

The Consequences of the Six Day War for the Jewish Communities of Arab countries from Hungarian Perspective

ZOLTÁN PRANTNER
KODOLÁNYI JÁNOS UNIVERSITY
ABDALLAH ABDEL-ATI AL-NAGGAR
ACADEMY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH &
TECHNOLOGY
EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY

Abstract

Jews living in Arab countries faced discrimination even before 1967, namely after the establishment of a territorial Jewish State in 1948. However, the Six-Day War brought them further suffering, which often had a serious impact on the existence of Israelite communities dating back to ancient times. The significant reduction in the size of some Jewish communities in the Arab world depended largely on the policies of their 'mother state'. Thus, Jewish emigration was less decisive in Maghreb countries, where governments sought to protect their Jewish citizens from atrocities fuelled by anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic sentiments.¹ The situation was quite different in the Middle Eastern states, where governments themselves were often responsible for some incidents against Jews. The Hungarian Foreign Ministry also tried to follow all these events, but due to the political and interstate relations of the time, it did not always manage to form a realistic image of them.

Keywords: Six-Day War, Jewish diaspora, exodus, Middle East, North Africa, Arab world

Introduction

Israel's victory in the Third Arab Israeli War had extremely serious consequences for members of the Jewish communities living in Arab countries, who were often regarded by some governments as agents of the State of Israel and therefore as a security threat. As a result, there was hardly any Arab state where demonstrations and anti-Jewish riots did not take place. In Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Morocco angry mobs spontaneously attacked Jewish neighbourhoods in the wake of the victory of the State of Israel. In addition to the destruction of material assets, the riots claimed a particularly high number of deaths in Libya, where survivors were virtually gathered in internment and concentration camps. Further to the popular anger, however, members of the Jewish diaspora have also had to face discriminatory measures by governments which, along with the distinctive decrees

¹ In most Arabic-Islamic eyes, there's no difference between anti-Judaism and antisemitism.

enacted, have deprived hundreds of them of their freedom for short or long periods, fined them or confiscated their property. As a result, members of the Jewish diaspora fled *en masse* from Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, while they were effectively held hostage in Syria and Iraq.

The process did not escape the attention of Hungarian foreign affairs, especially due to Israeli protests and international pressure on the “friendly” socialist states. However, due to the nature and dynamics of the Hungarian foreign relations system at the time – i.e. the importance of the Arab states in Hungarian foreign policy and the intensity of diplomatic relations – the information received was rather selective – or even absent – while the picture created from the case was not always accurate. The present study is therefore to offer an in-depth insight into how the consequences of the 1967 Arab Israeli war on the local Jewish community were perceived and evaluated in Hungarian diplomatic missions, in addition to the articles published in the international literature on the relevant events.

Iraq

The Iraqi government, in line with the political leadership of the other Arab states, consistently refused to recognise the existence of the State of Israel after its proclamation, the destruction of which was openly and repeatedly advocated by state propaganda until the June 1967 war.² Despite this, Iraqi governments did not pursue a policy of overt discrimination against Iraqi Jews in the 1950s,³ who lived in relative peace during Abd al-Karim Qasim’s presidency.⁴ The tacit agreement with the central authorities, based on the “live and let live” principle, ended with the rise to power of Abd al-Salam Arif and the Ba’ath Party in 1963. The new leadership not only reinstated the discriminatory restrictions imposed on them before the Qasim era, but also, from early July 1964, introduced further wide-ranging restrictions, mainly economic ones, and a ban on their departure from the country. Despite the severe restrictions, few families emigrated illegally, while the majority stayed in place and waited for their fortunes to improve. However, the Six Day War dashed their hopes.

² The Iraqi government and propaganda tried to justify its extremist position on Israel with Tel Aviv’s pro-Western foreign policy and rejection of the UN resolution on the establishment of a Jewish state. At the same time, the extremist messages lacked anti-Semitic or racist ideas, as there were no social and/or political bodies in the country that promoted anti-Semitic views with the open or even tacit support of the government. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/1968. (90. box) “*Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete,*” January 16, 1968.

³ Despite the lack of overt stigmatisation, Iraqi Jews were subjected to a number of discriminatory practices, such as being banned from holding public office or being excluded from public life. However, measures taken mainly under the Nuri Said government were used by Israel to increase the willingness of Iraqi Jews to emigrate, resulting in between 120,000 and 130,000 people being resettled by air to Israel during Operation Ezra and Nehemiah between 1951 and 1952. Barely 6,000 of the members of the original community decided to stay, the vast majority of whom were wealthy merchants and landowners. PASACHOFF, Naomi E. – LITTMAN, Robert J. (2005), “*Operation Magic Carpet*” and “*Operation Ezra and Nehemiah*”. *A Concise History of the Jewish People*, Rowman & Littlefield, 301.

⁴ Abd al-Karim Qasim Muhammad Bakr al-Fadhli al-Zubaidi (1914–1963) Iraqi military officer, prime minister and politician.

Although the Iraqi government essentially distanced itself from any anti-Semitic ideas and voices in the period following the Israeli attack, the situation of Iraqi Jews clearly deteriorated. In vain did Chief Rabbi Sasson, on behalf of himself and his religious community, assure the Iraqi state of his loyalty on Baghdad television, and openly distance himself from Israel and Zionism. Neither these declarations nor the Jewish donations to the Iraqi army had done much to dampen anti-Jewish public sentiment. Instead, their situation was further exacerbated by the anti-Jewish propaganda that was constantly pouring out of the Iraqi press and Baghdad television.⁵ According to recollections, some 3,500 Jews in Baghdad, fearing reprisals, virtually isolated themselves in their homes from the outside world from 6 June, when they closed their shops, rationed their food and kept their children out of school after Iraqi media reported that Israel had killed 400 Arab soldiers on the first day of the war.⁶ However, this did not protect them from retaliation. During the series of Israeli attacks, the Iraqi government imposed extensive official controls on them, largely for reasons of state security. As part of the latter, some 70 Jews were deported on trumped-up charges such as collecting money for Israel or spying for an imperialist state. At the same time, Jews who avoided detention were required to report regularly to the police, their household telephone lines were cut, their bank accounts were frozen, their club memberships were cancelled, and their trade licences were revoked. At the same time, policy makers branded Jewish citizens as Zionist and imperialist agents in their statements on radio and television, and called on loyal Muslim citizens to boycott their trade and to completely sever social relations with them. Finally, the Ministry of State Security added 3,000 plain-clothed secret police to its staff to keep a constant watch on Baghdad's Jewry.⁷

The anti-Jewish terror campaign did not lose its power even months after the war. By early October, the number of imprisoned Jews had risen to about 100, while the rest of the working-age men either were effectively under house arrest or became unemployed, with the exception of doctors.⁸ Although Jewish students at higher education institutions were not excluded, applications from new entrants were already collectively rejected. At the same time, according to Hungarian foreign affairs reports, in the weeks following the 1967 Israeli attack, the Iraqi press published numerous articles on the history and development of Zionism and its alleged role in serving Western interests.⁹ These writings identified Zion-

⁵ The Jewish community, for example, was repeatedly referred to by Baghdad television as the "fifth column" and warned Muslim Iraqis that contact with them would make them guilty. KARLIKOW, Abraham S. (1968), *The American Jewish Year Book*, American Jewish Committee – Springer, Vol. 69, 141.

⁶ SAWDAYEE, Max (1974), *All Waiting be to Hanged: Iraq Post-Six-Day War Diary*, Tel-Aviv, Levanda Press Ltd, 26–27.

⁷ BENJAMIN, Marina (2007), *Last Days in Babylon: The Story of the Jews of Baghdad*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 254–255.; MORAD, Tamar – SHASHA, Dennis (eds.) (2008), *Iraq's Last Jews. Stories of Daily Life, Upheaval, and Escape from Modern Babylon*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 141.

⁸ Under a law promulgated on 28 June 1967, Jews were officially deprived of all sources of income. BENSOUSSAN, Georges (2019), *Jews in Arab Countries. The Great Uprooting*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 451.

⁹ In the 17 June issue of *Sawt al Arab*, for example, one extremist article made the survival of the Iraqi state dependent on the close control of the Iraqi Jewish community in the short term, and its abolition in the long term. In this context, the author stated that "The Iraqi Jewish cancer is a serious

ism as the first concept of race theory, when they unilaterally emphasized the consciousness of ‘chosenness’ central to the Jewish religion. In several respects, they also pointed out that anti-Zionism is not the same as anti-Semitism, and that a clear distinction between the two concepts is definitely justified.¹⁰

The Hungarian foreign affairs’ reports also blamed the Arab countries, with the exception of Egypt, for not only lacking a clear position on Zionism and anti-Semitism, but also of conducting a completely misguided propaganda campaign against the Jewish state. Paradoxically, this idea – as a kind of self-reflection – also appeared over time in the Iraqi press, which published in detail the Egyptian articles that disapproved of the Arab states’ anti-Israeli propaganda before the war. As an unspoken justification of the Iraqi government’s policy and a condemnation of the Arab countries’ media products, it was pointed out that the official position of the Cairo government was contradicted in many respects by statements that were out of touch with reality. The latter only served to give Tel-Aviv the opportunity to accuse Arabs of anti-Semitism. They also emphasized that certain Arab politicians, notably Ahmad Shukeiri, the Chairman of the PLO who was deposed in December 1967, made irresponsible statements about the annihilation of the Jewish people, which Israel then used to justify its preventive war policy and to influence international public opinion. The authors therefore saw them as the real culprits of the war defeat, since they could not clearly distinguish between anti-Israel political positions and real politics. Therefore, it was considered of primary importance that, instead of populist and generalizing statements, the State of Israel should be clearly distinguished from Judaism, because “efforts to overcome the consequences of aggression are not directed against the Israeli people.”¹¹

This did not, of course, mean that anti-Jewish manifestations were completely absent. One of the latter was the meeting of representatives of Muslim religious leaders who called for the declaration of a large-scale holy war to destroy the State of Israel and expel the Jewish population from the region. Although this meeting was televised – and its message was thus broadcast to the wider Iraqi masses – the Iraqi government remained officially aloof.¹²

threat to our struggle for existence and to the future of our country. Even if interests, circumstances and the law demand that we do not harm them at present, we have at least an obligation to place them under strict control and freeze their activities.” *Sawt al-Arab*, June 17, 1967.

¹⁰ HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/1968. (90. box) “*Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete*,” January 16, 1968.

¹¹ The authors of the article, on the other hand, fell into the very generalisation they were trying to avoid, when they emphasised that the Arab peoples were not enemies of the Jews, ignoring the background and the real political situation of the time in many respects. In this context, the Hungarian foreign representative aptly pointed out, for example, the contradiction between the officially announced foreign policy directive and the practice followed in Syria. Indeed, the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs made several unofficial comments and remarks on the Jewish members of the approximately 200-strong Czechoslovak expert group working in the Arab state, as a kind of diplomatic warning of their unwanted presence. The Hungarian Ambassador considered unacceptable such discrimination by the Syrian authorities against the delegates on the basis of religion and/or origin, as it was clearly not motivated by Zionism or the declared fight against Israel. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/3/1968. (90. box) “*Csehszlovák zsidó származású szakértők problémái*,” March 3, 1968.

¹² The meeting was evaluated by several Iraqi press articles as saying that the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood called for its convening with the support of the West, basically to attack the

However, this restraint also disappeared after the bloodless coup of July 1968, when the new Baghdad leadership used anti-Semitic sentiment to marginalise domestic political problems and unite the divided country under the slogan of fighting the “Zionist threat.” Thus, for example, Iraqi television broadcast live President al-Bakr’s speech in December 1968, who, referring to a military incident earlier in the month,¹³ pledged, among other things, that “we will strike down the exploiters of imperialism and Zionism ... with the steel fist, without mercy,” to which his angry audience of thousands demanded “death to the spies (Jews)! Execute all spies immediately!”¹⁴ Following the heightening of mass psychosis, nine Jews accused of espionage were tried and executed in Baghdad in January 1969.¹⁵ Meanwhile, the financial exploitation of Jewish families under constant psychological pressure continued unabated, most of whom eventually fled to Israel during the rare and brief periods in the 1970s when their restrictions were temporarily eased with the intervention of the international community.

Syria

According to figures published by the Syrian Ministry of Information,¹⁶ the number of Israelis in Syria in June 1967 was only 5,870, of whom 2,500 lived in Damascus, 3,000 in Aleppo and 360 in Qamishli, near the Turkish-Syrian border.¹⁷ Even by Arab standards, their situation was unfavourable after the dissolution of the United Arab Republic¹⁸ in Sep-

government’s policy and to cause confusion. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/1968. (90. box) “Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete,” January 16, 1968.

¹³ On December 4, 1968, the Israeli Air Force bombed Iraqi troop positions in the Mafraq area, as well as Jordanian positions and densely populated villages in northern Jordan, in retaliation for earlier mortar attacks on Israeli villages. On the Iraqi side, six soldiers were killed in air strikes. OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION, *Yearbook of the United Nations 1968*, Vol. 22, New York, United Nations. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-207913/> (Downloaded: December 28, 2022.)

¹⁴ MAKIYA, Kanan (1989), *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 50.

¹⁵ In addition to the nine people executed in Baghdad on 27 January 1969, the victims included seven other Jewish men who died of torture while in custody, and two others who were hanged in Basra at the same time as the Baghdad events. The bodies were later put on public display with a plaque around their necks, which were viewed by one million Iraqis, and filmed by Iraqi television. For the purpose of propaganda, they also interviewed Chief Rabbi Sasson Khaddouri, who declared about the full religious freedom of Iraqi Jews and condemned anti-Iraqi criticism and foreign pressure attempts, in exchange for the release of his imprisoned and tortured son. Just three months later, another nine Jews accused of espionage lost their lives as a result of torture, and on August 25, two more Jews were executed. BASRI, Carole (2022), “The Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries: An Examination of Legal Rights – A Case Study of the Human Rights Violations of Iraqi Jews,” *Fordham International Law Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 688–690.; BENSOUSSAN, *Jews in Arab Countries*, 461–462.

¹⁶ One of the most influential authorities in Syria, and it is responsible for media, press and informations.

¹⁷ HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/003933/1/1968. (90. box) “A Szíriában élő zsidók helyzete,” December 15, 1967.

¹⁸ It was a sovereign state and an union between Egypt and Syria from 1958 until 1961.

tember 1961¹⁹ and the military-backed Ba'ath Party came to power in 1963, and became particularly hostile after the exposure of Israeli spy Eli Cohen in 1965 and the successful military coup of the radical left wing of the Ba'ath Party in 1966.²⁰ Draconian measures were imposed on them, such as a ban on buying property, the need to obtain a special permit to leave their place of residence for more than three miles, and the fact that they could only prove their identity by means of a special document issued specifically for Jews.²¹ Moreover, members of the army and the public sector were prohibited from trading with Jewish businesses, and the Jewish community living in the Qamishli military border zone was under constant and extremely strict control. After all this, the only reason Syrian Jewish families did not leave the Arab country was that the government also banned them from emigrating.²²

In the days following the outbreak of the 1967 Blitzkrieg, the government deployed troops around the ghettos of the two main cities, which Jewish residents were only allowed to leave for shopping for a short period of time. Paradoxically, however, the threat to the Syrian Jews was not reduced by the withdrawal of the troops, but rather increased exponentially. The properties left behind by Jewish families who had emigrated in the early 1950s were taken over by Palestinian Arab refugees, who became the majority in Jewish neighbourhoods by the time of the Six-Day War. As a result, they were already a constant threat to the local Jews, and with the departure of the soldiers, it was almost certain that the desperate Arabs would take revenge on them for the crushing defeat they had suffered in 1967. Furthermore, the government reportedly armed rather than restrained the crowds on the streets. The mob then regularly rioted in Jewish neighbourhoods, where they could loot and assault defenceless Israelites with impunity.²³ According to some sources, the pogrom eventually claimed the lives of 57 Jews in Qamishli alone. However, the situation of the Jews did not improve even after the tempers subsided. Members of the military and their families were forbidden to associate with them, boycotts of merchants' products were announced, and many Jewish workers were fired, leaving their families without income. In July, the Jewish teaching staff of their community schools were dismissed and replaced by Muslim teachers, all financial transactions involving Jewish property were banned, and the collection of their debts was not only suspended, but Muslim debtors were legally empowered to refuse to repay them. At first, the community tried to support the needy with dona-

¹⁹ It is worth mentioning that Egypt continued to be known officially as the United Arab Republic until 1971.

²⁰ LASKIER, Michael M. (2014), "The Emigration of the Jews from the Arab World," in: MEDDEB, Abdelwahab – STORA, Benjamin (eds.), *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 427.

²¹ On their identity cards, the word 'Musawi' was highlighted in red, indicating their Israelite religion. The term also appeared on their bank accounts, guild membership documents and driving licences. LASKIER, Michael M. (2002), "Syria and Lebanon," in: SIMON – LASKIER – REGUER (eds.), *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, 329.

²² KARLIKOW, *The American Jewish Year Book*, 142.

²³ The hooligans were mostly Palestinian Arabs and the local residents they instigated. It is important to note, however, that Sunni and minority groups in Syria were surprisingly tolerant of Jews. LASKIER, "The Emigration of the Jews from the Arab World," 427.

tions until the government confiscated the collected money. Their economic conditions then deteriorated to the point where many literally starved to death.²⁴

However, none of this did not reach the wider public, as the Interior Ministry placed them under house arrest in Damascus, Aleppo and Qamishli. They were held hostage for about eight months, and those who broke the ban were taken by the police to the dreaded Mezzeh prison if caught. Besides, in order to avoid interference from outside states, the political leadership in Damascus regularly published false reports and statements claiming that the situation of Syrian Jewry was satisfactory.²⁵ A special meeting was also organised between representatives of the local Jewish community and members of the Russell Commission²⁶, who visited Syria in September 1967. During the consultation, the Jews declared full respect for their rights in the presence and pressure of the Syrian authorities.²⁷

The disinformation campaign proved so successful that even the responsible Hungarian diplomatic mission fully believed its claims. Hungarian foreign affairs reports – completely misinterpreting the real situation – reported that, contrary to the assumptions of certain Western newspapers, there were no anti-Semitic demonstrations or state-level measures against local Jews after the Arab-Israeli war. However, the Hungarian Chargé d'affaires went even further in his report, almost praising certain manifestations of Syrian propaganda. He credited the merit of Syrian mass communication, which he also considered extremist in many respects, with the fact that it only made accusations about Israel and Zionism, while not attacking the local Jewish community at all. To justify the full respect for the human rights of Syrian Jews, he also cited a four-page article about the living conditions of local Israelites from the *Syrian Life* newspaper, which happened to be the official journal of the Syrian Ministry of Information.²⁸

²⁴ The French Embassy estimated that in July 1969, 90% of the Syrian Jewish community was unemployed and 75% had no source of income at all. BENSOUSSAN, *Jews in Arab Countries*, 451.

²⁵ The Syrian embassy in Paris, for example, reacting to the contents of an anonymous letter from a reader published on 27 December 1967, declared in the newspaper *Le Monde* on 3 January 1968 that the accusations were mere fantasy. It categorically denied the imposition of a curfew or that any anti-Jewish incidents or manifestations had taken place anywhere in Syria between Palestinian refugees and their Jewish neighbours. It also claimed that Jewish persons were not excluded from public offices, and quoted the statement of the International Red Cross representative in Damascus on the eve of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war that Jews had not suffered any rights violations. “La situation des juifs en Syrie, » *Le Monde*, 3 janvier 1968. https://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1968/01/03/la-situation-des-juifs-en-syrie_2512670_1819218.html (Downloaded: October 28, 2022.)

²⁶ The Russell Tribunal, also known as the International War Crimes Tribunal, the Russell-Sartre Tribunal or the Stockholm Tribunal, was a privately initiated people’s court organised by Bertrand Russell in 1966.

²⁷ KARLIKOW, *The American Jewish Year Book*, 142.

²⁸ The Syrian articles included the opinions of many Jewish merchants and intellectuals, including the 95-year-old Chief Rabbi. The interviewees, in line with the official Syrian position and presumably under various pressures, were unanimous in stating that they had not suffered any harm, nor had they been hindered in any way in the exercise of their religious beliefs, movement, housing, education or holding office. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/003933/1/1968. (90. box) “A Szíriában élő zsidók helyzete,” December 15, 1967.

Egypt

The number of Israelites in Egypt was estimated at about 2,500 in May 1967,²⁹ of whom about 1,400 lived in Cairo, 900 in Alexandria and 200 – mostly Karaites – in other cities. As the international crisis deepened in the spring of 1967, the tone of the state media became increasingly hostile towards them, gradually increasing fear among them of possible public and government reprisals. However, concerns about Egyptian public opinion proved unfounded, as apart from a few minor incidents, Jewish families were not harassed by their Arab neighbours.

However, the situation was completely different for the Egyptian authorities, who kept accurate records of them. First, Jewish persons connected to or working for public institutions were dismissed from their jobs and their accounts were frozen in early May. After that, almost all the men between the ages of 16 and 60, with the exception of about 50 persons, were systematically arrested after the outbreak of the war in their homes, shops, synagogues or even offices, where they could still work.³⁰ Of the at least 425 persons captured in this way, about 75 Jewish foreign nationals were transported to Alexandria with the intervention of their country of origin under military guard within a week, where they were put on a ship with other Western nationals and deported.³¹ The other detainees were transferred from the police stations to the notorious Abou-Za'abal prison,³² where they were held for weeks in extremely poor conditions in overcrowded prison cells, and were regularly humiliated and severely beaten by prison guards.³³ In addition, in the absence of Israeli prisoners of war, the Egyptian authorities paraded some 200 Alexandrian Jews in front of

²⁹ According to Arab sources and estimates, 6000 Jews lived in the Arab state until the outbreak of the 1967 war.

<https://raseef22.net/article/102139-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A2%D8%AE%D8%B1-%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%87%D9%88%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%B6%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84-%D9%88%D8%A7> (Downloaded: January 4, 2023.)

³⁰ The wave of arrests also included the imprisonment of Alexandria Rabbi Jacques Nefussi and the house arrest of Cairo Chief Rabbi Hayyim Douek. Even people of Jewish origin who had converted to Muslim or Christianity years earlier were detained. KIMCHE, Ruth (2017), "Israel and the Death Knell of Egyptian Jewry, 1967–1970," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 218.; LASKIER, Michael M. (1986), "From war to war: The Jews of Egypt from 1948 to 1970," *Studies in Zionism*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 143. doi:10.1080/13531048608575895

³¹ Until 19 September 1968, Jews who avoided arrest were allowed to leave Egypt with their families. In return, however, they had to renounce their citizenship, leave behind all their possessions, and promise never to return to the country. LASKIER, Michael M. (1995), "Egyptian Jewry under the Nasser regime, 1956–70," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 610. doi:10.1080/00263209508701070

³² A town about 22 kilometres north of Cairo, which houses one of the country's best-known and largest prisons.

³³ BERTO FARHI, Ibrahim (1967), "Les Juifs de Nasser," *L'Express*, December 25–31, 1967.; GAZZAR, Brenda (2007), "Egypt – Exodus II," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 31, 2007. <https://www.jpost.com/magazine/features/the-six-day-war-exodus-ii> (Downloaded: December 16, 2022); KIMCHE, "Israel and the Death Knell of Egyptian Jewry," 219–220.; MEITAL, Yoram (2017), "A Jew in Cairo: the defiance of Chehata Haroun," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 190.

the angry crowd in Cairo, which continuously shouted and pelted them during the spectacle.³⁴

The situation of the prisoners only improved somewhat from mid-August. Thanks to the intervention of foreign governments and international organisations, they were able to receive cash and a package of food, medicine, clothing and toiletries from their families, and some 15 people were released by the end of the month.³⁵ However, many of those freed in this way could not be happy for long, as the Egyptian authorities forced them and their families to leave the country permanently a few weeks or months later.³⁶ Only Jewish men who converted to Muslim faith and Jewish women who married a Muslim man were exempt. Others were only allowed to take five Egyptian pounds and a few personal belongings with them when they were deported.³⁷ In addition to the radical decrease in the number of Egyptian Jews, another consequence of the June war was the virtual merger of the Sephardic community with the much smaller Ashkenazi and Karaite groups.

However, little or none of this was made public thanks to effective Egyptian propaganda, which vehemently denied all accusations of persecution of Egyptian Jews and repeatedly emphasised the exceptional religious freedom that prevailed in the country. Minister of Interior Shaarawi Gomaa,³⁸ in an interview with *Al-Ahram* on 22 December 1967, acknowledged only 257 arrests of Egyptian Jews, far fewer than the actual number. He also stated that by the time of the interview, “the circumstances that necessitated their internment had lost their relevance,” and that they were therefore exploring the possibility of “freeing” those still in detention, and had begun to dismantle the internment camps on the orders of President Nasser.³⁹ However, contrary to the promises, the stateless had to wait almost two years and the prisoners with Egyptian citizenship about three years for their release, after which they were deported almost immediately.⁴⁰

³⁴ KHEDR, Marc, “My life in Abu Zaabal and Tora,” *Historical Society of Jews from Egypt*, https://www.hsje.org/mystory/marc_kheder/mylife.html (Downloaded: December 16, 2022); MANGOUBI, Rami, “Egypt – My longest 10 minutes,” *Historical Society of Jews from Egypt*, https://www.hsje.org/mystory/Rami_Mangoubi/egypt_my_longest_10_minutes.html (Downloaded: December 16, 2022)

³⁵ KIMCHE, “Israel and the Death Knell of Egyptian Jewry,” 220.

³⁶ The fate of the majority of the 224 Jewish prisoners released by the end of December 1967 was similar in the end. Only 12 of them – less than 5% – were allowed to remain in Egypt. The others were made to sign a declaration with the Egyptian Passport Service renouncing their Egyptian citizenship and were then deported. LASKIER, “From war to war,” 144.

³⁷ Of the displaced, 615 families, or about 1,500 people, were allowed to leave Egypt between June 1967 and 1969 through the intervention of Spanish Ambassador Angel Sagaz. In addition, France received 1,719 Egyptian Jews until the end of June 1970. KIMCHE, “Israel and the Death Knell of Egyptian Jewry,” 222–224.

³⁸ Shaarawi Gomaa (1920–1988) was an Egyptian military officer and politician. From 1966 to 1971, he served as Minister of the Interior.

³⁹ *Al-Ahram*, December 22, 1967.

⁴⁰ For more on the background to the release of imprisoned Egyptian Jews and the secret Israeli-Egyptian diplomacy on the issue, see: MUALEM, Yitzhak (2020), “Quiet Diplomacy: The Exodus of Egyptian Jews between the Six-Day War and the War of Attrition,” *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, Vol. 31, No. 1/2, 124–145.

But even these were not mentioned in Hungarian foreign affairs reports. They also gave only a brief, concise description of the situation of the Sudanese Israelite community. All that emerges from these reports is that there were no significant numbers of Jews living in the country at the time of the events. During the Six Day War of 1967 and the period that followed, the authorities did not take any discriminatory measures against them, and the merchants (including a bar owner of Hungarian origin) and intellectuals, who numbered less than ten in total, were not harmed in any way.⁴¹

Lebanon

Although the Lebanese Israelites were perhaps the least affected by the consequences of the Six Day War among the Jewish communities of the Arab states, they too experienced a rise in anti-Jewish sentiment and an increase in incidents as the crisis leading up to the war deepened. Some Muslim merchants took advantage of the situation to refuse to repay their loans to Jewish creditors. As conditions became more unfavourable, the Jews of Beirut asked for official protection, and army troops happened to take control of their neighbourhood on the morning of 5 June. This measure, unlike in many Arab states, was in fact intended to protect the residents and not to hermetically seal them off from the outside world. Thanks to their involvement and the support of Christians, the sporadic spontaneous demonstrations that broke out soon died out.⁴² Lebanese President Charles Helou also clearly defended them while doing his utmost to keep the Lebanese armed forces out of the war and the armies of foreign Arab states out of Lebanese territory. The authorities only prohibited Jews from entering South Lebanon, which borders Israel, but did not impose any other restrictions on them. Jewish community institutions were also allowed to operate freely, and financial investments and deposits remained accessible, providing sufficient financial reserves to finance expenses and to help those in need.

Despite all this, there was a significant emigration in the second half of 1967, not least due to the propaganda of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which had already established itself in Lebanon at the time, and the rapid increase in the number of Palestinian Arab refugees. The political activism of the latter, the increasing number of guerrilla attacks against Israeli targets, and the presence of armed, uniformed Palestinian fedayeen fighters⁴³ in Lebanon have created growing fear in the Jewish community. Due to the psychological pressure, the various incidents during the spring, as well as the adverse economic consequences for them and the deterioration of business conditions, the number of Lebanese Jews shrunk by half, when from a community of 5-6,000 people in June, barely 3,000 person remained by the end of the year.⁴⁴

⁴¹ HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/1/1968. (90. box) “Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete,” December 18, 1967.

⁴² However, during the riots, the mobs vandalised the British and US embassies in Beirut and blew up vehicles of American personnel. SHARNOFF, Michael (2017), *Nasser's Peace. Egypt's Response to the 1967 War with Israel*, New York, Transaction Publishers, 28.

⁴³ It is an Arabic word, and it refers to various military groups willing to sacrifice themselves.

⁴⁴ SCHULZE, Kirsten E. (2001), *The Jews of Lebanon. Between Coexistence and Conflict*, Brighton-Portland, Sussex Academic Press, 111.

Although the Lebanese state did not restrict the ability of its Jewish citizens to leave the country with all their possessions,⁴⁵ their emigration was not without problems despite this and the relatively calm public atmosphere. Within the religious community, there was a significant proportion of those who did not have citizenship, because they or their ancestors had moved from a Middle Eastern state only a few decades earlier to escape discrimination there. Their disputed status has led to suspicions in the Lebanese press in the weeks following the war that their mass exodus may be motivated by support for Israel, while the government expressed its reservations about settling their debts and paying their tax obligations. For this reason, the authorities made it difficult to obtain the necessary travel documents. The official papers were then issued only at the request of the Jewish community, which gave guarantees that the emigrants would meet all their financial obligations, while those who left gave a written commitment never to return to the country.⁴⁶ However, with their departure, Jewish capital also left Lebanon, which had a very negative impact on trade and played a major role in the waves of bankruptcy at a time when sectarian divisions were deepening and control was gradually being taken out of the hands of the state and the security forces.

Algeria

There were around 35,000 Jews living in the Arab state in the early 1900s, rising to more than 150,000 by the time independent Algeria was established in 1962. One of the main reasons for this considerable increase in numbers was that they were granted French citizenship under the so-called Crémieux law of 1871. The latter, as a sign of voluntary assimilation, led to a large number of members of the community marrying the population of French origin. In terms of their occupation, most of them earned their living from trade, while a smaller number of them took up posts in the local administration. They were not discriminated against, which was an attraction for members of the Jewish community living in other Arab states, particularly in neighbouring ones, especially after the establishment of the State of Israel.

The first noticeable, marked change in their circumstances occurred in November 1954, when the National Liberation Front launched an armed struggle against French colonial rule. In addition to the French military and administrative installations, Jewish communities were increasingly targeted, while the more wealthy and influential members were forced by the NLF from 1956 onwards, by threat and violence, to support their uprising financially. Their situation was made worse rather than helped when, in response, Mossad-trained local cells carried out retaliatory actions against Muslim-owned cafes and shops. The civil war was further complicated by the far-right Organisation Armée Secrète, which rejected any Franco-Algerian agreement. Following its formation in February 1961, a wave of violence spread throughout the country, resulting in many Jewish deaths.⁴⁷ After all this, local Jews

⁴⁵ Lebanon's liberal emigration policy, which was considered exceptional among Arab countries, was also considered remarkable by the Israeli press and praised with appreciation. "Kivándorol a libanoni zsidóság. Az ötezer főnyi közösség nagyrésze elhagyja az országot," *Új Kelet*, Vol. 48, No. 5759, 1967. július 2. 7.

⁴⁶ KARLIKOW, *The American Jewish Year Book*, 142–143.

⁴⁷ LASKIER, "The Emigration of the Jews from the Arab World," 425.

were seriously afraid of retribution and insecurity from the new Arab leadership due to their religious differences and their close ties with the French colonial administration. They therefore decided to emigrate en masse in several waves after the Evian Accords of March 1962.⁴⁸ Most of them already left with the former colonizers,⁴⁹ and the majority of them settled in France, while the rest – barely 10% of the emigrants – started a new life in Israel.⁵⁰ They were followed by a new wave of emigration from 1964, when advocates of liberal economic policy left the country in large numbers because of nationalisations and the institutionalisation of the socialist-type planned economy.⁵¹

According to the Hungarian foreign documents, the fears and reservations of the Jewish community were unfounded, as neither the Algerian authorities nor the local population had discriminated against them or any other nationality on the basis of race.⁵² However, this was not entirely true, as it forgot the clearly anti-Semitic acts of certain extremist elements, such as the looting of the Great Synagogue in Algiers on 12 December 1960, the painting of swastikas and “Death to Jews” on the walls of the Kashbah, the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Oran in September 1961, or the violent incidents between Jews and Muslims because of religious differences.⁵³

Despite all these warning signs, the Hungarian embassy did not experience any anti-Semitism during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, although Algeria played a prominent role in the crisis and some of the official statements were clearly violent in tone. However, when analyzing the causes, they overlooked the fact that by that time the Jewish quarters of Oran and Algiers, which could have become the main targets of the unrests, no longer existed. Nor was there any mention of the fact that Paris had taken steps to protect Jews who were also French citizens.⁵⁴ Instead, it was pointed out that Houari Boumédiène’s⁵⁵ speeches have always made it clear that, although his country condemned Zionism in the strongest terms,

⁴⁸ STORA, Benjamin (2012), “Juifs d’Algérie. Les choix du départ. Réflexions sur les vagues de départ des juifs d’Algérie en direction de la France (1958-1968),” in: ABECASSIS, Frédéric – DIRECHE, Karima – AOUAD, Rita (eds.), *La bienvenue et l’adieu. Migrants juifs et musulmans au Maghreb (XV^e-XX^e siècle)*, Vol. II, Ruptures et recompositions, Casablanca, Karthala, La Croisée des chemins, pp. 109–117.

⁴⁹ According statistics, 85% of the non-Muslim population left Algeria within a few months. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) “Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete,” February 23, 1968.

⁵⁰ DOMONITZ, Yehuda (2000), “Immigration and Absorption of Jews from Arab Countries,” in: SHULEWITZ, Malka Hillel (ed.), *The Forgotten Millions. The Modern Jewish Exodus from Arab Lands*, London – New York, Continuum, 164.

⁵¹ COHEN, David (2002), Algeria. in: SIMON – LASKIER – REGUER (eds.), *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, 470.

⁵² HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) “Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete,” February 23, 1968.

⁵³ In addition to the insults directed at them personally, members of the Jewish community also had serious problems identifying with the national motto of independent Algeria, which stated that “*Algeria is my country, Arabic is my language, Islam is my religion.*” BENSOUSSAN, *Jews in Arab Countries*, 459.

⁵⁴ LASKIER, Michael M. (1994), *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century. The Jews of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria*, New York & London, New York University Press, 343–344.

⁵⁵ He was an Algerian politician and officer who served as Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Algeria between 1965 and 1976. Also, he was the second President of Algeria until his death in 1978.

it was not against the Jewish people.⁵⁶ In reality, however, extremist youths openly wore Nazi insignia and drew swastikas, while the radio broadcast anti-Semitic programmes. They also assaulted Chief Rabbi Simon Zini of Oran and expelled six Jews from the country. Also, the authorities banned the screening of any film in the country whose creators or actors appeared on the list of 'Zionist enemies'. Eventually, the term 'Zionist' became such a dirty word in the country that if it was associated with someone, it was a clear signal to them that they should leave Algeria as soon as possible. As a result, the 25,000 people of Jewish origin who remained behind in the summer of 1962 were reduced to just a few thousand by the end of 1967.⁵⁷

Tunisia

Tunisia's Jewish community grew slightly in the first half of the 20th century, increasing from 50,000 in 1921 to 58,000 by the time the country gained independence in 1956. However, after the withdrawal of French colonial power, their numbers here also declined considerably, falling to just under half that number, to around 25,000, by 1964. From the mid-1960s, this sudden wave of emigration was considerably moderated by the tolerant policy of the Tunisian government, which was officially based on full equality of rights between Muslim and Jewish citizens. The latter not only prevented the introduction of unfavourable regulations for Jews, but also enabled most of them to acquire Tunisian citizenship and even hold public office.⁵⁸ This was largely the reason why only 10% of the religious community left the Arab country in the second half of the decade. However, their number was still estimated at around 22,000.⁵⁹

Already on the day of the outbreak of the Six-Day War, intense anti-Semitic demonstrations broke out, which the foreign missions of the socialist states, in line with the press coverage in the French press, attributed to the Tunisian authorities.⁶⁰ During a few days of

⁵⁶ HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) "Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete," February 23, 1968.

⁵⁷ BENSOUSSAN, *Jews in Arab Countries*, 459.; LASKIER, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century*, 344.

⁵⁸ According to information from the foreign embassies of socialist countries, many Tunisian Jews managed to find employment in various commercial bodies and financial institutions. In ministries, on the other hand, they were generally not employed, with the exception of the Ministry of Economy. However, due to the lack of a more nuanced analysis and knowledge of the domestic political processes in Algeria, no mention was made of the fact that only irreplaceable Jewish persons were allowed to remain in key positions, while the others were gradually replaced. They also overlooked the fact that they had little representation in important administrative posts and bodies, few of them were affiliated with the Neo-Destour party, and Jewish traders sometimes found it extremely challenging to obtain the necessary official permits to do business. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) "Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete," February 23, 1968.; LASKIER, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century*, 423.

⁵⁹ HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) "Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete," February 23, 1968.

⁶⁰ Referring to the opinion of the "friendly embassies," which can hardly be considered unbiased, the Hungarian diplomatic mission accredited in Tunis reported that the Tunisian state apparatus considered the local Jewish community as a kind of lightning rod to defuse social anger in the given political

rioting, protesters vandalized dozens of vehicles, assaulted and beat young Jews, looted Jewish shops, and invaded the Great Synagogue in Tunis, assaulting the rabbi, desecrating and burning Torah scrolls, and smashing part of the equipment. Although there were no fatalities, the Bokobza winery and Boukha⁶¹ factory, an unleavened bread factory and kosher butchers' shops on the outskirts of Tunis were destroyed.⁶² Despite the extensive damage caused, it was found that the destruction was carried out mainly by young hooligans and marginalised groups of the population prone to violence and extremism. Their rampage was facilitated by the initial reluctance of the authorities to take action to contain them, and public order was not restored until late afternoon, when army units were deployed.⁶³

At the same time, the wave of violence caused serious resentment in the wider society. The Arab families often took in Jewish people seeking refuge from possible violence until tempers calmed down.⁶⁴ However, neither this nor President Habib Bourguiba,⁶⁵ who made radio and television speeches strongly condemning the riots and urging calm, could alleviate the despair of the Jewish community. The government's promise to punish the perpetrators and compensate the victims proved futile in allaying fears.⁶⁶ The official apology to the Chief Rabbi Nessim Cohen, the manifesto signed by Tunisian intellectuals expressing solidarity with their fellow Jews, and the dismissal of the Interior Minister and the Tunisian Police Chief following the events also had little effect.⁶⁷ Despite the reopening of Jewish shops and the restoration of public security, it was reported that the rioters, many of whom were Algerians and Egyptians, had chosen their targets based on a blacklist that distinguished Jews from other Tunisian citizens.⁶⁸ Desperate people left their shops and homes

situation. According to some socialist countries, this was the reason why the interior authorities deliberately incited the demonstrations, while others believed that they "just" passively observed the anti-Jewish demonstrations, as they seriously feared that the discontent of the masses could easily turn into anti-government demonstrations. *Ibid.*

⁶¹ It is a distilled beverage produced from figs.

⁶² The events, however, had not only an anti-Jewish dimension, but also a strong anti-Western one, as the protesters also invaded the American and British embassies, where they caused considerable destruction to the equipment found there. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) "*Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete*," February 23, 1968.; "Zsidóellenes atrocitások az arab világban," *Új Kelet*, Vol. 48, No. 5764, July 9, 1967. 4.

⁶³ According to the recollections of eyewitnesses, at the time of the burning of the Great Synagogue, the police were involved in directing traffic instead of calming and dispersing the crowd. BENSOUSSAN, *Jews in Arab Countries*, 459.

⁶⁴ HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) "*Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete*", February 23, 1968.

⁶⁵ He was a Tunisian nationalist leader and statesman who led the Kingdom of Tunisia between 1956 and 1957 as prime minister, then as the first president of Tunisia (1957–87).

⁶⁶ The government later made the students the scapegoats when it placed sole responsibility on them for what happened. Forty-five participants of the riots were arrested and brought to trial. However, the Hungarian foreign service reports did not indicate whether the accused persons were acquitted or found guilty at the end of the proceedings, and if convicted, what sentence was imposed on them by the Tunisian judiciary. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) "*Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete*," February 23, 1968.

⁶⁷ LASKIER, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century*, 306–307.

⁶⁸ LASKIER, "The Emigration of the Jews from the Arab World," 424.

behind in droves. Two-thirds of them fled to France and less than a year later the Tunisian Jewish community dwindled to between 7,000 and 8,000.

Morocco

Of the Maghreb countries,⁶⁹ Morocco had the highest number of Jews, reaching 225,000 in 1952.⁷⁰ The emigration was mainly to Israel, which the authorities initially tried to curb after the country's independence, until a secret agreement was reached between King Hassan II and representatives of Israel in July 1961.⁷¹

However, the escalation of tension between Arabs and Israel also affected Morocco, where local Jews lived in panic for weeks following the outbreak of the war in June 1967. At the same time, the government and the palace protected the community, preventing a catastrophe. The latter gave the opportunity for left-wing political forces – such as the UNFP and its backed UMT – and the nationalist Istiqlal⁷² to accuse the king of turning his back on the Arab cause and sympathising with the Jews. The right-wing conservative Islamist Istiqlal, popular among the more anti-Zionist-sympathetic rural Muslim population, also stepped up its anti-Jewish activities, taking advantage of the defeat of the Arab states and Israel's territorial gains. The latter was reflected, for example, in the distribution of classic anti-Semitic literature and calls for the blacklisting of Jewish-owned businesses. At the same time, UNFP and UMT supporters also took to the streets on a regular basis. Like the followers of the Istiqlal, they chanted anti-Israel and anti-Western slogans at their mass meeting at Casablanca during the first week of the 1967 war, while their leaders tried unsuccessfully to get a statement condemning Israel and Zionism from the Jewish community. This was accompanied by extremist manifestations in the Moroccan press and an economic boycott of traders' goods, which, despite its partial success, was particularly injurious to Moroccan Jewry.⁷³

King Hassan II has done his utmost to calm the flare-ups, and the government has taken preventive measures to avoid possible incidents. Nevertheless, here too, the unfavourable public mood and insecurity led middle-class Jewish families to leave the country in droves, and only 35,000 of them were still living there by 1971. The emigrants, like their Tunisian compatriots, settled mainly in France, Spain and North America, with only a minority choosing Israel as their new home.

⁶⁹ The region includes Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia.

⁷⁰ HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) “*Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete*,” February 23, 1968.

⁷¹ Despite the ban, 17,994 Moroccan Jews emigrated to Israel at the risk of their lives between 1957 and mid-1961. This was followed by the Israeli-led Operation Yakhin between 26 November 1961 and June 1963, which saw the emigration of 60,028 Jews, representing 36.6% of the Moroccan Israelite community at the time. In exchange for those leaving, Morocco received an advance of \$500,000 as well as compensation of \$100 per person for the first 50,000 Jews, and \$250 per person for the others. LASKIER, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century*, 218–243.; MORENO, Aviad (2020), “Beyond the Nation-State: a Network Analysis of Jewish Emigration from Northern Morocco to Israel,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 52, No. 1, 8.

⁷² It is an Arabic word, which means independence.

⁷³ LASKIER, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century*, 246–248.

Lybia

The most brutal anti-Semitic rallies took place in Libya, where the Jewish community of around 4,500 people suffered the most hardship and suffering in the region.⁷⁴ The escalation of anti-Israel public sentiment was already clearly visible in May and early June in government publications and articles in extremist Libyan newspapers such as *Ar Raid* and *At Tally*. At the same time, the PLO's Libyan offices became centres of anti-Jewish propaganda, while anti-Semitic pamphlets from Syria and Egypt were also increasingly appeared.⁷⁵ In mosques, imams were already calling for a holy war against the Jews on 2 June, when Muslim worshippers gathered for Friday prayers. Their speeches, which were broadcast on Libyan radio, consistently focused on the conflicts between the Prophet Muhammad and the Jews.⁷⁶ In addition, the week of 5-12 June was declared a period of solidarity with the Palestinian Arab cause and a fundraising campaign was organised, which was to be given greater emphasis by holding demonstrations.⁷⁷ In the increasingly unfavourable climate, the Libyan Jewish community sent a telegram of solidarity to King Idris, stressing their neutral position and loyalty to the ruler.⁷⁸

At 9am on 5 June, when the first news of the outbreak of war broke, the mass demonstrations announced for "Palestine Week," which had been under police control until then, turned into a frenzy of destruction and rampage under the control of Syrian and Egyptian migrant workers in the country. One of the most credible accounts of the anti-Semitic riots here came from a Hungarian trade representative in the Arab country, who witnessed the pogroms against a Jewish community, mostly of Italian and to a lesser extent French nationality. During the latter, several people were killed in the open streets of the ghetto.⁷⁹ In addition, the Beit El Synagogue and the Sla Dar Serussi Talmud Torah were destroyed, along with hundreds of holy books, including many ancient ones, and the Jewish shops,

⁷⁴ Already after independence, anti-Jewish sentiment increased significantly for reasons such as personal and political rivalry between influential families close to the king, the lack of a clear political stance on the Jewish population, Libya's accession to the Arab League, the – less successful – Arab boycott against Jews, the rise of Arab nationalism, and the anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist campaign in local dailies and weeklies. Despite all this, however, there was a sense of calm and prosperity in the Libyan Jewish community between 1962 and 1967, largely due to government communications. ROUMANI, Maurice (2007), "The Final Exodus of the Libyan Jews in 1967," *Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol. 19, No. 3/4, 78–79.

⁷⁵ One of the pamphlets distributed was "The Jews in the Koran," which included several excerpts from *Mein Kampf*. DE FELICE, Renzo (1985), *Jews in an Arab Land. Libya, 1835–1970*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 274.

⁷⁶ BENSOUSSAN, *Jews in Arab Countries*, 458.

⁷⁷ ROUMANI, "The Final Exodus of the Libyan Jews in 1967," 86.

⁷⁸ DE FELICE, *Jews in an Arab Land. Libya*, 274.

⁷⁹ We can consider the later accounts of the expelled Jews as realistic, according to which 15 Jews – two individuals and two families, a total of 13 people – lost their lives during the riots. Press reports that, for example, "20 victims were burnt at the stake or stoned to death by the mobs" are therefore clearly exaggerated. However, the Libyan government has only officially acknowledged the deaths of two people killed in the streets. "Evidence given by Lillo Arbid, former President of the Jewish communities of Tripolitania (Libya)," in: SHULEWITZ, *The Forgotten Millions*, 219.; "Zsidóellenes atrocitások az arab világban," 4.

mostly on Tripoli's main street, were looted and set on fire.⁸⁰ The latter in particular has led to the suggestion that the wealthy Muslim middle class was behind the events here, and that, as well as stirring up mass anger, it also used the occasion to drive out of the country Jews, who were seen as competitors, mainly in the commercial sector.⁸¹

The public anger against the Jews, which was also artificially fomented, achieved its unspoken objective, as some 300 people fled the country during the events and in the days following the war alone. The rest were rounded up by the Libyan authorities and housed in barracks outside the cities. However, the situation remained chaotic until 9 June, with members of families in protective custody often living apart and in constant fear. It was only in mid-June that their conditions improved, especially after the Libyan government changed its position on the ban on emigration at the request of the Jewish community in Tripoli. Following the issuance of the necessary travel documents, their mass departure became possible from 28 June. Even then, they were escorted to the airport with military guard, from where they left, mainly for Italy – and many from there to Israel – or Canada, with their personal luggage and just 20 Libyan pounds.⁸²

The remaining 220 persons or so were still kept by the government authorities in the so-called “assembly camps” guarded by the armed forces, “for their own protection.” Only a few of those who emigrated later returned to the country, mainly to settle their pending business and financial affairs. However, the liquidation of their interests in Libya mostly proved to be ineffective due to the discriminatory provisions introduced in the meantime, by which the government made it practically impossible for Jewish goods and capital to leave the country.⁸³ The process culminated in the rise to power of Colonel Gaddafi in 1969, after which the 1951 constitution, which guaranteed, among other things, freedom of conscience and religion and equality before the law regardless of religious belief, was repealed.⁸⁴ In addition, the remaining property of the Jews was confiscated, official documents relating to their ownership were destroyed, and debts owed to them were cancelled. To erase them from collective memory, in addition to their remaining synagogues, even their cemeteries were demolished and, in time, incorporated.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ LASKIER, *North African Jewry in the Twentieth Century*, 418.; ROUMANI, “The Final Exodus of the Libyan Jews in 1967,” 87–88.

⁸¹ HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) “*Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete*,” February 23, 1968.

⁸² KARLIKOW, *The American Jewish Year Book*, 139.

⁸³ After the anti-Jewish riots of 1967, for example, insurance companies no longer took out life and property insurance with Jewish people. In addition, banks refused to open accounts for them, while regulations were issued to prevent foreigners from taking their assets out of the country. HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-1-j-Arab országok-1968-202-27/001010/2/1968. (90. box) “*Az arab országokban élő zsidók helyzete*,” February 23, 1968.

⁸⁴ ZARRUGH, Samuel (2022), “Restoring Libya’s Ancient Jewish Community,” *The Algemeiner*, August 10, 2022. <https://www.algemeiner.com/2022/08/10/restoring-libyas-ancient-jewish-community/> (Downloaded: December 16, 2022.)

⁸⁵ Evidence given by Lillo Arbid, former President of the Jewish communities of Tripolitania (Libya) in: SHULEWITZ, *The Forgotten Millions*, 219–220.

Aden

The territory of the Aden Protectorate, which was under British control until November 1967, was home to some 9,000 Jews before 1948, whose number reduced to just 138 by June 1967, mainly as a result of the October 1965 riots. Their schools had been closed by then and their religious relics and community archives were taken abroad. However, the existence of this small religious community was also made impossible by the rapid deterioration of economic conditions and the political climate, the imminent withdrawal of Britain from Aden, the regular strikes and demonstrations against the colonial power, the strengthening of various local Arab nationalist groups and the intensification of their ongoing armed struggle for power, and the outbreak of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.⁸⁶ The latter, in particular, further increased the already considerable anti-British sentiment among the Muslim population, and the public mood towards Jews became particularly hostile. The low point came on 12 June, when a mob of mainly Arab refugees attacked the Jewish quarter in the Crater district, looting Jewish shops and beating an elderly man to death. A week after the incident, British colonial authorities imposed a curfew in Aden. During the latter period, all Jewish men, women and children were rounded up and taken by bus to the airport, with the exception of two persons. From there they were evacuated in a separate plane chartered by the Jewish community, partly to London and partly to Israel.⁸⁷ This meant the complete disappearance of the Jewish community in Aden, and with the departure of the British and the establishment of the People's Republic of Yemen at the end of November the route that had until then provided the only possibility for members of the Jewish community in North Yemen to emigrate to Israel was effectively closed.

Conclusion

As a result of the June War, the rejection of the Jews within the Arab world was manifested with elemental force as a result of the Arab defeat. The incidents in each Arab state show marked differences in terms of the involvement of the local Jewish community, the intensity and scale of the incidents, the identity of the perpetrators and the involvement of the national government. Nevertheless, a common point of reference is the meeting of the World Islamic Congress in Amman on 22 September 1967, where the retaliatory campaign of the Arab governments gained clear legitimacy. The declaration, adopted in a spirit of solidarity to justify the atrocities and further deprivation of rights, stated that

“the Congress is convinced that Jews living in Arab countries do not appreciate the kindness and protection that Muslims have granted them over the centuries. The Congress proclaims that the Jews who live in the Arab states and who have contact with Zionist circles or the state of Israel do not deserve the protection and kindness that Islam grants to non-Muslim citizens living freely in Islamic countries.”⁸⁸

⁸⁶ AHRONI, Reuben (2001), *Jewish Emigration from the Yemen, 1951–98: Carpet Without Magic*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 79–81.

⁸⁷ FISCHBACH, Michael R. (2008), *Jewish Property Claims against Arab Countries*, New York, Columbia University Press, 51.; KARLIKOW, *The American Jewish Year Book*, 143–144.

⁸⁸ BENSOUSSAN, *Jews in Arab Countries*, 461.

Emphasising the principle of collective responsibility, they declared Jews in Arab countries to be “*mortal enemies*” and called on Muslim – and not only Arab – governments to treat them accordingly. This, coupled with repressive measures in some states, led to further mass Jewish emigration, which continued into the 1970s. As a result, less than three decades after the establishment of the State of Israel, most of the ancient Jewish communities in North Africa were virtually depopulated. Morocco with about 2000, and Tunisia with about 1000 Jewish inhabitants were the only two Arab countries, where Jewish people continued to live in significant numbers.