arab League Council. Minutes of the Arab League meetings have not been made available to the general public (in English). However, there are sufficient reports on the content of the February 17, 1948 for the conclusion to be drawn is that the proposed Law was adopted at that meeting.

One report states that the Arab League, in its Council meeting in Cairo, is reported to have approved a plan for *“political, military, and economic measures to be taken in response to the Palestine crisis...”*⁶

Another report on that same meeting stated that: *“The Council of the Arab League unanimously adopted the recommendations of its Political Committee concerning Palestine...”*⁷ This would appear to confirm and approve the Political Committee’s recommendations to coordinate, among other initiatives, repressive, discriminatory measures against their Jewish populations.

It is not necessary to have the formal minutes to establish an agreement amongst Arab League states to the proposed discriminatory measures against Jews. According to the Internal Regulations of the Committee of the League of Arab States, *"Each Member State of the League shall be represented in each Committee"*.⁸ So each member state of the League who served on the Political Committee would have already agreed to this proposed Law.

⁵ Article 4

⁶ “Sessions of the Arab League.” Chevy Chase, Maryland: American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. Jewish Virtual Library. Web. June 2007.

⁷ (1948). Arab League. International Organization, 2, pp. 378-380 doi:10.1017/

⁸ Article 2 at.<<http://faculty.winthrop.edu/haynese/mlas/CmteeRegs.html>> ¹⁰

Al-Kifah,, March 28, 1949

Arab League Meeting – Beginning March 17, 1949

Another indication that Arab League countries were colluding against their Jewish populations emerges from a report of a meeting of senior diplomats of Arab States that took place in Beirut Lebanon beginning on March 17, 1949. By this time, the Arab states had already lost the first Arab-Israeli war.

As reported in a Syrian newspaper, participants at this meeting concluded that: *“If Israel should oppose the return of the Arab refugees to their homes, the Arab governments will expel the Jews living in their countries.”*¹⁰ In fact, expulsion of Jews subsequently did take place in many Arab countries.

5) State Sanctioned Discriminatory Decrees

The final evidence that lends credence to the proposition that many Arab countries colluded to repress their Jewish populations was the plethora of legislation, decrees and other regulatory measures enacted by Arab regimes, violating the rights of its Jews.

These state-sanctioned discriminatory edicts were the culmination of the collusion by Arab regimes which began in 1947 with the Law drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League.

The draft law imposes denationalization. And there were denationalizations.

The draft law requires freezing of Jewish bank accounts. And Jewish bank accounts were frozen by law.

The draft law diverts the funds of frozen Jewish bank accounts to pay for the Arab wars against Israel. And that is exactly what happened, by law, in country after country in the region.

The draft law requires internment and confiscation of property of "active Zionists". And Zionism became a criminal offence throughout the region, in some cases punishable by death. Property confiscation of Jews was widespread.

The draft law was a prediction of what was to happen to Jews in the region. It became a blueprint, in country after country, for the laws which were eventually enacted against Jews. Examples of such discriminatory decrees against Jews in Egypt, Iraq and Libya are detailed below.

From the sheer volume of these state-sanctioned discriminatory measures, replicated in so many Arab countries and instituted in such a parallel fashion, one is drawn to the conclusion that such evidence suggests

a common pattern of repressive measures, - indeed collusion - against Jews by the Arab League and its member governments.

This report was issued June 2013



Human Rights Violations Against Jews in Egypt

(From Research conducted at the UNHCR Archives in Geneva)

(PLEASE NOTE: This does not represent an exhaustive survey but rather provides a few samples of such decrees and enactments)

I) Discriminatory Decrees and Violations of Human Rights

The first Nationality Code was promulgated by Egypt on May 26, 1926. According to this Nationality Code, individuals were entitled to Egyptian nationality only if they “belonged racially to the majority of the population of a country whose language is Arabic or whose religion is Islam.”

⁹¹⁰ Later, during the fifties, having failed to become ‘Egyptian’, this provision served as the official pretext for expelling many Jews from Egypt.

⁹ Article 10(4) of the Code. See: Maurice de Wee, *La Nationalité Egptienne*, Commentaire de la loi du mai 1926, p.

¹⁰ .

On July 29, 1947, an amendment was introduced to the Egyptian Companies Law which made it mandatory for at least 75% of the administrative employees of a company to be Egyptian nationals and 90% of employees in general. This resulted in the dismissal and loss of livelihood for many Jews since only 15% of them had been granted Egyptian citizenship.¹¹

Under Article 3, Paragraph 7 of Emergency Law No. 5333 of 1954, on the Proclamation of a State of Siege in Egypt, the Military Governor of Egypt was authorized “to order the arrest and apprehension of suspects and those who prejudice public order and security.” At least 900 Jews, without charges being laid against them, were detained, imprisoned or otherwise deprived of their liberty.¹²

An amendment in 1956 to the original Egyptian Nationality Law of 1926 led to a mass departure of Jews from Egypt. Article 1 of the Law of Nov 22, 1956, stipulated that “Zionists” were barred from being Egyptian nationals.¹³ Article 18 of the 1956 law asserted that “Egyptian nationality may be declared forfeited by order of the Ministry of Interior in the case of persons classified as Zionists”. Moreover, the term “Zionist” was never defined, leaving Egyptian authorities free to interpret as broadly as they pleased.

A telling signal as to the dire future of Egyptian Jewry was the promulgation in 1957 of Army Order No. 4 relating to the administration of the property of the so-called people and associations (“Zionist” i.e. Jewish) subject to imprisonment or supervision.¹⁴ Once again, the Law itself did not specify who was a “Zionist”, but was defined as “not a religion but the spiritual and material bond between Zionists and Israel”.¹⁵ A more precise definition is found in a subsequent amendment, published by the Egyptian Interior Minister in the Official Gazette on April 15, 1958. This regulation prescribes, in unambiguous terms, that all Jews (“Zionists”) between the ages of 10 and 65, leaving Egypt, are to be added to the list of persons who are prohibited from returning to Egypt.¹⁶

This 1958 decree includes a similar provision that, while not specifically excluding nonMoslems from citizenship, is even more clearly of an ethnic and political tenor showing that Egypt wished to be an Arab, Mohammedan country. Thus, the Minister of Interior is permitted by

¹¹ H.J. Cohen, “*The Jews of the Middle East, 1860 – 1972*”

¹² Confidential Memorandum provided to the UNHCR, Feb, 26, 1960

¹³ Law No. 391 of 1956, section 1(a). See *Revue égyptienne de Droit International*, Vol. 12 (1956), p. 80

¹⁴ *Egyptian Official Gazette*, No. 88, November 1, 1957

¹⁵ Decision of the President of the Republic, Law No. 391 of 1956 regarding Egyptian nationality, See *Revue égyptienne de Droit International*, Vol. 12 (1956), p. 87

¹⁶ Now according to the International Encyclopedia of Comparative Law vol. 1 (article “Egypt” p. E 10), after an amendment under the Law No. 282 of 1959, article 10 of the Nationality law reiterates the racial criterion, already found in the 1926 Code, for the acquisition of Egyptian nationality. ¹⁸ Confidential Memorandum provided to the UNHCR, Feb, 26, 1960

the law to accord “Arab nationality” to aliens or strangers who have “rendered eminent service to the state, to Arab nationalism or to the Arab fatherland.”

These two nationality laws made it very easy for Egypt to take away the citizenship of any Egyptian Jew. Provision both in the 1956 and 1958 laws permitted the government to take away citizenship of persons absent from UAR territory for more than six consecutive months. That this provision is aimed primarily at Jews is shown by the fact that the lists of denaturalized persons published time and again by the Official Journal overwhelmingly contains Jewish names, despite the fact that there were many non-Jewish Egyptians who stayed abroad for over six months.¹⁸

II) Economic Discrimination and Strangulation

A government decision, taken in 1951, required that all employees, foreign or Egyptian, to apply for a work card. It is significant that the card asked for, immediately after the person’s name, his/her religion.

Law No. 26 of 1952 obligated all corporations to employ certain prescribed percentages of “Egyptians.” A great number of Jewish salaried employees lost their jobs, and could not obtain similar ones, because they did not belong to the category of Jews with Egyptian nationality.

Military Proclamation No. 4 appeared under the heading of “Regime of Sequestrations.” Between November 1st-20th 1956, official records reveal that by a series of sequestration orders issued under Military Proclamation No. 4, the property of many hundreds of Jews in Egypt was taken from their owners and turned over to Egyptian administrators.¹⁷ The effects of these sequestration measures, enacted in 1956-1957, affected Egyptian Jews, stateless Jews as well as Jews of other nationalities (except British and French citizens). With the people listed in the published decrees already interned or placed under surveillance, in fact, the provision of this Proclamation No. 4 was carried into effect almost exclusively against Jews; and though a number of Copts and Moslems were also interned, their assets were never sequestered.¹⁸

Of the published lists of 486 persons and firms whose properties were seized under Military Proclamation No. 4, at least 95 per cent of them are Jews. The names of persons and firms affected by this measure represented the bulk of the economic substance of Egyptian Jewry, the largest and most important enterprises and the main sustenance, through voluntary contributions, of Jewish religious, educational, social and welfare institutions in Egypt.¹⁹

¹⁷ Confidential Memorandum provided to the High Commissioner, Mr. Auguste Lindt, on Feb. 21, 1957

¹⁸ Confidential Memorandum provided to the UNHCR, Feb, 26, 1960

¹⁹ *Egyptian Official Gazette*, No. 88, November 1, 1957

In addition to the vast sequestration of property and other discriminatory treatment, Directive No. 189 issued under the authority of Military Proclamation No. 4, authorized the Director General of the Sequestering Agency to deduct from the assets belonging to interned persons, or persons under surveillance, or others, 10% of the value of the sequestered property, presumably to cover the costs of administration. Hence, without regard to the question of whether a property is legally sequestered, the Jews of Egypt are being taxed to pay for the machinery or improper sequestration and withholding.²⁰

The Jews leaving Egypt were subjected to additional deprivations and inconveniences. A regulation was established which only authorized Jews leaving Egypt to take with them travelers checks or other international exchange documents up to a value of 100 pounds sterling per capita. These documents turned out not to be freely negotiable abroad. The Bank of Egypt provided Jews leaving the country with instruments specifically drawn on Egyptian accounts in Britain and France, when Egyptian authorities knew well that those accounts were blocked in reciprocation for the Egyptian blocking of British and French assets in Egypt.²³



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²⁰ Confidential Memorandum provided to the High Commissioner, Mr. Auguste Lindt, on Feb. 21, 1957 ²³
Ibid

Beginning in November of 1948, Iraqi authorities enacted a number of legislative and other decrees against their Jewish citizens.

The first piece of legislation promulgated that violated the rights of Jews, was the 1948 amendment to the 1938 supplement (*Official Iraqi Gazette* 24 July 1938. 475 {English edition}) to the Penal Code of Baghdad, which detailed the provision regarding communism, anarchy and immorality in section 89A--(1). The section prohibits the publication of anything that, *"incites the spread of hatred, abuse of the government or the integrity of the people."* This amendment, enacted in 1948, added *"Zionism"* to communism, anarchism and immorality, the propagation of which constituted an offense punishable by seven years imprisonment and/or a fine. (*Official Iraqi Gazette*. 14 November 1948. 591 {English edition}).

Discriminatory provisions that Jews were subjected to were also reported on in the foreign press in 1948. . The New York Times reported that: *"In Iraq, no Jew is permitted to leave the country unless he deposits £5,000 (\$20,000) with the Government to guarantee his return. No foreign Jew is allowed to enter Iraq, even in transit."* (*New York Times*, May 16, 1948, p. 6)

Law No. 1 of 1950, entitled *"Supplement to Ordinance Canceling Iraqi Nationality,"* allowed any government an avenue to deprive Jews of their Iraqi nationality. Section 1 stipulated that *"the Council of Ministers may cancel the Iraqi nationality of the Iraqi Jew who willingly desires to leave Iraq...."* (*Official Iraqi Gazette*. March 9, 1950. n.p. {English edition}) This allowed any Council of Ministers of the day to make a determination as to whether any Jew *"willingly desires to leave Iraq"* and thereby *"cancel"* the individual's Iraqi nationality.

In 1951, a special law was passed which allowed the government to seize the assets of any Jew who *"forfeited their Iraqi nationality"* and was forced to leave. Under Law No. 5 of 1951, entitled *"A Law for the Supervision and Administration of the Property of Jews who have Forfeited Iraqi Nationality,"* Section 2(a) *"freezes"* Jewish property. (*Official Iraqi Gazette*. 10 March 1951. 17 {English edition})

In addition, from 1951-1968, there were a series of laws that expanded on the confiscation of assets and property of Jews who *"forfeited Iraqi nationality."* These included Law No. 64 of

1967 relating to ownership of shares in commercial companies; and Law No. 10 of 1968 relating to banking restrictions.



Human Rights Violations Against Jews in Libya

(From Research conducted at the UNHCR Archives in Geneva)

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There has been a continuous presence of Jews in Libya, extending over the last 2,500 years. In 1948, prior to Libyan independence it was estimated that some 40,000 Jews resided in the former Italian territory of Tripolitania. Today, there are no reported Jews living in Libya.

Law Number 62 of March 30th, 1957

Law No. 62 of March 1957, Article 1 of which provided, inter alia, that physical persons or corporations were prohibited, among others, from entering directly or indirectly into contracts of any nature whatsoever with organizations or persons domiciled in Israel, with Israel citizens or with persons acting on behalf of Israel.

Provision of this article enabled the council of ministers to issue a resolution making possible the registration of residents in Libya who were relatives of persons resident in Israel.

Article 1 of this law enabled control and registration of movable and immovable property in Libya owned by persons or organizations domiciled in Israel.

Decree of December 31, 1958

A decree was issued by the President of the Executive Council of Tripolitania, which ordered the dissolution of the Jewish Community Council and the appointment of a Moslem commissioner nominated by the Government.

Law of May 24th, 1961

On May 24th, 1961 a law was promulgated which, while not aimed against Jews specifically, provided that only Libyan citizens could own and transfer real property. Conclusive proof of the possession of Libyan citizenship was required to be evidenced by a special certificate referred to above, which is reported to have been issued to a total of six Jews.

Law Number 6 of 1961

Law No. 6 of 1961 provided for the seizure of all property placed under the administration of the Custodian of property belonging to Jews who were believed to have emigrated to Israel. This superseded the previously-noted law of March 30th, 1957.

Royal Decree of August 8, 1962

On Aug 8th, although purporting to give recognition to the equality of rights of Jews in Libya with those of other Libyan nationals, the Council of Ministers announced a Royal Decree on that date, amending Article 10 of the law of citizenship, which provided, inter alia, that a Libyan national forfeited his nationality if he had had any contact with Zionism, forfeiture of Libyan nationality under this provision extending to any person who had visited Israel after the proclamation of Libyan independence, and any person deemed to have acted morally or materially in favor of Israel interests. The retroactive effect of this provision, which covered the preceding period commencing with Libyan independence of December 24th, 1951, enabled the authorities to deprive Jews of Libyan nationality at will.

After the Six Day War: June 5, 1967

There was widespread rioting and wholesale destruction of property of Jews in Libya. Several Jews lost their lives in the rioting and whole families disappeared. Jews were urged by Government personalities and high-ranking officials to leave Libya temporarily in their own interest. It is reliably estimated that as the direct result of these events, some 4,000 Jews left Libya, abandoning their property and other possessions.

Under a law creating the Public Custodian (Article 1) the assets, both real and personal, of Jews who have left Libya was seized.

Given the circumstances in which Jews were virtually driven from Libyan territory and were denied renewal of passports and temporary travel documents enabling their return to Libya, this constitutes a gross violation of human rights and resulted in the ultimate sequestration of this property without compensation.

Law Number 14 of February 7th , 1970

With the first law No. 14 of 1970 (Feb 7,1970) the Libyan Government established that all property belonging to "Israelis" who had left Libyan territory "in order to establish themselves definitely abroad" would pass to the General Custodian (established by virtue of Law No. 6 of 1961) who would administer and manage it.

In spite of the precise wording of the law ("Israelis who had left Libyan territory in order to establish themselves abroad definitely"), the Libyan Government started to take possession of property belonging to many Libyan Jews who had not "*established themselves definitely abroad*".

The Government also demanded the presentation of a list of property belonging also to those (that is to say the “Jews”) who continued to live in Libya and those others who requests temporary “exit and re-entry” visas.

This Law also tries to affect the situation also of former Jewish residents in Libya who are nationals of other countries, notably France, Italy, Tunisia and the United Kingdom. Paragraph 2 of Article 4, the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government has authority to refuse to recognize an agreement whose date preceded the entry into force of this law (namely, 25 February 1970), or for that matter, can nullify any contract or other agreement or transfer of property in the form of a gift, irrespective of the date of such an agreement.

Law of July 21st , 1970

The Government decreed the law of July 21st ,1970 with which it states that it wants to control “the restitution of certain assets to the State”.

- That the General Custodian will continue to administer liquid funds of the property of Jews as well as the companies and the company shares belonging to Jews.

This declaration is meaningless because all assets (liquid, movable and immovable) had already been transferred to the ownership of the Libyan state.