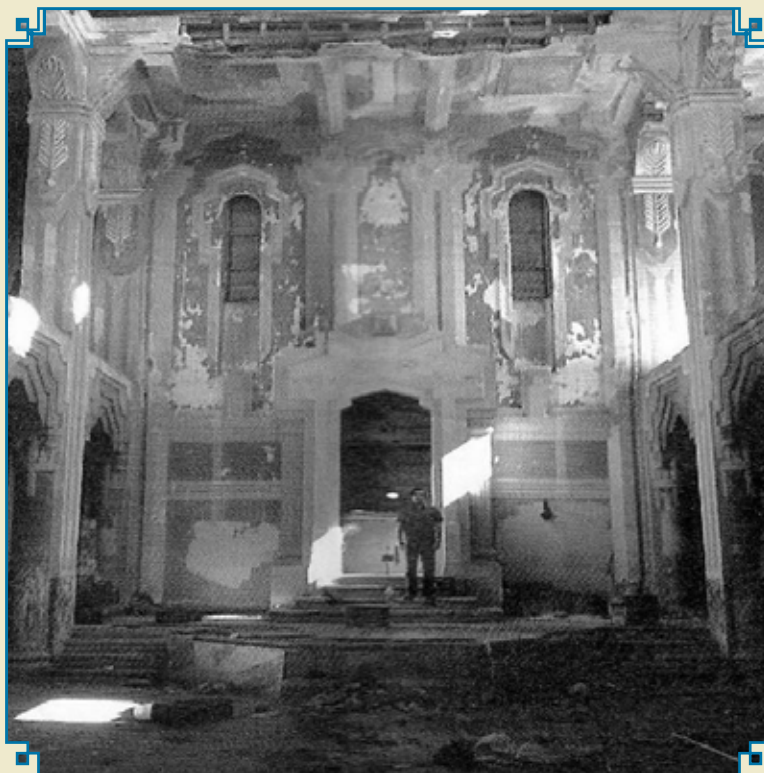




צדק ליהודים יוצאי מדינות ערב Justice Pour Les Juifs Des Pays Arabes العدالة لليهود من الدول العربية

Report on the Jews of Libya Historical and Economic Analysis



Cover Photo: Dar al-Bishi synagogue on the eve of the Jewish community's evacuation. Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf

Disclaimer

This Executive Summary provides data on the history and economic losses when Jews were displaced from Libya. Although every attempt was made to collect testimonies and locate all relevant statistical data, this Report should not be considered as definitive. Research was adversely affected by the fact that this mass displacement of Jews occurred decades ago and there is no central repository where records of losses were maintained. It is hoped that additional research will be conducted in the future which would expand upon and refine the financial projections contained in this Report.



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PREFACE

Justice for Jews from Arab Countries (JJAC) has completed a multi-year project to document the historical ethnic cleansing of Jews from Aden, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen.

The eleven Country Reports portray the narrative of ancient Jewish communities indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa for thousands of years; from their plight under the Muslim conquest, to Ottoman rule; then colonial occupation; their persecution under Arab nationalism and Islamism, then their flight from the region. Their story is one of an oppressed minority that was uprooted from their countries of birth and who suffered extensive losses of both personal (homes, businesses, property, etc.) and Jewish communal assets (Synagogues, schools, cemeteries, etc.)

This report is based on extensive personal testimonies and exhaustive statistical data. This process included a thorough and comprehensive review of available documentation, discussions with community leaders and subject-matter experts, the collection of testimonial data, an analysis of each Jewish community's place within their respective country and a consideration of previous valuation attempts.

Extensive archival research was conducted in the following 22 archives in six countries:

Israel: Israel State Archives (ISA), Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Israeli Ministry of Justice archives, Israeli Ministry of Social Equality archives, Yad Ben Zvi Institute, Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot, World Jewish Congress, Israel Archives

Canada: Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa

France: Alliance Israelite Universelle, Paris, Archives Nationale – France, Paris Branch, Pierrefitte Branch, Centre des Archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve

Switzerland: National Archives, Bern, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva

UK: London Metropolitan Archives, National Archives of the U.K.

USA: American Jewish Committee, New York, Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) – New York, National Archives & Records, College Park, Maryland, World Jewish Archives, New York

Research was adversely affected by the fact that records in Arab countries were inaccessible. Moreover, this mass displacement of Jews occurred, in some cases, more than 75 years ago and there is no central repository where records of these losses were maintained. Consequently, this Report should not be considered as definitive.

It is hoped that additional research will be conducted in the future which will expand upon and refine the projections contained in these Reports.

Libya Executive Summary

Context

The Jews of Algeria stand as another illustration of a broader historic pattern that unfolded across the Middle East and North Africa,

Jews are indigenous to the region, having lived there for thousands of years - roughly one thousand years before the birth of Islam in the seventh century C.E. For the next thousand years, Jews lived under Islamic rule as 'dhimmis', a subordinate class, marked by legal inferiority and social humiliation.

Under Ottoman rule, Jews faced fluctuating conditions, from oppression to limited reforms. The arrival of colonial powers to the Middle East and North Africa marked a dramatic turning point for indigenous Jewish communities. Many Jews gained access to education and the ability to contribute meaningfully to the cultural, economic, and professional life of their countries. But this chapter was short-lived.

The rise of Arab nationalism, at times fueled by fascist ideologies, and growing opposition to Zionism unleashed a wave of discriminatory laws, violence, and state-backed repression. While Jews were often victims of violence and pogroms throughout their time in Muslim countries, the situation worsened immediately before and after the founding of the State of Israel in 1948.

What followed was not a mere exodus, but the erasure of ancient Jewish communities, through forced expulsion, flight under duress, or systemic marginalization. With respect to Libya:

Displacement of Jews from Libya: 1948-2025

	1948	1958	1968	1976	2001	2025
Libia	140,000	130,000	3,000	1,000	0	0

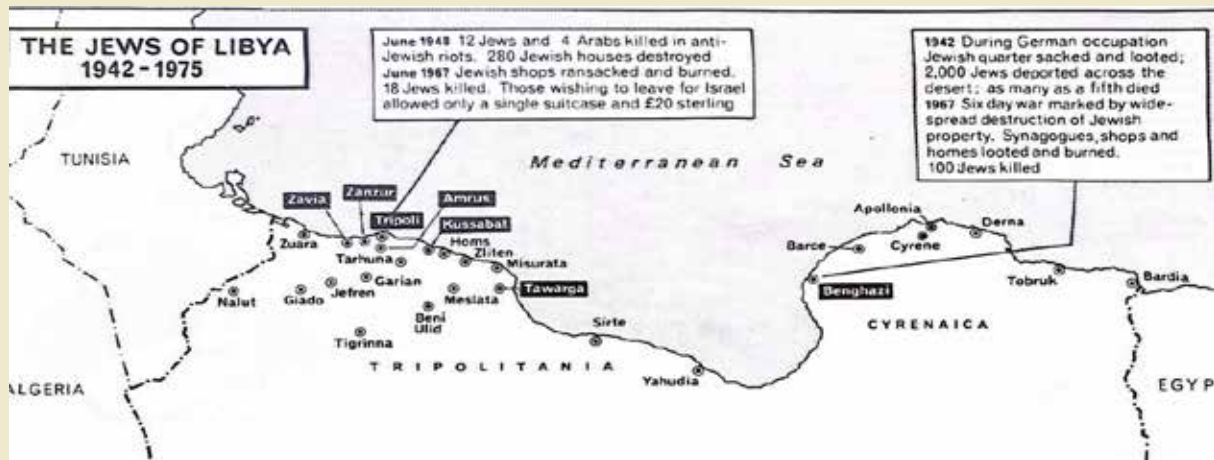
Today, over 99% of the descendants of the historic Jewish communities in 10 Arab countries plus Iran no longer reside in these vast regions.

Neither the mass violations of the human rights of Jews in Arab countries, nor their uprooting from their countries of birth, has ever been addressed by the international community.

This publication is a sincere call to recognize the rights of Jewish refugees from Arab countries on both moral and legal grounds and to ensure their story is no longer forgotten.

In an era of historic reconciliation, inspired by the spirit of the Abraham Accords, time has come to face history with honesty and courage. Only through truth and justice can the peoples of the region move toward a future of dignity, healing, and lasting peace.

History of the Jewish Community of Libya



The Jewish presence in Libya dates back over 2,500 years, with early communities established in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania during the Phoenician and Roman periods.

Following the Muslim conquest of Libya in the 7th century, Jews were classified as dhimmis under Islamic rule. As dhimmis, Jews in Libya were granted protection but were subjected to a subordinate and often humiliating social status. They were required to pay the jizya (a tax), which marked their inferior position in society, and were restricted in their rights and freedoms. Jews were prohibited from holding public office or engaging in certain professions.

Throughout antiquity and into the Middle Ages, the Jewish population endured cycles of coexistence and persecution under various regimes, including the Arab conquerors, the Almohads, and later the Ottomans. Despite intermittent stability, Jews were socially subordinated under Islamic law and occasionally subjected to violence and forced conversions. The influx of Jewish immigrants from Livorno (Italy), Spain, and Tunisia enriched the community, which became integral to Libya's trade and economic life.

In the 19th century, Ottoman reforms (Tanzimat) attempted to equalize the status of Jews, but resistance among local Muslim populations and inconsistent enforcement limited their effect. The Jewish community remained vulnerable, relying on protection from tribal leaders and foreign consuls.

The Jewish community in Libya played a key role in the country's economic development, especially from the 19th century. Jewish immigrants from Livorno strengthened ties with Italy, serving as commercial intermediaries, diplomats, and promoters of Western education and Italian-language media. Jewish families dominated trans-Saharan trade through Tripoli, with several prominent families excelling in textiles, leather, and cotton commerce.

The Italian colonial period (1911-1943) initially brought improved civil rights and economic opportunities for Jews. Under Italian rule, Jews held influential roles in trade, industry, and administration, acting as bridges between Arab farmers and Italian industries. By 1928, they owned a quarter of Libya's manufacturing enterprises, far exceeding their share of the population. However, Jews' increasing integration into

colonial structures and their perceived alignment with European powers exacerbated tensions with Arab neighbors.

Italian Fascist rule in the 1930s introduced racial laws, and during World War II, Jews faced deportation and internment, particularly at the Giado labor camp, where hundreds perished. After the war, in June 1945, riots in Tripoli destroyed 60% of Jewish assets, killed 135 Jews, and wounded ten. With the founding of Israel in 1948, riots resulted in fourteen deaths, as well as many injured, and the destruction of homes and synagogues. These pogroms, coupled with growing hostility and insecurity, prompted mass emigration. Between 1949 and 1951, over 30,000 Jews left Libya—mostly for Israel.

In 1951, just before independence, the Citizenship Act stripped Jews of political rights and their passports. The Jewish community faced legal discrimination, economic exclusion, and intense antisemitic propaganda. Restrictions intensified after Libya joined the Arab League and particularly after the 1956 Suez Crisis. In December 1958 the Tripoli community was dissolved and placed under government control.

Discrimination escalated in 1960: Jews were prohibited from acquiring assets and Alliance schools were closed. In 1961 Law No. 6 authorized seizure of Jewish properties. The 1967 Six Day War triggered another wave of violent riots in which 20 Jews were killed, prompting the near-total exodus of the remaining community. By the 1970s, under Gaddafi's regime, Jewish communal life had vanished entirely. Cemeteries were destroyed in 1970, and in 1978 sixty-four synagogues were demolished while seventy-eight were turned into mosques or churches

Today, no Jews live in Libya. The community's cemeteries, synagogues, and historical footprint have been desecrated or erased. This once-vibrant, ancient community, integral to Libyan history, was systematically dismantled through a century of violence, legal exclusion, and state-sanctioned persecution.

Economic Analysis of The Jews of Libya

Methodological Benchmarks & Economic Indicators

For the purposes of this report, a total Jewish Libyan population of 38,000 Jews was estimated. The Libyan Jewish population was determined to be 5% rural and 95% urban, with urban areas widely recognized as larger metropolitan centers and their immediate environs/hinterlands, while rural communities are characterized by their distance from urban centers, their relatively smaller numbers, and an agriculture-centric way of life. It was further determined that the average size of a Jewish family in Libya in and around the 1948 period was 5.5 people. Therefore, based on a population of 38,000 a total of 6,909 Jewish households was calculated.

The Libyan economy was not viewed as a strong one in 1948, as it was still recovering from the aftershocks of WWII and had yet to move past a large base of agricultural and commercial activity. However, a moderate portion of Libya's commercial and industrial base growth that occurred in the early to mid-20th century was attributed to the Jewish

population in Libya. The Jewish community also constituted a significant proportion of Libya's industrial landscape, owning a quarter of the manufacturing plants and workshops.

A specific breakdown of the socioeconomic structure and economic experience of Jews in Libya is not available. However, sources estimate about half of the Jewish population to be categorized as lower-middle and poor class.

Asset Categories & Types

This project considers losses suffered by Jews as individual members of Jewish households, as well as assets that belonged to each Jewish community, respectively. These losses include urban and rural land, urban and rural immovable property, personal property and moveable assets, financial assets, employment losses, business losses, and communal losses. This report does not attempt to account for non-pecuniary damages, such as pain and suffering, nor personal injury or death.

Different sources describe how Libyan Jews came to be almost singularly occupied in more urban professions, while demographic data also corroborates the depletion of the rural Jewish population in favour of more urban locales. The community also is known to have invested most of their capital in real estate, therefore a sizeable Jewish investment in urban property in Libya can be surmised.

Reliable testimonial and historical data were not available for Libya to make any conclusions as to the value of losses across the different asset categories. Instead, discussions and summaries were carried out for each asset category to provide further historical context.

Summary of Findings

Due to the lack of reliable testimonial and historical data for Libya, it was determined that the analysis for Egypt, Syria, and Iraq would be used for illustrative purposes. Lost assets found in the first three countries at 1948 values were used to determine the value of lost property per person. This yielded a range, with Iraq providing the lowest value of lost property per person among the three countries, and Egypt being the highest. The low and high values were then multiplied with the population of each remaining country, and a midpoint was calculated from this range. In the absence of "best evidence" to reach accurate and verifiable country-specific values a discount factor of 50% was determined based on precedent discounts and applied across the mid-point value for Libya. Finally, a compound interest formula which makes use of the principal amount and an average yearly rate based on the ten-year yields on US treasury bonds over a total compound period from January 1, 1949, through December 31, 2024, was applied to the mid-point value for each of the countries on a yearly compounding basis. As there is no internationally recognized, risk free rate, the 10-year US Treasury Yield rate was chosen, as it is an accepted benchmark for the time value of money over long horizons and aligns with established practices in historical asset valuation. The table below illustrates the calculated mid-point of lost assets for Libya:

Range of Lost Assets (\$)		
Libya	1948	Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024)
Population	38,000	
Estimated – Low Range	184,823,852	
Estimated – High Range	581,197,744	
Estimated – Mid-Point	383,010,798	
Discount	50%	
Estimated – Mid-Point (with Discount)	191,505,399	9,988,569,444

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries Legal and Political Context

When the term 'refugees' is mentioned in the context of the Middle East, the international community's singular focus has been on Palestinian refugees.

Yet, within the last 75 years, the world has ignored the mass displacement of some 1,000,000 Jews from the totalitarian regimes, dictatorships and monarchies of Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco Yemen and Aden, as well as Iran.

Neither the mass violations of the human rights of Jews in Arab countries, nor their uprooting from their ancestral countries of birth, has ever been appropriately addressed by the international community.

In reality, as a result of the longstanding conflict in the Middle East, two populations of refugees emerged – Arabs as well as Jews from Arab countries. In fact, there were more Jews displaced from Arab countries (856,000 plus Iran))¹ than there were Palestinians who became refugees as a result of the 1948 Arab Israeli war (726,000)²

Asserting rights and redress for Jewish refugees is not intended negate any suffering of Palestinian refugees. It is a legitimate call to recognize that Jews from Arab countries also became refugees as a result of that same Middle East conflict and still possess rights even today.

Jews as an Indigenous People of the Middle East

Jews are an indigenous people of the Middle East having lived in the region continuously from pre-historic times to the present. Jews and Jewish communities proliferated throughout parts of the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf region for thousands of years, fully one thousand years before the advent of Islam in the seventh century C.E. . For the next thousand years, Jews lived under Islamic rule as 'dhimmis', a subordinate class, marked by legal inferiority and social humiliation.

Longstanding Jewish Presence in the Region

Throughout the millennia, the Jewish presence endured despite various empires ruling the region, including the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Ottomans, and British. Notwithstanding some periods of exile, descendants of the Jewish people, maintained their unbroken lineage in the Middle East, stretching across millennia.

1 Roumani, *The Case 2; WOJAC'S Voice* Vol.1, No.1

2 United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine p. 18; United Nations, *Annual Report of the Director General of UNRWA*, Doc 5224/5223, 25 Nov. 1952 First estimate as September 1949

Table 1 - Early Jewish Presence in the Middle East and North Africa

Country/Region	Date of Jewish Community	Sources*
Iraq	6 th century BCE	Meir, Esther. Iraq and the Jews of Iraq – a General Survey. In Haim Saadoun (Ed.), <i>Iraq</i> (Ben-Zvi Institute, 2002), pp. 11-12. [Hebrew]
Egypt	6 th century BCE	Ehrlich, Haggai. Egypt and its Jews. In Nahem Ilan (ed.), <i>Egypt</i> (Ben-Zvi Institute, 2006), pp. 9, 12-14. [Hebrew]
Iran	6 th century BCE	Sahim, Haideh, Iran and Afghanistan, In Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Menachem Laskier, and Sara Reguer (eds.), <i>The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in modern times</i> (Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 368.
Libya	4 th century BCE	Goldberg, Harvey. Libya and the Jews of Libya. In Haim Saadoun (Ed.), <i>Libya</i> . Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2007, p. 11 [Hebrew]
Lebanon	2 nd century BCE	Schulze, Kirsten E. <i>The Jews of Lebanon: Between coexistence and conflict</i> (Sussex Academic Press, 2001), pp. 12-13.
Yemen	1 st century CE	Araqi Kiorman, Bat-Zion. Introduction. In Haim Saadoun (ed.), <i>Yemen</i> (Ben-Zvi Institute, 2002), p. 17. [Hebrew]
Morocco	1 st century CE	Bashan, Eliezer. <i>The Jews of Morocco, their past and culture</i> (Hakibutz Hameuchad, 2000), pp. 15-16. [Hebrew]
Algeria	1 st century CE	Cohen, David. Algeria. In Reeva Spector Simon, Michael Menachem Laskier & Sara Reguer (Eds.), <i>The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in modern times</i> (pp. 458-470). Columbia University Press, 2002.
Syria	1 st century CE	Harel, Yaron. Syria (Jerusalem, Ben-Zvi Institute, 2009), p. 11 [Hebrew]
Tunisia	2 nd century CE	Les Juifs de Tunisie: Quelques repères historiques. <i>Confluences Méditerranée</i> 10 (1994), pp. 149-154.

*These time periods are conservative projections, based on archeological and academic sources. Biblical and traditional sources claim earlier presence of Jews in these countries.

The ancient Israelites were among the first inhabitants of the region. Their illustrious history is detailed in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The uninterrupted historical presence of Jews in the Middle East can then be characterized into six periods:

Period One: Ancient Israelite History (See Appendix A)

Period Two: Destruction of the First Temple to The Rise of Islam (See Appendix B)

Period Three: Prophet Muhammed To Colonialism

Period Four: Colonial Period

Period Five: The Rise of Jewish and Arab Nationalism

Period Six: The Founding of The State of Israel

Period Three: Prophet Muhammed To Colonialism

With the birth of Mohammed in 570, and the advent of Islam, the region was transformed.

Starting in the seventh century, pan-Arab imperialism foisted the Arabic language and culture on indigenous peoples like Assyrians, Berbers, Kurds, Zoroastrians, Maronites, Egyptian Copts and Jews.

Following the Muslim conquest of the region, from the 7th century onward, Jews were ruled by Muslims for years under the Pact of Umar, attributed to the Second Caliph, Umar ibn al-Khattab (634-644 CE). Enacted in 637 CE, the Pact of Umar was a bilateral agreement of limitations and privileges between conquering Muslims and conquered non-Muslims who were declared “dhimmi”. The term *dhimmi*, ‘protected,’ was a diminished status assigned to Christians and Jews, among others, who were considered a ‘People of the Book’ (as opposed to atheists or polytheists) and therefore

extended some degree of legal protection, while relegated to second-class status³.

The most concrete law to which *dhimmis* were subjected was the need to pay a special tax known as '*jizya*.' The origin of this tax is contained in the Qur'an which states: "*Fight against those who have been given the scripture until they pay the due tax [jizya], willingly or unwillingly.*"⁴

By paying the *jizya*, Jews and Christians were allowed to practice their faith, maintain personal security and were permitted limited religious, educational, professional and business opportunities. They were also subject to discriminatory restraints.

Restrictions for the *dhimmi* under the Pact of Umar prohibited Jews and other religious minorities from holding public religious ceremonies; and the legal exclusion of Jews from holding public office. The *dhimmi* could not raise himself above the Muslim nor could his synagogue be higher than the mosques. Non-Muslims could not ride horses, only donkeys and were required to dismount if he passed a Muslim. The Jew was tolerated but barely so ⁵

These practices were not uniform within the Arab world and there were even differences in individual countries. ⁶

Throughout the countries colonized by the Muslim conquest, non-Arab and non-Muslim minorities, among the indigenous inhabitants in those regions, remained as minorities in their ancestral places of birth.

Period Four: Colonial Period

European colonialism in the Arab world was partially spurred by the British conquest of India, which led Napoleon to invade Egypt in 1798, in part to disrupt British trade routes. Although the French occupation of Egypt was short-lived, it was not long before the European presence in the Arab world grew. France's colonization of Algeria began in 1830, of Tunisia in 1881, and of Morocco in 1912. Meanwhile, Britain colonized Egypt in 1882 and also took control of Sudan in 1899. And in 1911, Italy colonized Libya.⁷

After World War I and with the fall of the Ottoman Empire, control over the Middle East fell into the hands of France and Great Britain.

Jews fared well under secular, colonial 'European' rule. This period witnessed a gradual erosion of the *dhimmi* system and a growing integration of Jewish and other communities into the broader societies in which they lived.

Many Jews experienced increased prosperity and opportunities during this era, contributing significantly to many fields such as education, finance, culture, politics, and administration.

3 Cohen,, *Crescent* p. 52-53

4 Quaran, Sura 9:

5 Cohen, *Crescent* 65

6 Yeor, *Islam and Dhimmitude*; Yeor, *The Dhimmi*; Deshem and Zenner; Stillman, *Jews of Arab Land*

7 Arab Center, "The Colonial Legacy in the Arab World: Health, Education, and Politics", Washington DC., Accessed Nov. 10, 2024. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-colonial-legacy-in-the-arab-world-health-education-and-politics/>

Period Five: The Rise of Jewish and Arab Nationalism

Arab nationalism emerged in the early 20th century as an opposition movement in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and European imperialism, later evolving into the overwhelmingly dominant ideological force in the Arab world.

It started out as a political ideology asserting that Arabs constitute a single nation. As a traditional nationalist ideology, it promotes Arab culture and civilization, celebrates Arab history, the Arabic language and Arabic literature. It often also calls for unification of Arab society.⁸

Zionism, or Jewish nationalism, is a modern political movement. Its core beliefs are that all Jews constitute one nation (not simply a religious or ethnic community) and that the only solution to anti-Semitism is the concentration of as many Jews as possible in the biblical land of Israel, and the establishment of a Jewish state in their ancestral homeland.

Most associate Theodor Herzl with the founding of the Zionist movement in 1897. While Herzl succeeded in bringing together virtually all Zionist groups under one organizational roof, there was significant Zionist activity even before Herzl came onto the scene.

The history of Zionism began earlier and is intertwined with Jewish history and Judaism.⁹ More than 20 new Jewish settlements were established in Palestine between 1870 and 1897 (the year of the first Zionist Congress).¹⁰

Arab nationalists predominantly perceived Zionism as a threat to their own aspirations.

Beginning with the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and intensifying in the 1930s during the Arab Revolt, tensions between Arab nationalism and Jewish nationalism escalated. From as early as 1922 and into the 1960s, all the North African states gained independence from their colonial European rulers.

In the aftermath of World War II, many regions transitioned from imperial rule to nation-states. Countries like Jordan and Iraq emerged in the wake of colonialism's decline. The Middle East became a focal point for political realignment, with borders redrawn and new Arab governments established. The evolution of Arab, Muslim states did not bode well for its Jewish inhabitants.

The Arab League and Jewish Refugees

To promote Arab unity, the Arab League was established by Pact on March 22, 1945, 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.¹¹

8 Dawisha, Adeed, "Requiem for Arab Nationalism", *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2003. Accessed Nov. 10, 2024 <https://www.meforum.org/middle-east-quarterly/requiem-for-arab-nationalism>

9 University of Michigan College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, accessed Nov. 10, 2024 https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/cmenas-assets/cmenas-documents/unit-of-israel-Palestine/Section1_Zionism.pdf

10 Snitkoff, Rabbi Ed "Secular Zionism". *My Jewish Learning*. Accessed on Nov. 11, 2024 http://www.myjewishlearning.com/israel/Jewish_Thought/Modern/Secular_Zionism.shtml

11 The Avalon Project "Pact of the League of Arab States, 22 March 1945". Yale Law School. 1998. Accessed on Nov. 10, 2024, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/arableag.asp

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 even before 1948 from: (a) reports on multilateral meetings of the the Arab League; (b) statements and threats made by delegates of Arab countries at the U.N.; and 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.¹²

The danger to Jews was well known and even declared publicly in threats made against their Jewish populations by Arab regime officials at the United Nations.

- 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. ... If the United Nations decided to partition Palestine, they might be responsible for very grave disorders and for the massacre of a large number of Jews."*¹³

- In an afternoon session of the Political Committee of the U.N. General Assembly on November 24, 1947, the Palestinian delegate to the UN, Jamal Husseini, representing the *Arab Higher Committee of Palestine* to the UN General Assembly, 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."*¹⁴

- On November 28, 1947 Iraq's Foreign Minister Fadil Jamali, at the 126th Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly stated:

*"Not only the uprising of the Arabs in Palestine is to be expected but the masses in the Arab world cannot be restrained. The Arab-Jewish relationship in the Arab world will greatly deteriorate."*¹⁵

Words were followed by actions

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

¹² The Text of Law Drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League was reported on in a front page, May 16, 1948 New York Times article headlined: "Jews in Grave Danger in All Moslem Lands"

¹³ 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). This comment was made at 10:30am.

¹⁴ 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) This comment was made at 2:30pm.

¹⁵ U.N. General Assembly, Second Session, Official Records, Verbatim Record of the 126th Plenary Meeting, November 28, 1947, p. 1391.

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.'¹⁶

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 - denationalizations; freezing of Jewish bank accounts; diverting funds of frozen Jewish bank accounts to pay for the Arab wars against Israel; 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 widespread¹⁷. The Arab League had accomplished its goal.

Period Six: Jewish refugees and the founding of the State of Israel

There were many factors that finally influenced virtually all Jews resident in North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf Region to leave: the rise of Arab nationalism; after the European colonialists left, the establishment of sovereign Arab, Islamic states; discriminatory decrees adopted by Arab regimes; the UN moving towards partition; the outbreak of war in 1948; etc. These factors convinced Jews resident in Arab countries that their situation had become dangerously untenable and that it was time to leave.

Following the UN vote on the partition plan in November 1947, and the declaration of the State of Israel in 1948, the status of Jews in Arab countries changed dramatically as six Arab countries – Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia – as well as the Palestinians, declared war, or backed the war against Israel. This rejection by the Arab world of a Jewish state in the Middle East triggered hostile reactions to Jews by Arab regimes and most of their peoples. Jewish populations in Muslim countries were suspected of dual loyalties and were under assault. For example: After the 1947 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 (Partition Plan), rioters, joined by the local police force, engaged in a bloody pogrom in Aden that killed 82 Jews and destroyed hundreds of Jewish homes.¹⁸

➤ In Syria, during November 1947 there were pogroms in several cities; synagogues were burned and of Jews were arrested.¹⁹

➤ Between June and November 1948, bombs set off in the Jewish Quarter of Cairo killed more than 70 Jews and wounded nearly 200.²⁰

In the immediate aftermath of the 1948 War of Independence, hundreds of thousands of Jews were either uprooted from their countries of residence or became subjugated, political hostages of the Arab Israeli conflict.

¹⁶ The Text of Law Drafted by the Political Committee of the Arab League was reported on in a front page, May 16, 1948 New York Times article headlined: "Jews in Grave Danger in All Moslem Lands"

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Sachar, *A History of Israel*, p. 397-398.

¹⁹ Trigano, Samuel, "Elimination of Israelite Communities in Arab and Islamic Countries", Outline Presentation, p. 9

²⁰ Sachar, p. 401

Displacement of Jews from Arab Countries

In reality, the displacement of Jews began even before the founding of the State of Israel. It accelerated in the twentieth century when, under Muslim rule, Jews were subjected to a wide-spread pattern of persecution. Official decrees and legislation enacted by Arab regimes denied human and civil rights to Jews and other minorities; expropriated their property; stripped them of their citizenship; and other means of livelihood. Jews were often victims of murder; arbitrary arrest and detention; torture; and expulsions.

As a result of these twentieth century developments, post-World War II life for Jews in Arab countries became dangerous and untenable. Leaving was not always easy – the difficulty varied from country to country. In some countries, Jews were forbidden to leave (e.g., Syria); in others, Jews were displaced *en masse* (e.g., Iraq); in some places, Jews lived in relative peace under the protection of Muslim rulers (e.g., Tunisia, Morocco); while in other states, they were expelled (e.g., Egypt) or had their citizenship revoked (e.g. Libya).

However, the final result was the same - the mass displacement - the ethnic cleansing - of some 856,000 Jews from some ten Arab countries – in a region overwhelmingly hostile to Jews.

As noted in the Table below, the mass displacement of Jews from Arab countries coincided with major conflicts in the Middle East (e.g. 1948 War; 1956 War; 1967 War; etc.) Each conflict led to major displacements of Jews from Arab countries. The cumulative result was that, over a seventy-five-year period from 1948- until today approximately 99% of all Jews resident in Arab countries and Iran have been displaced.

Table 2 - Country of Origin and Jewish Population Compiled by Justice for Jews from Arab Countries

Displacement of Jews from Arab Countries and Iran:1948-2025

	1948	1958 ⁱ	1968 ⁱⁱ	1976 ⁱⁱⁱ	2001 ^{iv}	2024 (est.)
Aden	8,000	800	0	0	0	0
Algeria	140,000	130,000	3,000	1,000	0	0
Egypt	75,000	40,000	2,500	400	100	8
Iran	100,000 +					8,756 ^v
Iraq	135,000	6,000	2,500	350	100	5
Lebanon	5,000	6,000	3,000	400	100	50
Libya	38,000	3,750	500	40	0	0
Morocco	265,000	200,000	50,000	18,000	5,700	2,500
Syria	30,000	5,000	4,000	4,500	100	3
Tunisia	105,000	80,000	10,000	7,000	1,500	1,500
Yemen	55,000	3,500	500	500	200 ^{vi}	1
TOTAL	856,000^{vii}	475,050	76,000	32,190	7,800	4,067^{viii}
<p>i American Jewish Yearbook (AJY) v.58 American Jewish Committee</p> <p>ii AJY v.68; AJY v.71</p> <p>iii AJY v.78</p> <p>iv AJY v.101</p> <p>v Official Census in Iran; As of 2012</p> <p>vi AJY v.102</p> <p>vii Roumani, The Case 2; WOJAC'S Voice Vol.1, No.1</p> <p>viii Estimates derived in discussions with the recognized leadership of the World Organizations representing Sephardi/ Mizrahi communities from these respective countries</p>						

What led to this mass exit and displacement of was a wide-spread pattern Arab regimes instituted legal, economic, political and behavioral processes aimed at isolating and persecuting Jews in their countries. These measures can be categorized as follows:²¹

- A) Denial of Citizenship**
- B) Quarantine and Detention of People**
- C) Legal Restrictions**
- D) Economic Decrees/Sanctions**
- E) Socioeconomic Discrimination**
- F) Pogroms**

The examples listed below are a mere sampling of the actual and extensive discriminatory measures and decrees enacted by Arab regimes against their Jewish populations.

A) Denial of Citizenship

Egypt:

- According to the first Nationality Code promulgated by Egypt on May 26, 1926, a person born in Egypt of a 'foreign' father, (who himself was also born in Egypt), was entitled to Egyptian nationality only if the foreign father *"belonged racially to the majority of the population of a country whose language is Arabic or whose religion is Islam."*²²
- A mass departure of Jews was sparked in 1956 when Egypt amended the original Egyptian Nationality Law of 1926. Article 1 of the Law of November 22, 1956, stipulated that "Zionists" were barred from being Egyptian nationals. 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 the law as broadly as they wished.²³

Iraq:

- Law No. 1 of 1950, entitled "Supplement to Ordinance Canceling Iraqi Nationality," in fact deprived 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 for good"* (official Iraqi English translation).²⁴

Libya:

- The Citizenship Act of June 12, 1951, (Section 11/27) places restrictions on the status of non-Muslims (e.g. Jews were not allowed to vote or play any political role).²⁵
- On August 8, 1962, the Council of Ministers announced a Royal Decree amending Article 10 of the Citizenship Act, which provided, *inter alia*, that a Libyan national forfeited his nationality if he had had any contact with Zionism. The retroactive effect of this provision, commencing with Libyan independence on December 24, 1951, enabled the authorities to deprive Jews of Libyan nationality at will.²⁶

B) Quarantine and Detention of People

Yemen:

- In 1949, Jews were officially banned from leaving the country, an injunction which still exists today.²⁷

22 Article 10(4) of the Code. See : Maurice de Wee, *La Nationalité Egyptienne*, Commentaire de la loi du mai 1926, p. 35.

23 Law No. 391 of 1956, Section 1(a), *Revue Egyptienne de Droit International*, vol. 12, 1956, p. 80.

24 Law No. 1 of 1950, entitled "Supplement to Ordinance Canceling Iraqi Nationality," *Official Iraqi Gazette*, March 9, 1950.

25 Trigano, p.3

26 UNHCR Archives, Confidential memorandum to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, dated May 8, 1970.

27 Trigano, p. 3

Libya:

- Law No.62 of March 1957, Article 1 of which provided, inter alia, that physical persons or corporations were prohibited 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, or with their representatives.²⁸

Syria:

- In 1973, communication with the outside world was banned²⁹

Many other measures were imposed in Iraq; Tunisia; Morocco; Iran and Egypt³⁰

C) Legal Restrictions

Egypt:

- Promulgation in 1957 of Army Order No. 4 relating to those who administer the property of the so-called people and associations ("Zionist" i.e. Jewish) are subject to imprisonment or supervision.³¹

Libya:

- Law of Dec 31, 1958, a decree issued by the President of the Executive Council of Tripolitania, ordered the dissolution of the Jewish Community Council and the appointment of a Moslem commissioner nominated by the Government.³²

Many other legal restrictions against Jews were imposed in Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen; Syria; Morocco; and Tunisia;³³

D) Economic Sanctions

Syria:

- In April of 1950, a 'Jewish property foreclosure Law' allowed authorities to seize Jewish houses, land, and shops in the cities of Aleppo and Qamishli. Palestinian refugees were then allowed to settle in these formerly Jewish neighborhoods. A ransom had to be paid for every Jew leaving the country.³⁴

Egypt:

- 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.³⁵

28 Gruen, "Libya and the Arab League", p. 11

29 Trigano, p.3

30 Trigano, p. 3-4

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

32 UNHCR Archives, Confidential memorandum to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, dated May 8, 1970.

33 Trigano, p. 4

34 Ibid, p. 6

35 Laskier, "Egyptian Jewry"

Iraq:

- Law No. 5 of 1951, entitled “A law for the Supervision and Administration of the Property of Jews who have Forfeited Iraqi Nationality,” also deprived them of their property. Section 2(a) “freezes” Jewish property.³⁶
- There were a series of laws that subsequently expanded on the confiscation of assets and property of Jews who “forfeited Iraqi nationality”. These included Law No. 12 of 1951³⁷ as well as Law No. 64 of 1967 (relating to ownership of shares in commercial companies) and Law No. 10 of 1968 (relating to banking restrictions).

Other economic sanctions were imposed in Iran, Yemen; Libya; Morocco and Tunisia.³⁸

E) Socioeconomic Discrimination

Egypt:

- On July 29, 1947, an amendment was introduced to the Egyptian Companies Law which required 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% had been granted Egyptian citizenship.³⁹

Iraq:

- 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.⁴⁰

Libya:

- On May 24, 1961, a law was promulgated which provided that only Libyan citizens could own and transfer property. Conclusive proof of the possession of Libyan citizenship was required to be evidenced by a special permit that was reported to have been issued to only six Jews in all.⁴¹

Other such socioeconomic discriminatory measures were imposed on the Jews in Yemen; Syria; Libya; Morocco; Egypt and, Tunisia⁴²;

F) Pogroms

Morocco:

- In Morocco, On June 7 and 8, 1948, there were riots against Jews in Ojeda and Jareda.⁴³

Egypt:

- In 1954, upon the Proclamation of a State of Siege in Egypt, the Military Governor

36 Law No. 5 of 1951, entitled “A Law for the Supervision and Administration of the Property of Jews who have Forfeited Iraqi Nationality,” *Official Iraqi Gazette*, March 10, 1951 (English version), p. 17.

37 Law No. 12 of 1951, supplementary to Law No. 5 (*Official Gazette*, English version, 27 January 1952, p.32)

38 Trigano, p. 5

39 Cohen, H.J., p. 88

40 *New York Times*, May 16, 1948, front page

41 UNHCR Archives, Confidential memorandum.to to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, May 8, 1970.

42 Trigano, p. 6-7

43 Trigano, p. 9

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.⁴⁴

Iraq:

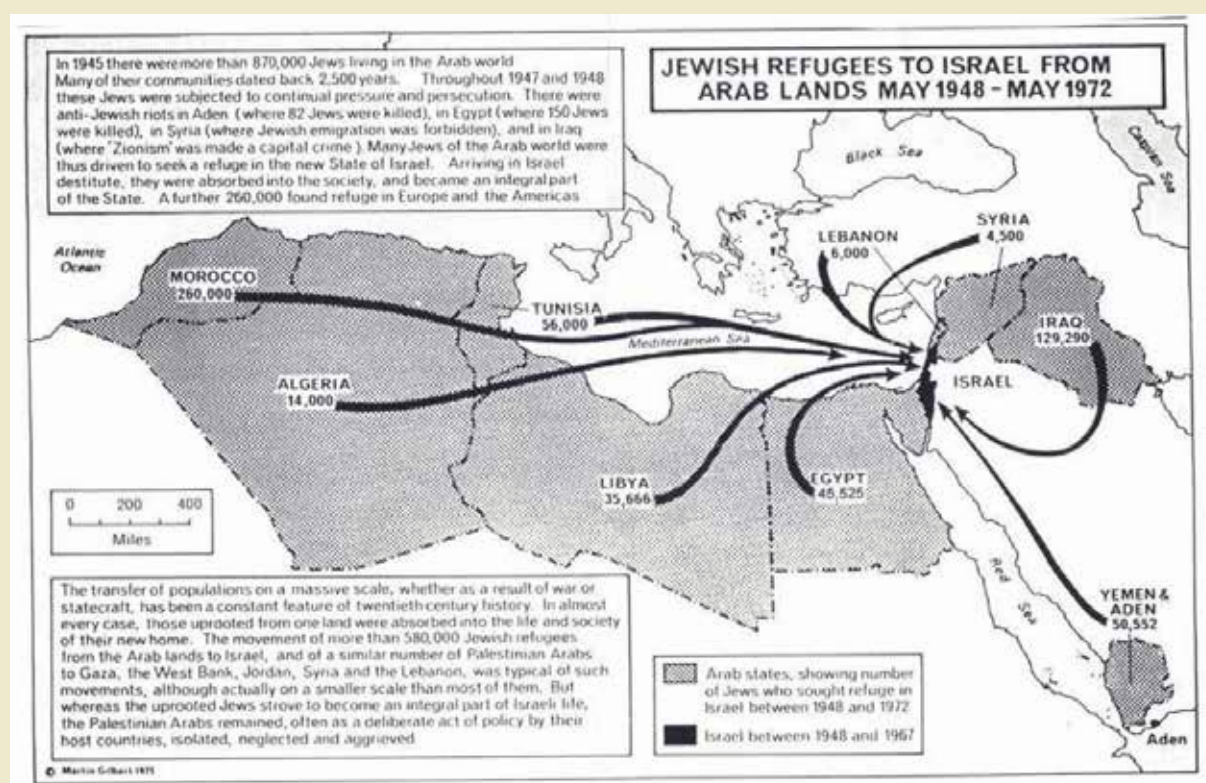
- At the end of 1968, scores were jailed upon the discovery of a local “spy ring” composed of Jewish businessmen. Fourteen men, eleven of them Jews, were sentenced to death in staged trials and hanged in the public squares of Baghdad; others died of torture.⁴⁵

Other pogroms and violence against Jews occurred in, Libya; Lebanon, Iran, Yemen; Syria; Tunisia; and Algeria;⁴⁶

Jews who left Arab countries were not voluntary migrants. They left their home countries neither for economic reasons nor solely for religious freedom. They suffered from harassment and discrimination. They were driven from their homes as a result of the persecution they suffered.

Over 2/3 of all Jews displaced from Arab countries – roughly 650,000 - emigrated to Israel:

Map 1 – Jewish Refugees to Israel from Arab lands May 1948 – May 1972



Source: Martin Gilbert, *Jews of Arab Lands*, p.16 (Egyptian Jewish community leaders claim the number fleeing from Egypt to Israel was significantly higher).

44 Article 3, Paragraph 7 of Emergency Law No. 5333 of 1954.

45 Judith Miller and Laurie Mylroie, *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf*, p. 34.

46 Trigano, p. 7-10

While Zionism motivated most to settle in Israel, an estimated 260,000 people⁴⁷ – or about one third - of all Jewish refugees immigrated to other countries (e.g. Britain, France, USA, Canada, etc.). In virtually all cases, as Jews left their homes and their countries of birth, individual and communal properties were confiscated without compensation.

Were Jews Displaced from Arab Countries Legally Refugees

The internationally accepted definition for the term “refugee” derives from the Statute of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that was established by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 319 (IV) on December 3, 1949. The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was adopted on July 28, 1951, by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, which was convened under General Assembly Resolution 429 (V) of December 14, 1950, and entered into force on April 22, 1954. Article 1 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees states the following:

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term “refugee” shall apply to any person who: ... (2) As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it...

This internationally accepted definition of “refugees” applied to many Jews who fled Arab countries who clearly had, a “well-founded fear of being persecuted.”

The plight of Jewish refugees displaced from Jews in Arab countries was finally and formally recognized when, on two separate occasions, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) specifically declared that Jews fleeing from Arab countries were indeed refugees “who fall under the mandate” of the UNHCR. The first recognition pertained to Jews fleeing Egypt. In a 1957 statement to the UNREF Executive Committee, Mr. Auguste Lindt, UN High Commissioner for Refugees stated:

*“Another emergency problem is now arising - that of refugees from Egypt. There is no doubt in my mind that those refugees from Egypt who are not able, or not willing to avail themselves of the protection of the Government of their nationality fall under the mandate of my office.”*⁴⁸

The second recognition by the UNHCR that Jews fleeing Arab countries were indeed refugees came in 11 years later in a letter released by the Office of the UN High Commissioner:

⁴⁷ Gilbert, *Atlas of the Arab-Israeli conflict*. p. 48

⁴⁸ Mr. Auguste Lindt, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Report of the UNREF Executive Committee, Fourth Session – Geneva 29 January to 4 February 1957.

*"I refer to our recent discussion concerning Jews from Middle Eastern and North African countries in consequence of recent events. I am now able to inform you that such persons may be considered prima facie within the mandate of this Office."*⁴⁹

The significance of this second ruling was twofold:

- 1) Unlike the first statement by the High Commissioner that merely referred to "refugees from Egypt" - the vast majority of whom were Jews - this letter referred specifically to "Jews"; and
- 2) Unlike the first determination that limited UNHCR involvement to "refugees from Egypt", this statement constituted a ruling that Jews who had left any of the "Middle Eastern and North African countries" - namely: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia – all fell within the mandate of the Office of the UNHCR.

Do These Former Jewish Refugees Still Possess Rights Today?

The statute of limitations does not apply to the right of refugees to petition for rights and redress. This principle is enshrined in the "*Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law*", adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly on December 16, 2005. It states, in part:

6)... statutes of limitations shall not apply to gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law which constitute crimes under international law.

The passage of time does not negate the right of refugees to petition for redress for the mass violations of their human rights as well as for the personal losses. If a refugee left behind assets, including bank accounts and pension plans, they do not lose their rights to these assets, notwithstanding how many years have passed. Therefore, former Jewish refugees have the legal right, under international law – even today - to petition for rights and redress.

United Nation and Middle East Refugees

So, in fact, both Palestinians and Jews from Arab countries were recognized as *bona fide* refugees by the relevant UN Agencies.

The declaration that Palestinians were refugees was made by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and accepted by the international community. The designation by the UNHCR that Jews fleeing Arab countries were indeed refugees was less known and not publicized.

From the mid 1940's onward, the United Nations was faced with two refugee populations; both emerging from the same conflict; in comparable numbers, both recognized by the UN as *bona fide* refugees; with both still possessing rights today. Nonetheless, there are startling differences in the treatment, by the United Nations, of Arab refugees compared to Jewish refugees. For example:

⁴⁹ Dr. E. Jahn, Office of the UN High Commissioner, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Document No. 7/2/3/Libya, July 6, 1967.

With respect to Security Council resolutions, from 1946 – 2024 inclusive, there were a total of 338 Security Council resolutions on the Middle East in general, and 9 resolutions on Palestinian refugees in particular. During that same time period, there was not one Resolution dealing with Jewish refugees.⁵⁰

UN Security Council Resolutions on Middle East Refugees			
	Resolutions on the Middle East	Resolutions on Palestinian Refugees	Resolutions on Jewish Refugees
SECURITY COUNCIL	338	9	0

With respect to Resolutions of the UN General Assembly,⁵¹ from 1949 to 2024 inclusive, the General Assembly focused much greater attention on the issue of Palestinian refugees – over 21 % of its resolutions – more than on any other Middle East issue.

UN General Assembly Resolutions on Middle East Refugees			
	Resolutions on Middle East	Resolutions on Palestinian Refugees	Resolutions on Jewish Refugees
GENERAL ASSEMBLY	976	208	0

In contrast to Palestinian refugees, General Assembly resolutions never specifically addressed the issue of Jewish refugees, nor were there any resolutions on other topics that mentioned Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

However, there is one UN Resolution that does refer to Jewish refugees from Arab countries obliquely, while still not mentioning their plight directly.

UN Security Council Resolution 242

On November 22nd, 1967, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 242, which laid down the principles for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Still considered the primary vehicle for resolving the Arab-Israel conflict, Resolution 242, stipulates that a comprehensive peace settlement should necessarily include “a *just settlement of the refugee problem*”. No distinction is made between Arab refugees and Jewish refugees. This was the intent of the Resolution’s drafters and sponsors.

On Thursday, November 16, 1967, the United Kingdom submitted their draft of Resolution 242 [S/8247] to the UN Security Council. The UK version of 242 was not exclusive and called for a just settlement of “the refugee problem.” Just four days after the United Kingdom submission, the Soviet Union’s U.N. delegation submitted their own draft Resolution 242 to the Security Council [S/8253] restricting the just settlement only to “Palestinian refugees” [Para. 3 (c)].

50 Urman, Dr. Stanley A., *The United Nations and Middle East Refugees: The Differing Treatment of Palestinians and Jews*; Rutgers University, 2010. Page 134. Analysis derived from United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), Statistics updated to 20.24 from UNISPAL on Nov. 2. 2024. <https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/>

51 Ibid, Page 137. Statistics updated to 20.24 from UNISPAL on Nov. 2. 2024. <https://www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/>

On Wednesday, November 22, 1967, the Security Council gathered for its 1382nd meeting in New York at which time, the United Kingdom's draft of Resolution 242 was voted on and unanimously approved.⁵² Immediately after the UK's version of 242 was adopted, the Soviet delegation advised the Security Council, that *"it will not insist, at the present stage of our consideration of the situation in the Near East, on a vote on the draft Resolution submitted by the Soviet Union"* which would have limited 242 to Palestinian refugees only.⁵³ Even so, Ambassador Kuznetsov of the Soviet Union later stated: "The Soviet Government would have preferred the Security Council to adopt the Soviet draft Resolution..."⁵⁴

Thus, the attempt by the Soviets to restrict the "just settlement of the refugee problem" merely to "Palestinian refugees" was not successful. The international community adoption of the UK's inclusive version signaled a desire for 242 to seek a just solution for all – including Jewish refugees.

Moreover, Justice Arthur J. Goldberg, the US Ambassador to the United Nations who was seminally involved in drafting⁵⁵ the unanimously adopted Resolution, told The Chicago Tribune that the Soviet version of Resolution 242 was "not even-handed."⁵⁶

He went further - pointing out that:

*"A notable omission in 242 is any reference to Palestinians, a Palestinian state on the West Bank or the PLO. The resolution addresses the objective of 'achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem.' This language presumably refers both to Arab and Jewish refugees, for about an equal number of each abandoned their homes as a result of the several wars...."*⁵⁷

So, it is clear that the intent of UN Resolution 242 requires a "just settlement of the refugee problem" that includes Jewish refugees, as equally as Palestinian refugees.

Other international Agreements and entities have recognized the rights of Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Multilateral Initiatives

- The Madrid Conference, which was first convened in October 1991, launched historic, direct negotiations between Israel and many of her Arab neighbors. In his opening remarks at a conference convened to launch the multilateral process held in Moscow in January 1992, then-U.S. Secretary of State James Baker made no distinction between Palestinian refugees and Jewish refugees in articulating the mandate of the Refugee Working Group as follows: *"The refugee group will consider practical ways of improving the lot of people throughout the region who have been displaced from their homes."*⁵⁸

52 Security Council Official Records - November 22, 1967 - S/PV.1382 - Paragraph 67..

53 Security Council Official Records - November 22, 1967 - S/PV.1382 - Paragraph 117

54 Security Council Official Records - November 22, 1967 - S/PV.1382 - Paragraph 117

55 Transcript, Arthur J. Goldberg Oral History Interview I, 3/23/83, by Ted Gittinger; Lyndon B. Johnson Library. March 23, 1983; Pg I-10

56 "Russia stalls UN Action on Middle East." The Chicago Tribune. November 21, 1967 pg. B9

57 Goldberg, Arthur J., "Resolution 242: After 20 Years." The Middle East: Islamic Law and Peace (U.S. Resolution 242: Origin, Meaning and Significance.) National Committee on American Foreign Policy; April 2002. (Originally written by Arthur J. Goldberg for the American Foreign Policy Interests on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary in 1988.)

58 Remarks by Secretary of State James A. Baker, III before the Organizational Meeting for Multilateral Negotiations on the Middle East, House of Unions, Moscow, January 28, 1992.

No distinction is made between Arab and Jewish refugees.

- The Road Map to Middle East Peace, advanced in 2002 by the Quartet (the U.N., EU, U.S., and Russia) also refers in Phase III to an *“agreed, just, fair and realistic solution to the refugee issue”*, language applicable both to Palestinian and Jewish refugees.

Bilateral Arab - Israeli Agreements

Israeli agreements with her Arab neighbors allow for a case to be made that Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians have affirmed that a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict will require a *“just settlement”* of the *“refugee problem”* that will include recognition of the rights and claims of all Middle East refugees:

Israel – Egypt Agreements 1978 and 1979

The *Camp David Framework for Peace in the Middle East* of 1978 (the “Camp David Accords”) includes, in paragraph A(1)(f), a commitment by Egypt and Israel to *“work with each other and with other interested parties to establish agreed procedures for a prompt, just and permanent resolution of the implementation of the refugee problem.”*

Article 8 of the *Israel – Egypt Peace Treaty* of 1979 provides that the *“Parties agree to establish a claims commission for the mutual settlement of all financial claims.”* Those claims were to include those of former Jewish refugees displaced from Egypt.

Israel – Jordan Peace Treaty, 1994

Article 8 of the *Israel – Jordan Peace Treaty*, entitled “Refugees and Displaced Persons” recognizes, in paragraph 1, *“the massive human problems caused to both Parties by the conflict in the Middle East”*. Reference to massive human problems in a broad manner suggests that the plight of all refugees of *“the conflict in the Middle East”* includes Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

Israeli Palestinian Agreements, 1993

Almost every reference to the refugee issue in Israeli-Palestinian agreements, talks about “refugees”, without qualifying which refugee community is at issue, including the *Declaration of Principles* of 13 September 1993 {Article V (3)}, and the *Interim Agreement* of September 1995 {Articles XXXI (5)}, both of which refer to “refugees” as a subject for permanent status negotiations, without qualifications.

Recognition by Political Leaders of Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries

Recognition by political leaders has enhanced the credibility of Jewish refugees from Arab countries and strengthened the legitimacy of their claims for rights and redress.

- U.S. President Jimmy Carter, after successfully brokering the Camp David Accords and the Egyptian - Israeli Peace Treaty, stated in a press conference on Oct. 27, 1977:

“Palestinians have rights... obviously there are Jewish refugees...they have the same rights as others do.”

- Former U.S. President Bill Clinton made the following assertion after the rights of Jews displaced from Arab countries were discussed at ‘Camp David II’ in July, 2000.

- *There will have to be some sort of international fund set up for the refugees. There is, I think, some interest, interestingly enough, on both sides, in also having a fund which compensates the Israelis who were made refugees by the war, which occurred after the birth of the State of Israel. Israel is full of people, Jewish people, who lived in predominantly Arab countries who came to Israel because they were made refugees in their own land.*

- Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin recognized Jewish refugees in a June 3rd, 2005, interview with the Canadian Jewish News which he later reaffirmed in a July 14, 2005, letter:

A refugee is a refugee and that the situation of Jewish refugees from Arab lands must be recognized. All refugees deserve our consideration as they have lost both physical property and historical connections. I did not imply that the claims of Jewish refugees are less legitimate or merit less attention than those of Palestinian refugees.

- British Prime Minister Theresa May spoke at a dinner in London marking the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, on November 2nd, 2017:

We must recognize how difficult at times this journey has been – from the Jews forced out of their homes in Arab countries in 1948 to the suffering of Palestinians affected and dislodged by Israel's birth – both completely contrary to the intention of Balfour to safeguard all of these communities.

Legislation Recognizing Rights for Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries

Unanimously adopted by the **United States** Congress on April 1, 2008, House Resolution 185 affirms that all victims of the Arab - Israeli conflict must be recognized and urges the President and US officials participating in any Middle East negotiations to ensure: *".... that any explicit reference to Palestinian refugees is matched by a similar explicit reference to Jewish and other refugees, as a matter of law and equity."*

On March 5, 2014, **Canada** formally recognized the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab lands. The Canadian Cabinet and Parliament accepted a committee recommendation that the federal government *officially recognize the experience of Jewish refugees who were displaced from states in the Middle East and North Africa after 1948.*"

The Knesset of **Israel** adopted two Bills, in 2008 and again in 2010, confirming rights - including compensation - for Jews displaced from Arab countries and that their rights must be addressed in any Middle East peace negotiations.

Jewish Refugees and Palestinian Refugees

Emanating as a result of the 1948 conflict in the Middle East, Palestinians are considered as the world's longest-standing refugee population who continue to require significant international protection as well as material and financial assistance.

Their continuing needs, however, do not supersede the fact that, Palestinians were not the only Middle East refugees. During the twentieth century, two refugee populations emerged as a result of the conflict in the Middle East – Arabs as well as Jews.

There is no parallel history, geography, nor demography that could allow for any just comparison between the fate of Palestinian refugees and the plight of Jewish refugees

from Arab countries. Moreover, there is a fundamental distinction in the way the two crises were dealt with:

The newly established state of Israel, under attack from six Arab armies, with scant and scarce resources, opened its doors to hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees displaced from Arab countries, granted them citizenship, and tried, under very difficult circumstances, to absorb them into Israeli society.

- By contrast, the Arab world, with the sole exception of Jordan, turned their backs on displaced Palestinian Arabs, sequestering them in refugee camps to be used as a political weapon against the state of Israel for the last seventy-five plus years.

So, while there is no symmetry between these two narratives, there is one important factor that applies to both: namely, the moral imperative to ensure that all *bona fide* refugees receive equal treatment under international law.

It would constitute an injustice, were the international community to recognize rights for one victim population – Arab Palestinians - without recognizing equal rights for other victims of the same Middle East conflict – Jewish refugees from Arab countries.

The legitimate call to secure rights and redress for Jewish refugees from Arab countries is just as in any Middle East peace proposals, the rights and claims of Palestinian refugees will certainly be addressed. What is important is to ensure that the rights and claims of hundreds of thousands of Jews displaced from Arab countries are similarly recognized and addressed.

As Jews were forced to leave their homes, communities and countries of birth, they left behind assets now estimated at over \$263 billion. But the true loss goes far beyond wealth. It was the erasure of a civilization, a rich tapestry of language, faith and identity that helped shape the very fabric of the region.

This publication is a sincere call to recognize the rights of Jewish refugees from Arab lands—on both moral and legal grounds—and to ensure their story is no longer forgotten. The Middle East conflict created two refugee populations—one Palestinian, one Jewish—and both deserve acknowledgment.

In an era of historic reconciliation, inspired by the spirit of the Abraham Accords, the time has come to face history with honesty and courage. Only through truth, justice, and mutual recognition can the peoples of the region move toward a future of dignity, healing, and lasting peace.

In the spirit of the Abraham Accords, at a time of historic breakthroughs in political and financial ties between Muslim countries and Israel/Jews, the time has come for nations to unite in promoting peace and reconciliation among all peoples in the Region.

Chapter 2

Scope and Methodology

The purpose of this project is to provide a detailed and comprehensive appraisal and valuation of property left behind by Jews displaced from Arab countries in the years following the founding of the State of Israel as well as post-Revolution Iran. The breadth and scale of the near-total displacement of Jews from eleven Muslim countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf region ranks among the more significant cases of mass displacement in modern history. Moreover, this massive civilizational presence was uprooted over only the course of just more than half a century and transformed into an enormous flow of refugees headed to Israel, Europe, North and South America, Australia and other locations. This report seeks to document this historical injustice to produce a valuation of assets left behind by Jewish refugees in Arab countries and Iran.

2.1. Project Scope

The scope of this project encompasses the Jewish communities of the following ten Arab countries.

- Aden
- Algeria
- Egypt
- Iraq
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Morocco
- Syria
- Tunisia
- Yemen

Also included is Iran.

“This project will bring to light the best evidence available on the scope of lost Jewish individual and communal assets, apply an orderly methodology on the data collected, and arrive at an aggregate valuation of the assets that belonged to Jewish refugees and their communities.

The research, which was conducted over a period of over five years, was orchestrated by Sylvain Abitbol, Co-President of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, working with economists, accountants, historians, academicians, Jewish community organizations and Mizrahi Jewish community leaders, utilizing testimonies submitted by Jews displaced from Arab countries.

This process included a thorough, comprehensive review of available documentation, the collection of testimonial data, an analysis of each Jewish community's place within their respective country, and a consideration of previous valuation attempts where such attempts have been made. The final result will be an aggregate valuation of Jewish individual and community assets from Arab countries and Iran.

2.2. Technical Premises

For the purposes of this report's valuation exercise, the assumption was that all Jewish assets that belonged to Jews in most of the countries under consideration were lost over the course of each Jewish community's displacement, unless otherwise noted.

As this valuation report represents a comprehensive effort to collect information on all types of assets that belonged to Jews and Jewish communities in countries whose subsequent governments can be said to be generally hostile to this particular demographic group and the State of Israel, the amount and quality of information available for such an effort was limited.

2.3. Loss Types Under Review

This project considers losses suffered by Jews as individual members of Jewish households, as well as assets that belonged to each Jewish community, respectively. These losses include urban and rural land, urban and rural immovable property, personal property and moveable assets, financial assets, employment losses, business losses, and communal losses.

Table 3 - Loss Categories and Types - Valuation Methodology

Loss Category	Loss Type
Individual	Urban and Rural Land
	Property – Immoveable assets: Urban and rural buildings, houses
	Property – moveable assets: Household and personal items, furniture etc.
	Financial assets: Bank accounts and other securities
Business	Total assets: Overall business value, including real estate, inventory, and commercial holdings
Communal	Communally-owned assets: All land and property communally owned by the Jewish community, including synagogues, cemeteries, mikvahs etc.

The report does not attempt to account for non-pecuniary damages, such as pain and suffering, nor personal injury or death. However, in rare cases some of the claim forms filed by displaced Jews and analyzed for the report did include monetary valuations for time spent incarcerated and other such losses associated with mistreatment and expulsion. In these instances, the valuations were included as part of individual losses calculated in the movable assets category.

2.4. Methodology: Principles and Rationale

The methodology implemented in this report consists of both preliminary research and a subsequent valuation. The research phase relies on general research and analysis approaches which have been further adjusted to fit the circumstances of each country under consideration, as well as the amount and quality of information available.

Furthermore, a significant aspect of the research and valuation methodology consists of information collected and analyzed from first-hand testimonials given by Jews displaced from all countries under consideration throughout the relevant time period. This aspect of the research and valuation methodology will also be described in greater detail below.

Research Methodology

The scope of this project requires an assessment of the present value of all individual and communal assets left behind by Jewish refugees from Arab countries and Iran. This task requires a particular methodology both for compiling all the relevant research materials available and for converting those materials into a professional, present-day valuation. Therefore, a research methodology was devised to collect all primary materials that are relevant and available to assessing the particular assets that belonged to Jews and their respective communities in the countries under consideration, as well as supplementary overarching country research, meant to fill the missing pieces in each country.

Considering that no full material accounting of all Jewish property was kept on record, a research methodology based solely on either one of the aforementioned approaches would be incomplete. There is neither a comprehensive, primary accounting of all Jewish property left behind by Jewish refugees from Arab countries and Iran, nor a reliable approach that is able to reflect the particular nuances of Jewish property-ownership in every country under consideration. In light of this complex scenario, it was decided the optimal research methodology would be to combine a number of approaches in order to paint the fullest picture of Jewish property left behind in each country.

Primary research included a preliminary audit of relevant archives and visits to those archives that were likely to contain relevant information. This research phase also included meetings with community leaders from all the relevant countries and

subject-matter experts in order to clarify any questions, to pursue further detail in regard to other primary documents uncovered, to ask for any primary materials these community leaders or experts might possess, and to ask for further guidance where necessary. Finally, use was made of a wide selection of secondary sources, including books, journal articles, reports, websites, heritage/cultural centers, etc. for any other relevant materials that helped produce as comprehensive and detailed an evidence-based assessment of Jewish property that belonged to Jews from the countries under consideration.

The next step of the research methodology seeks to supplement the assessment of Jewish property ownership, to the extent necessary, with a series of calculations any

other taking into consideration the size and relative position of the Jewish community in each country, as well as other factors as the situation demands. There are a number of reasons why the evidence-based picture emerging out of any country will be less than complete, including the fact that these events took place over 75 years ago, some of them in places where government administration was in flux and in places that are inaccessible today. Other rationales include differing colonial administrative practices, as explained below. From this research, reasonable conclusions are drawn from the available information.

Historical Note on Mandatory/Colonial Administrative Practices

This valuation report ultimately rests on the best information and evidence currently available based on multiple sources, including the primary administrative materials collected by the colonial/mandatory powers that directly or indirectly ruled many of the countries under consideration. As such, the administrative habits practiced by these powers (i.e. Great Britain, France, and Italy) ought to be considered for the purpose of illuminating any differences in administrative methods that may have had consequences for the amount and type of information and data available.

As far as the research phase of this project is concerned, the administrative habits exercised by Great Britain during its Mandate over Palestine from 1920 through 1948 ought to be juxtaposed with the administrative habits exercised by French authorities in its role as colonial/mandatory/protectorate authority in several of the countries under consideration (Italy ruled as a colonial administrator in Libya for a shorter amount of time that is relevant to this project). The British administrative record in Mandatory Palestine is interesting in particular, as these administrative habits produced the type of detailed information against which this valuation report must contend as an historical comparison. The historical record on this matter shows a starkly different approach to gathering and recording materials amongst the British and the French that are of major significance to this project.

The historical motives and interests that characterized the British presence in Palestine at the time were such that British authorities had reason to keep meticulous records of developments in Palestine. British authorities were well aware of their commitments to both Jewish and Arab nationalist aspirations in Mandatory Palestine and were sensitive to a future contest for land between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. This reality coincided with Britain's larger geo-political interests in maintaining a stable, long-term presence in part of Mandatory Palestine. The situation required a well-run administration capable of producing and maintaining detailed administrative records for the sake of controlling the eventual clash between Jewish and Arab communities, and for securing the long-term British presence in Palestine. This attitude was reflected in various British policies, including attempts at land reform, tax reform, registration of private and state land, aerial documentation of land throughout the territory etc. All of these efforts combined produced a detailed accounting of the kind of material that can serve as primary evidence for this sort of valuation project. And indeed, British land records, such as the '1945 Village Statistics' document, served as the basis for various Palestinian valuation reports.

From further research, it is apparent that French administrative habits were different to those of the British, for various reasons. To begin with, French authorities had a different 'ideological' outlook to the British, and this difference animated their administrative habits. French authorities were more determined to disregard the sociological divisions present in the populations they ruled, in an attempt to have their vision of an egalitarian society benevolently ruled by Frenchmen reflected in their administrative records. To this end, French administrative records show less distinctions among the populations over which they ruled, a practice which, for example, makes distinguishing Jewish and Muslim land records, much more difficult.

More importantly, however, is the fact that the French had no overriding interest in maintaining detailed records of the Jewish communities that were part of the territories they controlled. Unlike the British, who were in part dedicated to promoting the collective interest of the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine and of safeguarding the rights of Mandatory Palestine's Arab residents as well, a situation which forced British authorities to act as a neutral referee of sorts, French records were mainly concerned with recording narrower French interests, to cement their control of lands and economic interests in the territories they ruled. These differences between British and French interests and mindsets were reflected in their different administrative practices. These, in turn, produced different levels of detail and scope regarding the type of documentation necessary for a valuation project of this sort.

Testimonials by Jews Displaced from Arab Countries and Iran

In addition to research materials collected and reasonable assessments deduced, per the research methodology described above, information collected from first-hand

testimonials by Jews displaced from Arab countries and Iran was utilized and analyzed. Details of the testimonial collection campaign and analysis can be found in Section 2.6.

The Israeli Government, under the auspices of the registrar of foreign claims department in the Ministry of Finance, began collecting claims of property losses by Jews from Arab countries as early as 1949. By 1950, the registrar had collected claims totaling \$54,032,576, as detailed below:

Table 4 - Value of Jewish Property Losses in Arab Countries (including debts owed by Palestinian refugees), Recorded by Israel Registrar of Foreign Claims, 1949-1950

Country	No. of Claimants	No. of Claims	Amount (currency)	Total Amount (\$ -1950)
Libya	203	203	£Lib. 629,636,340 £Egypt 19,135 FF 1,248,620	1,065,927
Egypt	153	153	£Egypt 619,473 £Pal. 17,901 £UK 45,287 Rupees 74,357 \$US 3,025 FF 107,500	1,977,856
Iraq	1,619	50	Iraqi dinars 709,955 £UK 3,525	1,997,184
Yemen	15	15	£Pal. 15,000 Riyals 167,024 Rupees 116,217	85,512
Syria	121	121	£Syr. 2,453,090 £Pal. 100,902 Gold pounds 4,608 Ottoman pounds 34	1,410,467
Lebanon	74	74	£Leb. 289,946 £Pal. 90,417 £Syr. 2,459 £UK 1,667 \$US 253	390,981
Jordan	38	38	£Pal. 3,509,180 £Syr. 1,950	9,826,590
West Bank	1,414	1,284	£Pal. 3,094,294	36,664,023
Palestinian refugees*	111	111	£Pal. 219,015 £UK 998	616,036
Total	3,748	2,049	-	54,032,576

* Debts owed to Jews by Palestinian refugees

Source: ISA (130) 1848/hts/9, "Overall Summary of the Work of the Foreign Claims Registration Office as of December 31, 1950."

Subsequently, efforts to document property losses suffered by Jews displaced from Arab countries resumed in the aftermath of new waves of mass displacement. Notably, an effort to document property losses suffered by Egyptian Jews was initiated by the Organization of Victims of anti-Jewish Persecution in Egypt (Association des ex-Victimes des Persécutions Anti-Juives en Egypte) in the wake of the expulsion of Egyptian Jews after the Suez Crisis in 1956. Similarly, following a renewed wave of mass displacement of Jews from Arab countries after the 1967 war, the Israeli Government signed Government Decision number 34 on September 28, 1969, directing the renewed efforts by the Department for the Rights of Jews from Arab Countries, under the auspices of the Head of Legal Assistance at the Ministry of Justice, to register the claims of lost property by Jews displaced from Arab countries (this particular effort concentrated on Jewish property losses in four Arab countries: Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Yemen).

This responsibility was renewed and expanded both in March 2002, in Government Decision number 1544 relating to the “Registration of claims of Jews from Arab Countries” (expanding the registration efforts to include all Jews displaced from all relevant Arab countries and Iran), as well as on December 28, 2003 in Government Decision 1250 pertaining to the “Rights of Jews from Arab Lands”. Following this renewed emphasis on the matter, testimonial forms were made available for Jews displaced from Arab countries and Iran to document their stories and register any lost property. Later on, in 2009, the responsibility for these efforts was transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Senior Citizens, which was subsequently renamed the Ministry for Social Equality.⁵⁹

Methodological Principles Guiding the Report Preparation

As mentioned above, this valuation report is based on information that is decades old. In addition, the historical circumstances are such that the existing evidence often provides only an incomplete assessment of the property that used to belong to Jews and the Jewish communities in the countries under consideration. That said, the methodological principles that guide the analysis are as follows:

1. **Transparency:** The facts, that the events in question took place so long ago, the difficulty with accessing potentially-useful sources of information, the lack of data and/or the existence of contradictory information in some cases – tend to lend themselves to the necessity to delineate what is known and what cannot be known; what sources were available and which were not, and for the report to be transparent in all of its limitations, assumptions and consequent calculations.
2. **Professionalism and practicality:** In undertaking the project, we were guided by high professional standards at every step, including the research and valuation efforts.
3. **Simplicity and consistency:** This project comprises eleven separate country reports. The sources of information, the cooperation of community leaders, the administrative legacies in each country – all of these presented a complex informational web that had to be standardized for the purposes of this project.
4. Throughout, we strove for consistency in style, structure, scope, and methodology.

5. **Multidisciplinary:** The particular circumstances of this project demand a multidisciplinary approach that combines historical research, knowledge of the Jewish community in several countries over a lengthy timespan, familiarity with political, social, and economic trends at the time, as well as professional financial valuation expertise and strategic consulting insights that contributed to the problem-solving and analysis aspects of this project. We were guided by the need to fuse these disciplines in a coherent and direct manner.
6. **Trustworthiness:** We have referenced and documented all relevant sources of information and can fully stand behind the assumptions, methodological judgments, and final products in this project.

2.5. Level of Evidence

As mentioned above, this project entails an inquiry into the value of assets owned by Jews and the Jewish communities in eleven different countries, over half a century ago. As such, a comprehensive and detailed accounting of all manner of assets is virtually impossible. The testimonials cannot purport to serve as a representative sample of Jews leaving all Arab countries; they do, nonetheless, provide informative and useful data in portraying an uprooted Jewish community and its lost wealth.

In addition to the testimonials, data was derived from a variety of sources including archives, books and interviews. Research was based on the best documentation available, and this evidence was supplemented with the most appropriate and reasonable analysis that could be made on the basis of the available evidence.

Archives in numerous countries were visited and research was conducted seeking relevant files and data:

Israel: Israel State Archives (ISA), Central Zionist Archives (CZA), Israeli Ministry of Justice archives, Israeli Ministry of Social Equality archives, Yad Ben Zvi Institute, Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Museum of the Jewish People at Beit Hatfutsot, World Jewish Congress, Israel Archives

Canada: Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa

France: Alliance Israelite Universelle, Paris, Archives Nationale – France, Paris Branch, Pierrefitte Branch, Centre des Archives diplomatiques de la Courneuve

Switzerland: National Archives, Bern, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva

UK: London Metropolitan Archives, National Archives of the U.K.

USA: American Jewish Committee, New York, Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) – New York, National Archives & Records, College Park, Maryland, World Jewish Archives, New York

In addition, Jewish community leaders and academic experts from numerous countries were consulted.

2.6. Methodology for the gathering, processing, and analysis of testimonials

In order to organize and standardize the information derived from over 12,000 testimonials processed, a number of procedures were followed.

The testimonial methodology entailed filling out the following information: relevant country, year of displacement, family size, city of origin, year in which the testimonial was given, information relating to lost assets and their value (organized according to asset category: real estate, land, moveable assets, and business losses) and any other relevant information gleaned from narrative accounts written in individual testimonials.

An array of factors influenced the precision of these types of testimonials, and a measure of bias is usually an inseparable aspect of such methodologies. These factors include the following:

1. In many cases, 50 years or more had passed between the events and sums in questions and the recording of testimony/lost property.
2. A lack of representation of the impact of inflationary effects and other macro - economic conditions that might have influenced the real value of property under consideration
3. The age of respondents at the time the testimony was collected (many were children at the time of displacement and only documented their testimony at a much older age).
4. A lack of proper supervision during the documentation of testimony – in some cases, dependents filled out the forms for the relevant respondents.

The following details the testimonial methodology for use in the project, starting with the gathering of testimonials through to their analysis and the adjusted calculation of their values by class group.

The testimonial claims forms for this project were received from three sources:

- Scanned copies of testimonials collected by the Israeli government and various NGOs.
- Handwritten testimonials from the Israeli Ministry of Social Equality's "*And you said to your son*" project.
- Handwritten testimonials from the Israeli Ministry of Justice and Israel State Archives.

The process of analyzing the testimonials comprised three stages:

- Reception and cataloguing of testimonials.
- Manual entry of all testimonials deemed relevant, i.e. containing financial information, into a country-specific Excel spreadsheet for the purpose of data calculation.
- Testimonials underwent full processing, from reception to final analysis as laid out below.



Standard Testimonial Methodology

1. The testimonial documents came in different versions and included close to 10 different form types.
2. All versions of the testimonials were useful for the purposes of this project, with two exceptions:
 - a. Some claimants were not instructed to detail their assets in a number of the categories crucial to this project, resulting in a failure to report full holdings.
 - b. Some claimants were asked to report the value of their assets in a convoluted manner, which made it impossible to extract reliable data.
3. The following chart indicates the testimonials processed and entered:

Country	Testimonials Processed from All Sources	Testimonials Entered for Calculation
Aden	2	0
Algeria	57	22
Egypt	5,563	676
Iran	223	92
Iraq	5,503	1903
Lebanon	96	0
Libya	233	129
Morocco	328	112
Syria	229	102
Yemen	85	20
Tunisia	175	76
TOTALS	12,494	3,132

Stage 1 - Reception and Cataloguing of Testimonials

All testimonials were classified as “Processed” or “Unprocessed” and catalogued into the categories detailed below.

Processed

All processed testimonials were classified and filed as follows:

Entered: Testimonials which were entered into the spreadsheet for the relevant country. These testimonials were analyzed in order to calculate the average holdings of each class group.

Not Entered: Testimonials which were not entered into the spreadsheet for the relevant country for the following reasons:

- a. Testimonials included information on movable assets alone
- b. Duplicate versions of testimonial forms already processed
- c. Testimonials included communal property alone and as a result, were irrelevant to the calculation of individual holdings but were used elsewhere to calculate communal losses
- d. Testimonials that were not relevant to this project were categorized as “NR”. Testimonials were entered into this category if they met one or more of the following criteria:
 - The form was empty or illegible
 - The form did not include information regarding assets in the Movables, Business or Real Estate categories
 - There was no currency type was listed (for example: “Home worth 1,500”)
 - The information contained in the form did not include monetary values (e.g., “We were quite wealthy”)
 - The phrasing of the form itself did not allow for the extraction of reliable data (e.g., “Were it in Israel today, what would be the value in shekels of the property left behind?”)

Stage 2 – Entering Testimonial Data

Testimonials were entered into a country-specific Excel spreadsheet created in tandem with the structure of the testimonial forms and the needs of the project, according to the following parameters:

- a. Personal Information
- a. Real Estate
- b. Business
- c. Movables
- d. Rural Land

Claimants were instructed to list the value of their assets in the year in which the assets were abandoned. Therefore, as a rule, values were entered into the spreadsheet according to the currency used in the testimonial and the value of that currency in the year in which the claimant left their country of origin.

Exceptional to this are any testimonials for which the analyst was able to conclude that the values were not listed in regard to the year in which the claimant left their country of origin. This was the case in the following circumstances:

- a. The form itself instructed claimants to report values for a particular year, regardless of when they left their country of origin (for example: one version of the forms instructed all claimants to list the value of their assets as of 1949).
- b. The claimant listed values in a currency which was not in circulation at the time in which they left their country of origin (for example: a testimonial which reports values in NIS or EUR, despite the fact that the claimant left their country of origin in 1952).
- c. The claimant explicitly wrote that the values were reported in regard to a different year.
- d. In the analyst's judgement, it is not reasonable for the values listed to reflect the year in which the claimant was displaced.
- e. Any other circumstance in which the analyst concluded that a year other than the year of displacement should be used.

Stage 3 – Analysis of Testimonial Data

To effectively and efficiently analyze the testimonial data, the following procedures were followed:

Historical exchange rates for the testimonial currencies were identified in the following sources:

- a. IMF Tables: "Exchange Rates Selected Indicators." IMF data. Accessed August 28, 2024. <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61545850>
- b. IFS – IMF 1950: International Financial Statistics: International Financial Statistics, December 1950. Washington, D.C: International Monetary Fund, 1950, p. 34 & 54
- c. Pacific Exchange Rates: Antweiler, Werner. "Foreign Currency Units per 1 U.S Dollar, 1948-2015." PACIFIC Exchange Rate Service, 2016. <https://web.archive.org/web/20150512095429/http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca/etc/USDpages.pdf>.

It should be noted that the world exchange rate mechanism from 1944 until 1973 was operated under the auspices of the Bretton Wood agreement. Under this agreement, exchange rates were determined by pegging the countries rates to the gold standard and movements between major currencies were comparatively rare. Changes had to be formally implemented only after an application to the IMF/World bank. There were no constant hourly or daily changes as there are today – indeed rates could remain unchanged for years on end.

Because different testimonials were submitted at different times, individuals left their country of origin at different times, and values were listed using different currencies, a “base year” was identified and defined as the year in which the testimonial loss values are stated. A “valuation start year” was also identified, based on the circumstances governing each country. In each asset category, the relevant valuation start year is used as a benchmark. Testimonial data for each country was then converted to the valuation start year in two steps.

- a. Base year values for each loss category in the testimonial files were converted from the testimonial currency to USD in the base year using the exchange rate data (for example, real estate in Syria with a base year value of 20,000 SL in 1953 was converted to a value of 9,132 USD in 1953).
- b. The base year value in USD was then converted to the country’s “valuation start year” in USD using the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Inflation Calculator (Inflation Calculator | Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (minneapolisfed.org)) (for example, real estate in Syria with a converted value of 9,132 USD in 1953 was converted to a value of 7,617 USD in 1947, as this was the base year for valuation for Syria).

It should be noted that testimonials given in NIS were not used due to the assumed difficulty in recalling and converting values in these cases which would call into question their reliability.

Relevant population data and socioeconomic breakdowns of classes for each country were determined through primary and secondary research materials. Testimonial data was then divided into social classes based on the percent of population per socioeconomic breakdown, using the available data from relevant research materials. Social classes were consolidated into three groups:

- d. Wealthy and Upper Middle
- e. Middle
- f. Lower Middle and Poor

The summary of each country-specific testimonial data yielded a series of values per socioeconomic class. The median of the data in each social class was then calculated and multiplied by the number of households per class to determine the total asset value per class.

Due to the small number of testimonials in several of the categories, the following adjustments were made:

- a. The median calculation for each group includes the highest value of the class immediately below. For example: the range for the wealthy and upper middle class begins at the highest value of the middle class and extends to the highest value in the wealthy and upper-middle class group, thus creating a continuous range for calculations
- b. In cases where there were less than 10 testimonials in total in a given loss category, the median of all of the data in the category was used rather than dividing the data into the three classes above. The median was multiplied by the total number of households to arrive at a total loss value for the category.

2.7. Methodology for present day valuation

The above steps are meant to document Jewish refugees' losses, which include the assets' market value at the relevant benchmark year (or a substitute value based on the best evidence available), plus interest. The final figures should reflect the actualized, present-day valuation of all assets under consideration, reflected in 2024 US dollars (USDs).

Due to the high number of countries under consideration, a preference emerged for a single standard with which to measure all principal amounts. In addition, the fact that the testimonial data had been converted into USDs for base year values and valuation start year values supports the decision to rely on a rate of interest measured in USDs. The choices available are therefore between relying on either nominal or real inflation rates, the US consumer price index inflation rate, or some other relatively risk-free rate, in order to actualize the valuation principles in the most substantive and appropriate manner possible. Judgement was that the latter inflation rates are too reliant on particular economic trends in the United States and are not the best determinants of an interest rate that fully actualizes the value of the assets under consideration. And while there is no internationally recognized, absolutely risk-free rate, it was decided to use the 10-year US Treasury Yield Rate.

Furthermore, it was resolved that a compound interest formula is the most appropriate formula for calculating actualized value plus interest, instead of simple interest, in order to show the present market value of the assets under consideration in addition to compounded interest rates on those assets. $FV = PV (1+i/n)^{nt}$. This formula takes into account both inflationary and interest on value effects and thus reflects the most substantial actualized value of the original assets. The compound interest formula was applied on a yearly compounding basis, ending on December 31, 2024.

2.8. Methodology for the remaining 7 country reports

Four reports have been published under this project scope, finding **\$166,239,520,930** of lost assets across Egypt, Syria, Iran and Iraq. This project also encompasses seven additional countries:

- Aden
- Algeria
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Morocco
- Tunisia
- Yemen

However, the documentation available for review of these seven countries was not on par with the data collected for the first four. Despite a thorough review of historical sources, discussions with subject-matter experts, and community leaders, as described above, the collection of available testimonial data was insufficient to be relied upon to conclude on the financial value of the Jews' lost assets. Therefore, to estimate financial losses, an updated valuation methodology was used. We note that the resulting conclusions are provided for illustrative purposes only and should not be considered as exact figures.

Due to the lack of reliable testimonial and historical data for the seven remaining reports, it was determined that the analysis for Egypt, Syria, and Iraq would be used for illustrative purposes. Iran was left out of this analysis due to its valuation start year being significantly different than the other three countries (1979). Iran also had very different circumstances in comparison to the other countries reviewed at the time. It was reasoned that the Jewish population's circumstances across the ten countries were similar in many ways, and therefore the lost assets found, at 1948 values, in the first three countries was used to determine the value of lost property per person, as shown in the table below.

Table 5 - Range of Lost Assets for Egypt, Iraq, & Syria (\$, 1948)

Range of Lost Assets for Egypt, Iraq, & Syria (\$, 1948)			
	Egypt	Iraq	Syria ⁶⁰
Total Value (\$, 1948)	1,147,100,811	656,611,052	215,562,196
Population ⁶¹	75,000	135,000	30,000
(\$) Value per person	15,295	4,864	7,185

This determined the range of lost assets across Arab countries: Jews lost an estimated **\$4,864 to \$15,295** per person. This range was then applied to the population of each remaining country and a mid-point was calculated, per the table below.

⁶⁰ Syria's valuation start year is 1947, therefore it was decided to convert Syria's total assets as of 1947 to 1948 values to properly calculate a range across the three countries (Egypt, Iraq, and Syria). The reported total assets for Syria as of 1947 (\$ 200,167,458) were converted to the 1948 USD value (\$ 215,562,196) using the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis' Inflation Calculator (<https://www.minneapolisfed.org/about-us/monetary-policy/inflation-calculator>).

⁶¹ All population figures are based on Roumani population chart, for the year 1948.

Table 6 - Range of Lost Assets for Remaining Seven Countries (\$, 1948)

Range of Lost Assets for Seven Countries (\$, 1948)							
	Aden	Algeria	Lebanon ⁶²	Libya	Tunisia	Yemen	Morocco ⁶³
Jewish Population	8,000	140,000	6,000	38,000	105,000	55,000	265,000
Estimated - Low Range	38,910,285	680,929,980	29,182,713	184,823,852	510,697,485	267,508,206	30,467,470
Estimated - High Range	122,357,420	2,141,254,847	91,768,065	581,197,744	1,605,941,135	841,207,261	336,863,513
Estimated - Mid Point	80,633,852	1,411,092,414	60,475,389	383,010,798	1,058,319,310	554,357,734	183,665,491

We note that though this methodology is intended for informative and illustrative purposes only, it is still lacking in that it is based on values found in other countries and is not adjusted to reflect the exact situation of each jurisdiction. Similar to other attempts to value lost assets following wars and other tragedies,⁶⁴ this project was predicated on the availability of contemporaneous evidence, historical sources, and testimonial data. The inability to rely on the latter opens the door for inaccuracy, overstatement, and falls below the standard set for this project. Additionally, this method does not consider country-specific considerations such as GDP, the Jews' socio-economic status and their relative wealth as compared to non-Jews, and their ability to take their assets with them when leaving the countries. It also does not reflect macro-economic conditions that might have impacted the value of the property in question.

In the absence of the "best evidence" to reach accurate and verifiable country-specific values, other valuation exercises have applied various levels of discount factors to manage the risk of overstatement created by the methodologies' shortcomings. For example, the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) notes:

*"For instance, in the case of estimated cost of repair work not yet completed, in the absence of documents such as a quotation or description of damage, a 50 per cent discount factor was applied to the amount claimed. On the other hand, when claimants filed optional documents that had not been required upfront but which could serve to substantiate the claim, this would result in an add back to the adjusted value. The total of all deductions and add backs would result in an assessment score expressed as a percentage and applied to the adjusted value. The assessment score could not be higher than 100 per cent or lower than 0 per cent."*⁶⁵

62 All population figures are based on Roumani population chart, for the year 1948. However, we note Lebanon's population is based on estimates for 1958, as the base year valuation date for the country is 1967, and 1958 is the last population estimate available through Roumani that predates 1967.

63 As Morocco had no state-directed confiscation of Jewish-owned assets, and many Jews were able to divest themselves of their assets and/or bring them out of the country, it was deemed inappropriate to try and project wholesale losses of assets. Therefore, a range based on communal assets of the first three reports was used for Morocco instead.

64 As outlined in IOM's "Property Restitution and Compensation: Practices and Experiences of Claims Programmes" (2008) publication.

65 2008. "Property Restitution and Compensation: Practices and Experiences of Claims Programmes." International Organization for Migration.

To accommodate the issues listed above, it was determined that a discount factor should be applied to the range of values for each of the seven countries. A discount factor of 50% was determined based on precedent discounts and the following:

- To migrate for the risk of overstatement if any evidence fell sort of standards
- To migrate risks due to limited testimonial data
- To account for some countries, such as Morocco, where the Jewish population was able to divest their assets and/or bring them out of the country, limiting total property losses
- To account for other countries, such as Yemen, where the population was mostly rural and poor, and there was a lack of public synagogues
- To account for other countries, such as Lebanon, where some of the Jewish population was able to leave and liquidate their assets in a relatively orderly fashion prior to the outbreak of the civil war in 1975
- To account for other countries, such as Algeria, where some of the Jewish population received compensation from the French government

The discount factor of 50% was applied across the range of values for each of the seven countries, as shown in the table below. This led to a mid-point of **\$1,865,777,494** across all seven countries.

Table 7 - Range of Lost Assets for Remaining Seven Countries after discount (\$, 1948)

	Aden	Algeria	Lebanon	Libya	Tunisia	Yemen	Morocco ⁶⁶
Discount	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Estimated – Mid-Point (with Discount)	40,316,926	705,546,207	30,237,695	191,505,399	529,159,655	277,178,867	91,832,746

Finally, using the previously discussed present valuation methodology, each of the seven countries estimated mid-point with discount were brought forward to a present-day value as of December 31, 2024. This led to a total present value of **\$96,556,730,734** across all seven countries. See the tables below:

⁶⁶ It is noted that Morocco's range is based on communal assets only, as many Moroccan Jews were able to divest themselves of their assets and/or bring them out of the country, therefore communal assets were most likely the largest loss category.

Table 8 – Range of lost assets & estimated present values for remaining Seven Countries (\$, 1948)

	Estimated Mid-Point with 50% Discount (\$, 1948)	Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024) ⁶⁷
Aden	40,316,926	2,102,856,725
Algeria	705,546,207	36,799,992,688
Lebanon ⁶⁸	30,237,695	818,350,236
Libya	191,505,399	9,988,569,444
Morocco ⁶⁹	91,832,746	4,789,827,140
Tunisia	529,159,655	27,599,994,516
Yemen	277,178,867	14,457,139,985
Total of Remaining Country Reports	1,865,777,495	96,556,730,734

Range of Lost Assets for Seven Countries (\$, 1948)							
	Aden	Algeria	Lebanon ⁷⁰	Libya	Tunisia	Yemen	Morocco ⁷¹
Population	8,000	140,000	6,000	38,000	105,000	55,000	265,000
Estimated - Low Range	38,910,285	680,929,980	29,182,713	184,823,852	510,697,485	267,508,206	30,467,470
Estimated - High Range	122,357,420	2,141,254,847	91,768,065	581,197,744	1,605,941,135	841,207,261	336,863,513
Estimated - Mid-Point	80,633,852	1,411,092,414	60,475,389	383,010,798	1,058,319,310	554,357,734	183,665,491
Discount	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Estimated - Mid-Point (with Discount)	40,316,926	705,546,207	30,237,695	191,505,399	529,159,655	277,178,867	91,832,746
Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024)⁷²	2,102,856,725	36,799,992,688	818,350,236	9,988,569,444	27,599,994,516	14,457,139,985	4,789,827,140

67 Rates from 2024 to 1954 are from "Interest Rates: Long-Term Government Bond Yields: 10-Year." Federal Reserve Economic Data. 2024 rate represents average interest rate through December 31, 2024 based on available data. Retrieved from <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=IRLTLT01USQ156N>; Rates from 1954 to 1948 are from "An Update of Data shown in Chapter 26 of Market Volatility." R. Shiller, Princeton 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~shiller/data.htm>. R. Shiller notes that pre-1953 rates are government bond yields from Sidney Homer A History of Interest Rates

68 All population figures are based on Roumani population chart, for the year 1948. However, we note Lebanon's population is based on estimates for 1958, as the base year valuation date for the country is 1967, and 1958 is the last population estimate available through Roumani that predates 1967. We also note that the estimated present value is based on the start year of 1967 for Lebanon, while all other countries are based on 1948

69 It is noted that Morocco's range is based on communal assets only, as many Moroccan Jews were able to divest themselves of their assets and/or bring them out of the country, therefore communal assets were most likely the largest loss category.

70 We note Lebanon's population is based on estimates for 1958, as the base year valuation date for the country is 1967, and 1958 is the last population estimate available through Roumani that predates 1967. We also note that the estimated present value is based on the start year of 1967 for Lebanon, while all other countries are based on 1948.

71 As Morocco had no state-directed confiscation of Jewish-owned assets, and many Jews were able to divest themselves of their assets and/or bring them out of the country, it was deemed inappropriate to try and project wholesale losses of assets. Therefore, a range based on communal assets of the first four reports was used for Morocco instead.

72 Rates from 2024 to 1954 are from "Interest Rates: Long-Term Government Bond Yields: 10-Year." Federal Reserve Economic Data. 2024 rate represents average interest rate through December 31, 2024 based on available data. Retrieved from <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=IRLTLT01USQ156N>; Rates from 1954 to 1948 are from "An Update of Data shown in Chapter 26 of Market Volatility." R. Shiller, Princeton 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~shiller/data.htm>. R. Shiller notes that pre-1953 rates are government bond yields from Sidney Homer A History of Interest Rates.

Additional historical context was provided across all loss types under review for each of the seven countries, however additional valuation details were not provided in these sections.

Grand Summary Chart

Lost Assets Across All Countries (\$)		
Country	Base Year Value (\$, 1948) ¹	Estimated Present Value (\$, 2024)
Egypt	1,147,100,811	59,816,315,234
Iran²	5,879,126,747	61,491,251,179
Iraq	656,611,052	34,239,408,861
Syria³	200,167,458	10,692,545,656
Subtotal of Comprehensive Reports	7,883,006,068	166,239,520,930
Aden	40,316,926	2,102,856,725
Algeria	705,546,207	36,799,992,688
Lebanon⁴	30,237,695	818,350,236
Libya	191,505,399	9,988,569,444
Morocco	91,832,746	4,789,827,140
Tunisia	529,159,655	27,599,994,516
Yemen	277,178,867	14,457,139,985
Subtotal of Remaining Country Reports	1,865,777,495	96,556,730,734
GRAND TOTAL	9,748,783,563	262,796,251,664

¹ All country base years are for 1948, except for Iran (1979), Syria (1947), and Lebanon (1967). Note for the remaining seven countries (Aden, Algeria, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, and Yemen) the value is based on an estimated mid-point with discount, based on updated methodology discussed in detail within chapter 2.

² Note Iran's Base Year is 1979.

³ Note Syria's Base Year is 1947.

⁴ Note Lebanon's Base Year is 1967.

Chapter 3

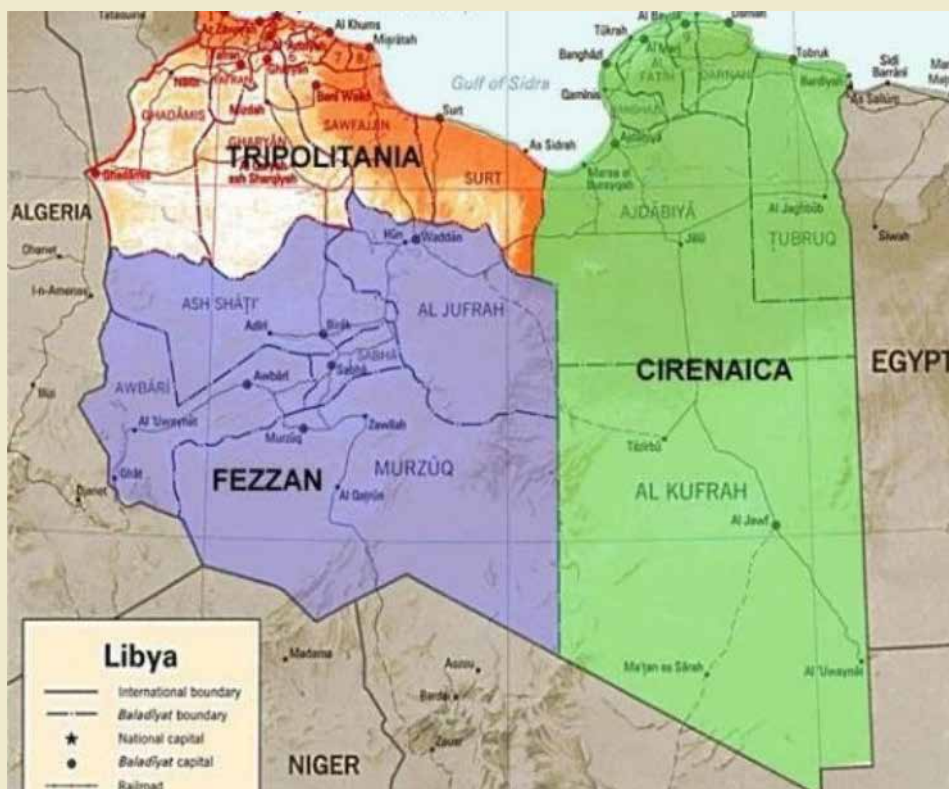
Libya Historical Section

Section 1 – Historical Background

Origins of the Jewish Community in Libya

Jewish presence in the territory of modern-day Libya, particularly in the western province of Tripolitania and the eastern province of Cyrenaica, has deep roots extending back to antiquity. Early traditions suggest that Jewish settlement in the region can be traced to the era of King Solomon, while archaeological evidence indicates a presence as far back as the time when Phoenician seafarers established trading outposts along the African coast more than 2,500 years ago⁷³.

Map 2 - Libya's Three Provinces: Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan



Source: Institute for Policy Studies

By the 4th century BC, Jewish communities were established in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, evidenced by discovered artifacts from this era. Inscriptions found in Benghazi and other sites in Libya further confirm the existence of a large Jewish

73 Goldberg, Harvey. Libya and the Jews of Libya. In Haim Saadoun (Ed.), *Libya*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2007, p. 11 [Hebrew]; Hagag-Lilouf, Yaacov. Demography. In Saadoun, Libya, pp. 24-25. [Hebrew]

community with a well-organized structure, dating back to the onset of Roman rule in 146 BC. During this period, the majority of Jews resided in agricultural villages, engaging in various trades such as pottery, seafaring, stonemasonry, weaving, and mercantile activities.

Other inscriptions tell us that in 71 A.D., Titus exiled 12 ships full of Jewish captives from Judea to Cyrenaica following the destruction of the Second Temple⁷⁴. By the 5th century AD, Saint Augustine documented the substantial Jewish presence in Oea (modern-day Tripoli) and lauded the renown of its Jewish scholars⁷⁵.

Very little is known about the Libyan Jewish community in the first few centuries of Arab rule, but with the rise of the Almohad dynasty to power in North Africa in the 12th and 13th centuries, many Jewish communities were devastated, including Libyan Jewry⁷⁶. After 1492, Libya's Jewish community saw an influx of refugees expelled from Spain, enriching its cultural fabric. Subsequently, immigrants hailing from various Mediterranean regions, notably from Livorno, Italy, and Tunisia, chose to make Libya their home, further diversifying its population⁷⁷.

During the Ottoman period, most Jews were Ottoman subjects ruled by the regulations of the Pact of Omar, which became a social practice in Libya⁷⁸.

Ottoman Reforms and Their Impact

The reforms instigated within the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century (Tanzimat) initiated a certain shift in Jewish-Muslim relations in Libya, weakening the influence of the Pact of Omar. In the wake of the Tanzimat, change was felt in many areas: Jews were allowed to leave their separate neighborhoods, ancient synagogues underwent refurbishment while new ones were erected, an increasing number of Jews secured positions within the state apparatus, and their involvement in both local and foreign trade burgeoned⁷⁹.

Yet, despite these advancements, the full realization of the Tanzimat reforms in Libya remained elusive, hampered by the resilient grip of established religious regulations that had solidified into accepted societal norms. Fearing potential reprisals from the Muslim populace, Jews hesitated to discard the distinctive garb mandated for them and refrained from engaging in horseback riding. The non-fulfillment of these traditional conditions of patronage might have drawn sharp reactions from the local Muslims⁸⁰. While the abolition of the Jizya tax marked a significant stride, it was in fact replaced by the imposition of a military service fee (*Bedel-i Askeri*⁸¹), despite

74 Roumani, Maurice. *The Jews of Libya – Coexistence, Persecution, Resettlement* (Yedioth Ahronoth Books, 2017), p. 24 [Hebrew].

75 Harkins, Franklin. Nuancing Augustine's hermeneutical Jew: Allegory and actual Jews in the Bishop's sermons. *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 36.1 (2005): 41-64.

76 Roumani, 2017, p. 25; Fierro, Maribel. "The Almohads (524–668/1130–1269) and the Hafṣids (627–932/1229–1526)." Chapter. In *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, edited by Maribel Fierro, 66-105. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

77 Hagag-Lilouf, Demography, p. 24; Simon, Rachel. The Sephardi Heritage in Libya. *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 10.3 (1992): 90-112.

78 Simon, p. 196

79 Simon, p. 197

80 Roumani, Morris. The Jews in their Surroundings. In Saadoun, *Libya*, pp. 47-48. [Hebrew]

81 İlker Aytürk, "Bedel-i Askeri", in: Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World, Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman. Consulted online on 12 March 2024 http://dx.doi.org/bengurionu.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1878-9781_ejiw_SIM_0003350 First published online: 2010.

compulsory conscription not being enforced in Libya until 1911⁸².

The concept of equality between Jews, Christians, and Muslims – one of the pillars of the Tanzimat reforms – was met with surprise and disapproval by the Muslim society, except for a minority of Westernized elites. Justin Alvarez, the British Consul in Tripoli at the beginning of the 20th century, attested that "the idea of the judicial and political equality of Moslems and non-Moslems... is especially distasteful to them [i.e., the Arabs]."⁸³

The Ottoman government in Libya endeavored to safeguard Jews, recognizing their importance to the Libyan economy and their status as part of the population deserving protection. However, local officials, including police officers, often failed to provide adequate protection to Jews and, in some cases, even colluded with attackers. There were instances of robbery, murder, and attacks on both property and religious sites. Following these acts, local authorities frequently hesitated to apprehend and punish perpetrators⁸⁴.

In response, Jews opted to negotiate with local authorities to maintain temporary peace, understanding that seeking justice from higher authorities might not provide a long-term solution. To enhance their security away from centralized power, Jews in rural areas were forced to establish alliances with tribal chiefs, who offered protection in exchange for a symbolic form of slavery. This practice persisted even after the official abolition of slavery in the Ottoman Empire, with remnants still visible in the early 20th century⁸⁵.

A testimony from the beginning of the 20th century tells us that in Libyan villages, the Muslims "will not allow a Jew to pass in front of them, mounted on an animal, nor will they permit him to carry a weapon. The Jews lower themselves and accord honour to the Muhammedans [i.e., Muslims], the lords of the land."⁸⁶

In the mountainous area southwest of Tripoli, "every Jew had a Berber lord who championed his cause in any quarrel."⁸⁷

Physical attacks, and cases of forced conversions to Islam, expanded and intensified from the mid-nineteenth century. These occurred on the background of what was perceived by the surrounding society as transgressions by Jews against Muslim patronage laws. Between 1880 and 1900, three Jews were murdered by Arabs because they refused to get off their cattle⁸⁸.

Correspondence between the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU) representatives in Tripoli and the AIU headquarters in Paris recounts cases of violence against the Jewish community. In a letter from July 10, 1879, for example, the president of the Tripoli branch wrote to Paris,

82 Simon, p. 197.

83 Stillman, Norman A. *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), p. 48.

84 Simon, pp. 204-205

85 Simon, pp. 204-205

86 Goldberg, Herve E. Patronage as a Model for Muslim-Jewish Relations in North Africa: Contributions of Anthropological Field Research and a Case from Libya. *Religion Compass* 6.2 (2012): 155.

87 Goldberg, 2012, p. 155.

88 Roumani, 2007, p. 48.

*"During the evening of January 2 last, in Zliti some Muslims attacked the house of a Jew. They stole all he had and seriously injured him. During the evening of February 24 at Amruss, Muslims entered the house of another Jew, stripped him of all his possessions, struck and injured both him and his wife and killed his twenty-year-old son. On the evening of March 29 at Tajura, Muslims robbed a Jew of all his belongings, injured him, and killed a young child at its mother's knee. Finally, on the evening of June 25 at Zawia Garbia... the Sacred Synagogue was plundered and profaned. The intruders profaned it in every way possible. After making off with three Torah Scrolls, they threw all the rest into the street and trampled on them."*⁸⁹

Another letter from the community in Tripoli, from February 21, 1897, says that,

*"The situation of the Jews in all parts of Tripolitania is very dangerous. From all the rights which, through his known goodness and generosity, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan has granted to all his subjects without distinction of race, we are unfortunately excluded. We suffer from extreme ill-treatment and persecution at the hands of the Muslims in our country... It is quite evident that, to the Muslims, Jews are of no account, our personal safety cannot be guaranteed, and our belongings are not our own."*⁹⁰

Antisemitic ideas from Christian Europe also infiltrated North Africa through Christian elements. In 1862, a blood libel was spread in Benghazi by local and foreign Christians, and part of the Muslim local population sided with the perpetrators⁹¹.

The 20th century

In the early 20th century, amid the twilight of the Ottoman Empire, Libya's Jewish community numbered around twenty thousand amidst a predominantly Muslim population of approximately one million. By the mid-century, this community had swelled to about thirty-five thousand, living alongside one and a half to two million Muslims. The bustling hub of Tripoli housed the majority of Jews, roughly two-thirds, with an enclave in Benghazi, while others found homes in towns and villages along the coastal plain, as well as nestled within the Garian and Fossa mountains at the heart of the Tripolitanian plateau⁹².

Primarily engaged in commerce, ranging from local markets to international trade, many Jews also pursued skilled crafts such as goldsmithing, tailoring, blacksmithing, carpentry, and medicine. While a minority enjoyed considerable wealth, the majority of the community belonged to the lower middle class, with some even grappling with poverty. Approximately a tenth of the community held foreign citizenship, predominantly stemming from ancestral emigration from Italy to Libya during the Ottoman era. This group, largely composed of Italian nationals, along with a contingent holding British, French, Austrian, and German citizenship, included prominent merchants and contractors whose children often assimilated European culture. Despite this, they

89 De Felice, Renzo. *Jews in an Arab Land: Libya, 1835-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), p. 21.

90 De Felice, pp. 22-23.

91 Roumani, 2007, p. 48.

92 Simon, Rachel. Jewish-Muslim Relations in Libya in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century. In Hava Lazarus-Yafeh (Ed.), *Muslim Authors on Jews and Judaism* (pp. 195-218). Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1996. [Hebrew]

maintained strong ties to their community, consistently providing support to its various segments⁹³.

Italian Colonialism

During Italian rule, spanning from 1911 until the British takeover in 1943 during World War II, the experience of Libyan Jews was characterized by a mix of positive strides and negative repercussions. Initially, Italian governance ushered in notable improvements in the status of Libyan Jews compared to their treatment under Ottoman rule. Italian authorities extended equal legal rights and protection to Jews, opening avenues for greater economic and social advancement within the Jewish community. This newfound equality enabled Jews to pursue various professions, including commerce, crafts, and medicine, leading to significant achievements in these fields⁹⁴.

Furthermore, Italian investment in infrastructure development brought about modernization in cities, enhancing access to education and healthcare for all residents, including Jews. This period witnessed the establishment of Jewish schools, cultural institutions, and community organizations. Jewish contributions to the development of the capital city were notable, reflecting their integral role in its prosperity. The migration of Jews to mixed neighborhoods indicated a better sense of security among them⁹⁵.

As modern influences permeated Libya in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Jews assumed intermediary roles between the local populace and European entities, contributing to economic changes and receiving foreign citizenship, predominantly Italian. Western culture and the emancipation experienced by Western European Jews served as models for imitation by Libyan Jews and other minorities⁹⁶.

However, these developments gradually disrupted the traditional hierarchy between Jews and Arabs in Libya and caused more and more resentment toward the Jewish community. Jews were perceived by their neighbors as aligned with foreign interests, exacerbating economic competition and fomenting hostility⁹⁷.

Before the Italian entry into Tripoli in October 1911, riots erupted in the city, resulting in harm to Jews. Similar attacks and robberies occurred in Benghazi. Many Jews, desiring liberation from Muslim rule, welcomed the Italian presence, anticipating an improvement in their situation. This sentiment was reinforced when Jews faced attacks from Ottomans and Arabs, further strengthening the expectation of improved conditions under a new government⁹⁸.

The First World War significantly deteriorated relations between Jews and Muslims in Libya. Attacks against Jews prompted some in the Jewish community to align with the Italian side, deepening the divide. While Arabs harbored resentment toward the Ottoman rulers, significant support for the Italians came from certain segments of the Jewish community. This alliance with a European power further alienated Jews from the Arab population, as it symbolized not just conquest but also a defeat of Islam⁹⁹.

93 Simon, p. 195.

94 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51.

95 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51.

96 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51.

97 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51.

98 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51.

99 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51.

The Italians initially favored educated and established Jews, leveraging their economic prowess and linguistic skills as mediators with the majority Arab population. This led to a privileged status for some Jews, exacerbating the growing cultural and social disparities between them and both their less fortunate brethren and the Arab populace¹⁰⁰.

Amidst growing nationalist and Islamic sentiments during local uprisings against the Italians, tensions between Jews and Arabs escalated. Major cities became battlegrounds for frequent clashes, and in 1920, both Tripoli and Benghazi witnessed serious incidents, indicative of the deepening animosity. By 1932, the situation had reached a boiling point, as evidenced by the Union of Italian Jewish Communities secretary's statement, saying that "Not a day passes without some scuffle with the Arabs; in fact, the situation today can be described as worse than before the Italian occupation."¹⁰¹

An organized attack on the Jewish quarter in Tripoli in September of that year underscored the gravity of the situation, narrowly averted by Italian authorities' intervention¹⁰².

Jewish Contribution to Libya

During the 19th century, the influx of Livorno's Jewish immigrants ("Grana") to Libya bolstered economic ties with Italy. Jews played pivotal roles as diplomatic envoys, commercial liaisons, and infrastructure architects for economic enterprises, bridging gaps between Italian interests and the local Arab populace. They introduced Italian-language newspapers, Western education, and facilitated the entry of Italian influence.

At the end of the Ottoman period, the economic situation of the Jews of Tripoli underwent a significant transformation. The period of prosperity and economic growth that characterized the years 1870 to 1880 gave way to a time of economic decline, driven by war, drought, and instability. However, from the late 19th century until the Italian occupation, the region experienced a relative revival – seen by locals as a new "Golden era" – primarily due to the flourishing of trans-Saharan trade routes that passed through Tripoli. The Jewish community benefited the most from this trade boom.

Fourteen prominent Jewish families dominated international commerce during this period. Tripoli lay along the most important corridor of trans-Saharan trade. Several Jewish merchant families prospered from this trade: the Arbiv family specialized in leather and textiles; the Nunes-Weiss, Nachum, and Lavi families traded in cotton, leather, and wool; and the Debash, Levi, and Srur families – who were French nationals – were active in the textile, leather, and cotton trades.

Under Italian rule, Jews held key administrative, transportation, and commercial positions, including monopolizing wholesale trade. Jews served as intermediaries between predominantly agricultural Arab communities and burgeoning Italian industrial centers, leveraging their linguistic skills and commercial acumen. Furthermore, they contributed significantly to the Italian military supply chain, construction projects, and industrial sectors, bolstering the Italian presence in Libya¹⁰³.

100 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51.

101 De Felice, pp. 75-76.

102 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51

103 Hagag-Lilouf, Economy, pp. 40-44.

A census conducted by Italian authorities in 1928 revealed that Jews constituted a significant proportion of Libya's industrial landscape, owning a quarter of the manufacturing plants and workshops, more than ten times their share in the overall population. Jews also exhibited higher rates of employment in these enterprises compared to their Muslim counterparts, attributed partly to their proficiency in the Italian language¹⁰⁴.

Demographics

Map 3 - Jewish Communities in Libya, Before 1908



Source: Gilbert, Maps

When Italy conquered Libya in 1911, Italian authorities registered approximately 21,000 Jews, most of them living in Tripoli¹⁰⁵. By 1939, the Jewish population grew to over 30,000, comprising 3.4% of the total population in Libya and 9.5% of the total population in the four major population centers. The last demographic census conducted by Italian authorities in 1938 showed the demographic breakdown between Italians, Arabs, and Jews below, as well as a breakdown of the demographic distribution between these three groups in the country's four largest cities:

Table 9 - Demographic Breakdown Between Jews, Arabs and Italians in Italian Libya, 1939

Population	Total	Percentage
Italian	119,139	13.3%
Arab	744,057	83.2%
Jewish	30,578	3.4%
Total	893,774	100%

Source: Annali di Statistica, p. 269

104 Hagag-Lilouf, Economy, pp. 40-44.

105 See <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries-2> for historical context on Jewish population in Libya

By the late 1940s, the Jewish community grew to a peak of 38,000 Jews¹⁰⁶, with about half living in the city of Tripoli¹⁰⁷ and another 6,000 in Cyrenaica Province. No Jews were known to live in the interior province of Fezzan.

Table 10 - Demographic Breakdown Between Jews, Arabs and Italians in Major Population Centers in Italian Libya, 1939

City	Italian	Percentage	Arab	Percentage	Jewish	Percentage	Total
Tripoli	47,442	42.0%	47,123	41.7%	18,467	16.3%	113,032
Misrata	1,735	3.7%	44,387	94.2%	977	2.1%	47,099
Benghazi	23,075	34.5%	40,331	60.4%	3,395	5.1%	66,801
Derna	3,562	20.3%	13,555	77.4%	391	2.2%	17,508
Total	75,814	31.0%	145,396	59.5%	23,230	9.5%	244,440

Source: Annali di Statistica, p. 269

World War II in Libya

By the late 1930s, Italy's alignment with Nazi Germany began to impact the Jewish community in Libya. It faced a turning point when Italy introduced severe discriminatory laws against its Jewish population in 1938. These laws, referred to as the Fascist "Race Protection Laws," were extended to Libya, albeit not immediately enforced until 1940. They imposed restrictions such as barring Jews from state employment and skilled professions. Additionally, Jewish individuals were compelled to have their passports stamped with the label "Jewish race."¹⁰⁸

In 1941, the arrival of German troops in Libya, reinforcing the Italian presence, further exacerbated hardships for the Jewish community. Economic constraints were imposed, and Jews holding foreign passports were deported. French nationals were sent to Tunisia, then under Vichy rule, while British citizens were transported to Italy and eventually to death camps such as Bergen-Belsen and Ravensbrück. Some were later exchanged for German prisoners of war held by the British¹⁰⁹.

In February 1942, Benito Mussolini, Italy's leader, issued an order to relocate Jews residing in Cyrenaica out of the war zone to deter potential collaboration with the British forces. Over the span of May to late October 1942, approximately 2,600 individuals were transported in convoys, enduring a five-day journey to reach an internment camp at Giado. Situated on an isolated military post, Giado was enclosed by barbed-wire fences and located on the high plateau, 235 kilometers (146 miles) south of Tripoli. Poor hygiene, lack of food, overcrowding, and severe weather conditions weakened

¹⁰⁶ Comprehensive calculations of Jewish populations throughout the Arab world in 1948 conducted on behalf of Dr. Maurice Roumani indicated a total Jewish population in Libya of 38,000

¹⁰⁷ Dr. Shlomo Navon, Report Concerning Mission to Morocco, Tunisia, and Tripoli on Behalf of Zionist Histadrut Management in March – April 1948: "There are about 20,000 Jews living in Tripoli."

¹⁰⁸ Ochayon, Sheryl. *The Jews of Libya*. Consulted online on 14 March 2024 <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/the-jews-of-libya.html>

¹⁰⁹ Goldberg, 2002, pp. 439-440.

the inmates, and when typhus spread through the camp in December 1942, over five hundred of them died¹¹⁰. Jews from Tripoli were sent to Sidi Azaz and Buq Buq labor camps.¹¹¹

1945 Pogrom

Following the end of World War II, the political future of Libya became an urgent and unresolved issue – one that placed the country's Jewish community in a precarious position. This uncertainty erupted into violence on the evening of November 4, 1945, when a series of brutal anti-Jewish riots broke out in Tripoli. The violence quickly spread across the city and to other towns in the following days.

The riots began in several parts of Tripoli simultaneously, and by the next morning, Muslims from neighboring villages had poured into the city. Zachino Habib, a Jewish community leader, urgently appealed to the authorities for military intervention, recognizing that the local police force – which included many Muslims – was incapable of restoring order. A British colonel promised to investigate, but meaningful action was only taken late in the evening of November 6.¹¹²

During the first three days of the violence, the civil police largely stood by and did nothing, occasionally confiscating loot from individual rioters but failing to stop the attacks. Despite repeated pleas from Jewish leaders, the British Military Administration delayed its response. It was not until Tuesday afternoon that British troops were deployed with orders to shoot rioters and impose a curfew – by which time the situation had spiraled out of control. Order was not restored in Tripoli and surrounding towns until the following day, November 7.

The riots – better described as pogroms – were marked by looting, arson, physical assault, and in many cases, sexual violence. Jews living outside the old Jewish quarters suffered the worst, while those within the walled ghetto were often able to defend themselves. The attackers were predominantly poor Muslims, including men, women, and children, though some wealthier individuals encouraged the violence from the sidelines. In a few instances, individual Muslims helped Jews escape or hide.¹¹³

The unrest spread from Tripoli to other towns across Libya, often following a short delay. While Jewish residents in some villages received advance warning, appeals to local police and Muslim leaders generally proved futile. The violence in rural areas was particularly devastating. Ninety-seven Jews were killed in the provinces and forced conversions to Islam occurred in at least one town. Nine synagogues were razed, and thirty-five Torah scrolls destroyed.¹¹⁴

By the time the pogroms ended, the toll was staggering. A total of at least 133 Jews were killed, including thirty-six children. Entire families were wiped out. Hundreds were injured, some gravely. Approximately 4,000 Jews were left homeless, and another 4,200 were driven into destitution. More than 1,000 homes and businesses were looted

110 Simon, Rachel. "Giado Concentration Camp", in: *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, Executive Editor Norman A. Stillman. Consulted online on 14 March 2024 http://dx.doi.org/bengurionu.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/1878-9781_ejiw_SIM_0008510 First published online: 2010.

111 De Felice, p. 181.

112 Goldberg, 2002, pp. 440-441.

113 Goldberg, 2002, pp. 440-441.

114 Goldberg, 2002, pp. 440-441.

or burned in Tripoli alone. The town of Qusabat saw widespread rape and instances of Jews converting to Islam under duress. The material damage was also immense: claims for losses amounted to more than a quarter of a billion lire – over half a million pounds sterling.¹¹⁵

As one contemporary observer noted, the pogroms delivered “an unprecedented blow... to the Jews' sense of security.” While a few prominent Arab notables condemned the violence, the British Military Administration's Annual Report for 1945 observed that “no general, deep-felt sense of guilt seems to animate the Arab community at large: nor has it been too active in offering help to the victims.”¹¹⁶

Some evidence suggests that the riots were not entirely spontaneous. They may have been orchestrated, perhaps by nationalist elements seeking to expel all foreigners. The slogans shouted by rioters tended to invoke religion more than political ideology, pointing to a broader desire to overthrow European rule and restore Islamic authority. In that context, the targeting of Jews was likely seen as a way of reasserting a traditional social hierarchy in which Jews occupied an inferior status.¹¹⁷

Figure 1 - Gravesite of Libyan Jews murdered during 1945 riots in Tripoli



Source: Ya'akov Hagag-Liluf. Courtesy of the author

The Beginning of the End

Following the declaration of Israel's independence on May 14th, 1948, a wave of thousands of Arab volunteers surged from French North Africa, traversing eastward through Libya to join the Arab forces in opposition to the fledgling Jewish nation. Their presence in Libya sparked unrest among the local Arab population, escalating threats against the Jewish community with each passing day. Despite pleas to the British authorities, who maintained control over the region, to implement security measures,

115 Stillman, 1991, pp. 144-145.

116 Stillman, 1991, pp. 144-145.

117 Goldberg, 2002, pp. 440-441.

tensions reached a boiling point. On the eve of Shavuot, June 12th, 1948, the Libyan Jews, still reeling from the 1945 pogrom, found themselves once again engulfed by unbridled riots¹¹⁸.

A violent Arab mob armed with clubs adorned with razor blades, iron rods, knives, axes, hatchets, and various other weapons, surged in vast numbers towards the Jewish quarter. In stark contrast to the riots of 1945, this time the Arab assailants were met with staunch Jewish resistance. The mob, recognizing the futility of overcoming the steadfast defenders in the quarter, redirected their aggression towards the vulnerable sectors of the city. They launched targeted assaults on individual Jews, pillaging homes, shops, and even desecrating a Jewish synagogue with fire. Responding swiftly to the chaos, British authorities declared a state of emergency and took decisive action to restore order. Unlike their previous response during the 1945 riots, this time they displayed unwavering resolve, dispersing the rioters with firmness¹¹⁹.

Official records from the British administration indicate that in the tumult of 1948, 13 Jews and 3 Arabs lost their lives, with 22 Jews and 13 Arabs sustaining severe injuries. However, accounts from Jewish sources, regarded as more accurate, paint a grimmer picture, reporting 14 Jewish fatalities, 22 severe injuries, approximately 100 minor injuries, and the horrifying rape of a woman. While the loss of life among the Jewish community was comparatively lower than the 1945 riots, the devastation to property was profound. Hundreds of residences lay in ruins, leaving around 1,600 Jews displaced and homeless. Moreover, dozens of families found themselves without livelihoods, burdening the already strained communal resources¹²⁰.

The pogroms of 1945 and 1948 left Libyan Jewry deeply disheartened, with little optimism for their future in the country. Following the events of June 12, a coalition of forty-two Libyan and Italian Jews conveyed their concerns to representatives from the four major international powers (US, UK, France, and the Soviet Union) involved in determining the fate of the former Italian colony. In a memorandum, they denounced the violence perpetrated by Arabs and expressed their despair over the situation¹²¹:

*"[W]e must ask you, who control our fate, for ships and transportation to emigrate en masse anywhere in the world where we can be assured of work, housing, and a future for our children, and where the tears we have shed for so many years may provide fertile moisture for a new life."*¹²²

In a heartfelt appeal addressed to the United Nations Security Council, certain individuals within the community depicted their shared suffering as "unbearable materially, economically, as well as morally," pleading to "be free of this hell." As indicated in the letter, a staggering 60 percent of the community relied on financial aid from international Jewish philanthropic organizations. The letter concluded with a poignant plea: "We make one cry to all free peoples: Set us free! Set us free! Set us free!"¹²³

118 Hagag-Lilouf, Yaacov. *Riots in Libya (1945, 1948, 1967): Background, Course, Results and Reactions*. Consulted online on 14 March 2024 <https://rb.gy/yx52s7> [Hebrew]

119 Hagag-Lilouf, *Riots*

120 Hagag-Lilouf, *Riots*

121 Stillman, p. 155.

122 De Felice, p. 226.

123 Stillman, p. 155.

*"We live under the spectre of the pogroms; our minds are full of fear at the danger that disorders may break out at any moment and the so-called irresponsible elements (in this territory no one is responsible), thirsting for blood and plunder, will assault us in our homes... We have knocked on all doors to escape from this hell on earth, but we have found that the local Authorities prevent all Jews from leaving the territory... Our only fault is being Jewish. It is worse for us than being in a concentration camp because there we would not have to think about how to feed our children, risk our skin, and fear attacks by evildoers, since the camp guards would protect us against assault."*¹²⁴

By 1949, a sense of desperation pervaded among many Libyan Jews, who felt ensnared by the British Military Administration's restrictions preventing their emigration. These restrictions extended to both Israel, the desired destination for the majority, and Italy, favoured by some of the more assimilated elite members. A significant number of individuals opted for clandestine emigration, much of which was coordinated by emissaries from Israel. Throughout the latter half of 1948, a total of 1,041 young people embarked on such underground journeys¹²⁵.

Following the lifting of travel restrictions by the British Military Administration in 1949, a surge of exit permits was issued, with over 600 permits granted within days. By February 2, 1949, thousands of Jews queued up to obtain exit permits, with Tripoli alone issuing over 8,000 permits within a short span. Over the subsequent months, around 2,000 individuals departed the country independently, primarily heading to Italy and subsequently to Israel. The remainder of the community anxiously awaited mass evacuation. Between April 1949 and December 1951, approximately 31,000 out of a total Jewish population of 35,000 to 36,000 left the country on Israeli vessels, the last two of which departing from Tripoli harbour shortly after Libya gained independence at the end of 1951¹²⁶.

Independent Libya: Remnants of a Community

On December 24, 1951, Libya declared its independence and liberation from the British administration. However, independence was far from promising for the remaining 4,000 Jews in Libya. On October 20, 1952, the Libyan nationalist newspaper *Al Libi* expressed indignation over the presence of Jews in Libya, accusing them that,

*"The Jews living in Libya today... dominate the largest commercial and industrial activities and exploit all means with their skilful and enterprising methods... They call themselves Libyan citizens in order to exploit this status to attain their goals and interests... Could these Jews be sincere? We have never heard of a single Jew actively participating in the cause of our Country and we have never seen a Jew sacrificing his person or goods for the Country! And so, what do they represent? The position of the Jews in Libya represents a form highly dangerous for the common cause of the Arabs and constitutes an insidious disease in the body of the nascent Country..."*¹²⁷

124 De Felice, pp. 226-227.

125 Stillman, p. 155.

126 Stillman, pp. 155-156.

127 De Felice, p. 387.

Within a span of two years, the Libyan government enacted significant measures targeting the Jewish community. This included the abolition of the Rabbinical Court and the dismissal of the last remaining four Jews in the police force. The catalyst for these actions emerged in the early months of 1953, driven by Libya's pursuit of admission to the Arab League. Upon its admission to the League, Libya imposed additional restrictions on the Jewish community and its connections with Israel, including the termination of postal services to Israel, and the closure of the Jewish Agency acting as the immigration office to Israel. Also, the last youth movement "Maccabi Tripoli" was shut down by the Libyan authorities. Renewing expired passports became a cumbersome process due to deliberate obstacles¹²⁸. Jews were only given one time "temporary travel certificate" that omitted any reference to their citizenship. In 1956 Jews were requested not to mention that they want to immigrate to Israel but rather to Italy.

In a further escalation after the 1956 Suez Crisis, on March 30, 1957, the Libyan government enforced a law prohibiting any individual or entity in Libya from engaging in direct or indirect agreements with entities or individuals in Israel, punishable by up to eight years in prison or hefty fines. Additionally, a government bureau was established to seize goods bearing even a slight resemblance to the Star of David from Jews, Muslims, or foreigners alike¹²⁹. Families wanting to travel abroad had to leave behind one first degree member to guarantee return and to prevent travel to Israel.

Gina Waldman, a young Jewish woman from Libya, vividly recalled an incident from her childhood in 1957 when she was just nine years old. In her math class, the teacher posed a disturbing question: "If you have ten Jews and you kill five, how many do you have left?" Reflecting on this memory years later, Gina remarked, "That was my first taste of hate."¹³⁰

The hostility towards Libyan Jews escalated further on May 9, 1957, when the Libyan government issued a directive mandating all Libyan Jews with relatives in Israel to register with the Libyan boycott office. This office served as the primary instrument for pressuring Arab nations to cease trade with Israel. Given that more than ninety percent of Libyan Jews had already left the country between 1949 and 1952, virtually every Jewish family in Libya was affected by this order¹³¹.

Libyan newspapers persisted in propagating hateful rhetoric aimed at Jews as a collective. On August 15, 1960, El-Raid ('The Guide') proclaimed the necessity for a "settling of accounts" between Jews and Islam. Similarly, Tarabulus al-Gharb ('Western Tripolitania') asserted that "the Jews are the authors of the misfortunes of all colonialist countries." Al-Libi argued that peace remained elusive as long as Jews harboured unwavering animosity towards the Arab world¹³². In 1960, also the Alliance Jewish School was closed.

The Libyan authorities pursued further measures to isolate Jews and sever their ties with Israel. On March 21, 1961, a law was enacted to confiscate all assets and properties

128 Gilbert, Martin. *In Ishmael's House – A History of Jews in Muslim Lands* (Yale University Press, 2010), loc. 426/693 in epub version.

129 Gilbert, loc. 426/693.

130 Gilbert, loc. 427/693.

131 Gilbert, loc. 427/693.

132 Gilbert, loc. 427/693.

in Libya associated with Israeli organizations or individuals residing in Israel or holding professional connections with them¹³³.

Figure 2 - A photo taken in the Jewish quarter of a Libyan city¹³⁴



Source: Courtesy of JIMENA

Figure 3 - The main Synagogue in Tripoli at its prime

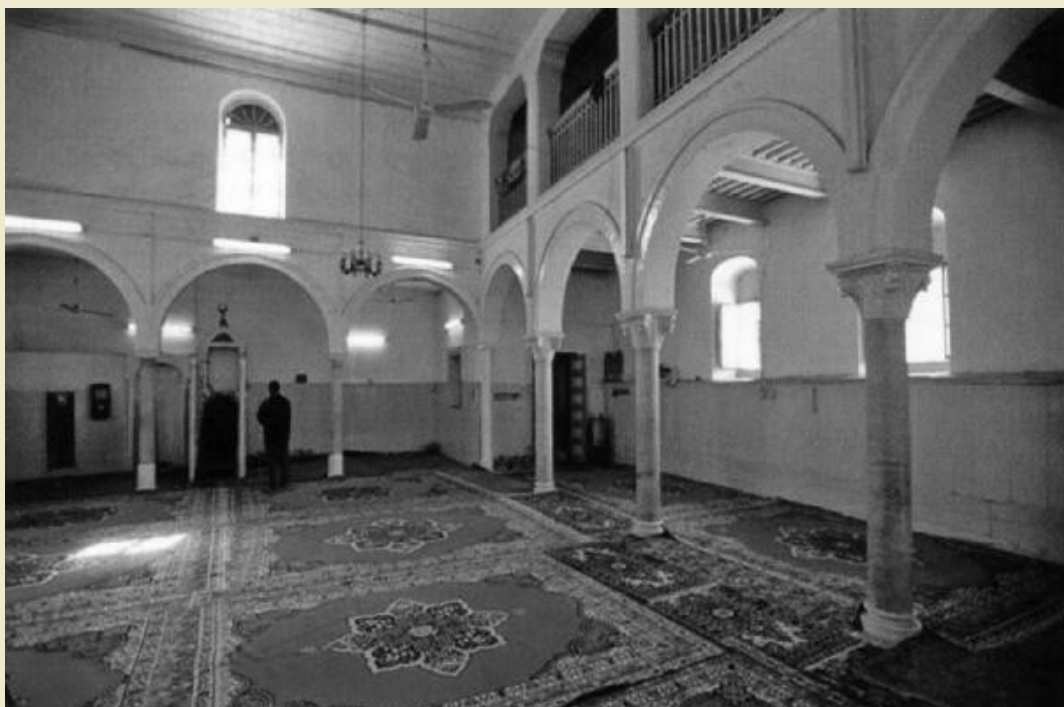


Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

133 Gilbert, loc. 427/693.

134 Retrieved from <https://www.timesofisrael.com/why-jews-from-libya-are-worried-about-the-fate-of-the-countrys-jewish-artifacts/> on 23/12/2018

Figure 4 - The main Synagogue in Tripoli, converted into a Mosque



Source: Ya'akov Hagag-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

The Six Day War

Leading up to the Six Day War in June 1967, anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish propaganda surged in Libya. The Jewish community, in a futile effort to mitigate the looming threat, sent King Idris a telegram expressing solidarity, underscoring their stance of neutrality and unwavering loyalty to the king. However, as hostilities began in Israel on June 5th, demonstrations erupted in Tripoli, resulting in attacks on Jews. Around twenty Jews lost their lives¹³⁵.

135 De Felice, pp. 274-275.

Figure 5 - Riots in Tripoli on the eve of the Six Day War, 1967



Source: Ya'akov Hagag-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

The severity of these events was downplayed by the Libyan government and certain local press outlets. Consequently, the majority of Jews sought to leave Libya, a move supported by authorities in hopes of restoring stability. Within a month, nearly all Jews had departed, with only about 100 remaining, primarily in Tripoli. Jews were permitted to take only a fraction of their belongings, with the vast majority resettling in Italy¹³⁶.

Following the 1969 military coup and Gaddafi's ascension to power, the situation deteriorated further for those who stayed behind. The majority of the Jews left. By 1976, a mere 16 Jews remained in Libya and today there are none¹³⁷.

136 De Felice, pp. 278-279.

137 De Felice, pp. 285-290.

Figure 6: Dismantling of the Jewish cemetery in Tripoli in preparation for new construction



Source: Ya'a kov Hagag-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

Figure 7 - New construction built on top of the remains of Tripoli's Jewish cemetery.



Source: Ya'akov Hagag-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

Chapter 4

Libya Economic Section

Section 1 – Methodological Benchmarks

Based on the information presented above regarding the makeup of the Jewish community in Libya in 1948, the following dates and figures will serve as a methodological benchmark for different points of analysis regarding the analysis of different categories of Jewish assets:

Valuation Start Year:

The year 1948 represents a reasonable benchmark regarding the beginning of the Jewish community's gradual departure from Libya, as well as a reasonable date from which to assess property values, as it predates the downward price-spiral associated with larger waves of Jewish departure in the years following.

Size of the Jewish community:

For the purposes of this report, a total Jewish Libyan population of 38,000¹³⁸ Jews, as supported by Roumani and reported by WOJAC, will be used to value Jewish property.

Distribution of Jewish population:

Based on the information presented below in detail, the Libyan Jewish population was calculated to be 5% rural and a 95% urban.

The distinction between rural and urban communities allows one to draw a simple distinction between vastly different types of communities (in terms of geography, literacy rates and type of education and employment, average size and value of land and property etc.).

Urban areas are widely recognized as larger metropolitan centers and their immediate environs/hinterlands, while rural communities are characterized by their distance from urban centers, their relatively smaller numbers, and an agriculture-centric way of life

Jewish demographics:

As mentioned in detail below, the average size of a Jewish family being utilized for the relevant period covered, is 5.5.

138 Roumani, Maurice. *The Case 2; WOJAC's Voice* Vol.1, No.1. 1978.

Section 2 – Economic Indicators

The following section is meant to describe the types of activities and occupations that characterized Jewish economic life in the time-period under consideration. The data and conclusions from this section will serve as a point of departure for further analyses regarding the Jewish community's economic strength in Libya.

Population Statistics

When Italy conquered Libya in 1911, Italian authorities registered approximately 21,000 Jews, most of them living in Tripoli.¹³⁹ By 1939, the Jewish population grew to over 30,000, comprising 3.4% of the total population in Libya and 9.5% of the total population in the four major population centers. The last demographic census conducted by Italian authorities in 1938 showed the demographic breakdown between Italians, Arabs, and Jews below, as well as a breakdown of the demographic distribution between these three groups in the country's four largest cities:

Table 11 - Demographic Breakdown Between Jews, Arabs and Italians in Italian Libya, 1939¹⁴⁰

Population	Total	Percentage
Italian	119,139	13.3%
Arab	744,057	83.2%
Jewish	30,578	3.4%
Total	893,774	100%

By the late 1940s, the Jewish community grew to a peak of 38,000 Jews,¹⁴¹ with about half living in the city of Tripoli¹⁴² and another 6,000 in Cyrenaica Province. No Jews were known to live in the interior province of Fezzan.

Jewish Settlement Patterns: Urban vs Rural

In regard to the demographic makeup of the Jewish community, the following demographic distribution is based on the Aliyah records of the 31,359 Jews who left Libya between Israel's declaration of independence in May 1948, and the end of the large wave of Libyan-Jewish Aliyah in 1951:

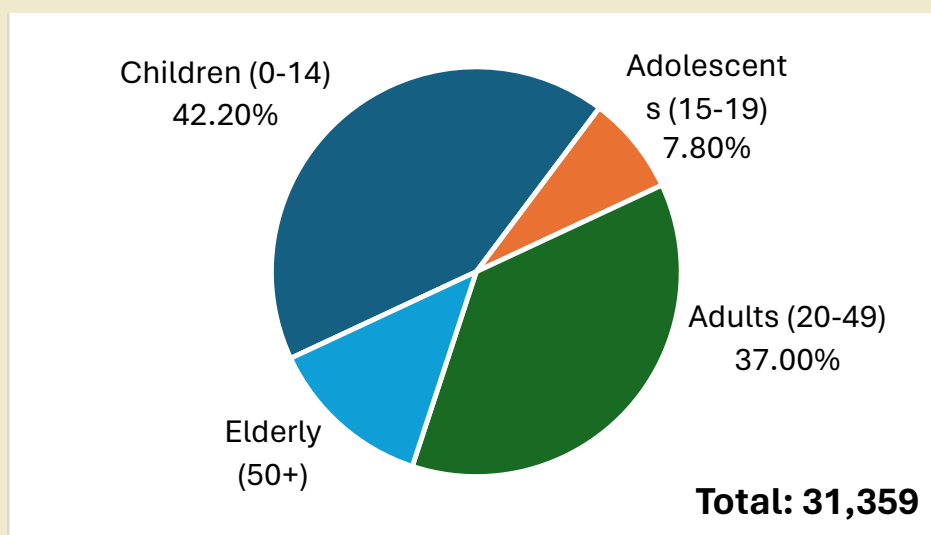
139 See <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-refugees-from-arab-countries-2> for historical context on Jewish population in Libya

140 Annali di Statistica, p. 269

141 Comprehensive calculations of Jewish populations throughout the Arab world in 1948 conducted on behalf of Dr. Maurice Roumani indicated a total Jewish population in Libya of 38,000

142 Dr. Shlomo Navon, Report Concerning Mission to Morocco, Tunisia, and Tripoli on Behalf of Zionist Histadrut Management in March – April 1948: "There are about 20,000 Jews living in Tripoli."

Figure 8 – Demographic Breakdown of Jews Who Left Libya Between May 14, 1948 and 1951¹⁴³



Furthermore, previous statistical analyses of the 1931 census show more precise data regarding the average birthrate in different Jewish communities in Libya.¹⁴⁴

Table 12 – Average Size of Jewish Family, by Community, based on 1931 Census¹⁴⁵

Location	Average Family Size
Tripoli	4.38
Rest of Towns & Villages in Tripolitania	4.25
Benghazi	4.48
Rest of Towns & Villages in Cyrenaica Province	4.45
National Average	4.36

It should be noted, however, that the Jewish community underwent a significant period of demographic growth immediately after the collection of this demographic data, experiencing a growth rate of 23% (compared to a 15% growth rate in the Muslim community), putting the average family size at around 5.36 up to 1939, when a general drop in growth rates affected all groups due to WWII. The growth rate in the Jewish community rose once more after 1945 to 21%.¹⁴⁶ This information, coupled with demographic data collected on Jewish refugee families who fled to Italy and registered by the Jewish Aid Committee (Deputazione Israelitica de Assistenza – DIA) indicated a larger average family size than the data collected in 1931 suggested, with demographic data collected Jewish refugee families indicating an average family size between 5 and 6 individuals.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Hag'ag'-Liluf, pg. 196

¹⁴⁴ Saadon, pg. 28

¹⁴⁵ Saadon, pg. 28

¹⁴⁶ Hag'ag'-Liluf, pg. 254

¹⁴⁷ Felice, pgs. 280-281

The demographic data regarding the average size of a Jewish family in Libya from 1931 serves as a firm basis upon which to judge the average Jewish family size in Libya. However, later information suggests a gradual increase in the average size of the Jewish family up until the mass departure of the Jewish community beginning in 1948. A general average middle point of 5.5 individuals per family from the available figures above was therefore settled on. By implementing this data to the total number of Jews residing in Libya in 1948 (38,000) and combining the demographic data available based on Aliyah records from Libya (representing 90% of the Libyan Jewish community at the time) it is possible to estimate the average size and makeup of a Jewish household.

Based on the list of known Jewish communities in Libya, it is possible to confidently say that the locales easily identified as urban include Tripoli, Benghazi, Derna, Misurata, and Sirte. The combined population from these locations amount to 27,092 Jews out of a reported population of 38,000. Adding the 4,000 Jews with foreign nationality, who it was assumed also lived in urban environs, yields a total of 31,092, or 81.8%. Furthermore, research has shown that the hinterland towns around Tripoli and Benghazi are also largely characterized by urban ways of living despite not being large cities. The Jews living in these locations were almost entirely disconnected from rural agricultural professions and ways of living and played a vital link in the commercial belt linking the coast to other locales in Libya and further inland into sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, it was resolved to increase the 81.8% figure.

Given that only a small number of Jews remained in obviously non-urban settings, it was calculated that approximately 95% of the Libyan Jewish community lived in urban settings. By applying this percentage to the 38,000 Jews that made up the Jewish community at its peak in 1948, a total number of 36,100 Jews living in urban locales and 1,900 Jews living in rural locales in Libya was reached. By the late 1970s, no Jews remained in Libya, all forced to leave without their assets.

Figure 9 - Stages of Jewish Displacement from Libya (Years, Number of Jews Departing)



Source: Hagag-Liluf, pp. 20-21, 149

Compensation Efforts by Former Italian Residents of Libya

In addition to attempts to value Jewish assets left behind by Jewish refugees in Libya, compensation claims have been brought forth by Italians who lived in Libya. By 1969, at the time of the military coup by Col. Qaddafi, there remained 20,000 Italians in Libya. A year later, in 1970, these Italian residents of Libya were expelled and their personal and business assets confiscated, along with the remaining Jewish population in Libya.

148 Goldberg, pg. 77 - Describing the Tripolitanian hinterland towns, "All of these were market towns, with markets usually held several times a week. Smaller local markets met once a week, and apparently there was a coordination of market days among the different centers in a region. Many of these centers seemed to be "vacant" towns, with only a few permanent residents, which would fill up with people on market days. For this reason, the Jews often formed a high percentage of the permanent population of these settlements."

This was done in contravention of a 1956 bilateral treaty between Italy and Libya that guaranteed the rights of Italian settlers to their land and to their assets.

In reaction to the expulsion, Italians from Libya founded an organization called the Association of Italians Repatriated from Libya (AIRL) in 1972, the purpose of which was to push for compensation for assets seized by the Libyan government and to demand the right to re-enter Libya after being denied entry by Libya ever since their expulsion. Over the years the Italian Parliament approved some measures to compensate these settlers. For example,

...a law for an advance on compensation for lost assets with scaled coefficients in an average of 15% (Law No. 1066 / 71) "pending international agreements". Subsequently, the repatriated from Libya benefited only from the laws of indemnity, but only in part and without monetary revaluation, in favor of all the owners of assets lost abroad (law n. 16/80, n. 135/85 and n. 98/94). The amount of these provisions did not even cover the nominal value of the losses to 1970.¹⁴⁹

In 2008, Italy and Libya signed a new treaty of cooperation. This treaty did not mention the issue of compensation for lost property, though the Libyan government did approve entry visas for expelled settlers who wished to visit the country.¹⁵⁰ Upon ratification by the Italian Parliament, however, the Italian government (not the Libyan government) agreed to compensate settlers over a period of three years. While in 2012, further compensation was also designated.¹⁵¹

It remains unknown how many of the above Italians were also Jews. It stands to reason, however, that hundreds if not thousands of Jews were included in this category and may have been eligible for this type of compensation.

Libyan Economic Development

In 1953, one year after Libyan independence, Benjamin Higgins, an economist appointed by the UN to evaluate Libya's economic conditions and its potential for development, produced the following economic indicators about the country: At the time, he evaluated, the country's population was slightly over 1 million people, with approximately 300,000 living in Cyrenaica, 750,000 in Tripolitania, and about 50,000 in Fezzan. The country remained an overwhelmingly rural and agricultural society, with most people living at subsistence level. There was barely an industrial sector, and little native capital resources or business infrastructure. The population was 90% illiterate. Annual per capita income was between \$25-35, a figure that put Libya among the poorest countries in the world.¹⁵² In addition, Libya had a comparatively weak international trade network, extremely high rates of unemployment and an infant mortality rate of 40%.¹⁵³ Indeed, at the time, Libya's most valuable source of foreign earnings was revenue received for leasing bases to the United Kingdom and the United States.¹⁵⁴

149 Association of Italians Repatriated from Libya (AIRL): <http://www.airl.it/la-nostra-storia>

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid

152 Vandewalle, pg. 51

153 Ibid., pg. 42

154 Ibid., pg. 45

There is little evidence to suggest that Libya's overall economic conditions experienced significant change in the few years preceding this assessment of the strength of the Libyan economy. Limited documentation exists regarding the structure of the Libyan economy in the 1940s; however, there is some documentation, Italian colonial administration records, touching on the Libyan economy in the 1930s. These records are useful in trying to ascertain a fuller sense of how the economy was built and which segments of the population participated in which industries. For example, records of economic activity by sector in 1936 show the following breakdown:

Table 13 - Main Sectors of Economic Activity in Italian Libya (By Number of Employees), 1936¹⁵⁵

Economic Sector	Percentage ¹⁵⁶
Industry	30.4%
Public Administration	29.8%
Agriculture and Fishing	16.7%
Commerce	10.7%
Transports	5.8%
Domestic Work	3.8%
Legal Profession and Private Teaching	1.3%
Banking and Insurance	1.1%

Furthermore, the country's overall value and quantity of trade imports and exports between the years 1913 and 1955 shows a significant post-WWII drop-in economic activity and an overall small economy compared to neighboring countries.

Overall, the Libyan economy was not a strong one. In 1948, it was still recovering from the aftershocks of WWII and had yet to move past a large base of agricultural and commercial activity. Over a decade later it would begin collecting large revenues from oil.¹⁵⁷

Jewish Socioeconomic Breakdowns

In post-WWII Libya, an American aid organization described half of the Libyan Jewish community as 'poor.'¹⁵⁸ Other sources describe the Jewish community as largely lower-middle class.¹⁵⁹ It was assumed that out of the total population of 38,000 Jews, half, or 19,000 could be categorized as Lower-Middle & Poor class. It should be noted that

155 Annali di Statistica, pg. 270

156 Percentage of sectors was taken on the basis of percentage of workers given no major GDP anomaly between the sectors

157 "Libya Country Profile." BBC News (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13754897>)

158 Roumani, pg. 72 - "The services of Jewish organizations in Libya were limited to the poor among the Libyan Jewish community and to take care of their basic needs. The American Joint Distribution Committee noted that half of the Libyan Jewish population was rated as poor during the post-Second World War period."

159 <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-forgotten-memories-of-libya-s-vibrant-jewish-community-1.6386744> - "The Jews lived mostly in their own neighborhoods, particularly in Tripoli, where they resided in the Jewish Quarter (Haret el-Yahud). They were for the most part from the lower middle class..."

this condition of mass poverty was in part due to the massive dislocation of Jews due to WWII and the result of the pogroms against Jews in both 1945 and 1948, a series of events that caused the flight of at least 4,000 Jews from Tripoli. Furthermore, the overcrowding of Tripoli in and around 1948-49 was in part the result of the BMA's decision to lift the emigration ban on Jews travelling to Israel, resulting in the hurried sale of Jewish businesses and the ingathering of Jews in Tripoli, waiting to leave Libya. Many of these Jews were described as poor and registered as aid dependents, amplifying the sense of Jewish poverty where in fact the situation was more the result of rushed immigration conditions.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, other descriptions of the working classes in Tripoli were relied on to further understand the Jewish population socioeconomic classes. A report by a representative of the Histadrut, written after a visit to Tripoli in April 1948, describes the working Jewish population in Tripoli as divided into artisans, small merchants, and large merchants.¹⁶¹ On the higher end of the wealth spectrum, there are reports corroborating the existence of a large class of Jewish millionaires in Libya: "In Tripoli alone there are about a hundred millionaires."¹⁶²

However, there was not access to more detailed accountings of the probable size of stronger socioeconomic classes in Libya and was therefore resolved to proceed on the basis of available information. Thus, the rest of the Libyan Jewish community (19,000 Jews) was divided into two other socioeconomic classes: 'Middle' class, and 'Wealthy & Upper Middle' class. While the 'Wealthy' class is commonly sized as 0.1% of Jewish households, in Libya there is evidence of at least 100 Jewish millionaires, as quoted above. Thus, it was decided to size the 'Wealthy' class in Libya at 1% of Jewish households, while 'Upper Middle' and 'Middle' were sized at 9% and 40%, respectively, based on available information describing the socioeconomic status of Jews in Libya, and countries with similar sizing, such as Tunisia.

Table 14 – No. of Jewish Urban Households per Socioeconomic Class in Libya (1948)

Socioeconomic Class	% Of Jewish Households	No. of Urban Households per Class
Wealthy & Upper Middle	10%	691
Middle	40%	2,764
Lower Middle & Poor	50%	3,109
Total	100%	6,564

As mentioned above, the urban-rural division of the Libyan Jewish community was calculated to be 95% urban and 5% rural. This translates into 36,100 urban Jews, or 1,900 rural Jews (345 households out of 6,909). It is estimated that these 345 households counted as 'Poor/Lower-Middle' class households, leaving 3,109 urban 'Poor/Lower-Middle' class households.

160 Felice, pg. 195 & 228

161 Dr. Shlomo Navon, Report Concerning Mission to Morocco, Tunisia, and Tripoli on Behalf of Zionist Histadrut Management in March – April 1948

162 Felice, pg. 175

Regarding the distribution of these urban classes, it was possible to assess how many Jews lived in the Jewish quarter of the old city in Tripoli, for example, versus the new, more modern European quarters, where the wealthier classes moved once, they could afford to.

During the Italian era there was a substantial improvement in Jews' living conditions in Libya. With the arrival of the Italians in Libya, new residential quarters were built, and many Jews moved there as well, primarily from more established classes. With the cessation of the Jewish Community's Committee in Tripoli in 1929 and the appointment of non-Jewish Italian commissioner named Munstro, the departure of Jews from the hara accelerated. Munstro designated land for Jewish construction in the new quarters, and the Jews, with the Italians, started construction companies and built modern residential buildings according to Italian master plans and architecture. Around 4,000 Jews from Tripoli left the crowded hara and moved to the modern quarters in the new city to large, spacious houses (some of the Jewish families built entire buildings for the purpose of housing the entire expanded family). Many Jews in Benghazi built new, spacious houses on streets where the majority of residents were Jewish. In other cities as well, with the designation of new lands for the purpose of relieving population density, many Jews moved and improved their living conditions... both within the hara and in the new city, the rich and capable owned houses while the common people, including the middle class, tended to pay monthly rent... There were also Jewish construction companies that built several story-buildings. For example, the Moshe Fallah built buildings (Dar Alkish or Las Dar Liluf) three stories high with 21 or 24 spacious apartments for housing most expanded family members from different generations. The rest of the apartment were rented to Jewish families.¹⁶³

By 1948, of the 21,000 Jews living in Tripoli, two-thirds lived in the hara, while the wealthier third lived in the 'new city.'¹⁶⁴

Jewish Participation in the Libyan Economy

As mentioned above, the great majority of what would become Libyan citizens after Libyan independence in 1952, could be characterized as largely agriculture-based tribes with little ties to international trading and commercial activities. To the extent that Libya's commercial and industrial base was growing in the early to mid-20th century, a large portion of this activity was attributed to the Jewish population in Libya. To understand the development of the Jewish community's economic presence in Libya, the roots of their economic participation in the modern era, starting under Ottoman rule was explored.

Under Ottoman rule, a measure of political stability, along with strengthening ties with different European powers, induced higher rates of economic growth, helped in part by Jewish commercial activity, both internally and internationally. As more and more Jews left the Libyan hinterlands and their agricultural lifestyles and moved to cities along

163 Saadon, pgs. 233-234

164 Dr. Shlomo Navon, Report Concerning Mission to Morocco, Tunisia, and Tripoli on Behalf of Zionist Histadrut Management in March - April 1948 - "There are about 21,000 Jews living in Tripoli.

the coast, Jews urbanized and pursued more commercial and artisanal opportunities, gradually becoming predominant in the coin imprinting industry, the jewelry trade, and the tailoring business.¹⁶⁵ Jews were also present in the Ottoman diplomatic service to Europe and especially to Italy. Over time, as more and more Jews moved from the countryside to the big cities, their economic conditions improved.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, the Jews came to be identified with the 'compradore' merchant class, as agents of foreign economic power, that thrived under Ottoman protection:

*The compradore merchant class benefited from the enhancement of Ottoman state authority and the transition to a more capitalistic economy that meant greater communication and trading between cities and the hinterland. Composed mostly of Libyan Jews or Europeans (in large part Maltese, French, and Italian) and dominant in local and import-export trading, this group had its own courts, some tax exemptions, and state protection. A number of these merchants, including Libyan Jews, held European citizenship, and they defended European interests before and during colonialism. In the city of Tripoli alone, 8,609 Jewish-Libyan artisans and traders had Ottoman nationality, and five hundred others held French citizenship."*¹⁶⁷

This level of Jewish participation in the international trade network that was slowly emerging in Libyan territory played a role in the Jewish reaction to the Italian entry to Libya. In addition to introducing changes to the traditional relationship between the Jewish and majority-Muslim population in Libya, the Italian presence promised more economic investment in Libya and therefore, greater economic growth for those Libyans involved with international trade and internal economic modernization in Libya. Indeed,

*Jewish middlemen tied to Italian interests also welcomed and collaborated with the Italians prior to and during the occupation. Many merchants dominated the import-export trade with Italy and spoke Italian. When Italy began its policy of cultural and economic penetration, the Jews in Tripoli were eager to enroll in Italian schools, work in the companies of the Bank of Rome, and write for Italian newspapers. In 1907, the first Tripoli newspaper in a European language was the Italian *Eco di Tripoli*, edited by Gustavo Arbib. In sum, economic interests motivated many merchants to collaborate with the colonial Italian state. Poor Jews were less enthusiastic than rich merchants; however, it seems most Jews welcomed the Italians.*¹⁶⁸

During the Italian era of the early 20th century, many Libyan Jews enjoyed the fruits of increased Italian economic activity in the region. The Jews came to occupy key position in administration, shipping, commerce, retail trade (which became a Jewish monopoly), industry, banking, and journalism. Jews were also hired as translators and salaried administrators in a variety of services, including insurance, finance, industry and business. Many were also active in the manufacturing sector worked as suppliers of products and goods to Italian occupation forces, and as contractors for paving

165 Vandewalle, pg. 46

166 Saadon, pgs. 34, 35

167 Ben-Ghiat and Fuller, pg. 62

168 Ben-Ghiat and Fuller, pg. 66

new infrastructure and residential quarters throughout Libya (especially the European quarter in Tripoli, into which many able Jews moved to once they could afford to leave the Jewish quarter, known as the 'hara').¹⁶⁹

Figure 10 - Depiction of Jewish economic placement relative to Europeans and Muslims in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco¹⁷⁰



Throughout these years, the modernization of the Libyan economy continued to pressure Jews out of agriculture and landowning and

more towards specialization in trade.¹⁷¹ By the 1930s, up to 85% of the Jews in Libya were engaged in crafts and commerce, while 85% of the Muslim population continued to work in agriculture and related occupations.¹⁷²

Regarding particular descriptions of Jewish participation in the economy, both anecdotal material and data collected by Italian authorities was relied on in order to give a sense of the dimensions of Jewish economic strength and the distribution of Jewish employment in Libya.

In the early 20th century, for example, “[t]he wealthiest of the Jews [had] assets in livestock, real estate, and chattel worth about eight thousand francs.”¹⁷³ The Jews of Benghazi were reportedly “mostly occupied in retail trade. Some were wholesalers and were known as large importers and exporters...Many Jews from Benghazi won high positions in the Italian government. Among them were also doctors and one Jew named Lebramli was the French Consul in Benghazi.”¹⁷⁴ Regarding the Jewish community in Cyrenaica, it was said that “[t]rade, export activity (crops, cotton, leathers, livestock, butter, ivory, ostrich feathers, etc.) and import activity (fabrics, sugar, tea, coffee, rice, spices, haberdashery etc.) were mostly operated by Jews.”¹⁷⁵

Below are some of the employment and business participation figures that animated the Jewish community in Libya from the late 1920s to the 1940s:

169 Saadon, pg. 40
 170 Issawi, pg. 9
 171 Goldberg, pg. 78
 172 Ibid., pg. 77
 173 Ibid., pg. 83
 174 Saadon, pg. 29
 175 Ibid., pg. 31

Table 15 - Ownership of Enterprises in Italian Libya by Demographic Group, 1928¹⁷⁶

Enterprise	Jews		Italians		Muslims		Foreigners	
	Tripoli	Other Locations	Tripoli	Other Locations	Tripoli	Other Locations	Tripoli	Other Locations
Mechanized Enterprises	14	-	106	26	7	1	12	1
Non-mechanized Enterprises	1,860	937	1,117	284	2,085	4,501	294	45
Subtotal	1,874	937	1,223	310	2,092	4,502	306	46
Total	2,811		1,533		6,594		352	

Table 16 - Professional Characteristics of Jews in Tripoli and Benghazi (Per Thousand), 1931¹⁷⁷

Employment	Tripoli		Benghazi	
	LibyanJews	Total Population	LibyanJews	Total Population
Agriculture	2	98	-	135
Industry and Transport	463	503	251	473
Trade and Banking	202	374	185	459
Public and Private Administration	41	94	63	93
Religious Offices and Professional Positions	20	21	14	38
Domestic Services	29	11	1	11
Nonprofessional Property Owning and Independent Wealth	71	71	99	188

176 De Felice, pgs. 64, 65

177 De Felice, pg. 63

Table 17 - Industrial and Commercial Company Ownership by Nationality in Italian Tripoli, 1938¹⁷⁸

	Italian	%	Arab	%	Jewish	%	Foreign	%	Total
No. of Industrial Companies	968	33%	1,158	39%	691	23%	126	4%	2,943
No. of Commercial Companies	921	12%	5,384	68%	1,415	18%	195	2%	7,915

Table 18 - Number of Industrial Companies by Sector in Italian Cyrenaica, 1938¹⁷⁹

Industrial Company Sector	No. of Companies
Clothing	441
Transport	314
Food	197
Mechanical	194
Building	186
Toilets and Urban Cleaning	161
Wood	139
Agriculture	102
Other	1,209
Total	2,943

Table 19 - Number of Commercial Companies by Sector in Italian Cyrenaica, 1938¹⁸⁰

Commercial Company Sector	No. of Companies
Foodstuffs	2,330
Restaurants and Hotels	545
Yarns and Fabrics	523
Livestock	514
Chemicals	401
Furnishings	207
Representations	168
Arts and Crafts	132
Metals and Machines	85
Other	3,010
Total	7,915

178 Annali di Statistica, pg. 270

179 Annali di Statistica, pg. 270

180 Annali di Statistica, pg. 270

Section 3 – Land Distribution

This section will discuss the legacy of the Ottoman land tenure system on the distribution of rural lands in Libya as well as subsequent changes to land registration practices instituted by Italian authorities in the era of Italian colonization. The purpose of this section is to show how the particular practices of the land tenure system in place at the time combined with the Italians' interest in acquiring arable lands for themselves comprised the state of land ownership in Libya at the time. Along with anecdotes describing a trend of Jews moving away from owning rural land, a picture emerges of overwhelming land ownership by the native Muslim population as a legacy of Ottoman land registration practices and Italian colonial control.

The Ottoman Land Code

As with other lands ruled by the Ottoman Empire, the Libyan rural land tenure system was shaped by the Ottoman Land Code of 1856 up until the early 20th century. Under this land tenure system, five categories of land registration were common in rural areas:¹⁸¹

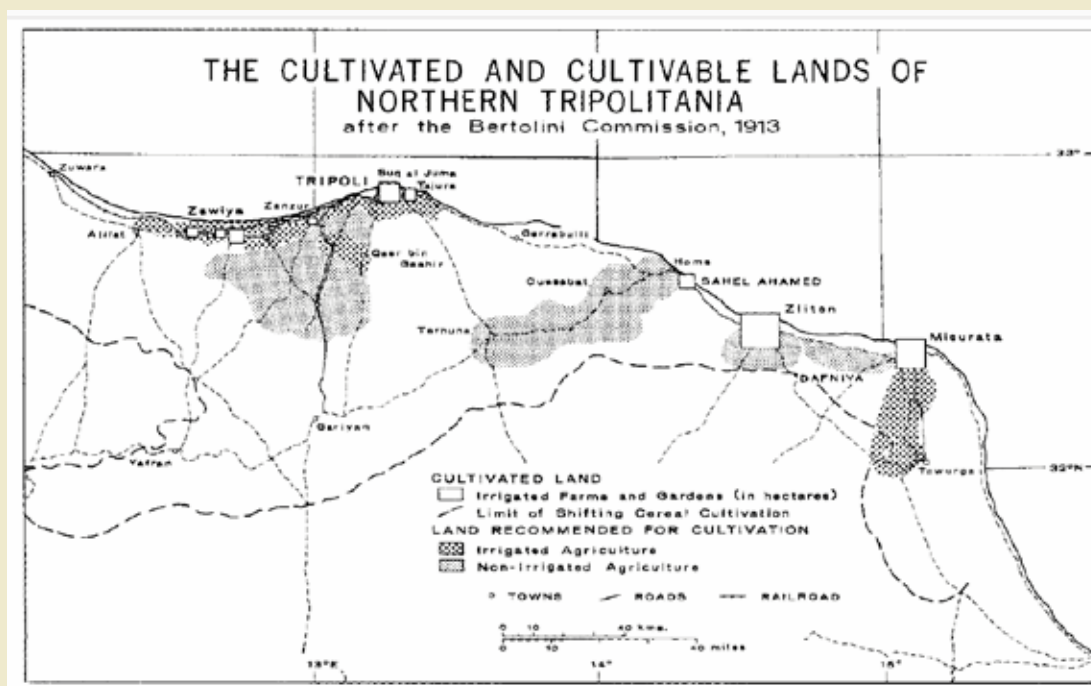
- 1) Mulk, or private (freehold) property, was land to which an individual held full rights of ownership and usufruct as a result of succession, sale, donation, or development
- 2) Waqf was generally constituted from mulk as a permanent endowment to an Islamic religious foundation such as a mosque, a shrine, or one of the Holy Cities of Islam
- 3) Miri was land to which the state held domanial rights and also direct control of usufruct
- 4) Matraka was state land to which a village, tribe, or other unit claimed inalienable usufruct in collectivity
- 5) Mawt, or "dead" land, was either uncultivated or uncultivable and free of individual appropriation

Arable land in Libya was generally constricted to oases along the northern coast around Tripoli. These were connected to a "system that combined sedentary agriculture, cereal cultivation, and pastoralism, with a well-defined apportionment of territory among tribal groups."¹⁸² While there is no comprehensive accounting of the amount and identity of rural land ownership in Libya at the time, maps that show the extent of cultivated and cultivable land in northern Tripolitania were obtained:

181 Fowler, pgs. 5, 6

182 Ibid., pg. 4

Figure 11 - Cultivated and Cultivable Lands of Northern Tripolitania, 1913



Source: Fowler, pg. 3

Italian Colonization of Rural Lands in Libya

The beginning of the Italian colonial project was accompanied by a determined effort to overtake and expand the extent of Italian rural landownership for the purposes of enlarging the Italian colonial project. An Italian land commission completed in 1913, two years after the arrival of the Italians in Libya, “favored a policy of reducing the Libyans’ holdings within the cultivable steppe in order to release land for Italian colonization.”¹⁸³ This project was made more difficult given the “lack of a comprehensive cadastral survey in rural northern Tripolitania,” an administrative failure preventing the establishment of official registration claims by Libyan landowners.¹⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the Italian colonial project gradually instrumentalized the vagaries of the land tenure system to serve their colonial ambitions and reduce Libyans to a primarily labor-oriented role in the colonial project. The Italians slowly transferred and granted Libyan lands onto Italian ownership:

183 Fowler, pg. 6

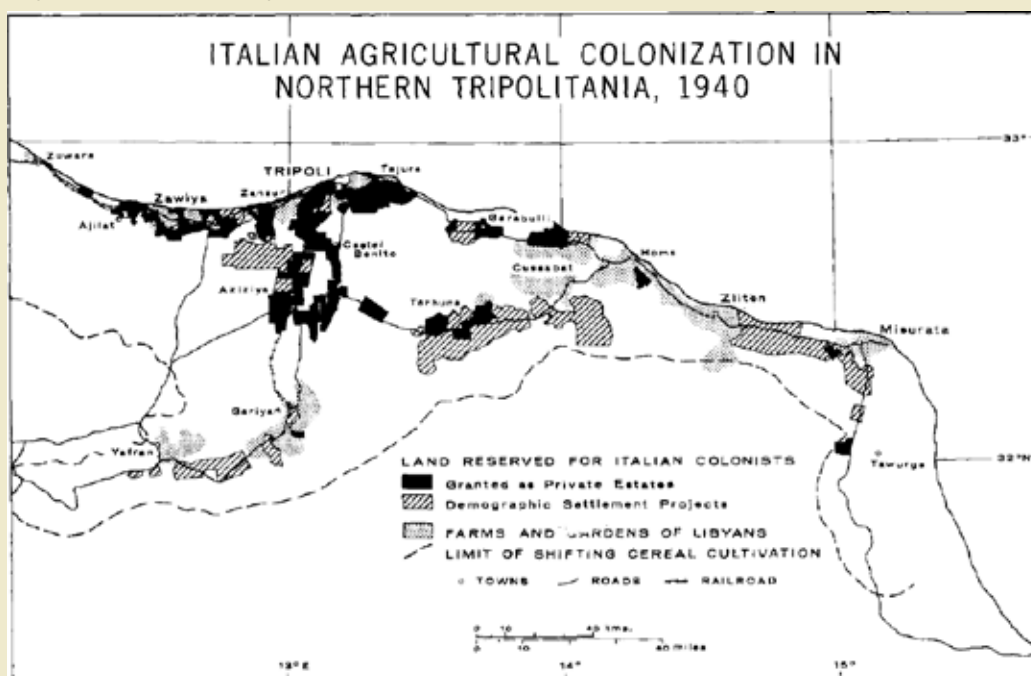
184 Ibid., pg. 7

Table 20 - Land Nationalized and Granted to Italian Colonists, 1914-1931¹⁸⁵

Year	Area (in hectares)	
	Nationalized	Granted
1914-1922	9,313	3,612
1923	26,100	3,970
1924	27,100	9,949
1925	4,887	17,619
1926	35,124	25,596
1927	45,264	27,554
1928	14,722	13,465
1929	17,153	14,944
1930	20,376	5,322
1931	-	1,718
Totals	200,039	123,749

By 1931, the colonial domain covered 200,039 hectares of rural land in northern Tripolitania alone.¹⁸⁶ By 1940, the extent of Italian land grants grew to 231,089.66 hectares, with an additional designation of 148,145.39 hectares of land 'Developed, or in development.'¹⁸⁷

Figure 12 - Italian Agriculture Colonization in Northern Tripolitania, 1940



Source: Fowler, pg. 13

185 Fowler, pg. 11

186 Fowler, pg. 11

187 Fowler, pg. 13

Table 21 - Italian Agricultural Colonization in Tripolitania, 1940¹⁸⁸

Type of colonization	Total Area (in hectares)	
	Granted	Developed, or in development
Private property and State land grants	100,363.29	80,366.39
Colonization companies	130,726.36	67,779.00
Total	231,089.65	148,145.39

Jews and Rural Land Distribution

As mentioned above, Italian authorities did not complete a comprehensive cadastral survey of agricultural rural land in Libya, let alone northern Tripolitania. Moreover, as far as can be ascertained, neither Ottoman nor Italian authorities bothered to differentiate land ownership based on ethnic or religious determinations, meaning, there are no records that indicate the extent of possible Jewish rural landownership.

However, many materials point to the fact that Jews had begun to drift away from rural occupation and landownership in the mid-19th century, a trend that only intensified with the arrival of the Italians and the further modernization of the Libyan economy. Different sources describe how Libyan Jews came to be almost singularly occupied in more urban professions. Demographic data also corroborates the depletion of the rural Jewish population in favor of more urban locales. Altogether, these sources indicate a general dissociation between the Jewish community and different aspect of rural life in Libya, including professional agricultural work and rural landownership.¹⁸⁹ These materials are not conclusive in the sense that it is possible to provide a definitive number of Jews who may or may not have owned rural land in Libya, but it is certain that this number was not a very large one.

Section 4 – Rural Assets

4.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section discusses the condition of rural land and property ownership by Jews in Libya. As previously mentioned, research shows that there is no comprehensive registrar listing Jewish rural landownership in Libya at the time. Likewise, research found that a thorough land registration system was not in place in Libya at the time, and that to the extent that one existed, it was meant to serve the interests of the Italian colonists and did not list land registration according to nationality or religion. In addition, while this research shows that approximately 95% of the Libyan Jewish population lived in urban conditions, the rural 5% mostly lived in cave-dwellings and their connection to agricultural activities was not substantiated.

188 Fowler, pg. 13

189 Roumani, 2007, pp. 50-51.

4.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

Reporting on the condition of the Jewish community in Libya in the early 20th century, Mordechai HaCohen, a well-known Libyan Rabbi noted that the Jews in the countryside had already largely stopped working the land and had turned to other commercial pursuits such as artisanship. Thus, a state of mutual dependency developed between the Jews, who supplied crucial professional knowledge in a range of subjects, and the local population, mostly Berber, who worked in more basic areas.¹⁹⁰ In addition, the Jewish community in Libya was overwhelmingly occupied in more urban pursuits such as commerce, trade, industry, services, administration etc.

The limited nature of Jewish rural landholdings was reinforced by an Italian report, commissioned by the Commissariat for War Supplies and Economic Coordination, describing the influence of Jews on the Libyan economy. The report reads: "Very little land is owned by Jews: they own more buildings, but most of their capital is invested in commercial and, to a lesser extent, industrial enterprises."¹⁹¹

Section 5 – Urban Assets

5.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section will carry out a summary of urban land and urban property owned by Jews in Libya.

5.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

As mentioned previously, it is known that Jews invested most of their capital in real estate,¹⁹² and given the almost complete Jewish presence in urban settings (approximately 95%) versus rural settings, a sizeable Jewish investment in urban property in Libya was surmised.

A compilation of statistical and anecdotal material was relied on in order to begin assessing the scope of Jewish ownership of urban assets.

Furthermore, the following statements were found that help shed light both on the scope and value of Jewish-owned real estate in Libya in 1950:

There is much Jewish property: In Tripoli itself there are over one thousand buildings belonging to Jews, 2/3 of which are located in the new city, and they are large and modern buildings...Today there are many Englishmen and Americans coming to living in Tripoli and they are paying overblown prices (6,000 MAL¹⁹³ instead of 1,000 MAL), though they are not interested in buying, only renting. In fact, three years' rent is worth almost as much as the property's value at these inflated prices, because the Arabs are refusing to buy Jewish property...A Number of Jews in Tripoli own large industrial factories and large real estate properties in large sizes (vineyards etc.). As

190 Saadon, pg. 38

191 Felice, pg. 175

192 AJA MS361, H235/24, English translation of H. Arzieli, "Jews in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica" (August 14, 1949)

193 Military Authority Lira, a historical currency used in Libya during the British occupation of Tripolitania introduced in 1943. Blowers and McLeod. "Currency Unification in Libya." International Monetary Fund.

for Benghazi, there are 300 Jews left, most of whom are wealthy... (Jewish property in Benghazi is represented by about 100 large buildings).¹⁹⁴

This information strengthens the overall picture of the Jewish community in Libya as a primarily urban one which invested its surplus capital in urban real estate.

Section 6 – Loss of Employment

6.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section will carry out a summary of employment and labor for Jews in Libya.

6.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

At this time, however, there is no specific information regarding income statistics or consumption indices for the Jewish community in Libya circa 1948.

Section 7 – Personal Property & Moveable Assets

7.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section will carry out a summary of personal property and moveable assets owned by Jews in Libya. For the purposes of this report, personal property and moveable assets include cash, gold and silver, jewelry, private vehicles, commodity stocks, clothing, household goods and furniture.

7.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

For the purposes of discussion, data was collected from Ministry of Social Equality and Ministry of Justice testimonials were analyzed.

Based on research thus far, limited information regarding the type, scope, and value of personal property and moveable assets owned by Jews in Libya in 1948 was found. The most detailed account of Jews' moveable assets in Libya derives from an account detailing the seizure of a ship carrying Jewish emigrants from Tripoli. The report describes some of the property the Jews were planning on transferring:

When the Jewish emigrants' ship "Galileh" left Tripoli for Israel on 17th August many of the 290 passengers embarking at Tripoli for the Holy Land went on board with only their hand luggage. Customs and Police officers stopped 1,100 pieces of luggage of heavy baggage from going on board. It was suspected that undeclared goods were concealed in the packages... Among other articles, merchandize and valuables not declared by the emigrants there have been found dress length, gold, refrigerators, washing machines, dried goods, more than two tons of tomato conserve, imported food stuff and similar valuable and prohibited material.¹⁹⁵

194 CZA, S20\583, Moving Jewish property abroad (1949-1951), "Report from Meeting Between B. Kalfon and representative of the Libyan Jewish Community, 20/7/1950" (Translated from Hebrew)

195 CZA, C15-2151, Comunita Israelitica della Tripolitania, Extrac from the paper "Sunday Photo Ghibli" no. 252 of 12 October 1952 "Emigrants' Luggage: Contraband."

Section 8 – Business Losses

8.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

This section will carry out a summary of businesses owned by Jews in Libya and business losses.

8.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

The Italian census along with other statistical reports, show evidence of the scope of Jewish activity in a number of business activities in Libya in the 1930s and 1940s. Economic data collected by the Italians indicated the number and percentage of Jewish ownership of commercial and industrial companies in Libya, compared with Italians and Muslims. Other charts show the relative distribution of economic sectors in Libya. While a few other reports mention Jewish-owned business in broad strokes.^{196 197} This data, shows an outsized Jewish economic presence in the more advanced sectors of the Libyan economy at the time (data which is in line with the other research materials collected, that describe the strong position of many Jews in the Libyan economy).

Section 9 – Communal Losses

9.1 Objectives and Scope of Work

In addition to private ownership by Jewish individuals throughout Libya, the various Jewish communities in the country owned communal assets that belonged to the Jewish community as a whole. This section will carry out a summary of communal assets owned by Jewish communities in Libya. Such assets include synagogues, cemetery land, mikvas (ritual baths) and other communal assets such as schools, hospitals, community centers, Zionist organizations, as well as holy books and other moveable assets.

9.2 Research Analytical Conclusions

Evidence showing the scope of different types of communal property owned by Jews in Libya was collected. The property types include synagogues, cemetery lands, ritual baths, law courts, schools, community offices, Zionist clubs, Jewish clinics and Aliyah apartments.

¹⁹⁶ CZA, S20\583, Moving Jewish property abroad (1949-1951), "Report from Meeting Between B. Kalfon and representative of the Libyan Jewish Community, 20/7/1950" (Translated from Hebrew): "A Number of Jews in Tripoli own large industrial factories and large real estate properties in large sizes (vineyards etc.)"

¹⁹⁷ Dr. Shlomo Navon, Report Concerning Mission to Morocco, Tunisia, and Tripoli on Behalf of Zionist Histadrut Management in March - April 1948 - "In 1945, Jewish store comprises 90% of all stores in the new city of Tripoli."

Table 22 - Communal Properties Owned by Jews in Libya in 1948¹⁹⁸

City	Synagogue	Cemetery	Ritual Bath	Law Court	School	Community Office	Zionist Club	Jewish Clinic	Aliyah Apartment
Tripoli	37	2	3	1	5	1	11 ¹⁹⁹	-	1 ²⁰⁰
Benghazi	5	1	3	1	1	1	1	-	-
Misurata	5	1	3	-	-	-	-		-
Tigrina & Beni Abas	2	1	2	-	-	-	-		-
Garian	2	1	1	-	-	-	-		-
Other²⁰¹	22	23	22	-	-	-	9	8	-
Total	73	29	34	2	6	2	21	8	1

Figure 13 - Dar al-Bishi synagogue in Tripoli, 1928



Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

198 Yaakov Hag'ag'-Liluf

199 Including 6 clubs with 10 rooms, 2 Hebrew libraries, and 3 sport stadiums with tribunes

200 Big Aliya apartment with many rooms and an apartment with big field of 'Akhshara'

201 Includes a number of cities and towns that contained 1 synagogue, 1 cemetery, and 1 ritual bath, as well as townships that accounted for 9 Zionist clubs and 8 Jewish clinics

Figure 14 - Dar al-Bishi synagogue during services



Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

Figure 15 - Dar al-Bishi synagogue on the eve of the Jewish community's evacuation



Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

Figure 16 - The ruins of the Dar al-Bishi synagogue in the walled old city of Tripoli, in 2011



Credit: Ivan Sekretarev / AP

Figure 17 - Looted synagogue, location in Libya unknown



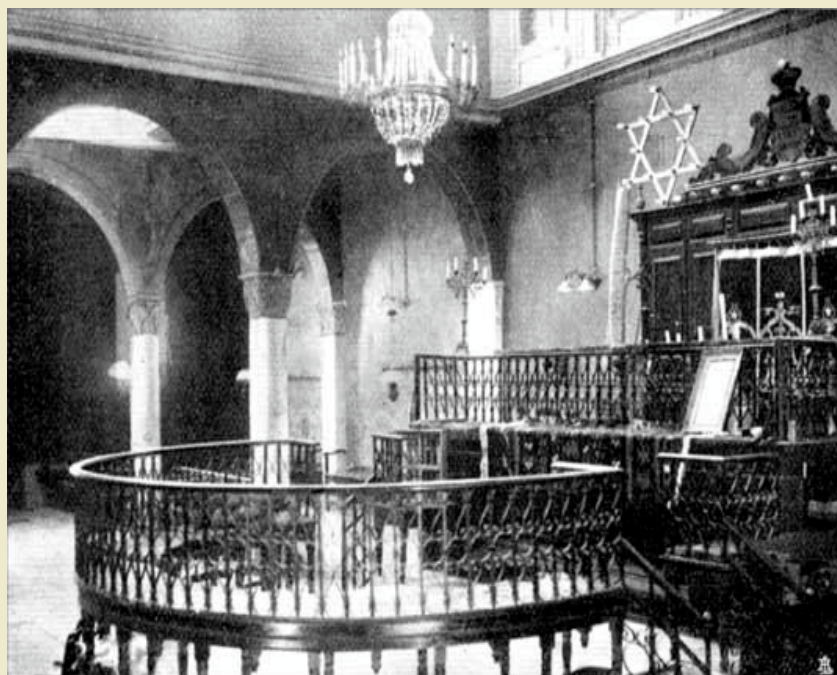
Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

Figure 18 - Looted synagogue, location in Libya unknown



Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

Figure 19 - Bermali synagogue in Benghazi, at its prime



Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

Figure 20 - Pietro Veri Jewish-Italian school in Tripoli, later converted into a museum



Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

Figure 21 - Tripoli's Jewish cemetery after the departure of the Jewish community



Source: Ya'akov Hag'ag'-Liluf. Courtesy of the author.

PV = Present Value

i = Interest rate

n = Number of periods

t = Number of years in the period

The formula was applied using ten-year units with corresponding ten-year US treasury bond average yields. This methodology yielded the results as outlined in Section 12 below.

Section 11 – Summary of Findings

A thorough review of historical sources, discussions with subject-matter experts, community leaders, and available testimonial data was conducted. However, due to the lack of reliable testimonial and historical data for Libya, it was determined that the analysis for Egypt, Syria, and Iraq would be used for illustrative purposes. Lost assets found in the first three countries at 1948 values were used to determine the value of lost property per person. This yielded a range, with Iraq providing the lowest value of lost property per person among the three countries, and Egypt being the highest. The low and high values were then multiplied with the population of each remaining country, and a midpoint was calculated from this range. In the absence of “best evidence” to reach accurate and verifiable country-specific values a discount factor of 50% was determined based on precedent discounts and applied across the mid-point value for Libya.

Table 23 – Range of Lost Assets for Libya, (\$)

(\$) Range of Lost Assets	
Libya	1948
Population	38,000
Estimated – Low Range	184,823,852
Estimated – High Range	581,197,744
Estimated - Mid Point	383,010,798
Discount	50%
Estimated – Mid Point (with Discount)	191,505,399

A compound interest formula which makes use of the principal amount and an average yearly rate based on the ten-year yields on US treasury bonds over a total compound period from January 1, 1949, through December 31, 2024, was applied to the mid-point value for each of the countries on a yearly compounding basis. As there is no internationally recognized, risk free rate, the 10-year US Treasury Yield rate was chosen, as it is an accepted benchmark for the time value of money over long horizons and aligns with established practices in historical asset valuation.

Table 24 – Periodic Compounding Table for Libya, (\$)²⁰²

Year	LT Govt Bond Yields: 10-Year for US (FRED) + 10-Year Treasury [RLONG (Robert Shiller)	(\$)	Balance	Year	LT Govt Bond Yields: 10-Year for US (FRED) + 10-Year Treasury [RLONG (Robert Shiller)	(\$)	Balance
1947				1986	7.68%		1,829,332,028
1948			191,505,399	1987	8.38%		1,982,706,275
1949	2.31%		195,929,174	1988	8.85%		2,158,093,167
1950	2.32%		200,474,731	1989	8.50%		2,341,495,118
1951	2.57%		205,626,931	1990	8.55%		2,541,692,951
1952	2.68%		211,137,733	1991	7.86%		2,741,427,655
1953	2.83%		217,112,931	1992	7.01%		2,933,601,734
1954	2.40%		222,327,260	1993	5.87%		3,105,901,942
1955	2.82%		228,589,477	1994	7.08%		3,325,799,800
1956	3.18%		235,864,338	1995	6.58%		3,544,637,427
1957	3.65%		244,467,489	1996	6.44%		3,772,853,000
1958	3.32%		252,573,624	1997	6.35%		4,012,523,486
1959	4.33%		263,518,481	1998	5.26%		4,223,749,410
1960	4.12%		274,366,658	1999	5.64%		4,461,828,085
1961	3.88%		285,018,944	2000	6.03%		4,730,839,137
1962	3.95%		296,265,316	2001	5.02%		4,968,208,991
1963	4.00%		308,123,335	2002	4.61%		5,197,284,827
1964	4.19%		321,023,432	2003	4.02%		5,405,955,813
1965	4.28%		334,771,261	2004	4.27%		5,637,015,374
1966	4.92%		351,253,166	2005	4.29%		5,878,843,333
1967	5.07%		369,073,410	2006	4.79%		6,160,537,910
1968	5.65%		389,910,680	2007	4.63%		6,445,719,477
1969	6.67%		415,920,971	2008	3.67%		6,682,062,525
1970	7.35%		446,484,231	2009	3.26%		6,899,675,028
1971	6.16%		473,983,938	2010	3.21%		7,121,442,083
1972	6.21%		503,418,341	2011	2.79%		7,319,833,590
1973	6.84%		537,864,741	2012	1.80%		7,451,773,590
1974	7.56%		578,513,869	2013	2.35%		7,626,952,368
1975	7.99%		624,722,664	2014	2.54%		7,820,740,516
1976	7.61%		672,274,471	2015	2.14%		7,987,778,499
1977	7.42%		722,151,634	2016	1.84%		8,134,886,753
1978	8.41%		782,884,587	2017	2.33%		8,324,429,614
1979	9.44%		856,808,464	2018	2.91%		8,566,670,516
1980	11.46%		954,998,714	2019	2.14%		8,750,354,210
1981	13.91%		1,087,846,993	2020	0.89%		8,828,596,960
1982	13.00%		1,229,285,233	2021	1.44%		8,955,949,471
1983	11.11%		1,365,797,358	2022	2.95%		9,220,299,246
1984	12.44%		1,535,679,786	2023	3.96%		9,585,192,589
1985	10.62%		1,698,820,169	2024	4.21%		9,988,569,444

202 Rates from 2024 to 1954 are from "Interest Rates: Long-Term Government Bond Yields: 10-Year." Federal Reserve Economic Data. 2024 rate represents average interest rate through September 30, 2024 based on available data. Retrieved from <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?id=IRLTLT01USQ156N> ; Rates from 1954 to 1948 are from "An Update of Data shown in Chapter 26 of Market Volatility." R. Shiller, Princeton 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~shiller/data.htm>. R. Shiller notes that pre-1953 rates are government bond yields from Sidney Homer A History of Interest Rates.

On the basis of the illustrated mid-point of lost assets for Libya and the application of the aforementioned periodic compounding formula, the estimated value for all assets on December 31, 2024 USD equals **\$9,988,569,444**.

Table 25 – Range of Lost Assets for Libya with Present Value, (\$)

(\$) Range of Lost Assets		
Libya	1948	Estimated Present Value (2024, \$)
Population	38,000	
Estimated – Low Range	184,823,852	
Estimated – High Range	581,197,744	
Estimated – Mid-Point	383,010,798	
Discount	50%	
(Estimated – Mid-Point (with Discount	191,505,399	9,988,569,444

Appendix A: Period One: Ancient Israelite History²⁰³

The illustrious history of the Jewish people in the region is detailed in the Bible and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. These dates are derived from Biblical references.

YEARS – BCE	NOTES
2000-1750	Old Babylonian period
1813-1452	The life of Abraham; begins period of Jewish forefathers
1240 1280-	Exodus from Egypt, Entry into the Land of Israel
1200-1050/1000	Period of the Judges in Israel
1000-587	Monarchical period in Israel
900-612	Neo-Assyrian period
722/721	Northern Kingdom (Israel) destroyed by Assyrians; 10 tribes exiled
587/586	Southern Kingdom (Judah) and First Temple destroyed

203 Jewish Virtual Library, "Timeline for the History of Judaism: Ancient Israelites" accessed on Nov. 6, 2024
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-for-the-history-of-judaism>

Appendix B: Period Two: From the destruction of the first Jewish temple to the rise of Islam 587 – BCE – 683 CE

In the years after the destruction of the Jewish Temple, the “Babylonian Exile” dispersed the Jews throughout the region. During this period, Mesopotamia became the preeminent center of Jewish life between the third and sixth centuries C.E. the Jewish communities in exile played a pivotal role in the development of Judaism. A prime example is the Babylonian Talmud, a foundational text of Rabbinic Judaism, composed between the 3rd and 5th centuries in present-day Iraq. This work, second only to the Hebrew Bible, serves as the primary source of Jewish law (halakha) and theology.

The Sages of Babylon also established the tradition of reading the Torah in an annual cycle, a departure from the triennial cycle practiced in ancient Israel.

Throughout the period of exile, there always remained a presence of Jews in the land of Israel.

PERIOD TWO: FIRST TEMPLE TO THE RISE OF ISLAM ²⁰⁴	
YEARS – BCE	NOTES
541	First Jews return from Babylon to rebuild the city
538-333	.Persian Period
520-515	.Jerusalem ("Second") Temple rebuilt
333-63	.Hellenistic (Greek) period
63	.Rome (Pompey) annexes the land of Israel
.YEARS – C.E	COMMON ERA
70	.Destruction of Jerusalem and the second Temple
132-135	Bar Kokhba rebellion (Second Jewish Revolt
368/426	.Jerusalem Talmud compiled. Babylonian Talmud compiled
570	Birth of Prophet Muhammad

204 Jewish Virtual Library, “Timeline for the History of Judaism: Ancient Israelites” accessed on Nov. 6, 2024
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-for-the-history-of-judaism>

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AJCA	American Jewish Committee Archives ASF	American Sephardi Federation
ASFR	American Sephardi Federation Records CZA	Central Zionist Archives
ISA	Israel State Archives	
JIMENA	Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa PRO	Public Records Office
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	World Organization of Libyan Jews

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